DEATH KNIGHT (template)

A death knight is a horrific form of a lich created when a knight that betrayed the chivalric code of honor dies. Cursed to walk eternity in its new form, a death knight hates all living creatures and attacks them on sight. Not bound by a code of honor any more, they will use any means at their disposal to slay those they encounter.

A death knight appears as a skeletal humanoid dressed in the same attire it wore at death. Its skin is shriveled, dry, and decayed, falling from its body in places. The death knight’s eyes have decayed and been replaced with small, crimson pinpoints of light. Its clothes are rotted and its armor shows the wear and tear of the grave.

A death knight speaks any languages it knew in life.

CREATING A DEATH KNIGHT

“Death Knight” is a template that can be added to any humanoid paladin (fallen) of at least 9th level (or blackguard of at least 3rd level) (referred to hereafter as the “character”). The character’s type changes to “undead.” It uses all the character’s statistics and abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Increase to d12
Speed: Same as the character.
AC: The death knight has +3 natural armor or the character’s natural armor, whichever is better.
Special Attacks: A death knight retains all the character’s special attacks and also gains those listed below. Saves have a DC of 10 + 1/2 death knight’s HD + death knight’s Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

Fear Aura (Su): Death knights are shrouded in an aura of fear. Creatures of less than 5 HD that come within 5 feet of the death knight must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 death knight’s HD + death knight’s Charisma modifier) or be affected as though by fear as cast by a sorcerer of the death knight’s level.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—darkness, desecrate, detect magic, and see invisibility; 2/day—dispel magic; 1/day—animate dead, any one power word spell, and symbol (pain or fear effect only). These abilities are as the spells cast by a 20th-level sorcerer (save DC 10 + death knight’s Charisma modifier + spell level).

Summon Undead (Sp): Once per day, the death knight can summon undead whose total HD do not exceed his own. The summoned undead creatures are under control of the death knight and remain for 1 round per HD of the death knight. All summoned undead have +4 turn resistance, in addition to any turn resistance they already possess, for the duration of their stay.

Special Qualities: A death knight retains all the character’s special qualities and gains those listed below, and also gains the undead type (see page 6, Monster Manual).

Darkvision (Ex): Range 60 feet.
Turn Resistance (Ex): A death knight has +4 turn resistance (see page 10, Monster Manual).
Spell Resistance (Ex): A death knight has SR 16 +1 per Hit Die.
Summon Grave Mount (Sp): Once per 10 years, a death knight may summon a grave mount (q.v.) to serve it as a paladin’s mount serves.
Empathic Link (Su): A death knight who has successfully summoned a grave mount to serve him has a link to the animal. The death knight can
converse with the grave mount telepathically so long as they remain within 100 feet of each other. In addition, the death knight’s fear aura radius is doubled to 10 feet so long as he is mounted on the grave mount.

**Saves:** Same as the character

**Abilities:** A death knight gains +4 Strength, +2 Wisdom, and +2 Charisma, but being undead, has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** Death knights gain a +8 racial bonus to Intimidate, Sense Motive, and Spot checks. Otherwise same as the character.

**Feats:** Same as the character

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**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground  
**Organization:** Solitary  
**Challenge Rating:** Same as the character +3  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Any evil  
**Advancement:** By character class

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**SAMPLE DEATH KNIGHT**  
This example uses a 9th-level paladin (fallen) as the character.

**Death Knight**  
**Medium-Size Undead**

**Hit Dice:** 9d12 (58 hp)  
**Initiative:** +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)  
**Speed:** 20 ft.

**AC:** 22 (+1 Dex, +9 armor, +2 natural)

**Attacks:** +2 Longsword +11/+6 melee

**Damage:** 2 Longsword 1d8+7

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Spell-like abilities, fear aura, summon undead  
**Special Qualities:** Undead, SR 25, turn resistance +4, summon grave mount, empathic link, darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 13, Con –, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 17

**Skills:** Diplomacy +12, Heal +12, Intimidate +11, Listen +8, Ride +12, Sense Motive +9, Spot +11

**Feats:** Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land or underground  
**Organization:** Solitary  
**Challenge Rating:** 12  
**Treasure:** Standard plus +1 full plate armor and +2 longsword  
**Alignment:** Chaotic evil  
**Advancement:** By character class

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**COMBAT**

**Fear Aura (Su):** 5-foot radius, All creatures of less that 5 HD must succeed at a Will save (DC 17) or be affected as though by fear as cast by a 9th-level sorcerer.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—darkness, desecrate, detect magic, and see invisibility; 2/day—dispel magic; 1/day—animate dead, any one power word spell, and symbol (pain or fear effect only). These abilities are as the spells cast by a 20th-level sorcerer (save DC 13 + spell level).

**Summon Undead (Sp):** Once per day the death knight can summon any undead creatures whose total hit dice does not exceed 9. The
summoned undead creatures are under control of the death knight and remain for 9 rounds. All summoned undead have +4 turn resistance, in addition to any turn resistance they already possess, for the duration of their stay.

**Summon Grave Mount (Sp):** Once per 10 years, a death knight may summon a grave mount to serve it as a paladin’s mount serves.

**Empathic Link (Su):** A death knight who has successfully summoned a grave mount to serve him has a link to the animal. The death knight can converse with the grave mount telepathically so long as they remain within 100 feet of each other. In addition, the death knight’s fear aura radius is doubled to 10 feet so long as he is mounted on the grave mount.

**Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage. Undead have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.