

Dogs As Dungeon Sidekicks

Man's most loyal friend and brave companion since time immemorial, the dog deserves a place in role playing far above what it is generally given. Famous dogs abound in legend and fantasy literature. The loyalty of the dog is always emphasized in such works, from Gelert, loyal to death, to Rufferto, the canine friend of Groo the Wanderer.

In some cases, dogs even possess supernatural or super-human (super-canine?) powers, such as the Dog-Saint Guinefort (another version of the Gelert legend), or, per *The Silmarillion*, Huan, kills who kills Draugluin, the father of werewolves, would have killed Sauron (and thus saved Middle Earth a lot of later trouble) had he not been ordered off by Luthien, and then slew and was slain by Carcharoth, the greatest werewolf who ever lived. Carcharoth ran wild through Beleriand, tormented and powered by a Silmaril he had swallowed, ripping aside the protective spells of the demigoddess Melian, and destroying all before him, until he was slain by an adventuring party including Beren and Huan the hound of the Valar.



What follows is an attempt to “beef up” the D&D dog into the companion to heroes that he deserves to be. Given below are the stats for the dog from the *Advanced Labyrinth Lord* rules:

Dog

	War	Wild
No. Enc.:	0 (0)	4d4 (4d4)
Alignment:	Neutral	Neutral
Movement:	120 (40)	150 (50)

Armor Class:	6	7
Hit Dice:	2 + 2	1 + 1
Attacks:	1	1
Damage:	2d4	1d4
Save:	F2	F1
Morale:	11	7
Hoard Class:	None	None
XP:	35	15

War: These dogs are bred and trained for combat. They will follow the commands of their owner, and likely will fight to the death. War dogs are sometimes equipped with leather armor.

Wild: Wild dogs are feral dogs that have taken up a pack lifestyle and tend to live on the outskirts of human society, either in the country or in the slums of towns.



Dogs By Level	Experience	D8 Hit Dice	Bite Damage Bonus
1st	0-500	As Wild Dog	
2nd	501-1,000	As War Dog	
3rd	1,001-2,000	3+3	
4th	2,001-4,000	4+4	+1

5th	4,001-8,000	5+5	
6th	8,001-16,000	6+6	+1
7th	16,001-32,000	7+7	
8th	32,001-64,000	8+8	+1
9th	64,001-125,000	9+9	
10th	125,001-250,000	+1	+1
11th	250,001-500,000	+2	
Per level thereafter	+250,000/level	+1	+1/even level

Dog Class Abilities

Increased Senses: Dogs have excellent senses of hearing and smell, as well as an innate ability to detect the presence of the supernatural. Therefore, dogs are extremely difficult to surprise, even when sleeping, and even by magical creatures. If the opposing side rolls to surprise a party containing a dog, each dog gets a saving throw vs. Death Magic to detect the enemy and avoid surprise. However, if successful, only the dog is not surprised. It can act normally (probably attacking) during the surprise round. Its master cannot act, but will not get an armor class penalty, as the dog's growling will alert him that something is wrong.

Increased Senses also allow the dog to track as a ranger of equal level. If your rules don't include rangers, allow the dog to track on a successful saving throw vs. wands, as modified by the GM for the situation.

Limited Communication: Unless your campaign allows fully intelligent animals, dogs have a limited ability to follow their master's instructions. They can follow simple one word commands (attack, heel, stay, fetch) accompanied by a pointed finger as needed, but anything more complicated ("Timmy's down the well, Lassie! Get help!") require a saving throw vs. paralysis for the dog to understand. Of course, the GM can rule that any instruction is too complex, though a little bit of cinematic license should be allowed here.

Adventuring With Dogs

A dog purchased or found as a puppy will count as a Wild Dog, becoming the equivalent of a War Dog on attaining second level. For every level thereafter, the dog becomes somewhat more powerful, advancing according to the table above, and otherwise (attack table, saving throws, etc.) as a monster of equal hit dice.

Generally speaking, a dog will remain within about 5' of its master during combat unless he orders it otherwise, or the dog fails a morale check.

If the dog's master dies or falls unconscious, it will tend to guard the body, often only allowing even a friendly party member to interfere with his master on a successful reaction roll.

Dogs are quite loyal, and any dog will tend to develop an 11 morale where the safety of his master is concerned within about a week of good treatment. However, poor treatment, such as using the dog to test traps and potions, will lead to desertion fairly quickly.

Dogs and Treasure

Dogs have no interest in money, and magic items for dogs will be few and far between, and generally limited to magic armor, and such magic weapons as hollow iron claws made to fit over the dogs paws. GMs who allow their players to make or commission the making of magic items could, of course, allow such items to be made for the master's faithful friend and ally as well.

