Carcass Crawler

**The official Old-School Essentials zine** **Issue #3**

Beast master, dragonborn, mutoid, mycelian, tiefling

Expanded adventuring gear, weapons, and armour

Creating monsters

OLD-SCHOOL ESSENTIALS

RETRO ADVENTURE GAME

Carcass Crawler

The official Old-School Essentials zine Issue #3

NECROTIC GNOME

EXALTED FUNERAL

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

Welcome to issue 3 of *Carcass Crawler*—the official *Old-School Essentials* zine. Each issue of *Carcass Crawler* is packed with new material for your games, including new character classes and races, new spells and magic items, new monsters, optional and expanded rules, referee advice, previews of in-development products, short adventures, and more.

IN THIS ISSUE

► **New classes:** Five new character classes. The beast master, the dragonborn, the mutoid, the mycelian, and the tiefling.

► **New races:** Four new character races for Advanced Fantasy games. The dragonborn, the mutoid, the mycelian, and the tiefling.

► **Expanded equipment:** More adventuring gear, weapons, and armour, to increase adventuring options and character customisation.

► **Woodland monsters:** 8 brand new monsters that lurk in the deep, shadowed glades and sacred groves of ancient forests beyond the reach of civilisation.

► **Creating monsters:** Referee guidelines for creating new monsters for *Old-School Essentials*. Keep the game fresh (and players on their toes) by devising your own new horrors and foes.

COMPATIBILITY

Content in *Carcass Crawler* is compatible with all flavours of *Old-School Essentials* (e.g. Classic Fantasy, Advanced Fantasy). By extension, this means that the content is also compatible with the classic Basic/Expert game and with other games that are based on the Basic/Expert rules.

New Classes and Races

By Gavin Norman

Introduction

This article presents five new, optional character types for your *Old-School Essentials* games. Introduce them as NPCs for players to encounter or add them to the roster of character types players may choose from when creating a character.

Beast Master

A classic fantasy archetype: the warrior who can tame and befriend wild animals. This class is (as the name implies) specifically inspired by the protagonist of the 1982 film *The Beastmaster*.

Dragonborn

A demihuman race of reptilian humanoids who share many traits with dragons, including their powerful breath weapons.

Dragonborn are also presented as a race, for those using the optional rules for selecting a character's class and race separately. See *Dragonborn (Race), p16*.

Mutoid

A demihuman race whose members have mismatched body parts of many different creatures (e.g. reptiles, crustaceans, birds, mammals, etc.). Each individual has a unique appearance.

Mutoids are also presented as a race, for those using the optional rules for selecting a character's class and race separately. See *Mutoid (Race), p17*.

Too Many Options?

The new classes and races in this article are entirely optional. Some groups love a wide selection of character types, relishing the variety that offers. Other groups prefer a more limited array of options. As always: do what makes your games most enjoyable for your group.

One approach that works well is for the referee to select around 7–10 classes / races that suit the flavour of the campaign. For example, in one campaign, dragonborn and tieflings may replace standard dwarves and elves.

In this way, the number of options available to players when creating characters is kept within reasonable bounds, while the hand-picked set of allowed classes and races reinforces the flavour of the specific campaign.

Mycelian

A demihuman race of fungal humanoids who dwell deep in the Underworld.

Mycelians are also presented as a race, for those using the optional rules for selecting a character's class and race separately. See *Mycelian (Race), p18*.

Tiefling

Humans with a fiendish ancestor (i.e. a devil, demon, etc.) somewhere in their bloodline.

Tieflings are also presented as a race, for those using the optional rules for selecting a character's class and race separately. See *Tiefling (Race), p19*.

SEPARATE RACE AND CLASS (OPTIONAL)

The four new types of demihumans in this issue are also presented as separate races, for groups who prefer to select character race and class separately.

If using this rule, each player may decide individually whether to create their character by selecting a class alone or by selecting race and class separately.

Character Creation Procedure

If selecting character race and class separately, the following procedure should be used, after rolling ability scores:

1. **Choose a race:** Choose a race from those available, bearing in mind their ability score requirements.

2. **Apply ability score modifiers:** Some races list ability score modifiers. Once you have chosen a race, adjust your character's ability scores as indicated. These modifiers cannot raise an ability score above 18 or lower it below 3.

3. **Choose a class:** Select a class from the list of classes available to the chosen race. Also bear in mind the ability score requirements of some classes. (Note that the new demihuman races in this issue only list core *Old-School Essentials* classes. The referee must decide which races are able to use classes from other sources, e.g. issues of *Carcass Crawler*, if allowed.)

Native Languages

When choosing race and class separately, the character's native languages are determined by the race. The languages listed in the class should be ignored.

Beast Master

Requirements: None
Prime requisite: STR and WIS
Hit Dice: 1d6
Maximum level: 14
Armour: Leather, chainmail, shields
Weapons: Any
Languages: Alignment, Common

Beast masters are adventurers with a special connection to animals. They are often accompanied by one or more loyal beasts.

Prime requisites: A beast master with at least 13 in one prime requisite gets +5% to XP. If both STR and WIS are 16 or higher, the character gets a +10% bonus.

Animal Companions

A beast master may attempt to forge a bond with an encountered animal. If the attempt succeeds, the animal becomes the beast master's loyal companion.

Establishing a Connection

The beast master must approach a single animal in a peaceful manner. The referee makes a reaction roll (see *Encounters* in *Old-School Essentials*). If the result is 8 or greater, the animal becomes the beast master's companion.

Limitations

Type of animals: Both wild and domestic animals may be companions. Giant or magical animals may be companions at the referee's discretion.

Maximum companions: A beast master may have up to one animal companion per experience level. The total Hit Dice of companions may not exceed the character's experience level.

Death or dismissal: If an animal companion dies or is dismissed, the beast master may attempt to forge a connection with a new animal.

Companions' Behaviour

Once a connection is successfully established, the animal companion follows the beast master everywhere. It obeys basic commands from the beast master and will fight to defend the beast master, never checking morale.

Clairvoyance

After reaching 5th level, a beast master can see through the eyes of their animal companions, wherever they may be. This requires deep concentration.

Combat

Beast masters can use all types of weapons and can use leather armour, chainmail, and shields.

Beast Master Level Progression

Level	XP	HD	THAC0	Saving Throws D	W	P	B	S
1	0	1d6	19 [0]	11	12	12	15	16
2	1,800	2d6	19 [0]	11	12	12	15	16
3	3,600	3d6	19 [0]	11	12	12	15	16
4	7,250	4d6	19 [0]	11	12	12	15	16
5	15,000	5d6	17 [+2]	9	10	10	13	14
6	30,000	6d6	17 [+2]	9	10	10	13	14
7	60,000	7d6	17 [+2]	9	10	10	13	14
8	120,000	8d6	17 [+2]	9	10	10	13	14
9	240,000	9d6	14 [+5]	7	8	8	11	12
10	360,000	9d6+2*	14 [+5]	7	8	8	11	12
11	480,000	9d6+4*	14 [+5]	7	8	8	11	12
12	600,000	9d6+6*	14 [+5]	7	8	8	11	12
13	720,000	9d6+8*	12 [+7]	5	6	6	9	10
14	840,000	9d6+10*	12 [+7]	5	6	6	9	10

THAC0: Attack matrix row to use. (Ascending AC attack bonus in [].)
*: Modifiers from CON no longer apply.

D: Death / poison; **W:** Wands; **P:** Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks; **S:** Spells / rods / staves.

Identify Tracks

A beast master can identify the tracks and spoor of animals in the wild.

Reaction Modifier

A beast master gains a +1 bonus to reaction rolls made when interacting with animals, in addition to their CHA modifier. (See *Encounters* in *Old-School Essentials*.)

Speak with Animals

Animals understand the basic meaning of a beast master's words.

► **From 2nd level:** The beast master can also understand the speech of animals.

► **From 4th level:** The beast master can communicate empathically with animals within sight, without the need for words.

Communication with animals is always commensurate to their intelligence.

After Reaching 9th Level

A beast master may construct a stronghold in the wilderness. Animals within a 5 mile radius of the stronghold will become friends with the beast master. They may warn of intruders, carry messages and news, and so on. In exchange for this friendship, the beast master must protect the animals from harm.

Dragonborn

Demihuman Class

Requirements: Minimum CON 9, minimum INT 9
Prime requisite: STR
Hit Dice: 1d8
Maximum level: 10
Armour: Any
Weapons: Any
Languages: Alignment, Common, Dragon

Dragonborn are tall, powerful demihumans with scaled skin and dragon-like heads. They typically weigh about 250 pounds and stand around 6' tall. As reptiles, they reproduce by laying eggs. Unlike true dragons, dragonborn do not have wings or tails. Dragonborn live in clans based on the colour of their scales (see *Draconic Bloodline*) and are known for their fierce loyalty and their love of hoarding gold. It is believed that dragonborn were created by the dragon gods.

Breath Weapon

Like dragons, dragonborn can exhale a breath weapon of destructive energy. The shape of the breath weapon and the type of damage it inflicts depend on the species of dragon that the character has an affinity with (see *Draconic Bloodline*).

Frequency of use: Up to 3 times per day.

Area: The size of the breath weapon depends on the shape:

► **Cloud:** 10' wide, 15' long.
► **Cone:** 15' wide at the far end, 20' long.
► **Line:** 5' wide, 30' long.

Damage: All caught in the area suffer damage equal to half the dragonborn's current hit points (rounded up). A **save versus breath** is allowed for half damage.

Combat

Dragonborn can use all types of weapons and armour.

Draconic Bloodline

Each dragonborn has an affinity with a specific species of dragons. This determines their breath weapon and the colour of their scales. The player should roll on the table below to determine the character's draconic affinity.

Draconic Bloodline			
		Breath Weapon	
d10	**Colour**	**Damage**	**Shape**
1–2	Black	Acid	Line
3–4	Blue	Lightning	Line
5–6	Green	Poison	Cloud
7–8	Red	Fire	Cone
9–10	White	Cold	Cone

Dragonborn Level Progression

Level	XP	HD	THAC0	Saving Throws				
				D	W	P	B	S
1	0	1d8	19 [0]	12	13	14	13	16
2	3,000	2d8	19 [0]	12	13	14	13	16
3	6,000	3d8	19 [0]	12	13	14	13	16
4	12,000	4d8	17 [+2]	10	11	12	11	14
5	24,000	5d8	17 [+2]	10	11	12	11	14
6	45,000	6d8	17 [+2]	10	11	12	11	14
7	95,000	7d8	14 [+5]	8	9	10	8	12
8	175,000	8d8	14 [+5]	8	9	10	8	12
9	350,000	9d8	14 [+5]	8	9	10	8	12
10	500,000	9d8+2*	12 [+7]	6	7	8	6	10

THAC0: Attack matrix row to use. (Ascending AC attack bonus in [].)
*: Modifiers from CON no longer apply.

D: Death / poison; **W:** Wands;
P: Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks;
S: Spells / rods / staves.

Draconic Resistance

A dragonborn gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against the type of damage associated with their breath weapon.

Dragon-Affecting Magic

Dragonborn are affected by magic that specifically targets dragons (e.g. a sword +1, +3 vs dragons).

Dragon Affinity

Dragonborn gain a +1 bonus to reaction rolls when encountering dragons (see *Encounters* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Scales

A dragonborn's scaly skin grants a natural +1 bonus to Armour Class.

After Reaching 9th Level

A dragonborn has the option of creating a stronghold that will attract dragonborn of the same clan from far and wide. Dragonborn from other clans will generally be friendly and clans may collaborate in times of war or disaster.

A dragonborn ruler may only hire dragonborn mercenaries. Specialists and retainers of any race may be hired.

Mutoid

Demihuman Class

Requirements: None
Prime requisite: DEX
Hit Dice: 1d6
Maximum level: 8
Armour: Leather, shields
Weapons: One-handed melee weapons, all missile weapons
Languages: Alignment, Common

Demihumans with mismatched body parts of many different creatures (e.g. reptiles, crustaceans, birds, mammals, etc.). Each individual has a unique appearance. Mutoids are often shunned by other species and live in ruins or in hidden lairs within large settlements.

Back-Stab

When attacking an unaware opponent from behind, a mutoid receives a +4 bonus to hit and doubles any damage dealt.

Combat

Mutoids can use shields, but their need for stealth prevents the use of armour heavier than leather. They can use any melee weapon that can be wielded one handed, and can use all missile weapons.

Mutations

No two mutoids are alike—each has a unique appearance and mutations. Roll twice on the *Mutations* table, opposite.

Duplicate mutations: May be re-rolled.

Two attack mutations: Both may be used each round. (e.g. clawed hand + pincer.)

Mutoid Skills

Mutoids can use the following skills, with the chance of success shown opposite:

▶ **Hide in shadows (HS):** Requires the mutoid to be motionless—attacking or moving while hiding is not possible.

▶ **Mimicry (MI):** A mutoid can mimic the sound of any monster or animal. Mimicking the voice of a specific individual incurs a –20% penalty to the roll.

▶ **Move silently (MS):** A mutoid may attempt to sneak past enemies unnoticed.

▶ **Pick pockets (PP):** If the victim is above 5th level, the mutoid's roll is penalised by 5% for every level above 5th. There is always at least a 1% chance of failure. A roll of more than twice the percentage required for success means that the attempted theft is noticed. The referee should determine the reaction of the victim (possibly using the reaction table under *Encounters* in *Old-School Essentials*).

After Reaching 8th Level

A mutoid can establish a secret lair, attracting 2d6 apprentices—1st level mutoids. These apprentices will serve the character with some reliability; however, should any be arrested or killed, the PC will not be able to attract apprentices to replace them. A successful mutoid might use these followers to start a Thieves' Guild.

Mutoid Level Progression

Level	XP	HD	THAC0	Saving Throws				
				D	W	P	B	S
1	0	1d6	19 [0]	10	11	12	13	14
2	1,750	2d6	19 [0]	10	11	12	13	14
3	3,500	3d6	19 [0]	10	11	12	13	14
4	7,000	4d6	19 [0]	10	11	12	13	14
5	14,000	5d6	17 [+2]	8	9	10	11	12
6	30,000	6d6	17 [+2]	8	9	10	11	12
7	60,000	7d6	17 [+2]	8	9	10	11	12
8	120,000	8d6	17 [+2]	8	9	10	11	12

THAC0: Attack matrix row to use. (Ascending AC attack bonus in [].)

D: Death / poison; **W:** Wands; **P:** Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks; **S:** Spells / rods / staves.

Mutations

d8	Mutation	Effect
1	Beast ears	3-in-6 chance to hear noises.
2	Beast eyes	Infravision to 60'.
3	Clawed hand	Unarmed attack for 1d6 damage.
4	Gills	Breathe underwater.
5	Pincer	Unarmed attack for 1d3 damage. The pincer locks on to the victim, causing 1d3 damage per round (**save versus paralysis** to escape).
6	Scales	+2 bonus to Armour Class.
7	Spring legs	Jump up to 30' forwards and gain +1 to attack. If wielding an impaling weapon (e.g. spear), this counts as a charge and inflicts double damage on a successful hit.
8	Sticky tongue	Grab an object up to 15' away and pull it to the mouth. Can be used as a melee attack: bite inflicts 1d3 damage.

Rolling Skill Checks

All skills are rolled on d%, with a result of less than or equal to the listed percentage indicating success.

Player Knowledge

The referee should roll for hide in shadows and move silently on the player's behalf, as the mutoid does not immediately know if the attempt was successful. If a roll fails, the referee knows that the mutoid has been noticed and should determine enemies' actions appropriately.

Mutoid Skills Chance of Success

Level	HS	MI	MS	PP
1	10	35	20	20
2	15	40	25	25
3	20	50	30	30
4	25	60	35	35
5	30	70	40	40
6	36	80	45	45
7	45	90	55	55
8	55	95	65	65

Mycelian

Demihuman Class

Requirements: Minimum CON 9
Prime requisite: STR
Hit Dice: 1d8
Maximum level: 6
Armour: Shields only
Weapons: Any
Languages: Alignment, Common, Deepcommon

Mycelians are humanoid mushrooms, with tall stems, wide, flat caps, and beady eyes amid their gills. They have no mouths, but communicate telepathically. They dwell in lightless caverns deep underground.

Combat

Mycelians have naturally tough skin and do not wear armour. They may use shields and any kind of weapons.

Fungal Spores

Once per day per level, a mycelian may emit a spray of spores at a single living person (i.e. human / demihuman of any level or humanoid monster of up to 4+1 HD) within 20'.

Pacifying spores: The target must **save versus poison** or become completely passive for 1 round per level of the mycelian, unable to act or move.

Hallucinogenic spores: (From 4th level.) The target must **save versus poison** or be afflicted with terrifying visions for 1 turn. Roll on the table below to determine the target's reaction to the hallucinations.

Hallucinogenic Spores	
d6	**Effect**
1–2	Flee in terror
3–4	Cower and babble
5–6	Attempt to kill nearest creature

Growth

A 1st level mycelian is 4' tall. A mycelian's height increases by 1' per level gained, up to a maximum of 9' tall at 6th level.

Unarmed attacks: A mycelian may make melee attacks with its club-like fists (1 attack per round), inflicting 1d4 damage per level, as shown in the level progression table.

Natural Armour Class: Although unable to wear armour, a mycelian's tough skin grants it a natural Armour Class that increases with experience level, as shown in the level progression table.

Mycelian Level Progression

Level	XP	HD	THAC0	Natural AC	Melee Damage	D	W	P	B	S
1	0	1d8	19 [0]	6 [13]	1d4	9	11	9	13	12
2	3,000	2d8	19 [0]	5 [14]	2d4	9	11	9	13	12
3	6,000	3d8	19 [0]	4 [15]	3d4	9	11	9	13	12
4	12,000	4d8	17 [+2]	3 [16]	4d4	7	9	7	11	10
5	24,000	5d8	17 [+2]	3 [16]	5d4	7	9	7	11	10
6	45,000	6d8	17 [+2]	3 [16]	6d4	7	9	7	11	10

THAC0: Attack matrix row to use.
(Ascending AC attack bonus in [].)

D: Death / poison; **W:** Wands;
P: Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks;
S: Spells / rods / staves.

Infravision

Mycelians have infravision to 60' (see *Darkness* under *Hazards and Challenges* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Light Sensitivity

When in bright light (daylight, *continual light*), mycelians suffer a –2 penalty to attack rolls and a –1 penalty to AC.

Rest and Sustenance

Mycelians do not eat or sleep in the normal sense. Instead, they require a period of 8 hours each day spent in contact with moist earth.

Missing the rejuvenative period: The mycelian loses 1 hit point per day until it is again able to spend 8 hours in contact with moist earth.

Telepathic Communication

Mycelians are mouthless and unable to speak, communicating entirely telepathically. This form of communication is effective with any sentient creature within 120' that the mycelian can perceive. The mycelian is able to converse in any language they know.

After Reaching 6th Level

A mycelian may found a subterranean stronghold that will attract mycelians from far and wide. The character will rule over the other mycelians as their liege.

Fungal Reanimation

A mycelian liege can implant special spores into the decomposing substrate of a humanoid corpse, causing it to reanimate as a fungal zombie under the mycelian's control.

Time: Creating a fungal zombie takes one week. The mycelian must carefully tend the process.

Fungal Zombie

AC 8 [11], **HD** 2 (9hp), **Att** 1 × weapon (1d8 or by weapon), **THAC0** 18 [+1], **MV** 60' (20'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), **ML** 12, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 20

▶ **Initiative:** Always lose (no roll).

▶ **Turning:** Fungal zombies are not undead and cannot be turned by clerics etc.

Tiefling

Demihuman Class

Requirements: Minimum INT 9
Prime requisite: CHA and DEX
Hit Dice: 1d6
Maximum level: 10
Armour: Leather, chainmail, shields
Weapons: Any
Languages: Alignment, Common

Tieflings are humans with a mysterious fiendish ancestor. They tend to be outcasts living on the fringes of society, shunned by those who fear their heritage.

Prime requisites: A tiefling with at least 13 in one prime requisite gets +5% to XP. If both CHA and DEX are 16 or higher, the character gets a +10% bonus.

Combat

Tieflings can use leather armour or chainmail, shields, and all weapons.

Fiendish Heritage

No two tieflings are alike—each individual's fiendish ancestry manifests in different ways. Roll twice on the *Fiendish Appearance* table and twice on the *Fiendish Gifts* table (re-roll duplicates).

Fiendish Appearance

d10	Cosmetic Trait
1	3 or 6 digits on each hand.
2	Black or red eyes, no whites/pupils.
3	Fangs or needle-like teeth.
4	Furry or feathered skin.
5	Forked tongue.
6	Goat-like hooves.
7	Long, thin tail.
8	Scaly or ridged skin.
9	Skin tinted red, green, or blue.
10	Small horns on forehead/temples.

Fiendish Gifts

d10	Innate Magical Trait
1	Cast *darkness* once/day.
2	Cast *detect invisible* once/day.
3	Cast *detect magic* once/day.
4	Cast *magic missile* once/day.
5	Cast *mirror image* once/day.
6	Cast *ventriloquism* once/day.
7	Cold resistance (half damage).
8	Fire resistance (half damage).
9	+2 bonus to saves versus paralysis.
10	+2 bonus to saves versus poison.

Holy Water Vulnerability

Tieflings' fiendish heritage makes them vulnerable to damage by holy water.

Infravision

Tieflings have infravision to 60' (see *Darkness* under *Hazards and Challenges* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Tiefling Skills

Tieflings can use the following skills, with the chance of success shown opposite:

▶ **Beguile (BE):** On a successful check, the tiefling's words take on a supernatural potency. A person of Hit Dice no greater than the tiefling's level must **save versus spells** or believe the tiefling's words. The beguilement lasts for 1 round per level of the tiefling. Afterwards, the beguiled person realises they have been tricked. This skill may only be used on any given person once per day.

▶ **Hear noise (HN):** In a quiet environment (e.g. not in combat), a tiefling may attempt to listen at a door or to hear the sounds of something (e.g. a wandering monster) approaching.

▶ **Hide in shadows (HS):** Requires the tiefling to be motionless—attacking or moving while hiding is not possible.

Tiefling Level Progression

Level	XP	HD	THAC0	Saving Throws				
				D	W	P	B	S
1	0	1d6	19 [0]	11	12	12	15	14
2	2,500	2d6	19 [0]	11	12	12	15	14
3	5,000	3d6	19 [0]	11	12	12	15	14
4	10,000	4d6	19 [0]	11	12	12	15	14
5	20,000	5d6	17 [+2]	9	10	10	13	12
6	30,000	6d6	17 [+2]	9	10	10	13	12
7	60,000	7d6	17 [+2]	9	10	10	13	12
8	120,000	8d6	17 [+2]	9	10	10	13	12
9	240,000	9d6	14 [+5]	7	8	8	11	10
10	360,000	9d6+2*	14 [+5]	7	8	8	11	10

THAC0: Attack matrix row to use. (Ascending AC attack bonus in [].)
*: Modifiers from CON no longer apply.

D: Death / poison; **W:** Wands;
P: Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks;
S: Spells / rods / staves.

▶ **Move silently (MS):** A tiefling may attempt to sneak past enemies unnoticed.

After Reaching 9th Level

A tiefling can establish a den, attracting 2d6 apprentices—1st level thieves or tieflings. These apprentices will serve the character with some reliability; however, should any be arrested or killed, the PC will not be able to attract apprentices to replace them. A successful tiefling might use these followers to start a Thieves' Guild.

Tiefling Skills Chance of Success

Level	BE	HN	HS	MS
1	30	1–2	10	20
2	35	1–2	15	25
3	40	1–3	20	30
4	45	1–3	25	35
5	50	1–3	30	40
6	53	1–3	36	45
7	56	1–4	45	55
8	60	1–4	55	65
9	65	1–4	65	75
10	70	1–4	75	85

Rolling Skill Checks

All skills except hear noise are rolled on d%, with a result of less than or equal to the listed percentage indicating success.

Hear noise is rolled on 1d6. If the roll is within the listed range of numbers, the skill succeeds.

Player Knowledge

The referee should roll for HN, HS, and MS on the player's behalf, as the tiefling does not immediately know if the attempt was successful. If an HS or MS roll fails, the referee knows that the tiefling has been noticed and should determine enemies' actions appropriately.

Dragonborn (Race)

Requirements: Minimum CON 9, minimum INT 9
Ability modifiers: None
Languages: Alignment, Common, Dragon

Dragonborn are tall, powerful demihumans with scaled skin and dragon-like heads. They typically weigh about 250 pounds and stand around 6' tall. As reptiles, they reproduce by laying eggs. Unlike true dragons, dragonborn do not have wings or tails. Dragonborn live in clans based on the colour of their scales (see *Draconic Bloodline*) and are known for their fierce loyalty and their love of hoarding gold. It is believed that dragonborn were created by the dragon gods.

Available Classes and Max Level

- **Assassin:** 7th
- **Cleric:** 8th
- **Fighter:** 10th
- **Knight:** 10th
- **Illusionist:** 6th
- **Paladin:** 8th
- **Magic-user:** 8th
- **Thief:** 6th

Breath Weapon

Like dragons, dragonborn can exhale a breath weapon of destructive energy. The shape of the breath weapon and the type of damage it inflicts depend on the species of dragon that the character has an affinity with (see *Draconic Bloodline*).

Frequency of use: Once per day.

Area: The size of the breath weapon depends on the shape:

- **Cloud:** 10' wide, 15' long.

- **Cone:** 15' wide at the far end, 20' long.
- **Line:** 5' wide, 30' long.

Damage: All caught in the area suffer damage equal to half the dragonborn's current hit points (rounded up). A **save versus breath** is allowed for half damage.

Draconic Bloodline

Each dragonborn has an affinity with a specific species of dragons. This determines their breath weapon and the colour of their scales. The player should roll on the table below to determine the character's draconic affinity.

Draconic Bloodline			
		Breath Weapon	
d10	Colour	Damage	Shape
1–2	Black	Acid	Line
3–4	Blue	Lightning	Line
5–6	Green	Poison	Cloud
7–8	Red	Fire	Cone
9–10	White	Cold	Cone

Draconic Resistance

A dragonborn gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against the type of damage associated with their breath weapon.

Dragon-Affecting Magic

Dragonborn are affected by magic that specifically targets dragons (e.g. a sword +1, +3 vs dragons).

Mutoid (Race)

Requirements: None
Ability modifiers: None
Languages: Alignment, Common

Mutoids are demihumans with mismatched body parts of many different creatures (e.g. reptiles, crustaceans, birds, mammals, etc.). Each individual has a unique appearance. Mutoids are often shunned by other species and live in ruins or in hidden lairs within large settlements.

Available Classes and Max Level

▶ **Assassin:** 5th
▶ **Cleric:** 6th
▶ **Fighter:** 7th
▶ **Illusionist:** 6th
▶ **Thief:** 9th

Mutations

No two mutoids are alike—each has a unique appearance and mutations. Roll twice on the *Mutations* table, below.

Duplicate mutations: May be re-rolled.

Two attack mutations: Both may be used each round. (e.g. clawed hand + pincer.)

Mutations

d8	Mutation	Effect
1	Beast ears	3-in-6 chance to hear noises.
2	Beast eyes	Infravision to 60'.
3	Clawed hand	Unarmed attack for 1d6 damage.
4	Gills	Breathe underwater.
5	Pincer	Unarmed attack for 1d3 damage. The pincer locks on to the victim, causing 1d3 damage per round (**save versus paralysis** to escape).
6	Scales	+2 bonus to Armour Class.
7	Spring legs	Jump up to 30' forwards and gain +1 to attack. If wielding an impaling weapon (e.g. spear), this counts as a charge and inflicts double damage on a successful hit.
8	Sticky tongue	Grab an object up to 15' away and pull it to the mouth. Can be used as a melee attack: bite inflicts 1d3 damage.

Mycelian (Race)

Requirements: Minimum CON 9
Ability modifiers: −1 DEX, +1 WIS
Languages: Alignment, Common, Deepcommon

Mycelians are humanoid mushrooms, with tall stems, wide, flat caps, and beady eyes amid their gills. They have no mouths, but communicate telepathically. They dwell in lightless caverns deep underground.

Available Classes and Max Level

- ▶ **Assassin:** 4th
- ▶ **Cleric:** 5th
- ▶ **Druid:** 5th
- ▶ **Fighter:** 6th
- ▶ **Illusionist:** 4th
- ▶ **Thief:** 4th

Fungal Spores

From 3rd level, a mycelian may emit a spray of spores once per day, targeting a single living person (i.e. human / demi-human of any level or humanoid monster of up to 4+1 HD) within 20'. The target must **save versus poison** or become completely passive for 1 round per level of the mycelian, unable to act or move.

Infravision

Mycelians have infravision to 60' (see *Darkness* under *Hazards and Challenges* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Light Sensitivity

When in bright light (daylight, *continual light*), mycelians suffer a −2 penalty to attack rolls and a −1 penalty to AC.

Rest and Sustenance

Mycelians do not eat or sleep in the normal sense. Instead, they require a period of 8 hours each day spent in contact with moist earth.

Missing the rejuvenative period: The mycelian loses 1 hit point per day until it is again able to spend 8 hours in contact with moist earth.

Telepathic Communication

Mycelians are mouthless and unable to speak, communicating entirely telepathically. This form of communication is effective with any sentient creature within 120' that the mycelian can perceive. The mycelian is able to converse in any language they know.

Tiefling (Race)

Tieflings are humans with a mysterious fiendish ancestor. They tend to be outcasts living on the fringes of society, shunned by those who fear their heritage.

Available Classes and Max Level

- ► **Acrobat:** 10th
- ► **Assassin:** 10th
- ► **Bard:** 6th
- ► **Fighter:** 8th
- ► **Illusionist:** 10th
- ► **Magic-user:** 10th
- ► **Ranger:** 6th
- ► **Thief:** 10th

Fiendish Heritage

No two tieflings are alike—each individual's fiendish ancestry manifests in different ways. Roll twice on the *Fiendish Appearance* table and twice on the *Fiendish Gifts* table (re-roll duplicates).

Fiendish Appearance

d10	Cosmetic Trait
1	3 or 6 digits on each hand.
2	Black or red eyes, no whites/pupils.
3	Fangs or needle-like teeth.
4	Furry or feathered skin.
5	Forked tongue.
6	Goat-like hooves.
7	Long, thin tail.
8	Scaly or ridged skin.
9	Skin tinted red, green, or blue.
10	Small horns on forehead/temples.

Fiendish Gifts

d10	Innate Magical Trait
1	Cast *darkness* once/day.
2	Cast *detect invisible* once/day.
3	Cast *detect magic* once/day.
4	Cast *magic missile* once/day.
5	Cast *mirror image* once/day.
6	Cast *ventriloquism* once/day.
7	Cold resistance (half damage).
8	Fire resistance (half damage).
9	+2 bonus to saves versus paralysis.
10	+2 bonus to saves versus poison.

Holy Water Vulnerability

Tieflings' fiendish heritage makes them vulnerable to damage by holy water.

Infravision

Tieflings have infravision to 60' (see *Darkness* under *Hazards and Challenges* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Expanded Equipment

By Gavin Norman

Adventuring Gear

The list of adventuring gear presented in *Old-School Essentials* covers the basic items that beginning adventuring parties will need. This article presents additional tools and oddments that more experienced parties may seek out.

Adventuring Gear			
Item	**Cost (gp)**	**Item**	**Cost (gp)**
Barrel	1	Ink (vial)	1
Bedroll	2	Ladder (wooden, 10')	5
Bell (miniature)	1	Lantern, bullseye	20
Belt pouch	1	Lock	20
Block and tackle	5	Magnifying glass	3
Box (iron, large)	30	Manacles	15
Box (iron, small)	10	Marbles (bag of 20)	1
Bucket	1	Mining pick	3
Caltrops (bag of 20)	1	Musical instrument (string)	20
Candles (10)	1	Musical instrument (wind)	5
Chain (10')	30	Paper/parchment (2 sheets)	1
Chalk (10 sticks)	1	Quill	1
Chest (wooden, large)	5	Saw	1
Chest (wooden, small)	1	Scroll case	1
Chisel	2	Sledgehammer	5
Cooking pots	3	Spade or shovel	2
Firewood (bundle)	1	Tent	20
Fishing rod and tackle	4	Twine (100' ball)	1
Holy symbol (gold)	100	Vial (glass)	1
Holy symbol (wooden)	5	Whistle	1

Holy symbols: Standard holy symbols (25gp) are assumed to be made of silver.

Adventuring Gear Descriptions

Barrel: A wooden barrel that holds 40 gallons (320 pints) of liquid.

Bedroll: A heavy woollen blanket with a small pillow.

Bell: A 1" brass bell.

Belt pouch: A leather pouch that holds up to 50 coins.

Block and tackle: Used for hauling or lifting heavy objects. Reduces the effective weight by 75%. Requires 4 times as much rope.

Box, iron: A solid iron casket. A large box can hold up to 800 coins; a small box can hold up to 250 coins.

Bucket: Holds 5 gallons (40 pints).

Caltrops: Small metal spikes sufficient to cover a 5' × 5' area. Creatures moving through the area have a 2-in-6 chance of treading on a spike. Victims suffer a 50% reduction of movement rate for 24 hours (or until they receive magical healing).

Candle: Casts dim light in a 5' radius and burns for 1 hour.

Chain: A 10' length of heavy, iron chain.

Chalk: Useful for making markings on stone.

Chest, wooden: A large chest can hold up to 1,000 coins; a small chest can hold up to 300 coins.

Chisel: Used with a hammer for chipping away stone.

Cooking pots: Pots and pans for campfire cooking.

Firewood: A bundle of dry wood. Burns for 8 hours.

Fishing rod and tackle: A rod, line, hook, and bait box.

Holy symbol, gold: Grants a +1 bonus to the 2d6 roll for the affected Hit Dice of undead monsters.

Holy symbol, wooden: Incurs a –1 penalty to the 2d6 roll which determines the success of the turning attempt.

Ink: A vial of black ink. Coloured ink costs double. Sufficient for about 50 pages of writing.

Ladder: Simple wooden construction. Very encumbering.

Lantern, bullseye: Casts light in a narrow beam, 60' long and 20' wide at the end. Can be closed to hide the light. Burns one oil flask every four hours (24 turns).

Lock: A basic iron lock with a key.

Magnifying glass: Used for studying fine details.

Manacles: Iron manacles with a chain. Used for binding hands or feet.

Marbles: A bag of colourful glass beads.

Mining pick: For breaking rock.

Musical instrument: A stringed instrument (e.g. a lute or mandolin) or a wind instrument (e.g. a flute or pipe). The listed price is for an instrument of basic quality. Higher quality instruments can cost up to 10 times as much.

Paper or parchment: Approximately 1'-square sheets.

Quill: A large feather sharpened into a writing point.

Saw: A hand saw for cutting wood.

Scroll case: An oiled leather tube with a cap. Not completely watertight.

Sledgehammer: A big heavy hammer for breaking rock.

Spade or shovel: For excavating earth.

Tent: Large enough for 2 adult humans.

Twine: A wound ball of thin cord or string. Can support up to 300 coins of weight.

Vial: A glass vial that can hold up to half a pint of liquid.

Whistle: Useful for signalling or faking bird calls.

Weapons & Armour

This article presents additional armour and weapon options inspired by the types available in the 1970s Advanced 1st Edition rules and the 1984 Companion rules.

Weapons

Weapon	Cost (gp)	Weight (Coins)
Bastard sword	15	80
Blackjack	1	10
Blowgun	3	5
Bolas	5	40
Garotte	1	5
Net	5	100
Whip	10	50

Ammunition

Ammunition	Cost (gp)
Blowgun dart (pouch of 5)	1

Armour

Armour	AC	Cost (gp)	Weight (Coins)
Padded armour	8 [11]	5	100
Furs	7 [12]	10	250
Studded leather	6 [13]	25	300
Banded mail	4 [15]	50	450
Full plate	2 [17]	1,000	700

Thieves and Studded Leather (Optional Rule)

Thieves and similar classes normally limited to leather armour (e.g. acrobats, assassins) may be allowed to use studded leather armour. When wearing studded leather, climbing, balance, and acrobatics skills suffer a –25% penalty and stealth skills suffer a –10% penalty.

Encumbrance (Optional Rule)

If the optional rules for encumbrance are used (see *Old-School Essentials*), armour worn is treated as follows.

Option 1: Basic Encumbrance

Padded armour, furs, and studded leather count as *light armour*, banded mail and full plate count as *heavy armour*.

Option 2: Detailed Encumbrance

The listed weight of armour and weapons is tracked. The listed weight of missile weapons already includes the weight of the ammunition and its container.

Armour Descriptions

Padded armour: Layers of cloth and quilted padding.

Furs: Thickly layered furs and pelts of any kind. Commonly worn by those who lack the resources to create better armour.

Studded leather: A suit of flexible leather studded with hundreds of metal rivets.

Banded mail: Horizontal bands of metal riveted to a padded leather backing, with sections of chain mail at the joints.

Full plate: Perfectly interlocking plates of metal over a backing of chain mail and padding. A suit of full plate armour must be crafted on request, and is tailored and balanced for a specific individual. Wearing another person's full plate armour is awkward and only grants AC 3 [16].

Usage of New Armour Types

Characters who can use leather armour: Can use padded armour and furs.

Characters who can use chainmail: Can use studded leather.

Characters who can use plate mail: Can use banded mail and full plate.

Weapon Combat Stats

Weapon	Damage	Qualities
Bastard sword	1d6+1	Melee, Versatile (1d8+1)
Blackjack	1d2	Blunt, Knock-out, Melee, Stealth
Blowgun	None	Missile (5'-10' / 11'-20' / 21'-30')
Bolas	1d2	Blunt, Entangle, Missile (5'–20' / 21'–40' / 41'–60')
Garotte	1d4	Melee, Stealth, Strangle, Two-handed
Net	None	Blunt, Entangle, Missile (5'-10' / 11'-20' / 21'-30')
Whip	1d2	Entangle, Melee

Damage: Die rolled when using the optional rule for variable weapon damage (see *Combat* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Weapon Descriptions

Bastard sword: A long sword that can be wielded either one- or two-handed.

Blackjack: A small, leather pouch filled with sand or lead shot. Used to quietly knock victims out.

Blowgun: A 3' tube through which tiny darts are blown. The darts inflict no damage but may administer a bloodstream poison (for example, those described in *Old-School Essentials Advanced Fantasy*).

Bolas: A cord and weighted balls, whirled around and thrown at a target.

Garotte: A 2' length of thin cord or wire with a grip at each end. Used to quietly strangle victims.

Net: A 6' square mesh of cord. Thrown to entangle a human-sized or smaller target.

Whip: A 10' long strap of braided leather. On a successful attack, the attacker must decide to *either* inflict damage or entangle the target.
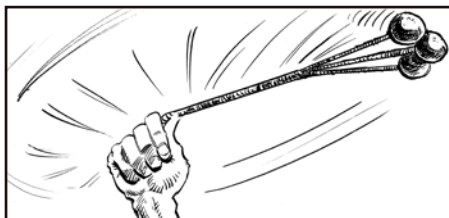
Weapon Qualities

Blunt: May be used by clerics.

Knock-out: On a successful hit, the target must **save vs paralysis** or be knocked out for 1d6 turns.

Melee: Close quarters weapon (5' or less).

Missile: Thrown or fired weapon (greater than 5' distance). The distances for short (+1 to hit), medium, and long (–1 to hit) range are shown in parentheses.

Entangle: On a successful hit, the target must **save versus paralysis** or be unable to move or act. A new save is allowed each round to escape.

Stealth: May only be used to attack an unaware person (i.e. human / demihuman of any level or humanoid monster of up to 4+1 HD) from behind. (Non-living creatures are immune.)

Strangle: Following a successful hit, inflicts automatic damage each round. The victim cannot move and suffers a –2 penalty to attack rolls. A successful hit on the attacker allows the victim to break free.

Two-handed: Requires both hands; the character cannot use a shield.

Versatile: May be used with one or two hands. When wielded two-handed, the damage listed in parentheses is used (the character cannot use a shield).

Woodland Monsters

By Donn Stroud

In deep, shadowed glades and sacred groves of ancient forests there dwell many strange creatures unknown to the folk of civilized lands. This article presents a collection of some of the inhabitants of these tangled domains.

Bracketfolk

2'-tall, humanoid bracket fungi covered in lichen and algae. Peaceful, calm, and slow moving. Entire family groups often live on the same ancient tree adorning the trunk for hundreds of feet. Bracket-folk are arboreal relatives of the subterranean mycelian (see *Old-School Essentials Advanced Fantasy*).

AC 5 [14], **HD** 1 (4hp), **Att** 1 × fist (1d4+1), **THAC0** 19 [+0], **MV** 60' (20') / 90' (30') climbing, **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), **ML** 9, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 10, **NA** 0 (4d6), **TT** None

▶ **Telepathy:** Communicate telepathically with sentient creatures within 100'.

▶ **Surprise:** On a 1–4, due to camouflage.

▶ **Spore cloud:** When threatened, a group of 5 or more bracketfolk can release a spore cloud that animates nearby vegetation. All in a 20' radius area selected by the bracketfolk (up to 60' distant) must **save versus paralysis** or be entangled (unable to move) for 1 turn. Those who succeed may move at half their normal movement rate.

▶ **Elders:** Each group is led by 1d6 elders with 4 HD (18hp) living higher on the trunk. Each elder bracketfolk can puff a spore cloud at a target within 15' once a day, causing the victim to fall asleep for 1d6 turns (**save versus poison** to resist).

Burlbug

Gnarled, nocturnal, simian-like animals with bodies resembling big, rounded burls 2–3' across. Rest on tree trunks during the day. Highly territorial; howl loudly when disturbed or annoyed. Love shiny gems and collect them in large stashes found up in tree hollows.

AC 4 [15], **HD** 2 (9hp), **Att** 1 × club (1d6) or 1 × projectile (1d3, +1 to attack rolls), **THAC0** 18 [+1], **MV** 120' (40') / 120' (40') climbing, **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), **ML** 6, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 20, **NA** 0 (1), **TT** L

▶ **Surprise:** On a 1–4, due to camouflage.

▶ **Howling:** Attracts other creatures. 3-in-6 chance of a wandering monster.

▶ **Projectiles:** Throw rocks, branches, or pinecones. +1 to attack rolls due to excellent aim.

Corpse Vine

Clusters of carnivorous vines that dangle from tree branches, craving blood and flesh. Hooked victims are pulled up to be slowly digested.

AC 9 [10], **HD** 2* (9hp), **Att** 2 × vine (1d4 + constriction), **THAC0** 18 [+1], **MV** 0' (0'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B14 S16 (1), **ML** 10, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 35, **NA** 0 (1d6), **TT** V

▶ **Lure:** 1d6 corpses of victims hang in the vines, twitching and moaning as the tendrils of the vines penetrate the brains and nervous systems to produce a mockery of life.

▶ **Constriction:** On a successful hit the vine wraps around the victim, inflicting 1d6 automatic damage each round.

▶ **Severing vines:** Requires a hit with a cutting weapon inflicting 4 or more damage.

▶ **Flammable:** Especially susceptible to fire—suffer double damage.

Ghoul-Stag

The decaying corpse of a deer, elk, or moose infected by a ghoul's bite, transforming the animal into a meat-eating monster. A ghoul-stag's antlers are draped with their own shredded velvet, as well flayed skin and strips of rotten meat torn from their victims.

AC 7 [12], **HD** 3+1* (18hp), **Att** 1 × butt (1d8), 1 × bite (1d3 + paralysis), **THAC0** 17 [+2], **MV** 240' (80'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2), **ML** 9, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 75, **NA** 0 (1d4), **TT** None

▶ **Undead:** Make no noise, until they attack. Immune to effects that affect living creatures (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).

▶ **Paralysis:** For 2d4 turns (**save versus paralysis**). Elves and creatures larger than ogres are not affected.

Nettle Skull Spider

Mobile, carnivorous plant monsters that inhabit humanoid skulls. The sting-ing, scrabbling fronds sprouting out of the eyes, nose, and mouth of the skull give the monster the appearance of a green-legged spider. Greatly feared for their ability to inject virulent spores into the skulls of vertebrates.

AC 8 [11], **HD** 2* (9hp), **Att** 2 × lash (1d4) **THAC0** 18 [+1], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), **ML** 9, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 25, **NA** 0 (1), **TT** None

▶ **Spore implantation:** If a victim is hit by both lash attacks in the same round, the spider injects spores into the victim's skull. Each day, the victim loses 1 point of INT until they reach 0 INT (death) or receive a *cure disease* spell. After death, the spores spread through the brain, de-capitating the corpse. In time new fronds sprout and the new nettle skull spider creeps through the forests in search of fresh heads to grow the next generation.

Spell Croaker

Giant tree frogs, nearly 4½' long, with dark black, spiny skin. Spell croakers are charged with magic, having fed on magic items and memorized spells in their tad-pole form. When aggravated, a display of magical energies streaks across their skin, like multi-coloured lightning and flashing false eyes.

AC 7 [12], **HD** 3* (14hp), **Att** 1 × bite (1d6) or spell, **THAC0** 17 [+2], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2), **ML** 9, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 50, **NA** 1d3 (1d3), **TT** Magical body parts

▶ **Spells:** 2-in-6 chance per round of disgorging an arcane spell with a loud croak. Roll 1d6 to select which spell—the frog then selects the target: 1. *levitate*, 2. *magic missile*, 3. *mirror image*, 4. *shield*, 5. *sleep*, 6. *web*.

▶ **Magic resistance:** +2 bonus to saving throws versus magical effects.

▶ **Magical body parts:** Spell croaker eyeballs can be sold for use in potions and spell research (75gp each). Their skins can be crafted by a leather-worker into cloaks granting a +1 bonus to saves versus spells.

Spell Croaker Tadpole

The immature form of spell croakers, the innate magic possessed by these 1' long, scintillating tadpoles gives them the ability to fly. Bulbous, black, gold speckled body, with a deeply keeled tail that fluctuates in colour as it whips back and forth in the air propelling the floating tadpole. Voraciously hungry for all types of magical enchantments, they can suck the magic out of weapons, armour, potions, and even spell-casters' minds.

AC 9 [10], **HD** ½* (2hp), **Att** 1 × attach (disenchantment), **THAC0** 20 [−1], **MV** 90' (30') flying, **SV** D14 W15 P16 B17 S18 (NH), **ML** 7, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 6, **NA** 4d10 (2d10), **TT** None

▶ **Detect magic:** Up to 60'. Can detect magic items and spell-casters with memorized spells.

▶ **Attach to magic:** Attack the most powerful spell-caster nearby or (if no spell-casters are present) the most powerful magic item. Attach to the item or the character's head on a successful hit. Small or concealed items (e.g. a ring or a potion in a backpack) incur a −4 penalty to attack.

▶ **Disenchanting spell-casters:** For each tadpole attached to a spell-caster, there is a 1-in-6 chance per round of draining a random memorized spell.

▶ **Disenchanting items:** For each tadpole attached to a magic item, there is a 1-in-6 chance per round of the item being drained of all magic.

▶ **Detaching:** Attached tadpoles will drop off once they have drained magic, but otherwise can only be removed if killed or by casting *dispel magic*.

Stick Children

Semi-intelligent, 3' tall insects that cover themselves with branches sawn from trees with their serrated mandibles, stuck on with an adhesive excretion. This camouflaging behaviour makes them look like human shaped children made of sticks. Stick children live in elaborately crafted colonies amongst the lower branches of trees.

AC 6 [13], **HD** 1+1* (5hp), **Att** 1 × wooden weapon (1d6 or by weapon, +1 to attack and damage rolls) or 1 × bite (1d6) or spray (adhesive, range 25' / 50' / 75'), **THAC0** 19 [+0], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), **ML** 7, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 19, **NA** 0 (1d12), **TT** None

▶ **Surprise:** On a 1–4, due to camouflage.

▶ **Wooden weapons:** Stick children construct wooden weapons by applying their glue to specially selected woods. These weapons grant a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls, but are non-magical. They sometimes barter their weapons for services or goods.

▶ **Adhesive: Save versus paralysis** or unable to move or act for 1d3 rounds.

CREATING MONSTERS

BY GAVIN NORMAN

Inventing new monsters is one of the most creative and fun aspects of the game for referees. In contrast with many more modern games, creating monsters for *Old-School Essentials* is an exercise of imagination, rather than one of following rules or formulae for what is allowed or balanced. The procedure presented in this article is therefore a guide to the referee, rather than a set of hard and fast rules as to what is possible.

Monsters and PCs are built with different rules: It is very important to note that monsters are not built using the same rules as PCs. They do not have classes or levels. They do not have ability scores. This greatly simplifies monster creation.

Tweaking Existing Monsters

Before starting to create a wholly new monster, consider whether a few small modifications to an existing monster could have the desired effect.

Re-skinning: The stats and special abilities of an existing monster can often be reused, simply altering its descriptive / behavioural qualities. For example, the standard giant leech stat block could be used for a vampiric "blood hound".

Tweaking: Similarly, variant monsters can be easily created by making a few alterations to an existing monster, adding breath weapons, web spinning, wings, extra limbs, multiple heads, etc. Remember to adjust the monster's XP value if it gains special abilities. (See *Awarding XP* in *Old-School Essentials*.)

1. Imagine

The first and most important step is to imagine the monster. A strong mental picture will make it easy to determine a monster's stats and combat abilities in the subsequent steps.

Factors to Consider

Appearance: What basic shape is the monster (humanoid, worm, avian, insect, etc.)? How large is it? Is it made of flesh and blood or something else (fungus, ooze, plants, crystal, metal, fire, ice, darkness, etc.)? What covers its surface (slime, fur, scales, feathers, spines, etc.)? What colour is it? How many limbs / heads / tails does it have?

Origin: Is the monster a biological organism (naturally occurring or bred)? Is it undead? Is it constructed or summoned by magic? Is it a denizen of another plane or dimension?

Intelligence and behaviour: Is the monster of animal, human-level, or greater intelligence? What does it consume? Does it value treasure (or other special items or substances)? What does it crave?

Environment: Does the monster live in dungeons or the wilderness (or both)? Does it favour one type of terrain or environment? Does it build lairs or wander?

Society: Is the monster solitary or does it live in groups? How does it interact with others of its kind? What kind of social structure does it have? Does a more powerful leader type exist?

2. Choose Hit Dice (HD)

Most monsters have HD in the range of 1 to 10.

Factors to Consider

Challenge rating: A monster's Hit Dice rating is a fundamental gauge of how dangerous an adversary it is. Characters of equal experience level to a monster's HD will be roughly evenly matched in combat. The number of combatants should of course also be taken into account. For example, a group of six 1st level PCs will be roughly evenly matched against three 2 HD monsters.

Size: Broadly speaking, physically smaller monsters have lower HD and larger monsters have higher HD.

Hit point modifiers: Some monsters have a hit point modifier—a fixed bonus or penalty applied after rolling an individual's hp. Monsters with a hit point bonus (i.e. +1 or greater) are treated as being 1 HD higher when attacking (see step 7), making them more powerful combatants.

Example Monster HD Ratings	
Example Monsters	**HD**
Bandit, orc, pixie, skeleton	1
Crocodile, ghoul, gnoll	2
Bugbear, giant crab, wight	3
Black bear, ogre, wraith	4
Lion, mummy, owl bear	5
Spectre, troll, white dragon	6
Black dragon, griffon, vampire	7
Green dragon, hill giant, treant	8
Blue dragon, chimera, stone giant	9
Efreeti, frost giant, red dragon	10

3. Choose Armour Class (AC)

Most monsters have an AC score in the range of 9 [10] to 3 [16]. Very few monsters have AC better than 0 [19].

Factors to Consider

Toughness: Unarmoured monsters will have a poor AC, while those with armour, thick hide, or scales (or those made from hard materials like stone or metal) will have a good AC.

Magic: Enchanted or innately magical monsters may have a better AC than their physical toughness would indicate.

Agility: Characters' AC is modified based on their DEX score. While monsters do not have a DEX score, slow or clumsy monsters may have a worse AC, while those that are fast-moving or dexterous may have a better AC.

Hit Dice: More powerful monsters (i.e. those with higher HD) also tend to have better AC, as a factor of game balance, making them challenging foes for higher level characters.

Example Monster AC Scores	
Example Monsters	**AC**
Giant centipede, normal human	9 [10]
Gelatinous cube, zombie	8 [11]
Harpy, horse, kobold, skeleton	7 [12]
Bandit, black bear, ghoul, lion	6 [13]
Bugbear, centaur, hydra, ogre	5 [14]
Basilisk, dwarf, panther	4 [15]
Pixie, stegosaurus, white dragon	3 [16]
Bone golem, giant crab, gorgon	2 [17]
Giant crocodile, green dragon	1 [18]
Blue dragon, bronze golem	0 [19]

4. Choose Movement Rate

Most monsters have a movement rate in the range of 60' (20') to 180' (60'). A small number of monsters move more slowly (or even not at all) and some very rare monsters may move much more quickly, up to 360' (120').

Factors to Consider

Load: An unarmoured person moves at 120' (40'), a person wearing light armour moves at 90' (30'), and a person wearing heavy armour moves at 60' (20').

Locomotion: Monsters with more than 2 legs tend to move more quickly. For example, an unencumbered riding horse moves at 240' (80').

Agility: Slow or clumsy monsters may have a slower movement rate, while those with lightning reflexes may have a faster movement rate.

Modes of Movement

If a monster can use multiple different modes of movement (e.g. swimming, flying, climbing, etc.), this should be noted. The monster may have a different movement rate for each mode of movement.

Example Monster Movement Rates

Example Monsters	MV
Yellow mould	0' (0')
Dragon turtle, ochre jelly	30' (10')
Dwarf, mummy, skeleton	60' (20')
Crocodile, cyclops, dragons	90' (30')
Bandit, black bear, war horse	120' (40')
Boar, camel, lion, storm giant	150' (50')
Centaur, sea dragon, pixie	180' (60')
Riding horse, unicorn, wraith	240' (80')
Air elemental, griffon	360' (120')

5. Choose Attacks

Number of attacks: Most monsters attack once per round, either with a weapon or a natural attack (e.g. bite, claw, butt). Some monsters attack multiple times per round with different attack forms (e.g. 2 claw attacks and 1 bite attack per round). Monsters with more than 3 attacks per round are rare and very dangerous.

Damage per attack: Attacks normally inflict 1d4, 1d6, or 1d8 damage. Very large monsters may inflict more damage.

6. Choose Special Abilities

Some of the most memorable monsters have extra abilities beyond simply rolling attacks and damage. Flaming breath, incorporeality, immunity to mundane weapons, spell casting, and venomous bites are some classic examples, but anything the referee can imagine is possible.

HD asterisks: For each special ability that makes the monster a more dangerous adversary (as judged by the referee), an asterisk is marked beside its HD rating. Each asterisk increases the monster's XP value (see step 7).

Examples: Some examples are listed opposite. All of these example abilities typically add an asterisk to the monster's Hit Dice. The *Old-School Essentials* monster listings have many more examples.

7. Calculate Derived Stats

THAC0 / attack bonus: Determined by the monster's HD. See *Combat Tables* in *Old-School Essentials*.

Saving throw values: Determined by the monster's HD (or half its HD rating, for unintelligent monsters). See *Combat Tables* in *Old-School Essentials*.

XP award: Determined by the monster's HD and the number of special abilities it has (see step 6). See *Awarding XP* in *Old-School Essentials*.

8. Final Details

Morale: Most monsters have a morale rating in the range of 6 to 9. Mindless monsters (e.g. undead) usually have a morale of 12, meaning that they never retreat or surrender.

Alignment: Monsters that wish to kill or enslave PCs are chaotic, while those likely to aid PCs are lawful. Others (including animals, acting purely on instinct) are neutral.

Number appearing: Determined by the monster's social structure. In dungeons, groups of 1d3 to 2d6 are typical. In the wilderness, larger groups of 1d8 to 2d10 are typical. Small, weak creatures tend to band together, while large, powerful monsters tend to live in smaller groups.

Treasure type (lair): Monsters that hoard treasure in their lair may have a large hoard treasure type (A, G, H, M), a medium hoard treasure type (B, C, D, E, F, I), or a small hoard treasure type (J, K). (See *Treasure Types* in *Old-School Essentials* for average values and more details.) Monsters especially likely to possess gems, potions, or scrolls may also have treasure type L, N, or O (respectively).

Treasure type (carried): Monsters that carry treasure with them, either individually or as a group, may have treasure types P–T (individual) or U–V (group).
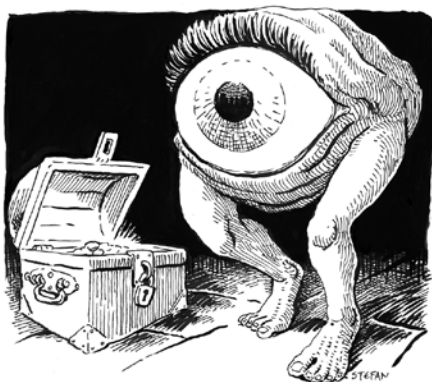
Example Special Abilities

Acid: The monster sticks to the target and inflicts automatic damage (e.g. 1d4) per round. Armour is destroyed after a certain number of rounds' contact.

Blood drain / constriction: The monster attaches to the target and inflicts automatic damage (e.g. 1d4) per round.

Breath weapon: A stream or cone of fire, ice, acid, etc. usable 3 times per day. All targets caught in its area suffer damage (**save versus breath** for half).

Damaging aura: Anyone in melee with the monster suffers damage (e.g. 1d4) each round due to the aura of flames / frost / necrotic energy surrounding it.

Energy drain: The victim permanently loses one experience level. See wraith in *Old-School Essentials* for full details.

Paralysis: The victim must **save versus paralysis** or be unable to move or act for some time (e.g. 2d4 turns).

Petrification: The victim must **save versus petrification** or be turned to stone. The monster may have a petrifying touch or gaze.

Poison: The victim must **save versus poison** or be poisoned. Some poisons cause instant death while others cause death after some time (e.g. 1d6 turns).

Regeneration: The monster regains a certain number of hit points (e.g. 1–3) per round, as long as it is alive.

Spells: The monster can cast spells as a cleric or magic-user of a certain level. It may have a spell book (which PCs could steal) or be an innate spell caster.

Swallow: On a natural 20 attack roll, the monster swallows the victim whole. Inside its belly, the victim suffers damage per round (e.g. 1d6) and may attack with sharp weapons with a –4 penalty to attack rolls. If the victim dies, their body is fully digested after 6 turns.

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