

FATE OF ARS MAGICA

CONVERSION GUIDE TO FATE CORE



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FATE OF ARS MAGICA

Why fate? Ars Magica is perfect what it is meant for – a simulation for the life and progression of a group of mages living in mythic Europe.

What it is not great for: a quick game for busy people living their lives, going to work, taking care of children.

Rules light version is easier for the game master so he can focus on the story and the fun, not realism.

What do you need?

1. Copy of Ars Magica
https://atlas-games.com/product_tables/AG0204

2. Book of Fate core, or SRD
<https://fate-srd.com/>

CHARACTER CREATION

STEP 1, CHOOSE ASPECTS

High concept, the idea of your magus

House, what house do you belong to

Nationality, defines your culture and native language. (all mages know latin)

Other (detail if you need)

STEP 2, DETAILS

Name and description

STEP 3 SKILL TREE

Character gets

1. Great skill
2. Good skills
3. Fair skills
4. Average skills
5. The rest are mediocre

Skill list

- Alertness
- Athletics
- Burglary
- Contacts
- Influence
- Investigate
- Lore (1 lore per skill lvl, church, hermetic, faerie, infernal)
- Magic Theory (Parma Magica)
- Medicine
- Melee
- Physique
- Ranged
- Resources
- Ride
- Stealth
- Survival
- Will

STEP 4, MAGICAL ARTS (OR STUNTS)

A companion can choose 1-3 stunts, but a magus has to take these

- Hermetic magic
- Parma Magica

So he has refresh of 1.

Magus as 15 xp points of magical arts to spend

Art rating	Cost of xp
1	1p
2	3p
3	6p
4	10p
5	16p

So character can choose different play styles

- Specialist, 1 art at 5
- Focused, arts 4,2,1
- General focused, 3,3,2,1
- Generalist, 2,2,2,2
- Academic, all arts at 1

Magic skill used for skill tests

- Technique + Form
- So Tech 4 + Form 2 = Fantastic (+6)

SPELLS

Magus gets 30 levels of spells

STEP 5, VIRTUES AND FLAWS

Character can choose up to 3p worth of virtues and flaws, one major or 3 minors. Flaws can give fate points; Virtues can be used with fate points. For bonuses, use +2, if appropriate.

SYSTEM CONVERSION

5 Ars Magica spell levels is 1 spell level in Fate of Ars Magica.

Ball of Abysmal flame level 35 spell is level 7 in FOAM.

Spell levels under 5

Characters are not meant to study formulaic spells under 1, they can be cast as spontaneous spells Difficulty 1.

CASTING SPELLS

Your skill is Technique plus Form, roll 4DF. If spell is resisted, this is the success rating.

Formulaic spell:

- if your result is equal to spell level, you succeed.
- If your result is 1 or 2 lower than spell level, you succeed, but lose a fatigue level.
- If your result is 3 lower than spell level, your spell fails, and you still lose a fatigue level.

Spontaneous magic:

Caster can choose to define spell effect fully, so if caster's final roll is lower than spell level, the spell just fails.

Or she can choose spell with one or more variables, and if success rating is high enough for minimal spell to succeed, she can set extra success to variables to get the effect she wants.

Fatiguing spontaneous magic.

- (Tech + Form + 4DF) divided by 2

Non-Fatiguing spontaneous magic

- (Tech + Form + 4DF) divided by 2
- Spend a few rounds to cast the spell or spend a fate point to cast it on one round.

STRESS AND CONSEQUENCES

PHYSIQUE, WILL

Physique determines physical stress and consequence.

Will determines mental stress and consequence

Mediocre	OOO
Average, Fair	OOOO
Good, Great	OOOOO
Superb +	OOOOO Mild consequence

One stress point absorbs one damage point.

FATIGUE

Is a new consequence, it works like mental consequence, but accumulates faster.

Fatigue	Penalty	Recovery
Mild	-0	4 min
Moderate	-1	6 min
Severe	-2	10 min
Incapacitated	out	60 min

Recovery time shows time when fatigue drops one level, from incapacitated to severe.

WEAPONS AND ARMOR

Weapon

1. small weapon
2. one handed weapon
3. 2 handed weapon
4. extra heavy weapon

Armor

1. light armor
2. medium armor
3. heavy armor
4. Magical battle armor

Weapon rating add to damage, armor rating reduces damage.

Parma Magica works as an armor versus magical attacks.

Armor rating reduces Parma Magica rating.

You always add Parma Magica to defense, passive and active defense. That is why mage versus mage combat might not lead to any bloodshed, better to send companions to finish the job.

Then again, combat between hermetic mages is forbidden, unless you challenge the mage to a duel.

When mage does a Parma Magica ritual, he spends a few minutes and gets magical protection equal to Magic theory rating.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Fate of Ars Magica.....	1
CHARACTER CREATION	1
Step 1, choose aspects	1
Step 2, details	1
Step 3 skill tree.....	1
Step 4, magical arts (or stunts)	1
Step 5, virtues and flaws	2
System Conversion.....	2
Casting spells	2
Stress and Consequences	3
Fatigue	3
Weapons and Armor.....	3
Table of contents	4



CHEAT SHEET

The Ladder (p. 9)

+8	Legendary
+7	Epic
+6	Fantastic
+5	Superb
+4	Great
+3	Good
+2	Fair
+1	Average
+0	Mediocre
-1	Poor
-2	Terrible

Game Time (p. 194)

- **Exchange:** time for every-one to get a turn
- **Scene:** time to resolve a situation
- **Session:** a single sitting
- **Scenario:** an episode
- **Arc:** a season
- **Campaign:** the entire game in a particular setting

Skill Roll (p. 130)

Roll four **Fate dice** and add to **skill** rating. Compare to opposition. For each step on the ladder greater than your opposition, you earn a **shift**.

Opposition Types (p. 131)

- **Active:** another character rolls against you
- **Passive:** a static rating on the ladder

Four Outcomes (p. 132)

- **Fail:** fail your action or succeed at major cost
- **Tie (0 shifts):** succeed at minor cost
- **Succeed (1–2 shifts):** succeed with no cost
- **Succeed with style (3+ shifts):** succeed with additional benefit

Four Actions (p. 134)



Overcome: get past an obstacle



Create an Advantage: invoke an aspect for free



Attack: harm another character



Defend: prevent attacks or advantages on you

Mitigating damage (p. 160)

Fill in one stress box greater than or equal to the value of an attack, take one or more consequence, or fill in one stress box and take consequences—if you can't do one of these three things, you're taken out.

Consequences (p. 162)

- **Mild:** –2 to attack value
- **Moderate:** –4 to attack value
- **Severe:** –6 to attack value
- **Extreme:** –8 to attack and permanent character aspect

Recovery (p. 164)

- **Mild:** overcome Fair (+2), one whole scene
- **Moderate:** overcome Great (+4), one whole session
- **Severe:** overcome Fantastic (+6), one whole scenario

Aspect Types (p. 57)

- **Game aspects:** permanent, made during game creation
- **Character aspects:** permanent, made during character creation
- **Situation aspects:** last for a scene, until overcome, or until irrelevant
- **Boosts:** last until invoked one time
- **Consequences:** last until recovered

Invoking Aspects (p. 68)

Spend a fate point or free invoke. Choose one:

- +2 to your skill roll
- Reroll all your dice
- Teamwork: +2 to another character's roll versus relevant passive opposition
- Obstacle: +2 to the passive opposition

Free invokes stack with a paid one and each other.

Compelling Aspects (p. 71)

Accept a complication for a fate point.

- **Event-based:** You have ____ aspect and are in ____ situation, so it makes sense that, unfortunately, ____ would happen to you. Damn your luck.
- **Decision-based:** You have ____ aspect in ____ situation, so it makes sense that you'd decide to _____. This goes wrong when ____ happens.

Refresh (p. 80)

At the start of a new session, you reset your fate points to your refresh rate. If you ended the last session with more points, you keep the extra. At the end of a scenario, you reset to your refresh rate no matter what.

Spending Fate Points (p. 80)

Spend fate points to:

- Invoke an aspect
- Power a stunt
- Refuse a compel
- Declare a story detail

Challenges (p. 147)

- Each obstacle or goal that requires a different skill gets an overcome roll.
- Interpret failure, costs, and success of each roll together to determine final outcome.

Contests (p. 150)

- Contesting characters roll appropriate skills.
- If you got the highest result, you score a victory.
- If you succeed with style and no one else does, then you get two victories.
- If there's a tie for the highest result, no one gets a victory, and an unexpected twist occurs.
- The first participant to achieve three victories wins the contest.

Conflicts (p. 154)

- Set the scene, describing the environment the conflict takes place in, creating situation aspects and zones, and establishing who's participating and what side they're on.
- Determine the turn order.
- Start the first exchange:
 - On your turn, take an action and then resolve it.
 - On other people's turns, defend or respond to their actions as necessary.
 - At the end of everyone's turn, start again with a new exchange.
- Conflict is over when everyone on one side has conceded or been taken out.

Earning Fate Points (p. 81)

Earn fate points when you:

- Accept a compel
- Have your aspects invoked against you
- Concede a conflict

VETERANS' GUIDE

This is a new version of Fate, which we developed to update and streamline the system. Here's a guide to the major changes to the system from previous versions like *Spirit of the Century* and *The Dresden Files Roleplaying Game*.

Game and Character Creation

- Game creation is a variant of Dresden's city creation, but very pared down. At minimum, you only make two aspects called issues to define your game, with the option to drill down if you want to add aspects to faces and locations.
- There are fewer aspects in this edition than other Fate games. We cut down the number of phases to three—a significant adventure, and two guest appearances. We found that it's easier to come up with five good aspects than seven or ten. And because there are game aspects and you can make situation aspects, you shouldn't be short of things to invoke or compel!
- If your game is going to use a lot of extras, or you have specific elements in your game that you want every character to describe with aspects (such as species or nationality), you can raise the number of aspect slots. We don't recommend going higher than seven character aspects—after that, we've noticed that many of them don't tend to pull their weight in play.
- If you've played *The Dresden Files RPG*, you know that we use skill columns for that instead of the pyramid. In this build of Fate, we wanted character creation to be as quick and accessible as possible, so we went with a Great (+4) pyramid as standard. If you want to use the columns, go ahead—you get 20 skill points. The skill column didn't completely go away. It's just reserved for advancement (p. 258).
- 3 refresh, and 3 free stunts. Stress boxes work exactly like *The Dresden Files RPG*.

Aspects

- In other Fate games, free invocations were called “tagging.” We thought this was one bit of jargon too many. You can still call it that if you want—whatever helps you and your table understand the rule.
- You might have seen player-driven compels referred to as “invoking for effect.” We thought it was clearer to just call it a compel, no matter who initiates it.
- Free invocations now stack with a regular one or stack together with other free invocations on the same aspect. Further, an aspect can hold more than one free invoke at a time.
- Invoking an aspect attached to another character gives them a fate point at the end of the scene.
- Compels are subdivided into two specific types: decisions and events. This isn't a change in how compels work, so much as a clarification, but it's worth noting.
- Scene aspects have been renamed to situation aspects, to clear up some confusion over how flexibly they can be applied.

Actions and Stuff

- The list of actions has been greatly reduced from previous Fate games down to four: overcome, create an advantage, attack, and defend. Movement is now a function of the overcome action, create an advantage subsumes assess/declare/maneuver from previous games under one banner, and blocks can be handled a number of different ways.
- The game is no longer based on a binary pass/fail. Now there are four outcomes: fail or succeed at cost, tie (succeed at minor cost), succeed, and succeed with style. Each outcome now has a mechanical or story-driven effect, based on what action it's attached to. Succeeding with style is basically taking spin from previous versions of Fate and applying it across the board.
- Challenges and contests have been greatly simplified and redesigned.
- Zone borders have been replaced by the use of situation aspects to determine if it's even worth rolling for movement. Moving one zone with an action is always free if there's nothing in the way.
- On that note, supplemental actions and skill modifiers are completely removed from the system. Either something is interesting enough to roll for, or it isn't.
- Teaming up is greatly simplified from previous games—everyone who has at least an Average (+1) at the same skill adds +1 to the person with the highest skill level.

Scenario Creation

- The advice is way better.

Extras

- These exist. Whereas each previous Fate game had a specific way of dealing with powers and gadgets and stuff, now there are a variety of options for you to choose from (as befits the toolkit nature of the system).