

BASIC D20 MAGIC SKILLS

Basic d20 assumes that you will use the normal D&D spellcasting system to create characters. A more basic, generic system is detailed here that allows each character to be customized as the player desires. Old class distinctions are discarded in favor of a unified approach to spellcasting.

MAGIC SKILLS

There are eight Magic skills, one for each school of magic. Each rank in a Magic skill costs the same as one rank in a normal Basic d20 broad skill area (1 Power Point per skill rank). Purchasing ranks in a Magic skill confers certain spellcasting benefits to the character. Each Magic skill represents the character's knowledge and mastery of one of the schools of magic. These schools are listed in the table.

Check: Normally associated with caster level checks only. The key ability does not figure into caster level checks. The key ability does affect the saving throw DC for spells of that school.

Action: Not Applicable.

Try Again: Not Applicable.

The Magic skills do not work like other skills. Each Magic skill grants the character the following advantages:

Magic Skills
Abjuration
Conjuration
Divination
Enchantment
Evocation
Illusion
Necromancy
Transmutation

Spellcaster Level: the character's level for the purposes of spellcasting is equal to the number of skill ranks the character has in a Magic skill. Each Magic skill counts separately. Thus, a character can potentially have eight different spellcaster levels, since there are eight different Magic skills. Spellcaster level governs the highest level of spell the character can use, the maximum number of spell points the character can use for one spell, and is used for all situations where a caster level is required. The character's caster level in each school is based on the number of skill ranks in Magic skill the character has in that particular school. For game effects requiring a class caster level (or some other "generic" caster level), use the highest caster level from among the character's eight different Magic skills. For example, the character's highest caster level is used when meeting the prerequisites for Item Creation feats. For caster level checks, use the appropriate Magic skill to determine caster level.

Spell Lists: Each Magic skill allows the character to access spells of the appropriate school. These spells become part of the character's personal spell list, representing the breadth of the character's magical knowledge and training. They are taken from all spell lists (bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer/wizard, etc.). If a spell has different spell levels for different classes, use the lowest from among cleric, druid, and sorcerer/wizard (excluding domain lists). For example, *true seeing* becomes a 5th level spell under this system. If a spell is not found on any of these three lists, use the lowest level listed for any class.

It is important to note that not all of these spells become automatically known by the character immediately. They must be found and learned through normal means (as determined by the GM).

Being on the character's personal spell list simply makes them available to be learned by the character, much like all sorcerer/wizard spells are available to be learned by sorcerers and wizards.

All spells of the appropriate school up to a level equal to the number of Magic skill ranks plus one, divided by two, become part of the character's spell list. See the chart below.

Ranks	Spell Levels in List	Ranks	Spell Levels in List
Special	0th	9	1st-5th
1	1st	11	1st-6th
3	1st-2nd	13	1st-7th
5	1st-3rd	15	1st-8th
7	1st-4th	17	1st-9th

For example, a character with 7 ranks in Evocation would include all evocation spells from 1st to 4th level in his personal spell list. A character with 17 ranks in Illusion would have every illusion spell (1st-9th) in his personal spell list. The "Special" for 0th level spells indicates that a character with at least one rank in any Magic skill is eligible to learn and cast any 0th level spell from any school. For example, if a character has only one rank in Enchantment and ranks in no other Magic skills, he still has all cantrips and orisons in his personal spell list.

Spell Knowledge: Each time a character gains an odd-numbered rank in a Magic skill, he gains knowledge of one spell of the appropriate school. If the character finds additional spells during the normal course of the campaign that are included in his personal spell list, he can learn them as well. A character must know a spell before he is able to cast it. In order to know a certain spell, the character must have learned the spell from another character, a spell scroll, a spell book, or by some other method (as determined by the GM). A known spell can be cast as long as the character has enough spell points to do so. It bears repeating: access to spell lists is simply a prerequisite to learning spells.

Spell Points: Every rank gained in a Magic skill adds a number of points to a character's total spell points. The table to the right shows the number of spell points in the character's total for each Magic skill. For example, if a character has five Magic skills at 7 ranks, two Magic skills at 5 ranks, and one at 3 ranks, then that character's spell point total is equal to $5 \times 5.33 + 2 \times 2.66 + 1 \times 1.33 = 34$ spell points. Always round all fractions up to the nearest integer.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in a Magic skill, you get a +2 bonus on Science (spellcraft) checks relating to the appropriate school.

Ranks	Spell Points	Ranks	Spell Points
1	0.33	11	14.66
2	0.66	12	17.33
3	1.33	13	20
4	2	14	22.66
5	2.66	15	25.33
6	4	16	28
7	5.33	17	30.66
8	7.33	18	33.33
9	9.33	19	36
10	12	20	38.66

KEY ABILITIES FOR MAGIC SKILLS

The GM determines the key ability for all Magic skills in his campaign. He can vary the key ability by character, allowing the player to determine the nature and “feel” of his particular spellcaster. The GM can also choose different key abilities for different Magic skills, such as Wisdom for Abjuration and Charisma for Enchantment. He could rule that the highest of the character’s mental abilities (i.e., Int, Wis, and Cha) is always that character’s key ability.

Regardless of the key ability chosen for each Magic skill, certain uses are standard. The key ability is added to the Difficulty Class of the saving throws for spells cast by the character. The key ability also determines the highest spell level the character can learn.

$$\text{HIGHEST SPELL LEVEL ABLE TO BE LEARNED} = \text{KEY ABILITY} \times 2 + 1$$

A simple table summarizes this formula:

Key Ability for Magic Skill	Highest Spell Level Able to be Learned
+0	1st
+1	3rd
+2	5th
+3	7th
+4	9th

BONUS SPELL POINTS

The table below shows the number of bonus spell points a character receives based on the character’s key ability and the rank of his highest Magic skill. For example, the GM determines that for his campaign, the key ability for all Magic skills is Intelligence. The character’s Int is +3 and he has 10 ranks in his highest Magic skill. This character receives a bonus of 9 SP.

Ability	Number of Ranks in Highest Magic Skill												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13+
+0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
+1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
+2	1	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
+3	1	2	4	6	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
+4	1	2	4	6	9	12	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
+5	2	3	5	7	10	13	17	21	26	26	26	26	26
+6	2	5	8	10	13	16	20	24	29	34	40	40	40
+7	2	5	8	13	18	21	25	29	34	39	45	51	58

SPELL POINT COST BY SPELL LEVEL

Spell point costs by spell level are shown below.

Spell Level	Spell Point Cost	Spell Level	Spell Point Cost
0th	0.5	5th	9
1st	1	6th	11
2nd	3	7th	13
3rd	5	8th	15
4th	7	9th	17

LEARNING NEW SPELLS

Characters gain one new spell every time an odd-numbered rank is purchased in a Magic skill (1, 3, 5, 7, and so on). The cost of this new spell in Power Points is already included in the cost of each skill rank. Learning additional spells, beyond the “free” one learned during each odd-numbered rank increase, is possible. It costs one Power Point to learn a new spell. First, the character must have access to the spell to be learned. Spell scrolls, spellbooks, characters or creatures knowing the spell, writings on temple walls, and other sources of information are all valid in meeting this requirement. Second, the player must make a successful Science (spellcraft) roll for the character to be able to learn the spell. If successful, the 1 PP is spent and the character now knows the spell. The time to learn the spell is determined by the GM and should be driven by campaign pacing and dramatic necessity.

Alternatively, new spells can be learned using the Natural Advancement method if the character does not have Power Points to spend. Each spell, regardless of spell level, takes three months to learn. The character can seek out a teacher or attempt to learn a spell alone. A teacher must know the spell being taught. Spellcasters will always charge at least 600 gp to teach the new spell plus the market price of the spell itself (determined by the GM). The advantage to this method is that as long as the character’s key ability for the appropriate Magic skill is high enough, a Science (spellcraft) roll is not needed. Successful learning is automatic. If the character wishes to learn the spell on his own, he spends three months studying it from its source (scroll, spellbook, obelisk, etc.). At the end of three months, a Science (spellcraft) check is made to see if the spell has been learned. If successful, the character has learned the spell. If unsuccessful, the character must spend additional time to learn the spell. For each additional week, another Science (spellcraft) roll can be attempted.

The DC for Science (spellcraft) rolls to learn a spell is equal to 15 + the spell’s level. Intelligence should always be used for this Science (spellcraft) roll. However, characters cannot learn spells having levels greater than twice their key ability plus one.

UNIVERSAL SPELLS

As long as a character can learn and cast spells of the appropriate level in any school, he can learn universal spells. For example, as long as a character has at least 13 ranks in any Magic skill and a key ability of +3 or higher, that character can learn and cast *limited wish*.

SPELL PREPARATION AND SPELL SLOTS

There is no spell preparation in this system. All spells are known in the manner of bards and sorcerers. As long as a character has enough spell points to cast a known spell, he may cast it normally.

If you absolutely must have spells per day “slots” for your campaign (maybe you despise the spell point system), then use these guidelines. Give your character one spell slot for each of the spell levels he can cast for every school, up to a maximum of six spell slots for each spell level. Using the previous example, a character has five Magic skills at 7 ranks, two Magic skills at 5 ranks, and one at 3 ranks. This would indicate that he receives 5/5/5/5 for the Magic skills at 7 ranks, 2/2/2 for the Magic skills at 5 ranks, and 1/1 for his one Magic skill with one rank. This adds up to 8/8/7/5. Because the maximum is six spell slots per level, his final spells per day are 6/6/6/5. This is comparable to the spells per day for a 9th level sorcerer. By contrast, a spellcaster with 17 ranks in only one school would receive one spell slot for each spell level (1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1). Characters always receive six cantrip spell slots as long as they have one rank in any Magic skill. Award spell slots even if the spellcaster cannot cast spells of that level due to a low key ability; they can use those slots for lower level spells. Add bonus spell slots based on the character’s key ability and highest level of spell able to be cast.

SPELL POINTS VARIANT RULES

See the SRD for more information on the Spell Points Variant Rules. The GM should choose the options that he desires for his campaign from among those offered (such as Vitalizing and rules for metamagic feats).

ARCANE AND DIVINE SPELLCASTER DISTINCTION

Under this system, disregard the arcane/divine distinction in spellcasting. For any game effects that require the source of the character’s spellcasting ability be known (whether arcane or divine), the GM should exercise good judgment. Spellcasters are not affected by the arcane spell failure chance when wearing armor in which they are proficient. Spellcasters wearing armor in which they are not proficient suffer the normal arcane spell failure chances.

THREE FEATS ESPECIALLY SUITED FOR CAMPAIGNS USING MAGIC SKILLS

The feats detailed below are found in a number of d20 supplements and can be used to expand the spellcasting capabilities of characters in your campaign.

Arcane Preparation [General]

You can prepare an arcane spell ahead of time as a wizard does.

Prerequisite: You must be able to cast spells as a bard or sorcerer before you can take this feat.

Benefit: Each day, you are able to prepare one or more spells as a wizard does. If you are a sorcerer or a bard, this means that you can prepare a spell with a metamagic feat ahead of time, instead of casting it as a full-round action. The prepared spell remains in your mind and occupies one of your spell slots until you cast it or change it. A prepared spell uses a spell slot of the spell's normal level, modified by any other metamagic feats.

Extra Slot [General]

You can cast an extra spell.

Prerequisites: Spellcaster level 4th+.

Benefit: You gain one extra spell slot in your daily allotment. This extra slot can be at any level up to one level lower than the highest-level spell you can cast. For example, a 4th level sorcerer gains either an extra 0-level or 1st-level slot, allowing him to cast any known spell of the chosen level one more time each day. A 4th-level wizard can prepare any extra 0-level or 1st-level spell she knows. Once selected, the extra spell slot never migrates up or down in level.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time, you gain an extra spell slot at any level up to one level lower than the highest-level spell you can cast.

Extra Spell [General]

You can learn one more spell.

Prerequisites: Spellcaster level 3rd+.

Benefit: You learn one additional spell at any level up to one level lower than the highest-level spell you can cast. Thus, a 4th-level sorcerer gains a new 0-level or 1st-level spell, expanding his repertoire. A 4th-level wizard can likewise learn an extra 0-level or 1st-level spell, but since wizards learn spells far more easily than sorcerers, this feat is of less use to her.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time, you learn a new spell at any level up to one lower than the highest-level spell you can cast.

HOW SHOULD THIS BE USED?

Like many other variants that have come before, this Basic d20 Magic system does away with all class distinctions between spellcasters. Mechanically, all spellcasters are the same under this system. It is up to the GM and players to determine what types of spellcasters exist in the campaign world. Different types of spellcasters can be created by varying key abilities, school choices, spell choices, and by choosing certain advantages. Alchemists, bards, clerics, cultists, druids, enchanters, exorcists, fakirs, geomancers, hedge mages, infernalists, loremasters, miracle workers, necromancers, oracles, prestidigitators, qabalists, seers, shaman, sorcerers, thaumaturgists, theurgists, warlocks, wise ones, and wizards can all be conceived of and created with this system.

For example, let's say you like the illusionist class from AD&D. You make Dexterity the key ability for illusionists. Dexterity will govern the spell save DCs and the highest level of spell that illusionists can cast ("a high manual dexterity is required in casting of the spells used by this class" – PHB, page 26). Intelligence will still be added to Science (spellcraft) rolls to see if spells can be learned. As GM, you also determine that illusionists normally take ranks in the Conjunction, Divination, Enchantment, Illusion, and Transmutation schools. Illusionists also take the Spell Focus (illusion) and Greater Spell Focus (illusion) feats as soon as possible. You can make these school choices and advantage purchases mandatory if you desire. Through defining a key ability, recommending school choices, and listing certain advantages, many distinct types of magic-users can be created for the campaign.