

THOUGHTWEFT

Several Creatures are connected through a telepathic bond, may it be from an arcane or psionic source. Through that connection their combined battle prowess becomes enhanced, as they engage their foe in unmatched cooperation.

What is a monster theme?

A monster theme is a collection of features to establish a consistent feeling among several monsters. Themes can be implemented easily by adding a certain feature, or collective of features to existing monsters.

A Mind-Link Monster gains the following changes:

It gains the following traits:

- **Thoughtweft.** The creature is telepathically connected with each other creature with the Thoughtweft ability within 120 ft. of itself. It can communicate with connected creatures telepathically and can see and hear what the other creature does.
- **Thoughtweft Bullwark.** As long as the creature is connected with another creature with the Thoughtweft ability, it has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.
- **Thoughtweft Coordination.** The creature has advantage on attack rolls against a creature an allied creature connected through the thoughtweft has attacked since the end of its last turn.

Flavoring Thoughtweft Theme

While the very theme of Thoughtweft might inform the idea of psionics, do not feel like you have to be limited to this flavor, as there are many ways to flavor the emergence of Thoughtweft creatures.

Swarm Consciousness.

The creatures are part of a greater system that makes them all connected to one another, like being a part of a swarm collective. Works well for insectoid or alien inspired creatures.

Improved Telepathic Bond.

A magic user worked on their own specific ritual to improve the power of Rary's Telepathic Bond, strengthening the telepathic link to such a degree that makes the connected creatures one coherent unit.

Several of One Soul.

All the souls of the linked creatures used to be one. This connection remains even now since they have split into smaller entities.

- A Thoughtweft creature's effective AC increases by 2
- A Thoughtweft creature's effective Attack Bonus is increased by 1
- A Thoughtweft creature's expected CR stays the same (most of the time).

Consider taking the time to recalculate the CR of the creature to see if its Challenge Rating is impacted. As a rule of thumb, I suggest increasing the creature's CR by 1/2, meaning that if you for example use two creatures of CR 3 that have the thoughtweft theme, that you calculate the challenge of the encounter as if you use one CR 4 and one CR 3 creature.

THAT ARE ALOT OF ADDITIONAL ABILITIES TO KEEP TRACK OFF! While yes, these are alot of extra abilities to keep track off, if you have alot of monsters to deal with, remember that in the optimal case, you would apply these same 3 abilities to every monster in combat. It becomes much more managable like that!

Connected in a Dream.

The creatures' minds once touched in the realm of dreams, this caused both of their minds to mix and match with one another. This left traces of their minds in the other, causing them to get glimpses of what the other sees and experiences.

Creepy Twin Connection.

The creatures are siblings with a unique bond, which goes beyond speaking in their weird made-up language. It almost seems as if they just know what the other thinks. Creepy.

Weird Mindflyer Experiment.

The creatures were injected with an experimental brain leech. The leeches have nestled deep into their brains and are telepathically connected with one another. This extended to the minds of the affected creatures, giving them the ability to transfer thoughts to one another.

XANATHAR BUGBEAR VARIANT: POP GOES THE BRAIN

For an additional challenge consider spawning one Intellect Devourer when one of the Xanathar Bugbears is reduced to 0 hit points, as the aberration ejects from the skull of its slain vessel to join the battle, or to flee and report to its master.

XANATHAR'S BUGBEARS

I featured the first iteration of the thoughtweft theme in my Dungeon of the Mad Mage campaign, in the first level of the Undermountain. I modified the bugbears there to be a creation of Xanathar. In his breeding experiments with intellect devourers he used a special batch of aberrations to modify the bugbears of the goblin tribes under his command.

Bugbears are not known for their intellect, a weakness that Xanathar has effectively compensated. He created powerful enforcers that have the brawn of the bugbears and the brains of the cold and calculating intellect devourers to secure key positions of the first level of Undermountain (which is connected to the first level of his own hideout as well).

XANATHAR BUGBEAR

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (0)	10 (0)

Proficiency +2

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +6, Survival +2

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Goblin, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the creature hits with it (included in the attack).

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear attacks a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Thoughtweft. The bugbear is telepathically connected with each other creature with the Thoughtweft ability within 120 ft. of itself. It can communicate with connected creatures telepathically and can see and hear what the other creature does.

Thoughtweft Bullwark. As long as the bugbear is connected with another creature with the Thoughtweft ability, it has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.

Thoughtweft Coordination. The bugbear has advantage on attack rolls against a creature an allied creature connected through the thoughtweft has attacked since the end of its last turn.

ACTIONS

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8+2) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage in melee or 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage at range.

Players encountering these unique bugbears might immediately notice how perfectly coordinated they set up their ambush and the superior battle tactics they use in the ongoing fight. Or perhaps if they manage to talk to them, the players might be bewildered by how precise and technical a captured bugbear's speech is.

XANATHAR BUGBEAR PSION

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Proficiency +3

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +5

Skills Insight +5, Perception +5, Stealth +8, Survival +5

Resistances psychic

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Goblin, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Alien Mind. The bugbear had advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the creature hits with it (included in the attack).

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear attacks a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Thoughtweft. The bugbear is telepathically connected with each other creature with the Thoughtweft ability within 120 ft. of itself. It can communicate with connected creatures telepathically and can see and hear what the other creature does.

Thoughtweft Coordination. The bugbear has advantage on attack rolls against a creature an allied creature connected through the thoughtweft has attacked since the end of its last turn.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The bugbear's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *mage hand* (*hand is invisible*) *levitate*

1/day: *telekinesis*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bugbear makes 2 weapon attacks.

Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d10+2) slashing damage.

Wreck Mind. A creature within 60 ft. of the bugbear must succeed a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw, or take 14 (3d6+3) psychic damage and be stunned until the end of its next turn.