

GUIDELINES TO HOMEBREWING CLASSES IN D&D 5E

Created by /u/JamesMusicus

Important: This document is not about balancing classes. This document analyzes all of the existing 5e classes to create guidelines for creating new ones in the same line of thought.

Note: If anybody uses this to create their own classes, I'd appreciate a citation if you post it anywhere. Even if you don't post it, let me know how it worked for you! (reddit /u/jamesmusicus)

[Link to Documentation Outline for Writing New Class Documents.](#)

I have a website now: <http://zappyman2.wix.com/musicushomebrew>

Class Types

Tank (Take hits, be threatening to enemies, low-moderate damage) d10/d12HD, medium/heavy armor

Melee Brawler (Take fewer hits, deal moderate-high damage) d8/d10HD, medium/heavy armor

Skirmisher (Take very few hits, deal high damage) d8HD, light/medium armor

Ranged Damage dealer (Takes few hits, deal high damage at range) d6/d8HD, light/medium armor

Spellcaster (Cast up to 9th level spells) d6/d8HD, any armor

Halfcaster (cast up to 5th level spells, mix magic and weaponry equally) d8/d10HD, light-heavy armor

Utility (Includes Healing and battlefield control) d8HD, medium armor

Core Classes Summary

Barbarian (Melee Brawler/Tank)

HD d12, Saves STR/CON, Martial Weapons, Unarmored Defense

Bard (Spellcaster/Utility)

HD d8, Saves DEX/CHA, Simple Weapons+, Light Armor

Cleric (Spellcaster/Melee Brawler/Utility)

HD d8, Saves WIS/CHA, Simple Weapons, Medium Armor

Druid (Spellcaster/Melee Brawler/Utility)

HD d8, Saves INT/WIS, some simple weapons, Medium armor, no metal

Fighter (Melee Brawler/Tank/Ranged DPS)

HD d10, Saves STR/CON, Martial Weapons, Heavy Armor

Monk (Melee Brawler/Utility)

HD d8, Saves STR/DEX, Simple Weapons+, Unarmored Defense

Paladin (Melee Brawler/Tank/Halfcaster)

HD d10, Saves WIS/CHA, Martial Weapons, Heavy Armor

Ranger (Melee/Ranged DPS/Halfcaster)

HD d10, Saves STR/DEX, Martial Weapons, Medium Armor

Rogue (Melee/Ranged DPS/Utility)

HD d8, Saves DEX/INT, Simple Weapons+, Light Armor

Sorcerer (Spellcaster/Utility)

HD d6, Saves CON/CHA, Some simple weapons, no armor

Warlock (Spellcaster/Melee DPS)

HD d8, Saves WIS/CHA, Simple Weapons, Light Armor

Wizard (Spellcaster/Utility)

HD d6, Saves INT/WIS, some simple weapons, no armor

Template Class Table:

The [Class Name]

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Extras	-----	Archetype Growth	-----	Total Archetype Gains
1st	+2	Tier 1	--	Archetype			3
2nd	+2	--	--	Cler	Archetype		2+1
3rd	+2	--	--			Archetype	7
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	--				
5th	+3	Tier 2 (Extra Attack)	--				
6th	+3	--	--	Cler/Sorc/Warl	Druid/Wiz	Barb/Bard/Monk	8
7th	+3	--	--			Fight/Pally/Rang	3
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	--	Cler			1
9th	+4	--	--			Rogue	1
10th	+4	--	--	Warl	Druid/Wiz	Barb/Fight	5
11th	+4	Tier 3	--			Monk/Rang	2
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	--				
13th	+5	--	--			Rogue	1
14th	+5	--	--	Sorc/Warl	Druid/Wiz	Barb/Bard	6
15th	+5	--	--			Fight/Pally/Rang	3
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	--				
17th	+6	Tier 4	--	Cler		Monk/Rogue	3
18th	+6	--	--	Sorc			1
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	--				
20th	+6	Capstone Feature	--			Pally	1

Let's take a look at this in regards to the archetypes.

- Most common levels to gain archetype features are 6, 10, and 14.
- Second most common are 7, 11, 15, and 17.
- Least common levels are 8, 9, 13, 18, and 20.
- Levels to avoid are 4, 5, 8, 12, 16, and 19 (levels of ability score improvements and extra attack)
- All casters EXCEPT Bard get Archetypes at levels 1 and 2. They also mostly stick to levels 6,10, and 14 (except of course Cleric and Sorcerer)
- At level 1, Classes that have a power source defined by their archetype pick archetypes. (cleric, sorcerer)
- At level 2, Classes that learn to use magic and then specialize pick Archetypes (druid, wizard)
- At level 3, Classes that can specialize into non-magic fighting pick Archetypes. (fighter, Bard, Paladin)

Nobody (except Clerics) gets Archetype features at the same levels as ABSI, clerics only get a weapon/cantrip improvement to make up for only getting a situational class feature at level 5

When designing a class, decide on class roles (listed above) and draft a class table based on other classes of those roles along with the observations above.

Every class gets SOMETHING at every level, be it an ABSI, new Spell slot level, class feature, or archetype feature.

Template Spellcaster Table:

The [Class Name]

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Cantrips Known	Spells Known	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	+2	Tier 1 (Spellcasting)	x	x	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2nd	+2	--	x	x	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3rd	+2	--	x	x	4	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	x	x	4	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
5th	+3	Tier 2	x	x	4	3	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
6th	+3	--	x	x	4	3	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
7th	+3	--	x	x	4	3	3	1	--	--	--	--	--
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	x	x	4	3	3	2	--	--	--	--	--
9th	+4	--	x	x	4	3	3	3	1	--	--	--	--
10th	+4	--	x	x	4	3	3	3	2	--	--	--	--
11th	+4	Tier 3	x	x	4	3	3	3	2	1	--	--	--
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	x	x	4	3	3	3	2	1	--	--	--
13th	+5	--	x	x	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	--	--
14th	+5	--	x	x	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	--	--
15th	+5	--	x	x	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	--
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	x	x	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	--
17th	+6	Tier 4	x	x	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
18th	+6	--	x	x	4	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	x	x	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1
20th	+6	Capstone Feature	x	x	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1

At the levels Spellcasting classes gain higher spell levels, they usually do not gain Class Features. Exceptions include the Cleric's *Destroy Undead* and lvl17 domain feature, the Bard's *Song of Rest* and *Bardic Inspiration*, the Sorcerer's *Metamagic*, and the Warlock's *Pact Boon*. All of these exceptions are either relatively minor or do not affect spellcasting at all.

Spellcasting classes have 2 categories: Prepared Spellcasters and Spontaneous Spellcasters

Prepared Spellcasters can prepare a number of spells, from a list of available spells, equal to their Spellcasting Modifier (INT/WIS/CHA) + their relevant class level.

Spontaneous Spellcasters have a limited list of learned spells which are available to them. This list is chosen and modified as the caster levels up and learns new spells.

Wizards are an exception, their Spells Known is in their spellbook, which they prepare spells from.

Spellcasting classes do not get any more ABSIs than the standard minimum. This rule may be broken if one were to homebrew a Martialy focused spellcasting class.

Spellcasting classes also know cantrips, which represent a spellcaster's basic attacks. The number of cantrips known increases with level, but classes vary greatly.

When choosing proficient saves, a class' spellcasting modifier is always a proficient save.

Template Halfcaster Table:

The [Class Name]

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Spells Known	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1st	+2	Tier 1	--	--	--	--	--	--
2nd	+2	(Spellcasting, Fighting Style)	2	2	--	--	--	--
3rd	+2	--	3	3	--	--	--	--
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	3	3	--	--	--	--
5th	+3	Tier 2	4	4	2	--	--	--
6th	+3	--	4	4	2	--	--	--
7th	+3	(archetype feature)	5	4	3	--	--	--
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	5	4	3	--	--	--
9th	+4	--	6	4	3	2	--	--
10th	+4	--	6	4	3	2	--	--
11th	+4	Tier 3 (archetype feature option 1)	7	4	3	3	--	--
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	7	4	3	3	--	--
13th	+5	--	8	4	3	3	1	--
14th	+5	--	8	4	3	3	1	--
15th	+5	(archetype feature)	9	4	3	3	2	--
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	9	4	3	3	2	--
17th	+6	Tier 4	10	4	3	3	3	1
18th	+6	--	10	4	3	3	3	1
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	11	4	3	3	3	2
20th	+6	Capstone Feature (archetype feature option 2)	11	4	3	3	3	2

At the levels Halfcasting classes gain higher spell levels, they usually do not gain Class Features. Exceptions include the Paladin's and Ranger's *Extra Attack*, which they get at the same level as their level 2 spell slots.

Halfcasting classes have 2 categories: Prepared Spellcasters and Spontaneous Spellcasters

Prepared Spellcasters can prepare a number of spells, from a list of available spells, equal to their Spellcasting Modifier (INT/WIS/CHA) + their relevant class level.

Spontaneous Spellcasters have a limited list of spells which are available to them. This list is chosen and modified as the caster levels up and learns new spells.

Halfcasting classes do not get any more ABSIs than the standard minimum. This rule may be broken if one were to homebrew a Martial halfcasting class.

Halfcasting classes do NOT know cantrips normally. This is because they focus equally on spellcasting and on martial ability. Their weapons fill the role of cantrips.

Halfcasting classes are half-spellcaster and half-weapon-user, so keep this in mind when using this template.

Template QUARTERcaster Table:

The [Class Name]

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Cantrips Known	Spells Known	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	+2	Tier 1	--	--	--	--	--	--
2nd	+2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3rd	+2	(Spellcasting/Archetype)	x	3	2	--	--	--
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	x	4	3	--	--	--
5th	+3	Tier 2	x	4	3	--	--	--
6th	+3	--	x	4	3	--	--	--
7th	+3	--	x	5	4	2	--	--
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	x	6	4	2	--	--
9th	+4	--	x	6	4	2	--	--
10th	+4	--	x+1	7	4	3	--	--
11th	+4	Tier 3	x+1	8	4	3	--	--
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	x+1	8	4	3	--	--
13th	+5	--	x+1	9	4	3	2	--
14th	+5	--	x+1	10	4	3	2	--
15th	+5	--	x+1	10	4	3	2	--
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	x+1	11	4	3	3	--
17th	+6	Tier 4	x+1	11	4	3	3	--
18th	+6	--	x+1	11	4	3	3	--
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	x+1	12	4	3	3	1
20th	+6	Capstone Feature	x+1	13	4	3	3	1

QUARTERcasters are people who gain spellcasting through a class archetype at level 3.

They probably CAN be prepared Casters, but the Eldritch Knight and Arcane Trickster are both Spontaneous Casters. It is likely that quartercasters will always be considered spontaneous casters to reduce bookkeeping.

This can only be added to classes that don't have any spellcasting ability.

Quartercasters may have additional ABSIs

Primarily Weapon users with supplementary magic.

Saves are split into 2 groups: Weak (STR/INT/CHA) and Strong (DEX/CON/WIS). Pick 1 from each group.

Class Types

Tank (Take hits, be threatening to enemies, low-moderate damage) d10/d12HD, medium/heavy armor

Melee Brawler (Take fewer hits, deal moderate-high damage) d8/d10HD, medium/heavy armor

Skirmisher (Take very few hits, deal high damage) d8HD, light/medium armor

Ranged Damage dealer (Takes few hits, deal high damage) d6/d8HD, light/medium armor

Spellcaster (Cast up to 9th level spells) d6/d8HD, no/light/medium armor

Halfcaster (cast up to 5th level spells, mix magic and weaponry equally) d8/d10HD, light-heavy armor

Utility (Includes Healing and battlefield control) d8HD, medium armor

Classes to Do:

- Battlemind (Melee Brawler, Halfcaster)
 - HD d10, Saves CON/INT, Martial Weapons, Heavy Armor and Shields
- Rune priest (Melee Brawler, Utility)
 - HD d8/10, Saves CON/WIS, Simple Weapons, Medium/Heavy Armor and Shields
- Necromancer (Utility, Skirmisher/ranged damage dealer)
 - HD d6, saves CON/CHA, some simple weapons, no/light armor
- Pirate (Skirmisher, Melee Brawler)
 - HD d8/10, saves STR/DEX, Martial Weapons, light armor
- Summoner/Eidolon (Utility, **Halfcaster Or Spellcaster**/Tank, Melee Brawler)
 - HD (d6 OR d12 w/ lifelink), Saves CHA/WIS, Simple Weapons, Light Armor
 - Access to very few spells. All of the “Conjure ____” Spells. Maybe use Warlock as a template
 - Archetypes:
 - Synthesist who merges with his eidolon to be a dps melee fighter. (Weaker version of beast form?)
 - Handler who works in tandem with his eidolon, using spells to support its attacks. (Comparable to animal companion, but with all the martial abilities on the eidolon.)
- Tactician (Skirmisher, Halfcaster)
 - HD d8, saves STR/WIS, Martial Weapons, Medium Armor and Shields
 - Uses Combat Awareness

Subclasses:

- Barbarian Options
 - Elemental
 - Unarmed
- Elemental Pact Warlock
- Time Wizard
- Weaponmaster Fighter
- Fist of the Dragon

CLASS DESIGN TEMPLATE

1. No casting, Full casting, Half casting, or something new
2. Primary Stats (STR/DEX/CON/INT/WIS/CHA)
3. Archetypes
4. Hit Die
 - a. Proficiencies
 - b. Saving Throws (2 groups: STR/INT/CHA and DEX/CON/WIS. Pick 1 from each group.)
5. Additional ability score improvements on top of the ones at levels 4, 8, 12, 16, and 19?
 - a. 1 = lvl 10
 - b. 2 = lvls 6 and 14
 - c. 3? = 6, 10, and 14?
 - d. 4 = please no
6. By level 3, Characters should have 2-3 core/strength class features and their class archetype.

Start with broad strokes. Decide between No casting, Full casting, Half casting, or something new. Figure out what possible archetypes there could be. If you can't think of any archetypes, maybe it would be better suited to being an archetype of a current class.

Hit Die

Hit die range from d6 to d12, though only Barbarian has a d12.

D6: squishy people with little physical fortitude. These are usually going to be ranged characters that are in severe danger should they be caught in melee range of a barbarian or fighter. (wizards, sorcerers)

D8: average fortitude, not somebody with a disordinate amount of physical ability, usually average athleticism. Probably the squishiest melee classes get. (clerics, bards, monks)

D10: the strongest most people are going to get. These people are on the front lines soaking up hits and protecting everyone else. Their damage output won't be as consistently high as someone with less physical fortitude. (paladins, fighters, rangers)

D12: superhuman fortitude. These people can ignore pain like nobody else. Reserved for Barbarians and similar classes.

Features come in 3 forms, Core, Strength, and Flavor

Examples of Core: Sneak attack, Rage, Bardic Inspiration, Metamagic, Spellcasting, Channel Divinity, Lay on Hands. These are unique between classes and serve to both increase a class' power and to define the niche that the class fills.

Examples of Strength: Fighting style, Ability Score Improvement, Extra Attack, Improvements to any Core features. These are common among classes and serve to greatly improve the power of the class.

Examples of Flavor: Druidic, Thieves' Cant, Tongue of the Sun and the Moon, Timeless Body, Natural Explorer. These serve to make a class more defined and/or versatile without strictly enhancing their overall combat power as a class. Most classes have at least one flavor feature, fighter seems to be an exception.

Capstone Features are something special entirely. When you reach level 20 in a class, you get a feature that is both Core and Strength that gives your class the ability to keep fighting throughout a longer adventuring day (unlimited rages and STR/CON+4, Ki when you roll initiative, more uses of bardic inspiration, Epic paladin abilities, etc.)

No Casting:

1. Do they get a fighting style or do they get something like Rage or Sneak attack to make them special as a martially focused class.
 - a. Which Fighting Styles do they choose from, should you write new ones?

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Feature Gains
1st	+2	Tier 1	major core class feature or two
2nd	+2	--	fluff feature or a less important core feature
3rd	+2	--	Archetype
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	Nothing but ABSI
5th	+3	Tier 2 (Extra Attack)	either Extra attack or another Strength Class Feature if the class doesn't need extra attack (rogue for instance).
6th	+3	--	the first level you can pick class features OR archetype features. Most levels are like this one.
7th	+3	--	Like level 6
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	ABSI
9th	+4	--	Like level 6
10th	+4	--	Like level 6
11th	+4	Tier 3	Like level 6, Usually has a Core feature improvement/Strength feature
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	ABSI
13th	+5	--	Like level 6
14th	+5	--	Like level 6
15th	+5	--	Like level 6
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	ABSI
17th	+6	Tier 4	Like level 6, Usually has a Core feature improvement/Strength feature
18th	+6	--	Like level 6
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	ABSI
20th	+6	Capstone Feature	

Half Casting:

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Feature Gains
1st	+2	Tier 1	Core and Fluff features
2nd	+2	(Spellcasting, Fighting Style)	Spellcasting and Fighting styles
3rd	+2	--	Archetype
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	ABSI
5th	+3	2nd level spells, Tier 2	Extra Attack
6th	+3	--	the first level you can pick class features OR archetype features. Most levels are like this one.
7th	+3	--	Like level 6
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	ABSI
9th	+4	3rd level spells	
10th	+4	--	Like level 6
11th	+4	Tier 3	Like level 6, Usually has a Core feature improvement/Strength feature
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	ABSI
13th	+5	4th level spells	
14th	+5	--	Like level 6

15th	+5	--	Like level 6
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	ABSI
17th	+6	5th level spells, Tier 4	
18th	+6	--	Like level 6
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	
20th	+6	Capstone Feature	

Full Casting:

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Feature Gains
1st	+2	Tier 1 (Spellcasting)	Spellcasting and a fluff feature OR an archetype
2nd	+2	--	either an archetype or a core class feature
3rd	+2	2nd level spells	an archetype only if one of the archetypes is melee focused, otherwise it's a core class feature
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	
5th	+3	3rd level spells	
6th	+3	--	the first level you can pick class features OR archetype features. Most levels are like this one. (Extra Attack from melee focused archetype goes here.)
7th	+3	4th level spells	
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	
9th	+4	5th level spells	
10th	+4	--	Like level 6
11th	+4	6th level spells, tier 3	
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	
13th	+5	7th level spells	
14th	+5	--	Like level 6
15th	+5	8th level spells	
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	
17th	+6	9th level spells, Tier 4	
18th	+6	--	Like level 6
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	
20th	+6	Capstone Feature	

[The Spellbow v1.0](#)[Also in Printer Friendly version](#)

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Arcane Ammunition Imbuements	Spells Known	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1st	+2	Arcane Imbuement, Weapon Bond	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
2nd	+2	Spellcasting, Fighting Style, Arcane Accuracy	1	2	2	--	--	--	--
3rd	+2	Archetype	1	3	3	--	--	--	--
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	1	3	3	--	--	--	--
5th	+3	--	2	4	4	2	--	--	--
6th	+3	Tracing Shots	2	4	4	2	--	--	--
7th	+3	Archetype Feature	2	5	4	3	--	--	--
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	2	5	4	3	--	--	--
9th	+4	--	3	6	4	3	2	--	--
10th	+4	Manifested Ammunition	3	6	4	3	2	--	--
11th	+4	Improved Arcane Accuracy	3	7	4	3	3	--	--
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	3	7	4	3	3	--	--
13th	+5	--	4	8	4	3	3	1	--
14th	+5	Tracing Improvement	4	8	4	3	3	1	--
15th	+5	Archetype Feature	4	9	4	3	3	2	--
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	4	9	4	3	3	2	--
17th	+6	--	5	10	4	3	3	3	1
18th	+6	Hail of Arrows	5	10	4	3	3	3	1
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	5	11	4	3	3	3	2
20th	+6	Archetype Feature	5	11	4	3	3	3	2

(Ranged DPS/Halfcaster)

HD d8, Saves DEX/INT, Simple Weapons/Martial Ranged Weapons, Light Armor

Skills: pick 2 from Athletics, Insight, Investigation, Arcana, Perception, Stealth, History.

LVL1: Arcane Imbuement 1, Weapon Bond

LVL2: Spellcasting, Fighting Style, Arcane Accuracy

LVL3: Spellbow Archetype

LVL4: ABSI

LVL5: Arcane Imbuement 2

LVL6: Tracing Shots

LVL7: Archetype Feature

LVL8: ABSI

LVL9: Arcane Imbuement 3

LVL10: Manifested Ammunition

LVL11: Improved Arcane Accuracy

LVL12: ABSI

LVL13: Arcane Imbuement 4

LVL14: Tracing Improvement

LVL15: Archetype Feature

LVL16: ABSI

LVL17: Arcane Imbuement 5

LVL18: Hail of Arrows

LVL19: ABSI

LVL20: Archetype Feature

I'm going to cancel my psion class and not only plug, but also defer to this amazing document:
[*Better Psionics by Caoimhe Snow*](#)

Unused Idea: Combat Awareness

Combat Awareness (or any better name)

Your focus in combat heightens to extraordinary levels. A few things, listed below, cause you to gain and lose combat awareness. You require Combat awareness to fuel your class features. You can not have more stacks of combat awareness than your class level + your relevant Ability Score. Any attack or feature that spends CA can not generate CA at the same time, and will spend the CA instead of Generate it.

Things that Generate stacks of Combat awareness.

- Hitting with a weapon attack once per turn (+1CA)
- Getting Healed (+1CA)
- Hitting with an opportunity attack (+1CA)
- Receiving the Help action from an ally for an attack. (+1CA from relevant attack)

Things that spend stacks of Combat awareness.

- Class Features
- GETTING HIT (1 CA)
- Not dealing damage or spending CA for 1 round. (1 CA)