

# ARCANOGENESIS

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The wilds and dark places at the borders of civilization are filled with unspeakable creations of twisted magic – owlbears and beastmen, chimera and lamia. But however unnatural these crossbreeds are, at least these creatures were blends of the natural. Some mages go beyond mere crossbreeding and create new life forms entirely. This esoteric and dangerous practice is known as **arcanogenesis**.

By default, arcanogenesis can be practiced only by arcane spellcasters who reach 11<sup>th</sup> level or higher. If desired, the Judge may restrict arcanogenesis to spellcasters who select a particular proficiency (e.g. Transmogrification or Black Lore) or otherwise place limits upon it.

## DESIGNING CREATURES

Spellcasters may design new, previously unknown creatures. The player and Judge should collaborate using the rules for creating new monsters presented in *Lairs & Encounters* to detail the new lifeform. The creature designed must have a minimum of 1 HD and cannot have more HD than twice the spellcaster's class level. It cannot have more than one special ability (\*), plus one special ability per point of Intelligence bonus the caster possesses.

**EXAMPLE:** An 11<sup>th</sup> level spellcaster with 16 INT can design anything from a 1 HD lifeform to a 22\*\*\* HD life form.

The design process costs 2,000 gp per Hit Die of the creature plus an additional 5,000 gp per special ability it possesses, and takes one week plus one day per 1,000 gp of cost. The design process requires a magic research throw. A successful throw yields a **formula** the spellcaster can use to create the creature.

The target value of the magical research is increased by +1 for every 5,000 gp the creature costs. If the creature reproduces asexually via any process (fission, sporing, parthenogenesis, etc.) the target value of the magical research throw is increased by 3.

The spellcaster must have access to a library (*ACKS*, p. 117) at least equal in value to the cost of the lifeform throughout the design process. For every 10,000gp of value above the minimum required for the lifeform, the spellcaster receives a +1 bonus on his magic research throw.

The spellcaster may **experiment** during the design process, as detailed in the *Player's Companion*, p. 100. The breakthroughs for designing lifeforms are identical to those for designing constructs.

**EXAMPLE:** Cedric, a 13th level mage of great talent (18 INT) but low charisma (7 CHA), tires of apprentices who cannot appreciate his genius, and seeks to create for himself the perfect research partner. To maximize his output, he designs a new 12 HD lifeform (base cost 24,000gp) with the abilities of an arcane spellcaster of its HD (two special abilities for 10,000gp) and the ability to work on multiple arcane research tasks at once (the Judge rules this counts as another special ability, costing 5,000gp). He gives the creature no other abilities – it is a stationary creature, meant only to research. His total cost is 39,000gp. It will take 46 days for Cedric to design the lifeform.

Cedric has a library with a value of 50,000 GP. The magical research throw to design the lifeform is 13+ (a base of 5+, plus 8 points for the value). Cedric gains a bonus of +3 for his INT, +1 for the library value, and +2 for his two ranks in Magical Engineering. Cedric needs only a throw of 7+ to succeed in his design.

## CREATING CREATURES

In order to create a creature, the spellcaster must have a formula for the type of creature he wishes to create. Formula can be found as treasure in rare manuals, or developed by the spellcaster using the design process (see above). The spellcaster is limited to creating creatures with HD no more than twice his class level.

The creation process costs 2,000gp per Hit Die of the lifeform, plus an additional 5,000gp per special ability it possesses, and takes one week plus one day per 1,000gp of cost. The creation process requires a magic research throw.

The target value of the magic research throw is increased by +1 for every 5,000gp the creature costs. If the creature reproduces asexually via any process (fission, sporing, parthenogenesis, etc.) the target value of the magical research throw is increased by 3.

In order to create a creature, the spellcaster must have access to a **genesis vat** at least equal in value to the cost of the creature. For every 10,000 gp of value above the minimum required for the creature, the spellcaster receives a +1 bonus on her magical research throw. The spellcaster may gain additional bonuses by using precious materials, as normal.

In addition, for each special ability, **special components** from creatures with a similar power must be provided. The value of special components required is 10% of the cost of the creature per special ability. (Special abilities equaling multiple asterisks count as multiple abilities.)

Instilling the capacity for thought is a laborious process. If a creature created through arcanogenesis is to have any intelligence, the spellcaster must have access to a **neuropsychic distiller**. Creatures created without a distiller are mindless. A **basic neuropsychic distiller** costs 15,000gp, and will imbue a creature with animal intelligence at a base Training Modifier of -3. For each additional point increase in Training Modifier, add 5,000gp to the base cost (up to a TM of +3 at 45,000gp in cost). An **advanced neuropsychic distiller** costs 60,000gp and will imbue a creature with sapient intelligence. A neuropsychic distiller requires a brain or brains to operate. The caster must harvest brains from creatures with a total XP value equal to 20% of the cost of the creature being created. Only creatures with an intelligence equal to or greater than the newly-created creature's intelligence can be used.

A newly-created creature is not automatically under control of the caster. If the creature is of animal intelligence or greater, a reaction roll can be made to determine the creature's reaction to its creator. If the creature is unfriendly or hostile, the caster could try to tame, train, or **charm** it using specialists or spells; imprison it in his dungeon; or just unleash it onto the world. Mindless creatures must be controlled via magic, and cannot be trained.

By default, newly-created creatures are born at the adult age category. If desired, creatures can be created as babies, children, or adolescents, but the cost is the same.

The spellcaster may **experiment** during the design process, as detailed in the *Player's Companion*, pg 100. The breakthroughs for creating lifeforms are identical to those for building constructs. For special abilities added from breakthroughs, roll 1d100 on the Monster Special Abilities table of *Lairs & Encounters*.

**EXAMPLE:** Cedric decides to implement his design for his new magical research partner. He acquires a genesis vat worth 50,000gp and proceeds. Since the creature will have 12 HD and 3 special abilities, it will cost a total of 39,000 GP to create. The arcanogenesis will take 46 days to complete. The magical research throw to design the lifeform is 13+ (a base of 5+, plus 8 points for the value). Cedric gains a bonus of +3 for his INT, +1 for the vat's value, and +2 for his two ranks in Magical Engineering. Cedric needs only a throw of 7+ to succeed in his design. Feeling sure of himself, Cedric decides to do some minor experimentation, receiving another +2 bonus.

To fuel the creature's special abilities, Cedric will need to provide several special components. To pay for its control of multiple arms, he gathers 3,900gp worth of tentacles from giant octopi. To pay for its spellcasting ability, he requires 6,800gp worth of special components from creatures who can cast spells - the hearts of his former apprentices and that of his main rival from his own apprenticeship are quickly co-opted for this purpose.

To be of assistance in magical research, his creature will need to be of sapient intelligence. Therefore Cedric acquires an advanced neuropsychic distiller at a cost of 60,000gp. To fuel the distiller he needs brains from sapient creatures totaling 6,800xp or more. Fortunately, his former apprentices and rival no longer have the hearts to deny him the request of their brains - they are quickly plopped into the neuropsychic distiller.

The preparations complete, the arcanogenesis process goes incredibly well (a roll of 15), and Cedric enjoys a minor breakthrough - the lifeform is given flight! The Judge decides the creature will fly at a speed of 30', as it was originally designed as an immobile creature.

His creation rises from the genesis vat and Cedric convinces it of the value of his proposition. Cedric enjoys several months of fruitful and rewarding magical research. Unfortunately, his new partner suddenly, perhaps inevitably, betrays and slays Cedric, and the **sorcerous sphere** makes Cedric's tower its own.