

# BOOK OF TEMPLATES

## *Deluxe Edition*



A d20 Accessory for fantasy roleplaying

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction (4)

Templates in the Game World (7)

Templates (13-233)

Aberrant (13)	Dragon-Blooded (72)	Half-Troll (131)	Relentless (182)
Abyssal (19)	Dreadnaught (77)	Heightened (133)	Savage (185)
Amorphous (21)	Drider (80)	Hiveling (135)	Scrying (187)
Angel, Fallen (24)	Ebon Servitor (84)	Hypermitotic (137)	Shadowborne (189)
Angel, War (27)	Elemental (88)	Immortal (140)	Siphon Beast (191)
Apocalyptic (28)	Elemental, Thermic (91)	Lekassi (142)	Skeleton, Greater (193)
Arcane Servitor (31)	Enchanted (92)	Lycanthrope, Wereworg (144)	Skinhusk (196)
Argent Servitor (32)	Ethereal (93)	Mephit Lord (146)	Spirit (198)
Beast, Elder (35)	Exoskeleton (95)	Metallivore (149)	Two-Headed Mutant (202)
Beast Lord (38)	Fey-Kissed (96)	Miniature (151)	Vampire, Corpse (204)
Bladed Horror (41)	Fiend, Redeemed (98)	Mohrg (153)	Vampire, Dread (208)
Blighted Thrall (44)	Ghoul (100)	Moon Wildling (155)	Vampire, Fleshbound (213)
Blind Oracle (46)	Gigantic (102)	Mummy, True (157)	Vampire, Half- (216)
Construct, Ablative (48)	Half-Drow (104)	Necrovore (160)	Vampiric (219)
Construct, Kith (52)	Half-Genie (106)	Nettlecloud Spider (162)	Vampiric Thrall (221)
Construct, Necromantic (57)	Half-Gnome (108)	Non-Euclidean (163)	Voidspawn (223)
Construct, Skinrug Guardian (59)	Half-Humanoid (111)	Paleoskeleton (166)	Wight (226)
Construct, Verminshell (61)	Half-Kobold (112)	Phantasmal (168)	Wretched (228)
Construct, Woundmender (63)	Half-Medusa (123)	Plantform (171)	Zombie, Greater (230)
Demi-Gorgon (64)	Half-Nymph (125)	Puppeteer Ooze (175)	
Denizen of the Deep (66)	Half-Ooze (127)	Puppeteer Ooze Host (177)	
Desiccated (68)	Half-Slime (129)	Quickened (180)	

Appendix I: Creature Construction Charts (234)

Appendix II: Stacking Templates (241)

Appendix III: Template Indices (247)

Appendix IV: Other Indices (253)

Appendix V: Licenses & Legal Information (261)



# INTRODUCTION

This book is based on the old adage, “Variety is the spice of life.” So, too, is it the spice of gaming encounters. Once players have familiarized themselves with the creatures in the *MM*, the mystery, excitement, and challenge of an adventure are all dulled. Since most DMs don’t have unlimited budgets to purchase the newest, hottest, hardback monster collection, it stands to reason that a better, more economical alternative would be to alter creatures already on hand. Enter the template.

Each of the templates in this volume was created to add a unique, surprising, and unexpected twist to monsters that would ordinarily elicit a chorus of yawns from the experienced (Player: *More kobolds?* Why bother?). These new twists will certainly keep players guessing and really put some much-needed challenge into ordinarily easy encounters (DM: One of the kobolds breathes out

a noxious smelling cone of gas, turning your +2 *bastard sword* and your suit of full plate armor into a pile of useless, rusting debris. Player: It did *what?*)

This book, then, is designed for the DM who wants to shake up the preconceived notions of his or her group. (When this book says “you”, it means “DM” and nobody else—the effect of applying a template is always the domain of the wise adjudicator.) It is also for someone who wants to get more mileage from the creatures presented in the *MM* and elsewhere. Most of all, it is designed to allow more creative freedom and flexibility in designing game sessions that are interesting, exigent, and memorable.

With these factors in mind, it is suggested that players not read this book. You may give them the parts aimed at them if you so desire, but the bulk of the content herein is designed specifically for DMs. This preserves much of the mystery and wonder of encountering creatures with these templates for the first time. It isn’t recommended that players use any of these templates for their characters either, but it’s your campaign.

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## How to Use this Book

Each template is presented in standard format. For the changes to a creature, charts have been included in this book (see *Appendix I: Creature Construction Charts*) to make it more useful. Here is a brief layout of how each template appears, along with some things to keep in mind while using a template:

*Template Name:* The name of the creature template appears at the top of the entry. A brief background on the origin of or the rationale for the template follows the name.

*Appearance Changes:* If there are any noticeable changes in the monster’s physical appearance, resulting from taking the template in question, they are noted here.

*Creating a (Templated Creature):* Listed here are the creatures to which a template may be applied. Information on changes in the creature’s type and subtype after the template is applied are also presented.

*Missing Attribute Categories:* When applying a template, don’t be confused by an attribute category that’s missing—such statistics stay the same as those of base creature. This means that the monster in question advances in the indicated category the same as the base creature, not that the numbers always stay exactly the same. Applying the template might modify the numbers of a missing entry in other ways, via ability or HD changes, or some other change such as size, so be sure to do that when appropriate. In this way, a half-fiend/

medusa has saving throws that advance like those of a normal medusa (good Reflex and Will), not according to the Outsider type. Likewise, a half-dragon ogre still has an attack progression from the Giant type

*Hit Dice:* Any change to HD is noted. An increase or decrease in number of HD always results in a similar change in other statistics as indicated below. Removing all HD due to character level always leaves 1 HD for humanoid creatures of Small or Medium size. Otherwise, this total is the minimum HD for the creature’s size and type according to *Appendix I: Creature Construction Charts*.

*Size:* Size changes always result in a change in some of a monster’s attributes—the templates do not include these changes unless one explicitly states it does. This is very important, because most of each template’s bonuses are balanced to account for the subsequent increase in size. If a template changes the creature’s size to Large and offers a +2 Strength increase, the creature gets any bonus for its increase in size *and* the +2. Check *Appendix I: Creature Construction Charts* section for relevant info on matters such as minimum HD by size, AC changes, attack bonuses or penalties,



# INTRODUCTION

damage by size, and ability scores. *Table 1-2: Creature Changes by Size* in that section shows the bonuses and penalties a creature gets for going from one size to the next. These factors stack if the creature increases more than one size. To shrink a creature, just make bonuses penalties, and vice versa.

When a creature increases in size, determine the multiplier by which size increases. A troglodyte that goes from 5 ft. to 10 ft. has doubled in height. To determine the creature's new weight, multiply its current weight by the factor by which the height increased (or decreased) cubed. (When height increases, volume, and thus weight increase by the same factor cubed if the size increase is proportional.) Thus, the troglodyte weighs in at  $150 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ , or 1,200 lbs. The same troglodyte decreases to 2 ft. 6 in, weighs just 19 lbs. ( $150 \times .5 \times .5 \times .5$ ). You may want to fudge this factor to get what you want.

The *MM* uses this math quite effectively for the values of most creatures. Others are presumably fudged for effect, like the 12 ft., 7,000 lb. fire giant, which results in a hefty 290 lbs. if reduced to 4 ft. 2 in. (the average for a dwarf male). That a human at 12 ft. (of average build) should weigh in around 1,500 pounds and an average dwarf weighs 165 lbs. at 4 ft. 2 in. gives some perspective on how burly those giants are.

*Speed:* Speed increases and decreases with size. In general, it's safe to increase a creature's speed in all modes by 10 ft. per size category increase, and to subtract 10 ft. from a creature's speed in all modes per size category decrease. In the former case, large creatures may be slower than indicated by this increase (if you wish), but smaller creatures are often surprisingly fast (minimum speed of 20 ft., or that of the original creature - 5 ft. if the original speed was 20 ft. or lower). So, as with other modifications, adjust the creature's speed until you have what you want, or believe to be right for your new monster.

*Attacks:* Changes, bonuses, or penalties to the creature's attack are listed. Always adjust the creature's attack bonuses and iterative attacks based on an increase or decrease in HD or size. Adjust attack bonuses based on any change in Strength and Dexterity.

*Damage:* Damage from new attacks is suggested, often referring to the creature's type and size. Use *Appendix I: Creature Construction Charts* for reference in these cases. If the creature's size category changes, damage from its natural and special attacks goes up according to its type using those charts. A change in Strength means a change in the damage modifier, so be sure to add that. If the damage is already higher than normal for a creature of that size, like with a chuul's claw attack, it's usually safe to increase that damage to the next level. (In fact, the chuul's claw damage corresponds to a normal Large aberration's bite damage—if the chuul grows to Huge, claw damage goes to 2d8 from 2d6.)

Damage usually includes a creature's full Strength modifier, but only half that if it's a secondary attack. A creature's natural attack adds 1.5 x the Strength bonus (but the only normal Strength penalty) if it is the creature's only mode of attack, as do attacks with two-handed weapons. Some special attacks and circumstances allow a creature to apply more Strength as well.

Secondary attacks in a string of attacks add only one-half of the creature's Strength bonus to the damage. In a (rare) situation in which the creature uses a secondary attack as a single attack (instead of making a full-attack action to use all of its attacks), the Strength bonus is not halved.

Weapon damage can be increased as well. Want your Colossal giant to use a greataxe fit for his size? See the *Quick and Dirty Weapon Size and Damage* sidebar in *Appendix I: Creature Construction Charts* for details.

*Face/Reach:* An increase or decrease in size always affects face and reach. See *Table 1-1: Creature Size Factors* in *Appendix I*.

*Special Attacks and Special Qualities:* The save DCs (if any) for special attacks or qualities are always adjusted for any increase or decrease in HD and ability scores. The formulas for those DCs are usually:  $(10 + \text{one-half of the creature's HD} + \text{its Constitution modifier})$  for most attacks that require a Fortitude save (poison, stench, and so on), while Constitution, Dexterity, or Strength might be used for abilities requiring a Reflex save, depending on the type of attack (for example, Trample uses Strength). For supernatural attacks (gaze, fear, and so on) the usual formula is  $(10 + \text{one-half of the creature's HD} + \text{its Charisma modifier})$ , and the formula is usually  $(10 + \text{spell level} + \text{a creature's Charisma modifier})$  for spell-like abilities. Undead that maintain some attack that requires Constitution as part of the save formula normally replace that ability with Charisma.

You may want to increase damage for special attacks with an increase in HD, but do so only when the damage due to size seems to make no sense (that is, it's too little). In general, each time HD doubles, double the current damage of the special attack. For example, an apocalyptic hell hound (Huge, 1d8 breath weapon) doubles HD once to 8 HD and thereby gains a 2d8 breath weapon, doubles again to 16 HD (4d8), and doubles again to 32 HD (8d8). In the case of the sample hell hound, it went to 40 HD, so the damage was increased by that fractional amount as well (8 is one-quarter of 32, one-quarter of 8d8 is 2d8, so the final damage is 10d8).

As simple rules, the range of special attacks and qualities increases by 33% of the current range per increase in size category, rounding up to the nearest multiple of 5 (ft.). Thus, an ability that starts at 30 ft. rises to 40 ft. ( $30 \times 1.33 = 39.9$ ) with one size category increase. On the other hand, range decreases by 33% of the current range per decrease in size category, round down to the nearest multiple of 5 (ft.)—a 30 ft. range becomes 20 ft. ( $30 \times .67 = 20.1$ , rounded down to 20 ft.) at one size category lower. Abilities with ranges of less than 5 ft. are unable to leave the creature's space or are only effective against a single opponent. Use the power itself as a guide to whether or not range should increase dramatically, modestly, or at all—always considering what you want from your new creature.

*Abilities:* Ability modifiers for templates usually simply add or subtract factors from a base creature's abilities. The minimum score for any ability is that noted for its size in Appendix I for physical ability scores. The minimum mental ability score for a creature is usually 3, or the base creature's score, whichever is lower. Deviations from this norm are noted in this section.

*Saves:* Any bonuses or penalties to saving throws are noted here. Always adjust a creature's saving throws if it gains (or loses) HD. See *Appendix I: Creature Construction Charts* for saving throws according to the differing creature types.

# INTRODUCTION

*Skills:* Any significant alteration to the way a creature uses or gains skills is noted here. Skill points are based on a monster's HD, and thus a monster always gains some skills and/or skill ranks as HD increase. Remember, also, that any change in ability scores may affect skill point totals as well as skill bonuses. Often, the creature's initial skill points are determined by type, while later advancement is by character class (like giants). Skill points from a character class take precedent over any skill points a monster might gain by instead advancing by its monster type. This serves to make the templated and classed creature a bit different from its normal cousins.

Skill bonuses for a creature are sometimes physiological (a grimlock's skin gives it a Hide bonus), while others are cultural (the Move Silently bonus of a goblin). When creating a templated creature, the new creature's background culture becomes important. You are free to omit or reduce certain skill bonuses based on a change in a creature's physiology or culture. A half-elf raised among elves should be different from one raised among humans.

*Feats:* Bonuses or losses to feats are noted here. Feats also increase in number as a creature advances in HD, and often when a creature changes type. Try to accentuate the monster's positive attributes when choosing new feats, and feel free to change them for your new creation (such as how the strong giant troglodyte focuses on melee (Weapon Focus (longspear)) rather than ranged attacks (Weapon Focus (javelin)) like a normal troglodyte).

*Climate/Terrain and Organization:* Templated creatures are often found in the same areas and same groups as normal creatures of their kind. Other times, such creatures are raised by another race, culture, or even in a laboratory or the lair of another monster. Templated creatures may even have their own preferences for these things. Don't feel constrained by this information; use it as a guide.

*Challenge Rating (CR):* Virtually all the templates in this book contain a challenge rating adjustment to reflect the change in power granted through the application of the template. However, some creatures benefit far more or less than others with any given template based on their particular attributes, which is why some CRs have a percentage factor instead of a solid number. The percentage is multiplied times the base creature's CR to determine how much of a change the creature gets. This factor is always rounded to the nearest whole number (up or down as you prefer) after it's added to the creature's base CR if the CR is above 1. If the resulting CR is less than one (fractional), round it to the closest quarter—round anything greater than 1/2 to 1.

Calculating and judging a challenge rating is more of an art than a science. The lack of exactness in CRs should be kept in mind when creating new and variant creatures with the templates. You should make any further adjustments to the CR as necessary to facilitate the balance and fun of the game. New creatures should be playtested to make sure they aren't party killers. It's always better to have a creature that's a little too weak, than one that's way too strong.

*Treasure:* Treasure is quite variable, like climate and organizational tendencies above. Just be astute when assigning

treasure to particular creatures. Logically, the food storage of a group of metallivores is likely to include a stack of metal objects. Some of these could be valuable.

*Alignment:* When a template changes an alignment, it's due to some fundamental change in a creature's outlook or spiritual affiliation. Once again, alignment is a guide, not a hard rule.

*Effective Character Level (ECL):* The templates, and some of the races, in this volume tend to be more (or less) powerful than a normal player race. As such, they are given an Effective Character Level (ECL) adjustment to denote this fact. This factor may be added to any such similar factor the base creature possesses to get the creature's total ECL. Racial ECLs include a creature's base HD.

*Sample:* Each template includes at least one example of how the template can be applied to a creature, along with specific notes on organization, terrain, disposition, language(s) spoken, and other data relevant to the specific creature at hand. Template creature write-ups are in monster stat-block format as found in the *MM*.

*New Material:* The sample of the creature is often followed by suggestions on how a templated creature is created within the game world or other relevant tidbits, such as new spells or feats.

## Character Classes

If a creature acquires a character class in addition to multiple monster HD, it follows the rules for multiclassing. A creature's challenge level equals the number of character levels it has, plus its total Hit Dice for its monster "class". The creature's monster class is always its favored class, and the creature never suffers XP penalties for having it. Additional Hit Dice from a character class never affect a creature's size.

It's often easier to create a templated creature by starting with a creature without classes. When applying a template to a creature that has a character class, the creature doesn't lose any abilities from the character class unless the template specifically says it does. Nor do any of the changes affect character class abilities unless expressly stated to do so or the effect comes from a secondary influence, like an increase in Strength affecting the melee attack bonus. Changes that affect how a base creature's attacks are calculated, or something similar, only affect the creature's base form, not its classes.

The Plantform template is an example of this point—its base form has an attack progression as if it were always a Plant type creature. Another example is the Gigantic template, which doubles the base creature's HD—a gigantic creature's class-based HD are not doubled and remain at their normal type. Undead are an exception to this rule, because all of their HD are always d12s, no matter what their character class.

Conversely, some template attributes do improve based on a creature's HD gained result of increased character levels. A half-efreeti/half-human with 13 character levels gets all of the spell abilities of a 13 HD half-efreeti, just like a half-fiend from the *MM*. It makes sense for many saving throw DCs to improve as well, due to increased HD from character levels. The Argent Servitor and Dreadnaught are good examples of templates where attributes improve as a character gains levels.

You'll have to decide whether some qualities increase based on your own preferences. The possibilities are too great to cover every exception or consideration. Does giving an ettercap

levels of fighter increase the potency of its poison via an increase in save DC due to the extra HD? Perhaps, but it is more likely that's a racial constant that can only be increased via advancement in monster HD.

## Native Outsiders

When you create a creature that's an outsider, it's important to note two things. First, the creature's alignment is important for its subtypes (Chaotic, Evil, Good, and Lawful), since that'll be relevant as to which spells affect the creature. It's also important to note on which plane the creature is a native. If the creature is an outsider (type) that is native to the Material Plane, then certain spells (like *banishment* or *dismissal*) are less effective, if not ineffective. *Banishment* and *dismissal* can't send an outsider on its native plane anywhere.

## My Better Half

To avoid pointless logical gymnastics and long periods of protracted confusion, there are a few things that should be mentioned here about using “half-” templates, such as half-orc, half-nymph, and so on. First and foremost, only one of these templates should be applied to any single creature. There are only two halves to a creature, so this guideline should be adhered to regularly if any templates of this nature are employed.

Second, unless stated specifically otherwise, the base creature is the original genetic type for the new, templated half-creature. This circumvents a great deal of conjecture as to whether a human with the Half-nymph template is a nymph that is half-human or a human that is half-nymph. If the base creature was a nymph, the new creation is half-human. If the base creature was human, the new creature is half-nymph.

Third and finally, there should be a good reason for such a hybrid creature to exist. Is it even physically, magically, or conceptually possible to obtain a giant halfling or a half-gnome halor within the context of the game world's cosmology? If so, what might a good justification be for such a creature's existence? Are such hybrids numerous or extremely rare? You should consider these questions and see if making such creatures fits your purposes and the flavor of the campaign world.

## Realism and “Half-” Templates

There's a problem with the half-and-half templates out there. Most aren't half-and-half, they're half-and-whole—that is, the “half-” template is applied to a base creature with no dilution of the base creature's statistics or abilities. Yet, when we look at the abilities of a half-elf or half-orc in the *PHB*, we certainly see dilution of orcish and elven blood.

So, which is it? Well, it's whatever you prefer. You can use the Half-humanoid template in this book to “halve” any creature for preparation for crossbreeding with other “half-” templates.

## Variants: Microplates and Simplates

Certain templates within this book have smaller, variant mini-templates associated with them. These smaller templates are too similar to other templates in this volume or do not alter the base creature enough to warrant a full-fledged, stand-alone template of their own. Thus, they are called “microplates”—quick and easy optional templates that provide even more alternatives for the creative DM.

“Simplates” are even smaller than microplates—especially designed for when the DM needs a quick boost to a creature's CR with little or no time to prepare (perhaps even on the fly during a gaming session). Expect no drastic changes here, just a simple power boost or other alteration to make the PCs' road a little rougher.

## It's Alive! Now, What Shall We Call It?

Those wishing to instill a greater sense of wonder should refrain from informing their players that a creature is, in fact, a hypermitotic metallivore half-janni lizardman. While this may be the technical descriptor of the creature, try to select a more unique name that encapsulates the essence of what the new creature has become. Some samples in this book work toward that end and can be used for inspiration.

With several templates attached, the name of even the most simplistic monster can quickly reach laundry-list proportions and become quite tedious to say. In our multi-templated lizardman example, above, names such as “iron-scourge hordeling” would be more appropriate. Whatever the final moniker, a simple recitation of the creature's templates is an inferior choice to a new name tailor-made for your creation.

# TEMPLATES IN THE GAME WORLD

There are many possible explanations for how templated creatures come to be. This book provides a simple set of rules for one of the many possible justifications in the form of a magical means by which some of the templates are created within a fantasy world—ritual magic. This system provides a better alternative than saying something is due to “long-lost magic now beyond mortal ken”, which can be frustrating to players and DMs. Where more than one idea is presented, such as a disease and a ritual, you may take your pick or use as many options as you like.

Further, a set of comprehensive and easy construct-building rules is included. These mechanics simplify the process for building most of the constructs found in this work. Rules specific to each template appear in the templates themselves.

## Ritual Magic

Mystics of literature and myth performed rituals toward great ends. Certainly, changing a creature into one like some of the templates in this book is such an act.

While each ritual is presented as a spell, it is really a process. Anyone who knows the process and meets the class and caster level requirements of the ritual can use it. This means that any cleric (of an appropriate god) that can cast 7th-level spells can use the Dreadnaught Ritual. This rule allows sorcerers, and other spellcasters who don't prepare spells, to use the rituals. The parameters of the ritual spell still apply when taking into account things like a specialist mage's school restrictions. A mage who is prohibited from Transmutation