

# BASIC D20 THE MAGIC SKILL

Basic d20 assumes that you will use the normal D&D spellcasting system to create characters. An extremely 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.

## THE MAGIC SKILL

There is one Magic skill. Each rank in the 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 the Magic skill confers certain spellcasting benefits to the character. The Magic skill represents the character's knowledge and mastery in all forms of magic. If this broad skill area is introduced into the campaign, then the Spellcraft specialty becomes a part of the Magic skill (and is removed from the Science broad skill area).

*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 cast by the character.

*Action:* Not Applicable.

*Try Again:* Not Applicable.

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

*Spellcaster Level:* the character's level for the purposes of spellcasting is equal to the number of skill ranks the character has in the Magic skill. Spellcaster level governs the highest level of spell the character can use, how many spell slots the character has, and is used for all situations where a caster level is required. The character's caster level is equal to the number of skill ranks in the Magic skill. For game effects requiring a class caster level (or some other "generic" caster level), use this caster level.

*Spell Lists:* Each rank in the Magic skill allows the character to access spells of the appropriate spell level based on the character's caster level. These spells become part of the character's personal spell list and 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 up to a level equal to the number of Magic skill ranks divided by two, become part of the character's spell list (with the exception of cantrips/orisons and 1st level spells). See the chart below.

Ranks	Spell Levels in List	Ranks	Spell Levels in List
1	0th-1st	12	0th-6th
4	0th-2nd	14	0th-7th
6	0th-3rd	16	0th-8th
8	0th-4th	18	0th-9th
10	0th-5th	20	0th-10th

For example, a character with 8 ranks in Magic would include all spells from 1st to 4th level in his personal spell list. A character with 18 ranks in Magic would have every spell from 1st to 9th level in his personal spell list.

*Spell Slots:* Each time the character gains one rank in the Magic skill, he gains one spell slot in the highest level spell he can cast. The table below summarizes these spell slots.

Level	Spells per Day										
	0th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
1	0	1									
2	0	2									
3	0	3									
4	0	3	1								
5	0	3	2								
6	0	3	2	1							
7	0	3	2	2							
8	0	3	2	2	1						
9	0	3	2	2	2						
10	0	3	2	2	2	1					
11	0	3	2	2	2	2					
12	0	3	2	2	2	2	1				
13	0	3	2	2	2	2	2				
14	0	3	2	2	2	2	2	1			
15	0	3	2	2	2	2	2	2			
16	0	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1		
17	0	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
18	0	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	
19	0	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
20	0	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1

This table assumes that the character has a key ability score modifier high enough to cast the indicated level. If not, all spell slots of spell levels higher than those able to be cast are added to the highest spell level the character can cast. For example, if a character has eight ranks in the Magic skill and a key

ability score modifier of +1 (limiting him to 3rd level spells), then his one 4th level spell slot becomes a 3rd level spell slot. Characters receive bonus spell slots based on their key ability. Additional spell slots can be gained by purchasing the Extra Slot feat (included here for convenience).

### **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.

*Spell Knowledge:* Characters gaining their first rank in the Magic skill gain knowledge of one spell, *read magic*. This spell is mastered, and as such, is cast in the manner of a sorcerer. That is, this spell can be cast by expending an open spell slot of 0-level or higher. Characters do not automatically gain knowledge of spells as they further increase their ranks in the Magic skill. The Magic skill simply represents a character's knowledge of magic and spellcasting itself. Characters having ranks in the Magic skill must fulfill additional requirements if they wish to cast additional spells. The first requirement is to take the Arcane Preparation feat (included here for convenience).

### **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.

The character meets the prerequisite due to the ability to cast *read magic* in the manner of a sorcerer. If taken, characters can then use their spell slots to prepare spells as a wizard does. Characters using this method of spellcasting must find, learn, and record spells in spellbooks in the manner of a wizard. To learn a spell, a character must make a Magic (spellcraft) skill check. The DC to learn a spell this way is equal to 15 + the spell's level. See the entry for Spellcraft in the SRD for more details.

Once a spell is learned it can be prepared normally by the character as a wizard does. After a spell has been learned, a character can then master the spell by taking the Mastered Spell feat. This allows the character to use an open slot to cast the spell in the manner of a sorcerer.

### **Mastered Spell [General]**

You can spontaneously cast one spell.

**Prerequisites:** Spellcaster level 3rd+.

**Benefit:** Choose one spell you can cast as a prepared spell. This spell can be at any level up to one level lower than the highest-level spell you can cast. You may now cast this spell without preparation in the manner of a sorcerer. You must expend an open spell slot of the same or higher level as the mastered spell to cast it.

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

As you can see, this skill only gives extremely limited spellcasting ability. The character gains the *read magic* spell and can cast it by using their only 1st level spell slot when the first rank is gained. Thereafter, characters must find spells, learn them, and record them into their spellbooks to expand their repertoires. They do not automatically gain additional spells like sorcerers and wizards. Characters also receive a limited amount of spell slots as they gain ranks in the Magic skill. The Extra Slot feat must be used multiple times to approximate the spells per day charts of SRD spellcasters. Characters can build their slate of spontaneous spells by taking Mastered Spell feats. Even though the “start-up” cost is low for magical ability, it takes a lot of dedication (and Power Points) to reach the power levels of clerics, sorcerers, and wizards.

### **KEY ABILITY FOR THE MAGIC SKILL**

The GM determines the key ability for the Magic skill in his campaign. He can vary the key ability by character, allowing the player to determine the nature and “feel” of his particular spellcaster. 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.

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

This yields: 1st level spells for +0, 3rd level spells for +1, 5th level spells for +2, 7th level spells for +3, and 9th level spells for +4. 10th level spells require a key ability score modifier of +5.

### **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.