# The Net Wizard's Handbook
Third Edition

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Thanks go to the many people who contributed material for this document. This particularly includes Matt Stanton, whose work was not only original and well-thought out, but also influenced other's systems. Thanks also to all the gamers who playtested all of the new rule ideas seen herein. - *Jim Gitzlaff*

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## What type of Magic in your world?

Magic in your world does not need to be the same as in the Forgotten Realms, Greyhawk, or Kara-Tur. More AD&D supplements are recognizing that there is fun to be had in worlds with tremendously different magical laws. This ranges from the complete absence of magic in A Mighty Fortress to the presence of a nation of wizards in the D&D Known World. Moreover, our own cultural heritage shows that for the bulk of history, magic was seen in a very different light than in most fantasy role playing games. At some times, magic was seen as a sort of quasi-science; while at others, the darkest blasphemy.

> "The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid isle of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a newdark age." [H.P. Lovecraft, The Call of Cthulhu]

What type of slant you want to put on magic is up to you. The standard AD&D spellcasting system does a terrific job of "simulating" one type of magical world -- it does a less than terrific job of modelling others. Using alternate magic systems allows the (otherwise unchanged) AD&D rules to support a campaign based on a nonstandard interpretation of magic.

The two most important factors controlling the way magic is represented in an AD&D campaign are controllability and quantity:

1. **The Controllability of magic.**
   The predictability of magical forces. Also, the related question of how dangerous magic is to the practitioner.

2. **The Quantity of Magic.**
   In other words, is your world bursting at the seams with magic, or is magic a rare and unusual feature?

Since the second factor is analyzed quite thoroughly in The Complete Wizard's Handbook, we will not delve too deeply into it here. The controllability of magic, on the other hand, will be discussed at some length.

Since these categories might seem arbitrary or unimportant at this stage, we will demonstrate their relevance on previously established worlds. A graph displaying the relationships between various novels and campaign environments follows. [The assignments of worlds to categories, especially for novels, is open to reinterpretation by others.]

Controllability Of Magic

| | Magic is Chaos | Magic is an Art | Magic is a Science |
|---|---|---|---|
| Magic is Abundant | The world of Michael Moorcock's "Elric" Saga. | The lands of Glantri and Alphatia from the D&D Known World. | The land of Kelewan from Raymond Feist's "Riftwar" Saga. |
| Normal Level of Magic | The world of Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd & Grey Mouser series. | The normal worlds of the AD&D Forgotten Realms and Dragonlance accessories. | The land of Earthsea from the series of books by Ursula K. LeGuin. |
| Magic is Scarce | Best exemplified by the short stories of H. P. Lovecraft. | Each of the various worlds in DeCamp and Pratt's The Compleat Enchanter. | Probably the land of Midkemia from Raymond Feist's "Riftwar" Saga. |

Just as the Earthsea books portray a very different type of magic than the Elric Saga, so too can the campaigns of different DM's. The choice of where on this graph to place a world is one of the most important decisions a DM must make during world design. It is also the most significant cause of conflicts between the campaign worlds of different DM's. In order to explain why this is so, we will outline each category and discuss of some of the likely results that accompany them.

## The Controllability Of Magic:

**Magic Is Chaos.** A portrayal of magic common in early fantasy novels is that magic is a "counter-science." Whereas the application of scientific and technical advances tend to add order and structure to the universe, magic represents true chaos that is unleashed through rituals or agents that are little known at best. Hence, powerful mages are greatly to

be feared, but risk their lives or souls every time they invoke their powers.

Worlds with chaotic magic tend to be populated with conjurers and necromancers -- the specialists best able to persuade other creatures to use their magic on the wizard's behalf. This has an obvious benefit when direct spell use is apt to backfire, fail, or draw unwelcome attention to one's self. Wild mages, since they are already used to potentially disastrous random spell effects, are also good choices for this type of world. Metamagicians are impossible in a campaign with chaotic magic.

Witches and militant wizards are the most commonly used kits. Witches have the ability to take advantage of the chaotic nature of magic using curses, alchemy, and beguiling. Militant wizards, on the other hand, are often simply those wizards that decided not to rely exclusively on their dangerous and unpredictable spell ability. Instead, They hedged their bets by learning physical combat as well. Academicians and patricians are both quite unusual in most worlds with chaotic magic.

Chaos/Abundant: A world that is dominated by unpredictable magic is not a stable place. At its most unfriendly, this type of campaign could see any of...

- mighty wizards releasing huge, barely controllable curses to blight whole nations
- evil conjurers summoning mighty lords of ill to battle distant, equally powerful enemies
- invasions of weird extraplanar beings with unfathomably sinister purposes

More liveable (but perhaps more annoying) worlds of this type could include the strangely illogical Wonderland of Lewis Carroll (see also the TSR module "The Land Behind the Magic Mirror," et al).

Chaos/Normal: Magic, due to its unpredictability, is generally considered to be trouble by common folk. Wizards do not have the strength or numbers to overtly impose their own rule, so they often work from the shadows, acting as advisors and assistants to the rich and powerful. It is also quite common to find wizards retiring to hidden locations for their own safety and privacy. An interesting type of campaign that fits this motif is the Gothic horror campaign.

Chaos/Little: Magic is widely rumored in legends and folktales, but few people in such a world will ever actually encounter spells in their lifetimes. When magic does turn up, it is a disorienting, frightening event that is difficult to oppose. Often, the major reason few mages exist in this type of campaign is that magic is so inherently dangerous that most die before they practice wizardry for very long.

**Magic Is An Art.** In most AD&D campaigns, magic falls into a middle ground between predictability and randomness. Spells and magical effects are fairly constant but suffer from inexplicable chaos on a more detailed level. For instance, a Fireball's damage or color may vary from casting to casting, but it will never suddenly summon a giant butterfly by mistake. Furthermore, many mages cast spells that are outwardly the same using totally different words and gestures. In other words, one wizard's *fireball* spell may require the speaking of "abracadabra" and the use of a pinch of sulfur, while another mage may speak "ala kazam" and hold a live glow worm. Why two seemingly different actions produce nearly the same results is a mystery, but it explains why mere warriors cannot simply pick up a spellbook and start casting things willy nilly.

Wizards are generally considered to be practitioners of a complicated art or craft. As such, they belong to guilds, possess trade secrets, and educate prospective entrants to the field by apprenticeship or technical education (e.g. magic colleges). Spells tend to be learned like recipes, and research is usually carried out using a heavy dose of trial and error -- because not everything can be just told to the prospective wizard. By and large, though, magic is no more dangerous for the mage than a mechanical loom is for the spinster -- it is merely a powerful tool that must be respected.

Mages are probably the most common single wizard type in these worlds, although all of the specialist types are possible. Metamagicians can exist in such a campaign, but would probably be very rare.

Virtually every kit is represented in such a world.

Art/Abundant: For one reason or another, it is easier both to become a wizard and to rise to high levels. Magical items have proliferated, sometimes to such an extent that they function in the same way as consumer goods in our real world. Many excellent examples of this sort of campaign already exist. For instance, the Known World of D&D probably fits into this category, and the Empire of Alphatia

(Dawn of Emperors) and the Principalities of Glantri (GAZ 3) certainly do.

Art/Normal: The AD&D norm. The Forgotten Realms, the World of Greyhawk, Krynn, and Kara-Tur all fall under this heading.

Art/Little: The wizards are very like their normal counterparts except that there are fewer of them. This can be because...

- there is so much popular sentiment against wizards that they have all been killed or forced into hiding
- a great catastrophe has lowered the level of civilization so far that most of the extant magical knowledge was lost
- the mechanics of casting spells are so difficult that very few people can learn magery

The DM may, of course, institute any other campaign-dependent reasons that he sees fit.

**Magic Is A Science.** This is the antipode of the "magic as chaos" view. Like the higher-level mathematics of our modern world, magic is an extremely esoteric science that requires natural ability and discipline to learn and use. Nonetheless, magic functions according to a set of knowable laws predicting its behavior absolutely. It is not necessarily the case in a given campaign that all (or even many) of these laws have been discovered, however, since the discipline of magic is quite complex.

The existence of a logical foundation to magic means that some powers, once learned, are simply and easily performed. The most complex effects, on the other hand, can only be reproduced by the finest minds.

Research and experimentation tends to be more theoretical (studying and planning) than practical (casting spells and tinkering). It is common for worlds with a scientific style of magic to harbor schools or academies that formally instruct students of magery.

Most worlds with scientific magic have an even blend of mages and specialists. Metamagicians, though, are more common in this type of world than in "chaos" or "art" worlds. Academicians are found quite frequently in this class of world, since their style of research lends itself to the scientific method.

A peculiarity of this world-view is that the quantity of magic is necessarily increased over time. Since magic is just a sub-field of a larger scientific discipline, knowledge of dweomercraeft will tend to build up as researchers enlarge the field. This means that barring extraordinary circumstances, the number of wizards will tend to increase (and probably at an increasing rate). It is entirely possible that a campaign world with scientific magic could experience a "magical revolution" that parallels our real world's industrial revolution as spell use spirals upwards.

Science/Abundant: Magic and wizards behave much like physics and engineers do in our real world. A huge amount of magical knowledge exists, many different schools and kits are represented, and large colleges and universities teach magic to eager students. Wizards in the economic sphere produce consumer goods and powerful weapons, often pushing the mundane craftsmen totally out of business. Political power is wielded solely by wizards; the armies are composed of summoned beings or magically-assisted warriors with wizards as artillery. In such a campaign, non-wizards often can play little but a supporting role.

Science/Normal: Wizards and magical items occur with the same frequency as in the AD&D norm, but only because of a lack of extant information. Because magic is just a scientific discipline, the slow pressure of inventive wizards will eventually (so the wizards say) push back the frontiers so that anything will be possible using magic. A better world in which absolute knowledge is available is just generations away.

Science/Little: Either because it was lost or hidden, magical knowledge is difficult to come by. Wizards must be incredibly talented, so a great many fail to pass from apprentice to master. A few rare colleges of magic probably exist in out-of-the-way locales, but wizards are difficult to find away from them. Magic is well-regarded by the common people, but still held in awe.

With a little thought, any prospective DM can use this system to decide what kind of wizardry he wants in his campaign. It is even possible to use this analysis to help decide what spellcasting system to use (see later in this book for a discussion of these alternate spellcasting systems).

## Optional Nonweapon Proficiencies:

| Proficiency | Slots Required | Ability | Ability Modifier |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alternate Magics | 1 | Intelligence | -1 |
| Cryptography | 1 | Intelligence | variable |
| Dweomercraeft | 3 | Intelligence | -3 |
| Magical Engineering | 1 | Intelligence | -1 |
| Mathematics | 1 | Intelligence | 0 |
| Meditation | 1 | Intelligence | N.A. |
| No Noticeable Effect | 2* | Intelligence | -2 |
| Planar Geography | 1 | Intelligence | -1 |
| Planar Geometry | 1 | Intelligence | 0 |
| Specific Spell | 2* | Intelligence | -2 |
| Speed Casting | 2* | Wisdom | -2 |
| Subtle Casting | 2* | Dexterity | -2 |

Proficiencies marked with a * can only be learned by wizards.

## Descriptions:

**Alternate Magics.** (Modified form of *alternate magics* from Dawn of the Emperors; Jim Gitzlaff) This skill grants a familiarity with magic that is not based on conventional spellcraft. Examples of this include the innate abilities of faeries, demons, djinn, and other known magical creatures, as well as the unusual spellcasting done by dragons and their ilk. A successful skill check indicates that the wizard has correctly identified the source and nature of the magical phenomenon.

**Cryptography.** (Jim Gitzlaff) Possession of this proficiency allows the character to create and break codes and ciphers. Reading/writing is required in order to learn this skill. Multiple picks of this proficiency are often very helpful.

Codes and ciphers fall into four levels of difficulty (equivalent to the number of slots of "cryptography" taken by the person that does the encryption). Their specific requirements are as follows:

| Difficulty: | Base Breaking Time: | Check Modifier: |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 10 minutes | +1 |
| 1 | 1 day | 0 |
| 2 | 1 week | -1 |
| 3 | 1 month | -2 |

The person encrypting the text can use a difficulty level no higher than the level of cryptography skill s/he possesses. The base breaking time is the unit of time that a person must spend to have any chance of "breaking" the code. Each day of code breaking must be 8 hours of uninterrupted thought or the period must be begun anew. The check modifier is an additional bonus/penalty applied to breaking a code that is dependent on its difficulty only.

The DM may choose to add more modifiers because of the length of the text or successive failures. Codes/ciphers can only be broken by a person familiar with the language that the normal text is in.

If encrypted documents are to be used for general communications, both the encryptor and decryptor must know the key. The impracticality of changing keys frequently is the only thing that tends to keep codes in use for long enough that breaking them becomes worthwhile.

In order to change codes, the encryptor must merely decide to. It is a very quick job to create a code (of the type useable without super-computers), generally taking 4 hours per skill level. Codes should be referenced (code A, code B, etc) so that the DM can remember which ones are in use.

**Dweomercraeft.** (Jim Gitzlaff) This rare nonweapon proficiency is generally only available in a world with a high degree of magical knowledge. It represents much in-depth study of metamagic -- the forces which underlie magic itself. Hence, it usually must be learned from a university or academy. On a successful proficiency check during spell research, the wizard can reduce the time required to complete the spell by 25%. The expenses that would have arisen during this extra time are, naturally, not accrued.

In general, this NWP should only be allowed by the DM if the PC has had some unusually deep connection with the study of magic. For instance, if the PC mage studied various courses at a magic academy for a year or more. Another possibility would be if the PC (like Merlin) had demonic blood (the DM could easily substitute the ancestry of some less baneful creature like a nymph or naiad).

**Magical Engineering.** (Modified form of *magical engineering* from Dawn of the Emperors) A character that has this proficiency can determine the nature of a magical item more easily. S/he does this by examining the item and looking for clues in its composition, form, and decoration. A successful proficiency check indicates that the character has correctly identified the item. Some particularly unusual magic items would apply significant penalties to this roll (e.g. while a Sword + 1 and Ring of Invisibility would have no modifiers, a Sword of Sharpness and Staff of the Magi might be harder to identify correctly.

Whether or not the ability check succeeds, the character using this skill will think that s/he has correctly identified the item. However, if the roll fails, the DM should tell the character that the item is something that it in fact is not.

This skill also reduces the amount of time needed to construct a magical item by a percentage equal to the intelligence of the wizard/cleric.

**Mathematics.** (Jim Gitzlaff) The ability to handle Euclidean geometry and very basic algebra. If it is possible to take this proficiency multiple times in a given campaign, later picks will grant basic logic, solid geometry, and basic trigonometry.

**Meditation.** (Modification of the *meditation* skill from GAZ 3; Jim Gitzlaff) For wizards, the meditation nonweapon proficiency allows a bonus to all intelligence checks if they follow an hour of meditation. For example, if a wizard wanted to use his Magical Engineering proficiency on a ring, he would get a +1 bonus to his intelligence check if he spent an hour beforehand meditating on the problem.

The method of meditating varies considerably from wizard to wizard. For some, it involves measured breathing while in lotus position -- for others, it means puffing silently on a pipe while watching the clouds. It is up to the player and DM to come up with an appropriate meditation method.

This skill is also useful in another way if certain alternate spellcasting systems are in use. Meditation frequently replaces (or supplements) sleep for the recovery of spellpoints. Optionally, only wizards with this skill can recover spellpoints through meditation.

**No Noticeable Effect.** (Matt Stanton) This is one of the four proficiencies allowed only for wizards. It works on the premise that many spells have visual components that are not connected to their function. For instance, the appearance of fire is required for *fireball* because the spell's primary function is to release a ball of flames. *Ray of enfeeblement*, on the other hand, need not create a visible beam as it weakens its target. Other possibilities include the various *detect...* spells, *fire shield*, and anything else the individual DM thinks is appropriate. Whether or not a particular spell has a visible component that is secondary to its function is up to the DM.

This proficiency allows the wizard to totally remove all secondary visual traits from his spells if he makes a successful skill roll before casting them.

**Planar Geography.** (Modied form of *planar geography* from Dawn of the Emperors; Jim Gitzlaff) This skill gives the possessor basic knowledge of the geographies of other planes of existence. This includes basic knowledge only -- the kinds of things that are mentioned in the Manual Of The Planes, for instance -- but not specifics about politics, national borders, and demographics.

**Planar Geometry.** (Jim Gitzlaff) This proficiency prevents the possessor from becoming disoriented in the unusual environments of other planes. Thus, the wizard will not be confused by directionless planes such as the astral, elemental air, and elemental water. He will also be able to fully comprehend the multidimensional aspects of interplanar travel and extradimensional spaces (e.g. bags of holding and *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Mansions*). A successful proficiency check could tell the wizard a variety of things:

- whether a given spell will behave unusually due to the directionless/multidimensional nature of a specific plane
- whether or not it would be bad to take a bag of holding into a *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*
- unusual modes of planar egress due to dimensionality (e.g. going from one level of the Nine Hells to another by entering the space above a *rope trick* spell)

Other categories of information may be allowed at the DM's discretion.

**Specific Spell.** (Jim Gitzlaff) This very special nonweapon proficiency represents that a wizard might, through much study and dedication, be able to specialize in a spell in the same way that a fighter can specialize in a weapon. Wizards can only specialize in a given spell once, and they can never begin at the first level of experience with a proficiency in specific spell.

When the wizard first decides to specialize in a particular spell, he must decide what component of the spell he wishes to emphasize. This can never be changed.

**Offensive Spell Only:**

- Reduce target's saving throw by -1.
- +1 point of damage per die.

**Any Spell:**

- Increase duration by +50%
- Increase range by +50%
- Increase area of effect by +50%

Note that some spells can have any of these applied (e.g. *Melf's minute meteors*), while others cannot. For instance, any spell with an "instantaneous" or "permanent" duration cannot be increased by +50%. Likewise, a spell with a range that is either "0" or "touch" cannot have its range improved by +50%. Finally, a spell with an area of effect of "caster only" cannot be increased.

**Speed Casting.** (Jim Gitzlaff) This skill, taken once, allows the wizard to reduce the initiative modifier of any spell by one if s/he makes his/her skill roll. If the wizard has chosen this skill more than once, s/he must make a skill roll for each level of speed casting s/he possesses. This skill cannot be taken more than three times, and no spell may have its initiative modifier reduced below one..

Examples of use: The wizard in these examples has three levels in speed casting and a wisdom of 13 (thus, he has a +1 modifier because he has three levels of speed casting).

Example one: The wizard wants to cast *chaos* (initiative modifier of 5). He rolls a 10, 5, and 13. Since he made all of his skill checks, the initiative modifier on *chaos* is reduced to 2.

Example two: Again, the wizard wants to cast *chaos*. This time, he rolls a 12, 2, and 20. The *chaos* spell has its initiative modifier reduced to 3.

Example three: This time, the wizard rolls a 5, 19, and 4. Since the second roll failed, it does not matter what the third roll was (in this case, it would have passed). The *chaos* spell has its initiative modifier reduced only to 4.

Spells that have an explicit casting time instead of an initiative modifier are in no way speeded up by this spell.

*Design note:* Wisdom is the relevant ability here because it was felt that mental toughness and concentration are required to rush out the spell without distraction, rather than memory or analytical ability INT).

**Subtle Casting.** (Matt Stanton) A wizard with this skill can cast spells so sneakily that no observer can detect any somatic spell components unless they make a successful Spellcraft skill check. If the wizard combines this with a *vocalize* spell, the only outward sign that he is casting a spell might be the visible effects of the spell itself.

## New Wizard Kit: The Metamagician

**Author:** Jim Gitzlaff
**Description:** This rare and esoteric school deals with the study of the scientific and logical underpinnings of magic itself, as well as the casting of spells that modify the operation of other spells. It is usually only open to individuals that attend a large college of magic, although it is not unheard of for a lone metamagician to take on apprentices far from such a school.
**Specialist Name:** Metamagician.
**Allowed Races:** Humans, elves, and half-elves may be metamagicians. The requirement for a broad base of magical skills excuses the other races from joining this school. However, the DM may choose to allow certain other (non-player) beings to become metamagicians by virtue of their highly magical nature. For instance, it would not be illogical to allow a lich to use this kit. And if the DM allows dragons to occasionally become true spellcasters, a metamagician silver dragon could be an interesting option.
**Ability Requirements:** Metamagicians must possess an intelligence that is no less than 17 because of the extreme technical rigor of metamagical studies.
**Saving Throw Modifiers:** None.
**Bonus Spells And Acquired Powers:** A metamagician can memorize an extra spell at each spell level, providing that at least one of the memorized spells is from the school of metamagic. They also gain a 15% bonus when trying to learn or research spells from the metamagical list (see below). A strange fact is that it is possible for one character to simultaneously be a wild mage and a metamagician.

As metamagicians rise in experience, they learn progressively more about how to control magical forces. Their bodies, in fact, become little more than vessels for the magical powers inside of them. This influence over magic manifests itself as a magic resistance of 5% when the metamagician reaches 11th level. For every second experience level that the metamagician attains after 11, another 5% resistance is added on. Thus, a 17th level metamagician has a 20% magic resistance. This resistance is modified by the caster of the spell. For every level of the caster over 11, the metamagician's magic resistance is lowered by 5%. But for every level of the caster below 11, the metamagician's magic resistance is raised by 5%. Since PC wizards generally are members of parties that encounter beings of equal or greater power, the net effect of this magic resistance is to protect the metamagician from occasional "nuisance" spells from low level spellcasters, wands, etc.
**Oppositional Schools:** The discipline of metamagic is a study of magic in all of its forms. Thus, there is no oppositional school to metamagic. However, the metamagician must take an experience point penalty of 10% to represent the extra time and study required to learn all of the different methods open to him. (Note that since the metamagician must have an intelligence of 17 or better, s/he automatically gets an experience point bonus of 10%. This is already accounted for in assigning the 10% penalty; actually, the metamagician receives a 20% penalty that is partially counteracted by high intelligence.)
**Spell Analysis:** The metamagical spell list -- taken from the Player's Handbook 2nd Edition, The Complete Wizard's Handbook, The Tome of Magic, and Greyhawk Adventures -- is as follows:

| **Level One** | |
|---|---|
| *Detect Magic* | (PH2) |
| *Identify* | (PH2) |
| *Nahal's Reckless Dweomer* | (TM) (Wild) |
| *Nystul's Magic Aura* | (PH2) |
| **Level Two** | |
| *Chaos Shield* | (TM) (Wild) |
| *Protection From Cantrips* | (PH2) |
| *Sense Shifting* | (TM) |
| *Vocalize* | (CWH) |
| **Level Three** | |
| *Alacrity* | (TM) |
| *Augmentation I* | (TM) |
| *Dispel Magic* | (PH2) |
| *Far Reaching I* | (TM) |
| **Level Four** | |
| *Dilation I* | (TM) |
| *Divination Enhancement* | (TM) |
| *Extension I* | (PH2) |
| *Far Reaching II* | (TM) |
| *Minor Globe of Invulnerability* | (PH2) |
| *Minor Spell Turning* | (TM) |
| *Mordenkainen's Celerity* | (TM) |
| *Otiluke's Dispelling Screen* | (CWH) |
| *Rary's Mnemonic Enhancer* | (PH2) |
| *Rary's Spell Enhancer* | (GA) |
| *Remove Curse* | (PH2) |

| Level Five | |
|---|---|
| *Extension II* | (PH2) |
| *Far Reaching III* | (TM) |
| *Rary's Superior Spell Enhancer* | (GA) |
| *Safeguarding* | (TM) |
| *Vortex* | (TM) (Wild) |

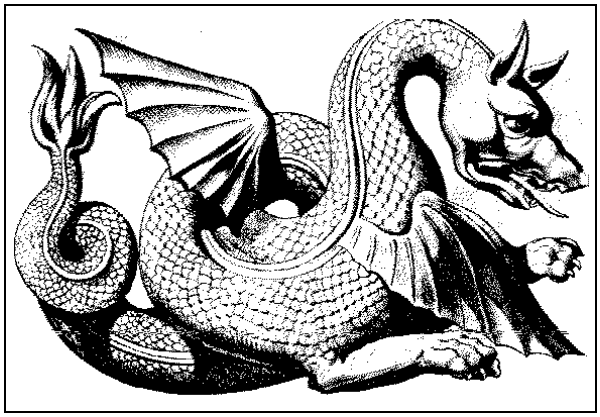
| Level Six | |
|---|---|
| *Anti Magic Shell* | (PH2) |
| *Augmentation II* | (TM) |
| *Dilation II* | (TM) |
| *Extension III* | (PH2) |
| *Globe of Invulnerability* | (PH2) |
| *Mordenkainen's Lucubration* | (PH2) |
| *Wildshield* | (TM) (Wild) |
| *Wildstrike* | (TM) (Wild) |

| Level Seven | |
|---|---|
| *Hornung's Surge Selector* | (TM) (Wild) |
| *Intensify Summoning* | (TM) |
| *Spell Shape* | (TM) (Wild) |
| *Spell Turning* | (PH2) |

| Level Eight | |
|---|---|
| *Permanency* | (PH2) |
| *Serten's Spell Immunity* | (PH2) * |
| *Wildzone* | (TM) (Wild) |

| Level Nine | |
|---|---|
| *Mordenkainen's Disjunction* | (PH2) |
| *Stabilize* | (TM) (Wild) |

* *Serten's Spell Immunity* is only a metamagical spell when the AD&D Second Edition rules are in use.



As the list of metamagical spells suggests, there are not many high level metamagicians that are not also wild mages. This may only be a temporary bias, or there may be some connection -- it is up to the individual DM.

Since the metamagician concentrates so fully on spells that are not especially useful in and of themselves for combat and adventuring, the metamagician is challenging to play as a PC. If they can acquire a large list of known spells, though, they will come into their own. This class also makes an excellent *opponent* for lower level PCs who are unfamiliar with the powers of this kit.

## Magic Sects

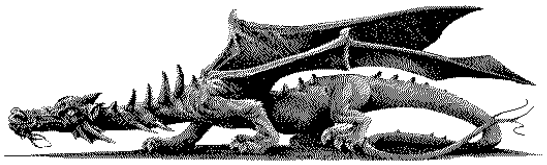
The idea behind magic sects is simple. It is probably best described using a mundane example from our own world, in which "sects" arise in martial atrs training. Any two schools teaching Tae Kwon Do will be more similar to each other than to one that teaches Karate. Nonetheless, if you pick two Tae Kwon Do academies at random, it is most likely that they will differ on a wide range of minor issues invovling philosophy, the order in which moves are taught, forms, etc.

In a similar manner to this, magical sects can arise in the AD&D campaign. The differences between different sects of wizards can be either downplayed (*e.g*. 95% of the wizards are of a single "sect" -- that being the *normal* AD&D wizard, and only the 5% coming from a few geographically remote regions belong to *distinct* sects) or significant (e.g. every starting PC wizard must choose one of nine sects created by the DM -- or even make up their own).

Some magical sects are formal bodies with a membership roll, methods of identification, and governing officers. Others, though, are just disorganized individuals that share nothing but a common intellectual heritage. Not all wizards belong to sects, because time tends to intermingle trees as much as it "inbreeds" them; but it is probable that fully half of the wizards alive are members of distinct sects.

It is unlikely that any two randomly chosen members of a given sect will share current teachers, but their heritage of knowledge will be the same. This heritage manifests itself in similar world views, methods, and spell effects. Examples of sects follow, with possible philosophies and spell alterations outlined for the DM's perusal. It should be noted that sects, far more than schools, are heavily campaign dependent. They may be tied to a certain region, a cult of personality, or almost any other socio-political reality that would encourage an unbroken chain of teachers. For this reason, none of the example sects have been named. It is up to the individual DM whether to name a given sect "the Red Cloaks," "the Cromarkin-Tel," or "the Followers of Marnak," for instance.

**Name:** _____
**Philosophy:** Mildly ascetic. They dress, eat, and entertain themselves simply, but are rarely known to go so far as to fast. They believe that magic is a dangerous and basically unnatural force, so low level



spells should always be used in preference to high level ones when possible. They always support order and peace. Members are usually good, lawful neutral, or true neutral.
**Cosmetic differences:** Any spell that pertains to visual detection or enhancement (e.g. Detect Magic, Clairvoyance, Wizard Eye, etc.) will cause the eyes of the caster to glow when cast. The color and hue tends to vary from spell to spell.

Another unusual feature of this sect is that no abjuration spell will ever leave a visual signature unless it is part of the primary function of the spell.
**Spell changes:** Members of this sect cannot cast the normal Fireball spell. Instead, over the years they have developed a different version which does 150% of the damage of the normal spell but has a diameter only half as large.
**Schools:** The most common specialist schools represented in this sect are abjurers and diviners. Enchanters, conjurers, and necromancers are quite rare.
**Kits:** Academicians, mystics, peasant wizards, and wu jen are particularly well suited to this sect.

**Name:** _____
**Philosophy:** Very religious, members of this sect devote themselves to the lay veneration of the god of magic. Magic is the greatest gift given by the gods to mortals, and must be respected as such. Magical knowledge must be increased at all costs.
**Cosmetic differences:** The only visible change is that members of this sect often like to present a holy symbol of the god of magic as they cast spells. This in no way hinders their casting, and often confuses opponents into thinking that the wizard is actually a priest.
**Spell changes:** In the cases of the following spells, the wizard gets the priest version instead: *light*, *protection from evil/good*, *detect evil/good*, *continual light/darkness*, and *protection from evil/good 10' radius*. The spells are memorized and cast normally, however -- they are not granted by the god.
**Schools:** Mages predominate heavily, but the occasional metamagician and wild mage have been encountered.

**Kits:** The academician and wu jen could be excellent choices for this sect.

**Name:** _____

**Philosophy:** Members of this sect are often very conservative, and many of its members have found their way into positions of authority. Members are interested in leadership and the tradition of government service. They have an "old boy" network that serves to help other members into similarly authoritative jobs while hindering the progress of outsiders.

**Cosmetic differences:** Wizards that were trained in this tradition tend to produce much more ostentatious spell effects than their fellows. Flames are a little brighter, lights a bit more vibrant, and illusions more detailed.

**Spell changes:** The *fireball* cast by members of this sect is nonstandard. Its radius is double that of the normal spell, but its damage is only 50% (25% if save).

**Schools:** All are represented.

**Kits:** Academicians, militant wizards, and patricians are the best suited to the goals and ideals of the members of this sect.

**Name:** _____

**Philosophy:** Wizards in this sect often try to conceal that they are. They tend to take a combative view of the world. Wizards are the gifted few, and they must protect normal mortals from their own folly be making all their decisions for them. Naturally, this prejudice earns them few friends among common folk.

Many times, of course, this view is not so extreme, but it is a fact that wizards in this sect do not often look on non-wizards as equals. They make few close non-wizard friends.

**Cosmetic differences:** Every spell that produces light (except the various *prismatic ...* spells) has its color shifted to the blue/indigo/violet end of the spectrum. This applies to *light* (bluish-white light), *fireball* (methane-like flames), and many, many other spells.

**Spell changes:** The *lightning bolt* spell is very different for members of this sect. The bolt must originate at the hand of the caster, but its length is 50% greater than normal. Its color is violet.

**Schools:** Any.

**Kits:** Any, but it is less common to find mystics (the contemplative life is too unfulfilling), academicians (too sedentary), or militant wizards (the reliance on mundane weapons is unthinkable).

# Alternate Magic Systems

At one time or another, nearly every AD&D player changes some aspects of the standard rules so that they fit in better with the campaign. These "house rules" may be a bit of a nuisance at conventions, but the ease with which they can be integrated into the standard framework of the Second Edition AD&D rules is undoublably a major factor in explaining the popularity of AD&D versus the other game systems that compete with it.

There are at least three specific problems that make the adoption of some formal alternative to the standard AD&D magic system desirable:

**(1) Game Balance:**

The usual pro-status quo argument makes the claim that "it is only fair to make magic users weak at low levels because they become so strong later on." This is not acceptable to many people because they want spell casters and other character classes to have roughly equal amounts of power at all levels, rather than merely a similar long-term average.

Another argument is that low level M-U's make up for their weaknesses by possessing more role-playing opportunities than most characters. This is bogus -- every class possesses unrecognized roleplaying opportunities.

People who agree with this generally want to see magic users given more power or versatility at low levels while either keeping their power at high levels steady or reduced slightly.

**(2) "The Utility Belt":**

Most character classes other than magic users rely on reusable abilities, the success of which are decided by dice rolls. For instance, thieves' skills may be used over and over again, as long as an opportunity to do so presents itself. Furthermore, these abilities have the potential for failure, adding an additional dimension of strategy to the play of the thief. Similarly, fighters fight, clerics turn, bards sing, monks use martial arts, et cetera.

Magic users, on the other hand, are the AD&D equivalent of Batman with his utility belt; for once they decide which spells to memorize, they are essentially push-button characters. Fundamentally, the M-U is a sedentary peasant wearing a utility belt. It is a depressing moment for the low level M-U when he realizes that he could be totally replaced (and, indeed, improved upon) by a decent wand until he reaches the higher levels.

Unless M-U's carry around a good supply of wands, scrolls, or other magic items that give them more options, magic users are relegated to a kind of "push button" playing style that makes them unexciting to imaginative players.

People who are bothered by this usually want to allow M-U's to cast spells more than one time per day or dynamically choose which spell(s) to cast.

**(3) Famous Wizards:**

Most people who play AD&D have read a large selection of fantasy novels that portray neat wizards and sorcerers. Not surprisingly, very few of these need to go through the same mechanics as AD&D M-U's. One rarely runs into a powerful mage who cannot cast a spell today that he cast yesterday simply because he decided not to "rememorize" it. Many players want to have characters similar to Pug, Ged, Gandalf, or Theleb K'arna, but are disappointed when the AD&D system does not allow it.

These people take a number of different approaches in changing the magic system.

This author believes that for all of the above reasons the present AD&D magic system needs to be improved. We will explore eight smaller alternative spellcasting **Subsystems**, so called because they tend to be shorter, easier to implement, and rougher around the edges. They address many of the perceived problems of the AD&D spellcasting system imaginatively and effectively. Unfortunately, they often cause a major shift in game balance. For this reason, each subsystem is followed by "campaign notes" that discuss what consequences they might have on the game.

The subsystems are followed by more completely analyzed alternate spellcasting **Systems**. These are listed seperately because they are longer, more thoroughly playtested, and require more explanation due to their complexity. In this author's humble opinion, any and all of these complete systems are quality substitutes for the standard one. If your campaign uses more magic than the average AD&D world, there is a system for you. If, in your campaign world, magic is a chaotic and dangerous force, there is a system for you. Even if you decide to use none of them, they will provide fascinating examples of other people's solutions to the AD&D magic dilemma.

## Alternate Spell Casting Subsystems

### **Subsystem 1:** no spell components

**Author:** Many, many people

As a general rule, do away with spell components. A medium-high level wizard usually has a lot of spells, and a detailed accounting of what components are required for every spell is both difficult and annoying. (We play the game to have fun, after all, not to practice accounting.)

Since the game already presumes that wizards have spell components secreted away in unmentioned pockets and pouches, and since the vast majority of components are either free or cheap (e.g. guano, sand, sulfur, etc.), it is highly desirable for many DM's to ignore spell components entirely until a highly unusual one is required.

Examples of "unusual" components must vary from DM to DM, but probably include live animals, gemstones, and anything else which requires significant time and/or money to get.

### **Subsystem 2:** simple spellpoint system

**Author:** Many, many people

Simply total the number of spell levels that a wizard would ordinarily be able to memorize at any given level. Call this total the wizard's "spellpoints." When the wizard wishes to cast a spell, he merely expends a number of spellpoints equal to the level of the spell. The wizard need not pick a certain list of castable spells --he may cast any that he knows.

*Campaign notes*: Subsystem 2 probably needs compensitory rules unless the group using it prefers stronger-than-normal wizards. The first advantage it gives to wizards is the ability to choose spells as they are needed. Thus, spells cast will always be useful; there will never be an occasion when the wizard loses out on spell levels because s/he memorized a worthless spell. Second, the wizard can freely determine what spell *levels* to cast. Normally, a 5th level wizard can cast a single 3rd level spell; but this subsystem would allow him to convert his 11 spellpoints into three 3rd level spells and a single 2nd level spell. This kind of level shifting makes the acquisition of a new spell level much, much more potent; and the same problem occurs at levels 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, and 18.

### **Subsystem 3:** simple spellpoint system, level shifting

**Author:** Brandon Cope

No matter whether the spellcaster is a wizard or a priest, the number of spells which he may cast per level are the numbers printed on the appropriate chart in the Player's Handbook. For example, a wizard of third level may cast two first level spells and one second level spell.

Wizards do not have to memorize their spells beforehand; they can use any spell in their book(s) that they know. Priests can use any spell of appropriate level that is in a sphere that they can normally use.

In an emergency, any spellcaster may shift spell levels. If a spellcaster wants to cast a spell that he no longer can, he may "buy" the spell by expending other spells. If these spells are lower level than the one he wishes to cast, then the caster must trade away a number of spell levels equal to 150% of the level of the spell he wishes to cast. For example, a 7th level wizard wishing to cast a second fourth level spell in one day can trade away any of the following combinations of lower level spells for the privilege:

(150% of 4 is 6)

4 first level spells and 1 second level spell:
(4x1)+(1x2)=6

2 third level spells: (2x3)=6

3 second level spells: (3x2)=6

etc.

If the caster wishes to trade a higher level spell for a lower level one, he may do so freely. In this case, though, the extra spell levels are totally lost. For example, a 12th level wizard that has cast (only) his two third level spells wants to cast Fireball again. To do so, he trades away his one fourth level spell slot. The extra one spell level is lost in the exchange.

A spellcaster regains spell levels just as he would regain them normally (by rest and study, although now the caster just refreshes his memory of his spells [note that this can apply to clerics studying their prayer books as well]). If desired, the DM may resist abuse of the "study" method by placing a total limit on the number of spells the caster may use before resting (a good limit is the actual number of spells the caster is allowed anyway -- so, for example, if a priest has a normal maximum of 4/3/2 spells, he can only cast 9 before testing).

*Campaign notes*: Readers will note that in practice this system is the same as Subsystem 2 except that the 150% rule constrains spellcasters in

their choice of spell levels. This partially vitiates the level shifting problem, but spellcasters will still be able to pick spells with tremendous freedom and versatility. Spellcasters will become noticeably stronger, and campaign balance will probably shift. Unless the campaign is particularly lethal, or some other compensatory rules are added, spellcasters will tend to dominate things.

## **Subystem 4:** Simple Spellpoint System, Arduin Grimoire

**Author:** "Sea Wasp"

This system is based on the Arduin Grimoire system. It can be used with either clerics or wizards. The caster gets a number of spellpoints equal to his or her prime requisite (INT or WIS) multiplied by level of experience, divided by three. Thus, a 5th level wizard with a 19 intelligence would have 19*5/2 or 47.5 mana points.

Spells, at their base power rating, cost 1.5 points per level of the spell. Thus, a first level spell costs 1.5 points, a second level spell costs 3 points, and so on.

When a spell has damage, duration, etc. that increase with level, more power must be spent to cast the spell and GET that increased power. For example, a 10th level *fireball* does twice the damage that a 5th level *fireball* does, so it costs twice as much to cast. The following example is illustrative:

> *Fireball* is a third level spell and costs 4.5 at the base of fifth level (the first level of experience at which it is castable). Casting a ten-die *fireball* will cost twice as much, or 9 mana points. Of course, the 10th level caster could just put in 4.5 mana points and get out only that 5-die blast, or even put in 0.9 mana and get a one-die *fireball*.

*Campaign notes*: This system allows an unparalleled amount of control over the power put into spells. Imagine being able to "pull" a *lightning bolt* in the same way that a fighter can pull a punch! This system lacks one feature, though, that the DM would need to decide on before using it. Specifically, what is to be done about the "level shifting" problem mentioned in the notes after subsystems 2 and 3? Possible solutions are...

(a) to allow the caster to use any combination of spells of any levels s/he would normally be able to cast,

(b) to allow the casting of spells whose levels are higher than the caster can normally use, but at an increased cost, or

(c) to restrict the caster in some way to mostly use spells that are of relatively low levels. Other solutions will no doubt occur to you.

## **Subystem 5:** The Arcanum System

**Author:** "Sea Wasp"

Each day, the wizard gets to cast 2 spells plus 1/level of experience. These spells may be any combination of levels that a wizard of that level of experience could normally cast. For example: If the wizard is 5th level s/he would be able to cast 7 spells per day. There are many possible combinations of spell levels...

(a) 7 first level spells

(b) 7 third level spells

(c) 1 third level, 4 second level, and two first level spells etc. -- any combination of known spells of levels 1-3.

Additionally, PURE spellcasters (not rangers, fighter-mages, etc.) get bonus spells for high intelligence. Simply give the wizard the same bonus [or penalty] for intelligence that a cleric would get for wisdom. Spell levels are also interchangable for these bonus spells, but the wizard does not receive them until s/he reaches a level of experience at which s/he would normally have been able to cast a spell of that level. A good example is a 4th level mage with an 18 INT. He would have 6 (base 2+4) + 2 (2 first level spells) + 2 (2 second level spells) = 10 total spells per day. These spells may be of any combination of levels 1-2. The wizard gains neither the 1 third nor 1 fourth level bonus spell because he is not able to cast third or fourth level spells at the 4th level of experience.

*Campaign notes*: This system is about as free-form as you get. If you think that wizards tend to be wimpy little dudes that need beefing up, then this system might be for you. It should probably be noted that low level wizards have a lot more to gain from this than high level wizards, who may in fact lose some power. For instance, a normal 17th level wizard can cast 33 spells per day. The same wizard (with an 18 INT) using this system would be able to cast 23 spells per day.

Of course, this assumes that level shifting were addressed in some way. If not, a 17th level wizard using this system could cast 23 (!) 9th level spells! This is so extraordinary that I take it for granted that very few DMs would adopt it "as is." Solutions to the level shifting problem have already been suggested.

## **Subystem 6:** Dynamic Memorization

**Author:** Niels Ull Jacobsen

The critical difference between this system and the standard one is that the number of spells you can cast per day is *not* the same as the number of spells you can memorize.

Spellcasters can cast a number of spells per day equal to that shown in the Player's Handbook, 2nd Edition. For example, a 5th level wizard can cast one 3rd level, two 2nd level, and three 1st level spells in a single day. If the spellcaster wants to use more lower level spells, s/he may do so at the expense of higher level ones. To do this, the caster can "convert" higher level spells to lower level ones at a one-to-one ratio. For instance, the wizard listed above could convert his 3rd level spell to one 2nd level spell OR one 1st level spell; but he could NOT trade the one 3rd level spell for three 1st level spells. A spell can only be converted to ONE lower level spell -- excess spell levels are lost.

Spellcasters can memorize as many spell levels as they have levels of experience. For example, the 5th level wizard above could memorize one 3rd and two 1st level spells (1x3 + 2x1 = 5), one 1st and two 2nd level spells (1 + 2x2 = 5), or even 5 1st level spells (5x1 = 5). This is quite a bit less than the standard rules allowed, but it is made up for in the amount of time required to memorize spells. The spellcaster only needs 1 round/spell level to memorize spells. Furthermore, as long as the caster hasn't used all of his or her spells for the day, s/he needn't be rested. This means that spells can actually be memorized during combat. Being hit in a round will spoil that round of memorising. When memorising, you can freely "overwrite" any other spell you have in memory without using the "Energy", it would have cost to cast them. As in the standard AD&D rules, spells are gone from memory when they are cast.

Example of play: Resu Cigam, the 5th level wizard mentioned above is dungeon-crawling with his trusty friends, Rethgif and Feiht. He hasn't cast any spells yet today. The spells he has memorized currently are *lightning bolt* (3rd level), *feather fall* (1st), and *magic missile* (1st).

Suddenly, Rethgif falls down a pit. Reacting quickly, Resu casts *feather fall*, saving Rethgif. Resu now has only *lightning bolt* (3rd level) and *magic missile* (1st) memorized. The party waits a minute while Resu memorizes another *feather fall* from his spellbook and then carefully sidesteps the pit.

Shortly afterwards they encounter a locked door, which Feiht cannot open. Resu hauls out his spellbook, finds the right page and use 2 minutes memorizing *knock* (2nd level), scratching *feather fall* and *magic missile* from his memory. He casts the spell, which opens the door. Unfortunately, 10 ogres rush forward from the corridor beyond. As they close in, Resu cast his last memorized spell, *lightning bolt*, killing 5 of the nasties. He has now cast one 1st, one 2nd, and one 3rd level spell today; and he can only cast one 2nd level spell and two more 1st level spells before he needs to rest. Unfortunately, he has no spells memorized. He frantically pages through his spellbook, trying to memorize a *web* spell while Rethgif and Feiht hold off the monsters for the two rounds he'll need. Fortunately, they succeed and the last three ogres are held in a *web* and shot to death with arrows. Since Rethgif and Feiht are severely wounded, they decide to withdraw. Resu uses 5 minutes memorizing two *magic missiles*, a *feather fall*, and two *light* spells, although at most he will only be able to cast two of them.

*Campaign notes*: The non-combat spells (such as *mending*, *message*, etc.) will be used more often since you don't have to risk wasting a slot for the entire day. When you need a non-combat spell, you usually will have the time to memorize it. In combats, spellcasters will usually cast their powerful offensive magic in the first few rounds and the run dry. This forces them either to spend valuable combat rounds memorizing more spells OR to be more tactical in their use of combat magic. This makes the spell users more flexible yet weaker in combat, which might be a good thing.

Since spellcasters are still limited to their original breakdown of number of spells per level per day, there is no way to abuse the system by spewing out inordinate amounts of either low level or high level spells. A very good solution to the level shifting problem.

This system works for both wizards and priests. Simply require that priests can only "be vested" (instead of "have memorized") at one time with one spell per level of experience, but that they can "pray for" (instead of "rememorize") new spells at a rate of 1 round per spell level.

## Subsystem 7: Chaotic Magic

**Author:** Jim Gitzlaff

This is a modest system that intends to add to, rather than supplant, any existing spell casting system which has automatic spell resolution. It adds an element of chaos into the AD&D magic system without relying extensively on data tables.

When a wizard wants to cast a spell, s/he rolls a 1d20 to see if the casting is successful.

**MODIFIERS:**

**Intelligence:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 15-16 | +1 |
| 17-18 | +2 |
| 19-20 | +3 |
| 21-22 | +4 |
| etc. | etc. |

**Wizard is a Mage:** +2 at all times

**Wizard is a Specialist:** +4 in school of specialization, -4 in opposing school, +/-0 otherwise.

**Wizard is injured:** -1

**Spell is of a level more than...:**

8 levels under the caster's maximum level castable: +3

5 levels under the caster's maximum level castable: +2

2 levels under the caster's maximum level castable: +1

**More than 3 spells cast on consecutive rounds:** -1 cumulative

**The DM should add environmental penalties as s/he sees fit** (e.g. -2 for casting from a moving horse's back)

**RESULTS:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 21+ | Caster chooses 3 from Bonus Table. |
| 18-20 | Caster chooses 2 from Bonus Table. |
| 15-17 | Caster chooses 1 from Bonus Table. |
| 12-14 | Spell works normally.* |
| 9-11 | Successful, but the spell is off by 50% on range (else it effects the caster if a touch spell, or fails if a range 0 spell). * |
| 6-8 | Spell apparently works for a moment, then totally fails. |
| 3-5 | Absolutely nothing happens. |
| 0-2 | A related but different effect occurs (DM's discretion).* |
| <0 | Spell backfires (DM's discretion).* |

(on a result with a "*" the caster forgets/expends the spell/spellpoints)

**BONUS TABLE:**

| |
|---|
| Duration +50% (only if the spell originally had a duration >0). |
| Area of Effect +50% (only if the spell had an area of effect). |
| Saving throw against the spell at -2 (only if it had a save). |
| Range +50% (only if the spell had a range > touch). |
| Damage +25% (only if the spell caused damage). |
| The material components (if any) are not expended. |

*Campaign notes*: This system cannot function on its own, obviously. It must be paired with a more substantive system -- *e.g.* the standard AD&D system, the Arduin Grimoire subsystem, or Spellpoints I (below). This subsystem only is referred to when a spell is cast, under whatever system of memorization/points/etc.

The simplicity of this subsystem is attractive, but it does introduce a large element of unpredictability to the spellcasting rules. Spell power is both increased and decreased, depending on the roll of a die. That makes the system good for a world with chaotic magic, but unattractive at best for worlds with scientific/artistic magic.

Despite the problems with this subsystem, it offers endless possibilities for tinkering and modification. Changing just a few numbers might make it perfect for campaign. One should also note the third alternate spellcasting system (*Proficiency Check I*), which is more complete, better balanced, and more complicated than this subsystem.

## Subsystem 8: Modified Memorization

**Author:** Petri Kokko (Helsinki)

The rule that a wizard forgets spells as s/he casts them is silly. In this system, you do *not* forget spells as you cast them, nor does the memorization brand magic patterns into your brain or anything like that. Memorization is just like it is in the real world.

To simulate memorization, imagine the memory of a wizard to be like a *stack* (If you know something about programming computers you know what I am talking about. If not, imagine a pile of cards.). Every spell the mage knows is numbered and the spells are thus in order. Those with a small number are in the "top" of the memory and those with a larger number are not so well memorized. This can be handled quite easily during game play by

using notecards, the recently released Wizard Spell Cards (TSR, Inc.), or small pieces of neatly stacked paper. A mage can change the ordering of spells by consulting his spell book and refreshing the instructions of a spell. This spell is then brought to the top. Each spell, regardless of its level consumes one memory location.

Every mage can fully memorize as many spells as he has levels. This memory is called the *actual memory*. Spells in this memory can be cast with no chance of error. These spells are also in the top of his memory stack.

Additionally, a wizard can memorize some other spells, but they are not necessarily remembered perfectly. These spells come next in the memory of the mage. To cast these spells correctly, the mage must succeed in an INT check. Every step (spell) in the memory below the actual memory causes a penalty of 2 to this check. This memory is called the *grey memory*.

When the penalty gets so great that the INT check succeeds only with a natural 1, you no longer have to perform any bookkeeping. Each and every spell that the wizard has ever learned (that doean't have a higher memory position already) rests in this memory area, called the *lost thoughts.* All spells therein work with an accuracy of only 5% (1/20).

A mage must still study his spell book regularly because after a night's sleep all spells in his memory drop down one step (place a blank card or sheet of paper on the top of the pile to help remind the player of this). By consulting the spell book, the wizard can bring spells to the top again.

Now, memorization is not enough for casting a spell (or a mage would be tremendously powerful). He must also have power called spell points. A mage has as many spell points as he has levels times two plus a bonus for high intelligence:

| **Intelligence:** | **Bonus Spellpoints:** |
|---|---|
| 13-15 | +1 |
| 16-17 | +2 |
| 18 | +3 |
| 19 | +4 |
| etc. | etc. |

For example, a 4th level mage with an INT of 14 has (2x4)+1=9 spell points. They are recovered at a rate of 1 spellpoint per hour of rest, not necessarily sleep.

Each spell costs 2 spell points per level of the spell to cast. This does seem to reduce the number of spells that the wizard may cast daily. However, s/he can cast any spell s/he likes as long as it is on memory. Thus, raw power is sacrificed, but compensated for with much increased versatility.

The mage can also, if desperate, continue casting after s/he has used every spell point. This technique is risky, though, because hit points are drained instead of spell points. The ratio is 1 hit point for 1 spell point.

If the wizard's hit points drop below 1 from this, s/he loses consciousness. The wizard does not continue to lose hit points, though (as would be normal with the optional "-10" rule). The wizard remains unconscious until his hit point total exceeds 0. However, if the wizard is reduced to -10 hit points from injury, spell point/hit point trade-ins, or a combination of the two, s/he is *dead*. That's why the technique is risky....

Hit points lost from spellcasting are recovered more quickly than normal hit point loss (**BUT** they **CANNOT** be recovered by any magical or priestly spell: the reason is obvious). Hit points lost by spellpoint trade-ins are recovered at the rate of 1 hp per hour of rest.

**An example:** A 4th level mage, INT 14, hit points: 7.

1. This mage has 4 spells in his *actual memory*. They can be cast with no chance of error.
2. The 5th spell in his *grey memory* has a 70% chance of working.
3. The 6th spell: 60%

...

8. The 11th spell: 10%
9. The 12th spell and all later spells, his *lost thoughts*: 5%

He has 2*4+1=9 spell points and can thus cast 8 1st level or 4 2nd level spells (or a combination of them) before passing out (hit points reach zero).

**Campaign notes:** This is a nifty system that can be implemented in a number of ways. For instance, the memorization rules could be used alone by grafting them on to another system (several of the alternative systems presented in this book seem like excellent candidates). Or this subsystem could be used as-is. Campaign balance might shift around some, but much less than subsystems 2-3, for instance.

One possible alternative the DM might want to consider pertains to the hit points lost when the wizard converts them into spellpoints. The DM could streamline things by treating those lost hit points as the same sort of temporary damage inflicted by punching & wrestling.

## System One: Spellpoints I

There are a myriad of spellpoint systems that have been released in the past several years by amateurs trying to improve the AD&D system. This one was playtested for four years by a group of 8-12 serious players. It was last revised five years ago and has presented no problems since. It is a simple system to implement, and should not require any significant changes in the campaign at large.

**Authors:** Jim Gitzlaff (Univ. of Illinois), Jim Sisolak (Univ. of Wisconsin)

**Principal Aim:** To make wizards more versatile and fun to play. To combat the game balance and "utility belt" problems.

Wizards receive a number of spellpoints equal to one per level number, cumulative, plus one. Thus, at specific levels, wizards possess the following number of spellpoints:

| Level: | Spellpoints: |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 (1+1) |
| 2 | 4 (1+1+2) |
| 3 | 7 (1+1+2+3) |
| 4 | 11 (1+1+2+3+4) |
| 5 | 16 (1+1+2+3+4+5) |
| etc. | etc. |

Any spell costs double its level in spellpoints to cast. Thus, a first level spell costs two, a third level spell six, and a ninth level spell eighteen.

A magic user can convert spellpoints into spells freely, with only two exceptions:

**First**, the spells must be known and memorized by the spell caster. *Knowing* has its standard AD&D meaning.

When a spell is first encountered by a wizard, he must try to make his % chance to learn new spell roll. If he fails with this roll, he can never cast the spell. The DM might rule, however, that different versions of this same spell exist in the world; and that if the mage finds one of these versions, he may try to learn it again.

The mage can memorize at one time a number of spells per spell level equal to the number in the "maximum spells knowable" column of the intelligence effects chart in the Players Handbook. The mage can automatically memorize spells up to his minimum capacity (same chart), but then must make his % chance to learn new spell roll for every spell up to his maximum capacity. If he fails in this roll for a certain spell, it does not mean that the mage is forever unable to memorize the spell in question, but merely that he cannot "get it in" that day and may try again after a sleep period.

**Second**, the wizard can convert spellpoints to spells only in such a way that he does not cast more spells of a given level than he would have been able to memorize in the old system.

For example, if a wizard is allowed by the original system to memorize 3 third level spells, he now possesses exactly 3 third-level "slots" that may be converted into spells, spellpoints permitting. He may, of course, cast less than this number if he desires.

This restriction is imposed in order to maintain a higher level of realism. If a wizard were allowed to freely allocate spellpoints to any spell level, it would be possible for M-U's to convert an overproportion into high level spells. For example, without this restriction, it would be possible for (but not realistic to allow) a 12th level M-U to assign 72 of his 79 spellpoints to sixth level spells!

Wizards, then, do not need to relearn spells every night. They can continue to cast the same spells day after day without problem as long as they have the spellpoints and the slots. The only factors that might motivate a wizard to spend time rememorizing spells are:

1. Memory loss. Caused by illness, injury, or magic.
2. New spell. To memorize a new known spell.
3. Change spells. To exchange a memorized spell for an unmemorized (but known) spell because the intelligence ceiling has been reached.

Spellpoints are recovered by sleep only (but see Option 1). In order to make a partial night of sleep worth something, but also to prevent M-U's from running around dungeons catching catnaps all the time, adoption of the following table is recommended:

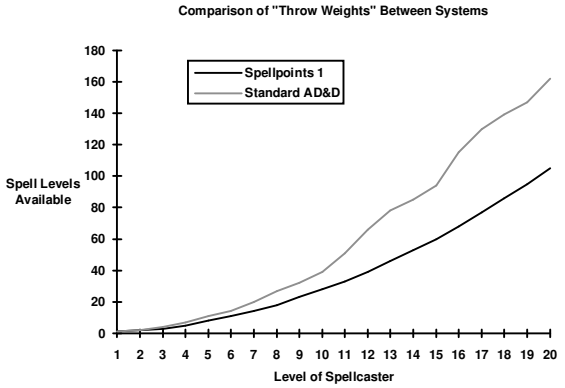
| Hours slept: | Fraction of total spellpoints: |
|---|---|
| <5 | 0/4 |
| 5-5.9 | 1/4 |
| 6-6.9 | 2/4 |
| 7-7.9 | 3/4 |
| 8+ | 4/4 |

Thus, if a M-U sleeps for only 4 hours, he will reap no benefit, but the same M-U would get back 1/2 of his total spellpoints if he slept for 6 1/2 hours. In each case, the fractions do not refer to the number of spellpoints that the M-U is down, but to

the total number of spellpoints that the spell caster has when at full power.

The system is that simple.

A close analysis of the numbers will show that the system is inherently balanced. An easily-created graph charting the difference in total spell levels available to a spellcaster operating under the original AD&D rules versus a spellcaster using this alternate system at each level will show three things:




First, at low levels the curves overlap. This means that the spellpoint-using wizard has the same "throw weight" as his official counterpart while gaining the ability to dynamically choose spells. This means that at low levels spellpoint-using wizards are more versatile than ordinary wizards.

Second, as the wizard rises in levels, the power curve for the conventional wizard begins to progressively pull away from his spellpoint-using counterpart. This reflects the fact that high level wizards are normally quite powerful (perhaps the most powerful class in the game at those levels), and that the added flexibility granted by the use of spellpoints must be counterbalanced by lowering the character's "throw weight." At lower levels, this gap is quite small (0-10%), but as one approaches level 20 it becomes more significant (30-45%).

Third, the conventional wizard gets a very different amount of added spell levels each time s/he rises a level of experience. This spellpoint system smooths out the curve in such a way that every level of experience is approximately as valuable as any other.

Hence, the system has intrinsic checks and balances. If anything, its adoption tends to make the wizard more balanced than before.

## Option 1: Study in lieu of Sleep

If the DM thinks it would be more realistic, M-U's could be allowed to recover spellpoints for study/meditation in addition to (or instead of) sleep.

In order to preserve balance in this area, though, it is recommended that the time fractions be the following:

| SPt Fraction Recovered: | Sleep: | Study/ Meditation: |
|---|---|---|
| 0/4 | <5 hrs | <90 min |
| 1/4 | 5-5.9 hrs | 90-119 min |
| 2/4 | 6-6.9 hrs | 2-2 1/2 hrs |
| 3/4 | 7-7.9 hrs | 2 1/2 - 3 hrs |
| 4/4 | 8+ hrs | 3+ hrs |

## Option 2: Cantrips

For added variety at low levels, the DM may choose to abandon the 2nd edition cantrip spell in favor of a system more similar to the Unearthed Arcana rules.

Specifically, allow every new M-U the option to have cantrip as a starting spell. Instead of being a first level spell, though, consider it to be zero-level. Casting a cantrip costs 1 spellpoint (instead of two), and uses one zero-level "slot." M-U's should be given two zero-level "slots" for every first level "slot" they would normally possess.

Application of this rule should add even more to the versatility of low level M-U's while keeping their offensive and defensive punch constant.

## Option 3: Other Spellcasters

As should be quite apparent at this point, this system was originally designed for magic users (mages, wizards) only. If the DM wants to apply it to clerics, druids, rangers, and the like, the following rules are suggested to maintain fairness:

**Priests:** The easiest way to convert priests to this spellpoint system is to say that they function just like the M-U. In other words, they have the same spell costs and slots, spellpoint recovery rate, and use their wisdom score whenever the intelligence table needs to be consulted. Give them their wisdom bonus spells -- or not, depending on how well it works in your campaign.

**Other Spell Casters:** They are better off left unconverted, both from a game balance and common sensical analysis. After all, one expects a ranger to have a utility belt approach to spell casting.

## System Two: Spellpoints II

This system is also called Tachyon Magic. It, too, has been heavily playtested for many years, and seems to work almost equally well for wizards and priests.

**Authors:** Originally created by Craig Rideout; later adapted by Mike Fonte. Made available by Deb Atwood, thanks to her amazing archival skills.

**Principal Aim:** To increase the versatility of spellcasters.

In general, each spell is worth an amount of points equal to its level times 10. For instance, a first level spell costs 10 points to cast, a second level spell costs 20 points, etc. Henceforth these points will be referred to as "tachyon points" (TP).

To determine a **wizard's** tachyon points:

Add up the number of spell levels that the Player's Handbook says a wizard can learn (e.g. 1 for a first level wizard, 2 for a second level wizard, 4 [2 first + 1 second] for a third level wizard, and so on), then multiply this by ten to arrive at the base number of spell points.

Next, add 5 tachyon points per level of experience of the wizard to the base number. Then add a number of points equal to the wizard's intelligence score minus ten. This intelligence modifier is applied only once, not for each level of experience. A first level wizard with an 18 intelligence, designed using this system, would have 10+5+8=23 TP to cast spells with.

The numbers and levels of memorizable spells are unchanged from the PH2. However, a cast spell does not disappear from memory. Instead, it can be recast as many times as the wizard has TP for. This provision allows for greater versatility in spellcasting, because wizards need not memorize a spell more than once in a single day.

Regeneration of TP occurs while sleeping, meditating or resting. While sleeping, wizards regain an amount of TP per hour equal to 5 points per level + (INT - 10). So a first level wizard with an 18 intelligence would have a regeneration rate of 13 TP per hour while sleeping or meditating. While resting, the Mage gains back TP at one quarter of the normal rate.

Spells remain memorized until the wizard completely purges himself of TP, at which time he can and must rememorize spells. Spells can only be rememorized when the Mage has no TP left.

Optional rules for wizards:

**1.** Spells are forgotten when the wizard sleeps for 8 or more hours. Spell must be forgotten to be rememorized, but you may be at full TP while memorizing

**2.** Gems contain Tachyon Points at a rate of 1 TP per 10 gold piece value of the gem. Thus, a 1000 gp gem would contain 100 TP. Wizards can begin to learn at level 5 (through research and training) how to tap TP from gems.

This technique is not without risk, though. The wizard attempting to get tachyon points from gems must add his experience level and intelligence together, then roll under this total on a d%. If he does, then the TP's are safely harvested by the wizard. Failure means that the magical energies do 2-20 points of damage to the spellcaster.

If enough TP are taken from the gem than the mage is over his normal maximum, then mage's eyes begin to glow and he must save vs. spell every round or suffer effects equivalent to a psionic blast.

[Note: Much of the information for this option was not submitted to the editor. What seemed like reasonable rules were filled in for completeness. JG.]

3. TP suicide -- a nasty attack reserved for NPC's and very high level wizards. The spellcaster directs raw tachyon power from his hands and into his enemy, at a damage rate of 1d4 for each Tachyon point expended (very nasty indeed). This has a high failure rate, and if the mage fails, he takes the same damage as his opponent. Even if he doesn't fail, the mage takes half the damage he dishes out.

4. By expending additional TP, a wizard can cast spells as if he were of higher level. This costs an additional 10 TP per level increased.

To determine a **priest's** tachyon points:

The spell points assigned to a cleric are the same as for a mage, except wisdom is substituted for intelligence and bonus spells granted due to wisdom are added to the total spell levels.

Clerics do not have to memorize spells. They pray on the spot for spells from their god, and can be granted any spell within their spheres and level of ability. However, this does have its disadvantages. First and second level spells are granted by the minions of the god to the cleric, but higher level spells are granted directly by the god/goddess, and if there is strife in the heavens,

there is a good chance the cleric will not receive his spell.

Calculate the regeneration rate for clerics as per mages, again substituting WIS for INT. Clerics only regain TP at full rate while meditating or in prayer, and regain at 1/4 rate while sleeping or testing.

Optional rules for priests:

**1.** Miracles may occasionally be granted by the gods (a 2% chance per level of the priest, and it is only possible for it to happen once per level). A miracle is a spell of one level higher than the caster's ability. The priest may pray directly to the god and by paying an amount of TP 3 times the normal amount (ex. 90 TP for a 3rd level spell), the miracle may be granted.

**2.** Clerics, like Mages, can also cast as if higher level by using more TP.

**3.** Clerics *cannot* use TP from gems or commit TP suicide. The TP used by both classes is inherently different, and is only called the same name to avoid confusion. TP for priests is granted by the gods, and TP for mages is pulled from the mage and from the magic of the world.

## System Three: Spellpoints III

This system has the advantage of being designed to handle rangers, paladins, and bards. It requires a fair amount of bookkeeping, but also rewards high ability scores. An excellent system.

**Author:** Tim Prestero (UC Davis), some alternate ideas by Andy Merritt.

**Principal Aim:** To recreate the spontaneity of spell casters from fantasy literature.

This spell point system closely follows that of the regular spell system in the Player's Handbook, as for tying mages to spellbooks, and clerics to prayer.

One important note for DM's using this system: You must take care to restrict the number of spells a mage has in his book, or else things tend to get out of hand, with mages casting spells all over the place and ruining game balance. Likewise, keep clerics to the spheres offered by their dieties. These simple guidelines keep the system from throwing things out of whack.

**POINT BONUSES FOR HIGH STATS**

| Statistic: | Bonus/ Level Acquired (Cleric): | Bonus/ Level Acquired (Wizard): |
|---|---|---|
| 13 | 1/1 | 1/1 |
| 14 | 1/1 | 1/1 |
| 15 | 2/3 | 2/3 |
| 16 | 2/3 | 2/3 |
| 17 | 3/5 | 3/5 |
| 18 | 4/7 | 4/7 |
| 19 | 1/1, 4/7 | 1/1, 4/7 |
| 20 | 2/3, 4/7 | 2/3, 4/7 |
| 21 | 3/5, 5/9 | 3/5, 5/9 |
| 22 | 4/7, 5/9 | 4/7, 5/9 |
| 23 | 10/9 | 10/9 |
| 24 | 12/11 | 12/12 |
| 25 | 6/11, 7/14 | 6/12, 7/14 |

***THESE BONUSES ARE CUMULATIVE**

The relevant statistic is WIS for priests and INT for wizards. Part-time spell casters such as rangers and paladins do not get spell point bonuses from high statistics. As indicated by the table, the bonuses are cumulative, but the spell caster only recieves the bonuses at the levels indicated.

**Example:** Boudewijn, a 5th level mage with a 20 intelligence, recieves a 12 point bonus. At 7th level, though, he would have a cumulative total of 24 bonus points.

**SPELL POINT TABLE**

| Caster Level: | Spell Points (M.U.): | Max. Spell Level (M.U.): | Spell Points (priest): | Max. Spell Level (priest): |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 1st | 1 | 1st |
| 2 | 2 | | 2 | |
| 3 | 4 | 2nd | 4 | 2nd |
| 4 | 7 | | 7 | |
| 5 | 11 | 3rd | 12 | 3rd |
| 6 | 14 | | 15 | |
| 7 | 20 | 4th | 19 | 4th |
| 8 | 27 | | 26 | |
| 9 | 32 | 5th | 34 | 5th |
| 10 | 39 | | 43 | |
| 11 | 51 | | 54 | 6th |
| 12 | 66 | 6th | 66 | |
| 13 | 78 | | 75 | |
| 14 | 85 | 7th | 91 | 7th |
| 15 | 94 | | 96 | |
| 16 | 115 | 8th | 108 | |
| 17 | 130 | | 124 | |
| 18 | 139 | 9th | 145 | |
| 19 | 147 | | 148 | |
| 20 | 162 | | 162 | |

**Max spell level:** The maximum allowable level of spell the caster is able to cast.

**Spell Cost:** A spell costs its level in spell points. *I.e.* a seventh level spell costs seven spell points. Cantrips are three to a spell point.

A caster is able to choose how he wants to expend his spell points. He could blow them all on fifth level spells, or cast some first, some second, and some fourth, etc. There is no spell per spell level restriction. See below for available spells.

**Spell Point Recovery:**

The number of spell points a caster has are actually the number he would get over a 24 hour period. Spell points are "recovered" constantly, at a rate depending on the number of spell points the caster has. To determine the number of spell points recoverd, divide the total number of spell points by 144 (the total number of turns in a 24 hour period). This will give the recovery rate in spell points per turn. For recovery rates less than one turn, divide into rounds. Otherwise round all fractions off to the nearest turn (*e.g.* 14.4 turns = 14 turns, 16.7 = 17 turns). Given below are some examples of recovery rates:

| Spell Point Total: | Recovery Rate: |
|---|---|
| 1 s.p. | 1 s.p./24 hours |
| 3 s.p. | 1 s.p./8 hours |
| 10 s.p. | 1 s.p./14 turns |
| 20 s.p. | 1 s.p./7 turns |
| 40 s.p. | 1 s.p./4 turns |
| 100 s.p. | 1 s.p./turn |
| 120 s.p. | 1 s.p./turn |
| 160 s.p. | 1 s.p./9 rounds |

A caster begins recovering spell points as soon as he drops below maximum (*i.e.* after the first spell is cast). If the DM doesn't mind the hassle, s/he is free to skip rounding up fractions of turns, and instead express the fractions as rounds, *i.e.* 14.4 turns is 14 turns, four rounds. This may be advantageous when casters begin reaching the triple digit spell point mark.

**Alternate recovery system:** Instead of recovering spell points automatically, the caster must rest to regain spell casting energy. The caster would regain one spell point for every 15 minutes' rest. The caster could read, or eat while resting, and could certainly sleep; but activities such as walking and horse riding prohibit spell point recovery.

**Spells Available:**

This is what ties mages to their spell books, and clerics to their prayers (a necessary part of the game, in my opinion). A caster is able to "store" a number of spells, dependant upon level, to be available for casting. The table below gives the number of spells available, per caster level.

| Level | Cleric | M.U. | Bard | Paladin | Ranger |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5 | 5 | | | |
| 2 | 7 | 7 | 3 | | |
| 3 | 8 | 8 | 4 | | |
| 4 | 10 | 9 | 5 | | |
| 5 | 12 | 11 | 6 | | |
| 6 | 15 | 16 | 8 | | |
| 7 | 18 | 19 | 9 | | |
| 8 | 21 | 23 | 10 | | |
| 9 | 22 | 26 | 11 | 4 | 4 |
| 10 | 24 | 29 | 12 | 5 | 5 |
| 11 | 27 | 31 | 13 | 6 | 6 |
| 12 | 30 | 35 | 14 | 7 | 7 |
| 13 | 33 | 38 | 16 | 9 | 8 |
| 14 | 34 | 42 | 18 | 10 | 9 |
| 15 | 36 | 44 | 20 | 10 | 10 |
| 16 | 38 | 47 | 21 | 11 | 11 |
| 17 | 40 | 50 | 23 | 12 | 11 |
| 18 | 43 | 52 | 25 | 13 | 11 |

This table is not cumulative. *Spells Available* represents the number of spells a caster can "fit" into his head after study or prayer. It takes a turn per level of the spell to fit each individual spell into his head.

A caster is free to "replace" any spell in his mental repetoire with another, after the appropriate period of study. All spells takes up the same amount of space, regardless of level; a ninth level spell takes up the same amount of space as a first level spell, though the ninth level spell would take longer to "fit" in.

**Example:** A tenth level mage wants to begin memorising spells. He has 39 spell points, and can "fit" 29 spells into memory. He chooses to memorise nine first level spells, and five of every other level up to fifth (his maximum castable level). It would take him (1x9)+(2x5)+(3x5)+(4x5)+(5x5), or 79 turns to memorise them all, or 13 hours and ten minutes. A cleric of the same level would spend an equal amount of time in prayer.

Memorised spells stay in the casters memory until changed, or until some action causes the mage to lose them. A feeblemind spell will wipe all spells from the casters memory. There are various offensive spells in my campaign designed to sap spell memory (as well as spell points). If a caster is konked on the head or suffers some other mentally debilitating injury, he must save versus magic or forget 1-100% of his spells (d100).

Finally, a caster need not have a full spell memory. If he does not wish to spend the full time memorising spells, he is free to move about, and do as he pleases.

**Fatigue:**

The act of spell casting is tiring in and of itself. Certain high level spells have the effect of aging the caster; but all spells, even the simplest of spells, are physically fatiguing to cast.

To determine the effects casting spells have upon the caster, first refer to the number of hit points the caster has when he begins casting spells. This is his "fatigue level." This amount will determine how many spells the caster is capable of casting before becoming exausted. Now, each time the caster casts a spell, he loses one of his fatigue points per level of the spell, but no actual hit points. When the caster runs out of fatigue points, he must make a CON check to stay conscious and avoid botching the spell from fatigue. This check is modified by the number of points the caster has below zero.

**Example:** Gilgamel, a sixth level mage, has a maximum of 18 hit points. Prior to spell

casting, he was stabbed by an orc and lost seven hit points. He now wants to start casting spells. As the party is swamped by orcs, he decides to fling a number of *lightning bolts* into the combat. Casting the first spell takes him from 11 fatigue points down to 8. It also costs him three spell points. Not satisfied with the results, he wants to cast some more. In the next two rounds, he casts two more *lightning bolts*. Now he feels tired, as he is down to 2 fatigue points. But, there are still orcs standing (tough orcs), so he rips off yet another lightning bolt. This will take him below zero, so he needs to make a CON check, at -1, because that is the number of fatigue points he'll have after the spell. Gilgamel, with his 10 CON, rolls an eight and thus makes it. Next round, he casts yet another lightning bolt, taking him to -4. Now he has to make the CON check at -4.

If the caster takes damage, it is subtracted both from his hit points and his fatigue points. A caster brought to -10 fatigue points or below automatically passes out.

If the caster fails his CON check, the spell fails. It is up to the DM to decide if it fails spectacularly, or if it just doesn't go off. Either way, the caster still expends the appropriate number of spell points. Upon failing the first CON check, the caster must make a second check at the same modifier to stay conscious. If he fails that, he is out until he has recovered sufficient spell points to take him to positive numbers.

Each round the caster doesn't cast spells, he will recover a fatigue point. If the caster lost fatigue points due to physical damage, those will be recovered when the damage is healed. The caster can only regain up to his current number of hit points in fatigue points. A caster will regain fatigue points if he manages to cast himself into unconsciousness, and will recover points while knocked out. Once he regains sufficient fatigue points to take him to positive numbers, he will regain consciousness.

**Example:** The orcs have all been fried, and Gilgamel needs rest. After a few rounds of furious spellcasting, he managed to bring himself down to -4 fatigue points. For each round he doesn't cast spells, he will regain a fatigue point, recovering up to a 11 fatigue points, his current hit point total. To get to his maximum possible total of 18, he would need to get his injuries healed.

**More Tables:**

Here are the tables for the other spell using classes. These classes, as previously mentioned, recieve no spell point bonus for exceptional stats.

| **Bard:** | **Spell Points:** | **Max. Spell Level:** |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | 1st |
| 3 | 2 | |
| 4 | 4 | 2nd |
| 5 | 5 | |
| 6 | 7 | |
| 7 | 10 | 3rd |
| 8 | 12 | |
| 9 | 15 | |
| 10 | 19 | 4th |
| 11 | 22 | |
| 12 | 26 | |
| 13 | 31 | 5th |
| 14 | 35 | |
| 15 | 40 | |
| 16 | 47 | 6th |
| 17 | 54 | |
| 18 | 63 | |
| 19 | 67 | |

| **Paladin:** | **Spell Points:** | **Max. Spell Level:** |
|---|---|---|
| 9(1) | 1 | 1st |
| 10(2) | 2 | |
| 11(3) | 4 | 2nd |
| 12(4) | 6 | |
| 13(5) | 9 | 3rd |
| 14(6) | 10 | |
| 15(7) | 14 | 4th |
| 16(8) | 19 | |
| 17(9)* | 22 | |
| 18(9)* | 22 | |
| 19(9)* | 26 | |
| 20(9)* | 30** | |

| **Ranger:** | **Spell Points:** | **Max. Spell Level:** |
|---|---|---|
| 8(1) | 1 | 1st |
| 9(2) | 2 | |
| 10(3) | 4 | 2nd |
| 11(4) | 6 | |
| 12(5) | 9 | 3rd |
| 13(6) | 10 | |
| 14(7) | 13 | |
| 15(8) | 15 | |
| 16(9)* | 18** | |

* maximum casting level

** maximum number of spell points

**Max spell level** is the maximum level of spell the caster is capable of.

**Maximum casting level** is the effective level of the caster, in regards to spell duration and effect.

Bards cast spells as magic users, and their effective level is the same as their level as a bard. Paladins and rangers use priest spells at the level indicated.

**Further Ideas:**

To add flavor to the campaign, here are some ideas of things that affect a spell user on a spell point system.

1. **Magic rich/ magic dead areas:** A mage would find that his spell point recovery rate would increase or decrease in such areas. Recovery rates could double in magic rich areas, and spells could always have maximum effect (max duration, max damage, etc). In magic dead areas, recovery rates could be halved, or stopped completely. Similarly, spells themselves would be adversely effected by such areas, with spells having reduced efects.

2. **Holy/Unholy areas:** A cleric in a temple devoted to his patron might find that memorisation time decreases, and spell point recovery time increases. Shrines or other consecrated places could have similar effects. Unholy places, or those of good align for evil priests, could reduce spell point recovery dramatically.

3. **Drugs:** There could be a variety of potentially addicting drugs that would increase recovery rates, and perhaps memory capacity.

4. **Magic items:** There are also a variety of magic items that could act as spell point resevoirs, or point recovery enhancers.

5. **Spells:** There could be various spells designed to sap spell points from other mages, or temporarily increase the number of points a mage has.

Once again, I would remind you that it is important to restrict the number of spells a mage has in his spell book, as it has the potential to become very game imbalancing.

## System Four: Proficiency Check I

Under the spell rules as written, what happens when a spell is miscast? Nothing -- it never occurs. Either the caster knows the spell perfectly, or else has no chance of casting it. Even worse, when a spell caster knows a spell, but wants a slight variation on it (e.g. a light spell that produces green light, or a glowing bird from a dancing lights spell), he must spend time and money researching a whole new spell. This system is designed to take account of both of these factors, as well as make a significant restructuring of the AD&D magic system.

**Author:** Matthew Stanton (Wisconsin)

**Principal Aim:** To satisfy the famous wizard problem. Also to simulate the uncertain nature of spell casting better than the original AD&D rules.

Magic is an art, not a science. For those DM's who wish their worlds to be populated with guilds of wizards engaged in a pseudo-academic study of the nature of magic, trading wands like bubble gum cards, stop reading now! DM's who think that the spell casters who inhabit the worlds of Raymond Feist, Lyndon Hardy, and Ursula LeGuin are the only real mages will be disappointed.

If, instead, the sorcerers found in Moorcock, Leiber, and Lovecraft are more your style -- where magic is unimaginably powerful but dangerously unpredictable -- then this offering is for you.

The Basic Idea:

In order to cast a spell, the priest or wizard must successfully roll a modified 20 or better on one throw of a d20. This roll is modified by environmental variables, proficiency, ability scores, skill level, the spell itself, and variations introduced by the caster.

If the roll is greater than or equal to 20, the spell is cast normally (or better). If the roll fails, however, the caster has lost control of the powers he sought to command, and the spell will function unpredictably if at all.

Specifically, the casting success roll is structured as follows:

**Caster Level:** This modifier is just exactly the level of experience of the spell caster, added to the die roll. Thus, a 5th level mage would add +5.

**Ability Modifier:** This simulates the bonus (or penalty) a mage or priest would get to cast a spell due to unusually high (or low) ability scores. Of course, wizards use intelligence and priests use wisdom.

| Ability Scores: | Ability Modifiers: |
|---|---|
| 1 | N.A |
| 2 | -6 |
| 3 | -3 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 5-8 | -1 |
| 9-14 | 0 |
| 15-16 | +1 |
| 17-18 | +2 |
| 19+ | +3 |

**Spell Level:** Higher level spells call upon magical energies of much greater power than lower level ones. It is only reasonable, therefore, for these spells to be more difficult to cast. The following chart holds for both priests and wizards:

| Spell Level: | Spell Modifier: |
|---|---|
| 1 | +4 |
| 2 | +2 |
| 3 | 0 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 5 | -4 |
| 6 | -7 |
| 7 | -9 |
| 8 | -11 |
| 9 | -13 |

**Special Modifiers:** These include all of the various adjustments to spell casting that are applied only under certain circumstances or in specific campaign situations.

Furthermore, each of these modifiers is optional for the DM. If s/he thinks that any of these are inappropriate, s/he should not include them in the campaign. The flip side of this, naturally, is that the DM should feel free to add special modifiers if the situation or campaign warrants it. Rules should be chosen primarily to contribute to a fun game, and only secondarily for game balance and realism. The most important thing is that whatever the DM and players decide, they should remember and stick to it from session to session.

**Example Special Modifiers:**

**Racial Background of Caster**
Highly magically deficient (githzerai): -2
Magically inept (dwarf, gnome): -1
Average (human, halfling): 0
Magically apt (elf, svirfneblin): +1
Very magically apt (faerie, drow, dragon): +2
[other creatures may exist that range from -5 to +5]

**Injury**
Caster has lost 50% starting hit points: -1
Caster has lost 75% starting hit points: -2
(not cumulative)

**Specialization**
Wizard casting spell in specialized school: +2
Priest casting spell in specialized sphere: +1
Caster specialized in one particular spell: +1
(this single spell specialization differs from the one described earlier in this document: it costs 1 nonweapon proficiency slot and may be cumulative with the bonus for specialized school)

**Magical Fatigue**
Caster cast spells for 3 consecutive rounds: -2
Caster cast spells for 5 consecutive rounds: -5
Caster cast spells for 7 consecutive rounds: -9
Caster cast spells for 10+ consecutive rnds: -15
(not cumulative)

**Improvisation**
Attempting minor variation of known spell: -1
(*e.g.* "firebird" based on fireball)
Attempting major variation of known spell: -2
(*e.g.* "frostball" based on fireball)
Attempting spell not known: -3
Attempting a purely creative effect: -3
(This means trying a spell effect not listed as a spell in any official or accepted source for spells. The DM should assign effective spell level for purposes of determining Spell Level Modifier.)

**Magical Areas**
Caster present in magical area: +1 to +5
(faerie ring, stonehenge, etc.)

**Personal Sacrifice**
Per two hit points lost during casting: +1
(they are healed normally)
Per attribute point lost during casting: +3
(STR, DEX, etc.; they are recovered slowly -- days, weeks, or years may be required)

**Object Sacrifice (Very campaign dependent)**
Mineral sacrifice: +1
(per 500 gp. worth, rounded down)
Plant sacrifice, religious significance: +1
Animal sacrifice, non-necromantic spell: +1
(per hit die)
Animal sacrifice, necromantic spell: +2
(per hit die)
Bound nature spirit/elemental: +2
(if applicable, per hit die)
Human sacrifice, non-necromantic spell: +1
(per level, eveil characters only)
Human sacrifice, necromantic spell: +3
(per level, evil characters only)
[*Special*: the object sacrificed is itself magical: +1 to total.]

**Magical Items/Things**
Special staves, amulets, ioun stones, etc.: +1 to +5
Cursed items: -1 to -5
Familiars: +0 to +1
(bonuses from special familiars only)

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Another option that the DM has at his disposal is the addition of new nonweapon proficiencies solely for spell casters of this type. If the individual DM thinks that these modifiers fit into his campaign well, he must decide how the mage or priest comes to know them. They must usually be taught by an experienced individual in a major magic college or temple, and might be available to members of certain faiths, sects, or schools.

**"No Noticeable Spell Effect" -1**
Costs 1 slot, roll vs. INT -1 (wizards) or WIS -1 (priests).

This assumes that normal spells have some sort of visible signature in the campaign, like a ray from the caster's hand, glowing eyes, etc. This nonweapon proficiency allows the user to dispense with such side effects as long as they are peripheral to the primary function of the spell. For instance, ray of enfeeblement would function normally, but without a visible ray. Similarly, lightning bolt would produce an audible crack, but the fork of electricity itself would not be seen. Spells such as phantasmal force, prismatic wall, and sunray would not be effected in the least.

**"Subtle Spell Casting" -3**

Costs 1 slot, roll vs. DEX -2 for both wizards and priests.

Observers will not be able to tell that the wizard or priest is casting a spell unless a successful spellcraft proficiency roll is made. This includes

only the ability to mask the verbal & somatic components of spell casting, and excludes the ability to produce no noticeable spell effect (above). The two can be used in tandem, however. [This NWP was slightly modified by the editor. Originally, it included both the powers described above and the powers of "no noticeable spell effect" and gave a -4 modifier to the roll for casting success. J.G.]

**"Speed Casting" -2**

Costs 1 slot, roll vs. DEX -3 for both wizards and priests.

This nonweapon proficiency allows the spell caster to gain greater initiative in a round of spell casting. It will shorten the casting time of a spell by 1 per -2 penalty taken on the spell casting success roll. No spell may be shortened below 1, and no spell may be shortened by more than 3.

---

OK -- What now?

After all of the modifiers are totalled, the player should roll a 20 sided die, add the modifiers, and determine whether or not he is successful. The table below shows all of the possible outcomes:

**THE BIG MAGICAL AFTERMATH TABLE**

| Modified Roll: | Result: (see below) |
|---|---|
| 34+ | Supercharged spell. |
| 25-33 | Spell works, caster free to act again. |
| 21-24 | Spell works, no more actions that round for the caster. |
| 20 | Spell partly works |
| 17-19 | Failure. Smoke, sparks, smell of brimstone. |
| 13-16 | Failure. No effect whatsoever. |
| 10-12 | Minor accident. |
| 6-9 | Major accident. |
| 2-5 | Catastrophe. |
| less than 2 | Magical apocalypse. |

**Supercharged Spell:** If the spell caster gets higher than 33 on his roll, the spell is doubled in effect for every statistic except damage done. Thus, duration, area of effect, number of creatures affected, range, and so on are each doubled.

**Spell works, caster free to act again:** The cast spell functions perfectly; and with the amount of time left in the round, the caster may move, ready components, or defend himself.

**Spell works, no more actions that round:** The cast spell functions perfectly, but the caster must spend the remainder of that round catching his breath and regaining his wits.

**Spell partially works:** Every statistic of the spell, including damage done (if applicable), is halved. Furthermore, the caster found it so difficult to cast the spell that he is worn out & unable to do anything except move normally and defend.

**Minor accident:** This means that some part of the spell energy backfires upon the caster. Many different things might happen, but they last for only two turns per level of the botched spell. After this time, the caster recovers totally. Examples of minor accidents follow in the "Accident" table.

**Major accident:** This effect is only possible when a caster of at least fifth level fails while casting a spell of at least third level. Otherwise, consider the result to be a minor accident. These nasty consequences tend to last for about a day, as they signify a pretty large mistake by the caster. The "Accident" table lists some specifics.

**Catastrophe:** This can only happen if the caster is at least level 12 and the spell he is casting is at least level 6. They tend to last a number of years equal to the level of the spell, as they are caused by a gross internalization of the chaotic magical energies. Refer to the "Accident" table.

**Magical apocalypse:** This can only be caused by casters of at least 18th level upon the failure of a spell of 9th level (optionally, level 7 for priests). It is caused by an uncontrolled rift forming between the plane of the caster and wherever the energies of chaos hight from. These effects can last for any amount of time, but generally endure for decades. See the "Accidents" table for more information.

**ACCIDENT TABLE**

**MINOR ACCIDENTS:**

Caster ages 1d10 years.
Caster's face distorts into that of a monster.
Caster's body goes numb; -1d6 to DEX.
Caster's body falls into convulsions.
Caster is blinded or stricken deaf.
Caster screams uncontrollably.
Caster "blinks" out of reality and returns to the same space in 2d6 turns.
Foul smoke fills the area.
Spell backfires on caster.
Spell works, but to an opponent's benefit.

Spell works, but so slowly that the effect could be negligible.

**MAJOR ACCIDENTS:**

Caster is battered about by unseen forces; 1d4 points of damage per level of spell attempted.
Caster polymorphs into an animal.
Caster's hands and/or feet are broken; nothing can be held easily, walking is difficult; magic cannot heal the breaks.
Caster goes mildly insane.
The caster notices everything 1 minute after it happens, as if reality were "running late."
Caster falls into a coma.
Caster deformed; charisma drops by 1-6 points.
Animals no longer trust the caster; they will either flee or attack
Hordes of some type of vermin (ants, rats, etc.) swarm into the area and attack everything in sight.
Caster is pained by contact with some pure element (e.g. air, fire, water, earth).

**CATASTROPHE:**

Caster's body bursts into flames, doing 2d4 points of damage per round until extinguished.
Caster displaced to the ethereal or astral plane.
Caster goes very insane.
The caster's body becomes anti-gravitational and "falls" upwards immediately.
Caster cursed to painfully polymorph into a new form every day at dawn/dusk/midnight, or monthly according to lunar cycles.
A powerful extraplanar being notices the caster and decides to make his life difficult.
An elemental, demon, devil, daemon, or demodand with hit dice equal to the caster's level appears & attacks.
Amazingly powerful storm springs up in the vicinity of the caster, damaging structures and hindering movement & combat.

**MAGICAL APOCALYPSE:**

Caster ceases to exist on any & all planes of existence.
Gate opened to another plane of existence; the caster is sucked through (no save) and the gate remains open behind him (not necessarily to the same part of the plane).
All members of the caster's family for the next two generations must save vs. spells at the age of 17 or go insane.
The lands within a one mile radius of the caster become infertile -- all plants begin to die immediately.

It is important to remember that these tables are only suggestions, and that the DM and players must get together to interpret the results creatively. Magic is a horribly dangerous thing -- both for the caster and the target -- and these results should stimulate an appreciation of this risk, not ruin the game. It is also advisable to try to make the accidents appropriate to the spell which failed. For instance, a fire based spell would not likely make the caster into a pseudo-werewolf, but might well accidently summon up a fire elemental. The responsibility to make these decisions is left to the DM because they cannot easily be tabulated.

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A final word about magic in this system...

Wizards must still keep track of their spells and occasionally study them. But keep this in mind -- magic is neither an art nor a science -- it is chaos waiting to be invoked. Little is really understood about how magic actually works. Sometimes two mages can cast the same spell and only one will meet with success. If a spell works while the caster is standing on one foot, does that mean that standing on one foot is part of the spell? And what about magical creatures like dragons and faeries? This system is principally a way to keep the mystery and danger of spellcasting at the forefront of the game. It also tends to make life as a fighter a bit more attractive [a nice selling point for those DMs whose players all love to control spellcasting characters].

Unsuccessful spell caster.

## System Five: Complete System I

| |
|---|
| An excellent hybrid system which combines many of the best parts of Spellpoints I and Proficiency Check I. The resultant system is more of a break from the official AD&D system than is Spellpoints I alone, but requires fewer dice and charts than Proficiency Check I. |
| **Author:** Robert Winkel (Australia) (based on prior works of Jim Gitzlaff, Jim Sisolak, and Matthew Stanton) |
| **Principal Aim:** To provide a complete, playtested alternative to the rules for spells in the AD&D game. To give wizards more flexibility while balancing out their power curve. To encourage the use of low level spells when possible. |

As a general rule, do away with material spell components. On the interpretation of this system, spell components are just an alternative energy source for spellcasting. Hence, only those components which are integral to the spell (e.g. a portal for Wizard Lock) are needed during casting.

Instead, the use of optional material components will assist the wizard in spell casting. The material component can be either the one specifically listed in the spell description or a related one of the player's choice. It is up to the DM to decide whether or not the chosen spell component is appropriate and to what degree. For instance, a mage using a material component for a Fireball spell might get a +1 for sulphur, a +2 for a live glow-worm +2, and a +3 for a red dragon scale. See below for specifics on using these modifiers.

Wizards receive a number of spellpoints equal to one per level number, cumulative, plus one. Thus, at specific levels, wizards possess the following number of spellpoints:

| Level: | Spellpoints: |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 (1+1) |
| 2 | 4 (1+1+2) |
| 3 | 7 (1+1+2+3) |
| 4 | 11 (1+1+2+3+4) |
| 5 | 16 (1+1+2+3+4+5) |
| etc. | etc. |

Any spell costs double its level in spellpoints to cast. Thus, a first level spell costs two, a third level spell six, and a ninth level spell eighteen. Because wizards can opt to "overspend" on any spell, it is not necessarily true that one spellpoint will be left behind if the caster has an odd number of spellpoints. Again, see below for the particulars on these modifiers.

A magic user can convert spellpoints into spells freely, with only two exceptions:

**First**, the spells must be known and memorized by the spellcaster. Knowing has its standard AD&D meaning.

When a spell is first encountered by a wizard, he must try to make his % chance to learn new spell roll. If he fails with this roll, he can never cast the spell. The DM might rule, however, that different versions of this same spell exist in his world; and that if the mage finds one of these versions, he may try to learn it again.

The mage can memorize at one time a number of spells per spell level equal to the number in the maximum spells knowable column of the intelligence effects chart in the Players Handbook. The mage can automatically memorize spells up to his minimum capacity (same chart), but then must make his % chance to memorize more spells, roll for every spell up to his maximum capacity. If he fails in this roll for a certain spell, it does not mean that the mage is forever unable to memorize the spell in question, but merely that he cannot "get it in" (understand the magical patterns) that day and may try again after a sleep period.

**Second**, the wizard can convert spellpoints to spells only in such a way that he does not cast more spells of a given level than he would have been able to memorize in the old system.

For example, if a wizard is allowed by the original system to memorize 3 third level spells, he now possesses exactly 3 third-level "slots" that may be converted into spells, spellpoints permitting. He may, of course, cast less than this number if he desires.

This restriction is imposed in order to maintain a higher level of realism. If a wizard were allowed to freely allocate spellpoints to any spell level, it would be possible for M-U's to convert an overproportion into high level spells. For example, without this restriction, it would be possible for (but not realistic to allow) a 12th level Mage to assign 72 of his 79 spellpoints to sixth level spells! This is a representation of mental fatigue. A Mage can cast too many high level spells the same way that an athlete can run too many long marathons. Just as the athlete might be able to run some short races in lieu of the long ones, so too can the wizard cast low level spells instead of the high level ones.

If the mage desires, he may trade down a higher level slot for a lower level slot freely. For

example, a 12th level wizard that has already cast four 3rd level spells but who has open slots for 4th, 5th, or 6th level spells may opt to use any one of those slots in order to free up another 3rd level spell.

Wizards do not need to relearn spells every night. They can continue to cast the same spells day after day without problem as long as they have the spellpoints and the slots. The only factors that might motivate a wizard to spend time rememorizing spells are...

1. Memory loss -- Caused by illness, injury, or magic.
2. New spell -- To memorize a new known spell.
3. Change spells -- Exchange a memorized spell for an unmemorized (but known) spell because the intelligence ceiling was reached.

Spellpoints are recovered either by sleep or study (meditation in the case of a Priest). Study can not be attempted if distracted or fatigued (Basically, a person is fatigued if s/he has gone without sleep or rest for an extended period. Feel free to use whatever fatigue rules suit your campaign.).

| SPt Fraction Recovered: | Sleep: | Study/ Meditation: |
|---|---|---|
| 0/4 | <5 hrs | <90 min |
| 1/4 | 5-5.9 hrs | 90-119 min |
| 2/4 | 6-6.9 hrs | 2-2 1/2 hrs |
| 3/4 | 7-7.9 hrs | 2 1/2 - 3 hrs |
| 4/4 | 8+ hrs | 3+ hrs |

Thus, if a Mage sleeps for only 4 hours, he will reap no benefit, but the same Mage would get back 1/2 of his total spellpoints if he slept for 6.5 hours. In each case, the fractions do not refer to the number of spellpoints that the Mage is down, but to the total number of spellpoints that the spell caster has when at full power.

As in the Proficiency Check I system, this method takes into account the possibility of spell failure. The casting success roll is structured as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Caster Level}}{3} + \text{Spell Level} + \text{Special Modifiers} + \text{1d20}$$

**Caster Level:** This modifier is just exactly the level of experience of the spell caster, divided by three and then rounded up. Thus, a 5th level Mage would add +2, a 9th level mage would add +3.

**Spell Level:** Higher level spells call upon magical energies of much greater power than lower level ones. It is only reasonable, therefore, for these spells to be more difficult to cast. The penalty is -1 for each level of the spell. Thus, a 4th level spell would be cast at a -4 penalty.

**Special Modifiers:** These include all of the various adjustments to spell casting that are applied only under certain circumstances or in specific campaign situations.

**Example Special Modifiers:**

**Injury**
Caster has lost 25% starting hit points: -1
Caster has lost 50% starting hit points: -2
Caster has lost 75% starting hit points: -4
(not cumulative)

**Specialization**
Wizard casting spell in specialized school: +2
Priest casting spell in specialized sphere: +1

**Magical Fatigue**
Caster cast spells for 3 consecutive rounds: -2
Caster cast spells for 5 consecutive rounds: -5
Caster cast spells for 7 consecutive rounds: -9
Caster cast spells for 10+ consecutive rnds: -15
(not cumulative)

**Improvisation**
Attempting minor variation of known spell: -2
(*e.g.* "green fireball" based on fireball)
Attempting major variation of known spell: -4
(*e.g.* "frostball" based on fireball)
(Major variations may have an even greater negative modifier, at the DM's discretion.)

**Magical Areas**
Caster present in magical area: +1 to +5
(faerie ring, stonehenge, etc.)

**Personal Sacrifice**
Per extra spell point used in spell: +1.5
(rounded down)
Per two hit points sacrificed during casting: +1
(they are healed normally)
Per attribute point lost during casting: +3
(STR or CON; they are recovered slowly -- days, weeks, or years may be required -- DM's discretion.)
Spell components used: +n
(DM decides if component use is appropriate: n can range over +1, +2, etc. It could probably also range over negative numbers if the DM thinks that the PC made a bad choice of materials.)

**"Subtle Spell Casting":** -3
(Per component; optional nonweapon proficiency; also costs 1 spell point.)

This nonweapon proficiency prevents observers from telling that the Mage or Priest is casting a spell unless a successful spellcraft proficiency roll is made. This is the ability to discard the verbal & somatic components of spell casting. It is -3 penalty and 1 spell point to discard either one, and -6 and 2 spell points to discard both.

This is based on the theory that verbal and somatic components are just a way of making it easier for the Mage or Priest to comprehend magical patterns.

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After all of the modifiers are totalled (plus any others the DM wishes to add -- suggestions can be found in the Proficiency Check I and II sections), the player should roll a 20 sided die, add the modifiers, and determine whether or not he is successful. The table below shows all of the possible outcomes:

**THE BIG MAGICAL AFTERMATH TABLE**

| Modified Roll: | Result (see below): |
|---|---|
| 25+ | Supercharged spell. |
| 22-24 | Spell works a bit better than normal. |
| 6-21 | Spell works as normal. |
| 3-5 | Spell partially works. |
| 1-2 | Spell fizzles, no effect. |
| <1 | Spell backfires. |

**Exceptions are:**

1. If the modifier before rolling the 1d20 is less than -15, then the result is automatically "Spell fizzles, no effect."
2. A natural 1 is "Spell partially works." A natural 20 is "Spell works a bit better than normal."
3. If the modifier before rolling the 1d20 is greater than 20, then "Spell works as normal."

(Use the better result if natural 20 was rolled, or the worst if a natural 1 was rolled. e.g. if I had +7 modifier and rolled a natural 20, I could pick either "Spell works a bit better than normal" because I rolled a natural 20, or "Wow!" because I rolled a total of 27. "Wow!" is the better of the two results, so I take that.)

**Supercharged Spell:** If the spell caster gets higher than 24 on his roll, something great happens. Some suggestions are: the spell is doubled in effect for every statistic, double damage done, more info gained, permanent (rare!), etc.

**Spell works a bit better than normal:** The cast spell functions perfectly and does a little bit more than expected. Some suggestions are: no sacrifice was needed, +2 damage per die, more creatures affected, etc.

**Spell works as normal:** The spell works as it was intended to.

**Spell partially works:** The spell doesn't live up to expectations. Some suggestions are: every statistic of the spell including damage done (if applicable) is halved, spell affects some others (detrimental), no spell casting next round, caster faints, etc.

**Spell backfires:** This means that some part of the spell energy backfires upon the caster. Many different things might happen, but they are always of equal level to the spell. Thus, a backfired *detect magic* will not do much, but watch out if it was a *time stop* or *wish*! Typical effects are: damage is done to the caster, false information, lose additional spell points equal to the level of spell, etc.

It is important to remember that these tables are only suggestions, and that the DM and players must get together to interpret the results creatively. Magic is a horribly dangerous thing -- both for the caster and the target -- and these results should stimulate an appreciation of this risk, not ruin the game. It is also advisable to try to make the accidents appropriate to the spell which failed. For instance, a fire based spell would not likely make the caster into a pseudo-werewolf, but might well accidently summon up a fire elemental. The responsibility to make these decisions is left to the DM because they cannot easily be tabulated.

## System Six: Complete System II

| |
|---|
| A large and complex system that allows an unprecedented degree of control over spellcasting. It also allows spell casters to be personalized more through the use of school/sphere specialization. |
| **Author:** Paul Kinsler (copyrighted 1992) (included by permission of Mr. Kinsler) |
| **Principal Aim:** This system attempts to make spell casting classes in AD&D more flexible by removing the rigid "spell memorization" rules, thus allowing characters more freedom to be creative with magic use. No longer will low level magic users curse because they felt forced to learn *sleep* when what they really need now is *message* - a spell no low level magic user can afford to take down a dungeon. |

### The basics:

Instead of memorizing a particular subset of their spells, this system permits spell casters to study all the spells in their spellbooks in order to be able to cast spells during the rest of the day. They draw on their knowledge and experience to cast magic, and do not store magical patterns in their head, *per se*. Clerics still meditate and pray in order to receive the power to cast clerical magic, but can now cast any of the spells they are allowed to know. This system also adds a *casting roll* to determine if a spell was correctly cast and *fatigue costs* of spells.

Before beginning, some terms must be defined to avoid the confusion caused by the AD&D rules' use of the word "level" for three different things. The level of experience of the character will still be called "level." However, spell level will be referred to as "rank" (thus *wish* is a rank-9 spell). The level of effect at which a spell is cast will be called the spell "power." In this system, spell power is variable -- i.e., it is not fixed at the level of the spell caster. Spells can now be cast at a lower power than the level of the character. For example, a fifth level magic user can cast a *magic missile* at the same level of effect as a first level magic user (releasing a single missile and doing 1d4+1 damage at 70').

### Specialization:

Spell casters also specialize in types of spells. Magic users select spell *schools*, clerics spell *spheres*. The schools for magic user spells are listed just after the title in the spell lists in the Players Handbook, and the Second Edition has additional tables listing them separately. The clerical spheres are listed only in the PH2.

There are five types of specialisation: Major, Minor, Other, Minor Opposition, and Major Opposition. A first level magic user selects a **major school**; this fixes the major opposition school to that specified by the 2nd Edition rules. For example, the choice of *alteration* as the major specialization school fixes the character's major opposition school as *abjuration*. Initially, spells in all other schools are classed as **other**; but upon reaching second and fourth level, a magic user can select an extra **minor school** for specialization. Opposition schools cannot be chosen as minor specializations. Choice of a minor specialization school fixes the school in opposition to it as a minor opposition school.

Clerics have their major and minor spheres fixed by their deity, although there may some room for choice in their minor or other spheres. Opposition spheres should be determined by the DM according to the cleric's deity.

For example: Stefania, a new first level magic user selects *divination* as her **major school**, thus setting her **major opposition schools** to be *conjuration* and *summoning*. Upon reaching second level she picks *necromancy* as a **minor school**, causing *illusion* to become a **minor opposition school**. When she reaches fourth level she selects *abjuration* as her second **minor school**, so *alteration* becomes a **minor opposition school**.

Spell casters get bonuses to their chance to successfully cast spells depending on whether and how they are specialized in it. Spells cast in a character's major school add +2 to the casting die roll for success, those in the minor school add +1, in the "other" schools add +0, minor oppositions add a -1 penalty, and major opposition spells have a -2 penalty. Spells cast in chosen specialisations are also less tiring. (see below)

### Casting Spells:

Spell casters get a number of spell points equal to their level per day, subject to being well rested and spending at least ten minutes of study, meditation, or prayer per spell point gained. Unused spell points are not lost at the end of the day, but a character cannot accumulate more spell points than they have levelsof experience. Casting a spell of a certain rank uses up an equal number of spell points. For example, casting the rank-3 *web* spell costs three spell points.

The chance of successfully casting a spell depends on several factors. The spell works if the spell caster rolls at least a certain "target number" on

a 1d20. This is called the *casting roll*. The target number to successfully cast a spell is determined according to the formula below:

$$9 + 3 \times \left(\frac{\text{Spell}}{\text{Rank}}\right) + \text{Spell Power} - 2 \times (\text{Level}) - \frac{\text{STAT}}{2}$$

For magic users, STAT is intelligence, and for clerics it is wisdom. Round fractions down when dividing. Spells that have no listed dependence on the spell caster's level must be cast with a power at equal or greater to its rank. Spells cannot be cast at a power greater than the level of the spell caster, or at a power less than one.

Casting spells is a tiring business, costing energy as well as spell points. To reflect this, casting a spell costs a number of hit points proportional to the spell power. The amount varies according to the type of hit dice used by the casters class and the school or sphere of the spell, and the base fatigue cost is given by the hit dice factor from the following table multiplied by the spell power.

| | d4 | d6 | d8 | d10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Major, Minor: | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 2.5 |
| Other: | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Opposition: | 3 | 4.5 | 6 | 7.5 |

If the target roll is made by more than five, the hit point cost is half the base fatigue cost; if it is made by ten, one quarter; by fifteen, one eighth; and so on. Round halves up. Furthermore, failing a casting roll by more than five doubles the hit point cost, failing by more than ten multiplies it by four, and by fifteen multiplies it by eight, and so on.

Fatigue costs for spells that restore hit points are treated differently. Examples are *cure light wounds*, *cure serious wounds*, and *heal*, but **not** *cure disease*, *raise dead*, or *resurrect*. When casting these spells, treat the specialisation as one class better on the table: minor and major specialisations cost no hit points, "others" are treated as major/minor, and opposition as "other."

These hit points are lost regardless of whether the spell succeeds or fails, but they can be regained after a suitable period of rest at a rate of one hit point per half hour of rest. As a result, a separate tally of hit points lost to spell fatigue should be kept. Note that the spell caster will still die if his remaining number of hit points, including the losses due to spell casting, is less than -10.

## Additional Rules:

**Clerical Bonus Spells:** Under the standard rules, very wise clerics gain extra spells. Including these as bonus spell points will give a first level cleric too many spell points, so the better solution is to treat these spells as under the old rules. They are considered to be a gift from the deity or its minions to particularly wise clerics, and as such are chosen by the cleric (or given by the deity) while meditating, for later use. Casting rolls are still made, but fatigue costs are not applied.

**Dispelling Magic:** When casting *dispel magic*, use the power the spell is cast at rather than the level of the caster to determine success or failure. This applies for both the *dispel magic* and the spell that caster seeks to negate.

**Scrolls:** Casting spells off scrolls does not cost spell points, and the spell should be treated as being cast by the creator of the scroll rather than by the reader. The only exception is that the STAT modifier of the reader should be used. Depending on the way the spell was scribed, the power of the spell may or may not be able to be varied by the reader.

**Magic Items:** The abilities relevant to spell casting need to be defined for the item, and are at best those of the maker. Relevant properties include level, spell points, specializations, intelligence or wisdom, and fatigue hit points. However, some items may use the wielders characteristics instead. For example, fatigue costs may be applied to the wielder instead of giving the item a 'hit point' total for accounting purposes. The item then casts spells as specified by those abilities.

## Optional Rules:

**Converting Failed Casting Rolls:** A failed casting roll can be turned into a success by a reduction in power of the spell. However, it is still treated as a failed roll. If Pring the Conjurer attempts to cast a power-9 *fireball* but fails his target roll by two, the result would be a power-7 *fireball*. If he had failed by six, a power-3 *fireball* would result, and his fatigue costs would be doubled.

**Overcasting In Rank:** DM's who like to play fast and loose with game balance might allow low level magic users to cast high level spells if they spend several days in the casting. It would take a character as many days to cast as it would take to get the spell points required, but it should be understood that it takes the entire time used to accumulate the spell points as it does to cast the spell. For example, Rufus, the first level Cleric could try to cast the rank-

3 *locate object* if he took three days to do so. However, his chance of success would not be good even if he could withstand the strain -- and the consequences of failure would be dire indeed. Allowing overcasting could provide a lifeline for desperate spell casters.

**Overcasting In Power:** Similarly, DM's may allow spell casters to cast spells at a higher power than their level of experience. The casting roll is not really designed to cope with this, though, so fatigue costs should be at least doubled when power overcasting.

## Examples:

Stefania, a sixth level wizard, has an intelligence 11 and 10 hp and is threatened by a cloud of poison gas. She tries to cast a power-4 version of the rank-3 alteration spell *gust of wind* to disperse it. The spell is in her "**other**" specialization. Her spell point total drops by 3 (from 6 to 3) and the effort has a base fatigue cost of 2(**other**) x 4(power) = 8hp. She now has to check if she successfully casts the spell: her target number is 9 + 3 x 3(rank) + 4(power) -2 x 6(level) -16(INT)/2 = 2, which she easily manages, rolling a 13. This is a success by more than 10, so the fatigue cost is 8(base)/4 = 2hp, and her hit point total drops from 10 to 8. The *gust of wind* generated is 10 yards wide and 10 x 4 (power) = 40 yards long. Now safe, she rests for half an hour, and regains one of those hit points.

Pring, a 9th level Conjurer with intelligence 18, wisdom of 4, and 20hp is in desperate straits. He has managed to steal a copy of the rank-9 *wish* spell from Chasark, Iron God of the Northern Hordes, and risks everything attempting to avoid retribution by casting it. It will cost him all of his maximum number of spell points. His target number is 9 +3 x 9 (rank) + 9 (power) - 2 x 9 (level) -18(INT)/2 = 18. Since he has *conjuration* as his **major school** he gets a +2 to his die roll to give him a 25% chance of success. Casting the spell costs him 9hp -- 18hp if he fails by 5, 36hp if he fails by 10, 72 if he fails by 15, etc. This may seem too easy, since the standard rules do not allow rank-9 spells to be cast until 18th level, but Pring has the best possible qualifications, and the consequences of failure should be understood to be so horrible that no one would attempt this without good reason. In particular, note that the fatigue rules leave him with a 25% chance of being killed by the strain.

Note also that if *conjuration* was not Prings **major**, but was classed as **other**, then it would have cost him at least 18hp. And in this case, a casting roll failed by more than five (65% chance) would kill him on the spot.

Senna Flash, a 67th level wizard has two hit points and three spell points left. If she can light the oil trap in front of her, she will be spared a horrible (and embarrassing) death at the hands of the five Kobolds charging at her. She wants to cast the rank-3 *lightning bolt* spell at power-1 to ignite the oil. Her target number is 9 +3 x 3 +1 - 2 x 67 -16/2 = -123, an automatic success. Invocation is an **other** spell according to her specialisations, and the base fatigue cost is 2hp. However, even if she rolls a one, she has succeeded by 124, and the hit point cost is 2/224 (since 124 = 5x24+4), which rounds down to zero.

Bix, a second level cleric who has wisdom of 16 and worships the deity Foop, casts a *cure serious wounds* spell from a scroll. The scroll was inscribed by NeNeHa (wisdom 18, level 20, **major** in *healing*), the renowned cleric of Foop. The target number is 9 + 3 x 6 (rank) +6 (power) - 2 x 20(scribe level) -16 (reader's wisdom)/2 = -15, an automatic success. Since the spell restores hit points, and Healing was NeNeHa's Major sphere, it costs no hit points in fatigue to cast. If the scroll had instead been cast by ReReHa, NeNeHa's evil twin, for whom *healing* is in **opposition**, it would be treated as **other** and cost a base of 2 x 6 = 12hp. Bix now rolls a 16 on his casting roll, which is a success by 31 ( 16 -(-15) = 16+15 ), so the fatigue cost is 12/26 (since 31 = 5 x 6 +1), which rounds to zero anyway.

## Discussion:

The greatest potential for disrupting the campaign with this system comes from the greater flexibility that spell casters are given. They can now cast any spell from their repertoire at any time. However, to avoid overcompensating, casting rolls and fatigue costs have been added. Moreover, the introduction of varying fatigue costs depending on the chosen specializations of the individual spell caster adds more color to spell casters.

The other major adjustment is that with this system, spell casters can cast spells of a higher level than they could under the old rules. Again, the potential for failure and the consequences therefrom should prevent abuses.

Note also that high level spell casters will have to undercast most of their spells in power in order to keep their fatigue costs under control -- a reduction in power by ten reduces fatigue costs on average by 75%.

## System Seven: Magical Sources I

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| A set of rules designed to simulate the idea, common to fantasy literature, that certain regions are more magical than others. It can be used to quickly make a campaign more detailed and interesting. |
| **Author:** Robert Winkel |
| **Principal Aim:** To provide formal rules for the use of "sources of magic." It is most easily used in conjunction with one of Complete System I, Proficiency Check I or Proficiency Check II, but may be modified to stand alone. |

This system addresses the idea that there are centers of magic -- magical sources if you will -- around the campaign world or playing area. This system is designed for spells and not magical items, but the DM should feel free to rule that the creation of magical items might be affected in some way.

The exact modifiers should generally not be told to the players in advance, but should be discovered by them during the course of play. This reflects the acquisition of similar knowledge by their characters. If the DM thinks that it would be common knowledge for mages and priests to know where the centers are, then so be it.

There are several general categories of spells, these are:

1. **Elemental spells.** (*e.g. gust of wind, wall of iron, fireball, fog cloud*)
These will typically have centers such as:
Air elemental: some tall mountain range.
Earth elemental: some rugged mountain range (the sort that dwarves love) or a canyon.
Fire elemental: a great desert or a volcano.
Water elemental: an ocean or a huge waterfall.
These are often better placed at the four corners of the playing world, but do not necessary have to be.

2. **Nature spells.** (*e.g. charm plants, weather summoning, warp wood, etc.*)
These are druid type spells that call upon the forces of nature in some way. The typical place for the source of Nature would be in the middle of a huge forest.

3. **Divination spells.** (*e.g. augury, detect magic, etc.*)
This often effects priests more than mages, since this often depends only on where the god or his holy city/temple is. Optionally, this can effect mages as well.

4. **Illusion spells.** (*e.g. shadow magic, phantasmal force etc.*)
The center of the source of illusionary magic is the place in the playing world where most of the intelligence is. This is generally a capital city, or possibly just a geometric center of population.

5. **Other spell types.** With regards to anti-magic -- the defence against magic -- the modifier will just reverse its in sign, since it will be easier to dispel or defend against a source of magic which is far away, and harder to defend against a source of magic which is near. (e.g. if the spell w*all of iron* is in the area which gives it +3 modifier, there will be a -3 modifier for anyone trying to dispel it) With regards to spells that are related to another spell type (e.g. w*ish*, g*lyph of warding*, p*ermanency*, *Nystul's magical aura*, etc.) treat them as the appropriate spell type. Any others: either no modifier, or use your judgement.

Remember that these are only suggestions. The system can be used with few changes if the DM wants to base the magic sources on the existing "circles" or "spheres" of magic, for instance.

| Distance from Magic Source: | Modifiers for Supplement: | Modifiers on Own: |
|---|---|---|
| up to 1000 miles | +5 | +50% |
| 1001-2000 | +4 | +40% |
| 2001-3000 | +3 | +30% |
| 3001-4000 | +2 | +20% |
| 4001-5000 | +1 | +10% |
| 5001-6000 | 0 | +/- 0% |
| 6001-7000 | -1 | -10% |
| 7001-8000 | -2 | -20% |
| 8001-9000 | -3 | -30% |
| 9001-10000 | -4 | -40% |
| 10000+ | -5 | -50% |

[Editor's Note: The distances, above, may also be used informally -- e.g. within kingdom X the modifiers are +2, etc. This may ease use in actual campaigns. J.G.]

**Distance From Magic Source:** This is best done from the map of the playing world. An alternative to the distances given above, if your playing world is a lot smaller or larger, is to divide the length of the playing area by about 15 and use this figure instead of the jumps of 1000 miles.

**Modifiers For Supplement:** If you are using one of the Alternate Magic Systems listed at the beginning

of this section, then these are the modifiers added or subtracted from the success rolls.

**Modifiers On Own:** If this system is used on it's own, then these are the modifiers used. If there is damage or healing involved, then the modifier is applied to this. If it is a divination spell and the modifier is negative, then a roll of this percentage on a second d% indicates that false information was given. If it is a divination spell and a positive modifier, then you can either get that percentage in extra information, or similar. For other spells, duration, area of effect, range, or even the chance of the spell working at all may be related to the given percentage.

Which is to be used is, of course, up to the individual DM.

**Magic Items:** These modifiers will affect all spells, whether they come from scrolls or come from a magical item that gave the user the spell use. So, in at least this one sense magic items are affected.