

Session Three – Choosing Your Race

Now that we have an idea of what classes you can choose from for your character, we can now look at the races you have to choose from. Again, there are many supplementary books that have lots of extra races to choose from but for now, we are only going to talk about the ones in your PHB. Once you have more experience with the game, you can explore the other books.

Let's just quickly go over the 9 races available to you:

Dwarf – these guys are like other dwarves you know from any fantasy story. Short, stocky, tough and typically stubborn. They usually live in the mountains and have a knack for mining. They live up to 350 years and are certainly capable of holding a grudge for that length of time. There are two types of subraces of Dwarves to choose from: Hill Dwarves that get a bonus to Wisdom and Mountain Dwarves that get a bonus to their Strength.

Elf – Elves in D&D are similar to the Elves in Lord of the Rings rather than the toy-making elves Santa employs. They are slender, graceful and due to their extremely long lifespan of around 700 years, they have centuries of maturity and wisdom. There are three subraces of Elves to choose from: High elves who get a bonus to Intelligence, Wood Elves who get a bonus to their Wisdom and Dark Elves (also referred to as Drow) who get a bonus to their Charisma. Each of these types of Elves have their own specific attitudes and differences in the way they interact with other races.

Halfling – Halflings are essentially Hobbits and actually how I would describe myself if I were a race in D&D. Stout, usually chubby, friendly and always down for a good meal and drink, Halflings are friends to all a very peaceful race. They tend to live in communities with multiple other races and have a knack for farming. There are two types of Halflings to choose from: Lightfoot who get a bonus to their Charisma and Stout who get a bonus to their Constitution.

Human – This are a very strange race totally unique to D&D that very few people have ever heard of. Just kidding, they are just like you and I! Humans are adaptable, versatile and each one is different therefore, they get to bump every stat up! There are different ethnicities of humans to choose from and although they do not grant any additional bonuses, they fine tune your character's aesthetic and where they originate. You can also choose to play a Variant Human which means you increase any two stats and pick a feat. Feats are additional abilities you can choose for your character. Unless you are building a Variant Human, they typically don't come into play until level 4 so I won't go into detail about those and will leave that up to your DM at the time to explain them to you.

Dragonborn – You may have immediately thought of Skyrim when I said that but the Dragonborns in D&D are a little different. They are the offspring when a Dragon (polymorphed as a human) mates with a human. They have a humanoid shape with a strong tail and dragon-like face, stand over 6 feet tall and are covered in colourful scales. They are proud and independent and are one of the more uncommon races you'll encounter while playing. They get a bonus to their Strength and their Charisma. The Charisma bump may seem odd but dragons are extremely charismatic, especially when in their human form so the young inherit that trait from their draconic parent. When building a Dragonborn, you choose the colour of their dragon parent. Your choices being black, blue, white, red, green or the metallic colours of brass, bronze, copper, silver and gold. This colour of dragon parent grants the Dragonborn a breath weapon that deals damage correlating to its colour. Red deals fire damage and silver deals cold damage, etc.

Gnome – If you have ever played World of Warcraft, the Gnomes in D&D are very similar to them. They are small, cunning and have a knack for tinkering with gadgets. They tend to make their homes underground in wooded or hilly areas. Gnomes get a bonus to their Intelligence as they are always taking things apart to learn more about it. There are two types of Gnomes to choose from: Forest Gnomes who get a bonus to their Dexterity and Rock Gnomes who get a bonus to their Constitution.

Half-Elf – Half elves are the offspring of an Elf and an Human. They are beautiful, friendly and extremely versatile. They spend their time in both the Human and Elven realms but strictly belong to neither. They have the Human's lust for adventure but the Elf's refined tastes and love of nature. They get to increase their Charisma and two other attributes of your choosing. There are no specific different Half-Elves to choose from like the other races but you can choose to write in any kind of influences from either the Human or Elf culture for role-playing purposes.

Half-Orc – while the half-breed Half-Elves are diplomatic and beautiful, Half-Orcs aren't so lucky. They are the offspring of a Human and an Orc. Although Orcs are typically hostile, barbaric enemies to most races, sometimes they can form alliances with humans which then leads to Half-Orcs. They are bulkier and taller than humans with large, pointed teeth that protrude from their mouth over their top lip. Half-Orcs are super strong and tough so they get to bump up their Strength and Constitution. Because they are feared or at the very least avoided by most other races, Half-Orcs most often live among Orc tribes. Like Half-Elves, there are no subraces to choose for Half-Orcs but you can write in storytelling aspects.

Tiefling – If you're looking to build a tragic character, Tiefling might be the race for you. Generations ago, a human made a sinful pact with demonic forces, causing the children of the bloodline to have devilish features. Horns, sharp teeth, red skin, a long tail and solid colour eyes with no visible pupil make the Tieflings a fearful sight to every race. Being mistrusted and often discriminated against have made Tieflings self-sufficient and suspicious of anyone who claims to be their friend. Tieflings get to bump up their Intelligence and Charisma. Like Dragonborn, you may think the Charisma score is odd when most people recoil at the sight of a Tiefling, but demons can be awfully persuasive and the children touched by the demonic influence inherit that trade.

As you can see, choosing your race doesn't just determine what your character will look like. Different races have unique physical features that affect your attributes like Strength, Dexterity or Constitution. They also have customs and social influences that can affect your attributes like Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma. This is important to keep in mind when you are building your character. Ideally, you want to pair the class of your character with a race that bumps up their main attributes being used. For example, if I were making a Rogue which are Dexterity based characters, I would probably choose one of the small, nimble races like a Halfling that get bonuses to Dexterity. If I were to build a Wizard, I might choose a gnome because they get to bump up their Intelligence score. All that being said, this is if you want to optimize your character and have them be as efficient as possible. If you're not worried about efficiency and just want to have fun, you can absolutely build a Half-Orc Rogue even though Half-Orcs do not get a bonus to the Dexterity. They do however get proficiency in the Intimidation skill so you could have a Half-Orc that isn't very good at sneaking but when he gets caught, he simply tells people “you saw nothing” as he towers over them and growls. You have full creative freedom when building your character!

On top of getting bonuses to their attributes, different races also gain special abilities that make them an enticing choice. Elves don't have to sleep and instead go into a trance for 4 hours each day that grants

them the benefit of a full 8 hour sleep. Halflings get the Lucky trait which means if they roll a 1 on their D20 for attacks, saving throws or ability checks, they can choose to re-roll once a day. Dragonborns get a breath weapon that inflicts a type of damage that correlates to their parent dragon's colour (for example, a Red Dragonborn can breathe fire, a Blue Dragonborn can breathe lightning). When Half-Orcs land a critical hit (rolling a 20 on your attack roll) they get to deal extra EXTRA damage. Several of the races are also equipped with Darkvision which, like is sounds, allows them to see in the dark. There are so many more details and traits in each race that I won't go over all of it today and will leave that up to you to read in your PHB.

Different races also speak different languages. Every race knows how to speak Common, which is whatever the players speak in (ours would be English) and the most widely known language through the land. Most races have their own language and the half-breeds speak both of their parents' languages. Some races like Half-Elves and Humans get to choose one other language to speak. The more exotic races like Dragonborns can speak Draconic (the language of dragons) and Tieflings can speak Infernal (the language of devils and demons).

Choosing the race of your character can not only affect how you play the game but how your story unfolds to your party. When you create a character, it is very helpful if you can either draw a picture of your character or find a reference online somewhere that is similar to how your character looks. It doesn't have to be perfect by any means. This really helps the other players and your DM connect to your character and they feel more "real" when there is a visual attached to them.

I know I have thrown a lot of information at you today so we'll have some time for questions today. Next week we only have a couple other things to discuss and then we will be putting pencil to paper and building your character so this is your time to clear up any confusion with races and classes. When we meet up next week, I would like you to have an idea of a race and class you'd like to build.

Race	Physical Nature	Typical Dwelling	Stat Bump	Subraces	Unique Features	Example Names
Elf	Slender, nimble, 5-6' tall, skin and hair of almost every colour, NO BEARDS.	Forests, cities, Underdark.	Dexterity +2	High - +1 Intelligence Wood - +1 Wisdom Dark - +1 Charsima	Darkvision, Trance, Fey Ancestry, Keen Senses	Aelar Moonwhisper, Keyleth Goldpetal, Peren Okenheel
Halfling	Stout, 3' tall, tan-pale skin, brown hair and eyes	Farming community	Dexterity +2	Lightfoot – Charisma +1 Stout – Constitution +1	Small size, Lucky, Brave, Halfling Nimbleness	Ander Boodbarrel, Saena Bushgather. Milo High-Hill
Human	No typical build, 5-6' tall, black -pale skin, black - blond hair	Everywhere	Every stat +1	N/A Variant Human option	Versatile build	Luth Kemper, Chen Xang, Luisa Blackburn
Dragonborn	Scales, tail, dragon-like face, 6'+ tall	Dragonborn clans, everywhere	Strength +2 Charisma +1	Colour of dragon parent	Breath Weapon, Damage Resistance	Nadaar Norixius, Biri Delmirev Kriv Yarjerit
Dwarf	Stocky and tough, 4' fall, brown to lighter tan skin, males have beards	Deep beneath mountains	Constitution +2	Hill – Wisdom +1 Mountain – Strength +1	Darkvision, Dwarven Resilience, Dwarven Combat Training	Bruenor Fireforge Eldeth Loderr Thoradin Frostbeard
Gnome	Petite, 3' tall, tan – brown skin, wild hair.	Forests, hills	Intelligence +2	Forest - +1 Dexterity Rock - +1 Constitution	Darkvision, Gnome Cunning, Illusionist, Speak With Small Beasts, Tinker	Alvyn Ningel Ella Scheppen Orryn Garrick
Half-Elf	Slender, 5-6' tall, black-pale skin, black- blond hair, can have beards	Everywhere Humans and Elves are	Charisma +2 two choice stats +1	N/A	Darkvision, Fey Ancestry, Skill Versatility	Any Human or Elf name or combination of both
Half-Orc	Stocky, muscular, 6-7' tall, grey skin, prominent teeth	With Orc clans or Human cities	Strength +2 Constitution +1	N/A	Darkvision, Menacing, Relentless Endurance, Savage Attacks	Human names or Orc names, Krusk, Ront, Baggi
Tiefling	Horns, tail, 5-6' tall, human shades and red	Human cities and towns	Charisma +2 Intelligence +1	N/A	Darkvision, Hellish Resistance, Infernal Legacy	Akmenos Glory Lerissa Torment Melech Chant