

INTRODUCTION

This bestiary is for storytellers and world-builders. If you have ever thought about running a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game for your friends, either a single night's adventure or a long-running campaign, this tome contains page after page of inspiration. It's your one-stop shop for creatures both malevolent and benign.

Some of the creatures that inhabit the worlds of D&D have origins rooted in real-world mythology and fantasy literature. Other creatures are D&D originals. The monsters in this book have been culled from all previous editions of the game. Herein you'll discover classic critters such as the beholder and the displacer beast next to more recent creations such as the chuul and the twig blight. Common beasts mingle with the weird, the terrifying, and the ridiculous. In collecting monsters from the past, we've endeavored to reflect the multifaceted nature of the game, warts and all. D&D monsters come in all shapes and sizes, with stories that not only thrill us but also make us smile.

If you're an experienced Dungeon Master (DM), a few of the monster write-ups might surprise you, for we've gone into the *Monster Manuals* of yore and discovered some long-lost factoids. We've also added a few new twists. Naturally, you can do with these monsters what you will. Nothing we say here is intended to curtail your creativity. If the minotaurs in your world are shipbuilders and pirates, who are we to argue with you? It's your world, after all.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The best thing about being a DM is that you get to invent your own fantasy world and bring it to life, and nothing brings a D&D world to life more than the creatures that inhabit it. You might read a monster's entry and be spurred to create an adventure revolving around it, or you might have an awesome idea for a dungeon and need just the right monsters to populate it. That's where the *Monster Manual* comes in handy.

The *Monster Manual* is one of three books that form the foundation of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, the other two being the *Player's Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The *Monster Manual*, like the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, is a book for DMs. Use it to populate your D&D adventures with pesky goblins, stinky troglodytes, savage orcs, mighty dragons, and a veritable horde of creepy crawlies.

Guidelines for creating encounters with monsters can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. That book also contains wandering monster tables and other goodies to help you use the monsters in this book in interesting ways, as well as advice for modifying monsters and creating your own.

If you've never run a D&D adventure before, we recommend that you pick up the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS *Starter Set*, which demonstrates how to take a bunch of monsters and build an exciting adventure around them.

WHAT IS A MONSTER?

A monster is defined as any creature that can be interacted with and potentially fought and killed. Even something as harmless as a frog or as benevolent as a unicorn is a monster by this definition. The term also applies to humans, elves, dwarves, and other civilized folk who might be friends or rivals to the player characters. Most of the monsters that haunt the D&D world, however, are threats that are meant to be stopped: rampaging demons, conniving devils, soul-sucking undead, summoned elementals—the list goes on.

This book contains ready-to-play, easy-to-run monsters of all levels, and for nearly every climate and terrain imaginable. Whether your adventure takes place in a swamp, a dungeon, or the outer planes of existence, there are creatures in this book to populate that environment.

WHERE DO MONSTERS DWELL?

If you are new to the D&D game, you might not be familiar with the weird and wondrous places where monsters can be found and fought.

DUNGEONS

When most people think of a dungeon, images of dark cells with iron bars and shackles spring to mind. In the D&D game, the word "dungeon" takes on a broader meaning to include any enclosed, monster-infested location. Most dungeons are sprawling underground complexes. Here are a few other examples:

- A ruined wizard's tower atop a lonely hill riddled with goblin-infested tunnels
- A pharaoh's pyramid filled with haunted crypts and secret treasure vaults
- A lost city in the jungle, overgrown with vines and overrun with demons and demon-worshipping cultists
- The icy tomb of a frost giant king
- A filthy, labyrinthine sewer system controlled by a gang of wererats

THE UNDERDARK

There is no greater dungeon than the Underdark, the underworld beneath the surface world. It is a vast subterranean realm where monsters accustomed to darkness dwell. It is a place filled with lightless caverns connected by tunnels that wind ever downward. One could spend a lifetime (however brief!) exploring the Underdark and find such places as the following:

- A mind flayer prison or asylum, filled with mindless thralls and raving lunatics
- A lost dwarven necropolis containing row after row of dusty tombs waiting to be plundered
- A fortified outpost bristling with armaments, guarding the way to a magnificent drow city
- A subterranean rift filled with giant fungi and ruled by a megalomaniacal beholder or mad fomorian king
- A chain of rocky islands on a vast, sunless sea that's home to aboleths and insane kuo-toa

THE WILDERNESS

Not all monsters lurk underground. Many of them inhabit deserts, mountains, swamps, canyons, forests, and other natural settings. The wilderness can be just as dangerous as any dungeon, particularly when there's nowhere to hide! Some wilderness locations are just as memorable as any dungeon:

- A roc's nest made of shattered ship hulls, built atop a lonely mountain or rocky hill
- A vast arctic tundra that serves as a hunting ground for berserkers and yeti
- A primeval forest protected by treants or corrupted by demon-worshipping gnolls
- A fog-shrouded swamp haunted by lizardfolk that worship a vile black dragon
- A jungle island inhabited by dinosaurs and human tribal warriors

TOWNS AND CITIES

Some of the best adventures unfold in the cradles of civilization. Urban settings afford adventurers the chance to rub shoulders with the rich and powerful, butt heads with the dregs of society, and peel back the veneer of civility to see the monstrous evil lurking beneath. Within a medieval town or city are places as deadly as any dungeon:

- A clock tower that serves as a base for a guild of kenku rogues and assassins
- A slavers' den hidden in an orphanage run by a rakshasa disguised as the headmaster
- A wizard's academy rife with corruption and practitioners of the necromantic arts
- A noble's manor where rich, devil-worshipping cultists gather to perform sacrifices
- A temple, vault, or museum watched day and night by animated constructs

UNDERWATER

Not all adventures take place on land. This book casts light on several creatures that haunt the oceans of the world, from the devilish sahuagin to the peaceful aquatic elves who loathe them. Within this aquatic domain are many surprising adventure locations:

- A graveyard of sunken ships haunted by sharks, aquatic ghouls, and angry ghosts
- A storm giant's coral castle, beautiful yet foreboding
- A lost city on the sea floor, encased in a magic bubble of air and ruled by a medusa queen
- A kraken's cave or bronze dragon's cavernous lair, filled with ancient treasures
- A sunken temple of Sekolah, evil god of the sahuagin

THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE

The Abyss. The Nine Hells. The City of Brass. Such faraway places beckon high-level adventurers to their doorsteps, defying the brave and the foolhardy to overthrow their evil masters and unlock their hidden mysteries. Many powerful, weird creatures live on other



planes of existence, from orderly modrons to murderous demons. When it comes to interesting adventure locations, not even the sky is the limit when you pass beyond the boundaries of the world:

- A pit fiend's stronghold on Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells
- A haunted castle in the Shadowfell that serves as a shadow dragon's lair
- An elf queen's tomb in the Feywild
- A djinni's palace on the Elemental Plane of Air, filled with marvelous stolen treasures
- A lich's secret demiplane, where the undead archmage hides its phylactery and spellbook

See the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on the planes of existence.

WHAT MONSTERS TO USE?

Many monsters inhabit dungeons, while others live in deserts, forests, labyrinths, and other environments. Regardless of which environment a monster traditionally calls home, you can place it anywhere you want. After all, "fish out of water" stories are memorable, and sometimes it's fun to surprise players with gricks hiding under the desert sands or a dryad living in a giant mushroom in the Underdark.

STATISTICS

A monster's statistics, sometimes referred to as its **stat block**, provide the essential information that you need to run the monster.

SIZE

A monster can be Tiny, Small, Medium, Large, Huge, or Gargantuan. The Size Categories table shows how much space a creature of a particular size controls in combat. See the *Player's Handbook* for more information on creature size and space.

SIZE CATEGORIES

Size	Space	Examples
Tiny	2½ by 2½ ft.	Imp, sprite
Small	5 by 5 ft.	Giant rat, goblin
Medium	5 by 5 ft.	Orc, werewolf
Large	10 by 10 ft.	Hippogriff, ogre
Huge	15 by 15 ft.	Fire giant, treant
Gargantuan	20 by 20 ft. or larger	Kraken, purple worm

MODIFYING CREATURES

Despite the versatile collection of monsters in this book, you might be at a loss when it comes to finding the perfect creature for part of an adventure. Feel free to tweak an existing creature to make it into something more useful for you, perhaps by borrowing a trait or two from a different monster or by using a **variant** or **template**, such as the ones in this book. Keep in mind that modifying a monster, including when you apply a template to it, might change its challenge rating.

For advice on how to customize creatures and calculate their challenge ratings, see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

TYPE

A monster's type speaks to its fundamental nature. Certain spells, magic items, class features, and other effects in the game interact in special ways with creatures of a particular type. For example, an *arrow of dragon slaying* deals extra damage not only to dragons but also other creatures of the dragon type, such as dragon turtles and wyverns.

The game includes the following monster types, which have no rules of their own.

Aberrations are utterly alien beings. Many of them have innate magical abilities drawn from the creature's alien mind rather than the mystical forces of the world. The quintessential aberrations are aboleths, beholders, mind flayers, and slaadi.

Beasts are nonhumanoid creatures that are a natural part of the fantasy ecology. Some of them have magical powers, but most are unintelligent and lack any society or language. Beasts include all varieties of ordinary animals, dinosaurs, and giant versions of animals.

Celestials are creatures native to the Upper Planes. Many of them are the servants of deities, employed as messengers or agents in the mortal realm and throughout the planes. Celestials are good by nature, so the exceptional celestial who strays from a good alignment is a horrifying rarity. Celestials include angels, couatls, and pegasi.

Constructs are made, not born. Some are programmed by their creators to follow a simple set of instructions, while others are imbued with sentience and capable of independent thought. Golems are the iconic constructs. Many creatures native to the outer plane of Mechanus, such as modrons, are constructs shaped from the raw material of the plane by the will of more powerful creatures.

Dragons are large reptilian creatures of ancient origin and tremendous power. True dragons, including the good metallic dragons and the evil chromatic dragons, are highly intelligent and have innate magic. Also in this category are creatures distantly related to true dragons, but less powerful, less intelligent, and less magical, such as wyverns and pseudodragons.

Elementals are creatures native to the elemental planes. Some creatures of this type are little more than animate masses of their respective elements, including the creatures simply called elementals. Others have biological forms infused with elemental energy. The races of genies, including djinn and efreet, form the most important civilizations on the elemental planes. Other elemental creatures include azers, invisible stalkers, and water weirds.

Fey are magical creatures closely tied to the forces of nature. They dwell in twilight groves and misty forests. In some worlds, they are closely tied to the Feywild, also called the Plane of Faerie. Some are also found in the Outer Planes, particularly the planes of Arborea and the Beastlands. Fey include dryads, pixies, and satyrs.

Fiends are creatures of wickedness that are native to the Lower Planes. A few are the servants of deities, but many more labor under the leadership of archdevils and demon princes. Evil priests and mages sometimes

summon fiends to the material world to do their bidding. If an evil celestial is a rarity, a good fiend is almost inconceivable. Fiends include demons, devils, hell hounds, rakshasas, and yugoloths.

Giants tower over humans and their kind. They are humanlike in shape, though some have multiple heads (ettins) or deformities (fomorians). The six varieties of true giant are hill giants, stone giants, frost giants, fire giants, cloud giants, and storm giants. Besides these, creatures such as ogres and trolls are giants.

Humanoids are the main peoples of the D&D world, both civilized and savage, including humans and a tremendous variety of other species. They have language and culture, few if any innate magical abilities (though most humanoids can learn spellcasting), and a bipedal form. The most common humanoid races are the ones most suitable as player characters: humans, dwarves, elves, and halflings. Almost as numerous but far more savage and brutal, and almost uniformly evil, are the races of goblinoids (goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears), orcs, gnolls, lizardfolk, and kobolds.

A variety of humanoids appear throughout this book, but the races detailed in the *Player's Handbook*—with the exception of drow—are dealt with in appendix B. That appendix gives you a number of stat blocks that you can use to make various members of those races.

Monstrosities are monsters in the strictest sense—frightening creatures that are not ordinary, not truly natural, and almost never benign. Some are the results of magical experimentation gone awry (such as owlbears), and others are the product of terrible curses (including minotaurs and yuan-ti). They defy categorization, and in some sense serve as a catch-all category for creatures that don't fit into any other type.

Oozes are gelatinous creatures that rarely have a fixed shape. They are mostly subterranean, dwelling in caves and dungeons and feeding on refuse, carrion, or creatures unlucky enough to get in their way. Black puddings and gelatinous cubes are among the most recognizable oozes.

Plants in this context are vegetable creatures, not ordinary flora. Most of them are ambulatory, and some are carnivorous. The quintessential plants are the shambling mound and the treant. Fungal creatures such as the gas spore and the myconid also fall into this category.

Undead are once-living creatures brought to a horrifying state of undeath through the practice of necromantic magic or some unholy curse. Undead include walking corpses, such as vampires and zombies, as well as bodiless spirits, such as ghosts and specters.

TAGS

A monster might have one or more tags appended to its type, in parentheses. For example, an orc has the *humanoid (orc)* type. The parenthetical tags provide additional categorization for certain creatures. The tags have no rules of their own, but something in the game, such as a magic item, might refer to them. For instance, a spear that is especially effective at fighting demons would work against any monster that has the demon tag.

ALIGNMENT

A monster's alignment provides a clue to its disposition and how it behaves in a roleplaying or combat situation. For example, a chaotic evil monster might be difficult to reason with and might attack characters on sight, whereas a neutral monster might be willing to negotiate. See the *Player's Handbook* for descriptions of the different alignments.

The alignment specified in a monster's stat block is the default. Feel free to depart from it and change a monster's alignment to suit the needs of your campaign. If you want a good-aligned green dragon or an evil storm giant, there's nothing stopping you.

Some creatures can have **any alignment**. In other words, you choose the monster's alignment. Some monster's alignment entry indicates a tendency or aversion toward law, chaos, good, or evil. For example, a berserker can be any chaotic alignment (chaotic good, chaotic neutral, or chaotic evil), as befits its wild nature.

Many creatures of low intelligence have no comprehension of law or chaos, good or evil. They don't make moral or ethical choices, but rather act on instinct. These creatures are **unaligned**, which means they don't have an alignment.

ARMOR CLASS

A monster that wears armor or carries a shield has an Armor Class (AC) that takes its armor, shield, and Dexterity into account. Otherwise, a monster's AC is based on its Dexterity modifier and natural armor, if any. If a monster has natural armor, wears armor, or carries a shield, this is noted in parentheses after its AC value.

HIT POINTS

A monster usually dies or is destroyed when it drops to 0 hit points. For more on hit points, see the *Player's Handbook*.

A monster's hit points are presented both as a die expression and as an average number. For example, a monster with 2d8 hit points has 9 hit points on average ($2 \times 4\frac{1}{2}$).

A monster's size determines the die used to calculate its hit points, as shown in the Hit Dice by Size table.

HIT DICE BY SIZE

Monster Size	Hit Die	Average HP per Die
Tiny	d4	2½
Small	d6	3½
Medium	d8	4½
Large	d10	5½
Huge	d12	6½
Gargantuan	d20	10½

A monster's Constitution modifier also affects the number of hit points it has. Its Constitution modifier is multiplied by the number of Hit Dice it possesses, and the result is added to its hit points. For example, if a monster has a Constitution of 12 (+1 modifier) and 2d8 Hit Dice, it has $2d8 + 2$ hit points (average 11).

SPEED

A monster's speed tells you how far it can move on its turn. For more information on speed, see the *Player's Handbook*.

All creatures have a walking speed, simply called the monster's speed. Creatures that have no form of ground-based locomotion have a walking speed of 0 feet.

Some creatures have one or more of the following additional movement modes.

BURROW

A monster that has a burrowing speed can use that speed to move through sand, earth, mud, or ice. A monster can't burrow through solid rock unless it has a special trait that allows it to do so.

CLIMB

A monster that has a climbing speed can use all or part of its movement to move on vertical surfaces. The monster doesn't need to spend extra movement to climb.

FLY

A monster that has a flying speed can use all or part of its movement to fly. Some monsters have the ability to **hover**, which makes them hard to knock out of the air (as explained in the rules on flying in the *Player's Handbook*). Such a monster stops hovering when it dies.

SWIM

A monster that has a swimming speed doesn't need to spend extra movement to swim.

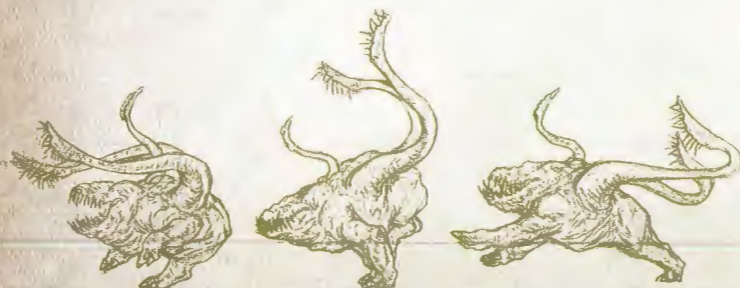
ABILITY SCORES

Every monster has six ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma) and corresponding modifiers. For more information on ability scores and how they're used in play, see the *Player's Handbook*.

SAVING THROWS

The Saving Throws entry is reserved for creatures that are adept at resisting certain kinds of effects. For example, a creature that isn't easily charmed or frightened might gain a bonus on its Wisdom saving throws. Most creatures don't have special saving throw bonuses, in which case this section is absent.

A saving throw bonus is the sum of a monster's relevant ability modifier and its proficiency bonus, which is determined by the monster's challenge rating (as shown in the Proficiency Bonus by Challenge Rating table).



PROFICIENCY BONUS BY CHALLENGE RATING

Challenge	Proficiency Bonus	Challenge	Proficiency Bonus
0	+2	14	+5
1/8	+2	15	+5
1/4	+2	16	+5
1/2	+2	17	+6
1	+2	18	+6
2	+2	19	+6
3	+2	20	+6
4	+2	21	+7
5	+3	22	+7
6	+3	23	+7
7	+3	24	+7
8	+3	25	+8
9	+4	26	+8
10	+4	27	+8
11	+4	28	+8
12	+4	29	+9
13	+5	30	+9

SKILLS

The Skills entry is reserved for monsters that are proficient in one or more skills. For example, a monster that is very perceptive and stealthy might have bonuses to Wisdom (Perception) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

A skill bonus is the sum of a monster's relevant ability modifier and its proficiency bonus, which is determined by the monster's challenge rating (as shown in the Proficiency Bonus by Challenge Rating table). Other modifiers might apply. For instance, a monster might have a larger-than-expected bonus (usually double its proficiency bonus) to account for its heightened expertise.

VULNERABILITIES, RESISTANCES, AND IMMUNITIES

Some creatures have vulnerability, resistance, or immunity to certain types of damage. Additionally, some creatures are immune to certain conditions. If a monster is immune to a game effect that isn't considered damage or a condition, it has a special trait.

SENSES

The Senses entry notes a monster's passive Wisdom (Perception) score, as well as any special senses the monster might have. Special senses are described below.

BLINDSIGHT

A monster with blindsight can perceive its surroundings without relying on sight, within a specific radius.

Creatures without eyes, such as grimlocks and gray oozes, typically have this special sense, as do creatures with echolocation or heightened senses, such as bats and true dragons.

If a monster is naturally blind, it has a parenthetical note to this effect, indicating that the radius of its blindsight defines the maximum range of its perception.

ARMOR, WEAPON, AND TOOL PROFICIENCIES

Assume that a creature is proficient with its armor, weapons, and tools. If you swap them out, you decide whether the creature is proficient with its new equipment.

For example, a hill giant typically wears hide armor and wields a greatclub. You could equip a hill giant with chain mail and a greataxe instead, and assume the giant is proficient with both, one or the other, or neither.

See the *Player's Handbook* for rules on using armor or weapons without proficiency.

DARKVISION

A monster with darkvision can see in the dark within a specific radius. The monster can see in dim light within the radius as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. The monster can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray. Many creatures that live underground have this special sense.

TREMORSENSE

A monster with tremorsense can detect and pinpoint the origin of vibrations within a specific radius, provided that the monster and the source of the vibrations are in contact with the same ground or substance. Tremorsense can't be used to detect flying or incorporeal creatures. Many burrowing creatures, such as ankhegs and umber hulks, have this special sense.

TRUESIGHT

A monster with truesight can, out to a specific range, see in normal and magical darkness, see invisible creatures and objects, automatically detect visual illusions and succeed on saving throws against them, and perceive the original form of a shapechanger or a creature that is transformed by magic. Furthermore, the monster can see into the Ethereal Plane within the same range.

LANGUAGES

The languages that a monster can speak are listed in alphabetical order. Sometimes a monster can understand a language but can't speak it, and this is noted in its entry. A "—" indicates that a creature neither speaks nor understands any language.

TELEPATHY

Telepathy is a magical ability that allows a monster to communicate mentally with another creature within a specified range. The contacted creature doesn't need to share a language with the monster to communicate in this way with it, but it must be able to understand at least one language. A creature without telepathy can receive and respond to telepathic messages but can't initiate or terminate a telepathic conversation.

A telepathic monster doesn't need to see a contacted creature and can end the telepathic contact at any time. The contact is broken as soon as the two creatures are no longer within range of each other or if the telepathic monster contacts a different creature within range. A telepathic monster can initiate or terminate a telepathic conversation without using an action, but while the monster is incapacitated, it can't initiate telepathic contact, and any current contact is terminated.

A creature within the area of an *antimagic field* or in any other location where magic doesn't function can't send or receive telepathic messages.

CHALLENGE

A monster's **challenge rating** tells you how great a threat the monster is. An appropriately equipped and well-rested party of four adventurers should be able to defeat a monster that has a challenge rating equal to its level without suffering any deaths. For example, a party of four 3rd-level characters should find a monster with a challenge rating of 3 to be a worthy challenge, but not a deadly one.

Monsters that are significantly weaker than 1st-level characters have a challenge rating lower than 1. Monsters with a challenge rating of 0 are insignificant except in large numbers; those with no effective attacks are worth no experience points, while those that have attacks are worth 10 XP each.

Some monsters present a greater challenge than even a typical 20th-level party can handle. These monsters have a challenge rating of 21 or higher and are specifically designed to test player skill.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The number of experience points (XP) a monster is worth is based on its challenge rating. Typically, XP is awarded for defeating the monster, although the DM may also award XP for neutralizing the threat posed by the monster in some other manner.

Unless something tells you otherwise, a monster summoned by a spell or other magical ability is worth the XP noted in its stat block.

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* explains how to create encounters using XP budgets, as well as how to adjust an encounter's difficulty.

EXPERIENCE POINTS BY CHALLENGE RATING

Challenge	XP	Challenge	XP
0	0 or 10	14	11,500
1/8	25	15	13,000
1/4	50	16	15,000
1/2	100	17	18,000
1	200	18	20,000
2	450	19	22,000
3	700	20	25,000
4	1,100	21	33,000
5	1,800	22	41,000
6	2,300	23	50,000
7	2,900	24	62,000
8	3,900	25	75,000
9	5,000	26	90,000
10	5,900	27	105,000
11	7,200	28	120,000
12	8,400	29	135,000
13	10,000	30	155,000



SPECIAL TRAITS

Special traits (which appear after a monster's challenge rating but before any actions or reactions) are characteristics that are likely to be relevant in a combat encounter and that require some explanation.

INNATE SPELLCASTING

A monster with the innate ability to cast spells has the Innate Spellcasting special trait. Unless noted otherwise, an innate spell of 1st level or higher is always cast at its lowest possible level and can't be cast at a higher level. If a monster has a cantrip where its level matters and no level is given, use the monster's challenge rating.

An innate spell can have special rules or restrictions. For example, a drow mage can innately cast the *levitate* spell, but the spell has a "self only" restriction, which means that the spell affects only the drow mage.

A monster's innate spells can't be swapped out with other spells. If a monster's innate spells don't require attack rolls, no attack bonus is given for them.

SPELLCASTING

A monster with the Spellcasting class feature has a spellcaster level and spell slots, which it uses to cast its spells of 1st level and higher (as explained in the *Player's Handbook*). The spellcaster level is also used for any cantrips included in the feature.

The monster has a list of spells known or prepared from a particular class. The list might also include spells from a feature in that class, such as the Divine Domain feature of the cleric or the Druid Circle feature of the druid.

A monster can cast a spell from its list at a higher level if it has the spell slot to do so. For example, a drow mage with the 3rd-level *lightning bolt* spell can cast it as a 5th-level spell by using one of its 5th-level spell slots.

You can change the spells that a monster knows or has prepared, replacing any spell on a monster's spell list with a different spell of the same level and from the same class list. If you do so, you might cause the monster to be a greater or lesser threat than suggested by its challenge rating.

PSIONICS

A monster that casts spells using only the power of its mind has the psionics tag added to its Spellcasting or Innate Spellcasting special trait. This tag carries no special rules of its own, but other parts of the game might refer to it. A monster that has this tag typically doesn't require any components to cast its spells.

ACTIONS

When a monster takes its action, it can choose from the options in the Actions section of its stat block or use one of the actions available to all creatures, such as the Dash or Hide action, as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

MELEE AND RANGED ATTACKS

The most common actions that a monster will take in combat are melee and ranged attacks. These can be spell attacks or weapon attacks, where the "weapon"

might be a manufactured item or a natural weapon, such as a claw or tail spike. For more information on different kinds of attacks, see the *Player's Handbook*.

Creature vs. Target. The target of a melee or ranged attack is usually either one creature or one target, the difference being that a "target" can be a creature or an object.

Hit. Any damage dealt or other effects that occur as a result of an attack hitting a target are described after the "Hit" notation. You have the option of taking average damage or rolling the damage; for this reason, both the average damage and the die expression are presented.

Miss. If an attack has an effect that occurs on a miss, that information is presented after the "Miss:" notation.

MULTIATTACK

A creature that can make multiple attacks on its turn has the Multiattack ability. A creature can't use Multiattack when making an opportunity attack, which must be a single melee attack.

AMMUNITION

A monster carries enough ammunition to make its ranged attacks. You can assume that a monster has 2d4 pieces of ammunition for a thrown weapon attack, and 2d10 pieces of ammunition for a projectile weapon such as a bow or crossbow.

REACTIONS

If a monster can do something special with its reaction, that information is contained here. If a creature has no special reaction, this section is absent.

LIMITED USAGE

Some special abilities have restrictions on the number of times they can be used.

X/Day. The notation "X/Day" means a special ability can be used X number of times and that a monster must finish a long rest to regain expended uses. For example, "1/Day" means a special ability can be used once and that the monster must finish a long rest to use it again.

Recharge X-Y. The notation "Recharge X-Y" means a monster can use a special ability once and that the ability then has a random chance of recharging during each subsequent round of combat. At the start of each of the monster's turns, roll a d6. If the roll is one of the numbers in the recharge notation, the monster regains the use of the special ability. The ability also recharges when the monster finishes a short or long rest.

GRAPPLE RULES FOR MONSTERS

Many monsters have special attacks that allow them to quickly grapple prey. When a monster hits with such an attack, it doesn't need to make an additional ability check to determine whether the grapple succeeds, unless the attack says otherwise.

A creature grappled by the monster can use its action to try to escape. To do so, it must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check against the escape DC in the monster's stat block. If no escape DC is given, assume the DC is 10 + the monster's Strength (Athletics) modifier.

For example, "Recharge 5-6" means a monster can use the special ability once. Then, at the start of the monster's turn, it regains the use of that ability if it rolls a 5 or 6 on a d6.

Recharge after a Short or Long Rest. This notation means that a monster can use a special ability once and then must finish a short or long rest to use it again.

EQUIPMENT

A stat block rarely refers to equipment, other than armor or weapons used by a monster. A creature that customarily wears clothes, such as a humanoid, is assumed to be dressed appropriately.

You can equip monsters with additional gear and trinkets however you like, using the equipment chapter of the *Player's Handbook* for inspiration, and you decide how much of a monster's equipment is recoverable after the creature is slain and whether any of that equipment is still usable. A battered suit of armor made for a monster is rarely usable by someone else, for instance.

If a spellcasting monster needs material components to cast its spells, assume that it has the material components it needs to cast the spells in its stat block.

LEGENDARY CREATURES

A legendary creature can do things that ordinary creatures can't. Legendary creatures can take special actions outside their turns, and a few can exert power over their environment, causing extraordinary magical effects to occur in their vicinity.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

A legendary creature can take a certain number of special actions—called legendary actions—outside its turn. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. A legendary creature regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn. It isn't required to use its legendary actions, and it can't use legendary actions while incapacitated.

A LEGENDARY CREATURE'S LAIR

A legendary creature might have a section describing its lair and the special effects it can create while there, either by act of will or simply by being present. Not all legendary creatures have lairs. This section only applies to legendary creatures that spend a great deal of time in their lairs and are most likely to be encountered there.

LAIR ACTIONS

If a legendary creature has lair actions, it can use them to harness the ambient magic in its lair. On initiative count 20 (losing all initiative ties), the creature can use one of its lair action options, or forgo using any of them that round.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The mere presence of a legendary creature can have strange and wondrous effects on its environment, as noted in this section. Regional effects end abruptly or dissipate over time when the legendary creature dies.