Magic Builder

Created By Ajala Bandele

Magic Builder
<u>Building Compelling Magic Systems</u>

Magic Builder is a writing tool to help build deep, rationale, magic systems. By using Magic Builder it becomes extremely easy to understand all the most important aspects of your magic system to better influence a compelling story.

Magic is an exciting addition to any story. It challenges an audience member by giving them something impossible and making it real. Magic changes the way we think about the world around us and our connection to it. It adds danger, it adds complexity, it adds magic to a story.

Creating a compelling magic system that doesn't distract from a story is easier than you would think. It takes thought, rationalization and an imagination to do, but it is no more-so complicated than developing a character. There are different types of magic, and all can be explored, expanded, and used to better a story.

Using Magic Builder will help you expand upon a single idea and develop your own magic system to its full potential. The more thought behind it, the more enticing the magic will be, and ultimately, the more compelling the story. By the end you will have built a deep, expansive magic system that transports an audience into the impossible and that, for me, is everything.

Keep Thinking

Ajala Bandele

Using Magic Builder...

As A Magic Generator

Sometimes you have more ideas about magic than you have ideas for anything else. Sometimes you have story ideas that could use an extra flare to make it really special. Magic Builder allows you to quickly and efficiently build compelling and believable magic systems

As A Reference Tool

During the writing process you may find yourself lost, or forgetting the magic system you already implemented into your story. Magic Builder is a great reference tool to help you keep track of how your magic works.

As A Story and Character Generator

Sometimes building a magic system can inspire you to invent characters or full stories based around the magic. You can use Magic Builder as a tool to instigate the ideas of Characters and Stories.

As A Tool To Review Other Magic Systems

When you are viewing something that has magic in it and you are tasked with critiquing it, it's good to know what to look for. The more comfortable you get with understanding what makes a strong and a weak magic system the better you can be with your critique or review. Using Magic Builder can help you as a tool to review other magic systems in different stories.

Writing process
<u>From beginning to end</u>

There are four steps to a writing process. Prewriting>Drafting>Revising>Editing.

1. **Prewriting**: Prewriting consists of <u>Concept Creation, Research, and Outlines.</u>
   A. The point of prewriting is to gain a thorough understanding of the story.
2. **Drafting**: Drafting is creating a first draft of your story focusing on if the structure and ideas are clear.
   A. The point of drafting is just to write the story. Get it all out of your head and onto the page. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it is easier to edit a flawed script than a hypothetical one.
3. **Revising**: Revising is adjusting the writing of your first draft, focusing on clearing up any structural mistakes, plot holes, weak character arcs, and weak dialogue.
   A. The point of revising is to refine and perfect the story so that it achieves the writers intention. Revising produces 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc…drafts of a script. This is also your time to really dig in and make sure your story is accomplishing what you want it to accomplish in a structurally sound manner.
4. **Editing**: Editing is checking for grammar, formatting, spelling, and punctuation after the story and all it's elements are complete.
   A. The point of editing is to polish off your story to look and feel professional, resulting in a final draft.

<u>Magic Builder is a part of the Prewriting and Revision Phases.</u>

As you are developing your concept and or outline, you can use Magic Builder to flesh out the details in a fully comprehensive magic profile. This will help you understand how magic helps you and your character in regards to the overall plot of your story.

After completing your first draft you may discover some new elements of magic that you hadn't planned on. Update Magic Builder and make sure that you have everything accounted for.

Building Magic
Go back to the shadow

Magic is a wonderful tool to add something exciting and special to any story. But magic for magics sake is not as interesting as magic that supports a world. Magic can be thought of in two major categories: Rules and History.

The challenge isn't making the magic believable, but rather **making it unique**. The things you can do with magic, what magic looks like, where it comes from, all can easily fall into areas of cliche, which makes out-of-the-box thinking important. Sometimes taking a twist on an old form of magic can push you in the right direction. Sometimes the limits and rules you put on a magic system make a simple magic system feel complex. The deeper you go, the better the magic will feel. The more detailed you go, the more semantics you find, the more interesting your magic will be.

Magic Rules

This is where you will define what magic is and what makes it what it is. A major part of defining what magic can do is what magic can't do. The limits of magic are what highlight the possibilities of magic. The minutia of what magic's limitations are, how it manifests, and what magic is, helps define and influence the world surrounding magic. It is important to remember that magic is a *system*, meaning there is more to it than a single aspect.

Magic is called

This is what people call magic. If it has multiple names then this is where you put them. Naming magic can be influenced by the language of the world, or what it does. For example you can name magic "Frosting" if the magic is uses snow and ice to "Frost" things. Or it could be called Fijor, if the magic is for a race of people that speak a slightly Swedish sounding language.

What is Magic

This is a description of the manifestation of magic. For example, Magic can be the ability to control fire, or the ability to travel through time.

What is Magic based on?

This is a description of what magic is centered around or the 'Magic Base'. The magic base is the core nature of what magic is. Examples are, time travel, flying, manipulation of gravity, the ability to read peoples minds, rage, energy, imagination, etc… The Magic Base is the center of your magic and it will determine what your magic can and cannot do. Magic based on gravity won't be able to get inside peoples heads, but it can make someone fly.

Often you see magic being based off of elemental ideas such as earth, wind, fire, and water. It can also be more focused like the ability to control plasma, or levitation. Magic can be based on the physical, spiritual, and mental planes as well.

How does magic work?

This is the process of using magic. Whether it's a spell with words, or a type of mental focus, or a physical foci, how magic works and what people must do to use magic is important. Magic typically has an **energy source**, a **channel** to draw and shape that energy, a **trigger** to activate that channeled energy, and a **result** of that activated energy.

ENERGY: This is the source of power.
CHANNEL: This is the vessel that the source of power is collected into and/or distributed from.
TRIGGER: This is the action that activates the use of collected source of power.
RESULT: This is the effect/s of the activated collection of power.

For Example: The Energy Source may by dreams, the Channel may be a magic book, the Trigger may be someone reading the book, and the Result may be a dragon is born.

What are the limits/costs of Magic

Everything in life has a limit and a cost. Knowing the limits of how magic works goes a long way to making magic feel real. Unlimited power for a common person makes for a less interesting world, unless that power is checked by something else. (Superman has unlimited god-like powers except for when touched by kryptonite, or away from the sun, or on his home planet.) Limits create vulnerability and creativity in the use and counter use of magic.

The cost of magic is what happens when the limits of magic are pushed. (If Superman goes to far away from the sun or touches kryptonite he loses his power.) The cost of magic can be physical, mental, psychological, or even social.

Magical Consequences

Magic, like every action, has a consequence. The consequence is typically directly related to the limits or costs. Exploring the consequences, be they physical, mental, spiritual, social, etc… completes the boundaries of your magic system. (Superman's consequences are typically social, as villains like to test him, or governments distrust him.)

Types of Magic

Magic, when defined by it's abilities and it's limits, develops variations. Even subtle differences can change something drastically, or enough that a new practice of magic can be developed. The different variations, however drastic, still need to be based off of the same source of magic, otherwise you are creating a new magic system.

For Example: Let's say you have magic based off of imagination. The Source is dreams, the Channel is a book, the Trigger is someone reading from the book and the result is a baby dragon. Let's now add a limit that there is only one book, and the cost of reading from it is you will never sleep again. A variation could be if someone copies the words from the book and makes their own. Now instead of dragons you might get hippogriffs. The copy of the dream book is a variation on the original magic.

In addition, with all the same rules in effect, if someone has memorized the book, then maybe they can control all the dragons.

In each example the magic still functions the same way, with slight variations which can be used in different ways.

Magic History

The history of magic is important as it gives a life to the magic you create. This is where you develop all the aspects of how magic came to be where it is at, from beginning to end. The more you know about how long magic has been around and the major events surrounding it, the more depth your magic will have, and the more believable it will be.

How did Magic begin

This is the origin of the magic within the world and how it came to be. Did it come from a god, an event, a mad scientist, etc…? Or is it natural, and has always been here? Even if you never tell the audience, the history of magic will influence the world around it.

What are the major historical events?

What are some of the major moments in the history of magic? This can be the history of great practitioners, cataclysmic events that involve or affected magic and/or it's users. This could also be major events in the world that greatly influence the path of magic.

Who can use Magic

Magic is either inherent (born with it), developed (experiments), inherited (cursed) or learned (magic school). Knowing the qualifications of magic allow you to create class systems or mythologies surrounding magic users. People born with magic may be revered or reviled. People who develop magic may be mad scientists or brilliant doctors. People who happen upon magic may be cursed or blessed. People who learn magic may be entitled or outcast.

Why can they use Magic

Once you know who can use magic then it's important to know why they can use magic. The who and the why are often woven together, but separating them out so you can understand each aspect individually can unearth tiny details that can add complexity to your magic system and your story.

Who knows about Magic

This is how common magic is to the world. If everyone knows about magic because everyone can use it, then that colors your world differently than if only a few people know about it. Deciding how wide spread the knowledge of magic is can greatly influence your story and world.

Why do they know about Magic

Once you know who knows about magic it's important to know why they know about magic. Is it because magic is on open display throughout the world, or is it because it's whispered in the dark alleys in the night? The reason why people know about magic is just as important as who knows about magic.

What is the culture created by Magic

The fact that magic exists or existed creates a type lore and presence within a culture. It may effect the setting, culture, and society in varying degrees. Understanding how the people of the world have adapted to magic will create a tone that permeates throughout your story.

Is magic governed

Whether it's self regulated, or there is a system of rule within the magical world, it is important to know if, how and why magic is regulated. Are magic users ungoverned and free to do as they please? Is there a set of laws magic users must follow? Is there a policing force to stop disobedient magic users? Do magic users rule all? Knowing how magic is governed changes the landscape of your world and story.

How to use Magic
Abra Kadabrah

     Creating a magic system is one thing, but using a magic system is something else. There are a few different ways to use magic within a story. But before you decide how you want to use your magic, you have to know what your story is about. If you have a story about a boy falling in love with a girl and that's it, then you might not need to explain how complex your magic system is. Unless the girl hates magic and thinks it's evil and he has to show her how magic is a good thing. Knowing the story will inform you how to use your magic system.

A world of Magic

     If the story you are writing uses magic as a major plot element, then you are creating a world OF magic. Magic is essential to your plot, your characters, and the whole story in general. In a world of magic, you are relying on your magic system to provide unique situations for your characters to navigate through. Magic gets them both in and out of trouble, and the more they learn about magic the more the plot develops. In a world of Magic you are constantly showing the audience either the rules of magic, the history of magic, or both. You want the audience to understand the magic system so that they are just as compelled in the development of the magic system as they are in the development of the characters and plot.

     A world of magic is a painting where the characters are all wielding magic.

A world with Magic

     If the story you are writing uses magic as a background element, then you are creating a world WITH magic. Magic is not essential to your plot. Magic is apart of the world around the characters and in this case, it is used to help color the world. In a world of magic you may hint at the rules and history of magic, but it never takes the center stage. The story, the plot, and the characters all take priority. It isn't as important to the audience if they understand how the magic works and the magic never distracts from the main story.

A world with magic is a painting with your characters in the center with magic hidden everywhere in the back ground.

Magic Advice

  When creating your magic, have an idea of the story that it's going to be in. If you know the world, then that will always help guide you in magic's creation. And don't limit yourself in thinking magic has to be used for violence. Magic can be subtle, and it can be big. It can be created when someone cries, or dies, or during a certain time of year.

  If you feel like you are creating a magic system that already exists, but you like it anyways, then change some of the limits and rules. Build a history around your magic that informs your magic, and let your magic influence the technology of the world.

  Once you start writing your story with the magic system attached, make sure you follow the rules. If at any point you don't the audience will catch it, and either discredit the magic in its entirety, or they will think that something deeper is happening. If that isn't your intent, then stick to the rules you've created, and see how the characters respond when the magic is tested to the limits.