

Magic

Of all the wondrous things in the universe, magic is the most deviously curious and fickle. Its mysteries are deep and its origins unknown, but what can be said is that none should cross into the path of magic who is not prepared to lose something along the way.

The Nature of Magic

Fundamentally, all magic is destructive. Even the most skilled mages are still, ultimately, destroying something in reality whenever they use it. For some this implication sees magic as something mortals should never dare to use, but for others, this just makes magic all the more potent, even when the magic turns on them, and turns their bodies to **Corruption**.

Corruption

In general, there are no limits to how much magic can be used. You could cast a million spells in a day, if you so chose. However, the destructive nature of magic is voracious, and even if you are using all your magic purely to destroy the world around you, it may still turn on you.

Whenever you use magic of any kind, there is a chance that you will receive what is called a Corruption. Your magic will begin to eat away at you, and this results not just in debilitating physical and mental detriments, but even the destruction of your own body, as the magic manifests some wicked part of your soul to break your body.

Manifesting a Corruption

Whenever you have rolled a Corruption, you will be taking either a Lesser or Greater Corruption, which respectively correspond to your character taking either a single die, or two dice worth of penalties to your Talents.

When you first take a Corruption, you will first need to roll to see which of your Talents (Excluding Luck) that it affects. Roll 1d8, and going from left to right on your Character sheet, your result will be that Talent. (EG, rolling a 2 will affect your Agility)

To determine the penalty itself, you will begin with either 1d4 or 2d4, rolling them. The total should be deducted from your Talent. Each time you take a new Corruption, and it affects the same Talent, you will step the die up one size and roll it again; the result becomes your new penalty.

As a result of your Corruptions, your Talents may run into the negative. What occurs when this happens will vary by the Talent in question; the **Talents** section in the **Creating a Character** chapter will cover these in detail.

Defining your Corruptions

What specifically happens to you as part of your Corruption is entirely up to you. Sometimes your eyes might fall out of your head; sometimes, your arm is deformed into a grotesque otherworldly appendage. Other times, your eyes might simply change to some unnatural color. A good rule of thumb is to think of the Talent the Corruption affected; how does one's Intuition becoming corrupted manifest physically?

Whatever the answer, keep this in mind: everyone will be able to recognize it for what it is, and not everyone is going to abide a monster, no matter what it looks like.

Healing from Corruption

In general, Corruptions never heal naturally. You will effectively have them forever, if you are unable to intervene through means like special Salves or Elixirs, or through the adoption of the Magical Arts themselves, so that you might make use of them..

Each Class of the Mage Archtype will have their own, unique way of dealing with Corruptions, many of which revolve around embracing them, rather than lamenting the myriad ways your body is being destroyed.

Types of Magic

Sometimes called “Schools”, there are four principle types of Magic: **Arcana**, **Runeweaving**, **Warding**, and **Enchantment**.

Arcana

The purest form of Magic, Arcana is the study of spellcrafting, and as a Skill is how adventuring mages will often contribute to their Party when all other Skills fail, improvising a spell to solve some issue or another. Arcana, unintuitively, is often the most dangerous kind of magic, particularly for the mere dabblers or hobbyists, as it has the highest chance of inducing a Corruption.

Whenever you attempt to cast an **improvised spell** (see Casting Spells), you will receive a Lesser Corruption if you come within 10 or less of the target number you need to reach. If you roll 5 or less, regardless, of your total, you will take a Greater Corruption.

Runeweaving

While magic is fickle and dangerous, it is curiously at its safest when you use it for the one thing it can do. Runeweaving is the practice of magical combat, and involves the manipulation of specific kinds of spells, called **Runes**, allow the mage to wield devastating power. No one can quite say where the Runes come from or what they even mean when they manifest as strange symbols, but their potency is not tampered by a lack of understanding.

But be wary, however, for even those who weave the Runes are not immune to Corruptions. Magic may turn on you for daring to use it at all.

In Combat, you will receive a Lesser Corruption if you roll a 1 when utilizing Momentum for any reason while casting a Rune spell. If you, in the same Action or Reaction, roll 3 1s in a row, you will receive a Greater Corruption.

Warding

Wards are truly a paradox in magic; as seeming variants of the Runes they too seem much less likely to induce Corruptions, but at the same time, they are defensive or even utilitarian in nature. While a boon for would be War Wizards and other such adventurers, it is a perplexing issue for those scholarly sorts that seek to understand what Magic actually is.

In Combat, you will receive a Lesser Corruption if you roll a 1 while utilizing Momentum for any reason while casting a Ward. If you, in the same Action or Reaction, roll 2 1s in a row, you will receive a Greater Corruption.

Enchantment and Curses

Arguably the most useful kind of Magic, Enchantment allows the embedding of certain magical effects and, occasionally, spells into objects. While an enchanted sword or ring are common enough, Enchantment has seen extensive use in Warfare, with magic forming the first line of defense for fortifications.

Curses however, are a particularly devious kind of Enchantment that sees the debilitating effects of Corruption embedded into the enchanted object, and while some of the mildest curses only inflict those effects on those who so much as touch the object, the worst Curses are much deadlier, and far more sinister. Both Enchantment and Curses are covered in the **Crafting** Chapter.

Casting Spells

Unlike many games with magic, outside of combat you will be completely **Improvising** a spell whenever you wish to cast one to solve some problem you might be facing. In general, you will not find there are any strict limits to what you can attempt to do with Magic in this way, but as you are Improvising, you are to adhere to the principle of Yes, And, and the agreed upon tone of your group's game, and naturally, you will be highly susceptible to the Corruption.

Once you have announced you are going to attempt a Spell, you should first clarify what it is you are going to do. Do not just say "I cast magic at it" to get out of a jam; be specific, and have logic to what you want to do. And most importantly, as you may already be familiar with from handling **Events** during your travels, do not expect to be able to just conjure fantastical riches out of thin air. You may well be skilled enough to make such things appear, but they will never quite be what you wanted.

And remember, while magic will not always be able to solve *everything*, it can certainly *break* just about anything.

Fighting with Magic

In Combat, Magic becomes much more specific, and a little more limited. But, unlike other games, you'll find that you still have a great degree of freedom in how your spell manifests.

The idea is that as you fight, you are building your spells on the fly; while you can immediately cast **Simple** spells without special effort, to get the best effects, you will have to utilize your Momentum and possibly even your next Action or Turn to pull them off.

Each Spell, whether it is a Rune or a Ward, comes as part of a sequence of 3 Spells, that run from Simple, to Intermediate, to Complex. When you begin to Cast a spell, you will pick the Spell you want to use, and roll your Damage Dice (or, if Warding first, your Defense Dice). Both of these dice come from your **Rod** and your **Garments**, respectively. (See **Touch Magic** if you do not wish to use a Rod)

If you wish to simply use the Simple Spell, you can select a target, announce your Action Rating, and then your Damage, as well as whatever basic effect the Spell grants you.

To continue to build a spell, you will instead reserve the Damage you rolled, and, using either a use of Momentum or another Action, roll again for the Intermediate Spell. In the same way, you can keep going for the Complex Spell. At this point, your spell is complete, and you may hold it until your next turn, upon which you will be forced to unleash it on something, costing you one of your Action Ratings in the process.

Touch Magic

For those who wish to go without either a Wand or a Stave, they will naturally be without a source of damage dice to utilize for their Spells. Such mages could, however, use their bare hands, and their damage dice will rely upon their **Hand-to-Hand** Damage dice, which is governed by the **Wrestling** Skill.

While such mages will never be without the ability to use their magic, they will be limited in terms of the ranges they can fight at to melee range, requiring physical touch to be able to release their spells. However, one should not fret. Mages who take to this style of magic are often not to be trifled with, and the terrifying Ursh, those bear pirates of the south, are especially dangerous when they've managed to take up magic.

Using Runes to Ward

When you are working to cast a spell, you are not limited in terms of defending yourself, and if you have nowhere else to place it, you might find Warding with it valuable. You may be in the process of conjuring a great Water Wave, but in a pinch, throw it into the air to absorb a fireball.

If you have already begun to cast a spell and you are Reacting, you may use the spell to defend yourself, treating the damage rolled as defense. Additionally, if you are beginning a new spell in Reaction, you can utilize a Rune to bolster your defense if its additional effects are desirable to you.

Welding Spells

As you weave together your spell, you are not limited to simply progressing through the same 3 spells each time; you can combine any Rune or Ward together; your only restriction is that you must follow the sequence Simple → Intermediate → Complex. When you do this with up to 3 different spells, this is called a **Weld**, and when you are utilizing the Elements, you will find that certain combinations can result in powerful combinations.

Elemental Welds

While not all of the Elements will weld with each other, you will not find yourself wanting. Elemental magic can Weld whether one is casting a new spell (Simply swap to a new, eligible element from what you started with) or when one is Warding against an enemy's elemental magic.

The following list covers each possible Weld and their effects. In this list, each Spell that may affect a number of Positions on the Combat Grid will be dependent on the spells that collided. Simple Spells are worth 1, Intermediate 2, and Complex 3. If two different spells collided, they should have these values added together.

Steamburst

- Fire and Water combine to burst into a cloud of fog or steam, adding the **Obscured** Tag to some number of Positions. This fog will last a number of Rounds equal to the Spell that created it. EG, a Complex spell would allow the fog to last 3 Rounds.

Molten Terrain

- Earth and Fire combine to warp the terrain into molten lava, adding +65 Difficult Terrain to some number of Positions, that deals 1d10 Fire damage to any who fail the save; if two Complex Spells resulted in this terrain, the difficulty increases to +85. This terrain can be destroyed with Water magic.

Rust Wave

- Water and Metal combine as a corrosive acid; when combined intentionally, the spell will deal double damage to Structures and Vehicles. When combined as part of a Ward, the spell will reduce the Defense of all combatants in the same position as the defending Mage; the amount will be equal to the damage that was not negated by that Mage.

Bloodmire

- Blood and Earth combine to form a bloodmire – a sapping swamp of blood and muck; some number of Positions gain +65 Difficult Terrain, and failing the saving throw will reduce Composure by 1d10. This terrain can be destroyed with Water.

Stormcall

- Air and Lightning combine to call forth a terrible storm. On the ground, Dwarves and any who attempt to cast Metal spells will have a 50% chance of being randomly struck by a 1d10 Lightning Bolt; in the air, some number of Positions will be affected by +65 Turbulence, in addition to the possibility of being struck by lightning each Round, regardless of whether they are a Dwarf or using Metal magic.

Night Wind

- Shadow and Air combine as the Night Wind, a dark, light sapping cloud that will randomly shift Positions. Any who occupy the same position as the Night Wind will enjoy +15 to any attempt to Hide, but will also be considered *Blind*, and take -10 to all attempts to Attack or Defend. It will disappear after 1 Round.

Ice Forge

- Frost and Metal combine to forge great barriers of ice. When used intentionally, a mage can select where they may add Cover within 1 Position of themselves in any direction; this Cover will have an SP total equal to the damage or defense of their Spell, and may Cover 1 Combatant. If this cover is attacked with Fire, it will take double damage.

Glarefrost

- Frost and Light combine to produce a dazzling display; when used intentionally, it can be directed to cause a +65 Composure Save against a target; failure will cause them Blindness for the remainder of the Round. If this is created unintentionally, it will cause Blindness to anyone who fails that saving throw within the same Position as the defending Mage.

Blood Lash

- Blood and Lightning combine to form a blood lash; a terrifying display of magical might. When used intentionally, the attacking mage may double their damage against any who have received at least a d10 *Sapped* or *Paralyzed* Wound, and may double how many targets they can hit at once per their Spell.

Eclipse

- Light and Shadow combine to warp the battlefield with a disorienting and stark black and white contrast; some number of Positions will be affected by +65 Difficult Terrain, and failing the saving throw will reduce any attempt to React that Round by -10.

Mirrorbeam

- Light and Metal combine to form a Mirrorbeam, greatly empowering the Light. Any Wound caused or exacerbated by the spell will be bumped up one additional size.

Spells

It is said that every aspiring mage typically asks the same question, “How can there so few Spells?” As their mentors would demonstrate, the small amount of Spells that are known are no less potent than a thousand.

This section will cover each Spell in detail as well as how to make the best use of them.

Understanding Each Spell

While there are two different sets of Spells, conveniently split in half between the **Runes**, which are more offensive, and the **Wards**, which are more defensive or utilitarian in nature, they will each follow a similar structure.

Each Spell comes as a pair of three separate Spells that naturally build into each other. The first listing in the pairing is the **Simple** Spell, which is always what you will cast first and which can be utilized for its effects immediately. The second is the **Intermediate** Spell, which as noted in **Fighting With Magic**, requires either Momentum or a second Action to progress to, and then finally the third is the **Complex** Spell, the most powerful of the pairing.

For convenience, each set will also include a recommended Short Hand, so that you can keep them on your Character Sheet. Also included at the end of the section is a full block you can include to keep all 10 sets together.

Combining Spells

As you fight, you are not limited in terms of how you mix and match your spells, so long as they follow the sequence from Simple to Intermediate to Complex. Your only limit is that you can only begin a spell with a Rune if you are attacking, and likewise, you can only begin a spell with a Ward if you are defending.

Additionally, it should be noted that when defending with Magic, any Rune you utilize will only contribute towards your Defense dice, but you may use its effects on your attacker if they are useful to you.

Holding Complex Spells

When you have fully cast a Complex Spell, you are eligible to Hold it for some time, with a specific effect that you are granted as a result, which will be noted in the Complex Spell's description. Inside of combat, this will only be for the duration of the Round, and upon your next Turn, you will have to release it at the cost of one of your Action Ratings.

Outside of combat, however, you can go for longer, but doing so will begin to take from your Composure at a rate of -1 for every 10 Seconds you continue to try and hold the Spell together. If you lose your Composure as a result of this, the spell will automatically trigger its effects on you.

While Wards may not usually be dangerous for this, Runes can be deadly, and if the damage dealt to you equals half or more of your max Composure, you will be killed immediately. A budding mage will have to decide if its worth it to try, for while each Complex spell can be very useful if held, they are not something to treat lightly.

Runes

The Runes are your offensive spells, and will be at their most potent when attacking. All Runes will allow you to immediately roll your Damage Dice.

Conflagration

These Runes conjure an explosive force that is especially effective against large creatures.

1. **Pop:** +1 Momentum per Creature Size Larger than Caster
2. **Burst:** -1 AR per Creature Size Larger than Caster
3. **Blast:** Any further Momentum channeled to damage or defense is doubled.

Recommended Shorthand:

Pop > Burst > Blast
+1M/Size | -1AR/Size | 2xM Dmg/Def

Projectile

These Runes conjure a progressively powerful and precise projectile of magical force.

1. **Ball:** Increase any Wound by 1 size automatically
2. **Bolt:** +5AR
3. **Missile:** Cannot miss; if Negated, the spell rebounds back to the target for half damage.

Recommended Shorthand:

Ball > Bolt > Missile
+1 Wound | +5AR | ½ Dmg if Neg

Resonance

These Runes conjure the devastating sounds of the Elements you channel through them.

1. **Chime:** Sound Effects half as effective on target.
2. **Peal:** Impose a Composure save equal to your damage; knock prone on failure
3. **Toll:** Deals double damage to magical barriers and summoned creatures.

Recommended Shorthand:

Chime > Peal > Toll
-50% SoundFX | Comp Save=+Dmg, prone | 2x Dmg vs Mag/Sum

Detonation

These Runes conjure a larger and larger font of magical energy that explodes on command, hitting many enemies at once.

1. **Crickle:** +1 Target
2. **Crackle:** +3 Target, doubles size of Weld Terrains
3. **Boom:** +3 Target, doubles Weld Terrain damage.

Recommended Shorthand:

Crickle > Crackle > Boom
1T | +3T & Terr×2 | +3T & TerrDmg×2

Deluge

These Runes manipulate your chosen Element into devastating, continuous flow of energy that can hit many enemies at once.

1. **Stream:** -5 Movement
2. **Flood:** +2 Target
3. **Wave:** Hits all combatants in targeted Position, doubles defense total if used to defend.

Recommended Shorthand:

Stream > Flood > Wave
-5 Mov | +2T | Hit All, 2xDef if React

Wards

The Wards are your Defensive and Utilitarian spells, and will be at their most potent when you either need to defend yourself, or when you need to gain an advantage in the fight. If you are Reacting, you can begin to roll your Defense dice.

Mirth

These Wards force your opponent to hear a progressively distracting and terrifying laugh.

1. **Giggle:** -1 Momentum to your Target
2. **Laugh:** -2 Momentum to your Target
3. **Roar:** -1 Momentum to your Target, inflicts **Stunned** Wound

Recommended Shorthand:

Giggle > Laugh > Roar
-1M | -2M | -1M, Stun

Glyph

A most versatile set of Wards, they allow you spontaneously create magical objects, markings, barriers and shields and manipulate the shape of your spells.

1. **Scribble:** +5 Defense; objects created use your roll as Structural Points (SP)
2. **Doodle:** Runes can use your Defense dice for this Spell, objects equal your size.
3. **Sketch:** +5 Defense; Objects can be of any size, double SP.

Recommended Shorthand:

Scribble > Doodle > Sketch
+5 Def | +Def Die to Rune | +5 Def
Create Objects; roll as SP | your size or less | Any Size, Double SP

Tempo

These Wards give you a modicum of control over your target's perception of time.

1. **Tick:** Turn back time 15 seconds for the target; they waste half their Movement.
2. **Tock:** Your magic is experienced in slow motion; impose your Defense total as a Composure save; failure inflicts Stunned.
3. **Turn:** Warp what your target can perceive; select a target in range to divert up to ½ their Attack to.

Recommended Shorthand:

Tick > Tock > Turn
-½ Mov | Def Save=Stun | Divert ½ Atk

Sound

These Wards can be used to enhance an ally's or your stealth or disrupt your enemy's.

1. **Hush:** +/- 5 Stealth depending on target.
2. **Still:** Prevents Ally Detection for 1 Round but halts all Stealth Movement in a Position.
3. **Silence:** All Sound Effects cease immediately in the Position.

Recommended Shorthand:

Hush > Still > Silence
±5 Stealth | No Det, No Mov | No SoundFX

Aviate

These Wards together grant you a small amount of Unnatural Flight, but can also be used to juggle...

1. **Flutter:** +10 Unnatural Flight for 2 Rounds; lift target up one Elevation, they take -10 AR
2. **Flap:** +10 Unnatural Flight; Flip target for -10 AR, or raise them higher.
3. **Fly:** +10 Unnatural Flight, +1 Round; use Defense Total as Toss distance, or raise 1 Elevation higher and drop them out of the air.

Recommended Shorthand:

Flutter > Flap > Fly
Unnatural Flight: +10/2 rounds | +10 | +10, +1 Round
Juggle: Elev↑ -10 AR | Flip -10 AR | Def = Toss or +1 Elev and Drop

Glossary of Spell Shorthand Abbreviations

The following is a list of each Abbreviation in the Short Hand Recommendations and what they mean.

- **M - Momentum:** Represents the force or influence exerted by a spell. Additional Momentum can enhance the spell's impact or duration.
- **AR - Action Rating:** A metric used to determine the speed and efficacy of a spell or action. Modifying the AR can accelerate or delay a spell's execution relative to others.
- **Dmg - Damage:** The harm inflicted upon a target. Spells may increase or multiply the damage dealt, depending on the conditions met.
- **Def - Defense:** The protective measure against incoming attacks. Spells may bolster Defense, providing resilience against assaults.
- **Size - Creature Size:** Refers to the size category of a creature relative to the caster. Effects often scale with the size difference.
- **Neg - Negated:** A term used when a spell's effect is successfully countered or nullified by an enemy's defense or resistance.
- **SoundFX - Sound Effects:** Pertains to the auditory impacts of spells, which can disorient or manipulate foes and allies alike.
- **Comp Save - Composure Save:** A check required to maintain one's composure and resist mental or emotional effects of a spell.
- **Terr - Terrain:** The spell's influence on the battlefield's landscape, affecting positioning and movement.
- **Mag/Sum - Magical Barriers/Summoned Creatures:** Specific targets for spells, with effects tailored to disrupt magical defenses or control summoned entities.
- **T - Target:** The focus of a spell's effect, which can be an individual or group, depending on the spell's design.
- **Mov - Movement:** The ability to move across the battlefield. Spells may reduce or hinder movement.
- **Stealth - Stealth Ability:** The capacity to avoid detection. Spells may enhance or reduce Stealth, affecting visibility and detectability.
- **No Det - No Detection:** Ensures that the affected entity remains undetected for a duration.
- **No Mov - No Movement:** Prevents any movement within the specified conditions, typically used in stealth or trap scenarios.
- **SoundFX Fail - Sound Effects Failure:** Indicates the cessation of all auditory effects within a given area, nullifying noise-based tactics.
- **UF - Unnatural Flight:** A spell-induced ability to defy gravity and move through the air, specified by distance and duration.
- **Elev - Elevation:** Refers to the change in vertical positioning on the battlefield, which can provide strategic advantages.