# The Complete Beginner’s Guide To Starting A Wizard In D&D

We’ve [previously covered](http://geekandsundry.com/new-rpg-players-everything-you-need-to-know-about-character-building/) great tips for new RPG players to help them setup their characters and those articles are a great place to start as they will help you get the most out of your new roleplay experience but I want to get more specific in this article; Wizards. So instead of focusing on your back story (which is REALLY important), let’s help you fill out your stat sheet and fill your spellbook.

**ARCANE TRADITIONS**

Once you have a great back story for your Wizard, the first thing you need to decide is what Arcane Tradition (School of Magic) your Wizard is going to use. The reason I think this is an important first step is because what you choose should match your backstory, and will define a bit of how you choose your statistics. As an example, my current Wizard is a Necromancer (School of Necromancy) who spent a lot of his research time experimenting on himself with different poisons and antidotes to learn their effects. It’s a cool bit of back story which I carried into my statistics by giving him a higher than normal Constitution score. Likewise, your own back story and school of magic will give you an idea of what is important. Is he an eloquent Abjuration Wizard who defends the weak and stirs loyalty among those he saves? Better take a high Charisma to back that up.

**STATISTICS**

Statistics in D&D represent how your character interacts with the world and what they can (and cannot) accomplish. A Bard with a low Charisma score is a bad Bard, unable to sway people and perform in front of crowds. Regardless of the method your group uses to determine your starting characteristics (follow your DMs guidance on this), you should have a pool of 6 numbers to choose from. These are your starting characteristics and it is your job to assign them into the 6 different attributes; Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma.

As a Wizard, the first place to start is by taking your highest attribute and putting it into your Intelligence. Intelligence is what you use to cast your spells so this MUST be the highest. For your lowest, unless you have a compelling back story reason for it, pick Strength. We can wreak havoc with our minds, we don’t need to be able to do pull ups (punch wizards, or wizards who cast punch, are a different class). The remaining 4 abilities should be attributed in ways that make sense for the character you are building. Is she painfully [shy or socially awkward](http://geekandsundry.com/how-to-creatively-roleplay-dumb-charmless-naive-characters/)? A low Charisma can make your character feel that way when she has to try and persuade or deceive someone else.

**SPELLS**

When you start your Wizard, you know 3 cantrips and 6 Level 1 spells. For your 3 starting cantrips, you should aim for 1 that matches your desired School of Magic, one that deals damage with a spell attack roll and one that is useful for interactions outside of combat. While this isn’t necessary, your school dictates the kind of Wizard you are going to be and spells from the same school capture that essence. For the utility cantrip, I recommend Light. No need to bring a torch or worry that your entire party doesn’t have dim/dark vision.

For the Level 1 spells, you want to try and stick to this same kind of idea, some spells that match your school of magic, others that are great at offense or utility outside of combat –except for 2 of those 6 spells, that is. Those are reserved for Mage Armor and Shield. You wear what is essentially a bathrobe into combat, you need magic to make up the difference and make sure you don’t get turned into a fine, Wizard-resembling paste. Comprehend Languages is a great utility spell, as is Feather Fall. For damage, I don’t think anything can beat Chromatic Orb at Level 1 for the most potential damage but Burning Hands is good if you ever find yourself surrounded or attacked by multiple enemies. Just two notes about Burning Hands: first, it has guaranteed damage as creatures who fail their save still take half the rolled damage and second, it absolutely can hurt your friends. Don’t accidentally burn them, like I have (it’s a party foul).