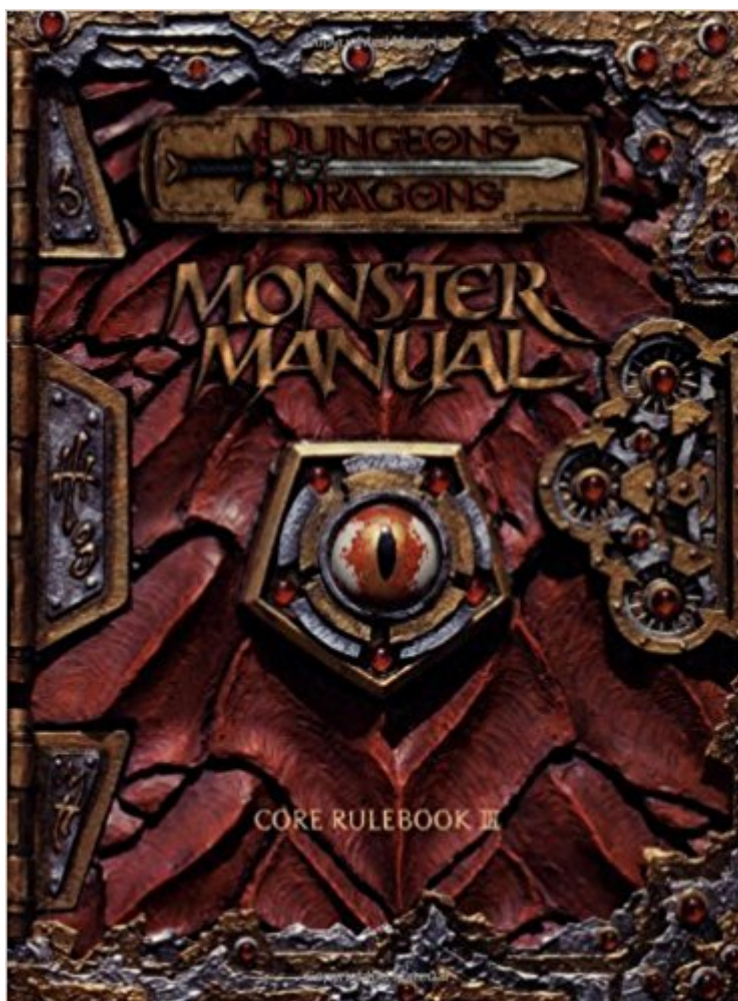


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# Monster Manual: Core Rulebook III (Dungeons & Dragons)



## Synopsis

Over 200 creeps, critters, and creatures to keep players on their toes. From Aboleths to Zombies, the Third Edition Monster Manual holds a diverse cast of enemies and allies essential for any Dungeons & Dragons campaign. There are hundreds of monsters ready for action, including many new creatures never seen before. Plus, all monster entries include character stats so for the first time players can play as the monsters. Dungeon Masters and players alike will find the new Monster Manual an indispensable aid in populating their Third Edition campaigns.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Great for playing D&D 3.0 or 3.5. Only difference I found between the Monster Manuals 3.0 and 3.5, is that 3.0 doesn't have level adjustments in the Monster Entries, which isn't that bad, because most of MM 3.5 has a dash for level adjustment anyways. As long as you have the internet, you can look up creatures level adjustments for free between sessions when creating creature. This is great for any normal Monster the Heroes will face along their adventures. All colored pages, with great art, and is considerably cheaper than 3.5, which isn't really worth the cost increase in my opinion.

Very basic but useful. These books are made to give you a guide line but a creative person is required to use the information and create their own world.

I am very happy with this book. Picked it up at an excellent price, and it was in superb condition. Holding it brings back my childhood memories of playing D&D in my lunchroom at school and in the

library. Good times. Lol. Anyway, the seller left an excellent description of the product, and I am pleased with my purchase!

The third of the core rulebooks is finally out, and DMs can at last fill their D&D campaigns with critters and start gaming in earnest. Reviewing the Monster Manual is a bit of a moot point, if you plan on DMing for 3rd edition you simply need to own this book. Like all previous monster books, it reads like an encyclopedia - but there are some aspects of the new Monster Manual that are significant departures from the old way of doing things. First off, the rulebook is thin. Surprisingly thin. "500 fearsome foes" it boasts on the back cover yet it's a third thinner than the Monstrous Compendium of 2nd edition. The alphabetical listing of monsters in the front only has 384 entries... Wha..? Here's what's going on - each monster doesn't get their own page, they are jammed in this book with a shoehorn. In addition to the usual sub-grouping of monsters (the monstrous spider has only one entry in the front listing, yet the entry lists stats for seven types of nasty arachnid - so it's really eight monsters), there are Monster Templates. Templates are to monsters what prestige classes are to characters, additional abilities and powers that can be grafted onto any existing monster, allowing the DM to multiply their options in monster selection. The existing templates are Celestial Creature, Fiendish Creature, Ghost, Half-Celestial, Half-Dragon, Half-Fiend, Lich, Lycanthrope, and Vampire. Templates can be sprinkled liberally into a campaign to ensure that player characters never take any monster for granted. Ghostly goblins...vampiric trolls...now nothing is certain, and no character is safe. The rules on lycanthropy are downright inspiring. In the old rules lycanthropy was something that affected a player once, and they immediately went to a cleric to get the cure. Now the cure is much less certain, and opportunities for role-playing abound. Want to surrender and become a shape-changer? You can, but as soon as you do, your alignment becomes that of whatever were-creature infected you, oops. Great stuff. This new manual also categorizes all monsters into one of 30-odd types and sub-types. Beasts, for example, are non-magical creatures whose abilities stem from physical attributes (like a dinosaur). Outsiders (great name!) are non-elementals from another dimension...etc. This allows DMs to use consistent, unambiguous terms to apply rules to groups of creatures, which is good. ("This sword is +1 vs all outsiders....hmmm the Shadow Mastiff is an outsider so, yes I get the bonus" etc.). --Here's the downside, looking at the entry for Naga in the new Monster Manual, you cannot find language that tells you whether or not the Naga has the ability of darkvision. It does, because the Naga is an "aberration," (as it says under the creature's entry on page 138) and on page 5 (flip, flip, flip) you can read that "Unless noted otherwise, aberrations have darkvision with a range of 60 feet." For a

DM looking to create an encounter, one-stop shopping is ideal. You look up the monster, copy the key stats and abilities, and roll some hit points. Now you have to pay attention to what type of creature your copying and check to see what other abilities that type of critter has. To be fair, this has always been an issue with monster descriptions. Shorthand phrases like "this ability is treated like the magic-user's spell lightning bolt, cast at 12th level of ability" have been annoying DMs since 1st edition. They haven't gone away in this edition either. The alternative is to ask WoTC to reprint the same ability and spell descriptions dozens of times, fattening the book and increasing the cost, so I suppose I should count my blessings. They have done a marvelous job with the monster abilities-giving DMs both a central listing of powers, as well as shorthand with each monster description-so the end result is certainly a very usable product. I am curious why the lich was the only category of undead that was created as a template. One would think that zombie-ogres and ettin-ghouls would be sensible additions. Next up, the critters themselves. The same cast of characters have returned, although the revamped abilities will no doubt surprise PCs the first time they run into something like an Old Red Dragon, (Be afraid, folks, be afraid...) The folks at WoTC have sensibly pointed out that the critter statistics are baseline figures and that tougher versions of each can and do exist. So anyone out there who thinks that his or her favorite critter should be meaner already has the framework to do so. Some new critters are in, some old are back - and the Tanar'ri and Baatezu are now filed under Demon and Devil again (I wish they'd make up their minds...). There are easily enough beasties to keep your players challenged and/or terrified. Finally, the art. The art has taken a major leap forward from the cartoonish junk that populated the Monstrous Compendium (the "Giant" illustrations from the MC just make me ill). Todd Lockwood has redeemed himself in the Monster Manual, making up for those laughable depictions of female character races he did in the new PH. Several of the new artists have done some really great work as well (The frost worm looked particularly cool) and since gaming truly starts with imagination - good art is a good thing. Hey, face it. If you're a DM and you're running 3rd edition, you'll end up buying this book. Fuss and procrastinate all you want. It's less than twenty bucks, and it's nothing short of essential. No DM wants to be without a good list of things that go bump in the night. Enough of this, already...I gotta find some dice...Go nuts, folks - and happy gaming.

Okay, now, in evaluating this particular rule book, I think that I need to make my standards clear. This isn't just another collection of monsters--this is the core collection. What the Monster Manual should do is set up the standards for all future expansions and make clear the monster specific rules that they're including. As it stands, this book is pretty unclear on some issues. The templating rules

can be hard to understand the first time around, and there's little information given on how to create your own templates without throwing the game out of balance. The feats which are included here seem out of place to an extent, since other abilities and feats for monsters have already been described in the Dungeon Master's Guide. The monster descriptions are acceptable for the most part, but bland, without any of the character and flavor of past editions. While this should be expected to some extent, what is not excusable is the occasionally confusing description of monster attacks and the occasionally odd listing style. Even the art has suffered in this book to some extent--while most of the pictures are right on, some of them are pretty far off base (a shambling mound does not have bark). All in all, I feel pretty safe giving this book 3 stars, since you have to own it to run the Dungeons and Dragons game. As a core rulebook, however, it leaves something to be desired, and it's certainly below the exemplary standards of clarity set in the previous two releases. While this is still a good rules system and while the Monster Manual is a necessary element, I can't help but feel a little disappointed with this product.

This book has all you need to create an exciting adventure. It has many new creatures that were not included in the 2nd Edition. However it also lacks some of the creatures from the original 2nd Edition MM (although you can get many of them in the newly released Monsters of Faerun book). The book has a section in the back for developing special monsters such as Lycanthrope and vampirism. So rather than having a "vampire" monster they have a template system for turning ANY monster into a vampire in a few simple steps (and have an example of one as well). Same for the lycanthrope's. You'll find the dragons to be much more powerful in the new Monster Manual (as opposed to 2nd Edition), however they lack a spell list (so you have to look them up in the Players Handbook manually). If you're new to the D&D gaming system, then let's just say that this is all you need to fill your dungeons with monsters!

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