

Focus on Freeport #2: The Freeport Pirate

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A d20 System Prestige Class

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The Life of a Corsair

As is well known, pirates founded the great city of Freeport. Although Sea Lord Drac gave Freeport the veneer of legitimacy, the city retained its buccaneer spirit. While modern day Freeport is a port of call for merchants the world over, it remains a haven for those living outside of the law.

The Freeport Pirate is the inheritor of a great legacy. He maintains a code passed on from captain to captain since the founding of the city. While the Captain's Council plays politics and makes grand alliances, the pirates live life as they always have. A fast ship, a stout crew, and sharp steel is all a pirate needs.

That being said, piracy these days is a quite a bit different than the days of yore. The well-organized navies of the continental nations are dangerous opponents, and few pirate captains have more than one ship under their command. These days Freeport Pirates must range further afield, and take longer voyages, to find ripe pickings. Many head east, fueled by tales of spices and riches, while others harry the humanoid coastlands in the distant south. No one on the continent sheds any tears for the kuo-toa, orcs, or lizardfolk who fall to pirate cutlasses.

Fighters and rangers are most likely to become Freeport Pirates, closely followed by rogues and barbarians. Bards and sorcerers are unlikely pirates, but their high Charismas make can make it work. Clerics of maritime gods sometimes become pirates, as do druids that focus on the element of water. Monks and paladins never become Freeport Pirates, due to their lawful natures.

Class Skills and Attributes

Skills: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (shipbuilding, sailmaking) (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Knowledge (boating, cartography, Freeport legend or history, geography, navigation, sea lore) (Int), Profession (sailor) (Int), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Use Rope (Dex).

Skill points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Hit Dice: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a Freeport Pirate, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Alignment: Any non-lawful.

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Feats: Dodge, Weapon Focus (Cutlass or Boarding Pike).

Knowledge (Sea Lore): 2 ranks

Profession (Sailor): 4 ranks

Swim: 4 ranks

Voyages: A character must take at least three voyages as a crewman on a pirate ship.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency

The Freeport Pirate is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, but no type of armor. Wearing armor on the high seas is suicidal, and it is avoided by any pirate worth his salt. Freeport Pirates can also use the cutlass with the *Weapon Finesse* feat.

Common pirate weapons include the cutlass (as scimitar), the boarding pike (as shortspear), the belaying pin (as club), and the gaff (1d4, x3).

Special Abilities

Sea Legs

A pirate spends years at sea, and learns to stay on his feet during fair weather and foul. A Freeport Pirate gains a +2 competence bonus to all Balance checks. Furthermore, a successful check allows a full move instead of a half move. A failed check still means no movement at all.

Reckless Abandon

No one fights quite like a pirate. Scorning armor, the pirate defies death with style and panache. Due to his fearlessness and swashbuckling demeanor, the pirate adds his Cha bonus (if any) to his Dex bonus to modify his Armor Class. This bonus is lost if the pirate wears any armor. You can't look fearless while hiding behind a tower shield!

Rope Monkey

Experienced seamen can climb rigging and ropes with the speed and dexterity of monkeys. Starting at 2nd level a pirate retains his Dex bonus to AC while climbing or fighting on rigging, ropes, or even masts. Furthermore, opponents gain no bonus to hit in these circumstances.

Animal Companion

If the character desires, he can gain an animal companion on reaching 2nd level. Treat this as the *animal friendship* spell, though the ability is not magical in nature. Common animal companions include parrots and monkeys, but others are also possible. This is an extraordinary ability.

Press Gang Thwack

Not everyone chooses the pirate life. Sometimes a captain needs more crew, and the only way to get them is by force. A Freeport Pirate quickly becomes an expert at subduing landlubbers. Starting at 3rd level he can use weapons to deal subdual damage without taking the normal -4 penalty to hit. The quick crack to the back of the skull has become known as the Press Gang Thwack in Freeport. (see pages 134-135 of the PH for rules on subdual damage).

Superior Weapon Focus

At 4th level the pirate gains +1 bonus to hit with either the cutlass or the boarding pike. This bonus stacks with any existing Weapon Focus feat.

Life is Cheap

In the chaos of close-quarters shipboard fighting, pirates must be quick to survive. Foes must be dispatched with alacrity, and pirates learn effective if messy techniques to do so. At 5th level the Freeport Pirate can perform a coup de grace as a standard action instead of a full round action.

Lightning Parry

At 6th level a pirate with a light weapon in his off-hand can use it to parry incoming melee attacks. This adds +2 to the pirate's AC for the round, and the off-handed weapon cannot be used to attack while executing a lightning parry.

Lungs of Legend

At 7th level a Freeport Pirate learns to survive underwater for extended periods of time. He can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to quadruple his Constitution, instead of double Con as normal. See page 85 of the DMG for full rules on drowning.

Superior Weapon Specialization

At 8th level the pirate gains a +2 to bonus to damage with either the cutlass or the boarding pike. This bonus stacks with any existing Weapon Specialization.

Fearsome Reputation

By 9th level such is the pirate's reputation that many foes flee at the mere sight of him. By announcing his presence and taking a dramatic action (like holding up the severed head of an enemy, for instance), a Freeport Pirate achieves the same effects as a *fear* spell cast by a 9th level sorcerer (use the pirate's Cha to determine DC). This is an extraordinary ability that can be used twice a day.

Pirate's Curse

At 10th level the Freeport Pirate gains his most feared ability: the Pirate's Curse. In his last moments of life the pirate can pronounce a curse on a person or small group of people (no more than 1d4+1). This is a supernatural ability that has the same effect as a *bestow curse* spell cast by a 20th level sorcerer (and again using the pirate's Cha for DC). Typical targets include the pirate's killers or those who steal his treasure. The curse may be given a trigger ("May my curse strike down the first scurvy dog to wield my cutlass in battle."). DMs should feel free to make up curse effects other than those listed in the PH. Curses should be both vengeful and appropriate to the crime. The dead pirate's ghost haunting the family of his killer for three generations, for instance, has a lot more flavor than a simple die roll penalty.

Table 1: Freeport Pirate

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Sea Legs, Reckless Abandon
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Rope Monkey, Animal Companion
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Press Gang Thwack
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Superior Weapon Focus
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Life is Cheap
6th	+6	+2	+5	+2	Lightning Parry
7th	+7	+2	+5	+2	Lungs of Legend
8th	+8	+2	+6	+2	Superior Weapon Specialization
9th	+9	+3	+6	+3	Fearsome Reputation
10th	+10	+3	+7	+3	Pirate's Curse

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