

5E PLAY STYLE AND HOUSE RULES

Play style:

I tend to run gritty, realistic games that have an old-school style, particularly when it comes to encounter difficulty. What that means is that it's always possible for you to encounter an enemy, monster, or situation that is much harder than you expected—maybe even deadly. I won't railroad you into TPK situations; believe me, TPKs are just as bad for me as they are for you (and probably worse!). On the other hand, by its very nature, adventuring is rough, risky, and brutal, and any good D&D game should convey that feeling.

So try to keep that in mind, and remember that combat is not the only way to handle situations. Sometimes discretion is the better part of valor, and the old saying "He who runs away lives to fight another day" is very true. Sometimes parleying is possible, too. The point is this: use your heads, think and plan carefully, and you should be okay.

I just want to make it clear because some players who have not played older editions of D&D tend to expect all encounters to be precisely engineered to match their level, so when they encounter something that is out of their league, they feel it's unfair. I don't want any of you to feel shocked or surprised by hard encounters.

House rules:

- **Rest variants:** I will use the "Gritty Realism" variant on page 267 of the DMG (i.e., short rest = 8 hours, long rest = 7 days).
- **Experience points:** Since 5th edition level progression is super fast, experience points for defeating monsters and other accomplishments will be halved. This makes advancing in level a much more special, monumental event in the life of the character.
- **Variant human traits are allowed** (*Player's Handbook* p. 31)
- **Ability score generation:** Distribute 75 points across the six abilities. The minimum score is 3, and the maximum is 18. The number of points you put into an ability is that ability score; e.g., putting 14 points into Strength gives you a 14 Strength.
- **Revivify spell:** Consider this spell nonexistent. It is far too powerful a spell for 3rd level!
- **Feats are allowed.**
- **Banned races:** dark elf (drow), dragonborn, and tiefling
- **Only good alignments:** Characters must be chaotic good, neutral good, or lawful good.
- **No attunement with magic items**
- **No multiclassing**
- **No walking polygraph machines:** Using the Insight skill to determine if an NPC is telling the truth or lying is very, very difficult to pull off in this campaign. Therefore, I advise you to pick another proficiency, if applicable for your character class.
- **Limited cantrips:** Spell-casters can cast a number of cantrips equal to their level plus their spellcasting ability modifier between long rests. For example, a 2nd-level bard with a charisma of 16 is able to cast 5 cantrips (level 2 plus charisma modifier of 3) between long rests. The ability to cast the full amount of cantrips is regained after a long rest is completed. *Note that*

this limitation applies even to at-will cantrips, such as those given to a warlock who chooses the Pact of the Tome feature.

- **Turning undead:** The undead to be turned must only *see* the cleric doing the turning as well as the cleric's holy symbol; whether the target undead *hears* the cleric is irrelevant.

Any hostile action will completely negate the turning effect. Hostile actions include:

- ✗ attacking the affected undead in any way
- ✗ entering an area that the turned undead have been commanded to guard
- ✗ attempts to remove guarded items or treasure that belong to the affected undead
- ✗ attempts to stop the turned undead from carrying out commands

Undead that are in an area that has been consecrated to evil—such as an evil shrine or temple—will be more difficult to turn.

- **Avoid out-of-character strategizing or tactics discussion during combat:** In the interest of maintaining a sense of combat realism as well as keeping combat moving along quickly, please try to refrain from excessive tactics discussion during combat. Please do not coach other players on what they should do with their characters during combat; don't tell others how to play their characters. Since your characters could not possibly stop the combat and have an in-depth situation conference about what everyone should do, players should not be having such out-of-character discussions either. Once the initiative dice are rolled, the time for planning is over and the time for action has come. This could also apply to non-combat situations that are stressful and require quick, on-your-feet thinking. Simply put: If your characters wouldn't have time to discuss it, then neither do you.

If you feel the need to coach a player during combat, please limit it to a single sentence spoken in character (i.e., a quick statement, which doesn't take much time and doesn't count as an action).

If OOC tactics discussion becomes excessive, I may reduce the experience points for the encounter, delay initiative for the players who are taking too long, or apply some other penalty.

- **Magic Mayhem:**

Spellcasting is a process, even if it's quick. It has a beginning and an end, so it's not instantaneous. Consequently, it's possible for you to disrupt an enemy's casting of a spell (and vice-versa) by readying an action in response to the beginning of the spellcasting process. If you hit the spellcaster that round, the spell does not go off (but the spell slot is still available).

Essentially, spellcasting enables a reaction from foes as long as they are able to recognize what the caster is doing.

- **Consequences of being raised from the dead:** If a PC is raised from the dead, there will be permanent consequences of some kind, reflecting physical or mental damage. The type and severity of these consequences are dependent on the kind of death, how much damage was taken, and possibly other factors.