

A dozen domestic dogs

Twelve ways to classify man's best friend

by Stephen Inniss

Domestic dogs are not well represented in official AD&D® game material. The war dog and the halfling's guard dog, both described in the *Monster* Manual, are the sole representatives of this widespread and highly variable animal. This is unfortunate, since dogs definitely have a place in the campaign, particularly a campaign involving lower-level player characters. Dogs can be useful allies or formidable opponents, depending respectively on the inventiveness of the players and the intelligence and imagination of the DM; with their keen senses, even the smallest dogs are the bane of thieves — PCs and NPCs alike — and a war dog is more than equal to the average hired swordsman or first-level fighter. Many other uses will doubtless suggest themselves to the thoughtful referee or player. Dogs may be employed as scouts, guards, or hunters, and are almost as useful and much less demanding than hirelings or henchmen. It follows, then, that these most ancient, ubiquitous, and multiform of domestic animals should be treated in more detail.

DOG, Domestic

FREQUENCY: Common

NO. APPEARING: *Varies with masters*

ARMOR CLASS: 7 (*better if armored*)

MOVE: See below

HIT DICE: See below

% IN LAIR: *Varies with masters*

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: See below

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Hold*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Semi-*

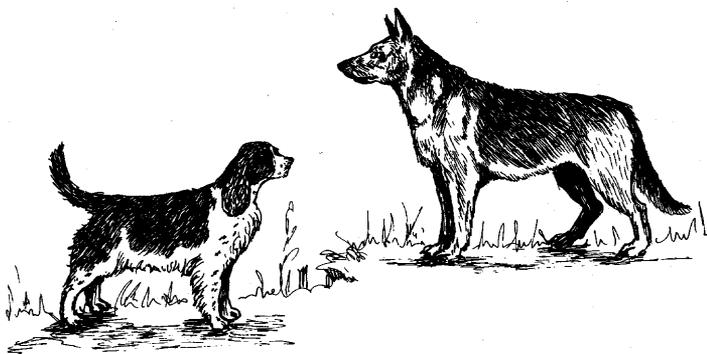
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

SIZE: S to M; also see below

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: *very small or small* (any), 1 / 5 + 1/hp
medium (normal or runner), 1 / 10 + 1/hp
medium (fighter), 1 / 20 + 2/hp
large (normal or runner), 1 / 20 + 2/hp
large (fighter), 11 / 35 + 3/hp

The many different breeds of domestic dogs can be divided into twelve different categories for AD&D game purposes: three classes



according to shape or build (fighter, normal, and runner) and four according to size (very small, small, medium, and large). For the purpose of this article, these size categories supersede the normal statistical designations of S, M, and L; however, note that a "large" dog, in this classification system, is still size M (in AD&D game terms) for considerations such as the amount of damage it suffers from an attack. Movement rates, hit points, attack damage, and sizes for the dogs in these categories are given below.

	Very small (11-20 lbs.)	Small (21-40 lbs.)	Medium (41-80 lbs.)	Large (80 + lbs.)
Fighter				
Move:	9"	12"	15"	12"
Hit Dice:	1-3 hp	1-4 hp	1+1	2+2
Damage:	1/1-2	1-3	2-5	2-8
Size:	S	S	S	M
Normal				
Move:	12"	15"	18"	15"
Hit Dice:	1-2 hp	1-3 hp	1	2
Damage:	0-1/1	1-2	1-4	2-5
Size:	S	S	S	M
Runner				
Move:	15"	18"	21"	18"
Hit Dice:	1-2 hp	1-3 hp	1	2
Damage:	0-1/1	1-2	1-4	2-5
Size:	S	S	S	M

The size classes are broad, to keep down the number of different classifications. Similarly, the build classes cover broad ranges.

Fighter dogs are those with massive bodies and outsize jaws and heads, enhanced resistance to pain, and relatively short legs. **Runner** dogs are long-legged and long-bodied, with narrow deep chests, large eyes, and long muzzles. **Normal** dogs are the majority, those of wolflike or houndlike build.

Not all the different breeds can be placed in this system, although the majority fit in one category or another. The few exceptions can be easily handled by the DM. A breed like the basset hound is a medium normal dog, for instance, but is 3" slower because of its short legs. Toy or lap dogs are not accounted for at all in the above system. These move at 9", have one hit point each, have no effective attack against creatures weighing more than 30 pounds (against smaller creatures they can bite for 0-1 points of damage), and weigh 10 pounds or less.

Like toy dogs, very small dogs are given two damage ranges. The larger figure is for damage against creatures weighing less than three times the weight of the dog (60 pounds or less), and the smaller one is for creatures larger than that. This reflects the fact that while these dogs can kill rats or weasels, or each other, they can't do much damage against larger creatures.

The different categories of dogs are further explained below.

Very small fighter: Dogs of this type are bred to attack vermin such as rats, or to drive weasels, foxes, or even badgers from their burrows. Some of the terrier breeds fit this category.

Small fighter: Dogs of this type are much like their smaller brethren. They may also be used in dog fights where there are weight categories.

Medium fighter: Dogs of this type may serve as guards, or fight other animals in such "sports" as dog fights, bull baiting, badger

baiting, or bear baiting. Examples would be the boxer, the bull terrier, or the Staffordshire terrier.

Large fighter: These are generally huge beasts of the mastiff type, bred to guard and attack, or for use in hunting large and dangerous animals such as boars or lions. Rottweilers and bull mastiffs are typical examples.

Very small normal: These may serve in any number of ways. Some, like Shetland sheepdogs, may be drovers' or herdsman's dogs, while others may be employed as burglar alarms, or are kept simply as pets. Still others are used to harass and delay large game for hunters, or are raised for the cooking pot, or to attack small animals.

Small normal: Dogs in this category are as various as their smaller cousins. They include the smaller hounds, herding dogs such as the border collie, the small spaniels, and some of the larger terriers. Typical village scavengers are of this size.

Medium normal: This is by far the largest category, including dogs that serve almost every conceivable purpose. Among them are drovers' and herdsman's dogs such as collies, old English sheepdogs, and German shepherds; most of the hounds, including foxhounds and coonhounds; sled dogs of various types; fast, light guard dogs such as Doberman pinschers; and most of the pointers, setters, retrievers, and spaniels, as well as many others.

Large normal: Dogs in this category are heavily built, but less so than the fighting breeds. They include the biggest hounds, such as the bloodhound, drovers' and herding dogs that also serve to protect the herd or flock, draft dogs, and rescue dogs such as the St. Bernard or Newfoundland breed.

Very small runner: These are miniature versions of the other running dogs, and are kept as pets. The Italian greyhound is typical.

Small runner: Small running dogs are usually set on rabbits and hares. An example is the whippet.

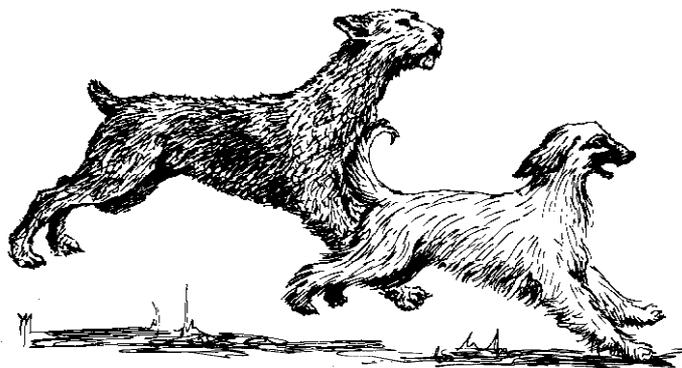
Medium runner: Most dogs built for speed are of this type, the optimum size for running; greyhounds, salukis, and Afghan hounds are examples. Over long distances other canids might be superior, but nothing canine can beat one of these in a sprint. These dogs usually pursue jackals, coyotes, gazelles, hares, and other speedy animals.

Large runner: These dogs are somewhat slower than their smaller cousins, but their greater size and strength allows them to attack larger game. Borzois, Irish wolfhounds, and Scottish deerhounds are examples of the type.

Special characteristics

Many of the qualities that dogs may be bred for, such as distrust of or acceptance of strangers, cold or heat tolerance, sociability, ability to live on vegetable food, presence or absence of a loud bark, and so on cannot be rendered into AD&D game statistics. Some of the breed differences that can be expressed in game terms are included in the discussion below.

In combat, some dogs grab and hold on. The hold is inflicted if the dog scores a hit with a roll of 16 or better, and it may then do damage equal to half the normal bite damage each round thereafter with no roll "to hit." Opponents so held are considered to be held by one leg, with appropriate combat penalties (*DMG*, page 67). Fighting breeds do this naturally, and others may be taught the move. A determined dog cannot be removed unless it is stunned or killed.



Dogs are generally slower swimmers than humans are. Small or very small breeds swim at 6", and medium or large dogs swim at 9" regardless of body form. Water dogs are 3" faster, but the major difference between them and other dogs is their inclination to enter water and their more water-repellent fur. Water dogs will last longer in cold water — four times as long as humans, and twice as long as ordinary dogs.

Dogs bred for digging ability (some of the small or very small breeds) can burrow as rapidly as badgers (3"). Other dogs of small or very small size dig at 1" and larger dogs can excavate burrows but have no burrowing movement *per se*.

Dogs have keen hearing, and any breed gains a 20% bonus to its chance of detecting hidden or invisible creatures by sound, as applicable. This bonus may be halved or doubled according to the conditions. Most dogs are allowed a similar bonus of 20% because they can detect otherwise hidden objects or creatures by scent. Most dogs can detect and identify people for a considerable distance downwind. The scenting bonus is increased to a basic 30% for tracking and pointing breeds and is reduced to 10% for running breeds (the latter hunt primarily by sight). An ordinary dog can track as an onyx *dog* can (*DMG*, page 144), while tracking breeds are allowed an additional 20% chance and running breeds track at a 10% penalty.

In strong light, dogs do not see as clearly as humans do (the running breeds are exceptions to this rule), and no dog perceives colors. However, a dog's night vision is superior to that of a human — about as good by moonlight as it is by daylight, and as good on a moonless night as a human's would be under a full moon.

The morale of an unaccompanied dog is as described for monsters on page 67 of the *DMG*, but all dogs are of the largest size for purposes of this calculation. Dogs with their handlers are treated as henchmen when morale is determined. In its lair a dog gains a 20% bonus to morale ("every dog is a lion in his own back yard"), and morale may be affected by training, as shown below. Fighting breeds gain a 10% bonus under all conditions.

Training

Dogs can be trained to attack on command, and ones so trained gain 10% to morale. Dogs may also be taught the hold described above.

Dogs that have not been trained to track do so at a penalty of -20% even if they are instructed via *speak with animals*, and they may forget the object of the search and track something that smells more interesting.

Dogs can be trained to point out hidden creatures, just as pointing breeds spot game for hunters. A dog's ability to detect hidden creatures is not increased by training.

Equipment

Dogs may be outfitted with armor, with specifications similar to those for horse armor (barding) as described by Gary Gygax in *DRAGON*® Magazine #74 and in *Unearthed Arcana*.

Armor type	Maximum speed	AC bonus
Leather or padded armor	15"	1
Studded leather, ring or scale mail	12"	2
Chain mail, banded mail	12"	3
Plate mail	9"	4

Only large dogs can carry plate mail, and only medium or large dogs can carry metal or partly metal armor at all. Small dogs are restricted to leather or padded armor, and very small dogs cannot carry armor. A spiked collar provides AC 6 versus bites from other animals (which instinctively are aimed for the throat).

costs

A few of the costs related to domestic dogs are listed in the *Players Handbook*. The prices given below are to the same scale.

- coursing hound50 gp
- draft dog/sled dog10 gp
- dog-fighting/bear-baiting dog30 gp
- food dog.3 gp
- herding dog20 gp
- ratter.10 gp
- collar, normal.3 sp
- collar, spiked5 sp
- dogsled.50 gp

The prices for dogs given here are for those that have already received any necessary training. The cost of dog armor is one-fifth that of equivalent human armor. Rations for dogs cost the full human amount for large dogs, half of that for medium dogs, one-quarter for small dogs, and one-eighth for very small dogs.

Travel

The following daily movement rates, in miles, are typical of dogs and dog-drawn conveyances. These figures are to be compared to those on page 58 of the *DMG*.

	Terrain type		
	Normal	Rugged	Very rugged
Dog, medium	60	40	20
Dog, small or large	45	30	15
Dog, very small	30	20	10
Dogsled	40	25	10
Skijorer	60	40	20

Fighting dogs are one size class slower than normal or running dogs, the very small fighting dogs moving at 20/10/5. Dogs carrying packs move at half the daily rate shown above. Skijoring is riding on skis that are pulled by relays of dogs. A dog's movement rate is little affected by forests, marsh, or snow; all of these conditions are interpreted as one terrain class better in assessing the difficulty of the terrain for dogs. Sleds can only travel where there is good, firm snow, which counts as normal terrain.

Dog breeds

Like those of medieval times, the breeds of dogs in an AD&D game world are likely to be less distinct from one another and less uniform within themselves than breeds of the real and modern world, since they are likely to be defined more by their functions than by their ancestry. Planned, long-term breeding programs will be relatively rare. Nevertheless, it is likely that each country-sized area will have its own set of dog breeds, adapted to local conditions, and that in less civilized areas each tribe will have one or more distinct breeds of dog. Spaniels, setters, and pointers will be relatively rare, since there is less of a demand for these in a world without guns. Nevertheless, they will find some employment with those who go hawking or (more commonly) with those who hunt birds using nets. Similarly, the retrievers will be fetching nets and fishing gear (and the occasional fisherman) rather than downed waterfowl.

Demi-human and humanoid species may also have suitable breeds of dogs if they haven't other animals on hand. Dwarves, for instance, are likely to have heavily built and loud-voiced fighting dogs to guard their mine sites and treasure troves. Elves, if they haven't got the cooshee dogs described in *Monster Manual II*, will probably have swift running breeds of medium size, silent and canny scouts and hunters. Orcs might keep vicious fighting dogs of the largest size — animals as ugly and bad-tempered as the orcs themselves. Only the humanoids of chaotic alignment and low intelligence are unlikely to have dogs; an ogre might well forget a dog's usefulness on a hungry day and eat it.

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