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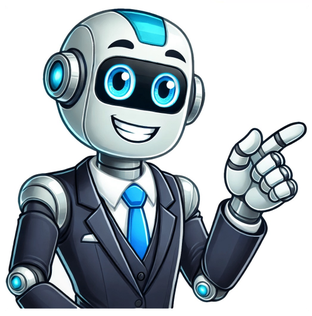

This guide is designed to help give you a deeper understanding of the choices youll make when building and playing a Hexblade Warlock in Dungeons & Dragons 5e. To help you get to grips with this martial spellcaster class, weve broken down what makes the Hexblade Warlock effective and stand out from the rest of the party, as well as highlighting a few of its shortcomings. Hexblades are also notorious for their ability to easily multiclass, and weve included some of the best options for combining your Hexblade with levels in other classes for even greater effect. Weve also broken down the basics, like ability scores, race, background, and skills, so you know how to get the most out of your Hexblade right from level one. Following that, weve put together a Progression Section. This acts as a sort of snapshot of how youll start, and when you get skills and powers after that, one level at a time. You will find things like Hit Points, Proficiencies, Equipment, any Class-specific skills. Then we go through what youll get at each level as you progress your character. Feats are an optional part of 5e that a lot of people tend to skip in favor of a few extra ability points. If youre interested in feats and how they can transform your Hexblade build, weve also broken down some of the ones that synergize best with this subclass. Lastly, weve put together an example build that will let you take your Hexblade from level 1-20 as effectively as possible. You can jump to any of these topics below using the table of contents below. In our ongoing series of 5e class guides, we use the following color-rating scheme: Red C Tier. Red options can sometimes be situationally useful and might make for an interesting narrative choice but are largely less effective than other tiers.Green B Tier. A solid choice, but nothing that is absolutely critical for a build, or can be very good but only situationally.Blue A Tier. An excellent choice. Widely regarded as powerful in some way, useful, highly effective.Purple S Tier. The best of the best. Objectively powerful or transformative in some way. No choice in D&D is essential, but these options are definitely worth considering when you create your character. Our goal here is to provide scannable, but comprehensive guides for you as you develop your character. While we might sometimes make reference to unofficial or homebrew content to illustrate a point (or just because its too cool not to talk about) every option we suggest is legal in the official rules for D&D 5e as published by Wizards of the Coast. All Warlocks are sworn and beholden to one powerful entity or another. From archdevils in the depths of Avernus to cosmic monstrosities of unknowable, cthulian horror drifting in the ice-cold depths of space, Warlocks have a decent amount of choice when it comes to where they hitch their wagon. Similar to a Wizards chosen school of magic, or a Sorcerers origin, the entity with which a warlock makes their pact affects the features to which their otherworldly patron grants them access. Hexblades have forged a dark bond with a weapon, a dark artefact of power forged from the matter of the Shadowfell itself. Also known as the Plane of Shadow, the Shadowfell is the dark counterpart to the Feywild a bleak, desolate realm of ash and decay. It is suspected that many notorious magical blades (Blackrazor being the most famous) have been forged from the Shadowfell over the ages, some say by the Raven Queen, ruler of the shadowfell and a minor goddess of death itself. Now, your Warlock has one of these blades in their possession, bound to their very soul in exchange for untold knowledge and power. The Hexblade Warlock is kind of a weird subclass, to be honest. Youre primarily a caster, a magic user, and things like your d8 Hit Die (HD) reflect that. But your bond with your blade also makes you a capable melee (and even ranged) combatant, able to wear medium armor and if you also take the Pact of the Blade at 3rd level capable of summoning a Zweihander made of shadow and flame to smite anyone who talks smack about your lack of spell slots with extreme prejudice. Expanded Spell List Powerful late game spellsStrong melee combat focusOther subclasses are better Each Warlock subclass gets access to an expanded list of spells in addition to the basic Warlock spell list. These spells tend to help focus your character on the things your subclass does best. For the Hexblade, this means combat spells for both survivability (like Blur, which puts attackers at disadvantage when trying to hit you) and damage (like Wrathful, Branding, and Banishing Smite). However, its worth noting that a lot of the Hexblades low-level spells require concentration, which means you cant do things like activate Blur and Branding Smite at the same time. There are also some spells from the basic Warlock list like Armor of Agathys which do a better job than some of the spells that are unique to the Hexblade. However, a somewhat lacklustre spell list isnt the end of the world; Warlocks Pact Magic means you wont be casting as much as, say, a Wizard, and your Eldritch Invocations can let you tweak the effects of your mainstay abilities like Eldritch Blast, as well as let you perform some first level spells (like Disguise Self) for free. Eldritch Blast and Invocations Best damage cantrip in the gameEldritch Invocations grant extra damage or utility later onYoure going to run out of spell slots before you finish reading the next paragraph, so your cantrips are a core element of your build Warlocks (Hexblade or otherwise) have a very limited pool of spells, and the way that Pact Magic works means that youll pretty much always be trying to burn the highest level spell you can at the most pivotal moment. As a consolation prize, the collective pantheon of Warlock patrons have coughed up the best damage cantrip in the whole game. A beam of crackling energy streaks toward a creature within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d10 force damage. Eldritch Blast is a fantastic damage cantrip. Also, when you get access to Eldritch Invocations at 2nd level, youll be able to start tweaking your Eldritch Blasts effects kind of like a Sorcerers metamagic. Pick up Eldritch Spear to more than double your blasts range to 300ft. That means that, if the average creature moves at a rate of 30ft per round, and you have a clear line of sight, you get to spend a full 10 rounds pelting them with 1d10 force damage every turn. Also, you can help your cantrip damage scale significantly by picking up Agonizing Blast, which lets you apply your Charisma modifier to the damage you deal with Eldritch Blast. There are a ton more awesome Eldritch Invocations that help you beef up your blasts (and do a bunch of other great stuff) but well get to that in a minute. Hex Warrior Become a Single Ability-Focused CharacterWeapon and Armour Proficiencies that let you fight in the front lineBuild into Pact of the Blade for maximum effect Hex Warrior along with your Hexblades Curse ability (more on that later) is the keystone of your build. The Hexblade, on the other hand, gets proficiency with medium armor, shields, and martial weapons at 1st level. Whenever you finish a long rest, you can touch one weapon that you are proficient with and that lacks the two-handed property (dont worry, Pact of the Blade gets rid of this requirement at 3rd level). This weapon then becomes the conduit through which you focus your eldritch abilities; instead of using Strength or Dexterity, you now apply your Charisma modifier to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. I cannot overstate how huge this is. Your ability as a melee combatant, your spellcasting modifier (and DC), and your social abilities (like deception and intimidation) are all tied to the same ability. That means that, once you max out your Charisma, you become a spectacular damage dealer, hard-as-nails frontliner, and master of social situations all rolled into one. This should go some way towards making up for the fact that Warlocks Pact Magic is, frankly, a pile of hot garbage. Extremely limited number of spell slotsLack of access to heavy armor stops you from being a true melee frontliner I gave up my immortal soul and all I got were two spell slots and this lousy t-shirt! A level 2 Warlock and a level 10 Warlock have the same number of spell slots: two. Warlocks do regain all their spell slots on a short rest, but its still a huge drawback of the class especially when some of your Eldritch Invocations and other class features are also going to require you to burn through some of your precious slots. Pact Magic spell slots are also all the same level, meaning that if you have access to third, fourth, or even fifth-level spells at later levels and want to cast a 1st level spell like Shield (you dont, trust me) you still need to burn a higher level slot. The other major drawback to the Hexblade specifically is that, while access to Medium Armor proficiency puts you head and shoulders above other full-caster subclasses (suck it, Wizards), at lower levels (when youll probably just have a chainmail shirt or even hide armor) youll need to put some of your precious Ability Points into Dexterity in order to get your AC above 14. You can fix this later on by multiclassing into something like a Paladin or Fighter for Heavy Armor proficiency, but that also requires you to boost your Strength score as high as 15 if you want to wear full plate, and those ability score points could be put to better use elsewhere. Basically, youre going to have to resign yourself to the fact that, if something nasty with a high to-hit bonus wants to hit you, its probably going to hit you. Gulp. Speaking of a Fighter or Paladin dip, it really wouldnt be a Hexblade guide if we didnt cover multiclassing. The Hexblade Warlock is probably the most frequently multiclassed D&D build. There are Hexadins, Sorlocks, and even Hex Bards all of which are potentially devastating combinations due to the Hexblades defining ability score: Charisma. Lets go over some of the more popular combinations. Sorcerer If you hit third level with your Sorcerer/Warlock, you get access to Metamagic and a Sorcerous Origin, both of which synergize well with a Warlocks cantrip-heavy spellcasting style. For example, Quickened Spell lets you cast two non-bonus action spells in one turn, provided one spell is a cantrip, and Twinned Spell lets you target more than one creature with a spell. Throw either of those on your Agonizing Eldritch Blast and you end up dealing effectively 1d10 + Charisma (which should be +4 by this point) to two creatures every turn. Punchy stuff. Paladin Easily the most popular and potent multiclass build maybe in the whole of 5e the Hexadin. With just two levels in Paladin (I recommend you pick them up instead of Warlock 4 and 5, after you grab Pact of the Blade at 3rd level) you get Heavy Armor proficiency, Divine Sense, a Fighting Style, Lay on Hands, more spellcasting, and Smite which is a huge improvement over the Hexblades concentration-based smiting spells. Paladins also have a d10 HD rather than your puny Warlock d8, so youll probably be picking up more HP per Paladin level. Also, the fact that Paladins swear oaths that are the source of their power makes for some interesting narrative dissonance with your existing bond to your patron. Ability Scores Primary: CharismaTier Two: Dexterity, ConstitutionAlso Good (sometimes): Intelligence, WisdomAbsolute Dump Tier: Strength As I mentioned before, a Hexblade is as close to a single ability class as exists in D&D 5e. Your attacks, spells and social interactions (Deception, Persuasion, and Intimidation are all right in your wheelhouse) are all defined by your Charisma not to mention the fact that it remains equally helpful if you dip into Paladin or Sorcerer. Strength: Unless youre going for heavy armor later in the game (Full Plate will get your AC to 18 and requires you to have a Strength of 15 to wear) or maybe have a DM whos really into monsters that can grapple (read: Hentai), your Strength is about as vestigial as a stat can be. Bump your Dexterity and Constitution for better AC and HP, buy a Breastplate as soon as you can scrape together 400gp, and forget about this utterly worthless stat. Dexterity: better AC, better Acrobatics and Stealth bonuses Dexterity is never a bad shout. Constitution: in addition to a bigger HP pool, which is literally never a bad thing, a few extra points of Constitution can really be a lifesaver due to the sheer number of the Hexblades spells that require concentration. When youre working with two spell slots per short rest, low Constitution can be the difference between landing an all-important Smite, and watching 50% of your spell pool fizzle away to nothing before your very eyes. Intelligence: Intelligence-based skills fit really well into the idea of Warlocks as seekers of hidden knowledge. But you never know, maybe your otherworldly patron chose you for your bubbly personality or your rippin bod. Wisdom: Wisdom is never a terrible shout when building a character, due to the fact that you use it to make Perception checks, which help you unlock more of the game. Otherwise, its nothing special, unless you want to be an absolute madlad and multiclass intro druid or (as someone in my weekly group with a fondness for cursed amulets and camping recently chose) ranger. Charisma: This is your bread, butter, and the cursed plate made of bone you eat it off. Charisma is everything for a Warlock especially the Hexblade. Get it as high as you can, as soon as you can. Great Choices: Half Elf, Variant HumanVery Solid: Tiefling, AasimarAlso Consider: Lightfoot Halfling If youve been paying attention so far, youll know that were going to be prioritising any race that buffs our Charisma, with Constitution and Dexterity as a secondary choice. Weve chosen four possible races that are available from the D&D 5e Basic Rules found in the Players Handbook. The rules for the Aasimar can be found in Volos Guide to Monsters. Half Elf An all-important +2 boost to your Charisma, combined with +1 to two other abilities of your choice makes the Basic Rules Half Elf a great foundation for a Hexblade. You also get advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic cant put you to sleep thanks to your Fey Ancestry Trait. Also, you get to choose two skills to be proficient in from the list, giving you even more flexibility when it comes to your starting build. This also means youre less likely getting locked into a background that you dont like just because you need proficiency in Stealth. Variant Human The +1 to all abilities that a regular human gets is fine, but the +1 to two stats and an extra feat is absolutely perfect for a Hexblade Warlock. Some feats synergize so well with the Hexblade after 3rd level that they very much become the basis for a good deal of your build going forward. If you used Standard Array or Point Buy (or rolled for your ability scores and didnt get a particularly good result) you are going to want to put extra points into your Charisma as soon as you get the chance at level four. By picking a Variant Human, you get a powerful feat at 1st level without having to sacrifice that crucial +1 or +2 bump to your primary ability at 4th level. You also get an extra Skill of your choice. Tiefling Once again, a +2 to your Charisma is great for a Warlock. However, the +1 to Intelligence that Tieflings also get isnt as useful as a boost to your Dexterity of Constitution. Hellish Resistance to fire damage, and the innate spells granted to you by your Infernal Legacy trait (Thaumaturgy as a cantrip, Hellish Rebuke at 3rd level, and darkness at 5th) are a huge bonus considering your shortage of spell slots. Lightfoot Halfling With an acceptable +1 to Charisma (and a +2 to Dexterity), Lightfoot Halflings have the potential to make fine Hexblades. Although your Pact of the Blade feature gets less useful due to your size limitation preventing you from using two-handed weapons, theres nothing to stop you from picking up a good old-fashioned sword and shield for the AC bump. Halflings also get the Lucky trait, which means that when you roll a 1 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can reroll the die, and is one of the best racial traits in the game. Aasimar Setting aside the irony of a half-celestial being making a pact with an ancient evil from the Shadowfell (although lets be real, its narrative gold), the Aasimars +2 Charisma bonus and resistance to both radiant and necrotic damage are a great start. The various Aasimar subraces also boost either your Wisdom, Constitution, or Strength by 1 none of which are amazing, but they also give you some cool additional abilities, like being able to sprout ghostly, skeletal wings that frighten anyone near you (also based on your Charisma modifier) or deal radiant damage to anything within a 10-foot radius every round. Basically, Aasimar rule, and are definitely worth considering. Top Choices: Criminal, CharlatanAlso Good Options: Entertainer, Noble Backgrounds are both a great way to help flesh out your characters personal history, and your primary source of skills. Each background also has its own special feature which I maintain are a criminally underused aspect of D&D. As a Warlock with Charisma as your Primary Attribute (and probably Dexterity as your second-highest) choosing backgrounds that grant you access to skills that use those abilities can be a good way to go. The Criminal background, for example, gives you proficiency in Deception and Stealth, to very useful skills as well as a network of criminal contacts to help you fulfil the dark desires of your patron. Alternately, the Noble background gives you Persuasion, which is great, and History, which is fine. If you have an idea of your characters backstory that doesnt synergise with the background that offers the best skills, however, dont worry about it. You can always choose to play as a Half Elf or Variant Human and scoop up some extra skill proficiencies from there. When you first create your Warlock, youll choose two Skills from the following list (in addition to the ones provided by your background): Arcana: Identify magic items, decode ancient runes, and other warlock-ey stuff that feels right in your wheelhouse. If youre the partys main spellcaster, your companions will thank you for grabbing this. If theres a Wizard here too, its probably better to grab something else. Deception: Youre going to have high Charisma, and there has never been a single D&D campaign in the history of the game where a high roll + high Deception bonus hasnt saved the party from certain death with an outrageous lie. Treasure inspectors?! well I guess that tracks. Right this way! Bring your big sacks too! History: like Arcana, having someone in the party who is capable of knowing at least a little about the world youre adventuring through is never a bad thing, and it might as well be you. Intimidation: another fantastic Skill that plays right into your charismatic wheelhouse. Investigation: search for clues, pick up the trail, unlock more of the DMs content. Nature: if your party is relying on its warlock for nature checks, and youre regularly finding yourself in situations where thats sorely needed, its time to go hire a druid. Religion: Not as universally applicable as History or Arcana, but could be thematically interesting if your Hexblades fall from grace was preceded by a stint in a religious order. Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per Warlock level after 1st Proficiencies Armor: Light armor, medium armor, shields Weapons: Simple and Martial Weapons Tools: None Saving Throws: Wisdom, Charisma Skills: Pick two Arcana, Deception, History, Intimidation, Investigation, Nature, Religion Equipment: Youre going to have to stick with the Warlocks underwhelming starting gear for a couple of levels, but when you pick up Pact of the Blade at 3rd level, your starting weapons are going to become immaterial as you start to manifest whatever your heart desires. (a) a light crossbow and 20 bolts or (b) any simple weapon(a) a component pouch or (b) an arcane focus(a) a scholars pack or (b) a dungeoneers packLeather armor, any simple weapon, and two daggers Otherworldly Patron: Hexblade Expanded Spells Hexblades Curse: Starting at 1st level, you gain the ability to place a baleful curse on someone. As a bonus action, choose one creature you can see within 30 feet of you. The target is cursed for 1 minute. The curse ends early if the target dies, you die, or you are incapacitated. Until the curse ends, you get to add your Proficiency Bonus (+2 at level 1-4) to your damage rolls against a cursed target, a roll of a 19 or 20 counts as a critical hit, and if the cursed target dies you regain HP equal to your warlock level + your Charisma modifier (should be 4 HP at 1st level). You can only use your curse once per short or long rest, however, so its definitely something you keep in your back pocket for bosses and brutes. This ability is also augmented by features you get at higher levels, so it scales really well. Hex Warrior: This is the core of your character. Get access to proficiency with medium armor, shields, and martial weapons. Whenever you finish a long rest, you get to transform a weapon you are proficient with (that lacks the two-handed property) into the focus for your Warlock abilities, meaning you can use Charisma instead of Strength or Dexterity when rolling to hit and deal damage. If (when) you pick up Pact of the Blade at 3rd level, this feature extends to every pact weapon you conjure with that feature, no matter the weapons type. Hello, Zweihander of malevolent darkness! Expanded Spells Blur: Like Shield, this spell is amazing for other classes but just alright on a Hexblade. The fact that its concentration-based and doesnt scale can really dampen its effectiveness, although imposing disadvantage on any enemy not using Truesight or Blindsight is nothing to sniff at particularly when you probably havent picked up any decent armor yet.Branding Smite: Kind of the Clerics spell Guiding Bolt but melee and not as good. The extra damage is nice, though, and being able to catch something invisible can really come in handy when you least expect it. Eldritch Invocations: This is where things get fun. Your Eldritch Invocations give you a chance to really customize your Warlocks abilities. Turn level one spells into cantrips, pick up a free use of a 1st-level spell like Mage Armor, Speak With Animals, or Detect Magic. You can also grab Invocations that modify your Eldritch Blast like Eldritch Spear (boost your range from 120ft to 300ft) or Agonizing Blast (add your Charisma modifier to your Blast damage). Choose two. Choose one of the following three pacts. Pact of the Blade: This is hugely important for a Hexblade. You gain the ability to use an action to create a pact weapon in your empty hand. You can choose the form the weapon takes and you are proficient while you wield it. Your Hex Warrior ability means that you can use Charisma for attack and damage rolls made using the pact weapon, and the ban on two-handed weapons is lifted. Also, if you choose the Improved Pact Weapon Invocation, your weapons get a +1 to hit and damage rolls, and you can summon ranged weapons. Pact of the Chain: You get some utility from the familiar that this pact grants you, but the synergies end there. Pact of the Tome: The expanded spell list from outside the Warlock class can look tempting, but this is easily the weakest option for a Hexblade. If its magic that you want, just dip into Sorcerer for a few levels further down the line. Expanded Spells Blink: The chance to poof out of the material plane and briefly dip into the Ethereal Plane while your enemies take their turns can be a huge advantage while youre still fairly squishy at low levels.Elemental Weapon: Decent extra damage and, if you havent picked up a magic weapon yet, 5th level is around the time that enemies with resistance to non-magical attacks start to get more common. If youre fighting enemies that frequently have vulnerability to a certain damage type, this can also be a good pickup. Thirsting Blade: Definitely grab this Eldritch Invocation as soon as you can. It lets you attack twice with your pact weapon instead of once an absolute must when youre playing a combat-focused subclass like the Hexblade. Eldritch Smite: Now this is what Im talking about. Finally, a real smite for Warlocks that doesnt use Concentration and scales as your spell slots do. Burn a slot to deal an additional 1d8 force damage to a target you hit, plus 1d8 per spell level. The Warlock spell list maxes out at 5th level spells, but an extra 6d8 force damage really is nothing to turn up your nose at. Accursed Specter: Starting at 6th level, if you land the killing blow on a humanoid enemy, you temporarily press-gang their soul into service. They rise as a Specter under your command. Now, the Spectre only has hit points equal to half your Warlock level, so if youre in the middle of a fight, its probably going to get sent straight back to the afterlife in less than a round. However, outside of combat, Spectres make excellent scouts and spies or useful props if youre looking to teach local businessmen about the true meaning of Christmas. Expanded Spells Phantasmal Killer: A really nasty spell that shows a creature its worst nightmare. The target becomes frightened and, assuming it fails its Wisdom save, can take 4d10 psychic damage every round for a minute.Staggering Smite: Another fine smiting ability. 4d6 psychic damage and imposed disadvantage for a round is nothing to sniff at, but youre getting up there in levels at this point, and what would have been a game changer at level 5 is now just meh at level 7. By the time you get to level 9, its probably not going to have been worth the pick up. Expanded Spells Banishing Smite: Probably my favorite smite in the game. Hit someone so hard that they not only take an extra 5d10 force damage, but also (if your hit brought them below 50hp) get sent to another plane of reality to think about what theyve done. Great use of a 5th level spell slot. Great way to get rid of a troublesome monster so you can spend a full minute beating up its friends.Cone of Cold: A thoroughly solid area of effect spell that helps you control the battlefield better than Fireball (in exchange for a bit less damage). Ascendant Step: Cast levitate on yourself at will thanks to Invocation. Honestly, this entry shouldnt be blue because there are just so many mechanically sensible pickups you could be making, but the option to just levitate everywhere is honestly far too good to pass up. Whispers of the Grave: This Invocation lets you cast Speak With Dead at will. If your campaign is all about the undead (or if you need to track down a murderer) then this can be a great narrative pickup. Armor of Hexes: Your Hexblades Curse gets way more powerful. Whenever the target of your curse attacks you, roll a d6 for a 50% chance that their attack just flat out misses you. This makes you way, way more capable of going toe to toe with some truly terrifying solo monsters. Mystic Arcanum: Grab an extra use of one 6th level Warlock spell per long rest (not short, like the rest of your spells). Never hurts, and, since your regular spell list only goes up to 5th Level, this is a good chance to grab something really meaty like Create Undead or Soul Cage. From here on out, your Mystic Arcanum is going to be how you pick up really powerful spells. The feature comes back at Level 13, 15, and 17, and gives you access to a free level 7, 8, and 9th level spell respectively. Lifedrinker: Inflict your Charisma Modifier as guaranteed necrotic damage whenever you hit someone with your pact weapon. Your Charisma should be at a 20 now, so (assuming youve also got Thirsting Blade) thats an extra 10 damage per round, which adds up. Master of Hexes: This ability lets you transfer your Hexblades Curse to another target when your first target dies. This means that you become a lot more effective at fighting multiple enemies, rather than just the big boss. Choose your targets in order from weakest to strongest and rip through them, dropping your curse on your next victim before the last body hits the floor. Eldritch Master: For a capstone ability, Eldritch Master is honestly kind of underwhelming. By spending a minute entreating your patron, you regain all your pact magic spells (all four of them, I know) and cant use this feature again until you finish a long rest. Yes, it effectively doubles your spell pool, but it feels decidedly like this class progression goes out with a whimper rather than a bang. While a lot of DMs tend to ignore Feats (theyre a somewhat maligned element of 5e), if youd rather get something a little more flavorful than an ability score bump, here are a few options that synergize well with a Hexblade Warlock. One of the best races to play as when choosing the Hexblade is the Variant Human. A +1 to two ability scores and a free Feat at first level makes for a really good start to the class, particularly if you pick one of the feats below. War Caster: This feat is hugely helpful, as it gives you advantage on Concentration checks, and basically all your spells use Concentration at lower levels. War Caster also lets you cast a cantrip instead of making an opportunity attack, which is fantastic for someone with an Agonizing Blast up their sleeve. Crossbow Expert: If you pick up Improved Pact Weapon as an invocation, you can start manifesting pact weapon crossbows. You ignore the loading feature of any crossbow you are using, being within 5ft of a hostile creature doesnt impose disadvantage on your ranged attacks, and when you use your action to attack with a one handed weapon, you can use your bonus action to also make an attack with a hand crossbow. This feat, along with Great Weapon Master can really form the backbone of your build, depending on the path you want to take. Great Weapon Master: If the idea of swinging a giant two-handed sword made of darkness and fire is the reason you picked the Hexblade in the first place (Its why I play them, and Im not ashamed to admit it) then grabbing the Great Weapon Master feat can really help you live your best, most-murderous life. Whenever you score a critical hit with a two-handed weapon (remember: your Hexblades curse lets you do this on a 19-20) or reduce a creature to 0 HP, you get to make another melee weapon attack as a bonus action. You can also choose to take a -5 penalty to hit in order to add +10 to the attacks damage roll. Example Hexblade Warlock Build Level 1 Ability Scores (standard array): Strength (8), Dexterity (14), Constitution (13), Intelligence (10), Wisdom (12), Charisma (15). Race: Variant Human Ability Score Increase: +1 Charisma, +1 ConstitutionFeat: War CasterSkill: Perception Background: Criminal Skills: Arcana, Intimidation Otherworldly Patron: Hexblade Equipment: Leather Armor, Shortsword, Light Crossbow, Scholars Pack, (2) Dagger Spells Cantrips: Eldritch Blast, Prestidigitation1st Level Spells: Charm Person, Wrathful Smite Level 2 Eldritch Invocations: Agonizing Blast, Eldritch Sight Spells: Protection from Evil and Good Dungeons & Dragons' subclasses allow players to specialize in specific areas of their main class. A warlock's subclass is generally defined by the Patron they are contracted to serve in exchange for their power. The Hexblade Warlock's patron exists somewhere in the Shadowfell, and it is from that place the powerful shadow weapons they wield in combat are shaped. Pact of the Hexblade warlocks are a popular specialization, but at times, the build feels like it's lacking. They have access to several powerful spells, but their casting remains limited. Though it grows by one spell slot every few levels and they can be regained after just a short rest, once those spells are used up in combat, it can leave the Warlock feeling a bit useless. Fortunately, there are ways to improve a Hexblade's performance and action economy in ways that serve the entire party on and off the front lines. Updated on July 21st, 2024 by Louis Kemner: This feature about the optimal Hexblade warlock build has been updated with yet more new information so a D&D player can make the best warlock for their games. Related The Bards of Dungeons & Dragons can play more than just a support role. The perfect build can create an epic Bard the world won't soon forget. Ability Scores (in order of importance) Charisma, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, Strength Species Tiefling, Half-Elf, Verdan, Warforged, Yuan-Ti Feats War Caster, Telekinetic, Eldritch Adept. Great Weapon Master Spells Eldritch Blast, Green Flame Blade, Armor of Agathys, Hunger of Hadar, Synaptic Static, Crown of Stars, Blur Magic Items Amulet of Health, Shield, Elven Chain, Studded leather armor, Tome of Leadership and Influence, Ring of Spell Storing Warlocks rely heavily on their Charisma score to enhance their spellcasting abilities and modifier, so even though the Hexblade has melee capability, magic is required to cast the shadow weapons they wield. It will determine the saving throw an enemy needs to make and the modifier that gets tacked onto ranged spells like Eldritch Blast to determine whether or not they hit. Outside of combat, a warlock's high CHA stat also allows them to serve as the party's face, conversing easily with NPCs to either sway them, fool them, or scare them off. Such a role may fall to any CHA-heavy character, often a friendly bard, but if a party lacks another strong CHA caster, then it calls to the warlocks to handle that duty. This also lends itself to strong warlock roleplay, which is always fun. Second, Constitution factors into the Warlock's durability. Being on the front lines swinging a Shadow Blade leaves a Hexblade open to melee attacks. The higher their CON is, the easier it is for them to avoid hits and potentially maintain concentration on spells that require it should they be hit. A lot of spells require concentration to maintain their flow, and that ongoing spell could well be the only thing standing between the party and ruin. This means the other four stats are all potential dump stats for a Pact of the Hexblade warlock, though a decent Wisdom score is still advisable, given how many spells and effects call for WIS saving throws. Most likely, a player will make WIS their third-highest stat, perhaps 10-12 or so. Something similar can be said about Dexterity, since a decent DEX score will boost the character's Armor Class and help them dodge effects such as Fireball. That leaves Intelligence and Strength as the Pact of the Hexblade's true dump stats, with neither contributing much to the character's combat abilities, skills, or roleplay. Related The Wild Magic Sorcerer is D&D 5e's most chaotic subclass, but it can still be optimized for maximum impact in and out of combat. There are a handful of species that seem like they were born to become Hexblade Warlocks. One of the most fitting races is the Tiefling, which gets an automatic +2 boost to CHA, +1 Intelligence, a cantrip specific to their infernal descent and access to useful spells at higher levels. Tieflings also have strong flavor as warlock characters, given their bloodline lineage to scary devils from the Nine Hells. Squishier warlocks might use the winged variant of tieflings to avoid harm, but Pact of the Hexblade warlocks are more like magical fighters, so they don't need wings in most cases. If they need aerial mobility, such as when fighting a dragon, the party's wizard can cast Fly. Half-elves are another option for the best Hexblade build. Not only do half-elves have +2 CHA like tieflings, they also get +1 to two additional attributes, so they can bulk up their CON and DEX. They also have darkvision, which is always useful. Depending on their fey ancestry, they may even gain access to additional spells or skills that can boost the Warlock's abilities. The verdan species from Acquisitions Inc. is another powerful choice if the DM allows it. Verdan characters gain +2 CHA and +1 CON, both of which go a long way to boosting the Warlock's stats right out of the gate. They also have limited telepathic abilities that allow them to communicate with a creature within 30 feet, even if they don't share a common language. Because they are so attuned to the world around them, their telepathic link grants them advantage on all Wisdom and Charisma Saving Throws. The aasimar species is another fine pick for Pact of the Hexblade warlock builds. This race gets +2 to any one stat and +1 to another, so a Hexblade will no doubt get +2 CHA and then either +1 DEX or +1 CON. From there, an aasimar warlock can benefit from their race's innate resistance to both necrotic and radiant damage, which helps protect them during brutal melee battles, and they can heal with an action, just in case, no spell slots required. That's a decent way for a combat-heavy Hexblade to patch themselves up without exhausting the cleric's spell slots or using healing potions. Finally, the aasimar race's Celestial Revelation feature is excellent for melee-oriented Pact of the Hexblade characters, given this feature's short range. The warlock can either frighten nearby enemies with a necrotic shroud or deal extra radiant damage with the radiant version. This feature might also grant the character a pair of wings, but the Pact of the Hexblade subclass has no particular need for that. Warforged is often a great species pick for martial classes like fighter, but warforged can also make great Hexblade warlocks. For one thing, their Integrated Protection offers +1 AC simply for being a mechanical being, regardless of any armor being worn. This is a great way to boost a Hexblade warlock's defenses while wearing medium armor like half-plate. As a bonus, these mechanical people have resistance to poison and have advantage on saving throws to become poisoned, further enhancing a melee warlock's defenses against the game's many poison-dealing enemies up close. If the player wants a few more non-combat options in their Hexblade warlock build, then Specialized Design allows a warforged warlock to gain one skill proficiency of their choice and put it to good use. Yuan-ti is a potent species pick for many classes and subclasses, including for a Hexblade warlock build. Such warlocks are melee warriors with explosively fast damage output, so they are likely to draw a lot of enemy fire, including from hostile magic users. So, it's essential that the Hexblade can defend themselves, and not just with spells like Shield and Absorb Elements, which cost precious spell slots. Instead, if the Hexblade warlock is a yuan-ti, then they have a natural resistance to magic, which is quite powerful in most campaigns. These serpentine people also resist poison in the same ways that warforged do, and they even have darkvision as a nfity bonus. Related D&D's Gloom Stalker Ranger doesn't fear exploring the dark forests or gloomy caverns that give others trepidation. Here's what makes them strong. Feats can give a Hexblade Warlock more options and protection, and one of the most important ones to take is War Caster. Not only does this give the caster advantage on Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration, but they have also become so adept at casting spells in the heat of battle that they no longer need to use somatic components. That means they can have a shield and weapon in both hands and won't need to put them down to cast a spell. They can also cast spells as an opportunity attack instead of making a melee attack. Telekinetic grants access to the Mage Hand cantrip, and it can become spectral and unseen. It also allows the Warlock to telekinetically shove a creature five feet, provided they fail their Strength saving throw. Eldritch Adept, while not entirely necessary, allows the Hexblade to learn an additional Eldritch Invocation so long as they meet the requirements for that Invocation. Inspiring Leader is a fine pick for any warlock build, Hexblades included. If the party lacks another Charisma-centric character with this feat, then the Pact of the Hexblade warlock should take it, then deliver their rousing speech right before a dungeon crawl or boss battle to give everyone temporary HP. Any character would want extra HP, but Hexblade warlocks need that boost even more, since they get up close and personal with the enemy, while spell-heavy warlocks stay at the back lines, away from danger. The Alert feat is another fine option for any warlock, Hexblades included. Warlocks want to take their turn early in the round so they can capitalize on their limited spellcasting, and Hexblade warlocks will want to cast Hex and get their defenses up sooner than later. It's also a nice bonus that the warlock can't be surprised while conscious. Great Weapon Master is a strong option if the Hexblade warlock uses Hexblade's Curse to deal critical hits on rolls of 19 and 20. This feat lets the character use their bonus action to make another weapon attack if they reduce an enemy to 0 HP with their attacks, so if the Hexblade has two or more enemies in melee range, they can attack both. The downside is that Great Weapon Master's benefits for two-handed, heavy weapons like greatswords probably won't apply to a Hexblade warlock. The bonus attack is the part that matters for this feat. Related Necromancy can be an incredibly taboo School of Wizardry to focus in, but having the power to raise an unstoppable army of the dead has major perks. When choosing spells and cantrips, several stand out as absolute must-haves for a Hexblade. First and foremost, Eldritch Blast is any Warlock's go-to cantrip, and it only gets more powerful as the player (not the class) levels up. Green Flame Blade is also useful early on, though it's not nearly as efficient at higher levels. Because a Warlock's access to spell slots is limited and must be budgeted, it's important to choose carefully. The player should think about what types of spells they'll use most often, how long they last, and what benefits they provide in combat. Armor of Agathys is a phenomenal spell because it lasts for an hour and provides the caster +5 temporary hit points. Extra HP is never a bad thing, and neither is watching enemies take frost damage whenever they hit the Warlock with a melee attack. Hunger of Hadar is a great spell that creates an area effect that traps enemies within a 20 ft area of darkness infested with horrors unknown. It works wonders when trying to control a situation or keep a heavy hitter from reaching the party while they prepare. As the Warlock learns more powerful spells, options like Synaptic Static have the ability to debuff enemies and deal a bit of damage, so they're ready for the heavy hitters to take them out. Crown of Stars allows the caster to create a crown of star-like motes around their head that they can send out one by one as a bonus action to a creature or object within 120 feet. Used as a ranged spell attack, if the attack hits, the target takes 4d12 radiant damage. The crown also sheds light up to 30 feet, so long as there are four or more stars. On defense, a Hexblade warlock build may call for spells like Shield, which is a brief yet huge boost to the warlock's AC, and they can also cast Mage Armor to enhance their AC if desired. An alternative is the Blur spell, giving enemies disadvantage on attack roles to hit the warlock, what with their image shifting and blurring in confusing ways. That's a great way to avoid damage, but there are two downsides. Blur requires concentration, which is a big ask for a melee warrior, and Blur won't work if an enemy has truesight or doesn't rely on vision at all to hit their targets. Fortunately, few monsters will be like that earlier in a campaign, making Blur useful at least for a time. Related For Dungeons & Dragons players interested in playing a heroic rogue who's self-sufficient in combat, they'll want to check out the Swashbuckler build. Image via Wizards of the Coast An optimal Hexblade warlock build calls for a few items common to most warlocks, and a few that are more oriented toward the martial classes, since a Pact of the Hexblade character has elements of both spellcasting and melee combat. Warlocks usually start with leather armor, and a Hexblade warlock in particular will seek better armor such as studded leather or even half-plate right away. Hexblades will also want an ordinary shield to boost their AC further, and a Cloak of Protection or Cloak of Displacement can help, too. The former provides a +1 to AC and saving throws, while the latter creates an illusionary double of the wearer, forcing enemies to attack the wearer with disadvantage. That is vital for keeping a front-line fighter like a Hexblade alive. Elven Chain armor is another item worth considering. Pact of the Hexblade warlocks will also want some items to boost their key ability scores. An Amulet of Health is a good call, a fine item for any front-line character with sub-optimal Constitution. Fighters and barbarians tend to have high CON, so an Amulet of Health is better for Hexblade warlocks, who need their highest stat to be Charisma. CON is usually the Hexblade's second-highest stat, so there's room for improvement. The Amulet sets the wearer's CON score to 19, easily enough for a Hexblade to survive combat in any campaign or even a one-shot. Meanwhile, if the warlock wants truly extraordinary Charisma, then they may seek a Tome of Leadership and Influence, and a gracious DM will probably provide one around level 6-10 or so. Reading that book increases the character's CHA by 2 and increases that score's maximum by 2. A Hexblade warlock with 22 CHA and a +6 modifier will dominate any battlefield. Various rings may enhance the warlock's defenses when they're tangling with the enemy up close. If the party includes a wizard or sorcerer with lots of spell slots, then that character can charge up a Ring of Spell Storing with spells like Shield and Absorb Elements, then give them to the Hexblade warlock to use on defense. Doing that assumes that the warlocks is either unwilling or unable to use their own spell slots for such spells in battle. Other rings to consider include the Ring of Evasion to dodge things like Fireball or Lightning Bolt, or a Ring of Protection or even various rings of elemental resistance. A fantasy roleplaying tabletop game designed for adventure-seekers, the original incarnation of Dungeons & Dragons was created by Gary Gygax in 1974. D&D Beyond Desktop View Have you ever wanted to get Pact of the Blade, but the other two options were just better? Tired of building Eldritch Blast Warlocks in every situation? Well, Xanathars Guide to Everything really does have everything for you, because it introduced the Hexblade Warlocks can now dedicate themselves to legendary weapons with a penchant for cursing. Should your Warlock consider binding themselves to these mysterious entities? Read on to find out with our Hexblade Warlock 5E Guide! The Hexblade is an aggressive Warlock subclass with some defensive options. Its sole role is to give the Warlock a reliable frontline option in a world where most Warlocks would be crazy to take anything but Eldritch Blast. Whether it actually succeeds at this task or questionable; Eldritch blast still ends up having more rays, and therefore more damage. However, combine the abilities of the Hexblade with the expanded spell list, and youll still have a fantastic reason to wade into melee range. The spell list is the real saving grace of the Hexblade, since the class abilities dont do quite enough to usurp Eldritch Blasts reign. It offers some ways to make melee combat slightly more enticing, but suffers from concentration issues. Hexblade Expanded Spell List1st Level Shield, Wrathful Smite3rd Level Blur, Branding Smite5th Level Blink, Elemental Weapon7th Level Phantasmal Killer, Staggering Smite9th Level Banishing Smite, Cone of Cold You might notice that 4 of the 10 spells offered to the Hexblade are smites. Wrathful Smite is a good way to apply Frighten without a save. It forces your opponent to spend their action saving, meaning youll normally just have a Frightened enemy for a while. Branding Smite can scale from 2nd to 5ht level spell slots, which is good for when you only need damage, without the utility options of the others. Staggering offers slightly less damage in return for debuffs on attack rolls and ability check; usually worthwhile. And Banishing Smite is essentially the only smite youll be using at level 5; 5d10 damage added to a melee strike is the best Smite available for the Hexblade, and the banish effect is quite potent against enemy casters or extremely hard-hitting melee characters. If you dont want to banish them, then Branding Smites 5d6 might be a better option, or Staggerings debuff. Id suggest picking up at least Staggering and Banishing, though all four are solid. Elemental Weapon, Phantasmal Killer, and Cone of Cold are also fairly aggressive. Elemental Weapon is only useful on nonmagical weapons, but gives you quite a boost when using them; in low magic campaigns, this is great. Phantasmal Killer is a decent ranged ability that can deal a lot of damage over the course of a minute. Quite potent, if you can spare the Concentration slots. And Cone of Cold is good for Warlocks, a class without great Area of Effect options. Shield and Blur are both solid defensive spells; Shield for emergencies and Blur to apply disadvantage. Blur does take concentration, however, so you wont be able to use Smites while its active. This spell list has a lot of concentration spells. A lot of them are Smites, which means theyre safe to stop concentrating on after the damage is delivered (unless you want that debuff!). They are all fairly solid, and you can always replace old Warlock spells with new ones. Be sure to cycle your weaker Smites with stronger ones as you level! The first level for Hexblade is quite powerful, compared to other level-1 patron bonuses. The first priority is the Hexblades Curse. As a bonus action, you can toss a curse on someone who is alive 30 ft from you. It ends early if you have trouble opening your eyes. You gain a few benefits from the curse, though the enemy isnt hampered; You gain a bonus to damage rolls against the cursed target. The bonus equals your proficiency bonus.Any attack roll you make against the cursed target is a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 on the d20.If the cursed target dies, you regain hit points equal to your warlock level + your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1 hit point). You cant use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest. This feature is actually quite strong! Its one of the few ways to get your Critical Hits to be a roll of 19 or 20, and it has a bonus to damage that scales with your Character level. All on a Bonus action! Multiclassing bliss! The damage bonus is actually quite large compared to a lot of similar abilities Such as Barbarian or Fighting Style eventually getting to +6. The healing aspect of this ability is by far the weakest part, and even that will heal for 4 at level 1; not exactly the worst, not exactly the best. It can keep you from getting killed right after your cursed target dies. And it scales well with Warlock levels, which can be nice. The only real downside is that its once per rest. And thats not even much of a downside; Warlocks adore having short rests! Use this fairly often, and youll reap extremely powerful benefits. And now for the other reason why the Hexblade is a fantastic choice for both multiclassing and melee warlocks. The first benefit includes a pile of proficiencies; shields, medium armor, and martial weapons. Then You get something more unique. The influence of your patron also allows you to mystically channel your will through a particular weapon. Whenever you finish a long rest, you can touch one weapon that you are proficient with and that lacks the two-handed property. When you attack with that weapon, you can use your Charisma modifier, instead of Strength or Dexterity, for the attack and damage rolls. This benefit lasts until you finish a long rest. If you later gain the Pact of the Blade feature, this benefit extends to every pact weapon you conjure with that feature, no matter the weapons type. Were still level 1 here! So, first off, the proficiencies. A huge problem with Warlocks is that they need Dexterity if they want any AC. Theres just too much of a feat responsibility to do so in any other Warlock build. Getting Medium Armor right off the bat is crucial, and shields really can boost the AC of a one-handed build. The martial weapon proficiency is nice in the early game, and if you dont end up taking Pact of the Blade, then this is a crucial increase to damage. Really good reason to put a Warlock on the frontlines! Now Usually, Melee Warlocks need to dedicate themselves to Dexterity or Strength. Its important for Weapons, of course! But, thanks to Hex Warrior, the Warlock can use the pure power of their personality to maul their opponents. Thats fantastic! You could theoretically do both Eldritch Blast and Melee Combat simultaneously, without needing to put anything into Strength or Dexterity! If youve ever wanted your Sorcerer to swing swords just as good as they sling spells, get this multiclass! Remember if you plan on taking the Heavily Armored feat to sneak your way into Plate Mail, theres a Strength 15 requirement. Losing 10 feet of movement speed is really rough! Otherwise, try to invest in the +2 Dexterity to boost your armor while in Medium plate. Itll be a life-saver! The level 6 ability is the most utility-focused one of them all. Starting at 6th level, you can curse the soul of a person you slay, temporarily binding it in your service. When you slay a humanoid, you can cause its spirit to rise from its corpse as a specter. Right off the bat, you get to summon a spooky ghost! Thats pretty neat. Specters are CR 1 spirits that can move through walls, have a hodgepodge of resistances, a few immunities, and probably knows how to talk with you or others. It also can reduce maximum HP, though the saving throw to negate it is rather pitiful. But They get more. When the specter appears, it gains temporary hit points equal to half your warlock level. Roll initiative for the specter, which has its own turns. It obeys your verbal commands, and it gains a special bonus to its attack rolls equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of +0). The specter lasts nor can you use this feature again until you finish a long rest. So this isnt exactly fantastic scaling. The temporary hit points are added to a base of 22; at level 20, this 32 hit point spookster is probably not going to take a hit too well. More interesting is the bonus to attack and damage. The Specters attack is normally +4. Youll probably be boosting it to +8 or +9 by the time this is super relevant, which is insane at level 6. In addition, each time your new ghost friend hits someone, they have a small chance of losing 3d6+5 hit points for the rest of the day. And even if they save, 3d6+5 damage is nothing to sneeze at. Sadly, other than small boosts to your Charisma, you cant scale this up much more. Itll have that +9 from level 6 (or more realistically 8) until level 20. And the hit points come aggravatingly slowly. Not to mention that it can only work on Humanoid creatures, occasionally locking you out of using this ability if combat doesnt happen or if you only stomp on mice for a day. Still, this gives you an Incorporeal scout with a potent touch attack, which follows your every command. Thats far from nothing, and there are plenty of ways to abuse such a potent skill. Use this on the first humanoid youve killed every day, and use it until it passes on. At level 10, the Hexblade gets an additional reason to use Hexblades curse Because I guess three really strong reasons werent enough. At 10th level, your hex grows more powerful. If the target cursed by your Hexblades Curse hits you with an attack roll, roll a d6. On a 4 or higher, the attack instead misses you, regardless of its roll. For the love of all thats unholy Alright, so, now, your bonus action, once-per-short-rest ability gives you a 50% chance to dodge attacks. On top of your already fantastic AC, potent healing, and (probably) good health thanks to the Constitution this class lets you get. 50% chance to miss might sound low But it really shouldnt. Your GM can roll a 20 on you, and you can still avoid getting completely decimated by a crit if you roll a 4 on a d6. This turns boss fights against talented duelists and hard-hitting treants alike into jokes. And its not even just weapon attacks! Disintegrate can be easily sidestepped with a lucky d6. Vampiric Touch can suffer the same fate! Theres a pretty long list of powerful attack roll spells that are fairly likely to connect in the lategame, so this pretty solid miss chance is super crucial. Your Hexblade Curse should normally be applied to the toughest creature in a room. Now, it should be applied to the one that hits the hardest Which probably is the same one. Establish a short-rest rhythm with your party and reap the benefits. Remember in the last section, where I mentioned that the Curse should be applied to the toughest guy in the room? Well Starting at 14th level, you can spread your Hexblades Curse from a slain creature to another creature. When the creature cursed by your Hexblades Curse dies, you can apply the curse to a different creature you can see within 30 feet of you, provided you arent incapacitated. When you apply the curse in this way, you dont regain hit points from the death of the previously cursed creature. Now you dont really need to plan at all. Notice that this doesnt take a reaction, or a bonus action, or even requiring you to defeat the creature yourself. You just Get the benefit. As a frontliner, being within 30 ft of another creature should be your natural habitat Eldritch Blast Warlocks will have to get a little bit close to the enemies to make use of this. The only reason that you should not land Master of Hexes is either because the mages are blasting you from 120 ft, or because the fight is over. Noticeably, you dont benefit from the heal of the curse. Thats fairly significant at this point, that gives you 19 health, as long as you have +5 Charisma. However, in 99% of situations, transfering the damage, crit chance, and 50% miss chance will be better than restoring the hit points. This makes the Hexblade go from a somewhat situational single-target beater with good damage potential elsewhere to an absolute beast on the battlefield. At level 3, the Warlock gets a choice of one out of three pacts. These pacts all have synergies with the Hexblade, but You chose Hexblade for the benefits of melee combat, right? The Pact of the Blade lets the Warlock use two-handed weapons, longswords, and more to boost your damage significantly. You also become essentially immune to disarm attempts, can always have a potent weapon by your side, get Thirsting Blade for the Extra attack feature, and Lifedrinker. This has by far the most synergies between the Pact and Patron of all the official releases its fairly rare for the Patron to quite literally note that a Pact Boon gets extra effects with a Patron ability. If only because its taken so rarely, please consider this boon. Pact of the Chain is the weakest of the options. You kind of already have a familiar; at level 6, you get a Specter. That can scout and deal damage for you. You dont really need the bonus range on touch spells, either; you want to be within one Move Action from enemies, even if you go Eldritch Blast. This really isnt worthwhile. The Pact of the Talisman has a unique place in a Hexblade build, since you can put it on yourself to improve your saving throws and allow for reflective damage. At the low, low price of Extra Attack, bonus damage to every weapon swing, and all of the other Pact of the Blade upsides. Its not worth it. The Pact of the Tome is a good option that gives Warlocks access to decent utility spells something Warlocks, let alone Hexblades, really like. Take some options from Wizard and Cleric, or maybe Druid, and youll be somewhat happy. Though, once again, if you plan on going into melee at any point, then Pact of the Blade will give you much better melee options, and melee protection. Incredibly, the Hexblade is one of the few melee builds in 5e that eliminate the need for Strength and Dexterity Although getting to 14 Dexterity is probably not a bad idea. Your priorities are to get your Charisma high, and your Constitution to a point where one strong breeze doesnt bowl you over. While not necessarily perfect for a Warlock build, if you want to get to the 14 Dexterity and dont mind putting your Ability Score Increases into Charisma twice, Tabaxi have quite a few uses. The extra movement speed plus Feline Agility can get you into melee range quite fast Or give you an effective way to retreat. Perception and Stealth are both fantastic skills to have automatic proficiency in. And the 2 Dexterity is not lost on a build that takes refuge in medium armor. A quite potent choice, though more focused on utility than pure damage. Consider it if youre allowed to use the races in Volos Guide. Yeah, how often are these guys talked about? Held in the not-often-used Acquisitions Incorporated, the Verdan are an intelligently-created race of almost goblinoids with +2 Charisma, +1 Constitution; Perfection. Add onto that a boost of healing during short rests, free Persuasion advantage, bonuses on Wisdom and Charisma saves, and some free telepathy, and youve got yourself a really cool choice. Just Ask your GM first. This ones in a pretty far-off book. The Hexblade Warlock works a tiny bit differently than their Warlock peers. They have several opportunities to be in melee combat constantly, and thus can benefit from melee-centric feats. Otherwise, giving them the ability to soak damage using Warlocks traditionally strong short rest feats is a good idea. Not included on this list is Heavily Armored. If you want your Warlock to be in heavy armor, wed recommend starting Paladin and multiclassing. You can take a different feat instead and slowly gain access to Divine Smite. The Chef feat is one of our favorites, and it really comes alive when added to a Hexblades toolkit. To begin, you gain a +1 to Constitution. This isnt much, but it can round out 15s to 16s and 17s to 18s. That gives a +1 to your modifier, which is a big boost in durability. The real benefit, obviously, can be found in the features. Chef grants three separate abilities of varying power. The first, proficiency with Chefs Utensils, isnt your strongest new ability. Chefs Utensils are a fun tool that can make the usually dull act of eating rations have a bit more roleplay opportunity. Not exactly the most fiery thing in the world, but serves to give the party a fun moment where you cook for them and open up the campfire for talks. The first mechanical benefit is your bonus healing during short rests. This works like a Bards song of rest, where you provide a d8 to healing for anyone who spends a hit dice. This is pretty small, but equates to around 18 additional health if everyone in a four-person party heals. Not bad. The second benefit, and the more substantial one, is that you produce treats. These treats can be munched on as a bonus action to provide a small overshield of temporary hitpoints. They provide a total of between 4-36 health, since the number and quality of the treats scale with your proficiency. A good thing to have in your back pocket as you brave the frontlines. As a Warlock, it is important to expand your extremely small list of spells however you can manage to. Fey Touched is perhaps the most efficient way of doing so, even if its strength is weaker for you than it is for most other characters. Fey Touched provides a +1 to Charisma, which is of course wonderful for a Warlock. Rounds out your odd stats or puts you in a position where, four levels from now, youll be good to go. However, perhaps more interesting to us is the spells that you get to learn. Fey Touched teaches you Misty Step and lets you cast it for free. For a Hexblade, the ability to get into the thick of combat or escape when it goes bad is something that cannot be underestimated. A bonus action that clears 60 feet is very, very handy. The other ability is to gain a 1st level spell in divination or enchantment. This is less powerful for a Warlock. While Misty Step provides much-needed gap closing, the level 1 options that are normally very strong for a caster (like Hex or Silvery Barbs) arent nearly as necessary on a Warlock. Wed recommend spells like Command, which scale better with your 5th level spell slots, but Silvery Barbs can still protect you from bad attack rolls. Sometimes, you just need someone dead and have advantage on attack rolls. Great Weapon Master is here for you. You get a solid bonus action in taking

another swing on critical hit which your Hex improves the ratio of or on kill. That bonus action can lead to huge damage turns, especially since the Hexblade usually only uses one bonus action per target to set up Hex or Hexblades Curse. The other benefit is that you can drop your accuracy by 5 to boost damage by 10. This is the main reason to take the feat. While a -5 might sound like a lot, by endgame 5E youre usually swinging with +14s or +15s. If you have advantage, a -5 easily gets canceled out. And Warlocks have a few ways to get advantage. Especially if your party is well-designed to help you out here, this feat can turn you into a damaging monstrosity. A one-handed Warlock can instead use Slasher or Piercer to replace the raw damage with some utility. The Inspiring Leader feat from the Players Handbook is uniquely quite strong for a Hexblade, though it is strong for all Warlocks. Inspiring Leader allows you to, after a rest, give allies a temporary HP shield of your level plus Charisma. This equates to 25 at minimum by level 20. Give that to a party of four characters and youre providing 100 HP per short rest with no spells attached. For a Warlock on the frontlines, 25 HP is no joke, especially if its recovered the same way that you recover spell slots. Youre granting your party huge boosts of durability, soaking up a Fireball for free. This feat is almost worth prioritizing if youre serious about being a frontline Warlock. Telekinesis is a +1 Charisma option for those who arent very interested in the Fey Toucheds bonus spells. While I disagree with that, Telekinetic at least offers some tangible benefits that can be useful for a melee-centric Warlock. The first is a Mage Hand. This version of mage hand is invisible and you can cast it without needing hands or speaking. That lets you do some sneaky stuff without much issue. And, if you later learn Mage Hand, you get the rare 60 ft Mage Hand. Spooky! And extremely helpful for out-of-combat situations. The second is a weird bonus action. This bonus action allows you to push or pull creatures as you need by five feet. Allies can fail this willingly, letting you pull a Wizard out of the threatened range of a giant beast or pulling that giant beast towards you so you can beat it with your sword. If you dont need to set up Hex or Curse, this is a great use of your bonus action. Though, admittedly, the Hexblade is definitely a bit more busy on the bonus action slot than most Warlocks. War Caster is a necessary price for wanting to be a frontliner with a shield. In most cases, DMs will be reluctant to let you cast while your hands are full with stabby stuff, forcing you to put your shield or weapon away for a cast. In those cases, War Caster allows you to wield two weapons or a weapon and a shield and have the free pass to cast. No DM fiat or anything! Thats not all, thankfully. You also get advantage on concentration checks, which is great for a Warlock. 75% of your spells take concentration. However, Warlocks have access to the Eldritch Mind invocation, making this part of the feat usually less necessary. The final part of this feat is the ability to cast a spell when a creature provokes an opportunity attack. That means a Warlock can use a spell like Booming Blade or Hold Person when a person runs away from them. Thats fun, though less necessary when your sword deals so much damage. The Hexblade has a few options for multiclassing. However, wed say that one is perhaps very slightly better than the others. Well break our usual alphabetical order to underline this strongest multiclass. The Paladin is the perfect multiclass if you want to be a Hexblade. If you start with Paladin, you get to have Heavy Armor proficiency right out of the gate and a strong option in Lay on Hands. Level 2 is the sweet spot, since it gives you a Fighting Style (like Defense, Great Weapon Fighting, or Dueling), spells, and the ability to use your Warlock spell slots for Divine Smite. While Hex is a great way to spend a spell, sometimes you just need to do 6d8 guaranteed damage instead of risking a saving throw or your concentration. Further levels in Paladin can grant Extra Attack without an invocation, Charisma to saving throws, and one of many Oaths. Vengeance or Oathbreaker work well for the Oathbreaker. An Oathbreaker Paladin could theoretically get Charisma to damage 3 separate times by level 19, which is just very funny. While the Paladin is almost certainly a more effective multiclass than a Fighter, this class still has some options for a Hexblade. Specifically, Action Surge gives the Hexblade the ability to deal a ton of damage while the Battlemaster or Samurai archetype allows the Hexblade to get advantage on attack rolls easily. Fighting Style with 1 level of investment is also helpful, as is a small heal on a bonus action. Hexblades Curse only heals so much, after all. Giving a Hexblade d6 hit dice might not sound like a good idea, but the Sorcerer has a few options that can help a Hexblade shuffle along towards the finish line of a fight. Metamagic is strong, giving the Warlock the option to cast without needing somatic components or get more range on magic. Sorcery Points and Warlocks go hand-in-hand, granting them some spell slots that they could use to their full advantage. The Sorcerer bloodline that works best is up for debate, but we like Storm. A bonus action to move 10 feet after a spellcast can let the Hexblade move closer to (or farther from) priority targets. However, theres a reason to go for bloodlines like Draconic or even Lunar that can access good options for walking in. Hexblades follow the same rules as many other Warlocks. They dont have Persuasion, Perception or Insight access, so backgrounds can really help them fill holes in their gameplan. However, while we truly believe that a Hexblades role in the party is to be a good face, Warlocks also dont have access to Athletics or Acrobatics, which can be dangerous to not have when you fight creatures who grab you. The Entertainer offers the Hexblade a few alright abilities that can help them on the frontlines. Acrobatics proficiency is actually fairly important, since a grappling monster will be targeting your otherwise weak skill check. Performance is less important, but does let you do funny distraction tools. Disguise kits and musical instruments are more fun than useful, but there are worst tool proficiencies to have. Poor Sailor Your equipment is fun, since it pays for a unique weapon, and you get to set up an admirer with your DM. If you want to go standard Entertainer, you instead get a free musical instrument, which is similarly funny though less potentially useful. You also start with 15 gp, which is fairly high for a background. Your feature, By Popular Demand, lets you get rooms with potentially popular people, though this often leads you into dangerous situations. The normal Entertainer feature is less dangerous but might get you less savage audience members, like Nobles itching to see someone die. A double-edged sword. The Investigator is a generally useful archetype for adventuring. Insight and Perception is hard for a Warlock to get, and the Investigator hands them over on a silver platter. Your tools are similarly powerful, with Disguise Kits and Thieves Tools being useful in many different situations the Disguise kit does require a creative mind, though. The equipment comes with 10 gp and some fun trinkets, but nothing very impressive. Your feature is also a bit less impressive, since it gives everyone important the opportunity to make their own opinions about you. You dirty cop. For a Warlock looking to talk, the Urban Bounty Hunter is a great choice. You get to choose Insight and Persuasion, making you a godly talker with all three Charisma options on the table. You also get to choose between a Gaming Set, Musical Instrument, and Thieves Tools. We recommend the Thieves Tools and probably the Musical Instrument, since its the easiest one to perform with. Your equipment is basically just 20 gp, which is low value for a background but gives you a lot of options if you need to buy something later. You also get contacts in most cities of the DMs discretion, which can at least give you a foot in the door or a lead that you otherwise would have had to work harder for. The Hex Warrior ability allows you to use two-handed weapons at level three, if you take Pact of the Blade. The Pact weapon ignores the restrictions of lacking the two-handed property, so you can use greatswords. With the Improved Pact Weapon feature, it becomes possible to use Charisma to attack with ranged weapons Though, admittedly, you have Eldritch Blast for that. A Hexblade is a sentient, cursed weapon from the Shadowfell. These weapons are typically darker in style, with glowing gemstones in the pommels, and are created by mages. You are making a pact with the weapons themselves, and do not wield them in combat outside of specific circumstances, though your Pact Weapon might emulate their style. While any Warlock might seek a pact with a Hexblade for power, most of the time, the Warlock should be an alignment that allows them to be content with cursing people and raising a fraction of a dead soul under your command. Wed recommend non-good options that are flexible, such as true neutral, chaotic neutral, or neutral good, to give your party some wiggle room. Were making a Hexblade. But, before we can even consider getting them in a party, we need to lay out some restrictions that our DM asks of us. Those restrictions include: No multiclassing. While the Paladin multiclass is incredibly potent for the Hexblade, well be stuck with 20 levels of Warlock. We can make this work, thankfully, though well likely miss out on heavy armor. No lineage rules. Lineage races get to choose ability scores, and some races are lineage only. This limits us significantly, which is unfortunate, but you can mostly follow along with this guide with lineage races. Owlkin or other flying options arent a bad idea, but grounded races make better use of medium armor. Can use any book. Perhaps as thanks for not using lineage rules, our DM is letting us choose from any book for our race and background. This opens the doors quite a bit, though were going to be taking a rather simple approach for our Hexblade. Standard Array for ability scores. 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, and 8 are definitely more restrictive than point buy, but we have more than enough to make things work. Average gold. Unlike many Warlock guides weve written, we really want average gold. Hexblades care quite a lot about starting with medium armor, a shield, and a martial weapon. 100 gold isnt a lot to work with, but itll at least get us started correctly. Our party includes a Fighter, Bard, and Druid. Were the second fronltiner of the party, so we can focus a bit on damage and a bit on durability. The Druid plans on spamming Lightning, so they can deal with mobs of enemies. Were going to go with a Wood Half-Elf for our race. This gives us amazing ability scores and slightly better movement speed to work with. While the default Half-Elf grants two skills which are fantastic for all situations, the Hexblade can struggle just a bit when it comes to moving to the frontlines. That extra five feet is gonna be a life-saver. For gear, were going to be spending that gold on Scale Mail, a Shield, a Longsword, and a Dungeoneers pack. This leaves us with 3 gp to spare. We are losing a lot of value on gear and wont start play with a Component Pouch, which you should get as soon as possible. However, making sure we have the right gear to survive the early game is very important for the Hexblade, since were waddling into melee immediately. For ability scores, we want Charisma at 17 to let us take a +1 Charisma feat early on. Thanks to the Half-Elfs +2 to the stat, were in a good spot. That leaves us with a 15 in Constitution and 14 in Dexterity, each boosted by 1. This covers our offense and defense, and our other stats are honestly unimportant. For a background, our Bard likely has talking skills covered. That lets us safely use the Gladiator background that was discussed earlier. Even if our Bard will be the partys talker, we can still help out or talk to others for our Bards sake. 5E Hexblade Warlock BuildRace: Half-ElfAbility Scores: STR 12, DEX 14 (13 + 1), CON 15 (14 + 1), INT 8, WIS 10, CHA 17 (15 + 2)Proficiencies: Deception, Intimidation, Acrobatics, Performance, Disguise Kit, LuteStarting Equipment: Scale Mail, Shield, Longsword, Dungeoneers Pack, Net, Love Letter, Costume Clothes, 18gpLanguages: Common, Elven, Orcish LevelClass BenefitsChoices1-Pact Magic-Expanded Spells-Hexblades Curse-Hex WarriorWhen choosing our spells and cantrips, it is important to remember that our Hexblade will be on the frontlines, doing battle with enemies. That doesnt mean we have to forfeit all magic for them, but itll be nice to have a few options available for them as we level up.Cantrips. Sadly, the Warlock has very few cantrips to work with. Also sadly, despite being the only Warlock that can free itself from the curse, Eldritch Blast remains far too powerful of a cantrip to ignore. However, were going to choose Green-Flame Blade as our second cantrip. Thisll deal quite a lot of damage early on and will be our default melee attack for most of the game. This leaves us with little room for utility, but you dont choose the Hexblade because it can solve problems.Spells. Hex might seem superfluous because of Hexblades Curse, but they both stack and a Hexed and Cursed enemy is going to explode instantly. Might as well abuse that, though prioritize applying your Hexblades Curse before spending the spell slot on Hex. Sleep isnt going to be useful for long, but the ability to guarantee a deadly status condition like sleep on a foe right now is way too much to pass up.2-Eldritch InvocationsWere not here to just learn spells. Eldritch Invocations are really, really important for the Hexblade, so pay close attention to them on a level-to-level basis.Invocations. Agonizing Blast gives our ranged option our Charisma in damage, which is way too strong to ignore. Our other option is a bit more out-in-the-open, with a handful of good utility spells on the table. Were going to go for a very early Eldritch Mind to help with concentration, since holding onto Hex as a frontliner is a terrible time.Spells. Well learn Shield at this level, something Im more than willing to spend a 5th level spell slot on if Im desperate. We can also start trading out spell slots, but Sleep should still be consistently hitting targets. Lets keep it around.3-Pact Boon-2nd Level Pact MagicWere not going to try anything fancy here.Pact. Were getting the Pact of the Blade. It has far too much synergy with the Hexblade. Well keep a Sword and Shield mentality for now, however. Let our Fighter get the cool big magical weapons. We value the AC that a shield can bring to the table.Spells. For our first 2nd level spell, were going to go for Hold Person. Being able to paralyze a humanoid, especially as a melee character, is too juicy to ignore.You might be wondering why we arent picking up Smites. Thats simply because, for the purposes of this build, were going to focus more on Hex as our primo damaging option that takes Concentration. Not that Smites are terrible damage or anything. Just that we plan on snagging later Smites instead.4-Ability Score ImprovementWeve reached our first Ability Score improvement, which means we get our first feat.Feat. Despite our extremely painful 17 in Charisma, were a sword and board build with a DM who isnt gonna give us some slack. War Caster will let us cast in melee without any issues, unlocking ourselves from awkwardly shoving our sword into our pockets every turn.Cantrip. Since we got Mage Hand from our feat, we can either dig deeper into options or get a dangerous melee attack like Booming Blade to further damage foes. Well go with the former by picking up Prestidigitation.Spells. To supplement our frontline capabilities for a little while, well pick up Mirror Image. Its a more annoying version of Shield that lasts a minute, allows for pre-combat buffing, and doesnt rely on concentration.Invocation. We just got War Caster, so Eldritch Mind no longer matters. Well tag that out right now for Improved Pact Weapon, an ability that lets us use our weapon for material components for spells like Hex as well as create magical weapons from thin air. It also lets us conjure magical bows, which is nice in a way. Eldritch Blast trounces any bow, but its the thought that counts.5-3rd Level Pact MagicA pretty important level for any Hexblade.Spells. Were going to pick up our second Expanded Spell list option here with Blink, which can get us out of danger half of the time. Blink kinda makes Mirror Image feel bad, so were losing Mirror Image for Counterspell. Were certainly the best counterspeller in our party. The only one, actually.Invocation. As a Pact of the Blade Warlock, we are legally obligated to take Thirsting Blade for Extra Attack. Swinging twice will outdamage Green-Flame Blade when were stuck with a single target.6-Accursed SpecterGet your specter early in a dungeon, basically whenever possible. It lasts all day and you can tell it to not attack if you need it to.Spells. Were losing Sleep at this point, since it is no longer consistent enough at putting people to bed. Were going to take Misty Step and Fly at this point. Both of these are potent mobility options and both will be needed in at least one fight in your campaign. What use is Hex if your Fighter cant join you in a fight, after all? As fun as pinging people to death with Eldritch Blast is, magical weapons should start to outpace blasting.7-4th Level Pact MagicA very fun level for us, if not the most consistent one.Spells. Staggering Smite is an extremely potent debuff that is well-worth losing Hex for. If an enemy is a huge, bulky ogre or another low-mental threat, giving them disadvantage on attacks is probably worth more than the d6 damage.Invocation. Well take Relentless Hex as a way to teleport around the battlefield as a bonus action. We have multiple ways to apply Hex too, which is quite fun.8-Ability Score ImprovementBecause we still have a 17 in Charisma, our goal is going to be to fix that now. Telekinesis will be our choice over Fey Touched, simply because we have Relentless Hex to help us move around the fight. 18 Charisma at level 8 hurts a lot, but its the price we pay for being able to consistently cast our more devastating magic while in melee.Before we take another spell, lets consider what we have going for us.Cantrips. Eldritch Blast, Green-Flame Blade, Mage Hand, PrestidigitationSpells. Hex, Shield, Hold Person, Misty Step, Blink, Counterspell, Fly, Staggering SmiteGood! This is a good spell list, with a mixture of ranged options, defensive opportunities, and concentration to non-concentration. The 4th level Warlock spell list is a bit wonky, with a few options were quite interested in. Lets take Raulothims Psychic Lance, a great option with anti-invisibility applications that targets Intelligence, an underrepresented saving throw.9-5th Level Pact MagicAs we touch down on the fifth level, were also getting the last spell we learn consistently. From here-on-out, were learning spells every other level. Dont be afraid to replace spells in your spell list with more situational options that fit your campaign, especially now. You should have generic options that work in every fight at this point, so magic that is more specific is generally fine.Spells. Our first fifth level spell is going to be Cone of Cold. We have a massive cone, are a frontliner, and can shotgun this out twice per rest. Thats a lot of damage.Invocations. Maddening Hex is a big improvement on our damage during turns where we dont want to push people around with our Telekinesis.10-Armor of HexesThe first level that we dont have a spell to choose. Woe unto us. Armor of Hexes is a fantastic ability, by the way. With Blink and this online, you theoretically have a 1/4th chance to be even targeted by an attack every turn. Very funny.Cantrip. Our final cantrip will be Thunderclap. While Green-Flame blade can handle most melee situations, if were surrounded by 3 or more enemies, Thunderclap will provide better damage. Sword Burst also works, but we like targeting Constitution if were being swarmed by enemies. They tend to be smaller, so this save tends to be a bit lower. Even if the damage type is much worse.Spell. In addition, because of the campaign were in, were also going to tag Hold Person out for Hold Monster. While Hold Person targets multiple humanoids, were in a campaign where we just dont have many people to target. Unfortunate, but very likely.11-Mystic Arcanum (6th Level)We get a spell whenever we get a Mystic Arcanum, and will also be looking at our spell list to see if there are any loose ends to trim.Mystic Arcanum. Scatter remains a favorite of ours. Repositioning before an important combat can be very difficult, but a 120 foot teleport will make things significantly easier. You can even teleport close enemies, if they fail a saving throw.Spells. As we advance into the higher levels, having a consistent Dispel Magic online is going to be very nice. Our Bard and Druid can both cast it, but accessing level 5 spell slots can be hard for them. Certainly not for you. Well also take the time to replace Staggering Smite with Banishing Smite, a higher damage option with the opportunity to entirely skip turns, as long as the monster is low enough health. If your team can kill it in time, dont activate the banish effect. But, if the enemy might be able to be healed, then keep them out of the fight.12-Ability Score ImprovementFinally, at long last, we can get +2 to Charisma for the 20 weve been looking for. Its unfortunate that it took this long, but War Caster was a very important detour.Invocation. We also get an invocation, which is extremely easy. Lifedrinker gives us another +5 to damage with each weapon swing. Alongside Maddening Hex, Hexblades Curse, and our Pact Weapon, our weapon attack can hit with something like a +20 modifier for damage, if only once per turn with Maddening Hex. Thats hilarious.13-Mystic Arcanum (7th Level)Mystic Arcanum. Forcecage has several applications, from ensuring that a group of civilians stay unharmed to keeping a group of lich minions in place for a few turns. Hell, in the worst case, it could be utilized as a bridge. The worlds most expensive, 10 ft bridge.Spell. Spirit Shroud is a spell that deals 2d8 damage per weapon swing, which isnt enough to be more useful than the day-long buff that Hex provides. What is enough is the utility of negating healing on targets, as well as potentially targeting a damage vulnerability. Use this when you need to keep someone off of healing.14-Master of HexesThis is the first level where there is nothing major to choose. Sit back, relax, and remember to spread your Hexblades Curse whenever possible. This is a huge boost to the Hexblades Curse, allowing you to sweep a whole encounter with it. Try to use Hex normally, and Hexblades Curse during medium or large sized encounters.15-Mystic Arcanum (8th Level)Okay, were back to selecting things. Hope you got some relaxation in.Mystic Arcanum. Power Word Stun is a strong magical option that allows us to ignore saving throws, provided a target has 150 hitpoints. For reference, you can just shotgun this on a Lich and hes stunned, guaranteed. That can let you pile on the damage while they cant do anything, something thats not exactly easily performed otherwise. No saving throw, no problem.Spells. Synaptic Static is our choice at this level. While Cone of Cold usually does a great job dealing damage, Synaptic Static deals a similar amount of damage while also providing a quite potent debuff to attack and damage. So, we have a high damage area of effect and a debuff area of effect. Perfect.Invocation. There arent too many Invocations that are very important for our build at this point. So, well recommend Tricksters Escape for the opportunity to get away from dangerous paralysis situations by buffing beforehand.16-Ability Score ImprovementWe now have the opportunity to round out our Constitution. Instead, were going to get a gigantic pile of temporary hitpoints. Inspiring Leader currently gives 21 hitpoints per short rest, as long as our Bard friend isnt taking the feat before us. Otherwise, were kinda free to take Chef, our level 19 option.17-Mystic Arcanum (9th Level)Mystic Arcanum. The last Mystic Arcanum of the game. Its not usually a tricky choice. However, well go with Power Word Kill. The ability to end a fight in a snap is far too powerful to ignore. Work with your DM to determine if theres any way you can know a creatures hitpoints, like through Medicine, that makes this even more impactful. Otherwise, no shame in options like Psychic Scream or even Gate. This is a level where working with your party to cover weak spots is critical.Spell. Teleportation Circle opens the world up just a little bit. While the party Bard might be able to know this or cast it from scrolls, getting the opportunity to do so with our spare spell slots is probably not a terrible idea.18Invocation. Our final Invocation will probably be simple. Visions of Distant Realms is a good scout to have at high levels, even if a familiar or animal can do something similar. You could alternatively consider Undying Servitude or Tomb of Levistus if youd like. Minions or emergency health isnt a bad thing to have.19-Ability Score ImprovementOur last feat, our last spell! How exciting.Feat. Here well grab Chef, something our bard definitely should have. 16 Constitution is enough to no longer beg our party for the Amulet of Health. It will also be nice to have treats to eat between fights or during free turns. We have a ton of bonus actions to choose from, which is a great change of pace compared to most 5E builds.Spell. Our last spell will be Dimension Door. Sure, Misty Step will usually be all we need, and well still learn it. But, the ability to move consistently and rapidly is nice.20-Eldritch MasterAnd were done! Lets check out that spell list.Cantrips. Eldritch Blast, Green-Flame Blade, Mage Hand, Prestidigitation, ThunderclapSpells. Hex, Shield, Misty Step, Blink, Counterspell, Dispel Magic, Fly, Spirit Shroud, Dimension Door, Raulothims Psychic Lance, Banishing Smite, Cone of Cold, Hold Monster, Synaptic Static, Teleportation Circle.Mystic Arcanum. Scatter, Forcecage, Power Word Stun, Power Word KillI love the options we have here. We have great area of effect, defense, concentration, and crowd control options. We dont have much problem solving magic here, unfortunately, but most problems can be solved with a good teleport or straight-up dispelling it. You should feel free to swap spells out if you find your party requiring specific magic, like the ability to send messages or other methods of magical problem solving. That wraps up our Hexblade Warlock 5E Guide. The Hexblade is the only Patron truly capable of unleashing Warlocks onto the frontlines. If your goal is to stand in front of your squishy allies in a unique but potent way, consider the Hexblade. Also, consider Hexblade for a multiclass if youve got a lot of Charisma and also want to swing a sword. For more info on this great class, check out our Warlock 5E Guide! Skip to main content Reddit and its partners use cookies and similar technologies to provide you with a better experience. By accepting all cookies, you agree to our use of cookies to deliver and maintain our services and site, improve the quality of Reddit, personalize Reddit content and advertising, and measure the effectiveness of advertising. By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. Random PowellNovember 19, 2023Saltblade? Hexbae?Hexblade warlocks are an interesting subclass: they can easily be a trapbecause their apparent versatility can leave you wanting to have many tools atyour disposal only to discover that none of them quite satisfy the way thatthe more specialized subclasses can. That said, with a little work you canfill your niche as a primary damage dealer in the front lines while stayingreasonably safe thanks to your spells and later parts of your kit.EDIT: This was the first article I ever wrote for RPGBOT, long enough ago that it was published on the old version of the site. More importantly, it was written before Tashas was published. That means that a lot of work went into the Races section (which has largely been made irrelevant, though feel free to give it a read), and one of the single most important optimization options hadnt been introduced yet: Elven Accuracy. This is a cornerstone of modern Warlock optimization for obvious reasons, and means that I need to redo the example build. Even if youve read this guide before, I recommend taking another thorough look at the table presented at the end.This guide is specifically for the Hexblade Warlock, and omits sections of my typical class handbooks when those sections arent meaningfully different from other members of the class. For more information on the Warlock, see our Warlock Handbook. I also strongly recommend reading our Warlock Eldritch Invocation Breakdown and Warlock Spell List Breakdown.Table of ContentsRPGBOT uses the color coding scheme which has become common among Pathfinder build handbooks, which is simple to understand and easy to read at a glance.Red: Bad, useless options, or options whichare extremely situational. Nearly never useful.Orange: OK options, or useful optionsthat only apply in rare circumstances. Useful sometimes.Green: Good options. Useful often.Blue: Fantastic options, often essentialto the function of your character. Useful very frequently.We will not include 3rd-party content, including content from DMs Guild, in handbooks for official content because we cant assume that your game will allow 3rd-party content or homebrew. We also wont cover Unearthed Arcana content because its not finalized, and we cant guarantee that it will be available to you in your games.The advice offered below is based on the current State of the 2014 DnD 5e Character Optimization Meta as of when the article was last updated. Keep in mind that the state of the meta periodically changes as new source materials are released, and the article will be updated accordingly as time allows.Expanded Spell List: While severaloptions on this list are very good, many of them require Concentration. Inparticular, even though all the smites are Bonus Actions (good for youraction economy), they require Concentration to ensure that youre able toactually get the effect off as long as you hit sometime during the nextminute, but this prevents you from running other excellent Concentrationbuffs like Blur and Elemental Weapon from the very same expanded list.Furthermore, since the smite spells dont scale well (if they scale at all),theyre often a poor use of your limited Warlock spell slots. Consider usingthem for a level or two when you first get them, but replace them after thatwhen better spells become available (even if its just the next smitespell).1st-level Spells: Shield isfantastic on any other spellcasting class. It costs a precious spellslot, and offers no benefits for upcasting, so its only helpful untilyou get access to 2nd-level slots for Armor of Agathys. If you arentrunning another Concentration spell, Wrathful Smite into Booming Bladeis staggeringly good damage at low levels, assuming the target moves andtriggers the secondary damage. The Wisdom save for fear is a nice touch,though your defenses arent really turned on yet so maintainingConcentration can be a challenge in melee. To summarize: temptingoptions at low levels, but youll abandon them in favor of other optionsalmost immediately.2nd-level Spells: Blur is just asuperb spell. Turn it on if you have more than one thing attacking youand/or your Armor of Agathys doesnt look up to the job. Branding smitefills some excellent niches, but is not otherwise overly helpful. Itsprobably the only way youre going to be able to deal radiant damage(youll be very grateful if you ever come across zombies) and it alsoprevents invisibility if your party cant cast Faerie Fire, InvisibilityPurge, or something else along those lines.3rd-level Spells: Blink would beinteresting if it wasnt random in the fashion it is. Elemental weaponsprimary benefit is making a weapon magical if for some reason you arentrunning Pact of the Blade, and Im not sure why you would skip Pact ofthe Blade (and the Invocations which require it like Thirsting Blade)and still use a weapon. It still runs into the Concentration problem,interfering with smites and defensive buffs, but it adds a small amountof extra damage (which will increase when your spell slot levelsincrease). Keep in mind that the Pact Weapon granted by Pact of theBlade counts as a magic weaponfor the purpose of overcoming damage resistance and immunity.Its technically not a magic weapon unless you bind a specific magicweapon, so you can use your Pact Weapon with ElementalWeapon.4th-level Spells: Phantasmal Killeris still an excellent spell, although the fact that it never scales past5th level for warlocks is disappointing at higher levels. StaggeringSmite would be much better if the effect lasted more than one round.Both spells cause the creature to suffer Disadvantage on attack rolls,but Phantasmal Killer works at range and lasts longer.5th-level Spells: Banishing Smite is abig pile of damage on a Bonus Action and the rider effect doesnt allowa saving throw. 50 hit points is a reasonably large window, andbanishing the target could dramatically affect the outcome of anencounter. Cone of Cold is a helpful way for you to do area of effectdamage, but apart from being a big pile of damage does little else foryou.Hexblades Curse: Are you ready to confuseliterally every new player by being the only thing that gets proficiency todamage? Then Hexblade is for you. Note that you can both Curse and Hexsomeone if you like to track several effects at the same time. In allseriousness though, this is a fantastic ability.You only get this once per Short or Long Rest, so be sure to use it whereit will matter. You want to make as many attack rolls as possible whilethis is running, so at high levels this will frequently work best whencombined with Eldritch Blast since Warlocks cant get more than threeattacks (assuming Thirsting Blade and either two-weapon fighting orCrossbow Expert). However, since this only works once per Short or LongRest, remember that you may still have better results focusing on otherparts of your build, and focusing on being effective with weapons is oftena better choice for the Hexblade than Eldritch Blast even though you mayget fewer attacks.Since this comes in at 1st level and scales based on your proficiencybonus, its very tempting for class dips into Warlock, totallydisregarding how good Hex Warrior is.Hex Warrior: This is probably why youpicked the subclass. You get medium armor and shields so that youre able toexist in the front line without dying immediately, but far more importantlyyou get to be a melee character and still have Str and Dex be dump stats.You do still need enough Dexterity to fill out Half Plates Dexterity cap,but thats not hard.Using your Charisma for attack and damage rolls in place of Strength iscrazy powerful. Not only does it make Pact of the Blade considerablyeasier for the Warlock, it makes Paladin/Warlock multiclass buildsmassively more effective. Keep in mind that by default Hex Warriorsweapon effect works on a weapon which you touch at the end of a long rest,but if you later take Pact of the Blade the effect extends to that weapontoo, so you can affect have two weapons with which to attack usingCharisma. This is important if you plan to explore two-weapon fighting orif you want a backup weapon or something.Accursed Specter: Not only does it haveto be a humanoid, but you personally have to get the killing blow. Thatsaid, if you can get one, Specters are a phenomenal companion to have withyou. They are effective in combat (although they never scalebeyond the tinyamount of temporary hit points and the attack bonus which you give them)and, while they cant speak, they will follow your verbal commands allowinga creative person to use one for scouting and have it report back. However,they have no ability to speak, to their ability to report their findings islimited to gestures like nodding, pointing, and pantomime.Armor of Hexes: Take the already excellentHexblades Curse and put an astonishing and unique defensive buff on it.Somewhere, a 40k player is wondering how 4-up saves got into their D&D.This is a 50% miss chance on top of whatever other defenses you might haverunning (Blur or Shadow of Moil, for example),Master of Hexes: The only problem withHexblades Curse was that it could feel wasted if you used it on somethingand then ran into something more threatening before your next rest. That isnow slightly mitigated by allowing you to chain it through a whole fight.You do need to be able to see a new target creature when you move HexbladesCurse, so if youre facing hidden or invisible enemies you may need to keepthat in mind before you finish off your current target.Clever players might try to move the effect to an angry rat which youkeep in a sack (the old bag of rats trick) to allow you to carry one useof Hexblades Curse all day, but wise DMs should explicitly disallow suchshenanigans.Unlike other Warlocks, you will need to invest some into Dexterity to makebest use of that medium armor youre now allowed to wear and boy will you needit. Otherwise, focus on Charisma.Str: You cant afford to have high abilityscores in four abilities, and Strength simply isnt useful enough.Dex: Warlocks have notoriously poor AC, andanything you can do to address that will still require some Dexterity unlessyou multiclass or something to get heavy armor.Con: Being in melee means you want hitpoints and a better chance of passing Con saves when targeted by things youremaking angry.Int: Dump.Wis: Dump.Cha: You are powered by Charisma.Point BuyStandard ArrayStr88Dex1414Con1513Int810Wis1012Cha1515Ability scores are crucial for the Hexblade Warlock, but also easy toachieve. Look for some combination of Charisma and either Dexterity andConstitution in most cases, but you only need 14 Dexterity if youre happy inmedium armor. Beyond that, innate spellcasting or things that improve yourdurability are great options.The list of races and subraces below is intentionally reduced to thoseoptions which I think make an effective Hexblade Warlock or which offer traitswhich are illustrative of what you should look for in other races, and it doesnot address the Customizing Your Origin optional rules. These are by no meansthe only viable options (especially with the custom origin optional rules inplace), and I encourage you to explore other options not listed below.For full race coverage (including discussion of options which work well forthe Hexblade), please see ourWarlock Races Breakdown, which includes the full range of available races.ElfPHB: Dexterity is helpful for Blade Pact Warlocks, and Perception is alwaysnice. Drow and Eladrin both make fine choices, but options which providelarger Charisma increases may be better.DrowPHB: Bonus Charisma and some Charisma-based innate spellcasting, but SunlightSensitivity can be a pain.EladrinMToF: Dexterity and Charisma are a great spread for warlocks, and freeteleportation on a short rest means that you dont need to spend one of yourspell slots to do it.High Elf: A Wizard Cantrip gets youaccess to a lot of useful options, including Booming Blade which doesntcare about a poor Intelligence score. But most of those options are alreadyavailable to us.Half-ElfPHB: The abilities work great, and bonus skills are always nice, but VariantHuman is likely better. You could argue that Darkvision is appealing, butthats what Devils Sight is for.DrowSCAG: With a very limited number of spell slots, innate spells provide fantasticutility.High/Moon/SunSCAG: Wizard cantrips are great for utility, but you already have the bestdamage cantrips. Consider Booming Blade since it doesnt care about yourspellcasting modifier.HumanPHB: Versatile and fantastic at everything.Variant: You still get a crucial bonus toyour Charisma, and you can get an awesome feat at level 1.Tiefling: Bonus Charisma and Charisma-basedinnate spellcasting.AsmodeusPHB/MToF: A perfectly fine option, but the Intelligence is wasted and you can findbetter spells from other subraces.BaalzebulMToF: The Intelligence is wasted, but access to Thaumaturgy could be nice.DispaterMToF: Dexterity means better AC, and the spells are great if you want to besneaky or tricky.FiernaMToF: The Wisdom is largely wasted, but the spells are great for a Face.GlasyaMToF: Dexterity means better AC, and the spells are great if you want to besneaky or tricky.LevistusMToF: Constitution means more hit points, and the spells offer a nice mix ofdefensive, offensive, and utility options.MammonMToF: The Intelligence is wasted, and the leveled spells are highlysituational.MephistophelesMToF: Flame Blade will be worse than just using your weapon.ZarielMToF: Strength is wasted and you already get the smite spells.Variant: FeralSCAG: Dexterity is normally fine for a melee build, but for Warlocks youll beusing your Charisma thanks to Hexblade.Variant: Devils TongueSCAG: Good options for a standard Warlock but doesnt help a Hexblade.Variant: HellfireSCAG: Burning Hands is about as good for the Warlock as Hellish Rebuke, butdoesnt require you to be hit to use it.Variant: WingedSCAG: Flight is fantastic even if youre built for melee because it offers youa way to engage enemies trying to use flight to stay out of reach.TortleTP: The natural armor is decent and wont require 14 Dexterity, but your accessto medium armor and shields already allows you to reach these numbers.TritonVGTM: A fantastic option for blade pact warlocks. Good ability score increases,and the innate spellcasting provides some good utility options.VerdanAcInc: Constitution and Charisma is a perfect combination for a Charisma-basedspellcaster, and getting Persuasion for free is great. Youll almost certainlybe your partys Face, and the Verdans Telepathic Insight can go a long way toaddress language barriers despite its limited capability.Yuan-Ti PureBloodVGTM / MotM: Good Charisma, some innate spellcasting, Magic Resistance, and PoisonImmunity (resistance with the updated version).Setting-specificracesareaddressbelow.Noteverysettingallowseveryrace,andwhilemostracespresentedinthecorerulesandincontentfortheForgottenRealmscanbeusedinothersettings,racesspecifictosettingslikeRavnicaarenttypicallyallowedinothersettings.TalktoyourDMaboutwhatracesareallowedinyourgame.KalashtarERLW: A Charisma increase, and youll be really good at Wisdom saving throwsdespite not being proficient. The Kalashtar doesnt support any specific partof being a warlock, but its a fine starting point for a warlock of any kind.WarforgedERLW: The flexible ability increase goes into Charisma, and the Warforgeds othertraits will make you more durable than a typical sorcerer before consideringspells. A warforged with Mage Armor would have an AC of 14+Dex totallyunequipped, allowing you to meet the AC of characters in light armor and ashield. A warforged hexblade can do even better: half-plate, a shield, and 14Dexterity brings you to 20 AC with very little effort.While the design intent for Dragonmarks was that they would offer some innate spellcasting for everyone, every dragonmark includes an expanded spell list which is arguably a more significant benefit than most of the provided racial traits. Because the expanded spell options are such an important part of the dragonmarks, if youre not playing a spellcaster youre giving up a huge part of your racial traits, which makes it exceptionally difficult to justify playing a dragonmark character who cant cast spells.Dragonmarks are uniquely helpful for the Warlock. Any amount of extraspellcasting can significantly improve your capabilities since your spellslots are so limited. Because your spell slots work differently from otherspellcasters, spells which scale when theyre cast with a higher-level spellslot can often be good options even though other spells on a specificdragonmarks spell list arent interesting.Dragonmarked DwarfERLW: Dragonmark traits replace your subrace.Mark of Warding: Bad ability spread.Dragonmarked ElfERLW: Dragonmark traits replace your subrace.Mark of Shadow: The ability scoreincreases are great, the innate spellcasting is good, and there are severaldragonmark spells which warlocks can normally only get from specificpatrons.Dragonmarked GnomeERLW: Dragonmark traits replace your subrace.Mark of Scribing: The ability scoreincreases work, and several of the dragonmark spells are new to theWarlocks spell list, but most of the spells arent very good.Dragonmarked Half-ElfERLW: Dragonmark traits replace some of your normal racial traits, as describedin the entry for each Dragonmark.Mark of Detection: The ability scoreincreases work, and with the exception of two spells available to great oldone warlocks, every spell provided by Mark of Detection is new to the Walockspell list. Many of the spells are powerful divination options, offeringgreat utility and scouting options.Mark of Storm: The ability score increaseswork, and while most of the spells arent very good theyre quickly replacedby better options as you gain levels, and easy to replace spells known, andseveral of the better spells arent on the Warlocks spell list.Dragonmarked Half-OrcERLW: Dragonmark traits replace ALL of your racial traits.Mark of Finding: Bad ability spread.Dragonmarked HalflingERLW: Dragonmark traits replace your subrace.Mark of Healing: Bad ability spread.Mark of Hospitality: The ability scoreincreases work well, and the spellcasting is surprisingly good for theWarlock. The innate spellcasting offers useful utility options, and thelow-level spells include great options that scale well with spell

while also potentially banishing the creature to a different plane.In the case of something like a demon from a different plane than what youre on (assuming youre currently on the Material Plane), its sent back home.If the creature is from your current Plane, theyre still out of the combat for up to a minute which gives you and your allies plenty of time to act strategically. Its plenty of time to do some quick healing and ready some actions so that you can dogpile them the second they return from their banishment.Meanwhile, Cone of Cold deals high damage in a large 60-foot cone. If you can line up your enemies just right, it can be completely devastating.The Hexblades features start with a bang at level 1 with Hexblades Curse.As a bonus action, choose one creature you can see within 30 feet of you. The target is cursed for 1 minute.The curse ends early if the target dies, you die, or you are incapacitated.Until the curse ends, you gain the following benefits:You gain a bonus to damage rolls against the cursed target. The bonus equals your proficiency bonus.Attack rolls you make against the cursed target are critical hits on a roll of 19 or 20.If the cursed target dies, you regain hit points equal to your Warlock level + your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1.)Theres a lot here, so lets break it down.Hexblades Curse is a bonus action which means you can put the curse on an enemy right before using your action to start getting the benefits right away.Keep in mind that Hexblades Curse works with more than just your melee attacks. There might be some situations where youll want to throw an Eldritch Blast at your cursed target. In fact, Hexblades Curse applies to each of the attacks from Eldritch Blast which gives it a ton of extra value!Youre dealing extra bonus with your attacks equal to your proficiency bonus which will increase as you continue to level up. Whats more, you have an even better chance to land a critical hit against a cursed target!You may not be recovering a huge amount of hit points from this ability, but its still more than enough to keep you going!This feature can be used once per short or long rest. That might seem limiting, but Warlocks require lots of short rests anyways so you should be fine!Its worth noting that the Hexblades Curse feature does not require concentration. However, the Hex spell does. It can be easy to mix these up and realistically Hex is a great spell to add to your list!This means that you are able to stack Hex and Hexblades Curse.If you really want to get crazy with it, you could even add Bestow Curse (as a 5th level spell if youre able to pick it up via multiclassing or another way) to the mix to completely ruin your enemys day.Once again, just be aware that your smites are concentration spells. If you have cast Hex on a creature then go for a smite, the hex will end!As a frontline combatant, the Hexblade is tougher than the average Warlock thanks to the Hex Warrior feature.You gain proficiency with medium armor, shields, and martial weapons.Not bad at all, but theres more to it than that! Your patron has an extra gift for youWhenever you finish a long rest, you can touch one weapon that you are proficient with and that lacks the two-handed property.When you attack with that weapon, you can use your Charisma modifier instead of Strength or Dexterity for the attack and damage rolls.This benefit lasts until you finish a long rest.If you later gain the Pact of the Blade feature, this benefit extends to every pact weapon you conjure with that feature, no matter the weapons type.Charisma is your most important ability score as a Warlock and now it powers your melee attacks!Its still worth investing in your Dexterity score (though the limits on Medium armor mean theres no real reason to have a Dexterity score higher than 14). If youre so inclined, Strength could even be your dump stat now!If you plan on dual-wielding as a Hexblade, Hex Warrior combines with the Pact of the Blade feature to effectively allow you to have two weapons that use your Charisma to attack.When you hit level 6 as a Hexblade Warlock, your patron teaches you how to make friends.Like literally make friends out of the souls of your slain enemiesOkay, maybe its an unconventional approach but Im not judging!Jokes aside, though, this is one of the more interesting Hexblade features. Unfortunately, its the only one thats a little awkward in practice.When you slay a humanoid, you can cause its spirit to rise from its corpse as a specter. When the specter appears, it gains temporary hit points equal to half your Warlock level.Roll initiative for the specter, which has its own turns. It obeys your verbals commands and gains a special bonus to its attack rolls equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of +0).The specter remains in your service until the end of your next long rest, at which point it vanishes to the afterlife.Once you bind a specter with the Accursed Specter feature, you cant use the feature again until you finish a long rest.As for the specters stats, you can find those in the Monster Manual. It will be fairly helpful in combat for a while but it doesnt exactly scale as you continue to level up. Eventually, it will be more of a scout than anything.Youll want to be mindful of the specific wording and limitations of this feature. It has to be a humanoid and you have to have been the one who dealt the final blow. If both of those criteria are met, youll have a spooky new friend!Related: Specters and Poltergeists in D&D 5eSpecters = best friend material, right?At level 10, you get a handy defensive buff: Armor of Hexes.If the target cursed by your Hexblades Curse hits you with an attack roll, you can use your reaction to roll a d6. On a 4 or higher, the attack misses you, regardless of its roll.This is so good that its almost broken. Your Hexblades Curse is now even more devastating to opponents!If the enemy is able to get past your Armor Class and spells like Blur, you still have a 50% chance for them to miss you. Considering it only costs your reaction, this is an incredible buff to the already impressive Hexblades Curse.The Hexblade Warlocks capstone feature buffs your Hexblades Curse even further.When a creature cursed by your Hexblades Curse dies, you can apply the curse to a different creature you can see within 30 feet of you, provided you arent incapacitated.When you apply the curse in this way, you dont regain hit points from the death of the previously cursed creature.The biggest (and honestly ONLY) downside to the Hexblades Curse feature is that it could potentially feel wasted. Generally, youd want to throw it on the biggest threat to help you take them down. But what if theres an even bigger threat around the next corner and you havent taken a rest?Now, your curse passes from creature to creature. You can throw your curse on one of the weaker enemies, focus them down, and then move the curse to the next one.It might sound like a small buff, but it has major implications. Youll virtually always be running at peak performance in combat with your Hexblades Curse out now!A Hexblade accepts payment for their services.As with all Warlocks, Hexblades choose a Pact Boon at level 3.The Pact Boon that you choose determines what kinds of Eldritch Invocations are available to you and gives you some extra abilities. Each Pact Boon focuses on a different role that your Warlock can play within the party.This is actually a pretty big decision that you have to make.To learn all about Pact Boons and how they work, I recommend checking out my article that fully covers them here. Theres a lot to them that you need to be aware of thats out of the focus of this subclass guide.For now, were going to look at a quick overview of each of the Pact Boon options and how they relate to Hexblade Warlocks.Realistically, however, theres really one option that needs to be considered for most Hexblades.The synergy here is through the roof. Realistically, the Pact of the Blade will be your go-to Pact Boon option as a Hexblade.Be sure to also take the Thirsting Blade and Improved Pact Weapon invocations!Generally, I try to look at why you would or wouldnt take each of the pacts in these guides. But this is the clear and obvious best pick for Hexblades!Theres no Warlock subclass that isnt at least somewhat compatible with the Pact of the Chain.Having a familiar is incredibly useful, but its nowhere near as useful as what Hexblades gain from the Pact of the Blade.Worst case: you still get your specters once you hit level 6!The Pact of the Talisman lets you offer some extra support to your allies.Its not bad, but it doesnt really enhance your role in the way that Pact of the Blade does.Your focus needs to be entirely on maximizing your damage output and combat abilities. Unfortunately, there isnt really anything to the Pact of the Talisman that directly helps you to that end.Just skip this one.Hexblades are plenty capable of casting spells, but theres nothing in the Pact of the Tome for them. The most youd really gain are some utility spells, but theres just no reason to take this over the Pact of the Blade.While Pact of the Tome tends to be my favorite Pact Boon, its just simply not meant for the Hexblade.Square peg meet round hole.Related: Eldritch Invocations in 5e (Plus the Best Invocations For Your Warlock!)While you have no shortage of weapon options, there are some weapons that are especially appealing based on how you build your Hexblade.The standard weapon option for Hexblades is a longsword or rapier. These provide solid damage while also leaving your other hand free.Remember that Hexblades are able to use a shield thanks to the Hex Warrior feature. Using a shield will give you a vital +2 bump to your Armor Class.Considering that you still have lower hit dice than most other frontline martial classes and are restricted to medium armor unless you build towards gaining the Heavily Armored feat, this is a strong choice. The sword and board combo is a classic for a reason!Alternatively, you might swap out a shield for a hand crossbow. Picking up the Crossbow Expert feat gives you an extra ranged attack each round if youd prefer to trade AC for damage output.Related: Feats in D&D 5e (Full Guide + Recommendations!)Speaking of whichThe combination of the Pact of the Blade and the Hexblades Hex Warrior feature means that you can also go for a two-handed weapon build.If thats your goal, Id recommend considering using a halberd or glaive and picking up the Polearm Master feat. Not only do you have reach, but Polearm Master can greatly help you lock down enemies and maximize your damage per round.If you dont plan on grabbing the Polearm Master feat, Id instead recommend going with a greatsword in a two-handed weapon Hexblade build.The default Warlock starting armor is leather, and your top priority at low levels should be getting something sturdier. If you are taking the variant starting equipment, grab some scale mail ASAP with your starting gold.Unless youre building towards gaining proficiency with heavy armor, your best bet as a Hexblade is going to be Half Plate armor.Generally speaking, Half Plate should be sufficient for most Hexblades without requiring too much extra squeezing in your characters build.Connecting a Hexblade character to the partys goals and the game world is actually pretty easy.The entity behind most Hexblades powers is the Raven Queen. She is revered as a deity who presides over life and death from deep within the Shadowfell. Her goals and methodologies are just as cryptic as they are mysterious.(Honestly, I think it would be fun to do an article all about her. If thats something youd like to see, let me know in the comments!)Why the Raven Queen has taken an interest in you is a very open question. What led you to come into contact with her? As a collector of memories, has the Raven Queen begun helping you solve some burning questions in exchange for your service?If you choose to go with another entity as the Hexblades patron, consider basing them on how the Raven Queen operates. She doesnt appear in person but instead will manifest little mementos or appear as dreams or an overall intuition.Hexblades tap into a mysterious power to use their abilities so its only fitting that their patron is similarly mysterious!These are beings that play the long game with those who serve them. A small direction, in the beginning, telling the Hexblade to join the party might simply be the first of many steps towards a much larger goal.Exactly what that goal is, however, remains to be seen.Even with the Pact of the Blade being available right from the start in D&D 5e, Warlocks were still much more of a caster-oriented class. The Hexblade doubles down to create a Warlock that is more than capable of standing on its own in melee combat.Not only is the Hexblade Warlock a very good subclass option, but its also among the best and certainly one of the most popular.In fact, most complaints youre bound to hear about the Hexblade are that its broken because its so good.But is the Hexblade Warlock broken?I wouldnt say so. Taken on its own, it still has the limitations of any Warlock with a low hit die and an incredibly limited amount of spells. While theyre capable of putting out incredible amounts of damage in combat, you still need to play smart and manage your resources effectively.Related: Ranking every Warlock subclass in D&D 5e!The broken part of Hexblades is more related to how strong their first level abilities are. A quick dip into the Warlock class if youre multiclassing can have an immediate major impact on a characters performance abilities.Sure, the Hexblade is a very easy piece of low-hanging fruit for those who like to hyper-optimize their characters, but thats not enough to claim that its broken.At the end of the day, play the character that you want. As it just so happens, the Hexblade has style and the combat prowess to back it up!There you have it: the guide to the Hexblade Warlock in D&D 5e!This is such a crazy good subclass that really stretches the Warlocks typical role and playstyle in a way that still works well.However, because its so different than every other Warlock subclass its kind of easy to get confused on exactly how the Hexblade works.I hope this guide has been helpful to you! If you still have questions about the Hexblade, let me know in the comments and Im happy to help you out!In the meantime, dont forget to sign up for my newsletter below. Its the best way to keep up to date with all of the latest guides, tips, news, and more for D&D 5e!You can also follow me on Facebook and Twitter.If you found this article helpful and want to support the site, you can buy me a coffee here! (Its not expected, but very appreciated!)In this post, we will be examining the Hexblade warlocks class features and how you can optimize your Hexblade warlock through choosing your race, background, ability scores, feats, and spells. Arcane Eye may earn a small commission from affiliate links in this article. Learn more. This guide is meant as a deep dive into the Hexblade Warlock subclass. For a full overview of the Warlock class, check out our warlock 5e Guide. For our full class guides, we use the following color rating scheme: Red: Weak, unlikely to contribute to your build Orange: Situationally good, but below average Green: A solid choice Blue: A great option worth considering Sky Blue: One of the best choices for optimization For our subclass guides, we focus mainly on the Blue and Sky Blue options, because the other options are discussed in the parent guide or other subclass guides. We also discuss options that normally would be good for a typical build, but underperform when used in a subclass. Hexblade Warlocks are warlocks that, in their pact with their patron, gain access to additional combat abilities. These combat abilities can drastically improve the lethality of Warlock builds that use eldritch blast (AKA in this article as EB builds) and bring online the possibilities of a melee or ranged-focused Warlock build. Hexblades are held to similar restraints as typical warlocks in terms of spellcasting, but their Hex Warrior feature allows them to make weapon attacks their CHA, rather than STR or DEX.StrengthsThe Hexblade solves a lot of problems that casters usually have when dipping their toes into weapon combat. The Hex Warrior class feature gives access to armor, shields, and maintainable ability scores all at 1st level. The biggest boon of the Hex Warrior trait allows Hexblades to add their CHA bonus to weapon attack rolls and damage, instead of STR and DEX. This brings melee/ranged Hexblade builds from Multiple-Ability Dependent (MAD) to Single-Ability Dependent (SAD).The Hexblades benefits do not solely benefit melee Warlocks. The medium armor, shields, and the Hexblade Curse provided by the subclass are also beneficial if you want to stay at a distance and use a ranged weapon or eldritch blast.WeaknessesThe Expanded Spell list that Hexblades get is pretty horrendous. This is for a number of reasons:Warlocks have limited spell slots and can only cast them at the highest available slot. shield, blur, and blink, while great defensive spells, dont scale with levels. Casting a 1st-level shield with a 3rd-level spell slot feels bad man.One of the Warlocks best spell, hex, is concentration. For some reason, the smites that Hexblade warlocks get access to are also concentration which negates them as useful spells to use in combat.Melee, Ranged, or EB Hexblade Build?Below is a chart comparing the damage output of melee, ranged, EB Hexblade builds: As you can see, the Hexblade Warlock builds using eldritch blast can certainly outpace melee Hexblade builds, even with all of the benefits the Hexblade subclass provides melee/ranged Warlock opportunists. The fact that eldritch blast has 120ft range, deals 1d10 damage, has a great damage type, stacks with levels, and is a cantrip makes it a pretty hard feature to beat.On top of this, the only invocation that is actually required to optimize EB Hexblade builds is Agonizing Blast. As discussed in our Hexblades Builds, melee/ranged Hexblades require a lot more resources in order to keep their damage on par with their EB counterparts.So, when does a ranged/melee build become more optimal than an EB build? When Feats get brought in. When melee/ranged Hexblade builds are able to utilize Feats such as Great Weapon Master and Sharpshooter to provide boosts in damage, they can end up outputting more damage than EB builds. The tradeoff is of course the number of times the hits actually land, but that can be mitigated with the famous Devils Sight + darkness combo and tends to matter less at higher levels.Eldritch Smite is another resource that melee/ranged Hexblades can use to boost their damage output over EB builds. The best thing to do is wait until crits to use the smite so you can double your damage dice. Doing so allows it to outpace just about any damage spell the Hexblade has access to. This comparison gets wonky when you start to factor in AoE spells with half-damage on saves vs. the guaranteed damage of a smite. A lot smarter people than me will need to do the math one that one.One thing is for sure: EB Hexblade builds take fewer resources (invocations and Feats) to do a similar amount of damage to their melee/ranged counterparts. In my opinion, melee/ranged Hexblade builds are more fun to play in combat because of the variation their invocations and Feats provide. Some may find that out-of-combat, EB builds have more versatility because they can spend fewer resources on combat-oriented features. A great example of this would be going Pact of the Chain and being able to use your familiar as a scout, or taking the Mask of Many Faces invocation + Actor Feat and becoming an infiltration specialist.Before You StartRacesHexblade Warlocks will want to prioritize CHA, get their +2 DEX to max AC, and boost CON to max their HP. If you would like to boost INT or WIS for outside-of-combat checks like Perception, or Arcana then that is also an option.Standard RacesLightfoot Halfling: +1 to CHA, in addition to the bonus to DEX and Lucky from the Halfling traits, is pretty nice.Half-Elf: The +2 CHA, ASI to boost DEX, and skill versatility make this is one of the better races for a Hexblade class.Tiefling:Tieflings get a +2 boost to CHA, a free cantrip, fire resistance, and free spells at higher levels making them a great choice for a Hexblade Warlock.Variant Human: Being able to boost to CHA and DEX and any of the numerous awesome feats for Hexblades is a stellar choice.Non-Standard RacesAasimar: Any of the subraces will work for Hexblade. Fallen and Protector are the best for sure.Changelings: +2 CHA is the best stat boost for a pure CHA caster, and the free ability score increase can be used on either DEX or CON depending on your needs. Since they have access to so many spells, a Hexblade could use Shapechanger in combination with a whole host of Illusion spells to make a pretty sly character.Half-ElfMark of Storm: Certainly a tempting subrace because it offers a number of spells while keeping with a solid ability mod bonus.Tabaxi: DEX makes the class less squishy and CHA is the most important ability score for Hexblade. The rest of the racial traits are very movement-focused, which can be great for a melee Hexblade build. The solid proficiencies are just gravy at this point.Tiefling:Bloodline of Glasya: DEX ASI and some great spells.Bloodline of Levistus: CON ASIs are always welcome as they mean more HP. The spells are solid as well.Tritons: CON and CHA are really the only two ability scores that Hexblades need to worry about outside of a little bit of DEX. Control Air and Water gives you a few more spells to play with.Yuan-ti Purebloods: Yuan-ti Purebloods have everything a Hexblade could want: +2 to CHA, innate spells, and some fantastic defensive traits to keep you alive.Ability ScoresAbility Score Increases (ASI) at 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level.Because of Hex Warrior, you can make weapon attacks with CHA instead of STR or DEX. This brings melee/ranged Warlocks from Multiple-Ability Dependent (MAD) to Single-Ability Dependent (SAD)CHA: Both melee, ranged, and EB Hexblades are mainly reliant on their CHA bonus. It helps face skills, attack bonus, and damage bonus.CON: Because you are truly only reliant on CHA, you can spend a fair amount of your ASIs on helping your mediocre HP. Melee builds will want to put more of a focus into this than ranged/EB builds but both will benefit from the extra hit points and bonuses to Concentration checks.DEX: Hexblades are proficient with medium armor, get your DEX to at least 14 for the +2 to bump your AC.BackgroundsCharlatan: Deception to go with the great CHA and sleight of hand can always be usefulCriminal: Deception and one of the most important skills in 5e, Stealth.Guild Artisan: Insight is always great, even if you have a low WIS. Persuasion is a super useful skill here.Sailor: Perception is the most important skill in the game, taking this background can help balance out the low WIS modifierUrchin: If you dont have a Rogue, grabbing proficiencies in Sleight of Hand and Stealth can help your partys chance of staying sneaky.Hexblade Class Progression1st LevelHit Points and Hit Dice: While its better than a Wizards d6 hit dice, a d8 isnt anything to write home about. Some Hexblades prefer to use their pact weapon to get down and dirty in combat whereas others will prefer to stay at range and fire a ranged weapon or eldritch blasts. Melee Hexblades will find that their meager hit dice and low AC make for a tricky combo in close quarters.Saves: WIS and CHA saves will be great to prevent nasty effects, though they are mainly seen at higher levels. Not having access to CON saving throws hurts melee Hexblades the most and will likely need to be mitigated by either the Resilient (CON) or War Caster feat, or the Eldritch Mind invocation.Proficiencies: While Hexblades can certainly be optimal without closing in, getting access to shields, medium armor, and martial weapons helps your case in melee big time compared to the baseline Warlock proficiencies. EB Hexblades will love the AC boosts as well.Skills: Refer to the 5e Warlock GuidePact Magic: Refer to the 5e Warlock GuideOtherworldly Patron: The HexbladeThe Hexblade Expanded Spells1st LevelShield:This is an amazing option for any melee Fighter. Unfortunately, it doesnt scale with Warlock spell slots. It would feel bad casting anything above a 1st or 2nd level spell on this.Wrathful Smite: Decent smite but doesnt scale with levels and takes concentration so you are unable to keep Hex online.2nd LevelBlur: Again, good option for melee Fighter but doesnt scale with Warlock spell slots. Useful while you can use a 2nd level spell slot for it, not worth it at higher levels.Branding Smite: Does a medium amount of damage and can make an invisible target visible. Also, interferes with hex concentrationNot a solid pick for Warlocks.3rd LevelBlink: 50% chance of completely avoiding any damage for a turn is more consistent over a long period than mirror image. Again, doesnt scale so stop using it when you get to higher levels.Elemental Weapon: The bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls make this a viable option over hex at lower levels. If you have a magical weapon bound that can give you pluses to hit and damage, hex will likely be a better option. The main trade-off to consider is the 1 hour duration for elemental weapon vs 8 hours duration for hex as well as the +1 to hit but lesser damage for elemental weapon and the more potential damage for hex.4th LevelPhantasmal Killer: Great spell that scales and can provide a ton of damage if the creature fails a couple saves.Staggering Smite: Same issue as the other smites. Doesnt scale and requires concentration.5th LevelBanishing Smite: Awesome use of a 5th level spell slot. Can get rid of a single target with one strike.Cone of Cold: Great AoE that is slightly below Fireball damage.Hexblades Curse Essentially a better version of hex as the damage scales with your prof. bonus. This also doubles your chance for a crit when active which can provide huge damage whether youre a melee, ranged, or EB Hexblade. The small amount of healing provided by downing the hexed creature is alright, but really takes off at the 14th level when youre able to transfer the curse to multiple creatures per activation.Hex Warrior Medium armor and shields provide a huge buff to AC. The biggest thing here is being able to make weapon attacks with your CHA bonus and gaining access to martial weapon proficiencies. This makes Hexblade the only Warlock subclass that can use their spellcasting ability for weapon attacks, making melee and ranged builds possible.3rd LevelPact of the Blade: This is necessary melee/ranged warlocks for the awesome invocations granted from this Pact like Improved Pact Weapon andThirsting Blade. EB warlocks will not have a use for this pact.Pact of the Chain: Warlocks will always find utility in the familiar granted by this pact. EB Hexblades in particular will love using the familiars help action to gain advantage and expand their crit possibilities (already improved by Hexblades Curse) even further. The Investment of the Chain Master invocation will allow you to output even more damage by using your familiar to attack with bonus actions. That said, Hexblades have a ton of uses for their bonus action so this will likely only be useful for long fights.Pact of the Talisman: This is a meh option for most Warlocks and that fact doesnt chance with Hexblades.Pact of the Tome: This is the weakest option for Hexblades6th LevelAccursed Specter Great at lower levels and still a decent trick to have at higher levels. It will help out your partys action economy.10th LevelArmor of Hexes Every attack that hits you has a 50% chance of missing from your cursed target. This really comes online at 14th level when you can shift your Curse from creature to creature.11th LevelMystic Arcanum: Refer to the 5e Warlock Guide14th LevelMaster of Hexes This is a powerful ability that will allow you to gain the benefit of Hexblades Curse consistently throughout a battle. Also, it doesnt even require a bonus action or reaction so you can move Hex with your bonus action and Hexblades Curse with Master of Hexes as soon as you kill a creature.20th LevelEldritch Master: Refer to the 5e Warlock Guide.Best Invocations for HexbladesBelow we are going to cover the major changes from our 5e Warlock Eldritch Invocation Guide, as well as what options are optimal for Hexblade builds.No Level RestrictionAgonizing Blast: (eldritch blast) Even melee Hexblades will want to use their extremely potent eldritch blast once in a while. Taking this early on is a no-brainer.Armor of Shadows: Unless the only medium armor option you have available in your campaign is hide armor, this isnt worth picking up for Hexblades.Devils Sight: Pairing this invocation with the darkness spell can give you a massive advantage in combat and stealth. Hexblades in particular will enjoy this invocation because attacking from unseen grants you advantage on your attack rolls. This means crits are all the more likely, especially when combined with Hexblades Curse. If you save your spell slots for Eldritch Smite crits, this can seriously up your damage output. The advantage provided by this combo is also helpful for offsetting the negative bonuses caused by Great Weapon Master or Sharpshooter. Remember that your party probably cant see in magical darkness.Eldritch Mind: Gaining advantage on concentration checks is important for all Hexblades as they will likely want to keep up hex at all costs. Advantage on CON checks is particularly advantageous for melee Hexblades. This invocation also frees up an ASI if youd like to take another feat instead of War Caster.Grasp of Hadar: (eldritch blast) This invocation still isnt great for ranged/EB Hexblades but pulling creatures closer with your eldritch blast can be useful for melee Hexblades.3rd LevelTheres technically no level restriction to these invocations but they are only available once a Warlock gets their Pact Boon at 3rd-level.Improved Pact Weapon: (Pact of the Blade) Automatically make your summoned weapon a +1 magical weapon. Plus, you can now use ranged weapons as your pact weapon. This invocation opens up huge opportunities for Hexblades.5th LevelCloak of Flies: While this is a good invocation for any Warlock build, the close-quarters AoE effect make it particularly shine for melee Hexblade.Eldritch Smite: Finally a Smite that Hexblades can use! The lack of concentration and great prone effect make this a shoe-in after choosing Thirsting Blade for melee/ranged warlocks. Once again, EB builds can skip this one.Maddening Hex: This invocation provides a consistent AoE damage ability that can be taken each round as a bonus action. Hexblades have a ton of uses for their bonus action, but after Hexblades Curse is up this option will likely see a ton of use.Thirsting Blade: This invocation allows you to attack twice with your pact weapon, which is necessary for melee/ranged Hexblades to keep their damage-per-round (DPR) on par with EB builds. EB builds can skip.Tomb of Levistus: Melee Hexblades can certainly find themselves in trouble because of their meager hit dice and relatively low AC. This is a great contingency if things start to look particularly bleak.7th LevelRelentless Hex: (hex spell or a Warlock feature that curses) This feature will be very useful for melee Hexblade builds but can be skipped by just about any other build.9th LevelNot really anything in particular here for Hexblades.12th LevelLifedrinker: An extra 5 necrotic damage per hit helps melee/ranged Hexblades keep pace with EB Hexblades.15th LevelChains of Carceri: (Pact of the Chain) At 15th level, you will likely be running into Celestials and Fiends. Being able to cast this at will is wonderful value, the only caveat is you cant target the same creature twice (without short/long resting in between). This is a must if you are in a campaign that frequents the specified creature types.Shroud of Shadow: Casting invisibility at will without expending a spell slot is pretty insane value for spell-slot starved Warlocks. This is especially true for Hexblades who will be able to crit easier due to Hexblades Curse and have nuclear options like Eldritch Smite when they crit.FeatsWe cover the best feats for Warlocks in our 5e Warlock Guide, the only changes would be:Crossbow Expert: If youre looking to max out a ranged Hexblade build, youll need the Improved Pact Weapon invocation which will allow you to make a heavy crossbow your pact weapon. At 5th level, you can choose the Thirsting Blade invocation to be able to attack twice in a turn. Seeing as the heavy crossbow has the loading property, youll need this feat to allow your Hexblade to fire multiple times per round. From there, you get to have fun. Eldritch Smite for critting from a distance, Sharpshooter for pumping your damage even higher, the possibilities are endless!Great Weapon Master: Great feat for melee builds using Pact of the Blade. You can get advantage easily using darkness and the Devils Sight Invocation to make it more reliable. Keep in mind, you cannot use heavy weapons with your Hex Warrior feature until you choose Pact of the Blade as your Pact Boon.Fey Touched: Misty step is a great spell for any Warlock and is particularly good for melee Hexblades who can regularly find themselves in trouble. Plus, you get to increase your CHA and are able to grab another spell from the divination or enchantment school. This is a go-to option if you end up with an odd CHA score after character creation.Inspiring Leader: As a Hexblade, youll have plenty of CHA to go around. Consider this after youve maxed your CHA for some extra party support.Lucky: Lucky will be especially useful for melee/ranged Hexblades who will be making more attacks than their EB counterparts.Shadow Touched: Invisibility is a great spell and an extra 2nd-level spell goes a long way because of the Warlocks reduced spell list. Melee/ranged Hexblades looking to make the most of Hexblades Curses increased crit chances plus Eldritch Smites nuclear damage will love the advantage granted by invsibility. Plus, you get to increase your CHA and are able to grab another spell from the illusion or necromancy school. This is a go-to option if you end up with an odd CHA score after character creation.Sharpshooter: Combined with the darkness spell and the Devils Sight invocation, ranged Hexblades can get plenty of advantage to offset the negative bonus from Sharpshooter.Polearm Master: Polearm Master is great for getting additional hits off with the melee Hexblades stacked Pact Weapon + Hex + Curse. After putting the hurt on a creature coming into your range, they may think twice before trying again.Sentinel: Another great way to get extra attacks for melee Hexblades. Combined with Polearm Master, this is extremely potent.War Caster: Before Tashas Cauldron of Everything, this was necessary for melee Hexblade builds that want to keep hex up as long as possible. Now, with the Eldritch Mind invocation available, this feat seems like a waste of resources due to the reasonable number of invocations Warlocks get, compared to the meager number of ASIs they are given. This has been adjusted from Light Blue to Orange because of this.SpellsDue to the restrictions put on the Warlocks spellcasting, not a whole lot of changes are made here from the original 5e Warlock Guide.Hexblade Build ExamplesFor our examples, we try to provide realistic examples of character builds. This means using standard races and class features from popular books (Players Handbook, Xanathars Guide to Everything, and Tashas Cauldron of Everything).There are three distinct paths that Hexblades can choose while still following viable playstyles: melee, ranged, and eldritch blast builds. While the playstyles of these builds are unique, the base for each can be quite similar. Each build will focus on CHA as its primary stat, but the melee build will be putting more stock in survivability than the ranged/EB builds.Youll notice that weve chosen the Agonizing Blast invocation for each build, even if were using a ranged/melee weapon. The reasoning behind this is: Agonizing Blast is amazing. An eldritch blast with Agonizing Blast behind it outpaces the damage of melee or ranged attacks in most circumstances. As a melee/ranged Hexblade, its still important to have the option to use your trusty dusty eldritch blast.Below, we outline the class progression each of these archetypes should follow in order to play optimally.Melee Hexblade BuildThis build is focused on marrying attack power with survivability. Melee Hexblades will be up close and personal so we are using a long sword and a shield to pump our AC. In most situations, armor of agathys will be huge to help with your lacking hit points especially because it doesnt require concentration. If you can cast armor of agathys pre-combat, even better because its duration lasts 1 hour.With your defense taken care of, you can begin focusing on your offense. Melee Hexblades have to find a marriage between hex and Hexblades Curse. At higher levels, hex can be kept up all-day whereas Hexblades Curse is only once per short rest for 1 minute. Usually, the game plan past 5th-level is to cast hex at the beginning of the day (usually targetting a rat and killing it so that you can cause another target later). Keep Hexblades Curse for when you really want a tough creature dead if you think there will be multiple encounters between rests.From there, its pretty much free reign. Because Hexblades are forced to cast spells at their highest level and have very little spell slots, they have limited expendable resources for extended battles. If you think youll be able to get a short rest in after the fight, feel free to go nova.1st Level:Race: TieflingDarkvisionHellish ResistanceInfernal Legacy: thalmaturgyClass: WarlockOtherworldly Patron: The HexbladePact MagicCantrips: eldritch blast, green-flame bladeSpells (1st-level): hex, armor of agathysHexblades CurseHex WarriorAbility Scores (Point Buy)Initial: STR 10, DEX 13 (+1), CON 14 (+2), INT 10, WIS 10, CHA 15 (+2)Racial bonuses: +2 CHA, +1 INTFinal: STR 10, DEX 13 (+1), CON 14 (+2), INT 11, WIS 10, CHA 17 (+3)Background: CriminalSkill Proficiencies: Stealth, PersausionTool Proficiencies: Thieves ToolsGaming Set: Dice SetCriminal ContactEquipment (Choose gold over equipment, 4d4 x 10 = average of 100gp):Armor: Chain shirt (45gp)Weapon: Long sword (15gp)Shield (10gp)2nd Level:Eldritch Invocations: Agonizing Blast, Eldritch MindPact MagicSpells (1st-level): 3rd Level:Pact Boon: Pact of the BladeInfernal Legacy Pact MagicSpells (2nd-level):Add: invisibility, mirror imageDrop: shield4th Level:Feat: Fey Touched (CHA) (CHA 18)Spells: misty step, dissonant whispersPact MagicCantrip: Spells (2nd-level): 5th Level:Eldritch Invocations: Thirsting BladeInfernal Legacy Pact MagicSpells (3rd-level):Add: hypnotic pattern, blinkDrop: mirror image6th Level:Accursed SpecterPact MagicSpells (3rd-level):Add: vampiric touch, counterspellDrop: suggestion7th Level:Eldritch Invocations: Improved Pact WeaponPact MagicSpells (4th-level): 8th Level:ASI: +2 CHA (CHA 20)Pact MagicSpells (4th-level): 9th Level:Eldritch Invocations: Eldritch SmitePact MagicSpells (5th-level):Add: synaptic static, dreamDrop: dimension door10th Level:Armor of HexesPact Magic 11th Level:Mystic Arcanum: mass suggestionPact MagicSpells (5th-level):Add: cone of cold, wall of lightDrop: hypnotic pattern12th Level:ASI: +1 DEX, +1 CON (DEX 14, CON 15)Eldritch Invocations: Lifedrinker13th Level:Mystic Arcanum: finger of deathPact MagicSpells (5th-level): 14th Level: 15th Level:Eldritch Invocations: Shroud of ShadowMystic Arcanum: dominate monsterPact MagicSpells (5th-level):Add: enervation, far stepDrop: invisibility16th Level:Feat: Resilient (CON) (CON 16)17th Level:Mystic Arcanum: foresightPact MagicSpells (5th-level): 18th Level:Eldritch Invocations: Maddening Hex19th Level: 20th Level: Ranged Hexblade BuildRanged Hexblades dont come online until 5th-level, when theyre able to pick up the Improved Pact Weapon invocation. Also, because ranged builds wont be in combat as often, they need less resources toward DEX and CON. These resources will instead go towards feats that allow us to maximize our damage.The biggest thing we have to balance is the trade off between invocations, feats, and damage. We want to start off with a longbow so we can get access to a second attack (via Thirsting Blade) as soon as possible. Sharpshooter is our next priority because were going to combine Devils Sight and darkness to get advantage on as many shots as possible. Then, with our next ASI/Feat, we are going to grab Crossbow Master which will allow us to upgrade to a heavy crossbow, or Fighting Initiate (Archery) to improve our to-hit bonus.With all those logistics out of the way, have fun with your insane damage output. The biggest advantage this build is going to have over the EB build is when you land your Sharpshooter shots and when you crit + Eldrtich Smite. This means that youre going to want to look for advantage as much as possible (Devils Sight + darkness and invisibility will help with that) and make liberal use of your Hexblades Curse to double your crit chances.Because weve established a great base for Hexblades in the melee Hexblade build, we are only going to trade out a couple of things to optimize for ranged builds. This means we are going to swap out the melee-focused spells, rearrange our invocations, get new equipment, and trade some ASIs for Feats. These changes will be noted in bold.1st Level:Race: TieflingDarkvisionHellish ResistanceInfernal Legacy: thalmaturgyClass: WarlockOtherworldly Patron: The HexbladePact MagicCantrips: eldritch blast, mind sliverSpells (1st-level): hex, armor of agathysHexblades CurseHex WarriorAbility Scores (Point Buy):Initial: STR 10, DEX 13 (+1), CON 14 (+2), INT 10, WIS 10, CHA 15 (+2)Racial bonuses: +2 CHA, +1 INTFinal: STR 10, DEX 13 (+1), CON 14 (+2), INT 11, WIS 10, CHA 17 (+3)Background: CriminalSkill Proficiencies: Stealth, PersausionTool Proficiencies: Thieves ToolsGaming Set: Dice SetCriminal ContactEquipment (Choose gold over equipment, 4d4 x 10 = average of 100gp):Armor: Chain shirt (45gp)Weapon: Longbow (50gp)2nd Level:Eldritch Invocations: Agonizing Blast, Devils SightPact MagicSpells (1st-level): 3rd Level:Pact Boon: Pact of the BladeInfernal Legacy Pact MagicSpells (2nd-level):Add: invisibility, darknessDrop: shield4th Level:Feat: Fey TouchedSpells: misty step, dissonant whispersPact MagicCantrip: Spells (2nd-level): 5th Level:Eldritch Invocations: Improved Pact WeaponInfernal Legacy Pact MagicSpells (3rd-level): 6th Level:Accursed SpecterPact MagicSpells (3rd-level):Add: thunderstep, counterspellDrop: suggestion7th Level:Eldritch Invocations: Thirsting BladePact MagicSpells (4th-level): 8th Level:Feat: SharpshooterPact MagicSpells (4th-level): 9th Level:Eldritch Invocations: Eldritch SmitePact MagicSpells (5th-level):Add: synaptic static, dreamDrop: dimension door10th Level:Armor of HexesPact Magic 11th Level:Mystic Arcanum: mass suggestionPact MagicSpells (5th-level):Add: cone of cold, wall of light Drop:hypnotic pattern12th Level:Eldritch Invocations: LifedrinkerEquipment: Heavy Crossbow13th Level:Mystic Arcanum: finger of deathPact MagicSpells (5th-level): 14th Level: 15th Level:Eldritch Invocations: Shroud of ShadowMystic Arcanum: dominate monsterPact MagicSpells (5th-level):Add: enervation, far stepDrop: invisibility16th Level: 17th Level:Mystic Arcanum: foresightPact MagicSpells (5th-level): 18th Level:Eldritch Invocations: Maddening Hex19th Level:Feat: Fighting Initiate (Archery)20th Level: Eldritch Blast Hexblade BuildAll Warlocks love eldritch blastand for good reason, its easily the best damage cantrip in the game. However, in my personal opinion, EB builds can get boring. Warlocks dont have a ton of expendable resources, so once the spell slots run dry youre pretty much eldritch blasting until you can get a short rest. While it may not seem that way at first glance, Hexblades are very effective for EB builds. Their medium armor and shield proficiencies will offer a significant AC boost and their Hexblades Curse works perfectly fine because eldritch blast is a spell attack cantrip. EB builds wont have any use for the Hex Warriors weapon feature because they will be relying solely on their eldritch blast. But, as weve seen above, this trait can siphon up a huge amount of resources for little gain against a maxed-out eldritch blasts damage.Below, weve taken the ranged Hexblade build from above and made some modifications. There are far more similarities between the ranged

scoreincreases can work, but the spellcasting isnt especially useful. MagicWeapon wont work on pact weapons, hexblades already get elemental weapon,and there arent enough other good options on the spell list to make up forhow many options arent useful for you.Mark of Passage: Dexterity and Charismaare great, free Misty Step is excellent, and nearly every one of thedragonmark spells is new to the Warlocks spell list.Mark of Sentinel: Bad ability spread.Simic HybridGGTR: The constitution increase is helpful, especially if youre consideringHexblade. Animal Enhancement offers several excellent options as you gainlevels, and saves you the trouble of getting those effects from your limitednumber of spell slots.SatyrMOoT: Dexterity for you AC, Charisma for your spells, Magic Resistance to keepyou alive, and two free skills to help you serve as your partys Face.Dragonborn: Wildemount presents two newDragonborn variants, each replacing the standard Dragonborns ability scoreincreases and damage resistance.DraconbloodEGtW: Roughly equivalent to the standard Dragonborn, but if youre playing yourpartys Face you might enjoy Forceful Presence. Getting Darkvision isusually great, but its less important thanks to Devils Sight.Our Warlock Handbook details advice for warlock feats in general, but a selection of feats which many Hexblades enjoy are presented below.Crossbow ExpertPHB: Hexblades can abolutely make Crossbow Expert work. Hex and HexbladesCurse both benefit greatly from additional attacks, and even EldritchBlast+Agonizing Blast cant keep up with Crossbow Expert, especially onceyou add Lifedrinker. However, this requires your Bonus Action for two roundsto set up, and in that time other warlocks are happily doing other thingswhich dont require resources that need a short rest to recharge. Sincecombats generally last around three rounds, in most cases you can except toget your combo set up and start using the Bonus Action attack from CrossbowExpert an average of once per encounter.Elven AccuracyPHB: This is practically tailor-made for Warlocks, and Hexblades will be able to make great use of it, especially if you follow the melee build detailed below. Triple advantage on a Greatsword makes you very likely to proc Great Weapon Masters bonus attack, and you have several ways to get that going like casting Darkness on a piece of your clothing and using the Devils Sight Invocation or just using Shadow of Moil as written which we discuss in this article.Great Weapon MasterPHB: Hexblades can make effective use of two-handed weapons, which makes thisa possibility. Hexblades curse allows you to score a critical hit againstthe target on a 19-20, which makes it more likely that you can trigger thefirst portion of the feat. If you use Darkness with the Devils Sightinvocation you can easily get Advantage, making the second half of the feata safe and reliable option. However, the weapon which you touch with HexWarrior cant have the Heavy property, and all two-handed weapons have theHeavy property so you cant use Great Weapon Master with that weapon. Onceyou gain Pact of the Blade, your Pact Weapon can be two-handed, and HexWarrior extends to your Pact Weapon.Heavily ArmoredPHB: Tempting for a Hexblade, but the Strength requirements for full platemake heavy armor unappealing.Medium Armor MasterPHB: Heavy armor isnt appealing for Hexblades because of the Strengthrequirements to wear it, so medium armor master can allow you to match heavyarmor AC without caring about Strength. Thats nice, but its also only adifference of +1 AC. A feat is too precious for so little.Polearm MasterPHB: Hexblades can make effective use of polearms. I would probably stick to aquarterstaff or spear (spear was added in errata in 2018) so that you canuse a shield to compensate for the Warlocks relatively poor AC and lowhitpoints, but maybe youre braver than I am. The total damage outputroughly matches that of a Crossbow Expert build and will have higher AC, butyou give up the advantage of range.ResilientPHB: Proficiency in Constitution saves really helps with Concentration, not tomention how common Consitution saves are. If you care primarily aboutConcentration its easy to compare this to War Caster. Advantage works outto a little more than +3, so once your Proficiency Bonus hits +4 Resilientbecomes the more effective option of the two.SharpshooterPHB: Warlocks dont use ranged weapons with the possible exception ofHexblades, but even then Crossbow Expert is a better choice.War CasterPHB: If youre a Hexblade, you want this. Juggling your weapon to cast spellsis annoying, but the ability to reliably maintain Concentration when youtake damage means that you can reliably maintain Concentration even whiledrawing a lot of attacks. For other subclasses, consider Resilient(Constitution) instead because mathematically its more effective thanAdvantage as your Proficiency Bonus increases.Only Blade Pact Warlocks actually need weapons, which generally means thatonly Hexblades should be using them. Your choice of weapon matters fairlylittle, and Pact of the Blade allows you to change your weapon easily (unlessyouve bound a magic weapon), so you can easily choose a weapon to suit thesituation. Hexblades get proficiency with shields, and since warlocks haverelatively low hit dice and hexblades still only get medium armor I think ashield is a good idea most of the time.Also keep in mind that Hex Warrior doesnt allow your touched weapon to havethe Two-Handed property, so if you want to use a two-handed weapon youlldefinitely need Pact of the Blade. Versatile weapons still work, though, andthe difference between a longsword and a greatsword isnt huge.Crossbow, Hand: The go-to for CrossbowExpert builds.Crossbow, Heavy: A good ranged optionuntil you get Crossbow Expert and/or Extra Attack.Glaive / Halberd: Great for two-handedmelee builds, it has reach, and it works with Polearm Master.Greatsword: Your go-to for two-handedmelee builds unless you want reach and or intend to take Polearm Master.Longbow: A decent ranged weapon, but itcant come close to the damage output of a Crossbow Expert build so its nota good primary weapon. If youre built for melee, the Longbow will be a goodranged option once you pick up Extra Attack.Longsword / Rapier: Interchangeable ifyoure using Hex Warrior. A good go-to for sword-and-board builds unless youwant the reach from a whip.Spear / Quarterstaff: Want to combine thedurability of sword-and-board with the number of attacks (and therefore thedamage output) of Crossbow Expert or two-weapon fighting? Grab a spear or astaff and pick up Polearm Master.Whip: One-handed and reach mean that youdont need to be in enemies reach to attack, and you can still hold ashield in your other hand. The damage difference of 1d4 vs. 1d8 fromsomething like a longsword seems significant, but when you consider the flatbonuses added by your various class features, the difference of 2 damage onaverage is negligible.Leather: The Warlocks starting armorunless you take the 100 gp starting equipment variant. The Warlocksstarting gear was written long before the Hexblade, and it doesnt accountfor the possibility of medium armor proficiency.Scale Mail: Take the 100 gp startingequipment variant so that you can start with scale mail or youll bepinching coppers until you can afford decent armor before you can riskdiving into melee.Half Plate: Your permanent armor.Shield: Great since youre in mediumarmor with d8 hit dice, but many hexblades go for two-handed weapons orCrossbow Expert so theyre force to give up a shield.The Hexblade Warlock likely needs to keep a melee weapon in-hand both forattacking on their own turn and for making opportunity attacks. They alsoprobably have a shield. Unfortunately, that means that youll need toconstantly draw/store your weapon to get a free hand with which to cast spellsunless youre using a two-handed weapon or a hand crossbow, or if you havePact Weapon.If you need to draw a Spellcasting Focus or Material Components, it could require you to spend your item interaction on two successive turns to switch from a weapon to a focus or from a focus to a weapon. Because this can be a problem and will often leave you empty-handed between turns, try to use spells that lack Material and Somatic components whenever possible until you can pick up Improved Pact Weapon, which conveniently allows your Pact Weapon to serve as a spellcasting focus.The Warlock Spell List Breakdown already includes notes about Hexblade/Pactof the Blade uses for spells but let me just plug Armor of Agathys again here.It has some of the best scaling in the game. When you get access to 5th-levelspell slots, even if something hits you twice for 24 damage each time, itsstill going to take 50 damage and youre only taking 23 of the 48 you couldhave been taking.I traded my soul for the ability to stab things really hard. Seems fair.This build leans into the Hexblades ability to use weapons more effectively than your typical warlock. Using spells like Armor of Agathys and Shadows of Moil to improve our durability, plus weapon-focused Eldritch Invocations and the Great Weapon Master feat, we create a durable melee threat with incredible damage output and Warlock spellcasting to fall back on for utility.Example warlock miniature from our friends at Heroforge. (affiliate link)We will assume the point buy abilities suggested above. Half High Elf gives us +2 Charisma, +1 Dexterity, and +1 Constitution.BaseIncreasedStr88Dex1516Con1516Int88Wis88Cha1517Half High Elf gives us easy access to the Booming Blade Cantrip, meaning we can walk out with that, Sword Burst, and Eldritch Blast, guaranteeing our capacity to do optimal damage in any situation. It also qualifies us as an Elf for the purposes of feat prerequisites and gives us a great ability spread.Take Faction Agent to get proficiency in Insight and trade Intimidation for Persuasion. Keep one campaign-appropriate language and turn the other into Thieves Tools proficiency. With a Dex this high, you could also make a viable Scout if your party doesnt have one. If you want to lean harder into Scout, drop Insight, hope your DM doesnt feel like lying to you very much, pick up Stealth, and wear a Breastplate.Take Deception and Intimidation from Warlock. We get Insight, Persuasion, and a language from our background, giving us the full compliment of Face skills.At 4 we take Elven Accuracy and immediately start abusing it. This also lets us raise Charisma to 18.At 8 we take Great Weapon Master.At 12 we finish capping Charisma.At 16 we take War Caster.At 19 we take an ASI in Constitution.LevelFeat(s) and FeaturesNotes and Tactics1Otherworldly Patron (The Hexblade)Hexblades CurseHex WarriorPact MagicSpells Known: Wrathful Smite HexCantrips: Booming Blade Eldritch Blast Sword Burst (Racial)For your starting equipment, take the money instead of the regular starting equipment and buy yourself scale mail, a longsword, and a shield.Your AC is already up to 18 and you want to get into melee as quickly as possible to start dishing out those Booming Blade or Green-Flame Blade hits.At this level, youve got one spell slot and youve got Hexblades Curse, and managing those two resources until you reach a short rest is crucial. With your spell slot, you need to decide if Wrathful Smite or Hex is a better choice. Wrathful Smite only works on one hit, but you dont need to worry about maintaining Concentration for very long and the fear effect may be very helpful.Hex will deal more damage in total and the other effects can be useful, but it may be hard to maintain Concentration and it can be redundant with Hexblades curse since the damage boosts are similar. Hexblades Curse only works on one target and cant be moved, so save it for something which you know will take a lot of damage to bring down.Eldritch Blast is still your primary ranged attack and will be forever since were focusing on melee for this build. You could technically change your pact weapon to a bow temporarily, but usually you wont use it long enough to justify the actions to change weapons.2 Eldritch Invocation: Fiendish Vigor Devils Sight New Spell Known: Protection from Evil and GoodFalse Life is great for temporary hit points until Armor of Agathys starts scaling, so well use Fiendish Vigor for now. Devils sight allows for excellent shenanigans later on.3Pact Boon (Pact of the Blade)New Spell Known: Armor of AgathysRetrain Fiendish Vigor ->Improved Pact Weapon.Retrain Spell: Protection from Evil and Good -> BlurRemember that part where spellcasting in melee was a chore? Not any more as Improved Pact Weapon not only increases your chance to hit and damage but also turns whatever weapon you use into a focus, meaning life is much easier on the front lines. Our spell slots also reach 2nd level, which means that our new spell gives us 10 temp hp and does 10 cold damage to attackers a minimum of once.Blur loses some of the niche protections against the handful of creature types covered but you really want that disadvantage on being attacked to apply to everything. Its also one minute instead of 10, but that will rarely matter.4Feat: Elven Accuracy (Cha 17 -> 18)New Cantrip: Mage HandNew Spell Known: DarknessCast Darkness on your clothes, then Booming Blade an enemy with super advantage and watch them take damage as they try to escape to a place where they can see. Take your Reaction to attack them with Advantage as they leave. Its a good time.While youre slightly below target DPR at this level with melee attacks, if the target moves from your Booming Blade to somewhere it isnt in magical darkness, we go from 20% under target to 20% over target with an additional 80% of target coming in the form of an Opportunity Attack.5New Eldritch Invocation: Thirsting BladeNew Spell Known: FlyFlying is always good, even if youre primarily a melee character. Thirsting Blade is going to do some real good work for you later on when we transition to a two-hander and its pretty good already, bringing us up to 45% over target DPR.6Accursed SpecterNew Spell Known: CounterspellNothing interesting at this level, but Counterspell is an excellentway of shutting down casters trying to keep your sword away fromthem.7New Eldritch Invocation: Eldritch SmiteNew Spell Known: Phantasmal KillerPhantasmal Killer is a great choice for locking down something you expect to fail the save. Make it afraid of you and leave it in the corner.So, we currently crit once on 26% of turns assuming we can get advantage from a source like Darkness. If we save our second slot for Eldritch Smite, that will be +10d8 of damage 26% of the time, leading to an additional ~2.5d8 of damage into the calculation or ~10 total DPR, bringing us up over 30 which sticks us into High DPR territory, all while maintaining a reasonably high AC and having Darkness permanently on us. But these numbers are on any target, not something with Curse on it. Lets check that out at next level.8Feat: Great Weapon MasterNew Spell Known: Shadow of MoilSo now your playstyle radically changes. You have the tools available to protect yourself enough that a shield is no longer necessary and you can transition to having two swings of a greatsword as your Action. This is enormous damage, particularly if the target is remaining stationary trying to hit us back.Shadow of Moil is truly one of the best things that ever happened to us. Reactive damage is the gravy on top of having Advantage on all attacks and Disadvantage to your attackers. It also makes it so were not blinding our party to make use of our obscuring shenanigans. The only issue is the expensive material component, but we were waiting to take this and a feat at the same time for the tactics change anyway.Since were leaning into alternative defensive measures, trading away the now-relatively-small number of temp HP for more damage when we cant get into melee is the icing on this levels cake.Lets see what this finally works out to on a target youve Cursed. Assuming you have advantage from Shadow of Moil and the target is Cursed, youre hitting 54.4 DPR, less than 15% shy of the Dude Stop value for this level. Admittedly that takes a turn of setup, but even two turns of that is 20% over High DPR and youre doing it while largely invisible. If you do crit, thats a bonus action for another 15 DPR from our new feat, bringing us fully into Dude Stop territory on that turn.If we actually turn the power attack portion on, were instead looking at 63 DPR and over 100 on a turn we crit. This is enough to kill many things single-handedly, although youre going to be very bursty as it all relies on critting.9New Eldritch Invocation: Agonizing BlastNew Spell Known: Banishing SmiteRetrain Spell: Wrathful Smite -> Cone of ColdPact Magic means that having more than one smite spell is fairly useless, so just take the best one. Sure, Frightened was a little cute, but if you really want something Frightened on a spell slot, you have Phantasmal Killer anyway.We take Cone of Cold for Area of Effect damage because its the one thing we cant really do right now.Agonizing Blast lets us keep up decent damage if we cant find a melee target.10Armor of HexesNew Cantrip: Green-Flame Blade / Booming BladeYour curse target now has an even harder time hitting you on top of whatever magical defenses youre wearing.I would personally wait this long to pick up Green-Flame Blade because more things resist fire than thunder and Booming Blade might make things stay next to you, which you often want.11Mystic Arcanum: Conjure FeyNew Spell Known: AnyYou dont have much utility, and having a once per day anything from a huge flying snake to carry yourself and a friend for an hour to getting a legend lore and/or scrying out of your summoned dusk hag is a pretty great deal.12Ability Score Improvement: Charisma 18 -> 20New Eldritch Invocation: Life DrinkerWe cap Charisma and get the final invocation were likely to care about, adding our newly bumped charisma modifier to damage again. If we take the penalty to hit from Great Weapon Master, with the current spell slot level factored into Smiting, were looking at Dude Stop DPR numbers, even without the bonus attack from GWM.This is, unfortunately, the last time they really go up except for the Smite and Curse numbers getting slightly larger, but a) many campaigns dont even get to this level, much less far beyond and b) even at level 20, the amount of damage were dealing now is still 35% over High DPR.13Mystic Arcanum: Force CageNew Spell Known: AnyForce Cage is still good for all the same reasons. Trap a big scarything in it while you cleave through all its friends and then go backto finish it off last.14Master of HexesIgnore the ability name, start Hexblades Cursing things more often. Itll now spread through fights, although you dont get the heal if you make it jump to a new person. At this level, though, thats another +5 damage per weapon hit, which will help you cleave through hordes.15New Eldritch Invocation: Visions of Distant RealmsMystic Arcanum: Dominate MonsterNew Spell Known: AnyYou are now also the nearly the best scout in existence. Cast Arcane Eye and send it wherever you need. Between this and your summoned fey, you have a surprising amount of utility for someone who swings a big heckin sword.For this levels Mystic Arcanum, well take Dominate Monster. It allows us to non-lethally remove a problematic creature, but it gives you more direct control over the target. If you do it right, you can dominate one monster and walk it into the next encounter or two like an extra party member.16Feat: WarcasterIs it a little late? Yes. Is it better than never? Also yes. Now you can attack someone on your turn and still booming blade them if they try to walk away. Advantage on Concentration is also very nice.17Mystic Arcanum: ForesightNew Spell Known: AnyWhat if the best parts of Shadow of Moil lasted 8 hours and didnt consume your Concentration? Foresight.18New Eldritch Invocation: Witch SightWitch sight? This one, of course.19Ability Score Improvement: Con 16 -> 18New Spell Known: AnyNothing notable here, but youre even more durable than you werebefore.20Eldritch Master20th level is a bit dry, unfortunately. Eldritch Master lets you askfor your spell slots back once per day without completing a shortrest, which saves you 59 minutes once a day.Random Powell. RPGBOT.Podcast co-host and RPGBOT contributing author. Random started playing D&D around 2003 and met Tyler just a couple years later. Thousands of hours of play and theorycrafting later (much of it with Tyler), he was grateful to be offered an outlet to exorcise some of the head full of characters and imagined arguments with DMs about how semantics relate to spell effects.

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