

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 ad-



vance 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.



CLERIC



There are rules that govern the multiverse, some deciphered by man and some opaque. The oldest rules are the Void, which no man or god understands, only Cthulhu and the Old Ones. Then the Old Ones established Law and Chaos, which created and divided the gods. From the gods came divine rules for the behaviors of mortal man, and if man lives by these rules, his gods reward him in this life or the next.

That is what your god tells you, and as his cleric, you will persuade, convert, or destroy those who speak otherwise. You adventure to find gold or holy relics, destroy abominations and enemies, and convert heathens to the truth. You'll be rewarded – even if you have to die to receive that reward.

An adventuring cleric is a militant servant of a god, often part of a larger order of brothers. He wields the weapons of his faith: physical, spiritual, and magical. Physically, he is a skilled fighter when using his god's chosen weapons. Spiritually, he is a vessel for the expression of his god's ideals, able to channel holy powers that harm his god's enemies. Magically, he is able to call upon his god to perform amazing feats.

Both clerics and wizards may gain powers from gods, but in different ways. A cleric worships a greater power and is rewarded for his service. A wizard unlocks the hidden mysteries of the universe in order to dominate powers both known and unknowable.

Hit points: A cleric gains 1d8 hit points at each level.

Choosing a god: At 1st level, a cleric selects a god to worship, and in doing so chooses one side of the eternal struggle. Clerics who worship demons and devils, monsters, fiends, Chaos Lords, and Set and the other dark gods of the naga are servants of Chaos. Clerics who worship lawful gods, nascent demi-gods, principles of good, immortals, celestials, guardians, and the prehistoric gods of the sphinxes are servants of Law. Clerics who stand at the balancing point, placing faith in the eternal struggle itself rather than the factions arrayed about it, are neutral in alignment. These "neutral" clerics may still be good, evil, or truly neutral, and as such are either druids, Cthulhu cultists, or guardians of balance.

All clerics pray to join their god in a never-ending afterlife. While still clothed in mortal form, clerics find a place among others with similar beliefs. The weak follow their order, the strong lead their order, and the

mighty are living avatars of their gods. As a cleric progresses in level, he moves through these ranks.

A cleric's choice of god must match his alignment, and determines weapon groups, holy powers, and magical spells. Clerics may choose from the gods shown on page 32.

Weapon training: A cleric is trained in the weapons used by faithful followers of his god, as shown on page 32. Clerics may wear any armor and their spell checks are not hindered by its use.

Alignment: A cleric's alignment must match his god's.

Clerics of chaotic alignments belong to secret cults and strange sects. They travel the world to recruit new cultists and undermine their enemies.

Clerics of lawful alignments belong to organized religious groups. They may lead a rural congregation, adventure on great crusades to convert heathens, or defend holy relics as a militant arm of the church.

Neutral clerics tend toward philosophical affiliations. They may be druids who worship the oneness of nature or dark theosophists who research the dead gods that originally created the universe.

A cleric who changes alignment loses the support of his god. He loses access to all spells and powers from cleric levels earned under his old alignment.

Caster level: Caster level is a measurement of a cleric's power in channeling his god's energy. A cleric's caster level is usually his level as a cleric but may be modified under certain circumstances. Many clerics adventure in search of holy relics that bring them closer to their gods and thus increase caster level.

Magic: A cleric can call upon the favor of his god. This form of magic is known as idol magic. Its successful use allows a cleric to channel his god's power as a magical spell. A cleric has access to the spells of his god as noted on table 1-5.

To cast a spell, a cleric makes a spell check (see page 106). The spell check is made like any other check: roll 1d20 + Personality modifier + caster level. If the cleric succeeds, his god attends to his request – not always predictably, but with generally positive results.

If the cleric fails he risks disapproval. His god is preoccupied, annoyed, or facing its own battle – or questions the cleric's use of its power. Some of the most powerful gods are in turn the most fickle.



These rules apply to cleric magic:

- **Natural 1 means disapproval.** On a natural 1 during a spell check, a cleric discovers that he has somehow gained the disapproval of his deity. The spell check automatically fails, and the cleric must roll on the Disapproval Table (see page 122).
- **Each failed spell check increases the chance of disapproval.** After his first spell check fails in a day, a cleric's range of disapproval increases to a natural roll of 1 or 2. Thereafter, on any natural roll of 1 or 2, the spell automatically fails, and the cleric must roll on the Disapproval Table. After a second spell check fails, a cleric's range of disapproval increases to a natural roll of 1 through 3. And so on. The range continues increasing, and any natural roll within that range automatically fails. This means that a cleric could potentially reach a point where normally successful rolls automatically fail because they are in the disapproval range. For example, a cleric who fails 12 spell checks in a day would automatically fail any future spell check on a roll of 1 through 13, even though a roll of 13 would normally mean success on 1st-level spells. When the cleric regains spells on the following day, his disapproval range is reset to a natural 1. Probably. Clerics who test their gods may find they are not always forgiving.
- **Penalties can be offset by sacrifices.** Once a cleric's range of disapproval increases beyond a natural 1, he can reduce that range by offering sacrifices to his deity. See below for more information.
- **Sinful use of divine power.** A cleric may be capable of using his powers in ways that displease his deity. Doing so is a sin against his beliefs. Sinful activities include anything that is not in accordance with the character's or deity's alignment; anything that is not appropriate to the deity's core beliefs (e.g., being merciful to a foe while worshipping the god of war); healing a character of an opposed alignment or healing or aiding a character of an opposed belief or deity (even if of the same alignment); failing to support followers of the same beliefs when they are in need; calling on the deity's aid in a frivolous manner; and so on. When a cleric commits a sinful act, he may incur an additional increase in his disapproval range. This could amount to an increase of +1 for minor infractions all the way up to +10 for significant transgressions. These



additional penalties are always at the judge's discretion, and may manifest accompanied by thunder and lightning, plagues of locusts, water running uphill, and other signs of divine displeasure.

Sacrifices: A cleric may make sacrifices to his deity in order to regain favor. Sacrifices vary according to the nature of the deity, but, in general, any offering of material wealth counts. Other acts may count as well, at the discretion of the judge.

Sacrificing wealth means the items must be burned, melted down, donated to the needy, contributed to a temple, or otherwise relieved from the character's possession. They may be donated as part of a special rite or simply added to a temple's coffers. This is not a rapid combat action; it requires a minimum time of at least one turn and the cleric's full concentration.

For every 50 gp of sacrificed goods, a cleric "cancels" one point of normal disapproval range. For example, a disapproval range of 1 through 4 can be reduced to 1 through 3. A natural 1 still counts as automatic failure and disapproval.

A great deed, quest, or service to a deity may also count as a sacrifice, at the judge's discretion.

Turn unholy: A cleric wields his holy symbol to turn away abominations. At any time, a cleric may utilize a spell check to deter unholy creatures. An unholy creature is any being that the cleric's scriptures declare unholy. Typically this includes un-dead, demons, and devils. For more information on turning unholy, see page 96. As with all spell checks, the turn unholy spell check is made as follows: 1d20 + Personality modifier + caster level + Luck modifier. Failure increases disapproval range, as noted above.

Lay on hands: Clerics heal the faithful. By making a spell check, a cleric may lay on hands to heal damage to any living creature. The cleric may not heal un-dead, animated objects (e.g., living statues), extraplanar creatures (e.g., demons, devils, elementals, etc.), or constructs (e.g., golems) in this manner. The cleric must physically touch the wounds of the faithful and concentrate for 1 action. The spell check is made as any other: roll 1d20 + Personality modifier + caster level. Failure increases disapproval range, as noted above.

The damage healed varies according to several factors.

- It is always a *number of dice*, with the type of dice determined by the hit die of the creature to be healed. For example, a warrior uses a d12 hit die, so a warrior would be healed with d12 dice.



- The number of dice healed *cannot exceed the target's hit dice or class level*. For example, a cleric healing a 1st-level character cannot heal with more than 1 die, even if he rolls well on his check.
- Finally, *before rolling his spell check*, the cleric may elect to heal a specific condition instead of hit points. Healed dice translate to conditions as noted below. In this case, the target's hit dice or class level do not act as a ceiling. If the cleric heals the indicated dice, the damaging condition is alleviated. "Overflow" hit dice do not become normal healing, and if the healed dice are too low, there is no effect.
 - Broken limbs: 1 die
 - Organ damage: 2 dice
 - Disease: 2 dice
 - Paralysis: 3 dice
 - Poison: 3 dice
 - Blindness or deafness: 4 dice

The cleric's alignment further influences the results, as follows:

- If cleric and subject are the same alignment, they count as "same" on the table below.
- If cleric and subject differ in alignment by one step (e.g., one is neutral and the other is lawful or chaotic), or have different but not antithetical gods, they count as "adjacent" on the table below. Such a healing action *may* constitute sin if not done in service of the faith.
- If cleric and subject are of opposed alignment (e.g., one

is lawful and one is chaotic), *or* have rival gods, they count as “opposed” on the table below. Such a healing *almost always* counts as a sin unless it is an extraordinary event in the service of the deity.

Then have the cleric make a spell check and reference the table below.

Spell check	Same	Adjacent	Opposed
1-11	Failure	Failure	Failure
12-13	2 dice	1 die	1 die
14-19	3 dice	2 dice	1 die
20-21	4 dice	3 dice	2 dice
22+	5 dice	4 dice	3 dice

Here is the same table presented slightly differently to match the format of the character sheet. The player should record the names of his party allies in the boxes for “same” (same alignment) or “adjacent” or “opposed” (based on alignment steps, as noted above). Then, the appropriate column shows the healing by check.

PC Names	Spell Check Minimum Result			
	12	14	20	22+
(same)	2	3	4	5
(adjacent)	1	2	3	4
(opposed)	1	1	2	3

Divine aid: As a devout worshipper, a cleric is entitled to beseech his deity for divine aid. Beneficent followers are already rewarded with spells and the ability to turn the unholy, so it must be recognized that requesting direct intervention is an extraordinary act. To request divine aid, the cleric makes a spell check at the same modifier that would apply were he casting a spell. This extraordinary act imparts a cumulative +10 penalty to future disapproval range. Based on the result of the spell check, the judge will describe the result. Simple requests (e.g., light a candle) are DC 10 and extraordinary requests (e.g., summon and control a living column of flame) are DC 18 or higher.

Luck: A cleric’s Luck modifier applies to all spell checks to turn unholy creatures.

Action dice: A cleric can use his action dice for attack rolls or spell checks.

TABLE 1-5: CLERIC

Level	Attack	Crit Die/ Table	Action Dice	Ref	Fort	Will	Spells Known by Level				
							1	2	3	4	5
1	+0	1d8/III	1d20	+0	+1	+1	4	-	-	-	-
2	+1	1d8/III	1d20	+0	+1	+1	5	-	-	-	-
3	+2	1d10/III	1d20	+1	+1	+2	5	3	-	-	-
4	+2	1d10/III	1d20	+1	+2	+2	6	4	-	-	-
5	+3	1d12/III	1d20	+1	+2	+3	6	5	2	-	-
6	+4	1d12/III	1d20+1d14	+2	+2	+4	7	5	3	-	-
7	+5	1d14/III	1d20+1d16	+2	+3	+4	7	6	4	1	-
8	+5	1d14/III	1d20+1d20	+2	+3	+5	8	6	5	2	-
9	+6	1d16/III	1d20+1d20	+3	+3	+5	8	7	5	3	1
10	+7	1d16/III	1d20+1d20	+3	+4	+6	9	7	6	4	2

TABLE 1-6: CLERIC TITLES

Level	Title by Alignment		
	Law	Chaos	Neutral
1	Acolyte	Zealot	Witness
2	Heathen-slayer	Convert	Pupil
3	Brother	Cultist	Chronicler
4	Curate	Apostle	Judge
5	Father	High priest	Druid



GODS OF THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE



he eternal struggle between Law and Chaos continues on a vast scale measured in the life and death of stars. In a man's brief time on earth, he chooses one antipode, and in doing so plays his tiny part in the eternal struggle. As such, a 1st-level cleric is either a cleric of Law, Chaos, or the balance. Within that scope, he chooses a god. The cleric displays the vestments of his god, preaches the god's good word, and carries the weapons considered holy by that god. The cleric's alignment further determines the creatures considered unholy for his turning ability.

Alignment	Gods	Weapons	Unholy Creatures
Law	Shul, god of the moon Klazath, god of war Ulesh, god of peace Choranus, the Seer Father, lord of creation Daentharr, the Mountain Lord, greater god of earth and industry Gorhan, the Helmed Vengeance, god of valor and chivalry Justicia, goddess of justice and mercy Aristemis, the Insightful One, demi-goddess of true seeing and strategy	Club, mace, sling, staff, warhammer	Un-dead, demons, devils, chaotic extraplanar creatures, monsters (e.g., basilisk or medusa), Chaos Primes, chaotic humanoids (e.g., orcs), chaotic dragons
Neutral	Amun Tor, god of mysteries and riddles Ildavir, goddess of nature Pelagia, goddess of the sea Cthulhu, priest of the Old Ones	Dagger, mace, sling, staff, sword (any)	Mundane animals, un-dead, demons, devils, monsters (e.g., basilisk or medusa), lycanthropes, perversions of nature (e.g., otyughs and slimes)
Chaos	Ahriman, god of death and disease Hidden Lord, god of secrets Azi Dahaka, demon prince of storms and waste Bobugbubilz, demon lord of evil amphibians Cadixtat, chaos titan Nimlurun, the unclean one, lord of filth and pollution Malotoch, the carrion crow god	Axe (any), bow (any), dagger, dart, flail	Angels, paladins, lawful dragons, Lords of Law, Lawful Primes, and Law-aligned humanoids (e.g., goblins)



