

# WHAT IS A ZOMBIE?



Before beginning any reading or course in zombie survival, it is essential that you have a clear understanding of what a zombie is, how it is created, the main types and, most important of all, how you can 'kill' a zombie.



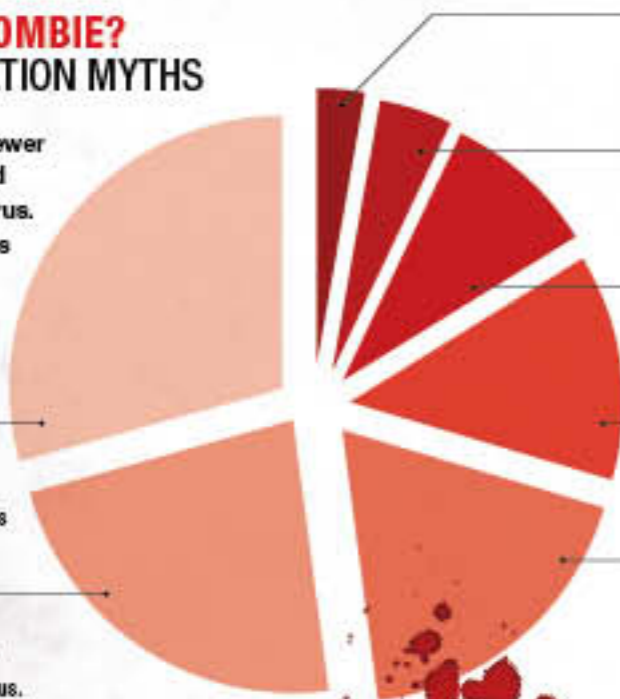
These three factors are the foundation of any zombie survival plan and are referred to as the Zombie Knowledge Triangle. All zombie survivalists must clearly understand how a zombie is created, be able to recognise the different types and deal with the walking dead.



## WHAT IS A ZOMBIE? ZOMBIE CREATION MYTHS

In a recent survey by GeoPol, fewer than 23% of Americans realised that zombism is caused by a virus. Here is a breakdown that shows the level of misunderstanding among the public of the root cause of zombies.

- 29.3% VODOO**  
Magic, myth and the poison from the rare puffer fish leads to mindless undead slaves.
- 22.8% VIRUS**  
The world of science has the answer – it's caused by a virus.



- 2.8% MAN-MADE**  
Zombies are part of a secret government conspiracy.
- 4.3% ALIENS**  
It's all part of their master plan to take over the world.
- 9.1% RADIATION**  
Barrels of green radioactive waste cause zombies.
- 13.4% ANGRY GOD**  
God's taking revenge by bringing the dead back to life.
- 18.3% SUPERNATURAL**  
There is an unseen world and it is from these misty realms that the walking dead emerge.

SURVEY OF 1,000 PEOPLE IN NEW YORK IN DECEMBER 2012

**A ZOMBIE IS A DEAD BODY THAT HAS BEEN BROUGHT BACK TO ANIMATION BY A COMPLEX RNA VIRUS WHICH LEADS THE BODY TO BEHAVE IN A CANNIBALISTIC WAY**

MINISTRY OF ZOMBIES HANDBOOK

To be clear, the zombic condition, which is characterised by the slow stagger, lumbering walk and violent appetite for the flesh of the living, are all classic symptoms of the zombie virus. So, there is nothing supernatural, nothing spooky and nothing superhuman about the walking dead. They are simply humans transformed into very different creatures. But always remember that once a human has become infected with the virus, typically by a bite from an infected zombie, then the transformation will begin. More detail is given on this process further in this volume but know this:

**THERE IS CURRENTLY NO CURE FOR THE ZOMBIE VIRUS AND ONCE CONTRACTED BY A HUMAN, TRANSFORMATION INTO A ZOMBIE IS A CERTAINTY**

## ▶ HOW TO SPOT A ZOMBIE

### KNOW THE SIGNS!

Scruffy Bohemian student or 'back from the office late' drunk may each display signs of the zombic condition, but it doesn't necessarily mean you should run and get the axe. It is vital that you clearly identify your target as a zombie before you get chopping. Be on the lookout for the following:



- ▶ A vacant and distant gaze, which only becomes agitated at the prospect of living flesh. The creature will emit a low-level guttural groan.



- ▶ A pallid, deathly colourless skin. Eyes may be milky or tinged with red. Both nails and hair may have grown giving the figure a distinctive 'hippie' look and smell.



- ▶ Clothes may be ripped or torn. There may be obvious injuries such as clear bite marks or missing limbs, but equally there may be no visible signs of trauma or dried blood.



- ▶ Slow, stumbling walk. Zombies appear unbalanced and awkward, often tripping and falling over minor obstacles. Newly converted zombies will display a better level of movement and dexterity.



- ▶ The walking dead will always move towards the living with the express purpose of turning them into their next meat snack.

**BE WARNED CITIZENS!**





## TYPES OF ZOMBIE

Once a human has turned into a zombie, they will enter a three-stage process of transformation. All will go through these stages, but factors such as climate, body mass and the amount of infected material will have an impact.

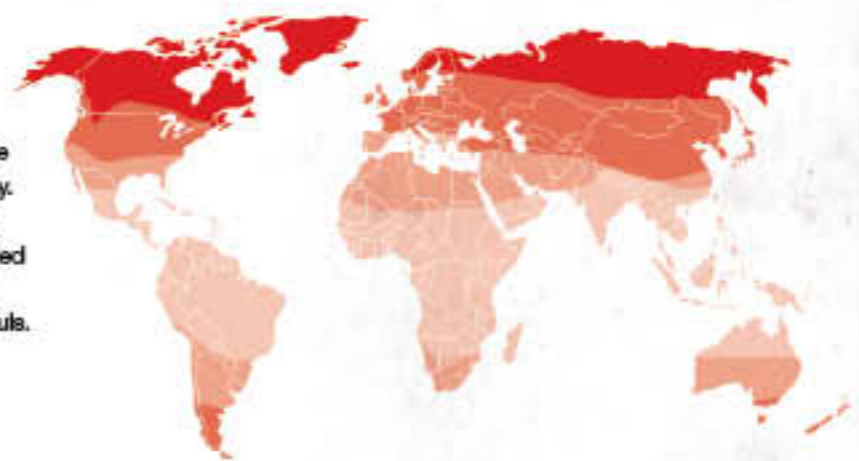
To be clear, these are not stages of the 'illness' – these will be reviewed later. For now, these humans have already transformed into the undead, they are fully infected with zombie virus and display symptoms of the zombic condition. In 2008, Dr Ahmed shocked the

zombie-fighting community when he declared that 'all zombies are not equal.' He later went on to expand on a scientific theory of zombie evolution, which describes how the undead develop over the course of time after infection. For many years, survivalists had offered accounts of desiccated zombies or huge bloated corpse-monsters, but the fledging science of Zombiology had no unified theory to explain these anomalies. Dr Ahmed's stages of zombie evolution changed all of this and they are presented below.



## WHAT IS A ZOMBIE? CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Experiments have now proved that it is climatic conditions which have the greatest influence on the 'type' of creature that survivors will face after Z-Day. For example, fighters in hot and humid, tropical or sub-tropical climates are likely to face more putrefied and bloated zombies whereas fighters in arid and desert conditions will battle dried and skeletal ghouls.



- TUNDRA
- DESERT
- TEMPERATE
- TROPICAL



## ZOMBIE EVOLUTION

### STAGE 1 FRESH (NOOBS, NEWBIES, INHUMOS)

These walking dead have contracted the zombie virus in the last few days. They have a pallid, grey/blue skin colour and a bloodless complexion. Some will appear almost human in appearance; others will be missing major body parts. Importantly, their movements will be stiff and awkward, they will be unable to speak and they will have an unhealthy interest in feasting on your flesh.

### STAGE 2 PUTREFIED (SICKIES, PUKERS, FATTIES, BUG BOYS, BLOATERS)

At this stage, zombies generally start to show signs of decomposition. For example, you may see pus-filled wounds and green fungus patches appearing. However, the decomposition process is greatly decelerated by the zombic condition. In humid conditions, excess acid or gastric liquid may swell the corpse to an enormous size.



### STAGE 3 DESICCATED (CLASSICS, ZEDS, STIFFS, STENCHIES, HIPPIES)

Most of the walking dead will move into this 'classic' zombie phase of development. These creatures will be barely human in appearance. Their skin will be thin and stretched; their wounds dry and cracked. By this stage, their clothes will be mostly tattered and their eyes turned a milky shade, even yellowish in some cases. Climatic conditions will determine the actual level of moisture in a classic zombie, with dry conditions leading to a skeletal creature on which the skin hangs like a rotting, almost transparent blanket. Over time, injury or rotten body parts may just fall off with the creature seemingly oblivious to any loss.



**ONCE INFECTED BY BITE OR FLUID EXCHANGE, A HUMAN WILL TRANSFORM INTO A ZOMBIE AND MOVE THROUGH THESE ZOMBIE TYPES**

### TROPICAL High temperature, high humidity

Bloated masses of dead flesh in addition to a veritable explosion in the insect life and fungus surrounding these walking corpses.

- High numbers of 'bloaters'.
- Higher rate of decomposition.
- More fungal growth.

### DESERT High temperature, low humidity

Often referred to as 'skeleton corpses', the dead will be thin and wiry with more exposed bone than in other regions.

- Parched zombies.
- Skeletal husks.
- Bleached flesh stretched tightly.

### TEMPERATE Low temperature, high humidity

Survivors should prepare to face all types of zombie in the initial outbreak. Depending on the season, most will move towards the classic phase.

- Most zombies will be at the desiccated stage within a month.
- Fewer bloaters than the tropics.

### TUNDRA Low temperature, low humidity

Winter will often keep the dead fully frozen and easy to deal with, but the thaw can see zombies emerge in a particularly rotten and hungry mood.

- Zombies may be frozen solid and dormant.
- Very low level of decomposition.



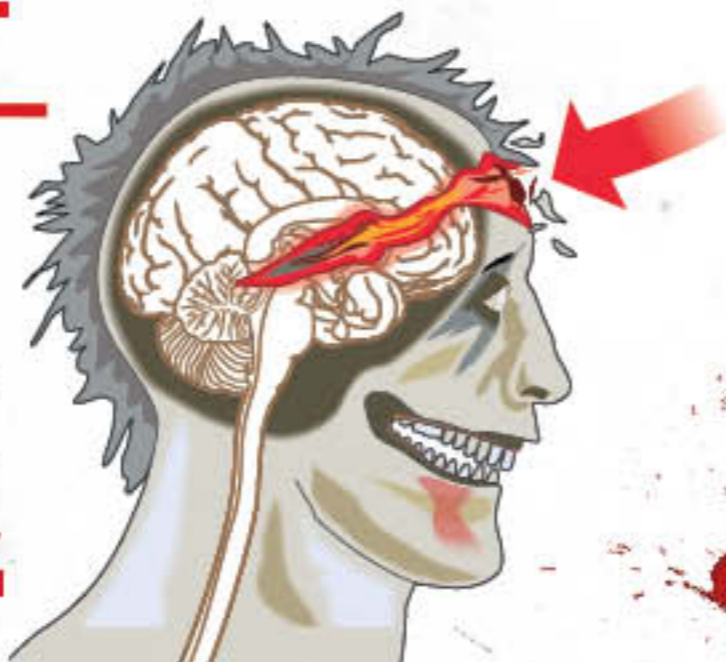
# WHAT IS A ZOMBIE?



## HOW TO KILL A ZOMBIE

Weapons and more advanced unarmed combat techniques that can be used against the dead will be discussed later. For now it's enough to know that to kill a zombie you must destroy at least 80% of its brain. Nothing else will work. In zombie combat, we define 'killing' a zombie as meaning removing it as a threat – in other words, taking it out of the game by ensuring that it never gets up. Technically speaking, you can't 'kill' what's already dead, but destroying a high proportion of a zombie's brain will prevent the creature rising again and seeking to feast on the flesh of the living.

**A BLOW WHICH DOES NOT CONNECT SQUARELY WITH THE ZOMBIE SKULL WILL NOT DO ENOUGH DAMAGE SO PRACTISE YOUR ACCURACY**



## WHAT IS A ZOMBIE? COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

More than any creature, the zombie is surrounded by legend, myth and misinformation. The zombie survivalist needs to be aware of these misconceptions. During the zombie apocalypse, panic and lies will be everywhere, rumours of their superpowers will be rife, and such tales will haunt the dreams of any survivors.

### AREN'T THEY JUST LIKE VAMPIRES?

Vampires are fictional monsters based on a mixture of folklore and creative writing. They have no connection to zombies. There is nothing sparkly or romantic about 'the undead' and you won't be joining 'Team Edward' or 'Team Jacob' when the dead rise. You're more likely to be driving an axe through his skull than losing yourself in his good looks.

### SHOULD I STAY AWAY FROM CEMETERIES?

For the seasoned zombie fighter, a cemetery should hold none of the horror it seems to for fans of ghost or vampire stories. It is a virus which causes the zombic condition. There is nothing supernatural about it and, statistically, very few zombies 'rise from the grave'. The incubation period for the virus means that there are far more outbreaks in hospital morgues than in chapels of rest or graveyards.

### DON'T ZOMBIES JUST EAT BRAINS?

The most powerful myth surrounding zombies is that they only eat brains. Indeed, the classic "Braaaaaainns!" catchphrase supposedly muttered by the dead could seriously mislead survivors. Firstly, zombies will happily eat any part of a living or very recently deceased human. Secondly, zombies cannot talk.

## ▶ A TYPICAL THREE-STEP PROCEDURE



### STEP 1 IDENTIFY THE ZOMBIE

Recognise the creature, shout a warning if you can, then get prepared for action! Remember, the zombie in front of you is no longer human so act with purpose. Do not endanger yourself with any warning; there may be occasions when you need to move quickly through Step 1.



### STEP 2 HEAD BASH OR KNOCK DOWN

If you have a weapon, go for a solid club to the head. Aim for the top of the skull and use force but be accurate – a glancing blow may not do the trick. If you are unarmed, you will need to sweep the creature's legs or kick it down. Remember, only a solid blow to the head will knock the creature down for good.



### STEP 3 SECOND BLOW OR STAMP

Zombies are extremely robust creatures, so always be sure by delivering a second blow. Never assume that your one hit has done the job. Many an experienced zombie fighter has been bitten on the lower leg by a ghoul they thought they'd dealt with. For once, the movies got it right – always use the double-tap rule.

### IF THEY ARE FRIENDS OR FAMILY, SURELY THEY'LL KNOW WHO I AM?

Simple answer, no! Once a human has transformed into a zombie, they have virtually no recollection of their former life. They are no longer the person they once were. So if zombie grandma staggers into view, it won't be to drop off any last-minute birthday or Christmas presents. Do not be deceived by the physical resemblance to your loved one. It's time to get busy with the axe. The zombic condition completely transforms any human into a ravenous and cannibalistic creature, and scientific experiments have shown that zombies will attack and feast upon the living, no matter who they are. It may not be easy driving a weapon into your neighbour's face or bashing a friend in with a baseball bat, so if necessary get someone else to do it. But, be assured, if you don't deal with zombie grandma, she will come drooling at the window. Finally, never attempt to bring a relative with the zombic condition into your fortified home. Where a member of your party has become infected, you should isolate them and then deal with them when they turn if you can't do it beforehand.

**ANY BLOW TO A ZOMBIE HEAD WILL RESULT IN INFECTED BRAIN SPLATTER. BE ALERT TO THE RISK OF INFECTION**

