

LEVEL 0 CHARACTERS

BY GAVIN NORMAN AND BRAD KERR

This article presents alternative character creation rules for rolling up normal human characters of level 0. This can be useful for fleshing out retainers. Alternatively, in some campaigns PCs might start play at level 0—see *Funnel Adventures*.

ROLLING A LEVEL 0 CHARACTER

1. Roll Ability Scores

Roll 3d6 for each of your character's ability scores: Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma.

Sub-par characters: You must keep whatever scores you roll. (Unlike rolling a 1st level adventurer.)

2. Note Ability Score Modifiers

Make a note of any bonuses or penalties associated with your ability scores.

3. Note Attack Values and Saves

THACO: 20 [−1]

Saves: D14 W15 P16 B17 S18

4. Roll Hit Points

Roll 1d4 for your character's hit points, modified by CON as usual. Characters always start with at least 1 hit point, regardless of CON modifier.

Re-rolling 1s and 2s: You must keep whatever hit points you roll. (Unlike rolling a 1st level adventurer.)

5. Choose or Roll Alignment

Decide whether your character is Lawful, Neutral, or Chaotic.

When creating multiple level 0 characters (e.g. for use in a funnel adventure), you can roll 1d6 for alignment: 1–2: Lawful, 3–4: Neutral, 5–6: Chaotic.

6. Languages

All characters speak Common. Characters with high INT also speak additional languages.

7. Roll Background and Items

Roll on the background table corresponding to your character's hit points. See *p14*. Your background determines an item and a weapon in your possession.

8. Note Armour Class

Unless your profession indicates that you have armour, your character is unarmoured, with a base AC of 9 [10], modified by DEX as usual.

9. Name Character

Finally, name your character. You can choose a name or roll on the tables on *p14*. You are now ready for adventure!



Level 0 Demihumans (Optional Rule)

Optionally, 1-in-6 level 0 characters is a demihuman. Roll 1d4: 1. dwarf, 2. elf, 3. gnome, 4. halfling.

All demihumans speak additional native languages and have a 2-in-6 chance of hearing noises when listening at a door. Each race also has its own boons:

Dwarf: Infravision to 60'. 2-in-6 chance of detecting room traps when searching.

Elf: Infravision to 60'. Immunity to ghoulish paralysis.

Gnome: Infravision to 90'. +2 AC when attacked by large opponents.

Halfling: +1 to missile attack rolls. +2 AC when attacked by large opponents.

EXPERIENCE POINTS AND ADVANCEMENT

After gaining XP on an adventure, a level 0 character becomes a 1st level adventurer. This is handled as follows.

1. Choose a Class

Choose a character class that the level 0 character graduates into, bearing in mind the minimum ability score requirements of some classes. Class selection can be based on the character's ability scores, background, or deeds at level 0.

Demihuman characters: May select the equivalent demihuman class.

2. Roll Hit Points

Roll the Hit Die type for the chosen class and apply the character's CON modifier. If this number is higher than the character's hit points rolled at level 0, this becomes their new hp total. Otherwise, the character keeps the hp rolled at level 0.

Re-rolling 1s and 2s: The referee may allow the player to re-roll 1s and 2s.

Funnel Adventures

Funnel adventures were popularised by the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* RPG. In a funnel, a large group of level 0 characters is whittled down to a small number of survivors, who then go on to become full 1st level PCs. A funnel can be a fun way to start a campaign and provides a compelling backstory of the deeds that led PCs to a life of adventure together.

- 1. Roll characters:** Players roll up a group of 10–20 level 0 characters. These are everyday folk whose village is threatened by some evil force.
- 2. Embark on adventure:** The characters venture forth into peril to save their village. Any normal adventure suitable for 1st level characters can be used (for example, the adventure in this issue—see p26).
- 3. Play:** During the adventure, each player controls 3–5 of the characters. Lacking the skills of true adventurers, they must rely on their collective wits and creativity to overcome the odds. It is likely that some individuals will have to sacrifice their lives for the good of the group.
- 4. Survivors:** Of the characters who survive the adventure, some are inspired to take up the life of an adventurer. Each player picks one of the survivors as their PC for the continuing campaign, choosing a character class and advancing them to 1st level as discussed in this article.



JERRY BOUCHER

BACKGROUND TABLES

* Character can memorise and cast this spell once per day. See *Cantrips*, p10.

1 Hit Point Backgrounds

d12	Profession	Item	Weapon
1	Acolyte	Incense, holy symbol	Mace (1d6)
2	Actor	2 × masks, 2 × costumes	Stage sword (1d4)
3	Alchemist's apprentice	<i>Potion of healing</i>	Club (1d4)
4	Artist	Parchment, paint, brush	Hammer (1d4)
5	Beggar	Wooden bowl	Walking stick (1d4)
6	Jeweller	Ostentatious jewellery (25gp)	Dagger (1d4)
7	Juggler	Juggling balls	3 × daggers (1d4)
8	Money lender	50gp	Mace (1d6)
9	Scribe	3 × parchment, ink pot, quill	Staff (1d4)
10	Trumpet player	Trumpet	Rock (1d3)
11	Wealthy heir	Signet ring, perfume	Jewelled dagger (1d4)
12	Wizard's apprentice	Spell book (1 random cantrip) *	Dagger (1d4)

2 Hit Point Backgrounds

d12	Profession	Item	Weapon
1	Butcher	Dried meat (5 days' iron rations)	2 × daggers (1d4)
2	Butler	Livery, silver serving tray	Hand axe (1d6)
3	Cook	Salt, skillet, onion	Dagger (1d4)
4	Fletcher	Bag of feathers	Shortbow (1d6) + 10 arrows
5	Gambler	Dice	Club (1d4)
6	Horse thief	A horse	Spear (1d6)
7	Innkeeper	3 × bottles of wine	Crossbow (1d6) + 10 bolts
8	Navigator	Compass, parchment, chalk	Crossbow (1d6) + 10 bolts
9	Shepherd	Pole (10' long, wooden)	Sling (1d4) + 10 stones
10	Tailor	Needle, thread, bag of buttons	Scissors (1d4)
11	Trader	Rare, fragrant spices	Crossbow (1d6) + 10 bolts
12	Weaver	Hand loom, yarn	Scissors (1d3)

Example Names

Human (d20): 1. Beska, 2. Brag, 3. Bran, 4. Doram, 5. Dougal, 6. Esme, 7. Estra, 8. Glendor, 9. Grame, 10. Hawk, 11. Marga, 12. Morgan, 13. Morgo, 14. Ralt, 15. Rosa, 16. Theodor, 17. Thyra, 18. Wilberd, 19. Wynn, 20. Yor.

Dwarf (d12): 1. Bhargi, 2. Dorm, 3. Fimbul, 4. Ghandar, 5. Gilda, 6. Gorm, 7. Krago, 8. Magra, 9. Nifdel, 10. Smarag, 11. Thorgrum, 12. Ulfinn.

Elf (d12): 1. Arianwen, 2. Armoviel, 3. Atheldwen, 4. Glind, 5. Heldor, 6. Ingvalor, 7. Lindra, 8. Luna, 9. Mezlo, 10. Orlandiel, 11. Orthiel, 12. Questor.

† **Save vs paralysis** or be unable to move or act. Save again each round to escape.

3 Hit Point Backgrounds

d12	Profession	Item	Weapon
1	Bowyer	Saw	Longbow (1d6) + 10 arrows
2	Cooper	Barrel	Hammer (1d4)
3	Executioner	50' rope	Battle axe (1d8)
4	Fisher	Net	Spear (1d6)
5	Groom	Brush	Pitchfork (1d6)
6	Hermit	Spell book (1 random cantrip) *	Staff (1d4)
7	Kennel master	A dog	Staff (1d4)
8	Leatherworker	A bearskin	Awl (1d4)
9	Limner	Lantern, 2 × oil flasks, paint	Staff (1d4)
10	Sailor	Bottle of rum, 50' rope	Belaying pin (1d4)
11	Teamster	50' rope	Whip (1d2, hits entangle †)
12	Trapper	Bear trap (1d6)	Club (1d4)

4 Hit Point Backgrounds

d12	Profession	Item	Weapon
1	Armourer	Chain mail	War hammer (1d6)
2	Barber surgeon	Bottle of strong spirits	Razor (1d4)
3	Blacksmith	Tongs, apron	War hammer (1d6)
4	Carpenter	Saw	Hand axe (1d6)
5	Farmer	A pig	Pitchfork (1d6)
6	Forester	Tent	Shortbow (1d6) + 10 arrows
7	Hunter	Whistle	Longbow (1d6) + 10 arrows
8	Mason	A bag of rocks	Rock (1d4)
9	Miner	Lantern, 2 × oil flasks	Pick axe (1d6)
10	Shipwright	Pot of tar	Hand axe (1d6)
11	Squire	Pole (10' long, wooden), flag	Shortsword (1d6)
12	Weaponsmith	Tongs, apron	Sword (1d8)

Gnome (d12): 1. Blunder, 2. Dunkle, 3. Froume, 4. Gilligan, 5. Horiddle, 6. Jingred, 7. Loom, 8. Lorum, 9. Nink, 10. Quindle, 11. Vex, 12. Viggle.

Halfling (d12): 1. Daisy, 2. Ferret, 3. Fink, 4. Gilly, 5. Jopher, 6. Largo, 7. Margold, 8. Nickle, 9. Pendor, 10. Righto, 11. Thomwise, 12. Twilly.

