* Goblins - weak, cowardly and stupid, but vicious in a group. Will fight if they think they can win, or if something big is telling them to. Easy to intimidate and interrogate, but slippery prisoners and too stupid to get much useful information out of them. Wear armor made from scraps (I've described them as wearing pans as helmets and things like that) and use 'short swords' that are just sharps bits of metal.
* Bugbears - big, strong and cruel, but thick. Tend to oversee, and bully goblins; tend to think they're in charge of Hobgoblins (mostly because they could never take orders unless it's from someone bigger). Try to fix problems by hitting things. Will fight until they can't. Don't tend to wear much armor and favor big smashing weapons.
* Hobgoblins - average size, but smart enough to be organized and use tactics where they can. Although they work with/for bugbears, they don't get along. Won't betray their comrades (even Bugbears) but quite happy to retreat when losing. Wear well-made, decorated armor and favor military weapons like swords, halberds etc.
* Orcs - separate to the other three. Tribal warriors who would rather burn a castle than occupy it and would never work with the goblinoids. Sometimes make use of ogres who they regard more as pack animals or siege weapons than members of the tribe. Wear hide or leather armor and favor axes.
* The first 3 are the big bad minions and tend to work together loosely, while orcs live in hills and pop up every now and again to ruin everyone's day.

**GOBLINS, THE GREAT BASTARDS**

[February 3, 2015](https://manysideddice.com/2015/02/03/goblins-the-great-bastards/) [Flannel](https://manysideddice.com/author/flanneljgary/) [Playing Monsters and NPCs](https://manysideddice.com/category/playing-monsters-and-npcs/) [4 comments](https://manysideddice.com/2015/02/03/goblins-the-great-bastards/#comments)

**This is part of a series exploring some advice on how to use certain monsters in your games–a resource for flavor and occasional combat tips.**

**Where are they?**

I like to think of goblins as being the fantasy equivalent (where possible) of the old slum and street gangs of England and the United States in the late 1700’s and 1800’s. So, I try to have them in numbers, force, and establishment. They’re not “everywhere”, they really only pop up in places overrun by disease, mortality, poverty (in the extreme), prostitution, and low resources.

Their tribal structure keeps them from having true nations (like the hobgoblins) and is in a constant state of flux. It should feel like, when you run into a goblin band, that you’ve found yourself in a very ugly place where only the very hard choose to live–because nobody else will have them. If a city, it should be the truest slums of the city. Broken temples, half-burned buildings, signs of lots of violence, dead bodies in the gutter, the sort of place where if you round-up a dozen random people they might have two vicious-looking knives and one copper between them all. Your average thief wouldn’t think of going to rob goblins, because gobs don’t have anything and are generally found in places that aren’t inviting or comfortable at all. If in the wilderness, it’s a clannish atmosphere of bare, rocky earth where things don’t grow well and overgrown trees and briars that aren’t good for much more than turning into things to kill or maim outsiders with.

I haven’t had too many parties run into goblins for that reason. They just don’t spend much time in the waste of the world–urban or otherwise. When I have had campaigns that do, I like to make sure goblin-areas feel like truly crappy places–not just a normal fantasy place that happens to have gobs in it. If it’s a cavern? It’s a crappy cavern. Ceilings too low and irregular, prone to cave-ins, slimy overgrowth and mold, rank water and (for good effect) excrement and waste in discreet places (to add some disgust). Why would they live there? Because nobody wants to live there. If in a city, then imagine the worst and foulest of “Gangs of New York”. Death is cheap. Guards don’t go near it–except for the corrupt who manage to put some scare and respect into one or two bands of gobs. Its a place one should expect to be shaken down in.

**Organization?**

Mix prison gangs and the highly discriminated against street gangs of immigrants and foreigners of old. Gobs have colors, codes, respect strength and fear, follow whoever gets them paid, fed, and keeps their territory. Any (virtually) creature could lead a goblin band if they’re willing to put up with the low intrigue and deceptions. Gobs turn on each other constantly and for every petty reason from money to food to sex to a favored place to sleep or survival. Any given gob has at least three fellows they dream of stabbing in the back at any given time. It makes them especially dangerous. Where a hobgoblin will stand down or flee (I have them do these constantly, because they’re soldiers and lawful and hardly stupid) when appropriate, goblins are as likely to murder their buddy after dropping a party member because of some old imagined slight.

There is usually a leader, they should be powerful enough to take on half the band by themselves. If you want a goblin band of 20, make sure the leader can take on 10 of them in a 50/50 contest at once. This, as reliable pattern, breeds expectation in the PC’s and players that if they see a small band, their leader is doubtless not too strong, but if they see a small town of goblins they should assume whoever can keep THAT riot from happening can probably put the PC’s on their ass as well.

Goblins should be an impregnable collection of bands that ally up and fight each other constantly. The Black Hammers should be allies with the Skulkers one day and then betray them to the Howling-Night-Killers the next. The constant churn of power between bands should make PC’s wary to negotiate or deal with them. Sure, they cut a deal with the old bugbear to do some dirty works, but by the time they come back, his right-hand-man has killed him in his sleep and taken his place and recognizes no deal. It isn’t evil, it’s just chaos.

Having gobs just be “small monsters” robs the game of something potentially valuable–worry, fear, and/or simple frustration. Gobs should produce the constant moral quandary of “what the hell should I do about them?” When the party stumbles onto them and fights, half the band is likely to bend a knee and pledge service to the badass that killed the other half (because, for the gobs, “f\*\*\* those guys anyway, never liked them, was going to kill them myself eventually”). Zone of truth? Absolutely, they’re sincere. They want to follow and share in some riches. But two nights later, for almost no reason, some will try to murder you in your sleep. Just will. Why? Because greed or gain or because in the last fight they saw, you didn’t do much of anything and the other party member really did all the ass kicking and they think you’re done and want to follow him and killing you is a good idea.

Evil, sure. But chaotic and unpredictable. It’s often easier to just slaughter them all and not try to deal with or negotiate with or try to “civilize” or profit from them. But then, that’s a pretty evil thing to do, too.

**Combat**

So, for combats, I like to play up that they’re not stupid. They’re sneaky and vicious and bad, but not dumb. I like to have several stay in place for range, several rush in for melee, and several try to actively bring a PC down like a mob of angry ants. Goblins are “weak” until you leverage their numbers and an intelligent take on how they’d fight.

Step 01 – Don’t be seen, period. Use that advantage in stealth. They will ambush first. Pick the weakest party member (weakest looking anyway) and have them lie in wait for them to come in range. Then, rush in with 2/3rds of the band. Their goal, one at a time and over and over should be to put the big f\*\*\*er on the ground. Shove him down, tackle him down, grapple him if need be. Band of 10? 7 “don’t end up on the ground, prone” rolls. That should terrify any PC. Prone sucks. For good measure, have one help another to grapple and drop movement to 0. Representative of a total “pile on”. The remaining, if any still have actions remaining, should start brutally stabbing or clubbing the crap out of the downed PC. Keep hitting the big bastard until he stops moving. If the other party members rush in, have the gobs grab something valuable looking (tear off the cloak, pull off a boot, take the sword or staff, money pouch, etc.) and make off in different directions. The other three gobs shooting the whole time.

Mob. Rob.

Goblins aren’t there, most of the time, to kill–they’re there to survive and plunder. They’re not farmers. This is how they live.

In one of my games, the PC’s came to absolutely hate (hate) goblins. They weren’t too dangerous, they weren’t risky encounters… but they were guaranteed to lose horses or goods off the wagon or a weapon here or there or something valuable and once that gob dashed for cover and hides it’s a pain in the ass to get it back. It only invites more ambushes.

For good measure, should the fight be going in the gobs favor, I have them outright murder the crap out of whoever they took down. Start of next gob turn after someone goes to 0? There’s a 1 in 4 change (toss a 1d4 and on a “1”) that they just keep stabbing and clubbing until the bastard is good and pulpy bits. Sometimes, it’s the only way to be sure. This makes them a non-trivial encounter. Leave it to animals or other monsters to consider the relative merits of leaving the “dead” alone and fighting the rest of the fight. Gobs stand a good chance of just continuing their brutal display until you’re truly gone and dead. If they get you on the ground, on your back, grappled and piled on, you stand a good chance (at low levels) of being viciously murdered.

It should make PC’s wary as hell. And it should mean the proper way for low-level PC’s to handle gob combat is to treat it a bit realistically. Sure, so often in D&D its “You’re prone and grappled” and then “Well, I attack on my turn” rather than “I scramble to get the hell away and blow inspiration dice to shrug them off” in fear. But it SHOULD be that way sometimes. This method of combat helps create that moment, where they chose to swing from their back thinking the consequences aren’t that bad and then end up having their head caved in by three of them after hitting 0.

For added worth, in higher encounters with a bugbear or larger monster and gobs littered about in the combat, this should be especially terrifying as the other party members have a high likelihood of being “occupied”.

For “night watch” encounters, I like to play up their territorial nature. They find the PC’s while they sleep and while half of them call out challenges and prepare for a “war” over the right to be there with ceremony and standard and insults hurled and their leader (or leaders if more than one band) grouped up to issue threats… the other half are in the weeds and bushes ready to do some murder on the stragglers in the back.

**NPC’ing Gobs**

Helpful, normal, a little rough and uncultured, bit dirty and unconcerned about spoiling food in the corner. But, flip a switch or give them a reason and it’s a wolf-whistle and twenty of the bastards showing up out of the shadows to kill or rob you and make off for parts unknown. They hardly know how to lie, but their minds change constantly. They probably don’t hate you, because they don’t know you, they hate their own because that’s how they are.

1 out of 5 goblin interactions should be thin attempts to simply rob the party. Weak as water, almost comical con jobs involving easily discerned lies. 3 out of 5 should be straight up ambushes. 1 out of 5 should be complicated traps to lure the unwary party into a situation where there are going to lose things: I maybe, but items for sure.

I made a variant goblin where their damage was lesser and used only a close knife, but on a successful hit they got to “cut free” or grab anything not hard-fastened to the character (armor, shields that are equipped) or held by them (weapons, spell books, etc.). This meant potions and coin purses and belts and hats and whatnot. Lots of choices. Ambush, attack, grab, run in a dozen directions. It made the party start prepping different spells and securing their items explicitly (my coin purse is IN MY armor and whatnot) and threatening random goblins on the street… “Hey, hey… you stay where I can see you, alright?”

Really, anything that you do with them to make them incidental, very difficult to understand or identify with for long, and unreliable monsters will give them a role in your game past the first few levels.  A level one party sees gobs as a threat.  But, twisting them this sort of way, they become NPCs to interact with and a formidable (even if not a lethal one) threat far longer.

**RUNNING HOBGOBLINS**

[October 20, 2014](https://manysideddice.com/2014/10/20/running-hobgoblins/) [Flannel](https://manysideddice.com/author/flanneljgary/) [Playing Monsters and NPCs](https://manysideddice.com/category/playing-monsters-and-npcs/) [2 comments](https://manysideddice.com/2014/10/20/running-hobgoblins/#comments)

**THIS IS PART OF A SERIES EXPLORING SOME ADVICE ON HOW TO USE CERTAIN MONSTERS IN YOUR GAMES–A RESOURCE FOR FLAVOR AND OCCASIONAL COMBAT TIPS.**

So, I like to take intelligent, lawful evil things seriously. Very seriously. Like Dr. Doom seriously. Hobgoblins being the more featured “antagonists” of Kalamar (the setting we in my group play most of our games) it requires breaking down ways to make them more than just “slightly less barbaric orcs”. I would recommend running Hobgoblins in certain ways–especially with 5e’s rules now about them–to really step up how scary they should be to your players.

Some points to consider first:

* Hobgoblins are (for my purposes and my setting’s) not tribal in the sense that they’re wandering monsters. They are like fantasy Spartans regarding how they’re raised. They believe the world is surrounding them–humans especially but other races as well. That they have few allies (but like to find truly powerful ones to preserve their interests). They are a true martial culture. You are raised with a sword in hand because your nation might need you. Every Hob (virtually) has had military training, many and most through a rather veteran level of it. Their nations are orderly, protected, and they pack far more war-powers per square inch than most others.
* Hobs have national interest and identity as well. They don’t just smash and rob, they acquire territory, they neutralize external threats, gather intelligence, supply their comrades with support. They aren’t Chaotic Evil violence, their lawful evil and lawful neutral. They are thoughtful, far thinking, and have survived a world that often disrespects or marginalizes them as a unified people with unified efforts. There is a strong sense of individualism in the Orcish community–who is strongest–Hobs are a collective. Their race and nation survive, first and foremost.
* As intelligent and organized as they are, with training, they should be thought of as minor PC’s in what they think to do. a wolf is an encounter that happens on instinct… a goblin is primitive, and his combat is sneaky, but rudimentary… an ogre is going to smash what’s in front of it… Hobs are going to strategize and kill the enemy. They exist mostly in squads or small regiments, they have chain of command, they obey orders, they are experienced at working together.

So, to that end, things to make your Hob combat and play “deeper” for players.

1. The buddy system. Hobs should not solo anything ever. Their strength is in their Martial Advantage and they will stick to their buddy for maximum effectiveness. Losing one means Disengaging and doubling or (if sufficiently worrisome opponents exist) tripling up on single targets. A solo Hob with no ally in range is smart enough to disengage, use cover, and get to clear air and rendezvous with allies before pressing the attack.
2. Further, with the Buddy System. The stronger of the two Hobs will shove prone the target to give the second maximum hit chance and maximum damage opportunity. This is war, this is training. When Orcs run up on the party, it should feel like a chaotic brawl of them hitting whatever the hell looks dangerous and running all over the place chasing people down. When Hobs attack, people should get damn worried about those tactically perfect hits.
3. Target Acquisition. Not all targets are created equal. Hobs are smart and understand battlefield conditions and control. They don’t have to kill the whole party. They only have to kill one of you for the card house to start falling. The weakest one… the least armored… the one that will be the quickest opportunity to demoralize the party. They converge resources on it to kill it outright. Often that’s the Wizard. The casters or lighter-weight physical combatants should see Hobs as “if I see one, I’m goddamn running” where the fighters and barbarians and Monks should have to think “how do I protect the rest?”
4. The Kill. I do this because of course I would. Hobs are clever. And a serious threat. Serious. Deadly. A foe falling is not a dead foe. Unless unable to or because doing so would put them at significant risk, after a foe hits the ground with that “drop to negative HP, start death rolls” situation, they take one opportunity to sink a sword into its back, twist, and then continue onto other opponents. This means when a Hob drops you, it doesn’t get an extra attack, I take its next attack or the attack of its fellow near you to hit a player with an automatic 1 failed death roll (as per rules, when you get hit while dying). This means players begin to understand that an Orc or Ogre or Goblin drops you and moves on… your survival rate is normal. A Hobgoblin will attempt to dispatch you while you’re dying–a mercy and a strategically wise move. Only one. Put them at a stronger need for “someone F\*\*\*ING HEAL ME” or “oh god, oh god” worry about the rolls to come.
5. Warnings. Hobs squads almost always have scouts (I make a % chance with every Hob encounter that their squad has one, 50/50). Scouts stay out of the fray, stay behind cover, hit from a distance, actively avoid melee and ranged attacks that might come to it… their job is to fire off (bow or crossbow, arrows with alchemical colorful trails when shot) communications into the air like a flare. Take liberties with what they mean, but I have them used as warnings to other Hobs in the area that there’s dangerous foes about in this place, call for reinforcements, sometimes just confirmations that a battle is being lost or won. It makes the players paranoid as hell because they don’t know what can or does see those things. They start looking out for the scout and try to take him out early if they don’t want to be known as here.
6. Surrender and retreat. My hobs don’t fight to the death, if need be. Withdrawal is a tactical decision, not a moral one. Surrender as well. I have had Captains below out a call for “stand down” in the middle of a fight going poorly and take a knee in surrender–offer his sword. He’ll expect to be ransomed back to his people or the like–of course he doesn’t do this lightly or if the party appear to have a lawless look about them. But they’re soldiers, not murderers. They attacked the party for reasons, always, even if those reasons are brutal ones like “we were ordered to dispatch any humans or demi humans in this area until the new moon”.

Make them real. Smart. Deadly. Soldiers.

[D&D Guide](https://dndguide.com/)

Everything About D&D

**Bugbear D&D 5th Edition (5E)**

June 20, 2019 by [admin](https://dndguide.com/author/admin/) [Leave a Comment](https://dndguide.com/races/Bugbear#respond)

The Bugbears are the hairy goblinoids which are born for the battle and mayhem. They do survive by raiding and hunting at the same time they are fond of the setting ambushes and fleeing when they outmatched. Here Bugbears feature which is in the nightmare tales of many races which are great, hairy beasts which creeps through the shadows as quite like cats. Suppose, if you walk yourself (single) in the woods there a bugbear will reach out of these bushes and strangle you.

If you would stay as far as long from the house at nighttime, the bugbears will be scoop you up to devour you in their den. If your head have been cut off by the bugbear, your soul will stay trapped inside and your bugbear uses your head to magically command all those whom you knew once. Lurid tales those are like have flowered from the seeds of truth. The bugbears do rely on the stealth and the strength to attack, preferring to the operate at nighttime. You will get to know about [goblin subraces 5e](https://dndguide.com/races/Goblin) from this post.

They take the heads of enemy leaders, but they are no more likely to eat the people indiscriminately than the humans are. These bugbears aren’t likely to the attack lone travelers or the wandering children until unless they clearly have something to the gain by doing so. From the viewpoint of the rest of the world, their aggression and also their savagery are thankfully offset by their rarity and also lethargy.

**D&D Bugbear 5e:**Considered as a giant humanoid, **Bugbear**is stronger than [goblins](https://dndguide.com/races/Goblin/) and [Hobgoblins](https://dndguide.com/races/Hobgoblin/). The creature speaks [Goblin](https://dndguide.com/races/Goblin/) language and the whole body is covered with fur. Based on the Dethek script, the language later incorporated Thorass alphabet.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Armor Class** | 16 (Hide Armor, Shield) |
| **Hit Points** | 27 (5d8+5) |
| **Speed** | 30 ft. |
| **Skills** | Stealth +6, Survival +2 |
| **Senses** | Darkvision 60 Ft., passive Perception 10 |
| [**Languages**](https://dndguide.com/languages/) | Common, Goblin |
| **Challenge** | 1 (200 XP) |

|  |
| --- |
| **STR**15 (+2), **DEX** 14 (+2), **CON** 13 (+1), **INT** 8 (-1), **WIS** 11 (+0), **CHA** 9 (-1), |

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**D&D Bugbear Statistics**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Size** | Medium |
| **Type** | Humanoid |
| **Tag’s** | Goblinoid |
| **Alignment** | Chaotic evil |
| **Challenge Rating** | Bugbear, Bugbear chief |

**D&D Bugbear Appearance**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Average Height** | 6’10” – 7’2″ |
| **Average Weight** | 250 – 300 lbs |
| **Skin Color’s** | Yellow to reddish brown |
| **Hair Color’s** | Brown, red |
| **Eye Color’s** | Orange, Yellow, red, brown, greenish white |
| **Distinction’s** | Large, hairy, wedge-shaped ears, heightened sense of smell, tough hide, claws, strong but nimble |

**Bugbear 5e**is like a hairy [goblin](https://dndguide.com/races/Goblin) with 7 feet height. It is named after their noses and claws that are akin to those of the sloth bears. Since the claws are not long or sharp, they use the armors to fight against the opponents in the battlefield.

In addition, they also use purloined gear to deliver killer punch to the enemies. Gear is not in a good state; therefore, it is seldom used in the battle. Have a look at this [genasi 5e](https://dndguide.com/races/genasi) race as well.

**Physical description:**

According to experts, bugbear and goblins are descendants of [Hobgoblins](https://dndguide.com/races/Hobgoblin/) in the form of slave races. They serve as elite soldiers to save the kingdom.

**Psychology:**

The two most important attributes of behavior are dimwits and brutish. **Bugbear 5e**is a very short-tempered creature and can easily fly into rages. They are prone to fight at the slightest of provocations however certain bugbears are adamant to overcome the issue due to the rewards earned from the virtue.

In short, it is good to be calm while the anger incites evil and causes destruction. **D&D 5e bugbear**understands that the pleasures of ill tempers are short and would do more harm than good in the long run.

**Society:**

The creature enjoys the company of other goblinoids since the tribes made of [Goblins](https://dndguide.com/races/Goblin) and Bugbears are hated and [other races](https://dndguide.com/races/)try to wipe them out as quickly as possible. Some members of the **D&D 5e bugbear**race try to operate independently however the clans of the hobgoblins are not savages and more organized.

It is partially due to the reason that bugbears are vulnerable to low tempers and do not have to the patience to indulge in diplomacy.  They prefer to resolve the disputes through violent means and bloodshed however negotiations are possible if they are overpowered. Due to hardships of life, **D&D 5e bugbear**becomes a survivor and is prepared for the worst. In battles, they can be used as barbarians. You can get to know more about [d&d firbolg](https://dndguide.com/races/Firbolg) race.

**Religion:**

The creatures are blessed with their own pantheons headed by the great Hruggek, the god of Violence and combat. It has massive physical features with 12 feet height and humungous fangs. One of the most important attributes of the God is that it wields a 10 feet morning star. After the battle, he used to sever the heads of his opponents as souvenirs.

The morning star is an extremely potent [weapon](https://dndguide.com/weapons/) of the Gods as it resembles spiked club but with refinements. You would notice a head with 20 spikes protruding out of the surface. The weapon carries significant weight as it is not less than 20 kg. After the occurrence of the [**spell**](https://dndguide.com/casting-a-spell/)**plagues** the powers of the Hruggek is reduced significantly and now it serves to the God of Tyranny.

**Bugbear D&D Traits:**

**Brute:** It is a unique weapon designed to inflict one die of the damage when the bugbear strikes. The rating indicates the brute force of the character and the effectiveness of the weapon.

**Adaptability:**

The bugbears are adept in living across diverse conditions. For instance, the average life span is like the humans because, the creature can live for 75 years. Since the character is an excellent barbarian, it is primarily a carnivore humanoid.

One of the most favored climates for the creature is temperate climate. Cool showers and moderate temperature are ideal; conditions for the bugbears to settle down and enjoy the time. The favored terrain for the creature is underground because it wants to stay away from the dangers on the surface.

**Surprise Attack:**

The bugbear can spring a nasty surprise over the creature as it hits the target with a ferocious attack. During the first round of combat, the assault magnifies and can bring extra7 damage. It is the unique attribute of the bugbear and makes the creature one of the most effective warriors in the battle. Here we also wrote [d&d feral tiefling](https://dndguide.com/races/Tiefling) detailed guide.

**Venal ambushers:**

* The creatures are masters of stealth in spite of having a intimidating body. Bug bear is known to wage guerilla warfare with the opponents. It kills the enemies with vengeance but flees from the zone of conflict if overpowered. The survival instinct of the [race](https://dndguide.com/races) is extremely brilliant; therefore it is not easy to annihilate them from the material world.
* Bugbear is an excellent mercenary as it is not only reliable but also strongly committed towards the objectives. They are loyal of you provide them food, drink and treasure on a persistent basis however in case of life threats; the creatures could be the first ones to turn their back on you.
* A wounded bug bear is left to its own device by its companions. The same individual would help the opponents to track down his friends if spilling the beans could save his lives.

**Actions:**

**Morning Star:**

The weapon delivers 4 points on a single attack at a height of 5ft while piercing through the opponents can provide 11 points on a trot.

**Javelin:**

It is a ranged [weapon](https://dndguide.com/weapons) with ferocious attacking power. A 5 ft height can easily clock 4 points. The range of 30 ft makes the bugbear an absolute winner in any battle.

**Bugbear 5e Racial Traits:**

**Ability Score Increase**: Your strength score increases by 2 and also your dexterity score increases by 1.

**Languages**: You have knowledge to speak, read and to write the common and the goblin languages.

**Sneaky**: In the Stealth Skill you are a proficient.

**Speed**: 30 feet is your base walking speed.

**Age**: At the age of 16 the bugbears do reach the adulthood and they live up to 80 years.

**Long Limbed**: Whenever you make a melee attack on your turn there your reach for it is 5 feet greater than the normal.

**Darkvision**: Within 60 feet of you, you can see dim light as if it was bright light and, in the darkness, as like it was dim light. But you cannot discern the color in darkness, only shades of the gray.

**Powerful Build:**You can count as one size larger when it is determining your carrying the capacity and the weight which you can push, drag or lift.

**Surprise Attack**: If you surprise any creature and hit it with an attack on your first turn in the combat and the attack on your first turn in the combat and also the attack deals an extra 2d6 damage to it. Simply you can use this trait only once for the combat.

**Alignment**: These bugbears endures a harsh existence which demands each of them who have been remain self-sufficient and even at the expense of their fellows and they tend to be chaotic evil.

**Size**: From 6 to 8 feet tall the bugbears have their size and it weighs between 250 and 350 pounds. Of course, your size is medium

DnD 5e - The Bugbear Handbook

Last Updated: November 30th, 2018

Disclaimer

I will use the color-coding scheme which has become common among Pathfinder build handbooks, which is simple to understand and easy to read at a glance.

* Red: Bad, useless options, or options which are extremely situational.
* Orange: OK options, or useful options that only apply in rare circumstances
* Green: Good options.
* Blue: Fantastic options, often essential to the function of your character.

I will not include 3rd-party content, including content from DMs Guild, even if it is my own, because I can't assume that your game will allow 3rd-party content or homebrew. I also won't cover Unearthed Arcana content because it's not finalized, and I can't guarantee that it will be available to you in your games.

Introduction

Bugbears are all about offense. They're an ideal ambush predator, with good Strength and Dexterity, Stealth proficiency for free, and Surprise Attack which provides 2d6 extra damage if you can surprise an enemy. At low levels, 2d6 is a significant damage increase, possibly allowing you to kill weak enemies in a single blow and tip encounters in your favor from the outset.

However, the Bugbear's strengths also pigeon-hole it at a martial character. Nothing about the bugbear makes spellcasters appealing, so you're largely limited to martial classes.

Long Limbs has some complicated implications because it doesn't work like a reach weapon. Long Limbs gives the Bugbear reach on your turn, which means that you can use it offensively without getting into the complications of using reach defensively. If you use a reach weapon your reach is 15 ft. on your own turn, allowing you to exceed the reach of most creatures in the game. However, since you lose this reach between turns enemies may be able to freely move away from your without provoking opportunity attacks.

Classes

Barbarian

Dexterity might not seem like an obvious benefit for a barbarian, and it's not as good as Constitution, but the AC bonus is still helpful. Reach makes it easy to compete with larger creatures or attack smaller foes at a distance, and Sneaky allows you to be an ambush predator. Use Reckless Attack while attacking surprised foes to ensure that you hit with Surprise Attack.

Bard

Bugbears don't have anything which caters well to bards. You could get by as a Swords or Valor bard, but at that point you would do better playing a barbarian or a fighter.

Cleric

Without a Wisdom increase your spellcasting will lag, but if you're built to swing a weapon and consider spellcasting a secondary concern you can make the Bugbear work.

Druid

Without a Wisdom increase, the Bugbear will be bad at Druid spellcasting, and Wild Shape doesn't care about any of the Bugbear's physical advantages.

Fighter

With good physical ability scores and built-in reach, you have a lot of great options with the fighter. If you want to use a reach weapon to capitalize on Long Limbs, pick up Polearm Master and Sentinel to keep enemies perpetually outside of their own reach while still able to reach them comfortably with your pointy stick.

Monk

Reach is hard for monks to get but reach and a small Dexterity increase are the only things that the bugbear has to offer that specifically cater to the Monk. Surprise attack is a nice damage boost, especially at low levels, but it's no better for the Monk than for any other class.

Paladin

Strength and reach are great, but Dexterity and Stealth do very little for the Paladin.

Ranger

For a martial class limited to medium armor, the +1 Dexterity increase is probably enough to fill out your +2 Dexterity bonus to AC so you can focus on your Strength. Reach is nice, and you get Stealth proficiency for free, making it easier to keep up with other sneaky, skilled classes like the Rogue.

Rogue

The Strength increase is totally wasted on a rogue, but reach is hard for rogues to get, you get Stealth proficiency for free, and Surprise Attack stacks with Sneak Attack so you can deal 3d6+weapon damage at first level and one-shot many enemies.

Sorcerer

Without a Charisma increase, the Bugbear will always lag other sorcerers.

Warlock

Without a Charisma increase, the Bugbear will always lag other warlocks.

Wizard

Without an Intelligence increase, the Bugbear will always lag other wizards.

***Dungeons & Dragons* 4th edition (2008–2014)**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bugbear_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)&action=edit&section=8)]

The bugbear appears in the [*Monster Manual*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_Manual) for this edition (2008), under the **goblin** entry, including the **bugbear warrior** and the **bugbear strangler**.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bugbear_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)#cite_note-17) The first recorded death of a player character in 4th edition was against a Bugbear Strangler during the D&D XP Convention in February 2008.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bugbear_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)#cite_note-18) Wizards of the Coast's online character builder also includes rules for creating a bugbear as a player character, although it notes that most of the rule material is still in the monster manual instead of the player races section of the base book.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

***Dungeons & Dragons* 5th edition (2014–)**

The bugbear appears in the [*Monster Manual*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_Manual) for this edition alongside the more powerful **bugbear chief** (2014).[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bugbear_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)#cite_note-19) The bugbear was released as a monstrous playable race in [*Volo's Guide to Monsters*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volo%27s_Guide_to_Monsters) (2016) which also goes into more detail about bugbear society and their relationship with other goblinoids.

Ecology[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bugbear_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)&action=edit&section=10)]

Bugbears live a life based around survival, often becoming rogues. Bugbears also make excellent barbarians. They tend to be sound military tacticians, and individuals can be highly intelligent. Bugbears are less fertile than other goblinoids, however, and have a smaller population. They have to compete with races their smaller cousins don't, such as [giants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)) and giant-kin.

Individual bugbears will sometimes work as mercenaries with other sorts of goblin-kin, acting as front-line muscle or even assuming leadership positions in [hobgoblin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobgoblin_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)) tribes. They assume mastery over goblins whenever it suits them. Goblins are always quick on their toes when bugbears are around, for the unwary are liable to end up in a bugbear stewpot.

Bugbears are carnivores who survive primarily by hunting. They will eat anything they can kill, including sentient beings. Intruders are considered a valuable source of food, so bugbears rarely bother to negotiate with them. They have a fondness for glittery, shiny objects and weapons, however, so they will sometimes parley if they think they can get something exceptional. Bugbears also enjoy strong wine and ale, sometimes to excess. Rarely, they will take slaves.

Unlike their smaller cousins, bugbears operate equally well in daylight and great darkness. A bugbear is considered mature by the age of 11. They live for approximately 75 years.

**Typical physical characteristics**

Bugbears resemble hairy, feral goblins standing seven feet tall. They take their name from their noses and claws, which are like those of bears. Bugbears often armor and arm themselves with a variety of gear purloined from fallen enemies. Most often, this gear is second-rate and in poor repair.

Bugbear eyes are greenish white with red pupils, and their wedge-shaped ears rise from the tops of their heads. Most bugbears have hides ranging from light yellow to yellow brown and their thick, coarse hair ranges from brown to brick red. The bugbears of the Land of Black Ice are known to have blue fur.

Bugbears have exceptional senses of smell, sight and hearing, able to see in pitch darkness. They move with amazing stealth.

**Alignment**

Bugbears are usually chaotic evil.

Society

Bugbears live in loose bands. Bands of 24 or more will be led by a chief and a sub-chief. Females are not given the same opportunities as males. Bugbears are less preoccupied with mass battles than most goblinoids, partially because they can't as easily afford the losses, and partially because their chaotic nature makes organizing them in armies difficult.

**Religion**

Bugbears have their own [pantheon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bugbear_pantheon), led by [Hruggek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hruggek" \o "Hruggek). Other members of the bugbear pantheon include [Grankhul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grankhul" \o "Grankhul) and [Skiggaret](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skiggaret" \o "Skiggaret). Other entities worshiped by bugbears include [Erythnul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erythnul" \o "Erythnul), [Geryon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geryon_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)), [Iuz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iuz" \o "Iuz), and [Meriadar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meriadar" \o "Meriadar) often receives the worship of those bugbears who have forsaken evil. The bugbear gods are martial, but more diverse than those of the goblins and [orcs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orc_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)). Local bugbear pantheons also have minor deities of fertility, earth, and death; sometimes, the bugbears treat the demigod [Stalker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalker_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)) as their darkness/death god. Many bugbears of a more orderly bent serve [Baalzebul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baalzebul_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)" \o "Baalzebul (Dungeons & Dragons)).

Bugbear priests and shamans tend to be more inventive in both their magic use and their myths than most goblinoids, as befits their chaotic nature (in the flexible/creative sense) and higher intelligence. Even so, their creator god Hruggek sits in a cave in [Pandemonium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandemonium_(Dungeons_%26_Dragons)) surrounded by severed heads, so there's little question of the fundamental bugbear attitude. Bugbears tend to be more subtle than other goblinoids, however. They are always watchful for omens from the gods, particularly in the form of lightning or violent weather changes. They seek to stay on the good side of Skiggaret, their god of fear, who sends omens in the form of sudden chills, the rising of hackles, and magical pools of darkness.

**Language**

Bugbears speak the Goblin tongue. As spoken by bugbears, it is a foul-sounding mix of grunts, snarls, and gestures that causes many outsiders to underestimate their intelligence