



MAGIC SCHOOL MYSTERIES

ABOUT

In this lighthearted storytelling-focused roleplaying game you'll play as a group of teen wizards studying at a magic school and solving mysteries in the style of Harry Potter, Scooby Doo, and Gravity Falls. You'll improvise mysteries from scratch, with no preparation.

BEFORE THE GAME

Choose the setting for the adventure (or invent your own):

Arcane Academy: the school of witchcraft and wizardry

Familiars: play as pets of the students of a magic school

Nethervale: a school for monsters and magic creatures

Protectorate: school for superheroes and supervillains

Duskfall Institute: steampunk school for inventors

Each player names 1-3 things they'd like to see in the story - characters, locations, magics, objects, mysterious events, challenges, troubles to overcome, etc. We'll try to include these elements as we play.

Discuss and pick a mystery you'd like to solve.

Decide where the story starts.

PLAYING AS A STUDENT

- Describe what your character says and does.
- Establish locations - choose where you go next.
- Say "yes and", and play to find out what happens.
- Be proactive, curious, and eager to investigate.
- Actively contribute ideas to the story.

PLAYING AS A NARRATOR

Each scene, a new player becomes a **Narrator**. They will describe the world around the heroes, the consequences of their actions, and play the roles of non-player characters.

Your goals:

- Introduce clues and suspects.
- Introduce something mysterious or unexpected.
- Introduce challenges, obstacles, and complications.

When you need help or aren't sure what happens next, ask questions and let the players tell you what happens.

What do you want to do now?

Something unusual is going on here. What is it?

What's weird about the potion's master behavior?

What's the spookiest thing you see in this dungeon?

What clue did you find that indicates he's planning a ritual?

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<https://rpgadventures.io/discord>



IMPROVISING A MYSTERY

THE FIRST SCENE

The players describe where the heroes are, and what they are doing when they encounter the mystery.

Then the Narrator introduces a mysterious event the heroes encounter, and makes up a couple of leads (the clues that give the players ideas where to start their investigation).

Mystery: The heroes are in the study room, a student asks them to help him find his missing pet frog.
Lead: He last seen his frog in the greenhouses.

THEORIES AND CLUES

Each player privately makes up a **theory** about what's going on, why is it happening, how did it happen, and who is behind it. Update your theory every time you encounter a new clue.

When it's your turn to be the Narrator, you'll introduce **clues** based on your theory and speculations.

| Theory: The frog ate something that turned it invisible.

INVESTIGATION SCENES

The players describe what they do to investigate this mystery - establish the location they go to, what kind of clues they're looking for, and what they hope to learn about the mystery.

The Narrator introduces a challenge, makes up some obstacle or a complication that makes the investigation difficult.

If the players overcome it, the Narrator reveals a clue based on their theory (without revealing the whole theory).

Players go to the greenhouses where the frog was last seen.
Challenge: A magical carnivorous plant is attacking you.
Clue: A half-eaten magic clover (after further investigation the players can learn that this is an invisibility clover).

SOLVE THE MYSTERY

Investigate the mystery until someone is ready to reveal the truth, explain what's going on, who's behind it, and establish the location where climax of the story will take place.

Roll the number of dice equal to the number of clues this theory explains. If at least one rolls 10+, the theory is correct.

Otherwise, continue investigating and discover a new theory.

| The frog ate an invisibility clover, its footprints lead to the Enchanted Forest. We better catch it before someone eats it.

STORY CLIMAX

Once the truth is revealed, the investigation story transforms into a mission-based save the day scenario. If there's a culprit, their evil scheme is nearly complete.

The players rush to confront the culprit, help the person in need, or have some other dramatic resolution to the story.

The Narrator comes up with the final challenge the players must overcome in order to succeed.

The frog footprints lead to the swamp where chupacabras live. The invisibility has worn off, and we witness the frog being hunted by a chupacabra. We rescue it.



CREATE A CHARACTER

DESCRIPTION

What is your name, appearance, personality, backstory?

What is your motivation (what do you want and why)?

Fame, justice, mischief, friendship, curiosity, freedom, honor, wealth, power, revenge, security, knowledge, etc.

TALENTS

Choose 3 talents from the list, or invent your own.

Strong	Nimble	Tough	Sneaky
Cunning	Booksmart	Perceptive	Charming
Brave	Crafty	Helpful	Artistic
Persuasion	Deception	Intimidation	Insight
Nature	Technology	Magic	Investigation

ABILITIES

Abilities are anything that enables you to do extraordinary things: your magic spells, items, potions, powers, pets, etc.

Invent 5 abilities, use the examples below for inspiration.

Telekinesis: Levitate objects no heavier than a bucket of water, within 30 meters, in line of sight.

Superstrength: Gain hulk-like strength for a scene, but for the next hour you'll feel extremely weak and tired.

Invisibility: Once per adventure, brew an invisibility potion (enough for 60 minutes of invisibility).

Wildshape: At night you can turn into a bat.

Cloak of Disguise: Assume the appearance of any humanoid creature you've seen (up to 3 hours per day).

Familiar: A trained creature who follows your commands and can communicate with you.

Clearly define what your abilities enable you to do. If the ability seems overpowered - add some costs or limitations.

Takes time to use, attracts attention, unpredictable, can backfire, has limited impact, expensive, has limited number of uses, has negative side effects, works only under certain conditions, only on specific targets, 3 uses per day, etc.

RELATIONSHIPS

Establish a relationship with another player's character. What do you think about each other? How do you know each other? What do you want from them?

Favor, forgiveness, friendship, trust, truth about their past, respect, mentorship, protection, help, etc.



PLAY THE GAME

ROLLING DICE

When you attempt something challenging, risky, or opposed by another character - roll the dice.

If you beat the **difficulty number** (set by the Narrator) - you succeed, otherwise you encounter a setback or a complication.

If you have **talents** relevant to the task you're attempting - roll an extra die for each talent and take the best result.

You can also add an extra die to your roll if you're getting help from a friend, or creatively using environment to your benefit.

If you have **conditions** that would impede the task you're attempting - roll an extra die and take the worst result.

CONDITIONS

If you fail a roll in a risky situation, you gain a condition.

Injured, cursed, angry, tangled, distracted, tired, sand in the eyes, cornered, sneezing, embarrassed, jealous.

Severity of conditions gradually increases, for example:

Scared → cornered → injured → unconscious.

To get rid of a condition, do something that would fix it.

Use a bandage, rest, cut the entangling vines, run away in fear, get comforted by a friend, break something to release anger, act cool to improve your reputation, etc.

To defeat opponents (in action scenes or social situations), inflict conditions on them until they lose or run away.

If someone tries to inflict a condition on you, describe how you defend yourself. The better your defense is, the higher the difficulty number for the attacker will be.

If someone tries to inflict a condition on you - describe how you defend yourself, and roll the dice. If you succeed, the attack fails.

LEVELING UP

Gain new abilities by learning from the books you read, the people you meet, or the cool items you find. You also gain a new ability at the end of each adventure.

Instead of gaining a new ability, you can add a power to or remove a limitation from an existing ability.

Gain a new talent at the end of a major story arc.



MYSTERIES

Subject...	Mysterious event...
Faculty member	Is missing
Odd Professor	Is acting strange
Valuable object	Was stolen
Student's project	Was sabotaged
A student	Turned into a creature
First-year students	Were kidnapped
Magic plants	Turned carnivorous
Headmaster	Suddenly fallen ill
Student's pet	Has disappeared
Magical creatures	Have escaped confinement
Strange monster	Is roaming the castle
Shady figure	Is stalking someone
Someone innocent	Accused of a crime
Gargoyle statue	Moved overnight
Zombies	Walk the grounds at night
Acid slugs	Grow and multiply
School mascot	Found under your bed
Invisible entity	Writes messages on walls
Janitor's cat	Floats when it shouldn't
Abandoned laboratory	Glowes at night
Living portrait	Is acting nervous
Magical items	Lost their magic
Ancient artifact	Is behaving erratically
Mysterious footprints	Appeared overnight
Dormitory	Is upside down
Familiar	Speaks strange languages
Poltergeist	Is unusually polite
Rival professors	Have switched places
Sentient book	Is missing memories
Suit of armor	Is stalking someone
Statue	Went berserk
School's parrot	Is telling lies

LOCATIONS

Adjective...	Place...	Occupants...
Cozy	Studyroom	Students
Official	Faculty Lounge	Professors
Haunted	Library	Floating books
Secret	Lair	Cloaked Figures
Headmaster's	Sanctum	Living portraits
Professor's	Office	Secret papers
Crowded	Tavern	Adventurers
Hidden	Passage	Insects
Dusty	Stables	Magic creatures
Forbidden	Corridor	Spider webs
Gloomy	Dungeons	Glowing Fungi
Frightening	Abyss	Shadows
Ancient	Hall	Ghosts
Secluded	Tower	Owls
Unvisited	Classroom	Strange sounds
Sacred	Grove	Spirits
Ritual	Chamber	Demons
Creepy	Crypts	Undead
Guarded	Vault	Magic Artifacts
Enchanted	Forest	Sentient Trees
Heated	Forge	Golems
Terrifying	Nest	Spiders
Overgrown	Greenhouses	Magic plants
Dimly-lit	Witch's Hut	Familiars
Foggy	Swamp	Chupacabras
Disgusting	Troll Den	Snoring Trolls
Romantic	Balcony	Student Couple
Exclusive	Clubhouse	Prefects
Unvisited	Trophy room	Holy Grail
Candle-lit	Alchemy Lab	Potions
Bustling	Train Station	Travelers
Ancient	Ruins	Old hermit

CHARACTERS

Adjective...	Occupation...	Motivation...
Odd	Professor	Keep secret
Arrogant	Rival	Prove superiority
Rebellious	Trickster	Defy Authority
Nefarious	Potions Master	Reclaim Respect
Shrouded	Cloaked figure	Complete mission
Enigmatic	Janitor	Protect treasure
Compassionate	Groundskeeper	Conceal creature
Obnoxious	Journalist	Break news
Eager	Teacher's Pet	Gain Favor
Fiery	Athlete	Win competition
Cunning	House Ghost	Settle old score
Zealous	Necromancer	Revive someone
Eccentric	Inventor	Build a device
Secretive	Librarian	Guard knowledge
Dutiful	House Elf	Follow orders
Giggly	Schoolgirl	Gossip
Flamboyant	Drama Teacher	Put on play
Ambitious	School Bully	Gain power
Rumored	Monster	Hunt
Honorable	Champion	Defend title
Rugged	Dragon Keeper	Tame beasts
Daring	Treasure Hunter	Find riches
Grim	Necromancer	Revive someone
Reckless	Witch	Unleash magic
Curious	First-year	Trespass
Condescending	Artist	Get attention
Flustered	Apprentice	Hide a mishap
Frantic	Werewolf	Conceal condition
Shifty	Potions seller	Make a profit
Prodigy	Student	Show off
Meddling	Bureaucrat	Interfere
Charismatic	Head Boy	Secure votes



CLUES AND CHALLENGES

Clue...	Challenge...
	SOCIAL
Witness	Interrogate someone
Someone with a secret	Persuade someone to help
Interviews with experts	Persuade an authority
Rumors	Covertly extract information
Myths and legends	Pass a test
Contradictory statements	Trick someone
	ACTION
Personal item	Defeat a person
Biological evidence	Defeat a creature
Overheard conversation	Escape from someone
Notes, letters, messages	Break into a guarded place
Significant object	Escape after alarm goes off
Prophecies, dreams, visions	Break a magic spell
Magic artifact	Deal with a magic creature
	ENVIRONMENTAL
Secret passages or rooms	Navigate a pitch-dark area
Marks on the scene	Explore a dangerous place
Magical residue/phenomena	Resist a magical effect
Maps, blueprints, diagrams	Steal from a secure vault
Strange creature behavior	Survive in an environment
	STEALTH
Mysterious object	Steal something
Suspicious behavior	Spy on someone
Books and archives	Sneak into forbidden place
People in surprising places	Sneak through corridors
Marks left on the scene	Covertly investigate
Personal journals	Steal from a guarded room
	INVESTIGATION
Traces of physical evidence	Search for subtle clues
Footprints	Follow tracks
Surveillance Records	Sneak a peek at information

NAMES

First Names

Ahmad, Alecto, Andromeda, Arabella, Argus, Ariana, Arsenius, Arthur, Augusta, Aurora, Chiwetel, Cormac, Cuthbert, Daniel, Dedalus, Dev, Dimitrios, Eldred, Eleni, Elphias, Emeric, Emma, Emmeline, Fatima, Filius, Gabriela, Genevieve, Griselda, Helena, Imelda, James, Jing, Joanne, Lorenzo, Ludo, Mafalda, Maggie, Merope, Newt, Nnedi, Pablo, Penelope, Phyllida, Richard, Riya, Rodolphus, Rolanda, Rupert, Scarlett, Sean, Septima, Silvanus, Susan, Sybill, Terry, Thorfinn, Wei, Wilbert, Wilhelmina, Zoe

Last Names

Adebayo, Ali, Bagshot, Chowdhry, Davies, Diaz, Dubois, Finnigan, Goldstein, Grint, Johnson, Kazinsky, Khan, Leung, Macmillan, Mwangi, Ogden, Okafor, Patel, Quinn, Radcliffe, Santos, Schmidt, Spinnet, Tarkowski, Thomas, Valentini, Warren, Watson, Wong.

CONDITIONS

Emotional

Unnerved, scared, shocked, disturbed, angry, irritated, love struck, saddened, melancholy, jealous, envious, isolated, obsessed with [person or thing], furious with [person or thing], sad about [person or thing], volatile emotions, a desire to lash out, gloomy disposition, shaken to the core.

Physical

Sprained ankle, smoke inhalation, scratched face, intoxicated, sand in the eyes, exhausted, limping, unstable footing, vertigo.

Supernatural

Cursed, hexed, haunted, seeing unnatural shapes, strange reflection, the rats are whispering to me, sensitive to sunlight, drawn to graveyards, glowing eyes.

SOMETHING HERE...

SOMETHING HERE...



SKILLS

Pick Locks

Pick any ordinary lock within 5 minutes.

Leap

Jump up to 20 times the normal distance.

Hide in Shadows

Three times per adventure you can hide so well as to become completely invisible.

Polyglot

You can speak and understand any language, including ancient or long-forgotten tongues.

Boy Scout

You're always prepared! Search through your pockets and find any mundane item of your choice (it should be believable that you have prepared in advance).

Improvised Weapons

Create effective makeshift weapons from your surroundings. Roll the dice, when you roll below 4 the weapon breaks or backfires (your choice).

Mimic Sound

You can imitate any speech or sound with perfect accuracy.

Unbreakable

Three times per adventure you can avoid any injury or attack and escape completely unscathed.

Eagle Eye

Once per day, you can see and observe details from an incredible distance, as if you were standing right next to the object or person.

Master Pilot

You can expertly pilot any vehicle.

Escape Artist

You can easily escape from ropes, chains, and other restraints, as well as locked doors and windows.

Tinkerer

Once per adventure you can repair or modify weapons, armor, and other equipment, improving their performance or adding new capabilities.

Tactical Retreat

Once per adventure you can help your team to safely escape from any combat situation.

Forger

Once per adventure you can make a flawless forgery of any document, signature, or an item (non-functional, but indistinguishable from the original at a glance).

Silver Tongue

Once per adventure, you can deliver a speech that convinces your audience of your point of view (you have to actually make a speech as a player).

Tracker

You can follow any trail, even if it's days old or obscured by weather.

Beast Tamer

You can tame and train animals to follow your commands. Works 3 times per adventure. For extremely powerful or intelligent animals the effect is limited to 5 minutes.

Power Napper

Heal all your injuries by taking a 5 minute nap. Works 3 times per adventure.

Master of Traps

You can design, create, and disarm various traps, making it easier for your group to secure an area or hinder your enemies.

Healer

You can heal any moderate injury up to 3 times per adventure.

Encyclopedic Knowledge

You have a vast store of general knowledge, allowing you to recall information on a wide range of topics.

Sprinter

For the next 5 minutes you can run as fast as a horse. Works once per scene.

Superhuman Strength

Once per day you can become as strong as Hulk.

Inspire

Give your friend an inspiring speech, and they will have an advantage on the next roll. Works once per scene.

Well-Connected

Once per adventure you can find a helpful ally in just the right place.

Reputation

You are well known. Choose what reputation you have in a specific region (Hero, Villain, Honest, Sex Symbol, Philanthropist, Impeccable Taste, etc.)

Spread the Word

Spread any rumor. Say a couple of sentences, and they go viral. Not everyone believes it, but everyone is talking about it.

Identify

Figure out properties of any object and how to use it. Learn whether the object is affected by spells and what they are.

Master Musician

When you're playing a musical instrument - roll the dice. If you roll above 10, everybody around you can't resist dancing.

Spider Climb

You can climb any surface.

Land On Your Feet

Like a cat, you are able to fall from great heights without excessive harm.

Escapist

Once per day you can successfully flee from any conflict or escape from bonds.

Deadeye

You could shoot a penny from the opposite side of a football field. You can make one extremely precise shot once per scene.

Battle Stomp

Smash your weapon into the ground, knock down everyone around you.

Redirect Attack

Once per scene you may force your opponent to attack another one of your enemies instead of you or one of your allies.

Darkvision

You can see in pitch darkness as if it's an overcast day.

Copycat

Once per day you can copy a skill you have seen used in the past hour.

Strong Back

You can carry heavy loads without being encumbered.



SPELLS

Message

Telepathically send a message to the nearby creature, they can respond.

Illusion

Create an illusory object no larger than a horse, complete with sounds, smells, movement. Within 50 meters, in your line of sight.

Telekinesis

Levitate small objects, no larger or heavier than a bucket of water.

Pet Pal

You can speak with animals.

Summon Familiar

Summon a small creature who will be your pet and a friend. You can communicate with it telepathically, give it commands, see through its eyes, hear what it hears, cast spells through it. If the creature takes damage it disappears until you resummon it. Works once per day.

Familiar Transposition

Swap places with your familiar.

Charm Person

The person regards you as their friend for 1 hour. Everyone around knows that they've been charmed. When the spell ends, they know they've been charmed.

Enlarge/Reduce

Make the object or a creature grow or shrink to 4 times its size.

Sense Magic

Sense the magic auras within 200 meters around you, get a vague sense of what and where they are.

Change Momentum

Halt, decrease, increase, or reverse the momentum of a moving object. Can apply enough force to suspend a falling boulder for 10 minutes.

Animate Object

Object will obey your commands as best it can. Requires a sacrifice.

Spider Web

Your wrists can shoot thick webbing (like Spider Man).

Misty Step

Instantly teleport a short-distance (a stone's throw, line of sight. Think Nightcrawler from X-Men).

Elasticity

You can do what Elastigirl from Incredibles can do.

Phobia

A target creature becomes terrified of an object of your choice.

Greed

The target creature develops an overwhelming urge to possess a visible item of your choice. Lasts 30 minutes.

Wall of Ice

Once per hour you can create an ice wall, 10x10 meters. Window is optional.

Minecraftsmen's Delight

Once per second you may summon or banish a 3-meter-wide cube of earth.

Paralyze

Once per scene you can paralyze one creature for a minute by making uninterrupted physical contact with it for 20 seconds.

Summon Item

Mark an object or an item (no larger than 2x2 meters). Whenever you cast this spell, it will teleport to your hand (or in front of you) from wherever it is.

Invisible Tether

Two objects within 5 meters of each other cannot be moved more than 5 meters apart. Lasts 30 minutes.

Suggestion

The target obeys a single, three-word suggestion that sounds reasonable. After spell ends, you're susceptible to suggestions from other people.

Produce Emotion

Make the target feel happy, sad, angry, smitten, afraid, insecure, etc.

Spy

You can see through the eyes of a creature you touched earlier today.

Technomancy

Control mechanical and electrical devices with your mind.

Befuddle

The target creature is unable to form new short-term memories for the next 15 minutes. But neither can you.

Disassemble

Any of your body parts may be detached and reattached at will, without causing pain or damage. You can still control them.

Grease

Cover an object or a surface in grease, making it frictionless and flammable.

Levitate

Slowly lifts the target vertically above the ground, up to 15 meters. The target can weigh up to 300 kg.

Calm Emotions

Make the target indifferent about the creatures of your choice.

Veil

Create a static illusion no larger than 100 meters in any direction. Like a building, an oasis, a pile of treasure, etc. When anything touches the illusion, it is dispelled.

Intwine

Use nearby grass, vines, and tree branches as if they were your own limbs.

Accio

Summon any object within your line of sight and within 300 meters towards you.

Counterspell

Three times per adventure you can dispel any spell or a magical effect on a target.

Secret Message

Write a message visible only to the people you choose.

Skywrite

Cause up to 10 words to form in the sky you can see (made of clouds).

Pyromancer

Create and manipulate flame, as large as campfire.

Firehose

A stream of water pours out of your hand as if it's a firehose.

Frost Powers

You can do what Frozone from Incredibles can do.



ITEMS

Bag of Gold

Spend it to do something a rich person can do (throw a lavish party, bribe someone, hire an assassin, etc.), or trade it for another item of your choice.

Familiar

A trained creature who follows your commands and can communicate with you.

Weapon

A simple melee or ranged weapon of your choice.

Grappling Hook Gun

Shoots the grappling hook to the distance of up to 50 meters, in line of sight. Supports weight of 1 person.

Cloak of Disguise

Enables you to assume an appearance of any humanoid creature you've seen. For 1 hour, up to 3 times per day.