

Converting 2nd Edition AD&D to The Basic System

If you're like me, you don't have too much of an RPG budget, so you focus your gaming energies on free downloads, like The Basic System (TBS), and RPG books available as inexpensive PDF downloads like almost the entire corpus of 2nd Edition AD&D. This document attempts to convert the essential elements of 2nd Edition AD&D, and 1st Edition for that matter, to TBS. These conversions come out a bit high; adjust as needed.

Disclaimer

The conversion conventions, especially those involving magic, I use here are my own [Curt Meyer's] and are not necessarily officially sanctioned by J. Parker or Dilly Green Bean Games.

Converting Stats

Although the stats have different names and slightly different functions in both systems, the raw numbers translate directly unless otherwise noted. Consult the table below for TBS and AD&D stat equivalents:

TBS Main Stat	AD&D Stat
Intelligence	Intelligence
Willpower	Wisdom
Charisma	Charisma
Agility	Dexterity
Strength	Strength
Endurance	Constitution
Speed	$(\text{Base Movement Rate} - 1) + \frac{1}{2} \text{Endurance MSB}$

Converting Percentile Based Class Skills and Weapon and Non-Weapon Proficiencies

To convert a class ability or stat bonus expressed in a percentile, divide that percentile by five (5) and then assign the result as the skill level to a corresponding TBS skill. Can't find it ... make it up. TBS is all about flexibility. Similarly, assign a skill level for each weapon and non-weapon proficiency equal to the number of slots each proficiency occupies.

Converting Racial Bonuses

Purgatory Fantasy RPG covers conventions for the Natural Abilities (NAB) of most the best loved fantasy humanoid races. If you don't have that PDF, then simply convert the bonuses directly based on the above stat conversion guidelines.

Converting Classes

TBS use of only three basic classes for the purpose of character advancement for games using the level progression option is a welcome change from a number of systems. Within each class, players may design unique professional templates for their characters based on which combination of skills, Natural Abilities, etc. they purchase. It is up to GMs to maintain game balance. Purgatory Fantasy RPG provides a number of guidelines for the most common fantasy professions (called classes there). The table below lists the three TBS classes used in level based games:

TBS Class	Hit Dice per Level	Examples
Combat Class	1d10	Warriors; Barbarians
Trade Class	1d8	Rangers; Bards
Thought Class	1d4	Wizards; Priests

I'm sure you're asking, "What's stopping a warrior from learning magic;" answer: absolutely nothing, other than a GM's preference. I say if you can role-play it convincingly and it doesn't upset game balance, go for it. One more thing: if you're converting a multi-class AD&D character into a Level Based TBS game, find the Hit Die to roll per level, divide the smaller Hit Die into the larger one and add the result to the smaller Hit Die.

Converting Magic

Admittedly, this convention is totally my own, although based on the Magic Surge-Plug from Purgatory Fantasy RPG. TBS measures spell potency, and the subsequent eldritch ability of the caster in Magic Points (MP). Casters wield a given number of MP based relative to their affinity to magical energy. The table below is an expansion of the one from the surge plug, which attempts to allow for higher-level AD&D spells:

Magic Level	Magic Points	Examples
Superior Mage	90 Magic Points	Mage Gods like Thoth
Arch Mage	70 Magic Points	Raistlin; Gandalf the White
Mage	50 Magic Points	Merlin; Gandalf the Grey
Adept	40 Magic Points	Ratigast the Brown
Experienced	30 Magic Points	Typical 6 th level Wizard
Neophyte	20 Magic Points	Harry Potter
Novice	10 Magic Points	Mickey Mouse in <i>Fantasia</i>

Historical fantasy settings, like the Arthurian, usually aren't home to magic users above the Mage level, and there are usually only two or three of those in the whole of the game world. To approximate the number of Magic Points a character has, multiply the AD&D Experience Level by five (5). To figure the MP cost of an AD&D spell, multiply the spell's Level by two (2). TBS also allows for increased spell effects with the expenditure of more MP: to double spell effects, double the MP cost; to triple spell effects, triple MP

costs, etc. This provision makes the TBS magic system more versatile than the AD&D system.

Converting Spell Effects

The raw numbers of most spell effects, i.e. range, damage, duration, etc. translate directly, but TBS spell casting conforms to the uniform TBS action resolution formula, so AD&D spells need to be able to fit into that formula. The procedure for casting spells in TBS is given below:

$\text{Will MSB} + \text{Spell Level} + \text{Any Applicable Modifier} + 1d20$

To resist a spell, the target rolls $\text{Will MSB} + \text{Any Applicable Modifier} + 1d20$; the highest roll wins.

Although an AD&D Spell Level doesn't exactly translate into a TBS one, using it in the above formula is probably the most hassle free way of conforming the spell to TBS, or GMs may opt to have players purchase a spell casting skill; if so, use that skill's level in place of a Spell Level. I've included "Any Applicable Modifier" in the spell casting / resisting formulas to reflect possible bonuses from spell affinity or magical resistance from Powers or Natural Abilities (NAB).

Converting Psionics (assumes access to the AD&D Complete Psionics Handbook)

Psionic effects translate more or less directly between the two systems. Psionic Strength Points (PSP) become Psionic Points (PP). But other than that things are pretty much the same, though streamlined. You can continue to use the Start Score method of determining psionic activation, or you can use the TBS action resolution formula:

$\text{Will MSB} + \text{Psionic Power Level} + \text{Any Applicable Modifier} + 1d20$

Please note that Psionic Power Level is not Initial Cost; Psionic Power Level represents the level of power amplification. As with any attack in TBS the target may resist:

$\text{Will MSB} + \text{Any Applicable Modifier} + 1d20$; the highest roll wins

If you'd like to see an official write up of Psionics for TBS, check out GU: Kamikaze Edition.

Converting Weapons and Armor

The good news here is that weapon stats generally translate directly between the two systems. Armor stats need a little bit of tweaking. TBS, like AD&D uses an Armor Class (AC) convention, but it's numbers, though not game it's mechanics, are a lot closer to d20's than AD&D. The TBS AC is equal to the d20 AC within a few points (d20

accounts for size, TBS doesn't), so a d20 AC is still a pretty good approximation of TBS AC. To find the d20 / approximated TBS AC, subtract the AD&D AC from twenty (20). If you're really conscientious, you can refine the result by consulting the armor table in the TBS fee download or the more detailed one in Purgatory Fantasy RPG. Unlike d20 or AD&D, in TBS, armor also has Hit Points equal to its AC.

Converting Monsters

Converting AD&D monsters into any other system is a bit tricky because, as you know if you've ever played AD&D, monster stat blocks are given in a shorthand designed to facilitate game play; that's great if you're playing AD&D, troublesome if you're converting. Hopefully these guidelines will make it easy. The table below shows the relationship between the AD&D monster stat block and the TBS Stats:

TBS Stat	AD&D Monster Stat
Intelligence	Intelligence
Willpower	Morale
Charisma	Average of Intelligence and Morale
Agility	$(20 - THAC0) + 10$
Strength	See Below
Endurance	$8 \times (\text{number of Hit Dice [round up]}) + 2$
Speed	$(\text{Movement} - 1) + \frac{1}{2} \text{Endurance MSB}$
Armor Class	$20 - AC$ (see TBS AC conventions above)

Please note that the above formula for converting Endurance uses Hit Dice (the number of d8s rolled to determine Hit Points when creating a monster), not Hit Points.

Determining Strength

Assuming that bigger monsters are stronger ones, Strength should vary directly with Size. Dwarves are the exception (see Purgatory Fantasy RPG). The table below shows approximate average TBS Strength scores for monsters of various AD&D Sizes. Use the corresponding TBS Strength score as a Base and add the TBS END MSB to it to find the specific Strength score.

TBS Base Strength	AD&D Size
25+	Gargantuan
20	Huge
15	Larger
10	[Hu]man- Sized
7	Smaller
4	Tiny

Converting Special Attacks / Defenses, Magical Resistance, etc.

The Effects of Special Attacks / Defenses can be converted directly in terms of the TBS NAB and / or Powers listed in the TBS fee download; as always if you don't see one that fits, make it up. To convert Magical Resistance, divide the given percentage by five (5). Apply the result as a modifier to any rolls defending against magic.