

Step II: Races and Racial Characteristics

Introduction

PC Race Comparison Chart

Race	Ability Modifiers	Height Range	Lifespan*	Detailed on Pg#
Aarakokra	-1 Str, +2 Dex, -1 Con	77-93"	11+, * v36, x42	2
Dwarves	+1 Str, -1 Dex, +2 Con, -2 Cha	50-58"	29+, m100, o133, v200, x360	4
Elves	+2 Dex, -2 Con, -1 Int, -1 Wis	74-94	18+, m50, o67, v100, x140	6
Half-elves	+1 Dex, -1 Con	70-80"	17+, m45, o60, v90, x110	7
Half-giants	+4 Str, +2 Con; -2 on Int, Wis, & Cha	128-155"	24+, m60, o80, v120, x220	x
Halflings	-2 Str; +2 Dex and Wis; -1 on Con & Cha	35-44"	28+, m45, o60, v90, x138	xii
Humans	—	61-76"	16+, m40, o53, v80, x120	xiv
Muls	+2 Str, +1 Con, -1 Int, -2 Cha	67-78"	16+, m40, o53, v80, x120	xvi
Pterrans	+1 Str & Wis; -1 on Dex & Cha	61-74"	13+, * v40, x50	xviii
Thri-kreen	+2 Dex, -1 Int, +1 Wis, -2 Cha	83-87"	5+, * v25, x35	xx

*Most races adjust -1 to Str & Con and +1 to Int & Wis on reaching middle age ("m"), -2 to Str & Con and +1 to Int & Wis on reaching middle age ("o"), and -1 to Str, Dex, & Con and +1 to Int & Wis on reaching venerable age (v). However, Aarakokra, Pterrans, and Kreen age differently, with no middle- or old-age adjustments, and simply take -1 to Str & Dex on reaching venerable age. The maximum age ("x") listed is the absolute racial maximum -- very few characters of the race will live this long.

Racial Descriptions and Abilities

After determining abilities and sub-abilities in Step I and II, move on to Step III: Determining a race and racial characteristics. Standard abilities are listed in plain text; the optional custom racial characteristics are shaded.

Racial Stat Minimums and Maximums

Each Race has required minimum and maximum statistics. For example, a character with intelligence over 15 or a strength under 17 cannot be made into a half-giant.

Racial Adjustments:

When the player decides on a race, the character's statistics are adjusted for that race as described in the individual race descriptions below. For example a player who has rolled a strength of 17 and intelligence of 15 for his character opts to make the character a half-giant; since a half-giant receives +4 to strength and -2 to intelligence, the character ends up with a 21 strength, and a 13 intelligence (the ultimate maximum intelligence and minimum strength for a half-giant—relative to other half-giants, this one is a weak nerd).

Carrying Charps over:

Standard humans receive an extra 10 charps to spend on traits and disadvantages in Step IV; standard non-humans have no charps that carry over. Custom characters, both human and non-human, can carry up to 10 charps over to Step III: Traits and disadvantages.

Athasian Races

Aarakokra Race

Of all the aarakocra who live beneath Athas' crimson sun, only the silvaarak of the White Mountains can be used as player characters. The bird-people born to the village of Winter Nest grow to an average height of 7'k feet tall with wingspans of 20 feet. Males weigh about 100 pounds, while females weigh about 85. With gray beaks, black eyes, and plumage that ranges from purest white to silver to shades of pale blue, the aarakocra of Winter Nest look much different than the bird-people of the deep desert.

Aarakocra who leave Winter Nest to become player characters are seen as young rebels by the rest of their community. They are adventurous, seeking higher purpose and a way to help the beleaguered world. In all cases, aarakocra have a deep and abiding respect for the gifts of nature and little patience for those who abuse those gifts.

As beings intimately connected to high mountain peaks and the open sky, aarakocra have a great love of freedom. In some ways, this love is even more intense than a similar emotion experienced by elves. They prefer to always be above a situation, either flying or perched above the rest of a group so that they can have a bird's-eye view. Aarakocra are claustrophobic and will only enter an enclosed building or cave if absolutely necessary. Aarakocra make excellent fighters and good rangers, but their fear of enclosed places makes them wither in captivity, so they can never develop into gladiators. The silvaarak send a select number of their village to learn preserving magic from Oronis of Kurn, but no bird-person can develop the skills necessary to be a defiler. All other character classes, except for bard, are open to aarakocran PCs. Like all character races, they can excel as psionicists. The following game statistics apply to the aarakocran player character:

- An aarakocran PC has a natural Armor Class of 7. However, because his bones are light and fragile, any damage caused by a

bludgeoning weapon is increased by 1d4 points.

- Each bird-person has the ability to fly; movement rate is 36, with maneuverability class C. Base movement rate on land is 6.
- An aarakocran can use his talons instead of a weapon during combat, striking twice in a round for 1d3 points of damage with each successful hit. When using a javelin (if the character is proficient in its use), an aarakocran can make a special diving attack that gets a +4 bonus to attack and causes double damage.
- When forced to fight in an enclosed area (any area where the aarakocra can't spread his wings and fly), an aarakocra receives a -2 penalty to all attack rolls.
- The silvaarak are slightly longer-lived than their primitive cousins. Even so, the oldest aarakocra known lived to only age 42.

Suggested Experience Points

Each game session, Aarakokran PCs add 1% of their next level jump xps if they role-played the Aarakokra well (reverence for nature, claustrophobia), another 1% if they relied on Aarakokran combat skills and tactics (dive-bombing), and another 1% if they effectively used Aarakokran non-combat skills and philosophy (take advantage of flying ability, scout out area, keep a "bird's" eye view of every situation, etc.)

Racial Penalties:

Bludgeoning Damage; Claustrophobia and Enclosed Fighting Disadvantage.

Racial Benefits

Aarakokrans receive 30 points to distribute among the following:

- 10 Aim Bonus +1
- 5 Beak Attack for d2 damage(combined for 3 attacks claw d3/claw d3 /beak d2).
- 5 Dextrous flying: PC especially adept and flies as maneuverability class B.
- 5* Javelin bonus when dive-attacking: +4 to hit and double damage.
- 5 Movement bonus: 9" movement on ground.
- 5 Net bonus: +1 to hit; hit entangles opponent; strength check frees opponent from the net.
- 5* Talon attack: the PC can use his talons in combat, thus allowing two claw attacks (d3) per round with no proficiency penalty.
- 15 Sharper talons: d6 instead of d3 damage per talon.
- 10* Improved armor class: Tough skin and feathers provide AC 7.

Dwarf Race

Short and powerful, dwarves stand between 4'2 and 5 feet tall. Their frames are nevertheless extremely massive, and an average dwarf weighs in the vicinity of 200 pounds. Life in the Athasian wastes make them ruled, tanned, and callused.

Dwarves seek out meaningful work to occupy their time. A dwarf is never happier than when he has a cause to work or fight for. A stoic race, dwarves love to approach tasks with a single-minded intensity. They devote their very beings to these tasks, laboring for weeks, years, even decades to the exclusion of other endeavors. Once a dwarf is committed to a particular task, it takes a great deal of coercion to make him set it aside for even a limited amount of time. A dwarf strives for the personal fulfillment he achieves upon completing a lengthy, difficult task.

A dwarf's present task is called his *focus*. No simple job can become a focus. A focus must be a feat that requires at least one week to complete. While performing actions that are directly related to his focus, a dwarf receives a +1 bonus to all saving throws and a +2 bonus to all proficiency checks (or +10 to any percentile rolls). The concept of the focus is integral to a dwarf's makeup and is even tied to his physiology—so much so that those dwarves who die before completing their foci become undead banshees who wander the wastes haunting their unfinished works.

A dwarf character reacts to other characters based upon his current focus. If another character is actively committed to the dwarf's focus, the dwarf considers that character to be a sensible and dependable companion. If, however, a character vehemently opposes a dwarf's focus, the two are irrevocably at odds until one or the other is dead. There's very little room for compromise in a dwarf's mind.

Dwarves are non magical by nature. They can't use wizard magic of any sort, though they can employ priestly magic. Their non magical nature gives them a resistance to wizard spells that translates into saving throw bonuses for attacks from magical wands, rods, staves, and spells of a wizardly nature, as shown below on TABLE IX. Likewise, dwarves also have exceptional resistance to toxic substances. They receive bonuses to saving throws versus poison using the same table.

DWARF SAVING THROW BONUS

Constitution Score	Saving Throw Bonus
4-6	+1
7-10	+2
11-14	+3
15-18	+4
19+	+5

Unlike in other AD&D campaigns, Athasian dwarves don't receive combat bonuses against larger opponents, and they don't have any natural abilities to detect sloping passages or other underground discrepancies. They do have infravision (the ability to see varying degrees of heat in darkness) to 60 feet, and on Athas their base movement rate is 6. The maximum age a dwarf can hope to live to is 260.

Unlike elves, dwarves see heat (though this "infravision" does not allow them to perceive color.)

Suggested Experience Points

Each game session, dwarven PCs add up to 3% of their next level jump xps depending on the intensity of their focus devotion. Breaking or ignoring a focus costs a stiff xp penalty, and possibly other repercussions. A dwarf who fulfils a difficult focus lasting over one year receives a one-time bonus of 5-50% of the next level jump. Dwarves receive no special bonuses for using racial abilities.

Custom Racial Characteristics:

All dwarves have the focus characteristic.

Dwarves have 25 points to spend on the following characteristics

- 5 Fear Bonus: +2 against all fear attacks.
- 10 Fitness bonus +1 to fitness score
- 5 Health bonus: +1 to health score.
- 15 Infravision, 90'. Sees Heat.
- 10* Infravision, 60'. Sees Heat.
- 5 Infravision 30'. Sees Heat.
- 10 Can chose one of the following as a wild talent, provided the trait and proficiency are paid for: detection, complete healing, or know Direction/location *and* immovability.
- 10 Muscle bonus: +1 to muscle score.
- 10 The PC's metabolism allows him to heal 1 hp per hour, provided the dwarf has sufficient food and water.
- 15* Saving throw bonus by constitution against magic and poison.
- 10 Tough dwarf. Takes only 1/2 damage from strangulation, constriction, bludgeoning, and falling damage.
- 10 Thick hide: Dwarf's skin provides AC 8.

Elf Race

The elves of Athas are long-limbed sprinters who lead lives of thievery, raiding, trading, and warfare. They stand between 6'1k and 7'k feet tall, with slender yet muscular builds. They have deeply etched features, with skin that has been made rugged by the baking sun and the scouring sand. The color of their skin is as varied as that of the other races of Athas, and as affected by the rays of the sun. They grow no facial hair, but the locks atop their heads come in shades of lightest blond to darkest black. They dress in garb designed to protect them from the desert and the elements.

Elves are tireless wanderers forged in the endless desert—burned dark by the sun, toughened by the swirling sand, and given strength and speed by the constant wind. There's no racial unity among them. Within a given tribe, all elves are brethren, but outsiders—even other elves—are regarded as potential enemies. Outsiders can be accepted and perhaps even become friends, but trust takes time to develop and is often associated with tests and great sacrifice.

Elves are seen as lazy and deceitful, and in most ways they are. They desire to lead short, happy lives as opposed to long, sad ones. The future, to an elf, is a dark, deadly place. This compels them to strive to make every moment as full and enjoyable as possible. They call this concept of the moment “the now.” Elves do work, however, and in some ways they work harder than members of other races. They won't farm, but they'll spend a lot of time and energy hunting and foraging. They detest hard labor, but they'll spend hours on end haggling and negotiating with potential customers.

Elves crave free, open spaces in which to run, so elf slaves wither in captivity if they can't escape. Travelers often see whole tribes of elves running swiftly across the sandy wastes. Only rarely will a member of this race ride an animal. To do so is dishonorable unless wounded and near death. The custom of the elves is to keep up or be left behind.

Most elf tribes make a living through herding, but merchants and raiders also ply the desert roads. Elf culture, while savage, is also rich and diverse. They have turned celebrating into an art form, and elf song and dance is some of the most beautiful and captivating in all of Athas.

When found in the company of others, elves tend to keep to themselves.

They fabricate tests of trust and friendship constantly until such time as they are ready to bond with their companions—or leave them for other pastures.

Elf PCs can be of any class except druid and bard. They also have access to a variety of multi class combinations. They receive the following bonuses:

- When using long swords or long bows crafted by his or her tribe, an elf receives a +1 bonus to all attack rolls made with these specific weapons.
- An elf character gains a surprise bonus when in the desert or steppes of Athas. Alone or in the company of other elves, the elf moves with great stealth—non-elves or mixed groups suffer a -4 surprise roll penalty.
- Elves have ultravision to 60 feet.
- Elves have a natural resistance to extreme temperatures and aren't adversely affected by the heat of the day or the chill of the night. However, this resistance doesn't extend to magical or supernatural heat and cold.

In addition to these bonuses, elves have an inbred swiftness. The elf character receives a bonus to his base movement rate (12) according to his Dexterity score, as noted below. The fastest, most dexterous elf has a movement rate of 21.

Elven Running Rate by Dexterity

Dex	12-13	14-15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Bonus	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9

The elf run is a state of mind that causes adrenaline to flow, inhibiting the tiring nature of the elf's weaker Constitution. When the elf run flows through an elf, he can run as many as 50 miles in a single day and keep up the grueling pace for a maximum of seven days in a row before fatigue sets in. To engage in the elf run, an elf adds his Constitution score to his base movement rate for overland travel to determine the distance he can cover in miles (or points) per day. (Note that overland travel rates are at twice the base movement rates.) Thus, in the example above, the dexterous elf has an overland travel rate of 42; if his Constitution is also the maximum at 18, he has a greater possibility of engaging in the elf run for the seven-day period *without* penalty.

An elf can induce an elf run with a minimum of concentration (one turn) and a successful Constitution check. The Constitution check also determines how many days the elf run lasts until fatigue sets in, as noted on TABLE X below. Once fatigue sets in, the elf suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls for each day (cumulative) he engages in the elf run beyond the predetermined limit. A full day's rest removes one day's penalty. Rules for mass elf runs are described in Chapter 8: DM Material.

ELF RUN Table:

Successful Roll	Days Before Penalties Begin
20	Automatic Failure
19	6
14-19	5
8-13	4
3-7	3
1-2	2

Elves live to a maximum age of 140 years. Specifically, these elves don't receive the special abilities common to elves of other campaign worlds, including the following:

- No special resistance to any types of spells.
- No ability to find secret or concealed doors.
- No attack or surprise bonuses beyond those described above.
- None of the special abilities from *The Complete Book of Elves*, including communion, manifestation, and reverie.

In the full light of Guthay, Elves see as well as in daylight (though this "ultravision" does not allow them to perceive color.)

Suggested Experience Points

Each game session, elven PCs add 1% of their next level jump xps if they role-played the elf well (test of trust), another 1% if they relied on elven combat skills (distance, bows, and fighting by the light of Guthay), and another 1% if they effectively used elven non-combat skills and philosophy (running, escape from entangling situations or relationships).

Custom Racial Characteristics:

Elves have 45 points to start off, or *60 points if they elect to take elven distrust. (Elves without distrust tend to be city elves; these are still distrusted by most Athasians, but city-raised find it easier to trust non-elves without "testing them". Up to 5 points can be saved for spending in the traits and disadvantages stage of character creation. The points may be spent of the following characteristics:

- 10 **Aim bonus** +1 to aim score.
- 10 **Balance bonus**: +1 to balance score.
- 5* **Bow bonus**: When using a composite longbow crafted by a member of his tribe, the PC gains a +1 attack bonus.
- 5* **Cold resistance**. Elf receives a +1 on saving throws vs. cold.
- 5* **Desert surprise bonus**. An elf character gains a surprise bonus when in the desert or steppes of Athas. Alone or in the company of other elves, the elf moves with great stealth — non-elves or mixed groups suffer a -4 surprise roll penalty.
- 10* **Elf run**. (see above)
- 5 **Haggle**: (automatic Bargain proficiency + 1/3 levels, up to an 18 score.
- 5* **Heat resistance**. Elf receives a +1 on saving throws vs. heat.
- 10 **Illusion immunity**. Immune to mirages and first-level illusion magicks.
- 10* **Inbred swiftness**. Elf receives a bonus to his base movement of 12 as noted above.
- 10* **Ral vision**: Elves can see up to 120 yards in the full light of Ral. Exact distance and accuracy of sight depends on Ral's phase.
- 5* **Spear Bonus**. When using a spear crafted by a member of his tribe, the PC gains a +1 attack bonus.
- 5* **Sword bonus**. When using a composite longbow crafted by a member of his tribe, the PC gains a +1 attack bonus.
- 5 **Kreen enemy**. Racial hatred vs. all kreen grants a +2 to hit and damage.
- 5* **Resistance to extreme temperatures**. Elves have a natural resistance to extreme temperatures and aren't adversely affected by the heat of the day or the chill of the night. However, this resistance doesn't extend to magical or supernatural heat and cold.
- 10 **Water conservation**. Elf only needs 1/2 water requirements.

Half-Elves

Half-elves are produced through the union of elves and humans. These characters of mixed breeding combine features of both races to create something unique. Indeed, half-elves can even produce children, unlike muls. Half-elves grow taller than humans but don't reach the height of elves, averaging about 6'6" feet. They are also bulkier than elves, making it easier to pass themselves off as full humans than as full elves. Even so, all half-elves have telltale features that hint at their elven heritage. Despite their unique nature, half-elves don't form their own communities. They live in human societies, either in the city-states or among the tribes and villages that fill the wilderness. A half-elf's life is typically harder than either a human's or an elf's. Intolerance from others is the main cause for this difficult existence, which often shapes and defines a half-elf's nature. As such, a half-elf rarely finds acceptance in either parent's society.

Elves have no tolerance for children of mixed blood; their traditions demand that such children and even their mothers be cast out of the tribe. Humans aren't quite as harsh, and half-elves born into human society have a better chance of survival, but life isn't particularly enjoyable or easy. Humans will accept half-elves as allies or partners, but seldom will they accept them into their homes or families, and few will call a half-elf friend. Humans have no faith in a half-elf's elven side, and elves distrust the human in these crossbreeds. Because of this, a half-elf goes through life as an outsider and loner. He wanders from situation to situation without a people or a land to call home. Thus, he is forced to develop high levels of self-reliance in order to survive. This self-reliance is a half-elf's greatest asset, and a half-elf prides himself on it. He learns not only the skills of survival but methods for dealing with loneliness as well. This may make a half-elf seem detached and aloof, but he will cooperate with companions when necessary.

This air of indifference often hides a desire to gain acceptance from one side of a half-elf's heritage or the other, a pursuit that's usually in vain. Fortunately, however, other races don't have a basic dislike of half-elves, so these characters typically find companionship among dwarves or thri-kreen. Some half-elves also turn to the animal world for company, training creatures to be servants and friends. Half-elves can select any character class; a number of multi class options are available to them as well. These characters receive the following bonuses:

- All half-elf characters have infravision to 60 feet; their base movement rate is 12.
- At 3rd level (the starting level for all DARK SUN PCS), a half-elf receives a bonus proficiency: survival. This proficiency is free; it doesn't fill up any of the character's available slots. The player must specify the terrain type his character is proficient in. Terrain types for the world of Athas include stony barrens, sandy wastes, rocky badlands, mountains, scrub plains, forests, salt flats, and boulder fields. Note that the terrain type selected must make sense for the character. A half-elf who grew up in Tyr, for example, shouldn't select swamp survival.
- At 5th level, a half-elf can befriend one creature. The creature can be any animal native to the half-elf's survival terrain type, but it can't be larger than a human (medium size). The half-elf must find the creature while it's young and spend a full week with it to train it. After that time, the creature follows the half-elf everywhere and obeys simple commands. A half-elf can only befriend one creature at a time, and he must wait 100 days after the death of one befriended creature before beginning to train another. Choice of a half-elf's befriended creature is always subject to the DM's approval. Like their elven counterparts, half-elf characters have no special resistance to any type of spells, nor do they have the ability to find secret or concealed doors. They have been known to live as long as 130 years.

Suggested Experience Points

Each game session, Half-Elven PCs add 1% of their next level jump xps if they role-played the half-elf well (independent and self-reliant), another 1% if they win the approval of a group of Humans or of Elves.

Custom Racial Characteristics

Half-elves have 30 points to spend. Up to 5 points can be saved for spending in the traits and disadvantages stage of character creation. The points may be spent of the following characteristics:

- 10 **Aim Bonus** +1 to aim score.
- 10* **Animal bonding:** If the half-elf selects the animal empathy trait, he can befriend on creature at fifth level as described above.
- 10 **Balance bonus:** +1 to balance score.
- 5 **Heat resistance.** Half-elf receives a +1 on saving throws vs. cold.
- 10 **Inbred Swiftess.** Half-elf receives a bonus to his base movement of 12 as noted above.
- 10* **Lesser Guthay vision:** Half-elves can see up to 60 yards in the full light of Guthay.
- 15 **Full Guthay vision:** As above up to 120 yards.
- 5 **Parental resemblance:** The character takes after its elven or human parent, and is mistaken for either full-elven or full-human.
- 10 **Ambiguous features:** with minimal touching up, the half-elf can pass for elven, or human at will. The character receives a bonus Imitation trait, and if he takes the disguise proficiency, the imitation may fool the keenest of observers, and the character gains an understanding of his parent race that grants him a +3 reaction bonus when dealing with either race.
- 5 **Resistance to extreme temperatures.** 1/2-elf has a natural resistance to extreme temperatures and aren't adversely affected by the heat of the day or the chill of the night. However, this resistance doesn't extend to magical or supernatural heat and cold.
- 10* **Survival terrain bonus:** at fifth level, 8th level, and again at 11th level, the character can add a bonus terrain to his survival proficiency. The half-elf must spend at least one month in the new terrain, studying the flora, fauna, and geography of the land to receive the bonus proficiency. If the character possesses the animal bonding characteristic, the half-elf can now also take an animal from each of his three terrains.
- 10 **Wild talent selection:** Rather than rolling a random wild Talent, the half elf can choose between one of the following wild talents: Telepathic projection, send thoughts (animals only), truthhear, ballistic attack, mind/body

Half-Giants

Half-giants are a relatively new addition to the races of Athas. The union was originally the result of magical experiments conducted by the sorcerer-kings. When the sorcerer-kings first took control of the cities of the Tyr Region, they used their arcane powers to cross humans with giants, striving to create warriors and laborers of gigantic proportions. Because of this turbulent beginning, the half-giants of today's Athas have no culture of their own to draw upon, no ancient traditions to turn to for inspiration.

From giants, this race inherited tremendous size and strength, as well as low intelligence. (Half-giants average 10 to 12 feet high and weigh upwards of 1,600 pounds.) From humans, they received curiosity, an interest in cooperation and communication, and a general tendency toward kindness. Although half-giants have human features, these tend to be exaggerated in some way. All existing half-giants are the descendants of the original magically created half-giants. They can only produce offspring by mating with other half-giants; they cannot reproduce with either giants or humans. Likewise, there's no natural way for giants and humans to mate and produce children in today's Athas.

Like half-elves, half-giants don't gather in communities of their own. Instead they live in the human cities or in the wilderness tribes, absorbing the culture of those around them. They are friendly and eager to please whoever they meet. If they are accepted in turn, the half giants quickly adopt the lifestyles, skills, and values of those they've come in contact with. A half-giant character presented with a new situation should examine the roles of the people there, determine how he best fits in, and then start performing tasks accordingly. For example, a half-giant who happens upon a dwarf quarry might watch for a time, then start quarrying stone. He won't necessarily work with the dwarves, but he'll continue to perform like his neighbors for as long as he can make a decent living.

Half-giants aren't strictly bound to perform as those they see around them, nor are they restricted from moving on when they see fit. If a situation isn't beneficial, or if a half-giant can't perform well in a given environment, he won't imitate the nearby culture. In all cases, half-giants simply aren't as emotionally attached to objects or work as are other races.

Players running half-giant characters should be ready to switch goals and

lifestyles quickly, usually according to charismatic individuals their characters might meet. They also need to remember that their characters have great size and strength, and so must play accordingly. For the most part, Athas is a human-sized world. Half-giants often have trouble with things that other characters take for granted, such as doors, chairs, and even buildings.

Characters of this race can select any warrior class, or they can opt to be clerics or psionicists. Half-giants also have a few multi-class options to choose from.

Half-giants switch attitudes very quickly, taking on new values to fit new situations. This malleable attitude is handled by a changing alignment. A half-giant character selects one aspect of his alignment to remain fixed at the time the character is created (either the "lawful/neutral/chaotic" side, or the "good/neutral/evil" side). The other aspect is determined at the start of each day of game time. The character is bound to that alignment combination until he sleeps and wakes again. For example, if a half-giant has a fixed "good" side, then each morning he chooses to be either lawful good, neutral good, or chaotic good. Half-giant psionicists must have a fixed lawful or neutral aspect; they can't be chaotic.

Although this alignment change isn't mandatory, it should certainly be invoked in role playing situations as a reaction to extreme changes in a half-giant's environment. A half giant's nature is to switch his alignment aspect to imitate or otherwise react to a significant change around him. Of course, there needs to be a good reason for a half-giant's flexible alignment aspect to change, and DMs are free to disallow any change that doesn't fit the current storyline. This shifting alignment should be a hindrance as often as it serves to help a half-giant character. It's up to the DM to make sure both good and bad events occur throughout a campaign.

A half-giant character doubles his Hit Die rolls, no matter what his character class is. Add any bonuses for high Constitution scores after doubling the roll of the die. For example, a half giant cleric rolls 1d8 and multiplies the result by 2 to determine his hit points at each level.

All personal items, such as clothing, armor, weapons, and food, cost double for half giant characters. Transportation and lodging, when they're available at all, are also considerably more expensive. Most things aren't built to support the weight of a half-giant, and even damage.

Half-giants can live to a maximum age of 220 years.

Suggested Experience Points

Each game session, Half-Giant PCs add 1% of their next level jump xps if they consistently take their extra bulk and height into account (particularly when this brings disadvantage). They add another 1% for being influenced by powerful personalities, and at the DM's option, sometimes receive 1% or even greater bonuses for alignment shifts in delicate situations that further the adventure story.

Custom Racial Characteristics

Half-giants have 25 points to spend. Up to 5 points can be saved for spending in the traits and disadvantages stage of character creation. The points may be spent on the following characteristics:

- 5* Carrying Capacity: Half-giants double the amount of weight that normal characters with their stamina could carry.
- 20* Double Hit dice.
- 10 Double Constitution Hit point bonus.
- 5 Fitness bonus +1
- 5 Health bonus +1
- 10 Lessen damage from size S weapons.
- 10 Massive weapons : Double all weapon damage (not bonuses) with weapons that have been custom-designed for the 1/2-giant's size.
- 5 Telepathic resistance: PC gets a saving throw vs. spells against any telepathic attack from all beings other than giants, half-giants, and humans. If the save is successful, the attack fails.
- 10 Tough Hide. The PC possesses tough skin that provides AC 7, cumulative with any other armor.

Halflings

In the ancient past, halflings were the masters of the world. All other demi-human and humanoid races—including humans—are descended from the ancient halflings. Today, however, halflings are primitive savages who control only limited areas of Athas. In most cases, player-character halflings come from the Forest Ridge. DMs may allow players to create characters using the more advanced halflings of the Jagged Cliffs if they so desire, but a good reason must be developed for why a cliff-dweller has left home and community to take up adventuring.

Halflings grow as tall as 3½ feet and weigh between 50 and 60 pounds. They are muscled and proportioned like humans, though they have wise, childlike faces that never succumb to the rigors of age. They always appear to be in peak physical condition.

Ritual and custom control every aspect of halfling life. They have a rich culture expressed in art and song. They remember their history through oral traditions—unfortunately, however, much of it has deteriorated into half-accurate legends and fanciful fables. Still, halflings remember the deep and abiding respect their forefathers had for the world, and this remains an important part of each halfling's psyche.

Halflings strongly believe in racial unity. Though the Halfling race is divided politically and geographically into separate villages and tribes, each halfling respects his race as a whole. Disputes between members of different tribes are settled peaceably whenever possible through ritual and custom. These customs are often directed by each tribe's shamans, the elemental clerics or druids who hold positions of honor and respect above all other halflings. On a personal level, halflings relate to each other extremely well. A considerable culture of art, song, and other expressive means of communication has developed that crosses the political and geographical bounds separating the tribes. Even such diverse halfling groups as the cliff-dwellers of Thamasku and the desert raiders of Small Water can communicate on a basic level with halflings of other regions.

Because of this, halflings rely on their culture to express abstract thoughts and to relay complicated concepts quickly. A typical halfling assumes that whomever he's talking to has the same culture to draw upon and therefore understands everything passing between them. It's difficult for a halflings to

compensate for a listener who isn't intimately familiar with the culture. As such, it's easy for halflings to become frustrated with outsiders. However, halflings who travel widely have a greater tolerance of those who "lack culture." These halflings can communicate without an immediate sense of frustration. Halfling culture cares for each individual's inner well-being and spiritual unity with race and environment. They have little concept of conquest or monetary wealth, and vices that other societies take for granted—such as greed and avarice—are particularly discouraged. Halfling player characters should role-play difficulty in adjusting to other customs and points of view. As a generally open-minded race, halflings tend to be curious or confused by the actions of others rather than initially combative. Halflings will attempt to learn all they can about other cultures, but will almost never adopt those cultures as their own. Halfling clerics teach that the customs of others are no threat to their own, so a Halfling player character will welcome the chance to learn another point of view, rather than instantly try to change it. Treasure that appeals to other character races holds little interest to a halfling PC. He's more concerned with promoting halfling culture, his own knowledge, or his inner well-being. He'll never lie to or betray another halfling. Lastly, he sees his own size as not a detriment but an advantage. Stealth and speed, for example, is better than bulk any day.

Halfling PCs can select any warrior or priest class, as well as the thief and psionicist class. They can also choose from a few multi class options. Their base movement rate is 6. Halfling date back to an age before the advent of magic, and thus they have a natural resistance to wizard spells. This translates into saving throw bonuses for attacks from magical wands, rods, staves, and wizard spells, as shown in the table below. This bonus is also applied to saving throws against poisons.

Suggested Experience Points

Each game session, halfling PCs add 1% of their next level jump xps if they consistently take minute height into account (particularly when this brings disadvantage). They add another 1% for good role-play of halfling culture: Eating opponents, treating fellow halflings with trust and kindness, lack of interest in money, etc.

HALFLING SAVING THROW BONUS

Constitution Score	Saving Throw Bonus
4-6	+1
7-10	+2
11-14	+3
15-18	+4
19+	+5

Halflings gain a +1 attack roll bonus when using thrown weapons and slings. They also receive the same surprise bonus described in the *Player's Handbook*. Unlike halflings in other campaign worlds, Athasian halflings gain no additional initial languages, they don't have infravision, and they aren't divided into subraces. Halflings live to a maximum age of 138 years.

Custom Racial Characteristics

Halflings have 35 points to spend. Up to 5 points can be saved for spending in the traits and disadvantages stage of character creation. The points may be spent on the following characteristics:

- 5 Aim bonus +1.
- 10 Balance bonus +1.
- 5* Blowdart bonus +4.
- 10 Charm immunity: immune to first-level charm spells.
- 5 Cliff climber: PC has an 80% success rate when climbing rocky inclines. Rogues do not suffer the standard halfling 15% penalty for climbing.
- 5 Healing knowledge: Automatic healing and herbalism proficiencies, and bonus +1 per three levels, up to a 19 score in both of these proficiencies.
- 5 Identify plants: Automatic botany proficiency and additional +2 to herbalism checks.
- 5* Jungle Stealth: -4 penalty to non-halflings adversaries in a jungle setting.
- 5 Pass without trace in a jungle setting
- 10* Halfling saving throw bonuses (see above).
- 5 Select wild talent rather than rolling it randomly. Any of the following Wild Talents may be selected: Chameleon form, control sound, danger sense, mind bar.
- 5* Sling bonus +4.

5* Thrown weapon bonus +4.

5* Tree climber: PC has an 80% success rate when climbing trees. Rogues do not suffer the standard halfling 15% penalty for climbing.

Human Race

Humans are the predominant race in the tablelands. Human player characters aren't limited in either the classes they can belong to or the levels they can attain. High-level humans can easily become the most powerful characters in a campaign, and all of the advanced beings (dragons and avangions) are human. Humans can't be multi class characters, but they can be dual-class (see the rules in Chapter Three of the *Player's Handbook*).

An average human male stands between 6 and 6'6" feet tall and weighs around 200 pounds. An average human female is somewhat smaller, between 5'1" and 6 feet in height and weighing around 140 pounds. Skin, eye, and hair color varies widely across the human spectrum, though most humans are tanned and weathered by the harsh elements.

Humans can be found at all levels of Athasian society. From the highest sorcerer-king to the lowest slave toiling in the obsidian mines of Urik, humans are everywhere. On average, they aren't as strong as some of the other prominent races, but what they lack in strength they more than make up for with cunning, persistence, and adaptability. Humans tend to be impulsive and driven toward great daring, especially when the lure of adventure permeates their souls.

The Cleansing Wars aside, humans are generally tolerant of other races. They often serve as the intermediary or binding element when different races interact.

Suggested Experience Points

Humans thrive on training and instruction. Any human with the Rapid Learning benefit (see below) who manages to acquire a good trainer needs only 90% of the needed experience points to go up a level. Humans are also most influenced by their own culture. DMs may award the PC 1% of next level jump for excellent role-play of his/her native city-state culture.

Custom Racial Characteristics

Humans have 10 points to spend for custom characteristics. Unlike the characteristics of other races, the characteristics listed below are all anomalous. Most Human characters carry these ten points into the trait stage. Up to 10 points can be saved for spending in the traits and disadvantages stage of character creation. The points may be spent on the following characteristics:

- 5 **Rapid Learning:** Most humans benefit from teaching. Humans with this characteristic may advance to the next level with only 90% experience, if and only if they receive active training from a higher-level character that knows the skills that the student is trying to learn.
- 10 **Bonus Hit point:** The human gains one additional hp per die.
- 10 **Elf-like Ral vision.** Diluted elven ancestry allows the character to see up to 60 yards in the full light of Ral. If this moon is not full, then the character will see less well.
- 5 **Tough hide:** AC 8, non-cumulative with other physical armor (except shields). This characteristic reduces Appearance sub-ability 2 points.
- 10 **Telepathic resistance:** This character automatically gets the cannibalism and ejection disciplines, which operate automatically regardless of the psionist's will. The human must take the psionic potential and defense traits in order for these abilities to function properly, and cannot gain any other psionic powers. If the character at some point becomes a psionist, then these powers are lost, though they may be relearned in standard psionic fashion. Note that these abilities, like others, can be disabled by mindwipe or mind thrust.
- 10 **Choose wild talent:** any one talent described in the *WotP* can be chosen.

Muls

Muls are the results of crossbreeding humans and dwarves. Each mul is sterile; the only way to create a new mul is through the union of a human and a dwarf. This race of mixed heritage has existed since the two primary races first came in contact with each other, but muls have only achieved great numbers since the city-states of the sorcerer-kings began breeding them for specific purpose and profit. Most muls are born in the slave pits of the merchant houses and city-states and then set to work as laborers or gladiators.

A mul has the height and adaptability of his human heritage and the raw strength and durability of his dwarf side. Adult muls stand between 6 and 7 feet tall and weigh as much as 300 pounds. They have a high metabolism that makes them lean and muscular, with broad shoulders and very little body fat. Muls look like large humans with a few obvious differences: prominent eye ridges, pointed ears, and no body hair.

This race, like the half-giants and half-elves, doesn't have a culture of its own. With few exceptions, muls are slaves or ex-slaves who live in the city-states or among the slave tribes that inhabit the wastes. Born to the slave pens, the taskmaster's whip takes the place of loving parents and family. For this reason, muls often have gruff personalities and tend toward violent reactions. Many never seek friends or companionship, living out their lives of servitude in hatred and spite.

Some muls learn the ways of the slave pits, figuring out who to trust, who not to, and gaining favor and reputation among the other slaves. Muls who perform well in the arenas receive the most pampered treatment of any slaves. For this reason, some don't see slavery as that great a hardship. However, those who have tasted the sweet air of freedom will fight to retain it.

Player character muls have either escaped, been set free, or otherwise won their freedom and now live independent lives. Free muls usually take advantage of the combat skills they've acquired and work as soldiers or guards. A smaller number turn away from violence to follow other paths -- such as psionic disciplines or priestly devotions. A few even learn the skills necessary to become thieves. As demi-humans, mul characters can select

from a number of multi class options.

Because of their amazing level of endurance, muls can work harder and for longer periods of time before needing rest than most other races. This is shown on the Mul Exertion Table below; a mul's Constitution score is added to the type of labor, which results in the total number of hours (or days) he can work before he must rest. Regardless of the type or length of exertion, eight hours of undisturbed sleep allows a mul to awaken fully rested and ready to begin work again. Perhaps this durability takes its toll in other areas, for the average mul lives only to a maximum age of 90. His base movement rate is 12.

Mul Exertion Table

Exertion	Time Before Requiring Rest
Heavy labor (stone construction, quarry work, running)	24+Con (hours)
Medium labor (light construction, mining, jogging)	36+Con (hours)
Light labor (combat training, walking encumbered)	48+Con (hours)
Normal activity (walking, conversation)	Con (days)

MUL EXERTION TABLE

Suggested Experience Points

The PC receives 1% of their next level jump for demonstration of his/her extraordinary exertion ability.

Custom Racial Characteristics

Muls have 30 points to spend. Up to 5 points can be saved for spending in the traits and disadvantages stage of character creation. The points may be spent of the following characteristics:

- 8 Fitness bonus +1.
- 10 Bonus Hit point: The Mul gains one addition hp per die.
- 10* Lesser Infravision 30'
- 15 Full Dwarf infravision 60'
- 20* Mul endurance and exertion: See description above.
- 5 Popularity a celebrated hero in her home state or town, the Mul receives a +2 to all reaction encounters with compatriots.
- 10 Regeneration: The PC's hardy constitution heals the PC of 1 hp every three hours.
- 10 Tough hide: AC 8, non-cumulative with other physical armor (except shields). This characteristic reduces Appearance sub-ability 2 points.
- 15 Telepathic resistance: This character automatically gets the cannibalism and ejection disciplines, which operate automatically regardless of the psionist's will. The psionist cannot gain any other psionic powers. Note that these abilities, like others, can be disabled by mindwipe or mind thrust.

Pterrans

Pterrans are reptiloids with light brown, scaly skin who grow to be about 6 feet tall. A pterrann stands upright in the humanoid configuration, though his two arms end in three-fingered, talon-clawed hands with opposable thumbs, and his two legs end in three-toed feet. A finlike growth juts from the back of a pterrann's head, and he has a short tail and two shoulder stubs—remnants of wings that vanished generations ago.

All player character pterranns come from two villages in the Hinterlands, Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale. They revere the world of Athas as their Earth Mother, believing themselves to be her first, best children. They see the recent earthquake and aftershocks as the Earth Mother's call to action, and now the bravest of these beings have left their homes to aid Athas in her time of need.

Pterranns are a wary, subdued race at first sight, but when others earn a pterrann's trust, they see an open, caring, friendly individual. In particular, a pterrann engages in many celebrations throughout the day. Each celebration gives thanks to the Earth Mother and reinforces a pterrann's beliefs and faith.

In initial role-playing situations, a pterrann character should be unfamiliar with the customs and practices of the societies of the Tyr Region. However, these pterranns aren't primitive by any definition of the word. They'll look upon differences with curiosity and a willingness to learn, as long as the custom doesn't harm the Earth Mother or her works.

A pterrann PC must select a "Life Path" to follow. In one respect, a Life Path is little more than another term for class; in the role-playing aspect, however, Life Path signifies a pterrann's deep devotion to a chosen way of life. The main Life Paths are the Path of the Warrior (fighters, gladiators, or rangers), the Path of the Druid, and the Path of the Psionicist. Lesser Life Paths allow pterranns to become thieves, traders, or multi class characters.

Civilized pterranns have a natural Armor Class of 8. They usually employ weapons, but they can attack with their claws in dire situations (two attacks in a round, 1 d4 points of damage for each successful strike). They live to a maximum age of 50 years, and their base move.

Many pterranns develop a weaker version of send thoughts, costing 1 psp per round, but functioning only with line of sight, and only between reptiles (or

non-reptiles using reptile mind, of course). This gift leads pterranns to think non-linearly, and their written communications look more like petroglyphs—a two-dimensional representation with no beginning or end.

Suggested Experience Points

Pterranns receive 1% of their next level jump for role-playing their culture (periodic daily celebrations, respect for Mother Earth, etc.); 1% for role-play of their life-path.

Custom Racial Characteristics

Pterrans have 30 points to spend. Up to 5 points can be saved for spending in the traits and disadvantages stage of character creation. The points may be spent of the following characteristics:

General:

- 10 **Bonus hit point:** The Pterrann gains one addition hp per die.
- 5* **Bite attack d6 damage**—can be used in combination with natural claw attacks.
- 5 **Hearing defense.** Pterrann gets a +4 bonus against any sound attacks.
- 5 **Life path bonus:** +10% to all experience gained to a greater life path (Warrior, Druid, or Psionicist).
- 15 **Telepathic resistance:** This character automatically gets the cannibalism and ejection disciplines, which operate automatically regardless of the psionicist's wishes or consciousness. The psionicist cannot gain any other psionic powers. Note that these abilities, like others, can be disabled by mindwipe or mind thrust.
- 5 **Path wild talent selection:** non-psionicists possess wild talents that suit their life path.
- 5 **Earth Mother's vigilance.** When standing on open ground or stone (first floor only), the PC can only be surprised on a 1 in 10.
- 5* **Natural attacks.** Claws (d4/d4) without 2-weapon penalty.
- 5 **Stealth:** In scrubland, the pterrann's natural coloration gives victims a -2 penalty to surprise.
- 5* **Tough hide:** AC 8, non-cumulative with other physical armor (except shields).
- 5* **Send images:** The pterrann receives a weaker version of the telepathic devotion send thoughts, in addition to any other psionics that he might possess. The power costs only 1 psp per round, but only works on reptiles or pterranns within line of sight. Words or sounds cannot be sent, but flash images. (If a PC is abusing this power, the DM should hand the player a notepad and allow her 30 seconds to sketch the image that her character wishes to send). Full mental contact is not required.

Priest only:

- 10* **Earth Mother's favor:** The Pterrann Druid is immune to channeling fatigue, even when not on her guarded lands.

Psionicist only:

- 5* **Mammal Telepath.** The pterrann psionicist receives the bonus discipline mammal mind. (If the pterrann psionicist possesses the mammal mind and send images discipline, she can employ both together to send images to mammals.)
- 5* **PtuPtop Handler.** When the pterrann psionicist learns the Telempathic projection discipline, she can befriend a PtuPtop, the great bat-eared amphihaena snake (pictured on the second Dark-Sun Box-set) once every 5 levels. Not one more than one PtuPtop can be befriended at once. (PtuPtop: HD 10 +10, Poison type D, AC 6, lvl 3 metabolic psionic powers, MAC 6, MTHACO 17.)

Warrior only:

- 5 **Attack bonus:** +1 to attack with any pterrann-created weapon.
- 10* **Pterrax Mount:** Warriors get a pterrax mount, automatic airborne-flying proficiency with a +1 bonus per 2 levels (up to a 19 check) and a slight telepathic link with the mount.
- 5 **Weapons making:** The warrior knows how to make a spear, atlatl, bolas, and all other weapons used by pterranns.

Thri-Kreen

The insectoid thri-kreen is the least “human” of the player character races. The average thrikreen stands 7 feet tall and grows 11 feet long from end to end. With six limbs, a sandy-yellow exoskeleton, and large, multifaceted eyes, a thri-kreen looks like a huge, intelligent mantis. While there are at least six kreen subspecies, the two most prominent in the Tyr Region are jeral and to’ksa kreen. Of these, player characters tend to be drawn from the ranks of the jeral.

A thri-kreen’s hind legs are its most powerful limbs, allowing him to walk, run, and leap at phenomenal speed. (A thri-kreen’s base movement rate is 18.) The four forward limbs end in three-fingered hands that can manipulate tools and weapons as effectively as a human’s hands.

Thri-kreen gather in packs that roam the Athasian wastes. There are no permanent thrikreen communities, which may account for why they have little understanding of human society or customs. Thri-kreen don’t need sleep and are thus never idle. Most thri-kreen are obsessed with the hunt, the daily ritual that makes up much of their life. They strive to become skilled and wise hunters capable of stalking and catching what they need and then moving on before a region is depleted of game.

Non-kreen sometimes view this preoccupation with gathering food and maintaining traveling supplies as a bit strange, especially considering that thri-kreen hunt throughout the night while other races “lazily lie around.” Further, thri-kreen care nothing for money or other items that are usually considered as treasure. In fact, a thri-kreen owns only what he can carry on his person.

Carnivores, thri-kreen will look toward other intelligent races as sources of food in extreme emergencies. Some kreen have a particular taste for elves, which puts both races in uneasy positions when forced to cooperate. However, thri-kreen won’t turn to other members of their “packs” for food—no matter how desperate the situation. A thri-kreen PC adopts his adventuring companions as his pack, regardless of their mix of races; this includes whoever he is with at the time danger strikes. He’ll instinctively leap to protect his companions, regardless of personal danger. The pack mentality is so ingrained in thri-kreen culture that they apply it to every situation they find themselves in.

Thri-kreen PCs can select from any warrior, priest, or psionicist class, as well as a number of multi class options. They have no ability or understanding of wizardly magic and can’t develop the skills or mind set necessary to be rogues. A thri-kreen PC is immune to *charm person* and *hold person* spells.

A thri-kreen PC makes and uses a number of weapons, such as gythka and chatkcha, fashions clothing and bodily decorations, but never wears armor. He can use most magical items available to his character class, though items specifically designed for the humanoid form (rings, cloaks, girdles, bracers, armor, etc.) won’t function for him.

Suggested Experience Points

Thri-kreen receive 1% of their next level jump for relying on their natural attacks, 1% for role-playing the kreen (subjection to party-leader, willingness to die to protect party, etc.).

Racial Penalties:

- Inability to swim, climb, or punch.
- Vulnerability to humidity
- Treated as Size M creature for all combat purposes, including speed, critical hits, etc.
- Never wears armor. He can use most magical items available to his character class, though items specifically designed for the humanoid form (rings, cloaks, girdles, bracers, armor, etc.) won’t function for him.
- Thri-kreen live to a maximum age of 35 years.

Custom Racial Characteristics

Thri-kreen have 50 points to spend. Up to 5 points can be saved for spending in the traits and disadvantages stage of character creation. The points may be spent of the following characteristics:

- 5* **Antennae sense:** A thri-kreen's antennae help him maneuver through brush and grassland in the dark. They also lessen the effects of darkness and blindness on melee combat by 1. Ranged combat isn't affected, however.
- 5 **Balance bonus:** +1 to balance.
- 5* **Bite attack in Melee:** If using a weapon, the kreen can strike with the weapon and apply a bite in the same round. Multiple attacks allowed by higher levels only apply to weapons.
- 5*/10 **Chatchka weapon bonus.** At 5th level, a thri-kreen receives the chatchka proficiency as a bonus. (If the character already has the proficiency, he gets nothing.) Those proficient with the throwing weapon can hurl it for 90 yards. If it misses its target, it returns to the thrower. If PC has venom benefit, it also learns how to make Chatchka and automatically gets the proficiency. 10-charp version: The kreen character also learns how to make any other kreen weapon in which she gains proficiency.
- 5 **Chitin hide:** AC 7 before dexterity.
- 15* **Chitin armor** (natural) AC 5 before dexterity adjustments.
- 5* **Dodge Missiles:** Upon reaching 7th level, a thri-kreen develops the ability to dodge missile fire on a roll of 9 or better on 1 d20. Only physical missiles can be dodged, not magical effects (such as the *magic missile* spell). Physical missiles that have been enchanted modify the dodge roll by their plus. Thus, a thri-kreen can dodge an *arrow* +3 on a roll of 12 or better (9+3=12).
- 5 **Elven predator.** When hungry, the Kreen gets a + 1 to hit and damage against elves. (+2 if the elves are frightened).
- 25 **Four-Weapon Fighting.** At sixth level, the kreen gains the 2-weapon fighting proficiency; at eighth level, no longer has the -2 penalty with the off-hand weapon, and at tenth level, can fight four-handed without penalty. The kreen may wield matching small or medium weapons in its upper hands, and only matching small

weapons in its lower hands.

- 5 **Hunting non-weapon-proficiency** comes free, with a +1 bonus every 3 levels, up to a score of 19.
- 5* **Jumping.** Upon reaching 3rd level, a thri-kreen develops a powerful leap that allows him to jump 20 feet straight up or 50 feet forward. He can't leap backward.
- 5* **Natural attacks.** If fighting without weapons, a thri-kreen can make four claws and one bite attack every round (1 d4 x 4/1 d4+1 damage).
- 5 **Pheromone speech.** Allows a small "vocabulary" of short non-verbal messages to thri-kreen and other friendly insects within 10-40 feet, depending on wind. Insects are under no obligation to obey or even acknowledge the message.