

UNEARTHED ARCANA

Sidekicks

This article gives you a straightforward way to play and level up a sidekick in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. The rules presented here take a creature with a low challenge rating and give it levels as you gain levels.

On your adventures, you sometimes meet a townspeople, an animal, or another creature and forge a special relationship with them. That creature might even join you on your adventures, which usually sparks this question: how does this sidekick get better as you gain levels? As you become more powerful, the foes you face are likely to become too dangerous for Vera the guard, Biscuit the mastiff, or another companion you befriended in the early days of your adventuring career. This article answers the question, giving your sidekick a clear path of advancement.

This Is Playtest Content

The material here is presented for playtesting and to spark your imagination. These game mechanics are in draft form, usable in your D&D campaign but not refined by final design and editing. They aren't officially part of the game and aren't permitted in D&D Adventurers League events.

If we decide to make this material official, it will be refined based on your feedback, and then it will appear in a D&D book.

Sidekick Stats

In these rules, a sidekick is a creature who is your friend and who accompanies you on adventures. It's essentially a second character you play. (The DM might decide to play it instead, or you could co-play it with other players at the table.)

The sidekick can be any type of creature with a stat block in the *Monster Manual* or another D&D book, but it must meet these prerequisites:

- Its challenge rating must be 1 or lower.
- The two of you must be friends.

Customization for Any CR

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* offers guidance on customizing a monster, including giving it levels in a

class. That approach works with any monster in the game, but it can be complicated, since it requires the monster's challenge rating to be recalculated. The approach to sidekicks in this article focuses on giving levels to a low-CR creature without ever having to recalculate its CR.

Gaining a Sidekick Class

When your sidekick joins you, it gains a sidekick class. Choose which class it will have for the rest of its career: warrior, expert, or spellcaster. These sidekick classes are detailed below. They are reminiscent of the classes available to player characters but are simpler.

To gain the expert or the spellcaster class, a creature must have at least one language in its stat block that it can speak.

Leveling Up a Sidekick

Whenever you gain a level, your sidekick also gains a level. It doesn't matter how much of your recent adventures the sidekick experienced; the sidekick levels up because of a combination of the adventures it shares with you and its own training.

Hit Points

Whenever the sidekick gains a level, it gains one Hit Die, and its hit point maximum increases. To determine the amount of the increase, roll the Hit Die (the type of die appears in the sidekick's stat block), and add its Constitution modifier. It gains a minimum of 1 hit point per level.

Proficiency Bonus

Once your companion has a sidekick class, the sidekick's proficiency bonus is determined by its level in that class, as shown in the class's table.

Whenever the sidekick's proficiency bonus increases by 1, add 1 to the to-hit modifier of all the attacks in its stat block, and increase the DCs in its stat block by 1.

Ability Score Increases

Whenever the sidekick gains the Ability Score Improvement class feature, remember to adjust anything in its stat block that relies on an ability modifier that you increase with the feature. For example, if the sidekick has an attack that uses Strength, increase the attack's modifiers to hit and damage if the sidekick's Strength modifier increases.

If it's unclear whether a melee attack in the stat block uses Strength or Dexterity, the attack can use either.

Multiattack vs. Extra Attack

Your sidekick might have the Multiattack action in its stat block. If it does and it gains the Extra Attack class feature, remember that Extra Attack works with the Attack action, not the Multiattack action. In short, you can't use Extra Attack with Multiattack.

Warrior

A warrior sidekick grows in martial prowess as it fights by your side. It might be a soldier, a town guard, a battle-trained beast, or any other creature honed for combat.

A sidekick gains the following class features as it gains levels in this class, as summarized on the Warrior table.

The Warrior

Level	Proficiency	
	Bonus	Features
1st	+2	Bonus Proficiencies, Second Wind (1 use)
2nd	+2	Danger Sense
3rd	+2	Improved Critical
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement
5th	+3	Extra Attack (1 extra)
6th	+3	Ability Score Improvement
7th	+3	Battle Readiness
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement
9th	+4	Indomitable (1 use)
10th	+4	Improved Defense
11th	+4	Extra Attack (2 extra)
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement
13th	+5	Indomitable (2 uses)
14th	+5	Ability Score Improvement
15th	+5	Superior Critical
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement
17th	+6	Indomitable (3 uses)
18th	+6	Second Wind (2 uses)
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement
20th	+6	Extra Attack (3 extra)

Bonus Proficiencies

At 1st level, the sidekick gains proficiency in one saving throw of your choice: Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

In addition, the sidekick gains proficiency in three skills of your choice from the following list: Acrobatics, Animal Handling, Athletics, Intimidation, Nature, Perception, and Survival. If the sidekick is a humanoid, it also gains proficiency with all armor, shields, and simple and martial weapons.

Second Wind

Starting at 1st level, the sidekick can use a bonus action on its turn to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + its level in this class. Once it uses this feature, it must finish a short or long rest before it can use it again.

The sidekick can use this feature twice between rests starting at 18th level.

Danger Sense

Beginning at 2nd level, the sidekick has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that it can see, such as traps and spells. This feature doesn't work if the sidekick is incapacitated.

Improved Critical

Starting at 3rd level, the sidekick's attack rolls score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 on the d20.

Ability Score Improvement

At 4th level, and again at 6th, 8th, 12th, 14th, 16th, and 19th level, the sidekick increases one ability score of your choice by 2, or the sidekick increases two ability scores of your choice by 1. The sidekick can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Extra Attack

Beginning at 5th level, the sidekick can attack twice, instead of once, whenever it takes the Attack action on its turn.

The number of attacks increases to three when

the sidekick reaches 11th level and to four when it reaches 20th level.

Battle Readiness

After the sidekick reaches 7th level, it has advantage on initiative rolls.

Indomitable

Starting at 9th level, the sidekick can reroll a saving throw that it fails, but it must use the new roll. When it uses this feature, it can't use the feature again until it finishes a long rest.

The sidekick can use this feature twice between long rests starting at 13th level and three times between long rests starting at 17th level.

Improved Defense

At 10th level, the sidekick's Armor Class increases by 1.

Superior Critical

Starting at 15th level, the sidekick's attack rolls score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20 on the d20.

Expert

The expert is a master of certain tasks or knowledge. This sidekick follows a path that favors cunning over brawn or spellcasting. It might be a scout, a musician, a librarian, a clever street kid, a wily merchant, or a burglar.

To gain the expert class, a creature must have at least one language in its stat block that it can speak.

A sidekick gains the following class features as it gains levels in this class, as summarized on the Expert table.

The Expert

Level	Proficiency	
	Bonus	Features
1st	+2	Bonus Proficiencies, Expertise, Helpful
2nd	+2	Cunning Action
3rd	+2	Jack of Many Trades
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement
5th	+3	Extra Attack
6th	+3	Expertise
7th	+3	Evasion

8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement
9th	+4	Inspiring Help (1d6)
10th	+4	Ability Score Improvement
11th	+4	Reliable Talent
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement
13th	+5	Bonus Proficiencies
14th	+5	Ability Score Improvement
15th	+5	Sharp Mind
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement
17th	+6	Expertise
18th	+6	Inspiring Help (2d6)
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement
20th	+6	Stroke of Luck

Bonus Proficiencies

At 1st level, the sidekick gains proficiency in one saving throw of your choice: Dexterity, Intelligence, or Charisma.

In addition, the sidekick gains proficiency in five skills of your choice. If the sidekick is a humanoid, it also gains proficiency with light armor, simple weapons, and two tools of your choice.

At 13th level, the sidekick gains proficiency in one skill of your choice. If the sidekick is a humanoid, it also gains proficiency with one tool of your choice.

Expertise

At 1st level, choose two of the sidekick's skill proficiencies. The sidekick's proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check it makes that uses either of the chosen proficiencies.

At 6th level and again at 17th level, choose two more of the sidekick's skill proficiencies to gain this benefit.

Helpful

The sidekick is adept at giving well-timed assistance; the sidekick can take the Help action as a bonus action.

Cunning Action

Starting at 2nd level, the sidekick's agility or quick thinking allows it to act speedily. On its turn in combat, it can take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action as a bonus action.

Jack of Many Trades

Beginning at 3rd level, the sidekick can add half its proficiency bonus to any ability check it makes that uses a skill but doesn't already include its proficiency bonus.

Ability Score Improvement

At 4th level and again at 8th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, and 19th level, the sidekick increases one ability score of your choice by 2, or the sidekick increases two ability scores of your choice by 1. The sidekick can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Extra Attack

Starting at 5th level, the sidekick can attack twice, instead of once, whenever it takes the Attack action on its turn.

Evasion

Beginning at 7th level, because of extraordinary good luck, the sidekick is skilled at avoiding certain dangers. When the sidekick is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it failed. The sidekick doesn't benefit from this feature while incapacitated.

Inspiring Help

Starting at 9th level, the sidekick's assistance becomes especially inspiring. When the sidekick uses its Helpful bonus action, the creature who receives the help also gains a 1d6 bonus to the d20 roll. If that roll is an attack roll, the creature can forgo adding the bonus to it, and then if the attack hits, the creature can add the bonus to the attack's damage roll against one target.

At 18th level, the bonus increases to 2d6.

Reliable Talent

By 11th level, the sidekick has refined its skills to an exceptional degree. Whenever the sidekick makes an ability check that includes its whole proficiency bonus, it can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

Sharp Mind

At 15th level, the sidekick gains proficiency in Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throws (your choice).

Stroke of Luck

At 20th level, the sidekick has an uncanny knack for turning failure into success. If the sidekick's attack misses a target within range, it can turn the miss into a hit. Alternatively, if it fails an ability check, it can treat the d20 roll as a 20.

Once it uses this feature, the sidekick can't use it again until it finishes a short or long rest.

Spellcaster

A sidekick who becomes a spellcaster walks the paths of magic. The sidekick might be a hedge wizard, a priest, a soothsayer, a spell-wielding performer, or a person with magic in their veins.

To gain the spellcaster class, a creature must have at least one language in its stat block that it can speak.

A sidekick gains the following class features as it gains levels in this class, as summarized on the Spellcaster table.

Bonus Proficiencies

When the sidekick joins this class, the sidekick gains proficiency in one saving throw of your choice: Wisdom, Intelligence, or Charisma.

In addition, the sidekick gains proficiency in three skills of your choice from the following list: Arcana, History, Insight, Investigation, Medicine, Performance, Persuasion, and Religion. If the sidekick is a humanoid, it also gains proficiency with simple weapons and light armor.

Spellcasting

At 1st level, the sidekick gains the ability to cast spells. (If the creature already has the Spellcasting trait, this feature replaces that trait.) Choose a class: bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard. This choice determines the spell list, spellcasting ability, and spellcasting focus used by the sidekick, as shown on the Spellcasting table.

Spellcasting

Spell List	Ability	Focus
Bard	Charisma	Musical instrument
Cleric	Wisdom	Holy symbol
Druid	Wisdom	Druidic focus
Sorcerer	Charisma	Arcane focus
Warlock	Charisma	Arcane focus
Wizard	Intelligence	Arcane focus

Cantrips

At 1st level, the sidekick knows three cantrips of your choice from its spell list. The sidekick learns additional cantrips of your choice at higher levels, as shown in the Cantrips Known column of the Spellcaster table.

Spell Slots

The Spellcaster table shows how many spell slots the sidekick has to cast its spellcaster spells of 1st level and higher. To cast one of these spells, the sidekick must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. The sidekick regains all

expended spell slots when it finishes a long rest.

For example, if the sidekick knows the 1st-level spell *cure wounds* and has a 1st-level and a 2nd-level spell slot available, it can cast the spell using either slot.

Spells Known

The sidekick knows three 1st-level spells of your choice from its spell list.

The Spells Known column of the Spellcaster table shows when the sidekick learns more spells of your choice. Each of these spells must be of a level for which the sidekick has spell slots, as shown on the table. For instance, when the sidekick reaches 3rd level in this class, it can learn one new spell of 1st or 2nd level.

Additionally, when the sidekick gains a level in this class, you can choose one of the spells it knows from this class and replace it with another spell from its spell list, which also must be of a level for which it has spell slots.

The Spellcaster

Level	Proficiency		Cantrips Known	Spells Known	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
	Bonus	Features											
1st	+2	Bonus Proficiencies, Spellcasting	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	Magical Recovery	3	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	—	3	4	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	4	5	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	—	4	6	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	+3	Potent Cantrips	4	7	4	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	+3	—	4	8	4	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	4	9	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	+4	—	4	10	4	3	3	3	1	—	—	—	—
10th	+4	Empowered Spells	5	11	4	3	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	+4	—	5	12	4	3	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	5	12	4	3	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
13th	+5	—	5	13	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	—	—
14th	+5	Focused Casting	5	13	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	—	—
15th	+5	—	5	14	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	—
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	5	14	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	—
17th	+6	—	5	15	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
18th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	5	15	4	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
19th	+6	—	5	16	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1
20th	+6	Signature Spells	5	16	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1

Spellcasting Ability

The sidekick's spellcasting ability for these spells depends on the choice you made on the Spellcasting table.

The sidekick uses its spellcasting ability whenever a spell refers to that ability. In addition, it uses its spellcasting ability modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a spell it casts and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC = 8 + sidekick's proficiency bonus + spellcasting ability modifier

Spell attack modifier = sidekick's proficiency bonus + spellcasting ability modifier

Spellcasting Focus

The sidekick can use a focus for its spells depending on the choice you made on the Spellcasting table.

Magical Recovery

Beginning at 2nd level, when the sidekick finishes a short rest, it can recover expended spell slots. The spell slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than half its level in this class (rounded up), and none of the spell slots can be 6th level or higher.

Once the sidekick uses this feature, it can't use the feature again until it finishes a long rest.

Ability Score Improvement

At 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, the sidekick increases one ability score of your choice by 2, or the sidekick increases two ability scores of your choice by 1. The sidekick can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Potent Cantrips

Starting at 6th level, the sidekick can add its spellcasting ability modifier to the damage it deals with any cantrip.

Empowered Spells

At 10th level, choose one school of magic. Whenever the sidekick casts a spell of that school by expending a spell slot, the sidekick can add its spellcasting ability modifier to the spell's damage roll or healing roll, if any.

Focused Casting

Starting at 14th level, the sidekick has advantage on any Constitution saving throw it makes to maintain its concentration on a spell.

Signature Spells

At 20th level, choose two spells that the sidekick knows from this class. Eligible spells are of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level. The sidekick can cast each of the chosen spells once at 3rd level without expending a spell slot. After the sidekick casts a spell in this way, the sidekick regains the ability to cast that spell with this feature when it finishes a short or long rest.