How to make a monster

Before we get into the nitty gritty of making a beast, there are a few concepts to get out of the way. *The Creature Crafter* is designed to be used with any role-playing game, so it doesn't follow any mechanical definitions of its own to define a monster. Instead, it guides you with everyday language to construct the monster in your game of choice.

The two keys to making this work are establishing a **baseline** and using **interpretation**.

Starting at baseline

Before you can make a creature with *The Creature Crafter*, you need to establish a baseline profile from which your creation will spring. This is the "vanilla" to which *The Creature Crafter* will add flavor. It's assumed the creature baseline is a fair challenge to an average member of the character group, not too weak but not too strong. If one of the player characters in your group were to get into a fight with this monster, the character should win, though he might take a serious beating.

You'll need a baseline for all monster statistics used in your game, such as the creature's initiative score or how much damage it does. These baseline statistics will then be modified as you generate your new creature.

There are a number of ways of determining the baseline:

CHARACTER AVERAGE

Figure the creature's baseline statistic scores based upon average scores of the player characters in your group. For instance, if there are three player characters in a group, with combat scores of 8, 3 and 5, then the baseline combat score for a creature would be 5.

You'll have to use some discretion when coming up with average scores depending upon the rpg you are playing. For instance, maybe your game doesn't use numerical values for every statistic. Use your best judgement to create average scores for the creature; the values don't have to be exactly average, just close enough to give you something to start with.

Basing your creature on character averages probably gives the most accurate baseline, but it creates a bit of work for the GM at the beginning to compile these values. Once you have the scores, though, you can record them and keep them handy for when you whip up the next baddy.

REPRESENTATIVE CREATURE

Another approach is to take an already existing monster, one that is a standard challenge to your group of players, and treat it as the baseline creature. The advantage here is you don't have to calculate anything, you just pick a creature as the representative and base your monster creations upon it. In this case, you're just looking for standard statistics, such as speed or armor values, and ignoring any special abilities that make the creature unique. It gives you something handy to refer to once you start generating a new monster.

The disadvantage to this approach is that your baseline monster might bring with it a certain bias. Maybe it has strong offensive values offset by a weak defense. That bias toward a strong offense and weak defense will carry over into the monsters you make from this baseline creature. This is not all bad, though, as you may want to generate creatures that "lean" in a certain direction. For instance, maybe you plan on making creatures that are variations of vampires. So, you start with a standard vampire as the baseline and modify it with *The Creature Crafter* from there.

If you choose a representative creature as the baseline, however, and want to try and minimize the bias, pick a beastie that is as generic as possible.

BALLPARK IT

This is the easiest approach, and is just a looser variation of the first, taking the character average. Here, when you generate a statistic for a creature, just decide on the spot what you think a good average score would be to begin from. As the GM, you know your game world and you know your characters, so it shouldn't be too hard to guess what a creature's average attack scores should be, or how many health points it

should average. You're just trying to get it as close to the player character average as possible without actually sitting down and calculating the exact number.

The art of interpretation

Since *The Creature Crafter* isn't geared toward a particular rpg, it doesn't generate specific statistics. Instead, we start from the baseline created above (which is geared toward the game you are playing) and branch out from there. The tables that follow will generate physical descriptions of your creature, guide you in altering the baseline stats, and generate your monster's special abilities that make it unique and terrifying.

To make all of this work, you must interpret the information you are rolling up. In other words, when you modify a statistic or add a special ability, you need to work it into the monster as a whole and have it make sense. This might require you to alter the monster as you go, or to change the result you rolled to make it fit better.

You should think of the process of generating a monster as an evolution. Starting from the physical description that you come up with, the creature will begin taking shape in your mind. Any new results you add to the creature should fit into that image that is evolving.

For instance, the initial random description may make your monster sound like a reptilian humanoid. Maybe you're imagining a sort of lizard person, with scaly green skin and a snake-like snout. When rolling for special abilities, you come up with Natural Weaponry. You think of the creature's sharp teeth and decide it has a dangerous bite. When determining the creature's defense, you roll surprisingly high and you decide that the creature's scaly hide is very tough and acts like good armor.

The Creature Crafter will give you general ideas about your monster, which you then interpret into the monster as a whole and determine its specific statistics so it all makes sense. One important aspect to this process is the "I Dunno" rule, which means: if you roll up something that makes no sense, and you simply can't fit it into the monster as it now stands, then ignore the rolled result and move on.

The idea is that you are taking your baseline creature and modifying it into something new and unique. The rules in this book guide you, but they don't decide for you because this system isn't geared toward any particular rpg. *The Creature Crafter* will help you determine if your creature does a lot of damage, or a little, but it's up to you to interpret what that means exactly in terms of how much damage specifically within the framework of the game you are playing.

By the same token, don't feel obligated to roll on every table. If you already know your creature is an undead, just choose undead from the Creature Classification table instead of rolling. As the creature evolves, an idea may strike you about how to finish up the creature and from that point you may just decide to invent the rest of the monster yourself.

The Power of Potency

Following are tables for determining how many creatures there are, what they look like and what they can do. The most important table, however, is the Potency Table. The results of this table are used to modify the baseline statistics of your creature and will be used any time there is a question about what a particular statistic should be. It can also be used to determine other details about your creature, such as how many weapons it carries.

To use the table, roll 2d10 and apply any modifiers. Modifiers can include adjustments based on how many monsters there are, their size, and classification. We'll get to these in a bit.

The table will give you a range of results in common language, including: Minimum, Weak, Less, Baseline, More, Strong, and Maximum.

> **Minimum:** The statistic for this creature should be lowered considerably from baseline, at least down by 75% of its real world power. This value should be near what you would consider to be the minimum possible score for this creature.
> **Weak:** The statistic is low, about half the baseline's real world value.
> **Less:** The statistic is just a little below baseline. Drop it by about 10%.
> **Baseline:** Leave the statistic at baseline.
> **More:** The statistic is just a little above baseline, by about 10%.
> **Strong:** The statistic is well above baseline, by about 50%.
> **Maximum:** The statistic is way over baseline, by at least double, maybe more. This should be the highest you would expect this value to go for this aspect of the creature.

These results are interpreted by the GM and applied to the creature's baseline statistics. Where numerical suggestions are given (-10%, +50%, etc.), these numbers refer to real world values associated with the statistic. For instance, if a creature has the strength to lift 400 pounds, +50% means it can lift 600 pounds. Keep in mind that this is just a rough suggestion which you can approximate as you apply it to the game system you are playing. The Minimum and Maximum categories are considered to be the lower and upper values for the creature. Use your best judgement when assigning values to statistics, keeping the monster's overall power level in mind.

POTENCY TABLE	
2d10	**Relative Potency**
-4	Minimum (-75%)
5-6	Weak (-50%)
7-9	Less (-10%)
10-12	Baseline
13-15	More (+10%)
16-17	Strong (+50%)
18+	Maximum (+100% or more)

The Creature Crafter can be used to make monsters in advance of a game, or you can use it to generate monsters as you go. If you are generating a monster off the cuff, during a game, don't take all day to figure out what the Potency Table is telling you. Just take the result as a suggestion and modify the baseline statistic the way that seems most appropriate. For instance, you may have determined that baseline damage for a creature is 1d8 (for a game that uses multiple-sized dice for damage). You roll Less on the Potency Table for damage, so you adjust the damage down to 1d6, which seems like the next closest value. A result of Weak may give you 1d4, and Minimum damage is perhaps 1. LIkewise, a result of More might give you 1d8+1, Strong a score of 1d12, and Maximum perhaps a score of 2d10.

USING THE POTENCY TABLE FOR OTHER VALUES

The Potency Table can be used not only to generate standard statistics for a creature, but for determing other values as well. For instance, you may want to determine how long a creature's magical effect lasts, or the quality of the weapons carried by a monster.

Anytime you need to know something about a