

Bards, Skalds, and Sami

Instead of using the Bard class in the Player's Handbook, I propose the following single-classed option.

Bards exist in two main varieties: the default "bard" is based on Celtic mythology; the "skald" is based on Norse and Finnish mythology. The only difference between them is their spell lists.

Single-classed bards are an option available to elves, half-elves, and humans. Humans and dwarves can be skalds.

Bards and skalds are both expected to travel widely and participate in battles in order to witness heroic deeds and immortalize them in song or saga. However, their main role in society is to carry and transmit the oral knowledge of their people. They often serve as historians, jurists, and trusted witnesses as well as entertainers.

Requirements: Str 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14

Experience: as per the Bard table in the PH appendix.

Hit dice: d8 up to 10th level, +1 HP per level afterwards.

Attack matrix: As clerics, but they gain 3/2 attacks on reaching 10th level.

Saving throws: As a thief.

Proficiencies: Bards can learn any weapon and use two-weapon fighting if their dexterity permits. They must be proficient in at least one melee weapon commonly used by warriors of their culture. They can use light and medium armors up to AC5 (chain mail), and shields. They gain weapon proficiencies as a ranger, but with a penalty of -3 instead of -2. Bards cannot specialize in a weapon.

Skills: Bards and skalds have Read Languages, Lore (History) and all other bard-specific skills described in the PH (lore, charm, etc.). In addition, they can choose any 3 adventuring skills at 1st level. They can add a new adventuring skill at level 6, level 12, and level 18.

Spells: Bards and skalds gain spells as per the Bard table in the PH. Bards have access to druid spells but not to any other abilities of a druid such as shapechanging. They prepare and cast spells exactly as druids do, including their dependence on freshly harvested mistletoe or other sacred plants. Skalds learn a mixture of cleric and magic-user spells.

Neither type of bard needs to keep a spellbook; all their magic is learned orally from other bards and the spell formulas are permanently memorized. However, unlike clerics or druids they do not automatically have access to all spells on the list. They start with four spells known and learn two more every time they level up.

Skald spells

The skald spell list is intended to combine two magical traditions: the power attributed to music, language and names in Finnish mythology, and northern European runic magic.

A few legendary bards have achieved even more powerful magic with their songs and runes, but this is not considered normal spellcasting. It would be handled with rules similar to magic item creation, and some effects may require finding a legendary musical instrument.

1 st level spells	2 nd level spells	3 rd level spells	4 th level spells	5 th level spells
1. <i>Armor</i>	1. <i>Augury</i>	1. <i>Continual Light</i>	1. <i>Charm Monster</i>	1. <i>Animate Object</i>
2. <i>Bless*</i>	2. <i>Chant</i>	2. Cure Blindness	2. <i>Confusion</i>	2. Break Enchantment
3. <i>Charm Person</i>	3. <i>Cure Light Wounds</i>	3. Cure Disease	3. <i>Cure Serious Wounds</i>	3. Geas
4. Command	4. <i>Enfeeblement</i>	4. <i>Detect Illusion</i>	4. <i>Dispel Illusion</i>	4. <i>Legend Lore</i>
5. <i>Detect Poison</i>	5. <i>Enthrall</i>	5. <i>Dispel Magic</i>	5. <i>Enchanted Weapon</i>	5. <i>Speak with Monsters</i>
6. <i>Endure Cold*</i>	6. <i>Knock</i>	6. <i>Glyph of Warding</i>	6. <i>Fire Charm</i>	6. <i>Spell Immunity</i>
7. <i>Erase</i>	7. <i>Locate Object*</i>	7. <i>Haste</i>	7. <i>Minor Globe of Invulnerability</i>	7. <i>Stone Tell</i>
8. <i>Friends</i>	8. <i>Phantasmal Force</i>	8. <i>Prot. from Evil 10' Radius</i>	8. <i>Neutralize Poison</i>	8. Truename
9. <i>Hold Portal</i>	9. <i>Resist Fire*</i>	9. <i>Prot. from normal missiles</i>	9. <i>Shout</i>	
10. <i>Jump</i>	10. <i>Scare</i>	10. Remove Curse	10. <i>Tongues</i>	
11. <i>Magic Stone</i>	11. <i>Slow Poison</i>	11. <i>Speak with Dead</i>		
12. <i>Prot. from Evil</i>	12. <i>Snake Charm</i>	12. <i>Suggestion</i>		
13. <i>Remove Fear*</i>	13. <i>Strength</i>			
14. <i>Sanctuary</i>	14. <i>Wizard Lock</i>			
15. <i>Shocking Grasp</i>				
16. <i>Taunt</i>				

If a spell is available to both magic-users and clerics, use the cleric description. All spells have verbal (singing) components, and many have a material component as well.

- Spells in *italics* always include a rune-carved amulet or focus as a material component, which must be carried by the person or creature affected by the magic. The runes are not magical until the spell is cast, and an amulet may be planted on the target by stealth or disguised. A few of these spells are cast on weapons.
- Spells marked with an asterisk can be cast in the reverse version.
- Spells in bold will only work if the skald knows the target's name, but it need not be their magical "true name". Any name that the person uses frequently will do, as long as it is not deliberately intended as an alias.
- "Break Enchantment" is not actually a spell in AD&D, but you get the idea. It can remove a geas, undo a transformation, and so on.