



ADVANCED PLAYER WORKSHOP

HIGHER LEVEL PLAY

Presented by Jason Koh

Wizards of the Coast, Dungeons & Dragons, and their logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast LLC in the United States and other countries. © 2015 Wizards. All Rights Reserved.

These Slides are not affiliated with, endorsed, sponsored, or specifically approved by Wizards of the Coast LLC. This Notebook may use the trademarks and other intellectual property of Wizards of the Coast LLC, which is permitted under Wizards' Fan Site Policy. For example, Dungeons & Dragons® is a trademark[s] of Wizards of the Coast. For more information about Wizards of the Coast or any of Wizards' trademarks or other intellectual property, please visit their website at (www.wizards.com).

OUTLINE

- What is Higher Level Play?
- Upping your Roleplay Game
- Advanced Gameplay Tips
- Q&A

WHAT IS HIGHER LEVEL PLAY?

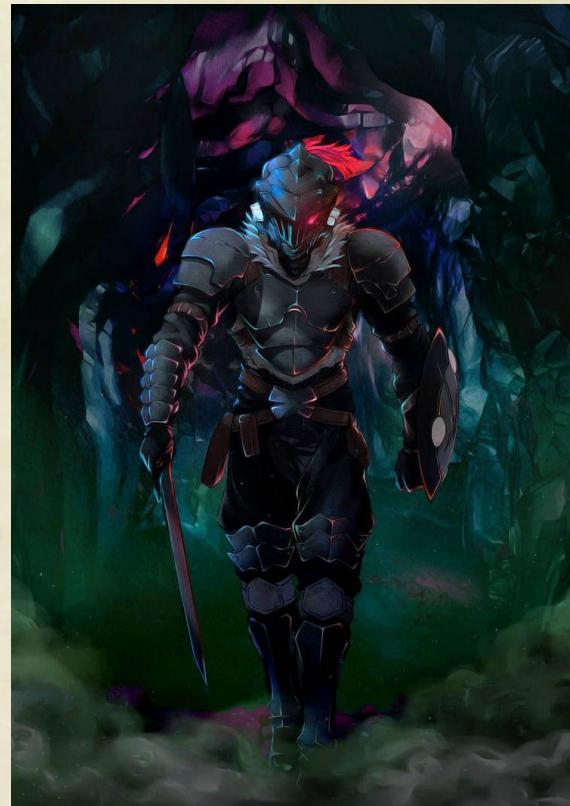
- Catch-all term for describing play in late Tier 2 (Level 8+), Tier 3, and Tier 4. The quests you undertake, the foes you expect to face, and the stakes scale as you level.
- For characters, getting to higher levels means access to more options, spells and class features.
- For players, there is an expectation of mastery - be it in understanding the rules, tactics, or your character.



YOU CAN'T ALWAYS BE MUCKING AROUND.
THERE'S A WORLD OUT THERE TO SAVE.

UPPING YOUR RP GAME

- Beyond Tier 1, you should have given some thought to your character's development and backstory. You're not a novice anymore and shouldn't always behave as such.
- It is perfectly fine to let your character develop organically based on their adventures and exploits e.g. swearing an Oath of Vengeance against an enemy that destroyed your hometown, but don't fixate on it.
- As characters grow, their goals and motivations will naturally also evolve.



*MY NAME IS GOBLIN SLAYER.
YOU DESTROYED MY VILLAGE. PREPARE TO DIE?*

UPPING YOUR RP GAME (CONT'D)

- As adventurers mature, they develop greater confidence in their own abilities, and certain habits and signature moves/spells may come to the fore. Play those up.
- Higher tiered characters will also often be saddled with greater responsibilities. Take this as a chance to further develop your character and their role in the society/world they live in.
- Try to make the shift from simply telling the DM and your fellow players what you're doing, to telling stories.



*SOMETIMES, YOU'VE GOTTA LOOK
AT THE BIGGER PICTURE.*

YOUR REPUTATION PRECEDES YOU

- **Level 3:** Village or town hero, seasoned sellsword or reputable mercenary.
- **Level 8:** Regional hero, helped resolve a national crisis or made a significant contribution to the safety of a kingdom.
- **Level 13:** National hero, savior of a kingdom or doer of a great deed.
- **Level 17:** A world famous legend and what many others hope to aspire to.



*ERADICATING EVILS AND PUTTING THE UNDEAD TO REST
ARE JUST ALL IN A DAY'S WORK RIGHT?*

YOUR REPUTATION PRECEDES YOU (CONT'D)

- As a player, understand that how you play has consequences.
- Developing a reputation as a contributing player and positive influence means you'll always be welcome at the table.
- You don't have to be a PRO. Just don't develop a reputation for selfishness, incompetence, or cowardice.



*IF YOUR FIRST THOUGHT IS TO FLEE,
YOU PROBABLY NEED TO RECONSIDER YOUR CAREER CHOICES.*



ADVANCED GAMEPLAY TIPS

DMs especially love Tip #7.

TIP #1: KNOW THYSELF

- Be intimately aware of what your character can do and how you can help make each adventure a success.
- Understand your character's Strengths and what you can offer at the table.
- Identify your character's Weaknesses and find ways to mitigate them.



YOU'RE A HERO NOW. YOU CAN'T WALK AROUND
LOOKING LIKE A DUMB NOOB ALL THE TIME.

TIP #1: KNOW THYSELF (CONT'D)

- Read and understand your Class features. If you're unsure, it is perfectly fine to ask.
- Learn what Actions are available to you in any given turn.
- Understand what your spells and abilities can do and what spells or abilities may be unique/exclusive to your character. Those are often powerful, game-changing options.

e.g. Thieves have the ability to use any magic item in the game and attune to them regardless of Class restrictions after Level 13, or wizards and their 40+ exclusive spells.

TIP #2: OPTIMIZATION IS NOT A CRIME

- Optimizing a character for a specific play style or a concept in your head is perfectly fine.
- RP and character optimization are NOT mutually exclusive. This is more a factor of player skill than anything. Optimization simply means **making generally good choices** that will heighten your survivability or chances of success.
- It is not limited to character building. Making optimized decisions during gameplay is also important.



*OH NO! WE'RE IN TROUBLE!
WHATEVER SHALL WE DO?*

TIP #2: OPTIMIZATION IS NOT A CRIME (CONT'D)

- An optimized character **will always** contribute more at the table.
- Optimization **does** require greater understanding of game rules and mechanics.
- Some combinations work better than others and/or have a higher skill ceiling to be effective.
- Do your homework. Don't just read an Optimization Guide, and be terrible in practice.
- Your choice of a +1 in AL is significant. Pick wisely.



*STRIVE TO BE THE VERY BEST,
LIKE NO ONE EVER WAS (JUST DON'T TAKE VOLO'S).*

TIP #3: MASTER ACTION ECONOMY

- Understand how to best utilize your Action, Bonus Action, Reaction, Move and Misc. Item Interaction each round to effectively work with your team and overcome challenges.
- In higher level play, sequencing is important. e.g. Bonus Action to Quicken a spell, Action to cast a Cantrip.
- Understand that making certain decisions can hurt your ability to make other decisions later e.g. casting **Shield** to protect yourself leaves your party vulnerable if you're the only **Counterspell** user.



*SHOUTING FOR HELP AND COORDINATING
WITH YOUR TEAMMATES IS A FREE ACTION.
JUST SAYING.*

TIP #4: BE SELF-SUFFICIENT

- Always have consumables e.g. Potions, Scrolls available for various situations. If you are a legacy character with gp, this is a great money sink.
- S8 makes it incredibly easy to purchase consumables, and standing (as expressed by Renown) can reward you with either a Potion or Inspiration at the start of the adventure.
- (Ab)Use your Renown perks liberally. Refer to the ALPG for more details.



*STOCK UP BEFORE THE RAID.
IT WILL SAVE LIVES.*

TIP #4: BE SELF-SUFFICIENT (CONT'D)

- Typical Potions include: Healing Potion (50 gp), Greater Healing Potion (100 gp), Water Breathing Potion (100 gp)
- Typical Scrolls are priced at: 1st (75 gp e.g. Mage Armor), 2nd (150 gp e.g. See Invisibility), 3rd (300 gp e.g. Dispel Magic, Fly, Revivify), 4th (500 gp e.g. Freedom of Movement), 5th (1,000 gp e.g. Raise Dead)
- You can purchase Scrolls with spells from ANY AL legal book. This means you can purchase both PHB and XGE spells as Scrolls (and scribe them).
- Remember to tell your party members what consumables you might have on your person in case they need to use one of them to bring you back from the dead.

TIP #5: COMMUNICATE

- D&D is a social game. **Talk to other players** at the table.
- Discuss what your characters **can do**, and how you can help each other to shine in the story.
- Build trust. Adventurers won't work with those they cannot trust, right?



TALK. TALKING IS A FREE ACTION.

TIP #5: COMMUNICATE (CONT'D)

- Be willing to get the ball rolling. Take the initiative.
- You don't have to share everything about your character. If you want to keep a few surprises to yourself, go ahead.
- You don't have to use **mechanical language**. Just tell other players what they can expect and what they can rely on you for.
- Take this as a chance to practice using narrative language to describe your character, their actions, and their choices.

TIP #6: BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER

- When the DM speaks, listen.
- Try to concentrate, understand, and pick up important cues in the narrative.
- Take notes, and be willing to ask questions or clarify doubts.
- Don't be afraid to ask the DM to repeat something you might have missed.



*PAY ATTENTION,
OR YOU MAY REGRET IT LATER.*

TIP #6: BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER (CONT'D)

- Look out for important cues and plot points e.g. names of important characters and places, descriptions, the current situation, and the tasks that you might have to accomplish.
- Pay attention to descriptions especially during exploration and social interaction segments.
- Even in combat, the DM might drop valuable hints about the strengths and weaknesses of your enemies, so listen out for those.

TIP #7: ASK QUESTIONS

- Don't be shy. Be willing to ask the DM questions.
- Asking the right questions can often mean the difference between success and failure.
- Your character lives in this fantasy world, and has experienced a great many things. Their background, their knowledge and experiences matter.



*TMW YOU CONTACT OTHER PLANE
AND SEE SOMETHING YOU SHOULDN'T.*

TIP #7: ASK QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

- Your character backstory, Background, your Class mix, and your Skills (e.g. Arcana, History etc) matter. If you think your character might logically know something or have some familiarity, ask the DM if that is the case.
- Clarify environmental effects (e.g. climate, hazards, visibility, weather) and other pertinent information early. This can help you with preparations and contribute to greater success.
- Ask for monster knowledge (Arcana, Nature, etc) and the emotional/mental state of NPCs you may encounter in social situations (Insight). Help the DM help you.
- Use spells like Augury, Contact Other Plane, Divination and so on if you need additional information. When casting such a spell, be sure to phrase your questions as clearly as possible. Be willing to work with your DM to get the answer you seek.

TIP #8: POSITIONING

- Positioning is one of the most critical aspects of high level play.
- It is critical to stay within range to deal damage to the enemy or to cast spells, while ensuring that you are not endangering your allies.
- This requires robust knowledge of your own character, as well as communication with your allies.



*STANDING IN FIRE DOESN'T ACTUALLY
INCREASE YOUR OVERALL DPS.*

TIP #8: POSITIONING (CONT'D)

- Understand the general shapes of effects in D&D e.g. 2 points make a line, fireballs are a 20-ft radius burst, cones are deadly, and so on.
- If the situation permits, try to spread out at least 15-ft from each other. Melee should stay in melee range instead of darting around, and on opposite sides of an enemy if at all possible. Never clump up unless you've got a paladin in your group, and even then, it's debatable.
- Always have a movement skill (whether as a feature, item or spell) as an emergency button.



WATCH OUT. EVEN IF YOU'RE FLYING.

TIP #9: THREAT ASSESSMENT

- Threat Assessment is the most important part of high level/tactical play.
- Skilled adventurers are capable of picking out the most dangerous threats at a glance.
- Learn to **FOCUS FIRE**.
- Use AOE magic or attacks to get rid of mooks.
- It is perfectly OK to catch your allies in AOE if it is the most optimal play. Just tell them first.



**WHO DO YOU TARGET FIRST?
AH KONG OR THE MOOKS?**

TIP #9: THREAT ASSESSMENT (CONT'D)

- Magic users and enemies that can dish out lots of damage to the party at once are often the greatest threats.
- Physical damage dealers tend to be of lower priority, since they can be easily hampered by good positioning or controlled with magic.
- Look out for **visual cues** to identify the abilities of various monsters. In the case of spells, there are often visual effects, chants, and the use of material components or implements.



SOMETHING'S DEFINITELY UP.

TIP #10: HEALING IS TERRIBLE

- Removing threats from the playing field is more important than healing. Reducing the number of threats reduces enemy action economy.
- At high levels, damage often outpaces healing in combat, which makes healing incredibly inefficient.
- Analyze the situation instead of hitting the Healing Word button blindly.
- If you're on the receiving end, don't BEG for healing or expect anyone to heal you. It's bad form and sometimes you just have to take one for the team.



HEAL AFTER, NOT DURING COMBAT.

TIP #10: HEALING IS TERRIBLE (CONT'D)

- At higher tiers of play, a character who focuses on healing must also be capable of dishing out damage or controlling/disabling the enemy, whether through the use of spells or other abilities.
- Prioritize in-combat healing (if at all) for characters that are clearly contributing more DPS in a fight. Healing someone who will only go down again to a monster's legendary action is not viable.
- Learn what your spells can do. Certain spells e.g. Polymorph can create a buffer of virtual hit points while improving the value of less effective characters. Aid can also pick up three (3) unconscious targets at a time.

RECAP

- Personal Mastery
- Don't be afraid to Optimize
- Understand Action Economy
- Be Self-sufficient (and buy Consumables)
- Communicate. Talk to your party (before AND during the game)
- Practice Active Listening
- Ask the DM Questions
- Good Positioning
- Threat Assessment
- Knowing when to Heal/not to Heal

Q&A
