



0-Level Characters

For D&D 4e

Created by King Nate

Creating 0-level rules for 4e.

In creating these rules, I looked at the different 0-level rules created for previous editions for inspiration. I didn't like how, in all the rules I looked at, that the rules were a completely different set of rules used just for 0-level characters and that it didn't feel like the D&D game from 1st Level and on.

I wanted to create rules that made 0-level characters play the same way as any other level characters in 4e just with more limitations, and without the DM having to keep track of an alignment table or which weapons you have swung and how many times you swung it.

Why play a 0-level character?

Because there are some great roleplaying opportunities with a 0-level character that you truly cannot have with 1st Level characters.

Here are a few reasons to start players at 0-level;

Extremely new player: This person has never played an RPG of any kind. They don't even know what RPG stands for. By starting this player at 0-level you limit their choices in combat and don't overflow them with multiple at-wills, encounters, and dailies. You teach them the basic a little bit at a time.

Backgrounds: Maybe you have some free time on your hands before the campaign starts but a player really wants to play. You can create his character as a 0-level and you guys go through his background getting him to the place he starts in the campaign. This will give him a

whole lot more detailed background and might even spark a few other ideas for the campaign as you play.

Nostalgic "Feel": Remember the days when the starting characters were so weak that a scratch from a housecat could kill them? Well 4e 0-level characters are not that weak but playing them will remind you of the days when your characters were truly scared to go into that dungeon.

What do the players get for playing a 0-level character?

The game usually starts players at 1st Level, as heroes ready to save the world. Starting out as 0-level will make the campaign longer, taking longer to reach 30th Level, gives the players less powers than if they had started normally. Not to mention that characters can die really easy as 0-level characters.

It is suggested that players willing to go through with the 0-level start should receive something a little extra upon reaching 1st Level. Fitting within the current guidelines of the character advancement table in the PHB, we will add to the 1st Level Ability Score section a +1 to all ability scores for reaching 1st Level.

Note: According to the PHB page 11, when you round down you must end up with a whole number. Now the smallest whole number you can have is 0. So the number that is half of 0-level is 0.

THE PLAYER'S GUIDE

TO 0-Level CHARACTERS

Creating a Character

You follow the same 9 steps listed in the PHB (page 14) when creating a 0-level character as you do when creating a 1st Level character. Though there are a few changes to the steps as listed below.

Character Creation Steps

1) When choosing your Race you gain all the abilities of that race. If an ability specifically states that the ability is gained at 1st Level then you will not get that racial ability until you reach 1st Level. For example; the half-elf's Dilettante ability or the Human's Bonus Feat ability.

2) When choosing your Class use the following Template to help figure your class traits:

Class Traits

Role: As described in the class you have chosen.

Power Source: As described in the class you have chosen.

Key Abilities: As described in the class you have chosen.

Armor Proficiencies: None

Weapon Proficiencies: None

Implement: As described in the class you have chosen

Bonus to Defense: None

Hit Points a 0-level: Calculate as a 1st Level Character then subtract 'Hit Points per Level Gained' from the total.

Hit Points per Level Gained: As described in the class you have chosen, except at 0-level you subtract these points from your starting Hit Points.

Healing Surges Per Day: As described in the class you have chosen.

Trained Skills: You are trained in any predetermined skill required for your class, but cannot choose to be trained in any other skills until you reach 1st level.

Build Options: Become available upon reaching 1st level.

Class Features: As described in the class you have chosen.

3) Your ability scores are determined as normal or as you DM sees fit for his campaign.

4) You are only trained in skills listed in your Race (Eladrin Education) or predetermined skills for the Class you have chosen (Arcana for Wizards). You cannot choose training in any other class skills until you reach 1st Level.

5) Starting Characters only start with bonus feats given to them from their chosen Class. There is another Feat option listed in the Special 0-level Rules Section (see below) that can be taken if the player wishes.

6) 0-level characters start the game with one 1st level At-will power offered by their chosen Class. (Humans receive a second one).

7) Check with your DM to see how much starting money your character begins with to purchase equipment.

8) & 9) These two steps remain the same as described in the PHB.

Note: If you are playing with regional background bonuses you will receive this bonus at 0-level.

Character Advancement

Character Advancement works just like normal D&D except 0-level characters begin the game with -500 XP. When a 0-level character builds up his XP to 0, he advances to 1st Level.

Mechanically the Novice Tier works as if it was the Heroic Tier when it comes to choosing feats and such. The separation is noted only for future reference incase I want to expand on these rules. (yes, of course I have ideas filed away)

0-level characters are not part of the Heroic Tier, they are part of the special Novice Tier.

The Character Advancement Table from the PHB (page 29) is updated here:

The Modified Character Advancement Table from PHB page 29

Total XP	Level	Ability Scores	Powers and Features	Feats Known	Total Powers Known (At-will/Encounter/Daily/Utility)
-500	0	See race	Class features as described below; racial traits; gain 1 at-will attack power	0*	1/0/0/0
0	1 st	+1 to all	Class features as described in the PHB; gain 1 feat; train starting skills; gain 1 at-will attack power; gain 1 encounter attack power; gain 1 daily attack power.	1**	2/1/1/0

*Some classes grant feats.

**Humans gain one additional feat at 1st level.

Advancing to 1st Level

Once you become 1st Level you will gain the following:

- You now have access to your Classes Armor and Weapon Proficiencies.
- Your Classes Bonus to Defense will be as described for the class you have chosen.
- You will gain hit points as described under your Classes 'Hit Points per Level Gained'.
- You are now able to choose training in Skills as described in the class you have chosen.
- Any Racial abilities that require you to be 1st Level are now accessible.
- You gain 1 Feat
- You gain one 1st Level At-will attack power, one 1st level encounter attack power and one 1st Level daily attack power.

Special 0-level Rules

1st Level At-will Powers: Any 0-level character with a 1st Level At-will power is able to use it while at 0-level.

Action Points: 0-level characters start with no action points. They can only gain action points by reaching a milestone. After taking an extended rest they lose any action points they haven't spent and upon waking up, have 0 action points once again.

Second Wind: 0-level characters cannot perform the heroic Second Wind combat action. They must rely on other means to use their Healing Surges.

Fumbles: Since 0-level characters are not fully trained they are susceptible to the fumble rules detailed in the DMG page 189. Once they become 1st level they will no longer have this hindrance.

Rituals: Characters that have access to rituals at 1st level also have access to the rituals at 0-level. 0-level characters can cast 1st level rituals at twice the time it would take them to cast the spell at 1st level. Everything else, including the component cost, remains the same.

Cantrips: Characters with cantrips gain the use of all their cantrips at 0-level instead of 1st Level.

Retraining: While there is nothing different about retraining in the 0-level rules, I just wanted to indicate that it can be done at 1st Level.

Feat instead of At-will: The player has the option to choose a feat rather than choosing an at-will power from his class. If he takes this option he does not gain a new feat at 1st level, but instead gain two at-will powers at first level instead of one.

Class abilities that deal extra damage: Some class abilities deal extra damage in certain situations, sneak attack for example. When a 0-level character uses these abilities, they are performed as if they were a 1st level character, but with the damage halved.



This PDF was created by King Nate for use with the Dungeons and Dragons 4th Edition rules.

King Nate DMs Play by Post games on www.thetangledweb.net.

THE DUNGEON MASTER GUIDE

TO 0-Level CHARACTERS

Running a 0-level adventure should be like running any other level adventure. There is no extra alignment charts to keep track of, no “testing” weapons and spells by counting the number of times a player uses them.

The main thing to remember when running 0-level characters is to avoid making it feel like a 1st level adventure. Players with 0-level characters want to feel as if their characters are learning the ropes, and while not quite a hero yet, they want to slowly become heroes.

Some ideas for 0-level campaigns:

Apprenticeship: The characters are still learning their chosen profession. They have a mentor teaching them.

Adventure idea: The mentor sends the characters on a coming of the age quest, or the mentor is captured and needs the help of his students.

Peasants: The characters are farmers, herdsman, peasants who show great promise of making something of themselves.

Adventure idea: Their town/farm/sheep is under attack by some recently moved into the area monsters. With no real adventures around to help, these characters take to arming themselves and taking matters into their own hands.

Slaves: Born into slavery or peasants recently captured and turned into slaves. They usually start out with nothing.

Adventure idea: Either the characters escape their masters or are released; they must now fend for themselves.

Children: The characters are just reaching puberty and are now finding out what kind of trouble they can get themselves into.

Adventure idea: Finding themselves the target of a double-dog dare, the children leave their safe point of light and head into the darkness or a group of bandits came through their village killing all the adults, the adventurer children escape capture but now must figure out how to survive.

Finding Instructors: The characters are on the verge of becoming heroes but need to be trained.

Adventure idea: The entire 0-level portion of the campaign can be a hunt for someone skilled at the player's class so that they can be trained into 1st Level.

Prisoners: The characters have or are spending years of time in a dungeon. They usually start out with nothing.

Adventure idea: The characters were framed for a crime they didn't commit and now must escape and prove their innocence. Or maybe they did commit the crime but after escaping must live the life of an adventurer or face the consequences of their crime.

Actions the Rules Don't Cover

The Actions the Rule Don't Cover on page 42 of the DMG is very useful when dealing with things outside the printed rules, but it doesn't include 0-level characters. Well here is the updated table for those actions.

Difficulty Class and Damage by Level Table DMG page 42

Level	Difficulty Class (DC) Values		
	Easy	Moderate	Hard
0	3	8	13

Level	Normal Damage Expressions		
	Low	Medium	High
0	1d4+2	1d8+2	2d6+2

Level	Limited Damage Expressions		
	Low	Medium	High
0	3d4+2	2d8+2	2d10+2

0-level Monsters

Using the guidelines in the DMG page 174 you can turn a 1st Level monster into a 0-level monster by decreasing its level by one. You can also create your own 0-level monsters as described in the DMG page 184 (remember level equals 0 and zero times any number is zero.)

You can use the Normal Damage Expressions and Limited Damage Expressions tables above to determine damage dealt by the 0-level monster you've created.

Here is the XP values for the 0-level monsters you create.

Modified Experience Point Rewards Table DMG page 120

Monster Level	Standard Monster	Minion	Elite	Solo
0	50	12	100	250

Creating Encounters for 0-level parties:

For the most part you do things as normal. Here is a modified Target Encounter XP Total table from DMG page 57. It should help spending an XP budget for the encounter.

Modified Target Encounter XP Total Table DMG page 57

Encounter Level	Target Encounter XP		
	4 PCs	5 PCs	6 PCs
0	200	250	300

One cool thing about 0-level encounters is that you can finally create easy encounters for your 1st level parties as well.

Treasure

1st Level characters begin the game with 100 gp to spend on equipment, weapons, and gear. They don't start with any magical items or things of the sort. This puts a damper on handing out treasures for 0-level characters.

If we look at treasure in a slightly different way for 0-level characters, you can instead of having the players purchase their gear, use this unique opportunity to make the equipment, weapons, and gear **BE** the treasure the players find.

This means each 0-level character will have 100 gp worth of 'treasure' to acquire during their 0-level adventure.

For those partial to the parcel system here is the recommended parcels for one 0-level character.

Novice Tier Treasure Parcel (one character)

Character Level 0		Total Monetary Treasure: 100 gp	
1	2 gp	4	10 gp
2	3 gp	5	30 gp
3	5 gp	6	50 gp or one potion of healing

The parcels listed above are total gold. You can break this up anyway you see fit. For example using parcel 6, the character gets a suit of chainmail armor (40 gp) and a short sword (10 gp) as gifts from his father before heading out on his adventuring life.

Additionally, you do not have to start players out with nothing. You can give them one of the parcels during character creation to purchase starting equipment. Of course this all depends on the DM and the starting 0-level campaign he has planed.

For each additional character you add one Parcel equal to 100 gp, so a group of 5 characters will have a total monetary treasure value of 500 gp with 10 Parcels of treasure.

When coming up with 'treasure' for the 0-level characters, listen to what kind of characters the players want to play. Don't give the rogue a suit of plate mail or the wizard a falchion. Wish lists are especially useful for 0-level characters.

Some DMs like to give out gifts or magical heirlooms to players before starting the game. This is of course outside the 100 gp Parcel system. 0-level games allow DMs to hand out these items during play without it feeling artificial.

This document was originally created as a blog found at this link:

<http://www.enworld.org/forum/blogs/king-nate/1527-0-level-characters-d-d-4e.html>

Drop me a line if you like it, or even if you don't. Suggestions are great as well.

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