

Mind Flayer Ceremorphosis

Playable Mind Flayers

LENMOS



MIND FLAYER CEREMORPHOSIS

MIND FLAYERS

Whatever you desire to call them, Mind Flayers, Illithids, or Ghaik these sentient and sadistic aberrations exist to reign tyranny over the multiverse with their psionic mastery. Most mind flayers live in the Underdark and expand their dominion over the powerful races of the Underdark, slowly turning them into slaves and devouring their brains for sustenance. Their power has grown so vast that beholders, drow, duergar, and other powerful races that exist within the Underdark acknowledge their power and never want to come across them.

Mind flayers were similar to humans in appearance, but with a set of four tentacles dangling from where their mouth would be and a slightly larger and more bulbous head. Their hands had long, reddish fingers and lacked an index finger, and webbed feet with two-toes a piece. For living in the Underdark for several millenium they have become sensitive to sunlight even hurting to look at in the worst cases.

Mind flayers fed on humanoid races all the time which they used for sustenance. Once it selected its victim it would attack it and latch its tentacles around its head and then suck the brain out of the creature, instantly killing the creature (if it only had one head) and providing sustenance for the mind flayer. However, this experience proved to be euphoric for a mind flayer as this process allowed them to literally devour the memories, personality, fears, aspirations, any anything else the brain held.

CEREMORPHOSIS

Their reproduction is different among most "civilized" species as their method of reproduction requires a vessel to fully complete. Mind flayers have no male or female reproductive organs, rather they lay a clutch of eggs once or twice in their life from which tadpoles hatched. These tadpoles lived in the elder brain tank, of which the Elder Brain exclusively feeds on, however some of these tadpoles survive long enough to undergo the process of Ceremorphosis.

Ceremorphosis is a process when a tadpole enters a living creature's body through some hole, even if it has to burrow its own, until it reaches the brain of the creature. It devours the brain of the creature where it then takes its place and merging into its body to form a new illithid. However, not all creatures create the desired effects and because of that several races have variants of illithids which differ from the traditional mind flayer.

ULITHARID

Ulitharid, also known as "Noble Devourers" in Undercommon, are a bigger and stronger mind flayer, with six tentacles, that is sometimes born through ceremorphosis. This is both good and bad for the colony as it means that the colony has much more potential and capabilities with a ulitharid, but the ulitharid and elder brain often infight and have rivalries. Eventually an ulitharid and its devout followers will go off to form a new colony where it becomes the new elder brain.

ABHORRENT DEFECTS

Sometimes a mature tadpole didn't undergo the process of ceremorphosis in time and then problems begin to occur. Firstly, it becomes a ravenous predatory creature known as an illithocyte and if allowed to grow out of control even more a neothelid. These creatures were considered abhorrent and mercilessly hunted.

CEREMORPHS

Mind flayers had many races they tried to convert and each had a different effect, the Ceremorphs table shows what each creature ceremorphed into and the Player Ceremorph Races table shows what races players can ceremorph into from their starter race.

Humans, elves (including drow), githyanki, githzerai, grimlocks, gnolls, goblinoids, and orcs would all turn into mind flayers and rarely ulitharids however some other races had stranger transformations.

CEREMORPHS

Original Race	Illithid Counterpart	Official Source (If Any)
Beholder	Mindwitness	<i>Volo's Guide to Monsters</i> page 176
Chuul	Uchuulon	None
Deep Gnome	Mozgriken	None
Dragon	Brain Stealer Dragon	None
Gnome (Successful Transformation)	Gnome Ceremorph	<i>Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden</i> page 303
Gnome (Unsuccessful Transformation)	Gnome Squidling	<i>Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden</i> page 303
Lizardfolk	Tzakandi	None
Roper	Urophion	None

Sometimes a gnome or lizardfolk could also become an ulitharid on top of their special status however it would sometimes cause interesting revelations in the colony whether to follow the outcast or to ignore their existence, they'll become a normal elder brain in the end anyways.

PLAYER CEREMORPH RACES

Original Race	Illithid Counterpart
Deep Gnome	Mozgriken
Gnome (Successful Transformation)	Gnome Ceremorph
Gnome (Unsuccessful Transformation)	Gnome Squidling
Lizardfolk	Tzakandi
Other	Illithid

PRELUDE

These options are special; you can choose one at character creation or at an appropriate time later in a campaign, transforming your character, such as a character undergoing ceremorphosis - here are rules to help facilitate that transition.

GNOME CEREMORPH

Prerequisite: *Gnome.*

For unknown reasons, ceremorphosis can go awry when a tadpole is implanted in the brain of a gnome. This might be because of the gnome's quasi-magical nature or just a manner of how their mind works. However due to this they retain their size and their drive to invent becomes elevated.

GNOME CEREMORPH TRAITS

Type. Abberation

Size. Small

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Your innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence, your spell save DC for the following spells is 10 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. You can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts, levitate*

1/day: *dominate monster*

Laser Pistol. You are proficient in Firearms (see "Firearms" in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). You are particularly adept at using a laser pistol which you can craft over the course of a week during Long Rests, or shorter if you sit down to make it in a singular session.

Mind Blast. You can magically emit energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on an Intelligence Saving Throw with a DC equal to 10 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. On a failed save, the creature takes 4d8 + your Intelligence Modifier psychic damage and are stunned until the end of the next 1d4 turn(s). After you use your mind blast, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

Languages. Deep Speech, Undercommon, Telepathy 120 ft.

GNOME SQUIDLING

Prerequisite: *Gnome.*

When ceremorphosis goes terribly awry for gnomes the result is a gnome squidling - a deformed mind flayer with weak spindly limbs. It uses its two large tentacles like pseudo-legs and levitation to move its weak body around. Squidlings are often destroyed by mind flayers on site so it is rare to see them at all.

GNOME SQUIDLING TRAITS

Type. Abberation

Size. Small

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Your innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence, your spell save DC for the following spells is 10 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. You can innately cast *levitate*, requiring no components.

Mind Tickle. You magically emit psychic energy in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on an Intelligence Saving Throw with a DC equal to 10 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. On a failed save, the creature takes 1d4 + your Intelligence Modifier psychic damage and are stunned until the end of its next turn.

Languages. Deep Speech, Telepathy 60 ft.

ILLITHID

Prerequisite: *Not beholder, chuul, dragon, gnome, lizardfolk, or roper.*

ILLITHID TRAITS

Type. Abberation

Size. Same as prior size

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Your innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence, your spell save DC for the following spells is 10 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. You can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts, levitate*

1/day: *dominate monster*

Mind Blast. You can magically emit energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on an Intelligence Saving Throw with a DC equal to 10 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. On a failed save, the creature takes 4d8 + your Intelligence Modifier psychic damage and are stunned until the end of the next 1d4 turn(s). After you use your mind blast, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

Languages. Deep Speech, Undercommon, Telepathy 120 ft.

MOZGRIKEN

Prerequisite: *Deep gnome.*

The birth of a mozgriken often meant the death of both a deep gnome and an illithid tadpole after the attempted conversion of a deep gnome. Their heads were similar to that of a normal illithid however only sporting three tentacles rather than four and missing a mouth. The rest of their body was similar to that of a normal deep gnome but heavily disfigured. Though they were failures, they were still faithful to the mind flayers and even adverse to combat so mind flayers kept them around for reconaissance without risk of them escaping.

Type. Abberation

Size. Small

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Your innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence, your spell save DC for the following spells is 10 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. You can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts, invisibility, nondetection*

Shadow Form. When a mozgriken feels threatened and needs to escape it can enter is shadow form. In this form the your movement speed is doubled and it is invisible as in the *invisibility* spell for the next minute. You can use this ability once and the use of it recovers after a Long Rest.

Languages. Deep Speech, Telepathy 60 ft.

TZAKANDI

Prerequisite: *Lizardfolk*.

Tzakandi were prized amongst mind flayers for their fearsome viciousness and increased intelligence. Even after ceremorphosis they resembled a lizardfolk and stood around seven feet tall. Some had two long writhing tentacles form from the back of their head and others had the traditional four in the front, no two tzakandi looked the same.

Type. Abberation

Size. Same as prior size

Acid Glob (1/day). Once per day you can fire an acid glob from your tentacles. When you use your acid glob weapon, a targeted creature within 60-feet must make a dexterity saving throw with the DC equal to 8 + your Intelligence modifier + your proficiency bonus. A creature takes 2d6 acid damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. The damage increases to 3d6 at 6th level, 4d6 at 11th level, and 5d6 at 16th level. After you use your acid glob weapon, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Mind Blast. You can magically emit energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on an Intelligence Saving Throw with a DC equal to 10 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. On a failed save, the creature takes 4d8 + your Intelligence Modifier psychic damage and are stunned until the end of the next 1d4 turn(s). After you use your mind blast, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

Languages. Deep Speech, Undercommon, Telepathy 120 ft.

ULITHARID

Prerequisite: *Dungeon Master's Choice*.

In some scenarios, it would make sense for player characters to become ulitharid's after their transformations, they naturally would be stronger than most mind flayer vessels so it would definitely be within the realm of possibility.

Type. Abberation

Size. Same as prior size

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Your innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence, your spell save DC for the following spells is 10 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. You can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts, levitate*

1/day: *confusion, dominate monster, eyebite, feblemind, mass suggestion, plane shift (self only), project image, scrying, telekinesis*

Mind Blast. You can magically emit energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on an Intelligence Saving Throw with a DC equal to 10 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. On a failed save, the creature takes 4d12 + your Intelligence Modifier psychic damage and are stunned until the end of the next 1d4 turn(s). After you use your mind blast, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

Languages. Deep Speech, Undercommon, Telepathy 120 ft.

BALANCE ISSUES & MORE

ABILITY SCORE INCREASES

Ability Score increases have been effectively transitioned out of D&D, however if you feel that becoming a Mind Flayer permits an increase, propose increasing Intelligence by 2 and Wisdom or Charisma by 1.

DIFFERENCES FROM OFFICIAL STATBLOCKS

Some abilities from official statblocks have been left from this document for balance purposes. For example, a gnome ceremorph has the ability to cast *planeshift* on itself once per day, which causes balance issues on top of magic resistance. Additionally, sunlight sensitivity is a no-brainer to apply to the creatures, but generally it leads to boring and needless challenging gameplay so it has also been left from the document.

DUAL-TYPING

Dual-Typing has been an option presented in *Unearthed Arcanas* a few times, if you want to use Dual-Typing at your table allow all these races to have both the Abberation and Humanoid types.

LASER PISTOL

This ranged weapon is powered by an energy cell, which enables the weapon to fire up to fifty shots. After its last shot is expended, the device is inoperable. The energy cell can't be removed without destroying the weapon.

Range. 40/120 ft.

Damage. 3d6 + your Dexterity Modifier radiant damage.

ARCANIST (PSEUDO/PRESTIGE-CLASS)

Prerequisite: Illithid & Wizard (Level 5)

An illithid player might want to pursue to imbue arcane spells into their newly acquired psionic repertoire. Other mind flayers will see this as deviance, however to you this is just power!

This class only has five levels and at each level you gain spells to add to your wizard spell list:

LEVEL 1

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward, dancing lights, mage hand, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, disguise self, shield, sleep*

LEVEL 2

2nd level (3 slots): *blur, invisibility, ray of enfeeblement*

LEVEL 3

3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance, lightning bolt, sending*

LEVEL 4

4th level (3 slots): *confusion, hallucinatory terrain*

LEVEL 5

5th level (2 slots): *telekinesis, wall of force*

DESIGN NOTE:

This class is purposefully lacking in content, this is more an option if you really wanted to lean into becoming an arcanist or alhoon, perhaps even an illithilich, but it is not worth giving up true levels for. It may be better to think of it as a guide for what spells to take to pursue the path of an arcanist.

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Sources:

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Template:

- Unearthed Arcana 2021 - Gothic Lineages:
https://media.wizards.com/2021/dnd/downloads/UA2021_GothicLineages

New Podcast/ D&D YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0OqBbdFQ03tJiBBJoMeF9Q>



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