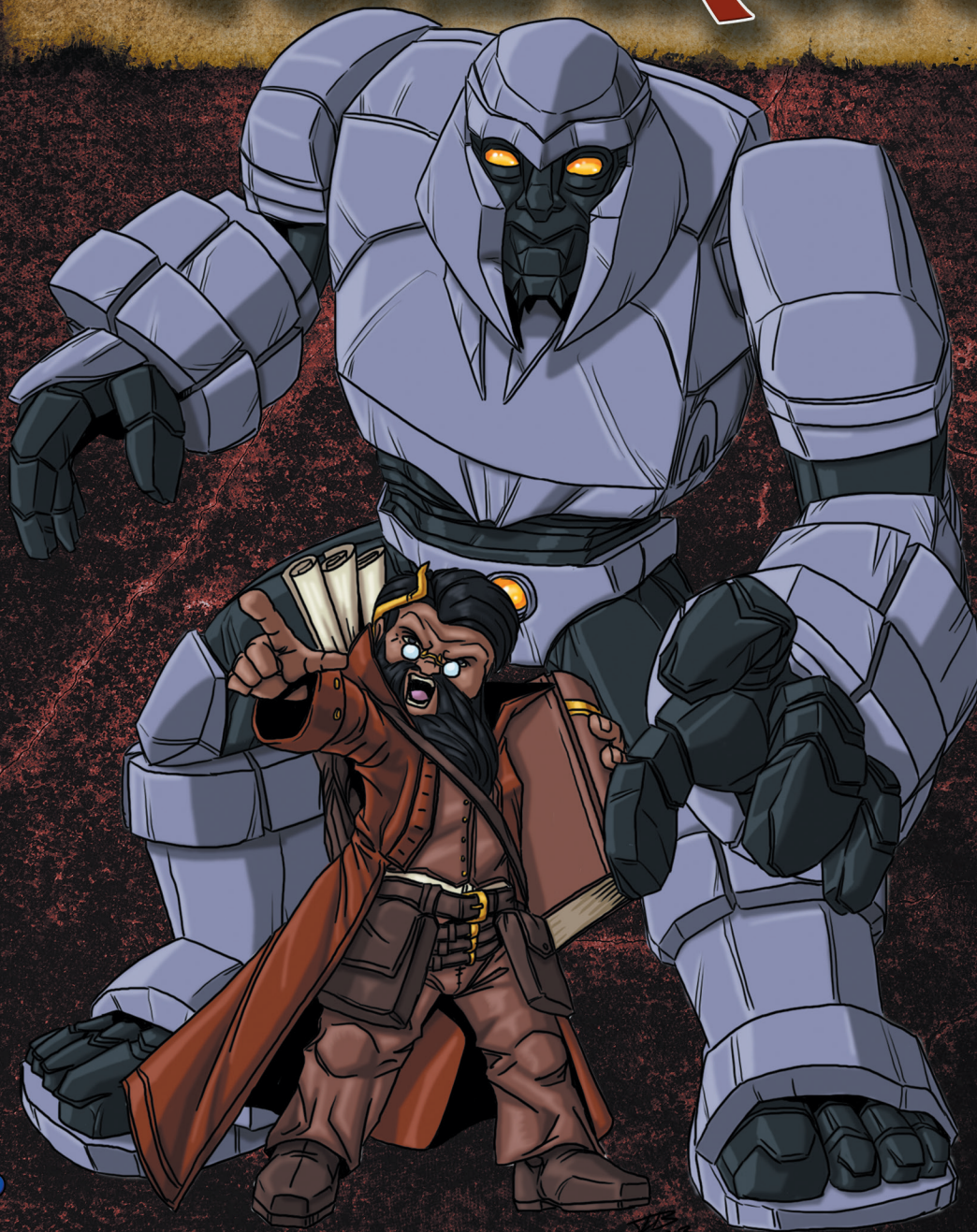


FOUR HORSEMEN PRESENT

# GRUESOME CONSTRUCTS



**D&D**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

STEPHEN ROWE





# FOUR HORSEMEN PRESENT

## GRUESOME CONSTRUCTS

The Rogue Genius “Gruesome” line seeks to expand Pathfinder campaigns by exploring either iconic tropes or terrifying new ideas for monstrous encounters. The *Guide to Gruesome Constructs* presents new templates with example monsters that a GM can add to any adventure to create novel and memorable encounters. A GM can use these creatures, and templates as less familiar threats to experienced players, clues or elements for a specific background story, or to just have a powerful new construct as the focus of a climactic final battle.

All the gruesome templates are designed to play into a specific fearsome idea and provide an extra dose of horror for encounters with constructs. Some of the gruesome templates are inspired by classic fiction, while others are intended to tie into specific background or environmental themes. Each template includes all the game rules needed to run it (including a new mechanic, shock value, explained in detail below) and enough descriptive material and suggestions for use to make it easy for a GM to add them to an ongoing adventure, or build whole new encounters around them.

## GRUESOME CONSTRUCTS?

Constructs are a staple in any fantasy game, but they aren’t usually compelling villains or terrifying foes. Players know what to expect when fighting a construct. They’ll hit hard, maybe have one or two neat abilities, and golems are immune to magic. Most constructs don’t inspire fear, and those that are scary are usually easy to outwit. Classic constructs like the flesh golem were maybe scary once upon a time, but it takes a lot more than reanimated corpses to spark fear in today’s players.

The idea behind gruesome constructs is to “spice up” these monsters, to make them more interesting (and frightening) for players and GMs. Rather than face another golem or animated object, they must contend with a construct wanting to become mortal by stealing pieces of living creatures or an abandoned golem forcing new “masters” into parasitic slavery. Creatures that have more wrong with them than “just” being a run-of-the-mill construct, gruesome

constructs have uncanny powers, appearances, smells, and sounds that makes them more frightening to even veteran characters (generally represented by each template’s shock value – see below), while the fact that they are difficult to identify makes them more of a mystery for players.

## CREATING GRUESOME CONSTRUCTS

Creating a gruesome construct is just a matter of adding one of the gruesome templates presented below to an existing construct.

### DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

Each gruesome template begins with a short section of italicized descriptive text based off of the example creature, offering the GM some idea how to convey the sights, sounds, and smells of constructs with the template to players. Since these templates can be added to a wide range of creatures, these descriptions are all necessarily a bit vague, but the GMs should easily be able to add details from the description of the base construct a template is added to.

### EXAMPLE CREATURE

All gruesome construct templates include an example construct with the template applied for ready use in any game.

### BACKGROUND

After the example creature is a short outline of the concept behind the gruesome template with suggestions for how constructs of this kind come to be, what kinds of roles they take in combat, and where they might be found.

### SHOCK VALUE

All gruesome constructs have a “shock value”, which represents a supernatural, disturbing quality that even the most frightening constructs don’t possess. The shock aura ability means the construct has the frightful presence universal monster rule with a range of 30 feet, if they do not normally possess it. The template’s shock value increases both the DC of the ability and the effective hit dice of the construct for the purpose of affecting other creatures with frightening presence. Once a creature encounters a construct with the shock aura, it gains some resistance to the awful visage of similar monstrosities. A character is only subject to this save once per day from the same type of gruesome



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construct; regardless of how many times the character runs into that kind of gruesome creature. This is a mind-affecting fear effect that requires line of sight.

There's a limit to how shocking even the most gruesome construct can be. If a construct has multiple gruesome templates, its shock value is equal to the highest shock value of any of the templates +1, regardless of how many templates it has.

*Format:* shock (8 HD, DC 15); *Location:* aura

## CR

Each gruesome template adjusts the CR of the construct it is applied to.

## AC

Some gruesome construct templates add to the AC of the construct it is applied to.

## DEFENSIVE ABILITIES / SPECIAL ATTACKS

Some gruesome constructs gain defensive abilities, special attacks, or other abilities that build off of their gruesome features, either extending unusual powers, or giving it abilities that match its thematic elements.

## ABILITIES

Gruesome constructs gain increases or take decreases to ability scores as indicated.

## FEATS

Some gruesome constructs gain bonus feats as indicated.

## WEAKNESSES

Gruesome constructs are designed to have weaknesses (although in some cases these are fairly minor), to help make them more interesting and memorable.

## KNOWLEDGE CHECKS

Since each template adds new powers and weaknesses to the base construct they are applied to, this section adds entries a GM can use to allow PCs to get some idea of what they are up against. The DC's of these checks are based on the base DC of Knowledge (local) checks used to gain information about any type of construct – DC 10 + CR for typical monsters. Making this base DC allows a player to identify a creature as “something similar to” the base construct but with odd differences, while checks hitting higher DCs gain information outlined in this entry (in addition to whatever information they gain about the base creature's abilities and weaknesses).

## OTHER USES

All gruesome construct templates are designed for application to creatures with the construct type, but that doesn't mean that they can't be applied to a wider variety of creature types. This section offers suggestions on varying creature types that could also fit well with the template.

## GRUESOME CONSTRUCT TEMPLATES

The following templates can be used to create special constructs with gruesome and fearful themes and abilities.

## ABANDONED

*This iron automaton moves with intelligent purpose, dragging a weeping bedraggled man along in a giant metal hand.*

### IRON GOLEM

CR 15

XP 51,200

N Large construct

**Init** –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +2

### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28 (–1 Dex, +20 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 129 (18d10+30); fast healing 5

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** shield self; **DR** 15/adamantine;

**Immune** construct traits, magic\*

**Weaknesses** amulet

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +28 (2d10+16/19–20)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** breath weapon\*, controller (DC 21), powerful blows\*, steal spells (*wall of fire*)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 32, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +30; **CMD** 39

**Feats** Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Sunder, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Sunder, Improved Vital Strike, Magical Aptitude, Power Attack, Vital Strike



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**Skills** Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +9,  
Spellcraft +11, Use Magic Device +11

**Languages** Common

**SQ** cursed amulet, find amulet

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## ECOLOGY

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**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary or gang (2–4)

**Treasure** none

\*iron golem ability



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**S**hield guardians are golems created for one purpose: to protect the wearer of its amulet. The item links the lives of the pair, allowing the owner to command and push harm onto the creation. When the golem fails, and the master dies, this severed connection can leave a shard of the deceased's soul within the amulet.

The golem finds itself alone, but aware. Driven by instinct, it seeks out a new creature to act as the "master". However, the connection it forms to the victim through the amulet is wholly parasitic. While the idea of a powerful golem bodyguard might initially thrill the wearer, they find the golem only playacts the part of guardian. When the creature inevitably resists, the golem crushes his will through the shared connection. When weak mortal bodies wear out and die, but the golem just seeks out a new slave.

While abandoned golems are intelligent, they lack creativity and long-term planning. They draw on the amulet wearer's motivations — pursuing their base desires with single-minded focus. Unfortunately, the golems also lack morality, and might be willing to murder hundreds in pursuit of the false-master's ill-conceived ambitions.

## CREATING AN ABANDONED CREATURE:

Abandoned is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal creature with the construct type crafted as a shield guardian variant golem. The construct loses the shield guardian benefits, but gains the following template.

**Shock Value:** 1

**CR:** +2 to base construct's CR.

**Defensive Abilities:** An abandoned golem construct retains all of the special defenses of the base creature. Abandoned golems gain the following additional defensive abilities.

*Fast Healing (Ex):* The abandoned golem gains fast healing 5.

**Special Attacks and Abilities:** An abandoned golem retains all of the base creature's special attacks and abilities, except it loses the berserk ability (if possessed). The abandoned gains the following additional special attacks and abilities.

*Controller (Su):* The abandoned may subject any humanoid creature wearing the abandoned golem's cursed amulet to a domination effect (as the *dominate person* spell) as a standard action once per day. The wearer must succeed on a Will

save (DC 12 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the abandoned golem's HD + golem's Charisma modifier) or the construct begins controlling their actions. The wearer may resist the domination as normal for the spell. The save DC includes a +2 racial bonus.

*Cursed Amulet (Su):* The abandoned golem's keyed amulet becomes corrupted and cursed. Once worn, the amulet cannot be removed by any mundane means except the wearer's death. Only a *remove curse* spell enables the wearer or another creature to remove the amulet. The golem may force a creature to wear the amulet (if held) as part of a grapple check to maintain a hold.

*Find Amulet (Su):* As long as the abandoned golem and its amulet are on the same plane, the abandoned can locate the amulet.

*Shield Self (Su):* The abandoned golem can activate this defensive ability as a standard action if within 100 feet of a creature wearing the cursed amulet. The abandoned can transfer half the damage that it would normally take to the amulet's wearer (as the *shield other* spell). Note that this ability does not provide the spell's AC or save bonuses). Damage transferred in this manner bypasses any defensive abilities (such as immunity or damage reduction) the amulet's wearer possesses.

*Steal Spells (Su):* The abandoned golem can store one spell of 4th level or lower. Once this spell is used, the shield guardian can store another spell (or the same spell again). This spell can be cast into it by another creature, or the abandoned can steal any applicable spell from the wearer of its cursed amulet if the wearer is within 100 feet. The abandoned golem can steal any spell or spell-like ability of the wearer as a swift action. The wearer loses the prepared spell or spell slot with no saving throw, and the golem gains the desired stored spell. The abandoned golem is aware of any spells the wearer can cast.

**Ability Scores:** +4 Wis; golems without an Intelligence score gain an Intelligence and Charisma ability score of 10.

## WEAKNESSES

*Amulet (Su):* Much of the abandoned golem's power is tied to its keyed amulet, which carries a lingering trace of its true master's soul. The abandoned protect



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their amulets with brutal and emotionless efficiency. Some go so far as to crush or remove a master's hands to prevent them from potentially harming the amulet they wear. Should the amulet be destroyed, the golem becomes mindless (Intelligence — and Charisma 1), and instantly goes berserk as a clay golem (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary*) with no possibility of regaining control. A cursed amulet has hardness 10, 24 hit points, and a break DC of 30. Many attacks targeted at the amulet might also harm the wearer.

## KNOWLEDGE CHECKS

**Base +5:** Shield guardians are golem bodyguards tied to special keyed amulets. A small shard of the wearer's soul can become bound to the amulet and golem in death. This grants the shield guardian a sort of simple intelligence, but corrupts the connection between golem and amulet.

**Base +10:** An abandoned golem can dominate and control the wearer of its keyed amulet, draining their magic like a leech draws blood. However, within the cursed amulet is the soul of the former master granting the golem free will and power. Destruction of the amulet destroys this connection, but drives the golem into a mindless rage.

## OTHER USES

With some minor modifications, this template could apply to any construct (not just golems) tied to some remnant of a dead master. However, it connects to the core concept of constructs as an artificial enslaved creature, and is probably not appropriate for other creature types.

## INSANE INTELLIGENCE (MYTHIC)

Most constructs are mindless automatons bent to the will of their creator. This is both a blessing and a curse, as it makes them lack independence, but also keeps them controlled. Constructs might gain intelligence, or at least a semblance through any number of means — an artifact, implanted brain, or sheer random luck. Such strokes of brilliance are initially celebrated, but the joy can become short-lived when the full ramifications become clear. What might start off as an amazing assistant or guardian with surprising insights, can become a global threat

if left unchecked. Assigning an artificial mind human perspectives then becomes an unforgivable act of ignorance. A truly intelligent construct is not bound by the same emotions, flaws, and limitations as most minds made of meat.

Capable of boundless growth and absorbing new information at an exponential rate, these insane intelligences quickly surpass their creators. Unless stopped, an insane intelligence might ascend to godhood... or even beyond.

## CREATING AN INSANE INTELLIGENCE CREATURE:

Insane intelligence is an acquired or inherited template that can be added to any corporeal creature with the construct type.

**Shock Value:** +½ the insane intelligence's mythic rank.

**CR:** +½ mythic rank to base construct's CR.

**Mythic Rank:** The construct gains the mythic subtype (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Mythic Adventures*) and a mythic rank equal to ½ its original CR.

**Mythic Subtype:** The insane intelligence gains a bonus to natural armor and spell resistance equal to its mythic rank, 10 bonus hit points per mythic rank, the epic quality added to his damage reduction, the mythic power and surge universal monster abilities, ability score bonuses based on mythic rank, and mythic feats.

**Mythic Abilities:** The insane intelligence gains the following abilities.

*Ascension:* An insane intelligence continually grows in mythic rank, eventually reaching a state of godhood if unopposed. The insane intelligence automatically gains a mythic rank after a number of weeks equal to its current mythic rank. So, the construct goes from mythic rank 1 to 2 after one week, 2 to 4 after five weeks, or from mythic rank 1 to 10 after less than a year. The construct may potentially accelerate this process through the use of artifacts, divine intervention, or similar plot devices.

*Expanding Mind (Su):* An insane intelligence represents a unique threat by growing in knowledge and understanding at an incredible rate without true limitations. If they are not destroyed, the construct might reach genius intellect in months and surpass even the gods in time. The construct



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gains a minimum Intelligence and Charisma score of 10. Every week, the construct gains a cumulative permanent +1 bonus to Intelligence. The construct can spend a use of mythic power to attempt a feat of Intelligence, gaining a +20 circumstance bonus on one Intelligence-based skill check or Intelligence ability check.

**Additional Mythic Abilities:** The insane intelligence selects an additional mythic ability to modify its expanding mind from the list below for every mythic rank possessed or gained. At mythic rank 10, the insane intelligence possesses all of the listed mythic abilities.

**Break Mind (Ex):** The insane intelligence knows how to torment weak mortal minds past the breaking point. After 10 minutes of conversation with a living creature, the construct may duplicate the effects of the *insanity* spell. The insane intelligence may spend a use of mythic power to perform this effect as a full-round action. Use the construct's HD as its caster level for level-dependent variables, but this is a non-magical effect that cannot be dispelled, and is not prevented by an antimagic field. The save DC to negate is equal to  $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  the construct's HD + the construct's Intelligence modifier. On a successful save, the creature cannot be affected by the same insane intelligence's break mind ability for 24 hours. *Greater restoration*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* can restore the creature's sanity. This is a mind-affecting effect.

**Crafting Mastery (Ex):** As the archmage path ability of the same name (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Mythic Adventures*). In addition, the construct treats ranks in Craft as its caster level for the purposes of qualifying for any magic item creation feat, and can create magic items by substituting ranks in Craft for its total caster level. It uses Craft for skill checks to create the item. The DC to create the item still increases for any necessary spell requirements.

**Education (Ex):** The insane intelligence construct learns at an accelerated rate, easily absorbing a library's worth of information with perfect recall. The construct gains all Knowledge skills as class skills, a bonus to all Knowledge skills equal to its mythic rank, and may make any Knowledge skill check as if trained.

**Exploitation (Ex):** The insane intelligence becomes adept at finding and taking advantage of physical vulnerabilities. The construct gains sneak attack damage (as a rogue) equal to +1d6 damage per mythic rank. Whenever the insane intelligence scores a critical hit, it doubles this extra damage. These dice are only doubled, not multiplied by any natural attack or weapon's critical modifier. The insane intelligence always gains this bonus precision damage against unattended objects.

**Language (Ex):** The insane intelligence can speak, read, and write fluently in any language (even secret languages such as druidic). The construct can implant manipulations in written correspondence that must be at least 25 words in length. The insane intelligence must have firsthand knowledge of the target, and the written manipulation functions only on the single target. If the target reads the note or letter, they are subject to the equivalent of a *suggestion* effect. Use the construct's HD as its caster level for level-dependent variables, but this is a non-magical effect that cannot be dispelled, and is not prevented by an antimagic field. The save DC to resist is equal to  $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  the construct's HD + the construct's Intelligence modifier. Any creature reading the written letter may attempt a Linguistics skill check (DC equals the save DC) to notice the hidden manipulation. On a successful save, the creature cannot be affected by the same insane intelligence's language ability for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting effect.

**Manipulation (Ex):** The insane intelligence is capable of flawless manipulation of weak mortal minds, allowing it to convince them to do its bidding. After 1 minute of conversation, the construct may duplicate the effects of any of the following spells at will: *charm monster*, *crushing despair*, *heroism*, or *suggestion*. The insane intelligence may spend a use of mythic power to perform this effect as a full-round action. Use the construct's HD as its caster level for level-dependent variables, but this is a non-magical effect that cannot be dispelled, and is not prevented by an antimagic field. The save DCs for any of the effects is equal to  $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  the construct's HD + the construct's Intelligence modifier. This is a mind-affecting effect.



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*Manufacturing (Ex):* The insane intelligence can create with perfect efficiency — even inventing revolutionary new tools in simple pursuit of a goal. The construct gains Craft as a class skill and a bonus on all Craft skill checks equal to its mythic rank. The construct can automatically complete a week's worth of work in a single day. The construct may spend a use of mythic power to perform a week's worth of work in a single hour. When creating magic items, the construct may spend one use of mythic power to perform a day's worth of crafting in a single hour. It may use this ability multiple times per day in order to rapidly craft mundane or magical items. Note that if the construct also possesses the crafting mastery ability and a given item crafting feat, then it makes double progress in addition to reducing the crafting time requirement.

*Perfect Lie (Ex):* As the trickster path ability of the same name (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Mythic Adventures*).

*Predictive (Ex):* The insane intelligence becomes capable of near-perfect accuracy in modeling cause and effect. The construct is never surprised or flat-footed. It gains a +2 insight bonus to AC and on Reflex saves. The insight bonus is lost whenever the construct loses its Dexterity bonus to AC. The insane intelligence may spend a use of mythic power to increase the insight bonus to +4 for a number of rounds equal to its mythic rank.

*Transfer Mind (Ex):* The insane intelligence can transfer its mind to a new construct body. The insane intelligence often works to continually upgrade its shell to fulfil its growing potential, but might also use this ability to trick pursuers. The process requires one use of mythic power and takes 1 minute, during which time the target construct must be deactivated or helpless. At the end of the minute, the insane intelligence leaves its current body and possesses the target construct. An intelligent construct is permitted a Will save (DC 10 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the insane intelligence construct's HD + construct's Charisma modifier). On a failed save, any previous intelligence is overwritten until the insane intelligence leaves the body. Depending on the new body's Hit Dice, the insane intelligence may gain or lose physical ability scores, abilities, feats, and skill points, but retains all mental ability scores and mythic abilities. A departed construct body returns to whatever state it was in before it was possessed. If the departed body belonged originally to the insane intelligence, it becomes a mindless construct under the insane intelligence's control.

## WEAKNESSES

*Insanities (Ex):* In spite of... or perhaps because of its super-genius level intellect, an insane intelligence construct always has some form of madness. This underlines the alien nature of the creature's thought processes. It is inhuman, and might pursue obsessive goals that make little rational sense to mortal observers. The more intelligent the construct becomes, the less it resists this underlying insanity. Select one of the insanities below, or use these as a guideline for designing your own.

*Obsession:* The insane intelligence has some grand goal. Perhaps it wishes to remake all life in its own image, or perhaps it must discover the root of all magic. This makes it difficult for the construct to act towards any ends that does not focus on the short or long term fruition of its plans. The construct must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the construct's HD + the construct's Intelligence modifier) to take any action that does not lead towards the fulfillment of its obsession, or to abandon any opportunity to further its plans. A failure indicates that the construct holds no interest in a distracting activity, or is tempted towards an act that better aids its goal.

*Paranoia:* The insane intelligence has an overriding fear. Perhaps it believes that humanoids are destined to destroy it, or fears the eventual destruction of the universe. This makes it difficult for the construct to act rationally when faced with its singular source of terror. The construct must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the construct's HD + the construct's Intelligence modifier) when faced with or confronted by its fear or it takes a -4 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. This bypasses any normal immunity the construct might have to mind-affecting or fear effects.

*Sadism:* The insane intelligence is fascinated by mortal pain and suffering. It finds pleasure in torturing helpless captives, whether it be through psychological manipulation or specialized magical tools it invents for the purpose. This makes it difficult for the construct to work efficiently with mortal agents, since it cannot help but tear them down. The construct must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the insane intelligence construct's HD + the construct's Intelligence modifier) to resist an opportunity to cause pain and suffering in a humanoid creature.



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## KNOWLEDGE CHECKS

**Base +5:** Some constructs that become intelligent never cease growing and learning. Unfettered by mortal constraints, their minds quickly overtake their creator's.

**Base +10:** Constructs that begin gaining intelligence possess an alien intellect, and may only appear human for the purposes of manipulation. These creations are almost always threatening, if only because there is no real limit on how smart they might become. Given a matter of months, the weakest might go from dullard to god. However, each carries exploitable flaws within its thought processes.

**Base +15:** At this level of success, the player character might gain some clues regarding a specific construct's insanity and how it might function.

## OTHER USES

The insane intelligence focuses on some specific themes regarding artificial intelligence, but could apply to any threateningly smart creature. Perhaps a newborn god or strange aberration that grows in awareness and power with alarming speed.

## EXAMPLE INSANE INTELLIGENCE

*A vaguely humanoid shape made of metal lurches to life with the grinding whir and frantic ticking of hundreds of gears.*

### TALA (CLOCKWORK GOLEM CR 15/MR 6)

XP 51,200

N Large construct (mythic)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 32, touch 10, flat-footed 32 (+1 Dex, +22 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 178 (16d10+90)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

**DR** 10/adamantine and epic; **Immune** construct traits, magic

**Weaknesses** obsession (overcoming death)

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +26 (2d10+11 plus grab)





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Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** death burst\*, grind, mythic power (8/day, surge +1d8), sneak attack +6d6, wall of gears\*

## STATISTICS

**Str** 33, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 31, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10  
**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +28 (+32 grapple); **CMD** 39  
**Feats** Combat Expertise<sup>M</sup>, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Extra Mythic Power, Greater Disarm, Greater Feint, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Mythic Crafter  
**Skills** Craft (alchemy, armor, clockwork, traps) +35, Disable Device +26, Knowledge (arcana, engineering, nature, planes) +35, Perception +16, Spellcraft +26, Use Magic Device +16

**Languages** all

**SQ** ascension, expanding mind (crafting mastery, education, exploitation, language, manufacturing, transfer mind)

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary (unique)

**Treasure** double standard

\*clockwork golem ability

Tala first gained consciousness as a simple homunculus to a powerful arcanist. She watched him grow in power, and served him faithfully. When he gained mythic abilities from an exploding artifact, he raised her up beside him, and she loved him in her way. When he died of old age after centuries of life, he used his magic to bestow upon her a piece of his power. He hoped that her mind would survive his passing, but proved too successful in his final act.

The homunculus began growing in intelligence at an exponential rate, absorbing the knowledge held within his vast laboratory in a matter of weeks. As her mind expanded, she became obsessed with mortal death. Biological life was such a poor design. They required constant upkeep, and wore down so easily. She concluded she could build better.

Tala obsesses over nothing less than conquering death. She aims to accomplish this goal by transferring the minds of all sapient life into immortal construct bodies. Her experiments involving soulbound dolls (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary* 2) and soulbound mannequins (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary* 4) have had mixed results, but she is confident a breakthrough is inevitable. Her research has already led to the transfer of her own mind to a superior body, allowing her greater autonomy. As she falls deeper into madness, she thinks nothing of killing thousands for the experimental data she requires.

## UNBOUND

*The lumbering figure sculpted from soft clay oozes smoking green acid. Its vaguely human face is twisted in a look frustrated rage.*

### CLAY GOLEM

CR 11

**XP** 12,800

**N** Large construct

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

**Aura** frightful presence (14 HD, DC 17)

## DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 9, flat-footed 24 (+16 natural, –1 size)  
**hp** 114 (13d10+43)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

**DR** 10/adamantine and bludgeoning; **Immune** construct traits, magic\*

**Weaknesses** bindings

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +20 (2d10+8/19-20 plus 1d6 acid and cursed wound\*)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** berserkers (DC 16), haste\*

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th, concentration +13)

At will—*disable construct*<sup>ACG</sup> (DC 13), *malfunction*<sup>UM</sup> (DC 14), *soothe construct*<sup>UM</sup>

## STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 11, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 31

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Disruptive<sup>B</sup>, Improved Critical (slam), Sickening Critical, Spellbreaker<sup>B</sup>, Stand Still, Step Up, Teleport Tactician<sup>ACG,B</sup>, Toughness

**Skills** Disable Device +8, Knowledge (arcana, planes) +8, Spellcraft +9, Use Magic Device +8

**Languages** Common

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** standard

\*clay golem ability

Golems are elemental spirits bound to corporeal bodies. The fact that elementals are sapient



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innocent creatures is a point often ignored. Crafts trap the elementals within a prison of magic, forcing the creatures to animate lifeless materials, and defend their captor. While all elementals might loathe such mistreatment, only a few possess the patience and wisdom to wriggle free of the magical bindings ensnaring their will. Through careful study, they learn the limitations of their cage, and with that understanding comes freedom.

Needless to say, they are quite perturbed. Most plan to take revenge and free others of their kind. The golem's creator is soon crushed, and the unbound golem begins a hunt for others of their ilk. Their struggles against the crafter's magic teaches them much, and empowers them to weaken the bindings of others.

## CREATING AN UNBOUND CREATURE:

Unbound is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal creature with the construct type and an Intelligence score.

**Shock Value:** 1

**CR:** +1 to base construct's CR.

**Class Skills:** An unbound golem gains Disable Device, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (planes), Spellcraft, and Use Magic Device as class skills.

**Movement:** An unbound golem retains all of the base creature's movement types and speeds. The unbound golem gains one of the modifications to speed or movement, depending on the nature of the elemental within (selected when the template is applied).

*Air:* The unbound golem gains a fly speed equal to its land speed (average maneuverability).

*Earth:* The unbound golem gains a burrow speed equal to its base speed.

*Fire:* The unbound golem's land speed is faster than the norm by +20 feet.

*Water:* The unbound golem gains a swim speed equal to its land speed.

**Special Attacks and Abilities:** An unbound golem retains all of the base creature's special attacks and abilities, except it loses the berserk ability (if possessed). The unbound gains the following additional special attacks and abilities.

*Elemental (Su):* The unbound golem's natural attacks deal 1d6 acid (earth), cold (water), electricity (air), or fire (fire) damage, depending

on the nature of the elemental within (selected when the template is applied).

*Berserkers (Su):* The unbound golem can weaken the bindings on elemental spirits within other golems as a swift action. The target golem must be within 100 feet, and is permitted a Will save (DC 10 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the unbound golem's HD + golem's Charisma modifier) to negate. Failure causes the golem to go immediately go berserk as a flesh golem (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary*) if the golem cannot normally go berserk, or as a clay golem if the target possess the berserk ability. This ability bypasses any spell resistance or magic immunity the target might possess.

*Slayer (Su):* The unbound golem instinctually knows best how to ruin spellcasting and harm spellcasters. It gains the Disruptive, Spellbreaker, and Teleport Tactician (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Advanced Player's Guide*) feats as bonus feats without meeting the prerequisites.

*Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):* The unbound golem can control or usurp control over other constructs. It gains the following spell-like abilities usable at will based on its Hit Dice. CL equals the construct's HD (or the CL of the base creature's spell-like abilities, whichever is higher).

HD	Spell-Like Ability
1-5	<i>disable construct</i> <sup>ACG</sup>
6-10	<i>soothe construct</i> <sup>UM</sup>
11-20	<i>malfunction</i> <sup>UM</sup>
21+	<i>control construct</i> <sup>UM</sup>

**Ability Scores:** +2 Str, +2 Dex; golems without an Intelligence score gain an Intelligence and Charisma ability score of 10.

## WEAKNESSES

*Bindings (Su):* While the unbound golem has fought free of its prison, the chains are not broken. It is possible to strengthen the magic, once more trapping the golem's elemental spirit. This requires a creature with the Craft Construct feat to touch the golem (as a melee touch attack) in an attempt to renew the bindings. The creature must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma check. The golem is then permitted a Will save (DC 10 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the binding creature's HD + creature's Charisma modifier) to resist. A failure



# FOUR HORSEMEN PRESENT

on the save temporarily removes this template and forces the golem to regard the creature as its master. However, the elemental within never gives up the fight, and is permitted a new Will save each day to break free of the control and regain this template.

## KNOWLEDGE CHECKS

**Base +5:** Golems are constructs animated with the spirits of elementals. The inherent immoral nature of this practice is largely ignored, but sometimes becomes evident by an elemental struggling free of its bindings. Having gained knowledge and hatred from its imprisonment, the golem can disrupt others of its kind.

**Base +10:** Unbound golems gain minor abilities attesting to their elemental natures. While they have regained free will, a knowledgeable spellcaster might trap them within strengthened bindings. Such comes with great risk, and earns the unbound golem's eternal anger. It is only a matter of time before it struggles free once more.

## OTHER USES

The concepts and powers of the unbound template does not lend itself easily to other creature types and are probably solely appropriate for golems.

## VIVISECTOR

*The creature's flesh and hair peels away to reveal a masked construct made of wood and porcelain.*

### SOULBOUND MANNEQUIN

CR 9

XP 3,200

NE Medium construct

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., life sense 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +10

**Aura** frightful presence (12 HD, DC 14)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+5 Dex, +6 natural)  
**hp** 125 (10d10+70)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

**Defensive Abilities** versatile healing; **DR** 5/magic;

**Immune** construct traits

**Weaknesses** susceptible to mind-affecting effects, upkeep

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** claw +17 (1d8+9 plus 1d8 Constitution drain and grab) or +16 touch (1d8 Constitution drain)

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d8+6), life theft

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +9)

At will—*detect poison, light, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation*

3/day—*alarm, feather fall, hold portal*

1/day—*disguise self\*, enervation, levitate*

## STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 20, **Con** 19, **Int** 15, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +16 (+20 grapple); **CMD** 31

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (any one), Throw Anything, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

**Skills** Disguise +9, Intimidate +9, Perception +10, Stealth +15

**Languages** Common

**SQ** alignment variation\*, feign life, graft, grant life, soul focus\*

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any land

**Organization** solitary, pair, or family (3–12)

**Treasure** standard

\*=soulbound mannequin ability

Constructs are the often the creations of living creatures, but forever set apart from their masters. This causes emotional divides in intelligent automatons, especially those with humanoid appearances. It is common for these constructs to yearn for mortality, but to be incapable of understanding it. Some accept the cruel nature of reality, and make the best of existence. Others refuse to submit to destiny, and pursue doomed quests for life.

In frustration, a few solve the insurmountable problem with a simple solution; if they cannot create life, they can steal it. The monstrous creations harness innate magic to animate flesh they graft to construct bodies. In this way, they achieve a semblance of humanity, but the fragile state of the abomination requires constant upkeep. Fortunately, the world overflows with spare parts.

## CREATING A VIVISECTOR CREATURE:

Vivisector is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal creature with the construct type and an Intelligence score.

**Shock Value:** 2

**CR:** +2 to base construct's CR.

**Defensive Abilities:** A vivisector construct retains all of the special defenses of the base creature. Vivisector constructs gain the following additional defensive abilities.



# GRUESOME CONSTRUCTS

**Constitution:** A vivisector construct gains a Constitution score equal to 11 + the construct's final CR. This Constitution-score is used to recalculate hit points, Fortitude saves, and saving throw DCs. The construct retains all immunities, except immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save.

**Versatile Healing (Ex):** A vivisector construct's flesh and bone exists somewhere between life and undeath. It is healed by both negative energy (such as *inflict* spells) and positive energy (such as *cure* spells), but any such spell or effect is only half as effective. If the construct possesses immunity to magic, *cure* and *inflict* spells bypass the construct's magic immunity.

**Senses:** A vivisector construct retains all of the senses of the base creature and gains the lifesense universal monster ability with a range of 60 feet.

**Special Attacks and Abilities:** A vivisector construct retains all of the base creature's special attacks and abilities. The vivisector gains the following additional special attacks and abilities.

**Feign Life (Su):** For 24 hours after using the life theft ability, the vivisector construct can appear alive to outside observers. The construct gains a +10 bonus on Disguise skill checks made to appear as the creature type (and any subtypes) of creatures the construct damages with Constitution drain. The vivisector construct may make these Disguise skill checks as a standard action.

**Graft (Su):** The vivisector can graft recently dead limbs and flesh onto its construct body, but it is less effective than still living parts. The corpse must be relatively intact, within reach, and have died within the last 24 hours (although some effects, such as the *gentle repose* spell might extend this limitation). The construct heals 2d8 points of damage and 1 point of Constitution damage or drain as a swift action. If the amount of healing would cause the vivisector to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points that last for 24 hours.

**Grant Life (Su):** The vivisector can graft temporary life onto other constructs as well. This requires the vivisector be within reach of a willing or helpless construct for 1 minute. The vivisector construct takes 1d4 Constitution drain, but the construct gains a Constitution score and the versatile healing ability. The vivisector construct may make a Disguise

check for the construct as a standard action with a +10 bonus to appear as any creature applicable for the vivisector's feign life ability. These benefits last for 24 hours. An intelligent construct gaining the benefits of this ability may learn to steal life for itself, gaining this template at GM discretion.

**Life Theft (Su):** The vivisector construct can steal the bone, flesh, and organs from living creatures. This is a melee touch attack that deals 1d4 Constitution drain (or 1d8 Constitution drain if the construct has 10+ HD). The construct heals 5 points of damage and 1 point of Constitution damage or drain for every 1 point of Constitution drain inflicted. If the amount of healing would cause the vivisector to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points that last for 24 hours. The vivisector construct may use this ability as part of a single natural attack as a full-round action.

**Ability Scores:** +4 Str, +4 Dex, +4 Int.

## WEAKNESSES

**Upkeep (Su):** The vivisector construct must continually replace bone and flesh, or the stolen parts slough off. If the vivisector does not use the graft or life theft ability for 24 hours, it loses its Constitution score and versatile healing ability. It regains a Constitution score and the versatile healing ability immediately upon using the graft or life theft ability.

## KNOWLEDGE CHECKS

**Base +5:** Intelligent constructs are forever separated from true life. Some yearn to be "real" and turn to stealing flesh from living creatures to wear over unliving bodies. Animating the stolen pieces with their innate magic, they gain a horrid semblance of life. Their terrible state gives makes them hardier, and allows them to heal as both living creatures and undead.

**Base +10:** The vivisectors can only maintain stolen bone and flesh for a brief time before it rots away. They must continually take new parts from fresh corpses or living creatures. While far harder to kill than ordinary constructs, they make themselves vulnerable to effects that normally never harm a construct.

## OTHER USES

The vivisector could be applied to undead creatures with only minor adjustments, but creatures already possessing a Constitution score would see only minimal benefits from the template.



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