

# A Magical Society: Guide to Monster Statistics

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Expeditious Retreat Press' newest free product, *A Magical Society: Guide to Monster Statistics*. This 19 page PDF breaks down the D20 monster stat block, delineating the interconnectivity between statistics, how each entry shapes a monster's CR, and how to properly present information within the monster stat block.

Besides being an excellent resource in and of itself, *A Magical Society: Guide to Monster Statistics* is an entire chapter from a larger work, *A Magical Society: Beast Builder*. *A Magical Society: Beast Builder* weighs in at a whopping 256 pages, covering the following concepts: what makes a good monster, how monsters fit in their environment, classifying monsters by their function rather than their physiology, breaking down types and subtypes, demystifying templates, how to use bits and pieces from monsters to enrich your game, and a comprehensive list of 600 special attacks and special qualities taken from the SRD and *Monster Geographica: Underground*.

And don't forget the appendices... What would a *Magical Society* book be without its useful appendices? *A Magical Society: Beast Builder* has 4 appendices: a D20 Mechanic Table (you'll never have to use your fingers again), an editing checklist to get you well on the road to John Coopering your own creations, a CR estimator to estimate CR before playtesting, and the Random(ish) Monster Generator.

Expect to see the PDF of *A Magical Society: Beast Builder* in late March/early April, while the hardback book will hit shelves in June/July 2005.

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Joe and Suzi  
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# MONSTER STATISTICS

There's a lot more to making a good monster than a good idea. The implementation of the idea is at least equally important as the idea itself. Good implementation requires a thorough understanding of how the d20 system deals with creatures. In other words, you've got to be savvy with your statistics and their interconnections. This section will provide you the necessary information to increase your monster making ability. Hopefully, with this information, all of your ideas will come to fruition in an exciting gaming session. It's suggested that you read this entire section before applying any of its information.

All creatures are presented in a specific manner: stat block followed by a description section and then a combat section. If the creature is one of a type of creatures (for example giants, true dragons, or demons), a description of the monster "family" comes first.

As in Chapter 4: Type and Subtype, each individual statistic is first defined and explained. After the description of what each particular statistic is and does, a short section follows containing thoughts about that particular stat. Not all stats have notes; some are pretty straightforward. Some have notes about advancing/improving monsters, and other just have notes about CR as opposed to other aspects of the statistic.

Throughout this chapter, challenge rating considerations will appear under bolded headings. Balancing monsters against PCs inevitably ends up squarely on the GM's shoulders, but there are ways of reducing the burden while assigning challenge ratings before playtesting. Although determining challenge rating is far more of an art than a science, I'll try to give you a lot of food for thought during your creation process. Beyond straight CR considerations, there may be other discussions on the finer points of monster creation as well as general GMing advice in relation to the subject matter.

If you're designing for general play, you should base your design and CR off the standard party of fighter, cleric, rogue, and wizard. But if you're just making a creature for your group of players, assess what creatures are more likely to be difficult for them particularly. It's not unusual for individual parties to have unusual strengths or weaknesses. Designing for general play is more challenging balance-wise, but designing for a specific group often provides for a more enjoyable encounter. As in most things, there are advantages and disadvantages in both. But either way, be aware of what audience you're designing for.

## THE STAT BLOCK

The stat block contains the basic game information on the creature. There is a tremendous amount of interrelation between the various statistics. If you change one trait, more than likely there's going to be a change to at least one other trait, if not multiple others. The below information is invaluable to good creature creation.

## NAME

This is the name by which the creature is generally known. The descriptive text may provide other names. If the creature has any class levels, the information is presented on the name line. This is common for humanoids, such as Goblin, 1<sup>st</sup>-Level Warrior, but should occur for any creature possessing class levels. See "Advancement/Improving" under Advancement below for some additional information on humanoid class levels.

Name is one of the few things you can change willy-nilly without mechanical chaos. To avoid confusion don't call something a particular type unless it is that type. In other words, try not to call a creature a dragon unless it is a dragon by type.

There are several naming conventions for monsters. The primary naming convention comes from myth and legend. Dragons, rocs, manticores, trolls, werewolves, and vampires are all mythological

creatures common to several different cultures. Many canon gaming monsters are named (and derive their statistics) from such sources.

The second common naming convention is the descriptive name. Chokers, digesters, dragon turtles, gold dragons, hellhounds, howlers, and shocker lizards are good examples of this naming convention. Descriptive names incorporate either function or appearance of the creature; chokers attack by choking while gold dragons are gold colored. This naming convention is an easy one to use when creating a new creature. Look at what it does and how it looks, pick two (or more) words, and run with it. White death giant, ebony ripper, and sanguine stalker are names that would be appropriate under this naming convention.

The final naming convention is simply making up words. If any creature isn't named from myth and legend or descriptively named, they fall into this group. Some of the best monsters have made up names that simply sound cool or threatening. Try to give a good, evocative name to your creature. A creature named the "Stay-Puft Giant" just isn't as cool as the "White Death Giant." You know your audience and your PCs, so pick a name that they'll remember. And hopefully learn to fear...

Regardless of what convention you use, naming creatures can be used for campaign-building purposes. You can name a monster after a particular location in your world, such as the nigiri tiger, or the frost peaks dragon. Also, don't hesitate to call the same creature by multiple names depending upon location in your world. This adds verisimilitude and keeps your players on edge as they move through differing cultural areas. Maybe the ouktuk is something they've never encountered before, but perhaps they're already familiar with it from a prior encounter. But a cautionary word: don't get too caught up in naming. Remember, sometimes something simple is simply the best.

**CR Considerations:** Although this may seem a bit silly, balance starts with a name. Don't give terrifying names to creatures that aren't powerful and try not to give powerful monsters unimpressive names. But with this advice in mind, don't hesitate to break things up to keep the PCs on their toes. Player expectation should be occasionally used for an enjoyable deception, but don't overdo it.

## SIZE, TYPE AND SUBTYPE

This line describes the creature's size. A size modifier applies to the creature's AC, attack bonus, grapple bonus, skills (Hide and Jump). Size determines how far it can reach to make a melee attack and how much space it occupies in a fight. Size also modifies a creature's natural armor, base damage, and physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution). See the Table 3.1: Size and Abilities for more information about size and its connections.

Type determines certain features, such as base Hit Dice, base attack bonus, base saving throw bonuses, skill points and how magic affects a creature. See the type information table and each individual type description for a thorough understanding of type. The most important advice on selecting type is to try to choose the right type to match your idea. When you know what each type is and does, this selection is fairly easy. Subtypes are further classification that modifies a creature as listed in each individual subtype description.

Become familiar with the types and sub-types. They are very important in monster creation and affect multiple key aspects of a creature. Double check all your numbers if you change a creature's size, type or sub-type; I can't stress this point enough. For a more thorough discussion of type and sub-type, see each individual entry in the Chapter 4: Type and Sub-Type.

If the creature has an alignment subtype such as lawful, good, chaotic, or evil, you should include this short paragraph concerning damage reduction in its Combat section before listing descriptions of its SA/SQs: "A [creature's name] natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as (alignment subtype) for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction."

**Table 3.1 Size and Abilities**

Size Name	Max Size	Max Weight	Space/Reach tall/Reach long	Str	Dex	Con	Natural Armor	AC/Attack	Grapple/Hide
Fine	6 in. or less	1/8 lb. or less	(6 in./0 ft./0 ft.) or less	-10	+8	-2	0	+8	-16/+16
Diminutive	1 ft.	1 lb.	1 ft./0 ft./0 ft.	-10	+6	-2	0	+4	-12/+12
Tiny	2 ft.	8 lb.	2.5 ft./0 ft./0 ft.	-8	+4	-2	0	+2	-8/+8
Small	4 ft.	60 lb.	5 ft./5 ft./5 ft.	-4	+2	-2	0	+1	-4/+4
Medium	8 ft.	500 lb.	5 ft./5 ft./5 ft.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Large	16 ft.	4k lbs.	10 ft./ 10 ft./5 ft.	+8	-2	+4	+2	-1	+4/-4
Huge	32 ft.	32k lbs.	15 ft./ 15 ft./10 ft.	+16	-4	+8	+5	-2	+8/-8
Gargantuan	64 ft.	250k lbs.	20 ft./ 20 ft./15 ft.	+24	-4	+12	+9	-4	+12/-12
Colossal	64 ft. or more	250k lbs. or more	(30 ft./ 30 ft./20 ft.) or more	+32	-4	+16	+14	-8	+16/-16

Ability/Stats adjustment for average creatures. Divide by up to 2 for weaker, Multiply by up to 2 for more powerful. Example: Giants should be closer to x2 listed Str adjustment because they're physically strong.

**Table 3.2 Increased Damage by Size**

Fine	Diminutive	Tiny	Small	Medium	Large	Huge	Gargantuan	Colossal
–	–	–	1	1d2	1d3	1d4	1d6	1d8
–	–	1	1d2	1d3	1d4	1d6	1d8	2d6
–	1	1d2	1d3	1d4 (Slam, Tentacle, Claw, or Sting)*	1d6	1d8	2d6	3d6
1	1d2	1d3	1d4	1d6 (Bite, Gore, Tail)*	1d8	2d6	3d6	4d6
1d2	1d3	1d4	1d6	1d8	2d6	3d6	4d6	6d6
1d3	1d4	1d6	1d8	1d10	2d8	3d8	4d8	6d8
1d4	1d6	1d8	1d10	1d12	3d6	4d6	6d6	8d6
1d2	1d3	1d4	1d6	2d4	2d6	3d6	4d6	6d6
1d4	1d6	1d8	1d10	2d6	3d6	4d6	6d6	8d6
1d6	1d8	1d10	2d6	2d8	3d8	4d8	6d8	8d8
1d8	1d10	2d6	2d8	2d10	4d8	6d8	8d8	12d8

\*(Attack Type) is the suggested standard damage for an attack of that type. For larger or smaller creatures, move the damage appropriately.

Size conveys several different bits of information to your players about the monster, and you should choose your creature's size with these things in mind. First, size is a relatively good indicator of combat prowess. PCs know that reach and strength go hand-in-hand with size, and they'll expect such from a creature larger than Medium.

From the world building perspective size, size is important in placing the creature within its niche. Currently on earth, the largest creatures are usually herbivores, but in fantasy worlds carnivores seem to be the norm, if for no other reason than fighting a cow isn't very exciting. However, consider the fierce hippo, arguably the most dangerous animal on earth besides the humble, malaria-carrying mosquito. But besides that, a creature's size is often a good indicator of the amount of food it requires (and hence the amount of territory it requires) to sustain itself.

**CR Considerations:** Size, type, and sub-type are important when determining CR. Size is easily understandable from a CR perspective: the bigger the creature, the tougher it is. As it increases in size, its base damage goes up, its reach increases and hence, it has a greater chance to use AoOs (attacks of opportunity) during combat. Also, a creature that wields manufactured weapons takes advantage of increased damage

due to increased weapon size. Here are a few general tendencies about size, type, sub-type and CR, followed by Table 3.4: Size and CR showing some correlations between size and CR.

- Fine monsters are absent from the SRD.
- Diminutive monsters are always under CR 1 unless possessing the swarm subtype.
- Tiny monsters are always under CR 3 unless possessing the swarm subtype, and they are only CR 3 if they are true dragons.
- Small monsters are always under CR 6, and the vast majority of the time they will be CR 3 or lower.
- Medium monsters are the first size category to vary widely in CR.
- Large monsters are almost always at least CR 3. There are some exceptions, but they are almost all animal or vermin types; the only exception is the magical beast hippogriff.
- Huge monsters (excluding true dragons) have an average CR of 8. Huge true dragons have an average CR of 17.
- Gargantuan monsters (excluding true dragons) have an average CR of 9. Gargantuan true dragons have an average CR of 23.
- Colossal monsters are badly represented. All but one, the tarrasque, are giant vermin that have fairly low CRs.

**Table 3.3 Type Information**

Type	Hit Die	Attack Bonus	Good Saving Throws	Skill Points*
Aberration	d8	HD x3/4 (as cleric)	Will	2 + Int mod per HD
Animal	d8	HD x3/4 (as cleric)	Fort, Ref (and sometimes Will)	2 + Int mod per HD
Construct	d10	HD x3/4 (as cleric)	—	2 + Int mod per HD**
Dragon	d12	HD (as fighter)	Fort, Ref, Will	6 + Int mod per HD
Elemental	d8	HD x3/4 (as cleric)	Ref (Air, Fire), or Fort (Earth, Water)	2 + Int mod per HD
Fey	d6	HD x1/2 (as wizard)	Ref, Will	6 + Int mod per HD
Giant	d8	HD x3/4 (as cleric)	Fort	2 + Int mod per HD
Humanoid	d8	HD x3/4 (as cleric)	Varies (any one)	2 + Int mod per HD
Magical beast	d10	HD (as fighter)	Fort, Ref	2 + Int mod per HD
Monstrous humanoid	d8	HD (as fighter)	Ref, Will	2 + Int mod per HD
Ooze	d10	HD x3/4 (as cleric)	—	2 + Int mod per HD**
Outsider	d8	HD (as fighter)	Fort, Ref, Will	8 + Int mod per HD
Plant	d8	HD x3/4 (as cleric)	Fort	2 + Int mod per HD**
Undead	d12	HD x1/2 (as wizard)	Will	4 + Int mod per HD**
Vermin	d8	HD x3/4 (as cleric)	Fort	2 + Int mod per HD**

All types have a number of feats equal to 1 + 1 per 3 Hit Dice.

\* As long as a creature has an Intelligence of at least 1, it gains a minimum of 1 skill point per Hit Die.

\*\* Creatures with an Intelligence score of “—” gain no skill points or feats.

Type also plays a role in CR, but it’s a little harder to determine. Some types (like elemental and ooze) have a definite advantage over other types (like animal, fey, and humanoid) from the very beginning. Sub-types also have this in common with type. Angel and swarm sub-types are, by their very nature, more powerful than the fire and cold sub-types. Here’s where the art part of estimating CR really begins. For a more detailed look at type and CR, look in Chapter 4: Type and Subtype.

## HIT DICE

This line gives the creature’s number and type of Hit Dice (determined by the creature’s type), and lists any bonus hit points. If a monster possesses class levels its class’s Hit Dice follows its racial Hit Dice in format “plus XdY+Z” where X is the number of levels in the class, Y is the Hit Dice for the class and Z is any bonus hit points for those levels. A parenthetical note gives the average hit points for a creature of the indicated number of Hit Dice. Generate this average by adding the maximum and the minimum hit points possible for the creature, divide by two (round down), and then add any bonus hit points. A creature’s Hit Dice total is treated as its level for determining how spells affect the creature, its rate of natural healing, and its maximum ranks in a skill. Hit Dice is also used to determine the creature’s ECL (Effective Character Level). On top of all this, Hit Dice determines a swarm type’s base damage as well as the effectiveness of breath weapons, energy drains, fear effects, gaze attacks, paralysis attacks, poison attacks, and trample attacks. As you can tell, a change in Hit Dice results in many other changes as well.

Hit Dice are the single most influential aspect of monster creation. They are the keystone of the arch of monster creation, to use a flowery metaphor. Hit Dice are determined by your creature type which is determined by your creature concept, so right from the beginning they play an important role in monster creation.

**Table 3.4 Size and CR**

Size	CR Min	CR Average	CR Max	Notes
Fine	—	—	—	
Diminutive	1/10	2	8	
Tiny	1/8	1	3	
Small	1/4	2	6	
Medium	1/6	3	15	
Large	1	6	23	
Huge	2	11	22	lots of dragons
Gargantuan	6	18	27	lots of dragons
Colossal	9	12	20	

**Advancement/Improving:** When you improve a monster by adding Hit Dice, use Table 3.5: Improved Monster CR Increase to determine the effect on the creature’s CR. Keep in mind that many monsters that advance by adding Hit Dice also increase in size. Do not stack this CR increase with any increase from class levels. In general, once you’ve doubled a creature’s CR, you should closely watch any additional increases in its abilities. Adding Hit Dice to a creature improves several of its abilities, and radical increases might not follow

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**Table 3.5 Improved Monster CR Increase**

Creature's Original Type	CR Increase
Aberration, construct, elemental, fey, giant, humanoid, ooze, plant, undead, vermin	+1 per 4 HD added
Animal, magical beast, monstrous humanoid	+1 per 3 HD added
Dragon, outsider, nonassociated class levels	+1 per 2 HD or 2 levels added
Directly associated class levels	+1 per level added
<b>Other Modifiers:</b>	
Size increased to Large or larger	+1 to CR
Monster's ability scores based on elite array*	+1 to CR
Monster possesses special attacks or qualities that significantly improve combat effectiveness	+2 to CR
Monster possesses special attacks or qualities that improve combat effectiveness in a minor way	+1 to CR
Template added	+ template CR modifier

\* Do not apply this increase if you advance a monster by class levels. (Monsters advanced by class levels are assumed to use the elite array.) See the Advancement trait below for more information on class levels.

**Table 3.6: CR and Hit Dice**

CR	HD Min	HD Average	HD Max
1/10	1/4	1/4	1/4
1/8	1/4	1/4	1/4
1/6	1/4	1	2
1/4	1/2	1	2
1/3	1/4	1	1
1/2	1/2	1	2
1	1/2	2	4
2	1	3	7
3	2	4	6
4	1	6	10
5	3	7	11
6	5	8	12
7	6	10	16
8	5	11	18
9	7	14	21
10	7	14	32
11	10	17	32
12	10	18	40
13	10	16	20
14	12	17	22
15	8	19	24
16	14	21	25
17	16	22	27
18	25	26	30
19	26	28	31
20	18	29	48

this progression indefinitely. Compare the monster's improved attack bonus, saving throw bonuses, and any DCs of its special abilities from the HD increase to typical characters of the appropriate level and adjust the CR accordingly.

**CR Considerations:** Hit Dice are the basic building block of challenge rating. Although there is not a direct correlation between HD and CR, some information can be gleaned by looking at common monsters. The first thing you'll notice is that HD is almost always equal to or greater than CR. There are few monsters where their CR is higher than their HD, and those monsters have powerful abilities (like grick, magmin, medusa, and rast) in relation to their HD. HD can be up to double CR for standard, multi-faceted intelligent monsters (like the homunculus, howler, and phasm), and up to triple or just a bit over for combat wombats barely smart enough to breath (like many animals, giant vermin, and non-intelligent undead - the latter of which don't actually have to breath anyway).

So, to reverse this train of thought, a creature's CR should rarely be less than its HD and only for monsters that have powerful abilities (and generally at lower CRs - higher CRs are often expected to have powerful abilities). For the majority of creatures CR should be equal to or 1/2 of HD. For animal/vermin/non-intelligent undead types CR can fall below 1/3 of HD, but many are in the 1/2-1/3 HD range.

The relationship between CR and HD is further complicated by type and sub-type. You'll notice that undead usually have a fairly high HD to CR ratio, mostly because their BAB is like a wizard's and they have no Con, although their d12 HD partially compensates the lack of bonus hp. On the other hand, oozes have a lower HD to CR ratio that what you'd expect for a mindless combatant because their ooze traits are powerful.

Table 3.6: CR and Hit Dice shows the relationship of HD and CR from SRD monsters. This will give you a rough idea about what HD is generally appropriate to a particular CR. The drop in max HD at CR 13 is due the absence of any vermin types at that CR and above.

## INITIATIVE

This line gives the creature's modifier on initiative checks. Initiative starts at 0 and is adjusted according to the creature's Dex modifier and the Improved Initiative feat.

Initiative doesn't play much of a role in monster creation. It's typically just the result of other factors. A few monster concepts depend upon a creature being very fast and quick, but even then initiative plays a vastly inferior role to special attacks/special qualities.

**Table 3.7: Flying Maneuverability**

Action	Maneuverability				
	Perfect	Good	Average	Poor	Clumsy
Minimum forward speed	None	None	Half	Half	Half
Hover	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Move backward	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Reverse	Free	-5 ft.	No	No	No
Turn	Any	90°/5 ft.	45°/5 ft.	45°/5 ft.	45°/10 ft.
Turn in place	Any	+90°/-5 ft.	+45°/-5 ft.	No	No
Maximum turn	Any	Any	90°	45°	45°
Up angle	Any	Any	60°	45°	45°
Up speed	Full	Half	Half	Half	Half
Down angle	Any	Any	Any	45°	45°
Down speed	Double	Double	Double	Double	Double
Between down and up	0	0	5 ft.	10 ft.	20 ft.

**CR Considerations:** Initiative is usually independent of CR considerations. But do remember that a higher initiative gives a slight, if only a very slight, advantage to the monster in comparison with the majority of PCs in an average party. If the creature is a confuser, disabler, enslaver, or nullifier, initiative has some importance when compared to standard combatant because a first attack could immediately reduce party effectiveness. Other than these general statements, initiative doesn't play much of a role in CR determination. However, if you're increasing the EL of an encounter based upon situation, initiative can matter quite a bit, especially in an ambush.

## SPEED

This line gives the creature's tactical speed on land (the amount of distance it can cover in one move action). If the creature wears armor that reduces its speed, the creature's base land speed follows its armor-modified speed (see titan as an example). If the creature has other modes of movement, these are given after (or in place of) the land speed. Unless noted otherwise, modes of movement are natural (not magical). Any speed except 30ft. modifies a creature's Jump skill as follows: -6 for every 10 feet of speed less than 30 feet, or +4 for every 10 feet faster than 30 feet. It is common to parenthetically include the number of 5-foot squares that the creature's movement equals after its base speed. Any additional movement types do not require such.

In general, speed is based upon creature size and number of legs/mobility type. See Table 3.8: Movement Speed by Type.

**Burrow:** A creature with a burrow speed can tunnel through dirt, but not through rock unless the descriptive text says otherwise. Creatures cannot charge or run while burrowing. Most burrowing creatures do not leave behind tunnels other creatures can use (either because the material they tunnel through fills in behind them or because they do not actually dislocate any material when burrowing); see the individual creature descriptions for details.

**Climb:** A creature with a climb speed has a +8 racial bonus on all Climb checks. The creature must make a Climb check to climb any wall or slope with a DC of more than 0, but it always can choose to take 10 even if rushed or threatened while climbing. The creature climbs at the given speed while climbing. If it chooses an accelerated climb it moves at double the given climb speed (or its base land speed, whichever is lower) and makes a single Climb check at a -5 penalty. Creatures cannot run while climbing. A creature retains its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any) while climbing, and opponents get no special bonus on their attacks against a climbing creature.

**Fly:** A creature with a fly speed can move through the air at the indicated speed if carrying no more than a light load. (Note that

medium armor does not necessarily constitute a medium load.) All fly speeds include a parenthetical note indicating maneuverability, as follows:

- Perfect: The creature can perform almost any aerial maneuver it wishes. It moves through the air as well as humans move over smooth ground.

- Good: The creature is very agile in the air (like a housefly or a hummingbird), but cannot change direction as readily as those with perfect maneuverability.

- Average: The creature can fly as adroitly as a small bird.

- Poor: The creature flies as well as a very large bird.

- Clumsy: The creature can barely maneuver at all.

A creature that flies can make dive attacks. A dive attack works just like a charge, but the diving creature must move a minimum of 30 feet and descend at least 10 feet. It can make only claw or talon attacks, but these deal double damage. A creature can use the run action while flying, provided it flies in a straight line.

*Minimum Forward Speed:* If a flying creature fails to maintain its minimum forward speed, it must land at the end of its movement. If it is too high above the ground to land, it falls straight down, descending 150 feet in the first round of falling. If this distance brings it to the ground, it takes falling damage. If the fall doesn't bring the creature to the ground, it must spend its next turn recovering from the stall. It must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save to recover. Otherwise it falls another 300 feet. If it hits the ground, it takes falling damage. Otherwise, it has another chance to recover on its next turn.

*Hover:* The ability to stay in one place while airborne.

*Move Backward:* The ability to move backward without turning around.

*Reverse:* A creature with good maneuverability uses up 5 feet of its speed to start flying backward.

*Turn:* How much the creature can turn after covering the stated distance.

*Turn in Place:* A creature with good or average maneuverability can use some of its speed to turn in place.

*Maximum Turn:* How much the creature can turn in any one space.

*Up Angle:* The angle at which the creature can climb.

*Up Speed:* How fast the creature can climb.

*Down Angle:* The angle at which the creature can descend.

*Down Speed:* A flying creature can fly down at twice its normal flying speed.

*Between Down and Up:* An average, poor, or clumsy flier must fly level for a minimum distance after descending and before climbing. Any flier can begin descending after a climb without an intervening distance of level flight.

**Table 3.8 Movement Speed by Type**

Movement Type	Size	Slow ft.	Average ft.	Fast ft.
Walking Biped	Fine	0	5	15
	Diminutive	5	10	20
	Tiny	10	15	25
	Small	15	20	30
	Medium	20	30	40
	Large	30	40	50
	Huge	40	50	60
	Gargantuan	50	60	70
Walking Quadruped	Fine	5	10	20
	Diminutive	10	15	25
	Tiny	15	20	30
	Small	30	40	50
	Medium	30	40	50
	Large	30	50	60
	Huge	40	60	70
	Gargantuan	50	70	80
Colossal	60	80	90	
	90	120	150	
Burrowing	Any	10	20	30
Climbing	Any	20	30	40
Flying	Fine	5	10	15
	Diminutive	10	20	30
	Tiny	20	30	40
	Small	40	40	60
	Medium	40	60	90
	Large	60	80	120
	Huge	80	100	140
	Gargantuan	100	120	160
Colossal	120	140	200	
	200	240	300	
Swimming	Any	30	60	80

**Swim:** A creature with a swim speed can move through water at its swim speed without making Swim checks. It has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. The creature can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. The creature can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

The above climb and swim paragraphs should be included at the end of the monster's combat section when appropriate.

**CR Considerations:** Speed can play a significant role in CR. Increased mobility provides more options in combat. Additional movement types, like climb, burrow, and fly provide creatures with

more ways to attack or defend against PCs through increased mobility. A good general rule is, the faster the creature, the more effective it is in combat and the slower it is, the less effective. This doesn't hold true for all things of course, but almost every creature would be tougher were it faster and/or if it had multiple methods of movement. Pay particular attention to speed if your monster possesses ranks in jump, tumble or if it has the Spring Attack feat or Sneak Attack special ability. If it has these abilities, a simple speed increase or decrease could result in a respective change in CR.

## ARMOR CLASS

The Armor Class line gives the creature's AC for normal combat and includes a parenthetical mention of the modifiers contributing to it (usually Size, Dexterity, and natural armor). The creature's touch AC (all modifiers except for armor bonus, shield bonus, natural armor bonus, and any enhancement bonuses to those values) and flat-footed AC (all modifiers except Dex bonus) follow the combat-ready AC. If a creature wears armor or carries a shield, spell out the armor type in the stat block, such as "+4 chain shirt armor" or "+2 heavy steel shield," rather than "+4 armor" or "+2 shield." If the armor is magical it should be listed as +4 +1 *studded leather armor*.

A creature's armor proficiencies (if it has any) depend on its type, but in general a creature is automatically proficient with any kind of armor it is described as wearing (light, medium, or heavy), and with all lighter kinds of armor.

Although AC is pretty straightforward, there are some complications. As in all things monster related, pay particular attention to type and sub-types. For example, incorporeal creatures' AC is treated differently (incorporeals have no natural armor and instead have a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Cha modifier with a minimum of +1 regardless of Cha modifier), so be aware of these differences. Estimating natural armor is somewhat tricky; refer to Table 3.9: Estimating Natural Armor Value for some guidance.

**CR Considerations:** Armor class is very important to CR determination. There are three ways to defeat a monster: physical combat, magical combat, or avoidance/negation. AC plays a key role in physical combat by preventing damage. Effectively, AC (along with hit points) determines the staying power of a monster in physical combat. A creature with low AC and high hit points can last as many average rounds as a creature with high AC and low hit points. The functional difference is minimal; one creature is hit every round, but keeps on going, the other is hard to damage, but once damaged, can't last very long. However, AC has fewer connections to other statistics than Hit Dice. You have more leeway playing with a creature's AC than you do with altering its hit points.

Perhaps the best way to look at AC is to determine how often, on average, you want your PCs damaging your monster. For example, say your best fighter has a +6 to his attack. If you want him to hit roughly every other time he swings, make the monster's AC 16. At lower levels, where the damage dealt in an average round is a greater percentage of the monster's hit point totals, a lower expected hit percentage is almost required for an exciting combat to last more than a few rounds. At the higher BABs, balancing party effectiveness is more difficult in relation to AC. Some party members may be able to easily hit the monster, while others just swing and pray. At that time, the issue is probably one of greater hit points with the monster being comparatively easier to hit.

From the pure enjoyment standpoint, especially at higher levels, it's often more fun to have monsters that secondary-fighter types (3/4 BAB progression) can hit, and against which the fighter types can really wail upon. You may want to keep high hit percentages for the fighter types and moderate hit percentages for secondary-fighter types while beefing up the monster's hit points a bit to offset the fighter's power. Having hard-to-hit monsters is fun every once in a while, but generally, you want the majority of the party's characters possessing average and good BAB progressions to hit the majority of creatures on something less than a natural 20.

Although I said this advice is especially applicable at higher levels, this isn't bad advice for any level. Fighting monsters that only



**Table 3.9: Estimating Natural Armor Value**

Type of Natural Armor	AC
<b>Skin/Hides</b>	
Human Skin	0
Tough Skin/Light Fur	1-2
Thick Skin/Thick Fur	2-4
Hide	3-5
Tough Hide	4-6
Tough Hide with Light Fur	5-8
Tough Hide with Thick Fur	7-9
Thick Tough Hide	8-10
Very Tough Hide	9-11
Awesomely Tough Hide	10+
<b>Scales</b>	
Leathery Scales	5-7
Lightly Scaled	6-9
Moderately Scaled	8-11
Heavily Scaled	10-13
Awesomely Scaled	13+
<b>Shells/Exoskeletons</b>	
Thinly covered	2-4
Moderately covered	3-6
Heavily covered	7-11
Awesomely covered	12+

the brute can touch becomes frustrating for the secondary fighter types when it happens too often. You know your players, so do what you think they'd enjoy the most, but as always, don't be afraid to adapt your style into something that increases everyone's enjoyment.

Take a look at the Full Attack section below for a more thorough discussion of damage per round capability-it goes hand-in-hand with AC.

## BASE ATTACK/GRAPPLE

The number before the slash on this line is the creature's base attack bonus (before any modifiers are applied; abbreviated BAB). This number won't often be used while gaming, but it can be handy sometimes, especially if the creature has the Power Attack or Combat Expertise feats. Creatures with less than one Hit Dice should be considered as having +0 BAB.

The number after the slash is the creature's grapple bonus, which is used when the creature makes a grapple attack or when someone tries to grapple the creature. The grapple bonus includes all modifiers that apply to the creature's grapple checks: base attack bonus, Strength modifier, special size modifier (see Table 3.1: Size and Abilities above), and any other applicable modifier, such as a racial bonus on grapple checks. Pay attention to type and sub-type here as well. Incorporeal creatures and swarms get a "—" for their grapple.

Base Attack is often a prerequisite for feats. Check the feats list for complete information.

**CR Consideration:** There aren't very many CR considerations for Base Attack. The mechanic is based upon the HD and type/sub-type of the creature, so balance issues reside in those factors. Don't forget to actually use the Power Attack or Combat Expertise feats if your monster possesses them; if you don't, you're playing the monster sub-optimally, which effectively reduces its CR. But this is standard advice for any of your creature's abilities.

Grapple is a bit more complex. Grappling can be deadly at almost every level, so pay attention to the creature's grapple bonus in relation to its function. A high grapple bonus for a monster that doesn't grapple often isn't much of a CR concern, but when the creature's a grappler, that bonus is very important. Also, size plays a very important role in grappling. In a simple combat comparison, a Huge grappling creature is probably going to be more of a challenge than the same monster build that slams instead. This is because larger size gives increasingly negative attack modifiers, **except when grappling**. Not only is larger size not a negative modifier for grappling, it's actually a positive modifier. And it's often one that dramatically increases a creature's hit percentages and weighted damage per round in relation to a non-grappling monster. Keep that in mind when designing a grappler.

Take a look at the Full Attack section below to help you determine just how effective a grappler you want your new creature to be.

## ATTACK

This line shows the single attack the creature makes with an attack action. In most cases, this is also the attack the creature uses when making an attack of opportunity as well. The attack line provides the weapon used (natural or manufactured), attack bonus, and form of attack (melee or ranged). The attack bonus given includes modifications for size and Strength (for melee attacks) or Dexterity (for ranged attacks). A creature with the Weapon Finesse feat can use its Dexterity modifier on melee attacks and is shown with its Dex mod instead of its Str mod in such a case. Look at your monster's type and sub-type to determine its base attack and for any differences in its generation and application. For example, incorporeals use Dex instead of Str (as they have none) for melee attack modifiers, and they also ignore armor, natural armor, and shields.

If the creature uses natural attacks, the natural weapon given here is the creature's primary natural weapon. If the creature has several different weapons at its disposal, the alternatives are shown with each different attack separated by the word "or." A creature can use one of its secondary natural weapons when making an attack action, but does so with a -5 attack penalty, as noted in the Full Attack section below (if the creature has the Multiattack feat, the attack penalty is reduced to a -2).

The damage of each attack is noted parenthetically after the attack bonus and form of attack. Damage from an attack is always at least 1 point, even if a subtraction from a die roll reduces the result to 0 or lower. Damage from additional sources (like the hell hound's fiery bite) is listed after the physical damage and indicated with "plus [amount] [type]" nomenclature. For example, the hell hound's completely listing for attack is "Bite +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 fire)." Some attacks cause no damage, but have an effect that is listed where the damage normally would be, such as (attach) for the stirge and (entangle) for a net.

A creature's primary attack damage includes its full Strength modifier or 1-1/2 times its Strength bonus if the attack is with a two-handed weapon or with the creature's sole natural primary weapon. Some creatures use a single attack type (like slam) but have multiple natural primary weapons, so they do not get 1-1/2 times Strength bonus damage. Good examples of creatures with a single attack type that do not receive 1-1/2 times their Strength bonus are earth elementals of CR 5 and higher (Large sized and larger), gricks, invisible stalkers, mimics, and treants. These creatures are distinguished because they have one attack type, but multiple attacks under their full attack information. These creatures do not get 1-1/2 times their Strength bonus for any of their attacks because they have two or more natural primary weapons.

Table 3.10 Increased Damage by Size

Fine	Diminutive	Tiny	Small	Medium	Large	Huge	Gargantuan	Colossal
–	–	–	1	1d2	1d3	1d4	1d6	1d8
–	–	1	1d2	1d3	1d4	1d6	1d8	2d6
–	1	1d2	1d3	1d4 (Slam, Tentacle, Claw, or Sting)*	1d6	1d8	2d6	3d6
1	1d2	1d3	1d4	1d6 (Bite, Gore, Tail)*	1d8	2d6	3d6	4d6
1d2	1d3	1d4	1d6	1d8	2d6	3d6	4d6	6d6
1d3	1d4	1d6	1d8	1d10	2d8	3d8	4d8	6d8
1d4	1d6	1d8	1d10	1d12	3d6	4d6	6d6	8d6
1d2	1d3	1d4	1d6	2d4	2d6	3d6	4d6	6d6
1d4	1d6	1d8	1d10	2d6	3d6	4d6	6d6	8d6
1d6	1d8	1d10	2d6	2d8	3d8	4d8	6d8	8d8
1d8	1d10	2d6	2d8	2d10	4d8	6d8	8d8	12d8

\*(Attack Type) is the suggested standard damage for an attack of that type. For larger or smaller creatures, move the damage appropriately.

Table 3.10: Increased Damage by Size offers guidelines on how damage should be assigned or modified based upon the size of the creature. If a creature has multiple natural attacks, the primary attack should do the most damage, and the secondary attacks should move down the scale. So if a medium creature has a bite and 2 claws, a good damage rating would be bite (1d6) and 2 claws (1d4). Remember, these are just guidelines, not set-in-stone rules, and you may wish to consider the Improved Natural Attack monster feat for increased damage.

See Full Attack below for descriptions of both natural weapons and manufactured weapons.

**CR Considerations:** CR and attack... what can I say? Well, your monster's got to hit your party if it's supposed to be a combatant of any caliber. Determine this the same way you determine hit percentages for the PCs against your monster's AC. Generally you want to make sure your monster, if it is going to engage in any melee combat at all, is capable of hitting your PC with the highest AC on something less than a natural 20. We'll talk more about this under the Full Attack section.

## FULL ATTACK

This line shows all the physical attacks the creature makes when it uses a full-round action to make a full attack. It gives the number of attacks along with the weapon, attack bonus, and form of attack (melee or ranged). The first entry is for the creature's primary weapon, with an attack bonus including modifications for size and Strength (for melee attacks) or Dexterity (for ranged attacks). A creature with the Weapon Finesse feat can use its Dexterity modifier on melee attacks and is shown with its Dex mod instead of its Str mod in such a case. The remaining weapons are secondary, and attacks with them are made with a -5 penalty to the attack roll, no matter how many there are. Creatures with the Multiattack feat take only a -2 penalty on secondary attacks. The damage that each attack deals is noted parenthetically. Damage from an attack is always at least 1 point, even if a subtraction from a die roll reduces the result to 0 or lower.

A creature's primary attack damage includes its full Strength modifier (1-1/2 times its Strength bonus if the attack is with the creature's sole natural weapon) and is given first. Secondary attacks add only 1/2 the creature's Strength bonus and are given second in the parentheses.

If any attacks also have some special effect other than damage, that information is given here. Unless noted otherwise, creatures using natural weapons deal double damage on critical hits.

## Natural Weapons

Natural weapons are weapons that are physically a part of a creature. A creature making a melee attack with a natural weapon is considered armed and does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Likewise, it threatens any space it can reach. Creatures do not receive additional attacks from a high base attack bonus when using natural weapons. The number of attacks a creature can make with its natural weapons depends on the type of the attack—generally, a creature can make one bite attack, one attack per claw or tentacle, one gore attack, one sting attack, or one slam attack (although Large creatures with arms or arm-like limbs can make a slam attack with each arm). Such attacks should be listed in the individual monster's description.

Unless otherwise noted, a natural weapon threatens a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 20.

When a creature has more than one natural weapon, one of them (or sometimes a pair or set of them) is the primary weapon. All the creature's remaining natural weapons are secondary.

The primary weapon is given in the creature's Attack entry, and the primary weapon or weapons is given first in the creature's Full Attack entry. A creature's primary natural weapon is its most effective natural attack, usually by virtue of the creature's physiology, training, or innate talent with the weapon. An attack with a primary natural weapon uses the creature's full attack bonus. Attacks with secondary natural weapons are less effective and are made with a -5 penalty on the attack roll, no matter how many there are. (Creatures with the Multiattack feat take only a -2 penalty on secondary attacks.) This penalty applies even when the creature makes a single attack with the secondary weapon as part of the attack action or as an attack of opportunity.

Natural weapons have types just as other weapons do. The most common are summarized below.

*Bite:* The creature attacks with its mouth, dealing piercing, slashing, and bludgeoning damage.

*Claw or Talon:* The creature rips with a sharp appendage, dealing piercing and slashing damage.

*Gore:* The creature spears the opponent with an antler, horn, or similar appendage, dealing piercing damage.

*Slap or Slam:* The creature batters opponents with an appendage, dealing bludgeoning damage.

*Sting:* The creature stabs with a stinger, dealing piercing damage. Sting attacks usually deal damage from poison in addition to hit point damage.

*Tentacle:* The creature flails at opponents with a powerful tentacle, dealing bludgeoning (and sometimes slashing) damage.

## Manufactured Weapons

Some monsters employ manufactured weapons when they attack. Creatures that use swords, bows, spears, and the like follow the same rules as characters, including those for additional attacks from a high base attack bonus and two-weapon fighting penalties. This category also includes “found items” such as rocks and logs that a creature wields in combat – in essence, any weapon that is not intrinsic to the creature.

Some creatures combine attacks with natural and manufactured weapons when they make a full attack. When they do so, the manufactured weapon attack is considered the primary attack unless the creature’s description indicates otherwise, and any natural weapons the creature also uses are considered secondary natural attacks. These secondary attacks do not interfere with the primary attack as attacking with an off-hand weapon does, but they take the usual -5 penalty (or -2 with the Multiattack feat) for such attacks, even if the natural weapon used is normally the creature’s primary natural weapon.

The bonus for attacks with two-handed weapons is 1-1/2 times the creature’s Strength modifier (if it is a bonus), and is given first. Offhand weapons add only 1/2 the Strength bonus and are listed separately like “Shortsword +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+4) and shortsword +15 melee (1d6+2).

**CR Consideration:** Full attack is where combatants shine. I mentioned hit percentages against your PCs AC above, but don’t only look at hit percentages. Look at damage as well. You can calculate a weighted average damage based upon how often a creature hits and its average amount of damage, giving you the best view of how powerful a combatant you’re really dealing with. This information is most useful in the mid-levels and above, where busting the curve isn’t as instantly fatal as at lower levels, but it’s still useful at any CR.

For an example, let’s look at the CR5 troll. Trolls are great combatants. They have two strong primary claw attacks at +9 melee (1d6+6) and a secondary bite at +4 melee (1d6+3). Against a typical 5<sup>th</sup>-level fighter’s AC of 21, the troll will hit with each claw attack 45% of the time. The average claw damage is 9.5 but since it only hits 45% of the time the weighted average damage (including criticals) is 4.7025. His average bite damage is 6.5 but it will only hit 20% of the time creating a weighted average damage (including criticals) of 1.4.

To an AC 21 fighter, this troll is going to deal an average of 10.835 points of damage per round. However, this is excluding his special rend attack which deals 2d6+9 (average 16) when he hits on both claw attacks. He’ll do that 20.25% of the time, so the troll’s total per-round-weighted-averaged-damage is 14.075. A typical 5<sup>th</sup>-level fighter has around 42 hp and could stand toe-to-toe with the utterly average troll for two rounds but he’ll fall unconscious with -2 hp after round 3.

But when looking at damage averages, don’t forget to include the average minimum and maximum possible. For our troll the minimum weighted average damage is 10.03 per round while the maximum weighted average is 18.11. Although the true minimum is obviously 0 damage (there’s a 24.2% chance he won’t hit at all), and the true maximum is a terrifying 87 points of damage (if he hits and crits every attack while rolling the max damage for each die), working with weighted averages is a better estimate of a more likely outcome.

This reinforces what every 5<sup>th</sup> level party knows: trolls are damn scary and not fun when fought toe-to-toe.

## MATH BREAK

Ok, here’s how you can determine the above information for your own creatures. I’ll use the troll as my example. First, look at the attack bonus for the creature’s first attack in his full attack entry. Compare it with the target AC on the D20 Mechanic Table in Appendix 1. That will give you the percentage chance for a successful hit. For our troll’s claw at +9 against an AC of 21 that’s 45%.

Now that we know our troll hits 45% of the time we can determine average damage. The troll does 1d6+9 points of damage per claw attack. To determine average damage for a die, add its highest possible roll (6) with its lowest possible roll (1), divide by two, and then add bonuses. This makes our troll’s average 9.5.

Repeat this process for every attack. For our troll, we simply use the above again since it has two identical claw attacks, and we determine its bite attack at +4 against an AC of 21 will hit 20% of the time with damage of 1d6+3 averaging out to 6.5 points of damage.

Once you have determined an attack’s average damage and percentage to hit, you can find the a weighted average by multiplying the average damage by the percentage to hit, which does account for the fact that the creature will not always hit. For our troll’s claw attack it works out thusly:  $45\% \times 9.5 = 4.275$  (remember that 45% is .45 when multiplying). The bite attack is  $25\% \times 6.5 = 1.3$ . There’s our weighted average damage, but to give us a better picture of the monster’s capabilities, we have to consider critical hits.

Since a troll has a crit threat range of 20 (as do all creatures unless specifically noted), it has a 5% chance to threaten a crit per attack. To confirm a crit, it must roll again and hit the target AC. To find the percentage to hit with a confirmed crit, you must multiply the crit threat range by the creature’s percentage chance to hit the target AC. For our troll’s claw attack against an AC of 21 that would be  $2.25\%$  of the time ( $.05 \times .45 = .0225$ ). Its bite attack against an AC of 21 would confirm a critical 1% of the time ( $.05 \times .2 = .01$ ).

The average damage of the critical is determined just like the regular damage above. For our troll’s claw crit (2d6+12), the average damage is 19, and the bite attack’s average crit (2d6+6) damage is 13. Now we just repeat the process to determine the weighted average damage of the criticals. The troll’s weighted average critical damage per claw attack is  $.4275 \times 19 = 8.1225$  and the weighted average critical damage for its bite attack is  $.13 \times 13 = 1.69$ .

To find the most holistic weighted average damage per round (including critical hits and times when the monster will not hit at all), simply add all the weighted averages of all attacks and the weighted average of all their corresponding criticals. For our troll that comes out to  $10.835 + 8.1225 + 1.69 = 20.6475$ .

Easy enough! But hey, don’t trolls rend as well?

Determining a monster’s special attacks will depend upon the nature of each creature. For our troll, we determine it just like we did above. In order for the troll to rend, it has to hit with both claw. To determine that probably of when it can rend, multiply 45% by 45%. This gives you 20.25%. You then determine the average damage for a rend (2d6+9) as 16 and perform the weighted average function to get a weighted average damage of  $3.24 \times 16 = 51.84$ . Unlike the normal attacks, rend never crits, so there is no need to do anymore calculation on rend.

Some creature’s special attacks will be indeterminable because they won’t do any damage. For example, a *sleep* effect cannot be mathematically calculated to determine effect since it is completely situational.

## SPACE/REACH

This line describes how much space the creature takes on the battle grid (and thereby needs to fight effectively) and how close a creature has to be to threaten an opponent. The number before the slash is the creature’s space, or how many feet one side of the creature occupies. The number after the slash is the creature’s natural reach. If the creature has exceptional reach due to a weapon, tentacle, or the like, the extended reach and its source are noted in parentheses at the end of the line.

To determine a creature’s base space/reach, look at the Table 3.1 Size and Abilities under Size, Type and Sub-Type. The monster concept determines exceptional reach.

**CR Considerations:** Like base attack, there aren’t very many balance considerations for space/reach. The mechanic is based upon the size of the creature, so most balance issues reside in that statistic. In other words, when possible, changes in space/reach should be done through changes in a creature’s size, not through changes in space/reach.

Generally, space/reach is only a CR concern for combatants. Monsters that don’t rely upon their physical prowess don’t have much (if any) of their CR riding on space/reach. Monsters with a reach beyond 5ft. have several advantages. It usually forces those

with less reach to suffer Attacks of Opportunity to close and projects more power over the battlefield by allowing a greater probability for AoO due to movement through the monster's controlled squares. A creature with a high Dex and the Combat Reflexes feat can dominate its controlled space. Exceptional reach increases these concerns. Giving such a creature exceptional reach could result in a CR increase.

## SPECIAL ATTACKS AND SPECIAL QUALITIES

Many creatures have unusual abilities. A monster entry breaks these abilities into special attacks (SA) and special qualities (SQ). Within the stat block, SA and SQ are listed in alphabetical order with additional information (when needed) is provided in the creature's Combat section.

Special qualities include defenses, vulnerabilities, and other special abilities that are not modes of attack. A special ability is either extraordinary (Ex), spell-like (Sp), or supernatural (Su). When a special ability allows a saving throw, the kind of save, the save DC, and the ability upon which the DC is based are noted in the descriptive text. Most saving throws against special abilities have DCs calculated as follows: 10 + 1/2 the attacker's racial Hit Dice + the relevant ability modifier.

A monster's special attacks and special qualities are alphabetically listed in its combat section. Special attacks are listed first, followed by special qualities. A creature's type usually determines its vision and some other special qualities. It is customary to only list darkvision and low-light vision on the SQ line with their appropriate ranges in a parenthetical note following the special quality's name. For lengthy qualities, such as the many immunities of constructs and undead, the standard is to simply list "construct traits" or "undead traits" on the SQ line.

If a creature has damage resistance overcome by magic, this short paragraph should be inserted at the end of its combat section: "A (creature's name) natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction."

**CR Considerations:** The heart of a monster concept usually resides in its special attacks and/or special qualities. It's here that monsters distinguish themselves from each other and make their special mark on your game. There are six hundred special attacks and special qualities listed within this book (see Chapter 7: Special Abilities and Conditions), far too many to discuss here, but a few general statements can be made. As stated above, DC calculations are usually based upon the monster's racial HD + relevant ability modifier. That means that if you want to add a level or two of bard to your medusa, her gaze attack DC isn't going to increase because bard HD are not her racial HD. Adding classes to monsters doesn't improve their SA DCs, but if you add enough levels they could put their ability score increases into the associated ability.

Tying SA DCs to HD and relevant ability modifiers means that you should increase (or decrease) those two statistics if you want to manipulate the effectiveness of a special attack. If you wish, you can always use an Ability Focus feat for a +2 to an SA DC, if you want a little extraumph without increasing HD or abilities.

## SAVES

This line gives the creature's Fortitude, Reflex, and Will save modifiers. Saves are based upon monster type and ability score. The feats Great Fortitude, Iron Will, and Lightning Reflexes also augment saves. The easy way to determine saves is to take the monster's HD/2 plus 2 for good saves and HD/3 for poor saves (as always, round down.). If a monster has a racial bonus against certain effects, it is customary to list it as follows (example is from the hound archon): Fort +6 (+10 vs. poison).

**CR Considerations:** Saves are to magical attacks as AC is to physical combat. Saves determine the expected staying power of a creature in magical combat. Saves are pretty well accounted for by HD and ability scores, so the only thing you need to think about are the feats that add +2 to saves (Great Fortitude, Iron Will, and Lightning Reflexes). These feats make the creature's magical defenses a bit tougher

and can help overcome natural weaknesses of type or sub-type. Again, look at the D20 Mechanic Table in Appendix 1 to determine how your creature's saves holds up against a particular magical attack and its relevant DC. If you want to increase the saves, use feats or change ability scores before changing HD. Although changing ability scores will require some consideration, changing HD will affect many more things than changing ability scores.

## ABILITIES

This line lists the creature's ability scores in the customary order: Str, Dex, Con, Int, Wis, Cha. Except where noted otherwise, each creature is assumed to have the standard array of ability scores before racial adjustments (all 11s and 10s; for even balance use three 11s and three 10s). To determine any creature's racial ability adjustments, subtract 10 from any even-numbered ability score and subtract 11 from any odd-numbered score. Exceptions are noted in the Combat section of a creature's descriptive text.

**Nonabilities:** Some creatures lack certain ability scores. These creatures do not have an ability score of 0—they lack the ability altogether. The modifier for a nonability is +0. Each ability below has a non-ability section which further explains the nonability's effects.

**Advancement/Improving:** Advanced/improved creatures can use two other arrays besides the standard array. The elite array (15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8) creates a monster with one weakness compared to the typical members of its species, but it is significantly better overall. The elite array is most appropriate for monsters who add levels in a player character class. The nonelite array (13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8) doesn't necessarily make a monster better than normal, but it does customize the monster as an individual with strengths and weaknesses compared to a typical member of its race. The nonelite array is most appropriate for monsters who add class levels in a NPC class.

An advanced/improved creature's monster HD are treated the same as character level for determining ability score increases. This only applies to HD increases, monsters do not gain ability score increases for levels they "already reached" with their racial HD, since these adjustments are included in their basic ability scores.

## Strength (Str)

Strength measures your monster's muscle and physical power. This ability is especially important for combatants and grapplers because it helps them prevail in combat. Strength also limits the amount of equipment your monster can carry.

You apply your monster's Strength modifier to:

- Melee attack rolls.
- Damage rolls when using a melee weapon (natural or manufactured) or a thrown weapon (including a sling). (Exceptions: Off-hand attacks receive only one-half the monster's Strength bonus, while two-handed attacks receive one and a half times the Strength bonus. A Strength penalty, but not a bonus, applies to attacks made with a bow that is not a composite bow.)
- Climb, Jump, and Swim checks. These are the skills that have Strength as their key ability.
- Strength checks (for breaking down doors and the like).
- Strength (of various amounts) is a prerequisite for the feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, and Power Attack
- Strength determines carrying capacity. Quadrupeds can carry heavier loads than bipeds can. Any creature with four or more motive limbs can carry a load as a quadruped, even if it does not necessarily use all the limbs at once.
- Incorporeal creatures have a Strength score of –.

**Nonability Strength:** Any creature that can physically manipulate other objects has at least 1 point of Strength. A creature with no Strength score can't exert force, usually because it has no physical body or because it doesn't move. The creature automatically fails Strength checks. If the creature can attack, it applies its Dexterity modifier to its base attack bonus instead of a Strength modifier.

**Table 3.11: Ability Modifiers and Bonus Spells**

Score	Modifier	Bonus Spells (By Spell Level)									
		0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1	-5	Can't cast spells tied to this ability									
2-3	-4	Can't cast spells tied to this ability									
4-5	-3	Can't cast spells tied to this ability									
6-7	-2	Can't cast spells tied to this ability									
8-9	-1	Can't cast spells tied to this ability									
10-11	+0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12-13	+1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14-15	+2	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16-17	+3	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
18-19	+4	—	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
20-21	+5	—	2	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—
22-23	+6	—	2	2	1	1	1	1	—	—	—
24-25	+7	—	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	—	—
26-27	+8	—	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	—
28-29	+9	—	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
30-31	+10	—	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
32-33	+11	—	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1
34-35	+12	—	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1
36-37	+13	—	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
38-39	+14	—	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
40-41	+15	—	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2
42-43	+16	—	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2
44-45	+17	—	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3

## Dexterity (Dex)

Dexterity measures hand-eye coordination, agility, reflexes, and balance. This ability is usually one of the most important for any small, tiny, diminutive, or fine creature.

You apply your monster's Dexterity modifier to:

- Ranged attack rolls, including those for attacks made with bows, crossbows, throwing axes, and other ranged weapons.

- Armor Class (AC), provided that the monster can react to the attack.

- Reflex saving throws, for avoiding fireballs and other attacks that moving quickly escapes.

- Balance, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, Open Lock, Ride, Sleight of Hand, Tumble, and Use Rope checks. These are the skills that have Dexterity as their key ability.

- Dexterity (of various amounts) is a prerequisite for the feats Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Grapple, Improved Precise Shot, Manyshot, Multiweapon Fighting, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Snatch Arrows, Stunning Fist, Two-Weapon Fighting, and Whirlwind Attack.

*Nonability Dexterity:* Any creature that can move has at least 1 point of Dexterity. A creature with no Dexterity score can't move. If it

can perform actions (such as casting spells), it applies its Intelligence modifier to initiative checks instead of a Dexterity modifier. The creature automatically fails Reflex saves and Dexterity checks.

## Constitution (Con)

Constitution represents your creature's health and stamina. A Constitution bonus increases a monster's hit points, so the ability is important for all monsters, regardless of their function.

You apply your monster's Constitution modifier to:

- Each roll of a Hit Die (though a penalty can never drop a result below 1 – that is, a monster always gains at least 1 hit point for every Hit Die and at least 1 hit point each time it advances).

- Fortitude saving throws, for resisting poison and similar threats.

- Concentration checks. Concentration is a skill, important to spellcasters, that has Constitution as its key ability.

- If a monster's Constitution score changes enough to alter its Constitution modifier, the monster's hit points also increase or decrease accordingly.

- A Constitution score of 13 is a prerequisite for the Improved Natural Armor feat.

Table 3.12: Realized Abilities by Size

Size	Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma
Fine	*	*	*	*	*	*
Diminutive	1/1/3	12/17/22	8/10/14	-/2/6	10/12/14	2/3/9
Tiny	1/5/11	10/14/19	-/11/14	-/5/12	1/11/14	1/6/14
Small	1/11/17	8/13/29	-/12/15	-/7/16	1/10/16	1/9/18
Medium	-/14/27	1/13/23	-/14/23	-/8/18	1/12/20	1/10/26
Large	-/21/37	-/13/28	-/17/31	-/9/26	1/13/26	1/11/26
Huge	10/27/43	1/12/33	-/21/39	-/11/24	1/14/28	1/12/24
Gargantuan	23/36/48	1/10/17	-/25/33	-/20/32	1/20/33	1/18/32
Colossal	27/33/45	4/11/16	12/19/35	-/3/3	1/9/14	1/4/14

– Constructs and Undead have a Constitution score of –.

*Nonability Constitution:* Any living creature has at least 1 point of Constitution. A creature with no Constitution has no body or no metabolism. It is immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless the effect works on objects or is harmless. The creature is also immune to ability damage, ability drain, and energy drain, and automatically fails Constitution checks. A creature with no Constitution cannot tire and thus can run indefinitely without tiring (unless the creature's description says it cannot run).

### Intelligence (Int)

Intelligence determines how well your monster learns and reasons. This ability is important for some spellcasting monsters because it affects how many spells they can cast, how hard their spells are to resist, and how powerful their spells can be. It's also important for any creature you want to have a wide assortment of skills.

You apply your monster's Intelligence modifier to:

– A creature can speak all the languages mentioned in its description, plus one additional language per point of Intelligence bonus. Any creature with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher understands at least one language (Common, unless noted otherwise).

– The number of skill points gained for each HD or level. But your monster always gets at least 1 skill point per HD/level unless otherwise stated in its type/subtype description. A creature does not retroactively get additional skill points for previous HD or levels if it increases its intelligence.

– Appraise, Craft, Decipher Script, Disable Device, Forgery, Knowledge, Search, and Spellcraft checks. These are the skills that have Intelligence as their key ability.

– Some spellcasting monsters gain bonus spells based on their Intelligence scores. The minimum Intelligence score needed to cast such spells is 10 + the spell's level.

– Most vermin, constructs, oozes, plants and many undead have an Intelligence score of –; animals have an Intelligence score of 1 or 2. A creature of humanlike intelligence has a score of at least 3.

– An Intelligence score of 13 is a prerequisite for the feats Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Trip, and Whirlwind Attack.

*Nonability Intelligence:* Any creature that can think, learn, or remember has at least 1 point of Intelligence. A creature with no Intelligence score is mindless, an automaton operating on simple instincts or programmed instructions. It has immunity to mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects) and automatically fails Intelligence checks. Mindless creatures do not gain feats or skills, although they may have bonus feats or racial skill bonuses.

### Wisdom (Wis)

Wisdom describes a monster's willpower, common sense, perception, and intuition. While Intelligence represents the ability to analyze information, Wisdom represents being in tune with and aware of the surroundings. If you want your creature to have acute senses, put a high score in Wisdom. Every creature has a Wisdom score.

You apply your creature's Wisdom modifier to:

– Will saving throws (for negating the effect of *charm monster* and other spells).

– Control Shape, Heal, Listen, Profession, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks. These are the skills that have Wisdom as their key ability.

– Some spellcasting monsters get bonus spells based on their Wisdom scores. The minimum Wisdom score needed to cast such spells is 10 + the spell's level.

– A Wisdom score of 13 is a prerequisite for the Natural Spell feat.

*Nonability Wisdom:* Any creature that can perceive its environment in any fashion has at least 1 point of Wisdom. Anything with no Wisdom score is an object, not a creature. Anything without a Wisdom score also has no Charisma score.

### Charisma (Cha)

Charisma measures a monster's force of personality, persuasiveness, personal magnetism, ability to lead, and physical attractiveness. This ability represents actual strength of personality, not merely how the monster is perceived by others. Charisma is very important for many monsters. Many Special Attacks/Qualities rely upon Charisma (look at each individual special ability for complete information). Every creature has a Charisma score, but some types (constructs, plants, undead, and vermin) often have Charismas of 1-3. Animals are usually in the 2-7 range, but there are some exceptions for particularly self-aware or fierce animals (like wolverines).

You apply your creature's Charisma modifier to:

– Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform, and Use Magic Device checks. These are the skills that have Charisma as their key ability.

– Checks that represent attempts to influence others.

– Some spellcasting monsters get bonus spells based on their Charisma scores. The minimum Charisma score needed to cast such spells is 10 + the spell's level.

– Spell-like abilities are based upon Charisma.

*Nonability Charisma:* Any creature capable of telling the difference between itself and things that are not itself has at least 1 point of Charisma. Anything with no Charisma score is an object, not a creature. Anything without a Charisma score also has no Wisdom score.

## Ability Scores and Size

Determining the ability scores for your monster concept is simply one of comparing existing creature's abilities against your monster concept. In the core books there are several charts showing ability scores in relation to a sample creature, and they should help you select the number that best fits your concept. Or you can refer to the D20 Mechanic Table in Appendix 1 and work backwards from success chance to what ability score is needed to create the desired success chance.

As indicated in Table 3.1: Size and Abilities, the size of a creature modifies its base array. Although Table 3.1 gives the standard decrease/increase patterns for a monster based upon its size, Table 3.12: Realized Abilities by Size, based upon the monsters in the SRD, gives a slightly different opinion of size and abilities. The table shows the min/average/max of each ability, and – indicates a nonability minimum. All averages do not include non abilities. Generally, you may follow both leads when making your monsters as both are obviously appropriate.

**CR Considerations:** Ability scores play a prominent role in CR determination. Every combatant relies upon Str, Dex, and Con to

ensure a successful combat while almost every creature also relies upon its ability scores to determine the DCs of its special attacks. Abilities (along with HD) determine the power of a creature's special attacks and its combat prowess—the two main determiners of CR.

Table 3.13: Realized Abilities by CR shows the min/average/max of ability scores in relation to CR. – represents a nonability minimum score, and nonabilities are not included in averages.

## SKILLS

This line gives the creature's skills, along with each skill's modifier (including adjustments for ability scores, armor check penalties, and any bonuses from feats or racial traits). All listed skills are class skills, unless the creature has a character class (noted in the entry). A creature's type and Intelligence score determine the number of skill points it has. The number given for each skill reflects synergy bonuses. If a synergy bonus is situational, list it parenthetically, such as the bonus to Survival while following tracks from having 5 ranks in Search: Survival +2 (+4 to following tracks).

**Table 3.13: Realized Abilities by CR**

Challenge Rating	Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma
1/10	1/1/1	12/13/15	10/10/11	1/1/2	14/14/14	4/4/4
1/8	1/1/2	15/15/15	10/10/10	-/2/2	10/11/12	2/2/2
1/6	1/4/10	13/14/15	10/10/12	1/1/2	11/12/14	2/4/6
1/4	3/5/13	10/14/17	10/10/14	2/5/10	9/11/14	2/4/8
1/3	4/9/13	11/15/17	10/11/15	1/3/10	9/11/14	2/5/7
1/2	3/11/17	10/13/19	10/12/15	-/7/13	-/9/14	1/6/11
1	-/12/18	-/13/18	-/12/17	-/5/14	1/10/14	1/6/18
2	1/13/22	9/14/22	-/13/19	-/4/13	1/11/14	1/7/14
3	-/14/25	1/13/21	-/13/26	-/7/14	1/11/21	1/10/24
4	1/17/27	1/12/19	-/15/21	1/6/16	1/11/15	1/8/17
5	-/18/27	1/13/25	-/16/23	-/8/18	1/12/18	1/10/18
6	1/18/35	8/13/29	10/15/22	-/8/15	8/12/16	2/9/16
7	-/20/35	1/13/29	-/17/24	-/9/16	1/12/17	1/11/26
8	-/21/29	8/13/22	-/17/24	2/9/18	10/13/19	1/11/20
9	15/23/34	8/14/31	-/19/25	-/9/18	10/13/19	2/11/18
10	12/23/31	4/11/18	-/18/26	2/13/18	1/13/19	1/11/18
11	-/26/35	8/15/33	-/20/29	-/12/18	10/13/19	1/12/24
12	14/28/35	1/9/17	-/21/29	-/11/21	1/13/20	1/11/20
13	23/29/39	9/12/21	-/21/31	-/17/22	11/17/22	1/15/20
14	20/25/31	10/12/18	18/21/27	14/17/22	15/17/22	14/17/20
15	26/29/35	10/10/13	21/21/21	8/14/20	13/18/21	12/17/20
16	25/30/38	10/13/25	20/21/25	14/17/22	15/18/23	14/18/22
17	-/29/31	-/12/19	20/22/29	14/17/20	15/18/21	14/19/24
18	29/33/48	10/10/10	-/22/23	14/17/20	15/18/21	14/17/20
19	29/32/35	10/10/10	21/23/25	14/18/22	15/19/23	16/18/22
20	31/35/45	10/14/27	23/26/35	3/19/26	14/21/26	14/20/26

The Skills section at the end of the creature's combat section recaps racial bonuses and other adjustments to skill modifiers for the sake of clarity; these bonuses should not be added to the listed skill modifiers.

**Conditional Adjustments:** An asterisk (\*) beside the relevant score and in the Skills section of the descriptive text indicates a conditional adjustment, one that applies only in certain situations. These bonuses are not included in the creature's skill total as they are not always applicable. For example, a gargoyle has Hide +7\* listed in its Skills list and a conditional adjustment of +8 in stony areas that brings its Hide up to a +15 under those certain conditions.

**Natural Tendencies:** Some creatures simply aren't made for certain types of physical activity. If it seems clear that a particular creature simply is not made for a particular physical activity, that creature takes a -8 penalty on skill checks that defy its natural tendencies. In extreme circumstances the creature fails the check automatically.

**CR Considerations:** Most skills are rarely involved with CR determination, but a few prominent ones (Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, Tumble) are fairly important while others (Bluff, Concentration, Escape Artist, Spellcraft) have some importance depending upon the

monster concept. Generally, the skills that either help the creature remain undetected, fight better, or cast spells better are the only important ones in relation to CR.

## FEATS

The line gives the creature's feats. A monster gains feats just as a character does; one feat at 1HD and an additional feat every three HD. Sometimes a creature has one or more bonus feats, marked with a superscript <sup>B</sup>. Creatures often do not have the prerequisites for a bonus feat. If this is so, the creature can still use the feat. If you wish to customize the creature with new feats, you can reassign its other feats, but not its bonus feats. A creature cannot have a feat that is not a bonus feat unless it has the feat's prerequisites.

Bonus feats are a good way to create your monster concept without increasing the creature's HD and respective CR. If you want a fairly non-powerful creature that is feat-oriented, bonus feats are for you. However, don't assign more than three bonus feats to a creature because if you need that many additional feats, it's probable that you really should increase the HD and CR of your concept.

**Table 3.14: Skill Synergies**

5+ ranks in ...	Gives a +2 bonus on
Bluff	Diplomacy checks
Bluff	Disguise checks to act in character
Bluff	Intimidate checks
Bluff	Sleight of Hand checks
Craft	Related Appraise checks
Decipher Script	Use Magic Device checks involving scrolls
Escape Artist	Use Rope checks involving bindings
Handle Animal	Ride checks
Handle Animal	Wild empathy checks (class feature)
Jump	Tumble checks
Knowledge (arcana)	Spellcraft checks
(architecture and engineering)	Search checks involving secret doors and similar compartments
(dungeoneering)	Survival checks when underground
(geography)	Survival checks to keep from getting lost or for avoiding hazards
(history)	Bardic knowledge checks (class feature)
(local)	Gather Information checks
(nature)	Survival checks in aboveground natural environments
(nobility and royalty)	Diplomacy checks
(religion)	Checks to turn or rebuke undead (class feature)
(the planes)	Survival checks when on other planes
Search	Survival checks when following tracks
Sense Motive	Diplomacy checks
Spellcraft	Use Magic Device checks involving scrolls
Survival	Knowledge (nature) checks
Tumble	Balance checks
Tumble	Jump checks
Use Magic Device	Spellcraft checks to decipher spells on scrolls
Use Rope	Climb checks involving climbing ropes
Use Rope	Escape Artist checks involving ropes

**CR Considerations:** Feats give extra umph to a creature, be that through increasing its combat abilities (Awesome Blow, Improved Critical, Power Attack etc.), casting abilities (metamagic feats, Combat Casting, etc.), or special abilities (Ability Focus, Empower Spell-Like Ability, Quicken Spell-Like Ability). Feats can play an important role in CR determination because they can allow creatures to utilize more effective tactics. A good example of this is the greater shadow from the SRD. Although it has three times the HD of a regular shadow, it really only varies from an advanced shadow in that it does 1d8 Str damage instead of 1d6. However, what it does have (and the reason its a CR 8 instead of a CR 5 or so) is Mobility and Spring Attack. This lets the nasty incorporeal bugger fly out of a wall, attack, and then fly back into a wall giving it a greatly increased tactical ability in comparison to an advanced shadow.

Feats can be important to CR determination, but generally they're expected based upon the creature's HD. It's really only the tremendously useful combinations (like the greater shadow's Mobility and Spring Attack coupled with its Incorporeal subtype) that have a strong impact on CR.

These feats apply to abilities most commonly found amongst monsters or are related to monsters.

### Ability Focus [general]

Choose one of the creature's special attacks.

**Prerequisite:** Special attack.

**Benefit:** Add +2 to the DC for all saving throws against the special attack on which the creature focuses.

**Special:** A creature can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time the creature takes the feat it applies to a different special attack.

### Awesome Blow [general, fighter]

**Prerequisites:** Str 25, Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush, size Large or larger.



**Benefit:** As a standard action, the creature may choose to subtract 4 from its melee attack roll and deliver an awesome blow. If the creature hits a corporeal opponent smaller than itself with an awesome blow, its opponent must succeed on a Reflex save (DC = damage dealt) or be knocked flying 10 feet in a direction of the attacking creature's choice and fall prone. The attacking creature can only push the opponent in a straight line, and the opponent can't move closer to the attacking creature than the square it started in. If an obstacle prevents the completion of the opponent's move, the opponent and the obstacle each take 1d6 points of damage, and the opponent stops in the space adjacent to the obstacle.

## Craft Construct [item creation]

**Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item.

**Benefit:** A creature with this feat can create any construct whose prerequisites it meets. Enchanting a construct takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its market price. To enchant a construct, a spellcaster must spend 1/25 the item's price in XP and use up raw materials costing half of this price (see individual construct monster entries for details).

A creature with this feat can repair constructs that have taken damage. In one day of work, the creature can repair up to 20 points of damage by expending 50 gp per point of damage repaired.

The market price of an advanced construct (a construct with more Hit Dice than the typical construct described in each entry) is increased by 5,000 gp for each additional Hit Die, and increased by an additional 50,000 gp if the construct's size increases. Most constructs start out with average hit points for its Hit Dice, but the creator can pay an additional 2,500 gp per HD to increase the construct's hit points to maximum while lesser amounts cost proportionally less (ie. 7.5 hit points per HD would cost an additional 1, 250 gp per HD). The XP cost for creating an advanced construct is equal to 1/25 the advanced construct's market price minus the cost of the special materials required.

## Empower Spell-like Ability [general]

**Prerequisite:** Spell-like ability at caster level 6th or higher.

**Benefit:** Choose one of the creature's spell-like abilities, subject to the restrictions below. The creature can use that ability as an empowered spell-like ability three times per day (or less, if the ability is normally usable only once or twice per day).

When a creature uses an empowered spell-like ability, all variable, numeric effects of the spell-like ability are increased by one half. Saving throws and opposed rolls are not affected. Spell-like abilities without random variables are not affected.

The creature can only select a spell-like ability duplicating a spell with a level less than or equal to half its caster level (round down) -2. For a summary, see the table in the description of the Quicken Spell-Like Ability feat.

**Special:** This feat can be taken multiple times. Each time it is taken, the creature can apply it to a different one of its spell-like abilities.

## Flyby Attack [general]

**Prerequisite:** Fly speed.

**Benefit:** When flying, the creature can take a move action (including a dive) and another standard action at any point during the move. The creature cannot take a second move action during a round when it makes a flyby attack.

**Normal:** Without this feat, the creature takes a standard action either before or after its move.

## Hover [general]

**Prerequisite:** Fly speed.

**Benefit:** When flying, the creature can halt its forward motion and hover in place as a move action. It can then fly in any direction, including straight down or straight up, at half speed, regardless of its maneuverability.

If a creature begins its turn hovering, it can hover in place for the turn and take a full-round action. A hovering creature cannot make wing

attacks, but it can attack with all other limbs and appendages it could use in a full attack. The creature can instead use a breath weapon or cast a spell instead of making physical attacks, if it could normally do so.

If a creature of Large size or larger hovers within 20 feet of the ground in an area with lots of loose debris, the draft from its wings creates a hemispherical cloud with a radius of 60 feet. The winds so generated can snuff torches, small campfires, exposed lanterns, and other small, open flames of non-magical origin. Clear vision within the cloud is limited to 10 feet. Creatures have concealment at 15 to 20 feet (20% miss chance). At 25 feet or more, creatures have total concealment (50% miss chance, and opponents cannot use sight to locate the creature).

Those caught in the cloud must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 10 + 1/2 creature's HD) to cast a spell.

**Normal:** Without this feat, a creature must keep moving while flying unless it has perfect maneuverability.

## Improved Natural Armor [general]

**Prerequisites:** Natural armor, Con 13.

**Benefit:** The creature's natural armor bonus increases by 1.

**Special:** A creature can gain this feat multiple times. Each time the creature takes the feat its natural armor bonus increases by another point.

## Improved Natural Attack [general]

**Prerequisite:** Natural weapon, base attack bonus +4.

**Benefit:** Choose one of the creature's natural attack forms. The damage for this natural weapon increases by one step, as if the creature's size had increased by one category: 1d2, 1d3, 1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 2d6, 3d6, 4d6, 6d6, 8d6, 12d6.

A weapon or attack that deals 1d10 points of damage increases as follows: 1d10, 2d8, 3d8, 4d8, 6d8, 8d8, 12d8.

## Multiattack [general]

**Prerequisite:** Three or more natural attacks.

**Benefit:** The creature's secondary attacks with natural weapons take only a -2 penalty.

**Normal:** Without this feat, the creature's secondary attacks with natural weapons take a -5 penalty.

## Multiweapon Fighting [general]

**Prerequisites:** Dex 13, three or more hands.

**Benefit:** Penalties for fighting with multiple weapons are reduced by 2 with the primary hand and reduced by 6 with off hands.

**Normal:** A creature without this feat takes a -6 penalty on attacks made with its primary hand and a -10 penalty on attacks made with its off hands. (It has one primary hand, and all the others are off hands.) See Two-Weapon Fighting.

**Special:** This feat replaces the Two-Weapon Fighting feat for creatures with more than two arms.

Table 3.15: Empower and Quicken Spell-like Ability

Spell Level	Caster Level to Empower	Caster Level to Quicken
0	4th	8th
1st	6th	10th
2nd	8th	12th
3rd	10th	14th
4th	12th	16th
5th	14th	18th
6th	16th	20th
7th	18th	—
8th	20th	—
9th	—	—

## Quicken Spell-like Ability [general]

**Prerequisite:** Spell-like ability at caster level 10th or higher.

**Benefit:** Choose one of the creature's spell-like abilities, subject to the restrictions described below. The creature can use that ability as a quickened spell-like ability three times per day (or less, if the ability is normally usable only once or twice per day).

Using a quickened spell-like ability is a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The creature can perform another action—including the use of another spell-like ability—in the same round that it uses a quickened spell-like ability. The creature may use only one quickened spell-like ability per round.

The creature can only select a spell-like ability duplicating a spell with a level less than or equal to half its caster level (round down) -4. For a summary, see the table below.

In addition, a spell-like ability that duplicates a spell with a casting time greater than 1 full round cannot be quickened.

**Normal:** Normally the use of a spell-like ability requires a standard action and provokes an attack of opportunity unless noted otherwise.

**Special:** This feat can be taken multiple times. Each time it is taken, the creature can apply it to a different one of its spell-like abilities.

## Snatch [general]

**Prerequisite:** Size Huge or larger.

**Benefits:** The creature can choose to start a grapple when it hits with a claw or bite attack, as though it had the improved grab special attack. If the creature gets a hold on a creature three or more sizes smaller, it squeezes each round for automatic bite or claw damage. A snatched opponent held in the creature's mouth is not allowed a Reflex save against the creature's breath weapon, if it has one.

The creature can drop a creature it has snatched as a free action or use a standard action to fling it aside. A flung creature travels 1d6 x 10 feet, and takes 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet traveled. If the creature flings a snatched opponent while flying, the opponent takes this amount or falling damage, whichever is greater.

## Wingover [general]

**Prerequisite:** Fly speed.

**Benefits:** A flying creature with this feat can change direction quickly once each round as a free action. This feat allows it to turn up to 180 degrees regardless of its maneuverability, in addition to any other turns it is normally allowed. A creature cannot gain altitude during a round when it executes a wingover, but it can dive.

The change of direction consumes 10 feet of flying movement.

## ENVIRONMENT

This line gives a type of climate and terrain where the creature is typically found. The three climates are cold, temperate, and warm. This describes a tendency, but is not exclusionary. Most outsiders and many extraplanar creatures list their home plane under Environment. If a monster lives on a particular layer of a plane, it is listed parenthetically after the plane name. A brief explanation of the various environments is found below. Some outsiders have the Native sub-type, and their environment is chosen from the below list. See Chapter 2: Monsters and Their Environment for a thorough discussion on each environment.

**Aquatic:** The ocean floor holds many marvels, including undersea analogues of any of the terrain elements described in this section. Generally, aquatic terrain is divided into two categories: flowing water (such as streams and rivers) and nonflowing water (such as lakes and oceans).

**Desert:** Desert terrain exists in warm, temperate, and cold climates, but all deserts share one common trait: little rain. The three categories of desert terrain are tundra (cold deserts), rocky desert (often temperate), and sandy desert (often warm). Tundra differs from the other desert categories in two important ways. Because snow and ice cover much of the landscape, it's easy to find water. And during the height of summer, the permafrost thaws to a depth of a foot or

so, turning the landscape into a vast field of mud. The muddy tundra affects movement and skill use like shallow bogs, although there's little standing water.

**Forest:** Forest terrain can be divided into three categories: sparse, medium, and dense. An immense forest could have all three categories within its borders, with more sparse terrain at the outer edge of the forest and dense forest at its heart.

**Hills:** A hill can exist in most other types of terrain, but hills can also dominate the landscape. Hills terrain is divided into two categories: gentle hills and rugged hills. Hills terrain often serves as a transition zone between rugged terrain such as mountains and flat terrain such as plains.

**Marsh:** Two categories of marsh exist: relatively dry moors and watery swamps. Both are often bordered by lakes, which effectively are a third category of terrain found in marshes.

**Mountain:** The three mountain terrain categories are alpine meadows, rugged mountains, and forbidding mountains. As characters ascend into a mountainous area, they're likely to face each terrain category in turn, beginning with alpine meadows, extending through rugged mountains, and reaching forbidding mountains near the summit.

**Plains:** Plains come in two categories: farms and grasslands. Farms are common in settled areas, of course, while grasslands represent untamed plains.

**Underground:** The four basic underground types (occupied structure, ruined structure, safe storage, and natural cavern complexes) are defined by their current status. Many underground environments are variations on these basic types or combinations of more than one of them. Sometimes old underground environments are used again and again by different inhabitants for different purposes.

**CR Considerations:** Environment usually has no role in CR determination. Environment only plays a factor if your creature is designed to ignore special penalties associated with a particular environment that PCs cannot reasonably be expected to overcome. For example, darkvision is really useful underground, but PCs are expected to be able to simply overcome the environment (via a torch for example), so darkvision isn't really important for CR. A different example would be a marsh-based monster that can walk on water. In this case, the ability both does and does not matter based upon the expected party level it is supposed to challenge. A high CR monster with such an ability shouldn't have it considered since high level PCs will probably overcome the environment, but low level PCs will struggle against the muck, making the monster that much more effective against them.

## ORGANIZATION

This line describes the kinds of groups the creature might form. A range of numbers in parentheses indicates how many combat-ready adults are in each type of group. Many groups also have a number of noncombatants, expressed as a percentage of the fighting population. Noncombatants can include young, the infirm, slaves, or other individuals who are not inclined to fight. If the organization line contains the term "domesticated," the creature is generally found only in the company of other creatures, whom it serves in some capacity.

Humanoid creatures usually have larger organization numbers than most creatures. Typically, leader types (and their NPC or PC class levels) are indicated, shaman or spell-caster types are indicated as well and the number of non-combatants (children, elderly, and in some cases females) should also be included. Although this is typical of humanoids, is always true of the goblinoid subtype.

If the creature typically works with another creature (such as goblins with dire wolves), the number and situation in which the secondary creatures appears should be indicated as well.

**CR Consideration:** Organization has no impact upon CR. Organization will make a difference concerning the EL of an encounter as certain creatures will usually be found in the groups indicated here.

## CHALLENGE RATING

This shows the average level of a party of four adventurers (fighter, wizard, cleric, and rogue) for which one creature would make an encounter of moderate difficulty. Moderate difficulty uses around 15-25% of the party's resources. When testing CRs, test two of the monsters against a party that is on average two levels higher than a single monster's CR. This helps alleviate some of the randomness in die rolling and provides a slightly more accurate assessment of the monster's capabilities.

Determining CR without playtesting is one of the hardest things about monster creation, but the more of it you do the better at it you'll become. Take a look at your monster's function and then compare your monster to other creatures from various sources with a similar function, comparing their power against the power of your creature. Also, see Appendix 3: CR Estimator for one method of estimating CR prior to playtesting. Between these two methods, you will more than likely get within 1 or 2 CRs of your monster's true rating. Playtesting should help you refine the number down from there.

The only true hard and fast rule about CR is that you **must** playtest your creature to be certain. Ideally you'll run it against different players, under different circumstances, and several times each. This isn't probably the way you'll be able to run your playtesting, but serially running a pair of your creatures against the same group will give you a good idea of how powerful a creature you've really created. Players will, once they learn of a monster's abilities and tactics, modify their play as you run them through several encounters. You should expect the first encounter to leave the party the worst off and the last you run (I recommend 5 if you have the time, but 3 is workable) should leave them in the best shape as they adapt to the creature.

Even after playtesting, assigning a CR can be a difficult task. It could be that your group unconsciously favors certain tactics over others that would be more effective against your creatures or it could be that probability favored one side more than other. But to be honest, every GM knows that CR is merely a guideline. It's not as rigidly definable as the effects of an ability score or the average hit points of a creature.

**Class Levels and CR:** If you add class levels to your creature, there are a few guidelines about recalculating its CR depending on what type of class you added.

Class levels that increase a monster's existing strengths are known as associated class levels. Each associated class level a monster has increases its CR by 1. Barbarian, fighter, paladin, and ranger are associated classes for a creature that relies on its fighting ability. Rogue and ranger are associated classes for a creature that relies on stealth to surprise its foes, or on skill use to give itself an advantage. A spellcasting class is an associated class for a creature that already has the ability to cast spells as a character of the class in question, since the monster's levels in the spellcasting class stack with its innate spellcasting ability.

If you add a class level that doesn't directly play to a creature's strength the class level is considered nonassociated, and things get a little more complicated. Adding a nonassociated class level to a monster increases its CR by 1/2 per level until one of its nonassociated class levels equals its original Hit Dice. At that point, each additional level of the same class or a similar one is considered associated and increases the monster's CR by 1.

Levels in NPC classes are always treated as nonassociated.

## TREASURE

This line reflects how much wealth the creature owns. In most cases, a creature keeps valuables in its home or lair and has no treasure with it when it travels. Intelligent creatures that own useful, portable treasure (such as magic items) tend to carry and use these, leaving bulky items at home. Any equipment used in this manner is not considered in the creature's challenge rating. Treasure can include coins, goods, and items. Creatures can have varying amounts of each, as follows.

**Standard:** Refer to the treasure tables in the core rules and roll d% once for each type of treasure (Coins, Goods, Items) on the Level section of the table that corresponds to the creature's Challenge Rating (for groups of creatures, use the Encounter Level for the encounter instead). Some creatures have double, triple, or even quadruple standard treasure; in these cases, roll for each type of treasure two, three, or four times. Variance depends upon the monster concept and how it relates with its environment. If a monster possesses a magic weapon or armor in its description it should be noted in the treasure section such as "Standard plus +1 longsword."

**None:** The creature collects no treasure of its own.

**Nonstandard:** Some creatures have quirks or habits that affect the types of treasure they collect. These creatures use the same treasure tables, but with special adjustments.

**Fractional Coins:** Roll on the Coins column in the section corresponding to the creature's Challenge Rating, but divide the result as indicated.

**% Goods or Items:** The creature has goods or items only some of the time. Before checking for goods or items, roll d% against the given percentage. On a success, make a normal roll on the appropriate Goods or Items column (which may still result in no goods or items).

**Double Goods or Items:** Roll twice on the appropriate Goods or Items column.

**Parenthetical Notes:** Some entries for goods or items include notes that limit the types of treasure a creature collects.

When a note includes the word "no," it means the creature does not collect or cannot keep that thing. If a random roll generates such a result, treat the result as "none" instead.

When a note includes the word "only," the creature goes out of its way to collect treasure of the indicated type. Treat all results from that column as the indicated type of treasure.

It's sometimes necessary to reroll until the right sort of item appears.

**CR Consideration:** Treasure plays no direct role on CR, but generally the higher the CR the greater likelihood that treasure will be present at standard or even better.



## ALIGNMENT

This line gives the alignment that the creature is most likely to have. Every entry includes a qualifier that indicates how broadly that alignment applies to the species as a whole. "Always" means the monster type will have the given alignment unless it is truly unique. "Usually" means that most creatures encountered will have the given alignment, although exceptions are not unique. "Often" means that the given alignment is the one most common out of all alignments for the creature, but not that the majority of creatures have the given alignment. A brief explanation of the various alignments is found below.

**Lawful Good:** A lawful good monster acts as a good creature is expected or required to act. It combines a commitment to oppose evil with the discipline to fight relentlessly. It tells the truth, keeps its word,



helps those in need, and speaks out against injustice. A lawful good monster hates to see the guilty go unpunished.

**Neutral Good:** A neutral good monster does the best that a good creature can do. It is devoted to helping others. It does not feel beholden to maintaining order.

**Chaotic Good:** A chaotic good monster acts as its conscience directs it with little regard for what others expect of it. It makes its own way, but it's kind and benevolent. It believes in goodness and right but has little use for laws and regulations. It hates it when people try to intimidate others and tell them what to do. It follows its own moral compass, which, although good, may not agree with that of society.

**Lawful Neutral:** A lawful neutral monster acts as law, tradition, or a personal code directs its. Order and organization are paramount to it. It may believe in personal order and live by a code or standard, or it may believe in order for all and favor a strong, organized government.

**Neutral:** A neutral monster does what seems to be a good idea. It doesn't feel strongly one way or the other when it comes to good vs. evil or law vs. chaos. Most neutral monsters exhibit a lack of conviction or bias rather than a commitment to neutrality. Such a monster thinks of good as better than evil—after all, it would rather have good neighbors and rulers than evil ones. Still, it's not personally committed to upholding good in any abstract or universal way.

Some neutral monsters, on the other hand, commit themselves philosophically to neutrality. They see good, evil, law, and chaos as prejudices and dangerous extremes. They advocate the middle way of neutrality as the best, most balanced road in the long run.

**Chaotic Neutral:** A chaotic neutral monster follows its whims. It is an individualist first and last. It values its own liberty but doesn't strive to protect others' freedom. It avoids authority, resents restrictions, and challenges traditions. A chaotic neutral monster does not intentionally disrupt organizations as part of a campaign of anarchy. To do so, it would have to be motivated either by good (and a desire to liberate others) or evil (and a desire to make those different from itself suffer). A chaotic neutral monster may be unpredictable, but its behavior is not totally random. It is not as likely to jump off a bridge as to cross it.

**Lawful Evil:** A lawful evil monster methodically takes what it wants within the limits of its code of conduct without regard for whom it hurts. It cares about tradition, loyalty, and order but not about freedom, dignity, or life. It plays by the rules but without mercy or compassion. It is comfortable in a hierarchy and would like to rule, but is willing to serve. It condemns others not according to their actions but according to race, religion, homeland, or social rank. It is loath to break laws or promises.

This reluctance comes partly from its nature and partly because it depends on order to protect itself from those who oppose it on moral grounds. Some lawful evil monsters have particular taboos, such as not killing in cold blood (but having underlings do it) or not letting children come to harm (if it can be helped). They imagine that these compunctions put them above unprincipled monsters.

Some lawful evil creatures commit themselves to evil with a zeal like that of a crusader committed to good. Beyond being willing to hurt others for their own ends, they take pleasure in spreading evil as an end unto itself. They may also see doing evil as part of a duty to an evil deity or master.

Lawful evil is sometimes called "diabolical," because devils are the epitome of lawful evil.

**Neutral Evil:** A neutral evil monster does whatever it can get away with. It is out for itself, pure and simple. It sheds no tears for those it kills, whether for profit, sport, or convenience. It has no love of order and holds no illusion that following laws, traditions, or codes would make its any better or more noble. On the other hand, it doesn't have the restless nature or love of conflict that a chaotic evil monster has.

Some neutral evil monsters hold up evil as an ideal, committing evil for its own sake. Most often, such monsters are devoted to evil deities or secret societies.

**Chaotic Evil:** A chaotic evil monster does whatever its greed, hatred, and lust for destruction drive it to do. It is hot-tempered, vicious, arbitrarily violent, and unpredictable. If it is simply out for whatever it can get, it is ruthless and brutal. If it is committed to the spread of evil and chaos, it is even worse. Thankfully, its plans are haphazard, and any groups it joins or forms are poorly organized. Typically, chaotic evil monsters can be made to work together only by force and their leader lasts only as long as it can thwart attempts to topple or assassinate it.

Chaotic evil is sometimes called "demonic" because demons are the epitome of chaotic evil.

**CR Consideration:** Alignment has no effect on CR.

## ADVANCEMENT

The monster entry usually describes only the most commonly encountered version of a creature. The advancement line shows how tough a creature can get, in terms of extra Hit Dice. (This is not an absolute limit, but exceptions are extremely rare.) Often, intelligent creatures advance by gaining a level in a character class instead of just gaining a new Hit Die. These creatures have "By character class" in their Advancement stat.

Advancement follows two basic patterns. The first is advancement by class just like a PC; the second is HD advancements. Generally speaking, a monster can advance up to three times their listed HD. For example, a 5HD creature can advance up to 15HD. Usually each of the three stages share equal HD, and the second advancement results in a size increase. For example, our 5HD creature is medium sized. His first advancement stage is 6-10HD (Medium) and his second is 11-15HD (Large). This general pattern isn't always followed as many monster concepts don't fit easily into HD/size advancement. However, it should be considered the "standard" advancement pattern. One notable exception to this standard is the animal type. Animals (excluding dinosaurs) usually only advance in one step (so a 2 HD animal is advanced to a 3-4HD animal), and their size is almost never increased. If you want a larger animal, you may want to try out a dire variety. It may serve your needs nicely.

Some monsters cannot be advanced and have an "-" under Advancement.

**Advancement/Improving:** If a creature acquires a character class, it follows the rules for multiclass characters. The creature's Hit Dice equal the number of class levels it has plus its racial Hit Dice. A creature's "monster class" is always a favored class, and the creature never takes XP penalties for having it. Additional Hit Dice gained from taking levels in a character class never affect a creature's size.

**Humanoids and Class Levels:** Creatures with 1 or less HD replace their monster levels with their character levels. The monster loses the attack bonus, saving throw bonuses, skills, and feats granted by its 1 monster HD and gains the attack bonus, save bonuses, skills, feats, and other class abilities of a 1st-level character of the appropriate class.

**Level Adjustment and Effective Character Level:** To determine the effective character level (ECL) of a monster character, add its level adjustment to its racial Hit Dice and character class levels. The monster is considered to have experience points equal to the minimum needed to be a character of its ECL.

If you choose to equip a monster with gear, use its ECL as its character level for purposes of determining how much equipment it can purchase. Generally, only monsters with an Advancement entry of "By character class" receive NPC gear; other creatures adding character levels should be treated as monsters of the appropriate CR and assigned treasure, not equipment.

**Feat Acquisition and Ability Score Increases:** A monster's total Hit Dice, not its ECL, govern its acquisition of feats and ability score increases.

**CR Considerations:** Advancement has no effect on CR. However, advancing a creature following the guidelines here will usually change the CR of the creature you advanced.

## LEVEL ADJUSTMENT

This line is included in the entries of creatures suitable for use as player monsters or as cohorts (usually creatures with Intelligence scores of at least 3 and possessing opposable thumbs). Add this number to the creature's total Hit Dice, including class levels, to get the creature's effective character level (ECL). A monster's ECL affects the experience the monster earns, the amount of experience the monster must have before gaining a new level, and the monster's starting equipment.

If a creature can be taken as an Improved Familiar via the same feat, it should be parenthetically noted as well as the required arcane spellcaster level.

Monsters with an ECL over 20 generally have a LA of "-" as do monsters which are unsuitable for use as player characters.

**CR Considerations:** Level adjustment has no effect on CR.

## THE DESCRIPTION

The description section of a monster is much simpler than the statistics section. There are a few main things that a description should provide. Firstly, a physical description of the creature is required. How many legs does it have? How many eyes? Does it wield manufactured weapons or does it have sharp pointy teeth? Use a paragraph or two to fully describe the average version of the monster that you'd expect your PCs to meet. You don't have to go into massive detail obviously, but you'll at least want to hit the high points of your monster's physique. You'll also want to make sure to state the size of the creature in your physical description. Nothing is worse than a PC going, "That's a good description, but just how BIG is it anyway?"

Besides the physical you should give some information on the social structure or behavior of the creature as well. Not all monsters will have a social structure, but everyone will at least have typical behaviors that help a GM place and use the creature in her world. How long you wish this section to be is up to you. But generally the longer this section is the less applicable the monster becomes to every campaign. The more detail you add the greater chance you have of causing a conflict between a reading GMs world and the world you're building in your creature. However, if you're making a monster up for your own use and don't care about other GMs, make this section as detailed as you enjoy doing. It's always fun to world build while making monsters.

Lastly, and traditionally as the final paragraph before the combat section, you should state the languages that the average example of your monster knows. This helps GMs place the monster in their world and gives additional information for roleplaying. You should also state what other languages are fairly common for the particular creature if you want your monster to know more than a single language.

## THE COMBAT SECTION

The combat section contains a brief description of the monster's combat tactics, a listing of its SA/SQs and, for some powerful creatures, a round-by-round breakdown of how it tends to fight. The small tactics section gives behavioral notes on how non-intelligent creatures acquire their food and how intelligent creatures hunt or defend themselves. There are a few specific things that are mentioned in the combat section depending upon the monster concept.

If it is a creature that can be easily ridden, such as nightmares and unicorns, it should have a listed carrying capacity.

If the creature has any racial bonuses to skills they should be listed under a skills heading. If the creature possesses the aquatic subtype the following text should appear in the combat section:

**Skills:** A [monster name] has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

If the creature has a climb speed the following text should appear in the combat section:

**Skills:** A [monster name] has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks even if rushed or threatened.

If the creature is a construct you should have a construction section explaining how the construct is created. See the construct type in Chapter 4: Type and Subtype for more information.

If your creature can be trained as a mount, you need to list training information under "Training a [monster name]" section such as those found under the giant eagle, griffon, hippogriff, howler, giant eagle, pegasus, and spider eater.

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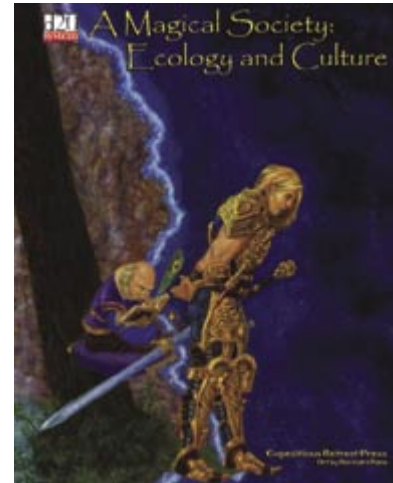
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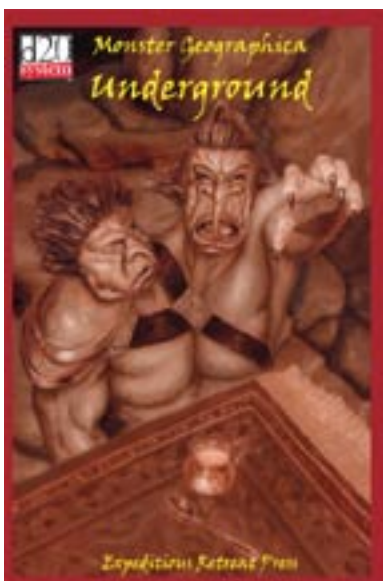


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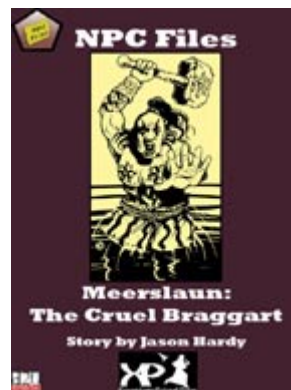
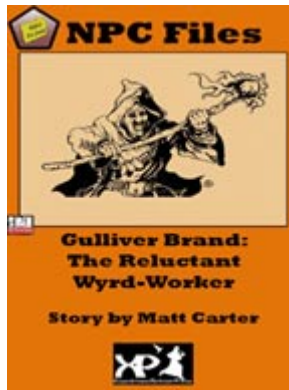
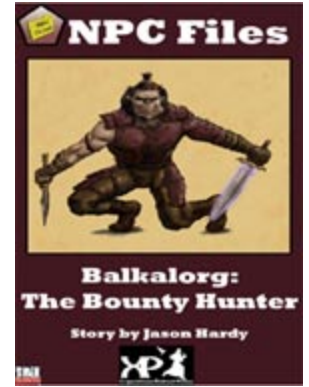
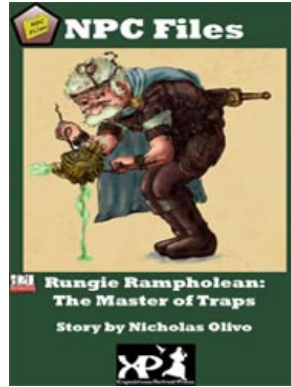
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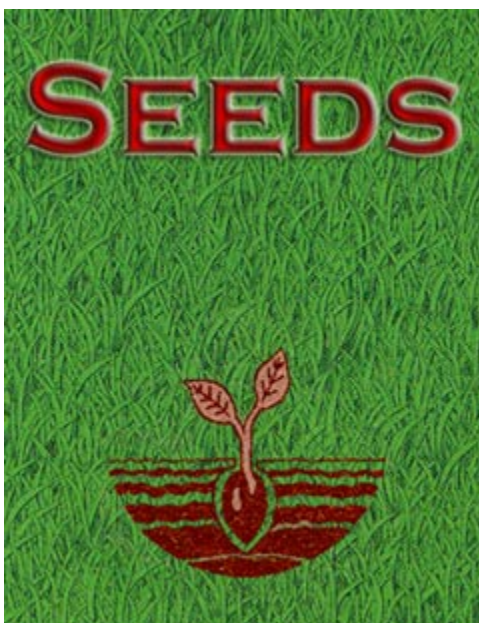
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