# AL RECOMMENDATIONS

I hope you find some ideas here you like for Season 9! Each section can be used independent of the other sections if there are some you like and some you don't. If you have any suggestions for improvements, please let me know! Thank you for your consideration.

There were some great changes with Season 8 (no more magic item sniping was big)! However, after playing lots of Season 8, I think there are some things we could improve on. The goal is to retain all the good of Season 8 and bring back some of the magic that was lost and look at some ways to increase first time player return rates.

I am continually updating these recommendations.
To see the latest, check out the pdf at: http://www.d20play.com/Rplaying/Downloads/Recommendations.pdf

## SUMMARY

A summary of proposed changes. See the details and design notes below for extended explanations.

- Use ACP awarded by objectives achieved (add objectives to hardcovers and season 1-7 adventures)
- Use found/rewarded gold and magic items that are capped to control maximums (rather than having set values awarded per level or using TCP)
- Allow magic items to be discarded to lower magic item counts (instead of allowing inter-PC trading)
- Limit usable rarities by tier to mitigate past exploits and excessive rewards
- Provide alternate treasure ideas if gold by level and/or TCP are retained
- Discourage magic item farming by excluding magic item rewards during replay
- Open up player control of PC progression
- Define expectations for PC contributions to restore fellow party members to health after an adventure (or renown impacts if they don't)
- Define adventure design criteria that put AL, CCC, and AO adventures on a level playing field so that they stand out by the quality of their design and not by excesses or restrictions to their awards
- Codify DM rewards consistent with these changes
- Define Season 8 to Season 9 conversion criteria consistent with these changes

## ACP/XP

- Use ACP per the Season 8 rules.
- Make objectives without regard for actual play time the standard for ACP across all seasons and hardcovers (not just season 8).
- Update past DDEX/AL/CCC etc. adventures to award 4 ACP for completing the objectives of a "4-hour adventure" and 2 ACP for completing the objectives of a "2-hour adventure."
- Add objectives to hardcovers that match the expected pace for hardcovers.
- Only revert to 1 ACP per hour when a hardcover has not been reviewed and had objectives added to the ALCC (but make that a priority (outsourced if necessary)).

Design Notes
- ACP smooth out progression and make it easier to anticipate.
- Encourage highly prepared DM's that run a well-paced, fun-filled adventure. If players finish an adventure in 3 hours and complete all the goals and have a fantastic time, those players should get the same ACP as players who play with an unprepared/ slow/ distracted/ etc. DM that takes 6+ hours to cover the same roleplaying, exploration, and combat as the prepared DM covered in 3 hours, not fewer ACP.
- ACP/XP for achieving objectives is good design practice.

**TREASURE**

- If a party finishes an adventure (or hardcover chapter) in possession of new-found mundane treasure (coins, gems, art objects, etc.), each member of the party receives an equal share.
- Cap a PC's gold award for an adventure (or hardcover chapter) per the following table.

| Adventure Tier | max gp per ACP |
|:---:|:---:|
| 1 | 100 |
| 2 | 200 |
| 3 | 300 |
| 4 | 600 |

- If a party finishes an adventure (or hardcover chapter) in possession of new-found magic item(s) (including spellbooks), any member of the party can take those items in the condition they are in at the end of the adventure (even multiple PCs can take the same item(s)). A PC may take a maximum of 1 found item per 2 ACP (or fraction thereof) awarded.
- Each PC has a maximum number of magic items and wealth they can have at the end of an adventure after all rewards and expenses. To keep more wealth or magic items, they can discard any of their possessions at any time. Maximums are as follows.

| Adventure Tier | Maximum Items and Wealth at End of an Adventure | | | | | |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| | C | C-U | C-U-R | C-U-R-V | ANY | Wealth |
| 1 | 5 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1000gp |
| 2 | 10 | 1 | 4 | - | 1 | 5000gp |
| 3 | 15 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 15000gp |
| 4 | 20 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 40000gp |

**C** = Consumable (any rarity), Common, Found Spellbook.
**U** = Uncommon. **R** = Rare. **V** = Very Rare. **ANY** = Any Rarity.
**Wealth** = All coins, gems, art objects, etc. and the purchase price of all items (including armor, weapons, spell components, simulacrums, animals, spells in personal spellbooks, etc.) the PC owns excluding their staring equipment.
**For example, after a Tier 2 adventure, a PC could have:**
>16 Consumable
>10 Consumable, 6 Uncommon
>10 Consumable, 5 Uncommon, 1 Rare
>10 Consumable, 2 Uncommon, 4 Rare
>10 Consumable, 1 Uncommon, 4 Rare, 1 Very Rare (that they can't use yet)
>10 Consumable, 1 Uncommon, 4 Rare, 1 Legendary (that they can't use yet)
>etc.

- A PC can use any consumable (regardless of rarity), common, or uncommon magic item at L1-4. A PC can use rare items at L5, very rare items at L11, and legendary items at L17.
- Story items do not count against maximum items and may be usable at all PC levels (within the story).
- An item that has given a permanent boon to a PC (such as a Manual of Quickness of Action) can be discarded, but the boon is also removed.
- PCs cannot trade items with other PCs (but they can be loaned out during an adventure).

- PCs can purchase the following items in addition to what is in the PHB. Note that purchased items must still abide by the maximum number of magic items rules.
  - Potion of Animal Friendship ....... 100 gp
  - Potion of Climbing........................ 75 gp
  - Potion of Greater Healing .......... 100 gp
  - Potion of Healing ........................ 50 gp
  - Potion of Superior Healing........ 500 gp
  - Potion of Water Breathing.......... 100 gp
  - Scroll of L0 PHB Spell ................ 25 gp + Component and/or Focus Cost
  - Scroll of L1 PHB Spell ................ 50 gp + Component and/or Focus Cost
  - Scroll of L2 PHB Spell .............. 150 gp + Component and/or Focus Cost
  - Scroll of L3 PHB Spell .............. 300 gp + Component and/or Focus Cost
  - Scroll of L4 PHB Spell .............. 500 gp + Component and/or Focus Cost
  - +1 PHB Weapon....................... 500 gp + Mundane Weapon Cost
  - +1 PHB Ammo (each)................. 20 gp

Design Notes
- Increase player return rate (especially first-time players).
  - Finding and keeping gold and magic items is fun!
  - They will walk away with gold their first time, even if they don't level.
  - They can walk away with a magic item their first time (unlike Season 8 where they must accumulate 16 TCP and likely be 5th level before they can take their first uncommon item).
- Make gold rewards or promise of treasure hoards a tangible incentive for adventures.
  - Because this is a cap and there is no lower limit, PCs need to be resourceful in finding treasure.
- Encourage PCs to take cool items they may otherwise be afraid of being "stuck with."
- Encourage PCs to use up (for the good of the party) limited use items.
- Players do not have to worry about magic item snipers! (best part of the Season 8 changes!)
- A PC does not "miss out" on an item that is too powerful that shows up too early because they can keep one item they cannot use yet (such as a legendary item they find at level 1).
- Retains the availability of story items without reducing maximum items a PC can have.
- Maintain maximum expected power levels for PCs regardless of specific adventures played.
  - The exact numbers in this table can be adjusted to the power level desired for the campaign.
  - Allow use of content that may award too much treasure.
- Reduce bookkeeping!
  - No tracking TCP's of various tiers.
  - No tracking which magic items (that may never be taken) a PC has unlocked!
  - No need to reference DMG for magic item tables.
  - No need to document items that are only missing magic item table info in the ALCC.
- Could, theoretically, reduce the number of items on the Problematic Item List in the ALCC (specifically items that are problems because they are awarded too soon) (I would still retain items on there that the powers of the world would take away from PCs that took them or that are problematic due to being in an organized play campaign rather than just due to pure power level).
- Excluding inter-PC trading maintains an even playing field for PCs of both casual and prolific players. All PCs gain power through the adventures they play (not all the adventures their player has ever played).
- Inter-PC trading is no longer needed as a mechanism to get rid of undesirable items.
- Retaining inter-PC trading would be too powerful in combination with the ability to discard and replace items.
- Limiting purchases puts greater focus on found magic items which often tie into the game world and have special and fun quirks.
- Magic weapons are retained on the purchase list because they are the one "must have" item in order for PCs who rely on weapon attacks to be effective in some situations.

- In-Game Explanations
  - Extra Gold Is: used for other than adventuring (for homes, castles, lands, livestock, extravagant living, etc.), taxed, stolen, lost, gambled away, invested poorly, given to the poor, used to help friends/ family/ organizations/ fellow PCs, etc.
  - Discarded Items Are: traded, taxed, donated, stolen, broken, used up, returned to owner, etc.
  - High Rarity Magic Items Are Not Usable Because: the item has not revealed its powers, the PC is incapable of harnessing the magic to use the item, etc.
  - Consumables: have a limited supply, go bad over time, etc.
- Gold Quantities Comparisons
  - Season 9 recommendation
    - L5: 1000gp (2.7 times Season 8)
    - L11: 5000gp (3.0 times Season 8)
    - L17: 15000gp (1.5 times Season 8)
    - L21: 40000gp (1.3 times Season 8)
  - Season 8 Cumulative Gold
    - L5: 375gp
    - L11: 1675gp
    - L17: 9925gp
    - L21: 31925gp
- Magic Item Quantities Comparisons
  - Season 9 recommendation
    - L4: 2U
    - L10: 2U, 4R
    - L16: 2U, 4R, 4VR
    - L20: 2U, 4R, 4VR, 2L
  - Season 8 Item Count Estimates (high rarity distribution)
    - L4: 1U
    - L10: 1U, 2R
    - L16: 1U, 2R, 0VR, 4L
    - L20: 1U, 2R, 0VR, 6L
  - Season 8 Item Count Estimates (low rarity distribution)
    - L4: 1U
    - L10: 1U, 2R
    - L16: 1U, 3R, 4VR
    - L20: 1U, 3R, 4VR, 2L
  - Season 1-7 Item Count Estimates (see assumptions below)
    - L4: 1U
    - L10: 1U, 2.7R
    - L16: 1U, 2.7R, 2.1VR
    - L20: 1U, 2.7R, 2.1VR, 1.3L
    - These assume 5 PCs playing 4-hour AL adventures.
      - Playing only 2-hour AL adventures would double these.
      - Playing at 6/7-person tables would reduce these by the ratio 5/6 or 5/7.
      - Playing with DMs that ran adventures repeatedly would increase these with DM rewards.
      - Hardcovers could be better (CoS) or worse (HotDQ).

## ALTERNATE TREASURE IDEAS IF GOLD BY LEVEL OR TCP ARE RETAINED

- If gold by level is maintained, increase gold by level rewards to 100gp for L2-4, 250gp for L5-10, 1000gp for L11-16, 5000gp for L17+
- Allow a PC to purchase a magic item and go into TCP debt. They cannot then buy another item until they first raise their TCP back to 0.
- Move all legendary items to be only purchasable at T4 using T4 TCP.
- Allow a PC to discard or use up a magic item and recover the TCP spent on that item (this would replace inter-PC trading).
- Allow a PC to only use items that are tier appropriate (rare at T2, very rare at T3, legendary at T4). They can still have items of higher rarity, they just cannot use them yet.

Design Notes
- By allowing a PC to purchase a magic item and go into TCP debt, it allows them to potentially get a magic item the first time they play (which will increase player return rate)
- Gold Quantities Comparisons
  - Season 9 alternate gold by level recommendation
    - L5: 550gp (1.3 times Season 8)
    - L11: 2800gp (1.6 times Season 8)
    - L17: 12800gp (1.3 times Season 8)
    - L21: 32800gp (1.0 times Season 8)
  - Season 8 Cumulative Gold
    - L5: 375gp
    - L11: 1675gp
    - L17: 9925gp
    - L21: 31925gp
- See the treasure section above for additional design notes.

## REPLAY

- A player can play an adventure they have previously DM'd and/or played but if they do, they cannot take any of the magic items from the adventure.

Design Notes
- Encourage players to play new adventures. New players can all work together to solve the challenges! No one has to hold back and not fully participate and not fully help their team mates.
- Discourages playing adventures to farm magic items. Thankfully, farming is rare, but it does exist...
- Allows for replay to allow games that may not otherwise happen.

## PROGRESSION

- A PC may take less than the full ACP they earn from an adventure. They may take anywhere from 0 to the full ACP earned.
- At any time, you can increase your PC's level. Their ACP remain unchanged and they gain no rewards (such as gold or items with these free levels).

Design Notes
- Gives agency to players and more ways to keep parties together or to just play the way they want!
- PCs who play for all their levels will have an advantage over those that do not.
- Note: If a PC takes 0 ACP, they can still take 1 found item.

## BENEFACTORS

- At the end of an adventure (of any tier), if any PC needs restorative spells to return to full health, they are assumed to receive those spells (regardless if that player plans to ever play that PC again). All PCs at the table must decide if they will help pay for the magic.
- Full health is defined as alive by raise dead (not reincarnation) or resurrection or true resurrection as required and free of any curses or other ongoing harmful effects.
- Each PC (including any needing help) have 3 options.
    1. Pay their share of the cost of all restorative magic required. The following costs are used (they are rounded down and apply regardless of the number of PCs in the party).

       | Spell | Each PC Must Pay |
       | --- | --- |
       | Lesser Restoration | 5gp per spell |
       | Dispel Magic | 10gp per spell |
       | Remove Curse | 10gp per spell |
       | Greater Restoration | 50gp per spell |
       | Raise Dead | 100gp per spell |
       | Resurrection | 300gp per spell |
       | True Resurrection | 3000gp per spell |

    2. Reduce their downtime days by 10 per tier of the adventure (to a minimum of 0) (after rewards for the adventure).
    3. Reduce their renown by 2 per tier of the adventure (to a minimum of 0) (after rewards for the adventure).

Design Notes

- Increase first time player return rate who have a PC die or who have a friend who has a PC die. Their adventuring will not be for naught. They can come back next time and continue with the same PC.
- Each PC has options.
    - Option 1 reflects helping pay with gold.
    - Option 2 reflects helping pay with time.
    - Option 3 reflects not helping and suffering a loss of renown.
- The penalty is shared by all and is not severe enough to hamper the PCs for the rest of their careers.
- Benefactors takes effect regardless if the player plans to ever play the PC again so that no players are pressured to abandon a PC to save the party gold, downtime, or renown.
- The prices for option 1 are set so PCs pay the same regardless of party size (and are set at round numbers that are lower than the original cost divided by 7).
- The reduced costs can be abstractly explained a number of ways: some of the gold over the cap (if any) was used, the PCs have helped enough in the world that they received a discount, etc.


## ADVENTURE DESIGN

- XP Budget
    - pending
- GP Budget
    - pending
- Magic Item Budget (per 4-hour adventure)
    - AL, CCC, and AO adventures have one tier appropriate magic item per 2-4 hours (uncommon at T1, rare at T2, very rare at T3, and legendary at T4)
    - Epics and the D&D Open have the above items and may have an additional tier appropriate item per 2-4 hours.
    - Hardcovers have items added per the ALCC to match normal AL adventures if they are low (but don't have magic items removed if they are high).

Design Notes

- Simple adventure design formulas
- Adventures are about fun combat and exploration and social interaction and stand out based on that criteria alone. None, save the epics and opens, are incentivized by overpowered magic items and none are held back by lower powered and/or fewer magic items.

**DM**

- The DM who ran an adventure can choose one (and only one) of their own PCs to receive rewards from the adventure as if their PC had played it.
- If different PCs received different reward amounts for the adventure, the DM choses one of the PCs to match.
- The DM PC only gets magic item(s) if this is the first time the DM has run the adventure and they have not played it before (otherwise, they get all rewards except for the magic item(s)).

Design Notes
- DMs are rewarded sufficiently to keep up with any players they DM for (assuming they DM as often as the players play).
- DMs have a slight advantage on optimizing the magic items of their PCs because they can assign the adventure rewards to any of their PCs (but the one-time limit for magic items prevents an excessive advantage).

## SEASON 8 TO SEASON 9 CONVERSION

- Convert a Season 8 PC into a Season 9 PC as follows:
  1. Level and ACP are unchanged.
  2. Keep magic items and gold and mundane gear that do not exceed the values in the table in the Treasure Section above. Discard remaining treasure (see above for in-game explanations of what happens to it).
  3. Finished!

Design Notes
- Conversion is very simple and levels the playing field for all current PCs.
- PCs who are currently behind the maximums will have a chance to catch up as they play more adventures. Unlike Season 8 conversion in which if they were behind at conversion, they would always be behind.

## THANK YOU!

Thank you for reading these proposed changes. I look forward to many great years of AL ahead of us. If you like any of these recommendations or have any recommendations of your own, please let the leaders of AL know.

I am continually updating these recommendations.
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