

7 Magic

7.1 Introduction to Magic

Magic represents the effects of the unknown forces that shape and control the worlds. Those who have talent and knowledge can tap these energies (known as mana) and shape them to their own ends. These people are known as Mages. They are usually either revered or reviled by the normal population.

There are three types of Magic: Talent Magic operates more or less immediately, while Spell and Ritual Magic require preparation before taking effect. Spells may be prepared in seconds or minutes, but Rituals take hours (and sometimes many weeks) to perform.

There are a number of separate Colleges of Magic. Each represents a specific type of magic, and each has a list of Spells, Rituals and Talents available only to Adepts of that College. Most of the magic detailed within these rules is Collegiate magic.

Definitions:

Active Resistance A special type of Magic Resistance, where the entity can choose to concentrate their attention on resisting a magical effect, and thus reduce its Cast Chance by their Magic Resistance. Only some magic is actively resistible.

Adept A member of a College of Magic is known as an Adept.

Backfire If a spell or ritual is particularly incompetently cast, unpredictable and often dangerous effects can occur. This is colloquially known as a backfire.

Branches of Magic There are 3 branches of Magic: the Thaumaturgies, the theoretical branch of Magic including the Bardic, E & E, Mind, Naming, Illusion and Binding Colleges; the Elementals, the naturalistic branch of Magic that includes the Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ice and Celestial Colleges; and the Entities, the old, "dark" branch of Magic that includes the Necromantic, Rune, Summoning and Witchcraft Colleges. The Thaumaturgies and Entities are opposed to each other.

Cast Chance The modified Base Chance of effectively casting a spell or performing a ritual.

Cast Check The game mechanic whereby a Mage's player determines the result of an attempted spell or ritual.

Cold Iron All solid metals that are primarily composed of iron ore are termed Cold Iron. This includes both Iron and Steel. Such metals in a liquid state are not "cold". Cold Iron inhibits the ability of Mages to use mana.

College Most magic is divided up into numerous Colleges, each of which specialise in a type of magic (e.g. Fire, Necromancy). A Mage who has joined a particular College is known as an Adept of that College, and may not belong to another College without first forsaking all knowledge of their previous College.

Concentration If a spell has a concentration component in its duration, then the Adept must concentrate in order to maintain the spell. A Mage may only have one concentration spell in effect at any time.

Consecrated Ground Any ground that has been consecrated to the "Powers of Light" affects the Magic Resistance of all within it. There is no College specifically dedicated to the Powers of Light, because they are, in effect, opposed to the use of magic. Most temples and monasteries and some graveyards will be consecrated ground. Barrows, pagan temples and the dwellings of magical beings can never be consecrated ground. Undead and Necromancers suffer special penalties on consecrated ground.

Counterspell A type of spell which helps to protect individuals and areas against the effects of a particular College of Magic.

Fatigue Cost The amount of energy, in the form of Fatigue, that a Mage must expend in order to cast a spell.

General Knowledge All Colleges of Magic have a body of Spells, Talents and Rituals which are classified as General Knowledge. These magics are taught to all Adepts of the College during their initial training.

High Mana An area that is rich in mana is referred to as a high mana area. Such areas are rare, and include locations where human sacrifice is practised or where the inter-planar boundaries are weak, and mana leaks through. Often mountain tops or clearings in jungles will contain such areas. They are likely to be well guarded by beasts and individuals attracted by the mana, including a larger than usual proportion of fantastical beasts. Magic is easier to perform in these areas.

Low Mana An area with depleted mana is known as a low mana area. Most densely populated or civilised parts of the world are Low Mana, as are some battle-scarred areas. Magic is harder to cast in low mana areas.

Mage Any sentient being who can manipulate mana to produce (often fantastic) results (excluding racial Talents). A Mage must have a Magical Aptitude characteristic.

Magic Resistance All targets with a Willpower value have the capacity to resist some magics directed against them. This ability is their Magic Resistance, and is a function of their Willpower. Not all magic is resistible.

Magical Animates Anything that has been animated, except undead, is a magical animate. Some Magical animates gain a magic resistance. Only those animates that have a Magical Aptitude or Willpower gain a Magic Resistance. Those animates that have neither MA nor WP have no resistance to magic, and in addition, may be affected by spells that affect Entities and those that affect objects.

Mana The type of energy that is used in all magic. A Mage must draw upon mana to perform any magic. If there is no mana present, a Mage cannot perform any magic.

Object An item wholly composed of never living or formerly living matter, or some combination thereof. Objects do not have a Magic Resistance except when they are Possessions or Magical Animates.

Passive Resistance This is the default Magic Resistance made by all targets with willpower and operates automatically against all spells that may be passively resisted. It is possible to stop passively resisting temporarily.

Place of Power Certain places aid the practise of magic. The most well known places are Earth places of power, but they exist for all the Elemental and Entity Colleges (excluding Rune). Such places are rare, and often co-exist with High Mana areas.

Possessions Possessions are those objects held, carried or otherwise within the personal area of an Entity. They are affected by those spells that affect the Entity, and are entitled to the Entity's Magic Resistance.

Resistance Check The game mechanic which determines whether a resisting entity is fully affected by a magical effect.

Ritual Magic Complex procedures and techniques that require the Mage to spend large amounts of preparation time (and often ingredients) to complete successfully.

Special Knowledge All Colleges of Magic have a body of complex or specialised spells and rituals which are not taught to mere apprentices, but which are gained with time and effort after the Adepts prove

themselves worthy. These magics are termed Special Knowledge.

Spell Magic Codified magical formulae that take anywhere from a few seconds to a minute to perform, require energy from the Mage, and which result in specific alterations to Natural Law.

Talent Magic Magical abilities that require mana, but no energy and minimal time from the user. Many species have racial Talents.

7.2 How Magic Works

There are three types of Magic: Talent, Spell and Ritual Magic.

Talent Magic is broken into Racial and Collegiate Talents. Talents are common to all members of a Race or College of which they are a characteristic part and may never be learned or forgotten, though they often may be "ranked". Talents require no preparation, take a maximum of 5 seconds to utilise, and require no expenditure of energy. All Talents can be classified as either active or passive. Passive Talents are always in effect. Active Talents require a Pass Action to utilise, and often require rolls to see if they succeed. Racial Talents are described in Character Generation. Collegiate Talents are discussed in the individual Colleges.

Spell Magic constitutes the great majority of the magic utilised by Mages. Unless otherwise stated, all magic mentioned in these rules is Spell Magic. All Spell Magic has the following characteristics in common:

Each individual Spell has a defined range, duration, base chance and effect. Spells must usually be prepared by the Mage through a process of incantation to draw mana to activate the Spell. Spells are unstable in their workings, and if cast ineptly, may fail entirely or have unexpected effects on the vicinity. The casting of a Spell drains energy from the caster in the form of tiredness Fatigue.

Ritual Magic requires the expenditure of large blocks of time (usually hours) and usually certain conditions must be fulfilled while performing the Ritual. Ritual Magic occasionally requires a large number of special tools and substances and may be restricted to particular times or places. Magical effects from Ritual Magic tend to be more powerful, prolonged or delayed than those of Spells. Most rituals require a Cast Check to determine whether the ritual was successful. If not otherwise stated in the specific ritual description, a ritual may backfire (roll greater than Base Change + 30) with similar consequences to a spell. Rituals may also multiple effect similar to spells.

Extended Rituals

Some rituals require a far greater time to perform than the standard one hour, possibly requiring weeks or even months. During these rituals the Adept is not involved in constant concentration. The Adept may eat, sleep (8 hours a day) and perform other activities requiring less than 2 hours a day while engaged in a lengthy ritual. During the extended ritual the Adept can utilise only stored magic, and that inherent in the ritual.

7.3 How to Cast Spells

Casting a Spell is a complex process.

Preparing Firstly, the spell must be prepared and mana gathered for the spell. This does not require any fatigue, and normally carries no risk. However, it does involve gesticulations and conversation-level speech, which will be obvious to observers. The spell may be prepared in 5 seconds, 1 minute, or multiples of an hour (using Ritual Spell preparation). The length of time taken to prepare the spell is proportional to the resulting safety of the Mage. The length