

Agent of Inquiry

Whether on the trail of a fugitive, a long-lost treasure trove, or a criminal mastermind, agents of inquiry are motivated by an intense curiosity about the world and use knowledge of it as a weapon. Observing the world around them, they gain valuable knowledge about the situation they're in, process that information using inspiration and deduction, and cut to the quick of the matter in unexpected ways.

The agent of inquiry is an archetype of the bard class.

Bardic Performance: An agent of inquiry gains the following types of bardic performance:

Careful Teamwork (Su): An agent of inquiry uses performance to keep allies coordinated, alert, and ready for action. All allies within 30 feet gain a +1 bonus on Initiative checks, Perception, and Disable Device checks for 1 hour. They also gain a +1 insight bonus on Reflex saves and to AC against traps and when they are flat-footed. These bonuses increase by +1 at 5th level and every six levels thereafter. Using this ability requires 3 rounds of continuous performance, and the targets must be able to see and hear the bard throughout the performance. This ability is language-dependent and requires visual and audible components.

This performance replaces inspire courage.

True Confession (Su): At 9th level, an agent of inquiry can use performance to trick a creature into revealing its secrets. Using this ability requires a successful Sense Motive check to see through a Bluff or notice mental compulsion. After 3 continuous rounds of performance, the target must make a Will save (DC 10 + half of the bard's level + his Charisma modifier). Success renders the target immune to this power for 24 hours. On a failed save, a liar inadvertently reveals the lie and the truth behind it. A creature under a charm or compulsion reveals the nature of its enchantment and who placed it (if the creature knows) and gains a new saving throw to break free from the enchantment. This ability is language-dependent and requires audible components. Using this power requires only 2 rounds of performance at 15th level, and 1 round of performance at 20th level.

This performance replaces inspire greatness.

Show Yourselves (Ex): At 15th level, an agent of inquiry can use performance to compel creatures to reveal themselves when hiding. All enemies within 30 feet must make a Will save (DC 10 + half of the bard's level + his Charisma modifier). If they fail, they must cease using Stealth, unlock and open doors between themselves and the agent of inquiry, and dismiss, suppress, or dispel if necessary magical effects that grant invisibility or any other form of concealment from the agent of inquiry. As long as they can hear the performance, affected creatures may not attack or flee until they have eliminated every such effect, though they are freed from this compulsion immediately if attacked. Creatures in the area must make this save each round the bard continues his performance. This ability is language-dependent and requires audible components.

This performance replaces inspire heroics.

Inspiration (Ex): At 1st level, an agent of inquiry is beyond knowledgeable and skilled—he also possesses keen powers of observation and deduction that far surpass the abilities of others. An agent of inquiry typically uses these powers to aid in their investigations, but can also use these flashes of inspiration in other situations. An agent of inquiry has the ability to augment skill checks and ability checks through his brilliant inspiration. The agent of inquiry has an inspiration pool equal to half his bard level + his Intelligence modifier (minimum 1). An agent of inquiry's inspiration pool refreshes each day, typically after he gets a restful night's sleep. As a free action, he can expend one use of inspiration from his pool to add 1d6 to the result of that check, including any on which he takes 10 or 20. This choice is made after the check is rolled and before the results are revealed. An agent of inquiry can only use inspiration once per check or roll. The agent of inquiry can use inspiration on any Knowledge, Linguistics, or Spellcraft skill checks without expending a use of inspiration, provided he's trained in the skill. Inspiration can also be used on attack rolls and saving throws, at the cost of expending two

uses of inspiration each time from the agent of inquiry's pool. In the case of saving throws, using inspiration is an immediate action rather than a free action.

This ability replaces musical power.

Deductful Dodge (Ex): Sometimes, while the agent is looking for clues while on the case, foes tend to miss him, or perhaps the agent can see the enemies attack coming before they even make their move through deduction. At 1st level, when the agent is a target of an attack he may make a Perception check as an immediate action (he does not need to be aware of the attack) using his Perception roll as his AC against the attack. If he is unaware of the attack, he takes a -4 to the roll dodging attacks without knowing he even dodged them. He may do this a number of times per day equal 3 + his Charisma modifier.

This ability replaces distraction.

Eye for Detail (Ex): An agent of inquiry gains a bonus equal to half his level on Knowledge (local), Perception, and Sense Motive checks, as well as Diplomacy checks to gather information (minimum +1).

This ability replaces fascinate.

Arcane Insight (Ex): At 1st level, an agent of inquiry can find and disable magical traps, like a thief's trapfinding ability. In addition, he gains a +4 bonus on saving throws made against illusions and a +4 bonus on caster level checks and Perception skill checks to see through disguises. In addition, an agent of inquiry gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, granting him a +1 bonus on Reflex saving throws to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks by traps. At 5th level and every 3 levels thereafter, these bonuses increase by 1 (to a maximum of +7 at 20th level).

This ability replaces countersong.

Extraordinary Accidents (Ex): At 2nd level, the agent is great at making things happen even if accidental, by opening passages by falling on their back, or saying the wrong words but the right words, at the right time. Once per day, when the agent rolls a 1 on any d20 roll, he may treat that roll as natural 20, seemingly still causing a fumble that actually acts in his favor extraordinarily. At 6th level and every 4 levels thereafter, he may use this ability one additional time per day.

This ability replaces versatile performance.

Inquiry Talent (Ex or Su): At 2nd level and every two bard levels thereafter, an agent of inquiry gains an inquiry talent. Except where otherwise noted, each inquiry talent can only be selected once. Inquiry talents marked with an asterisk (*) add effects to an agent of inquiry's studied combat or studied strike. Only one of these talents can be applied to an individual attack, but the decision can be made when the damage is dealt..

Amazing Inspiration (Ex): When using inspiration, the agent of inquiry rolls a d8 instead of a d6. At 20th level, the agent of inquiry rolls 2d8 and adds both dice to the result. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 6th level to select this talent.

Applied Engineering (Ex): The agent of inquiry can leverage his knowledge of engineering to solve tasks that normally require brute strength or keen eyes. He can expend one use of inspiration as a full-round action to study an object or area and attempt a Knowledge (Engineering) check. On his next turn, he can use the result of that Knowledge (Engineering) check in place of a Strength check to break the object or in place of a Perception check to locate hidden doors or compartments in that area.

Blinding Strike (Ex):* When the agent of inquiry deals damage with studied strike, the opponent must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or be permanently blinded. A successful saving throw reduces this to dazzled for 1d4 rounds. The DC for this Fortitude save is equal to 10 + half the bard's level + his Intelligence modifier. This talent has no effect on creatures that do not rely on eyes for sight or creatures with more than two eyes (although multiple critical hits might cause blindness, at the GM's discretion). Blindness can be cured by heal, regeneration, remove blindness/deafness, or similar abilities. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 16th level to select this talent.

Combat Inspiration (Ex): When an agent of inquiry uses inspiration on an attack roll or saving throw, he expends one use of inspiration instead of two. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 8th level to select this talent.

Confusing Strike (Ex):* When the agent of inquiry deals damage with studied strike, the opponent must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or become confused for 1d4+1 rounds. A successful saving throw reduces the duration to 1 round. The DC for this Fortitude save is equal to 10 + half the bard's level + his Intelligence modifier. Constructs, mindless creatures, oozes, plants, undead, incorporeal creatures, and creatures immune to critical hits are not affected by this ability. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 18th level to select this talent.

Deafening Strike (Ex):* When an agent of inquiry deals damage with studied strike, the opponent must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or become permanently deafened. A successful saving throw reduces the duration of this effect to 1 round. The DC for this save is equal to 10 + half the bard's level + his Intelligence modifier. This talent has no effect on deaf creatures. Deafness can be cured by heal, regeneration, remove blindness/deafness, or similar effects. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 14th level to select this talent.

Domino Effect (Ex):* When the agent of inquiry uses studied strike, he uses his opponents against each other and sets himself up for his next move. Whenever he successfully deals damage to an opponent with studied strike, as a free action the agent of inquiry can apply the effects of studied combat to an opponent adjacent to the first. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 4th level to select this talent.

Effortless Aid (Ex): The agent of inquiry can use an aid another action as a move action instead of as a standard action. An agent of inquiry can expend one use of inspiration to instead perform an aid another action as a swift action.

Eidetic Recollection (Su): An agent of inquiry can always choose to take 10 on any of his Knowledge checks, even if he's in immediate danger or distracted. An agent of inquiry may expend one use of inspiration to take 20 on a Knowledge skill check even if he's in immediate danger or distracted. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 10th level to select this talent.

Empathy (Ex): When attempting a Sense Motive check, the agent of inquiry makes two d20 rolls and takes the higher result. If an agent of inquiry uses inspiration on a Sense Motive check, he rolls the inspiration dice twice and takes the higher result.

Expanded Inspiration (Ex): An agent of inquiry can use his inspiration ability when attempting Diplomacy, Heal, Perception, Profession, and Sense Motive checks without expending uses of inspiration, provided he's trained in the skill.

Greater Combat Inspiration (Ex): Choose a single weapon type (such as sword cane or short sword). As long as the agent of inquiry has at least 1 inspiration point in his inspiration pool, he no longer has to expend a use of inspiration to use that ability with attacks made with this weapon. **Prerequisites:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 18th level and have the combat inspiration inquiry talent to select this talent.

Greater Numerical Strike (Ex):* Once per day, when the agent of inquiry has confirmed a critical hit with a studied strike, he can deal the strike's maximum damage instead of rolling damage as normal. This includes the damage dealt by the successful attack as well as the additional damage from the studied strike. He can expend a use of inspiration to use this ability a second time per day. Using this ability doesn't require an action. **Prerequisites:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 12th level and have the numerical strike inquiry talent to select this talent.

Hidden Agendas (Ex): An agent of inquiry learns to obscure his thoughts and endeavors from prying eyes and even intrusive magic. When an agent of inquiry uses inspiration while attempting a Bluff check to pass secret messages or attempting a Linguistics check to create forgeries, he can roll his inspiration dice twice and take the higher result. In addition, the agent of inquiry can use inspiration when attempting a saving throw against a divination spell or effect without expending a use of inspiration. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 10th level to select this talent.

Inspirational Expertise (Ex): When an agent of inquiry succeeds at a Knowledge check to identify a monster's special powers or vulnerabilities, he can expend one use of inspiration as a swift action to grant allies within 30 feet that can hear him a +4 insight bonus on attack rolls against that monster or type of monster for 1 round. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 6th level to select this talent.

Inspired Alertness (Ex): Whenever the agent of inquiry becomes flat-footed, he can expend one use of inspiration to ignore that condition. He must be conscious to do so, and must decide to do so when he becomes flat-footed. Using this ability doesn't require an action.

Inspired Engineering (Ex): An agent of inquiry can use his inspiration on Disable Device, Drive, Navigate, Pilot, or Repair checks without expending uses of inspiration, provided he's trained in the skill.

Inspired Intelligence (Ex): An agent of inquiry can add his inspiration die to all Knowledge, Linguistics, or Spellcraft checks without expending a use of inspiration.

Inspired Intimidator (Ex): When the agent of inquiry succeeds at an Intimidate check to demoralize or antagonize an opponent, he can expend one use of inspiration to automatically increase the result of the check by 5 for the purpose of determining the duration of the demoralize or antagonize effect. He can choose to spend multiple uses to inspiration in this manner to further increase the duration of the demoralize or antagonize effect. The underworld inspiration agent of inquiry talent has no effect on this talent. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must have 1 rank in Intimidate to select this talent.

Item Lore (Ex): An agent of inquiry can use Spellcraft to identify the properties and command words of magic items without the use of *detect magic* or similar spells. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 6th level to select this talent.

Mark (Ex): The agent of inquiry gains the ability to measure a creature's capabilities with a look, sizing him up as a potential target for cons, robbery, or combat. The agent of inquiry must spend a full-round action observing a target, and must succeed at a Perception check against a DC of 10 + the target's character level or HD. If he succeeds, the thief learns the target's class, level, and ability modifiers. If the target is in disguise and its Disguise check exceeds 10 + its character level, the Perception DC is instead equal to the Disguise check. Failure at this check means the agent of inquiry is not able to accurately gauge his target, while failure by 5 or more leads to false information. Observing someone in this manner also designates that person as the agent of inquiry's mark, granting him a number of bonuses against them. An agent of inquiry gains a +2 bonus to Perception, Bluff, Sleight of Hand, and Steal combat maneuver checks made against his mark. An agent of inquiry also gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made against his mark. These bonuses increases to +3 at 7th level, +4 at 13th level, and +5 at 19th level. An agent of inquiry must keep his attention focused on his

mark, and suffers a –2 penalty to his AC except against attacks made by his mark, and also suffers a -4 penalty to Perception checks made against anyone but his mark. Once an agent of inquiry has designated a mark, he must maintain that creature as his mark each round with a free action.

Masterful Numerical Strike (Ex):* The agent of inquiry can use both numerical strike and greater numerical strike three times per day. The agent of inquiry doesn't need to expend uses of inspiration to use either ability, but he can never use either more than three times per day each. **Prerequisites:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 16th level and have the numerical strike and greater numerical strike inquiry talents to select this talent.

Numerical Strike (Ex):* Once per day when the agent of inquiry has confirmed a critical hit with a studied strike, he can deal average damage instead of rolling damage as normal. This includes the damage dealt by the successful attack as well as the additional damage from the studied strike. He can expend a use of inspiration to use this ability a second time per day. Using this ability doesn't require an action. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 4th level to select this talent.

Perceptive Tracking (Ex): The agent of inquiry can use Perception instead of Survival to both find and follow tracks, using the same DCs listed under the Survival skill. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must have at least 1 rank in Perception to select this talent.

Prolonged Study (Ex):* The agent of inquiry can study his opponents for long periods of time. The effects of his studied combat ability last for a number of rounds equal to twice his Intelligence modifier (minimum 2) or until he deals damage with a studied strike, whichever comes first. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 12th level to select this talent.

Quick Study (Ex): An agent of inquiry can use his studied combat ability as swift action instead of a move action. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 4th level to select this talent.

Repositioning Strike (Ex):* When the agent of inquiry deals damage with studied strike, he can perform a reposition combat maneuver as a free action against the creature damaged by studied strike. This reposition does not provoke attacks of opportunity. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 12th level to select this talent.

Sapping Offensive (Ex):* When the agent of inquiry damages a studied target, that creature cannot make attacks of opportunity for 1 round. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 4th level to select this talent.

Sickenening Offensive (Ex):* When the agent of inquiry damages a studied target, that creature is also sickened for 1 round. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 6th level to select this talent.

Slowing Strike (Ex):* When the agent of inquiry deals damage with studied strike, the opponent must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the bard's level + his Intelligence modifier) or be slowed by the crippling blow. A slowed opponent's movement speeds are each reduced by 5 feet (to a minimum of 5 feet) until the creature is healed through the application of any spell that cures hit point damage or with a successful DC 15 Heal check. Multiple slowing strikes stack, to a minimum of 5 feet. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 6th level to select this talent.

Stealing Strike (Ex):* When the agent of inquiry deals damage with studied strike, he can perform a steal combat maneuver as a free action against the creature damaged by studied strike. This steal does not provoke attacks of opportunity. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 12th level to select this talent.

Studied Defense (Ex): When an agent of inquiry with this talent uses his studied combat ability, he can choose to apply that ability's insight bonus to his AC against attacks made by the target of his studied combat instead of to attack rolls against the target of his studied combat. (The insight bonus on damage rolls remains.) He must choose which type of bonus he gains when using studied combat, and it cannot be changed until he uses studied combat again. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 8th level to select this talent.

Tenacious Inspiration (Ex): When an agent of inquiry rolls his inspiration die, he can roll an additional inspiration die and take the higher result. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 12th level to select this talent.

Timed Strike (Ex):* The longer the agent of inquiry studies his opponent, the greater the damage he ultimately deals with his studied strike. When the agent of inquiry makes a studied strike, he deals a number of points of additional damage equal to the number of consecutive rounds he studied the target with studied combat. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 4th level to select this talent.

Toppling Strike (Ex):* When the agent of inquiry deals damage with studied strike, he can perform a trip combat maneuver as a free action against the creature damaged by studied strike. This trip does not provoke attacks of opportunity. **Prerequisite:** The agent of inquiry must be at least 8th level to select this talent.

Unconventional Inspiration (Ex): An agent of inquiry with this talent can pick any one skill. He can add his inspiration die to checks attempted with that skill without expending a use of inspiration.

Underworld Inspiration (Ex): An agent of inquiry can use his inspiration on Bluff, Disable Device, Disguise, Intimidate, or Sleight of Hand checks without expending uses of inspiration, provided he's trained in the skill.

These abilities replace song talents and advanced song talents.

Gentleman's Hustle (Ex): The agent is adept at chasing after suspects of crimes he inspects, or running from suspects. Starting at 2nd level, he gains a 10-foot movement bonus to his base land speed. This increases by 5 feet every four bard levels thereafter. He loses this bonus movement speed while in any armor other than light.

This ability replaces well-versed.

Studied Combat (Ex): With a keen eye and calculating mind, an agent of inquiry can assess the mettle of his opponent to take advantage of gaps in talent and training. At 3rd level, an agent of inquiry can use a move action to study a single enemy that he can see. Upon doing so, he adds half his bard level as an insight bonus on melee attack rolls and as a bonus on damage rolls against the creature. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to his Intelligence modifier (minimum 1) or until he deals damage with a studied strike, whichever comes first. The bonus on damage rolls is precision damage, and is not multiplied on a critical hit. An agent of inquiry can only have one target of studied combat at a time, and once a creature has become the target of an agent of inquiry's studied combat, he cannot become the target of the same agent of inquiry's studied combat again for 24 hours unless the agent of inquiry expends one use of inspiration when taking the move action to use this ability.

This ability replaces inspiration.

Studied Strike (Ex): At 4th level, an agent of inquiry can choose to make a studied strike against the target of his studied combat as a free action, upon successfully hitting his studied target with a melee attack, to deal additional damage. The damage is 1d6 at 4th level, and increases by 1d6 for every 2 levels thereafter (to a maximum of 9d6 at 20th level). The damage of studied strike is precision damage and is not multiplied on a critical hit; creatures that are immune to sneak attacks are also immune to studied strike. If the agent of inquiry's attack used a weapon that deals nonlethal damage (like a sap, whip, or an unarmed strike), he may choose to

have the additional damage from studied strike be nonlethal damage instead of lethal damage. If the agent of inquiry chose to make an attack with a lethal weapon instead deal nonlethal damage (with the usual -4 penalty), the studied strike damage may also deal nonlethal damage. The agent of inquiry must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. An agent of inquiry cannot use studied strike against a creature with concealment.

This ability replaces wide audience.

Relentless Pursuit (Ex): At 5th level, an agent of inquiry can learn enough about a suspect through observation that he can deduce the most effective way to deal with the subject. Once per day, if an agent finds a creature's tracks using tracking, he gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Knowledge, Perception, Sense Motive, and Survival checks against or about that creature, as well as on weapon attack and damage rolls against that creature. These bonuses last until the agent selects a new subject for relentless pursuit. Upon defeat of the subject, the agent of inquiry may select a new subject.

This ability replaces additional song.

True Inspiration (Ex): At 20th level, an agent of inquiry can use inspiration on all skill checks—even ones he isn't trained in—and all ability checks without spending inspiration. In addition, the agent may expend an inspiration on an ability check or skill check, to add 2d6 rather than 1d6 to the result.

This ability replaces deadly performance.