

The NPC Features table summarizes the ability modifiers and features of various nonhuman races, as well as various creatures from the *Monster Manual* with a challenge rating lower than 1. Apply these modifiers and add these features to the NPC's stat block, then determine the NPC's challenge rating just as you would for a monster. Features that can affect a monster's challenge rating are listed in the Monster Features table. The NPC's proficiency bonus is determined by its level, just like a character, rather than by its challenge rating.

If the monster you want to use isn't listed on the table, use the process described below under "Monsters with Classes."

MONSTERS WITH CLASSES

You can use the rules in chapter 3 of the *Player's Handbook* to give class levels to a monster. For example, you can turn an ordinary werewolf into a werewolf with four levels of the barbarian class (such a monster would be expressed as "Werewolf, 4th-level barbarian").

Start with the monster's stat block. The monster gains all the class features for every class level you add, with the following exceptions:

- The monster doesn't gain the starting equipment of the added class.
- For each class level you add, the monster gains one Hit Die of its normal type (based on its size), ignoring the class's Hit Die progression.
- The monster's proficiency bonus is based on its challenge rating, not its class levels.

Once you finish adding class levels to a monster, feel free to tweak its ability scores as you see fit (for example, raising the monster's Intelligence score so that the monster is a more effective wizard), and make whatever other adjustments are needed. You'll need to recalculate its challenge rating as though you had designed the monster from scratch.

Depending on the monster and the number of class levels you add to it, its challenge rating might change very little or increase dramatically. For example, a werewolf that gains four barbarian levels is a much greater threat than it was before. In contrast, the hit points, spells, and other class features that an ancient red dragon gains from five levels of wizard don't increase its challenge rating.

CREATING A SPELL

When creating a new spell, use existing spells as guidelines. Here are some things to consider:

- If a spell is so good that a caster would want to use it all the time, it might be too powerful for its level.
- A long duration or large area can make up for a lesser effect, depending on the spell.
- Avoid spells that have very limited use, such as one that works only against good dragons. Though such a spell could exist in the world, few characters will bother to learn or prepare it unless they know in advance that doing so will be worthwhile.
- Make sure the spell fits with the identity of the class. Wizards and sorcerers don't typically have access to



healing spells, for example, and adding a healing spell to the wizard class list would step on the cleric's turf.

SPELL DAMAGE

For any spell that deals damage, use the Spell Damage table to determine approximately how much damage is appropriate given the spell's level. The table assumes the spell deals half damage on a successful saving throw or a missed attack. If your spell doesn't deal damage on a successful save, you can increase the damage by 25 percent.

You can use different damage dice than the ones in the table, provided that the average result is about the same. Doing so can add a little variety to the spell. For example, you could change a cantrip's damage from 1d10 (average 5.5) to 2d4 (average 5), reducing the maximum damage and making an average result more likely.



SPELL DAMAGE

Spell Level	One Target	Multiple Targets
Cantrip	1d10	1d6
1st	2d10	2d6
2nd	3d10	4d6
3rd	5d10	6d6
4th	6d10	7d6
5th	8d10	8d6
6th	10d10	11d6
7th	11d10	12d6
8th	12d10	13d6
9th	15d10	14d6

HEALING SPELLS

You can also use the Spell Damage table to determine how many hit points a healing spell restores. A cantrip shouldn't offer healing.

CREATING A MAGIC ITEM

The magic items in chapter 7, "Treasure," are but a few of the magic treasures that characters can discover during their adventures. If your players are seasoned veterans and you want to surprise them, you can either modify an existing item or come up with something new.

MODIFYING AN ITEM

The easiest way to invent a new item is to tweak an existing one. If a paladin uses a flail as her main weapon, you could change a *holy avenger* so that it's a flail instead of a sword. You can turn a *ring of the ram* into a wand, or a *cloak of protection* into a *circlet of protection*, all without altering the item's properties.

Other substitutions are equally easy. An item that deals damage of one type can easily deal damage of another type. A *flame tongue* sword could deal lightning damage instead of fire, for example. One capability can replace another, so a *potion of climbing* can easily become a *potion of stealth*.

You can also modify an item by fusing it with properties from another item. For example, you could combine the effects of a *helm of comprehending languages* with those of a *helm of telepathy* into a single helmet. This makes the item more powerful (and probably increases its rarity), but it won't break your game.

Finally, remember the tools that are provided for modifying items in chapter 7, "Treasure." Giving an item an interesting minor property, a quirk, or sentience can alter its flavor significantly.

CREATING A NEW ITEM

If modifying an item doesn't quite do the trick, you can create one from scratch. A magic item should either let a character do something he or she couldn't do before, or improve the character's ability to do something he or she can do already. For example, the *ring of jumping* lets its wearer jump greater distances, thus augmenting what a character can already do. A *ring of the ram*, however, gives a character the ability to deal force damage.

The simpler your approach, the easier it is for a character to use the item in play. Giving the item charges is fine, especially if it has several different abilities, but simply deciding that an item is always active or can be used a fixed number of times per day is easier to manage.

POWER LEVEL

If you make an item that lets a character kill whatever he or she hits with it, that item will likely unbalance your game. On the other hand, an item whose benefit rarely comes into play isn't much of a reward and probably not worth doling out as one.

Use the Magic Item Power by Rarity table as a guide to help you determine how powerful an item should be, based on its rarity.

MAGIC ITEM POWER BY RARITY

Rarity	Max Spell Level	Max Bonus
Common	1st	—
Uncommon	3rd	+1
Rare	6th	+2
Very rare	8th	+3
Legendary	9th	+4

Maximum Spell Level. This column of the table indicates the highest-level spell effect the item should confer, in the form of a once-per-day or similarly limited property. For example, a common item might confer the benefit of a 1st-level spell once per day (or just once, if it's consumable). A rare, very rare, or legendary item might allow its possessor to cast a lower-level spell more frequently.

Maximum Bonus. If an item delivers a static bonus to AC, attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks, this column suggests an appropriate bonus based on the item's rarity.

ATTUNEMENT

Decide whether the item requires a character to be attuned to it to use its properties. Use these rules of thumb to help you decide:

- If having all the characters in a party pass an item around to gain its lasting benefits would be disruptive, the item should require attunement.
- If the item grants a bonus that other items also grant, it's a good idea to require attunement so that characters don't try to collect too many of those items.

CREATING NEW CHARACTER OPTIONS

If the options for player characters in the *Player's Handbook* don't meet all the needs of your campaign, consult the following sections for advice on creating new race, class, and background options.

CREATING A RACE OR SUBRACE

This section teaches you how to modify existing races, as well as create new ones. The most important step in customizing or designing races for your campaign is

to start with the story behind the race or subrace you wish to create. Having a firm idea of a race's story in your campaign will help you make decisions during the creation process. Ask yourself several questions:

- Why does my campaign need the race to be playable?
- What does the race look like?
- How would I describe the race's culture?
- Where do the members of this race live?
- Are there interesting conflicts built into the race's history and culture that make the race compelling from a storytelling standpoint?
- What is the race's relationship to the other playable races?
- What classes and backgrounds are well suited to members of the race?
- What are the race's signature traits?
- In the case of a new subrace, what sets it apart from the other subraces of the parent race?

Compare the race you have in mind with the other race options available to players, to make sure that the new race doesn't pale in comparison to the existing options (which would result in the race being unpopular) or completely overshadow them (so that players don't feel as if the other options are inferior).

When the time comes to design the game elements of the race, such as its traits, take a look at the game's existing races and let them inspire you.

COSMETIC ALTERATIONS

A simple way to modify an existing race is to change its appearance. Changes to a race's appearance need not affect its game elements. For example, you could transform halflings into anthropomorphic mice without changing their racial traits at all.

CULTURAL ALTERATIONS

In your world, elves might be desert nomads instead of forest dwellers, halflings might live in cloud cities, and dwarves might be sailors instead of miners. When you change the culture of a race, you can also make minor alterations to the race's proficiencies and traits to reflect that culture.

For example, imagine that the dwarves of your world are seafarers and inventors of gunpowder. You could add the pistol and musket to the list of weapons that dwarves are proficient with, and give them proficiency with waterborne vehicles instead of artisan's tools. These two small changes tell a different story than the default assumptions about dwarves in the *Player's Handbook*, without changing the power level of the race.

CREATING A NEW SUBRACE

Creating a new subrace is more involved than making some minor tweaks to existing racial features, but it does have the advantage of increasing the diversity of options for a particular race, rather than replacing some options with other ones.

The following example walks through the creation of an elf subrace: the eladrin. This subrace has history in the D&D multiverse, so you already have some stories to draw on when building its traits.