

Cosmere RPG Session Zero Checklist

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Starting a new game of the Cosmere RPG? A Session Zero, meaning a session where the group comes together prior to beginning actual play, is a great means of introducing yourself to the group, ironing out expectations, and laying down a groundwork of etiquette that will be expected from all members.

What a Session Zero looks like for your group will be different from others. Some like having an entire session set aside for this discussion and actual play does not begin until the next time everyone meets up, while others will prefer having a Session Zero discussion right before actual play begins.

Session Zeroes typically fall under the GM's responsibility to lead and take notes, as some of the answers may impact how they prepare and run the game, however if you are joining as a player and no one has brought up having a Session Zero, you should do so! After all, even if you do not have questions or a sensitive subject to worry about, others might and could be relieved you brought it up.

The checklist in this document is generalized. Some items are specific to in person or online groups, while others assume the group does not know each other. You can, and should, customize and tailor the checklist to be most useful to your group!

Lastly, remember that the whole point of Session Zero is to ensure everyone is on the same page, and if you discover you do not mesh well with the group feel free to politely let them know and excuse yourself. We play TTRPGs to have fun, so make sure you will have fun!

NOTE: This checklist is a culmination of my own experiences as both player and GM over my life of playing TTRPGs, as well as much of its DNA being found from online resources. In particular I would like to credit the following:

- YouTube channel Dungeon Dudes video [How to Run a Session Zero for Dungeons and Dragons 5e](#)
- Reddit user u/HazeZero for the post [Session-0 Topic Checklist and Guide](#)
- Reddit user u/OuYeMistekuKrabz for the post [An actual session 0 checklist](#)
- The Cosmere RPG Beta Rules! I made this entire sheet prior to reading it and was very pleased to see Session Zero mentioned in the Gamemastering section.

Introductions and General Topics

□	Topic	Notes
	Player introductions; names and pronouns (character intros can come during session 1)	
	What is everyone's experience with Brandon's works? Only read one series, fully caught up on the cosmere, etc?	
	What is everyone's experience with TTRPGs? First time player or veteran?	
	What is everyone most excited by from the game; combat, exploration and puzzles, or roleplay?	
	When will we play? How often? Be sure to schedule your first session, or another checkup session to review character sheets at the very least.	
	If someone cancels or shows up late, what do we do?	
	How will we play? Online using VTT, if so which one? Does everyone have access? Offline in person, if so where?	
	Does everyone have access to the rules and character sheets (VTT, digital pdfs, ebooks, or physical books)?	
	How long will this campaign be? Using a premade adventure? Suggestion to use # of sessions as rough length measurement.	
	How difficult will the game be? Is this a very hard campaign with deadly encounters at every turn, a standard difficulty using encounters around the party's level, or an easy campaign to relax to?	

Ethic Concerns

I will add a preface to this section to remind you that these topics are quite sensitive. Approach this section with respect, and ask that the rest of the group do the same. The goal is to ensure that everyone at the table is on the same page with regards to these topics, and that no one is suddenly blindsided with content in or out of the game which triggers them.

☐	Topic	Notes
	Gender Norms - Ensure the group is aware, and comfortable, that the Cosmere does play host to a variety of gendered norms, and specify the ones they may run into throughout the campaign based on which location(s) will be visited.	
	Sexual Orientations - Ensure your group is all on the same page when it comes to the acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community. The Cosmere is already canonically host to many individuals who would identify as LGBTQ+.	
	Rape and Sexual Assault - Confirm with the whole group on whether these topics are allowed at the table, both in and out of the game. This includes involvement in backstories and ongoing events within the campaign.	
	Prejudice - Ensure the group is aware, and comfortable, that prejudice of many kinds are found within the Cosmere. Consider specifying what kinds of prejudice they may run into throughout the campaign based on which location(s) will be visited.	
	Slavery - Ensure the group is aware, and comfortable, that slavery exists on multiple worlds within the Cosmere, and in fact is quite prevalent in some of the adventures.	
	Other - Ask your players if they have any topics they may be triggered by, or would prefer to avoid. Some examples include real world religions, real world politics, sex, etc.	

Out of Game Expectations and Behaviors

□	Topic	Notes
	Snacks - Is the group allowed to eat and/or drink at the table? Defer to host preferences.	
	Alcohol - Is the group allowed to drink / get drunk during play?	
	Narcotics - Is the group allowed to smoke/vape during play? Cigarettes? Marijuana? Will there be smoke breaks and if so how often?	
	Cellphones and Other Devices - Are these allowed at the table? Do they need to be silenced? What about important phone calls? Can players use headphones during play?	
	Player Attention - If a player is getting distracted to the point of slowing down the game, how is this handled?	
	Socializing - Does the group want to add a socializing period before sessions start? Is it okay to socialize mid-session?	
	Maturity Rating - How mature is the table expected to behave? PG, PG-13, R? Is profanity allowed? Is there a limit to how gratuitous violent descriptions should be?	

In Game Expectations and Behaviors

□	Topic	Notes
	Rules Decisions - How close to Rules as Written (RAW) is the GM planning to run the game? Will play stop to look something up or will the GM make a decision in the moment? Will that decision stand for the rest of the campaign or be a one time thing?	
	House Rules - Any house rules the GM likes to use, or the players wish to propose?	
	Homebrewed Content - Will homebrewing be allowed? Is there a list of allowable brews the GM likes to include?	
	Min/Maxing - Is the group comfortable with possible power discrepancies between characters? Can an experienced player help others with their builds?	
	Meta Knowledge - Is players having meta knowledge okay? Is some info okay while others not, and how should this be handled? Should they roll knowledge checks?	
	Unannounced Dice Rolls - What are the GM's expectations regarding dice rolls? Are players allowed to roll without saying anything, then announce they have taken an action with the roll they got? Does the GM prefer all rolls be asked for prior to rolling?	
	Player vs Player (PVP) - Is PVP allowed? Both combat and role playing tension? Is it allowed to get deadly?	
	Player Secrets - Are players allowed to keep in game secrets from each other (e.g. things found during an investigation check being privately communicated for the player to decide to share vs being announced to the whole table)? Are certain secrets allowed while others not?	

Character and Party Creation

□	Topic	Notes
	Premades - Are the players using premade characters?	
	Character Ideas - what sorts of ideas regarding their characters do the players have? Backstories, build plans, party role, or anything else the players want to share.	
	Character Goals - What goals do the players have for their characters, both in game and out of game. In game examples include saving a sibling, discovering the secrets of new technology, or exacting revenge. Out of game examples include becoming a 4th ideal Dustbringer, or wanting their character to make tough moral decisions.	
	Backstory Integration - Are the players okay with their backstories being heavily tied into the campaign plot? Do their character goals mesh well with doing so? How much do they wish to know about this integration?	
	Party Relationship - Do the characters already know each other? Are they already an adventuring group? If running a premade adventure, be sure to check if this is defined.	
	NPC Contacts - Do the characters have pre-existing relationships with NPCs from their backstory? Are the players okay with the GM introducing NPCs and informing them their characters have a pre-existing relationship?	
	Private Info - Have the players communicate with the GM privately to discuss any info the player does not want the rest of the group to know at the start of the campaign.	

