

Comprehensive Guide to Linguistic Patterns

Signaling “Special Abilities”

This document presents an **exhaustive, domain-independent reference** for identifying linguistic, semantic, contextual, and narrative patterns that signal the presence of a *special ability, skill, power, magical technique, supernatural talent*, or any comparable capability in text. It is organized into clear sections with detailed examples, serving as a blueprint for constructing an **ABILITY** entity-extraction layer in NLP. The guide covers everything from ability taxonomies and trigger phrases to genre-specific tropes and extraction-ready patterns.

1. Full Taxonomy of Ability Types

Special abilities in fiction (and sometimes in real-world descriptions or myth) can be categorized in various ways. Below is a full taxonomy breaking down ability types into logical categories. Each category includes a description and **dozens of examples** of abilities that fall under it.

Innate Abilities

These are abilities that a character possesses *naturally* or from birth, without needing to learn or acquire them. They often derive from the character’s species, lineage, or inherent nature. Such powers are considered “built-in” traits (sometimes due to non-human status or hybrid heritage). For example, in many comics and myths, certain beings inherently have powers simply by what they are (aliens, gods, demons, etc.) ¹. Some characters even have **innate knowledge or skills** that others would normally have to learn (a phenomenon sometimes called *innate capability* ²).

- *Inhuman nature examples*: A dragon’s ability to breathe fire from birth; a vampire’s natural immortality and night vision; an alien species (e.g. Kryptonians like Superman) being inherently super-strong under Earth’s sun ¹; a demigod’s divine strength.
- *Racial/lineage gifts*: Elves being innately able to perceive auras; a character “born with the Sight” (clairvoyance from birth); a bloodline of psychics with telepathy in their DNA.
- *Natural physical gifts*: A mutant child who can **see in total darkness** without training; a merfolk who can **breathe underwater** naturally; a winged humanoid who **flies by instinct**.
- *Innate magical affinity*: A sorcerer’s *wild magic* they channel intuitively since childhood; a fairy inherently able to perform glamour (illusions) without study.
- *Examples of innate abilities*: **Superhuman strength** from an alien physiology (no training needed to lift cars or boulders), **bulletproof skin** as a genetic mutation, **eyes that see infrared** naturally, **talking to animals** as a birth-given gift, **regeneration/healing factor** present from infancy, **psychic empathy** (feeling others’ emotions innately), **inborn shapeshifting** (a changeling child who instinctively changes form).

Learned Skills

Learned abilities are those acquired through training, practice, or study rather than by birth. These could be **mundane skills** (master swordsmanship, expert marksmanship) or **extraordinary skills that border on supernatural** (ancient martial arts techniques that grant immense power, learned magic spells, etc.). In fiction, characters often undergo training arcs to gain such powers.

- *Martial arts & chi techniques:* Through intense training, characters harness inner energy (chi/qi) to achieve superhuman feats ³ – e.g. a monk learns to **punch through stone** after years of discipline; a fighter's meditation unlocks the ability to **slow their heartbeat and resist poison**. (Many martial arts narratives feature **chi mastery** that grants strength, speed, and even elemental attacks ³.)
- *Wizardry & sorcery:* Unlike innate sorcerers, wizards learn magic through study. A mage spends years poring over grimoires to cast spells (fireballs, teleportation, etc.); a witch apprentice learns rituals and incantations to gain magical effects. *Magical techniques* are often treated as learnable skills in fantasy worlds ⁴.
- *Scientific/tech abilities:* A scientist may *develop* an ability via experimentation (e.g. learning to interface with technology telepathically through a neural implant – a form of **technopathy** – which might blur the line between learned and innate ⁵). A hacker "ability" to manipulate virtual systems could be learned.
- *Examples of learned extraordinary skills:* Mastering a **sword technique** that can cut even steel (through secret training), learning the **"Fireball" spell** from an arcane tutor, acquiring the **ability to astral project** via meditation practice, a telepath honing their mind-reading through exercises, a superhero developing combat skills in a training simulator, an alchemist learning to transmute metals after studying forbidden texts.

Supernatural Powers

This category covers any abilities that are mystical or otherworldly in origin. They might overlap with innate or learned, but "supernatural powers" implies powers beyond scientific explanation, often granted by or connected to mystical forces, deities, or the occult. These can be innate (e.g. a demon's powers) or bestowed/learned (via magic).

- *Divine or demonic powers:* A character might be granted powers by a god or devil – e.g. a warlock makes a pact for **demonic shadow magic**, a cleric is blessed by a deity with **healing hands**, a cursed amulet gives its wearer **necromantic powers**.
- *Ghosts and spirits:* The abilities of supernatural creatures like ghosts (e.g. **intangibility, possessing the living**), mediums who communicate with spirits, or shamans calling on spirit animals.
- *General supernatural:* Telekinesis, telepathy, elemental manipulation, etc., when not explained scientifically, fall here. For instance, **telekinesis** might be described as a paranormal gift (e.g. "psychic" powers, ESP).
- *Overlap with "magical":* Often "supernatural" and "magical" are used interchangeably. For example, **magical powers** in fiction are the ability to wield forces beyond the natural law ⁴. A wizard casting spells or a mutant with psychic powers might both be called supernatural if the narrative frames it as beyond normal nature.
- *Examples:* **Exorcism abilities** (casting out demons), **talking to ghosts**, **evil eye** (cursing someone by gaze), **blessing of protection** that turns away harm, **poltergeist telekinesis** (objects moving with no visible cause), **supernatural luck** (probability manipulation by fate).

Magical Techniques

Magical techniques are specific *methods* or *spells* used to achieve supernatural effects. They are typically learned or invoked deliberately (through words, gestures, or rituals). This category emphasizes the *structured, often ritualistic nature* of some powers.

- *Spells and incantations*: For example, an incantation that **conjures fire** or a spell circle drawn on the ground to **summon a spirit**. Each spell is a “technique” – e.g. the *Fireball Technique*, *Teleportation Circle*, or *Shielding Charm*.
- *Ritual magic*: Abilities that require multi-step rituals (drawing sigils, offering sacrifices). E.g., a **resurrection ritual** that brings someone back at a cost, a **binding ceremony** to seal a demon.
- *Combat magic techniques*: Named moves like “*Lightning Strike*” or “*Ice Spear*” which are cast like techniques in battle.
- *Magical martial arts*: In some genres (like wuxia or fantasy), magic and combat blend – e.g. *sorcerous sword techniques* that create energy waves, or *element-bending forms* (as in some anime) – these are techniques one practices.
- *Examples*: The “**Teleportation Spell**” taught at a magic academy, **Enchantment** spells to imbue objects with power, **herbal potions** that produce invisibility, a druid’s **weather-working ritual** (rain dance), a necromancer’s **soul-binding technique**, *healing spells*, *shield charms*, *glamour* (illusion) spells, etc.

Combat Techniques

These are special abilities or skills used in physical combat, often having fanciful names or extraordinary effects. They may be purely physical or channel some energy. They are often learned (through training or lineage).

- *Martial arts secret moves*: e.g. “**Dragon Strike Fist**” – a punch so powerful it creates a shockwave; “**Shadowless Kick**” – too fast to see; “**Seven-Step Palm**” – a death touch technique that kills in seven steps. Many martial arts fiction works enumerate special named attacks.
- *Weapon techniques*: For instance, a swordsman’s “**Lightning Draw**” that unsheathes and strikes faster than a blink, or an archer’s ability to **shoot multiple arrows with one draw**. Samurai epics might mention moves like “*Nine Cuts in One Breath*”.
- *Assassin/stealth skills*: **Pressure point strikes** (temporarily paralyze or kill with a touch), **silent movement** (moving so no one can hear at all, seemingly impossible stealth), throwing weapons with uncanny accuracy (bending around obstacles).
- *Superhuman combat moves*: A boxer who can punch with the force of a cannon, a gunfighter with *impossible quick-draw speed*, a fencer whose blade literally ignites from the speed of thrusts.
- *Examples*: The “**One-Inch Punch**” (delivering tremendous force over an inch of distance), **Dim Mak** (the legendary “death touch”), **Whirlwind Kick** (spinning kick generating a small tornado), **Eagle Claw Grip** (hand technique to grip with superhuman strength), **Sword Beam** (swinging a sword releases an energy wave), **Meteor Strike** (leaping and smashing down with enough force to crater the ground).

Mental Powers

Abilities that function on the mental or cognitive level. These include psychic abilities and superhuman intellectual or perceptual skills. They might be innate (e.g. born a telepath) or learned (through mental training or enhancement).

- *Telepathy and mind-reading*: The ability to **read others' thoughts** or **send one's thoughts** telepathically. E.g. a telepathic mutant who can hear everyone's inner voice in a radius.
- *Mind control/domination*: For instance, **hypnotic gaze** or psychic domination that compels others to obey. A strong-willed telepath forces thoughts into another's mind to control their actions.
- *Empathy and emotion control*: **Empathic** characters who sense emotions, or project emotions (make others calm, afraid, etc.).
- *Psychic sensing*: **Clairvoyance** (seeing distant places), **Precognition** (seeing the future), **Retrocognition** (seeing the past), **Mediumship** (communicating with spirits). Often described as "the Sight" or ESP.
- *Superhuman intelligence or knowledge*: e.g. **Omnilinguism** (understanding any language instantly) ⁶, **superhuman calculation** ability (like mentally performing impossibly complex math in seconds), photographic memory to a supernatural degree (never forgetting anything, "eidetic memory" on steroids).
- *Examples*: **Astral projection** (projecting one's mind or spirit out of the body), **psychokinesis/telekinesis** (often considered mental power to move objects by thought), **remote viewing** (psychically seeing a far location), **psychometry** (touch an object and sense its history), **mental illusions** (making people see things that aren't there by mental suggestion), **hyperintuition** (just "knowing" things beyond normal logic).

Enhanced Physical Capabilities

These are abilities that represent *amplified versions of normal human physical traits*. They exceed normal limits in strength, speed, durability, etc. Characters with these might be called *superhuman* or *augmented*. Such enhancements can be innate (born with it), bestowed (e.g. via a serum or magic), or achieved (cyborg implants, training to peak beyond normal).

- **Superhuman strength**: The classic "able to lift a car" or even more (tank, building). This is a common power in superheroes and monsters. *Definition*: the ability to have physical strength far beyond a normal human's capacity ⁷. (*Example: a character punching through a concrete wall or lifting 10 tons.*)
- **Superhuman speed**: Moving/running extremely fast (faster than any human, sometimes faster than cars, sound, or even light). E.g. a speedster who can run around the world in seconds.
- **Superhuman agility/reflexes**: Jumping incredible heights, acrobatic moves that defy gravity, dodging bullets after they've been fired. Reflexes so quick that time appears slowed to them ⁸ ("faster-than-the-eye" movements).
- **Superhuman durability**: Having an unusually high resistance to damage ⁹ ⁸. This ranges from bulletproof skin, to bones that don't break, to just not feeling pain like a normal person. (Could be called invulnerability if extreme.)
- **Regeneration/healing factor**: The body can heal injuries at an accelerated rate (from cuts healing in seconds, to limbs regrowing over days). Some characters regenerate so fast they're effectively immortal unless completely destroyed.

- **Enhanced senses:** While technically physical and sensory, it fits here – e.g. **superhuman vision** (seeing farther or with more spectrum than normal) ¹⁰, **night vision**, **super-hearing** (hear a whisper miles away), **keen smell tracking** (like a bloodhound or better).
- **Stamina/endurance:** Able to exert oneself far longer than normal (run for days without tire, hold breath for hours, survive extreme environments like arctic cold or high radiation due to a tough constitution).
- **Examples:** A hero who **can lift 50 times their body weight**, a mutant who **never gets sick and is immune to toxins**, an experiment that made a soldier's muscles and bones incredibly dense (giving durability and strength), a character with **eyesight like a hawk** (can see details from a mile away), a ninja with **hearing so acute** they detect a heartbeat through a wall, someone who **runs at Mach 2**, or a child who **feels no pain** (inexplicably, to a supernatural degree).

Transformation Abilities

These abilities involve *changing form or state*. Transformation can be of the self or others, partial or complete. They often come with a new set of powers or alter the character's abilities while transformed.

- **Shapeshifting (self-transformation):** The ability to alter one's own body shape or identity ¹¹. This includes **animal morphing** (turning into animals or hybrid forms), **inorganic transformation** (turning into stone, metal, etc.), **size shifting** (growing giant or shrinking tiny), **liquification** (becoming liquid), **sublimation** (becoming gas or mist) ¹². *Example:* a werewolf can transform from human to wolf (and back), a metamorph can mimic other people's appearances.
- **External transformation (transfiguration):** Ability to transform *other* objects or beings. E.g. a witch turns a prince into a frog, Midas's touch turns things to gold, a Medusa turns onlookers to stone. This is sometimes called **transmutation** (altering matter's form) ¹³.
- **Partial transformations:** Manifesting claws, wings, or other changes without full shape change. For instance, a character who can sprout dragon scales for defense, or turn their skin to steel (partial inorganic transformation).
- **Transformation as power-up:** In many genres (especially anime/games), a character might have a special "transformed state" (like going "Super Saiyan", or activating a *demonic form*) that temporarily boosts abilities. This is an **ability to enter a new form**. It often requires a trigger (anger, a magic word, etc.) and comes with dramatic power increases.
- **Fusion or merging:** Two beings merging into one stronger entity (common in some sci-fi or superhero stories). *Example:* an alien symbiote fusing with a host to create a powerful combined form. (This is a form of transformation ability: *fusion dance* style or literal absorption.)
- **Examples:** **Were-creature transformations** (werewolf, werebear, etc.), **vampiric transformations** (turning into mist or a bat), a wizard turning into a dragon, a hero activating "**Titan Mode**" to become a giant version of themselves, a cursed belt that transforms whoever wears it into a monster, a mage using transfiguration magic to turn arrows into snakes mid-flight.

Elemental Manipulation Powers

These abilities involve controlling, creating, or becoming elements of nature. Elemental powers are a staple in fantasy and superhero settings. Often characters are described as *Elementals* or mages of a certain element. Each element type yields a range of abilities.

- **Fire Manipulation (Pyrokinesis):** The ability to create, control, or extinguish fire. Examples: a pyrokinetic who conjures flames in their palms, a firebender who throws fireballs or surrounds

themselves in fire. Can include heat manipulation more broadly. (E.g. *Firestarter* ability to ignite objects.)

- **Water Manipulation (Hydrokinesis):** Controlling water in all forms. E.g. a water mage who makes water levitate and shape into tendrils, or even control ice (often water/ice are same domain or closely linked). Could include breathing underwater or creating water out of moisture in the air.
- **Earth Manipulation (Geokinesis):** Control over earth, rock, soil, metal (sometimes metal is separate but often earth encompasses it). An earth-controller can cause earthquakes, make rock walls rise from the ground, or even metal-bend. Sand manipulation falls here too. (*Toph from Avatar controlling earth is a classic example.*)
- **Air/Wind Manipulation (Aerokinesis):** The ability to generate or direct air currents and wind ¹⁴. A character might summon gusts, create tornadoes, or even remove air from a space (suffocate target). Flying can be achieved via wind for some.
- **Weather Control (Atmokinesis):** A combination of elements – controlling weather patterns ¹⁵. For example, a storm-bringer who can call thunderstorms, rain, lightning, wind all together (e.g. Storm from X-Men). This often implies high-level elemental power (multiple elements).
- **Ice/Cold Manipulation (Cryokinesis):** Often a subset of water or weather: generating ice, lowering temperature, forming frost and snow at will ¹⁶. E.g. freezing objects or encasing enemies in ice.
- **Electricity/Lightning Manipulation (Electrokinesis):** Generating and controlling electrical energy or lightning bolts ¹⁷. A character might shoot lightning from their hands, or absorb electricity from power lines.
- **Plant Manipulation (Chlorokinesis):** Control over plant life – making vines grow rapidly, commanding trees, causing flowers to bloom or wither ¹⁸. (Often druids or nature spirits have this.)
- **Light and Darkness:** Some characters manipulate **light** (lasers, illumination, holograms) ¹⁹ or **shadow/darkness** (concealing areas in darkness, solidifying shadows) ²⁰. These can be considered elemental in a broader metaphysical sense (light spectrum, dark energy).
- **Combined elements or exotic ones:** Lava (fire+earth), Storm (air+water+electric), etc. Also **metal** (sometimes explicitly controlled), **sound** (sonic powers, controlling sound waves), **gravity** (gravity can be seen as elemental control of a fundamental force) ²¹, **radiation** (like X-ray or nuclear energy manipulation) ²².
- **Examples:** A **fire mage** conjuring a pillar of flame; an **ice sorceress** freezing a lake solid; a **stormcaller** summoning a lightning strike; an **earthbender** creating a protective wall of stone; a **wind runner** riding on a flying gust; a **plant whisperer** causing giant vines to entangle foes; a **shadow user** who envelopes an area in darkness at noon; a **light manipulator** bending lasers around herself to become invisible.

Abstract or Metaphysical Abilities

These are powers dealing with abstract concepts, fundamental forces, or metaphysical phenomena that don't fit neatly into physical categories. They often appear extremely "high-level" or reality-defying in fiction.

- **Reality Warping:** The ability to alter reality itself on a broad scale ²³. A reality-warper can make the impossible happen just by will: e.g. rewrite the laws of physics locally, conjure anything they imagine, erase people from existence by thought. (*This is one of the most extreme types of power.*)
- **Space-Time Manipulation:** Controlling space and/or time. Examples: **Time manipulation** (stop, slow, or accelerate time; time travel falls here too) ²⁴. **Spatial manipulation** – creating portals, warping space (bending distance so that two points are closer), teleporting objects or people (teleportation is essentially spatial manipulation).

- **Dimensional Manipulation:** Accessing or affecting other dimensions or planes of existence. For example, opening portals to other universes, banishing someone to a pocket dimension, phasing between dimensions (which might be how teleportation or intangibility works in some lore).
- **Probability Manipulation (Luck control):** The power to make unlikely things happen or likely things not happen ²⁵. Essentially controlling luck/fate. For instance, a character causes every coin flip to land heads, or an enemy's gun to jam at the worst time. (Domino from Marvel has this kind of luck ability.)
- **Causality Manipulation:** Even more abstract – the ability to control cause and effect. This is rare in narrative because it's complex (basically god-like powers, e.g. saying “no cause for this effect” and something happens spontaneously).
- **Conceptual Manipulation:** Controlling or embodying concepts like death, fear, love, etc. E.g. a personification of Death that can decide when beings die (Discworld's Death, for instance), or someone who literally manipulates the concept of “distance” to always be near or far as they please.
- **Metaphysical states:** **Astral projection** (mentioned in mental, but it's metaphysical too – separating soul from body), **possession** (one consciousness taking over another's body – crossing spiritual boundaries), **energy absorption** (absorbing various forms of energy – kinetic, magical, etc. – and converting or nullifying them).
- **Existence Erasure or Creation:** The ability to *unmake* something from existence (erase it completely) or conversely create matter/energy from nothing (true creation power). These are godlike abilities in fiction.
- **Examples:** A villain clicks his fingers and **reality shifts** (houses turn to sand, day to night) – classic reality warp. A time-controller **freezes time** to stroll through a battlefield of statues. A **teleporter** opens a glowing portal door to instantly travel across the world (space manipulation). A character with **absolute luck** who always improbably survives danger (probability bent in their favor). A **chronomancer** reversing an object's destruction (time rewind). A hero drawing strength from the **belief of people** (some metaphysical source like faith or hope as energy). A **dreamwalker** who enters dreams (blurring line between reality and dream realm). A being who **cannot be remembered** by anyone (a bizarre metaphysical “anti-memetic” trait).

Passive vs Active Abilities

This classification describes **how an ability operates** rather than what it affects. Many games and systems use these terms, but they apply generally:

- **Active abilities** are powers or skills that a character *consciously activates or uses*. They typically require an action, command, or trigger by the user. For example, throwing a fireball, turning invisible, or teleporting are active – the character chooses when to do it. Active abilities often have an observable initiation: a spell cast, a button pressed, a shout, etc. (*In game terms, an active ability might be a skill you click to use.*) They usually can only be used a certain number of times or under certain conditions because they are *not always on*. **Example:** Telepathy can be active if a telepath must focus to read minds; they “activate” the mind-reading.
- **Passive abilities** are powers that are *always in effect* (or at least do not require a deliberate action to maintain). They provide constant benefits or traits without conscious activation. For instance, a character with unbreakable bones has that ability passively – they don't need to think “activate unbreakable mode”; it's just always true. Other examples: a continual aura that boosts allies, a permanent immunity to fire, a supernatural charm that always makes people trust the character.

Passive abilities can sometimes be toggled on/off, but generally they are inherent or automatic. (*In game terms, passive abilities are often “always on” bonuses or traits.*)

In summary: “Active ability” = the character **uses** it explicitly; “Passive ability” = it **just is** or auto-triggers. As one game design document puts it: an active ability is **used against a target** to produce an effect, while a passive ability **provides an effect without being actively used** ²⁶. In practice, some abilities blur lines (e.g. a passive that triggers under conditions might feel “active” at that moment, but generally it’s classified as passive if the user isn’t consciously invoking it every time).

- *Active ability examples:* casting a spell, **invisibility cloak** activation (turn on/off invisibility), **flying** (if it’s something the hero must will to do), **teleportation**, **healing someone by laying hands** (you have to decide to do it), **shape-shifting** (you choose when to change).
- *Passive ability examples:* **Invulnerability to bullets** (you don’t “activate” it; bullets just bounce off), **night vision** (always see in dark), **regeneration** that constantly heals minor injuries, **danger sense** that automatically alerts the character to threats (like Spider-Man’s “spider-sense” – it’s passive, he doesn’t turn it on; it just tingles when danger is near), a magical **aura of fear** that causes enemies to feel dread when near (the character isn’t actively doing anything each moment – it’s an ever-present field).
- *Active vs Passive in context:* In RPG terms, “Active Ability can be used once per battle while the Passive Ability provides its effect without the player using it (though some require specific actions to trigger)” ²⁷. So a **passive** might still *trigger* on a condition (e.g. “when hit, automatically heal 10%” – the character didn’t press a button, it just happened), whereas **active** you intentionally invoke (“press X to heal now”). This concept carries to narratives: sometimes a character’s passive power only shows up in response to something (like automatically, reflexively).

Triggered vs Constant Abilities

This is closely related to active/passive, but worth distinguishing. It describes whether an ability is **always on (constant)** or only happens when certain **conditions/triggers** are met.

- **Constant abilities** are effectively *always in effect*. This often overlaps with passive abilities. If a character’s power is constant, there is no moment when it’s “off.” For example, a character who is permanently invisible (perhaps a curse that they can’t turn off) – that invisibility is constant. Or a character with an **ongoing curse** that causes misfortune around them continuously. Constant abilities can also be things like an *ever-present force-field* or *ongoing magical effect*. In narrative, constant abilities might be part of the status quo of the character (“he is and has always been immune to fire, 24/7”).
- **Triggered abilities** activate only under certain circumstances or triggers. The trigger could be user-controlled (the character decides to activate, which makes it similar to active ability), or it could be automatic in response to an event (which is more like a conditional passive). Essentially, *triggered* means there is some condition or event that causes the power to manifest. Many abilities in fiction are triggered by emotional states, environment, time of day, etc., rather than being freely controllable.
- *Examples of triggers:* **Emotional state** – e.g. the classic: when the character gets angry, their latent super-strength triggers (think Hulk: anger triggers transformation). **Environmental** – e.g. a

werewolf's transformation is triggered only at the full moon (not constant; only at that time). **Item-based** – a power that works only when holding a certain artifact (“wielding the Sword of X triggers the warrior’s berserker strength”). **Conditional** – “only in the presence of fire does his phoenix power awaken,” or “she can only talk to spirits at night.”

- *Examples of triggered vs constant:* A **vampire's powers** (strength, immortality) are constant *except* maybe they're diminished in sunlight – but they always have them at night, no trigger needed besides time. On the other hand, a **hero who can only turn invisible when scared** has a triggered ability (trigger = feeling fear causes involuntary invisibility). Another: a **healing factor** might be constant (slowly healing all the time), but **healing burst** might trigger *only when the character is near death*, suddenly regenerating them (trigger = mortal danger).
- **Internal vs External triggers:** Sometimes the trigger is internal (an emotion, a physiological state) versus external (an outside condition like location or someone else's action). Internal trigger example: “heart rate goes above 180 => super strength activates.” External: “when lightning strikes them, they absorb it and become charged up.”

In summary, when designing detection, *phrases that indicate conditions* (“only when...”, “if...then he could...”, “whenever X happens, her Y power manifests”) often signal triggered abilities. Constant abilities might be described with words like “always” (“He was always surrounded by a faint glow” implies a constant protective aura).

Internal vs External Abilities

This categorization differentiates **who or what the ability primarily affects or originates from**.

- **Internal abilities** primarily affect the user's own body or mind (or are wholly contained within the self). These include enhancements and powers that modify oneself. Essentially, the power is *internalized*.
- *Examples:* **Enhanced strength/speed** (it's the character's own body performing beyond normal limits), **shapeshifting one's own form**, **invisibility of self**, **healing factor** (self-healing), **telepathy** (arguably internal mental ability, though it reaches out to others' minds, it originates in the mind), **psychic resilience** (mental shield).
- Internal abilities often read like *traits*: “He has unbreakable bones” – that's an internal trait (his body).
- Phrases indicating internal: “he can *withstand* X” (immunity, resilience), “she can *survive* Y”, “his body can/do X”, “he transforms into...”, “she herself becomes...”.
- **External abilities** affect the outside world or other beings. These powers project outward from the user or manipulate something outside the user's own form.
- *Examples:* **Telekinesis** (moving external objects with mind), **pyrokinesis** (creating fire externally), **healing others**, **flight** (arguably external if one is manipulating gravity or air, though one's body is moving – but it's affecting external force), **teleportation** (affects location in space, environment), **force field generation** (creating a barrier outside one's body), **mind control** (affecting others' minds).

- Essentially any power where energy, matter, or effects emanate outwards. If you conjure a shield around a friend, that's external (affecting something outside yourself).
- Phrases indicating external: "control [element/object]", "project [energy]", "cause [effect]", "make X happen".

Many powers have both internal and external aspects. For instance, **invisibility** could be internal (the character themselves is invisible) but has external effect (others can't see them). **Super strength** is internal (the body's strong) but the effect is external (able to lift things in environment). This classification is mainly useful in understanding descriptions: e.g. "the power *within him*" vs "the power *to manipulate the world around him*."

When scanning text: if the sentence says "He hardened his skin into stone," that's internal (his own skin). If it says "He turned the guard into stone," that's external (affecting someone else).

Single-Action Skills vs Multi-Step Powers

This refers to whether an ability is executed in one discrete action or requires a *sequence of actions/steps* to produce the effect.

- **Single-action skills:** A one-and-done ability use. The character performs a *single action* and the effect happens. Most "fire a lightning bolt" or "teleport now" type powers are single-action. This is basically how instantaneous or straightforward the ability is.
- **Narrative cues:** Often described as a single verb phrase: "He **snapped his fingers** and vanished" – one action (snap) triggers vanish. Or "She **spoke a word** and the door unlocked" – one spoken word did it. The presence of a single trigger like a word, gesture, snap, clap, punch, etc. indicates a single-step power activation.
- These are easier to spot as one sentence often encapsulates the whole use.
- **Multi-step powers:** These require a process – multiple steps, components, or stages – to achieve the final effect. This could be something like **ritual magic** (needing preparation: drawing circles, chanting for an hour, combining ingredients) or a **combination attack** (in martial arts, maybe a 5-hit combo to channel energy into a final blast).
- **Narrative cues:** Descriptions will include *sequences*: "First, she did X, then Y began to happen, and by the end of the ritual, Z occurred." Key phrases like "started to...", "began a chant...", "after ten minutes of meditation...", "required the following steps...". Multi-step might also be implied by mention of **ingredients or preparation**: e.g. "to open the portal, he gathered three enchanted stones and placed them in a triangle, reciting an incantation under his breath." That entire description is the multi-step process leading to the portal opening.
- Another example: in some anime, a character might need to **charge up** an attack (multiple episodes of charging!): the charging phase, then release phase – that's multi-step in time.
- Or a transformation with stages (like needing to absorb energy first, then transform).
- **Single-action vs Multi-step in context:** Think of **casting a quick spell** (like shouting "Expelliarmus!" in Harry Potter – that's single-action, just an incantation) versus **performing a summoning ritual** (drawing runes, lighting candles, chanting for an hour – multi-step). The text for the latter will be

more elaborate and possibly span multiple sentences or paragraphs, whereas the former might be a single sentence or even a clause.

- **Examples: Single-action:** *"With a wave of her hand, the locks sprang open."* / *"He blinked out of existence in an instant."* / *"One punch from her sent the boulder flying."* (All immediate). **Multi-step:** *"Over the next hour, he inscribed a pentagram on the floor, burned sacred herbs, and muttered an ancient prayer; at midnight, a ghostly figure materialized within the circle."* / *"They combined their techniques – first, she struck with fire, then he followed with wind, and together the flames became a blazing tornado."*

Cursed or Negative Abilities

Not all powers are blessings; some are curses or have inherently negative aspects. This category includes abilities that are portrayed as *undesirable*, *harmful*, or *tainted*. They might harm the user or be something the user wishes to rid themselves of.

- **Cursed powers:** Abilities bestowed as a curse – e.g. a character is *forced* to turn into a beast under certain conditions (werewolf curse), or has a *death touch* that they cannot control (everything they touch dies, like King Midas's golden touch – which was effectively a curse). These powers usually cause suffering or have a drawback that makes them a curse. The text might explicitly call it a *curse* ("the curse of the [power]") or imply it through negativity ("afflicted with the ability to see how people die" – useful but traumatizing).
- **Uncontrollable destructive powers:** Some characters have a power that harms those around them involuntarily. For example, a mutant whose body emits radiation that kills living things nearby – they can't turn it off, so it's a negative ability. Phrases like "couldn't control her power which wreaked havoc" or "his power would flare up and injure his friends" signal this.
- **Powers with a price:** Abilities that *consume* something valuable from the user – life force, sanity, etc. E.g. every time a mage casts a spell from a forbidden tome, he loses some of his memories. Or a cursed sword technique that injures the user each time it's used. The ability is "negative" in effect on the user. Narratively: "Using the Black Flame gave him immense power, but it **ate away at his soul** each time."
- **Negative side-effects:** A character can have a powerful ability that comes with side effects that are essentially curses. For instance, precognition (seeing the future) but every vision is painful or drives them mad. Or healing factor but the character constantly feels others' pain.
- **Losing control (cursed with power):** A theme called "*Blessed with Suck*" where the power is great but causes big problems. Text example: "She could hear everyone's thoughts all the time, an overwhelming cacophony she couldn't shut out – a gift that felt like a curse."
- **Examples:** The **werewolf's curse** – *"Under the full moon, he unwillingly transforms into a mindless beast."* / *"The curse of the Gorgon was upon her – she could never look into someone's eyes without turning them to stone."* / *"He was cursed to eternally regenerate – even when he desperately wished for death, his body would knit back together (an immortality he viewed as damnation)."* / *"Whenever anger overcame him, the demon's mark on his arm burned and he lost himself to a violent power."* / *"The healing power in her blood kept her alive, but also prevented her from ever aging or sleeping – an endless waking life."* (Blessing and curse.)

Conditional Abilities

Abilities that only work or appear under specific conditions. Many abilities have already been mentioned with conditions (triggered by something), but here we emphasize explicit conditions like time-based or situational rules stated in text (often using words “only,” “when,” “if,” etc.).

- **Time-based conditions:** e.g. “only at night”, “during a full moon”, “at the stroke of midnight”, “when the stars align”. Classic example: “He only had his powers in the dark; once the sun rose, he became ordinary.” Or “The witch’s magic grows strongest under a full moon and fades at dawn.”
- **Emotional state conditions:** “only when afraid,” “only when enraged,” “only in despair”. Example: “Her telekinesis manifested only when she panicked, objects flying around unintentionally.”
- **Environmental conditions:** “in water,” “in sunlight,” “on sacred ground,” “within his domain,” “when surrounded by flames”. E.g. “The salamander spirit could ignite only when in contact with fire – outside of it, he was powerless.”
- **Item/weapon conditions:** “while wielding the Sword of X,” “as long as she wore the ring,” “after drinking a special potion”. For instance, “He could see the unseen, but only while wearing the enchanted glasses.”
- **Other specific triggers:** could be anything: “only towards men, not women” (an oddly specific curse where a siren’s song affects only men), or “only if the person had true love in their heart” (like some spells only work on the pure of heart).
- Essentially, **look for “only” / “unless” / “if” clauses** in ability descriptions. They explicitly state conditional nature.
- **Examples:** “He can communicate with the dead, but only in his dreams.” / “The golem was invulnerable except when a certain word was spoken.” / “Her strength increased tenfold whenever the constellation of Orion was visible.” / “The cloak granted invisibility, but only to one who has never told a lie.” (a quirky conditional) / “If he hears music, his otherwise dormant powers awaken.” / “She could transform into a mermaid, but only while in water – on land she reverted to human form.”

Each of these categories can overlap; for instance, a power can be an innate, passive, conditional ability (e.g. a demon’s innate fire immunity that only works in hell, say). Authors often mix these attributes to create unique limitations or origins for abilities. The above taxonomy provides a lens for understanding and identifying ability descriptions in text.

2. Linguistic Trigger Structures for Abilities

Certain linguistic patterns and phrasing often indicate that a special ability or power is being described. This section covers **all known trigger structures**: from particular modal verbs and phrases that imply capability, to sentence constructions that explicitly name an ability, to subtle cues in adjectives, reactions, or narrative style. Each trigger pattern is explained with **numerous examples** demonstrating how they signal an ability. These examples are meant to cover a wide variety of formulations one might encounter.

Modal Constructions Indicating Ability

Modal verbs and related constructions in English frequently convey ability or potential. Words like *can*, *could*, and phrases like *able to* directly denote capability. In the context of narrative, when these modals are paired with extraordinary actions, they strongly signal special abilities. Below we enumerate common modal triggers and provide many example sentences for each. (Each example illustrates a character doing something that a normal person ordinarily could not, highlighting the ability.)

1. Using “can” to indicate ability: The modal “can” is the clearest marker of capability in English. It literally means “to be able to.” In grammar guides, *can* is taught as expressing *ability in the present tense* ²⁸ ²⁹ . In narrative, “can” followed by an exceptional action often flags a superhuman skill.

- *He can lift a car with one hand.* – (No normal human can do that; implies super strength.)
- *She can see in complete darkness as if it were day.* – (Suggests night vision or some kind of dark-sight ability.)
- *They can hold their breath for ten minutes without any gear.* – (Implies a biological or supernatural adaptation for not needing air that long.)
- *The warrior can outrun a speeding train.* – (Clearly superhuman speed.)
- *The child can heal from any injury overnight.* – (Rapid healing factor – a power.)
- *My friend can walk through solid walls.* – (Intangibility or phasing ability.)
- *The sorcerer can turn invisible at will.* – (Invisibility power explicitly stated.)
- *The mutant can control fire with his mind.* – (Pyrokinesis, using “can.”)
- *The stranger can read people’s thoughts just by looking at them.* – (Mind-reading ability.)
- *The young girl can fly without any aid or device.* – (Self-propelled flight ability.)
- *The old man can predict the future accurately in his dreams.* – (Precognitive visions.)
- *Our teacher can talk to animals as if conversing with humans.* – (Communicating with animals – a Dr. Dolittle style ability.)
- *The knight can stop time for a few seconds during combat.* – (Time manipulation in bursts.)
- *The assassin can move faster than the eye can follow.* – (“Faster than the eye” is a common phrase for super-speed; the use of *can move faster than perception* indicates a power.)
- *The alien can survive without food or water indefinitely.* – (Doesn’t need sustenance – an alien physiology ability.)
- *The magician can create light out of thin air.* – (Light conjuration ability.)
- *The hero can shatter stone with a single punch.* – (Extreme strength or a special technique.)
- *She can transform into a wolf at will.* – (Werewolf shapeshifting ability, explicitly using *can*.)
- *He can bend metal bars as if they were made of rubber.* – (Super strength or metal-bending power.)
- *The soldier can shrug off bullet wounds without slowing down.* – (Supernatural durability or pain immunity.)
- *The vampire can hear a whisper from miles away.* – (Super hearing ability.)
- *The demon can remain unharmed by fire.* – (Immunity to fire – phrased as “can remain unharmed”).
- *The librarian can remember every detail she sees, even years later.* – (Photographic memory to a superhuman degree.)
- *The shapeshifter can change his face at will.* – (Morphing ability.)
- *The linguist can speak any language instantly upon hearing it once.* – (Instant language acquisition – a “universal translation” ability.)
- *The champion can dodge bullets effortlessly.* – (Superhuman reflexes/speed.)
- *The empath can sense others’ emotions clearly as colors around them.* – (Empathic aura reading ability.)
- *The guardian can see through solid objects with a special gaze.* – (X-ray or penetrating vision ability.)
- *The stormcaller can summon storms out of nowhere.* – (Weather control.)
- *The guardian can turn her skin to steel when threatened.* – (Body transmutation as a defensive ability.)
- *The ghost can phase through solid objects.* – (Intangibility phrased with “can phase through”).

In each of these, the structure “[Subject] can [verb phrase]” is used. The verb phrase is something extraordinary (lift a car, see through walls, etc.), which immediately flags it as an ability. When parsing text, instances of *can* or *cannot* followed by a verb phrase describing an unusual feat are strong indicators of a special ability being described. (Of course, *can* is also used for mundane abilities – “he can drive a car” –

which by itself is not extraordinary. The key is the complement: what action follows *can*? If it's outside normal human capability, then it's an ability context.)

2. Using "could" (past/conditional ability): "Could" is the past tense or conditional form of can. It's often used to describe what someone *was able to do* in the past, or *would be able to do* hypothetically. In narratives, *could* can appear in flashbacks or conditional statements revealing abilities.

- *When he was younger, he could lift a car with one hand just as easily.* – (Past ability – implying perhaps he had powers then or still does.)
- *Back in her prime, she could run faster than sound.* – (Past tense describing an ability; maybe she's reminiscing or lost that power with age.)
- *He wished he could fly away whenever he wanted.* – (Hypothetical/desire, but implies flying is within the realm of possibility for him or others, hinting at a world with such powers.)
- *After the experiment, he found he could move objects with his mind.* – (This is a **common reveal construction**: "found he could..." signals a discovered ability in the past.)
- *As a child, she could talk to spirits that no one else saw.* – (Past ability, possibly still present – often children in stories have latent abilities that adults disbelieve.)
- *No one could see him when he stood in the shadows – he simply disappeared from sight.* – (Using *could* in a descriptive way – implies an ability to vanish in shadows.)
- *In those days, I could heal from any wound in minutes.* – (First-person narrative reflecting on an ability.)
- *She could teleport behind an enemy in the blink of an eye.* – (Either describing a habitual ability in past narrative or a general statement of capability.)
- *He could appear and disappear at will, which made him an effective spy.* – (General statement, using *could* to indicate an ability the person had.)
- *The witch could turn men to stone with a single glance.* – (General ability statement in past-tense style – common in fairytale-like narration.)
- *He could walk through fire without being burned.* – (Describing an ability to resist fire; *could* is used for either past habitual or just narrative style.)
- *She could speak to the dead as easily as talking on a telephone.* – (Ability to communicate with spirits, described with *could*.)
- *They could breathe underwater, thanks to subtle gills behind their ears.* – (Ability with a slight scientific explanation; "could" used to state that capability.)
- *He could not be harmed by ordinary weapons.* – (Here "could not" is used to state invulnerability in a past/conditional sense – often found in fantasy lore descriptions: e.g. "Achilles could not be wounded except by..."). This negative form *could not* or *couldn't* is also a trigger, indicating an *immunity or invulnerability* ability.
- *If she concentrated, she could slow time around her.* – (Conditional *if* structure – suggests she has the ability under certain conditions.)
- *No prison could hold him for long, as he was able to slip through the bars.* – (Using *could* plus "no X could Y him" – implies ability to escape constraints.)
- *I could feel the power inside me, healing my wounds at an unnatural speed.* – (First person, *could feel* implying sensing one's own ability at work.)

In summary, "**could**" often appears in ability contexts either to recount what someone used to be able to do or to frame the ability in a hypothetical/conditional way. It's frequently paired with additional context: "could *always* do something" (habitual ability in the past), or with conditions ("if X, then [subject] could [ability]"). The presence of *could* alone isn't enough (since it can do polite requests or possibilities unrelated to ability), but *could* followed by an **impossible action** is a giveaway.

3. Using “can’t / cannot” (impossibility implying special trait): Interestingly, the **negative** forms *cannot* or *can’t* also signal special abilities, usually by stating that something normally possible is impossible for this character, or vice versa. Often it’s used to express *invulnerability, immunity, or an impossibility being defied*.

- *He can’t be hurt by bullets.* – (Literally stating invulnerability to bullets; signals a power.)
- *She cannot die, no matter what happens to her.* – (Immortality stated via “cannot die.”)
- *They can’t be seen by normal humans.* – (Invisibility or some kind of undetectability to regular people.)
- *A mortal can’t run that fast.* – (Often used as an observer remark: “That’s not possible for a normal person,” implying the person running that fast is beyond normal – hence has an ability.)
- *This can’t be natural.* – (General phrase by onlookers; implies the observed feat defies natural explanation – so it must be a power.)
- *I can’t believe my eyes – he just vanished!* – (“Can’t believe my eyes” is a reaction, but tied to witnessing an impossible event, see Reaction section as well.)
- *He can’t possibly have lifted that boulder alone.* – (Observer disbelief, again using can’t possibly to mark the feat as impossible without special ability.)
- *We shot at the creature, but it couldn’t be killed.* – (Narration implying invulnerability; “couldn’t be killed” signals an immortal or unkillable nature.)
- *This door can’t be opened by any ordinary key – only magic can unlock it.* – (Indicates a magical lock, an object’s ability/immunity to normal methods.)
- *She can’t control her powers when she’s angry.* – (This is explicitly about powers, but shows “can’t” in context of limitation of an ability.)
- *He cannot be stopped by any earthly means.* – (Dramatic way to say he’s essentially unstoppable – implies some invincibility or overwhelming power.)
- *It can’t have just disappeared into thin air!* – (An observer exclamation; “can’t have disappeared” ironically is said when something *did* disappear – implies teleportation or invisibility occurred.)
- *You can’t outrun your own shadow – unless you’re him.* – (Setting up an impossible task and then hinting the character can do it, which shows how special they are.)
- *She cannot be touched by fire or ice.* – (Immunity to extreme temperatures.)
- *He can’t swim – he walks on water instead.* – (Twist on expectations: not being able to swim is normal, but walking on water is the ability – phrased humorously.)
- *Money can’t buy what she has – the gift of true sight.* – (Using “can’t buy” figuratively to highlight a supernatural gift.)

In these examples, *can’t/cannot* is often part of phrases that either 1) *state an immunity/unstoppable trait* (“can’t be hurt,” “cannot be killed”) or 2) *express impossibility that implies a power* (“can’t have disappeared into thin air” suggests something weird like invisibility/teleport happened). They often appear in dialogues or narrative expressions of disbelief. **Detection tip:** Look for “*can’t be X*” or “*cannot Y*” where X/Y is something that normally *could* happen. If the text says a character *cannot* be harmed or cannot do something normal because they do something paranormal instead, it’s highlighting an ability.

4. “Able to” constructions: Using the phrase “**able to [verb]**” is functionally similar to “can,” but often appears in descriptive narrative or formal exposition. It explicitly denotes capability. For ability detection, “able to” preceding an unusual action is a clear sign.

- *He is able to move at the speed of thought.* – (Expresses a flash-like speed ability.)
- *She was able to heal the sick with a touch.* – (Healing touch ability described.)
- *The dragon is able to spit acid that can melt steel.* – (Many bestiary or character descriptions use “able to”. This clearly indicates an ability of the dragon.)

- *They were able to breathe underwater as easily as fish.* – (Underwater breathing ability.)
- *No ordinary human is able to outrun a cheetah, but somehow he was.* – (Comparative; implies he has super-speed since normally no human is able to do that.)
- *The device made him able to see through walls.* – (Technological or granted ability via device, but phrased as “made him able to”.)
- *After the ritual, the mage is able to speak with the forest spirits.* – (Acquired ability phrased in exposition.)
- *The alien species is able to change their skin color at will for camouflage.* – (Natural ability of a species, described scientifically.)
- *She seemed to be able to predict events before they happened.* – (Describing precognition: “seemed to be able to” – that tentative phrasing often used by an observer narrator.)
- *He will be able to regrow his arm if it's cut off, given time.* – (Future tense “will be able to” indicating a known ability of regeneration.)
- *Few are able to withstand the poison of the dark lotus, but he somehow managed.* – (Immunity to poison implied by “withstand poison that few can”.)
- *The psychic was able to pull information from my mind without me saying a word.* – (Mind-reading expressed with “able to pull information”.)
- *Though blind, she is able to perceive her surroundings via echo.* – (Supernatural echo-location ability.)
- *The golem is able to absorb fire and not be harmed.* – (Fire absorption ability.)

The structure here is often “[Subject] is/was able to [do something extraordinary].” It might also appear in subordinate clauses or after seem: “seem to be able to...”. In all cases, like *can*, it directly denotes capability. When the ability is notable, authors use this to clearly state what a character can do (especially in more formal descriptions or narration). For detection, it's straightforward: find “able to” and check the verb that follows – if it's an out-of-the-ordinary action, that's an ability being described.

5. “Manage(s) to” implying difficulty-defying success: The verb **“manage to [verb]”** often implies doing something *despite difficulty or impossibility*. In normal usage, “manage to do X” means X was somewhat challenging. But in ability contexts, you'll often see “manages to” paired with a feat that *should have been impossible*, implying some special skill allowed it.

- *He manages to lift a boulder twice his size, astonishing the spectators.* – (By saying “manages to,” it underplays that it's basically impossible without strength power.)
- *She managed to stay underwater for an hour without scuba gear.* – (Implying she has some ability like amphibious traits or breath-holding superpower.)
- *The novice mage manages to cast a spell well beyond his level by accident.* – (Implies an innate gift or surge of power allowing it.)
- *Despite being blindfolded, he manages to parry every strike in the duel.* – (This hints at a daredevil-like heightened sense or precognition.)
- *The cat manages to speak a few human words when prompted.* – (A talking cat – clearly an ability of the cat; phrased humorously as “manages to speak”.)
- *They managed to fix themselves a cup of tea just by thinking about it.* – (Telekinesis or object summoning, hidden in a whimsical phrasing.)
- *In the chaos, he managed to disappear completely.* – (“Managed to disappear” implies that vanishing is something he intentionally pulled off – likely invisibility or teleportation.)
- *She manages somehow to be in two places at once.* – (“Be in two places at once” is literally impossible, so if someone “manages to” do it, that signals duplication or time manipulation.)

- *The knight managed to deflect the dragon's breath with just his shield.* – (Could be just skill, but if a normal shield deflecting dragon's fire is surprising, might indicate a magic shield or enchanted ability.)
- *He manages to learn the ancient ritual in one night, a process that takes others years.* – (Suggests superhuman intellect or perhaps memory absorption.)
- *Even with a broken leg, she managed to run faster than a horse to warn the village.* – (Points to either adrenaline-fueled super speed or a magical blessing, beyond normal.)
- *The little girl managed to calm the enraged beast with a single word.* – (Could imply a subtle power like animal empathy or magical voice.)
- *Against all odds, the hero manages to survive the fall from the cliff unscathed.* – (Implying some invulnerability or incredible luck – because normally one would die.)

"Manage to" often co-occurs with "somehow" ("managed to somehow do X") as well, reinforcing the improbability. It's a subtle trigger: it might sometimes be just describing a difficult but not supernatural achievement. But if the achievement truly defies logic, "managed to" highlights that. For extraction, consider if the clause after "manage to" describes something physically impossible – if yes, likely an ability enabled that success.

6. The words "somehow" and "impossibly" as clues: These adverbs convey that the action has no explainable means or is seemingly impossible – which strongly hints at some power at play. They often modify the verb or entire clause.

- *He somehow knew exactly what I was thinking.* – (How could he know? Likely telepathy. "Somehow" flags that there's no normal explanation.)
- *She somehow walked through the flames unharmed.* – (Immunity to fire or illusion – "somehow" emphasizes the mystery/power.)
- *They somehow managed to be in two places at once.* – (Again duplication or teleportation; "somehow" + "managed" doubly stresses impossibility.)
- *The door was locked, but he somehow appeared inside the room anyway.* – (Teleportation or phasing through walls; "somehow appeared" means no one saw how – implying an ability.)
- *The wound somehow healed on its own in minutes.* – (Rapid regeneration – the "somehow" indicates it wasn't normal medicine at work.)
- *He moved impossibly fast, a blur to all eyes.* – ("Impossibly fast" directly says his speed defies possibility – a sure sign of super-speed.)
- *Her wounds closed at an impossibly rapid rate, right before our eyes.* – ("Impossibly rapid healing" = accelerated healing ability.)
- *The warrior was impossibly strong – he punched through a solid iron door.* – ("Impossibly strong" is a way of saying "beyond human strength".)
- *The child solved the riddle impossibly, knowing things she had no way to know.* – (This one's a bit odd phrasing, but trying to convey she did something impossible by normal logic, likely via psychic insight.)
- *Impossibly, the shattered sword reformed itself in his hands.* – ("Impossibly" at start of sentence indicates the narrator's emphasis that what happened breaks natural law – pointing to magic.)
- *He dodged the bullet at point-blank range – impossibly, it seemed.* – (Reflexes so high it's labeled impossible.)
- *The old magician somehow hadn't aged in 50 years – an impossibility without sorcery.* – (Combining both words – "somehow hadn't aged" – clearly immortality or longevity power.)

- *The statues impossibly came to life when she sang.* – (Inanimate to animate – obviously magic, “impossibly” underscores it.)
- *His eyes were impossibly blue and glowing in the dark.* – (If taken literally, might hint he’s not human – though this one could be figurative. But glowing eyes often mean some power.)

These words “somehow” and “impossibly” (or phrases like “inexplicably,” “unbelievably,” etc., covered next) are often the author’s or characters’ way of acknowledging “this shouldn’t be possible, yet it happened.” They are red flags for us that a non-obvious mechanism (i.e., a special ability) is involved.

For detection: scanning for words like **“impossibly”**, **“inexplicably”**, **“unbelievably”**, **“miraculously”**, etc., in proximity to an action can identify those actions as likely supernatural. They usually collocate with descriptions of speed, strength, precision, healing, or appearance that defy logic.

7. “Inexplicably” and similar adverbs: Similar to impossibly, **“inexplicably”** means “without explanation.” When something happens inexplicably, it implies a supernatural or otherwise not understood cause.

- *The scar on his arm inexplicably vanished overnight.* – (Healing or reality alteration – no explanation means magic likely.)
- *She found herself inexplicably floating a few inches off the ground.* – (Levitation power manifesting spontaneously.)
- *The door inexplicably unlocked itself when he approached.* – (Could be telekinesis or the door responding to his magic – “itself” with inexplicably personifies an effect with no seen cause.)
- *He recovered from the illness inexplicably quickly, leaving doctors baffled.* – (Accelerated healing described in realistic terms – doctors baffled, it’s beyond normal medicine.)
- *The statue inexplicably began to speak in her presence.* – (Animate statue, clearly magical, “inexplicably” denotes it’s outside normal possibility.)
- *The lights in the house inexplicably flickered whenever she felt upset.* – (Poltergeist or emotional telekinetic effect – linking an emotion to an external effect with no rational cause given.)
- *His wounds inexplicably closed within seconds of being made.* – (Again rapid healing.)
- *The ship inexplicably changed course against the wind, as if guided by an unseen hand.* – (Maybe telekinesis or a ghost steering it.)
- *An unexplained force somehow kept the monster at bay.* – (Using “unexplained” similarly – signals a power or magic barrier.)
- *There was no explanation for how she’d gotten there so fast.* – (This phrasing “no explanation for how...” is akin to saying it must be an ability like teleportation.)
- *The injuries he inflicted healed in an instant, defying explanation.* – (“Defying explanation” is explicitly saying it’s beyond normal – likely regeneration ability.)

Other words in this family include **“unbelievably”** (“He moved unbelievably gracefully – likely enhanced agility or hypnotic movement), **“miraculously”** (which often is used literally for healing: “He miraculously recovered” – implying perhaps literal miracle or healing power), **“without explanation”**, **“unseen”** (like “an unseen force lifted him” – which is basically describing telekinesis without naming it).

Summary of modals and adverbs: Modal verbs *can/could* (and negative forms) and phrases like *able to*, *manage to*, combined with extraordinary action verbs, are prime indicators of abilities. Adverbs like *somehow*, *impossibly*, *inexplicably*, etc., augment these descriptions to emphasize the unnatural aspect. In extraction patterns, one should capture sentences where these modals or adverbs co-occur with verbs or

actions that exceed normal human limits. According to English usage, “can” is specifically taught as a modal of ability ²⁹, so its presence is a direct linguistic signal of capability.

Nominal Ability Constructions

Often, abilities are mentioned in noun form – referring to “an ability,” “power,” “gift,” “talent,” etc., that someone has. These nominal phrases are explicit markers. Here are common patterns and trigger phrases in noun form, each illustrated with examples:

- “[**Possessive**] **ability to...**” – Using the word *ability* itself.

Examples:

- *Everyone was amazed by his ability to bend metal with his mind.* – (States directly he has an ability; “his ability to X” is a dead giveaway phrase.)
- *Rumors spoke of her ability to become invisible under the moonlight.* – (Possessive + ability to + verb describes a power myth.)
- *The report documented their ability to heal rapidly from injuries that would kill others.* – (Formal tone example. “their ability to heal rapidly” spells out a regenerative power.)
- *I fear my ability to read thoughts is more a curse than a blessing.* – (First-person, explicitly naming it an ability to read thoughts.)
- *The mutant revealed his ability to absorb energy from any attack.* – (Direct and explicit.)

- “[**Possessive**] **power [to/of]...**” – Using *power* as noun. Often “power to [verb]” or sometimes “power of [noun phrase]”.

Examples:

- *She struggled to control her power to set objects aflame when angry.* – (“power to set objects aflame” clearly indicates pyrokinesis.)
- *The amulet granted him the power to speak with dragons.* – (Literally says the power to do something magical.)
- *We were in awe of his power to cheat death itself.* – (Power to cheat death = immortality or resurrection ability.)
- *Legends told of a power to stop time that only the Chosen One could wield.* – (A power to stop time – explicitly described.)
- *He feared the power of the curse inside him.* – (“power of the curse” referencing an internal ability, albeit dark.)
- *Her strange power over the weather made her both revered and feared.* – (“power over [something]” is another structure, meaning ability to control that domain – here weather control.)
- *The sorcerer’s power was the power of shapeshifting – he could become anyone.* – (Repetition to define what the power is, sometimes done for emphasis.)

- “[**Gift**] (in the supernatural sense): *Gift* often denotes a special innate ability (as if given by fate).

Examples:

- *They regarded her mystical gift with a mix of awe and fear.* – (“mystical gift” implies an innate magical ability.)
- *He called his telepathy a gift and a curse.* – (Explicitly referring to telepathy as a gift.)

- *Not every generation is born with the Gift of Sight.* – (Capitalizing Gift often happens in fantasy to denote a specific special ability like clairvoyance.)
- *The healer's gift for taking pain away could not be explained by science.* – (“gift for [gerund]” or “gift for healing” etc., indicates ability.)
- *Her music wasn't just talent; it was a gift of magic – she could charm anyone who listened.* – (Using gift to hint her musical ability is literally magical.)

- **“Talent” (unnatural talent):** *Talent* usually means skill, but when modified by words like *unnatural*, *strange*, *unique*, etc., it implies something beyond normal skill.

Examples:

- *He had an unnatural talent for finding water in the desert.* – (Could imply a dowsing or water-sense ability; “unnatural talent” flags it's more than just skill.)
- *Her unique talent for communicating with machines made people suspect she was a technopath.* – (Unique talent for X, likely a power.)
- *There was something uncanny about his talent for mimicry – he didn't just imitate, he became the person.* – (“uncanny talent” suggests shape-shifting or supernatural mimicry.)
- *The child's talent for teleportation manifested before she could even speak.* – (Directly calls it a talent for teleportation – clearly a power.)
- *No mere human could have a talent like that; it bordered on the supernatural.* – (If you see the word talent near “supernatural” or “uncanny,” that collocation is a hint.)

- **“Blessing/curse of...”:** Using *blessing* or *curse* to describe an ability often anthropomorphizes it or ties it to external sources. *Examples:*

- *He bore the curse of lycanthropy – to become a wolf under the full moon.* – (Curse explicitly naming the ability/disease of werewolf transformation.)
- *The blessing of Athena granted her extraordinary wisdom and battle skill.* – (Divine blessing as ability source.)
- *They called his healing hands a blessing, but he suffered each wound's pain himself.* – (Referring to healing power as blessing.)
- *The ring conferred the curse of invisibility – once worn, the bearer would slowly fade from memory as well.* – (Curse phrased ability with twist.)
- *Magic often comes as a double-edged gift – a blessing and a curse at once.* – (Generic, but how authors might philosophically refer to powers.)
- *She lived with the curse of never aging, watching all her loved ones die.* – (Curse described as “never aging” which is essentially immortality framed negatively.)

- **Other noun phrases:**

- **“knack for” / “knack of”** – E.g. *“He had a knack for disappearing whenever trouble arose.”* (Knack usually means a quirky ability – here possibly literal invisibility or teleportation.)
- **“knack”** is a mild word but in context can hint at ability if the action is unusual.

- **“trait” / “ability”** – E.g. *“Invisibility was not a trait any normal man possessed, yet here was one standing unseen – a testament to some unnatural trait or ability.”* (Using synonyms like trait, capacity, capability similarly.)
- **“faculty”** (old-fashioned) – E.g. *“He possessed a strange faculty for seeing events distant in space and time.”* (Faculty meaning ability.)
- **“aptitude”** – Usually means learning ability, but you might see *“arcane aptitude”* meaning natural magical ability.
- **Capitalized descriptors** – Sometimes texts will label a person as “a Telepath” or “an Empath” as a noun, which is indirectly nominalizing their ability. E.g. *“As a Telepath, she heard what others could not.”* The capital suggests it’s almost a title or species, but it’s an ability essentially.

In text, these nominal constructions might appear as part of character introductions or lore exposition. Phrases like **“the ability to...”** ³⁰ are explicitly teaching the reader what the character can do (we often see this in summaries or indices in books, or when a character explains their power to someone). For extraction, catching words like *ability, power, gift, talent, curse*, etc., especially followed by an infinitive “to <verb>” or a descriptive phrase, is key. They almost always signal a discussion about special capabilities.

Adjectival Markers of Abilities

Sometimes an otherwise ordinary verb or action is turned extraordinary by the use of particular adjectives or adverbs that indicate it’s beyond normal. These “ability markers” are words that, when attached to descriptions, imply the action was not normal but *superhuman, supernatural*, or otherwise exceptional.

Key adjectives/adverbs in this category include: **impossible, inhuman, superhuman, supernatural, uncanny, unreal, unnatural, unbelievable, miraculous, extraordinary**, etc. By modifying a noun or verb with these, authors flag the feat as an ability.

Let’s illustrate how these descriptors transform a statement:

- **Impossible:** When used as an adjective before a noun or with “it was impossible” constructs:
 - *“He performed an impossible feat, climbing the sheer glass wall with bare hands.”* – (If described as impossible, clearly a special ability – maybe adhesive wall-crawling like Spider-Man.)
 - *“She dodged every arrow – an impossible display of reflexes.”* – (Emphasizes superhuman speed.)
 - *“With impossible strength, he pushed the truck out of the mud by himself.”* – (“impossible strength” = strength beyond what’s possible, so super strength.)
 - *“The machine moved with impossible precision, as if guided by magic.”* – (Could hint at a precognitive or telekinetic guidance.)
 - *“It was impossible for him to have gotten here so quickly.”* – (Narrative comment implying teleportation or speed ability.)
- As an adverb: *“He moved impossibly fast.”* (We covered in modals: that phrase explicitly signals a speed beyond possibility.)
- **Inhuman / superhuman:** These mean “beyond human.” Often attached to qualities like strength, speed, etc.
 - *“With inhuman strength, he tore the iron gate off its hinges.”* – (Strength not humanly possible.)

- *"She let out an inhuman scream that shattered glass."* – (An ability? Could be a Banshee-like sonic scream; "inhuman" suggests something monstrous or beyond normal.)
- *"His eyes had an inhuman glow in the dark."* – (Likely indicating a supernatural creature or power.)
- *"He reacted with superhuman reflexes, catching the falling vase in mid-air."* – ("superhuman reflexes" directly states reflexes beyond normal human capacity.)
- *"The marathon runner kept superhuman pace, never tiring."* – (Could just be figurative, but often in fiction it's literal – maybe enhanced physiology.)
- *"She possessed inhuman agility, climbing the building like a spider."* – (Comparing to an animal or something, clearly beyond human.)
- **Supernatural:** Implies literally "beyond nature," often used when magic or paranormal is involved.
 - *"He possessed supernatural strength and speed, far greater than any mortal."* – (Straightforward – indicates probably a vampire, deity, or similar.)
 - *"A supernatural glow surrounded the sword, indicating its enchantment."* – (Glow isn't an action, but supernatural as adjective signals magic.)
 - *"There was a supernatural quality to her singing – it literally enchanted those who heard."* – (Using the word to hint at a siren-like ability.)
 - *"The detective had a supernatural knack for finding clues, almost as if guided by the spirits of the dead."* – (The word primes us to think it's more than just skill.)
 - *"Supernatural resilience kept him standing long after any normal man would collapse."* – (saying outright his endurance is supernatural.)
- **Uncanny:** Means strange or mysterious in a way that might be beyond normal. Often collocates with words like ability, accuracy, etc.
 - *"She had an uncanny ability to know when someone was lying."* – (Could be just intuition, but phrased like this, maybe telepathy or empathy.)
 - *"His uncanny aim allowed him to hit every target, even the invisible ones."* – (Uncanny aim suggests maybe some minor precognition or enhanced vision.)
 - *"There was an uncanny light in his eyes whenever he healed someone."* – (Using uncanny to hint at an unexplained effect.)
 - *"By some uncanny instinct, the dog always found its way to her no matter where she was."* – (Might hint at a familiar bond or magical connection.)
- **Unreal / unbelievable:** These explicitly say "not real" or "not believable" – heightening the sense that normal explanation fails.
 - *"He recovered with unreal speed – one moment bleeding, the next completely fine."* – ("unreal speed" = unnatural healing rate.)
 - *"Her precision was unreal – ten bullseyes in a row blindfolded."* – (This might be hyperbole, but in fiction maybe an actual ability like radar sense.)
 - *"The strength he exhibited was unbelievable – literally beyond belief – as he held up the collapsing roof."* – ("unbelievable" hammered to say it defies belief.)

- *"She solved the puzzle with unbelievable ease, as if she'd seen the answer already."* – (Implies perhaps she literally had – maybe precognition or time travel.)
- *"The knight's endurance was unbelievable; after days of battle he still stood."* – (Could be just heroic, but possibly magically enhanced stamina.)
- **Unnatural:** Directly suggests "not according to nature." Commonly used for abilities (especially in older literature).
- *"He possessed an unnatural strength for someone of his size."* – (Implies something is off – probably magical or monstrous source.)
- *"She had an unnatural ability to see events at great distances."* – (Explicit phrasing similar to ability to, with unnatural as a qualifier.)
- *"There was an unnatural glow to the wounds as they healed before our eyes."* – (Could be magical healing.)
- *"The corpse rose with unnatural speed and agility – clearly under some dark magic."* – (Zombies or vampires often described as moving with unnatural speed.)
- *"An unnatural hush fell over the forest whenever she stepped into it."* – (Suggests a magical aura causing animals to quiet – unnatural silence as an effect.)
- **Other similar markers:**
 - **"Beyond (human) + noun":** e.g. *"He had endurance beyond human limits," "speed beyond anything a human could achieve,"* etc.
 - **"Not humanly possible":** *"He did something not humanly possible."* (Directly stating it.)
 - **"More than mortal":** older style, e.g. *"Her beauty was more than mortal – perhaps a glamour."*
 - **"Unprecedented":** *"He displayed unprecedented strength."* (If context implies truly unprecedented, likely ability.)
 - **"Incredible":** literally "not credible" = unbelievable. *"With incredible strength (literally, not credible), he..."* – although "incredible" is often just a strong adjective in common usage, in context with feats it can be literal.
 - **"Mythic" or "Herculean":** sometimes used to imply legendary ability. *"He summoned Herculean strength"* (refers to Hercules, hence super strength).
 - **"preternatural":** meaning beyond normal, often used in literature similarly to supernatural. *"preternatural grace," "preternatural awareness"* etc.

When these adjectives are used, they modify an ability or action noun, or even directly a verb phrase (especially "impossibly" and "uncannily" as adverbs). They serve as neon arrows pointing at "this is not normal."

For extraction, one strategy is to pick up on these adjectives. Phrases like **"inhuman strength", "supernatural ability", "uncanny knack", "impossibly fast"**, etc., are strong signals. They often co-occur with our modal phrases too ("can with inhuman strength" might not collocate directly, but "with inhuman strength, he can...").

In dialogues, onlookers might also say these: *"That was unreal!" "That's not natural."* – those are reaction phrases crossing into the next category (reactions).

Reaction/Observer Clues

One very telling set of patterns comes from **the reactions of other characters (or the narrator) upon witnessing an ability**. People in the story often express disbelief, amazement, or fear when they see something impossible. Their exclamations and questions can indirectly highlight that an ability was just used. These are crucial because they often explicitly label an action as impossible or amazing.

We have compiled a broad list of such reaction phrases. These can range from shocked questions to declarative statements of impossibility, across various tones (frightened, excited, confused, humorous, etc.). Here are **100+ example reaction phrases** one might find after an ability is displayed:

- **Expressions of disbelief or impossibility:**

- "How did you do that?!"
- "That's impossible!"
- "No way... No one could have survived that!"
- "What on earth was that?"
- "People can't fly! This is impossible!"
- "You've got to be kidding me..."
- "I must be seeing things."
- "This can't be real."
- "There's no way you should be able to do that."
- "I don't believe it."
- "Did that really just happen?"
- "He vanished—just like that!"
- "Nobody can move that fast. Not normally."
- "It's not possible, it's a trick... it has to be a trick!"
- "Humans can't do that... are you even human?"
- "I blinked and you were gone! How...?"
- "He caught the bullet... with his hands?!"
- "But... but that defies physics!"
- "Nothing survives fire like that. Nothing human, anyway."
- "This defies all logic."
- "I saw it, but I don't believe it."

- **Questions seeking explanation:**

- "What are you?!" (Often said in awe or fear after someone does something inhuman.)
- "Where did you go?" (When someone disappears or teleports.)
- "What did you just do?"
- "How is that even possible?"
- "How... how did you survive that?"
- "How on earth...?"
- "Care to explain how you just did that?"
- "Can someone tell me what I just saw?"
- "Did you see that?" (Onlooker asking others if they also witnessed the impossible event.)
- "Is this some kind of magic?"

- **"Are you a ghost? How did you walk through that wall?!"**
- **"What kind of trick is this?"** (skeptical interpretation)
- **"Tell me I'm not crazy – you just teleported, right?"**
- **"Explain yourself! Normal people can't do what you did."**
- **"What in God's name was that?"** (If in a religious context, calling on God to explain a miracle.)
- **Exclamations of astonishment or admiration:**
 - **"That was incredible!"**
 - **"Amazing... I've never seen anything like it."**
 - **"You... you're amazing."**
 - **"Truly astounding..."**
 - **"I'm speechless."**
 - **"You really are special, aren't you?"**
 - **"Wow... just wow."**
 - **"You've got some kind of power, don't you?"**
 - **"I knew it! You have a gift."**
 - **"So the legends are true..."**
 - **"Behold, the prophecy was right about you."** (In fantasy context, in awe that someone did what prophecy said.)
 - **"That was not just luck. That was something else."**
 - **"I can't believe my eyes."**
 - **"I've heard of things like this, but to see it..."**
 - **"Is there anything you can't do?"** (Half amazed, half rhetorical.)
 - **"You saved us... how can we ever thank you?"** (Implying the feat was extraordinary.)
- **Fearful or accusatory reactions:**
 - **"Witchcraft!" or "Sorcery!"** (Common in fantasy/historical when villagers see magic.)
 - **"Monster! Stay back!"** (They do something inhuman, someone calls them a monster.)
 - **"He's not human! I tell you, he's not human!"**
 - **"Burn the witch!"** (Classic reaction to perceived magic.)
 - **"What devilry is this?!"**
 - **"You've made a deal with the Devil, haven't you?!"**
 - **"She's cursed! No normal girl could do that."**
 - **"We should run... nothing can stop someone like that."** (Fear of an unstoppable power.)
 - **"You're one of them... one of those freaks!"** (Derogatory for mutants, etc.)
 - **"Don't come near me! I saw what you did."**
 - **"This is unnatural, unholy..."**
 - **"God save us, he's invincible..."** (Religious fear.)
 - **"I always knew there was something off about you... Now I see what you are."**
 - **"You're cursed! Get away!"**
 - **"It's a demon's power you have!"** (Accusing the person's ability as demonic.)
 - **"We can't fight that!"** (Despair upon seeing an enemy's overwhelming ability.)
 - **"Somebody stop him – he's not normal!"**

- **Supportive or matter-of-fact acknowledgments:**

- **"Of course – you're a telepath, aren't you?"** (Someone deducing the power calmly.)
- **"So it's true. You can use magic."** (Matter-of-fact tone.)
- **"I had a feeling you were different."**
- **"So that's how you did it. You have powers."**
- **"You really can do X, just like they said."**
- **"It appears I underestimated your abilities."** (Perhaps a villain acknowledging a hero's power.)
- **"I see now why the prophecy spoke of you."**
- **"Using your powers in public like that was risky."** (One character calmly referencing the other's power.)
- **"We always suspected you had a gift."**
- **"Finally, your powers have awakened."** (Mentor figure after student shows ability.)
- **"Welcome to the team, superhuman."** (Humorous or casual acceptance.)
- **"It's nothing, really. Just a little trick I can do,"** (Sometimes the powered person themselves downplaying it, which in dialogue signals to reader it is a power.)

These reaction lines are often accompanied by stage directions in text: e.g., *"John stared in disbelief"*, *"Gasps filled the room"*, *"Alice recoiled, eyes wide"* – such physical reactions also underscore that something extraordinary occurred.

For detection, reaction phrases can be a gold mine because they explicitly contain words like *impossible*, *normal person*, *no way*, *not human*, *magic*, *sorcery*, etc. For example: - **"no normal person can..."** or **"no human could..."** is a pattern from above. - **"that's impossible"** or **"impossible"** with an exclamation. - **"what are you"** (when addressed to a person who did something freaky – implies they might not be human). - **"witch" "sorcery" "demon"** – if in context likely pointing at ability usage (though careful: in some contexts could be metaphorical or name-calling). - **"did you see that"** – people verifying a miraculous event. - **"how did you do that"** – direct request for explanation of an impossible feat.

We provided a wide variety because context and genre affect how reactions are phrased (casual modern, old-timey, etc.). But the constant is: **shock or emphasis on the feat's impossibility**.

Causative/Indirect Ability Structures

Sometimes texts reveal abilities in a more roundabout way – through phrases that show a character *discovering* or *coming into* their power, or phrased as if the ability is happening to them. These often use verbs like *found*, *realized*, *discovered*, *it turns out*, etc., with a clause about the ability. They cause or lead into the mention of the ability indirectly.

Key patterns include: - **"found (himself/herself) able to ..."** - **"realized (that) [pronoun] could ..."** - **"discovered her power when ..."** - **"it turns out [pronoun] can ..."** - **"learned that [pronoun] had the ability to ..."** - **"was surprised to find ..."** etc.

Examples: - *He found himself able to lift objects with his mind after the strange accident.* – (Implies suddenly he has telekinesis, discovered unconsciously: "found himself able to".) - *She realized she could heal others only when she saw her wounds transfer to herself.* – (A narrative of realization – presumably she healed someone and took on their injury.) - *On her 13th birthday, she discovered she could talk to snakes.* – (Classic awakening

scenario, Harry Potter-esque parcel-tongue discovery phrased as discovered could.) - *It turns out he can breathe underwater – something even he didn't know until he fell in and didn't drown.* - (Using “it turns out” is a casual way in modern narration or dialogue to reveal an ability with a surprise.) - *During the full eclipse, he found he was able to read the ancient script effortlessly. - (*Perhaps latent magical skill awakening under condition.*) - *When pushed off the cliff, the terrified boy discovered he could fly before hitting the ground.* - (*Dramatic awakening of flight mid-fall – phrased as discovered he could.*) - *She discovered her power when she accidentally set her hairbrush on fire just by holding it.* - (*Common trope: discovery when emotional/puberty causes uncontrolled power manifestation.*) - *After months of training, he finally found himself able to control the wind at will.* - (*Here it's a combination of causative and training result.*) - *In that moment of grief, she realized the fire didn't burn her at all.* - (*Realization of immunity to fire indirectly phrased – not “she could” but by noticing something off.*) - *He learned of his ability to teleport through dreams from an old family diary.* - (*Another way: someone learns about their own latent ability via information rather than doing it spontaneously.*) - *They came to understand that the storms answered her emotions – she had a gift.* - (*Indirect: “came to understand” leads into describing an ability.*) - It was then that John understood the truth: he could stop time itself. - (*Dramatic revelation phrased in narrative.*) - *Upon lifting the enchanted sword, the farmhand found himself endowed with the strength of ten men.* - (*“endowed with” is another phrase meaning “given ability of”.*) - *She was surprised to find that her cuts had already healed overnight.* - (*Implying she might have a healing factor and is just discovering it.*) - To his astonishment, the shadows obeyed his command. He had power over darkness. - (*Not using the exact keywords, but narratively showing discovery.*) - *When her younger brother was in danger, she found power surging within her that* flung the attacker away.* - (*Describing the moment of ability manifesting with “found power surging within”.*)

These constructions are slightly more complex structurally than a simple “X can Y” sentence. They often involve multiple clauses: - **Main clause (past tense) + subordinate clause about ability.** - Words like *found, realized, discovered, learned, surprised to find, astonishment, turns out*, etc., are common. - They often will be in past tense or past perfect because they narrate a moment of discovery or reveal that happened.

For detection, scanning for these verbs and phrases is useful: - *“found himself able to” / “found herself able to”* - a very specific sequence that pretty much always introduces an ability. - *“realized she could” / “realised”* (British spelling) - likely followed by something improbable. - *“discovered (that) [noun/pronoun] could”* or *“discovered her [power/ability]”*. - *“it turns out [pronoun] can/could”* - usually in conversational narration. - *“learned (that) he/she could”*. - *“was able to”* in contexts like *“finally was able to after training”* etc.. - *“was surprised to find”* or *“amazed to find”* and then an ability evidence. - *“(the moment) when [pronoun] [past verb], [pronoun] found (that) ...”* - e.g. “the moment he touched the stone, he found he could speak to the dead.”

These structures often explicitly contain an ability after the trigger verb. The user might not say “I have the ability of X” but the narrative around it makes it clear.

Narrative Signaling of Abilities

Authors sometimes hint at or convey abilities through the narrative style rather than straightforwardly stating them. These signals can be more subtle and require reading context. We identify several techniques:

- **Foreshadowing:** Clues planted before the ability is fully revealed.

- **Example:** Early in a story, a child character always seems to know things she shouldn't. The narration might say: *"Even as a toddler, Mira always seemed to know what was about to happen, her mother would joke that she had a 'third eye.'"* This foreshadows Mira's precognitive ability (perhaps revealed later explicitly). The phrasing is innocent but if you know to look, "seemed to know what was about to happen" is a hint.
- Foreshadowing often uses metaphors or small incidents: lights flicker around a character when they're upset (hinting they might have telekinetic or electric powers tied to emotion), animals behave strangely around someone (hinting at druidic or demonic presence), a prophecy or offhand comment *"You've got your father's eyes... and maybe more"* hinting inherited power.
- **Narrative technique:** Pay attention to unusual descriptions that are not explained immediately. Often, they'll pay off later as an ability reveal.
- **Metaphoric Descriptions:** Sometimes abilities are initially described in metaphor or flowery language rather than literal.
 - **Example:** *"When he ran, he was a blur, faster than a blink."* This could be poetic hyperbole or literally describing super-speed. If later context or consistency confirms it, it's actually an ability.
 - Or *"She danced through the battle like a leaf on the wind, untouched by blade or arrow."* – Could be just a simile for skill, or hinting at a magical protection or true untouchability.
 - Authors might use natural phenomena: *"It was as if the shadows themselves clung to him."* – Could be metaphor for stealth or a literal shadow manipulation ability.
- In detection, these are tricky because it overlaps with figurative speech. But repeated or especially *on-the-nose* metaphors might signal an actual power. (E.g. if someone "glows" when happy – if the text later shows actual glowing, the earlier mention might have been literal or half-literal.)
- **Unreliable Narrator Cues:** If the story is told by a character who doesn't understand the phenomenon, they might describe it in a way that signals something's off, without outright stating it.
 - **Example:** First-person narrator: *"I must have blacked out, because one moment the mugger had me at knifepoint, and the next he was on the ground ten feet away, moaning in pain. I don't know what happened."* – The narrator themselves did something (telekinesis burst or super speed disarm) unconsciously, but as an unreliable witness (to their own action) they can't explain it. This strongly implies the character has an ability that activates under stress. The *"I must have blacked out... I don't know what happened"* is a classic self-unreliable narration of one's own latent power.
 - Another: *"People told me later that I glowed, but I remember none of it."* – The narrator doesn't realize they used power.
 - Unreliable narrator cues require reading between lines: the text won't explicitly say "I have X power," but the events described (with narrator confusion) indicate it.
- Also consider **unreliable observers:** If villagers witness someone's power but attribute it to something else (*"We thought it was an angel, not realizing it was Sarah all along"*), the truth is hidden in plain sight.
- **Euphemistic or guarded references:** Characters might refer to an ability indirectly, especially if it's secret or taboo.

- **Example:** Instead of "He's telepathic," a character might say, *"He has a way of getting into people's heads."* – as a turn of phrase that is literally true (mind-reading) but spoken as an idiom.
- "She has **the Sight**" – capitalized or spoken in hush, which is a known euphemism for clairvoyance or second sight ³¹.
- "He's **touched by fire**" – maybe meaning he's immune to fire (or metaphorically passionate, depends on context).
- In a more modern setting, euphemism could be like *"special"* or *"one of us"* in an X-Men style context where they avoid saying "mutant powers" outright.
- **Reading context:** if characters talk around a subject, like *"Have you told him about your condition?"* and the "condition" is actually a power, those euphemisms are clues.
- **Hints in character interactions:** Sometimes the way other characters act around someone hints they know the person has powers.
 - **Example:** Everyone in a village avoids looking a certain woman in the eye and always whispers about "the witch" – hints she has some ability like a curse or evil eye.
 - People showing fear or deference inexplicably can be a clue. E.g. *"The soldiers gave the small frail man a wide berth."* Why? Later it's revealed he's a sorcerer – the narrative hint was the soldiers' behavior out of proportion to his appearance.
 - Another: A friend always calls before you even dial (hinting precognition or telepathy).
 - Or a side character says *"We were waiting for you... we saw what you did back there."* even if the main didn't realize anyone saw – indicating news of their feat spreads, implying it was extraordinary.
 - These social or secondary hints often come in dialogue or slight exposition.
- **Environmental reactions:** The environment changing due to an ability can be described without immediately pinning it on the character, as a subtle sign.
 - **Example:** *"Whenever she raised her voice, the room went cold and the lights dimmed slightly."* – This suggests some emotional or aura-based power affecting temperature and light.
 - *"As he walked by, every dog on the street began to howl."* – Could hint he has a supernatural presence.
 - *"The flowers leaned towards her as if drawn by an unseen sun."* – Possibly indicating nature magic or an aura of life.
 - If the narrative notes these things consistently, it's likely tied to the character's ability.
 - Another environment cue is weather: a character's mood causing storms or calm – might first be described as coincidence or pathetic fallacy, but it might literally be them subconsciously controlling weather.
- Also technology interference: *"The radio static got worse whenever he was around."* – could hint at electromagnetic powers or ghostly presence.
- **Sudden unexplained events:** Like a *chekov's gun* scenario: something odd happens earlier that is not explained until later when ability is revealed.
 - E.g. Early chapter: hero is locked in a cell, next morning the guards find him outside and think they just forgot to lock it – not explained. Later you learn he can teleport or pass through walls; the earlier event was him using it covertly.

- Or, “*She survived the car crash that should have been fatal, without a scratch.*” At the time maybe put to “miracle” or luck. Later it’s revealed she’s invulnerable or has healing powers – the earlier survival was a clue.

In text, narrative clues require context to confirm, but for an extraction system, certain phrases can be flagged: - Look for **comparative/simile** phrases: “like a blur,” “as if by magic,” “as if X” where X is something unnatural (e.g. “as if guided by an unseen force”). - **Foreshadow triggers:** words like “strange,” “odd,” “uncanny” describing a person’s habit or aura early on. - **Unexplained outcomes:** if a narrative describes an event but explicitly shows confusion or lack of explanation (“no one knew how...”, “for some reason...”), that unresolved mystery might be resolved by “oh, it was an ability.” - Phrases like “**little did they know**” or “**none of them realized**” can lead into hinting at abilities: e.g. “none of them realized the meek servant girl could speak to the winds.”

Combining subtle cues often paints the picture of an ability before it’s outright stated. A human reader picks these up; an NLP system can be guided to pick up on them by looking for repeated inexplicable elements associated with a character.

The above sections (1 and 2) have enumerated a large variety of explicit and implicit linguistic patterns that signal abilities. Next, we will delve into the **semantic layer** of distinguishing ordinary actions from extraordinary ones (Semantic Rarity), and continue through named patterns, context amplifiers, and lexicons.

3. The Semantic Rarity Layer: Verbs and Context that Signal Abilities

Not every verb of action implies a superpower – humans can run, jump, see, hear normally. The *semantic rarity* layer refers to analyzing whether an action is ordinary or requires extraordinary explanation. In other words: - **Which verbs normally describe mundane actions, and should only be considered an ability if qualifiers/context raise them to extraordinary?** - **Which verbs inherently suggest extraordinary ability?** - **What contextual cues turn a normal verb into evidence of a power?**

This section provides extensive lists and cues for differentiating normal vs. ability usage. It includes: - Ordinary verbs that should *never* be treated as superpowers without context. - Verbs that often imply abilities (especially those rarely used outside sci-fi/fantasy context). - Ambiguous verbs that can go either way depending on modifiers. - Specific semantic cues and phrasings that elevate an action to the extraordinary. - Tropes or culturally specific phrasing that indicate abilities (e.g. anime moves, superhero jargon, etc., which overlap with the cross-domain section but we mention here in terms of language semantics).

Ordinary Action Verbs (Usually Not Abilities)

These are common verbs describing everyday actions or abilities every human has to some degree. By themselves, they do **not** indicate any special power; they only become noteworthy if paired with an extreme modifier or context. A non-exhaustive list: - **run, walk, jump, swim, climb, eat, drink, sleep, breathe, see,**

hear, speak, grab, throw, catch, lift (reasonable amounts), carry, push, pull, drive, read, write, think, feel (emotion), understand (normal things), etc.

For example, "He can run" – trivial, everyone can run. Not an ability unless context says "He can run faster than sound" (then it's ability). Likewise, "She can see" – normal. "She can see in pitch darkness" – that second part would make it an ability. So these basic verbs need context like "how far/fast/much" or "under what conditions" to become extraordinary.

One must be cautious: sometimes an ordinary verb is used but context implies it's not ordinary: - e.g. "fly" – Humans can't fly unaided, so "fly" usually indicates a power, but an airplane pilot might say "I can fly" meaning piloting. Usually, context clarifies (pilot vs literal flying). - "see" – ordinarily normal, but "see through walls" or "see the future" clearly not normal. - "hear" – normal vs "hear the grass grow" (hyperbole or literally super hearing in tales). - "jump" – normal vs "jump over a building" (superhuman). - "hold breath" – everyone can hold breath, but context like "for ten minutes" makes it superhuman.

List of some ordinary actions (which by themselves would NOT trigger ability detection): - Physical: *walk, run, jump, sit, stand, bend, lift (like lift a box), carry, throw (a ball), catch, push, pull, hit, climb (a ladder or tree), swim, eat, drink, sleep, wake, talk, listen, look, smile, cry, etc.* - Sensory: *see (normally), hear (normal ranges), smell (normal scents), taste, feel (touch).* - Mental: *think, remember (normal memory capacity), learn (normal speed), understand (normal context).* - Everyday tasks: *cook, clean, drive, write, read, count, etc.*

Unless these come with an intensifier or unusual object, they are just normal human actions. In fact, if a system flagged "He can walk" as a special ability, that would be a false positive.

Verbs that Often Indicate Abilities

Some verbs (or verb phrases) are strongly associated with actions humans cannot normally do. If you see these, chances are high an ability is being described. Examples: - **teleport, levitate, fly (unaided), shapeshift, regenerate, heal (instant or others), conjure, summon, vanish, materialize, dematerialize, phase, ignite (oneself or spontaneously cause fire), freeze (objects or environment, not just feeling cold), read minds, mind-control, hypnotize (in a supernatural sense), curse (supernaturally), bless (supernaturally), resurrect, time-travel, time-stop, accelerate (time or objects beyond normal physics), transmute (materials), shrink, enlarge (oneself or objects magically), astral project, possess (spiritually), create illusions, unleash energy (blast, beam), shield (magical energy shield), enchant, cast (a spell), charm (magically compel), invoke (spirits or magic), banish (spirits/demons), teleport (worth listing twice, very indicative), etc.*

These verbs almost never appear in mundane contexts except metaphor or specialized contexts: - e.g. "conjure" might appear metaphorically ("conjure up an idea") but if literal conjure something from thin air – magical. - "summon" can be mundane like summon a person to office, but "summon a demon" – clearly supernatural. - "levitate" – rarely outside magic talk except maybe magicians (illusionists) but in fiction usually real. - "teleport" – purely sci-fi/fantasy concept. - "regenerate" – in biology context maybe, but in narrative usually means quickly heal (power). - "shape-shift" – always fiction. - "cast a spell" – explicit. - "fly" – as said, context needed, but if no airplane mentioned, likely a power or tech (like an Iron Man suit). - "phase (through)" – not normal, indicates intangibility power. - "mind read/ mind control" – explicit ability phrases. - "bend [element]" – thanks to Avatar et al., "bend water/air" is clearly ability (normal person bends only their body parts or maybe rules, not elements). - "absorb [energy/substance]" – humans absorb some things (food, info), but "absorb fire/absorb souls" – definitely ability. - "project [energy]" – like project flames,

project force fields. - "manipulate [element or concept]" – e.g. manipulate time, manipulate gravity – humans can't directly do that. - "summon lightning" – not normal.

List of common explicitly extraordinary verbs (some overlap with above): - *teleport, levitate, fly, soar* (without device/wings), *shapeshift, transform* (oneself physically), *heal* (others instantly or self instantly), *regenerate* (body parts or health quickly), *resurrect* (raise dead), *conjure* (create something from nothing), *summon* (bring forth entities or objects magically), *vanish* (literally disappear), *appear* (materialize suddenly), *disappear* (thin air), *phase* (through matter), *walk through* (walls/fire), *ignite* (set ablaze without tools), *extinguish* (fire by will), *control* (fire, water, weather, etc.), *bend* (elements e.g. waterbend), *freeze* (objects/environment, beyond normal means), *melt* (with eyes or touch, etc.), *petrify* (turn to stone), *teleport, blink* (teleport short-range, common term), *astral project, spirit-walk, mind-read, mind-control, hypnotize* (if clearly magic, not just stage hypnosis), *charm* (as enchant), *hex, curse, bless, enchant, brew* (if referring to potion brew in magical sense), *channel* (if energy or magic context, e.g. channel mana), *blast* (as a verb – e.g. energy blast someone), *fling* (with telekinesis context), *shield* (as verb: shield oneself with energy), etc.

When these appear, they almost certainly indicate an ability. We should still check context (e.g. "teleport" in programming means something else, but unlikely in narrative except maybe metaphorically in humor "I wish I could teleport out of this meeting").

Verbs that Can Indicate Abilities (Depending on Modifiers)

Now, some verbs are ordinary but become extraordinary given certain modifiers (adverbs, objects, comparisons). We touched on this concept. Let's list some and what modifiers/collocations to watch:

- **run** – normal: run fast, run home. Ability context if: *"run at [extreme speed]"* (*"run at Mach 1"*), *"run faster than sound/light/a bullet"*, *"outrun [something impossible like outrunning an explosion or the sun]"*, *"run on walls / run across water"* (impossible surfaces), *"never gets tired running"* (super stamina).
- **jump** – normal: jump high maybe 1-2 meters. Ability if: *"jump [story/building height]"* (*"jump 30 feet in the air"*), *"leap over a house"*, *"jump impossible distance/gap"*, *"from rooftop to rooftop effortlessly"*.
- **see** – normal: see the room, see a bird. Ability if: *"see through [walls/objects]"* (X-ray vision), *"see in complete darkness"* (night vision beyond tech), *"see the future"* (precognition; note usage differs: "see the future" is idiomatic but if literal context, it's ability), *"see aura/see ghosts/see invisible things"*, *"see for miles"* (beyond normal human horizon without tools).
- **hear** – normal: hear conversation in same room. Ability if: *"hear a heartbeat from across the room / through walls"*, *"hear whispers miles away"*, *"hear frequencies beyond range"* (like dog whistle), *"hear thoughts"* (that's literally mind-reading).
- **sense** – normal usage: sense = feel intuitively (everyone has some intuition but not like actual sixth sense). If context says *"sense danger before it happened"*, *"sense the presence of unseen creatures"*, *"sense emotions"* – likely ability (danger sense, empathy, etc.).
- **heal** – normal as in healing others requires medicine or time. If used like *"heal wounds with a touch"*, *"heal instantly"*, *"heal others"* – clearly ability.
- **hold breath** – normal few minutes max. If *"hold breath for an hour"*, *"doesn't need to breathe for a day"* – ability.
- **survive** – normal people survive normal injuries. If *"survive a fall from 10,000 feet"*, *"survive being shot in the head"* (implying regen or invuln), *"survive in space"* – that's ability or unnatural.
- **withstand** – similar to survive: *"withstand fire / extreme heat / sub-zero cold / bullets / explosion"* – implies either invulnerability or special resistance.

- **reach** – normal usage physical reach a location. Could be ability if *“reach into dreams,” “reach inside someone’s mind,” “reach across dimensions”* (those are metaphors but if literal context, definitely ability usage).
- **slip** – normal: slip out of a room quietly. Could be an ability context in phrase *“slip through [a crack/closed door]”* (implying intangibility or extreme contortion beyond human), or *“slip away unseen despite no cover”* – might hint invisibility or perfect stealth ability.
- **appear / disappear** – normal: appear means come into view normally by arriving. But *“appeared out of nowhere,” “disappeared into thin air”* are idioms often meaning literally vanished by power.
- **fly** – as noted: if no airplane or wings context, “fly” means ability. Even with wings, if wings are natural to them and they can fly, that is an ability (for a human context). But if it’s a bird or plane, not an ability (but outside typical detection scope if not about a human-ish entity).
- **move** – normal: move an object. Ability: *“move something without touching”* (telekinesis), e.g. *“the objects moved by themselves”* in context means someone or something with ability did it.
- **speak** – normal: speak languages one learned. Ability if: *“speak to animals,” “speak any language”* (without learning, like a polyglot power), *“speak in someone else’s mind (telepathy)”*, *“speak after death”* (like ghost).
- **understand** – normal: understand things you’ve studied. Ability if: *“understand any language spoken to him (magically)”*, *“understand the speech of birds”*, *“instantly understand complex equations without training”* (superintellect).
- **endure** – normal: endure some pain. Ability: *“endure days without food/water,” “endure injuries that would fell anyone else”* (again pointing to durability).
- **change** – normal context: change clothes, etc. Ability: *“change shape,” “change form,” “change his face/appearance at will”* (shapeshifting).
- **control** – normal: control a vehicle, control oneself. Ability: *“control [element/nature]”* e.g. *control fire, control minds, control weather*. Usually if “control” has a direct object that is not normally controllable, that signals ability.
- **create** – normal: create art, create a plan. Ability: *“create fire from nothing,” “create life,” “create a portal”*.
- **read** – normal: read books. Ability: *“read minds,” “read a sealed letter without opening it”* (could imply x-ray vision or psychic reading).
- **walk** – normal: walk on ground. Ability: *“walk through walls,” “walk on water,” “walk on air”* – these violate normal physics, so ability.
- **glow** – humans don’t literally glow. If text says “his eyes glowed” or “she glowed with a faint light” – likely a power manifestation or non-human trait.
- **transform** – if someone “transforms” that’s inherently beyond normal unless metaphorical “transform his life.”
- **teleport** – always ability (as listed).
- **absorb** – normal: absorb knowledge etc. If *“absorb flames/electricity/energy”* physically, that’s an ability.

Semantic cues that elevate an ordinary verb to extraordinary:

In many of the above, we saw pattern: add an extreme measure or an “impossible outcome” to a mundane action to mark it as ability: - Use of **timeframe**: “in an instant,” “in the blink of an eye,” “within a second,” “faster than X” – if attached to movement = super speed. - e.g. “He ran across the field **in the blink of an eye.**” - Use of **comparisons**: “as if it weighed nothing,” “faster than a speeding bullet,” “stronger than an ox times ten,” “like a feather” (for heavy objects). - e.g. “She lifted the giant stone **as if it were a feather.**” (No human can do that unless it’s truly weightless or she’s super-strong.) - **No effort / effortlessly** with

something usually strenuous: “with barely a flick of his finger, ...”, “without breaking a sweat, ...”, “effortlessly lifted ...”, “casually” doing something outrageous. - e.g. “He **casually** stopped the moving car with one hand.” - **No harm when there should be**: “unharmed,” “unscathed,” “untouched” after something that should harm. - e.g. “She walked out of the fire **unscathed**.” (implies fireproof) - “He stood **unharmed** after the explosion.” (implies invulnerable) - **Impossible precision**: “hit the bullseye with eyes closed,” “split a bullet with another bullet,” “threaded a needle from 100 yards.” - Phrased as “no one could normally, but he did exactly X perfect thing.” - Observers might say “never missed a shot,” “impossibly precise aim” etc. - **Distance and scale exaggeration**: If a verb’s object is huge or far beyond normal: - “lift **a truck**” (no normal human can), “throw **an elephant**,” “hear **a conversation across town**,” “see **a ship on the horizon 20 miles away**.” - any such combination of verb + object that is physically out of human capability signals an ability. - **Weather or environment obeying**: “the wind obeyed his gesture,” “flames parted around her,” “shadows coalesced at his feet.” - Those are environment cues phrased as the character causing subtle changes. - **Repetition or emphasis phrases**: “no ordinary man could have done that” (someone outright stating it), “beyond normal limits,” “more than humanly possible” appear as either narrator statements or dialogues and directly flag an action as beyond normal.

Let’s provide **specific pattern templates** (semi-regex or phrase structures) from these cues: - “in the blink of an eye” – often collocates with verbs like *disappear, appear, move, run, strike*. (e.g. “disappeared in the blink of an eye”). - “before [anyone] could [react/blink]” – e.g. “Before I could blink, he was gone” (implies extreme speed/teleport). - “faster than the eye could see” or “faster than X”. - “as if it were nothing / as if it weighed nothing” – usually after heavy object being lifted or huge task done easily. - “with one hand” – lifting something huge with one hand specifically emphasizes strength (lifting car with one hand, etc.). - “without a scratch” / “without a bruise” / “unharmed” / “unscathed” – paired with surviving something hazardous. - “no one (else) could have ...” – watchers acknowledging uniqueness of feat. - “should have [killed/hurt] him, but it didn’t” – explicit contrast: “That fall should have broken every bone in his body, but he’s fine.” - “even [weapon/natural force] didn’t [affect]” – e.g. “Even bullets didn’t pierce his skin.” (explicit ability indicator) - “not even [extreme scenario] was enough to [stop/harm/etc]” – “Not even fire could burn her.” - “too [adj] to be [true/real/normal]” – “too fast to be real,” “too strong to be natural.” - “like it was a [toy/plaything]” – “He tossed the man aside like a rag doll.” (Similes showing disparity in power – implying super strength.) - “like a [animal/specific ability]” metaphor if repeated or literal: “see like an eagle” could be metaphor, but if actual detail supports it (he can see at night, far, etc.), it might be actual. - “every single [target/hit]” – e.g. “He dodged every single bullet.” (That’s basically impossible normally, implying power.) - “[number]-foot [jump/fall]” – e.g. “a 50-foot leap” (no normal human leaps 50 feet). - “X that would Y” format: “a punch that would have felled an ox barely fazed him.” – indicates strength/endurance difference.

Rare or Hidden Ability Phrasings

Some authors hide abilities behind unusual turns of phrase or archaic references: - For example in certain fantasy, instead of saying “telepathy,” a writer might say “*he touched her mind, speaking without words.*” That’s a descriptive way to portray telepathy. - Or instead of “invisibility,” one might write “*he stepped between moments, unseen by those around him.*” (Poetic way to imply he’s invisible or out-of-phase.) - Mythic or folk phrasing: “*the strength of ten men*” is a classical way to say super strong (from fairy tales like about someone having strength of many men). - “*skin like iron*” or “*bone like steel*” – implies invulnerability. - “*fleet as the wind*” – implies unnatural speed (if literal). - “*no shadow*” – if someone “casts no shadow” or “makes no sound” in text, that often marks them as supernatural (e.g. vampire trope: no shadow, no reflection). - The presence of *unnatural quiet or calm* around someone in horror often marks them as ghostly or powered.

Culturally specific phrasing (tropes): - **Anime tropes phrasing:** Often descriptive: "His **ki** flared visibly," "She released her **Bankai**" (if the text uses that term, it's clearly a known power concept in that universe), "He has reached **Level 5**" (in an academy of espers or something, meaning highest power tier). - Over-the-top move names in narration: "He unleashed the **Dragon's Roar**, a blast of energy shaped like a dragon." – even if you didn't know what Dragon's Roar is, the description tells you it's a special ability attack. - The use of words like **aura**, **ki**, **chakra**, **energy**, **power level**, etc. – "Her **power level** was off the charts" (explicit). - "**ultimate move**", "**final form**" – those phrases themselves are tropey and indicate abilities. - Emotional power-ups: "As his anger grew, a **crimson aura** enveloped him." – sign of powering up. - **Superhero tropes phrasing:** - Often direct: "He's a **mutant** with the power to..." or using terms like **metahuman**, **meta-gene**, **enhanced**, **X-gene**. - Or talking about **origin**: "After the accident, he found he could..." (we covered in causative). - Some formal: "Classified as an **Omega-level telepath**" – obviously marking a powerful telepath ability. - Techno-babble for powers: "His DNA was altered to give him **bioluminescence** and **electrogenesis**." (big words but essentially ability to glow and produce electricity). - **Signature lines:** "with great power comes great responsibility" (Spider-Man motto – acknowledging power existence). - **Mythological tropes phrasing:** - Might use antiquated or grand language: "He is **favored by the gods**" (implying blessings/powers), "bearing the **Mark of Cain**" (biblical reference that often is used in fiction to denote some curse or power of immortality/protection). - "Wears the **Nemean Lion's pelt** so no weapon can harm him" – referencing a myth artifact to explain invulnerability. - "Possessed the **strength of Hercules** and the **swiftness of Mercury**" – using myth figures to describe powers (common in analogies or formal descriptions, e.g. old comics or pulps would do that). - **RPG/gaming tropes phrasing:** - Using game terminology in narrative: "He cast **Fireball** (Level 5)" – some novels (LitRPG genre) explicitly include skill names and levels as part of story. - "Her **MP** was almost depleted after healing the party." – using MP (mana points) is an overt game mechanic reference but in some fiction it's diegetic (the characters know these terms if it's a VR or game world). - "He **leveled up**, and suddenly new abilities flooded his mind." – direct reference. - "Cooldown, buff, debuff, spell slot, enchantment" – terms a narrative might use if styled like a game or if characters themselves treat abilities systematically. - Titles like "Epic-tier skill" or "Rare ability" might even show up in such contexts.

We will cover more on culturally dependent phrasing in section 9 (cross-domain), but from a semantic perspective: - Recognizing when domain-specific words (ki, chakra, mutant, etc.) appear is important because they usually correlate with the presence of abilities. They act like domain jargon triggers.

Now, we should move on to specifically **Named Ability Patterns** (section 4), which deals with capitalized or specially formatted names of abilities.

Before that, let's summarize section 3 succinctly: ordinary vs extraordinary verbs, and cues: - We might present in bullet or table form: - **Never treat as ability unless context:** (list of everyday verbs). - **Common ability verbs:** (list of strong ones). - **Ambiguous verbs needing context:** with examples of normal vs ability usage. - **Semantic elevating cues:** bullet list of phrases like "in the blink of an eye", "as if nothing", etc. - Possibly sub-lists for culturally-laden terms (though that might overlap with cross-domain, which is later; maybe just a brief note here, and elaborate in section 9).

Alright, continuing with the document sections:

(Proceed to section 4.)

4. Named Ability Patterns

In many works of fiction (especially fantasy, anime, some sci-fi and superhero genres), special abilities, powers, or techniques are given **distinct names or titles**. These names often stand out by capitalization or unique phrasing and follow certain linguistic patterns. Recognizing these patterns is helpful, as a capitalized ability name is a strong indicator of a special power being referenced.

We will cover several common patterns for named abilities: - **Definite article “The” + capitalized word/phrase** (e.g. *The Sight*, *The Gift*, *The Flame*). - **Ordinal or numeric references** (e.g. *Second Sight*, *Seventh Sense*, *Thousand Cuts*). - **Hyphenated or compound words** (e.g. *Shadow-bind*, *Ever-Burning*, *Ghost-Step*). - **Multi-word technique names** often in Title Case (e.g. *Breath of the Storm*, *Fist of the North Star*). - **Titles and ceremonial names** (e.g. *Rite of Binding*, *Dance of the Dragons*). - **Ability as object or force names** (e.g. *the Mark*, *the Curse of X*, *the Phoenix Force*).

Let's break these down with examples:

“The X” format: When a power is referred to as “the [Name]”, it often personifies the ability or treats it as a known singular concept. - *“She had the Sight.”* – *The Sight* typically refers to clairvoyance or second sight (the ability to perceive unseen or future events) ³¹. In many novels, *“the Sight”* is a known gift some characters have (often capitalized as a quasi-proper noun). - *“They spoke of his gift – they called it the Flame – a strange fire that he could summon from his hands.”* – Here *“the Flame”* is an ability name, possibly known in-universe as a specific power. - *“Only a few possess the Gift.”* – *The Gift* (capital G) is a generic way to denote some magical or psychic ability bestowed on a few. - *“He was cursed with the Mark; those who bore it could not be killed by any ordinary means.”* – *the Mark* is used as a name for a condition or power (like Cain's mark historically gave protection). - *“Legends say the hero wielded the Voice, able to command dragons.”* – *the Voice* here is an ability (possibly like Thu'um in *Skyrim* or *Voice* in *Dune*). - *“The Shadow fell upon him – the name his clan gave to the power of invisibility.”* – *the Shadow* as a named power. - When parsing, if you see *“the [CapitalizedWord]”* and it's not at sentence start (thus capitalized inherently), and it's in context of something someone “has” or “uses,” it's often an ability or force. E.g. “the Force” in *Star Wars* is a famous example – always referred to with “the”. (We won't mention SW in detail to avoid copyrighted content, but as an analogy, “the Force” is exactly this pattern as a mystical power).

Ordinal + Noun (Second Sight, Seventh Sense, etc.): This pattern often appears in fantasy or spiritual contexts: - *“He was born with Second Sight.”* – Second Sight, as mentioned, is essentially ESP or clairvoyance ³¹. - *“She awakened her Third Eye.”* – Third Eye (a concept from spiritual traditions) implies a mystical form of vision or insight. - *“He achieved the Seventh Sense after years of meditation.”* – The “Seventh Sense” could be a term in a specific story for an ultimate intuition beyond the six human senses (common in anime or metaphysical texts). - *“First Light and Last Light were two spells known to the ancient mages.”* – These sound like named spells or abilities in-world. - *“The warrior unlocked the Second Gate of power within his body.”* – In some systems (like certain anime/martial arts fiction), abilities are named as “Gates” or “Levels”. - **Ordinal names** often indicate a special state or power level: e.g. *“Fourth Gear”*, *“Level 5 Esper”* (though Level 5 is more like rank). - Also the use of *“Another”* like *“the Other Sight”* or *“True Sight”* (True Sight means ability to see truth/through illusions). - Many of these come from folklore or systems of thought (Second sight as ESP, third eye from chakra system, seventh sense from Saint Seiya anime etc.).

Hyphenated Powers or Techniques: Hyphenation often is used to form unique compound words for abilities, giving them a snappy name. - *“He used his Shadow-bind to freeze the bandit in place.”* – Shadow-bind

(could also be written Shadow Bind) sounds like a named technique using shadows to bind. - *"The clan's secret move, Sky-Cleave, could split even metal armor."* - Sky-Cleave as a named attack. - *"Beware the Ever-Burning curse, a fire that never goes out."* - Ever-Burning as an adjectival power name. - *"In a flash, she vanished with her Ghost-Step technique."* - Ghost-Step implies a step that turns you ghostly (intangibility or teleport). - Hyphenated names frequently pair a dramatic noun with an action or descriptor. Some common patterns: - **Shadow-[word]** (Shadow-step, Shadow-bind, Shadow-strike) - anything with shadow usually a stealth/dark ability. - **Dragon-[word]** (Dragon-flame, Dragon-punch) - often found in martial arts or fantasy attacks. - **Blood-[something]** (Blood-curse, Blood-bond) - abilities or curses involving blood. - **Ever-[present participle]** (Ever-burning, Ever-healing maybe). - **[Element]-something** (Flame-Tongue as a sword name or ability name, Frost-bite, Thunder-clap). - **[Cool noun]-[cool noun]** combos like "Soul-Bind", "Mind-Meld" (though mind meld is from Star Trek as a concept, it's effectively a telepathic ability name). - The hyphen gives a unique branded feel to the ability name.

Multi-Word Phrase Names (Title Case): Many special moves or spells have multi-word names, often in Title Case or with important words capitalized. They might include "of" or "the" in the name as part of a longer phrase. - *"He unleashed Breath of the Storm upon his foes."* - Likely a technique or spell name conjuring a stormy breath attack. - *"Her ultimate attack was the Five-Star Exploding Heart Technique."* - This is reminiscent of "Five Point Palm Exploding Heart Technique" from Kill Bill (a fictional move). Multi-word, capitalized key terms. - *"The mage invoked Chains of Truth to bind the spirit."* - Name of a spell. - *"Whisper of the Nightingale was a song said to heal all wounds."* - Could be name of a magical song ability. - *"He struck with Tiger in the Brush, a swift and deadly sword form."* - A poetic name for a move. - *Common structures:* "[Noun] of [Noun]", "[Adjective] [Noun] [Noun] Technique/Spell/Strike]", "[Number]-[noun] [Attack/Technique]". - e.g. "Claws of the Wolf", "Light of Life", "Thunder of Judgement", "Blazing Phoenix Strike", "Seven Hells Inferno", "Meteor Storm". - Often in fantasy or martial arts fiction, such moves are given proper names that sound a bit like poetic or code phrases. - If a phrase is unusually capitalized in prose (not at sentence start), that's a hint it's a proper noun (likely an ability, artifact, or title). Combined with context (like being "unleashed" or "invoked"), it suggests an ability.

Ceremonial or Title-case Objects that are Powers: Sometimes an ability is described almost like an object or entity: - *"She bore the Silver Flame within her, an ancient power."* - Here Silver Flame is capitalized, acting like a proper noun, but it's an inner power. - *"He is the vessel of the Nine-Tailed Fox."* - That's an entity inside giving power (Naruto reference in concept). The nine-tailed fox is a being, but functionally the power source. - *"Through the Rite of Seven Suns, she gained the Phoenix's strength."* - Rite of Seven Suns is a ceremony name that bestows power. - *"After the Blood Bond, he could share his brother's pain and strength."* - Blood Bond capitalized as a specific magical bond. - *"He was guarded by the Mark of the Firstborn, rendering him immune to fire."* - Mark of the Firstborn as a named magical mark, conferring ability. - *In such cases, you might have an object or concept name that equals an ability.* - For example, "the Amulet of X grants the wearer flight" - the power is flight but it's via an object named "Amulet of X" (although that's an object pattern). - Or a curse name: "the Curse of Y" - if someone "has the Curse of the Werewolf", we know that means they transform on full moon (werewolf ability). - **Abilities expressed as objects or forces:** - "the Darkhollow" in some novels is an event or place power. - "the Spark" often used in urban fantasy to mean magical talent. - "the Sight," "the Talent," "the Gift," we mentioned as generic ones. - "the Quickening" (from Highlander series) - a phenomenon/power transfer, capital- **Ability expressed as an object or force:** Sometimes an ability is referred to like an external thing or entity, often with a capitalized name. The character might "have" or "wield" it, as if it's separate from them even if it's internal.

Examples:

- *"She carries the Phoenix Force within her."* - The Phoenix Force (Marvel's X-Men context) is an example of an

ability/power treated as a cosmic entity. This construction “the [Name] Force” or “the [Name] Power” can appear in fiction to denote a specific power source.

- *“He inherited the Old Blood, giving him strange visions and strengths.”* – *The Old Blood* is phrased like a thing, but it implies a hereditary magical trait.

- *“The Curse of the Ice King lay upon him, making his skin cold as iron.”* – A curse named as such confers an ability or effect (in this case, perhaps immunity to cold or a frosty aura).

- *“By invoking Sol’s Light, the priest could heal the sick.”* – Here Sol’s Light is an external-seeming source of power, essentially a named ability via divine force.

- *“They called his strange aura the Shadow, for it bent light around him.”* – The power of bending light is given the name “the Shadow” as if it’s an entity.

- *“She was the bearer of the Mark, an ancient sigil that granted dominion over beasts.”* – *the Mark* is effectively the name of the ability (beast control) framed as an object (a sigil on her).

- In such patterns, you’ll see *the [Name]* often with mystical or ominous naming, or *the [Descriptor] of [Name]*. These should be recognized as ability references, especially if followed by an explanation of an effect or if characters fear/revere it.

General tips for recognizing named abilities:

- Capitalization in the middle of sentences is a big clue, especially when it’s a noun phrase that isn’t a character or place name but something like *Gift, Sight, Curse, Power, Technique*, etc. Titles of moves (often italicized in some texts or capitalized) also stand out.
- Keywords like *Technique, Spell, Curse, Rite, Ritual, Form, Style, Art, Seal, Mark, Gift, Power, Ability* when capitalized or preceded by “the” in a name often indicate a formal name of an ability. E.g. *“Bloodseal Ritual”* or *“Art of the Quick Blade”*.
- Hyphens and multi-word proper names often indicate a specific skill or spell. If a phrase reads like an attack name or spell name, it likely is (context will confirm by showing it being “used”).
- Lists or exposition sometimes outright list abilities by name: *“Common spells include **Fireball, Lightning Bolt, and Invisibility.**”* – those capitalized ability names can be picked up directly (and indeed are entries in many RPG spell lists).
- Also note, some character-specific powers are named after them (e.g. *“Saitama’s Serious Punch”* – if one encountered that in text, it’s an ability name where the character’s name or moniker is attached).

In summary, **pattern templates** for named abilities might include:

- “the [Capitalized AbilityName]”
- “[Ordinal/descriptor] [AbilityName]” (Second Sight, True Sight, Third Eye, Final Form)
- “[Capitalized Phrase with Of]” (Sword of Truth – though that could be an object, context needed, but “Breath of the Dragon” likely a technique)
- “[Capitalized Attack Name] Technique/Strike/Form” (Lightning Dragon Strike, Shadow Clone Technique, etc.)
- Hyphenated compounds (Soul-Bind, Heaven-Pierce, Earth-Shaker)
- “Curse of X” or “Blessing of Y”
- Unique spell names (often two or three words, sometimes faux-Latin or fantasy language but capitalized).

Having these patterns in mind allows an NLP system to pick up potential ability names even without knowing their meaning, simply by form. Once identified, context usually confirms them as abilities (e.g. characters “use” or “have” them, or their effects are described).

5. Contextual Amplifiers: Upgrading Generic Actions to Abilities

This section focuses on linguistic signals that **upgrade a generic action or attribute into an extraordinary one**. We touched on some in the semantic layer, but here we categorize them by type of ability (physical, sensory, mental, etc.) to create **pattern libraries**. These are phrases and descriptors that,

when attached to an otherwise ordinary verb or ability, indicate that something superhuman or supernatural is happening.

We will break it down into categories: - **Physical Amplifiers** (strength, speed, resilience, etc.) - **Sensory Amplifiers** (sight, hearing, etc. beyond normal) - **Mental/Intellectual Amplifiers** (intelligence, memory, etc.) - **Metaphysical/Spiritual Amplifiers** (abilities affecting reality, soul, etc.) - **Emotional/Psychic Amplifiers** (emotions, empathy, mind-based powers) - **Elemental/Environmental Amplifiers** (control over elements or environment) - **Dimensional/Spatial Amplifiers** (teleportation, portals, dimensional travel)

For each, we'll list patterns or phrasing that commonly signal an ability is in play.

Physical Abilities – Speed, Strength, Endurance, Agility

When describing physical feats, certain intensifiers or comparisons signal an ability: - **Speed Intensifiers:**

- *"in the blink of an eye", "faster than sight", "faster than a speeding bullet", "before X could blink/react", "blur of motion", "moved like lightning", "with uncanny speed", "quicker than thought".*

- *Examples: "She crossed the room **in the blink of an eye.**" / "He dodged the arrow **before I could even blink.**" / "His hand was a **blur** as he caught the falling vase."*

- **Strength Intensifiers:**

- *"with one hand" (for heavy things), "with ease" / "with no effort", "as if it weighed nothing", "might of [some large thing]", "strength of ten men", "unbelievable strength", "iron grip" (beyond human grip strength).*

- *Examples: "He hoisted the boulder **with one hand.**" / "She pried open the steel doors **with ridiculous ease.**" / "He punched through the wall **as if it were paper.**" / "Her grip was unbreakable, an **iron vise** crushing the sword."*

- **Endurance/Resilience Intensifiers:**

- *"without tiring", "tireless", "never slowing down", "without a scratch", "unharmd", "unscathed", "didn't even flinch" (after impact), "bullets bounced off", "immune to [weapon]", "skin like steel".*

- *Examples: "He fought for hours **without tiring** or breaking a sweat." / "After the explosion, he emerged **unscathed.**" / "She walked through the fire **unharmd.**" / "The knives couldn't cut his skin; they **bounced off** as if hitting stone." / "He took a punch that would fell a horse and **didn't even flinch.**"*

- **Agility/Reflex Intensifiers:**

- *"cat-like" (e.g. cat-like reflexes, cat-like balance), "nimble beyond belief", "darting", "moved between raindrops" (metaphor for extreme agility), "dodged every bullet", "impossible contortion", "landed lightly from ten stories".*

- *Examples: "With **cat-like grace**, she leapt to the windowsill." / "He balanced on the tightrope in high winds, an **impossible feat** of balance." / "She contorted through the small opening, an **impossible** flexibility." / "He flipped through the laser grid **untouched.**"*

All these phrases turn a normal physical action into evidence of an ability by emphasizing extremes (blink of an eye = extremely fast, etc., as we enumerated).

Sensory Abilities – Sight, Hearing, Smell, etc.

To signal superhuman senses, writers use: - **Distance/Clarity Intensifiers (Sight):** - *"eagle-eyed", "could see for miles", "saw every detail on a distant mountain", "night vision" phrases like "saw as clearly as day in the pitch dark", "could see the individual wingbeats of a hummingbird" (implying either time slow or sharp vision), "X-ray vision" or "saw through" something opaque.*

- *Examples: "Thanks to **eagle-eyed** vision, he spotted the caravan leagues away." / "She navigated the cave in*

total darkness, **seeing as clearly as in daylight.**" / "He **saw straight through** the wall as if it were glass."

- **Hearing Intensifiers:**

- *"keen ears", "could hear a pin drop in the next room", "heard the heartbeat of someone behind a wall", "picked up frequencies beyond human hearing", "her hearing was like a bat's sonar", "could hear thoughts"* (which crosses into telepathy if literal).

- *Examples:* "With **preternatural hearing**, the elf could **hear a whisper across the hall.**" / "He **heard the steady drip of water two floors below.**" / "She cocked her head; **no footstep or breath escaped her notice** in the entire house."

- **Smell/Taste Intensifiers:**

- *"bloodhound-like sense of smell", "caught the scent of the enemy from a mile away", "could track by smell alone", "smelled fear"* (metaphorically common, but if literal it's a power), *"taste the poison in a meal with one bite".*

- *Examples:* "The mutant had a **bloodhound's sense of smell, detecting the intruder's scent** long after they'd gone." / "He **smelled her fear** – literally, as an acrid bitter scent only he could detect." / "One sip and her **preternatural taste** told her the wine had been poisoned."

- **Other senses / Sixth sense:**

- *"sense of danger" or "spider-sense tingling"* (like Spider-Man's precognitive danger sense), *"felt eyes on him from miles away", "sensed the presence of ghosts", "aura reading"* (e.g. "she saw colors around people indicating their mood or health"), *"thermal vision", "infrared vision".*

- *Examples:* "Just as the attack came, his **danger sense** kicked in, and he moved instinctively." / "She **sensed a presence** in the room that no one else could." / "His **third eye** granted him vision of the aura of every living thing."

When normal sensory verbs are paired with range or clarity far beyond human norm ("hear a heartbeat from 100 yards", "see microscopic details without aid"), it's a sure sign of enhanced senses ability. Phrases like "eagle-eyed" and "bloodhound smell" can be metaphors in common usage, but if the text gives concrete evidence (like actually tracking by smell), then it's literal.

Mental and Intellectual Abilities

Superhuman mental powers can be indicated by: - **Knowledge and Calculation:** - *"eidetic memory"* (photographic memory), *"remembered every word in the book after one glance", "calculating at computer-like speed", "solved complex equations in his head instantly", "multitasked on ten problems at once".*

- *Examples:* "With **photographic memory**, she could **recite entire pages** after reading them once." / "He **calculated trajectories in a split second**, outpacing any computer."

- Phrases like "a human calculator" or "walking encyclopedia" might be figurative, but if backed by literal demonstration in context (like instantly recalling minute details or computing huge numbers mentally), it implies a super-intellect ability. - **Learning and Understanding:** - *"learned a new language in an hour", "picked up the sword style after seeing it once", "instantly grasped the alien technology".*

- *Examples:* "She **absorbed knowledge** at an **inhuman rate** – becoming fluent in ancient Greek overnight." / "He **understood the complex spell formula intuitively**, as if it were child's play."

- Words like "genius" alone might just describe a smart person, but extreme cases (learning an entire subject in minutes) cross into ability. - **Telepathy and Communication:** (Though these are psychic, not intellectual, they involve the mind) – Recognized by phrases: - *"heard thoughts", "spoke directly into his mind", "shared memories with a touch", "mind-to-mind communication", "her voice sounded inside my head."*

- *Example:* "He **heard her voice in his mind**, even though her lips did not move." (Clear telepathy indicator.) -

Mind Control / Influence: - Phrases like *"his words compelled obedience", "she ensnared his mind", "unable to resist the command that echoed in his head", "like a puppet on strings he moved as she wished."*

- *Example*: "Under the vampire's gaze, he felt **his will dissolve** – he moved to open the door against his own intent."
- Key terms: *compulsion, charm, enthrall, mesmerize* in a context beyond normal charisma. - **Precognition / Intuition**: - "*knew what was going to happen a moment before*," "*sixth sense warned him*," "*flashes of the future*," "*dreams that came true*," etc.
- *Example*: "Just before the accident, she had a **flash of foresight** and swerved, avoiding what would have been a fatal crash." / "He **often finished people's sentences**, as if he knew what they'd say (an eerie intuition born of true telepathy)."
- Terms: *premonition, foresight, foreknowledge, intuition* plus indicators like being always correct about future events, not just guessing. - **Emotional Influence/Empathy** (bridge between mental and emotional): - "*calmed the angry mob with a single word*," "*projected a sense of peace over the crowd*," "*felt the pain of everyone around him*," "*drained the fear from her friend's heart by holding her hand*."
- *Example*: "The empath **took on the grief** of the villagers, **soothing them** instantly." / "He **radiated an aura of courage** that **bolstered his allies' resolve**."

These mental ability cues often involve adverbs like "instantly," "effortlessly" for cognitive tasks or describe outcomes that no normal intellect could achieve (like mastering a field of knowledge overnight). Telepathic and empathic cues often show in dialogue (speaking in minds) or narrative of inner feelings being influenced.

Metaphysical/Spiritual Abilities

These are abilities dealing with reality, soul, or abstract forces: - **Reality Warping/Physics-breaking**: - "*defied gravity*" (without clear mechanism), "*time itself bent around him*," "*reversed causality*" (rare phrasing, but maybe in hard sci-fi/fantasy), "*the laws of nature bowed to her will*". - *Examples*: "He snapped his fingers and the boulder **simply ceased to exist**, a hole in reality where it stood." / "She spoke a word and **time stopped** for everyone but her."

- If narrative literally states impossible physics (like time stop, or gravity reverse localized on someone) with no tech explanation, that's heavy reality warping. Often signaled by phrases like "and suddenly, as if the world itself obeyed her..." - **Dimensional/Dream/Spirit**: - "*stepped into the astral plane*," "*became a ghost*," "*phase through dimensions*," "*opened a portal out of thin air*," "*his soul left his body*," "*summoned from another dimension*." - *Examples*: "The sorcerer drew a circle and **opened a portal** to the Shadow Realm." / "She **walked in the spirit world**, her body sleeping peacefully while her spirit roamed." / "He **became incorporeal**, the blade passing through him as through air."
- Terms: *astral projection, spirit form, ethereal, incorporeal, portal, gate, summon* – if someone summons something "from beyond" or "from another realm," that phrase indicates dimensional magic. - **Spiritual/Aura**: - "*holy light emanated from him*," "*dark aura drained the life around*," "*blessed by divine power*," "*cursed presence caused milk to spoil and plants to wither*," etc. These indicate a metaphysical aura or alignment (holy/unholy powers). - *Examples*: "She placed her hands on the wound, and a **holy light** shone, **knitting the flesh** whole." / "His **cursed aura** made candles extinguish as he entered the room." - Also "*laying on hands*" typically for healing, "*banishing evil*" by presence or prayer, "*consecrate*" or "*desecrate*" as actions (if someone can consecrate ground, they have divine power). - **Luck/Probability**: - "*unlikely events seemed to align in his favor*," "*random chance bent around her*," "*bullets miraculously never hit him*," "*every gamble he took succeeded unless he wanted it to fail*." - *Example*: "He walked through the battlefield untouched – a **miraculous fortune** as bullets missed by millimeters (in truth, his subconscious power **bending probability** to protect him)." / "The casino had to ban her; her **luck was too uncanny to be natural**." - Terms like "*impossibly lucky*," "*jinx*" (if someone can jinx others, that's probability manipulation in a way). - **Curse signs**: - If someone's mere

presence causes consistent bad or strange outcomes (milk spoils, mirrors crack) – often narrative signals of a curse or negative ability at play.

Many metaphysical abilities are described in almost poetic or dramatic terms because they don't have a straightforward physical action. They often involve environment changes (we discussed in narrative signaling: lights dim, temperature drops, etc., can indicate a metaphysical effect like ghost or aura).

Emotional/Psychic Contextual Amplifiers

Emotional context can trigger abilities or manifest as powers: - **Rage/Anger triggers** super strength or transformation: - *"as his anger grew, so did he – muscles bulging with newfound strength," "her hair began to lift and glow when she got mad," "in his fury, the ground shook around him."* - Example: "He normally hid his strength, but when the villain hurt his friend, **rage unlocked the beast within** – he **threw a car** at the attacker." - The phrase "beast within" or "inner demon" often is literal for some characters (werewolf/Hulk scenarios). - **Fear/Stress triggers** invisibility or teleportation (like a defensive reaction): - *"the moment she felt afraid, she vanished instinctively," "cornered and terrified, he blinked out of existence without knowing how."* - Example: "The child **disappeared the instant** the thunder struck – her power responding to her terror." - **Emotional aura**: - *"Her sorrow was so deep it manifested as a tangible chill in the air," "his joy radiated warm golden light that uplifted everyone," "when he laughed, reality itself seemed to bend (and in truth, it did)."* - Emotional states causing environmental changes indicates empathic or aura-based ability. - **Psychic empathy**: - *"She felt others' emotions as if they were her own," "he absorbed their pain," "she projected calm into their hearts."* - Words like *soothe, calm, enrage (others)* used where one character is deliberately or automatically altering another's emotional state.

Often, these amplifiers come as subordinate clauses or descriptive additions: "when X, then [power sign]". They can be structured as **"whenever [emotional condition], [ability effect]"** in text: - "Whenever he was scared, **time seemed to slow** around him." (Implying maybe he's subconsciously slowing time when frightened.) - "In her fury, **flames danced** in her eyes and **caught the curtains on fire.**" (Pyrokinesis linked to anger.) - "When he wept, **it began to rain** as if the heavens cried with him." (Could be poetic or literal weather control tied to sadness.)

Elemental and Environmental Amplifiers

When someone has power over elements, certain phrases describe the unnatural behavior of those elements around them: - **Fire**: - *"flames obeyed her command," "fire did not touch him," "he walked through the inferno unburnt," "she clicked her fingers and a flame sprung to life," "the candleflame bent towards him as he passed."* - Example: "He extended his hand and **the flames parted** before him, **forming a path** – the fire itself yielding to his presence."

- Look for fire verbs used oddly: *ignite* (with no source), *extinguish* (by will), *immune to burning* (like earlier). -

Water: - *"water rose at her gesture," "the waves calmed when he stepped into the boat," "raindrops froze in the air around her," "he walked on water as if on solid ground."* - Example: "She sang softly and **the waters shaped themselves** into a staircase for her to ascend – a feat of hydromancy."

- Terms: *bend, shape, summon water, water shield, breathe water* (breathing water indicates adaptation). - **Air/Wind**: - *"a gust sprang up from nowhere at his whisper," "the wind wrapped around her, lifting her off the ground," "still as a statue while a tornado swirled at his command," "air obeyed his every whim."* - Example: "He raised his arm and **a powerful gust shot forward, knocking the attackers off their feet.**"

- Also flight from air, or suffocating someone by removing air are possible described effects. - **Earth**: - *"the*

earth rumbled when she was angry," "rocks levitated and formed a barrier at his side," "with a stomp, a fissure opened in the ground," "the mountainside rearranged itself to create a path." - Example: "He clenched his fist and **boulders cracked and rose, forming a hovering ring of stones** ready to launch."

- Phrases like "stone obeyed her", "roots snaked from the soil to entangle the foe" (earth/plants overlap). -

Electricity/Lightning: - "sparks danced across his fingertips," "lightning arced from her eyes," "electrical appliances shorted out whenever he was near," "she called down lightning from a clear sky." - Example: "With a roar, **she summoned a bolt of lightning** from the clear air, **striking the ground at the monster's feet.**"

- Modern setting: "whenever he touches a device, it **goes haywire**" (could imply an EMP field ability). - **Ice/**

Cold: - "the temperature plummeted around him," "ice formed on the surfaces she touched," "she exhaled and her breath became a blast of frost," "he was unfazed by the blizzard, snowflakes avoiding him." - Example: "He gestured and **a spear of ice crystallized** in the air, launching towards the target."

- Phrases like "frost formed at her footsteps". - **Plants/Nature**: - "flowers bloomed in her presence even in barren soil," "the forest came alive to defend him," "vines sprouted and grew at an impossible rate around her," "she spoke and the ancient oak bent its branches to her hand." - Example: "With a gentle hum, **vines unraveled from the earth** and **entwined the attacking golem**, restraining it – the druid's will manifest."

- Terms like "green thumb" used literally (making plants grow instantly). - **Light/Darkness**: - "light gathered in his palm," "she dispelled the darkness with a wave of her hand," "shadows clung to him, making him nearly invisible," "he commanded the light to bend and it formed illusions," "in his anger the room grew dark at the edges." - Example: "She whispered, and **the shadows in the room stretched and converged, forming a cloak of darkness around her.**"

- Or "At his presence, **darkness deepened unnaturally** until even torches could not push it back." Conversely, "a holy glow". - **General Environmental Impossibilities**: - "footprints in solid rock where he stepped," "walked through walls," "floated in mid-air," "day turned to night at her command," "the storm calmed when she raised her hand," "the mirror's surface rippled and he stepped through." - These can cover other phenomena: stepping through mirrors (dimension travel), altering time of day (massive magic), "stars shone in her eyes literally" (cosmic power).

Each category above shows characteristic language that a normal scenario wouldn't have. A crucial part of extracting abilities is noticing these improbable modifiers and environmental reactions around characters.

Negative & Failed Ability Patterns (Section 6 preview)

(As we transition, note that we've described how abilities function. It's also useful to capture when abilities **don't** work or have limits, which authors also describe with certain phrases. We will cover that next.)

We've compiled an extensive set of patterns up to this point. To maintain organization: - We should ensure each section's content is clearly delineated with headings and bullet lists, which we have done. - Citations: We have integrated citations up to section 4. For section 5, we might cite a couple of examples from our sources if relevant (the wiki content in [17] had elemental categories with definitions, etc.). Perhaps we can cite a line about weather control or elemental control from [17] to back up something. - Eg: [17†L459-L464] defines weather manipulation. - [17†L447-L455] defines fire/heat manipulation (Pyrokinesis). - That could reinforce the idea of elemental control powers.

Let's quickly grab a citation: **(Elemental control example)**: In a factual context, *weather manipulation* is defined as the *ability to control or mentally affect the weather, generating phenomena like rain, tornadoes, lightning, etc., or controlling their intensity* ¹⁵. Such a description in narrative would appear with phrases like those above (e.g. "called down lightning from a clear sky" or "stopped the storm with a gesture").

By recognizing these contextual amplifiers across physical, sensory, mental, spiritual, and elemental domains, one can distinguish when a text is describing a mundane action versus signaling a supernormal **Ability** at work. The presence of extreme descriptors, impossibility markers, or environmental responses are strong flags that the narrative is conveying a special ability.

6. Negative & Failed Ability Patterns

Just as important as recognizing when abilities are being used successfully is recognizing when abilities **fail, malfunction, or are lost** in a narrative. Authors often include scenes where a power doesn't work as expected, is suppressed, or causes unintended side effects. Certain phrases and structures are commonly used to depict these scenarios:

When a Power Fails to Work

Characters might try to use their ability and nothing happens. Common descriptions: - *"nothing happened"* - A very straightforward phrase after an attempt. - *"for the first time, his power failed him"*, *"her magic fizzled"*, *"the spell sputtered out"*, *"his abilities desert him"*, *"to no effect."*

- *Examples:*

- "She recited the incantation, but **nothing happened.**"

- "He stretched out his hand to summon the flames, **but this time it failed.**"

- "She concentrated with all her might, **yet the object refused to move.**"

- "His usual spark of lightning **only sputtered and died**, leaving him in darkness."

- "He expected to heal instantly, but **the wound remained open** - his power **failed him when he needed it most.**"

- Look for language indicating an attempt (words like *tried, attempted, concentrated, expected to*) followed by an outcome like *nothing, no effect, failed, died out, remained, refused*.

- Also *"fizzled"* or *"sputtered"* are onomatopoeic ways to indicate a magical effect starting then failing (like a spark that goes out). E.g. *"The portal flickered, then fizzled out."*

Losing an Ability (Temporarily or Permanently)

When characters lose access to their abilities, authors might use phrases related to *draining, damping, nullifying*, or simply state the absence: - *"lost his powers"*, *"stripped of her magic"*, *"his abilities were gone"*, *"devoid of the gift"*, *"the link was severed"*, *"her power had left her"*.

- *Examples:*

- "After the artifact was destroyed, **he lost his powers.**"

- "She felt **her magic drain away**, leaving her ordinary and mortal."

- "With the spell of binding, the witch was **stripped of all her abilities.**"

- "The telepath found only silence in her mind - **her gift was gone.**"

- "He reached for the familiar energy, but **nothing answered his call**; it was **as if his powers had vanished overnight.**"

- Words like **drain, sap, fade, vanish, leave, desert** often indicate losing ability.

- If it's permanent or a key plot event, it might be dramatic: *"no longer"* e.g. *"He could no longer fly; the skies were closed to him."*

Suppression or Dampening of Abilities

Often through devices or conditions that keep an ability from functioning: - *"dampened", "suppressed", "contained", "nullified", "silenced"* (for telepathy perhaps), *"sealed"*.

- *Examples:*

- "The collar around his neck **suppressed his powers**, rendering him as weak as a normal human."
- "Within the magic-null zone, **her spells fizzled out before forming.**"
- "They placed a sigil on the mutant to **dampen her abilities.**"
- "His fire was **sealed away** by the curse – he couldn't summon even a spark."
- "The vaccine **nullified the virus's effects**, taking away the enhancements it gave."
- Also physical manifestations: *"He felt a weight or pressure preventing him from accessing his power."* E.g. *"An invisible force weighed on her mind whenever she tried to teleport, locking her in place."*
- Phrases like *"rendered him powerless"* or *"made her mortal"* indicate suppression too.

Trying and Failing (activation failure in the moment)

This overlaps with "when a power fails to work," but specifically the immediate struggle: - *"tried in vain to ...", "strained to ... but could not", "no matter how much she focused...", "his attempt to [ability] failed"*. - *Examples:*

- "She **tried in vain to become invisible**, but her form stayed stubbornly solid."
- "He **strained to heal the wound**, sweat on his brow, but it **would not close.**"
- "No matter how he tried, **he couldn't summon the portal.**"
- "It was like **trying to grab smoke** – his telekinesis just couldn't hold onto the object under the null spell." (Simile illustrating futility.)
- "Her powers **refused to answer her call** in that moment of panic."
- Emotive words often accompany this, showing frustration or panic: *"desperately", "frantically"* trying to use the ability.
- e.g. *"He desperately tried to read her mind, but only silence answered."*

Abilities Flare Up Uncontrolled (surges or involuntary bursts)

Sometimes an ability fails in the sense that it is **out of the character's control**, flaring or backfiring: - *"flare up", "surged out of control", "went wild", "uncontrolled burst", "overwhelmed him", "power took over"*.

- *Examples:*

- "Her telepathy **flared up**, a cacophony of voices flooding her mind against her will."
- "When he got angry, **his power surged out of control, setting everything ablaze** before he could stop it."
- "There were times his magic **went wild, harming allies** as well as foes."
- "The transformation **overtook him** suddenly, **beyond his ability to halt.**"
- "A **backlash** of energy knocked her off her feet as the spell **overpowered her** instead of the target."
- Phrases like *"too much to handle", "more than he could contain", "exceeded her control", "fingers slipping from the metaphoric grip"* might appear.
- e.g. *"The energy he channeled became too much to handle, backfiring in a brilliant explosion."*
- **Incontinence of power** (to borrow a trope name "power incontinence") is shown through such uncontrolled scenarios.

Temporary Exhaustion or Limits Reached

Abilities often have limits – e.g. can only be used so much before rest is needed. Phrases: - *“exhausted his energy”, “reached his limit”, “too drained to continue”, “could barely muster a spark now”.*

- *Examples:*

- *“After healing five people, she **felt drained – her power at its limit.**”*
- *“He tried to fly again, but **exhaustion weighed him down**; he **had no energy left to lift off.**”*
- *“The next fireball sputtered – he **was running on empty.**”*
- *“Each teleport took a toll; after a dozen jumps, **he was spent** and **couldn’t manage another.**”*
- Terms like **mana** or **energy** are explicitly used in some settings: *“His mana was depleted,” “her energy reserves emptied.”*
- Also the simple *“too weak now to [ability]”.*

In these negative or failure contexts, the language often directly contrasts with earlier positive ability usage:

- If earlier *“flames obeyed her,”* now *“flames flickered and died on her fingertips.”* - If normally *“he can lift a car,”* in a null zone *“he struggled to lift even a chair.”* - Authors might explicitly highlight the contrast: *“He had always been fast as lightning, but under the dampening field he could barely jog.”*

For extraction: - Phrases like **“nothing happened,” “failed to,” “couldn’t,” “unable,” “no effect”** immediately around ability attempts indicate a failure or suppression. - The presence of words like **suppress, nullify, dampen, drain, lose, strip, without powers** are clear signals of an ability context (since those words specifically refer to powers). - Scenes of exhaustion can be recognized by **depleted, exhausted, spent, no energy, reached limit** etc., usually coupled with context of attempting an ability or referencing a power source (mana, etc.).

7. Ability Evolution and Progression Patterns

Characters gaining, improving, or changing their abilities is a common narrative element (think training arcs, sudden power-ups, transformations). Authors describe these progressions with certain patterns:

First Awakening/Manifestation

The first time a power manifests is often dramatic: - Trigger phrases: *“the first time,” “when it first manifested,” “awoke to her power,” “his powers awakened,” “came online,” “dormant abilities stirred.”*

- Often tied to puberty, stress, or specific events in fiction: - *“On her 16th birthday, her powers awoke with a vengeance.”*

- *“Near death, his latent abilities manifested at last.”*

- *“In that moment of terror, something inside her snapped – and the earth shook as her power erupted.”*

- *“He had been ordinary until that day when the gene activated during a solar flare.”*

- The actual description usually includes uncontrolled usage: lights bursting, accidental telekinesis, etc., which indicates “first time use.”

- Words like **latent, dormant, ignite** can be used: *“the latent magic ignited within her.”*

Training and Partial Control

When a character is learning: - *“with practice, she could now [do slightly better ability],” “after months of training, he learned to control...”, “he could only maintain the invisibility for a minute at first”, “each day her*

control grew."

- Patterns: - Progress markers: *"at first ..., but gradually ..."*, e.g. *"At first he could barely lift a spoon with telekinesis, but gradually he moved larger objects."*

- *"trial and error", "honoring her skills", "under the tutelage of X, her powers strengthened."*

- Examples: *"It took **weeks of practice** before she could summon even a flicker of flame at will."* / *"He meditated daily, and **bit by bit his control improved** – the wind no longer blew wildly when he called it."*

- Dialogue might reflect this: *"I'm getting the hang of it,"* or mentor saying *"Your control has improved."*

Mastery and Full Power

When a character reaches a high level of control or unlocks full potential: - *"mastered his powers," "full potential," "complete command over," "no longer struggled to," "like second nature now."*

- Examples: *"After years of discipline, she **mastered the art of shapeshifting** – now **changing form was as easy as breathing**."* / *"He attained **full control** of the beast within; now **the transformations happened at will**, not just in anger."*

- Phrases like **"at will"** (do something at will effortlessly) are often used to signal mastery: *"able to summon lightning at will."*

- **"Complete"** or **"total"** control vs earlier partial: *"He achieved complete telepathic control, able to filter and focus without overwhelm."*

Power-Up Transformations (Level-Ups, Ascension)

Often characters have stages (Super Saiyan forms, etc.): - Indicated by terms: *"transform into [new form]", "evolve into," "ascend to," "unlocked a new level," "next stage of his ability,"* possibly colors or physical changes are described. - Examples: *"When pushed to the brink, **he ascended to a higher state** – his hair turning white as **power radiated from him** (the legendary Omega Form)."* / *"She drank the elixir, **awakening a second stage of her powers** far beyond the first."*

- If the ability is known to have tiers, authors might name them: *"Dragonfire Level 2", "Ultra Mode",* etc., or more diegetic: *"the fire within her grew hotter, blue flames replacing red – a sign of her evolving power."*

- Visual cues often accompany: *glowing aura intensifies, eye color changes, new wings appear,* etc.

Merging or Combining Abilities

Sometimes two powers combine (either two characters combining powers, or one character merging two abilities into a new one): - *"fusion of their powers," "combined their abilities to...," "synergy," "merged into a single, stronger ability,"* etc. - Examples: *"The twins **combined their telekinetic forces, lifting the entire truck together** where individually they couldn't."* / *"His fire and her wind **merged**, creating a **devastating firestorm**."* / *"She realized she could **use her speed and invisibility simultaneously**, a **combination that made her a perfect infiltrator**."*

- If internal: *"His two gifts, long separate, finally merged – the result was something new and astonishing."* - Terms: **unite, blend, fuse, synergy.**

Inherited vs Developed

This compares how ability came: - In text, characters might reflect: *"He was born with it while she learned hers through years of study."* - Or explicit: *"a power inherited from her mother," "a gift passed down through blood,"*

vs. *“one he acquired by training.”* - Might see: **“bloodline ability,” “ancestral power,”** vs **“forged his own ability,” “self-taught magic.”**

Unstable or Changing Powers

Powers that change unpredictably or grow unstable are described with: - *“unstable,” “volatile,” “each time it was different,” “harder to control as it grew,” “mutating.”*

- Examples: *“His powers were **volatile** – sometimes his strength was **tenfold**, **other times it left him completely.**”* / *“The serum gave her power but it was **unstable**, **mutating her abilities** in unforeseen ways each day.”* / *“Magic is **unpredictable** at puberty; her gift changed from summoning fire to summoning lightning without warning.”*

- If an ability changes type: authors might say *“evolved into,” “took on a new form,” “what was once simple telepathy evolved into full mind control as he aged.”*

- Or combining unstable with emotional: *“As his powers grew, they became harder to control and sometimes acted of their own accord.”*

Narratively, power evolution is often spelled out by mentors or lore: - e.g. *“Your power is still growing – one day you’ll do more than just create sparks,”* said a mentor figure. - Or in inner monologue: *“So this is what Master Yi meant by the next level of the technique,”* as the character spontaneously achieves it.

From an extraction standpoint: - Words like **awaken, emerge, unlock, evolve, ascend, improve, strengthen, master, fuse** are good indicators of discussions about ability development. - Phrases like **“for the first time”** (manifestation), **“more than ever,” “than before”** indicate comparison (improvement). - Also explicit level terms (Level 2, Stage 3, Super form, etc.).

Now, we shall provide comprehensive **Whitelists and Lexicons** of ability-related terms (section 8), and then go into cross-domain templates.

8. Comprehensive Ability Lexicons and Vocabulary

In this section, we compile extensive lists of words and terms that are strongly associated with special abilities across various domains. These serve as a **whitelist** of keywords that often indicate abilities. We break them into categories: - Named abilities from fiction (canonical examples), - Magical/action verbs, - Nouns for abilities, - Adjectives/modifiers commonly used, - Supernatural jargon (mana, aura, etc.), - Technique phrasing (especially for martial arts or anime moves), - Transformation terms, - Psychic powers lexicon, - Elemental control terms, - Combat/martial vocabulary related to special techniques.

These lists will be exhaustive to serve as a reference.

Named Abilities from Fiction (Examples)

(Note: Including famous examples to illustrate patterns; actual usage should be careful with trademarks.)

- **General Superpowers:** *Flight, Invisibility, Telepathy, Telekinesis, Super Strength, Super Speed, Invulnerability, X-ray Vision, Heat Vision, Shape-shifting, Regeneration, Immortality, Time Travel, Weather Control, Elemental Bending (Firebending, Waterbending, etc.), Healing Factor, Mind Control, Precognition, Astral Projection.*

- **Fictional Spell/Power Names:**

- From mythology/folklore: *Thunderbolt of Zeus, Midas Touch, Thor's Strength, Cupid's Charm, Evil Eye, Second Sight.*
- From modern fiction (illustrative): *Kamehameha (energy blast), Hadouken (energy attack), Force Lightning, Vader's Choke (Force Choke), Expecto Patronum (summon guardian), Avada Kedavra (kill spell), Wingardium Leviosa (levitation spell), Phoenix Force, Spirit Bomb, Bankai (final release of sword in Bleach), Rasengan (spiraling energy ball), Sharingan (copy eye technique), One For All (quirk passed down in My Hero Academia), Instant Transmission (teleportation), Final Flash, Super Saiyan (transformation form), Ultra Instinct, Cero (energy blast in Bleach), Unforgivable Curses (HP spells trio), Eldritch Blast, Lightning Bolt, Fireball, Heal, Resurrection, Polymorph, Invisibility Cloak (object but provides invisibility).*
- **Attack Techniques:** *Shadow Clone Jutsu, Burning Sword Strike, Dragon Slave, Nine-Tailed Fox Mode, Bankai: Tensa Zangetsu, FUS RO DAH (Unrelenting Force shout from Skyrim), Limit Break, Omni-Slash, Hadoken/Shoryuken (Street Fighter moves), Fatality (Mortal Kombat finisher, though generic usage means finishing blow), Bigby's Hand (D&D spell), Finger of Death, Meteor Swarm, Summon Demon, Dimension Door, Time Stop.*
- **Defensive/Other:** *Force Field, Shield Charm, Protego (shield spell), Teleportation Circle, Petrificus Totalus (petrify spell), Mind Meld, Spidey-Sense, Green Lantern's Light (power of GL's ring), Flame of Anor (Gandalf referring to his magic), Glamour (fae illusion), Blood Magic, Gate of Babylon (Fate series weapon summon), Super Saiyan 1/2/3/etc.*

(These examples illustrate naming conventions, but a system should not assume knowledge of all of them – rather, notice their capitalization and context. In a real dataset, one may see any of these terms used as abilities.)

Magical Verbs (Action Words of Power)

- A large set of verbs that often connote magical or superhuman actions: - **Create/Conjure Verbs:** *conjure, summon, manifest, materialize, spawn, evoke, invoke, generate (elements or objects), call forth, raise (the dead/spirits).*
- **Destroy/Attack Verbs:** *incinerate, ignite, scorch, electrocute, zap, shock, blast, vaporize, disintegrate, freeze, petrify, shatter (with sound or telekinesis), crush (with mind), drown (via water control), poison (supernaturally), drain (life or energy).*
 - **Movement/Translocation Verbs:** *teleport, blink, vanish, disappear, phase, levitate, fly, soar, hover, propel (oneself telekinetically), glide (without support), accelerate (time or oneself), time-travel, rewind (time), stop (time), blink (short teleport), slip (into shadows or another dimension).*
 - **Mental/Psychic Verbs:** *read (minds), sense (auras, danger), probe (thoughts), compel (minds), hypnotize, mesmerize, charm (in sense of mind-control), communicate (telepathically), empathize (as power, to feel others' emotions strongly), project (thoughts or illusions), erase (memories), alter (memories or perceptions).*
 - **Shapeshift/Change Verbs:** *transform, transmute, morph, shapeshift, mutate, convert (one substance to another), enchant (an object or person, to imbue magic or change behavior), curse (as verb, to lay a curse), bless (to confer blessing), heal, regenerate, rejuvenate, resurrect, animate (make inanimate come alive), bind (spirits or elements), banish (spirits/demons), seal (magically lock or contain).*
 - **Protective/Defensive Verbs:** *shield, protect (magically), ward, cloak (invisibility or protection), absorb (damage or energy), deflect, repel, immune (to), resist (like "resist fire" as an ability), regenerate (healing, also defensive), fortify (strengthen self or others), nullify (magic or powers).*
 - **Perception/Knowledge Verbs (magical context):** *sCRY (magically see distant places), divine (verb, to seek knowledge magically), foretell, foresee, discern (supernaturally detect truth or magic), detect (magic, life, etc.), reveal (hidden things), astral project (already includes motion, but effectively an action), commune (with spirits or gods).*
 - **Element Manipulation Verbs:** *ignite, extinguish, freeze, melt, quake (cause earthquakes), gust (create wind*

gusts), flood (cause water flood), bolt (cast lightning bolt), grow (plants rapidly), blossom (make plants bloom), wither (cause plants to wither/decay), harden (stone/metal skin), magnetize (control metal via magnetism), illuminate (create light), darken (create darkness).

These verbs are often directly used in descriptions of magic. If you see one of these with a human subject and no technological assistance, it's almost certainly describing an ability.

Ability Nouns (Types of Powers/Gifts)

A comprehensive list of nouns that denote powers or aspects of powers: - **General Power Nouns:** *power, ability, gift, talent, skill (when context is clearly superhuman), quirk (as used in MHA for mutant powers), blessing, curse, boon, trait (supernatural trait), knack (if referring to minor ability), faculty (old term for ability), aptitude (if clearly beyond normal), superpower, enhancement.*

- **Elemental/Environmental:** *pyrokinesis (fire control), cryokinesis (ice control), hydrokinesis (water), aerokinesis (air), geokinesis or terrakinesis (earth), electrokinesis (electricity), chlorokinesis (plant control), atmokinesis (weather control), photokinesis (light control), umbrakinesis (shadow/darkness control), gravikinesis (gravity), magnetokinesis (magnetism).* These terms combine Greek roots with “-kinesis” meaning manipulation – commonly used in sci-fi/fantasy.

- **Psychic/ESP Terms:** *telepathy (mind reading), telekinesis (moving objects with mind; also called psychokinesis), empathy (feeling others' emotions strongly), clairvoyance (seeing distant places), clairaudience (hearing distant sounds), precognition (future sight), retrocognition (past sight), mediumship (communicating with spirits), psychometry (reading object's history by touch), aura reading, second sight, sixth sense, mind control, hypnosis (in a psychic sense), psychic, ESP (extrasensory perception), intuition (when implied to be supernatural), mind link, hive mind (if someone can create one), thought-projection.*

- **Physical Enhancement Terms:** *super-strength, super-speed, invulnerability, regeneration, healing factor, shapeshifting, elasticity (like stretchy body), invisibility, intangibility, flying, wall-crawling, night vision, X-ray vision, heat vision, enhanced senses (sight, hearing, etc.), longevity, immortality, duplication (cloning oneself), size-shifting (growth or shrinking: gigantism or miniaturization), enhanced reflexes, agility, endurance.*

- **Magical/Other:** *spellcasting, sorcery, witchcraft, necromancy (death magic), animancy (life magic), alchemy, enchantment, curse (as noun, e.g. “he bears a curse”), shapeshifting (as noun too), illusion (illusion magic), glamour (fae illusion magic term), invocation, evocation (summoning magic), transmutation, elemental magic, dark magic, holy magic, divine power, demonic power, chi (or ki) energy, chakra, aura, mana (magical energy resource), geomancy (earth magic), hydromancy (water magic), fireball (as ability shorthand), lightning bolt (the noun form, often listed as ability), barrier, shield, ward, portal creation, summoning, banishing, binding, telepathy (the ability, also a noun), foresight, prophecy (if character can prophesy, that's an ability), shapeshifter (the person, but implies ability), healer (implies healing ability).*

- **Special States/Transformations:** *berserker mode, trance, astral form, spirit form, avatar state, super saiyan, ultra instinct, battle aura, elemental form (e.g. “flame form”), metamorphosis, animation (bringing objects to life), possession (taking over another's body).*

- **Artifacts or External Power Sources (if relevant to ability extraction):** Because sometimes abilities come from items: *magic wand (enables spells), enchanted sword (flames, etc.), ring of invisibility, talisman, amulet (grants protection/power), grimoire (spellbook), potion (grants temporary ability), serum (like super-soldier serum giving strength), mutagen, enhancer.* (While these are objects, mentions often coincide with ability usage.)

This list shows terms that if encountered, strongly correlate with the presence of abilities. For example, if text mentions “telekinesis,” that is explicitly an ability name. If it says someone is a “clairvoyant,” they have clairvoyance. These nouns often appear in exposition or dialogues identifying a power.

Ability Modifiers and Adjectives

Certain adjectives commonly modify abilities or describe the nature of powers: - **Strength/Level Adjectives:** *ultimate (ultimate technique), infinite (infinite power), supreme, peak, unparalleled, unmatched, formidable, almighty, immense, minor/major (like minor illusion, major image in D&D spells), weak/strong (strong magic aura, weak telepath), latent (latent ability), dormant (dormant power), awakened (awakened power), inner (inner strength), inherent (inherent ability), innate (innate magic), hereditary, ancient (ancient magic), forbidden (forbidden technique), dark (dark magic), holy (holy light), unholy, sacred, profane, arcane (arcane arts), elemental (elemental power), primal (primal force), psychic (psychic powers), supernatural, superhuman, inhuman, extraordinary.*

- **Temporal/Conditional:** *temporary, permanent, unstable, wild (wild magic), chaotic, controlled, uncontrolled, mastered, advanced, nascent (nascent ability), fledgling (fledgling telepath), evolving.*

- **Descriptive of effect:** *invisible (invisible force), invulnerable (invulnerability), intangible, ethereal (ethereal form), astral (astral projection), telepathic (telepathic link), telekinetic (telekinetic burst), pyrokinetic, electromagnetic, gravitational, mindless (mindless rage – context of berserker ability), regenerative (regenerative ability or regenerative factor), shape-changing (shape-changing ability), reality-bending.*

- **Curse/Negative Descriptors:** *cursed, damned (damned power), corrupting (corrupting influence of a power), dark, malevolent, uncontrollable, monstrous (monstrous strength), berserk (berserker strength), blood-fueled, demonic, forbidden.*

- **Source-based:** *divine (divine healing), demonic, cosmic (cosmic power), psychic, psionic (another term for psychic), elemental (elemental fury), draconic (draconic fire), volcanic (volcanic rage), arctic (arctic chill – perhaps in context of ice powers), celestial, infernal, arcane, eldritch (eldritch blast, often meaning strange or Lovecraftian magic).*

- **Other trait descriptors:** *mental, physical, mystical, latent, awakened, mutated (mutated ability), hybrid (hybrid power), symbiotic (if power comes from symbiote), untapped (untapped potential), limitless (limitless power), godlike (godlike strength), Herculean (Herculean strength, referencing myth-level strength), electrifying (electrifying presence, perhaps literal if power), chilling (chilling aura), fiery (fiery spirit - maybe literal fire aura), unearthly (unearthly grace), preternatural (preternatural reflexes – i.e. beyond natural), miraculous (miraculous healing).*

These adjectives often accompany either the ability noun or describe the person with the ability. E.g. “He possessed godlike strength,” “Her latent telepathy became active under stress,” “A forbidden spell of immense power.”

Supernatural/Magic-Related Vocabulary (Lore Terms)

Various terms that typically appear in fantasy or supernatural contexts, indicating ability-related concepts: - **Energy & Auras:** *mana, chi/qi, prana, chakra, aura, life force, essence, spirit energy, cosmic energy, dark energy, energy field, ley lines (magical energy veins), vibe (colloquial, “I get a vibe” – but in paranormal might be aura reading), emanation.*

- **Artifacts & Channels:** *rune, sigil, pentagram, circle (magic circle), wand, staff, talisman, amulet, grimoire, totem, familiar (spirit companion), focus (magical focus), portal, gate, beacon (as in beacon for summoning perhaps).*

- **Rituals & Spells:** *ritual, incantation, spell, enchantment, invocation, evocation, conjuration, hex, curse, geas (binding magical command), charm (noun, magical item or effect), glamour (illusion), potion, elixir, transmutation, alchemy.*

- **Beings & Entities associated:** *ghost, spirit, demon, deity, god, angel, familiar, golem, homunculus, elemental (as creature), dragon (if someone has dragon blood or powers), phoenix (phoenix force etc.), werewolf (implies shapeshift power), vampire (implies suite of powers), mutant, metahuman, esper (someone with psychic powers, term used in some fiction), mage, wizard, sorcerer, witch, warlock, psychic (as noun), telepath (noun), empath (noun), medium (spirit communicator), necromancer, healer (if used as title), paladin (if context of divine powers).*

While these aren't abilities by themselves, they are contextual vocabulary: if text mentions "mana" or "aura," we're in a context of abilities. If it says someone is a "telepath" or "pyromancer," that directly labels their ability. If an artifact "focus" or "rune" is in use, magic is at play.

Special Technique and Combat Move Phrasing

For martial arts or battle techniques, some vocabulary often accompanies named moves: - **Style/School terms:** *Style, Technique, Form, Stance, Kata, Art (Art of X), Way (Way of the X), Fist (as in Iron Fist, Tiger Fist), Palm (e.g. Buddha's Palm), Strike, Slash, Cut, Thrust, Kick, Punch, Blow, Wave (e.g. Kamehameha = Turtle Destruction Wave), Blast, Beam, Cannon (Spirit Cannon, etc.), Attack, Dance (Blade Dance), Whirlwind (Whirlwind Kick), Cyclone, Dragon, Tiger, Phoenix, Eagle, Crane, Shadow, Flame, Thunder, Lightning, Iron, Heaven(ly), Hell, Divine, Demon, Yin, Yang.*

- Moves often pair an adjective/noun with an attack type: *Dragon Punch, Tiger Claw, Phoenix Wing, Shadow Step, Iron Skin, Thunder Kick, Heavenly Slash, Demon Fang, etc.*

- Numbered sequences: *Seven Step Strike, Thousand Cuts, Nine Palms, Eight Gates (an internal power concept), 64 Palms (Naruto's Hyuga technique), etc.*

- **Weapon techniques:** *Draw (Iaijutsu quick-draw), Slash, Thrust, Parry (special parry techniques maybe), secret technique, ultimate move, finishing move, fatal technique.* Phrases: *"One-hit kill", "Secret Sword X", "Hidden Technique: [Name]", "Forbidden Technique: [Name]"*.

- **Ninja/Anime terms:** *Jutsu (means technique in Japanese, used in Naruto extensively), Bankai (final release in Bleach), Ki blast, Spirit Bomb, Final Flash, Limit Break, Overdrive, Quirk (MHA term for power), Stand (Jojo's Bizarre Adventure spirit guardian), Hamon (JJBA Ripple energy), Devil Fruit (One Piece power source), Nen (Hunter x Hunter aura power), Shikai/Bankai, Getsuga Tenshou (Bleach attack name), Rasengan/Chidori (Naruto moves), Ultra Instinct, Super Saiyan (transformation levels).*

These terms might appear in more niche contexts, but the idea is if a text has something like *"He assumed the Dragon Stance"* or *"unleashed his secret art: Shadow Dragon Strike"*, those are clearly describing a combative ability usage.

Transformation and Power-Up Vocabulary

Words related to changing states or forms: - *transform, transcend, ascend, evolve, metamorphose, shift, change, unleash, release (as in release true power), awaken (awaken true form), activate (power activation), limiters (removing limiters), full power, final form, true form, ultimate form, fusion, synchronize (e.g. with another entity), merge, possess (if being possessed or taking power from possession), overcharge, overload (overloading power), burnout (when pushing too far), surge (power surge), rampage (uncontrolled power spree), berserk mode, frenzy, supercharged, empowered (or self-empowered), buff (in gaming context), enhanced, boosted.*

- Names of forms: *werewolf, vampire (transformed state implies power changes), Super Saiyan 1/2/3, Sage Mode,*

Monster Point (One Piece Chopper's form), Bankai (again, a form release), Devil Trigger (Devil May Cry transformation), God Mode.

- If narrative explicitly says *"He activated his second form"* or *"entered God Mode,"* that's a direct indication of transformation ability. - Even without explicit names, descriptions like *"He grew scales and wings"* or *"her eyes turned red and a fiery aura enveloped her"* suggest transformations or power-ups.

Summing up lexicons: basically, any of these terms in a text strongly indicate that the content deals with unnatural abilities. An NLP pipeline could have these as keywords to look for (with context to reduce false positives, e.g. "immortality" always means inability to die, "invisible" might need check if literal or figurative like "she felt invisible at the party" which is metaphorical – context matters).

Finally, we'll consider different **genres and domains** in how they present abilities (Cross-Domain Templates, section 9) and then patterns for extraction (section 10).

9. Cross-Domain Ability Description Templates

Abilities are described differently across genres. Here we provide templates and examples for various genres, showing typical language and style in each:

Fantasy (High Fantasy, Epic Fantasy)

- **Style:** Often formal or archaic language, using terms like *ancient, prophecy, magic, enchantment*, etc. Abilities might be tied to bloodlines, artifacts, or learning at wizard schools.
- **Phrasing:**
 - *"According to the prophecy, the One born under the blood moon shall wield the Gift of Sun and Shadow."* (Prophetic tone, named gift.)
 - *"He spoke a word in the Old Tongue, and a wall of fire arose."* (Ancient language incantations.)
 - *"The runes on her staff glowed as she cast her spell."* (Use of runes, staffs, etc.)
 - *"Many thought it was sorcery when the young knight healed the dying king with a touch."* (People in-world recognizing magic, possibly calling it sorcery or miracle.)
 - *"Elf-sight"* or *"dwarf-strength"* might be used to attribute innate racial abilities.
 - Politeness or formal address: *"Lady Arina, if you truly have the Sight, tell us what you see."*
 - Words like **ensorcelled** (for enchanted), **wyrd** (fate/magic in some fantasy), **glamour** for illusions (fae).
- **Example snippet:**
 - *The sorcerer extended his hand. "By the Seven Names, begone!" he intoned. In a swirl of ancient magic, the demon shrieked and vanished, banished back to the Abyss.* (Formal invocation, capitalized "Seven Names" implies a ritual power.)
 - *Sir Gareth raised his sword, which blazed with runic fire – the Blade of Azzanor awakened by his will. The orcs fell back, for no mortal weapon glowed so, only one imbued by enchantment.* (Use of terms like runic fire, imbued, enchantment, giving fantasy flavor.)
- **Note:** In high fantasy, abilities are often given detailed lore context (who taught it, what ancient lineage it comes from, limitations in pseudo-medieval logic).

Science Fiction (Sci-Fi, including Space Opera and Cyberpunk)

- **Style:** Tends toward scientific or technical explanations, even for extraordinary abilities. Terms like *genetic mutation*, *nano-enhancement*, *cybernetic*, *psionic*, *quantum* might be used.
- **Phrasing:**
 - *"She was a product of genetic engineering, born with enhanced cognitive abilities and telepathy."* (Techno-scientific explanation of telepathy.)
 - *"The astronaut's eyes flashed – a sign of the neural implant activating her thermal vision."* (Implants as source of power.)
 - *"He teleported across the room, a feat made possible by his quantum displacement device."* (Mixing ability with tech device.)
 - *"The cyber-ninja engaged cloaking mode, rendering himself invisible to the guards' sensors."* (Abilities in cyberpunk often come from tech or augmentation.)
 - *"Her psi powers were off the charts, the lab readings going haywire whenever she flexed her mind."* (Using "psi" as shorthand for psychic in SF.)
 - Hard SF might not say "magic," they'd use "anomalous energy field" or "telemetric control" or so.
- **Example snippet:**
 - *Captain Reyes focused intently. The neuroboosters in her suit fed her brain, and within moments she calculated a trajectory that an ordinary human could never compute in time. This was her hypercognition ability at work – a human computer outmatching any AI in the fleet.* (Explains ability with tech augmentation terms.)
 - *The subject, code-named Oracle, demonstrated ESP – she predicted the random symbols with 99.8% accuracy. Researchers noted elevated delta waves in her brain scans corresponding to each successful prediction.* (Mixing jargon and citing maybe how a lab would discuss precog ability; also referencing brain waves and terms like ESP give it a scientific tone.)
- **Note:** Sci-fi often avoids mystical language; if a character is basically magical, the narrative will often give it a science twist (e.g. telepathy due to evolution or cosmic radiation unlocking X-gene if superpowers in a sci-fi world).

Superhero (Comics and Movies style)

- **Style:** A mix of casual and dramatic; often straightforward naming of powers, sometimes pseudo-scientific, sometimes simply accepted as "powers." Dialogue can be quippy about powers. Origin stories might be explained succinctly or with comic logic (radiation, accidents, etc.).
- **Phrasing:**
 - *"After that radioactive spider bite, Peter discovered he could cling to walls and sense danger before it happened (his Spider-Sense)."* (Typical origin and straightforward description of powers with a branded name.)
 - *"He's a mutant – his X-gene lets him manipulate metal at will."* (Using universe-specific terms like mutant, X-gene, which are normal in superhero dialogue.)
 - *"Can you believe it? The new hero shoots lasers from his eyes!"* (Casual, amazed tone like a news report or civilian.)
 - *"I have heat vision and freeze breath," he said matter-of-factly. "Comes with being from Krypton."* (Heroes often describe their powers in simple terms for others.)
 - *Villain monologue: "Your electric blasts won't stop me. I'll simply absorb them – energy manipulation is my specialty."* (Villain coolly describing their immunity/power with slight bravado.)
 - *Sound effects and exclamations:* Comics often include sound onomatopoeia (SNIKT for Wolverine's claws, THWIP for Spider-Man's web, etc.) and exclamations like **"BAMF!"** (Nightcrawler teleport)

sound). In narrative text, one might actually mention “with a *BAMF*, he disappeared in a puff of smoke” to capture the comic vibe.

- Characters might refer to each other’s powers by nicknames: e.g. calling a telepath “Mind-reader” casually.

- **Example snippet:**

- *“Time to turn up the heat!” Flamegirl shouted, hurling a fireball at the oncoming robot. Across the street, Steelheart braced himself; his steel skin could take the impact. The fireball exploded against his chest, doing no harm. “Gotta love invulnerability,” he grinned.* (Quippy dialogue “turn up the heat,” straightforward naming of abilities in dialogue or narrative – fireball, steel skin, invulnerability.)
- *News ticker in story: “Metropolis marvel Superman exhibited flight, super-strength, and heat vision in today’s battle.”* (Media or third-person summarizing hero powers plainly.)
- **Note:** Superhero genres mix scientific and magical freely (one hero might be a tech suit guy, another literally magic). The tone remains accessible – they rarely use archaic speech (unless it’s Thor or Wonder Woman quoting myth). Abilities are often named simply (flight, super-strength) or with brand names (Speed Force for Flash’s speed source). Also lots of capital letters for hero/villain names and sometimes power sources (e.g., **Omega Beams**, **Pym Particles**).

Horror

- **Style:** In horror, abilities (if any) are often portrayed as frightening or unnatural. It could be the monster’s powers described in eerie ways, or a protagonist’s unwanted powers (like seeing ghosts) described with dread. Often subtle, atmospheric language is used instead of blunt “he has telekinesis.”

- **Phrasing:**

- *“She had always seen things that aren’t there – flickers of movement in empty rooms, faces in mirrors behind her. It was a curse, this ability to see the dead.”* (Framing a clairvoyant gift as a curse, emphasizing atmosphere.)
- *“The lights would flicker whenever he walked by, and sometimes dark shadows clung to the corners of the room in his presence.”* (Subtle hint that this character has a dark aura or is a supernatural entity; horror often shows effect rather than naming it outright.)
- *“No matter where she hid, the vampire could smell her blood – an inhuman sense of smell that chilled her to the bone.”* (Describing monster’s ability with the word inhuman and focusing on the character’s fear.)
- *“Father O’Malley recited the rite, attempting to banish the demon. The walls shook – the demon’s telekinetic fury made the house itself an enemy.”* (Might use religious or horror terms like banish, and describe telekinesis as fury making environment hostile.)
- *“Her voice... it wasn’t hers. It came out in an otherworldly hiss, speaking in Latin – a sure sign she was possessed and the demon within was exerting its power.”* (Horror often involves possession or curses, and uses words like otherworldly, unholy.)
- Also, weaknesses are often highlighted (holy water burning vampire’s skin – an ability inversion).

- **Example snippet:**

- *The old manor was silent, yet Marian felt a presence. How did she know? Perhaps it was the sudden chill or the way her breath misted – or perhaps it was her unwanted gift: she could sense when spirits were near. Right now, that sense screamed at her: something unseen watched from the corner of the room.* (First-person style dread, calling it an unwanted gift, focusing on symptoms like chill, unseen watcher.)
- *Detective Harmon clicked off his flashlight. In the dark, Emily’s eyes glowed with a soft green luminescence. He shuddered; whatever Emily had become since crawling out of that grave, it wasn’t human. Moments*

later, he heard the wet tearing sounds of her inhuman strength rending the iron bars... (Horror describing ability (glowing eyes, ripping bars) but with gory/creepy adjectives).

- **Note:** Horror leans on sensory description and emotional reaction (“he shuddered,” “chilled,” “dread”) rather than straightforward naming. If an extraction system sees lots of “unseen,” “presence,” “shadows,” “chill,” plus indications that something is happening (doors slamming by unseen force), it might infer telekinesis or ghost activity. The genre context matters here.

Mythological or Folk Tale

- **Style:** Similar to fantasy but often simpler and more moralistic or symbolic. May use antiquated terms or very plain language since folk tales often sound simple. Abilities are often called “magic” or described as blessings/curses from gods, or inherent traits of creatures (like “the giant had the strength of ten men”).
- **Phrasing:**
 - *“Hercules possessed immense strength, able to perform feats no other man could.”* (Telling directly.)
 - *“The princess was under a curse – by day she was a swan, by night herself.”* (Mythic shape-shifting described as curse.)
 - *“Finn MacCool had a gift: when he sucked his thumb, he could see the future.”* (Irish legend trait, described plainly as a gift and then specific effect.)
 - *“Thor’s hammer gave him the power to call lightning from the sky.”* (Citing artifact and effect directly.)
 - *“It was said King Midas had the Golden Touch – everything he touched turned to gold.”* (Naming the ability in capitalized nickname “Golden Touch” and explaining it.)
 - *Similes and references: “He was as strong as ten elephants,” “she ran like the wind,”* – sometimes just hyperbole, but in myth often literally true.
 - Use of archaic or formal tone can come: *“None could harm him, for he had been dipped in the River Styx as a child and was invulnerable except for his heel.”*
- **Example snippet:**
 - *“Blessed by Poseidon, Theseus found that water obeyed his commands – waves would calm or rise at his word.”* (Mythic style, mentioning god’s blessing.)
 - *“The old witch muttered an incantation and touched the girl’s eyes. From that day on, the girl had second sight, able to see things before they happened.”* (Shows cause (witch’s incantation) and effect (second sight) in a straightforward but fairy-tale-like way.)
 - *“No sword could cut the hero, for he had been enchanted at birth. But he could be hurt by fire, as the fairy’s blessing did not protect against flame.”* (In myth, often one invulnerability but one weakness, described in a matter-of-fact way.)
- **Note:** Mythic text sometimes personifies abilities (gifts from gods, curses by fate). There’s little scientific explanation – it’s “because a god or magic said so.” Also genealogies: “He was the son of the North Wind, and thus **could run like the wind.**”
- The language might include antiquated words like *smite, boon, bane, enchantment, sorcery* but also be fairly narrative “just-so” style.

Martial Arts (Wuxia, Eastern fantasy)

- **Style:** In Wuxia (Chinese martial arts fantasy) or similar genres, abilities are often martial techniques combined with chi energy. Descriptions often use poetic names for moves, mention of internal energy (chi), lightness skill (qinggong for jumping high, walking on water or walls), etc. The tone can be both flowery and matter-of-fact about near-superhuman feats (it’s expected in genre).
- **Phrasing:**

- *"With his Qinggong lightness skill, Li ran across the surface of the water as if it were solid ground."*
- *"She unleashed the Nine Swords of Heaven technique; sword qi (energy) flew from her blade in arcs of light."*
- *"His inner power was strong – at a touch, he could shatter boulders. It was said he had mastered the Iron Palm."*
- *"The monk's chi focused into his fist (a glowing aura gathering) – this was the famed Buddha's Palm strike."*
- Terminology: *Neigong* (internal power), *Wugong* (martial skills), *Jianghu* (martial artists' community), levels of mastery often **"third level of X skill,"** *"half-step to mastery,"* *"X sutra"* for manuals.
- Use of nature metaphors in move names: *"Flying Dragon," "Whirling Leaf," "Tiger Pounce,"* etc.
- Also, characters often talk about abilities in terms of **years of training**: *"His ten years of cultivation allowed him to release bursts of invisible force."*
- **Example snippet:**
- *"Lin's swordsmanship had reached a divine realm. With a flick of his sleeve, he launched a blade of qi through the air – an invisible slash that felled the distant archer."* (Covers invisible projectile via internal energy.)
- *"The Master of the Cloud School moved as a breeze – utilizing Lightfoot Technique, he glided over the rooftops. His disciples marveled at his superhuman agility, though in the Jianghu, such feats were commonplace for a true master."* (Mixing narrative explanation with cultural context; noting that in that world it's commonplace for masters.)
- Dialogue: *"Your Nine Yang Divine Art is strong, but can it withstand my Heart-Devouring Palm?"* (Colorful move names used in conversation.)
- **Note:** Wuxia often describes internal injuries (someone strikes pressure points, injures internal organs with chi), etc. They might use terms like *"spitting blood"* as sign of being hit by powerful internal energy. A system should treat those as signs of extraordinary martial ability.
- Japanese martial arts anime/manga might have similar aspects, often with less formal terms (like *"ki"* or just saying *"energy blast"*). They also incorporate *power levels* or *ranking* explicitly sometimes, which Wuxia also does (like *"He's at the peak of X realm"*).

Paranormal Romance

- **Style:** Often modern setting, focusing on emotional and sensual aspects of abilities. One partner might be a vampire, werewolf, or psychic. The ability descriptions are often entwined with romantic tension and sometimes described in a more alluring or mysterious way (especially vampiric powers).
- **Phrasing:**
- *"His eyes held a hypnotic gleam – she felt drawn in, unable to resist (little did she know, he was actually compelling her with his vampire charm)."*
- *"She found she could read his thoughts – a shock at first, but it brought them closer, for there would be no secrets between them."* (Empathic or telepathic connection described as intimacy.)
- *"When he touched her, a spark of energy passed between them – literal electricity, his fae magic reacting to her presence."* (Mixing magic with romantic metaphor of spark.)
- *"Even in the dark, he could see every detail of her face – werewolf night vision had its advantages."* (Casual mention of power as a benefit.)
- *"She healed quickly – unnaturally quickly – and he realized with a start that the woman he loved was not mortal."* (Using an ability (healing) as a plot reveal, phrased in lover's observation.)
- Often first-person narration of one partner noticing weird things: *"I could have sworn his eyes glowed golden for an instant," "His skin was ice-cold, yet it didn't bother me," "He moved with inhuman grace, one moment by my side, the next across the room."* (Describing vampire speed/grace subtly.)
- **Example snippet:**

- *"James pressed a gentle kiss to her forehead, and Elena felt warmth radiate through her – not just love, but actual warmth. The bruises on her arms faded. She pulled back, astonished. 'I... I heal people,' James confessed softly. 'It's my gift.'"* (Romantic context confession of a healing ability, framed as gift.)
- *"A low growl rumbled in his chest – the sound vibrated through the night. Lily wasn't afraid; she knew his wolf was protective of her. In moments of passion or anger, his voice sometimes took on that animal timbre, his eyes a flash of amber. It reminded her that the man she loved was something more than human."* (Romanticizing the werewolf traits as part of his allure and protective nature.)
- **Note:** Paranormal romance often normalizes the abilities in context of relationship ("we'll make it work even though you're immortal," etc.). There's also emphasis on emotional impact (how do I accept his power? how does being telepathic affect trust? etc.). The language might be less about the mechanics, more about feelings and subtle observations of the supernatural.

Anime/Light Novel style (Isekai, Shounen etc.)

- **Style:** Exaggerated, with characters often exclaiming move names, inner monologues explaining power-ups, sometimes direct addresses to the audience or clearly stating abilities. Light novels often have more exposition (like stat sheets, "He has Level 5 Fire Magic"). Isekai (character transported to game-like world) often explicitly uses game terminology.
- **Phrasing:**
 - *"Fireball!"* (Character literally shouting the move name as they cast it – common in shounen battle anime.)
 - *"Kazuto checked his status screen. His Mana was nearly depleted from casting Grand Heal twice."* (Game-like narration from isekai or LitRPG style.)
 - *"She activated Flight Magic, floating above the battlefield."* (Often capitalizing magic types or skill names.)
 - *Inner monologue example: "<i>This is bad,</i> he thought. <i>Even after going Super Saiyan, I'm still not fast enough to dodge that attack!</i>"* (Anime characters think in terms of their transformation states and power levels mid-fight.)
 - *"His Power Level is over 9000!!"* (Infamous DBZ line, characters explicitly talking about quantifying strength.)
 - *Chuunibyou (deliberately chunni) style: "Behold my ultimate attack – Darkness Flame Dragon!"* (Ridiculous move name yelled out).
 - *Narrator/exposition in anime: "S-Class Mage Erza Scarlet, also known as Titania, uses Requip Magic to swap armor and weapons mid-battle."* (Often anime will have narrator or on-screen text explaining a character's ability with titles and types.)
- **Terms: Ki, Aura, Chakra, Bankai, Shikai, Quirk, Nen, Stand, Devil Fruit, Jutsu, Sage Mode, Limit Break, Mana, XP, Level Up, Skill, Dungeon, etc.** often thrown around.
- **Example snippet:**
 - *Ryu lifted his sword skyward. "Dragon Slave!" he shouted, calling the ancient spell's name. A massive crimson blast erupted from the blade, obliterating the horde of monsters. (Yes, it was completely overkill.)* (This shows shouting move name, big effect, and even a light-novel style aside in parentheses with a comedic tone.)
 - **[System Message]: Level Up!** *Alice felt a rush of strength. "Alright!" she exclaimed. "Now I can finally use Lightning Strike Level 5." She navigated her skill menu* and activated the new ability, grinning as sparks danced around her blade.* (LitRPG style with system messages and explicit talk of skill levels and menus.)

- *"That's the Rasengan... Incredible," thought Kakashi as he watched Naruto form the spiraling ball of chakra. (In anime adaptations, characters often think or comment on specific abilities by name so the audience knows it.)*
- **Note:** The anime/light novel style often mixes first-person or third-person limited perspective with meta-game elements if isekai. Abilities are often referred to by proper noun names often in English or faux-English (Katana writing English words). They may also incorporate onomatopoeia and visual cues ("FWOOOSH", "BAM"). An NLP pipeline might catch a lot of these by capital letters or known terms like "Level Up" or brackets.

Folk Tales / Children's Fantasy

- **Style:** Simpler language, often explicitly saying "magic" or presenting abilities as wonder, often without needing detailed explanation. For children, abilities might be whimsical (talking animals, flying with pixie dust).
- **Phrasing:**
 - *"Jack had a magic bean that grew into a towering beanstalk overnight."* (Magic stated plainly.)
 - *"The fairy gave the girl the ability to talk to animals."* (Straight out.)
 - *"With a wave of his wand, the fairy godmother turned a pumpkin into a carriage."* (Matter-of-fact but magical transformation.)
 - *"The little dragon could breathe fire, but only when he sneezed – which made the villagers laugh instead of fear him."* (Often humorous or gentle framing of powers.)
 - *Repetition and rule-of-three common: "The first brother wished for strength – and became strong as ten men. The second wished for sight – and could see the tiniest ant on a distant hill. The third brother, however, wished for wisdom..."* (Telling it almost proverbially.)
 - *Moral-centric: "But the invisible cloak did not make the boy happy, for he realized being seen and loved was better than hiding."* (Using the ability invisibility as moral lesson.)
- **Example snippet:**
 - *"Little Elsa discovered she had magic in her hands. When she laughed, snowflakes swirled in the air. When she stomped her foot in a tantrum, the floor turned to ice! It was fun at first... but soon, her parents grew worried about her frosty powers."* (Child-friendly, describing effects in simple terms like snowflakes swirling, floor turning to ice, calling it magic and powers.)
 - *"In the enchanted forest, animals could speak just like people. A kind woodcutter befriended a talking fox, who had the gift of cleverness. Together, they tricked a giant who was big and strong but very foolish."* (Anthropomorphic ability - animals talking, described as a gift or just presented as normal in that fantasy world.)
 - **Note:** In children's contexts, words like *magic, spell, fairy, witch, giant, dragon, invisible, flying, talking animals* are common and explicitly used. The language is straightforward: if someone is invisible, the narrative will say "he turned invisible" rather than euphemisms. Emotions around abilities are often wonder or mild trouble, not complex trauma.

Finally, we'll compile extraction-ready patterns.

10. Extraction-Ready Pattern Sets

In this final section, we translate the insights above into more formalized patterns and guidelines that could be implemented in an NLP pipeline. This includes regular expressions, dependency patterns, and template structures to identify ability-related text, a list of whitelist terms (from section 8) as direct clues, and also an outline of exceptions to avoid false positives.

Regex-Style Patterns for Ability Triggers

These regex-like patterns (in a simplified form) can help catch many ability mentions: - **Modal ability patterns:**

- `\b(can|could|cannot|can't)\b\s+[^\s.!?]*\b(teleport|fly|invisible|hear|see|lift|run|heal|etc)\b`

(Explanation: find "can/could" followed reasonably soon by an action verb that is often ability-laden. For example "can see in the dark", "could lift a car".)

- `\bable to\b\s+[^\s.!?]*\b(see|hear|lift|move|run|walk|breathe|control|manipulate)\b`
(“able to” followed by a verb phrase). This would catch things like “able to walk through walls”, “able to manipulate fire”.)

- `(found|discovered|realized)\b[^\s.!?]*\b(he|she|they)\b[^\s.!?]*\b(could|had the ability to)\b`

(Past tense discovery: “found he could...”, “realized she had the ability to...”.)

- **Nominal constructions:**

- `\b(his|her|their)\b\s+(strange|mystical|unique|uncanny|mysterious)?\s*(power|ability|gift|talent)\b\s*(to|for)?\b`

(Matches “his power to”, “her strange gift for”, etc.)

- `\b(blessing|curse)\b\s+of\b`

(“the curse of X”, “blessing of Y”) maybe restrict to capital after of or known ability words following.

- `\bThe\s+[A-Z][a-z]+` (with context)

(Generic for “The Sight, The Gift” – need to ensure it’s not just any “The [Name]”, but likely by checking if that phrase is followed by “of” clause or usage that indicates ability. For instance, a simple regex can catch capitalized The X, but we should verify meaning via surrounding text.) - **Adjectival markers:**

- `\b(impossibly|inhuman(ly)?|superhuman(ly)?|uncanny|unbelievably|unnaturally)\b`

(If these appear, they often modify an ability context. Could use them as triggers to examine the sentence for an action. e.g. “impossibly fast”, etc.)

- `\bno\s+ordinary\b` or `\bno\s+normal\b`

(Phrases like “no ordinary person could...”)

- `\b(not|wasn't|isn't)\b\s+human`

(“He isn’t human” – strong indicator something ability-like is implied.)

- **Reactions:**

- `\bHow\s+did\s+you\s+do\s+that\?` (common direct reaction)

- `\bthat's\b\s+impossible`

- `\bno\s+way\b` or `\bno\b.+ \bcan\b` (for “No one can...” type incredulity)

- `\bwhat\s+are\s+you\?` (when said literally, indicates person witnessed unnatural ability)

- These could be compiled but might over-trigger if not careful. They are useful when near an extraordinary event description. - **Ability Names and Capitalized Phrases:**

- For capitalized multi-word abilities, one could look for patterns like: - `\b(The\s)?[A-Z][a-z]+(?:\s+[A-Z][a-z]+){1,3}\b` preceded or followed by verbs like “use, wield, has, with, of”.

Example regex logic: `\buses\b\s+(?:the\s)?[A-Z][a-z]+(?:\s+[A-Z][a-z]+){0,3}` to catch “uses Shadow Bind” or “uses the Evil Eye”.

- Or `\bmastered\b\s+(?:the\s)?[A-Z][a-z]+` (e.g. “mastered the Iron Fist Technique”). - **Known ability name keywords can be part of regex:** `\b(Sight|Gift|Curse|Power|Force|Form|Technique|Style|Art|Jutsu|Mode)\b`

when capitalized and preceded by ‘the’ or in a title-case phrase could signify a named ability. E.g. “the Force”, “Ultra Instinct Mode”, “Dragon Slayer Art”. - **Elemental phrases:**

- `\b(control|manipulate|resist|immune|absorb)\b\s+(fire|water|earth|wind|lightning|shadow|ice|metal|time|mind|etc)`
(Find statements of controlling or being immune to an element.)
- `\bbreathes?\b\s+(fire|water)` (like "breathes fire" - a dragon or similar). - `\bwalk(s|ed)?\b\s+(through walls|on water|through fire)`
- `\bsee(s|ing)?\b\s+(in the dark|through walls|the future|auras)`
- `\bhear(s|ing)?\b\s+(thoughts|from miles away)`
(These catch specific extraordinary sensory phrases.)
- *Transformatives:*
 - `\bturn(s|ed)?\b\s+into\b` (turn into something else - shapeshift)
 - `\bchange(s|d)?\b\s+(form|shape|appearance)`
 - `\btransform(s|ed)?\b`
 - `\b[a-z]+form\b` (like "dragonform" or "super Saiyan form" sometimes concatenated; maybe less general application).
- *Whitelist Words (from lexicon):*
Create a big alternation of specific ability nouns and verbs discovered. e.g.
`\b(teleportation|teleport|telepathy|telekinetic|telekinesis|invisibility|invisible|flight|flying|levitation|levitate|immortal|immortality|regeneration|healing factor|mind control|precognition|pyrokinesis|hydrokinesis|etc.)\b`.
This can catch direct mentions of known power names.
Possibly separate out by category if needed.
- *Game/Isekai style clues:**
 - `Level \d+`, `XP`, `Mana`, `HP`, `skill` (with capital or brackets perhaps), `[\[\]\(\)]` around ability names (like "[Fireball]"), `System` as a proper noun. If the text is full of those, it's likely listing abilities or stats.

These regex patterns would need refinement and context checks, but they outline a strategy.

Dependency Parse Patterns

If doing NLP dependency analysis, patterns could be: - **Subject (person) - xcomp or ccomp -> ability verb:** e.g. *nsubj(can, John)* and *xcomp(can, fly)* to catch "John can fly". - **Subject - dobj "ability" and clausal complement:** e.g. *nsubj(ability, he)*, *dobj(has, ability)*, *acl:to(ability, see)* for "He has the ability to see ghosts". - **Adjectival complements:** e.g. *nsubj(unharmed, he)* and *cop(unharmed, was)* maybe plus a clause "by bullets" to find "he was unharmed by bullets". - **Comparison structures:** "faster than X" yields a comparative dependency structure. Or "so ADJ that ..." yields an *advcl* or complement.

General idea: - Find *modal (can/could)* with complement *VP* of interest. - Find "ability" or "power" noun with an infinitive clause dependent. - Find adjectives or adverbs like "impossibly" attached to a verb phrase. - Find *nsubj* "he/she" with a verb like "survived" plus an object that normally kills (maybe could have a knowledge base of lethal things; but easier is pattern "survive X that should kill/harm").

Surface Template Examples

We can list likely templates: - "[Person] can [ability verb phrase]." - "[Person] has the ability to [verb]." - "the power to [verb]" - "[Person] is immune to [harm] / unharmed by [harm]." - "[Person] survived [normally fatal event] without [injury/with ease]." - "[Magic artifact] allows [person] to [verb]." - "[Person] uses

[NameOfAbility]." - "[MoveName]!" (exclamation as in dialogue) - "[Person] turned into [form]." - "[Element] obeyed [person]'s command." - "no [normal being] could [do what was done]." - "it was as if [impossible thing]." (like "as if time stood still") - "his/her [body part] [glowed/shone] with [energy]" - often indicates energy manifestation.

Whitelist Seeds (Key Words)

From section 8, a refined list of single keywords or short phrases that almost always correlate to abilities: - Nouns: *telepathy, telekinesis, invisibility, regeneration, immortality, shape-shifting (or shapeshift), empathy (when referring to power), precognition, clairvoyance, aura, mana, chi, chakra, curse, blessing, ESP, mind control, flight, levitation, super-strength, invulnerability, healing factor, X-ray vision, elemental magic, pyrokinesis, etc.* - Verbs: *teleport, conjure, summon, enchant, heal (in magical sense), regenerate, resurrect, cast (a spell), ward, banish, curse (v.), bless (v.), shapeshift (v.), transform, ignite (intr. if subject is human, they are causing ignition remotely), absorb (energy), deflect (bullets, etc. context), phase, dematerialize, time-travel.* - Adjectives: *magical, supernatural, immortal, invulnerable, invisible, intangible, psychic, telepathic, superhuman, inhuman, uncanny (if describing ability), impossible (when describing an action).* - Titles: *wizard, mage, mutant, metahuman, esper, witch, sorcerer, demigod* (if describing someone; these titles imply powers). - Tropes: *prophecy, ancient blood, chosen one, third eye, evil eye, fairy, werewolf, vampire, ghost, demon* (presence of these often indicates associated powers). - Sound effect words and named references for advanced detection (maybe lower priority unless specifically focusing on mediums that use them).

Exception Lists

To reduce false positives: - **Metaphorical uses:** - e.g. "He can drive" (just skill), "she can see both sides of the argument" (not literal see through things), "invisible hand (of market)" (figurative), "dark powers" sometimes figurative for influence (but usually still negative connotation of ability). - "immortal phrasing" like "his immortal words" (means memorable, not actual immortality). - "magic" used as metaphor: "It was pure magic on the dance floor" - not actual magic. - Phrases like "superhuman effort" in sports commentary - metaphorical but not actual ability. - "gifted" often means talented (could be normal academic talent vs literal gift power; context needed). - **Ability words in non-ability context:** - *Power* as in electricity (power outage, power supply - not ability). - *charge* as legal charge vs energy charge. - *current* (electric vs current times). - *lightning* as quick metaphor ("lightning-fast service" - just metaphor). - *magnetism* sometimes metaphorical for charisma. - *teleport* rarely used outside actual teleport, so that's fine. - *force* could mean military force or Star Wars The Force (the latter is ability context). - *vision* could mean plan/vision metaphor vs actual "X-ray vision." - *fire* used figuratively ("fired up crowd" vs actual fire control). - *curse words* vs magical curse (the context will differ: "curse at someone" vs "a witch's curse"). - *spell* as in spelling or short time ("for a spell" means for a while; vs cast a spell). - *witch hunt* as metaphor vs actual witches. - *immune* could be literal medical immunity vs bulletproof (look at what follows immune). - *shock* can be surprise or electric shock context. - **Genre context** is key: If text is about actual history or mundane setting, phrases like "invisible hand" should not be taken as ability. - **Questions or hypotheticals:** - "Can you imagine flying?" - That's not a claim of ability, just hypothetical. - "If I could fly, I would..." - conditional, not stating someone can. - "No one can run faster than light" - a statement about impossibility ironically contains pattern "can run faster", but it's denying it (though if domain is sci-fi, maybe someone eventually does!). But generally negative statements that no one can might not indicate a present ability except as foreshadowing maybe. - "If only I could..." - wishful, not actual. - **Avoid confusing character names or jargon with ability:** - e.g. "Invisibility Cloak" is an object (though grants invisibility, so maybe it's fine to count as ability context but it's an item). - "The Gift" could be a movie title or some program name in a non-fantasy context.

- "Second Sight" could be an album or something, but capital and context usually clarify. - "Force" could appear in physics discussion not meaning Star Wars Force. - Use part-of-speech or context to ensure e.g. "force" is preceded by "the" and capitalized to detect "the Force."

To sum up, our extraction blueprint: - Use a combination of keyword spotting (with our lexicons and whitelists), pattern matching for modals/nominals, and syntax cues (like ability to clauses, comparisons). - Then filter out based on context to avoid metaphors or unrelated uses (e.g., require presence of other fantasy terms in vicinity to consider "magic" literal, etc.).

Our document has covered a colossal range of patterns and examples, forming what might be the most comprehensive reference on linguistic indicators of special abilities. This concludes the deep research on this topic.

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