

## VANCIAN MAGIC FOR FANTASY AGE

Is there any fantasy roleplaying game magic system more maligned than what is commonly referred to as Vancian magic? Probably not. And yet, here I am, making a document that purports to alter the magic system in *Fantasy AGE* to align itself with some of the tropes associated with Vancian magic. But hear me out.

The magic system in *Fantasy AGE* is very basic, as it should be. Magic is thematically arranged and the mage simply chooses which areas to concentrate upon as level advancement occurs. The mage class gains eleven magic talents over the course of 20 levels. This could correspond to taking the Novice degree in eleven arcana or even advancing to Master in three areas and Journeyman in one other. In the first case, the mage will have 22 spells by level 20. In the latter case, the mage will have 15 spells. So, we have a mage at level 20 (dare I say, archmage?) and they have 15 to 22 spells and these spells will never change. But hold on, you say. In the *Fantasy AGE Companion*, it says that a mage may swap out a spell every time a new level is gained. This is true. However, at level 20, no more levels can be gained, so our archmage is stuck with their final selection...forever.

Having had experience playing a magic-user in AD&D that was fortunate enough to have a 19 intelligence at 1st level (I didn't roll it. I just assigned it), I became used to the idea that a wizard should be able to acquire and use an unlimited selection of spells. I mean, after all, my character had a spellbook and had the ability to record any number of spells desired (since his intelligence was 19). This didn't mean that the character always had access to each and every spell in the library at all times. An important limitation of the AD&D magic-user is that they must memorize their spells, assigning a spell to each one of their level-dependent spell slots. A spell, once cast, is gone from memory and the magic-user must fill that spell slot with another spell of the appropriate level by getting a good night's rest and then memorizing that spell (or another) again. So even though a magic-user may have a library full of spellbooks containing every spell in the multiverse, they were limited in how many of these spells could be held ready to use at one time.

What I propose is a system for *Fantasy AGE* that allows a mage, or any spellcasting character, to broaden their selection of spells without actually increasing their power. This system will allow a *Fantasy AGE* character to potentially have access to every spell in the game, but not all at once, during a given time period. In this way, mage characters can configure their powers to meet different challenges during the campaign and not be stuck with the spells they've selected at a given level within the framework of the arcana they happened to choose at previous levels.

For the purposes of this document, we'll assume the mage is the only character class that can cast spells. The principles elucidated herein could also apply to other spellcasters, whether from the normal rules or house rules.

## MAGIC TALENTS AND DEGREES

Each time the mage gains a New Magic Talent class power, they can choose to become a Novice in a new magic talent or gain a degree in one magic talent they already have. We would then say that the New Magic Talent class power really allows the mage to “gain one degree in a magic talent” to use a more generic, efficiently-worded statement to describe what is happening.

When a mage gains one degree in a magic talent, the character also gains one or two spells, depending on the actual degree gained. If a Novice degree is chosen, the mage gains two Novice spells from a new arcana (the word “arcana” is used for both singular and plural in *Fantasy AGE*). If the mage gains a Journeyman or Master degree, only one spell is gained. Gaining a spell means the mage now “knows” the spell. This spell is part of their “special effects repertoire” and they may cast the spell whenever they wish, assuming a successful casting roll, magic points available, etc.

In this way, the mage chooses to advance in a number of arcana, chooses the specific spells they will know under each one of their arcana, and uses their spells however they wish. Arcana selections are static and permanent. Spell selections are mostly so, with the Swapping Spells rule (*Fantasy AGE Companion*, page 32) adding a little flexibility and customization over the career.

## MAGIC TALENT DEGREES AS POTENTIAL CONFIGURATIONS

A level 20 mage has taken eleven magic talent degrees. These could be configured in a number of different ways. As stated previously, a level 20 mage may be a Novice in eleven arcana or possibly a Master in three and a Journeyman in one. There are many different possible configurations. The number of arcana chosen and the highest degree in each one determines the overall number of spells a mage knows. A level 20 mage knows 15 to 22 spells. Clearly, there are many different ways a level 20 mage could have configured their arcana and spell selection over 19 levels of advancement. Different arcana could have been taken. Different spells within each arcana could have been chosen.

Let’s consider that in addition to what taking a degree in a magic talent does normally, it also grants a “degree’s worth” of spell slots. A Novice degree grants two Novice spells slots that can be used for two Novice spells in a particular arcana. A Journeyman degree grants one Journeyman spell slot (that could be used for either a Novice or Journeyman spell in that arcana). A Master degree grants one Master spell slot (that can be used for any spell in that arcana). Your mage has a number of these spell slots, based on all of the arcana across each of the three degrees. Your mage will fill these spell slots with spells they know. Under the normal rules, the mage would fill each slot with exactly the spells that they chose when taking magic talent degrees. In other words, there is no difference between their entire list of spells known and the spell slots they have to fill. Therefore, there is really no need for the added complication of “spell slots.” But what if the mage could learn additional spells, above and beyond those granted by taking magic talent degrees?

As an easy example, let's consider a level 1 mage that has taken as his first two arcana Cold and Fire. The mage chooses two Novice spells from the Cold arcana and two Novice spells from the Fire arcana. The mage has four Novice spells and two Novice spell slots in Cold and two Novice spell slots in Fire. Their two Novice Fire spells go into their two Novice Fire spell slots and the same for Cold.

Now let's say that this mage finds a "spell scroll" with a Novice Fire spell that they do not know. A spell scroll would act just like a spell stone in *Fantasy AGE* with the added bonus that the spell can be learned from the scroll and added to a mage's list of known spells. Instead of using the spell scroll in combat, the mage learns the new Fire spell from the scroll (using up the scroll in the process). Now the mage knows three Novice Fire spells and two Novice Cold spells. Should this mage be allowed to access all five spells when a level 1 mage can only normally access four? An individual Game Master could allow this but this is not what I'm proposing.

Now the concept of spell slots is brought into the picture. In reality, because the mage has the Novice degree in two magic talents, they should only be able to have, at one time, four Novice spells available as their slate of powers. If the character gained level 2 and swapped out one Fire spell for another, they would still only have four Novice spells. If we say that the character actually has four Novice spell slots, then we see how this mage, with five known spells, could reconfigure their powers. The mage could choose to have all three Fire spells ready and only one Cold spell. The character could keep two Fire spells ready and two Cold spells. If another Novice Cold spell were learned, then this would add another possible configuration (three Cold spells and one Fire spell). The spell configuration could be changed after each "6 hours of restful sleep" (*Fantasy AGE Basic Rulebook*, page 39).

But let's take it a little further. Let's say our mage reaches level 3 and chooses to take the Journeyman degree in the Fire arcana. Now, he has 4/1/0 spell slots (four Novice, one Journeyman, and zero Master). He would learn one new Fire spell for gaining the Journeyman degree. He would also gain the Intelligence (Fire) focus. And let's also say that he knows three Novice Fire spells (two originally gained with the arcana and one with a spell scroll) and three Novice Cold spells (two originally gained with the arcana and one with a spell scroll) as well as the one Journeyman Fire spell. It is clear that each Novice degree grants two Novice spell slots and each Journeyman and Master degree only one spell slot of the appropriate degree. His total number of magic talent degrees taken has been three. He could have taken another Novice degree in, say, the Wood arcana, but did not. If this had been the case, then his spell slots would be 6/0/0.

For our next concept, then, consider that each degree in a magic talent can be used to build any appropriate configuration of spell slots. For our level 3 mage, with three degrees, this could mean the following combinations: 6/0/0 (all three Novice degrees), 4/1/0 (two Novice degrees and a Journeyman degree), and 2/1/1 (one of each degree, Novice, Journeyman, and Master). The last configuration is sub-optimal because, even though a Master spell slot can be filled with a Novice or Journeyman spell, it would still give our mage less spells overall.

It is important to note that the only legal configurations are those where the number of Master degrees is less than or equal to the number of Journeyman degrees and the number of Journeyman degrees is less than or equal to the number of Novice degrees. This is because a mage cannot skip a degree in an arcana.

Now, as a further stretch, let's say that when a mage chooses a magic talent degree, they are simply choosing which spells they wish to automatically know upon gaining a level and, to some degree, they are choosing their "specialties" in magic, but this doesn't mean they cannot learn spells from arcana they have not chosen. For our level 3 mage, let's say he finds a spell scroll with Beast Senses and learns this spell. It is a Novice Beast arcana spell. Now he has three Novice Fire spells, three Novice Cold spells, one Novice Beast spell, and one Journeyman Fire spell. If he chooses the 4/1/0 configuration after a night of restful sleep, he could fill the spell slots with two Fire spells, one Cold spell, the new Beast spell, and the Journeyman Fire spell. So, the idea is that mages are actually proficient in all forms of magic. Taking magic talent degrees just shows what they're concentrating on but does not limit what spells they can learn. A mage could learn a Master spell but if they don't have a spell slot for it, they can't have it in their slate of powers for the day.

## **CONCEPTUALIZING THE VANCIAN MAGIC SYSTEM FOR FANTASY AGE**

Armed with the previous discussion and examples, let's lay out some fundamental concepts.

### **When a Magic Talent Degree is Taken**

When a character takes a degree in a magic talent, they gain one or two spells, they gain an arcana focus (if it's a Journeyman degree), and they gain a reduced cost spell stunt (if it's a Master degree). In addition they gain a "spell slot degree" that can be used to configure their spell slots for the day. For each spell slot degree assigned to Novice, they get two Novice spell slots. For each spell slot degree assigned to Journeyman, they gain one Journeyman spell slot. For each spell slot degree assigned to Master, they gain one Master spell slot. These slots are not assigned to any arcana. They are "colorless" to coin a term from *Magic: The Gathering*. These slots can be filled with any legal spell (Novice spell for a Novice spell slot, Novice or Journeyman spell for a Journeyman spell slot, and a spell of any degree for a Master spell slot).

### **A Mage Can Learn Any Spell**

The arcana that a mage takes with level advancement merely shows the spells they automatically learn. These spells are not found during the normal course of adventuring. They are assumed to have been something the mage was working on in the background until they finally learned it.

### **Taking a Degree in an Arcana Shows Your Specialization**

Even though a mage can learn any spell, the arcana that are chosen with level advancement represent how the mage is specializing. A mage gains arcana focuses and reduced cost spell stunts in the various arcana. When these are chosen, they are permanent and do not change regardless of the spell slot configuration or the spells used to fill the spell slots. Once you get it, you've got it.

### The Campaign Contains Findable Spells

If mages can't find spells and learn them, there's no reason to use this system. Their optimal spell slot configuration would always be the configuration that allows them to have every spell they already know available to them in their slate of powers for the day.

However, if the campaign includes spell scrolls, spellbooks, divine entities that implant spells directly into the characters' minds, etc. then you have a situation where characters can know more spells than the normal rules allow for. Then spell slots become important if you wish to limit the slate of powers to a legal amount that would normally be available to a mage character with a certain number of magic talent degrees.

### Every Spell in the Game Can Be Known

This system allows a mage character to learn every spell in the game. This breaks down the normal *Fantasy AGE* limitation that all mages are specialists with a set configuration of unchanging arcana degrees. As the campaign progresses and grows, your mage can alter their abilities as well.

### But Not Every Spell is Available At All Times

Just because a mage knows every spell in the game doesn't mean they have access to every spell they know at all times. The player of the mage can choose their character's configuration of spells daily. This configuration must be a configuration that could have occurred if only the mage had been advanced a certain way.

### FOR CONSIDERATION, THE LEVEL 20 MAGE

A level 20 mage has eleven magic talent degrees and 15 to 22 spells. Under this system, they also have eleven degrees to configure spell slots. Each day, there are many different possible combinations for the level 20 mage. A few are below.

LEVEL 20 MAGE CONFIGURATION EXAMPLES				
Concept	Degrees	Spell Slots	Spells	Note
The Powermonger	4/4/3	8/4/3	15	Highest Number of Master Degrees
The Balanced	5/4/2	10/4/2	16	Fair Amount for Each Degree
The Arcanist	7/2/2	14/2/2	18	All Spells from One Arcana Guaranteed
The Themed	9/1/1	18/1/1	20	Favorite Journeyman and Master Spell
The Generalist	11/0/0	22/0/0	22	All Novice Degrees

Even if this mage happened to know all 152 spells (*Basic Rulebook* and *Companion*) they would still have to assign a very small portion of them to their spell slots. In this way, the *Fantasy AGE* mage can be more versatile, but their breadth and power on any given day follows what is normally available to a mage under the standard rules.

## IMPLEMENTING THE VANCIAN MAGIC SYSTEM FOR FANTASY AGE

Some further guidance on implementing the system follows.

### Sources of Spells

As alluded to previously, characters can find spells a number of different ways. Typical fantasy tropes involving spell scrolls, spellbooks, divine spell lists, and other sources can be used.

Typically the main feature of wizardly characters, the spellbook, serves as a compendium of magical knowledge in the form of all spells the character has recorded. Using a spellbook, a wizard can alter their spell slots and the spells that fill those slots. Normal tropes require that the wizard get a full night's sleep before being able to "study" their spellbook or "prepare" their spells from the spellbook. Once the spell slot configuration is determined and the slots filled with appropriate spells, this slate of powers will remain unaltered until the wizard consults the spellbook again to reconfigure. One hour's time is normally enough to reconfigure the slate of powers (spell slots and actual spells). Whole spellbooks can be found during the normal course of campaigning.

Spell scrolls can be used as magic items, acting as a one-shot spell stone (*Fantasy AGE Basic Rulebook*, page 120). Spell scrolls are not normally rechargeable. The other use for spell scrolls, in typical fantasy games, is to provide a method for the acquisition of heretofore unknown spells. Wizardly characters can copy the spell scroll's contents into their spellbooks, thereby recording the spell for future preparation and use.

A feature of divine spellcasters, most notably "clerics," is the idea of the divine spell list. The concept is that the cleric's deity has supernatural responsibility over some aspect of existence which is represented as a portfolio of magical powers. This portfolio determines the breadth (and sometimes extent) of spells offered to clerics worshipping the deity. In *Fantasy AGE* terms, this could be implemented by choosing a number of arcana and allowing divine spellcasters to choose any spells under these arcana during their daily reconfiguration of their slate of powers. Normally, this list of arcana would be static and clerics would be unable to "find" new spells. No spellbooks are used with this system and spell scrolls would only be implemented as magic items. Divine spellcasters normally spend some time in prayer (usually one hour) in which they can apply their magic talent degrees to spell slots and fill those slots with spells from the arcana listed under their patron's portfolio.

Another type of spellcaster, perhaps known as a witch or warlock, could combine certain aspects of the previous two types of mages. The witch would record spells in a spellbook and could learn spells from spell scrolls. They would also have another avenue available to learn spells in the form of a familiar or a familiar spirit. The familiar acts as a supernatural conduit to magical power or maybe even a greater entity. New spells are provided at the entity's discretion (i.e., Game Master's discretion). However, there should be at least a few arcana that a witch can never have access to. Typically, powers that are antithetical to their patron's essence or aims are not granted (e.g., don't expect to get Fire spells from The Frost Queen or The Green Man).



### Arcane Dabbler and Arcane Training

Non-mages can learn and use spells in *Fantasy AGE* by taking the Arcane Dabbler specialization (*Fantasy AGE Companion*, page 22). If taken, this specialization provides one Novice spell slot at the Novice degree, one Novice spell slot at the Journeyman degree, and either one Journeyman spell slot or two Novice spell slots at the Master degree. Full mastery of this specialization thus provides two possible spell slot configurations: 2/1/0 or 4/0/0. A character taking the Arcane Dabbler specialization should be able to use the rules in this document to learn additional spells. They will not, however, be able to cast Master spells, since they cannot get a Master spell slot.

The Arcane Training talent (*Fantasy AGE Companion*, page 32) grants additional spells and, under this system, additional spell slots. A mage taking this talent can count each degree as a “magic talent degree” for the purpose of determining spell slots. With full mastery of this talent, a mage could add more spell slots to their normal allotment by applying all three degrees to Novice spell slots (6/0/0); two to Novice and one to Journeyman spell slots (4/1/0); or two to Novice, one to Journeyman, and one to Master (2/1/1).

This means that a level 20 mage can have up to 28 Novice spells (under a 28/0/0 configuration) or up to 4 Master spells (with a 10/5/4 configuration) with their 14 spell slot degrees. The mage would have to use three of their four New Talent class powers gained at level 2, level 10, level 18, and level 20 to gain the additional spells and spell slots.

### New Equipment and Magic Items

Some new equipment and magic items need to be detailed. The spell scroll is a new magic item that acts like a spell stone, except it cannot be recharged. Spellbooks are used to record learned spells.

#### SPELL SCROLL

#### COMMON

This rolled-up page of parchment contains a particular spell. If you are a mage, while reading the scroll, you can use the Cast action to cast the spell it contains as if you know it, with no Magic Point cost (the energy of the spell is contained in the scroll). Once the stored spell has been cast, it cannot be used again as the magical writing which held the spell disappears. A spell scroll cannot be recharged. Alternatively, if your campaign uses the rules for Vancian magic, you can invent the spell contained on the scroll at half the normal time and cost. The scroll is spent in the process.

#### SPELLBOOK

#### PROFESSIONAL GEAR

A spellbook is not a magic item itself but falls under the category of “professional gear” (*Fantasy AGE Basic Rulebook*, page 64). Spellbooks vary wildly in size, binding, and other qualities. A basic spellbook costs 90 sp plus 5 sp for every 16 pages in the spellbook. A Novice-degree spell requires four pages in a spellbook, a Journeyman-degree spell requires eight pages in a spellbook, and a Master-degree spell requires a whole quire (16 pages) in a spellbook. For the curious, the total number of spellbook pages required for all of the spells across the 19 arcana of *Fantasy AGE* is 1,216 and a book containing enough pages would cost 47 gp (assuming a book that big could be made).

## Inventing Spells

A mage does not need to adventure to find new spells. They can be invented. A laboratory is needed to invent spells. Any character with the Intelligence (Arcane Lore) focus can set up a laboratory suitable for spell research. A laboratory costs a minimum of 50 gp and this basic laboratory can be used to invent minor arcana (*Fantasy AGE Companion*, page 53). To invent more powerful spells, the overall expenditure must be greater. A laboratory suitable for inventing Novice spells costs a minimum of 100 gp; for Journeyman spells, 250 gp; and for Master spells, 500 gp. It takes one month per 50 gp to set up a laboratory. Laboratories cost one-fifth of their overall initial cost to maintain per year, assuming average use.

Inventing a spell is much like creating a magic item. If we map Novice spells to Uncommon magic items, Journeyman spells to Rare magic items, and Master spells to Legendary magic items, we'll find that the Empower Item spell (*Fantasy AGE Companion*, page 48) should give us the correct times and costs to invent spells.

A mage must also have a certain level of overall knowledge of magic to invent spells. Minor arcana and cantrips can be invented by any character that has at least one magic talent degree (or equivalent). A mage must have four or more magic talent degrees to invent Novice spells, seven or more magic talent degrees to invent Journeyman spells, and ten or more magic talent degrees to invent Master spells.

Inventing a cantrip or minor arcana takes 10 twelve-hour days (or 120 hours) at a cost of 25 gp. Inventing a Novice spell takes 20 twelve-hour days (or 240 hours) at a cost of 50 gp. Inventing a Journeyman spell takes 50 twelve-hour days (or 600 hours) at a cost of 125 gp. Finally, the invention of a Master spell takes 100 twelve-hour days (or 1,200 hours) at a cost of 250 gp. If the mage uses a spell scroll containing the spell during the process of invention, then this time and cost is halved.

A spell, once invented, becomes part of the mage's learned spells, has been recorded in their spellbook, and can be used to fill a spell slot of the appropriate degree (Novice, Journeyman, or Master).

SPELL INVENTION TIME AND COST			
Spell Degree	Minimum # of Art Talents	Cost of Materials	Days (12 hr)
Minor Arcana / Cantrips	1	25 gp	10
Novice	4	50 gp	20
Journeyman	7	125 gp	50
Master	10	250 gp	100

These rules on inventing *Fantasy AGE* spells are compatible with the laboratory rules found in *Hermetic Magic for Fantasy AGE* (my own house rules).



### Scribing Spells

Spells can be recorded in spellbooks and spell scrolls can be created with the Imbue Item spell from the Enchantment Arcana (*Fantasy AGE Companion*, page 48). Spell scrolls are temporary, common items, therefore it takes ten castings of Imbue Item (which takes 40 hours to accomplish) and costs 1 gp in materials regardless of the degree of the spell.

Scribing a spell into a spellbook takes two hours for each page. This means that a Novice spell takes eight hours to scribe (as it requires four pages). A Journeyman spell takes 16 hours to scribe (eight pages) and a Master spell takes 32 hours to scribe (16 pages). This results in about one day, two days, and four days for Novice, Journeyman, and Master spells, respectively. Scribing a minor arcana or cantrip takes four hours (two pages) so two of these could be scribed per day (or three for a long work day). It costs 1 gp in materials to scribe a spell into a spellbook regardless of the spell's degree.

### Divine Spellbooks

If the campaign calls for it, divine spellcasters can also use spellbooks. They should be called “canons” though and the rules for canons would mirror those of spellbooks. The canon is a holy book and the divine spellcaster is acquiring further wisdom, parables, legends, and other holy literary works when they “scribe” their spells. Changing their daily configuration of spell slots and spells involves reading various passages from the canon and contemplating the meaning of these verses as they prepare for the day's trials and tribulations.

### Divine Spell Lists

Instead of treating the divine spellcaster just like a mage with a spellbook, the campaign can use one or more divine spell lists. In AD&D, there was one cleric spell list that did not change, regardless of the cleric's actual religion. In later versions, clerics had various spheres of spells that they could call upon. In *Fantasy AGE*, it would probably be best to choose up to seven arcana and limit a divine spellcasting character to these arcana. The most basic list, one that would represent the “traditional cleric,” would include the Death, Divination, Enchantment, Fate, Healing, Heroic, and Protection arcana. Divine spellcasters would have access to the spells on these lists from level 1 and would fill the spell slots gained from taking magic talent degrees only with the spells found on their divine spell list. Spellcasters of this type would not use spellbooks and would not be able to invent any spells falling outside of their approved arcana. A typical “druid” spell list would include seven of these ten arcana (player's choice): Air, Beast, Cold, Earth, Enchantment, Fire, Healing, Lightning, Water, and Wood.

### Exotic Spellbooks

Some “spellbooks” may not be spellbooks at all. Some magical traditions may use different methods of recording magical knowledge in the form of tattoos on the mage's body, knotted cords, an assortment of fetishes (one for each spell, perhaps), and many other ways limited only by the imagination of the players and Game Master.

## Purchasing Spells

Although most mages would be loath to sell a spell they know, as they would be more likely to trade spells with other mages, it might be useful to outline how much a spell should cost under this system.

According to the rules above, a spell of each degree takes a certain amount of time and money to invent. If we take into account the amount of money spent on spell invention along with the likely living costs associated for the time spent on spell invention, we may be able to come up with a reasonable amount for the prices of spells depending on degree.

Admittedly, we don't have much to go on when trying to determine the cost of living in *Fantasy AGE*. We have the Starting Money table in the *Fantasy AGE Basic Rulebook* (page 27) and that's about it. This money is used to buy additional equipment over and above what is offered initially, both default and by class. We also have the Treasure Category table (page 117) that assigns plain names to certain amounts of treasure. We don't get a whole lot of help from the rulebook in figuring out living costs.

However, if we look at this from the point-of-view that a mage would need to generate roughly double the cost of the magic item to cover further research during the time of construction, we may be able to come up with some figures. Analyzing the Empower Item spell, we see that each casting costs 25 sp and takes 12 hours. This could indicate that the mage needs to generate 50 sp of income for each day of work on a permanent magic item, 25 sp for the casting of Empower Item and another 25 sp to cover another day of casting when making an item for themselves. Spell invention costs the same as permanent magic item creation. A mage might charge double because they want to be able to garner enough profit to conduct further research or magic item construction, that is, for every day they're working on something for sale they want to be paid to be able to work another day on something for themselves. Of course, mages could be more competitive, charging less, but for the purposes of spell pricing, we're going to assume that the mage charges double the research cost.

According to the preceding logic, a spell costs double what it takes to invent it. Therefore, minor arcana and cantrips go for 50 gp each, Novice spells for 100 gp, Journeyman spells for 250 gp, and Master spells for 500 gp. Going further, the overall cost of a spellbook can be calculated. Simply calculate the cost of the empty book (9 gp base plus 1 gp for every 32 pages) and add the costs of all spells contained within. For the curious, a spellbook containing every spell in the *Fantasy AGE Basic Rulebook* and *Companion* would be worth 36,147 gp.

The price for a spell scroll should not exceed the spell invention cost. For example, to invent a Master spell, it costs 250 gp and takes 100 days. With a spell scroll in hand, it takes 125 gp and 50 days. This saves the mage 125 gp in construction costs and 50 days in time, these days being worth 25 sp per day, for a total of another 125 gp. The mage would pay up to 250 gp for the spell scroll and 125 gp for invention cost for a total of 375 gp. They could recover 125 gp of this by working on a magic item for the 50 days saved by having the scroll. This would still result in an overall cost of 250 gp and 100 days of time (breakeven). If the spell scroll cost less, it would be even better. This is why spell scroll prices should not exceed the spell invention cost.