

ILLITHIDS

ILLITHIDS, ALSO KNOWN AS MIND FLAYERS, ARE *horrific, alien humanoids that lurk deep within the Underdark. Masters of psionic energy, they use their mental powers to dominate other creatures. The fortunate among their victims are slain, their brains devoured. The unlucky ones have their psyches warped, leaving them as mindless slaves with little hope of being rescued.*

—Volohtamp Geddarm, *Guide to monsters*

A CULTURE OF FUGITIVES

Despite all their unique and overwhelming abilities, the mind flayers are a race on the edge of extinction.

Thousands of years ago, the illithids were the dominant power of the Inner Planes. From their astral domains, they launched flying vessels called nautiloids, able to cross between planes, so that they could harvest intelligent humanoids from hundreds of worlds.

The mind flayers relied on a slave race, the gith, to provide physical labor and sustenance when other sources of food grew thin. Eventually, the gith revolted. Whether the mind flayers became decadent or the gith discovered a weakness, none can say. What is known is that after centuries of domination, the mind flayer empire collapsed in less than a year. The gith rose up, slaughtered their masters, and destroyed almost all traces of the illithids' astral domains.

Only the mind flayers that had infiltrated the worlds of the Material Plane survived, and their safety was shortlived. Both the githzerai and the githyanki, two factions that arose from the victorious gith, sent hunting parties to root out and slaughter the remaining mind flayers.

To this day, isolated clutches of mind flayers remain in hiding, seeking ways to recapture their former glory but hampered by their paranoia of being discovered and destroyed by their enemies.

RENEGADE ILLITHIDS

Sometimes a mind flayer that's away from its colony breaks free from the elder brain. Perhaps it ran into a situation where its bonds of obedience were broken, or perhaps the colony was destroyed while it was away. In such a case, the mind flayer becomes freewilled for as long as it avoids contact with an elder brain.

A renegade illithid remains fearful of gith attacks, and likely sets about creating a sort of colony of its own, the better to remain undetected. It gathers minions, establishes a lair, and makes defense of its territory a top priority. Unlike colonial mind flayers, rogue illithids develop a healthy respect for those not of their kind. They treat especially powerful creatures and individuals as equals, not adversaries, and seek to cooperate with them.

A renegade mind flayer might become a trusted advisor or a powerful ally, so long as it is kept well fed. Any alliance it makes, however, collapses if the mind flayer falls under the sway of an elder brain once more.



Credit: Conceptopolis ©Wizards of the Coast

ILLITHID NAMES

Among mind flayers, thoughts aren't communicated in language per se, but are instead transmitted telepathically as concepts and associations, which other humanoids interpret in their own language.

Telepathic communication with a mind flayer is frequently accompanied by a mental static that "sounds" to the receiver like an underlying sussuration peppered with guttural clicks. The intensity of this static increases when a mind flayer refers to itself, because with the saying of its name, the illithid is communicating far more information about itself than other humanoids can comprehend. The syllables that make up mind flayer names as expressed in other languages are thus weak approximations of the sound that others hear in their minds when illithids refer to themselves.

An illithid might adopt a name that is easier for minions and allies to speak or that makes it seem more fearsome to enemies, but each begins its life with a thoughtname such as the examples in the Mind Flayer Names table, which are suitable for any campaign.

Names: Aurangaul, Cephalossk, Drukt, Drusiss, Lugribossk, Quoor, Ralayan, Sardsult, S'venchen, Tharcereli, Tobulux, Zellix

THE ELDER BRAIN

Mind flayers use telepathy to communicate with each other and with other creatures. Among their own kind, they form a network of minds. Each mind flayer is an individual node of the network, taking on specific tasks, sharing information, and so on. At the center of this network is the elder brain. The elder brain is the most powerful member of a mind flayer colony. Just as mind flayers treat thralls made from captured humanoids, an elder brain expects perfect obedience from the illithids that dwell in its colony.

If a single mind flayer in a colony sees or hears something, the elder brain and the rest of the illithids in the colony learn of it immediately. The colony relies on a collective memory, composed from the knowledge, experiences, and skills of all of its members and stored within the elder brain.

There are limits to a colony's reach. An illithid can be part of its colony's network of minds only while it is within five miles of the elder brain. Beyond that distance, it is on its own. Mind flayers that venture away from the colony do so only under strict orders from the elder brain. Although such missions risk attracting unwanted attention, they can yield a treasure trove of knowledge and insights to be shared throughout the entire colony when a roaming mind flayer returns.



Credit: Wayne Reynolds

ILLITHID TRAITS

Your Illithid character has the following racial traits.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma scores each increase by 1.

Age. Newly hatched Illithid tadpoles ceremorphose out of mature humanoids in about a week, and live not much past their first century and a couple decades.

Alignment. As hive-mind communal creatures with particularly violent reproductive cycles and dietary requirements, most Illithid have a strict sense for hierarchy and no empathy for most humanoid races, most being Lawful Evil. Individuality, empathy, if only an alien kind of it, and respect can be found on renegade Illithids who value and trust powerful creatures seen as equals; off-aligned Illithids aren't unheard of.

Size. Illithids are tall and consumed humanoids, measuring 6 feet on average and weighing much less than a normal human of that size. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. 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.

Telepathy. You can speak telepathically to any creature within 60 feet of you. You don't need to share a language with the creature for it to understand your telepathic messages, but the creature must be able to understand at least one language or be telepathic itself.

Innate Psionics. You know one psionic talent of your choice from the mystic talent list. Intelligence is your psionic ability for it.

Lesser Magic Resistance. As an Illithid ventures far from its hive, their magic resistance weakens. You have advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

Languages. You can "speak", read, and write Common, you can speak Deep Speech, read and write Qualith.

ASI (+1 Int, +1 Wis, +1 Cha) + Darkvision 60+Telepathy +
Psionic Talent + Lesser Magic Resistance - Poor Synergy*
= 12 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 7 - 1
= 27

*<https://goo.gl/JyeQHu>