

Introduction

We are freshman at the University of Denver. As freshman, we have writing requirements. For our last quarter of freshman year we are required to take a writing and research class. This quarter a new type of research class was introduced: a writing and research class based on the massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) World of Warcraft (WoW). We both signed up for the class for different reasons, but what made us a good pair in researching WoW, is that unlike our peers in class, we are both noobs to the game. We both started playing the game about 8 weeks ago, at the start of class. We decided to research, mostly in game, for all our fellow noobs, and to put together a noob guide to making a character based on easiness to level in terms of class and starting point. In part one of our research project, Sam researched quantitatively and qualitatively about the different classes to determine which class was the easiest to level. We determined what we considered easy in the category of classes by how long it took to level, the amount and effectiveness of weapons, how many times she died, quests, mana, and the overall feel of the character. The second part of the research was done by Cord, also quantitatively and qualitatively, on the easiest starting zone to level. Easiness for starting zones was determined by length of time to level, difficulty of quests, prevalence of quests, and how many times he died.

Easiest Class to Level

For the class aspect of the project, the research entailed making a character of every class, leveling them up to four or five. When leveling, there was documentation and numerical figures for how long it took to level each class (in minutes), notes on their weapons and modes of fighting (what weapons they use, how many weapons they use, how they use them, how effective they are at killing quickly, and how frustrated I got when playing with them), brief notes on how often mana ran out, how many, if at all, times they died in the level process, and really the overall feel the class gave to me as a noob.

My first character made was a night elf druid. This being my very first character in WoW, it took a while to level her up to four: 206 minutes. However, now looking back on the process, and notes from my first game plays, I felt that the quests were all easy, once I learned how to fight well, understand how to find people on quests, and navigate using my map. The druids use two handed sticks (a staff) and wrath as their first two main ways of battle. I did not really understand how to use wrath until level three or four, so I leveled up only using attack, my staff. It took a little while to kill using this, but I never died in these first few levels. My quests were either: kill this many of this, or find this person located here. It took a little while to understand that the beasts might look the same, but they are named something different, making them a totally different entity in the game, and lending themselves to totally different quests. For a new character, all quest givers, and all other night elves were extremely kind, and explained what I was suppose to do entirely. Personally, looking back, I am very happy that I learned the ropes, if you will, with a night elf druid.

The next character made was an undead rogue. I thought the physical aspect of the undead as great. Personally I am really into skulls, skeletons, and typical horror film monsters, so seeing that I could play a zombie was a pretty exciting. When I made this character, and entered this new segment of the world, I had already leveled my Druid to nine, and got some practice with her, so I was not as confused by how to kill or how to complete quests as a new player. Since I had a little more experience, playing a rogue was not very difficult for me because I knew the basics of fighting already. The undead use a dagger in attack, and something called sinister strike. They use energy instead of mana, but it works the same way. All in all, I felt that the rogue was not the most difficult, but not the easiest either. A great deal of skills (as in how to attack and fight, how to navigate using my map, where to look for quests, etc) I used were lent from my experience playing my druid; if someone were brand new to the game as I was with my druid, I could see this being harder than some other races. Personally, it took me 97 minutes to level up to four, and I did not die at all.

The third character was a troll warrior. My warrior leveled up very quickly: 65 minutes to get to level four I did not die once. They have three different ways of killing just from level one: attack (using an axe), heroic strike, and throw (throwing a boomerang type object), and the quests were not difficult. Unlike the other races, warriors use rage instead of mana. They seem to be the equivalent to each other, however rage works in the opposite way. Mana is like health, and decreases with fighting, rage increases with every hit, so warriors are able to battle for longer periods of time without tiring. All in all, the warrior was one of the easiest races to play.

The fourth was a human paladin. Though I really did not run into any trouble with the paladin, it killed very slowly. It only had one main mode of attack or offense: a polearm, though it did have a good defense with the seal of righteousness from level one. It seems to me that a paladin would be better in higher levels, not when one is first starting out, and trying to level up quickly. It took me 52 minutes to level to four, I did not die at all, and my mana was pretty average, running out completely after two or three kills.

The fifth was an orc hunter. I did not die while leveling as a hunter, but I found it to be one of the more difficult to play as a low level. It took longer than most the other characters to level, especially considering I did not die while doing it. The hunter uses an axe in attack, something called raptor strike, so a more intense hit while in attack, and a bow and arrow, which was interesting because it is possible to run out of arrows. It took me 177 minutes to level to four, after already have played four characters previously. I would not recommend for a noob to start out as a hunter, definitely more of a high level character.

The sixth was a dwarf priest. I died twice in just leveling to four as a priest. It took me 58 minutes to get to level four. I feel like they are a really focused race in what they do in the game. They are way more about healing than about killing, so leveling up quickly is not going to be the easiest to do as this race. Their mana did not really suffer because of this, but it was still frustrating. The priests use maces and an ability called smite to battle when they are first starting out, neither of which are that effective. I would not recommend this for a noob, if they are looking to level quickly.

The seventh was a tauren shaman. As a shaman, my mana ran out super quick. It would be completely out and I would not have even finished one kill. I constantly had to rest after one fight. When a quest is to kill 10 certain kinds of beasts, and I have to rest for 18 seconds after only one kill, time really starts adding up, and things start getting kind of boring. It took me 67 minutes to level to four, without dieing at all. As a shaman I used lightning bolts and a mace, both were fairly effective, but not the greatest. The only other problem I had with this character was the tauren itself. The body of the tauren was so big that when I would be fitting something I would have to move my screen view around just so I could see my opponent. I do not recommend a shaman for quick leveling at all nor a tauren for a noob either.

The eighth was a gnome mage. Personally, I really enjoyed playing the gnome mage. Mages use fireballs as a main way of battle, and they were great. I was killing opponents quicker with these fireballs than I was with any other method of battle from any other race. Mages were one of my quickest to level. I would definitely recommend a mage as a race for a noob. It only took me 43 minutes to level and I did not die once. My mana was pretty average, it did not run out excessively or keep or extreme amounts of time either.

The ninth and final character made was a human warlock. The warlocks are much more about spell casting, and as a low level, do not really have spells to use. They use a dagger and shadow bolts, which both were really good and helpful in battle, but they are clearly cut out for using their spells, which a noob just cannot do in early leveling. I also died right away when I played a warlock, just having to get used to the different kind of play. It took me 62 minutes to level to four and I did not die. My mana was once again

fairly average, not running out too often, nor keeping for long periods of time. I would definitely not say warlocks are the worst race for a noob to choose, but they are not on the top of my recommendations for quick leveling.

Easiest Starting Zone to Level in as a Warrior

In the following I will be discussing the research that I have done on starting points in the game World of Warcraft. I conducted a study in which I leveled a warrior class character to level four in each of the six starting zones. I collected data on quests, time, number of deaths and the overall difficulty of each starting point.

The first starting zone that I will be discussing is Teldrassil. Teldrassil is the starting zone of the Night Elf warrior and after much research, I found that this zone was the hardest to level in. The first quest that I did in this starting point was called "The Balance of Nature." This quest was fairly simple but a bit time consuming. Basically, I had to go and kill seven Young Night Sabers, four Young Thistle Boars, seven Mangy Night Sabers, and seven Thistle Boars. After this quest I moved on to a very simple quest that consisted of me reading a simple sigil, and then speaking with Allyissia, a warrior trainer who resides in Shadowglen. After this, I took a quest called "A Good Friend." This quest was presented to me by a lady named Dirania Silvershine. Basically, she asked me to search for her friend near a cave because he had been away for quite some time. I walked for quite a while and finally found him. Iverron, Dirania's friend, received a severe spider bite and gave me a quest called "A Friend in Need." This quest required me

to run all the way back across the starting zone in order to inform Diriana of the bad news. This wasted quite a bit of time. The last quest that I was given is called “webwood venom.” This required me to collect 10 webwood venom sacs and deliver them to Gilshalan Windwalker. This took me the longest out of any quest because in order to get the sacs my character had to battle large spiders in and around a cave. When my character walked past the spiders they all attack him. I died four different times when leveling this character up to level four, and it took me one hour and ten minutes to do so.

The next starting zone that I will be discussing is Durotar. Durotar is the starting point of the Orc warrior, and this zone was unquestionably the easiest to level up to four in. The first quest that I completed was a very simple one called “Your Place in the World.” In this quest the only requirement of me was to walk a short distance and converse with a character named Gornek. The second quest that I completed was called “Cutting Teeth.” In this quest all that was asked of me was to kill ten mottled boars. This is very easy because there are a good number of mottled boars directly outside of camp. The third quest that I pursued was called “Simple Parchment.” In this quest all that I had to do was simply bring a piece of parchment to a character named Frang. The fourth quest that I had to do was called “Vile Familiars.” In this quest I simply killed 12 vile familiars outside of the camp. These creatures live in a cave directly outside of camp and cause quite a bit of trouble. After completing “Vile Familiars” I moved on to a quest called “Sarkoth.” This was the most difficult and time consuming task of the starting zone because I had a bit of trouble finding my target. I received the quest from a character named Hana’zua that had been poisoned by a scorpion named Sarkoth. Before he died he wanted the claw of the scorpion as a sense of accomplishment. The last quest that I

completed in this starting point in order to reach level four was called “Sting of the Scorpion.” This was not a difficult task because all that I had to do was collect 10 scorpion worker tails, and they do not live far from camp. Clearly, the majority of quests in this starting point consist of busy work instead of logic. I did not die at all in this starting point, and it took me the least amount of time to complete with a time of 38 minutes.

The third starting zone that I will be discussing is Elwynn Forest. Elwynn Forest is the starting point of the Human warrior. This starting zone was right behind Durotar in terms of easiness due to the fact that all of the quests were near the camp. The first quest that I completed in this starting zone was called “Kobold Camp Clean Up.” In this quest I only had to kill 10 kobold vermin around the camp. This was very easy and didn’t take much time at all. The next quest that I completed was called “Wolves Across the Border.” Once again this was a fairly easy task due to the fact that I only had to kill wolves and collect their meat. The third quest that I completed in this starting zone was called “Brotherhood of Thieves.” This was also fairly easy because I only had to travel just outside of the camp to complete it. The object was to kill defias thugs and bring their red bandanas back to camp. For some reason, although there were many of them, I didn’t even come close to dying. The last quest of this starting zone and by far the most difficult was called “Milly Osworth.” Milly Osworth is a lady who owns a grape vineyard outside of camp where the defias thugs settled. She asked me to collect eight crates of the grapes for her otherwise she would lose her crops. When I reentered the area, it was for some reason much harder to avoid the thugs. Although it took me an average time of 46 minutes to level up to four, I died three times in the vineyard before finally escaping with the grapes.

The fourth starting zone that I will be discussing is called Dun Morogh. Dun Morogh is the starting zone of the Gnome warrior and was not very difficult as well. The first quest that I completed in this area was called “Dwarven Outfitters.” This quest required me to once again kill wolves and collect their meat to bring back to camp. The second quest was a simple one as well called “Simple Memorandum.” This quest only required me to deliver a memorandum to a character named Thran Khorman who is a warrior trainer. The third quest that I stumbled upon was one called “A New Threat.” This quest required me to kill six rockjaw troggs, and six burly rockjaw troggs. The fourth quest that I encountered was called “Coldridge Valley Mail Delivery.” For this quest I simply had to deliver letters to a character named Talin Keeneye right outside of camp. The final quest that I completed in this starting zone was called “The Boar Hunter.” In this quest I was required to kill 12 small crag boars. This took a bit longer than it normally would in a quest of this nature because the boars were spread out. Although the quests in this starting zone are very simple, the simplicity made this zone difficult because I found that it was the most boring out of the starting zones. This zone took me an average time of 44 minutes to level up to 4 and I didn’t die once.

The fifth starting zone that I will be discussing is called Mulgore. Mulgore is the starting zone for Tauren warriors. The first quest that I completed for this starting zone was called “The Hunt Begins.” In this quest I had to go outside of camp to collect seven plainstrider feathers, and seven pieces of plainstrider meat. This was not very difficult due to the fact that plainstriders are very easy to kill, and there are vast numbers of them so it is not necessary to search for them at all. The second quest that I completed was called “A Humble Task.” For this quest I was asked by Chief Hawkwind to search for his

mother by a well right outside of Camp Narache. I was then asked by his mother to bring a pitcher of water back to her son. After this I took a quest called "Simple Note." In this quest I only had to deliver a note. The fourth quest that I attempted was called "The Hunt Continues," This quest came from the same character that gave me "The Hunt Begins." For this quest I was required to collect ten mountain cougar pelts from around the camp. The final quest that I completed was called "The Battleboars." For this quest I had to kill eight battleboars and collect their snouts and flanks. In this starting zone I took 51 minutes to reach level four and I did not die a single time.

The final starting zone that I researched is called Trisfal Glades. This is the starting point for undead warriors and although generally easy, it could be very frustrating at times. The first quest that I completed as an undead warrior was called "Rude Awakening." After I was awoken I was simply told to go talk to a shadow priest names Sarvis. The second quest that I completed was called "The Mindless Ones" and was a bit more interesting than normal. In this quest I was required to kill two types of zombies. I was required to kill eight mindless zombies, and 8 wretched zombies. The third quest that I encountered was called "The Damned" and it was actually quite frustrating. The object was to collect six scavenger paws, and six duskbat wings but it was more difficult than it sounds. As I was killing the dusk bats and scavengers, only very scarcely did they actually give me the paws or wings. The fourth quest that I attempted was called "Scavenging Deathknell." This quest consisted of collected scavenged goods from the area of Deathknell. This quest took me the least amount of time in this starting point. The final quest that I took for this starting point was called "Night Web's Hollow." This quest took me the farthest away from town and required me to kill ten young night

web spiders, and eight night web spiders. This quest certainly took me the most time out of the quests in this starting zone. In Trisfal Glades I did not die at all, and it took me 56 minutes to reach level four.

After thoroughly researching the easiest starting points for the warrior class, I have come to the conclusion that the orc's starting point, Durotar, is by far the easiest. All quests in this starting point are fairly easy and don't take you very far out of camp. The hardest starting point to level in was definitely Teldrassil. This is because I had to do a good bit of traveling, and the quests were quite time consuming. Although quests in these starting points seem fairly easy, they are all considerably time consuming and can be frustrating at times.

Recommendation for a Noob Character

Both sets of research have been put together. Quantitatively and qualitatively we have composed two lists: one, stating the races from one to nine in terms of easiest to hardest, and the second, stating the starting zones from one to six in terms of easiest to hardest. We then made a key of the characters, stating what race each character could be, and a key of the starting zones stating which character was at each. Then we cross reference between the races and starting zones to put together a list of races from easiest to hardest and the characters they can be listed from easiest to hardest. From there we used a point system to rate each race and character. The points system was extremely easy, and gave an accurate view on the characters when combining class and starting zones. Separately, we comprised lists for our respective areas of research ranking either

class or starting zone. Whatever the ranking number that was given to the respective class or zone became their points. We then went through and added up the total number of points for each character that is possible to make (refer to appendix A to view points system), comprising the following list.

Listed from **Most** recommended, down to **Least** recommended

- 1) Troll Warrior, Orc Warrior
- 2) Human Mage, Human Warrior, Troll Rogue, Orc Rogue
- 3) Tauren Warrior, Human Rogue
- 4) Gnome Mage, Dwarf Warrior, Gnome Warrior
- 5) Undead Mage, Undead Warrior, Orc Warlock
- 6) Night elf Druid, Night elf Warrior, Undead Rogue, Human Warlock
- 7) Night elf Rogue, Human Paladin, Troll Priest
- 8) Human Priest, Gnome Warlock, Troll Hunter, Orc Hunter
- 9) Orc Shaman, Undead Warlock, Dwarf Paladin
- 10) Tauren Shaman. Tauren Hunter, Dwarf Priest
- 11) Undead Priest, Dwarf Hunter
- 12) Night elf Priest
- 13) Night elf Hunter

Limitations and Conclusion

For researching about different classes, there were significant limitations that Sam came across. First, not every race can be all of the classes, so each class made had to be a different race, making for various starting zones. These starting zones definitely could have contributed to the difficulty in leveling. Sam tried to make it as class focused as possible, though data more than likely was skewed because of the various settings, and physically limitations of the races. The other big limitation is that with every new character made, the more experience Sam gained, so by researching the last class, she had significant advantage over a brand new player whom might be starting that class. The only true noob data that was collected was from her night elf, since that was her first character created. All other data cannot be 100 percent accurate, because a new player can only really be brand new to the game with one class, not with all nine.

For the starting zones, there really were not too many limitations in this research. Cord, after making his first characters and researching the starting zones, went back and then collected data after he had gained enough basic knowledge to play. This way he could play all the starting zones equally, and not have more knowledge in one zone than in another. This however, could skew data, because someone brand new to the game will not have any knowledge of the area, quests, or abilities of a player at all. This does however make it more accurate than if data were to be collected the first time around, because this way at least his ability was the same for each zone.

In conclusion, we tried to make the data collected as accurate as possible, although it is bound to be skewed because of the limitations listed above. There are other approaches to answer our question of the best character for a noob to make in easiness of

leveling, but we feel that our method was the most appropriate for us to use, because of our experience, or noobaciousness if you will, in the game.

Appendix A

Classes in order of easiest to hardest:

- 1) Druid, Mage, Warrior
- 2) Rogue
- 3) Warlock
- 4) Paladin
- 5) Priest
- 6) Hunter
- 7) Shaman

Starting Zones in order of easiest to hardest:

- 1) Durotar
- 2) Elwynn Forest
- 3) Dun Morogh
- 4) Mulgore
- 5) Tirisfal Glades
- 6) Teldrassil

Points System: Each number that the class or starting point is listed next too now turns into their points.

Now we made a list of the different races, and what class they could be. Then added up the points between the race and class to determine their final number, which will also be their place in our list.

For example: Night elf druid. A Druid receives 1 point, a night elf starts at Teldrassil, and so it gets 6 points. A night elf druid gets a total of 7 points, putting them at number 7 on our list.

We followed the same procedure with every class and race, making our final list.