

Races: Changes from the Core Rules

- No favored classes. The restrictions this placed on multiclassing seemed to cause more harm than good. In the core system, there is the potential to create some very unbalanced characters with too much multiclassing, but I think I've addressed that appropriately at least with the base classes. I've also replaced favored classes with racial feats that encourage particular careers for a given race (see Chapter 5).
- Literacy is no longer the default and bonus languages have been removed from the game. All PCs can speak common and perhaps a racial language. Additional languages and the ability to read and write are purchased with skill ranks in the Linguistics skill. Aside from adding parsimony and some interesting roleplaying moments, this removes the absurd situation wherein a barbarian suddenly becomes literate upon multi-classing.
- No Level Adjustments. The ECL system for running monsters as PCs was fun but ultimately caused a lot of logistical headaches. It's far better to simply balance races that have level adjustments by moving their strong abilities to racial feats. This also removes predictability from NPCs to discourage metagaming.
- Many racial abilities have been moved into racial feats. PCs gain feats much more frequently now (see Chapter 5: Feats), so there is plenty of opportunity to select the racial flavor you'd like your like character to have.
- I'm now using Fortitude, Reflex and Will both as defenses and as saving throws (see Chapter 7: Combat). So, the racial bonuses have been adjusted to reflect this.
- I've removed the range limitations of darkvision. Too many encounters could be complicated by trying to remember what a character can and can not see due to range. Instead, darkvision just works at unlimited range just like normal vision. However, once any light at all is present darkvision is disrupted. This means that darkvision is of little use in the outdoors (see Vision And Light in Chapter 8: Adventuring).
- Aasimar and Tiefling are core classes. Feel free to omit these races if you'd prefer they were not in your campaign. I've made adjustments to these races to make the balance with the core choices.
- Many races, especially Dwarves and Gnomes, have a lot of circumstance bonuses and minor abilities that tended to be forgotten when they came into play. I've moved these into racial feats or replaced them with flat bonuses that are always on.
- The Light Sensitivity trait is no longer circumstantial. It's also more severe to keep the races balanced.
- The implicit flavor of the duergar class means they're more inclined toward rogue and psion classes they were in the past.
- I've harkened back to the 2nd edition and brought back the elven immunity to paralyzation.
- I've removed an elf's ability to automatically search for secret doors. I saw this rule abused time and again as players would simply "elf the room" by having the elven PCs walk the perimeter of a room. Finding a secret door should be a victory of keen eye or careful deduction and not a freebie.
- I've given elves the ability to ignore natural difficult terrain. This makes the race a bit more balanced compared to other races and promotes mobility in combat.
- Gnome skill bonuses have been adjusted.

Races: Changes from the Core Rules (continued)

- The gnomish ability to speak with animals is now much more limited in power but can be used an unlimited number of times and with any type of animal. It is no longer overtly magical in nature. In addition to being simpler to adjudicate and more fun to use, this is a much purer fit to the spirit of the gnomish ability to speak to animals.
- A forest gnome's pass without trace ability is rather limited. I think giving them a climb speed is closer to the spirit of the race. The forest gnome's traits have been adjusted to support this.
- In my experience, half-elves are considered the weakest of the races. To help compensate for this, I have given them a bonus to one defense and an extra feat. I also have added Bluff to the list of skills that half-elves receive a racial bonus to.
- I've changed the halfling's ability modifiers to +4 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -4 Strength. Some rule systems make halflings larger as this is more realistic than an adult humanoid with the physical stature of a three-year-old human who, nevertheless, can stand his ground in combat with humans. I like the idea of a half-height humanoid race and think that the Strength penalty is a better way to address that. By balancing with the Dexterity and Charisma bonus the class becomes even better suited for the rogue class. I've adjusted the racial skill bonuses to make the Strength penalty less bothersome for Str-based skills.
- I've also given the halfling a faster move rate in light armor as I think it's a better fit for the race.
- There are no halfling subraces listed. I think the idea of an "elf halfling" and a "dwarf halfling" is silly so the tallfellow and deep halfling variants are not here. Feel free to add them back in if you like them.

Races

Your character's race defines his nature. While all player character races are similar: humanoids of small or medium size their backgrounds, abilities and personalities are shaped by their heritage.

Race and Languages

All characters know how to speak Common. Some races also speak a racial language, if that character was raised by others who spoke this language. Literacy and the ability to speak additional languages can be purchased via skill ranks (see the Linguistics skill in Chapter 04: Skills).

Human

“What are you waiting for? Let's go!”

Humans are the most versatile of the races and they're a good race to choose for both beginner and veteran players.

- Medium: As Medium creatures, humans have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Human base land speed is 6 squares.
- Humans gain a +2 racial bonus to one defense: Fortitude, Reflex or Will (player's choice).
- Humans gain a +1 racial bonus to saving throws.
- Humans gain 2 extra feats at 1st level.
- Humans gain 1 extra skill rank at every level.
- Each time a human rolls initiative, he gains 1 additional token of his choice.

Aasimar

“This situation is so much bigger than you and me and this pile of little metal disks.”

Aasimars are usually tall, good-looking, and generally pleasant. Some have a minor physical trait suggesting their heritage, such as silver hair, golden eyes, or an unnaturally intense stare.

Most aasimars are decidedly good natured. They fight against evil causes and attempt to sway others to do the right thing. Occasionally they take on the vengeful, judgmental aspect of their celestial ancestor, but this is rare.

Aasimars usually like a fair, straightforward contest. Against a particularly evil foe, however, they fight with utter conviction and to the death.

Aasimar Racial Traits (Ex)

Aasimar characters possess the following racial traits.

- +2 Wisdom or +2 Charisma (player's choice)
- Medium size.

- An aasimar's base land speed is six squares.
- Low-light Vision. An aasimar can see clearly in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of dim illumination. She retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Racial Skills: Aasimars have a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.
- Good subtype. An aasimar is not always good, but she has inherited the Good subtype from her ancestors. As a result, some spells and abilities affect her differently.

Dwarf

"Ye call this ale? It's no wonder ye're fool enough to do battle with a pointy stick."

Dwarves are the short, stout, dour folk that are a staple of almost any fantasy genre. They favor earth tones in their clothing and prefer simple and functional garb. The skin can be very dark, but it is always some shade of tan or brown. Hair color can be black, gray, or brown. Dwarves average 4 feet tall and weigh as much as adult humans.

Dwarves speak Dwarven. Most who travel outside dwarven lands (as traders, mercenaries, or adventurers) know the Common tongue, while warriors in the dwarven cities usually learn Goblin to better interrogate and spy on those evil denizens of the deep caves.

Most dwarves encountered outside their home are warriors.

Dwarves are experts in combat, effectively using their environment and executing well-planned group attacks. They rarely use magic in fights, since they have few wizards or sorcerers (but dwarven clerics throw themselves into battle as heartily as their fellow warriors). If they have time to prepare, they may build deadfalls or other traps involving stone. In addition to the dwarven waraxe and thrown hammer, dwarves also typically use warhammers, picks, shortbows, heavy crossbows and maces.

Unless they were raised in very unusual circumstances, dwarves have an inherent familiarity with stone and stonework. At the DM's discretion, this "stonecunning" means a dwarf is much more likely to notice unusual stonework, such as sliding walls, stonework traps, new construction (even when built to match the old), unsafe stone surfaces, shaky stone ceilings, and the like. Something that isn't stone but that is disguised as stone also counts as unusual stonework. A dwarf can also intuit depth, sensing his approximate depth underground as naturally as a human can sense which way is up. Dwarves have a sixth sense about stonework, an innate ability that they get plenty of opportunity to practice and hone in their underground homes.

- +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma.
- Medium size.
- A dwarf's base land speed is 4 squares (20 feet). However, dwarves can move at this speed even when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.
- Darkvision. Dwarves can see in total darkness. In conditions of bright or dim illumination their vision is comparable to a human's.
- Weapon Familiarity: Dwarves treat any exotic weapon with "dwarven" in its name as a martial weapon.
- Stability: Dwarves are exceptionally stable on their feet. Dwarves ignore attacks or conditions that would cause them to become **unbalanced**.

- Dwarves are particularly resistant to poison. A dwarf automatically succeeds on Fortitude saving throws to resist poison.
- +1 racial bonus to Will defense.
- +4 racial bonus to Endurance checks
- Dwarves begin play with 2 additional specialties in the Craft skill.
- Racial Language: Dwarven.

Dwarven Subraces

The information above is for hill dwarves, the most common variety. There are other major dwarven subraces, which differ from hill dwarves as follows.

Deep Dwarf

These dwarves live far underground and tend to be more standoffish with non-dwarves.

Deep dwarves are the same height as other dwarves, but leaner. Their skin sometimes has a reddish tinge, and their large eyes lack the brightness of those of their kindred, being a washed-out blue. Their hair color ranges from bright red to straw blond. They have little contact with surface dwellers, relying on hill dwarves or mountain dwarves to trade goods for them.

Deep Dwarf Traits (Ex)

These traits are in addition to the hill dwarf traits, except where noted.

- Racial bonus to Will defense increases to +3.
- Light Sensitivity: Generations underground have left deep dwarves with weak eyes. They suffer a -2 racial penalty to their Search and Perception modifier and a -1 penalty to Dexterity attacks.

Mountain Dwarf

Mountain dwarves live deeper under the mountains than hill dwarves but generally not as far underground as deep dwarves. They average about 4½ feet tall and have lighter skin and hair than hill dwarves, but the same general appearance.

Duergar

Sometimes called gray dwarves, these beings dwell in the underdark.

Most duergar are bald (even the females), and they dress in drab clothing that is designed to blend into stone. In their lairs they may wear jewelry, but it is always kept dull. They war with other dwarves, even allying with other underground creatures from time to time.

Duergar have stonecunning just as other dwarves do.

Duergar Traits (Ex)

Duergar do not gain any of the racial traits of hill dwarves. They have the following traits instead.

- +2 Constitution, -2 Strength
- Medium size.
- A duergar's base land speed is 4 squares.

- Darkvision. Duergar can see in total darkness. In conditions of bright or dim illumination their vision is comparable to a human's.
- +2 racial bonus to Will defense.
- +2 racial bonus to Fortitude defense.
- +2 racial bonus to Stealth and Perception skills.
- Duergar begin play with one additional specialty in the Craft skill.
- Duergar are particularly resistant to poison. A duergar automatically succeeds on Fortitude saving throws to resist poison.
- Light Sensitivity: Generations underground have left duergar with weak eyes. They suffer a -2 racial penalty to their Search and Perception modifier and a -1 penalty to Dexterity attacks.
- Racial Languages: Dwarven, Undercommon.

Elf

“My people have lived in this forest since the days when it spanned half the continent and we will remain long after your great grandchildren are forgotten.”

Elves average 5 feet tall and typically weigh just over 100 pounds. They live on fruits and grains, though they occasionally hunt for fresh meat. Elves prefer colorful clothes, usually with a green-and-gray cloak that blends well with the colors of the forest.

Elves are cautious warriors and take time to analyze their opponents and the location of the fight if at all possible, maximizing their advantage by using ambushes, snipers, and camouflage. They prefer to fire from cover and retreat before they are found, repeating this maneuver until all of their enemies are dead.

They prefer longbows, shortbows, rapiers, and longswords. In melee, elves are graceful and deadly, using complex maneuvers that are beautiful to observe.

Elf racial traits:

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution
- Medium size
- Immunity to paralyzation and sleep effects.
- Elves do not sleep but instead enter a state of reverie for four hours in which they meditate on the events of past and future. In order to reverie, an elf must have relative quiet and relaxation just as any other race might require for sleep. However, when in this state, an elf is fully alert. An elf who does not reverie for four hours a day suffers the same effects of fatigue that other races do.
- Low-Light Vision: An elf can see clearly in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of dim illumination. She retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Weapon Familiarity: Elves treat any exotic weapon with “elven” in its name as a martial weapon. In addition, elves who are raised in a traditional manner by their people are automatically proficient with the longsword, rapier, longbow (including composite longbow), and shortbow (including composite shortbow).

- +2 racial bonus on Perception and Search checks.
- Light step: An elf is not hindered by difficult terrain unless it is magical in nature.
- Racial Language: Elven.

Elven Subraces

The information above is for high elves, the most common variety. There are other major elven subraces, which differ from high elves as follows.

Aquatic Elf

Also called sea elves, these creatures are waterbreathing cousins to land-dwelling elves. Aquatic elves fight underwater with tridents, spears, and nets.

Aquatic Elf Traits (Ex)

These traits are in addition to the high elf traits, except where noted.

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Intelligence. These adjustments replace the high elf's ability score adjustments.
- An aquatic elf has the aquatic subtype.
- An aquatic elf has a swim speed of 8 squares.
- Gills: Aquatic elves prefer to breathe water not air. They can survive out of the water for 1 hour per point of Constitution (after that, refer to the suffocation rules).

Drow

Also known as dark elves, drow are a subterranean offshoot with a depraved and evil culture. White is the most common hair color among drow, but almost any pale shade is possible. Drow tend to be smaller and thinner than other sorts of elves, and their eyes are often a vivid red.

Drow racial traits (Ex)

- +2 Intelligence or +2 Charisma (player's choice)
- Darkvision. Drow can see in total darkness. In conditions of bright or dim illumination their vision is comparable to a human's.
- +2 racial bonus to Will defense
- Weapon Familiarity: A drow raised in the typical manner is automatically proficient with the hand crossbow, the rapier, and the short sword.
- Light step: An drow is not hindered by difficult terrain unless it is magical in nature.
- Racial Languages: Elven, Undercommon.

Gray Elf

Taller and grander in physical appearance than others of their race, gray elves have a reputation for being aloof and arrogant (even by elven standards). They have either silver hair and amber eyes or pale golden hair and violet eyes. They prefer clothing of white, silver, yellow, or gold, with cloaks of deep blue or purple.

Gray Elf Traits (Ex)

Gray elves are identical to high elves except that their racial ability modifiers are as follows:

- +2 Intelligence, -2 Strength

Wild Elf

Wild elves are barbaric and tribal. Wild elves' hair color ranges from black to light brown, lightening to silvery white with age. They dress in simple clothing of animal skins and basic plant weaves.

Wild Elf Traits (Ex)

Wild elves are identical to high elves except that their racial ability modifiers are as follows:

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Intelligence
- Wild elves do not gain the Weapon Familiarity ability of high elves.

Wood Elf

Wood elf hair color ranges from yellow to a coppery red, and they are more muscular than other elves. Their clothing is in dark shades of green and earth tones to better blend in with their natural surroundings.

Wood Elf Traits (Ex)

Wood elves are identical to high elves except that their racial ability modifiers are as follows:

- +2 Strength, -2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma
- Wood elves do not gain the Weapon Familiarity ability of high elves.

Gnome

"I have every intention of telling you the truth. Just close your eyes for one moment."

Gnomes stand 3 to 3½ feet tall and weigh 40 to 45 pounds. Their skin color ranges from dark tan to woody brown, their hair is fair, and their eyes can be any shade of blue. Gnome males prefer short, carefully trimmed beards. Gnomes generally wear leather or earth tones, though they decorate their clothes with intricate stitching or fine jewelry. Gnomes reach adulthood at about age 40, and they live about 350 years, though some can live almost 500 years.

Gnomes speak their own language, Gnome. Most gnomes who travel outside gnome lands (as traders, tinkers, or adventurers) know Common, while warriors in gnome settlements usually learn Goblin.

Gnomes prefer misdirection and deception over direct confrontation. They would rather befuddle or embarrass foes (other than goblinoids or kobolds) than kill them. Gnomes make heavy use of illusion magic and carefully prepared ambushes and traps whenever they can.

As creature of fey origin, gnomes are inherently in tune with all living things. As a result, they can sometimes sense when something is amiss in a natural creature's behavior.

Gnome Racial Traits (Ex):

- +2 Constitution, -2 Strength.
- Small: As a Small creature, a gnome gains a +1 size bonus to Armor Class and Reflex defense, a -2 penalty to Fortitude defense, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks, and a -4 penalty to Athletics checks but he uses smaller weapons than humans use, and his lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium character.

- Gnome base land speed is 4 squares.
- +2 racial bonus to Will defense.
- Low-Light Vision: An gnome can see clearly in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of dim illumination. She retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Weapon Familiarity: Gnomes treat any exotic weapon with “gnome” in its name as a martial weapon.
- Always One Step Ahead: +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class
- Bluff is always a class skill for gnomes.
- +2 racial bonus on Perception and Handle Animal checks
- Gnomes begin play with one additional specialty in the Craft skill.
- Racial Language: Gnome.
- A gnome gains the Animal Whisperer feat as a bonus feat even if he doesn't meet the prerequisites.

Gnome Subraces

The information above is for rock gnomes, the most common variety. There are two other major gnome subraces, which differ from rock gnomes as follows.

Svirfneblin

Also called deep gnomes, svirfneblin are said to dwell in great cities deep underground. Though they are relatively weak compared to other creatures that exist in that harsh environment, the svirfneblin survive through guile and stealth.

Like dwarves, a svirfneblin's has an inherent stonecunning due to their underground environment. They are more likely to detect unusual stonework and can intuit depth and direction underground.

A svirfneblin has wiry, rock-colored skin usually medium brown to brownish gray. Only males are bald; females have stringy gray hair. The average svirfneblin lifespan is 250 years.

Svirfneblin Racial Traits (Ex)

- -2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma.
- Small: As a Small creature, a svirfneblin gains a +1 size bonus to Armor Class and Reflex defense, a -2 penalty to Fortitude defense, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks, and a -4 penalty to Athletics checks but he uses smaller weapons than humans use, and his lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium character.
- Svirfneblin base land speed is 4 squares.
- Darkvision. Svirfneblin can see in total darkness. In conditions of bright or dim illumination their vision is comparable to a human's.
- Svirfneblin are considered to always have the Stealth area of mastery even if it is not granted by their class.
- +2 racial bonus to Fortitude defense.
- +2 racial bonus to Perception checks.
- Svirfneblin begin play with one additional specialty in the Craft skill.
- +4 racial bonus to Stealth checks.

- Racial Languages: Undercommon, Gnome.

Forest Gnome

Forest gnomes are the smallest of all the gnomes, averaging 2 to 2½ feet in height, but look just like regular gnomes except with bark-colored or gray-green skin, and eyes that can be brown or green as well as blue. A very long-lived people, forest gnomes have an average life expectancy of 500 years.

Forest Gnome Traits (Ex)

Forest gnomes have traits identical to rock gnomes except as follows:

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Strength instead of the rock gnome's ability modifiers.
- A forest gnome does not gain a +1 dodge bonus to AC
- A forest gnome does not receive a racial bonus to Bluff checks.
- A forest gnome does not receive any bonus specialties in the Craft skill.
- A forest gnome gains a climb speed equal to their base speed.
- +4 racial bonus to Stealth and Acrobatics checks

Half-Elf

“One foot in this world and one foot in the other. I can make my way anywhere but never be home.”

Half elves embody both human and elven characteristics but are doomed to never fit in with any culture. Half-elves make great villains and great heroes.

Half-Elf Traits (Ex)

- Medium size.
- A half-elf's base land speed is six squares.
- Like elves, half-elves are immune to sleep spells and paralyzation. However, like humans, half-elves require eight hours of sleep per day to avoid fatigue.
- Low-light vision. A half-elf can see clearly in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of dim illumination. She retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Half-elves gain a +1 racial bonus to one defense: Fortitude, Reflex or Will (player's choice).
- Half-elves gain 1 extra feat at 1st level.
- +1 racial bonus to Perception and Search checks.
- +2 racial bonus to Bluff and Perform checks: Half-elves get along naturally with most people.
- Elven Blood: For all effects related to race, a half-elf is considered an elf. Half-elves, for example, are just as vulnerable to special effects that affect elves as their elf ancestors are, and they can use magic items that are only usable by elves.
- Half elves have access to the racial feats of both humans and elves.
- Racial Language: Elven (if raised by elves)

Half-Orc

“If you come any closer, you pointy-eared pansy, I’ll show your friends how I make half-elves...with an axe!”

Social outcasts and for good reason, half-orcs are the muscle-bound underdogs. These orc-human crossbreeds can be found in either orc or human society (where their status varies according to local sentiments), or in communities of their own. Half-orcs usually inherit a good blend of the physical characteristics of their parents. They are as tall as humans and a little heavier, thanks to their muscle. They have greyish pigmentation, sloping foreheads, jutting jaws, prominent teeth, and coarse body hair. Half-orcs who have lived among or near orcs have scars, in keeping with orcish tradition.

Half-Orc Traits (Ex)

- +2 Strength, -2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma.
- Medium size.
- A half-orc’s base land speed is six squares.
- +2 racial bonus to Fortitude defense.
- Half-Orcs always have access to the Combat area of mastery. They also gain access to one of the following lesser areas of mastery: Power Attack or Unarmed.
- Half-Orcs are highly resistant to pain. They ignore any effect, magical or mundane which would inhibit their actions solely due to pain. This ability does not negate any associated injury.
- Darkvision. Half-Orcs can see in total darkness. In conditions of bright or dim illumination their vision is comparable to a human's.
- Orc Blood: For all effects related to race, a half-orc is considered an orc.
- Racial Language: Orc (if raised by orcs)

Halfling

“Why is it that every time you big folk come up with a great idea it always starts with 'Step 1: Tie one end of a rope to the halfling'?”

Halflings stand about 3 feet tall and usually weigh between 35 and 40 pounds. They have brown or black eyes. Halfling men often have long sideburns, but beards are rare among them and mustaches almost unseen. Halflings prefer simple, comfortable, and practical clothes. Unlike members of most races, they prefer actual comfort to shows of wealth. Halflings reach adulthood in their early twenties and generally live into the middle of their second century. Halflings speak Halfling and Common.

Halflings prefer to fight defensively, usually hiding and launching attacks when their foe is unaware. Their tactics are very much like those of elves but place more emphasis on cover and concealment and less on mobility.

Halfling Traits (Ex)

Halflings possess the following racial traits.

- +4 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -4 Strength.
- Small size. As a Small creature, a halfling gains a +1 size bonus to Armor Class and Reflex defense, a -2 penalty to Fortitude defense, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks, and a -4 penalty to Athletics checks but he uses smaller weapons than humans use, and his lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium character.
- A halfling's base land speed is 4 squares. However, a halfling gains the Light Foot feat as a bonus feat even if she doesn't meet the prerequisites.
- +2 racial bonus to Acrobatics and Perception checks.
- +1 racial bonus to Fortitude, Reflex and Will defenses.
- Immunity to fear effects.
- Weapon Familiarity: Halflings treat any exotic weapon with "halfling" in its name as a martial weapon.
- Racial Language: Halfling.

Tiefling

"Who would notice? And just once isn't going to make any difference anyway."

Many tieflings are indistinguishable from humans. Others have small horns, pointed teeth, red eyes, rough or ruddy skin, a whiff of brimstone about them, or even cloven feet. No two tieflings are the same.

Tieflings tend to be sneaky, subtle, and generally conniving. They prefer to strike from ambush and usually avoid a fair fight if they can.

Tiefling Racial Traits (Ex)

Tiefling characters possess the following racial traits.

- +2 Dexterity or +2 Intelligence or +2 Charisma (player's choice)
- -2 Wisdom
- Medium size.
- A tiefling's base land speed is six squares.
- Darkvision. Tieflings can see in total darkness. In conditions of bright or dim illumination their vision is comparable to a human's.
- Tieflings have a +2 racial bonus on Bluff and Stealth checks.
- Due to their infernal heritage, tieflings have resistance to fire 5.
- Evil subtype. A tiefling is not always evil, but he has inherited the Evil subtype from his ancestors. As a result, some spells and abilities affect him differently.