Master Class:
Runecaster

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5e Compatible

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Master Class: Runecaster

The runecaster is a manipulator of powerful magic that take the form of runes—written sigils which serve as containers for magic energies—rather than spells. Runes existed before the first languages were created, and are a form of writing reality-changing energy. Each rune describes a single concept so powerfully that the mere presence of the rune brings some element of that concept into existence.

Runecaster are not spellcasters, but users of a more ancient, less refined kind of magic. Many cultures depend on runecasters as their hero-warriors, supernatural campions, and wise advisors. Runecasters are most common among dwarves, dragons, and giants, but every society that has language can result in someone delving deeply enough into the origins of words and what words existed before there were languages to house them to stumble on the ancient tradition of runecasting.

Adepts of Ancient Power

Runecasters are empowered by their understanding of runes that are older than any mortal society. Most runecasters were taught by older masters who wished to preserve their art, but such instructors never do more than put a runecaster's feet on the right path to runic insight. Runes cannot simply be known or memorized, they must be understood in their totality. Copying the symbols a runecaster creates has no effect, because only a runecaster knows how each line, curve, and pigment expressed the connection between any given rune, and the universe around it.

Some runecasters stumble upon the first inklings of these powers without any guidance from others, perhaps by finding an ancient rune untouched by the ravages of time, and surviving a discharge of its energies. Others find the first whispers of runic power coming to them in dreams and visions, and must seek to understand the source of their knowledge even as they seek further runic lore.

Scholars and Warriors

Runecasters are flexible adventurers who can augment themselves to allow them to be mainline combatants, augment those around them to make them more capable, or impede major foes to make them easier to overcome. Most runecasters work to balance their selection of runes to have a few options in each of these categories, though it is possible to specialize in just one form of runes. As learned scholars of an ancient mystic proto-language, runecasters are also talented sages and can choose to learn runs that aid in the acquisition of knowledge.

Alignment: A runecaster may be of any non-lawful alignment.

Starting Wealth: 4d4 × 10 gp

Class Features

As a runecaster, you gain the following class features.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d8 per runecaster level

Hit Points At 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d8 (or 5)+ your Constitution modifier per runecaster level after 1st.

Proficiencies

Armor: Light and medium armor

Weapons: Simple and martial weapons

Tools: Calligraphy tools

Saving Throws: Wisdom, Constitution

Skills: Choose any three.

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TABLE 1-1: RUNECASTER

Level	Proficiency	Features	Runes
1	+2	Runecasting, Rune Trace	2
2	+2	Runic lore	3
3	+2	Logos	3
4	+2	Ability Score Improvement	4
5	+3	*Glyph of Warding* (3rd)	4
6	+3	Logos feature	5
7	+3	*Glyph of Warding* (4th)	5
8	+3	Ability Score Improvement	6
9	+4	*Glyph of Warding* (5th)	6
10	+4	Logos feature	7
11	+4	*Glyph of Warding* (6th)	7
12	+4	Ability Score Improvement	8
13	+5	*Glyph of Warding* (7th)	8
14	+5	Logos feature	9
15	+5	*Glyph of Warding* (8th)	9
16	+5	Ability Score Improvement	10
17	+6	*Glyph of Warding* (9th)	10
18	+6	*Symbol*	11
19	+6	Ability Score Improvement	11
20	+6	Runelord	12

Runecasting

A runecaster creates runes drawn from the runecaster rune list. A runecaster begins play knowing 2 runes, though he may also have access to runes from other sources (such as runestones, see the 52-in-52 product *Rune Magic*). As the runecaster gains levels he learns additional runes, as indicated on the class advancement table. He can create any rune he knows, but cannot have more runes active at a time than his total runes known. If the runecaster creates a new rune in excess of this limit, a randomly determined previously active rune ends. (This does not count as the rune reaching its end state, the rune and all its effects end immediately.)

At each new runecaster level, a runecaster can choose to learn up to 1 new rune in place of rune he already knows. In effect, the runecaster loses the old rune in exchange for a new one. A runecaster must choose whether or not to swap the runes at the same time that he gains new class features for the level.

Runes are magic abilities governed by the following rules.

Rune Recover: A runecaster can create a number of runes equal to its runes known. It can recover it's rune use with a short rest.

Time to Create: Creating a rune takes the cast a spell action, unless the rune says otherwise. Creating a rune requires some drawing implements, pigments, and special materials, though the rune magically adheres to its surface regardless of how ink-resistant the target is. Calligrapher's tool has everything a runecaster needs to create runes.

Range and Targets: All runes can only be put on something adjacent to the runecaster, unless the rune says otherwise. Once in place, the rune is effective at any range. If placed upon an unattended object, ally, or the runecaster, no attack roll is necessary. If placed upon a foe or an item held by a foe a Wisdom ranged attack is required (this is true even if you have an ability that allows you to create runes at greater range).

A target cannot have more than one of the same rune on it, and a runecaster cannot have more than one rune of the same type active at a time. If the runecaster creates a new rune that violates these rules, any previous rune of that type ends. (This does not count as the rune reaching its end state, the rune and all its effects end immediately.)

Saves and Skill DCs: If a rune requires a saving throw, the DC is equal to 8 +1/2 your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier. If the rune requires an ability check by opponents, the DC is 8 +1/2 your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier.

Size and Visibility: A rune is roughly the size of the palm of your hand (or as close to that as possible if placed on a target smaller than that), and glows with light equal to that of a candle. Any rune placed

on a person or object is obvious when in use (even if something was covering it, the rune becomes visible when in use). A rune not actively doing anything can be concealed as with any small object if there is appropriate cover to do so.

End State: Rather than having a set duration, runes function until they meet a specific circumstance (or one of several circumstances) that cause the rune to end. This is known as the rune's end state. Each rune's end state is defined in the rune's description.

Dismissing and Dispelling: Unless a rune says otherwise, you can dismiss it as an action. This does not count as the rune reaching its end state, the rune and all its effects end immediately. A rune can be dispelled as if it was a spell with a spell level equal to 1/2 the runecaster's level.

Runes

The runecaster may choose from the following runes.

Accuracy: An accuracy rune can be placed on a creature or an object that makes its own attacks roll (such as some traps). When the creature makes an attack roll and fails, the accuracy rune can immediately grant the creature an additional attack roll. The rune ends after it is used for a reroll.

Air: An air rune can be placed on any creature, which gains the benefit of a *feather fall* whenever it wills it (as a swift or immediate action), or falls uncontrollably further than 30 feet. If your runecaster level is 5th or more the creature can instead choose to *levitate*, as the spell. If your runecaster level is 10th or more, the creature can instead *fly*, as the spell. Once the rune is active, it ends if the creature touches the ground, or 1 minute passes.

Bear: This rune is placed upon a creature, giving it claws that do 1d6 damage. At 6th level the claws become magical, gaining a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. This bonus increases to +2 at 12th level, and +3 at 18th level. This rune ends if the claws makes an attack that fails to hit the target's armor class by 10 or more, or make an attack that result in a natural 1 on the attack roll. An attack that misses for some other reason (such as a miss chance due to concealment or attacking an ethereal target) does not end the rune.

Additionally a creature with this rune has a constant *speak with animals* that only works with bears.

Blast: The runecaster can create a blast rune in any adjacent square. Any creature entering this square takes 1d6 points of damage, plus one per class levels of the runecaster creating it. The rune lasts until discharged or until you create another blast rune, and cannot be created in a square occupied by a creature or another rune. This rune deals either acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage, decided when created. This rune counts as a 1st-level spell for the purposes of dispelling. If the rune is placed in a hard-to-see spot (such as on the back of a door or under a rug), it can be discovered with a successful Wisdom (Perception) skill check and disarmed with a successful Dexterity skill check.

Bleed: A bleed rune can be placed on any creature not immune to critical hits. If the creature has some chance to negate critical hits, it has the same chance to negate the bleed rune when it is first created. The creature takes 1d4 additional damage from any piercing or slashing damage it takes while the bleed rune is in effect, and takes 1 bleed damage at the end of each round if it has any damage at all on it. If the runecaster is 7th level the extra damage increases to 1d6, and at 14th level it increases to 1d8. The rune ends if the creature receives any magic healing, or if a successful Wisdom (Medicine) check is used on it, or if the extra damage rolled is ever only 1 point of damage.

Blocked Trails: A rune of blocked trails can be placed on any piece of terrain, Huge or larger structure (such as a ship), or in an immobile point in the air. It causes the area around it to be difficult terrain. The area is a radius determined by the runecaster when the rune is created, with a maximum radius of 5 feet per runecaster level. The rune ends when any creature makes a melee attack against it, or 10 minutes pass. If the rune is placed upon a mobile structure, it does not affect that structure's movement.

Cougar: This rune is placed upon a creature, giving it evasion. If it already has evasion, it instead gains advantage on Dexterity saving throws. The rune ends when the target succeeds at a Dexterity save.

Additionally a creature with this rune has a constant *speak with animals* that only works with felines.

Earth: An earth rune can be placed on any creature, which gains Damage Resistance to bludgeoning damage. This lasts until the creature spends a full round not in contact with the ground, or is hit by a critical hit.

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Eldritch: An eldritch rune allows you to know, and cast, a limited number of arcane spells. The rune is created only upon yourself. It ends after you rest and regain all your daily abilities. You cannot dismiss an eldritch rune, nor can it be dispelled. When your rune ends, the duration of any spell you cast using it also ends. Your caster level is equal to your runecaster level.

You can cast a number of eldritch rune-granted spells per day equal to 1 +1/5 your runecaster level. You also know a number of arcane spells equal to 1 + 1/5 your runecaster level. The spells must be drawn from the wizard spell list, and cannot have a range of personal. The maximum level of spell you can know is no greater than 1/3 your runecaster level. At each runecaster level, you may change what spells you know through the eldritch rune. You do not need to prepare your spells in advance—as long as you have castings left you may cast any of the rune-granted spells you know. You must fulfill all the spell's requirements normally.

Fire: A fire rune can be placed on any creature or object. It gains Damage Resistance to fire. It can also make a ranged attack using its Wisdom bonus with a range of 30 feet, that does 1d6 damage, plus 1 per runecaster level. The rune ends if the target takes a critical hit that deals fire damage or fails a saving throw against an effect that deals fire damage, or it uses the rune to make a ranged attack.

Fog: A rune of fog can be placed on any piece of terrain, Huge or larger structure (such as a ship), or in an immobile point in the air. It causes an area around it to be filled with fog, granting half cover to all creatures within it, against any creature that is not adjacent to them. The area is a radius determined by the runecaster when the rune is created, with a maximum radius of 5 feet per runecaster level. The rune ends when any creature makes a melee attack against it, or 10 minutes pass.

Hardness: A rune of hardness makes creatures or objects significantly more resilient. It grants the creature +2 bonus to Armor Class that lasts until the target takes damage.

Healing: A rune of healing can be placed on a creature or object. When a foe makes an attack that damages the target, the rune heals the target (after the damage is done) for 1d4 points of damage plus the runecaster's level. This also ends the rune.

Incompetence: A rune of incompetence can be placed on a   creature, or an object that makes Ability checks (such as some traps). When the rune is placed, the runecaster attunes it to one specific Ability score. The target has disadvantage on checks with that ability score. The rune ends when the target fails at a check with the attuned ability score, or 10 minutes pass.

Inspiration: An inspiration rune allows you to know, and cast, a limited number of divine spells. The rune is created only upon yourself. It ends after you rest and regain all your daily abilities. You cannot dismiss an inspiration rune, nor can it be dispelled. When your rune ends, the duration of any spell you cast using it also ends. Your caster level is equal to your runecaster level.

You can cast a number of inspiration rune-granted spells per day equal to 1 +1/5 your runecaster level. You also know a number of divine spells equal to 1 + 1/5 your runecaster level. The spells must be drawn from the druid spell list, and cannot have a range of personal. The maximum level of spell you can know is no greater than 1/3 your runecaster level. At each runecaster level, you may change what spells you know through the inspiration rune. You do not need to prepare your spells in advance—as long as you have castings left you may cast any of the rune-granted spells you know. You must fulfill all the spell's requirements normally.

Misfortune: A misfortune rune can be placed on any creature, or an object that makes skill or ability checks, saving throws, or attack rolls (such as some traps). The first attack roll, skill check, ability check, or saving throw the target makes each round has disadvantage. The rune ends once the target fails an affected die roll, or 1 minute passes.

Mitigating: A mitigating rune can be placed on a creature. When the creature is forced to make a saving throw and fails, the mitigating rune can immediately grant the creature an additional saving. When the rune's additional save is successful, the rune ends. The rune can only activate once per round.

Mongoose: This rune is placed upon a creature, giving it physical resiliency to avoid certain attacks. If the target succeeds at a Constitution saving throw against an attack that has a reduced effect on a successful save, he instead avoids the effect entirely. It additionally gives advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. The rune ends if any Constitution save or Dexterity (stealth) check the target makes fails.

Additionally a creature with this rune has a constant *speak with animals* that only works with mongooses and other Herpestidae.

Owl: This rune is placed upon a creature, giving it mental resiliency to avoid certain attacks. If the target succeeds at a Wisdom saving throw against an attack that has a reduced effect on a successful save, he instead avoids the effect entirely. It additionally gives advantage on Wisdom ability checks. The rune ends if any Wisdom save or check the target makes fails.

Additionally a creature with this rune has a constant *speak with animals* that only works with birds.

Ownership: A rune of ownership can only be placed on an object, and only while no creature other than the runecaster is touching it. It lasts until the item is held and either used or claimed by a creature other than the runecaster. The rune acts as a *minor illusion* indicating the object is owned by the runecaster. Additionally, a runecaster's proficiency bonus with the item increased by 1.

Shielding: A rune of shielding can be placed upon any creature or object. If the target does not have a shield or the benefits of a *shield* spell, it gains a +1 shield bonus to AC. The rune ends if the target has a grapple of shove attack (or any other contest) successfully performed against it, or 10 minutes pass.

War: This rune is placed upon a weapon, making it magic and granting it and bonus to attack and damage rolls. The bonus is equal to +1, increasing to +2 at 7th level and +3 at 14th level. It ends if an attack with the weapon misses, or 10 minutes pass.

Water: A water rune can be placed on any creature or object. It gains Damage Resistance to cold, and a swim speed equal to its speed. The rune ends if the target takes a critical hit that deals cold damage, fails a saving throw against an effect that deals cold damage, makes an attack that does fire damage, or has to hold its breath for longer than 30 seconds.

Weakness: A rune of weakness can be placed on a creature, or an object that rolls its own damage rolls (such as some traps). The target does half damage on the first damage roll it makes each round from any source (weapons attack, spell, special ability, and so on). Each time the creature rolls damage, it also rolls 1d6. The rune ends if this secondary d6 roll is ever a 4, 5, or 6.

Wolf: This rune is placed upon a creature, giving it advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on scent. The rune ends if any Wisdom (Perception) check the target makes results in a natural 1 on the die roll. Additionally a creature with this rune has a constant *speak with animals* that only works with canines.

Rune Trace

By immersing yourself fully in the intricacies of a carved or written rune of any kind (or other type of glyph, symbol, or other marking, hereafter referred to as the "rune"), you can divine the elements of that rune's nature. To use rune trace, you must run your fingers (which cannot be gloved at the time) over the rune. This does not trigger any effects that touching the rune would normally trigger. Runes, symbols, and other effects that trigger when read still trigger as normal if you do so— but note that this ability does not require you to view and read the rune that you're targeting. After examining the rune for one minute, you instantly receive flashes of insight regarding the rune's nature, history, and purpose, including the following information.

Age: You learn if the rune was placed within the last 24 hours, within the last month, within the last year, within the last decade, within the last century, or prior to the last century.

Insight: If you use rune trace on a magical rune, you gain a +5 bonus on all checks to dispel, disable, identify, or otherwise tamper with the rune.

Language: You learn what language the character of the rune is taken from, or in the case of a rune that has no language, you learn that it is a unique image.

Purpose: You learn the general purpose of the rune (such as whether it's a decoration, information, a magical defense, or a warning).

Runic Lore

As an adept at the magic of runes, you gain a number of language-based abilities. Your mastery of one of the ancient proto-languages allows you to understand many of the oldest, most primal tongues not normally learned by mortals, and tongues closely related to them.

With one minute of work and a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, you can successfully translate one page of text written in Abyssal,

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Celestial, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Gnomish, Goblin, Infernal, Orc, or Primordial. Additionally you gain one of these of your choice as a bonus language known at 2nd level. (The GM may add other ancient languages as runic languages in a specific campaign.) At 4th level, and every 4 levels thereafter, you gain another language from this list as a bonus language.

You add your proficiency bonus to all Charisma checks made in one of the listed languages you know.

Logos

At 3rd level, you find your understanding of how runes and reality intersect begins to take on a specific tone, guided by your *logos*, your own primal rune that you have come to realize describes your entire existence. You select from one of three logos, Sigilwarrior, Runescribe, or Warder, each detailed at the end of the class. Your choice grants you features at 3rd level, and again at 6th, 10th, and 14th.

Glyph of Warding

At 5th level a runecaster gains the ability to cast *glyph of warding* as a 3rd level spells once per day, without needing to fulfil any of its material components. Only the explosive runes version of this spell is available unless you have the Warder logos. You can only have one *glyph of warding* active at any time—creating a new glyph while another is active causes all older glyphs to end. As you gain runecaster levels, you can create a higher-level *glyph of warding* as indicated on the runecaster advancement table.

Symbol

At 18th level a runecaster gains the ability to cast *symbol* once per day, without needing to fulfil any of its material components. You can only have one *symbol* active at any time—creating a new *symbol* while another is active causes all older glyphs to end.

Logos

Every runecaster slowly comes to realize they are themselves defined by a rune, which is known as their personal *logos*. While every *logos* is unique to that runecaster (or at most shared by two runecasters in any given generation), they fall into a few broad categories—the runescribe, sigilwarrior, and warder. Most runecasters select runes from runecasting that support their logos abilities, but some instead explore runes specifically different in tone from their logos. Your logos gives you additional features at 6th, 10th, and 14th level.

Runescribe

A runescribe logos indicates a natural aptitude for runes that affect and modify other runes. Runescribe logos are adept at rune manipulation and enhancement, allowing them to do things with runes no other runecaster can manage. Runescribes most often avoid the front-line of combat, preferring to boost allies and manipulate the battlefield with the runic powers.

Secret Runes

At 3rd level when you select this logos, you learn secret runes hidden from other scholars. Using these secret runes, *w*hen you create a rune that can affect creatures other than the one it is placed on, you can include in the rune the names of a number of creatures up to 1 + your Wisdom modifier. You must know the full, true names of these creatures, and be accurately aware of which name goes to each creature, or adding the name has no effect. Done properly, the rune does not affect any creature who has their name added to it.

Additionally, you have created your own unique language using these secret runes. As a magic ability you may grant a temporary understanding of this language to a number of creatures (which must have an Intelligence of 3 or greater) equal to your Wisdom bonus. This takes ten minutes per creature, and they retain knowledge of the language for 30 days. If you are at your maximum number of creatures to grant knowledge of the language through magical means, you cannot grant it to another creature.

Call Rune

At 6th level, you can call out a rune verbally by speaking its ancient name in the proto-language from which all words and names descend. This allows you to create runes at a range of 30 feet. If your runecaster level is 9 or greater, the range becomes 120 feet. If your runecaster level is 15 or greater, the range becomes 300 feet.

Rune Scholar

Beginning at 10th level, your study of runes in all their various forms has allowed you to discover more runes than most runecasters of your experience. You gain 1 additional rune known, and the number of runes you can have active at once also increases by 1.

Preserve Rune

By 14th level, you have learned to extend the effect of a rune past its normal duration. A number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1/day), when a rune encounters its end state, you may choose to preserve the rune as a bonus action. It continues to function as if it had not encountered the end state. There is no maximum range on this ability, but you must be able to see the rune (or the person wielding it) to preserve it. You can always preserve runes on your body or gear you are wielding.

You can only preserve a given rune once—if it meets its end state again, you cannot choose to preserve it. If you re-create the rune, it once again qualifies to be preserved.

Sigilwarrior

A sigilwarrior logos indicates you are a mighty combatant and champion, and your mastery of runes includes access to numerous combat-specific runic abilities. Sigilwarriors are often driven to test themselves against new and strange foes to learn more about the logos rune that describes them, though some are more concerned with protecting others, and some are little more than mercenaries who use their combat runes in exchange of coin.

Runeweapon

Beginning at 3rd level when you select this logos, you can focus runic energy into a runeweapon. This can be any one simple or martial weapon. Once you select your runic weapon, you cannot change it until you gain another runecaster level. Forming your runeweapon is a manipulate action you can combine with an attack made with the weapon. You can only have one runeweapon in existence at a time, unless your runeweapon is a light melee weapon, in which case you can have two. If your runeweapon requires ammunition, you must provide that normally. Your runic weapon ends after 10 minutes. You gain a +1 bonus to damage with your runeweapon. This increases to +2 at 10th level.

Iron Rune

Beginning at 6th level, you can create an iron rune as an action. This gives temporary hit points equal to your runecaster level. You may do this once, and regain the ability to do so after a short rest.

Runic Extra Attack

Beginning at 10th level you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action with your runeweapon on your turn.

Striking Rune

Beginning at 14th level, you can create a striking rune as part of any Attack action. This gives you advantage on the attack roll. You may do this once, and regain the ability to do so after a short rest. At 17th level, you may do this twice between short rests.

Warder

You have focused on the art of creating runic wards and guards, specializing on the ancient arts of storing defensive energy in glyphs and symbols. Warders are often cautious and suspicious, doing all they can to choose any field of battle they must fight upon. Others are minor nobility, who have studied warding runes as a means of protecting their holdings and (in the best cases) their people.

Minor Glyphs

When you select the warder logos, you learn a number of minor defensive runes that allow you to cast the following spells, each once per day: *alarm*, *protection from evil and good*, *resistance*, and *spare the dying*. Your runecaster level is your caster level for these spells.

At 5th level, you also gain the ability to cast *find traps* one per day.

Spell Glyphs

At 6th level, you gain the ability to learn spells you can use with your *glyph of warding* to access its spell glyph function. You select two spells with spell levels no greater than half your runecaster

level. You cannot cast these spells normally, but when you use your *glyph of warding* ability, you can include them as part of a spell glyph rather than creating explosive runes. The spells must be selected from the cleric or wizard spell list, and must be spells that could be placed within a *glyph of warding*'s spell glyph.

You select an additional spells at 7th level, and every runecaster level thereafter.

Greater Warding

At 10th level your mastery of warding runes greatly enhances your *glyph of warding* power. You can regain your ability to use *glyph of warding* after a short rest, though you still cannot have more than one glyph active at a time.

Ward Lord

At 14th level, your power over warding runes gives you a vastly expanded ability to place wards. Rather than having a limit of one *glyph of warding* active at a time, you can have one glyph of warding of each spell level you can cast active at a time.

Runelord

At 20th level you have become an unquestioned master of runes, and can force them to do your bidding. You add +4 to the number of runes you can have active at once, and can affect a single creature with a number of the same rune equal to your Wisdom bonus. When a character with multiple of the same rune reaches the rune's end state, only one copy of that rune ends.