

The Tequila Sunrise
Manual of Monster Creation
for Dungeons & Dragons
3rd Edition



Monster Design Steps

1. Choose Challenge Rating. Your monster's challenge rating is the foundation of all of its important statistics.

2. Choose Role. Your monster's role is a shorthand for how it acts in combat.

Artillery: These monsters excel at dealing damage from a distance.

Brute: These monsters are easy to hit, but hit hard in return and are hard to kill.

Controller: These monsters challenge the PCs by hampering or disabling them.

Lurker: These monsters excel at ambush tactics.

Skirmisher: These monsters are highly mobile and hard to pin down.

Soldier: These monsters excel at dealing consistent damage and staying alive.

3. Assign Size and Type. Assign your monster whatever size and type you feel are appropriate.

4. Assign Hit Points. Modify your monster's hit points with its Constitution and CR, just as you would modify an NPC's hit points with its Constitution and level. Your monster should have a constitution bonus of about one half per CR. Though monsters do not need hit dice in order for you to assign their statistics, some spells and effects require a hit dice value to gauge their effects. In such a case, treat your monster as having a number of hit dice equal to twice its CR.

Role	Hit Points	Constitution Bonus
Artillery	5 per CR	+0 plus +1 per 4 CRs
Brute	9 per CR	+3 plus +1 per 2 CRs
Controller	5 per CR	+1 plus +1 per 4 CRs
Lurker	5 per CR	+1 plus +1 per 4 CRs
Skirmisher	7 per CR	+2 plus +1 per 3 CRs
Soldier	7 per CR	+2 plus +1 per 3 CRs

5. Assign Initiative. Assign your monster a Dexterity modifier and/or a racial modifier such that its initiative modifier follows the guidelines below.

Role	Initiative Modifier
Artillery	+0
Brute	+0
Controller	+0
Lurker	+4 plus 1/4 CR
Skirmisher	+2 plus 1/4 CR
Soldier	+2 plus 1/4 CR

6. Assign Speed. Assign your monster whatever modes and rates of speed that you feel are appropriate. Keep in mind that flying monsters are difficult for low level PCs to deal with, so be careful with them. It helps to think of flight as a significant special quality for this purpose. Take similar care with other modes of movement if you expect the monster to fight the PCs in its home environment. For example, a monster with a swim

speed is more difficult for the PCs to fight in water.

7. Assign Armor Class. Assign your monster a natural armor bonus, a Dexterity modifier and/or whatever other type of modifiers you wish such that its AC follows the guidelines below.

Role	AC
Artillery	11 + 3/4 CR
Brute	11 + 3/4 CR
Controller	11 + 3/4 CR
Lurker	13 + CR
Skirmisher	13 + CR
Soldier	15 + 1-1/4 CR

8. Assign Attack Bonus and Damage. Assign your monster a base attack bonus, ability modifiers and/or racial modifiers such that its best attack bonus and damage follows the guidelines below. (Note: A monster's secondary attacks, like the melee attacks of an Artillery monster, should use Controller attack and damage for those attacks.)

	Total Attack Bonus	Attack Damage	Full Attack Damage
Role			
Artillery	4 + 2 per CR	2 per CR	4 per CR
Brute	1-1/2 CR	3 per CR	6 per CR
Controller	1-1/2 CR	1 per CR	2 per CR
Lurker	2 + 1-3/4 CR	5 per CR	5 per CR
Skirmisher	2 + 1-3/4 CR	3 per CR	3 per CR
Soldier	4 + 2 per CR	2 per CR	4 per CR

9. Assign Space and Reach. Assign your monster whatever space and reach you feel are appropriate. These values are usually based on size, you can choose to disregard those guidelines. If your monster has more than a 5 ft. reach, it will be more challenging for your PCs to defeat, so be careful with reach. It helps to think of 10 ft. or more reach as a significant special attack for this purpose.

10. Assign Special Attacks and Attack DCs. If your monster has a special attack, assign it a base attack DC, ability modifiers and/or racial modifiers such that its attack DCs follow the guidelines below. Tactical attacks are those that hinder the PCs in some way, while disabling attacks are those that incapacitate, kill or otherwise remove PCs from combat. (Note: Artillery monsters whose best attacks are damaging spell-like abilities or spells should use the Controller DCs for those abilities.)

	Tactical Attack DC	Disabling Attack DC
Role		
Artillery	10 + 1/2 CR	4 + 1/2 CR
Brute	10 + 1/2 CR	4 + 1/2 CR
Controller	14 + 3/4 CR	8 + 3/4 CR
Lurker	10 + 1/2 CR	4 + 1/2 CR

Skirmisher 10 + 1/2 CR 4 + 1/2 CR

Soldier 10 + 1/2 CR 4 + 1/2 CR

11. Assign Special Qualities. Assign your monster whatever special qualities you feel are appropriate. In addition, each monster type comes with a set of standard qualities that you will probably want to add to your monster; these qualities are found on pages 305 - 317 of the Monster Manual.

12. Assign Saves. Assign your monster base save bonuses, ability modifiers and/or racial modifiers such that its save bonuses follow the guidelines below. It's okay to switch your monster's "good" save bonus from one type to another if it's appropriate.

	Total	Total	Total
Role	Fort Bonus	Ref Bonus	Will Bonus
Artillery	1/2 CR	4 + CR	1/2 CR
Brute	4 + CR	1/2 CR	1/2 CR
Controller	1/2 CR	1/2 CR	4 + CR
Lurker	1/2 CR	4 + CR	1/2 CR
Skirmisher	1/2 CR	4 + CR	1/2 CR
Soldier	4 + CR	1/2 CR	1/2 CR

13. Assign Ability Scores. Assign your monster whatever ability scores you feel are appropriate, but keep important scores in line so that they do not break the guidelines above.

14. Assign Skills. Assign your monster whatever skills you feel are appropriate. Assign it skill ranks, ability modifiers and/or racial modifiers such that its skill bonuses do not exceed 5 + its CR, or 10 + its CR for very exceptional skills.

15. Assign Feats. Assign your monster whatever feats you feel are appropriate. Do not assign your monster feats that grant it continuous bonuses such as alertness, weapon focus, ability focus, improved natural armor and improved natural attack.

16. Assign Environment, Organization, Treasure and Alignment. Assign your monster whatever labels you feel are appropriate.

Greater and Lesser Monsters

Not all monsters need to strictly follow the guidelines above. If you want a monster to be particularly memorable, like most dragons are for example, you can give it multiple roles and the best benefits of each of those roles. If you want to pit your PCs against hordes of monsters without a great risk of killing them, you can use the worst benefits of several roles instead.