LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

As a character completes adventures, he practices his skills and becomes more talented. Characters earn experience points (XP) that allow them to progress in level.

DCC RPG takes a different approach to experience points than the historical precedent and its modern interpretation. There is certainly a strong case for the historical approach which the author calls a "fiddly" system – a calculation-based method that accurately captures the abilities of a creature in a final XP-based number. There is also a case for an "encounter calculation" system – such as that used in 3E – that scales the XP awarded for each encounter based on the relative power of the characters and provides an ability to calculate the appropriate challenge rating of a set of opponents.

Another perspective is provided by Appendix N. The heroes of Appendix N did not always face enemies suitable to their power level nor did they proceed on a predictable path to greater competencies. Occasionally, they fled their enemies -- better to stay alive and fight another day. And as they advanced in power – for example, from wanderer to mercenary to king – they never quite knew exactly when the next opportunity for advancement would present itself.

The author has made one last consideration in his choice of XP system. As gamers grow older and must squeeze their sessions into complicated lives involving families, jobs, and other time commitments, the most enjoyable elements of the game must rise to the top. Bookkeeping related to XP tracking is not one of those elements.

Therefore, DCC RPG uses an extremely simple XP system. If this system is not to your liking, the author encourages you to adapt one of the many "fiddly" systems existing from prior and current editions. However, I urge you to give this system a try, as I suspect it will ease your game play experience considerably.

Basics of the XP System: The DCC RPG experience system works as follows:

- All character classes use the same advancement table.

- Each *encounter* is worth from 0 to 4 XP, and those XP are not earned merely by killing monsters, disarming traps, looting treasure, or completing a quest. Rather, successfully surviving encounters earns the characters XP in DCC RPG. A typical encounter is worth 2 XP, and the system scales from 0 to 4 depending on difficulty.

- All characters that participate in the encounter receive the same XP.

- The judge determines how much XP is awarded.

- Characters level up when they reach the XP threshold for the next level.

- The level thresholds become progressively higher. The number of "average adventures" required to advance to each subsequent level is higher than the preceding level.

The XP Table: The table below shows the experience points required for each level.

As an optional rule, consider allowing any 0-level characters that survive their first adventure to automatically advance to 1st-level and 10 XP. Zero-level adventures are a harrowing, deadly experience with particularly high fatality rates. As long as each player controls a portfolio of multiple 0-level PCs, such a play style can be fun. However, too many games with a 0-level character exchange novelty for enforced cowardice.

A 1st-level character retains his hit points from level 0, and gains new hit points according to his class. All characters of 1st-level or higher thus have their class hit dice *plus* 1d4 hit points from level 0.

TABLE 1-4: XP LEVEL THRESHOLDS

Zero-level characters start at 0 XP. The indicated level of XP is necessary to achieve each new level. For example, a 0-level character becomes a 1st-level warrior when he reaches 10 XP, a 2nd-level warrior when he reaches 50 XP, a 3rd-level warrior when he reaches 110 XP, and so on.

Level	XP Required
0	0
1	10
2	50
3	110
4	190
5	290
6	410
7	550
8	710
9	890
10	1090

CHOOSING A CLASS

What man calls free will is but the options remaining after destiny and the gods have made their plays. If your character survives to 1st level, you can choose a class. Your free will is constrained by the fatalism of the dice; pick a class that suits your randomly determined strengths and weaknesses. The demi-human classes of dwarf, elf, and halfling may only be selected by characters whose 0-level occupation was of that race.

The following terminology is introduced in the class descriptions:

Hit points: Each class uses a certain die to determine hit points. Note that all characters receive 1d4 hit points at 0 level, and their class hit points are *in addition to* the 1d4 hit points from 0 level. For example, a cleric has 1d8 hit points per level, so a 1st-level cleric actually rolls 1d4+1d8 to determine hit points. When that cleric achieves 2nd level, the player rolls another 1d8 hit points and adds it to the prior total.

Weapon training: Each class is trained in a certain list of weapons. Characters use their normal class action die when attacking with these weapons. When using other weapons, they roll a lower die (according to the dice chain).

Action dice: Action dice are used to make attacks, cast spells, and use skills. The most common use of an action die is to attack; most characters roll 1d20 for their attack rolls because they have a 1d20 action die. As characters advance in level, they may gain additional action dice. Typically, these start as additional dice of lower facings (i.e., a d14 instead of d20) to reflect that the character's secondary attacks are not as effective as his primary attacks. Character classes with spellcasting ability, or specialized skill uses, may be able to use action dice to cast additional spells or use additional skills rather than make attacks, as described in the class descriptions.

Title: Titles are included for characters of levels one through five. These titles reflect the most common terms for characters of that power level. In some cases, these titles are tied to formal orders; in other cases, they are generic terms. Formal orders (such as those noted in the thief and warrior descriptions) may have different titles. Characters of 6th level and above are extremely rare, so much so that no generic titles exist. Players are encouraged to develop their own titles for such levels using Appendix T for inspiration as needed.

WIZARD

You owe allegiance to no man, aye, but a demon or god may hold sway upon your soul. You are a tight-lipped warlock studying ancient tomes, a witch corrupted by black magic, a demonologist trading soul-slivers for secrets, or an enchanter muttering chants in lost tongues. You are one of many foul mortals clutching at power. Will you succeed? Low-level wizards are indeed very powerful, but high-level wizards fear for their souls.

Wizards control magic. At least, they attempt to. Mortal magic is unpredictable and wild but powerful. Unlike clerics whose faithful service is rewarded with divine powers, wizards wield magic through mastery and dominance of forces in which they are not always voluntary participants. Wizards are sometimes trained in combat, but are rarely a match for warriors or clerics in a clash of worldly weapons.

Hit points: A wizard gains 1d4 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: A wizard is trained in the use of the dagger, longbow, longsword, shortbow, short sword, and staff. Wizards rarely wear armor, as it hinders spellcasting.

Alignment: Wizards pursue magical arts according to their natural inclinations. Chaotic wizards study black magic. Neutral or lawful wizards seek control over elements. Wizards of all persuasions practice enchantment.

Caster level: Caster level is a measurement of a wizard's power in channeling a spell's energy. A wizard's caster level is usually his level as a wizard. For example, a 2nd-level wizard usually has a caster level of 2.

Magic: Magic is unknown, dangerous, and inhuman. Even the best wizards occasionally fail to properly harness a spell, with unpredictable results. Wizards thus inculcate their preferred magics, lest they err in casting a spell and corrupt themselves with misdirected magical energies. At 1st level a wizard determines 4 spells that he knows, representing years of study and practice. As his comprehension expands, a wizard may learn more spells of progres-sively higher levels. A wizard knows a number of spells as shown on table 1-12, modified by his Intelligence score.

Known spells are determined randomly (see Chapter 5: Magic). They may be of any level for which the wizard is eligible, as shown by the max spell level column. The wizard chooses the level before making his die roll. Higher-level spells are more powerful but harder to cast – and there are consequences for failure.

Wizards cast spells by making a spell check. A wizard's spell check is usually 1d20 + Intelligence modifier + caster level. In some cases, a wizard may roll a different die on the spell check (see Mercurial Magic).

Supernatural patrons: Wizards weave magic spells in consultation with powers from supernatural places and the outer planes. Demons and devils, angels, celestials, ghosts, outsiders, daevas, genies, elementals, Chaos Lords, spirits, elder gods, alien intelligences, and concepts foreign to mortal comprehension whisper secrets in exchange for favors best left unexplained. In everyday concourse, these secrets manifest as spells; in dire circumstances, the wizard can invoke one of his patrons directly and call for material assistance. This sort of request is called invoking a patron.

To invoke a patron, the wizard must spellburn at least 1 point of an ability score (see page 107) and cast the spell *invoke patron*. There may be additional requirements depending on the specific circumstances. Presuming the patron condescends to attend to the wizard, some negotiation may be required: a bauble exchanged, a secret name spoken, a sacrificial token burned, or maybe a quest performed. If the patron deigns to act, it sends an emissary to assist the wizard in the way the patron deems most appropriate.

Invoking a patron is powerful magic. Do not use it lightly.

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Some common patrons include the following:

- Bobugbubilz, demon lord of amphibians

- Azi Dahaka, demon prince of storms and waste

- The King of Elfland, fey ruler of the lands beyond twilight

- Sezrekan the Elder, the wickedest of sorcerers

- The Three Fates, who control the fate of all men and gods to see that the world reaches its destiny

- Yddgrrl, the World Root

- Obitu-Que, Lord of the Five, pit fiend and balor

- Ithha, prince of elemental wind

Familiars: More than one wizard has found comfort in the company of a black cat, hissing snake, or clay homunculus. A wizard may utilize the spell *find familiar* to obtain such a partner.

Luck: A wizard's Luck modifier applies to rolls for corruption (see page 116) and mercurial magic (see page 111).

Languages: A wizard knows *two* additional languages for every point of Int modifier, as described in Appendix L.

Action dice: A wizard's first action die can be used for attacks or spell checks, but his second action die can only be used for spell checks. At 5th level, a wizard can cast two spells in a single round, the first with a d20 spell check and the second with a d14. Note that the results of mercurial magic may modify the action dice based on the dice chain.
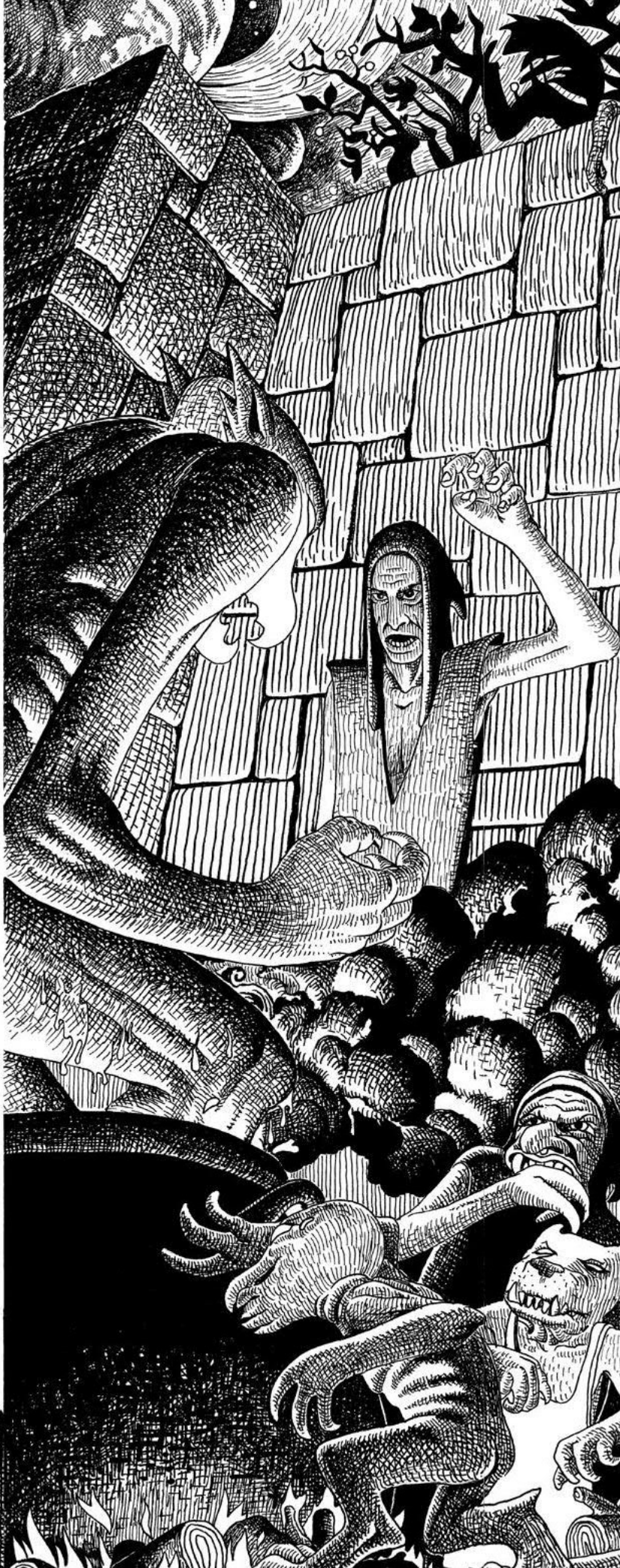
TABLE 1-12: WIZARD

Level	Attack	Crit Die/ Table	Action Dice	Known Spells	Max Spell Level	Ref	Fort	Will
1	+0	1d6/I	1d20	4	1	+1	+0	+1
2	+1	1d6/I	1d20	5	1	+1	+0	+1
3	+1	1d8/I	1d20	6	2	+1	+1	+2
4	+1	1d8/I	1d20	7	2	+2	+1	+2
5	+2	1d10/I	1d20+1d14	8	3	+2	+1	+3
6	+2	1d10/I	1d20+1d16	9	3	+2	+2	+4
7	+3	1d12/I	1d20+1d20	10	4	+3	+2	+4
8	+3	1d12/I	1d20+1d20	12	4	+3	+2	+5
9	+4	1d14/I	1d20+1d20	14	5	+3	+3	+5
10	+4	1d14/I	1d20+1d20+1d14	16	5	+4	+3	+6

TABLE 1-13: WIZARD TITLES

Level	Title by Alignment and Specialty		
	Chaotic	Lawful	Neutral
1	Cultist	Evoker	Astrologist
2	Shaman	Controller	Enchanter
3	Diabolist	Conjurer	Magician
4	Warlock / Witch	Summoner	Thaumaturgist
5	Necromancer	Elementalist	Sorcerer

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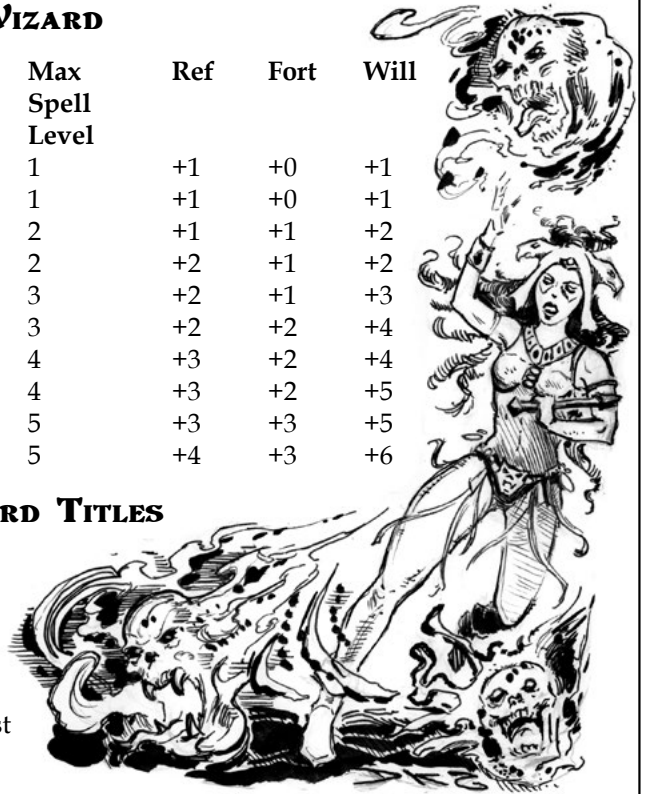
ELF

You are a strong, slender demi-human native to woodlands and shaded forests. You avoid the provincial oafs of the younger races, with their bumbling war-making and crude superstitions. Against the noisy backdrop of their empires rising, falling, and rising again, your magical enclaves advance the study of arts and crafts millennia in the making.

Elves live for more than a thousand years in small cities of like-minded individuals. Reproducing and maturing slowly, and likewise studying and practicing with great patience over many years, each elf masters his chosen area of expertise at a level of competency no man can hope to achieve. Those elves who study the martial or magical arts may find themselves in search of an arcane relic, a divine token, or a legendary weapon. These seekers comprise the rare elven adventurers encountered by humans.

Elves divide their race into castes not always evident to outsiders, each speaking specific sub-dialects of a common, ancient tongue. There are forest elves and plains-dwelling elves, undersea elves and elves who dwell on floating cloud-cities. A fallen race of black-skinned dark elves shuns the glare of sunlight.

Elven longevity, combined with their skill with magic, has created many legends about their racial roots. Whether elves really have traffic with demons and gods is for them to know and the other races to discover.

Elves can cast spells as wizards do. An elf of the same power level as a human wizard also has many decades of combat experience. As such, elves typically cast their spells just as competently as human wizards and also have martial skills.

Hit points: An elf gains 1d6 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: An elf is trained in the use of the dagger, javelin, lance, longbow, longsword, shortbow, short sword, staff, spear, and two-handed sword. Elves often wear armor of mithril, even though it affects their spellcasting.

Because of their sensitivity to iron (as explained below), elf characters are trained from an early age with mithril weapons. Before they depart on a life of adventure, they have acquired mithril equipment. At 1st level, an elf character may purchase one piece of armor and one weapon that are manufactured of mithril at no additional cost. Mithril armor weighs slightly less than iron or steel armor of the same type and can be worn by the elf without the pain normally associated with metal armors.

Alignment: With their multicentenarian lifespan and proclivity for observation over action, elves tend toward chaotic and neutral alignments. Because they outlive many institutions of authority, elves are not often of lawful alignments.

Magic: Elves practice arcane magic sustained by traffic with otherworldly creatures. More so than human wizards, they form relationships with specific demi-beings and can directly request aid from beyond. Where a human wizard may cast a spell to summon a demon a few times in his life, an elf may converse repeatedly with the same demon so many times over so many centuries that long-term arrangements become feasible. All elves have one or more extraplanar patrons who sustain their magic. As such, their spells tend more toward those associated with elemental or demonic powers.
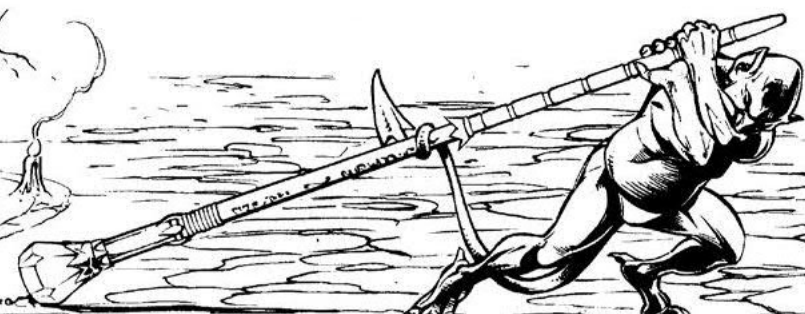
Elf spells are determined randomly like a wizard's, except for *invoke patron* and *patron bond*, as described below.

Caster level: Caster level is a measurement of an elf's power in channeling a spell's energy. An elf's caster level is his level as an elf. For example, a 2nd-level elf has a caster level of 2.

Supernatural patrons: Like wizards, elves can invoke supernatural patrons. An elf *automatically* receives the spells *patron bond* and *invoke patron* at 1st level in addition to his other spells.

Infravision: An elf can see in the dark up to 60′.

Immunities: Elves are immune to magical sleep and paralysis.

Vulnerabilities: Elves are extremely sensitive to the touch of iron. Direct contact over prolonged periods causes a burning sensation, and exposure at close distances makes them uncomfortable. An elf may not wear iron armor or bear the touch of iron weapons for extended periods. Prolonged contact with iron causes 1 hp of damage per day of direct contact.

Heightened Senses: Elves are astute and observant. All elf characters receive a +4 bonus to detect secret doors. Moreover, when simply passing within 10 feet of a secret door, elves are entitled to a check to detect it.

Luck: With their long lifespan, elves have ample opportunity to practice their magic craft. At first level, an elf may *choose* to apply his Luck modifier to spell checks on *one* spell of his choosing. That modifier does not change as the elf's Luck score changes.

Languages: At 1st-level, an elf automatically knows Common, the elven racial language, and one other language. An elf knows one additional language for every point of Int modifier. Additional languages are randomly determined as specified in Appendix L.

Action dice: An elf's action dice can be used for attacks *or* spell checks at any level. At 5th level, an elf can cast two spells in a single round, the first with a d20 spell check and the second with a d14; or he can make two attacks, the first with a d20 attack roll and the second with a d14; or he may combine an attack with a spell check. Note that the results of mercurial magic supersede the action dice, so an elf with a particularly high (or low) spell check die from mercurial magic uses that result instead (with his total actions still limited by his level).

Table 1-16: Elf

Level	Attack	Crit Die/ Table	Action Dice	Known Spells*	Max Spell Level	Ref	Fort	Will
1	+1	1d6/II	1d20	3	1	+1	+1	+1
2	+1	1d8/II	1d20	4	1	+1	+1	+1
3	+2	1d8/II	1d20	5	2	+1	+1	+2
4	+2	1d10/II	1d20	6	2	+2	+2	+2
5	+3	1d10/II	1d20+1d14	7	3	+2	+2	+3
6	+3	1d12/II	1d20+1d16	8	3	+2	+2	+4
7	+4	1d12/II	1d20+1d20	9	4	+3	+3	+4
8	+4	1d14/II	1d20+1d20	10	4	+3	+3	+5
9	+5	1d14/II	1d20+1d20	12	5	+3	+3	+5
10	+5	1d16/II	1d20+1d20+1d14	14	5	+4	+4	+6

* Plus *patron bond* and *invoke patron*.

Table 1-17: Elf Titles

Level	Title (all alignments)
1	Wanderer
2	Seer
3	Quester
4	Savant
5	Elder