

Yet Another Firearms Module

Simple Rules for Fantasy Firearms in 5e



"In the great expanses of the tunnels, where shadows devour and leave behind nothing but their victims' screams, new weapons were forged from grim necessity. It's hotly debated whether the Gnomes or the Dwarves invented the first firearms, but both take credit for the invention. The inaccuracy of the weapon doesn't matter in the tunnels; no skittering horror dares approach a line of gnomes or dwarves: the cascade of bullets will leave pulp behind. Poorer mining clans and prospecting teams will sometimes even carry fake firearms to imitate the tactics of the Firing Square in hopes that creatures who know the bite of a bullet will simply leave them alone."

— Binn Faldwin,
A History of Winter's Glow

This simple module adds fantasy firearms to your D&D 5e campaign. It's designed to be light on mechanics (with a few crunchier options for those who prefer them) and to make these weapons an effective and attractive option to use within the otherwise unchanged game; guns are meant to be attractive to players, but not to overshadow class abilities, spells, or even other ranged weapons.

1. PROFICIENCY

Firearms fall under the categories of either Simple Ranged Weapons or Martial Ranged Weapons. All

Simple Firearms are also Simple Ranged Weapons, and all Martial Firearms are also Martial Ranged Weapons.

2. RACIAL OPTIONS

The weapons have not spread far from their underground homes. Rock Gnomes and Mountain Dwarves can begin with proficiency in Firearms; Mountain Dwarves can trade one of their weapon or armor proficiencies for proficiency in one Firearm, and Rock Gnomes can trade their Tinker ability for Simple or Martial Firearms Proficiency, and can additionally create ammunition in half the time.

3. CLASS OPTIONS

Classes with proficiencies in these areas also gain proficiencies with the appropriate firearms.

If a class has individual ranged weapon proficiencies, they can (on creating their character) swap that proficiency for a comparable Firearm Proficiency. For instance, a Wizard could change her Sling Proficiency (a Simple Ranged Weapon) to Pistol Proficiency or Human-Style Blunderbuss Proficiency (Simple Firearms), but not to any Martial Firearm.

Fighters are the notable exception, and simply gain the proficiencies. If you're playing with any Gunslinger Archetype modules, instead limit Firearm proficiencies to

this subclass of fighter.

4. GREAT EQUALIZERS

The mechanics here aim to represent the firearm's role as the great equalizer. Firearms are devastating at long ranges and don't require nearly as much training to use at martial levels of proficiency. The weapons here are neither modern guns nor are they renaissance weapons, but rather firearms in a high fantasy setting.

Firearms throughout history made gruesome violence more accessible to wide varieties of people. A frail, ill person with a sword is concerning; that same person with a shotgun is terrifying. To better reflect this, Ranged Weapon Attacks made with Firearms have no associated Ability Score; only a character's proficiency modifier is added to the Ranged Weapon Attack Rolls made with Firearms. This makes Firearms an attractive option to Player Characters and Creatures with negative dexterity scores.

5. POINT-BLANK RANGE

It's much more difficult to interfere with gunfire than it is to interfere with releasing a missile from a bow or sling. Additionally, since there are no Ability Scores tied to Firearms, imposing disadvantage on them in close range is especially odious to the player.

The point-and-click nature of

Firearms makes them easier to use at very close range. Ranged Weapon Attacks made with Firearms in melee distance with a target are not made at disadvantage, unlike with other ranged weapons.

Alternate Rule:

WISDOM FIREARMS

Mechanically, giving a ton of extra damage to Dex players means that they'll have the highest armor class and the most damage output, and while that can be appealing to certain types of play, it's hardly balanced. Wisdom isn't tied to defenses or (often) to damage, so having it be the Ability Score tied to attacks made with firearms gives your campaign's gunfighters makes an interesting choice, and will have your min-maxers looking at Rangers, Druids and Clerics in a new light.

As the great equalizer, firearms are accessible to people who don't have a lot of physical training. While hand-eye coordination is typically assigned to Dexterity, perception is tied to Wisdom, so the ability to aim and fire a Firearm accurately can be seen as a more deliberate and less automatic action.

If the DM decides that Firearms need an associated Ability Score, this module suggests using Wisdom. Under this ruling, I suggest ignoring the section called "Point-Blank Range."

6. CINEMATIC AMMUNITION

The cop and her partner are pinned down by sheets of gunfire. The partner throws his shotgun away in disgust. "I'm out," he says. The cop spins out the side of her revolver. "I've got two left," she says. They brace for the worst.

In fiction centered around gunslinging heroes, ammunition is only an issue when there is a plot-related need for it. This mechanic tries to emulate that feeling.

Instead of players tracking individual bullets and arrows, they have levels of ammunition. These levels only decrease in specific circumstances.

The four levels of ammunition are: **Plenty, Enough, Several, Three Left, Two Left, One Left and Empty.**

When a player's character has an ammunition level of Plenty, Enough, or Several, they can fire as often as they want without worrying about running out of ammunition. In all three cases, the ammunition level can decrease in these specific circumstances:

Falling in combat: suffering a Critical Hit that lowers the character to zero Hit Points will reduce the character's ammunition level. The character can recover this level of ammunition if they can search the area where they fell after the fight.

Scrambling away: failing a Dexterity Saving Throw to avoid a trap or a similar effect that requires quick movement to avoid damage will reduce the character's ammunition level. The DM can rule that the ammunition is lost or recoverable. If its recoverable, time spent searching the area will recover it.

Falling: taking any falling damage will reduce the character's ammunition level. The DM can rule that the ammunition is lost or recoverable. If its recoverable, time spent searching the

area will recover it. (For ideas on how to put time pressure on players, check out our Move It! Module.)

Resting: Taking a Long Rest or Short Rest after expending ammunition will reduce the character's ammunition level. The player can roll an unmodified D20 against the DM's unmodified D20 immediately after the rest to not lose a level of ammunition.

The player must always be alerted if their level of ammunition has changed.

When the player has an ammunition level of Several, the DM can choose to roll a D6 any time the player expends ammunition. On a result of 1, the player's ammunition level is reduced to Three Left.

When the player has an ammunition level of Three Left, the next Ranged Weapon Attack that uses this type of ammunition will expend it, and they will then they will be at Two Left, etc, until all ammunition of this type is expended.

Magical and Silvered ammunition should be given out one level at a time, starting with One Left. Finding more of the same type of ammunition will increase it by one level

7. PROPERTIES

Rules for using weapons are modified with properties, which are special words affixed to a weapon that describe its function in the game-world. The Dangerous and Spread properties are unique to this module. The other properties referenced in this document are found in the Dungeons and Dragons Systems Reference Document and The Player's Handbook, but for convenience are re-