



Bullet Points

Urban Arcana

by Charles Ryan

Welcome to the thirty-first installment of *Bullet Points*. I'm Charles Ryan, one of the designers of the **d20 Modern Roleplaying Game**. I'm here to answer your questions about the game, offer advice on tricky issues, and give you a little peek into the minds of the designers. You'll be hearing from me every couple of weeks.

If you've checked out the earlier installments of *Bullet Points*, you know the format. Every two weeks I pick an issue that's provoked a lot of questions or comments, begin with a general discussion of the topic, and then answer specific questions related to it. If there are any unrelated but pressing questions in my mailbox, I might tackle them at the end of the column, but only if there's room and they can't wait for an appropriately themed column.

Changing of the Guard

First of all, I have an announcement to make: This column is my last installment of *Bullet Points*. I've been writing the column for well over a year now, but my new duties as Category Manager for Roleplaying Games here at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. preclude working on *Bullet Points* any more. Not only are there lots of new constraints on my time and attention, but I'm also no longer directly associated with the design and development of roleplaying games. I no longer work with the other **d20 Modern** designers every day, and I no longer sit in an office surrounded by the lead designers of the d20 System. In short, I'm no longer the best person to keep answering the challenging game rules questions you send in.

Don't despair, though -- *Bullet Points* is in good hands! Starting with the next installment, WotC designer James Wyatt will be writing the column. James was not one of the original **d20 Modern** designers, but I can vouch for his credentials -- he's played in my ongoing **d20 Modern** campaign for more than two years now, since the early days of the game's playtesting. Those of you who also play **D&D** may recognize his name and be familiar with the many contributions he's made to that game and to the d20 System in general. James is going to do a great job with *Bullet Points*!

Urban Arcana Campaign Setting

This installment covers questions related to the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting*. I have no general points to make on this subject, so we'll go straight to the questions.

Questions and Answers

Without further ado, then, let's get started.



Does the Renown feat apply to the abilities associated with the expert in your field class feature? Does the Low Profile feat penalize them?

The Renown and Low Profile feats change your hero's Reputation score as soon as he takes them. So yes, the expert in your field class feature (and any other ability based on Reputation) is affected by these feats.

 **Can a Techno Mage program skills he doesn't have into a mechanical homunculus?**

Yes. The homunculus's skill points can be spent on any of the skills noted in the creature's description. The choices do not depend on what skills its maker possesses.

 **Do the skills to which a hero gains access through the Arcane Skills feat count as class skills only for a particular class she has, or are they considered permanent class skills?**

They are permanent class skills; that is, they are class skills for every class she currently has or gains thereafter. The same principle applies to the Psionic Skills feat.

 **Why isn't the Wild Talent feat an [Initial] feat? Considering other similar feats, it seems as though it should be.**


Nothing in the feat description says that your hero has always had this ability. He may have developed it over time, or it may have been dormant within him until he unlocked it by taking the feat.

 **Under Special Combat Bonuses in the dwarf description, it says "Creatures of giants (including giants, trolls, and ogres)." Is this passage a typo?**

Yes. It should read "creatures of the giant type (including trolls and ogres)."

 **Is it accurate to assume that the skill points per level given for advanced classes apply only to humans?**

Yes. Check Table 1-3 in the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting* to find the skill points per level for Shadowkind.


 **Is there a reason that a creature with the template called "changeling" can't actually change form? Upon reading the name of the template and perusing the passage about the changeling's sidhe parentage, I assumed that such a creature would have some kind of change self ability.**

Technically, the term "changeling" means "swapped at birth." It appears in faerie references and is based on the myth that fey creatures would sometimes steal human babies and replace them with faerie babies. Granted, such a substitution is not really what the template represents, but having it represent a shapechanger would be no more faithful to the derivation of the term.

 **The table in the Animal Companions sidebar on page 59 contains a reference to "share spells," yet there is no text description of that particular ability.**

The relevant text is in fact missing. It should be as follows.


Share Spells (Ex): At the Wildlord's option, she may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) she casts upon herself also affect her animal companion. The animal companion must be within 5 feet of her at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the animal companion if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the animal again, even if it returns to the Wildlord before the duration expires. Additionally, the Wildlord may cast a spell with a target of "You" on her animal companion (as a touch range spell) instead of on herself. A Wildlord and her animal companion can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the companion's type (animal).

 **What happens to a character who drinks from the *cup of curing* four times in a row (or six times total)? It says he disappears with the cup, but that doesn't say what happened to him, especially since the cup reappears later on.**


Sorry that the text here is vague. The drinker does not actually go anywhere with the cup. By the time the cup disappears, the drinker is already gone -- "consumed" by the bright flare of light produced. In short, the drinker is irrevocably dead and gone.

 **What is the correct ECL for a gnoll? The table on page 25 of the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting* gives it as +1, but the description of gnolls on page 29 says the ECL is +2.**

The level adjustment in the gnoll description is a typo. The creature's level adjustment is actually +1.

 **I'm making a bugbear Tough hero for a game my group is starting soon. We are starting at 3rd level, so my character will have one class level as a bugbear. But does she get a feat now for being a 3rd-level character, or does she have to wait until she becomes a Tough hero 3?**

She has to wait. The feat she gets every three levels is specifically for class levels.

 **Table 2-5: General Equipment shows a chemistry kit that weighs 15 pounds, has a purchase DC of 13, and requires a license. This kit is not described in detail in the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting*, but page 116 of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* shows a different chemical kit. This one weighs only 6 pounds, has a purchase DC of 16, and does not require a license. Are both kits the same piece of equipment, except that one has been modified for use with *Urban Arcana*, or are they different? And if they are the same, or have a similar function (presumably both are used with the Craft [chemical] skill), then why do they have such different statistics?**

Ignore the chemistry kit in the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting*. The one in the core rulebook has the correct statistics.


 **I'm confused about the Archmage. If I had a Smart hero 3/Mage 10/Archmage 5, how many spells could he cast? Does the total spellcasting feature mean his *fireball* now deals 15d6 points of damage?**

At 4th level, the Archmage's increased spells per day give him twice the number of spell slots that he has from his other casting classes (before counting bonus spells). So a Smart hero 3/Mage 10/Archmage 5 would have the following spells of each level.

Spell Level Number of Spells


0	8
1st	8
2nd	8
3rd	6
4th	6
5th	2

The Archmage's total spellcasting class feature lets him count all of his caster levels for the purpose of determining casting levels for arcane spells. So the Smart hero 3/Mage 10/Archmage 5 has a caster level of 15th (for 10 levels in Mage and 5 in Archmage). This figure applies to any spell effect that depends on caster level. Thus, his *fireball* would deal only 10d6 points of fire damage (because that's the maximum for *fireball* damage), but its range would be 1,000 feet ($400 + [40 \times 15]$).

 **How do unarmed combat feats such as Brawl or Combat Martial Arts work for characters who aren't normal human beings? For example, how would they work for characters who normally deal different amounts of damage (because they are Large or Small) or types of damage (because they have natural weapons)?**

Unarmed combat feats such as Brawl operate exactly as written, regardless of character size, natural weapons, or any other factor. Thus, in some instances, a feat such as Brawl offers a greater (or lesser) increase in capability for one character than another. Nevertheless, the feat does what the rules say it does.

That principle applies to creatures or characters of differing sizes as well as those with natural weapons or other unusual features. So, for example, a character using the Brawl feat deals nonlethal damage, even if he has natural weapons.

 **In the Creating New Incantations section, the first paragraph under Duration and Range mentions that a 6th-level incantation has a medium range of 220 feet. Why is this so?**

Medium spell range is 100 feet + 10 feet per caster level (see *d20 Modern Rulebook*, page 331). An incantation's caster level is twice the spell level. Thus, a 6th-level incantation is caster level 12th. Applying that caster level to medium range gives us 100 feet + 120 feet (10×12), or a total of 220 feet.

Do you have a rules question about the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game? Send it to bulletpoints@wizards.com. For the quickest possible answer, please put the topic of your question in the subject line and keep the question as succinct as possible. If you have more than one question, feel free to send two or more emails -- but for best results please include only one question per email unless your questions are very closely related to one another. Please don't expect a direct answer by email. Check back here every other week for the latest batch of answers!

About the Author

Charles Ryan was one of the designers of the ***d20 Modern Roleplaying Game***. He has been designing and editing games for more than twelve years. His other credits include such diverse titles as the *The Wheel of Time Roleplaying Game*, *Deadlands*, *Millennium's End*, *The Last Crusade*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, *Dune: Chronicles of the Imperium*, and *Star Trek: Red Alert!*, to name just a few. Charles served as Chairman of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design, the professional organization of the games industry, from 1996 through 2001. He lives in Kent, Washington with his lovely wife Tammie, three cats, two rats, and a dog. He works for Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



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