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Design Doc - Mage

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HERO IDENTITY
Class Fantasy: Master of arcane magic who weaves spells across time and space. Scholar who accumulates mystical power through careful spellcasting, then unleashes devastating combinations when the moment is right.
Core Mechanics:
1. **Arcana** - Accumulating magical resource gained by casting spells (1 per 3 mana spent). Cards have threshold bonuses at different Arcana levels2. **Echo** - Cast spell, place it face-up in your Echo Zone (max 3 spells), recast later for 2 mana less
Playstyle: Control deck that scales into late game dominance. Build Arcana through steady spell casting, Echo your best spells for later reuse, survive to turns 9-12 where your Arcana thresholds create overwhelming advantage.
The Loop:
- Cast spells to generate Arcana and control board- Echo key spells (removal, card draw, finishers) for later reuse- Manage Echo Zone strategically (only 3 slots - which spells to keep?)- Build to 5-8 Arcana where threshold bonuses become oppressive- Level up (spells cost 1 less) enables explosive combo turns- Finish with massive Arcana-boosted burn or board control
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ARCANA MECHANIC (SCALING RESOURCE KEYWORD)
Definition: A permanent accumulating magical resource that makes your spells more powerful. Gain Arcana by casting spells, spend mana not Arcana.
Rules:
- Track with d12 die on hero board- Gain 1 Arcana for every 3 mana spent on spells this turn- Round down (5 mana spell = 1 Arcana, 6 mana spell = 2 Arcana)- Persists permanently (never decays)- Maximum tracking: 12 (though game rarely reaches that high)- Cards check Arcana thresholds: "3+ Arcana: Deal 5 instead of 3"- You don't spend Arcana - it's just a stat that makes cards better

Strategic Depth:
- **Late-game scaling** - Every spell makes future spells better- **Threshold planning** - "I need 5 Arcana for Fireball to hit hard"- **Mana efficiency** - Bigger spells = more Arcana per card- **Visible threat** - Opponent sees your Arcana count climbing

Example Tracking:
- Turn 2: Cast 3-mana Fireball → gain 1 Arcana (now at 1)- Turn 4: Cast 2-mana + 4-mana spells (6 total) → gain 2 Arcana (now at 3)- Turn 6: Cast 5-mana Blizzard → gain 1 Arcana (now at 4)- Turn 8: You're at 7-8 Arcana, threshold bonuses fully online

Example Cards:
- *"Frost Bolt - 2 mana, Deal 3 damage. 3+ Arcana: Deal 5 instead"*- *"Arcane Golem - 5 mana 4/5, When played: Gain 2 Arcana"* (shortcut)- *"Spellblade - 4 mana 3/4, Empower: When you gain Arcana, this gets +1/+1"*

The Power Curve:
Turns 1-4: Building to 2-3 Arcana (thresholds starting to activate)Turns 5-7: Hitting 4-6 Arcana (most thresholds online)Turns 8+: 7-10 Arcana (overwhelming power, every spell is premium)

ECHO MECHANIC (SPELL MEMORY KEYWORD)

Definition: When you cast a spell, you can place it face-up in your Echo Zone instead of discarding. Later, you can recast it for 2 mana less.

Rules:
- After casting a spell and resolving its effect, you choose: discard normally OR Echo it- If you Echo: place spell face-up in your Echo Zone (special area next to hero board)- Maximum 3 spells in Echo Zone at once- If Echo Zone full and you want to Echo a new spell: must cast or discard one existing Echo first- To cast an Echo: pay its cost minus 2 mana (minimum 0), resolve effect, then discard- Echo spells are visible to both players (opponent can see your "spellbook")- Each Echo can only be cast once (no re-Echoing)

Physical Tracking:
Three card slots next to your hero board labeled "Echo Zone." Place spells face-up here when you Echo them.

Strategic Depth:
- **Spell selection** - Which 3 spells deserve slots in your spellbook?- **Timing decisions** - Echo now for value later, or cast twice from hand?- **Resource

planning** - Echo expensive spells to cast them cheaper later- **Opponent mindgames** - They can see your Echoes coming

Example Sequence:

Turn 3: Cast Fireball (3 mana, deal 4 damage). Choose to Echo it. Place in Echo Zone slot 1.

Turn 5: Cast Polymorph (4 mana). Choose to Echo it. Place in Echo Zone slot 2.

Turn 7: Cast Blizzard (5 mana). Choose to Echo it. Place in Echo Zone slot 3. Echo Zone now FULL.

Turn 9: Want to Echo another spell. Must cast one existing Echo first. Cast Echo Fireball for only **1 mana** (was 3, -2 for Echo). Now have empty slot. Echo new spell.

Turn 11: Cast Echo Blizzard for **3 mana** (was 5, -2). Still generates Arcana. Huge value.

Why This Works:

- **Skill expression** - Bad players never Echo. Good players curate perfect 3-spell spellbook- **Late-game power** - Turn 10+ you're casting Echoes for cheap while Arcana is high- **Deck thinning** - Echoing removes dead draws from deck cycling- **Memorability** - "I learned these three spells" feels very mage fantasy

The Beautiful Loop:

1. Early game: Cast spells normally, Echo the ones you want again (removal, card draw)2. Mid game: Start casting Echoes for mana discount, building Arcana faster3. Late game: Chain multiple Echo spells in one turn, Arcana at 8+, opponent can't keep up

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LEVEL-UP SYSTEM

Condition: *"Cast 15 spells"*

Tracking: Use d20 as quest tracker (separate from Arcana die)

- Increment each time you cast a spell (from hand OR Echo)- Cheap spells count same as expensive (just counting casts)- When total reaches 15+, immediately level up- Tracks naturally through heavy spell gameplan

Timing: Turns 7-9 (control deck levels later than aggro)

Passive Bonus: *"Your spells cost 1 less"*

Why This Works:

- **Enables explosive turns** - Chain multiple spells in one turn- **Scales with Arcana** - More spells cast per turn = more Arcana gained- **Synergizes with

Echo** - Echo spells become even cheaper (5 mana spell → 3 Echo → 2 post-level)- **Rewards core gameplan** - You wanted to cast spells anyway- **Simple to remember** - Just subtract 1 from every spell cost

Calculation Example Post-Level-Up:

- Echo Fireball normally costs 1 mana (3 base - 2 Echo)- Post-level-up: **0 mana** (1 - 1 level passive)- Free Fireball that still generates Arcana and hits thresholds

Example Combo Turn (Turn 10, Leveled):

1. Hero Power (1 mana) → gain 1 Arcana2. Cast Echo Frost Bolt (0 mana, was 2 -2 Echo -1 level) → removal + Arcana3. Cast Arcane Intellect (3 mana, was 4 -1 level) → draw 3 cards4. Cast Fireball (2 mana, was 3 -1 level) → burn with high Arcana threshold5. Total: 6 mana spent, cast 4 spells, controlled board, drew cards, pushed damage

Ultimate Access: Pyroblast and Time Cascade become playable (game-ending spells)

HERO ABILITIES

HERO POWER - "Arcane Focus"

Base: *"Cost 1 mana: Gain 1 Arcana"*

Simple accelerant. Turn 2 with no play? Hero Power, start building. Turn 10 with 1 mana left? Hero Power, inch toward next threshold.

Strategic Uses:

- Smooth out awkward mana turns- Accelerate toward key Arcana thresholds (need 5 for Fireball? Hero Power)- Always useful early and late- Builds quest progress toward level-up

Upgrade: "Arcane Mastery" (3 mana to play, permanent replacement)

"Cost 1 mana: Gain 1 Arcana and draw a card"

Upgrade Benefits:

- Becomes card advantage engine- Enables longer grinds (never run out of cards)- Every turn with 1 leftover mana = Arcana + card- Extreme value over 10+ turn game

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ATTACK - "Arcane Blast"

Base: *"Cost 2 mana: Deal weapon damage to target enemy minion or hero. Take damage back equal to their Attack/weapon"*

Standard Attack ability. Mage isn't weapon-focused, so this is mostly for finishing

off damaged minions or pushing chip damage.
Strategic Uses:
- Turn 4: Attack 1-health survivor after spell- Late game: Chip hero for lethal math- Equipment makes this better (but low priority)
Upgrade: "Empowered Blast" (3 mana to play, permanent replacement)
"Cost 2 mana: Deal weapon damage +1 to target. 5+ Arcana: This costs 0 instead"
Upgrade Benefits:
- Extra damage helps kill 3-4 health threats- **At 5+ Arcana: FREE ATTACK** every turn- Late game becomes 0-mana removal tool- Synergizes with Arcana thresholds you're building anyway

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COMPLETE CARD LIST (40 cards)

MINIONS (11 unique, 22 total cards)

1-COST MINIONS:

Arcane Apprentice - 1 mana 1/3 (1g bounty) - **3 COPIES**
"When you cast a spell, this gains +1 Attack until end of turn"
Your defensive early drop. 1/3 body blocks aggro. When you cast spells (which you will), becomes 2/3 or 3/3 for favorable trades. Rewards spell-heavy turns. Scales naturally with gameplan.

Mana Sprite - 1 mana 2/1 (1g bounty) - **2 COPIES**
"When played: Gain 1 Arcana"
Arcana accelerant. Play turn 1, immediately at 1 Arcana. 2 attack trades with most 1-2 drops. Simple, always useful. Helps hit thresholds faster.

2-COST MINIONS:

Spellweaver - 2 mana 2/3 (1g bounty) - **3 COPIES**
"When you cast a spell, gain 1 Armor"
Defensive engine. Control needs Armor to survive. Every spell you cast (and you cast many) gives 1 Armor. Over a 15-turn game with 20+ spells cast = 20+ Armor gained. Protects you while building Arcana.

Arcane Scholar - 2 mana 1/4 (1g bounty) - **2 COPIES**
"Whenever you gain Arcana, draw a card. This ability triggers once per turn"
THE CARD DRAW ENGINE. Every turn you gain Arcana (which is most turns), draw

a card. 1/4 body is defensive. Limits to once per turn to prevent broken combos. If this sticks 3+ turns, you've drawn 3+ extra cards. Must-answer threat.

3-COST MINIONS:

Frost Elemental - 3 mana 2/4 (2g bounty) - **2 COPIES**

"When you cast a spell, deal 1 damage to a random enemy minion"

Board control on a body. You're casting spells naturally - this converts them into minion removal. Random targeting keeps it from being oppressive. 2/4 stats are defensive. Clears 1-health survivors automatically.

Arcane Channeler - 3 mana 3/3 (2g bounty) - **2 COPIES**

"3+ Arcana: This has +2/+2"

Threshold payoff minion. Turn 3 it's a vanilla 3/3. Turn 6+ when you have 3 Arcana, it's a 5/5. Incentivizes building Arcana. Becomes premium threat mid-game.

4-COST MINIONS:

Spellblade - 4 mana 3/4 (2g bounty) - **2 COPIES**

"Empower: When you gain Arcana, this gets +1/+1"

THE SCALING THREAT. Play turn 4 as 3/4. Every time you gain Arcana, permanent +1/+1. By turn 8 you've gained 5-6 Arcana since playing this = 8/9 or 9/10 stats. If not removed, becomes unkillable. Opponent must answer immediately.

Archmage Familiar - 4 mana 2/5 (2g bounty) - **1 COPY**

"Your spells cost 1 less while you have 5+ Arcana"

Mini level-up passive. At 5+ Arcana (achievable turn 6-7), all spells cost 1 less. Enables combo turns. 2/5 defensive body. Single copy keeps it special, not oppressive.

5-COST MINIONS:

Arcane Golem - 5 mana 4/5 (3g bounty) - **2 COPIES**

"When played: Gain 2 Arcana"

Tempo play that accelerates Arcana. Turn 5 play gets you 4/5 body + 2 Arcana immediately. Helps hit key thresholds (need 5 Arcana for Fireball? This gets you 2 closer). Above-curve stats for midrange pressure.

6-COST MINIONS:
Master Arcanist - 6 mana 5/5 (3g bounty) - **1 COPY**
"When you cast a spell, if you have 6+ Arcana, deal 2 damage to all enemy minions"
Late-game bomb. By turn 8-9 you have 6+ Arcana. Every spell you cast becomes mini-board-wipe. Opponent can't go wide. Forces them to remove this immediately or lose board permanently. Premium threat.

SPELLS (14 unique, 23 total cards)
1-COST SPELLS:
Spark - 1 mana - **2 COPIES**
"Deal 2 damage to target enemy minion"
Cheap removal. Kills 1-2 health threats. Generates Arcana (1 per 3 mana = rounds to 0, but still counts for quest). Always useful. Echo-worthy early, becomes less relevant late.

Arcane Insight - 1 mana - **2 COPIES**
"Gain 2 Arcana"
Pure Arcana accelerant. Turn 2 play to rush toward thresholds. Late game when Arcana matters less, less useful. But early it's great for hitting 3+ or 5+ breakpoints faster.

2-COST SPELLS:
Frost Bolt - 2 mana - **3 COPIES**
"Deal 3 damage to target enemy minion. 3+ Arcana: Deal 5 instead"
Your bread-and-butter removal. Early: kills 3-health threats. At 3+ Arcana: kills 5-health threats. Cheap, efficient, scales. VERY Echo-worthy (cast it twice for 0 mana each post-level). Core card.

Mana Surge - 2 mana - **2 COPIES**
"Draw 2 cards. Gain 1 Arcana"
Card advantage + Arcana. Refills hand for spell-heavy turns. Unconditionally good. Echo this to draw 4 cards over the game for total 4 mana investment. Control deck loves this.

3-COST SPELLS:

Fireball - 3 mana - **3 COPIES**
"Deal 4 damage to any target. 5+ Arcana: Deal 7 instead"
THE ICONIC MAGE SPELL. Early: 4 damage removal or face burn. At 5+ Arcana: 7 damage nuke. Can target hero for reach. Premium Echo target (1 mana Echo → 0 mana post-level = free 7 damage). Win condition.

Arcane Missiles - 3 mana - **2 COPIES**
"Deal 1 damage three times to random enemy minions. 4+ Arcana: Deal 2 damage three times instead"
AOE that scales. Early: clears 1-health minions. At 4+ Arcana: clears 2-health minions. Random keeps it fair. Good against wide boards. Generates 1 Arcana (3 mana spent).

4-COST SPELLS:
Polymorph - 4 mana - **2 COPIES**
"Transform target enemy minion into a 1/1 Sheep token"
Hard removal. Doesn't care about health total. Leaves 1/1 body (bad for you) but removes threats permanently. No "when this dies" triggers. Clean answer to scary minions. Echo-worthy for having hard removal twice.

Arcane Intellect - 4 mana - **2 COPIES**
"Draw 3 cards"
Big refill. Control needs card advantage. 4 mana for 3 cards is premium. Generates 1 Arcana. Definitely Echo-worthy (draw 6 total cards for 6 mana over the game = insane value).

Chain Lightning - 4 mana - **1 COPY**
"Deal 3 damage to target enemy minion and 2 damage to another random enemy minion"
Multi-target removal. Kills a 3-health threat and damages another. Useful against wide boards. Generates 1 Arcana. Single copy keeps it from feeling repetitive.

5-COST SPELLS:
Blizzard - 5 mana - **2 COPIES**
"Deal 2 damage to all enemy minions. 6+ Arcana: Deal 4 to all enemy minions instead"

Board wipe. Early: clears 2-health boards. At 6+ Arcana: clears 4-health boards. Your primary answer to wide aggro. Generates 1 Arcana (5/3 = 1). Very Echo-worthy.

Arcane Explosion - 5 mana - **1 COPY**

"Deal damage to all enemy minions equal to your Arcana"

Scaling board wipe. At 3 Arcana = 3 damage AOE. At 8 Arcana = 8 damage AOE. Gets better as game goes long. Rewards building Arcana. Late game this clears everything. Single copy to prevent spam.

6-COST SPELLS:

Time Stop - 6 mana - **1 COPY**

"Return all enemy minions to their owner's hand. Gain 3 Arcana"

Tempo swing. Bounces entire enemy board, doesn't kill (so no bounties for them). Gives 3 Arcana as bonus. Turn 8 answer to wide boards. Forces opponent to replay everything. Single copy, high-impact.

UPGRADES (2 cards)

Hero Power II: "Arcane Mastery" - 3 mana Upgrade - **1 COPY**

"Hero Power becomes: Cost 1 mana: Gain 1 Arcana and draw a card"

Turns Hero Power into card advantage engine. Over 10+ turns = 10+ cards drawn while building Arcana. Extreme value for control.

Attack II: "Empowered Blast" - 3 mana Upgrade - **1 COPY**

"Attack becomes: Cost 2 mana: Deal weapon damage +1 to target. 5+ Arcana: This costs 0 instead"

Makes Attack relevant. Free removal every turn at 5+ Arcana. Bonus damage helps kill 3-4 health threats.

ULTIMATES (2 cards, 3 total copies)

Pyroblast - 7 mana Ultimate - **2 COPIES**

"Deal 10 damage to any target. 8+ Arcana: Deal 15 instead"

THE FINISHER. 10 damage nuke to anything. At 8+ Arcana (achievable turn 10+): 15 damage. Can target hero for lethal. Post-level costs 6 mana. Echo this and you have two 15-damage nukes in your spellbook. Game-ending.

Time Cascade - 8 mana Ultimate - **1 COPY**
"Recast all spells in your Echo Zone without paying their costs. They return to your Echo Zone afterward"
COMBO ULTIMATE. Turn 11 with 3 Echoes (Fireball, Blizzard, Polymorph): Cast Time Cascade → Fireball deals 7, Blizzard clears board, Polymorph removes threat → All three spells STAY in Echo Zone for later use. Absurd value, game-winning if it resolves.

CORE ABILITIES (tracked for reference, not deck cards)
Hero Power Base - *"Cost 1 mana: Gain 1 Arcana"* - **CORE**
Attack Base - *"Cost 2 mana: Deal weapon damage to target"* - **CORE**
Level Up - *"Condition: Cast 15 spells. Passive: Your spells cost 1 less. Unlocks: Ultimate cards"* - **CORE**

MANA CURVE BREAKDOWN
Total: 40 cards
1-Cost: 7 cards (17.5%)- 3x Arcane Apprentice (minion)- 2x Mana Sprite (minion)- 2x Spark (spell)
2-Cost: 10 cards (25%)- 3x Spellweaver (minion)- 2x Arcane Scholar (minion)- 3x Frost Bolt (spell)- 2x Mana Surge (spell)
3-Cost: 9 cards (22.5%)- 2x Frost Elemental (minion)- 2x Arcane Channeler (minion)- 3x Fireball (spell)- 2x Arcane Missiles (spell)
4-Cost: 8 cards (20%)- 2x Spellblade (minion)- 1x Archmage Familiar (minion)- 2x Polymorph (spell)- 2x Arcane Intellect (spell)- 1x Chain Lightning (spell)
5-Cost: 4 cards (10%)- 2x Arcane Golem (minion)- 2x Blizzard (spell)- 1x Arcane Explosion (spell)
6-Cost: 2 cards (5%)- 1x Master Arcanist (minion)- 1x Time Stop (spell)
7-Cost: 2 cards (5%)- 2x Pyroblast (Ultimate)
8-Cost: 1 card (2.5%)- 1x Time Cascade (Ultimate)
Upgrades (3-cost to play): 2 cards
Curve Shape:
Heavy 1-4 cost (74% of deck) enables consistent early plays. Control needs cheap interaction. Thin 5-6 cost (15%) for mid-game bombs. Ultimates at 7-8 for explosive late game.
Spell-heavy: 23 spells out of 38 playable cards (60.5%) - perfect for Arcana

generation and level-up quest.

KEYWORD SYNERGY DENSITY

Total cards that interact with Arcana or Echo: 30 out of 40 (75%)

Arcana Interactions (28 cards):

Direct Arcana generation:- Mana Sprite (generates on play)- Arcane Golem (generates on play)- Arcane Insight (generates 2)- Time Stop (generates 3)- Hero Power (generates 1)- Every spell generates Arcana naturally

Arcana threshold payoffs:- Arcane Channeler (3+ Arcana threshold)- Spellblade (gains +1/+1 per Arcana gain)- Archmage Familiar (5+ Arcana discount)- Frost Bolt (3+ Arcana bonus)- Fireball (5+ Arcana bonus)- Arcane Missiles (4+ Arcana bonus)- Blizzard (6+ Arcana bonus)- Arcane Explosion (scales with Arcana)- Pyroblast (8+ Arcana bonus)- Attack Upgrade (5+ Arcana free cost)

Arcana-adjacent:- Arcane Apprentice (synergizes with spell casting)- Spellweaver (synergizes with spell casting)- Arcane Scholar (triggers on Arcana gain)- Frost Elemental (synergizes with spell casting)- Master Arcanist (6+ Arcana trigger)

Echo Interactions (All spells are Echo-able):

All 23 spells can be Echoed. Key Echo targets:- Frost Bolt (cheap removal twice)- Fireball (big damage twice)- Polymorph (hard removal twice)- Arcane Intellect (draw 6 total)- Blizzard (board wipe twice)- Pyroblast (30 damage potential)

Time Cascade specifically recasts Echoes.

Target: 60-70% keyword density**Achieved:** 75%

Slightly above target but justified - spell-heavy deck means most cards naturally generate Arcana by existing. Every spell you cast progresses your gameplan.

EQUIPMENT PRIORITIES

Mage Shopping Strategy:

Priority 1: RELIC (Critical)

Control wants utility relics:- Octarine Core (Hero Power twice per turn = 2 Arcana + 2 cards drawn with upgrade)- Refresher Shard (use Hero Power multiple times)- Aghanim's Scepter (spell power boost)- Pipe of Insight (spell