Pathfinder

Gamemastery Guide
Monster and Hazard Creation

CHAPTER 2: TOOLBOX

While the Core Rulebook provides all the tools you need to be a Game Master, you may want resources to create original game content, whether it be new items, unique creatures, or a sprawling new world for adventurers to explore.

This chapter provides a variety of tools to help you quickly and easily build your own elements for your game, as well as some special types of rules you can incorporate in your game, such as more hazards and strange magic items. This chapter is organized into the following sections.

- **Building Creatures** (page 56) demonstrates a top-down approach for quickly and easily constructing the creatures and NPCs you want or need for any possible situation in your game.
- **Building Hazards** (page 74) gives rules and advice for creating your own brand-new hazards.
- **Additional Hazards** (page 77) presents several ready-to-use hazards, particularly haunts and environmental hazards.
- **Building Items** (page 82) teaches you how to create new pieces of treasure to delight your PCs.
- **Item Quirks** (page 86) introduces simple but memorable quirks that you can use to quickly personalize an item and make its nature seem just as unique and exciting as its special abilities.
- **Intelligent Items** (page 88) includes rules for creating items with a mind of their own that are characters in their own right, as well as several examples to get you started.
- **Cursed Items** (page 90) examines items that have a nasty drawback or might be altogether unpleasant. The section includes specific cursed items and a list of curses you can add to an existing item, akin to a rune.
- **Relics** (page 94) are special magic items that increase in power along with the PCs that you and your players work together to build and enhance.
- **Artifacts** (page 106) are the most powerful and story-rich magic items in the game, and can only be destroyed in a specific way.
- **Gems and Art Objects** (page 114) can be used to expand the diversity of monetary awards given to PCs, and includes 100 sample art objects.
- **Afflictions** (page 116) provides a plethora of curses, diseases, and drugs for use in your games, as well as drug and addiction rules useful in creating your own afflictions.
- **Building Worlds** (page 122) explains how to go about building your own entire world or setting from scratch. This section leads into the next three, which will let you go into greater detail about parts of your game world.
- **Nations** (page 130) includes a system to quickly encapsulate a nation in a stat block that contains all the information you need.
- **Settlements** (page 132) covers everything from tiny villages to incredible metropolises. It considers the settlement's role in a game and provides a system to describe a settlement in a stat block with all the important information.
- **Planes** (page 136) includes the various planar traits you can use to build your own planes, and explores all the planes of reality in the Age of Lost Omens setting as well.

It's up to you to determine how much of your game you want to customize. Many GMs use the default rules and creatures, and set their adventures on Golarion or another published game world. Others incorporate all-new creatures and places devised by the GM, with strange themes don't fit in the standard Pathfinder game or world. Unless you're building your entire game world from scratch, you can usually wait to implement any new rules creation until you think you'll need it for your next session.

BUILDING VERSUS MODIFYING

Many times, a small adjustment to an existing creature, item, adventure, or other part of the game can serve you just as well as building something brand new. Before you delve into creating your own new content, ask yourself a few questions. First, does something similar already exist? When answering this question, look beyond the surface level. Maybe you want a 5th-level clawed centipede creature that regenerates unless you use acid or fire and has Attack of Opportunity. It might not look very much like a troll on the surface, but the statistics for a troll are going to get you most or all the way there. Ask yourself what you'll need to change between your idea and the existing material. This will help you decide between using the original rule with a minimal reskin, using the original with adjustments, starting with the original as a framework to build your own, or just starting from scratch. Finally, ask yourself how much time you have to prepare the content, what overall impact you expect it to have in your campaign, and how important any discrepancies from existing material are to the core concept. The less important an element is to your game, or the less time you'll be using it at the table, the more likely you should modify something that already exists.

BUILDING CREATURES

Making your own creatures fleshes out your game world and lets you introduce concepts not yet available in published products like the Bestiary volumes. These guidelines help you customize creatures to your specifications and explore your imagination. From strange beasts to canny political rivals, you have the power to design creatures that fit the narrative needs of your story.

Creatures aren't built the same way PCs are. The rules for building them are more flexible, and their statistics are based on benchmark final numbers rather than combining each individual modifier together. This is called top-down design, in which you consider the design process as a whole and select the details that reflect your intended result rather than building statistics from the bottom up and hoping the finished creature matches your vision.

Though this guide provides a step-by-step process to build creatures, when you feel more comfortable you may prefer to use different methods. You could start with one ability you think is cool, or you might need to create a spellcaster of a certain type. There's no wrong starting place nor wrong way to compile and present your creation; some GMs prefer to generate a stat block that is as similar to an official *Bestiary* entry as possible, while others prefer to compile just a brief set of notes.

CONCEPT AND ROADMAP

To begin making a creature, you should first come up with its concept. You likely already have the basic idea. As you add details to the general idea, taking notes can help keep your creature on track. Consider the parts of your creature you find most compelling and that you want to emphasize when the creature hits the table. For example, in the *Bestiary*, demons are creatures of sin, and were designed to have weaknesses against virtues that oppose them. Harpies enchant creatures by singing, represented by their centerpiece ability, Captivating Song. Note your creature's core aspects, and if you feel uncertain later, you can look back and ask yourself, "Does this emphasize a core aspect or not?"

Next, look at the creature's role in your game. Is it meant to be a combatant? A social creature? A trusted ally? Figuring this out will help you determine whether to give it strong combat abilities or whether to put more effort into skills, spells, and special abilities. Think about how the creature might behave in a fight, if someone tries to talk to it, or if it's in a social situation. Does it work better alone or with allies? What sort of character should be best at facing it or be particularly weak against it?

Consider also the complexity of the creature. This matters most when you have a large number of creatures. If you're planning to use five of the creatures at the same time, you'll want its turns to move swiftly and avoid complex special actions. A creature likely to face a group of

OVERVIEW

This section details the following steps in the creature-building process.

1. **Concept and Roadmap (page 56)** Think about your creature and make notes you can use in future steps.
2. **Build the Stat Block** Pick all the statistics for the creatures, going through the list below.

  Level (page 58)
  Alignment, Size, and Traits (page 58)
  Ability Modifiers (page 59)
  Perception and Senses (page 60)
  Languages (page 60)
  Skills (page 60)
  Items, if necessary (page 61)
  AC (page 61)
  Saving Throws (page 62)
  Hit Points (page 62)
  Immunities, Weaknesses, and Resistances (page 63)
  Speed (page 64)
  Strikes, including their damage (page 64)
  Spells, if necessary (page 65)

3. **Design Abilities (page 67)** Construct the special abilities your creature can use.
4. **Reality Check (page 69)** Step back, take stock of your creature, and tweak as needed.

TRAIT ABILITIES (PAGE 70)

This section provides the abilities conveyed by certain traits, such as demon, dragon, and undead. You'll also find abilities typical of creatures with those traits to help guide you as you plan your creatures.

DESIGNING NPCS (PAGE 72)

Sometimes you'll design a creature that's meant to have abilities or characteristics similar to that of a PC. Maybe you need a bold champion, a sly rogue, or a wizened druid elder for your game. You also might need a common baker, who has little combat ability but great skill with an oven. In these cases, this section provides ways you might modify aspects of the creature-building process to fit those needs.

PCs alone can have more abilities, and it might need a more versatile set of defenses against PC tactics. Cut complexity as much as you can while retaining your desired theme.

Now, how do you want an encounter with this creature to feel? Should it be scary? Mobile? Confusing? A mystical duel or a knock-down, drag-out fight? What can you give your creature to convey those characteristics? Note that much of this feel will come from your choice of the creature's special abilities or spells, rather than the creature's raw numbers.

With all this in mind, think about the specific abilities your creature should have. Take a few notes now, and get to the details later. You might want to snag some existing abilities from the *Bestiary* or from feats in the *Core Rulebook*, adjusting as needed, to save you some time. It helps to think of the creature that's most similar to yours and seeing what makes it tick—and what you can steal from it. Maybe you can just reskin the creature, instead of making it from scratch (page 58).

Now that you understand your creature's concept, it's time to get to the statistics. Remember that you can always change your concept later on. Your creation might evolve and transform as you go, so be open to change and revisions.

UNDERSTANDING THE STATISTICS

Most of the statistics in this section use a scale of extreme, high, moderate, and low—though some incorporate terrible values as well.

Extreme: The creature is world class in this statistic, and can challenge almost any character. Most creatures have no extreme statistics or one extreme statistic, with the exception of creatures that trade accuracy for extreme damage being slightly more common. Examples from the *Bestiary* include the succubus's Diplomacy and the lich's spell DC.

High: Extremely capable, but not world class, the creature presents a challenge for most characters. Just about all creatures have at least one high value. Most combat-focused creatures have high AC and either high attack and high damage, or merely moderate attack but extreme damage. An ogre warrior's attack bonus and a kobold scout's Stealth are high values.

Moderate: A middle-of-the road statistic can cover anything unremarkable about the creature. Use this one liberally!

Low: The creature is actively bad at this. Choose these intentionally to represent the creature's weak points. Most creatures should have at least one low statistic; an example is the goblin pyro's Will save.

Terrible: Some statistics can dip even lower than low, to terrible. This indicates a truly awful statistic that still isn't game-breakingly bad. A spider's Intelligence is poor, as is a dero stalker's Will save.

Push and Pull

When it comes to statistics, a creature should be balanced overall. That means if you're giving a creature an extreme statistic, it should have some low or terrible statistics to compensate. For example, if you were making a creature extremely hard to hit by giving it an extreme AC, you'd likely give it lower saving throws or low HP. If a creature is great at spellcasting, it might need several low statistics to be a balanced challenge. There's no perfect system for making these decisions. If you've made a creature roadmap that has four high stats and nothing low, or vice-versa, take another look. The strengths and weaknesses of a creature change the PCs' strategies in dealing with it, and that's what makes playing the game fun!

Extreme Increases

At the higher levels of the game, PCs have more tools at their disposal. That means the creatures need to hit back harder! At higher levels, give each creature more extreme statistics. Having one extreme statistic becomes typical around level 11. A creature at level 15 or higher typically has two extreme statistics, and one at level 20 or higher should have 3 or 4. Keep in mind that these should be relevant to the encounters you expect them to have. A combat-focused creature won't get far having four extreme social skills. Be careful about doubling down the extreme statistics: a creature with extreme damage and Fortitude saves is one thing, but having both extreme attack bonus and damage allows the creature to apply both extreme statistics to each attack.

LEVEL

For most homemade creatures, the level will depend on the level of the party who will encounter it. Look at other creatures you think are similar in power to yours to determine its level. Note that level represents a creature's combat ability, and a creature that's more social might have, for example, 3rd-level combat statistics and 6th-level skills but remain a 3rd-level creature. Most such creatures are NPCs; for more information on this distinction and how to use it, see page Non-Combat Level on page 72.

Some abilities are hard to deal with at low levels. For instance, creatures that can fly and have ranged attacks should typically appear around 7th level, when PCs can fly. Natural invisibility or at-will *invisibility* as an innate spell should come at around 6th level, when PCs are more likely to prepare *see invisibility* in lower-level spell slots, or 8th level, when some PCs get the Blind-Fight feat.

The tables in this chapter go up to level 24—the highest-level extreme encounter a party might face.

ALIGNMENT, SIZE, AND TRAITS

Fill out the trait line of your creature's stat block. The alignment can be whatever suits your story, though some types of creatures must be or tend to be certain alignments. Creatures can be whatever size they need to be, though you seldom find Large creatures below 1st level, Huge creatures below 5th level, or Gargantuan creatures below 10th level. There aren't any automatic statistical adjustments by size, except for an exception to Strength modifiers for Large and bigger creatures, which you'll find below.

Your creature will almost certainly have one of the following traits to define its type: aberration, animal, astral, beast, celestial, construct, dragon, elemental, ethereal, fey, fiend, fungus, giant, humanoid, monitor, ooze, plant, or undead. If you're making a creature from an existing category, it has that trait as well, such as demon. Elements—air, earth, fire, and water—and types of energy—like acid, cold, and electricity—appear on creatures with a close affinity to them.

Some abilities typical to creatures with the traits listed above can be found in the Trait Abilities section (page 70). As with the other steps, looking at similar creatures will give you an idea what traits to use.

Also add any traits that have detailed rules attached to them: amphibious, aquatic, incorporeal, mindless, and swarm. You can add traits related to the creature category, such as dinosaur or werecreature, but most of these traits are pretty self-evident in play. In fact, if at any point you realize during play that you didn't add a trait the creature really should have, you can usually include it in retroactively.

ABILITY MODIFIERS

It's useful here to figure out your creature's ability modifiers, since these will suggest what their other stats should be. You don't have to determine the exact numbers, but it's generally good to avoid creating a creature with a terrible Wisdom and a very high Perception, or one with terrible Dexterity and highly accurate ranged attacks. Most of the time, you'll just be using ability modifiers for untrained skills, so they're useful as a guide, though not crucial.

The Ability Modifier Scales table shows some benchmarks for your creatures. Use high for the creature's best stat or stats, moderate for ones they're okay at, and low for the rest. If a creature has a truly bad ability, you can go as low as –5. That's the "terrible" range for ability modifiers, and doesn't really change by level. This is most common with animals, which have an Intelligence of –4 (for dogs, dolphins, and such) or –5 (for more instinctual animals like spiders), and for mindless creatures, which use –5 Intelligence.

Few creatures use the extreme column. A powerful, dedicated spellcaster might use an extreme spellcasting statistic, or a preternaturally charming creature like a succubus or nymph might have extreme Charisma. However, the most common way extreme numbers are used is for really big, really strong creatures. This happens with Large or larger creatures from level 1 to 5, only Huge or larger creatures from level 6 to 9, and only Gargantuan creatures from level 10 to 15. Beyond that level, a creature wouldn't gain extreme Strength from size alone.

TABLE 2–1: ABILITY MODIFIER SCALES

Level	Extreme	High	Moderate	Low
–1	—	+3	+2	+0
0	—	+3	+2	+0
1	+5	+4	+3	+1
2	+5	+4	+3	+1
3	+5	+4	+3	+1
4	+6	+5	+3	+2
5	+6	+5	+4	+2
6	+7	+5	+4	+2
7	+7	+6	+4	+2
8	+7	+6	+4	+3
9	+7	+6	+4	+3
10	+8	+7	+5	+3
11	+8	+7	+5	+3
12	+8	+7	+5	+4
13	+9	+8	+5	+4
14	+9	+8	+5	+4
15	+9	+8	+6	+4
16	+10	+9	+6	+5
17	+10	+9	+6	+5
18	+10	+9	+6	+5
19	+11	+10	+6	+5
20	+11	+10	+7	+6
21	+11	+10	+7	+6
22	+11	+10	+8	+6
23	+11	+10	+8	+6
24	+13	+12	+9	+7

BASE ROADMAPS

You can use the following suggestions to set the baseline when creating your roadmap. For example, use brute for a big, tough creature like an ogre, or skirmisher for a darting enemy. Each entry is a starting point you can customize as you see fit. Any core statistic that isn't listed normally uses moderate numbers. You can set ability modifiers and add additional abilities as needed. To make a creature that resembles a character of a certain class, see the Class Roadmaps sidebar on page 73.

Brute low Perception; high or extreme Str, high to moderate Con, low or lower Dex and mental modifiers; moderate or low AC; high Fortitude, low Reflex, Will, or both; high HP; high attack and high damage or moderate attack and extreme damage

Magical Striker high attack and high damage; moderate to high spell DCs; either a scattering of innate spells or prepared/spontaneous spells up to half the creature's level (rounded up) minus 1

Skill Paragon high or extreme ability score matching its best skills; typically high Reflex or Will and low Fort; many skills at moderate or high and potentially one or two extreme skills; at least one special ability to use the creature's skills in combat

Skirmisher high Dex; low Fortitude, high Reflex; higher Speed than typical

Sniper high Perception; high Dex; low Fortitude, high Reflex; moderate to low HP; ranged Strikes have high attack and damage or moderate attack and extreme damage (melee Strikes are weaker)

Soldier high Str; high to extreme AC; high Fortitude; high attack and high damage; Attack of Opportunity or other tactical abilities

Spellcaster high or extreme in a corresponding mental modifier; low Fortitude, high Will; low HP; low attack bonus and medium or low damage; high or extreme spell DCs; prepared or spontaneous spells up to half the creature's level (rounded up)

CONVERTING FIRST EDITION CREATURES

If you're converting creatures from First Edition, you won't find a direct numerical conversion. Instead, use the original stats to create your roadmap, giving a better AC to a creature that had a good AC in First Edition, and so on.

Here are the main areas of difference that you'll want to keep in mind for your conversion.

1. Ability modifiers scale differently, so don't copy them over exactly. The highest modifiers tend not to get as high in 2nd edition. You'll rarely see a +10 Strength, for example. Creatures also tend to get better low stats at higher levels, particularly in Dexterity and Wisdom, than they used to. This is most evident in high-level First Edition creatures with awful Dexterity.

2. Low-Intelligence creatures, particularly animals, tend to have more special actions than they would have in 1st edition. This is to make encounters with them more dynamic and different. Compare dinosaurs between the editions for good examples.

3. When converting spell-like abilities to innate spells, you might need to make some substitutions. Some spells will appear as heightened versions of spells (such as *greater dispel magic* now being a heightened *dispel magic*), but others will require you to find something different. Also, don't feel like you need to keep every spell. Focus on the most thematic and potent ones. The Spells section on page 65 has more advice on this subject.

4. Damage reduction has been replaced with two sets of rules: a resistance to all damage (possibly with exceptions) or more HP and a weakness. The Immunities, Weaknesses, and Resistances section on page 63 describes the distinction.

5. If you want to convert spell resistance over, you can give the creature a +1 status bonus to all saves vs. magic, or +2 if it had abnormally high spell resistance for its level, such as a rakshasa.

PERCEPTION

Perception is a fairly straightforward statistic. Use Wisdom as a guide for setting it, and adjust to the high side if your creature has acute senses or extra training. If your creature had low Wisdom, for example, it would probably have a low Perception modifier, or moderate if it's supposed to be a great hunter. Perception shouldn't be artificially high, even though it's used for initiative. (Also note that some creatures with worse Perception might have a good Stealth modifier to use for initiative instead.)

SENSES

Choose or design any special senses for your creature, such as low-light vision, darkvision, or scent. If you're making a sense from scratch, simply decide what it senses, whether it has a range limit, and whether it's precise or imprecise. For example, the sinspawn (on page 297 of the *Bestiary*) has "sin scent (imprecise) 30 feet." This means it can smell creatures bearing its sin if they're within 30 feet, and the sense is imprecise—as acute as human hearing.

TABLE 2–2: PERCEPTION

Level	Extreme	High	Moderate	Low	Terrible
–1	+9	+8	+5	+2	+0
0	+10	+9	+6	+3	+1
1	+11	+10	+7	+4	+2
2	+12	+11	+8	+5	+3
3	+14	+12	+9	+6	+4
4	+15	+14	+11	+8	+6
5	+17	+15	+12	+9	+7
6	+18	+17	+14	+11	+8
7	+20	+18	+15	+12	+10
8	+21	+19	+16	+13	+11
9	+23	+21	+18	+15	+12
10	+24	+22	+19	+16	+14
11	+26	+24	+21	+18	+15
12	+27	+25	+22	+19	+16
13	+29	+26	+23	+20	+18
14	+30	+28	+25	+22	+19
15	+32	+29	+26	+23	+20
16	+33	+30	+28	+25	+22
17	+35	+32	+29	+26	+23
18	+36	+33	+30	+27	+24
19	+38	+35	+32	+29	+26
20	+39	+36	+33	+30	+27
21	+41	+38	+35	+32	+28
22	+43	+39	+36	+33	+30
23	+44	+40	+37	+34	+31
24	+46	+42	+38	+36	+32

LANGUAGES

Think about what languages the creature would need to communicate with other creatures in its home. For instance, many intelligent undead speak Necril, and many creatures from the Darklands speak Undercommon. If you want your creature to be able to speak to the PCs, be sure it has Common; for a creature with no reason to speak the common tongue of your setting (such as most extraplanar creatures in a typical campaign), be sure it doesn't. Some creatures can understand language but not vocalize themselves; in this case, you can state that they can't speak any language. For creatures that need to be able to infiltrate and communicate wherever they go, you might give *tongues* or a similar ability as a constant innate spell.

SKILLS

You have lots of flexibility in setting your creature's skills. Pick some skills you think are appropriate, and consider how good the creature is at them. High skills are roughly on par with a specialized PC of the creature's level; sometimes they're a little lower or higher. Most creatures have at least one high skill, but no more than three. The best skills typically go with the best ability modifiers, and you might even want to estimate skills using proficiencies like you would with a PC. Some skills can get a high bonus "for free" to fit the creature's theme, particularly Lore skills.

Most creatures don't have an extreme skill unless they are world class for their level, like a succubus's Diplomacy. Having an extreme skill is less impactful than an extreme AC or attack bonus, but still might warrant sacrifice elsewhere, especially if the creature also has more high skills than usual. There's no need for "terrible" skill modifiers, since an untrained skill usually represents that.

TABLE 2–3: SKILLS

Level	Extreme	High	Moderate	Low
–1	+8	+5	+4	+2 to +1
0	+9	+6	+5	+3 to +2
1	+10	+7	+6	+4 to +3
2	+11	+8	+7	+5 to +4
3	+13	+10	+9	+7 to +5
4	+15	+12	+10	+8 to +7
5	+16	+13	+12	+10 to +8
6	+18	+15	+13	+11 to +9
7	+20	+17	+15	+13 to +11
8	+21	+18	+16	+14 to +12
9	+23	+20	+18	+16 to +13
10	+25	+22	+19	+17 to +15
11	+26	+23	+21	+19 to +16
12	+28	+25	+22	+20 to +17
13	+30	+27	+24	+22 to +19
14	+31	+28	+25	+23 to +20
15	+33	+30	+27	+25 to +21
16	+35	+32	+28	+26 to +23
17	+36	+33	+30	+28 to +24
18	+38	+35	+31	+29 to +25
19	+40	+37	+33	+31 to +27
20	+41	+38	+34	+32 to +28
21	+43	+40	+36	+34 to +29
22	+45	+42	+37	+35 to +31
23	+46	+43	+38	+36 to +32
24	+48	+45	+40	+38 to +33

SPECIAL MODIFIERS

You can also add special, thematic modifiers for certain skill uses. For instance, you might give a creature that secretes adhesive "Athletics +7 (+9 to Climb or Grab)." This special bonus should probably still remain at or below the extreme number, especially if it has a combat purpose like the Grab bonus above.

ITEMS

If you gave a creature gear equivalent to a PC, defeating a gang of thieves would give your party a huge amount of treasure! Using Table 2–4: Safe Items can help you avoid that. A creature can have a single permanent item of the listed level without issue. For example, if a 6th-level creature has a +1 weapon, that item's not amazing for the PCs, but it's also not worth so much that they would be massively rich if they encountered many creatures of that type and sold everything they found. You can give a creature several lower-level items too. Just pay attention to

your overall treasure as measured against the guidelines on page 508–510 of the *Core Rulebook*. At the lowest levels, a creature can certainly have multiple level 0 items even though normally the table means the creature has only one item of the level listed in the Safe Item Level column.

Specific creatures or NPCs have more leeway to break these guidelines because you can plan the rest of your adventure's loot around them, not to mention that giving a boss villain a powerful magic item makes the fight and its aftermath more interesting.

TABLE 2–4: SAFE ITEMS

Creature Level	Safe Item Level
3 or lower	0
4–5	1
6	2 (*+1 weapon*)
7	3
8	4 (*+1 striking weapon*)
9	5 (*+1 armor*)
10	6
11	7
12	8 (*+1 resilient armor*)
13	9
14	10 (*+2 striking weapon*)
15	11 (*+2 resilient armor*)
16	12 (*+2 greater striking weapon*)
17	13
18	14 (*+2 greater resilient armor*)
19	15
20	16 (*+3 greater striking weapon*)
21	17
22	18 (*+3 greater resilient armor*)
23	19 (*+3 major striking weapon*)
24	20 (*+3 major resilient armor*)

ARMOR CLASS

Because AC is one of the most important combat stats, you need to be more careful with setting this number for any creature you expect will end up in a fight. Low AC typically fits spellcasters, who compensate with their

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selection of powerful spells. High and moderate statistics are close together—most creatures use these. High is close to what a PC fighter would have. Reserve extreme values for a creature that is even better defended; these values are for creatures that have defenses similar to champion or monk.

Extreme saves often pair with extreme or high ability modifiers. Almost no creature should have more than one extreme save, even at higher levels. Terrible saves can be given to creatures who have a clear weak point, like a nearly immobile creature's Reflex save.

TABLE 2–5: ARMOR CLASS

Level	Extreme	High	Moderate	Low
–1	18	15	14	12
0	19	16	15	13
1	19	16	15	13
2	21	18	17	15
3	22	19	18	16
4	24	21	20	18
5	25	22	21	19
6	27	24	23	21
7	28	25	24	22
8	30	27	26	24
9	31	28	27	25
10	33	30	29	27
11	34	31	30	28
12	36	33	32	30
13	37	34	33	31
14	39	36	35	33
15	40	37	36	34
16	42	39	38	36
17	43	40	39	37
18	45	42	41	39
19	46	43	42	40
20	48	45	44	42
21	49	46	45	43
22	51	48	47	45
23	52	49	48	46
24	54	51	50	48

TABLE 2–6: SAVING THROWS

Level	Extreme	High	Moderate	Low	Terrible
–1	+9	+8	+5	+2	+0
0	+10	+9	+6	+3	+1
1	+11	+10	+7	+4	+2
2	+12	+11	+8	+5	+3
3	+14	+12	+9	+6	+4
4	+15	+14	+11	+8	+6
5	+17	+15	+12	+9	+7
6	+18	+17	+14	+11	+8
7	+20	+18	+15	+12	+10
8	+21	+19	+16	+13	+11
9	+23	+21	+18	+15	+12
10	+24	+22	+19	+16	+14
11	+26	+24	+21	+18	+15
12	+27	+25	+22	+19	+16
13	+29	+26	+23	+20	+18
14	+30	+28	+25	+22	+19
15	+32	+29	+26	+23	+20
16	+33	+30	+28	+25	+22
17	+35	+32	+29	+26	+23
18	+36	+33	+30	+27	+24
19	+38	+35	+32	+29	+26
20	+39	+36	+33	+30	+27
21	+41	+38	+35	+32	+28
22	+43	+39	+36	+33	+30
23	+44	+40	+37	+34	+31
24	+46	+42	+38	+36	+32

COMPENSATING WITH HP AND SAVES

You might adjust your creature's HP, AC, and saves in tandem. Almost no creature has great defenses in all areas; making such a creature will often result in frustrating fights. A creature with higher AC might have fewer HP and weaker saves, and one that's easy to hit could take more damage and have a strong Fortitude. This depends on the theme of the creature. An extreme AC might mean reducing the creature's HP to the next lowest category, or reducing its HP by a smaller amount and making another reduction elsewhere.

SAVING THROWS

You can often set saves quickly by assigning one high, one moderate, and one low modifier. Some creatures might vary from this, either because they have poor AC but better saves or because they should thematically have multiple good saves and compensate elsewhere. You have more flexibility with saves, and having one save off the listed number by 1 is rarely a big deal. Pay attention to the creature's Con, Dex, and Wis—these don't have to correspond to the creature's saves exactly, but they should inform your choices.

HIT POINTS

Give a creature HP in the moderate range unless its theme strongly suggests it should use another range. Spellcasters, for example, often have low HP. Brutish creatures usually have high HP, compensating with lower AC, weaker saves, few tactical options, or other limitations. As mentioned in the Armor Class section on page 61, you don't want a creature with extreme AC to have high HP too.

Hit Points are closely tied in with immunities, weaknesses, and resistances, so if your creature has any of those, look at that section before finalizing HP.

REGENERATION AND HEALING ABILITIES

Your creature might regenerate, possess fast healing, or have some other ability to heal itself. These can really affect the flow of a fight. Regeneration or fast healing heals back some number of hits each round, so look at the high damage value on Table 2–10: Strike Damage (page 65) and see how many hits it should be able to heal back each round. Usually, regeneration should heal back one hit or a hit and a half. For instance, if the high

damage is 20, regeneration between 20 to 30 makes sense. The value should be higher if the regeneration is easy to overcome—and remember that most regeneration gets easier to overcome at higher levels. Also, you might want to decrease the creature's total HP by double its regeneration value. Fast healing follows the same rules, but because it can't prevent a creature's death and doesn't always have a way to deactivate it, it's typically less interesting to put on a creature than regeneration, so you might want to just give the creature more Hit Points instead of fast healing to keep things simple.

If a creature can take an action that heals it, the healing is usually higher because the creature must spend its actions on it. An at-will healing ability should be based on a *heal* spell 2 levels lower than the highest-level spell a creature of that level could ordinarily cast (for example, an 11th-level creature can typically cast up to 6th-level spells, so a 4th-level spell). If the ability both deals damage and heals, use the same baseline scale as *vampiric touch*.

TABLE 2–7: HIT POINTS

Level	High	Moderate	Low
–1	9	8–7	6–5
0	20–17	16–14	13–11
1	26–24	21–19	16–14
2	40–36	32–28	25–21
3	59–53	48–42	37–31
4	78–72	63–57	48–42
5	97–91	78–72	59–53
6	123–115	99–91	75–67
7	148–140	119–111	90–82
8	173–165	139–131	105–97
9	198–190	159–151	120–112
10	223–215	179–171	135–127
11	248–240	199–191	150–142
12	273–265	219–211	165–157
13	298–290	239–231	180–172
14	323–315	259–251	195–187
15	348–340	279–271	210–202
16	373–365	299–291	225–217
17	398–390	319–311	240–232
18	423–415	339–331	255–247
19	448–440	359–351	270–262
20	473–465	379–371	285–277
21	505–495	405–395	305–295
22	544–532	436–424	329–317
23	581–569	466–454	351–339
24	633–617	508–492	383–367

IMMUNITIES, WEAKNESSES, AND RESISTANCES

If it's highly thematic for a creature to have an immunity, weakness, or resistance, add it. The Resistances and Weaknesses table lists the ranges for weaknesses and resistances by level.

Immunities should be reserved for creatures that are made of a substance (like a fire elemental being immune to fire). You can also give an immunity when your creature's biology or construction would logically cause it to be unaffected (like a mindless creature's immunity to mental effects).

If the creature should be hard to affect with something, but the above isn't true, give it a resistance instead. For instance, a giant octopus isn't actually made of cold water, so it wouldn't be immune to cold, but it'd still be resistant from its life in the ocean depths. You'll typically use the lower end of the value on the table for a broad resistance that applies to a wide range of effects, like "physical 5 (except silver)" and the higher end for something more narrow, like a single damage type. A creature with resistances, especially broad ones or against physical damage, usually has fewer HP.

Giving your creature a weakness can add flavor to your creature, and it greatly rewards effective player tactics once your players identify the weakness. You'll want it to apply to one damage type or phenomenon, and use the high end of the scale. Creatures typically don't have more than one weakness. If a creature has a weakness, especially to something fairly common, give it additional HP. The amount of extra HP might depend on how tough the creature should feel if you don't exploit its weakness. A tough creature might have additional HP equal to quadruple the weakness value, whereas a weakness that is hard to exploit probably gives the creature extra HP equal to its weakness value, or less.

TABLE 2–8: RESISTANCES AND WEAKNESSES

Level	Maximum	Minimum
–1	1	1
0	3	1
1	3	2
2	5	2
3	6	3
4	7	4
5	8	4
6	9	5
7	10	5
8	11	6
9	12	6
10	13	7
11	14	7
12	15	8
13	16	8
14	17	9
15	18	9
16	19	9
17	19	10
18	20	10
19	21	11
20	22	11
21	23	12
22	24	12
23	25	13
24	26	13

More HP and a weakness has a different feel from standard HP with resistances. If the creature being an impervious tank really a fits its theme, use a resistance with an exception, such as "physical 5 (except silver)." If, however, it makes more sense for normal hits to get through and the creature to have great staying power, use more HP and a weakness. Skeletons and zombies are a good example of the difference between these styles. Skeletons have resistances because they're bony and hard to hurt, but zombies have more HP and a weakness to slashing damage. They're tougher, but their bodies aren't built to deflect weapon attacks, and slashing attacks can rip them up quickly.

SPEED

Your creature's Speed should be 25 if it moves just like a human. Beyond that, you can set the Speed to whatever makes sense. Remember that the creature can move triple this number if it spends its whole turn, so if you want the PCs to be able to chase the creature you can only go so high. Creatures at higher levels will need ways to deal with flying PCs, very fast PCs, and more efficient actions at the PCs' disposal that let them engage and retreat more easily. This might mean adding a fly Speed, giving the creature ranged attacks, and so forth.

Creatures can have climb and swim Speeds even at low levels. While fly Speeds can also be there from the start, its better to wait until around 7th level (when PCs gain access to *fly*) to give your creature a fly Speed if it also has ranged attacks or otherwise has a way to harry the PCs from a distance indefinitely.

STRIKES

When building your creature's selection of Strikes, use the table below to set the attack bonus and the section beyond for damage. Give the attack all the normal traits if it's a weapon; for unarmed attacks or weapons you invent, give whatever traits you feel are appropriate. Note that these traits might influence the damage you give the Strike.

Use a high attack modifier for combat creatures—fighter types—which also usually have high damage. A creature could shift its attack modifier up while simultaneously, shifting its damage down, or vice versa (for instance, a moderate attack modifier and extreme damage might fit a creature that's more like a barbarian), instead of having a poor statistic in another category. Spellcasters typically have poor attack, potentially in exchange for extreme spell DCs.

You might want to make sure a creature has an unarmed attack if you think they're likely to get disarmed. At 7th level and higher, PCs might have the ability to fly, which makes it more important for creatures to have decent ranged Strikes to make sure they aren't totally hopeless against flying PCs (though they might instead have fast fly Speeds or something similar).

TABLE 2–9: ATTACK BONUS

Level	Extreme	High	Moderate	Low
–1	+10	+8	+6	+4
0	+10	+8	+6	+4
1	+11	+9	+7	+5
2	+13	+11	+9	+7
3	+14	+12	+10	+8
4	+16	+14	+12	+9
5	+17	+15	+13	+11
6	+19	+17	+15	+12
7	+20	+18	+16	+13
8	+22	+20	+18	+15
9	+23	+21	+19	+16
10	+25	+23	+21	+17
11	+27	+24	+22	+19
12	+28	+26	+24	+20
13	+29	+27	+25	+21
14	+31	+29	+27	+23
15	+32	+30	+28	+24
16	+34	+32	+30	+25
17	+35	+33	+31	+27
18	+37	+35	+33	+28
19	+38	+36	+34	+29
20	+40	+38	+36	+31
21	+41	+39	+37	+32
22	+43	+41	+39	+33
23	+44	+42	+40	+35
24	+46	+44	+42	+36

STRIKE DAMAGE

The table below gives the amount of damage a creature should deal with a single Strike. You might use a lower category if the creature has better accuracy, or a higher category if its accuracy is lower.

A creature that's meant to be primarily a combat threat uses high damage for its melee Strikes, or moderate for melee Strikes that have the agile trait. Ranged attacks more typically use the moderate value, or maybe low. A creature that's meant to be highly damaging uses the extreme damage values, but might have a moderate attack bonus. As with most stats, extreme damage is more likely at higher levels. You can also use the extreme value for special attacks that the creature can use only a limited number of times or under circumstances that aren't likely to happen every round.

More versatile creatures, such as ones that can cast some spells and aren't meant to primarily get their damage through Strikes, go one category lower: medium for their main melee Strikes, low for agile and ranged Strikes. Spellcasters and other creatures that aren't meant to be competent in a direct fight might use the low damage value, or even less if they completely don't care about their Strikes.

On the Strike damage table, you'll find a damage expression (dice plus a flat modifier) you can use as is, or you can take the damage in parentheses and build your

own damage expression. If you do the latter, remember that a d4 counts as 2.5 damage, a d6 as 3.5, a d8 as 4.5, a d10 as 5.5, and a d12 as 6.5. Usually, a damage expression works best when it's roughly half the damage from dice and half from the flat modifier. If your creature gets special damage, like 1d6 fire from flaming attacks, that needs to come out of its total damage per Strike. Keep in mind that a creature using a weapon should have a damage value that feels right for that weapon. A dagger-wielder dealing extreme damage isn't a common sight without something like sneak attack to boost the damage—that's usually reserved for two-handed weapons that deal d10s or d12s for damage. However, the dagger-wielder might have the ability to attack several times or use other sorts of tricks.

TABLE 2–10: STRIKE DAMAGE

Level	Extreme	High	Moderate	Low
–1	1d6+1 (4)	1d4+1 (3)	1d4 (3)	1d4 (2)
0	1d6+3 (6)	1d6+2 (5)	1d4+2 (4)	1d4+1 (3)
1	1d8+4 (8)	1d6+3 (6)	1d6+2 (5)	1d4+2 (4)
2	1d12+4 (11)	1d10+4 (9)	1d8+4 (8)	1d6+3 (6)
3	1d12+8 (15)	1d10+6 (12)	1d8+6 (10)	1d6+5 (8)
4	2d10+7 (18)	2d8+5 (14)	2d6+5 (12)	2d4+4 (9)
5	2d12+7 (20)	2d8+7 (16)	2d6+6 (13)	2d4+6 (11)
6	2d12+10 (23)	2d8+9 (18)	2d6+8 (15)	2d4+7 (12)
7	2d12+12 (25)	2d10+9 (20)	2d8+8 (17)	2d6+6 (13)
8	2d12+15 (28)	2d10+11 (22)	2d8+9 (18)	2d6+8 (15)
9	2d12+17 (30)	2d10+13 (24)	2d8+11 (20)	2d6+9 (16)
10	2d12+20 (33)	2d12+13 (26)	2d10+11 (22)	2d6+10 (17)
11	2d12+22 (35)	2d12+15 (28)	2d10+12 (23)	2d8+10 (19)
12	3d12+19 (38)	3d10+14 (30)	3d8+12 (25)	3d6+10 (20)
13	3d12+21 (40)	3d10+16 (32)	3d8+14 (27)	3d6+11 (21)
14	3d12+24 (43)	3d10+18 (34)	3d8+15 (28)	3d6+13 (23)
15	3d12+26 (45)	3d12+17 (36)	3d10+14 (30)	3d6+14 (24)
16	3d12+29 (48)	3d12+18 (37)	3d10+15 (31)	3d6+15 (25)
17	3d12+31 (50)	3d12+19 (38)	3d10+16 (32)	3d6+16 (26)
18	3d12+34 (53)	3d12+20 (40)	3d10+17 (33)	3d6+17 (27)
19	4d12+29 (55)	4d10+20 (42)	4d8+17 (35)	4d6+14 (28)
20	4d12+32 (58)	4d10+22 (44)	4d8+19 (37)	4d6+15 (29)
21	4d12+34 (60)	4d10+24 (46)	4d8+20 (38)	4d6+17 (31)
22	4d12+37 (63)	4d10+26 (48)	4d8+22 (40)	4d6+18 (32)
23	4d12+39 (65)	4d12+24 (50)	4d10+20 (42)	4d6+19 (33)
24	4d12+42 (68)	4d12+26 (52)	4d10+22 (44)	4d6+21 (35)

SPELLS

Your creature might have magical abilities that are best represented by spells. If you're making a highly spellcasting-themed creature, give it prepared or spontaneous spells. For a creature that has spells due to its magical nature, especially if that magic isn't its core focus, look at giving it some innate spells instead. How many spells you give a creature should depend on how you expect it to spend its actions in combat. If it's primarily going to making Strikes, it might not have any spells, or just have a few to help it move around better or protect against certain types of magic.

When choosing spells, lean hard into the creature's theme. Many PCs choose spells to cover a wide variety of situations, but creatures are more evocative the more focused they are. Consider selecting 75% of spells based on relevance to the theme and the remaining 25% for other things. However, make sure the spells aren't one note. Selecting *fireball* for 75% of a creature's spell slots doesn't make for a compelling fire creature in the way a diverse selection of fire spells would.

When choosing spells, pay attention to heightened versions, as some spells won't be very useful if prepared at their minimum level despite the creature having higher-level spell slots. Most notably, damaging spells drop off in usefulness for a creature that's only expected to last a single fight. A damaging spell two levels below the highest level a creature of that level can cast is still potentially useful, but beyond that don't bother. Spells that have the incapacitation trait should be in the highest level slot if you want the creature to potentially get their full effect against PCs.

SPELL DC AND SPELL ATTACK ROLL

Set the creature's spell DC and spell attack roll using the following table. Most creatures use the same DC for all their spells, even if they have multiple types, such as a creature with both prepared spells and innate spells.

Use the high numbers for primary casters, and moderate for creatures that have some supplemental spells but are focused more on combat. At 15th level and higher, the extreme numbers become standard for spellcasters. A few might hit extreme at lower levels, but they tend to be highly specialized, with very weak defenses and attacks. Secondary spellcasters can go up to high numbers if they're above level 15 and have offensive spells. There is no low value—the creature shouldn't have any spells in the first place if it would be that bad at using them!

TABLE 2–11: SPELL DC AND SPELL ATTACK ROLL

Level	DC	Extreme Spell Attack	DC	High Spell Attack	DC	Moderate Spell Attack
–1	19	+11	16	+8	13	+5
0	19	+11	16	+8	13	+5
1	20	+12	17	+9	14	+6
2	22	+14	18	+10	15	+7
3	23	+15	20	+12	17	+9
4	25	+17	21	+13	18	+10
5	26	+18	22	+14	19	+11
6	27	+19	24	+16	21	+13
7	29	+21	25	+17	22	+14
8	30	+22	26	+18	23	+15
9	32	+24	28	+20	25	+17
10	33	+25	29	+21	26	+18
11	34	+26	30	+22	27	+19
12	36	+28	32	+24	29	+21
13	37	+29	33	+25	30	+22
14	39	+31	34	+26	31	+23
15	40	+32	36	+28	33	+25
16	41	+33	37	+29	34	+26
17	43	+35	38	+30	35	+27
18	44	+36	40	+32	37	+29
19	46	+38	41	+33	38	+30
20	47	+39	42	+34	39	+31
21	48	+40	44	+36	41	+33
22	50	+42	45	+37	42	+34
23	51	+43	46	+38	43	+35
24	52	+44	48	+40	45	+37

PREPARED AND SPONTANEOUS SPELLS

Spell slots work best for creatures that are meant to play like spellcasters. Choose the magical tradition best suited to the creature. You aren't strictly limited to that tradition's spell list, though sticking close to it will make your creature's connection to that tradition more clear. The decision to use prepared or spontaneous spellcasting should align with the creature's theme. As a one-off creature, a spontaneous spellcaster will have more flexibility in combat and is thus more effective than a prepared spellcaster. However, if you expect the creature to be a recurring character, a prepared spellcaster might be able to change their spells between appearances in a way a spontaneous caster can't.

The highest spell level a creature can cast equals half its level rounded up, at maximum for a creature that can cast the same number of spells as a PC spellcaster. The maximum number of spell slots it has of that spell level is 2 or 3 if the creature's level is odd, or 3 or 4 if it's even. Then, every spell level below gets 3 or 4 spell slots (depending on what you picked for its highest level), and the creature gets 5 cantrips.

Because creatures tend to be "on stage" for only a short period of time, you usually don't need to fill every single spell slot. You can often fill just the top three levels of spells, pick cantrips, and maybe slot in a few thematic backup spells in the fourth level down. For a creature you expect to recur, you might give it the full complement of spells.

INNATE SPELLS

Unlike prepared or spontaneous spells, innate spells can be of higher level than half the creature's level rounded up, and you can choose how often they're used—they can even be used at-will or be constant effects. The most notable innate spells tend to be top-level ones that make a big impact but can be used only once, at-will spells that strongly reinforce the creature's theme, and constant spells that give it an ongoing benefit. A spell that's usable a limited number of times and falls at a lower level than the top tier tends to be less interesting and less likely to come up in play. However, that's a great spot for utility and recovery spells, such as *restoration* or *dispel magic*.

Sometimes a strongly thematic innate spell is higher than the creature would normally be able to cast, but it's so fitting that it belongs there. Be careful when doing this, as PCs might not have their normal countermeasures for the spell. This spot works best for "helper" spells that change the odds of a fight without outright killing anyone, such as the succubus's *dominate* spell. These should make the fight more interesting, not end it. Keep the number of such spells very low, typically just one.

Though you can achieve all sorts of things with innate spells, always start with theme and with an idea of how you want the creature spending its actions. Sure, you could give the creature a tool to counter every kind of PC attack or

trick, but remember that the players chose those options to enjoy using them, rather than to be constantly foiled while tiring effortlessly against an effectively invincible creature.

RITUALS

Since rituals happen during downtime, giving them to a creature is usually a purely thematic choice. You can skip even looking at rituals in most cases. If you decide a creature needs to have a ritual for your story, add in the ritual whenever you need it.

DESIGN ABILITIES

As noted back in the creature concept step, you should have decided upon some linchpin abilities you plan to design. Again, you can look at existing creature abilities from the *Bestiary* and feats from the *Core Rulebook* and use them as printed or modify them to fit your needs.

When choosing abilities, think about both the number of abilities and the diversity of abilities. Having a large number of similar abilities can make the creature tougher to run, and means it probably won't use them all! Diversity of abilities gives the creature different ways to act in different situations, and helps guide you as GM. For instance, a combat creature might have one ability it uses to get into position, another to use when it wants to focus damage on a single enemy, and a third that's more defensive.

BASICS OF ABILITY DESIGN

There are a few principles of ability construction that you'll want to keep in mind. Some guidance for specific types of abilities will come later, but these apply to everything.

- Respect the action economy.
- Make sure abilities are level-appropriate.
- Avoid "invisible" abilities.

ACTION ECONOMY

Core to making a creature work is understanding its action economy. Remember how short the lifespan of a typical combat creature is. Including a bunch of combat abilities might mean you spend time building actions the creature will never have time to use. Narrow your selections down to the smallest and most compelling set that makes sense. Also keep in mind that special actions will compete for time with any combat spells you gave the creature.

Reactions can help somewhat, giving the creature a way to act when it's not its turn. See the Reactive Abilities section for advice on designing these tricky abilities.

Because of PC capabilities at higher levels, creatures at those levels should get more advantages to their action economy. For instance, creatures that grapple should have Improved Grab instead of Grab, Speeds should be higher, and many abilities that would have cost an action at a lower level should be free actions.

FOCUS SPELLS

Some creatures have focus spells, especially when a set of focus spells clearly fits a creature's theme. Simply give the creature the focus spells you like and between 1 and 3 Focus Points (you can also allow your creature to cast a focus spell using spell slots). Use the same DC and spell attack roll as any other spell. A creature that has just 1 Focus Point is likely to cast a focus spell only once, unless it's a recurring enemy. If the creature has plenty of spells already, you might want to skip the focus spells altogether, as they aren't as strong as top-level spell slots.

LEVEL APPROPRIATENESS

The effects of an ability should be appropriate to the creature's level. For damaging abilities, that really just means they follow the damage guidelines below. For others, take a look at spells and feats with a similar effect to see if they're appropriate. For instance, say you're considering giving a 6th-level creature the ability to teleport a short distance. Something comparable is *dimension door*. That's a 4th-level spell, normally cast by a 7th-level or higher creature. That means 6th level probably isn't too low, but the creature shouldn't be able to use the ability more than once! You can also compare your creature to those in a *Bestiary* volume to see if the special abilities seem appropriate to those of other creatures of the same level.

Invisible Abilities

Avoid abilities that do nothing but change the creature's math, also known as "invisible abilities." These alter a creature's stats in a way that's invisible to the players, which makes them less engaging because the players don't see the creature using its abilities in a tangible or evocative way. For example, a creature ability that takes an action to increase its accuracy for the round with no outward sign (or worse, just grants a passive bonus to its accuracy) isn't that compelling, whereas one that increases its damage by lighting its arrows on fire is noticeable. These both work toward the same goal—dealing more damage this round—but one is far more memorable.

ACTIVE ABILITIES

Abilities a creature uses on its turn have the most flexibility and scope. You can have them spend 1 to 3 actions as needed (or be free actions in rare cases), and use just about any type of tactic. Feats, spells, and creature abilities provide a wide variety of examples here, so look for something similar to your idea to use as a basis.

Consider how you want your creature to spend its turns. Two-action activities pretty much define the creature's turn, and single actions work best for supplemental benefits or normal Strikes. And as you build out your idea of a creature's turn, don't forget about movement! Remember that, especially early in a fight, a creature often needs to spend actions getting into position. This is especially challenging with melee-only creatures. You can give such creatures abilities similar to Sudden Charge or the deadly mantis's Leaping Grab.

Use 3-action activities sparingly, as they become useless if the creature is slowed or stunned. Putting a 3-action ability that's crucial to define the creature might mean it never uses its most interesting tactic. These activities should be reserved for abilities that include some movement (such as Trample), or that the creature is likely to use before it's engaged in combat. Don't use three actions as a balance point. In other words, saying "This can be more powerful than other abilities because it is less likely to work," is a recipe for frustration if you've made a cool ability that's too hard or even impossible for the creature to use.

Be especially careful with activities when designing boss creatures. They're likely to get targeted with the PCs' worst debuffs, get grabbed, become slowed, or otherwise have their actions restricted. Bosses need to have some solid options they can take with 1 or 2 actions. This lets them save their third action to get away, use a simple ability, or otherwise keep the fight dynamic.

Free Actions

Use free actions that don't have triggers sparingly. They should almost always be used for "helper" actions, not Strikes or movement. If you come up with a free action, consider whether it should be its own action or whether you're really looking for a combo, such as drawing a weapon and attacking. In cases like the latter, you might be better off making a single action that allows the creature to draw a weapon and then Strike instead of creating a free action to draw a weapon.

Damage of Abilities

If a special action is a single action with only one target, you can often set damage using Table 2–10: Strike Damage on page 65. If it takes more than one action or requires set-up in some way, it might deal higher damage than is typical. Often you can get there just by using the extreme column.

For abilities that deal damage in an area, use the Area Damage table below. These numbers are based on a 2-action activity (i.e., most damaging spells). Single actions should do much less damage. Of course, an ability that has another significant effect, like applying a condition, should deal less damage; for this, you can look at the damage for two or more levels lower, and judge based on the severity of the additional effect. Area damage typically allows a basic saving throw. The table includes values for unlimited-use abilities (ones that can be used at-will) and limited-use ones (which can be used once or, like a Breath Weapon, once or twice and not on consecutive turns).

As with the Strikes damage table, you can either use the dice given or generate your own based on the average damage in parentheses. If a high-level effect has a small area for its level, it might deal more damage.

TABLE 2–12: AREA DAMAGE

Level	Unlimited Use	Limited Use
–1	1d4 (2)	1d6 (4)
0	1d6 (4)	1d10 (6)
1	2d4 (5)	2d6 (7)
2	2d6 (7)	3d6 (11)
3	2d8 (9)	4d6 (14)
4	3d6 (11)	5d6 (18)
5	2d10 (12)	6d6 (21)
6	4d6 (14)	7d6 (25)
7	4d6 (15)	8d6 (28)
8	5d6 (17)	9d6 (32)
9	5d6 (18)	10d6 (35)
10	6d6 (20)	11d6 (39)
11	6d6 (21)	12d6 (42)
12	5d8 (23)	13d6 (46)
13	7d6 (24)	14d6 (49)
14	4d12 (26)	15d6 (53)
15	8d6 (27)	16d6 (56)
16	8d6 (28)	17d6 (60)
17	8d6 (29)	18d6 (63)
18	9d6 (30)	19d6 (67)
19	9d6 (32)	20d6 (70)
20	6d10 (33)	21d6 (74)
21	10d6 (35)	22d6 (77)
22	8d8 (36)	23d6 (81)
23	11d6 (38)	24d6 (84)
24	11d6 (39)	25d6 (88)

DEFENSIVE ABILITIES

Active offensive abilities usually fit creatures better than defensive abilities do. Save defense increases for creatures that are strongly defense-themed. For martial creatures, something as simple as a shield and Shield Block is usually plenty. Defensive abilities often run the risk of being invisible abilities. For good examples, look at spells like *sanctuary* for ideas, or other spells that create interesting protective effects instead of just granting a bonus. If you do want to make a creature defensive, pick one defensive ability rather than several, since stacking up multiple defenses can make for a frustrating fight. One solid style of defensive ability is a mode switch, which causes the creature to get stronger defenses, but limits its attacks, spells, or other offensive options.

REACTIVE ABILITIES

Reactions and free actions with triggers can give a creature an impact outside its turn. This can make the fight more interesting, but may also be risky. It's tempting to give every creature a reaction, but that's not necessarily a good idea. To decide whether your creature should have a reaction, first consider if the creature has the reflexes or insight to react well in the first place. Oozes, constructs, and unintelligent creatures are less likely to have reactions than others for this reason. For instance, an ogre doesn't have Attack of Opportunity because it's a big oaf.

Second, look at the complexity of the encounter your creature is likely to appear in. If you'll have a large number of creatures, skipping reactions can make the fight flow faster. A creature that's more likely to fight solo, on the other hand, might have a reaction to give it a way to continue to be dangerous amid an onslaught of attacks by the party.

When creating reactions, be careful with "gotcha" abilities. These are reactions that punish the players for making perfectly reasonable choices, for rolling poorly, and so on. If you include abilities like this, they need to reinforce the creature's core theme and the play style you want it to use during combat. For example, a creature that Strikes as a reaction when someone fails an attack roll will encourage PCs not to take their second and third attacks, or to not attack at all if their bonuses are low. Is that what you want? Is this dynamic essential for making the creature feel like it's supposed to? This isn't the type of ability you'd throw onto any old creature—only an incredible duelist or something similar. Reactions should also require something out of the ordinary to happen in most cases, or be relatively weak if triggered by something ordinary. Having a reaction that can trigger any time someone attempts a Strike against a creature is likely to be perceived as mundane because it's so predictable.

The best reactions should be telegraphed, so when they happen it makes sense to the players. Think of one of the core reactions of the game: Shield Block. The creature raises its shield—an obvious action the PCs can see—so when it blocks damage from an attack, that makes perfect sense. If you made a crystalline creature, you might have it build up sonic energy in a low thrum, so that when it uses a reaction to release a burst of sonic energy when hit, the players can say, "Oh, I should have seen that coming."

REACTION DAMAGE

Reactions should use lower damage, usually equivalent to a moderate Strike. A reaction dealing area damage (which should be used with caution) might deal low damage.

CONSTANT AND AUTOMATIC ABILITIES

Certain abilities shouldn't take any actions. Auras are one example. Look at frightful presence, the adult red dragon's dragon heat, or a xulgath's stench for examples. Your aura will need a range, and likely a DC. You'll usually set this to the moderate spell DC, unless the aura is one of the core concepts the creature is crafted around. For example, the xulgath's DC is significantly higher because its stench is such an iconic part of the creature.

Abilities the creature has no control over should be automatic. For example, the living wildfire fire elemental explodes into flame when it dies. It has no option not to, so this wouldn't make sense as a reaction or free action. Conversely, the Ferocity ability is a reaction because it requires the creature to give itself a last push to stay at 1 HP.

CONSTANT AND AUTOMATIC DAMAGE

Much like reactions, damage for any constant ability should be pretty low. Usually this value is just below low Strike damage. Automatic abilities like the living wildfire's tend to deal moderate Strike damage or unlimited area damage, and can deal more than that if they only happen after the creature is dead or otherwise no longer presents a threat.

SKILL ABILITIES

A skilled creature might have special abilities related to its skills. The skill feats in the *Core Rulebook* make for a good baseline. Avoid giving your creature skill abilities that won't matter in its interactions with PCs. When NPCs deal with NPCs, you can decide what happens as you like.

REALITY CHECK

Now it's time to look over your creature and do a final check to make sure it's living up to your roadmap. Can it do everything you wanted? Will it fit the role you planned for it? Is there anything you could add or anything superfluous you could cut to get the creature where it needs to be?

If this creature is built for combat, run through a few turns in your head. Does it still work decently if it gets slowed? Can it move into combat against the PCs given their mobility options compared to its own? Does it have any abilities it won't ever use given its other actions?

When you're satisfied with your creation, it's ready to hit the table. But that's not necessarily the end! If you notice issues during the game, you can fix them on the spot! It's your game, and you don't have to be beholden to what you wrote if you think differently later on.

TRAIT ABILITIES

Creatures with certain traits tend to have similar abilities to one another. Many of them appear here, to help you make your creatures match the theme of the trait when you build your own creatures.

ABERRATION

Senses usually darkvision
Languages usually Aklo

AEON

Traits LN, monitor
Languages Utopian and other planar languages; envisioning for true aeons
Weaknesses chaotic
Damage Attacks always deal additional lawful damage.

AIR

Languages usually Auran
Speed Many air creatures have fly Speeds.

ANGEL

Traits good (usually NG), celestial
Aura Angels each have a unique aura based on how they serve as messengers and how they deliver those messages.
Speed usually has a fly Speed
Rituals usually *angelic messenger*

ANIMAL

Traits N
Languages none
Int −4 or −5

ARCHON

Traits LG, celestial
Virtue Ability Archons each represent a specific virtue, like courage or hope, and have a special ability based on the virtue they represent.

ASTRAL

Senses darkvision

AZATA

Traits CG, celestial
Weaknesses cold iron, evil
Freedom Ability Azatas each represent a specific freedom, like free expression or free love, and have a special ability based on the freedom they represent.

BEAST

Int −3 or higher

CELESTIAL

Traits good
Senses darkvision
Languages Celestial

Saves often a +1 status bonus to all saves vs. magic
Weaknesses evil
Damage Attacks always deal additional good damage.

COLD

Immunities or **Resistances** cold

CONSTRUCT

Traits many constructs lack minds and have the mindless trait
Immunities bleed, death effects, diseased, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; if mindless, add mental

DAEMON

Traits NE, fiend
Languages Daemonic, telepathy 100 feet
Immunities death effects
Death Ability Daemons each represent a specific kind of death, like death by disease or starvation, and have a special ability based on the method of death they represent.

DEMON

Traits CE, fiend
Languages Abyssal, telepathy (usually 100 feet)
Weaknesses cold iron, good
HP typically high to account for their multiple weaknesses
Divine Innate Spells usually 5th-level *dimension door* and at-will 4th-level *dimension door*
Rituals usually *Abyssal pact*
Sin Vulnerability Demons each represent a specific sin, like envy or wrath, and have a special vulnerability based on the sin they represent. This should be something the PCs can exploit through their actions, which should then deal mental damage to the demon. The amount of damage should be based on how easy the vulnerability is to exploit.
Sin Ability Demons also have a special ability based on the sin they represent, which either makes them better embody the sin or instills that sin in others.

DEVIL

Traits LE, fiend
Languages Infernal, telepathy (usually 100 feet)
Immunities fire; **Resistances** physical (except silver), poison
Divine Innate Spells usually one 5th-level *dimension door* and at-will 4th-level *dimension door*
Rituals usually *Infernal pact*
Infernal Hierarchy Ability Devils each have an ability corresponding to the role they play in the infernal hierarchy, typically focused around control or being controlled, from the lowly lemure's subservience to the gelugon's tactician of Cocytus and the pit fiend's devil shaping.

DRAGON

Senses darkvision
Languages usually Draconic
Speed usually has a fly Speed

Breath Weapon Many dragons have the Breath Weapon ability, with specifics determined by the theme of the dragon.

EARTH

Perception often tremorsense
Languages usually Terran
Speed usually a burrow Speed

ELEMENTAL

Senses darkvision
Immunities bleed, paralyzed, poison, sleep

ETHEREAL

Senses darkvision

FEY

Senses low-light vision
Languages usually Sylvan, Aklo, or both
Weaknesses cold iron

FIEND

Traits evil
Senses darkvision
Saves often a +1 status bonus to all saves vs. magic
Weaknesses good
Damage Attacks always deal additional evil damage.

FIRE

Languages usually Ignan
Immunities fire; **Resistances** cold

FUNGUS

Traits fungi without minds have the mindless trait
Immunities if mindless, mental; **Weaknesses** sometimes slashing or fire

GIANT

Traits Large or bigger, humanoid
Senses low-light vision
Languages usually Jotun

HUMANOID

Int –3 or higher

INEVITABLE

Traits LN, aeon, monitor
Immunities death effects, disease, emotion, poison, unconscious
Damage Attacks always deal additional lawful damage.

MONITOR

Traits neither good nor evil
Senses darkvision

OOZE

Traits almost all oozes lack minds and have the mindless trait
Senses typically motion sense (*Bestiary* 254) and no vision

AC usually well below the low value for their level
HP usually around double
Immunities critical hits, precision, unconscious, often acid; if it has no vision, add visual effects, if mindless, add mental

PLANT

Traits plants without minds have the mindless trait
Senses usually low-light vision
Immunities if mindless, mental; **Weaknesses** sometimes fire

PROTEAN

Traits CN, monitor
Languages Protean
Weaknesses lawful; **Resistances** precision, protean anatomy
Protean Anatomy (*Bestiary* 237)
Damage attacks always deal additional chaotic damage
Divine Innate Spells constant *freedom of movement*
Change Shape

PSYCHOPOMP

Traits N, monitor
Senses lifesense (typically 60 feet)
Languages Requian
Immunities death effects, disease
Resistances negative, poison
Damage spirit touch (*Bestiary* 270)

RAKSHASA

Traits LE, fiend
Saves usually +2 status to all saves vs. magic (+3 vs. divine magic)
Resistances physical (except piercing)
Change Shape

SPIRIT

Traits incorporeal, often undead

SWARM

Traits size based on the entire mass, usually Large or bigger
HP typically low; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind; **Weaknesses** area damage, splash damage; **Resistances** physical, usually with one physical type having lower or no resistance

UNDEAD

Traits Almost all undead are evil. Ghostly undead have the incorporeal trait. Undead without minds, such as most zombies, have the mindless trait.
Senses darkvision
HP negative healing
Immunities death effects, disease, paralyze, poison, sleep (or unconscious if it never rests at all); if mindless, add mental

WATER

Languages usually Aquan
Speed usually has a swim Speed

DESIGNING NPCS

Creatures that are meant to cleave closely to character classes or intended to represent normal people instead of monstrous creatures are NPCs. They might face more scrutiny around their mechanics than creatures, because a player can more directly compare their rogue to an NPC who acts like a rogue. That doesn't mean you have to build an NPC exactly like a PC, though.

You can build your NPCs just like any other creature. Use the class features and feats of a suitable class to pick abilities, and look at both the class's proficiencies and ability modifiers to determine how strong stats should be. The Class Roadmaps sidebar on page 73 has many prebuilt roadmaps for the *Core Rulebook* classes to get you started.

If the NPC isn't meant to work like a PC class (a baker, for example), instead look at the NPC Gallery on pages 202–249. Compare your NPC to the existing ones to determine their level, and look for abilities that are similar to what yours should have. You can also create new abilities as needed to get the NPC's interactions with the players to express their theme and role in the story. Remember that these NPCs can be level –1 or level 0. They have capabilities below that of PCs, and should typically not use any class features or feats from PC classes. Creatures of these levels tend to be extremely simple, and usually you can just take one from the NPC Gallery and reskin it.

It's highly recommended that you select NPC skills using proficiency ranks as you would a PC, though you don't need to be precise with the number of skill increases you give it. You can give it earlier access to expert, master, or legendary proficiency if they're a skill-based NPC, and hand out better proficiency in narrow areas of expertise, like Engineering Lore for a tinker NPC.

NON-COMBAT LEVEL

An NPC's level should represent its combat prowess. A common person, even if they're important or highly skilled, might not be a combat threat, and consequently have a low level. However, that doesn't mean they can't present a challenge in other types of encounters. This is represented by a non-combat level, and tends to be specific to their area of expertise. For example, the barrister on page 232 of the NPC Gallery is a 4th-level creature in an encounter related to legal matters.

This can go the other way as well, such as with a powerful combat creature that's not suited to social settings. This is usually the case with creatures untrained in mental skills! You can improvise this as you run the game, or plan ahead if you have something particular in mind.

Building a creature's non-combat level is pretty simple. Choose the level you want them to be for the type of challenge you have in mind, and use the skill numbers for that level—typically high or even extreme. Some challenges, such as social challenges, require the creature to have a high Perception and Will DC, so in those cases, you should increase those values as well. These should be set at the moderate or high values for the non-combat level, usually, depending on how adept you want the NPC to be.

The Experience Points gained for besting an NPC depend on how the party overcame them, because XP comes from overcoming a specific challenge. If it was in a non-combat setting of the NPC's specialty, the party gets XP based on the NPC's non-combat level. If they just beat the NPC up, that's going to use the NPC's creature level. Quite often, that means 0 XP and failure at the PCs' objective; for instance, during a baking contest, if the PCs murder the other baker, they will not only be disqualified, they will likely be apprehended for their crime.

PC-STYLE BUILD

If you do choose to build an NPC fully using the PC rules, your NPC should likely end up being an appropriate challenge as a creature of their level. They will likely have lower statistics in some areas than if you had built them using the creature rules, but more options due to their full complement of feats and class features. This is best saved for important, recurring NPCs, especially if they're meant to engage in social or exploration endeavors rather than just battles.

There are still some considerations and shortcuts that can expedite the process and make sure the NPC works as you intend.

- The creature's treasure should follow the Treasure for New Characters rules on page 511 of the *Core Rulebook*. You'll need to account for this in your campaign's overall treasure. You might even want to give the NPC a higher-level item appropriate as a treasure allotment for the level.
- You can expedite ability score generation by just making the starting ability modifiers add up to +9, with no more than one modifier at +4 (and typically no more than one negative modifier). You can skip adding a background if you do this, but you might want to give the creature two skills, which includes one Lore skill, to represent the skills granted by a background.
- It's not necessary to assign every skill feat, particularly for a higher-level NPC. You can just pick the most emblematic ones and gloss over the rest.
- For general feats, Incredible Initiative and Toughness make good choices.
- Most of the guidelines about choosing spells still apply, though you might want a few more utility spells that deal with non-combat challenges, particularly in low-level slots.

CLASS ROADMAPS

You can use these suggestions when creating your roadmap to emulate a PC class, customizing as you see fit. You'll still need to look at the class to pick feats, weapons, and the like. Any statistic that isn't specifically listed can use moderate numbers.

Alchemist low Perception; high Crafting; high Int, moderate or better Dex or Str; low to moderate HP; moderate attack with bombs; infused alchemical items, Quick Bomber if a bomber alchemist, a few other alchemist abilities; it's usually easier to simply give the alchemist its bomb items rather than use Quick Alchemy on the spot.

Barbarian high Athletics; high Str, high to moderate Con; high AC; high Fortitude; high HP; moderate attack and extreme damage (when raging); Rage and a few barbarian abilities

Bard moderate Occultism, high Performance, high Charisma-based skills; high Cha; low Fortitude, moderate to high Will; low to moderate HP; low accuracy; high to extreme spell DC; spontaneous occult spellcasting as a bard of their level; composition spells

Champion low Perception; moderate Religion; high Str or Dex, moderate Cha; extreme AC; low Reflex; moderate attack and high damage; champion's reaction, devotion spells, Shield Block

Cleric (Cloistered) high Perception; high Religion, moderate or high skill themed to deity; low AC; high Wis; low Fortitude, high Will; low to moderate HP; low accuracy; high to extreme spell DC; prepared divine spellcasting as a cleric of their level; divine font; domain spells

Cleric (Warpriest) moderate Perception; moderate Religion, moderate or high skill themed to deity; high Str, moderate Wis; high AC; low Reflex, high Will; high spell DC; prepared divine spellcasting as a cleric of their level; divine font, Shield Block

Druid high Perception; high Nature, moderate or high skill from order; high Wis; high Will; low to moderate HP; low accuracy; high to extreme spell DC; prepared primal spellcasting as a druid of their level; order ability and order spell for their order; Shield Block; add an animal to the encounter for animal order

Fighter high Acrobatics or Athletics; high Str or Dex; high AC; low Will; high attack and high damage; Attack of Opportunity, Shield Block, a few fighter abilities

Monk high Acrobatics and/or Athletics; high Str or Dex, moderate Wis; high or extreme AC; moderate attack and high damage; Flurry of Blows, a few monk abilities (possibly including ki spells)

Ranger high Perception; moderate Nature and moderate to high Survival; high Str or Dex; high AC; moderate attack and high damage (or for a simpler ranger, remove Hunt Prey and just use high attack and high damage); a few ranger abilities

Rogue high Perception; high Dex (unless using a different key ability score using a specific rogue's racket); high Stealth and Thievery, plus more skills than usual; high AC; low Fortitude, high Reflex; low to moderate HP; moderate attack and low to moderate damage before sneak attack plus high or extreme damage with sneak attack; sneak attack, a few rogue abilities

Sorcerer low Perception; moderate bloodline skills and high Charisma-based bloodline skills; high Cha; low AC; low Fortitude; low HP; low accuracy; high to extreme spell DC; spontaneous spellcasting of a tradition based on bloodline as a sorcerer of their level; bloodline spells

Wizard low Perception; high Arcana; high Int; low AC; low Fortitude; low HP; low accuracy; high to extreme spell DC; prepared arcane spellcasting as a wizard of their level; Drain Bonded Item, school spells and additional slots for a specialist (or additional uses of Drain Bonded Item for a universalist)

CLASS ABILITIES

You don't need to give an NPC all the abilities from its class—especially those that just alter numbers. The following abilities are good quick choices that make for more interesting encounters.

Alchemist *Feats* 1st: Quick Bomber; 6th: Debilitating Bomb; 8th: Sticky Bomb; 10th: Expanded Splash, Greater Debilitating Bomb; 14th: True Debilitating Bomb; 18th: Miracle Worker

Barbarian instinct ability and related feats, raging resistance; *Feats* 1st: Raging Intimidation; 2nd: No Escape, Shake it Off; 4th: Fast Movement, Swipe; 6th: Attack of Opportunity, Cleave; 8th: Sudden Leap; 10th: Come and Get Me, Knockback, Terrifying Howl; 14th: Awesome Blow, Whirlwind Strike; 18th: Vicious Evisceration

Bard muse feats; *Feats* 4th: Melodious Spell; 6th: Dirge of Doom, Steady Spellcasting; 10th: Quickened Casting; 14th: Allegro, Soothing Ballad; 16th: Effortless Concentration; 20th: Fatal Aria

Champion divine ally and related feats, divine smite, exalt, feats based on cause; *Feats* 1st: Deity's Domain; 2nd: Divine Grace; 4th: Aura of Courage, Mercy; 6th: Attack of Opportunity; 8th: Greater Mercy; 12th: Aura of Faith; 14th: Aura of Righteousness, Divine Reflexes; 18th: Celestial Form, Ultimate Mercy

Cleric *Feats* 1st: Harming Hands, Healing Hands; 2nd: Sap Life, Turn Undead; 4th: Command Undead, Necrotic Infusion; 6th: Divine Weapon, Selective Energy; 8th: Channeled Succor; 12th: Defensive Recovery; 14th: Fast Channel; 16th: Eternal Bane, Eternal Blessing

Druid order feats; *Feats* 6th: Steady Spellcasting; 8th: Fey Caller (only the added spells); 10th: Overwhelming Energy; 12th: Primal Summons; 16th: Effortless Concentration, 20th: Leyline Conduit

Fighter bravery, feats associated with a combat style; *Feats* 1st: Power Attack, Sudden Charge; 2nd: Intimidating Strike, Lunge; 4th: Knockdown, Swipe; 6th: Shatter Defenses; 8th: Blind-Fight, Felling Strike, Sudden Leap; 10th: Certain Strike, Combat Reflexes, Disruptive Stance, Fearsome Brute; 12th: Spring Attack; 14th: Determination, Whirlwind Strike; 20th: Weapon Supremacy

Monk mystic strikes, metal strikes, perfected form, stance and related feats; *Feats* 1st: Ki Rush, Ki Strike; 2nd: Crushing Grab, Stunning Fist; 4th: Deflect Arrow, Flying Kick; 6th: Abundant Step, Ki Blast, Whirling Throw; 8th: Wall Run; 10th: Winding Flow; 16th: Quivering Palm, Shattering Strike; 18th: Diamond Fists, Swift River; 20th: Enduring Quickness, Impossible Techniques

Ranger Hunt Prey, hunter's edge, nature's edge, masterful hunter, swift prey, companion or combat style and related feats; *Feats* 2nd: Quick Draw, Wild Empathy; 4th: Scout's Warning; 6th: Skirmish Strike; 8th: Blind-Fight, Warden's Boon; 10th: Camouflage; 14th: Sense the Unsee; 18th: Shadow Hunter; 20th: Ultimate Skirmisher

Rogue surprise attack, deny advantage, debilitating strike, master strike, rogue's racket and related feats; *Feats* 1st: Nimble Dodge; 2nd: Mobility, Quick Draw; 4th: Scout's Warning; 6th: Gang Up, Skirmish Strike, Twist the Knife; 8th: Blind-Fight, Opportune Backstab; 10th: Sneak Savant; 12th: Fantastic Leap, Spring from the Shadows; 14th: Sense the Unseen; 16th: Dispelling Slice, Perfect Distraction; 20th: Hidden Paragon, Reactive Distraction

Sorcerer bloodline and related feats; *Feats* 1st: Counterspell, Dangerous Sorcery; 4th: Bespell Weapon; 6th: Steady Spellcasting; 10th: Overwhelming Energy, Quickened Casting; 16th: Effortless Concentration; 20th: Metamagic Mastery

Wizard school and related feats; *Feats* 1st: Counterspell; 4th: Bespell Weapon; 6th: Steady Spellcasting; 10th: Overwhelming Energy, Quickened Casting; 12th: Clever Counterspell; 14th: Reflect Spell; 16th: Effortless Concentration; 18th: Infinite Possibilities; 20th: Metamagic Mastery, Spell Combination

BUILDING HAZARDS

Building hazards designed for your game allows you to customize them to match your story, location, and needs, as well as to surprise the other players at every turn. There's no wrong way to create a hazard, but this guide presents the information in the order you might see it in a hazard stat block.

CONCEPT

The first thing you'll need is a concept for your hazard. What level is your hazard? Will it be simple or complex? Is it a trap, a haunt, an environmental hazard, or something else? If it's a trap, is it mechanical, magical, or both? This is a good time to brainstorm the hazard's name and description, as this will help you decide how the hazard can be disabled.

The following information builds on concepts from Building Creatures, which starts on page 56.

HAZARD TYPES

There are three main types of hazards: traps, environmental hazards, and haunts.

Traps are usually built or placed, though they can also form accidentally, such as if a magic portal, through millennia of disuse,

malfunctions as its magic warps. Mechanical traps always have some physical component, whereas purely magical traps typically don't. Magical traps can usually be dispelled, and those without a listed proficiency rank for Stealth can be found using *detect magic*. Thievery is the most common skill used to disable traps.

Environmental hazards are either living things, like dangerous spores and molds, or simply features of the terrain or environment, like avalanches or rockslides. While they are always physical, some environmental hazards can't reasonably be attacked or damaged, such as a cloud of poisonous gas or a patch of quicksand. Survival is the most common skill used to disable environmental hazards.

Haunts are spiritual hazards, usually formed when the spiritual essence of a location is imprinted with the instincts and emotions from a living being's demise. Because haunts lack matter, they rarely involve a physical component, and when they do, that component is generally incorporeal or might even be damaged only by positive energy. The skills and options used to disable haunts vary, though using Religion for an exorcism is common. However, even with a successful check to disable a haunt, it can reoccur until its unfinished business is resolved. Typically, successfully disabling or enduring a haunt provides clues to determine what it would take to lay it to rest permanently.

UNDERSTANDING THE STATISTICS

Much like for creatures, hazard statistics can be extreme, high, or low (hazards don't need as much granularity, so they usually don't have moderate or terrible values for their statistics). While they are defined in creature creation, when building a hazard, you'll use the values slightly differently.

Extreme: While extreme values remain world-class statistics that are extremely difficult to meet or exceed, unlike with monsters, almost all hazards have one extreme statistic because hazards normally activate only if they have gone unnoticed or if someone critically failed to disable them. Does it have an extreme Stealth DC that makes it incredibly hard to find, an extreme Disable DC that makes it perilous to disable, or a save DC that makes it deadly in the event it triggers? These are the most common choices, as each affects a different phase of encountering the hazard.

High: This is a capable level, and can generally serve as a baseline value; this value for

hazards covers what would be the high and moderate ranges for creatures.

Low: If a hazard has a weakness, like a poor Reflex save for a bulky mechanical trap or an easy DC to disable for a hard-to-find trap, it usually has a low value. If you need something even lower, use a terrible value from Building Creatures (pages 56–73), or just an incredibly low value like the Armageddon orb's Stealth (*Core Rulebook* 526).

STEALTH AND DISABLE

When determining a hazard's combat statistics, first decide how the hazard can be located and how hard it is to disable. A hazard where the main challenge is how difficult it is to find, like the *Core Rulebook's* hidden pit, might have a very different effect for its level than a hazard out in plain sight, daring a PC to try to disable it, like the Armageddon orb.

TABLE 2–13: STEALTH AND THIEVERY DCS

Level	Extreme	High	Low
–1	18	15	12 to 11
0	19	16	13 to 12
1	20	17	14 to 13
2	21	18	15 to 14
3	23	20	17 to 15
4	25	22	18 to 17
5	26	23	20 to 18
6	28	25	21 to 19
7	30	27	23 to 21
8	31	28	24 to 22
9	33	30	26 to 23
10	35	32	27 to 25
11	36	33	29 to 26
12	38	35	30 to 27
13	40	37	32 to 29
14	41	38	33 to 30
15	43	40	35 to 31
16	45	42	36 to 33
17	46	43	38 to 34
18	48	45	39 to 35
19	50	47	41 to 37
20	51	48	42 to 38
21	53	50	44 to 39
22	55	52	45 to 41
23	56	53	46 to 42
24	58	55	48 to 43

When deciding how to disable your hazard, be sure to come up with a narrative description of how it would happen, which will inform which methods and skills disable the hazard. You'll need to decide the proficiency rank necessary to find the hazard as well as disable it with each method. Remember, a hazard without a listed rank next to its Stealth DC is blatant enough that creatures can find it without Searching, and magical hazards without a listed rank are not normally protected against *detect magic*. This means most hazards built by intelligent creatures expecting them to remain concealed have at least a trained rank. Table 2-14 indicates the high and moderate proficiency requirements by level; you can always use lower proficiency ranks than the ones listed, and you should consider a secondary, perhaps less efficient, method to disable the hazard using a lower rank if you use the high rank. For instance, the bloodthirsty urge haunt in the *Core Rulebook* can be disabled with master Religion, or by a higher DC with expert Diplomacy.

If you need a Stealth modifier for a complex hazard, just subtract 10 from the listed DC.

TABLE 2–14: MINIMUM PROFICIENCY

Levels	High	Moderate
0 or lower	Untrained	Untrained
1–4	Trained (expert for Perception)	Trained
5–8	Expert	Trained
9–18	Master	Expert
19 or higher	Legendary	Master

DEFENSES

When building a purely magical or formless hazard, you can skip this section entirely. If there's a physical component that a character could break, you'll need to determine the hazard's AC, Fortitude save, and Reflex save, using the extreme, high, and low values (preceded by E, H, or L on the table) as well as its Hardness and Broken Threshold (BT).

TABLE 2–15: DEFENSES

Level	EAC	HAC	LAC	ESave	HSave	LSave	Hardness	HP*
–1	18	15	12	+9	+8	+2	2–4	11–13
0	19	16	13	+10	+9	+3	3–5	15–17
1	19	16	13	+11	+10	+4	5–7	23–25
2	21	18	15	+12	+11	+5	7–9	30–34
3	22	19	16	+14	+12	+6	10–12	42–46
4	24	21	18	+15	+14	+8	11–13	46–50
5	25	22	19	+17	+15	+9	12–14	50–54
6	27	24	21	+18	+17	+11	13–15	54–58
7	28	25	22	+20	+18	+12	14–16	58–62
8	30	27	24	+21	+19	+13	15–17	62–66
9	31	28	25	+23	+21	+15	16–18	66–70
10	33	30	27	+24	+22	+16	17–19	70–74
11	34	31	28	+26	+24	+18	19–21	78–82
12	36	33	30	+27	+25	+19	20–22	82–86
13	37	34	31	+29	+26	+20	21–23	86–90
14	39	36	33	+30	+28	+22	22–24	90–94
15	40	37	34	+32	+29	+23	23–25	94–98
16	42	39	36	+33	+30	+25	25–27	101–107
17	43	40	37	+35	+32	+26	27–29	109–115
18	45	42	39	+36	+33	+27	29–31	117–123
19	46	43	40	+38	+35	+29	31–33	125–131
20	48	45	42	+39	+36	+30	33–35	133–139
21	49	46	43	+41	+38	+32	36–38	144–152
22	51	48	45	+43	+39	+33	39–41	156–164
23	52	49	46	+44	+40	+34	44–46	168–176
24	54	51	48	+46	+42	+36	46–50	180–188

* The Broken Threshold is usually half the hazard's HP

Some hazards, even high-level ones, don't make sense with a high Hardness value. In those cases, you can skip the Hardness and use the HP values from table 2–7: Hit Points on page 63. Especially for complex hazards, you might want to divide the durability over multiple sections, located in different positions, to encourage teamwork and mobility.

OFFENSE

Almost all hazards need an attack bonus or a save DC, and hazards that deal damage need to list a damage value. Simple hazards deal about twice as much damage as complex hazards and have an attack bonus even higher than the extreme attack bonus for a creature (abbreviated as S. Atk in Table 2–16: Offense). Complex hazards usually have attack bonuses akin to a high attack bonus for a creature (abbreviated as C. Atk in Table 2–16: Offense). You can adjust them further using Table 2–9: Attack Bonus on page 64 if your hazard needs it. Simple hazard DCs aren't as accelerated as attack roll modifiers, since effects with DCs usually have some effect even on a successful saving throw; use the EDC and HDC columns for extreme and hard DCs on Table 2–16: Offense below.

The damage columns on the table give a damage expression you can use, followed by the average damage in parentheses. If you want to make your own damage expression, remember that average damage is 2.5 for a d4, 3.5 for a d6, 4.5 for a d8, 5.5 for a d10, and 6.5 for a d12.

TABLE 2–16: OFFENSE

Level	S. Atk	C. Atk	Simple Dmg	Complex Dmg	EDC	HDC
–1	+10	+8	2d4+1 (6)	1d4+1 (3)	19	16
0	+11	+8	2d6+3 (10)	1d6+2 (5)	19	16
1	+13	+9	2d6+5 (12)	1d6+3 (6)	20	17
2	+14	+11	2d10+7 (18)	1d10+4 (9)	22	18
3	+16	+12	2d10+13 (24)	1d10+6 (12)	23	20
4	+17	+14	4d8+10 (28)	2d8+5 (14)	25	21
5	+19	+15	4d8+14 (32)	2d8+7 (16)	26	22
6	+20	+17	4d8+18 (36)	2d8+9 (18)	27	24
7	+22	+18	4d10+18 (40)	2d10+9 (20)	29	25
8	+23	+20	4d10+22 (44)	2d10+11 (22)	30	26
9	+25	+21	4d10+26 (48)	2d10+13 (24)	32	28
10	+26	+23	4d12+26 (52)	2d12+13 (26)	33	29
11	+28	+24	4d12+30 (56)	2d12+15 (28)	34	30
12	+29	+26	6d10+27 (60)	3d10+14 (30)	36	32
13	+31	+27	6d10+31 (64)	3d10+16 (32)	37	33
14	+32	+29	6d10+35 (68)	3d10+18 (34)	39	34
15	+34	+30	6d12+33 (72)	3d12+17 (36)	40	36
16	+35	+32	6d12+35 (74)	3d12+18 (37)	41	37
17	+37	+33	6d12+37 (76)	3d12+19 (38)	43	38
18	+38	+35	6d12+41 (80)	3d12+20 (40)	44	40
19	+40	+36	8d10+40 (84)	4d10+20 (42)	46	41
20	+41	+38	8d10+44 (88)	4d10+22 (44)	47	42
21	+43	+39	8d10+48 (92)	4d10+24 (46)	48	44
22	+44	+41	8d10+52 (96)	4d10+26 (48)	50	45
23	+46	+42	4d12+48 (100)	4d12+24 (50)	51	46
24	+47	+44	4d12+52 (104)	4d12+26 (52)	52	48

DESIGNING SIMPLE HAZARDS

When designing a simple hazard, make sure to select an appropriate trigger and effect. Often, a simple hazard that merely damages its target is little more than a speed bump that slows down the game without much added value, so think about the purpose of your hazard carefully, both in the story and in the game world, especially when it's a hazard some creature intentionally built or placed in that location. A great simple hazard does something interesting, has a longer-lasting consequence, or integrates with the nearby inhabitants or even the encounters in some way (you can find more information on integrating hazards with encounters in Dynamic Encounters on page 48).

DESIGNING COMPLEX HAZARDS

Unlike a simple hazard, a complex hazard can play the part of a creature in a battle, or can be an encounter all its own. Many of the concerns with damaging effects when designing a simple hazard don't apply when designing a complex hazard. A complex hazard can apply its damage over and over again, eventually killing its hapless victim, and isn't intended to be a quick-to-overcome obstacle.

Complex hazards have a lot more in common with creatures than simple hazards do, and you'll see that a complex hazard's statistics are similar to those of a creature. A good complex hazard often requires disabling multiple components or otherwise interacting with the encounter in some way. For instance, while the *Core Rulebook's* poisoned dart gallery only requires one Thievery check to disable, the control panel is on the far end of the gallery, so a PC would need to make their way across first.

Building Routines

A complex hazard has a routine each round, whether it stems from preprogrammed instructions built into a trap, instincts and residual emotions swirling around a complex haunt, or a force of nature like sinking in quicksand. Make sure to build a routine that makes sense for the hazard; an environmental lava chute that ejects lava into the area each round shouldn't be able to seek out and precisely target only the PCs, but it might spatter random areas within range or everything within range, depending on how you describe the hazard. However, a complex haunt might be able to recognize life force and target living creatures.

If you create a hazard that can't consistently attack the PCs (like the *Core Rulebook's* blade pillar that moves in a random direction), you can make it deadlier than normal in other ways.

The hazard should have as many actions as you feel it needs to perform its routine. If you split the routine out into several actions, you can also remove some of the hazard's actions once partial progress is made in disabling or destroying it; this can give the PCs a feeling of progress, and it can help encourage them to handle the hazard if it appears in a mixed encounter with creatures.

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