

MIGHTY MONSTER MAKER

WHAT'S IN A NAME? THE BOOK NAME IS FOR THE DM. THE LORE NAME IS WHAT LOCALS CALL IT. PRO TIP: USE THE LORE NAME TO MISDIRECT PLAYER EXPECTATIONS.



BOOK NAME

LORE NAME

CATEGORY



ABBERATION
INEXPLICABLE ALIEN CREATURES



BEAST
ANIMALS GREAT & SMALL



CONSTRUCT
ANIMATED MATERIALS OR DEVICES



DRAGON
HIGHLY INTELLIGENT REPTILIAN BEING



ELEMENTAL
ASPECT OF A FORCE OF NATURE



FEY
UNIQUE CREATURE OF THE FEYWILD



GIANT FOLK
SUPER-SIZED HUMANOID



HUMANOID
ALL KINDS OF INTERESTING PEOPLE



INTERPLANAR
CELESTIALS, FIENDS & BEYOND



MONSTROSITY
TERRIFYING BEAST-LIKE CREATURES



OOZE
SENTIENT GELATINOUS LIFE-FORMS



PLANT / FUNGI
SENTIENT UNNATURAL GROWTHS



UNDEAD
FROM BEYOND THE SHROUD OF DEATH

HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Generally speaking, every creature has needs. A creature without any needs has no motivation, and that's boring. So maybe it doesn't breath, does it need to be protected while it sleeps? Maybe it needs connection and prestige? Get inside it's skin & it's mind.

PHYSICAL CONSIDER FOOD & WATER SOURCES, SLEEP, SHELTER, AIR. IF IT NEEDS TO COLLECT SOULS, HOW DOES IT PROCURE THEM?



SAFETY WHERE DOES THIS CREATURE SLEEP? DOES IT HAVE A LAIR? WHEN FOUND HOW DOES IT ESCAPE? ARE THERE OBJECTS IT PROTECTS?



COMMUNITY NOT EVERY MONSTER IS AN ISLAND... PACKS, HIVES, COMPLEX SOCIAL STRATA, FAMILIES, BLOODLINES & THRALLS.



PRESTIGE MANY BEASTS VIE FOR PACK SUPREMACY. HUMANOID & GIANT FOLK EMPLOY POLITICS. MANY DRAGONS SEEK DOMINION.



CREATIVE BUILDING CAN BE INTRINSIC, LIKE BEES. FEY ARE AESTHETIC. THE PYRAMIDS EXIST AS PROOF THAT RULERS LOVE LEGACY.

SENSORY OVERLOAD

In the original 1930's stories of Conan the Cimmerian, the monsters are described as if their unnatural form was almost incomprehensible. What would characters feel, hear, smell, taste & finally see? A new monster is a shock to the senses! And, play against expectations.



SIZE



GARGANTUAN



HUGE



LARGE



MEDIUM



SMALL



TINY

ALIGNMENT



LAWFUL



GOOD



NEUTRAL



NEUTRAL



CHAOTIC



EVIL

NICKNAME

MONSTER MAKER



WELCOME TO MY LAIR

For what environment is this creature most suited? How does its lair smell? How was it constructed? Where is it situated in relation to resources and habitations, and why? If it's nomadic, where & why does it roam? Does your monster have special powers when it's in its lair?

PETS WHAT CREATURES DOES THIS MONSTER RIDE, LOVE OR ENSLAVE?

FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

Playing against expectations in unexpected ways drives player engagement. Maybe your ooze wears a trench coat and "walks" the dungeon? Maybe your ghoul vomits up swarms of annoying flies? Maybe your beholder is "planted" in the soil, and each of its stalks has a flower?

MINIONS WHO ADVISES, FOLLOWS, AND FIGHTS FOR THIS MONSTER?

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ORIGIN STORY

How did this monster come to be? Does it have a family? Was it created or re-animated by in a lab some nefarious villain? Maybe it was summoned from beyond through an ancient rite or ritual?

LOCAL LORE

What are locals saying about this monster? Are they any eye witnesses? What have folks heard or smelled? Have cattle been killed? Are there creepy noises at night? Does the water taste funny?

CLUES & HINTS PLAYERS CAN BE PRETTY DENSE. YOU OFTEN NEED TO HIT THEM OVER THE HEAD WITH INFORMATION. PRO TIP: IT CAN BE FUN TO ALSO PROVIDE MISDIRECTION, BUT MAKE SURE YOU ARE NOT LEADING THEM INTO A DEAD END.

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NICKNAME

MONSTER MAKER



STR OFF: MELEE ATTACKS DEF: UNGRAPPLE

- 1-8 **Weakling:** Avoids melee, more likely to flee. Very susceptible to being grappled & captured.
- 9-13 **Average:** Will rely on other abilities first, knows that stronger creatures pose a threat up close.
- 14+ **Brute:** Not afraid to get up close and personal. Capable of grappling & shoving average foes.

DEX OFF: RANGED ATTACKS DEF: ARMOR CLASS, SAVING THROWS, UNGRAPPLE

- 1-8 **Easy Target:** Easy to hit, terrible aim & not very stealthy. Will rely on brute strength or magic.
- 9-13 **Average:** Will rely on other abilities first, decent aim and agility. Tentative about using surprise.
- 14+ **Lightfoot:** Harder to hit, prefers ranged attacks. When up close, will prefer to hide & ambush.

CON OFF: N/A DEF: HIT POINTS, SAVING THROWS

- 1-8 **Lightweight:** Probably has an innate sense that it's fragile. Will prioritize defense & cover.
- 9-13 **Average:** Healthy fear of taking damage, but not a coward. Unlikely to take unnecessary risks.
- 14+ **Roughneck:** Not afraid to take some damage, resists endurance attacks quite well. (ex: Poison)

INT OFF: COMBAT STRATEGY, SPELLCASTING DEF: SAVING THROWS

- 1-7 **Instinctual:** Uses natural advantages effectively, but can't adjust its tactics on the fly.
- 8-11 **Adaptable:** Applies limited strategy, but can assess and adjust to threats on the fly.
- 12-13 **Coordinated:** Plans & coordinates with others. Has several strategies, adjusts to adapt.
- 14-18 **Proficient:** Able to assess enemy weaknesses and improvise strategies on the fly.
- 19+ **Superhuman:** Able to detect hidden weaknesses. Can mimic or meet enemy tactics.

WIS OFF: TARGETING, SPELLCASTING DEF: SURVIVAL INSTINCT, SAVING THROWS

- 1-7 **Ignorant:** Chooses targets by proximity. May fail to flee in time: underdeveloped survival instinct.
- 8-11 **Blunt:** Can make rudimentary target & threat assessments. Understands when to retreat.
- 12-13 **Aware:** Chooses targets strategically. Likely to attempt to parlay rather than simply withdraw.
- 14-18 **Wise:** Avoids fights where victory is in question. Likely to bluff, bargain or bully before retreating.
- 19+ **Superhuman:** Rarely fights. Always has several escape plans. Never caught flat-footed.

CHA OFF: SPELLCASTING DEF: PARLAY, SAVING THROWS

- 1-7 **Crude:** Poor social skills. Subject to tantrums and emotional outbursts. Easily fooled & conned.
- 8-11 **Affable:** Reasonable self-control and will power. Can detect obvious lies & deception.
- 12-13 **Disarming:** Quick witted and streetwise. Fast friends at the tavern, and tough to deceive.
- 14-18 **Shrewd:** Can sell ice to an eskimo. Knows how to lie effectively. Strong willed & persuasive.
- 19+ **Superhuman:** Charming almost to magical proportions. An iron will with a silver tongue.

PARSING ABILITIES MONSTERS PLAY TO THEIR STRENGTHS & AVOID THEIR WEAKNESSES:

STR CON Rushes in to melee, not afraid to take damage.

STR DEX Ambush predator, counts on a fast win.

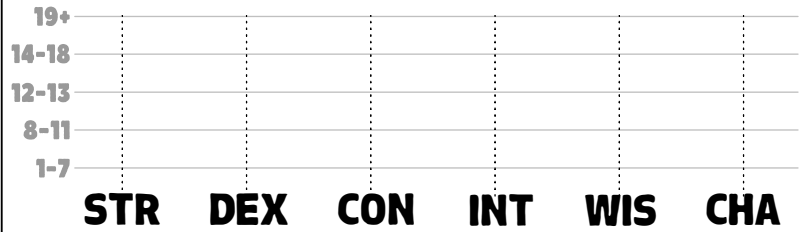
DEX CON Hard to hit with lots of endurance. Willing to fight a battle of attrition.

For a deeper understanding of these concepts, pick up *The Monsters Know What They're Doing* by Keith Ammann.

COMBAT TACTICS

Before you dig into making a stat block, consider this monster's fighting style from a more wholistic perspective. Remember the story you're telling about this monster, and use these tools to build a believable tactical profile.

ABILITY CONTOUR PLOT THIS MONSTER'S ABILITY SCORES ON THE GRAPH BELOW. IDENTIFY PRIMARY OFFENSE & DEFENSE ABILITIES ON THE TABLES TO THE LEFT.



FIGHTING STYLE USING THE ABILITY CONTOUR & THE REFERENCE ON THE LEFT SUMMARIZE THIS CREATURES FIGHTING STYLE IN A FEW, QUICK SENTENCES.

ICONIC POWERS

Compelling monsters have an iconic ability that defines them, one or more abilities that enhance or augment it, and an armed or unarmed melee attack. This is a brainstorm, not a stat block. Consider the unexpected & play against expectations.

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HIDDEN ASSETS

Unique creatures have hidden talents & traits. Given the opportunity, they will shape the environment and the situation to leverage these strengths. Consider special senses, proficiencies, resistances, immunities and defensive magical abilities.

MORALE & FLAWS

Assess this creature's instincts, training & motivation. Consider the strength of its survival instinct. What does it fear? Does it have any sensitivities or an Achilles heel? Under what conditions will it withdraw, parlay or surrender?



HP Left Perceived Injuries

90% Light

70% Moderate

40% Severe

20% Critical

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