

First Edition Bard



The Bard Character Class for OSR Campaigns

Version 1.0

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What is a Bard?

The bard is a jack-of-all-trades. He is an entertainer, magician, trickster, keeper of ancient knowledge and wanderer. Bards are very rare, as few people are ready to take the path of the bard, and found only among humans and half-elves.

Class Basics

Attribute Requirements	STR 15, INT 12, WIS 15, DEX 15, CON 10, CHA 15
Prime Requisite	None
Races	Human, Half-Elf
Hit Die	d6 (max 10)
Alignment	Any Neutral
Weapons	Club, dagger, dart, javelin, sling, scimitar, spear, staff, sword (bastard, broad, long, short)
Armour	Leather, magical chainmail
Attack Progression	None (see below)
Saving Throws	As Druid (see below)
Weapons Proficiencies	5+1 every 4 levels
Non-Proficiency Penalty	-2
Weapon Specialisation	N/A

The Path of the Bard

Unlike most other classes, a bard player character does not start his career as a bard. A character that meets the prerequisites and wishes to become a bard first gains levels as a fighter. Once he has reached at least 5th level but no more than 7th level he can become a thief as if becoming a dual-classed character (this is an exception to the human-only limitation and the need for a 17 in Dexterity). After becoming a thief he may advance to at least 5th level and no more than 8th level. After this he undergoes druidic training and finally becomes a bard.

Attribute Requirements

The number of humans and half-elves ready for the path of the bard are vanishingly small. A bard requires an attribute score of at least 15 in Strength, Wisdom, Dexterity and Charisma as well as an Intelligence score of no less than 12 and a Constitution score of at least 10.

Prime Requisite

A bard does not have a prime requisite and does not gain an experience bonus from any ability score while he gains levels as a bard. He does receive the respective bonus for high prime requisites while he gains experience as a fighter, thief or druid, though.

Races

Only humans and half-elves can become bards. Other races are not suited to take the path of the bard.

Hit Die

The bard uses the d6 to determine his hit points. He can gain a maximum of ten hit dice as a bard and receives an additional hit point per bard level thereafter. The bard keeps all hit dice he gain while being a fighter and also those of his thief career (provided he gained more thief levels than fighter levels). When he starts to gain bard levels, no hit dice are lost.

Alignment

Bards have to be Neutral. They can be Lawful, Chaotic, Good or Evil, though.

Weapons and Armour

Bards use no armour but leather armour and magical chainmail. They can use the club, dagger, dart, javelin, sling, scimitar, spear, staff, bastard sword, broad sword, short sword and long sword as well as burning oil. Only Neutral Evil bards may use poison.

Table 1: Bard Experience Progression

Level	XP	College	Title
1	2,000	<i>Probationer</i>	Singer
2	4,000	Mongán	Storyteller
3	8,000	Mongán	Rhymester
4	16,000	Mongán	Lyricist
5	32,000	Cairbre	Metricist
6	48,000	Cairbre	Poet
7	64,000	Cairbre	Galater
8	100,000	Amairgin	Troubadour
9	200,000	Amairgin	Liedermacher
10	300,000	Amairgin	Loremaster
11	400,000	Deireóil	Bard
12	600,000	Deireóil	Master Bard
13	800,000	Deireóil	Master Bard
14	1,000,000	Fardd	Master Bard
15	1,250,000	Fardd	Master Bard
16	1,500,000	Fardd	Master Bard
17	1,750,000	Taliesin	Master Bard
18	2,000,000	Taliesin	Master Bard
19	2,250,000	Taliesin	Master Bard
20	2,500,000	Lamfada	Master Bard
21	2,750,000	Lamfada	Master Bard
22	3,000,000	Lamfada	Master Bard
23	3,500,000	Myrddin	Master Bard

Attack Progression

A bard's combat abilities do not increase and he attacks using the attack table of a fighter and his highest fighter level.

Saving Throws

Bards have the same saving throw progression as druids of a level equal to their current bard level unless previously gained levels as fighter or thief grant them a better saving throw.

Weapon Proficiencies

A bard starts with five weapon proficiency slots and gains an additional one every four levels. Bards are not eligible for weapon specialisation. They do keep specialisation gained as fighter, though. If they use a weapon they are not proficient in, they suffer a -2 penalty to their attack roll.

Bard College

Every bard is associated with a college with the exception of a bard of the first level, who still has to prove himself worthy of joining a college. Bards do not associate with bards of a college of a lower rank. Bard of the highest college, the College of Myrddin, are an exception and freely associate with any bard.

Special Abilities

Bonus Languages

On his journeys, a bard learns many new languages. He does not need to study to learn these languages and gains them in addition to any languages he already knows.

Bardic Charm

While playing his instrument, a bard can use *Charm Person* or *Charm Monster* with a success chance as shown below (see **Table 2**). This ability functions like

the spells of the same name unless noted otherwise. Creatures immune to these spells will also be immune to *Bardic Charm*. The effect has a radius of 40' and even creatures that make their saving throw will still be entranced and listed to the bard for one round. If the bard decides to implant a *Suggestion* (which works like spell of the same name) in his song, the target creature has to save against it at a -2 penalty. Those who make their save are immune to the bard's music. The bard can attempt to charm a creature once per day. Loud noise will interrupt the *Charm*, but not the *Suggestion*.

Bardic Lore

This indicates the chance that a bard has knowledge of a certain legendary place or personality. It can also be used to identify magic items but is limited to weapons, armour, scrolls, rings, potions and other items the bard can use and magic items with inscriptions.

Druid Spells

This indicates the number of druid spells that the bard can use per day. Bards cast spells like druids with a druid level equal to their bard level until they reach level 12. From level 12, they always cast spells like a druid of level 12 until they reach level 23. From thereon, they cast spells like a druid of level 13

Table 2: Bard Special Abilities

Level	Bonus Languages (total)	Bardic Charm	Bardic Lore	Druid Spells	Number of Henchmen
1	-	15%	-	1	-
2	-	20%	5%	2	-
3	-	22%	7%	3	-
4	1	24%	10%	3/1	-
5	1	30%	13%	3/2	1
6	2	32%	16%	3/3	1
7	3	34%	20%	3/3/1	1
8	3	40%	25%	3/3/2	2
9	4	42%	30%	3/3/3	2
10	5	44%	35%	3/3/3/1	2
11	5	50%	40%	3/3/3/2	3
12	6	53%	45%	3/3/3/3	3
13	7	56%	50%	3/3/3/3/1	3
14	7	60%	55%	3/3/3/3/2	4
15	8	63%	60%	3/3/3/3/3	4
16	9	66%	65%	4/3/3/3/3	4
17	9	70%	70%	4/4/3/3/3	5
18	10	73%	75%	4/4/4/3/3	5
19	11	76%	80%	5/4/4/4/3	5
20	12	80%	85%	5/4/4/4/4	6
21	13	84%	90%	5/5/4/4/4	6
22	14	88%	95%	5/5/5/4/4	6
23	15	95%	99%	5/5/5/5/5	Any number

Bardic Inspiration

Bards can use poetry to inspire their companions. This requires the bard to recite inspirational poetry for two rounds. During this time, the bard can engage in close combat but not sing or cast spells. The effect lasts for one turn and can either raise the morale by 10% or provide a +1 bonus to attack rolls.

Countersong

A bard's song and music negates musical hazards like a shrieker's cry or a harpy's song.

Magic Items

A bard can use magic items usable by fighters, thieves and druids (including scrolls usable by druids). A bard is limited to magic versions of weapons and armour he can use anyway. Bards can benefit (or suffer) from magical (or cursed) tomes for fighters, thieves and druids.

Certain musical magic items will be more effective if used by a bard:

Table 3: Bard Magic Items

Item	Effect
Drums of Panic	-1 saving throw penalty
Horn of Blasting	Double damage
Lyre of Building	Double effect
Pipes of the Sewer	Double the number of rats in half the usual time

Henchmen

A bard cannot employ henchmen other than fighters, thieves or druids that are humans, elves or half-elves. From level 5 on, he can have a single henchman. When a bard gains experience levels, he can employ additional henchmen (see **Table 2**). At any point, a bard's maximum number of henchmen is limited by his Charisma score. Bards do not serve others as henchmen for more than 1d4 months.

A Bard's Stronghold

A bard can settle down and construct a stronghold, but will not do so before he reaches level 23.

Name:	Alignment:	Level:
Race:	Sex:	XP:
Class:	College:	Next Level:

Abilities

Str:	To Hit:	Damage:	Encumbrance :	Major Test :	Minor Test:
Dex:	Missile To Hit:	Surprise:			
Con:	Hit Points:	Minor Test:	Major Test:		
Int:	# Languages:				
Wis:	Mental Save:				
Cha:	# Henchmen:	Loyalty:	Reaction:		

Saving Throws

Paralysis, Poison, Death	Rod, Staff, Wand	Petrification, Polymorph	Breath Weapon	Spell

Equipment

Armour	Gloves	Boots
Helmet	Bracers	Cloak
Shield	Ring #1	Ring#2
Other	Other	Other

Target AC	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10	
# To Hit																						

Weapon	Type	Rate of Fire	Damage	Range	Special

Bardic Abilities

Bonus Languages	Bardic Charm	Bardic Lore
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Maximum Number of Spells

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
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Thief Skills

Pick Pockets	Open Locks	Find/Remove Traps	Move Silently	Hide in Shadows	Detect Noise	Climb Walls	Read Languages
							Elven Chain
							Padded, Hide, Studded Leather
							Chain, Ring

Treasure, Gear & Special Abilities

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