

# Courtier

With tensions rising on both sides, the human delegation about to storm out of negotiations with the conclave of woodland elves, all hope for diplomacy seemed lost until the witty half-elven courtier raised his glass and proposed a toast to Simolan and Arik, characters from an ancient story who fell in love despite one being an elf and the other a human. With both sides obliged to partake, the room was silent for the first time in days, allowing a moment of quiet contemplation and, thanks to the strong wine provided, a rise in spirits all around.

The half-orc barbarian wouldn't let go of his greataxe until the tavern's bouncer yanked it out of his hands. His anger only increased when the group's human courtier, offering nothing but a wry smile and a courteous nod to the bouncer, waltzed right in with the rapier still on his hip. "A gentleman's weapon," he explained to his barbarian companion, who was forced to enter the seedy establishment unarmed. "But don't worry," the finely dressed man added, "if anything happens while we're in here, I'll protect you."

Everyone stopped and stared. The adventurers all turned to see what would happen, even the attacking bandits paused. Off to the side of the road, where the party's horses were tied, a highwayman was attempting to pull a chest full of treasure off their wagon. In doing so, however, he had accidentally splattered mud across the hem of the elven courtier's exorbitantly expensive dress. The offended aristocrat looked down at the stain, then back up at the terrified man. She slowly drew her jewel-encrusted rapier and leveled it at the bandit. "This gown is worth more than your life," she sternly declared, striking as much fear into his heart as if he'd just been caught stealing a dragon's gold.

Courtiers are silver-tongued duelists, able to hold their own in swordplay and politics. While they might not exactly be the most capable wilderness travelers or dungeon spelunkers, they are effective party faces and their mastery of the rapier bolsters their group's effectiveness in battle with a surprising variety of maneuvers.

## [Fancy Footwork](#)

In combat, a courtier is quick and nimble, dancing around enemies and making precision strikes with the rapier. Despite their lack of armor and shield, they infuriate their attackers with a defense made from equal parts flashing steel, nimble dodges, and withering demoralization. When they do strike, it's rarely with the sole intent of dealing damage, but rather to lure the enemy into making another mistake.

Outside of combat, however, is where a courtier truly shines. Their highly developed social skills make ordinary city going obstacles trivial and give them access to a whole new world of high society benefits. With the right connections made and the right palms greased, they can go just about anywhere they please.

## [By Any Other Name](#)

While it could be tempting to play a cliché courtier, a well-dressed fop with a penchant for wine and swashbuckling, there are many ways to fill the role without adhering to the stereotype. For example, courtiers



could have a strict sense of duty, protecting the common folk as a musketeer. Then again, a courtier could easily become a pirate, terrorizing the high seas from the deck of their infamous flagship. Disgraced or defamed courtiers could also become ronin, stripped of their rank and wealth, forced to wander the countryside as a sellswords or vigilantes.

### Creating a Courtier

The most important thing to understand when making a courtier is that Charisma is more than just something you use to get people to like you. For you, it's a weapon, armor, and, when you really put your mind to it, almost as powerful as magic. Keep this in mind when deciding on your background, where you're from, and what kinds of connections you have. Courtiers are very rarely solitary individuals, instead choosing to surround themselves with friendly associates, useful contacts, and helpful retainers.

Think about where you learned to use the rapier. Was it a fencing school? Sponsorship from the local duelist's society? Military service? Your family's weapon master? An older sibling or parent? Furthermore, why did you develop into a natural leader instead of just another greedy miser? Where does your irresistible magnetism and allure come from? Confidence? Appearance? Wit? Answers to these questions will help you define your character and set you on your way to adventure, whether in dank underground ruins or the gilded ballrooms of the royal palace.

### Quick Build

You can make a courtier quickly by following these suggestions. First, Charisma should be your highest ability score, followed by Dexterity. Second, choose the noble background.

### Class Features

As a courtier, you have the following class features.

**Multiclassing Prerequisites:** Charisma 13

**Multiclassing Proficiencies:** Rapiers, one skill from the class's skill list.

#### Hit Points

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 per courtier level

**Hit Points at 1st Level:** 8 + your Constitution modifier

**Hit Points at Higher Levels:** 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per courtier level after 1st

#### Proficiencies

**Armor:** None

**Weapons:** Daggers, light crossbows, rapiers

**Tools:** One type of gaming set or musical instrument

**Saving Throws:** Dexterity, Charisma

**Skills:** Choose three from Animal Handling, Acrobatics, Deception, History, Insight, Intimidation, Performance, and Persuasion

#### Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

### THE COURTIER

Level	Proficiency	
	Bonus	Features
1st	+2	Unarmored Defense, Expertise
2nd	+2	Assistant, Fencing
3rd	+2	Courtier Archetype
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement
5th	+3	Extra Attack
6th	+3	Expertise
7th	+3	Courtier Archetype feature
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement
9th	+4	Footwork
10th	+4	Fencing
11th	+4	Courtier Archetype feature
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement
13th	+5	Flashing Steel
14th	+5	Expertise
15th	+5	Courtier Archetype feature
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement
17th	+6	Fencing
18th	+6	Courtier Archetype feature
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement
20th	+6	Legendary

- a rapier and a set of fine clothes
- (a) a light crossbow, 20 bolts, and any simple melee weapon or (b) a riding horse and riding saddle
- (a) a diplomat's pack or (b) an entertainer's pack

**Starting Wealth:** 6d4 x 10 gp

### Unarmored Defense

While you are wearing no armor and not wielding a shield, your AC equals 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Charisma modifier.

### Expertise

At 1st level, choose one of your proficiencies. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses the chosen proficiency. At 6th level and again at 14th level, you can choose another of your proficiencies to gain this benefit.

### Assistant

At 2nd level, you attract a loyal assistant. This retainer is a commoner who can perform mundane tasks for you, but they do not fight for you, will not follow you into obviously dangerous areas (such as dungeons), and will leave if they are frequently endangered or abused. Your assistant can use the Help action to aid you with any Charisma skill in a noncombat situation.

### Fencing

At 2nd level, you learn several fencing techniques that make an ordinary rapier a deadly weapon in your skilled hands. At 10th level and again at 17th level, each of these techniques improves. You can attempt any of these abilities so long as you're not encumbered, wearing armor, or wielding a shield.

**Feint.** During your turn, if you make a melee attack against a creature, that creature can't make opportunity attacks against you for the rest of your turn. At 10th level, if you make a melee attack against a creature, it has disadvantage on any attacks it makes that don't include you until the start of your next turn. At 17th level, if you make a melee attack against a creature, that creature's speed is also reduced to 0 so long as it is no more than one size category larger than you.

**Lunge.** When you make a melee attack using a rapier, you can use a bonus action to increase your reach for that attack by 5 feet. If you hit, you add 1d6 to your damage roll. When you use this ability, you may only make one attack with your attack action on the same turn. At 10th level, you can increase your reach by 10 feet and the bonus damage by 3d6. At 17th level, you can increase your reach by 15 feet and the bonus damage by 5d6.

**Parry.** When another creature damages you with a melee weapon attack, you can use your reaction to reduce the damage by 1d6. At 10th level, the damage you reduce increases to 3d6. At 17th level, the damage you reduce increases to 5d6.

**Riposte.** When a creature misses you with a melee weapon attack, you can use your reaction to make a melee attack with a rapier against that creature. At 10th level, you can also move 5 feet. At 17th level, you can also move your target 5 feet so long as it is no more than one size category larger than you.

### Archetype

At 3rd level, you choose an archetype that you strive to emulate. Choose Diplomat or Duelist, which are detailed at the end of the class description. The archetype you choose grants you features at 3rd level and again at 7th, 11th, 15th, and 18th level.

### Ability Score Improvement

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

### Extra Attack

At 5th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, when you take the Attack action on your turn.

### Footwork

At 9th level, when you move half your speed or less, your movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

### Flashing Steel

At 13th level, you can draw a rapier whenever you roll initiative so long as you're aware of your opponent and are not surprised. If an enemy creature ends its turn within 5 feet of you before you act during the first round of combat, you can use a reaction to make a melee attack with a rapier against it.

### Legendary

At 20th level, your wit and charm reach otherworldly levels. Your Charisma score increases by 6. Your maximum for that score is now 26. You always enjoy the aristocratic lifestyle wherever possible, free of charge, and you and your immediate traveling companions never need pay for normal lodging or transportation.

## Courtier Archetypes

While all courtiers have tongues as quick as their blades, they tend specialize in one or the other.

### Diplomat

Diplomats are courtiers who solve more problems with their words than their swords. Their quick wits and inspirational calls can turn the tide of even the most treacherous confrontations, on the battlefield or in the throne room.

### Dilettante Etiquette

At 3rd level, you are intimately aware of every major culture's social norms and traditions. When you use the research downtime activity, you can make up to three Charisma (Persuasion) checks to learn up to three pieces of information, and need not spend any gold per day of research. You also learn two bonus languages and gain proficiency in one type of gaming set and one musical instrument.

### Shrewd Negotiation

At 7th level, you pay only half the base price for all services other than spellcasting services. You also have advantage on Charisma checks to negotiate prices.

### Motivational Speech

At 11th level, after a short rest, you can inspire your companions with words of encouragement, affecting up to 6 allies who can see and hear you. Until they take another short or long rest, they can add your Charisma bonus to any one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw they make.

### Casual Blasé

At 15th level, you have advantage on all saving throws against social skills, as well as any spell or effect that would cause you to become charmed or frightened. You also have advantage on any saving throws or contested skill checks to detect your alignment, read your mind, or detect if you're lying.

### Call Truce

At 18th level, you can use your action to call for a truce. Make a Charisma check against the highest passive Insight of all enemy creatures who can see, hear, and understand you involved in combat. You have disadvantage on this roll unless all enemies within range are intelligent and understand you. If you succeed, combat immediately stops for at least 1 minute, or until you or one of your allies threatens any of the affected creatures again, casts a spell, or tries to escape. During this time, you can make another Charisma check, using one of the skills below, to affect the outcome of the battle. The base difficulty for each of these subsequent checks is 10 + the highest challenge rating of all the enemy creatures present.

**Deception.** You provide a distraction for your allies to flee unnoticed, after which you can excuse yourself as well, buying at least a minute head start on any pursuit.

**Intimidation.** You attempt to force your enemies to surrender. If you are obviously outmatched, outnumbered, or outmaneuvered, you have disadvantage on this check.

**Persuasion.** You try to convince your enemies to come to a peaceful conclusion to the encounter, resolving any differences amicably, perhaps with some amount of compensation, recourse, or maybe just a sincere apology.

### Duelist

Some courtiers prefer to let their blades do the talking when negotiations fail. These daring swashbucklers can drag out a duel as long as they like, making their frustrated opponents look like helpless fools, or end the battle in an instant with a well-placed thrust.

### Deadly Thrust

At 3rd level, you deal +2 damage on melee attack rolls with a rapier and score critical hits on a roll of 19 or 20.

### Witty Repartee

At 7th level, all intelligent, humanoid enemies have disadvantage on melee weapon attacks against you so long as you're conscious, can move, and share a language with them.

### Endless Panache

At 11th level, whenever you cause damage with a melee weapon attack using a rapier, you can convert as much of the damage as you like into temporary hit points for yourself.

### Ready Stance

At 15th level, you add your Charisma modifier as well as your Dexterity modifier when rolling initiative. You automatically win all initiative ties.

### Run Through

At 18th level, whenever you score a critical hit with a rapier, you deal an extra 5d6 damage.