

Steel Dragons' Guide to

Rangers

*Subclasses and additional character options.
"Old School" sensibilities for "New school" systems.*



*A supplement for Players & Dungeon Masters of
the 5th edition of the world's first role-playing game.*

The Ranger

A half-elf scouts silently along the forest path, long bow in hand. He makes sure to keep to the dappled shadows and adjusts his position with the wind. As he nears the lair of the rampaging owlbear he's been tracking for days, he climbs a tree and nocks an arrow to take down the mad beast before it can kill any more villagers.

A human charges through the swamp and stops for a moment as a small sprig of bright yellow catches her eye. She plucks the "muckgold" and hastily mashes it into a paste as she returns to camp. After applying the remedy to the fighter, poisoned by a giant viper, falls into a restful sleep. She knows he will survive.

A gnome wipes his axe in the grass, removing the foul-smelling kobold blood from the blade. He hardly flinches when a panther returns to his side and nudges him with a growling purr. The gnome surveys the dozen dead kobolds strewn about the clearing and rubs the panther's head, between her ears. "Well done, Splotch," he says.

An elf crouches behind a rocky outcropping and looks to the old fortress on the neighboring hilltop. The evil mage that has been creating undead horrors to terrorize the countryside rests there. She knows the mage will be unable to find her with his magic and reaches into the natural ether to conjure a mist to mask her approach from mundane eyes.



The Ranger is a warrior class that lives "on the edge", quite literally. Roving the wild borderlands between civilized realms or along the outskirts of settlements of any size, the ranger seeks out persistent, recurring and imposing threats to their lands and the people they care about. Incredibly self-reliant, they possess an array of skills that help them live and fight, surviving across great distances and spans of time away from comfort and convenience. With their knowledge and skills, combat prowess, instincts and bond with the natural world, a ranger is cause for concern to any who would cross the ranger's path, from sniveling goblins to the mightiest monstrosities.

Stealthy Scouts: The ranger...well, ranges. Traveling the stretches of their terrain observing, assessing, and dealing with threats they find are the ranger's bread and butter. Kings and nobles often engage rangers as scouts, spies or monster hunters, acting as eyes and ears at the outer edges of their domain. Common town or city-folk often lend rangers a dubious eye for their questionable nature of living "out there", where respectable folk would refuse to go. In more rural surroundings, rangers often enjoy or earn reputations as great heroes and defenders.

Ambush Predators: The ranger's primary modes of combat are the ambush and skirmish. They are not often heavily armored and prefer the freedom of movement and speed afforded by lighter armors. To strike from cover and retreat to same is a standard or preferred tactic for nearly all rangers, especially effective from range. That is not to say a ranger is not capable of close-quarters, hand-to-hand combat. Far from it. When melee is desired or unavoidable, the ranger is a force of nature swathed in steel, with little hold barred. Their ferocity against their enemies can be as effective as any fighter or raging barbarian.

Class Features

HD: d10 per level.

HP at 1st level: d10. So start with 10 + Con mod.

HP at Higher Levels: d10 + Con. mod. at every level.

Proficiencies

Armor: Light and Medium armors. Shields.

Weapons: Any.

Tools: Herbalism Kit

Saving Throws: Wisdom & Dexterity

Skills: Choose any 3 of the following: *Animal Handling, Arcana, Athletics, History, Intimidate, Insight, Investigation, Medicine.*

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Equipment

The Ranger begins with the following in addition to the equipment granted by your background.

- a) light crossbow or b) short bow with 20 bolts or arrows, respectively.
- Explorer's Pack and Herbalism Kit.
- a set of leather armor and a single-handed melee weapon.
- a simple weapon.

1st: Wilderness Expertise

You are an expert of the wild lands of your origin or training, be they forests, deserts, coastal areas, subterranean or even urban environments. You choose 1 terrain type in which your skills have been honed.

- The ranger gains proficiency with *Survival [Wis.]*, *Nature Lore [Int.]* and *Stealth [Dex.]*. You add your proficiency bonus to these rolls wherever you are. If used within a chosen terrain, you have advantage with these three skills (as noted above).
- You double your proficiency bonus for rolls with 2 skills of your choice while within a preferred terrain. For each additional terrain you choose 1 additional skill with which you double proficiency bonus.
- Choose a bonus language, regardless of Intelligence, of a creature found in your wilderness type.

The ranger selects additional types of terrain in which they have spent a significant amount of time and gained experience, as approved by the DM, at 6th, 12th, and 17th level.

Keen Senses

The ranger has proficiency with the *Perception [Wis.]* and rolls with advantage for rolls based on sight or hearing, anywhere. Checks based on scent or ambient temperatures are added in the ranger's chosen terrain(s).

2nd: Ranger's Recourse [Courses of Action]

You are a specialized warrior, trained and tried in techniques to combat the threats that roam and harry the edges of your preferred terrain. You have a variety of special maneuvers ["courses of action"] you can apply to various situations.

Ranger level + Dex. or Wis. modifier [whichever is higher] times between long rests, the ranger can use one of the following bonus maneuvers:

- **Hunter's Mark:** Use your bonus action to choose a "mark", a specific enemy you can see, *before* you attack. On a successful weapon attack against that enemy you deal an extra 1d6 damage. This bonus increases to 2d6 at 9th level and 2d8 at 13th.
- **Superior Tracker:** Add 1d6 to any ability/skill roll while searching for or following a trail or tracking quarry.
- **Horde Breaker:** When you make a successful melee or ranged weapon attack, you may roll to attack a second target within 10' of the first as a bonus action.
- **Hit n' Run:** You can take the Hide, Dodge or Disengage

actions as a bonus action after your attack.

- **Roll with It:** As a reaction, when hit by an attacker you can see dealing piercing, slashing or bludgeoning damage, you roll 1d6 + your Dex. modifier and reduce the damage of one attack by the total.

You regain all uses of these maneuvers after a long rest.

3rd: Ranging Trail

Choose your Ranger's specialty: *Beastmaster*, *Guardian*,

Suggested Wilderness Expertise

Terrain Categories:

The following are a typical array for terrain types that can be broken down in most fantasy world settings:

- **Forests/Woodlands [optional default]**
- **Plains/Grasslands**
- **Desert**
- **Arctic/Tundra**
- **Mountains/Rocky Hills**
- **Swamps/Marshes/Wetlands**
- **Subterranean/Caves/Underdark**
- **Urban/City Environment**
- **Coastal Fresh Water/Lakes/Rivers**
- **Coastal Salt Water/Marine**



Slayer or Warden.

4th: Ability Boost: as normal. Increases at 8th, 12th, 16th, 19th.

5th: Ranging Stride

Your base movement rate is increased by 5'. Also, your speed is not slowed while moving through non-magical difficult terrain. When moving through (again, non-magical) thorns, briars, and the like, you take no damage. Magically altered/enchanted terrain, such as the *Entangle* or *Wall of Thorns* spells, effect the ranger normally.

8th: Herbalist Healer

Beginning at 8th level, you use your knowledge of flora and fauna to heal yourself and others. On a short or long rest, you can spend HD to produce herbal remedies that can be used to heal others. With these healing poultices, a single HD worth of healing can be split among different creatures, but the total HP healed can not exceed the ranger's HD [10hp per HD spent]. Alternately, an HD can be used to cure one person of one disease.

The healing remedies can also be used to slow the effects of poison in one ceature. Instead of healing HP, these poultices

slow the effects of one poison for a total of 1 hour per ranger level. The afflicted character suffers no further damage or detrimental effect for that time, though damage and conditions already effecting the character are not reversed. This poison slowing will only work once on a given poisoning.

To use against poison, the ranger spends an HD to add their Wisdom modifier to the d20 roll to beat the poison's DC. The DC of the roll is based on the poison and dependent on the DM to determine. If the roll exceeds the DC by 6 or more, the poison condition is *removed*. The ranger knows if they succeed in removing the poison or simply slows it.

This feature requires one use of an Herbalist Kit per HD of healing/one disease/one poisoning **or** a successful *Nature* or similar check (*Wilderness Expertise* applies) to successfully find the needed plants prior to expending the HD.

10th: Scrying Adept

Beginning at 10th level, you gain training and intiation into the secrets and forgotten ways of discovering secrets and forgotten ways, specifically as pertains to remote-viewing and detection magics. The ranger has proficiency with any magic item that deals with clairvoyance or divination magic, including spell scrolls, crystal balls, wands of detection, etc... If the item requires attunement, the ranger can attune/

TABLE X.X: RANGER FEATURE PROGRESSION

Ranger lvl.	Prof. Bonus	Features
1	+2	Wilderness Expertise, Keen Senses
2	+2	Ranger's Recourse
3	+2	Ranging Trail
4	+2	Ability Boost
5	+3	Ranging Stride
6	+3	add terrain type for Wilderness Expertise
7	+3	Archetype Feature
8	+3	Ability Boost, Herbalist Healer
9	+4	improved Hunter's Mark damage (2d6)
10	+4	Scrying Adept
11	+4	Archetype Feature
12	+4	Ability Boost, add terrain type for Wilderness Expertise
13	+5	improved Hunter's Mark damage (2d8)
14	+5	Vanish
15	+5	Archetype Feature
16	+5	Ability Boost
17	+6	add terrain type for Wilderness Expertise
18	+6	Feral Senses
19	+6	Ability Boost
20	+6	Foe Slayer



access the item in a single turn.

Also, the ranger's natural and supernatural know-how conceal them from divination spells of fourth level or lower. This ability might be explained as some ritual, weaving a talisman out of special twigs or grass, actually tapping the magical essence of nature, simple mundane concealment/"slipping out of sight" of the spell, sheer force of will, or any other explanation, as the player and DM agree.

14th: Vanish

You can use the Hide action as a bonus action on your turn. Also, you can't be tracked by nonmagical means, unless you choose to leave a trail.

18th: Feral Senses

At 18th level you gain preternatural senses to fight things you can't see. You do not suffer disadvantage for attacking a creature you can't see. You are also aware of the location of any invisible creature within 30' of you, provided that the creature isn't hidden from you and you aren't blinded or deafened.

20th: Foe Slayer

You add your Wis. mod. to all attack or damage rolls.



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Ranging Trails

The Beastmaster

The Beastmaster archetype embodies a friendship between the civilized races and beasts of the world. United in focus, beast and ranger work as one to fight the monstrous foes that threaten civilization and wilderness alike. Emulating the Beastmaster archetype means committing yourself to this ideal, working in partnership with animals, as its companion and friend.

3rd: Animal Companion

At 3rd level you gain a beast companion that accompanies you on your adventures helping and fighting with you. Choose a Tiny, Small or Medium sized beast that has a CR of 1/4 or lower. The beast will obey your commands, as best it can within its natural ability. It takes its turn on your initiative, though it doesn't take an action unless you command it to, see below. The animal's bond with and special training by you provides them with the following benefits:

- **Expert Trainer:** You add your proficiency bonus to the animal's AC, attack rolls and damage rolls, as well as to any saving throws or skills in which it is proficient.
- **Tough Creature:** Its HP maximum equals normal maximum or 4 times your ranger level, whichever is higher.
- **Shared Respite:** When you spend HD on a short or long rest to regain HP, you may transfer/share up to half [50%] per your HD to heal your animal companion.
- **Simple Command:** On your turn, at no action cost to you, verbally direct the beast to move (using its normal movement rate), Dash, Hide, or take the Help action.
- **Learned Command:** Using one of your Attack actions, you direct companions to take the Attack, Disengage, or Dodge actions.

Once directed with a Simple or Learned Command, the animal will continue to follow the directive until a) you use your action to change their command to something else, b) you may make a *bonus* action to have the animal stop/end whatever type of action they were given, or c) all available foes have been defeated/fled, at which point the animal will simply make its way back to the ranger's general location.

Wild Empathy: The Beastmaster has an innate bonding with animals, both wild and domestic. As an action, the ranger makes a Cha. or Wis. roll (whichever is higher), the ranger can understand and/or alter the attitudes of animals (including giant types) that are not under some other form of charm or control. The ranger can use this ability to effect a total CR of animals up to half [rounded down] their ranger level. Any hostile or aggressive behavior by the ranger or any of their companions will negate this effect.

Neutral or domestic creatures will be helpful and/or docile with the ranger, assisting them within the limits of their natural ability (a horse will go as fast as far as it can, a hound will follow a scent, etc...). Wild animals of hostile intent are soothed by the ranger's careful non-threatening sounds and actions, adopting a neutral attitude toward the ranger and those accompanying them.

7th: Bestial Perception: You may use your connection to your bonded animal(s) to perceive through their senses. While doing so, you are unaware of your own surroundings, perceiving only what one of your animal companions see, hear, smell and/or feel. Entering the trance to do so takes the ranger's action and you can not move, speak or otherwise act while remote-viewing in this manner.

The ranger may exit the trance, voluntarily, at any time as a bonus action. If the ranger sustains damage while in the trance, the connection is broken and the ranger must succeed a Wis save [DC10 + amount of damage suffered] or suffer the *stunned* condition until the end of their next turn. If the animal companion sustains damage during the connection, the ranger loses the same amount of HPs from psychic damage backlash.

11th: Champion of Beasts: The Beastmaster's link to their companion and the animal world, itself, to offer the following benefits:

- You can bond with multiple animal companions equaling up to half your ranger level in number.
- You may take on companion animals that are up to Large size and/or CR 1.
- Using a Learned Command to direct one, some, or all animal companions requires a *bonus* instead of full action. All animals engaged as a bonus action must take the same action.
- Animal companions that have been bonded with the ranger for extended periods of time increase in toughness and power. For every 5 levels the animal has been a companion of the ranger, the animal adds 1/4 CR and gains 1 HD of its own to add to its HP and use for healing itself during rests.

15th: Bestial Fury: When you and/or your animal companion takes the Attack action, both you and your companion can now attack twice instead of once on its turn.

The Guardian

The Guardian's primary concern is the safety and protection of their lands, their people, and their allies. But equally, their reverence for, collection, and keeping of the secret, forgotten and/or lost knowledge of some civilization. This can be that of the ranger's own people, a kingdom brought low through the fickle hands of fate, some other forgotten realm or nearly lost people by whom the ranger has been befriended (or came upon by chance). Guardian rangers are

Optional Variant Beastmaster:

In lieu of a full subclass for one type of ranger only, the Beastmaster archetype can be implemented for any ranger (or any other character, if the DM wishes) as a Feat.

The Beastmaster Feat

Choose a beast with CR 1 or less that is Tiny, Small, Medium or Large. This creature is your animal companion and will travel with and protect you, as well as it can, while it is well-treated and has a choice.

- You have proficiency and advantage on all *Animal Handling* checks and *Nature Lore* rolls pertaining to animals and their behavior.
- Your animal companion adds your proficiency bonus to its AC, attack and damage rolls, save rolls, and hit point maximum.
- Choose 3 of the following action types: *Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, Help, Hide*. If you are taking one of the chosen actions, the animal companion can take the same action at no action cost to you.
- You can command your animal companion to take any action, without taking it yourself, as a bonus action.

the most apt to work with a group or form organizations, albeit often secretive. They gladly join other individuals in pursuit of a shared cause or defeating a common foe.

3rd: Home Field Advantage

The Guardian adds your proficiency bonus to your AC when you are in a terrain type with which you have *Wilderness Expertise*.

Enhanced Armor Proficiency: You gain proficiencies in Ring and Chain mail armor. Furthermore, the guardian does not suffer disadvantage to Stealth rolls for wearing any type of armor.

7th: Practiced Passage: When in a preferred terrain type, you and up to 8 companions can move without leaving a trail, unless you wish to. In any terrain, while moving with your assistance and expertise, the group is not slowed by more than 10' in non-magical difficult terrain.

11th: Forgotten Lore: You have been introduced to the basic mysteries and practices of magic-use and can direct the energies of nature to work limited magic effects. Your casting ability is Wisdom. Your caster level, if applicable, is one half [rounded down] of your ranger class.

- *Cantrips:* You may choose 3 cantrips [total, not each] from the Druid and/or Wizard spell lists. Once chosen, they can not be changed.
- *Decipher Magical Writings:* You may cast any spell of

third level or less that you find on a scroll or other written form.

- **Ritual Casting:** If you find a spell that has the ritual tag, you may cast it as a ritual.

15th: Ranger-Knight: The Guardian lends their expertise to allies, instructing and/or inspiring them to greater feats. Allies within a 20' radius who can see the ranger add the *Hunter's Mark* bonus to their *attack and damage* rolls against designated foe(s). Also, the Ranger-knight can now apply their Wisdom modifier to all attack rolls.

The Slayer

The Slayer's is the path of the warrior, fighting and defeating your foes. For some slayers, this is an increased ferocity against their preferred or ancestral foes, to save their lands and loved ones. Others may prefer to range far and wide, hunting creatures they have focused their training on, seeking them out in any realm they threaten.

3rd: Favored Quarry

You have significant experience studying and fighting a certain type of enemy.

Choose a type of creature on which your combat prowess is focused: *Aberrations, Beasts, Celestials, Constructs, Dragons, Elementals, Fae, Fiends, Giants, Monstrosities, Oozes, Plants, or Undead.*

Alternately, you may choose **two** *Humanoid* types to consider your prey: Goblins & Bugbears, Orcs & Gnolls, etc...

Once chosen, creature categories or types, they can not change.

You receive the following benefits against creatures who are your *Favored Quarry*:

- The ranger is +2 to all hit rolls against these foes.
- The ranger deals an additional weapon die of damage on a successful hit from a melee or ranged weapon.
- The ranger has advantage on Intelligence [*Lore: Nature, History, Arcana, etc...*] rolls to know information about their quarry.
- The ranger learns a bonus language used by the creature. Some categories of creature might have a single language (as is often the case with dragons and giants in various settings) that all of their kind use. But if multiple languages exist within a category, such as among elementals, the ranger must choose one [Air, Earth, Fire or Water?]. They gain an additional language with each new quarry at 7th, 12th & 17th levels.

If the creature has no language, per se, the ranger has an intuitive sense of the intentions or general wishes of the creature and on a successful Wisdom check is able to convey similar information through gesture, sounds, movement or other behavior.

You add a new creature [**not** a whole category] to this list of quarry at 7th, 12th, and 17th level.

These additional preferred enemies should be creatures you have observed (covertly or otherwise) for a minimum of 1 week, engaged in combat more than once, and again,



subject to DM approval, i.e. you can not choose some creature your character has never seen or encountered before.

Example: A Slayer ranger chooses the category "Giants" at 3rd level. Their slayer features apply to any creature listed in the Monster Manual as a "giant." By 7th level adventures have taken the party to an arctic tundra where they are hunting some ice trolls and frost giants. They have had a few run-ins with a pack of young white dragons. The Slayer takes white dragons as her new *Favored Quarry*, a single kind of creature. The slayer can not take the whole dragon category. Their slayer skills now apply to any type of the giant category and white dragons.

Fighting Style

Choose your combat specialty:

- **Archery:** You are +2 to hit with ranged weapons.
- **Dueling:** You are +2 to damage when wielding one single-handed melee weapon and no other weapon.
- **Two-Weapon Fighting:** You fight with two light, single-handed weapons and add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

7th: Retributive Strike: When you take damage from one of your *Favored Quarry*, you may make one extra attack with a weapon already in your hand as a reaction.



11th: Extra Attack: Beginning at 11th level you attack twice, instead of once, when you take the Attack action on your turn.

15th: Sixth Sense: You are preternaturally aware of the presence of any *Favored Quarry* types/creatures that is within 1 mile of your location. You have a sense of a general direction (north, south, east, west), but not exact location or number.

The Warden

The Warden ranger is the champion of the wild, the defender of nature and its inhabitants, both civilized and wild. Consorting with fae, protecting the hidden sacred sites of druids or saving rural farmlands and villagers from the feral and fantastic, the warden blends skills of all rangers with a focus on magic use to enhance their abilities.

3rd: Spell Casting

Cantrips: You know 3 cantrips chosen from the Druid and Wizard spell lists. You gain new cantrips known as shown on the Warden Spell Progression chart, below.

TABLE X.X: WARDEN SPELL PROGRESSION

Ranger	Cantrips	Spells	Slots:			
lvl.	Known	Known	1	2	3	4
3	3	2	2			
4	3	2	3			
5	3	3	3			
6	3	3	3			
7	3	4	4	2		
8	3	4	4	2		
9	3	5	4	2		
10	4	5	4	3		
11	4	6	4	3		
12	4	6	4	3		
13	4	7	4	3	2	
14	4	7	4	3	2	
15	4	8	4	3	2	
16	4	8	4	3	3	
17	4	9	4	3	3	
18	4	9	4	3	3	
19	4	10	4	3	3	1
20	4	10	4	3	3	1

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Spell Slots: You gain spell slots as shown on the Warden Spell Progression chart. These slots are used to cast your 1st level or higher known spells. You regain all slots at the end of a long rest.

Spells Known 1st level and higher: You know 2 1st level spells, one from the Druid spell list and one from the Wizard spell list. Following these initial spells, the ranger may choose from either list, as desired. Your Wizard spells must be kept in a spellbook for study and preparation, as normal. If Druid spells are used, you may change your selection at the end of a long rest. Spells selected must be of spell level you can cast.

Spellcasting Ability: Wisdom is your spellcasting ability. You use your Wisdom when a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. Your Save DC is 8 + proficiency bonus + Wisdom modifier. Attack DC = proficiency bonus + Wisdom modifier.

Primeval Awareness: You use your full action and one spell slot to focus your awareness on the region around you. For one minute per level of the slot you expend, you can

sense whether any of the following creatures are within 1 mile per slot level expended of you: aberrations, celestials, dragons, elementals, fae, fiends, or undead. This feature provides a general direction (north, south, east, west) but does not reveal the creature's location or number.

7th: Casting Strike: When you use your action to cast a cantrip or spell, you can cast a cantrip or make a weapon attack with a melee weapon in hand as a bonus action.

11th: Warded Step: You can spend a spell slot to teleport yourself to a location you have previously been or can see. You can teleport a distance up to 10' per level of the spell slot expended.

15th: Unimpeded Stride: You can not be disrupted, slowed, or require extra movement by difficult terrain whether it is enchanted or not.

DM's Option: The Ranger Lord

The Ranger Lord is a king of the wild. Their nobility and heroism are known far and wide. Their presence is a reassuring and inspiring one for the creatures of the lands in which the ranger has been known to rove. Enlightened beasts, fey, and those seeking training or offering their services to the ranger seek them out and devote themselves to the ranger's life and causes.

Additional Class Feature: Followers

Beginning at 10th level and for each level after, the DM has the option to roll (or let the player roll or choose, if they prefer) on the following list. The creature rolled becomes a loyal follower of the ranger. They will travel with, fight for, seek to protect and otherwise be a loyal follower (while well-treated) of the ranger to the best of their abilities.

The ranger gains the following benefits:

- You have advantage on all Persuasion checks and Lore rolls dealing with creatures that follow you.
- You gain the bonus language of your first follower and an additional language for every 3 followers gained thereafter. The languages chosen must belong to one of your followers.
- Due to their mystical link to the ranger, animal followers (or other creatures without a language of their own) will understand and follow the ranger's requests, to the best of their natural abilities.
- If the ranger qualifies for more than one possible creature, the player may choose. These choices are marked by an asterisk (*).

Roll d12

- 01:** Fighter (any playable race), level d4.
- 02:** Tiny or Small Beast of CR 1/4 or less appropriate to the terrain of the ranger's adventures.
- 03:** 1st level Ranger (any playable race) seeking to enter the ranger's service and tutelage.
- 04:** Satyr (for ranger of any alignment) **or** Sprite (for any *Good* alignment)*
- 05:** Tiny, Small or Medium Beast of CR 1/2 or less appropriate to the terrains of the ranger's adventures.
- 06:** Griffon (for ranger of any alignment) **or** Centaur (for any *Good* alignment)*
- 07:** Druid **or** Cleric of a nature-based deity or a deity the ranger lord is known to revere (any playable race), level d6.
- 08:** Weretiger (for ranger of any alignment) **or** Werebear (for any *Good* alignment)*
- 09:** Any size up to Large Beast of CR 1 or less appropriate to the terrains of the ranger's adventures.
- 10:** Elf Eldritch Knight, level 2d4
- 11:** Stone Giant (for ranger of any alignment) **or** Treant (for any *Good* alignment)*
- 12:** Hippogriff (for ranger of any alignment) **or** Pegasus (for ranger of any *Good* alignment) **or** Unicorn (for *Lawful Good* rangers only)*