

ORIGINAL EDITION DELTA

House Rules Compatible with Original D&D

JUDGE'S RULES (V. 1.04)

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CHARACTERS

ZERO-LEVEL CHARACTERS

Zero Level: Normal men are assumed to be 0-level: Roll 3d6 for abilities in order, 1d6 for hit points, no combat bonus, and start at -1,000 XP. Familiarity with up to three weapon types is allowed. ¹

Advancement: When achieving 0 XP, the character can enter one of the three basic classes. This assumes: At least one combat encounter for a Fighter; one act of larceny for a Thief; or one spell learned for a Wizard (*read magic*). Fighters gain 1 hp, and Wizards lose 1 hp, at this time. ²

HIGHER-LEVEL CHARACTERS

Abilities: Levels 2-4 roll three selected abilities 2d6+6, others 3d6. Levels 5-7 roll one ability 2d4+10, two 2d6+6, others 3d6. Levels 8+ roll one 2d3+12, one 2d4+10, two 2d6+6, and two 3d6. ³

Hit Points: Reroll results of "1" or "2" for all hit dice at time of creation. ⁴

Magic Items: Characters should be checked for magic items at 1-in-6 per level. Check for each of the following: (1) sword or wand, (2) armor or scroll, (3) potion, (4) weapon, ring, or miscellaneous (roll 1d3). Roll a d6 for each level per category; each "6" indicates a +1 bonus, extra ability or dosage, etc.

Spellbooks: Wizards should generate a random spellbook, using the Intelligence table in Sup-I. ⁵

Languages: Give an extra language per level above 1st, up to Int limit. ⁶

Hirelings: Humans may each take a 1st-level hireling (fighter or same class). ⁷

Equipment: Characters can take any mundane item, encumbrance permitting.

MONSTERS

Hit Dice: Monster hit dice are d6 each, as per the original rules. ⁸

Attacks: Monsters have one attack by default, and damage is 1d6, unless otherwise stated. ⁹

Goblins: Goblins, orcs, and kobolds are at -4 to attack in full daylight. ¹⁰

Giants: Giants can throw stones every other round. Armor is as leather, +3 for natural toughness. Optionally, damage can be rolled 1d10 + Str bonus (Str and Con are 20-28). XP is as base, no bonus given. ¹¹

Undead: Level drain allows a save vs. death to avoid. If failed, max hp are reduced proportionally; current hp reduced by like amount (dead at 0); XP set at midpoint of prior level. ¹²

Vampires: Summoned monsters are Rat (AC 7, MV 15, hp1, Atk 1, Dam 1 pt), or Wolf (AC 7, MV 18, HD 2+2, Atk 1, Dam 1d6). XP is base × 5. ¹³

Mummies/Lycanthropes: Mummy rot and lycanthropy can be treated with *remove curse* (within the usual time limits). ¹⁴

Gorgons/Chimeras: The breath-attacks of these creatures use the same rules as for Dragons (breathe on 2d6 ≥ 7, 3 times per day).

Dragons: Breath damage is fixed and ignores any damage taken by the dragon. Dragons also have the abilities of *detection* and *fear* in 15" (force NPC morale checks). XP is base × age. ¹⁵

Oozes: All make a grab attack in the first round. Armor is then dissolved, or else damage applies automatically to bare flesh (ochre jelly bypasses armor). Escape is as forcing a locked door (-2 on d6). Weapons corrode 2-in-6. ¹⁶

Horses: Warhorses only are usable in combat, near fire or smells, etc. Maximum load in stone is 24, 36, or 48 by size. ¹⁷

Animals: Use Sup-II appendix for disease-carriers. Make save vs. death at end of duration, e.g.: giant rats (plague, save at +5), ticks (spotted fever, +3), leeches (yellow fever, +10). Save at +4 if a doctor hired (1,000 sp). ¹⁸

ADVENTURES

DUNGEON ADVENTURES

Callers: Have the party agree to a caller at the start of a venture. The caller should get player consensus/break impasses on where to explore. ¹⁹

Climbing: Base 2-in-6 chance, plus Dex bonus, minus encumbrance level. Move is 30'/turn (5'/round) on a sheer surface; roll each turn; fall on failure. Modify as desired for surface difficulty (slippery, handholds, spikes, etc.). ²⁰

Detection: Base 2-in-6 chance, plus Int bonus, for any character to find secret doors, find traps, listen at doors, etc. ²¹

Doors: Base 2-in-6 chance, plus Str bonus, to open. Locks/bars are at -2, reinforced gates at -4, solid iron doors at -6. Teaming up may require a tool (grappling hook, battering ram); each helper adds Str bonus +1. ²²

Falling: Damage is 1d6 per 10 feet for a normal fall (earth, wood). Decrease for yielding surfaces (water, snow, mud); increase for hard ones (metal, stone). ²³

Lighting: Torches and lanterns shed light in a 30 foot (6") radius. Torches last for 1 hour of movement, lanterns 4 hours per flask of oil. ²⁴

Movement: Searching and mapping cover MV × 100 feet per half-hour. Cleared/mapped areas cover 5 times that distance. ²⁵

Rappelling: Using a rope and wall, one can descend 120'/turn; make a climbing check at +3. Characters can belay or haul up/down weight equal to their Strength in stone. Once per encounter, a 1 on d20 indicates a broken rope. ²⁶

Thief Skills: Interpret these generously. They have no penalty for failure; can procure the most desirable item (e.g., ring off finger); etc.

Wandering Monsters: Check every half-hour of play time, when searching a 30-ft square room for secrets, when crossing a cleared level, etc. ²⁷

COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

Combat Modifiers: Attacks to the rear are at +2 to hit (no shield). Attacks when silent and unseen, or on stunned, stationary, etc. targets are at +4. Helpless targets are hit at +6 by missiles, or automatically in melee for max damage. ²⁸

Critical Hits: On natural 1 or 20, a fumble or critical may occur; the victim saves vs. stone or consults a critical chart (*Dragon* #39). Fumbles only occur on the first attack of a sequence. Delayed death is cured by 3 doses of *healing potion*. ²⁹

Damage Descriptions: This author rolls a special hit-location d12 so as to describe hits with proper verisimilitude.

Helmets: Helmets must be worn with any armor type, or a one-step AC penalty is assessed. A helmet and shield is AC7; helmet alone, AC8.

Herbs: Garlic wards against vampire attacks; wolfsbane against lycanthropes (save vs. breath applies; -1 reactions). Belladonna consumed just after infection can cure lycanthropy (save vs. poison, but on a "1" death results). ³⁰

Magic to Hit: Every natural 4 HD permit striking as magic +1 to hit. ³¹

Morale: The reaction table in Vol-1 is used for morale checks. We roll 2d6 and add the NPC's HD, leader's Cha bonus, and situational modifiers (e.g., +1 for Law, -1 for Chaos). Results may be surrender, flee, stand, fight, or fight at +1. ³²

Oil, Burning: Lamp oil cannot be burned in the open as a weapon. ³³

Saving Throws: All harmful spells give a save (half damage or no effect).

Shots at Groups: If an attack roll is less than 10 (before AC addition), then roll d20 to hit one other target in line with the shot (no bonus but AC). ³⁴

Shots at Long Distance: If ceiling height permits, then longer bowshots can be made against groups (20+); range penalty is waived, but roll target randomly. ³⁵

Zero Hit Points: Save vs. death. Success indicates waking in 1-6 turns with 0 hp and incapacitated; any healing allows normal activity. Hits while unconscious require a save vs. death with penalty equal to damage.

RECOVERY & REWARDS

Healing: Natural healing recovers $\frac{1}{2}$ level in hit points every day after the first. Special critical hits require *regeneration* (*cure light wounds* will not suffice!).

Magic Healing: Since clerics are not available, we usually allow for some source of *cure light wounds* potion in the campaign; say, 6 potions in a jug for 1,000 sp, available once per week. A *potion of mithridate* (poison antidote) may also be available for 1,000 sp/dose. ³⁶

Treasure: Convert to "silver standard": Read all values in gold as silver. Divide normal coin treasures by 10. ³⁷

XP Awards: Monster base is 100 XP per hit die; this may be multiplied for major special abilities. Treasure earns 1 XP per silver piece value. Awards are not modified for ability scores. ³⁸

XP for High Levels: Levels past Name each require an XP increment equal to the Name level (so: 240K for Fighters, 300K Wizards, 125K Thieves). ³⁹

OED FUTURE EXPANSIONS

- Monster magnifications (see 1st print Vol-1 p. 8).
- Revised monster level matrix (notes Vol-3 p. 10-11).
- Wilderness rules (incl. margin notes Vol-3 p. 15-19).
- Ship/naval notes (notes Vol-3, p. 28-33).

Original Edition Delta is compatible with Original D&D (1974) and similar game systems. The original core rules can be purchased online at [DriveThruRPG](#) (search for "Original Edition").



NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The given parameters for 0-level humans were used as the basis for various demographic computer simulations; search for “Arena” articles on the blog at <http://deltasdnd.blogspot.com/> for more information. See blog 4/6/15 for the history of 0-level in different D&D editions.
2. See Dragon #51 for a more sophisticated 0-level advancement (Lakofka/Wheeler; double XP levels found there, per Arena lessons).
3. Ability score boosts are a result of survivorship bias, as observed in the Arena demographic computer simulations (blog 4/13/15).
4. Hit point boosts are observed survivorship bias, as in the prior note.
5. Spellbook creation can be abbreviated by use of the *Spellbook Generator* program (see blog 7/8/17). This gives the “minimum” number of spells at the top available level, the “maximum” at 1st level, and interpolates in between.
6. Vol-1, p. 12 gives the maximum limit on languages as one per point above 10 Intelligence. This is in addition to common and alignment tongues.
7. This compensates for the fact that humans have no other benefit up to the demi-human level caps; and also emphasizes the preponderance of humanity in the campaign world.
8. Hit dice are observed as d6’s in the paragraph on Vol-1, p. 18. See also Vol-1 p. 5 where the expectation is to use many d6’s, but only one d8 (or other dice). This is considered much simpler for the DM to manage in play. For other published modules, reduce monster hp by 20% ($3.5/4.5 \approx 80\%$).
9. Damage is noted on bottom Vol-1 p. 19 (in revised prints; else see TSR #2, p. 3, 1st paragraph). The addition of attacks and damage by monster type in Sup-I is not used. In particular, we frown on normal animals getting many attacks per round. For specifics on what we use, see blog 2/1/16 and inspect the monster data file linked there. A work like the AD&D MM should be generally compatible, noting differences given here.
10. This is equivalent to the –1 to attacks first seen in *Chainmail* (p. 29-30), when attack dice were d6; note that goblins are helpless against armored men in daylight. The –1 to morale still applies (morale always on 2d6). Of course, see Tolkien for the immense difficulty that goblins have in light.
11. Giant stone-throwing is noted as light catapults (Vol-2). In CM, light catapults fire every other turn (p. 28), and of giants it reads, “they can move on turns they don’t throw missiles, for reloading for them simply consists of picking up a boulder” (p. 35). Strategically this makes sense; if boulders were thrown every round, it would never be advantageous to engage in melee.
12. We appreciate the heightened drama for the player making a die roll in this case. Lost hit points can be recorded, and like added if the level is regained. The XP point is as given in DMG p. 119; this was also found to be the best rule in the Arena simulations (e.g., 1 point under level would be regained at the end of the same fight, evidencing no real loss).
13. The animals are basically as given in the AD&D MMI and MMII. Vampires have the highest XP value in the game, except for the eldest dragon types.

(See blog 4/4/16. Recall that we have no clerics or turning available.)

14. Without clerics, *cure disease* is unavailable, so some allowance was necessary. Re: mummies, see blog 10/30/17.
15. *Detection* and *fear* are specified in CM, MM, etc. In OD&D arguably breath damage and dragon hit points are disconnected (“per die”, Vol-2, p. 11). AD&D core rules are ambiguous; the example shows no reduction for subdual damage (MM p. 30). But dragons in *Fiend Folio* and B/X do damage by current hit points. See blog 8/18/17.
16. This is how real-world amoebas capture prey. It resembles rules in B/X, 3E, and preferred in a poll online. See blog 11/6/17.
17. War horse restrictions are directly from Vol-3, p. 20 (but this author tends to forget them). For research on horse carrying capacity, see blog 5/11/17.
18. See Sup-II, p. 52-54. Generally, fatal % can be converted to save vs. death bonus as: $12 - 20F$. Giant rats don't have disease in OD&D, but do in all later editions. Victims may be in recovery for some weeks.
19. See comments on blog 5/25/15.
20. Sheer surfaces include well-maintained dungeon/castle wall, smooth rock cliff, free-standing rope, etc. Speed is scaled to cover a standard castle wall or building in one check, and make some headway per round. Optionally, allow speed to be doubled with a -1 penalty.
See blog 7/17/17 for climbing rules through different editions (esp., AD&D and 3E). For using rope, see note on Rappelling. For a high-end simulation, use the Fontainebleau grading system as a base target number on d6 (see Wikipedia: Grade, Bouldering).
21. This matches Vol-2, p. 9, except for human listening scores.
22. These chances are similar to those found in Sup-I p. 7, AD&D PHB p. 9, and 3E. Giants are able to smash down reinforced gates in a number of rounds, depending on type (matches DMG p. 109-110). If needed, approximate monster Strength bonuses by $HD/2$.
23. Vol-3 gives a 1-in-6 save per 10 feet (from naval section, et. al.), but that is not used here. The retcon to geometric dice in UA is also not used. We recommend *Dragon #88*, “Kinetic energy is the key”, by Steve Winter (in response to longer Parker article in same issue).
24. See research at blog “On Light”, 9/8/09.
25. The exploration speed is about $\frac{1}{2}$ mph for light foot; about twice that given in OD&D Vol-3, p. 8 (and four times AD&D). It is conservatively close to the average tour speed at [Mammoth Cave National Park](#); and agrees with encumbered search rate for firefighters with heavy gear (1,000 sq. ft. per 5 minutes; see Maltman, “Searching Smarter”, [www.fireengineering.com](#), 2/1/2001). We find this is also roughly the distance explored in real playing time. The accelerated $\times 5$ move matches AD&D (PHB p. 102), and results in near normal walking speed of 2.5 mph. See blog 8/21/17 for more.
26. See special rules for rappelling downward in the *AD&D Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* (p. 16-17), and mostly repeated in 2E PHB. For hauling capacity, compare to beginner deadlift standards (e.g.,

<http://strengthlevel.com/strength-standards/deadlift>).

27. We deprecate the 10-minute turn, and use half-hour units instead.
28. See *Chainmail* p. 25-26; Sup-I p. 4; DMG p. 67 and 70. Normally flank/rear attacks allow no Dex & no shield.
29. The critical hit tables in use are excerpted on the blog 7/30/12. Note that we customarily have players roll their own critical hits to heighten tension. We would consider natural 20 as 30-to-hit, but for ACs in OD&D this is almost always the same as auto-success-on-20. See tail of normalized resolutions analysis (blog 2/7/11); see also 3E DMG variant.
30. The protection is only for an individual wearing the herb as a garland. Moldvay allows hits with wolfsbane to force lycanthropes to flee, but this is considered overpowered. See blog 9/29/14.
31. Compare to DMG p. 75.
32. In brief, a total result of 9 or more indicates good morale. Use of the reaction table for morale is dictated in Vol-1, p. 13, para. 3 (reaction table on the prior page). Modifying loyalty for alignment is noted in Sup-I, p. 9. Consider that use of the HD modifier approximates the morale scores in CM p. 17 (and AD&D DMG p. 67). High-HD morale is therefore much more robust than in B/X. See also *OED Book of War*. For reduced DM record keeping, we do not use the loyalty score rule (Vol-1, p. 13).
33. See blog articles on “Burning Oil” analysis & tests. Medieval lamps used vegetable oil, which has a flashpoint over 600°F. Gygax presumed kerosene (which still wouldn’t work, flashpoint 100-160°F). See blog 9/18/14, and ENWorld Gygax Q&A 8/6/07.
34. This is a much more permissible rule than most groups use. See blog 4/14/14 (esp., videos from SCA skirmishes).
35. See 3E DMG, p. 65; and also blog, “Model of Archery for D&D” (4/15/14).
36. Most likely there will be an alchemist who can create potions at half-cost (Vol-3, p. 22); compare to wizard manufacture prices in Vol-1, p. 7 (250) and DMG, p. 121 (200, as XP). For the poison antidote, see [Wikipedia: Mithridate](#); and compare to the *elixir of health* in AD&D *Unearthed Arcana*, p. 90. We give a 1-in-20 chance that any manufactured item is cursed (e.g., *delusion*; as footnote DMG p. 117).
37. See money discussions on blog 3/30/10, 5/19/10, 3/16/11; castle costs on 8/14/17. Note that gem expected value is base 234, total 501 each; jewelry expected value is 3,410 per piece (per Vol-2 tables).
38. Power levels of monsters were assessed by computer simulations; the alternative tables in Sup-I (B/X, AD&D, etc.) are not considered advantageous. See blog 9/11/17 for a precise XP values list by Equivalent Hit Dice (EHD), as well as prior “Monster Metrics” articles.
39. For Thieves this is explicit in Sup-I (p. 9), but for other classes Vol-1 is silent. The rule here is as per Mike Mornard’s recollection of playing in Gygax’s games (see <http://odd74.proboards.com/post/161241>; and blog 4/24/17). It is consistent with the tables in AD&D, but not B/X.