

# BESTIARY TEMPLATE

Note: mythological creatures should hew to the actual mythology. Achilles heels and unusual ways to defeat them are fine.

I've used a troll here, because it's a very simple creature and easy to use to demonstrate how the descriptive text should be arranged. Other writers should be able to use this template to write about other creature types.



# TROLLS

Gimnor crept through the dark tunnel, bushing away the remnants of spider-web which hung from the ceiling. Up ahead, the assassin could hear an ugly sound - crunching, scraping, and snorting. Whether some great animal laired ahead, he did not know, but even from here the stench was overpowering. He wrapped a scarf around his face in an attempt to make the air more palatable.

As he got closer, the ugly sight before him became clear. A great beast of a creature, human in shape, but mightily deformed, crouched over the carcass of a horse. As he watched, the foul creature wrenched a leg from the corpse and proceeded to devour it, bone and all.

Sickened, Gimnor quietly unstrapped his crossbow and inserted a quarrel. Taking aim at the monster, he carefully measured his breaths, steadying his hand, concentrating on that perfect shot. He would only get one try at this, and he had no desire to see that grotesque being standing over him with a huge stone club raised.

Carefully, carefully, Gimnor let loose the quarrel. It flew true, piercing the fell abomination in the eye, driving deep. The troll - for that is what it was - let out an anguished scream of pain and dropped to one knee, both hands clutching at the wooden shaft proceeding from its eye socket as dark, foul blood poured down the creature's face.

And then, to Gimnor's horror, the monster grasped the quarrel tightly and tore it free from its eye socket, throwing it aside. It let out a roar of rage and pain, casting its gaze around the cave in search of its assailant. As the dwarf watched, the creature's flesh started knitting back together, and the flow of blood ceased; an eye seemed to form from the congealed mess in its socket.

Gimnor backed away. The damage he had done had healed before his very eyes. The troll was whole again, and sniffing the air, seeking the dwarf.

"I smell you, little thing. I hurt you for wot you did!" it spoke in deep, broken words.



Some say that trolls are the evil corruptions of beings of nature, created by evil gods to punish them for ancient wickedness.

Trolls are huge, stupid creatures. Standing ten to fifteen feet tall, they are immensely strong, cruel, and utterly revolting. Usually - but not always - obese, trolls enjoy nothing more than to slaughter and eat other living things.

Crude and primitive, trolls use basic weapons. Clubs fashioned from stone and wood or the occasional home-made axe are more than enough to bring down their prey. They dress in simple clothes - jerseys and tunics which have never been repaired or washed, barely covering their repulsive, hairy bodies.

Trolls vary in colour, from a yellowish tan to a dark green. Their thick hide and natural regenerative ability makes them unafraid of most things, and they charge eagerly into battle.

Trolls are truly stupid creatures. They speak in broken, clumsy sentences, and can be easily outwitted by appealing to their base desires.





Despite their fearsome regenerative power, trolls have one fatal weakness - they cannot abide the sunlight and, indeed, it will turn them to stone instantly, killing the creature permanently. This is the only way to permanently defeat a troll, for they can recover from any other injury, no matter how severe.

### ORGANIZATION

Trolls do not organise well. They are often solitary creatures, lairing in caves and venturing out at night to hunt animals or - if they are lucky - an unwary traveller.

Very occasionally, a leader - a troll king - will emerge. This stronger, slightly more intelligent troll (+1d6) is usually able to gather a tribe of a half dozen or so trolls, dominating them with its larger size and strength. Upon defeating foes, the king will get first choice of the pickings, and consume the juiciest, tastiest of the remains of the tribe's victims.

### TACTICS

Trolls are fundamentally stupid. A troll's sense of smell enables it to locate other creatures with relative ease, but beyond that most combat tends to be of the "Charge! Smash!" variety.

A troll's vulnerability to sunlight makes the creature wary to most forms of bright light. Most will seek to avoid such illumination, although they are able to distinguish between sunlight and other light sources.

### LAIR & TREASURE

Trolls almost always dwell in caves, away from the sunlight. These lairs reek of rotting carcasses and unwashed bodies, and are littered with half-gnawed bones. A troll's lair reeks so much, in fact, that those who enter or start their turn in the area must make a *Challenging* [13] END check or advance a stage along the Nausea status track. Using a method such as a handkerchief or rag to cover the nose can grant a +1d6 bonus to this check. Trolls

*"Trolls simply detest the very sight of dwarves (uncooked)."*  
- JRR Tolkien

themselves are, of course, immune to this effect.

If a troll king is present, it will have some kind of "throne room". This chamber will contain an improvised throne - perhaps a pile of bones, a tree stump, or large rock.

Throughout a troll's lair, rotting carcasses can often be seen hanging from the ceiling from large, crude hooks, awaiting consumption. Flies buzz around these corpses.

Trolls do not appreciate the value of treasure, but they do like "shiny" things. They will tend to discard items which are not shiny, and such items can be found littered around the lair and its immediate surroundings. The shiny things will typically be gathered together.

An individual troll will have one piece of jewellery, and 2d6 gold coins on its person, with the same again in its lair. A tribe will have the same amount of treasure individually, and their combined lair wealth will be found in the throne room.

### ALCHEMY

Trolls are fey beings, and as such have great value to alchemists.

*Troll blood.* Correctly extracted with a *Challenging* [13] LOG (*alchemy*) check, a dose of troll blood cures 1d6 HEALTH. Alternatively, the same dose can allow a magic-user to use the Healing/Cure Wound enhancement for half the normal cost of 2MP per 1d6 of HEALTH.





# MOUNTAIN TROLL

*Enormous rare sentient fey goblinoid (7d6)*

Dull-witted, ugly, giant, vicious mountain dwellers.

**STR** 18 (5d6) **AGI** 4 (2d6) **END** 30 (7d6)  
**INT** 3 (2d6) **LOG** 3 (2d6) **WIL** 3 (2d6)  
**CHA** 3 (2d6) **LUC** 0 (0d6) **REP** 14 (4d6)

**HEALTH** 72 (regenerate 1d6)  
**MELEE DEFENSE** 17  
**RANGED DEFENSE** 10  
**MENTAL DEFENSE** 10  
**SOAK** 5; **VULN** 1d6 (lightning)  
**STATUS IMMUNITIES** bleeding, nausea

**INITIATIVE** 2d6 (7); **spellsense** 15'  
**PERCEPTION** 2d6 (7); *scent* 4d6 (14);  
*superior darksight*  
**SPEED** 9; **CLIMB** 5; **JUMP** 8'/18'  
**CARRY** 960lb (max lift 1800lb)

**ACTIONS** 3  
**NATURAL DAMAGE** 3d6+5  
**REACH** 10'

*Claws* 5d6 (3d6+5 blunt damage)  
*Large club* 7d6 (3d6+5 blunt damage)  
*Vomit* 7d7 (3d6+5 acid damage; 10' cone)

**Skills** *scent* 3 (2d6), *hardy* 6 (3d6), *clubs* 3 (2d6)

**Gear** large club, 7gc

**Regeneration.** All trolls regenerate 1d6 **HEALTH** at the start of their turn. Trolls can be reduced to less than zero **HEALTH**, but their regeneration power continues, and they wake up again when their **HEALTH** rises above zero. If dismembered, the troll still regenerates from the largest of the remaining body parts.

**Turned to stone.** If trolls are exposed to sunlight, they immediately turn to stone. This is the only way to permanently kill a troll.

**Charge.** Trolls charge eagerly into battle, confident in their regeneration powers. Once per turn, when making a melee

attack, the troll can move its speed in a straight line and then attack at the end of it. This costs 2d6 and grants +1d6 damage to the attack.

**Knockback.** The target is pushed back 5' for a cost of 1d6. For 2d6, this can be increased to 10'.

**Knockdown.** The target is knocked prone for a cost of 2d6. Trolls cannot Knockdown targets two sizes or more larger than them.

**Vomit.** Once per day, a troll can regurgitate the flesh, bone, and other materials it has eaten in a vile, acidic attack which affects all within a 15' cone. Those hit by the attack are nauseated.

A huge, lumbering, misshapen giant, with tiny, squinting eyes, a bulbous nose, and jagged yellow teeth glares down at you. It's large paunch is not covered by its worn hide tunic, and its foul stench can be discerned from some distance away. It clutches an enormous club in both hands - a clumsy weapon fashioned from stone which nevertheless looks like it could fell a horse with a single swing.

## VARIANTS

The troll described above is the mountain troll. Other variants include:

**Cave trolls.** Cave trolls (mountain troll +1d6) are bigger and tougher than mountain trolls, although even more dim-witted. Unable to speak, or utter much more than a bestial growl or roar, these trolls have stony skin with 15 **SOAK**. Cave trolls despise any light - if they start their turn in bright light, they are pushed one stage down the Blindness status track. They can shake this off as normal (by covering their eyes, squinting, and so on).

**Snow trolls.** Covered in white hair, these creatures might be mistaken for a yeti or similar creature. Immune to cold damage, snow trolls are vulnerable (1d6) to fire. More importantly, however, they cannot regenerate fire damage.

**Horned trolls.** This monstrous beings (mountain troll +2d6) are bred and trained





for war. While no more intelligent than mountain trolls, they have a fierce cunning and are stronger, more aggressive, and more agile. Horned trolls tend to be part of a larger army or force commanded by a more intelligent creature. Horned trolls have black, scaly hides which grant SOAK 10, and sharp bony protrusions which give them +1d6 natural damage. Horned trolls are resistant to sunlight - instead of being turned to stone instantly, they take 1d6 damage whenever they start their turn in sunlight, and are turned to stone only when they reach 0 HEALTH.

**Troll-folk.** These "lesser trolls" (mountain troll -1d6) often dwell in burial mounds. They are human-sized, although short in stature.

**Deep trolls.** Deep trolls (mountain troll -2d6) are smaller than humans with stubby limbs and round bellies. Like many who dwell in the dark places, they are foul to look upon, and glisten with slime. These creatures share the cave troll's weakness to light (see above).

**Sea trolls.** Smaller than mountain trolls, these aquatic creatures (mountain troll -1d6; large) have a SWIM speed equal to their regular speed. Sea trolls are only able to regenerate when in contact with water, and have an additional SOAK +5 vs. fire damage.

**Troll king.** These tribal chieftains (mountain troll +1d6) typically lead bands of a half dozen or so mountain trolls. See above, under *Organization*.

## plot hooks

The following plot hooks feature trolls. Choose from (or roll on) the following table.

1. A mountain troll has been stealing livestock. Two farmers have disappeared now after seeking its lair, and the villagers are seeking more professional help.
2. A troll king has been uniting the lone trolls of the county. Now he has gathered a band of six mountain trolls

*"Slay him! The Christian man's son has  
seduced  
the fairest maid of the Mountain King!  
Slay him!  
Slay him!*

*May I hack him on the fingers?*

*May I tug him by the hair?*

*Hu, hey, let me bite him in the haunches!*

*Shall he be boiled into broth and bree to me*

*Shall he roast on a spit or be browned in a  
stewpan?*

*Ice to your blood, friends!"*

*- Henrik Ibsen*

who lair in and guard an important pass.

3. Something has been hunting trolls! Trolls don't have many predators, but whatever is hunting them is tearing them asunder before dragging them into the sunlight.
4. A deadly disease has struck the town, and the local healer says that only troll blood, with its curative powers, can cure it.
5. A mighty troll lairs in a cave under a bridge, coming out to devour passers-by.
6. A troll king has discovered a special potion which allows trolls to move in sunlight. The source of this potion must be found and destroyed, for the trolls are nigh-unbeatable otherwise!

## SPECIAL ITEMS

Troll clubs are oversized clubs or spiked clubs. In the hands of anybody except the troll who created the club, these weapons are treated as improvised weapons. However, in the hands of the troll they have the following statistics.

### TROLL CLUB

**Damage** 3d6 blunt

**Cost** -

**Size** enormous

**Weight** 50 lbs

**Special** heavy





## LEGENDS & LORE

Trolls come from Scandinavian mythology, where they are said to be descended from the Jötnar, a race of primordial giants. Ancient landmarks are often said to be trolls who turned to stone in the sunlight.

While usually ugly and slow-witted, some may look normal, even beautiful.

In Norse mythology, trolls live in mountain caves.

The trollish vulnerability to lightning stems from Norse mythology, where trolls were hunted by the thunder god, Thor.

Trolls feature in Scandinavian fairy-tales, such as *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, dwelling under bridges to pounce on travellers. Dunker is a **mountain troll** who kidnapped a woman in a folk tale from Fosen.

The Mountain King, of Ibsen's play *Peer Gynt*, is a **troll king** named Dovregubben. It features the recognisable classical theme,

*In the Hall of the Mountain King* by Edvard Grieg.

Trolls also feature in tales from the Orkney and Shetland islands, where they are known as "trows".

Later, trolls found a new niche in medieval stories, where they performed mischief upon Christians.

Tolkien, of course, featured trolls in his works. Trolls in Middle-earth are corrupted ents, in the same way that orcs are corrupted elves. The three **mountain trolls** in *The Hobbit* (Bert, Tom, and William) are well-known as is the **cave troll** which appears in Moria. The Olog-hai are fierce **horned trolls** created by Sauron.

[Below: size chart placeholder]

