(Left) Photo taken during the OI excavations at Khorsabad, modern Dur-Sharrukin, between 1928 and 1935! The relief fragment in this photo shows the lower section of an apkallu, a protective mythological figure who guarded the palace against evil!

(Right) An intact example from the Northwest Palace of Nimrud, ancient Kalhu. A34980: gypsum, Iraq, Kalhu, Neo-Assyrian period (883–859 BC)
Make an Ancient-Inspired Monster Mash-Up!

Monsters and demons in ancient myths and legends were often fearsome hybrids of humans and different creatures. Take a look at these examples from the OI, then use them as inspiration to create your own monster in a multi-player drawing game!

The Mesopotamian demon Pazuzu has the body and tail of a scorpion, legs and feet like a bird, four wings, clawed hands, and a horned, lion-like head!

The Egyptian demon Ammit, a combination of a lion, crocodile, and hippo, is shown in this Book of the Dead fragment. He watches over the judgment scene of Yartiuerow, ready to devour the man’s soul if his heart shows he has lived a bad life.

Humbaba, shown on the left, and defeated under Gilgamesh’s feet above, was a fearsome demon that guarded the Ceder Forest, home of Mesopotamia’s gods. He has traits of a lion, vulture, bull, and snake!

What types of animals do you see in these ancient monsters? What animals would you combine to make a scary monster?
Monster Mash-Up Drawing Game

Create a collaborative monster mash-up in this fun drawing game! Each player takes turns drawing monsters part-by-part. The full monsters are only revealed at the end!

You will need:
• At least one partner to play with, preferably two
• A piece of blank paper for each player
• A pencil for each player

Instructions

1. Each player folds their paper into thirds, as shown on the right. The top third will be for the head of your monster, the middle for its torso and arms, and the bottom for its legs and feet.

2. In the top section of the paper, each player draws a head for their monster without showing it to any of the other players. The head should not go outside of the top third of the paper. When a player is done drawing their monster’s head, they draw two small lines from the neck of their monster into the next third of the paper, so the next player will know where to connect the torso they will draw.

3. Once all players are finished drawing their monster heads, they fold the paper to hide the head and reveal only the middle third of the paper. Then, players pass their paper clockwise to the next player.

4. In the middle section of the paper, each player draws a torso and arms for the monster, connecting the torso to the marks left by the previous drawer. The torso and arms should not go outside of the middle third of the paper. When a player is done drawing the monster torso, they draw small lines from the torso of the monster into the last third of the paper, so the next player will know where to connect the legs they will draw.

5. Once all players are finished drawing their torsos and arms, they fold the paper to hide the torso and head and reveal only the bottom third of the paper. Then, players pass their paper clockwise to the next player.

6. In the bottom section of the paper, each player draws legs and feet for the monster, connecting the legs to the marks left by the previous drawer. The legs and feet should not go outside of the bottom third of the paper. Once all players are done drawing the legs and feet on their papers, everyone unfolds their papers to reveal the full monster mash-up!