

# SAVAGE DRAGONS



STORM



# DRAGONS

Dragons are mythical beasts with reptilian traits, but their precise appearance and abilities can vary significantly. They can have scales, feathers or fur. Some have wings capable of flight, while others are aquatic and serpentine, or deadly land-based predators.

Dragons come in many shapes and forms, and this document should allow you to design one to your own specification.

A dragon starts out as a young hatchling, but will age as he or she advances.

## RACIAL ABILITIES

**Draconic Strength:** Dragons start with Strength d8, and can raise their Strength to d12+2 through normal advances.

**Scourge:** Dragons automatically start with one of the Scourge Edges. Most winged dragons take Scourge of the Skies, but there are other possibilities.

**Rending Teeth and Claws:** Dragons have sharp teeth and claws which inflict Str+d4 damage. If they attack with multiple natural weapons in the same round then they incur the normal multi-action penalty.

**Low Light Vision:** The eyes of a dragon are well adapted to the caves in which they traditionally make their lairs. They ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

**Newly Hatched:** A hatchling has Size -1, which also reduces its Toughness by 1. Note that if the hatchling takes the Small Hindrance as well, its Size does not drop below -1.

**Prehensile forefeet:** Dragons can use their forefeet to cast spells and manipulate objects, although they still need them for walking, and cannot wield weapons or use shields.

**Draconic Breath:** All dragons have an innate breath weapon, although initially it's very weak and not focused enough to cause damage. It can however be used as a trapping for tricks.

**Treasure Hoard:** Dragons are very greedy when it comes to treasure, particularly valuable metals and gems, although some dragons have also been known to collect magical items, artwork, or even people. This is treated as the Greedy Minor Hindrance.



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# HINDRANCES

Dragons cannot take the Young or Elderly Hindrances, as they age differently to other races; as magical creatures, they mature as they gain in power rather than through the passage of time. However they do have access to some new Hindrances, as follows:

## VULNERABILITY (MINOR OR MAJOR)

Some dragons are strongly associated with a specific elemental or energy type (such as fire or ice), and it's not uncommon for them to be particularly vulnerable to the opposed energy type.

As a Minor Hindrance, the dragon suffers +4 damage from attacks of the opposed energy type. As a Major Hindrance, they instead suffer double damage.

## EXCESSIVE GREED (MINOR)

Dragons normally start with Greedy as a Minor Hindrance, from their Treasure Hoard racial ability. With this Hindrance, Treasure Hoard is instead treated as if it were the Major Hindrance version of Greedy.

## WATER DEPENDENCY (MAJOR)

The dragon needs to immerse itself in water for at least an hour every day, otherwise it suffers an automatic level of Fatigue, or dies if it is already incapacitated by Fatigue.

Normally only dragons with Scourge of the Seas or Serpent Breed may take this Hindrance.



# EDGES

Dragons have access to a range of new racial Edges. Note that Breed Edges and Scourge Edges can normally only be taken during character creation. No dragon may ever have more than one Breed Edge, and all dragons must begin play with at least one Scourge Edge.

## BREED EDGES

### HYDRA BREED

**Requirements:** Novice

The hydra has many heads on long serpentine necks, each of which can make a separate Fighting roll (although this still incurs the usual multi-action penalty). The exact number of heads is equal to the character's Size+5, and each head has +1 Reach.

**Note:** If you really want to track how many heads you've currently got, use the Multiple Heads and Regeneration abilities from the Hydra in the Fantasy Companion, except that the heads *do* incur a multi-attack penalty.

### LINDWORM BREED

**Requirements:** Novice

Lindworms slither around like snakes, but still have forelimbs. These forelimbs are no longer required for movement, allowing them to comfortably wield weapons and use shields if they wish.

### SERPENT BREED

**Requirements:** Novice

Serpents don't have any limbs, and cannot make claw attacks or manipulate objects, although some have fins or mouth tentacles capable of making magical gestures. If they hit with a raise when making a Fighting attack, they can choose to coil themselves around their victim instead of resolving the normal damage roll. While coiled around an opponent the serpent automatically inflicts Str+d6 damage every round (including the round they first hit). Victims can only escape with a raise on an opposed Strength roll, and if they attempt any other action they suffer a -4 penalty to the roll.

Note that while sea serpents are perhaps the most well-known, there are also winged serpents, sand serpents, feathered serpents, naga, and other forms of snake-like dragon.

## WYVERN BREED

**Requirements:** Novice

Wyverns have no front limbs, only powerful legs for walking. They can only make claw attacks while flying, and their feet cannot be used to manipulate objects. However their tail is barbed and dripping with venom; it inflicts the same damage as their bite and claws, has +1 Reach, and any opponent who is Shaken or wounded must make a Vigor roll or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds. This Vigor roll is made at a -1 penalty if the wyvern is Large (or Massive), or at a -2 penalty if the wyvern is Huge.

## SCOURGE EDGES

### SCOURGE OF THE LANDS

**Requirements:** Novice

Some dragons are fast land predators. This Edge grants the Wall Walking ability at base Pace, including the option to 'run' while using it. The dragon's Pace while moving on land is also increased by +2".

### SCOURGE OF THE SEAS

**Requirements:** Novice

This Edge is common among the long, serpentine dragons of the east, most of whom are either wingless or have only small bat-like wings on their forelimbs. They are strongly associated with water, and gain the Aquatic ability, including a free d6 in Swimming.

### SCOURGE OF THE SKIES

**Requirements:** Novice

This Edge covers the more traditional dragons. They typically have powerful wings, granting them the Flight ability at their base Pace, with Climb 2 and the option to 'run' while flying. If the dragon is Large then it gets +2" Pace while flying, but its Climb is reduced to 1. If the dragon is Huge then it gets a further +2" Pace while flying, and its Climb is reduced to 0.

## SCOURGE OF THE UNDERWORLD

**Requirements:** Novice

Some dragons prefer burrowing deep down into the earth. This Edge grants the Burrowing ability at base Pace through sand and loose earth, half Pace through packed earth, and quarter Pace through rock. The dragon also gains the Infravision ability.

## AGE EDGES

### WYRMLING

**Requirements:** Novice

The dragon has started to grow and its soft scales have begun to harden. Remove the Newly Hatched ability, and gain +1 natural armor.

### YOUNG DRAGON

**Requirements:** Novice, Wyrmling

Increase Size by +2 and Strength (and maximum Strength) by +2 die steps. Bite and claws now inflict Str+d6 damage. The dragon is classified as 'Big', which falls half way between Medium and Large; attackers add +1 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking the dragon, and the dragon suffers a -1 penalty when attacking back.

### JUVENILE DRAGON

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Young Dragon

Increase Size by +2 and Strength (and maximum Strength) by +2 die steps. Bite and claws now inflict Str+d8 damage, and Pace increases by +1". The dragon is classified as 'Large'; attackers add +2 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking the dragon, and the dragon suffers a -2 penalty when attacking them back.

### ADULT DRAGON

**Requirements:** Veteran, Juvenile Dragon

Increase Size by +2 and Strength (and maximum Strength) by +2 die steps. If the character has a breath weapon, its damage increases by +1 die step (e.g., 2d4 becomes 2d6). The dragon is now classified as 'Massive', which falls half way between Large and Huge; attackers add +3 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking the dragon, and the dragon suffers a -3 penalty when attacking them back.



## MATURE DRAGON

**Requirements:** Heroic, Adult Dragon

Increase Size by +2 and Strength (and maximum Strength) by +2 die steps. If the character has a breath weapon, its damage increases by +1 die step (e.g., 2d6 becomes 2d8). Pace increases by +1". The dragon is now classified as 'Huge'; attackers add +4 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking the dragon, and the dragon suffers a -4 penalty when attacking them back.

## BACKGROUND EDGES

### AURA OF FEAR

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Spirit d10

Some dragons can choose to radiate an aura of fear, causing a Fear check to all who see them. If the dragon is Large then this Fear check is made at -1, while if they are Huge it is made at -2.

### ELEMENTAL RESISTANCE

**Requirements:** Novice

The dragon no longer suffers background damage from one specific energy type (usually related to the color of their scales), and direct attacks have their damage reduced by 4. Typical forms of resistance include fire/heat, cold/ice, lightning, and acid. The benefits of this Edge also apply in Humanoid Form.

### IMPROVED ELEMENTAL RESISTANCE

**Requirements:**

Seasoned, Elemental Resistance

Damage of the one specific energy type you're resistant to is now halved, instead of being reduced by 4. The benefits of this Edge also apply in Humanoid Form.

### HUMANOID FORM

**Requirements:** Novice

Some dragons have the ability to shapechange into a humanoid form. Changing forms is a normal action, and a

specific humanoid form must be chosen when this Edge is first taken. In humanoid form the dragon retains its Draconic Strength and Low Light Vision, as well as Treasure Hoard and Newly Hatched, but loses all other dragon racial abilities and Edges, unless otherwise noted within their description.

### SWIFT FLIER

**Requirements:** Novice, Scourge of the Skies

This Edge doubles the dragon's Pace while flying, applied after any other modifiers.

## COMBAT EDGES

### BREATH WEAPON

**Requirements:** Novice, Wyrmling

The dragon's breath weapon is now powerful enough to cause serious damage. Everyone within a Cone Template must make an Agility roll at -2 or suffer 2d4 damage. This breath cannot be used in the same round as a bite or claw attack.

### IMPROVED BREATH WEAPON

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Breath Weapon

The dragon's breath weapon now inflicts 2d6 damage instead of 2d4 damage.

### LASHING TAIL

**Requirements:**

Seasoned, Young Dragon, Agility d8, Fighting d8

The dragon has learned to use its tail as a weapon.

This is a resolved with a single Fighting roll against everyone behind the character, inflicting Str-2 damage (roll the damage separately for each victim). The tail hits everyone within an area 1" long and 2" wide, and this area is doubled to 2x4" if the dragon is Large, or tripled to 3x6" if it is Huge. This Edge cannot be combined with Sweep.

### THICK HIDE

**Requirements:** Novice, Young

Dragon, Vigor d8



The dragon's scales have become increasingly rigid, providing an additional +2 natural armor.

## IMPROVED THICK HIDE

**Requirements:** Veteran, Young Dragon

The dragon's scales have fully hardened, providing an additional +1 natural armor as well as the Hardy ability.

## LEGENDARY EDGES

### VENERABLE

**Requirements:** Legendary, Mature Dragon

The dragon has continued to grow and mature. Increase Size by +1 and maximum Strength by +1 die step every time this Edge is taken, up to a maximum of four times. These age categories are known as Old, Ancient, Wyrm and Great Wyrm. Note that although this Edge increases the maximum Strength, the character must still spend additional advances to increase their actual Strength.

### GARGANTUAN

**Requirements:** Legendary, Venerable

The dragon gains the Gargantuan ability. It now has Heavy Armor, all its attacks count as Heavy Weapons, and it is able to make stomp attacks. Attackers can still make called attacks at -6 to target eyes, joints, and gaps in the scales (this avoids the natural armor entirely, as well as granting the usual +4 damage for a hit to the head or vitals).

### DRACOLICH

**Requirements:** Legendary, Venerable, Improved Thick Hide, Arcane Background

A dracolich is an undead skeletal dragon, created through willing participation in a potent necromantic ritual. The dragon must have an Arcane Background with necromantic trappings in order to take this Edge.

The dracolich gains the Undead ability, but loses its natural armor, and receives a -4 penalty to Charisma. The dracolich's breath weapon (if any) is now "ghostfire", ethereal flames which only harm the living.

A dragon cannot take any more Venerable Edges after becoming a dracolich. Note that the benefits and drawbacks of this Edge also apply to Humanoid Form.

# DESIGN NOTES

## TRAPPINGS BRING DRAGONS ALIVE

These rules cover a wide range of dragons, but you'll still have to put some effort into the appearance and theme of your dragon - just like when you're designing trappings for a power. For example an oriental dragon could be built mechanically using Scourge of the Seas and Scourge of the Skies, but to really make it come alive you'll also need to flesh out its description, mannerisms and background.

## BALANCING DRAGONS

The Edges in this document were balanced using a combination of the race creation rules in SWD, my combat simulator, comparisons with existing Edges and Hindrances, and (at least in the case of Elemental Resistance) the observation that 1 PP of powers from the SPC is roughly on-par with a +1 racial ability.

The dragon race itself is balanced as a +2 race, with its racial abilities valued at +3, +2, +1, +1, -2, -2, +0 and -1 respectively.

## STANDING OUT

In some campaigns, a dragon will draw a lot of unwanted attention, and can stick out like a sore thumb. If this is a problem, the GM should simply rule that PC dragons *must* purchase the Humanoid Form Edge during character creation.

## DRAGON AS MOUNTS

If a player wants to have a dragon mount, they can do so with the Sidekick Edge; just give the sidekick the dragon race. It'll need to be at least Size 2 (the same as a mule or riding horse) for a human-sized creature to ride, but this is achievable with a normal starting character.

## THE BESTIARY DRAGON

For those who are curious, it requires 23½ advances to recreate the dragon from the SWD bestiary as a PC using the rules in this document. The PC will also have Low Light Vision and Hindrances, but other than that they'll be identical to the bestiary entry.