

A MAGIC SYSTEM FOR ADVENTURES IN MIDDLE-EARTH

This document details how to incorporate a magic system into the campaign for characters to use in the Adventures in Middle-Earth setting for Dungeons & Dragons 5e. The basic idea is to use the spells of the Dungeons & Dragons 5e magic system along with house rules to construct a magic system for Middle-Earth. Under this system, a “wizard” is simply a character that has learned the magical Schools and can cast spells. A character of any class, any culture, and any background can either start play as a wizard or become a wizard after play begins at any character level.

QUALIFYING TO BE A WIZARD

STARTING PLAY AS A WIZARD

The Loremaster can allow a character to start play as a wizard, if they can meet the requirements. There are four possible ways for a character to begin the game as a wizard.

FOR ANY CULTURE, ANY CLASS, ANY BACKGROUND

You can forego the Ability Score Increase for your culture to take Wizardry (a new Open Virtue detailed below) at 1st level. This represents your time spent learning magic instead of engaging in the typical activities of your culture during youth.

FOR ANY CULTURE, ANY CLASS, ANY BACKGROUND

If the Loremaster decides that a character can start with the Wizardry virtue without having to sacrifice anything during character generation, then that character must forego their Character Improvement at 4th level.

FOR MANNISH CULTURES, ANY CLASS, ANY BACKGROUND

You can choose the Open Virtue: Wizardry instead of your Cultural Virtue at 1st Level. The Player’s Guide, page 100 says that members of the Mannish cultures can take an Open Virtue in lieu of a Cultural Virtue.

FOR ANY CLASS, ANY CULTURE, MAGICIAN BACKGROUND

If you take The Magician Background at 1st level, you can choose the Wizard option. You are a true wizard rather than a performer and prestidigitator. Refer to pages 135 and 136 in the Player’s Guide and add the following background option for The Magician:

OPTIONAL MAGICIAN: WIZARD

You have studied the magic of the ancient world prior to beginning your adventures. You gain the Wizardry virtue. You may pick two skills other than Performer and Sleight of Hand if you desire (for your background skill proficiencies).

BECOMING A WIZARD AFTER PLAY BEGINS

First, a character of any culture, class, or background can become a wizard. All that is required is to take the Wizardry virtue. Wizardry can be taken during a Fellowship phase when you are eligible to take an Open Virtue. The Loremaster's Guide, page 153 says that characters can gain an Open Virtue every other Fellowship phase at a Sanctuary. A character can also take Wizardry as their Character Improvement at 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th or 19th level if the story allows that the character may have had some training by a master previously (or at 10th level for Treasure Hunters or at 6th or 14th level for Warriors). It will be assumed they’ve been working on things for quite some time behind the scenes and are now finally wizards. A character of any class (Scholar, Slayer, Treasure Hunter, Wanderer, Warden, and Warrior) can become a wizard.

NEW OPEN VIRTUES

WIZARDRY

Prerequisite: None

You have had the magical Schools of the ancient world opened to you. You gain proficiency in the Lore skill if you do not have it already. You also learn Quenya if you do not already know it.

You have basic knowledge of all nine Schools of Magic. You gain a caster level of zero in each of these nine Schools. You have learned a number of cantrips equal to the sum of your proficiency bonus, your Intelligence modifier, and your Wisdom modifier. You may learn cantrips from any School.

You are now more closely tied to the spiritual aspects of Creation and less tied to the physical world of Arda. All of your current hit dice are replaced with d6 hit dice. Your hit point maximum becomes $2 + \text{your character level} \times \text{your Constitution modifier} + 4$. For example, a 5th level character with a Constitution of 16 (+3) would have a hit point maximum of $2 \text{ hit points} + 5 \text{ levels} \times (3 + 4) \text{ hit points per level} = 37 \text{ hit points}$. All hit dice you gain from advancing in character level become d6 hit dice (regardless of class) and you may add a number of hit points equal to the roll of $1d6 + \text{your Constitution modifier}$ or $4 + \text{your Constitution modifier}$ when you gain a level.

Your ways are somewhat suspect among normal folk. If you make the introduction during an Audience, the default attitude is Askance (unless it is already Mistrustful). The result of a failed Intelligence (Traditions) check (DC 15) will worsen this attitude to Mistrustful. Another character in your party may make the introduction at the normal default attitude but one step worse (as you are still a member of the group presenting themselves). These attitudes can change with time and become irrelevant if your party has the advantage of the Open Sanctuary undertaking at the location.

During Fellowship phases, you may be able to take advantage of additional undertakings available to wizards. The Loremaster may require that you spend the Fellowship phase in a Sanctuary that could be reasonably expected to have the proper libraries, workshops, teachers, or other facilities that would allow for magical undertakings.

NEW FELLOWSHIP PHASE UNDERTAKINGS FOR WIZARDS

The following are two new Fellowship Undertakings that are available to wizard characters.

INCREASE MAGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Prerequisite: Wizardry Open Virtue

Choose one School of Magic. You increase your caster level in that School by one. You may not increase your caster level in any School to higher than your character level. If the character gains an even-numbered caster level (i.e., 2nd, 4th, 6th, etc.) they also gain one cantrip or 1st level spell of the School chosen, for free. Players must record their wizard characters' various caster levels in each of the nine Schools of Magic, as they are separately raised through this undertaking.

You must have access to a library with magical knowledge, a magical laboratory, or some other place appropriate to your research. Most likely, this will be a Sanctuary that could be reasonably expected to contain magical knowledge, such as Rivendell or Isengard. The Loremaster will determine how high you can raise your caster levels in the various Schools at these locations.

GAIN SPELL

Prerequisite: Wizardry Open Virtue

You gain one spell of a spell level you can cast. You know this spell in the manner of D&D bards, sorcerers, and warlocks. The maximum spell level you can cast in each School is equal to your caster level in the appropriate school, divided by two, rounded up (to a maximum of 9th level spells). The table below summarizes.

Maximum Spell Level by Caster Level

Caster Level	Maximum Spell Level	Caster Level	Maximum Spell Level
0	Cantrip	9th – 10th	5th Level Spells
1st – 2nd	1st Level Spells	11th – 12th	6th Level Spells
3rd – 4th	2nd Level Spells	13th – 14th	7th Level Spells
5th – 6th	3rd Level Spells	15th – 16th	8th Level Spells
7th – 8th	4th Level Spells	17th +	9th Level Spells

You must have access to a library with magical knowledge, a magical laboratory, or some other place appropriate to your research. Most likely, this will be a Sanctuary that could be reasonably expected to contain magical knowledge, such as Rivendell or Isengard. The Loremaster will determine what spells you might be able to gain at these locations.

SPELLCASTING IN MIDDLE-EARTH

CASTING SPELLS

Characters may cast spells they know whenever they want as long as they pay the cost. The player decides which of these costs to pay upon casting a spell:

1. Use your Inspiration.
2. Spend power points.
3. Gain one level of exhaustion.
4. Accept one Shadow point.

Characters casting a 6th, 7th, 8th, or 9th level spell also suffer one level of exhaustion in addition to the normal spellcasting cost. Your spellcasting ability is the highest of your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. You may use a spellcasting focus to cast your spells and you may cast a spell as a ritual if the spell has the ritual tag.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your spellcasting ability modifier

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your spellcasting ability modifier

Power points (known as “pips”) are gained by spending hit dice. For each hit die the player spends, the wizard gains either 1d6 or 4 pips (player choice). These power points can then be used as a pool from which to power spellcasting. Spells cost a number of pips equal to the level of the spell. Cantrips cost half a pip up to 8th character level and cost nothing at 9th character level and higher. A wizard can use Inspiration in lieu of power points to cast a spell of any level. Alternatively, a wizard can take on one level of exhaustion to cast a spell of any level in lieu of power points. Finally, by accepting one Shadow point the wizard can cast a spell of any level without power points. Spells of 6th level and higher still induce one level of exhaustion even if Inspiration, exhaustion, or Shadow is used.

Characters can cast spells while wearing armor or bearing a shield only if they are proficient in the armor and shield. They otherwise cannot cast spells while wearing armor or employing shields. There is, however, an additional cost in power points when casting spells while wearing armor and bearing a shield (there is no additional cost if Inspiration, Exhaustion, or Shadow is used). It costs one additional pip to cast a spell while wearing light armor, two extra pips while wearing medium armor, and three more pips while wearing heavy armor. Using a shield adds another pip to the spellcasting cost. Thus, a warrior-wizard wearing full mail and using a shield would have to pay an additional four power points each time they cast a spell. Loremasters may waive this armor penalty if desired, as it may not reflect their campaign preferences.

MAGIC, MISDEEDS, AND SHADOW

Many traditional roleplaying uses of magic, like killing from a distance, controlling someone's mind, and magical thievery are considered Misdeeds in this setting. Loremasters should warn players if a use of magic would have their characters gain Shadow points. When magic is used against creatures aligned to the Shadow, Loremasters may go a little easier on these restrictions. If the player uses magic to accomplish a Misdeed, they will most definitely gain Shadow points. Wizards have to be very careful.

SUCCUMBING TO THE SHADOW

You might note that if a wizard character, for some reason, didn't care about gaining Shadow they could become prolific spellcasters. This is intentional. This is another lure of falling all they way into Shadow - you can cast as many spells as you want, for a time. The problem with this is that as soon as the character actually succumbs to the Shadow, they can't cast a spell by gaining a Shadow point and may only cast spells by expending their Inspiration, power points, or by accepting one level of exhaustion. In other words, Shadowed wizards may *not* take on a point of Shadow in lieu of power points.

THE RESTORATION SCHOOL OF MAGIC

There is an additional School of Magic in Middle Earth known as the Restoration School. The spells of the Restoration School are:

Spell	Original School	Level
Spare the Dying	Necromancy	Cantrip
Cure Wounds	Evocation	1
False Life	Necromancy	1
Goodberry	Transmutation	1
Healing Word	Evocation	1
Aid	Abjuration	2
Gentle Repose	Necromancy	2
Prayer of Healing	Evocation	2
Protection from Poison	Abjuration	2
Healing Spirit	Conjuration	2
Lesser Restoration	Abjuration	2
Aura of Vitality	Evocation	3
Beacon of Hope	Conjuration	3
Mass Healing Word	Evocation	3
Remove Curse	Abjuration	3
Revivify	Necromancy	3
Death Ward	Abjuration	4
Greater Restoration	Abjuration	5
Mass Cure Wounds	Evocation	5
Raise Dead	Necromancy	5
Reincarnate	Transmutation	5
Heal	Evocation	6
Resurrection	Necromancy	7
Regenerate	Transmutation	7
Clone	Necromancy	8
Mass Heal	Evocation	9
Power Word Heal	Evocation	9
True Resurrection	Necromancy	9

These spells also remain in their original Schools as well. Loremasters may devise other Schools of Magic that are in keeping with the spirit of the setting.

THE EYE OF MORDOR

The Eye of Mordor rules in the Rivendell Region Guide must be used if this magic system is employed in your campaign (even if you just use it for this spellcasting). Use those rules and add one additional bullet point under “Using Magic”:

- For those whose vision of Middle-earth includes OGL magic, when a spell is cast the Hunt is raised by a number of points equal to half the level of the spell slot used when casting a spell by sacrificing a hit die or gaining one level of exhaustion. Subtract one if casting a spell with Inspiration (minimum of +0) and add one if gaining a Shadow point.

Level of Spell Slot Used	Increase in Hunt Score (Cast by Inspiration)	Increase in Hunt Score (Cast by Hit Dice/Exhaustion)	Increase in Hunt Score (Cast by Shadow Point)
Cantrip	+0	+0	+1
1	+0	+0	+1
2	+0	+1	+2
3	+0	+1	+2
4	+1	+2	+3
5	+1	+2	+3
6	+2	+3	+4
7	+2	+3	+4
8	+3	+4	+5
9	+3	+4	+5

REVELATION EPISODES FOR SPELLCASTING

The Loremaster may want a few additional examples of revelation episodes specific to spellcasting. These can be used when the Hunt score increases due to spellcasting and the Eye Awareness check is failed. The Loremaster may choose from the following list below or may roll 1d6 to determine which episode affects the spellcaster. The player can negate the penalty that would be gained by accepting one Shadow point (unless the character has already succumbed to the Shadow).

- (1) **Wearied by Magic.** Casting the spell takes a physical toll on the character. The spellcaster immediately increases their Exhaustion level by 1.
- (2) **Ill-Fated.** Casting the spell imposes a spiritual penalty on the character. The player of the spellcaster has disadvantage on a future d20 roll. The Loremaster determines when the disadvantage to the roll will be applied. The player can negate this disadvantage by accepting a point of Shadow, either immediately (when the disadvantage is gained) or before the d20 roll is made.
- (3) **Of Two Worlds.** The spellcaster slips further away from the world of Arda. The character loses one available hit die. If the character has no hit dice available to lose, the character loses 1d6 hit points.
- (4) **Clouded Memory.** The spellcaster loses memory of the spell that brought on the revelation episode and cannot cast the spell any longer. The memory of and ability to cast the spell return after a long rest.
- (5) **Diminished Power.** The spellcaster loses the ability to cast the highest level spell(s) they know. They regain the ability to cast these spells after a short rest.
- (6) **Tempted by Shadow.** If the player chooses to accept one point of Shadow, all exhaustion levels gained from spellcasting and all hit dice spent to cast spells are restored. If the player does not accept the Shadow point, the character gains Inspiration stemming from the increased confidence engendered by successfully resisting the Shadow.