



# Session Zero

*“Wait! Before you start playing,  
take a few steps back and hold a **Session Zero**”*

**D**ungeons and Dragons is a great game that can be played in a thousand different ways in which you can do literally anything! It might seem awesome at first to just dive in and play but this can actually be a little daunting. Besides that, what you want to do – like slaying dragons – might not actually be what your fellow players have in mind.

Discuss the checklist the first session you’re together and you prevent disappointment and conflicts at the table and instead you’ll get your first sense of what your adventure might be.

*It’s a good idea to do this before or while you’re creating your characters together.*

## **So... what’s a session zero?**

Before you run of and start playing, it’s smart to set some ground rules and get a feel for wat the wishes are from everyone around the table;

- *How would you like to play the game?*
- *What kind of story do you want it to be?*
- *What house rules do you want to set?*
- *What are everyone’s expectations of the game?*
- *What expectations do you have from one another?*

***Now, on to the checklist!***



# The checklist

## HOSTING A SESSION

- Where will you hold the game?
- How many times will you come together to play?
- What do you do if someone is absent?  
*See DMG\* p235 Missing players*
- Will you be playing all in the “Theater of the Mind” or are there mini’s and maps involved?
- Who is responsible for snacks and refreshments?  
*No that’s not on you too dm, don’t worry.*

## TABLE RULES [DMG p235 FOR TIPS]

- Is “Player vs Player” allowed?
- May you keeping secrets from other players?
- How do you handle difficult topics?  
*What’s a no go, how do you handle ethics and what do you do if someone gets uncomfortable*
- How will you handle metagaming?

*Be prepared to share the spotlight with your fellow adventurers. DnD is a party game.*

**Note.** that DnD is all play pretend and that choices made by a character do not always reflect the player’s.

**For example:** Someone could play a character that reacts a little racist because it dislikes elves according to his background. It doesn’t mean that he hates you for real if you happen to play an elvish character. But this doesn’t mean that player should continue bullying your character if that’s something that’s ruining the game for you!

Just keep in mind that you’re all playing DnD to have a good time and not to sabotage one another. Take everything with a grain of salt, but don’t bully each other just because “that’s what my character would do”. Unless you’re all into a heavy pvp game, than by all means go for it!

## GAME SETTING

*And the kind of game the Dungeon Master would like to play*

- What kind of world will you be playing in?  
*From a module, book, a one shot or a homebrew game*
- How does your party know each other?
- What difficulty do you want the DM to set?  
*Easy, high fantasy, or a realistic game*
- Is it ok to railroad the story or should it be a sandbox type game?
- What is allowed in the setting you create?  
*Races, classes, backgrounds, the level of magic*

## CHARACTER BUILDING [PLAYER EXPECTATIONS]

How does your character fit into the party?

- How does your background fit into the story?
- What are the alignments in the party?  
*Should they match or not for possible fun roleplay?*

**Note.** To insure a good time it’s important to get on the same page. What kind of game the DM wants to run has to be in line with what the players want and the other way around. If the DM want to build a game centered around politics and the players want a combat heavy game you won’t have any fun.

## EXPERIENCE POINTS [DMG p260]

- What earns experience points?  
*Killing or defeating enemies, at set points or maybe good roleplay*
- How will you level?  
*Through xp, every session or when you finishing a quest*

## WHAT ARE YOUR OWN RULES

- What rules do you want to change to fit your playing style better?
- How do you handle players death?
- Do you use inspiration?

In the end, everything depends on how you all want to play the game. This checklist is a guideline to get everyone on the same page. You can always discuss things and change them as you go and develop your playing style.

## Reference and tips

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1. Chapter 8: Running The Game p235 in the Dungeon Master's Guide\* is a good reference on how to host a game as a dungeon master.
2. Read "Tasha's Cauldron of Everything p139: Session Zero" for some good information for tips how to play together as a party.
3. Play a one shot first to learn the game and get accustomed to/ develop a playing style.
4. Hold another little session zero after a while to see if everyone is still having fun.

## Appendix A: Checklist Handout

## GROUND RULES

- ❑ How would you like to play the game?
- ❑ What kind of story do you want it to be?
- ❑ What house rules do you want to set?
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## NOTES

[illegible]