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DnD 2024 Wizard Subclasses Guide

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Introduction

Every Wizard subclass in the 2024 Player's Handbook is themed around a specific school of magic, seeking to emphasize and improve spells in that school. While you're not locked into learning specific spells, you'll typically benefit more by focusing on spells from your chosen school than by picking whatever spells catch your fancy.

For legacy subclasses, see our [2014 Wizard Subclasses Guide](#).

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Disclaimer

RPGBOT uses the color coding scheme which has become common among Pathfinder build handbooks, which is simple to understand and easy to read at a glance.

- ☆☆☆ Red: Bad, useless options, or options which are extremely situational. Nearly never useful.
- ☆☆☆ Orange: OK options, or useful options that only apply in rare circumstances. Useful sometimes.
- ☆☆☆ Green: Good options. Useful often.
- ☆☆☆ Blue: Fantastic options, often essential to the function of your character. Useful very frequently.

We will not include 3rd-party content, including content from DMs Guild, in handbooks for official content because we can't assume that your game will allow 3rd-party content or homebrew. We also won't cover Unearthed Arcana content because it's not finalized, and we can't guarantee that it will be available to you in your games.

The advice offered below is based on the current [State of the Character Optimization Meta](#) as of when the article was last updated. Keep in mind that the state of the meta periodically changes as new source materials are released, and the article will be updated accordingly as time allows.

Wizard Subclasses

☆☆ Abjurer ([PHB](#))

The Abjurer Wizard's signature mechanic is Arcane Ward, which provides a pool of not-quite-hit-points that you can use to mitigate huge amounts of damage to yourself and eventually to your allies. Spell Breaker makes the Abjurer the uncontested champion of Counterspell and Dispel Magic, allowing you to defend your allies both from mundane damage with your ward and from spells with Counterspell and Dispel Magic. While this is undeniably effective, the purely reactive nature of the subclass can make it boring to play for many players who prefer a more proactive approach to challenges.

3. ✨✨ Abjuration Savant: Free spells in your spellbook. Always nice, but not massively impactful.
3. ✨✨ Arcane Ward: A great way to protect yourself and your party. The ward works a lot like Temporary Hit Points, but, since they aren't technically THP, the two effects provide two layers of protection before you take real hp damage. The Ward itself begins at full HP the first time you cast an Abjuration spell each day. Mage Armor is a great way to get the ward in place before you go anywhere dangerous.

Since the ward can take damage in your place, you may even be able to avoid saves to maintain Concentration when you take damage. This additional overshield is a resource, and resources are meant to be spent, but don't be reckless and overextend yourself. Be sure to take all the normal defensive precautions and the ward will help mitigate damage when the dice just don't go in your favor.

Remember that damage to the ward is applied after damage resistances, so anything that reduces the incoming damage will stretch the value of your ward. Blade Ward and Resistance can both help here, though you may want to Concentrate on more impactful spells.

Unfortunately, charging the ward requires you to cast Abjuration spells using spell slots, which makes it difficult and expensive to keep the ward fully charged throughout the day. Look for Abjuration buffs that you can cast on your allies before jumping into combat.

6. ✨✨ Projected Ward: Your party's Defender likely takes a lot more damage than you, so soaking some of it with your ward can really cut down on how many resources your party must devote to healing. Just be aware that you'll be unable to cast Shield, Absorb Elements, and Counterspell in response to future triggering events should you block some damage to an ally since you only get one Reaction per round.
10. ✨✨ Spell Breaker: Two free prepared spells, and, if you cast either and fail the ability check, your spell slot isn't expended. Counter every hostile spell worth a spell slot even if you're unlikely to succeed. Outside of combat, you can repeatedly cast Dispel Magic at level 3 until you eventually get lucky on the check.

In combat, the ability to cast Dispel Magic as a Bonus Action will rarely be impactful, but, against enemy spellcasters, it's a powerful way to strip them of buff spells.

14. **☆☆ Spell Resistance:** Resistance to spells is great for resisting dangerous save or suck spells, and resistance to spell damage makes you greatly resistant to direct damage spells which typically don't require saves (Eldritch Blast, Fire Bolt, etc.). Both halves of the feature apply at the same time, so against spells which allow you to save for reduced damage (Fireball, etc.), this is extremely effective because on a successful save you'll often take just a quarter of the game. However, you're expected to counter spells rather than try to resist them, so this is mostly a redundant defense for when you're outnumbered or surprised.

☆☆ Diviner ([PHB](#))

Forewarned is fore-armed, and Divination is all about forewarning. If you ever walk into a room without knowing who and what is inside it, you aren't casting enough Divinations. The biggest problem with relying heavily on Divinations is that they can quickly eat your spell slots, often with little tangible effect. Fortunately, Expert Divination dramatically reduces the cost of casting divination spells. Portent provides a wonderful mechanic to influence rolls, allowing you alter the outcome of critical rolls in significant and powerful ways.

As great as Portent is, if you plan to play a Diviner, you and your DM need to be prepared to handle divinations and how they work. The DM may be forced to predict the future for you, to offer cryptic hints, or to improvise the idle activities of creatures who are generally just sitting in a room waiting for your party to come fight them. You need to remember to use your Divination spells to mitigate risk and to solve problems that can't be solved using Fireball and the like. But, if you put in the work, the Diviner Wizard will reward you for your efforts.

3. **☆☆ Divination Savant:** Free spells in your spellbook. Always nice, but not massively impactful.
3. **☆☆ Portent:** Roll high? Save it for important saving throws or attacks. Roll low? Use it to replace an enemy attack roll or an enemy saving throw. There is no way for this to be bad unless you forget to use it. Portent is School of Divination's signature trait, and mastering it will have a massive impact on your game.
6. **☆☆ Expert Divination:** This dramatically expands the number of spells you can cast in a day. If you ever think "is it worth a

spell slot to cast a Divination right now?”, the answer should always be “yes”. Throw them around like confetti. You can even use Mind Spike (the only damage-dealing divination spell in the game) to get big piles of single-target damage at minimal cost whenever you might normally use a cantrip.

10. **The Third Eye:** The wording is odd. You gain the ability listed in the bullet until your next rest. For example: the “See Invisibility” option gives you the ability to cast See Invisibility without spending a spell slot, but you still need to actually do so.
 - **☆☆ Darkvision:** Darkvision isn’t a Divination, so this is a good way to get it for free if you don’t get it from your race, an item, or an ally who can cast Darkvision.
 - **☆☆ Greater Comprehension:** Cast Comprehend Languages as a Ritual.
 - **☆☆ See Invisibility:** See Invisibility is essentially. It has a 1-hour duration, but you can cast it without spending a spell slot, so you can freely refresh the duration whenever you’re out of combat.
14. **☆☆ Greater Portent:** Not a game changer, but Portent is fantastic, and this makes it 50% more powerful.

☆☆ Evoker ([PHB](#))

Evocation is the blunt hammer of magic, and the Evoker Wizard swings it better than anyone. It’s rarely subtle or elegant, and it’s often imprecise. But, hey, when 90% of problems are nails, the hammer is the king of tools. The Evoker is a great option for players who are new to spellcasters because many of the Evoker’s best spells are mechanically simple, and the subclass makes it extremely reliable.

3. **☆☆ Evocation Savant:** Free spells in your spellbook. Always nice, but not massively impactful.
3. **☆☆ Potent Cantrip:** Fantastically reliable.

This feature is notably not limited to Wizard cantrips, in case you happen to have something from another class, a feat, or a Species trait.

6. **☆☆ Sculpt Spells:** Friendly fire happens inevitably when you have an Evoker in the party. This goes a long way to cut down on the problem, and you should abuse the fact that your allies are functionally immune to your spells wherever possible.

There’s some weird nuance here that’s easy to overlook: While this is clearly intended to protect allies from Burning

Hands, Fireball, and other such AOE damage options, the protection doesn't end after the initial effect of the spell. Creatures are protected from the spell's effects for the spell's full duration.

This means that your allies can comfortably walk around in the areas of spells like Sickening Radiance, potentially dragging enemies about inside the area to force them to take damage. You could even cast Otiluke's Freezing Sphere, designate your allies as protected by Sculpt Spells, then send them off with pockets full of frozen spheres to smash at their feet in a room full of enemies. Honestly, I don't think this was intended when WotC wrote School of Evocation. Much like Empowered Evocation, I think that they meant for Sculpt Spells only to apply to the initial effects. But it's been 5+ years and we haven't gotten errata or tweets from Jeremy Crawford, so it appears that Sculpt Spells works as I've described it until someone tells us otherwise.

10. ✨✨ Empowered Evocation: This is a considerable damage boost. However, it only applies to one damage roll, so any spell that rolls damage multiple times (e.g. Magic Missile) won't benefit from this repeatedly. Instead, focus on multi-target instantaneous damage spells like Acid Splash and Chain Lightning.
14. ✨✨ Overchannel: This is a great way to get more mileage out of reliable lower-level spells like Magic Missile and Fireball at a level where your higher-level spells and spell slots would generally eclipse them. Just be sure to have a Cleric handy when you start intentionally taking damage.

Because this only applies on the turn that you cast the spell, it doesn't significantly benefit spells that deal ongoing damage like Wall of Fire or Sickening Radiance.

✨ ✨ Illusionist ([PHB](#))

Illusion is the most complex, open-ended, and flexible school of magic. It is limited only by your and your DM's imaginations. A clever player and patient DM willing to play along can make the Illusionist an unstoppable creative force. However, subjective interpretations of NPC behavior can also make the Illusionist a frustrating, ineffective nightmare. If you plan to play an Illusionist, have a thorough discussion with your DM about how they want to handle illusions before you commit.

Illusionist Wizard Subclass Guide

3. ★★ Illusion Savant: Free spells in your spellbook. Always nice, but not massively impactful.
3. ★★ Improved Illusions: [Minor Illusion](#) can be incredibly powerful in the hands of a smart caster, and adding both effects on one casting makes it considerably more useful. Creating an illusion of a pot lying on the floor accompanied by the sound of a pot falling, or an illusion of a small animal accompanied by appropriate sounds (I'm fond of chickens for this purpose) can be excellent distractions, and creatures don't get a save or a skill check to disbelieve the illusion until they spend an Action to do so.

While it's primarily a non-combat utility, the ability to cast Minor Illusion as a Bonus Action makes it an exciting tool in combat, too. Creating visual cover to break lines of sight can have a huge impact. Depending on how your DM handles illusions, you may be able to hide yourself inside an object like a crate or a barrel to make yourself untargetable.

Don't overlook the range increase, either. 60 feet of additional range means that you can do illusory nonsense from a safe distance, such as leading enemies far away from you and your party in order to avoid violent encounters.

6. ★★ Phantasmal Creatures: This is complicated.

Changing the spells' school to Illusion has no mechanical benefit on its own, but remember that Improved Illusions increases the range of your Illusion spells by 60 feet, allowing you to cast these spells from up to 150 feet away.

Two free summon spells is pretty nice. Summon Beast and Summon Fey both offer some appealing options, and upcasting summon spells to boost their stats and number of attacks keep them relevant for your whole career.

The two free castings (one for each summon) are a nice convenience, giving you low-cost canon fodder that can absorb a few hits that might otherwise target you and your allies. The summons won't last long in combat with half hit points, but both spells have a 1-hour duration, so you can pre-cast them and wander around outside of combat with a pet ready to go. Even as you gain levels and a level 2 or level 3 summon stops being a threat, they can still be useful as a scout or as a distraction.

10. ★★ Illusory Self: Infallibly ignore one attack against you for free, once per Short or Long Rest. Very good for a squishy Wizard. Combined with other defensive measures like hiding and using cover, you may even be able to forgo Shield, especially since you can use this again at the cost of a level 2 spell slot.
14. ★★ Illusory Reality: This turns your illusions into creation spells, which means that any tool that you can imagine is available for the low cost of casting Silent Image. Sadly, Malleable Illusions likely doesn't let you change the object which you've chosen to make real because Illusory Reality only applies when you cast the spell.

You can't directly harm creatures with Illusory Reality, but the rules say nothing about impeding, restraining, blocking, or even dropping them. Throw up a Silent Image to create a wall of stone between you and your foes, or to put a cage around them. Create an illusory bridge with a convenient trap door (or just time it so that they're on the bridge when the 1-minute duration expires) and drop your enemies into a pit.

About The Author

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Tyler "RPGBOT" Kamstra has been the author of RPGBOT.net since 2013. Tyler began playing tabletop RPGs with 3rd edition Dungeons and Dragons over 20 years ago. Tyler has a long-standing love for building characters and for game mechanics, and brings that enthusiasm to everything he creates.