



# CULTURE & PHYSIOLOGY

## A replacement for Race in D&D 5e

*Race* is an inherently limiting idea. At first, it doesn't seem like it, though. It gives us a framework for cool ideas that unify groups of

people. Elves don't sleep. Dwarves are strong. Kobolds are weak. Orcs are primitive. But the limitations of race as a concept are inherent in it. Assign an *entire group of imaginary*

*people* a set of traits, and suddenly content creators have to wonder what they might accidentally be saying about the real world.

The idea that one race in fantasy is smarter and

another race is stronger doesn't carry any consequences, but apply this same idea to the real world, and people create horrors. This can be a hurdle for DMs and players alike. Are all goblins *really* evil? Does that make them morally acceptable to

kill? Does this world have concentration camps for the wrong type of elf?

Frankly, these are all questions our tables do better without. This small module removes the concept of race and replaces it with physiology & culture, both

to get rid of the notion that groups of people have inherent superiorities, and to give players & DMs more freedom when creating individuals and cultures.

This document's focus is purely on gameplay mechanics. The way a character actually looks – skin color, horns, wings, hooves, height, weight – are all choices to be made by the player.

Not every option from every 5<sup>th</sup> edition race is represented, due to limitations of space. If a trait you are interested in is missing, decide if that trait is physiological or cultural. Once you've done that, this document should also work as a model for how to add it to a character.

## Physiology

### Size

Your size is small or medium. Small creatures have 25 move speed instead of 30.

### Traits

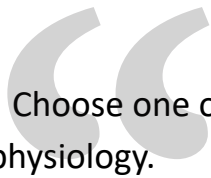
Choose one physiological trait.

#### Aerial

You have a flying speed equal to your movement speed.

#### Aquatic

You can breathe underwater and have a swim speed equal to your movement speed +10.



## Physiology

Choose one of the following ways to establish your character's physiology.

### Prowess

Your character is naturally better at something than the average person. Raise one of your ability scores by 2, and another ability score by 1. You cannot choose the same score twice.

Choose an additional physiological trait (see below).

### Adaptable

Your character is naturally good at almost everything they try. Raise all of your ability scores by +1.

Choose an additional cultural trait (see below).

### Gifted

Your character is gifted at a specific task. Raise two of your ability scores by +1.

Begin with a feat of your choice.

### Big

You can bear weight as if you were a size category larger.

### Innate Magic

You gain a cantrip of your choice from the sorcerer spell list.

At level 3, you gain access to a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell of your choice from the sorcerer spell list and can cast it once per day.

At level 5, you gain access to a 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell of your choice from the sorcerer spell list and can cast it once per day.

Charisma is the spellcasting modifier for these spells.

### Lithe

You can move through a hostile creature's space without a check. Your



movement speed increases by 5.

#### *Long-limbed*

When you make a melee attack on your turn, your reach for it is 5 feet greater than normal.

#### *Lucky*

When you roll a 1 on a d20 roll, you can immediately re-roll the d20. You must take the second die roll regardless of its result.

#### *Nightvision*

You have superior vision in dark and dim Conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in Darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in Darkness, only Shades of Gray.

#### *Other*

Your creature type is humanoid, plus one other type, such as Monstrosity or Undead. Consult the Monster Manual for a complete list of creature types.

You gain a property from a creature of the type you chose in the Monster Manual, with the following exceptions: it cannot be listed as an Action or as Spellcasting, and the DM must explicitly approve the property or a variant of that property.

Think reasonably:

*Legendary Resistance* is an inappropriate pick.

*Blindsight*, on the other hand, is a perfectly reasonable player ability.

#### *Pack Instincts*

You gain advantage on attacks that another

creature friendly to you has successfully attacked this turn.

#### *Resistance*

Choose a type of non-physical damage. You are resistant to this type of damage.

#### *Slippery*

You can hide when only lightly obscured, such as by foliage, a small group of people, or in dim light. If you are heavily obscured, such as by fog or darkness, you gain advantage on checks made to hide.

#### *Sturdy*

When you drop to 0 hit-points, you immediately regain 1 hit-point. This cannot occur again until you finish a long rest.



## Culture

### Language

You know two languages. One of them is Common, unless your DM says you can choose something else.

### Cultural Traits

Choose two of the following cultural traits that define the type of society or upbringing that inform your character.

#### *Blessed Society*

You know a cantrip of your choice from the cleric spell list.

At level 3, you gain access to a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell of your choice from the cleric spell list.

At level 5, you gain access to a 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell of your choice from the cleric spell list.

You gain a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell slot and 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell slot when you gain these spells.

Wisdom is your spell-casting modifier for these spells.

#### *Cultural Savagery*

Your critical strikes deal 1 additional weapon damage die.

#### *Deep Cultural Hatred*

Choose a type of creature (fiends, fey, undead, etc.). You have advantage on attacks against it, and checks related to learning about it, tracking it, and communicating with it.

If that type of creature has a language associated with it (for example, some fiends speak infernal), gain that language.

#### *Deep Cultural Knowledge*

Gain one skill proficiency, and a situation in which

you gain advantage on checks with that skill. For example, you might be proficient in history, and have advantage on checks to know more about types gemstones.

Gain an additional language.

#### *Hardy People*

Your hit point maximum increases by 1, and it increases by 1 every time you gain a level.

#### *Higher Education*

Gain any two skill or tool proficiencies. You can take this trait multiple times.

#### *Magical Society*

You know a cantrip of your choice from the wizard spell list.

At level 3, you gain access to a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell of your choice from the wizard spell list.

At level 5, you gain access to a 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell of your choice from the wizard spell list.

You gain a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell slot and 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell slot when you gain these spells.

Intelligence is your spell-casting modifier for these spells.

#### *Martial Society*

You are proficient with the weapon of your choosing, or with shields, or with light armor. You can take this trait multiple times.

If you choose light armor, and then choose to take the trait again, you can choose medium armor. If you choose medium armor and then choose to take the trait a third time, you can choose heavy armor.

You are proficient with

light armor. You can take this trait multiple times. If you do take this trait again, you gain proficiency with medium armor. If you take this trait a third time, you gain proficiency with heavy armor.

#### *Secret Society*

Choose a skill in which you are proficient. You gain double your proficiency bonus when you make checks with this skill. Choose a language that you already speak. You can speak a coded version of this language to other members of your secret society. Only other members of your secret society understand this code.

#### *Rough People*

Choose a simple weapon that you're proficient in. Your attacks with that weapon gain +1 to hit.

#### *Diaspora*

Your movespeed increases by 5 feet and you gain two additional languages of your choosing. Any time you arrive in a new town, the DM provides you with additional information about the area.



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