Arrive on Time - A General Guide to Wizardry

Last update: 01/8/2021 (Updated for Tasha's Cauldron)

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Overview: What is a Wizard?

They are few who can manipulate the weave to their bidding. Some call on the intercession of their gods, others rely on some innate connection borne within them, still others call upon vile patrons for power. But you never had a quick and easy way to power. Time, dedication, and study are the root of your magic. By learning the inner workings of the weave and understanding the essential nature of the universe you see how the connections play out in ways that others can never hope to understand. The right word, gesture, and a bit of bat guano are all you need to bend the universe to your will. Your calculations provide the ability to do anything from producing a simple light, to stopping the flow of time itself.

The wizard is an arcane spellcaster. Without much in the way of weapons and armor, the wizard relies on her knowledge of magic for attack and defense. Wizards bring an uncanny amount of power and utility to an adventuring party. Beware, once that power has been tapped out, robes and a wooden staff do not do much to keep orcs and trolls at bay. Many wizard adventurers have met their end to a simple blade for want of one more spell.

Why play a Wizard?

A wizard is a great choice for a player who loves to prepare for battle. Gathering intel and choosing the best spells for the challenges ahead are the wizard's forte. The wizard has access to the largest list of arcane spells, and the ability to pick new spells from her spell book every day. However, such power comes at a cost. Wizards do not have the innate casting power of sorcerers, and as such, will never have access to metamagic. Nor do they have the skillful diversity of bards or their healing abilities.

Play a wizard if you like thinking and over analyzing every choice!
Play a wizard if you think knowledge is power!
Play a wizard if you think robes should be back in style!
Play a wizard if you think Gandalf was obviously the coolest member of the fellowship!
Play a wizard if your DM is pretty laid back and will let you get away with abusing illusion spells!

Thanks to RhaegarT for the formatting I used in this guide, as well as for his sorcerer guide, which I shamelessly plagiarized in a few places =D

Color Coding the Guide:

This guide will use the following ratings: (language shamelessly stolen from RhaegarT)

Red is dead. A trap that you will want to avoid at all costs, either because it's ineffective or because it's thoroughly outclassed by another option that accomplishes something similar.
Purple is a substandard choice. It might be useful in corner-case situations, but overall it's not worth the investment.
Green is average. You're not hurting your character by taking this, and it might even help in some situations, but there are better choices.
Blue is a good choice. It definitely helps your character in the majority of cases.
Sky Blue is a fantastic choice. An option you should strongly consider above most others.
Gold is mandatory if you want to be optimal. It's a rare rating that denotes something that is so good that you must take it, or you can't call yourself optimized.

Races

Aarakocra: Flying speed pretty useful for a wizard in combat, sit out of reach of the melee riff raff and rain down spells. But, you can usually just sit really far away instead. The Dex bonus isn't wasted on you, but no int buff hurts. Still has some advantages for utility, but fly spell or a flying familiar handle many of those. Make sure you take Featherfall, so you don't get prone and fall to your death. Update: I'm bumping this up to blue. At low levels flying is broken. At higher levels everyone will want to be flying, and potentially freeing up an attunement by having wings is a great value.
Assimar (Fallen, Procetor, Scourge): No int buff, spells are tied to CHA, and features you can get from another, better race. The volo variant features are really strong even with the off-stat problem, so that bumps it a notch.
Bugbear: Not really doing anything for you.
Centaur: I am just imagining a centaur in a robe and wizard hat. Yeah, the race fits you just as well as it sounds.
Changeling: Significantly better for the sorc, but shapechanger along with your charm spells is useful until you can get alter self.
Dragonborn (Ravenite): Fire resist could be alright, I guess.
Dragonborn (Draconblood): Breath Weapon is still pretty crummy, but I suppose you could do worse.
Dwarf (Mountain)(Hill, Duergar): No int bump but, a nice collection of other traits. Mountain gets you into

medium armor so you can stop improving dex at +2, and you don't have to bother casting mage armor every day. Freeing up a spell slot and some feats is worth the trade. Duergar Resilience is nice, but the rest of the subrace features don't do much for you.
Dwarf (Mark of Warding): Alright another Int race! Makes for a really decent skill monkey wizard by buffing your investigation, history and thieves tools. The spells are of dubious utility, and all but one of them are already on your list.
Elf, (High)(Eladrin(DMG))(Eladrin(MTF)): High Elf gets an int bonus and some nice traits. Eladrin is probably better, as a free use of misty step per short rest is fantastic. The MTF version is just worse for us.
(Drow): Drow superior darkvision is really nice with your long range spells, but too situational to be worth giving up your int buff and the sunlight sensitivity just hurts too much.
(Wood) Wood elf doesn't really offer anything.
(Shadow): Overall mediocre, but adding **pass without trace** to your list is huge. Potentially worth it just for that if your party does a lot of sneaking. (Check out human mark of passage).
(Pallid): A few spells you already have. Advantage on investigation is nice, but not worth the drawbacks.
(Sea): Dex and con are both nice, but nothing else that useful. Probably worth if you are doing an aquatic campaign.
(Shadar-kai): Dex and con are still nice, but this time you have a couple of useful features. Not bad. Strongly worth considering for low int builds. Misty step that's not a spell, meaning you can use it and still cast a spell. Nice.
Firbolg: Cracks me up. You can talk to plants but they can't talk back… I mean, anyone can do that. Hidden step is nice.
Genasi (Fire)(Other): Con is useful for anyone, but racial bonuses are less valuable if you aren't stacking it (assuming point buy). Fire offers a +1 int, but since the spells are tied to Con, there isn't a huge synergy for you unless you are planning to build some sort of tanky **warmage** multiclass. In general, the daily spells here are nothing to write home about.
Githyanki / Githzerai: You get +1 and some pretty decent traits. Warmages and abjurers looking to frontline should pay attention to githyanki for that medium armor.
Gnome (Deep, Forest): Gnome is pretty much built for wizard with its +2 int. Gnome cunning is also amazing. Any sub race is good but Forest Gnome and Deep Gnome are usually more optimal with the dex bump. Deep gnome also gives you access to an outstanding feet, which may be of particular interest to abjurers.
(Rock, Scribing): Rock gnome is still a fine choice, especially if you think you can take advantage of its more non-combat perks: artificer's lore and tinker. Scribing's spell list gives you nothing, and the free casts are meh. Probably the least useful gnome.
Goblin: Yeah, makes no sense to me either, but these features are the jam. Small size lets you move through large creature's space, hide behind allies as a bonus action to scorching ray with advantage. Or disengage as a bonus and still cast a real spell, unlike misty step. Fury of the small is a nice, reliable damage burst that just works. Con and dex aren't wasted. Crazy. Let me see your goblin bladesinger builds lol.
Goliath: No real reason to pick goliath.
Half Elf (various sub races): A solid choice, on par with human variant since you can get +1 dex and int. Decent perks. Works well with an illusionist or enchanter who wants to back up his spells with bluffs / persuasions. Lots of subclasses here with minor variations. They are all pretty much on par.
Half Elf Mark of Storm: No int and none of these spells are very useful.
Half Elf Mark of Detection: The spells aren't great but at least you can get int.
Half Orc (Basic)(finding): Nothing here for you. Mark of finding is technically better, since you get faerie fire (a great spell) and wisdom. It's still red, though.
Halfling (Ghost, Lightfoot, Lotusden, Stout, Hospitality): Great collection of traits, but no stat bump. Goodberry almost makes hospitality blue.
(Healing): A bunch of spells you don't have. Some of which are really really good. You don't really give up much to get it. Aura of vitality. On a wizard. Wow.
Hobgoblin: Solid stat layout. Solid features.
Human (variant): +1 to all stats isn't terribly useful, but the variant is pretty nice, as the feat can be used

to create an ad-hoc +2 int race, but Alert might be a better choice.
(Finding): Faerie fire is solid
(Handling): Nothing here, really. You can get +1 int, so technically not red.
(Sentinel): Guardian of faith is kinda a cool pickup, since no concentration.
(Making): Perfect stat layout, Artisan's intuition is nice, magic weapon with no concentration is nice. Spells are useless.
(Passage): Great stat layout, Misty step on long rest, Pass without trace, freedom of movement. Even better for a sneaky party.
Kalashtar: Nothing to see here unless your DM is stingy about languages and controlling your summons. You can talk to anything with mind link, so you're always able to give orders. Could also be good for a talky campaign. Advantage on wis saves is nice. Communicate while polymorphed.
Kenku: Dex is nice.
Kobold: Pack Tactics is insane, but you only really get benefit on your cantrips and scorching ray. Overall probably not worth the rest of the kit. **Bladesingers** might consider it. The elegance of bladesinging is really captured by these kobold and goblin bladesingers.
Lizardfolk: Eh. Con is okay.
Loxodon: This probably seems weird but, you can go with con instead of dex. No int bonus hurts, but you can start with 17 con, 15 int for 15 AC, lots of hp as you level. It's probably worth it. Serenity is nice too. Pick up Absorb elements to deal with your crap dex save. Excellent **grappler**. Also this is just cool.
Minotaur: You can get int, which is nice, but the rest of your traits don't do much for you. However, if you are making a **gish or grappler**, this might be a decent choice. The horns let you wield a shield and focus and still make attacks or grapple one guy while holding a focus and still making attacks. Outclassed by Simic Hybrid for that now.
Orc: another con race that offers nothing. Volo's version actually has an int penalty.
Shifter: No int bumps to be found, but the base traits are solid and a few of the subraces stand out. Longstride is particularly attractive if you aren't using your bonus action for anything else. Longtooth is nice for grapplers. Wildhunt buffs the always-important wis save.
Simic Hybrid: Solid stat layout, excellent **grappler**, or a free +1 AC. Nothing not to like.
Tiefling (various other subraces): Could be decent with its +1 int, but it doesn't really compete with Half elf / High elf in my opinion. Infernal legacy trait being tied to charisma kills it.
Variant Tiefling (Feral + winged): The Sword Coast Adventurer's guide offers these attractive options for Tieflings. As always be aware of the danger of flying, but this is a solid choice. It's basically Aarakocra but better.
Tortle: You aren't a ninja, unfortunately. That said, base AC of 17 is killer, and I love the idea of setting up a concentration save spell, then withdrawing into your shell for 21 AC and advantage on con saves. Try breaking my concentration now! Unfortunately attackers within 5' will have advantage since you are prone.
Triton: Go Sea Elf or Simic if you want an aquatic race.
Vedalken: Not quite perfect stat layout, but close enough. Advantage on mental saves and the d4 and proficiency on a skill rounds out a very solid kit.
Verdan: The advantage on wis saves is great, and the extra skills and languages are nice.
Warforged: Although I lament the loss of the much more interesting warforged that was in UA, this Last war version is actually better for us. With +2 con +1 int, free AC, and a skill, it's a solid platform.
Yuan-ti Pureblood: Suggestion is nice, and you get +1 int. Magic resistance is super amazing. This is better than "spell resistance" notice the "other magical effects" bit. That means it works on almost anything, including dragon breath, gaze attacks, ghoul poison, etc etc (at the DM's discretion).

Stats

Strength: Really does nothing for you. Not a lot of Strength saves out there either. Dump it unless you are doing a grapple build or aiming for heavy armor.
Dexterity: Your primary defense vs spell damage and physical attacks. This should be as high as you can reasonably get it (unless you are going for armor).
Constitution: Failing a con save sucks. More HP is good. Don't dump this, but you aren't a tank either.

Intelligence: This is your casting stat. Max it. Spell saves and attacks are tied to this, as well as number of prepared spells.
Wisdom: Applies to Wisdom saves and Perception checks. Both are important, but not important enough to invest heavily in this. Don't dump it though.
Charisma: You can consider not dumping this if you want to back up your illusions with some talky skills. It's not super important, though.

Skills

Class Skills:

Arcana: This is your job. If you have a wizard that doesn't know arcana, well… I'm not even sure how that works. You need this to copy spells. Even more gold if your DM lets you use this reactively to identify spells as they are being cast.
History: It's tied to Int, so you will be good at it, but to be honest, this doesn't come up in my games too often. Your mileage may vary.
Insight: Good skill but it's tied to Wis. You will probably not have a huge advantage on this. Leave it to the cleric.
Investigation: Great skill if you know how to use it to your advantage. This is basically your search check, and can also be used to do research. Need to find a secret door? Investigation. Need to find out what the BBEG is weak to? Investigation. It also fits really well flavor-wise with a wizard who learns from books!
Medicine: Good skill but it's tied to Wis. You will probably not have a huge advantage on this. Leave it to the cleric.
Religion: Oddly enough, this is pretty decent for you since it's tied to Int.

Other Skills:

Stealth: You have a pretty awesome Dex score, right? You are wearing cloth, right? You can make minor illusions for distractions / block line of sight, right? Seriously, get stealth, have fun.
Nature: As with religion, it's tied to Int, so you might actually be better than the druid at this.
Perception: Tied to Wisdom, but it's "the most important skill." (Mileage may vary depending on your GM.) It hurts if you don't have this one trained, I hate to admit.
Deception, Persuasion, Performance: These guys can be used to give your illusions and enchantments a bit more kick. If you are making a dedicated social wizard then go for it. (Although you are likely better off with sorcerer, warlock, or bard if this is what you are trying to do.)

Class Features:

Base Features: Welp. You have the worst HP, armor, and proficiencies available. Try not to get hit.

Saves: Wisdom is useful... Int, not so much.

Spell Casting: You have the largest spell list, and the ability to switch out spells every day. In theory you can learn every spell on your list. In practice, you are limited by gold to transcribe the spells and how many scrolls/spellbooks you can get access to.

Spellbook: Whether this feature is a blessing or a curse depends on how often your DM gives out spellbooks / scrolls / lets you buy new spells. In any case, your versatility is better than a sorc or warlock.

Ritual Casting: Amazing. Not needing to have rituals prepared means your utility goes through the roof.

This feature only gets better as more content is added. (Boy, I was optimistic about player content when I wrote that sentence back in 2014.)

Arcane Recovery: Better than sorc's recovery feature since you don't have to give up features to use it. Not bad.

Spell Mastery: Shield and Misty Step. Or invisibility. Woah.

Signature Spells: "Encounter" versions of some pretty serious spells. Only blue because at this point you already have a ton of spell casts at higher levels and will likely only rarely run out of good things to cast.

Arcane Traditions:

I'm not going to rate each individual feature, but I will give my thoughts on them, and rate each school. In general I think the schools are fairly well balanced assuming you pick the right one for the campaign you are in.

Abjuration:

Abjuration Savant: There are 26 Abjuration Spells Available to the Wizard, not including cantrips.
Arcane Ward: This is a really nice defensive feature which can save the party a good amount of healing if used properly, however, even as an Abj spec, I'm not sure how often you will be casting abjuration during combat. It might not get refreshed that often in combat, but you can spam Alarm (for free) to keep it up between fights. Your DM may decide this is cheese, though.
Projected Ward: Move your ward to another creature who needs it. Nice since it can be done as a reaction.
Improved Abjuration: This basically makes it so you don't have to cast counterspell at max level for it to be useful. That's pretty good.
Spell Resistance: If you are fighting casters, they can pretty much forget about it. (Note it says spells, not magic damage. This won't work on dragon's breath or similar attacks.) Pretty strong, but you can also get this as a racial trait.

Thoughts on Abjuration: If you know you will be **fighting a lot of casters**, get this. Otherwise, it's still a fine choice. Consider a level of fighter and grabbing armor. Abjurers make great frontline fighters with Arcane Ward. See the July 2015 sage advice for more clarification on how the ward works.

Conjuration:

Conjuration Savant: (41 spells)
Minor Conjuration: Purely flavor/utility. Maybe situationally useful.
Benign Transposition: Get yourself out of a hot mess, and put an enemy into one by swapping with the fighter. Recharging after you cast a conjuration spell makes this interesting. No need to take misty step now.
Focused Conjuration: Nice when you need it, that's for sure. If you plan to be a summon master, this is bread and butter. Remember that conjured elementals will turn against you if your concentration is broken. On the other hand, hopefully your summons are eating those attacks for you instead (that's what they are for). Note that there are other concentration spells aside from summons. e.g. Evard's, cloudkill.
Durable Summons: Pretty good when you conjure elemental. Amazing when you up rank a conjure minor elementals. Enjoy the tactical madness from 24 minor elementals with bounded accuracy and 30 extra THP running around.

Thoughts on Conjuration: If you want to summon, this is a more straightforward choice than necromancy. Think of your summons as distractions and bags of HP that the enemies have to get through

to get to you and you will get the idea. It will almost always be useful if you focus on summons, but summons are pretty good even without it.

Sage advice July 2015 tells us that the DM gets to control what you actually summon, and can even give you elementals of lower CR than the max. Talk to your DM. If he is going to screw you on your summons, then I would **avoid** this spec and all related spells. Its best features come on pretty late.

Divination:

Divination Savant: (17 spells)
Portent: Portent is potent. This is a great way to force a monster to fail a save or make sure an important ability hits. Better for you than lucky feat, since you can use this on monster saves. This is potentially the single best feature available to wizards.
Expert Divination: Seems good to me at first, but honestly it's situational. The requirements of having the proper slot available to recover, and having to cast a divination spell (of which there are only 17) make this of fairly limited use.
The Third Eye: Darkvision is easily replaced by a party member with a racial ability or a simple torch, but the ability to see invisible or ethereal at will is pretty incredible.
Greater Portent: Well at least they understand why you took this school. As a capstone it's certainly powerful, if not a bit bland.

Thoughts on Divination: With Portent, Divination is a great catch-all school. Making enemies fail saves on disintegrate or hold person, or even a charm spell in a social situation is useful no matter what. If you don't really care for any of the schools, this is a good choice for generic usefulness.

Enchantment:

Enchantment Savant: (24 spells)
Hypnotic Gaze: Not terrible, but not very good either. It's fairly dangerous and situational since you need to be right next to the enemy, and stay there, but this is basically an at-will incapacitation.
Instinctive Charm: You are going to need this when your hypnotic gaze fails. Again, it's basically at-will, but generally there will either be no other targets available, or it's just going to move the attack to one of your allies. Situationally useful, but unreliable.
Split Enchantment: Twin spell any enchantment at will? Twinned hold and dominate spells, mostly I think. This is the best combat perk in enchantment. Charm monster from XGtE is a gamechanger here.
Alter Memories: This one basically gets around the big problem with social use of charm spells. Too bad it comes so late. Mostly utility/social implications.

Thoughts on Enchantment: If you play combat-light, and you focus on RP this one is great. Twinned enchantment spells are really nice in combat too. Unfortunately, split enchantment just comes in so late. Make sure you take a look at bard and sorcerer. They might be just as attractive for enchantment.

Evocation:

Evocation Savant: (51 spells)
Sculpt spells: Ironically, you get this before you have any large AOE spells, but trust me it will come in handy if you plan to fling fireballs. Probably the best feature in evocation.
Potent Cantrip: As of the Elemental Evil supplement, we now have frostbite to take advantage of this, so I guess it's okay. Just kidding, it's garbage.
Empowered Evocation: With the PHB errata this is pretty much a non-feature on single target spells like scorching ray. It still works fine on fireball.
Overchannel: Cone of cold just got real, but with the PHB errata you can no longer apply this to cantrips. Supposedly that use was overpowered. It's not. Check the section at the end of the guide if you don't

believe me. But since you now can't use it on cantrips the feature just became somewhat less useful.

Thoughts on Evocation: If you want to do single target damage, you will have to look elsewhere. The nerfs to empowered evocation and overchannel make evoker a lot less viable for that. It's still a decent choice for AOE nuking. **Blue** if you don't use the errata. The ability to rely on cantrips for damage at later levels means you can fill out your list with even more utility. And scorching ray with pre-errata empowered evocation offers good single target damage. Basically, if your DM loves to throw big groups at you, this will be a great choice. If she prefers 1-2 really strong enemies, avoid this like the plague.

Illusion:

Illusion Savant: (29 Spells)
Improved Minor Illusion: I love this kinda stuff, but it really depends on what your DM will let you get away with. In the right hands this can be pretty powerful, but it's up to your creativity to make it good.
Malleable Illusions: More flexibility for your illusions. Again, if you like this stuff, you will find a use for this.
Illusory Self: An auto miss once per rest is pretty decent.
Illusory Reality: This could be pretty hilarious. The image can't "directly harm" anyone. But I'm sure you creative types will come up with something. Suggestion: Make a real cage around the enemy. No limit to how often you can do this (aside from how many illusions you can cast), so that's pretty cool. Becomes nearly game breaking when combined with **Mirage Arcane.**

Thoughts on Illusion: Let's be honest, you know if you are going to pick this. If you love coming up with strange, outside of the box ways to mess with your enemies, this will make it easier. That said, you might not need this spec at all. Illusions already do what they do without it. Combat wise, you don't really gain anything until the level 14 feature, but that feature is really good.

Necromancy:

Necromancy Savant: (24 Spells)
Grim Harvest: This could be nice at low level, if you were actually doing enough damage to kill anything. By the time you have real damage output, the healing is likely not that great. In any case, I think the abjuration shield thing is better. Important to note, this heals once **per turn**, so damaging terrain that triggers at the start of an enemy's turn can potentially result in several heals per round.
Undead Thralls: Okay, your zombies and skeletons are more dangerous and there is one more of them. This is certainly helpful if you want to have that army of undead at your command.
Inured to Undeath: Really situational, but if you are reduced to zero max hp, you die. Nice benefit that you will wish you had sooner if you fight a lot of undead.
Command Undead: This is a pretty potent way to turn around an encounter with undead. Intelligent undead will break free pretty quickly. If GM throws a ogre zombie or something at you, you might just have that unique undead minion you always wanted. You can also command one of your own undead creations to remove the requirement to reassert control over it each day. Also has a great combo with feeblemind.

Thoughts on Necromancy: To really make this effective you need to have a way to generate minions during down time. Your minions last 24 hours, or indefinitely, as long as you recast animate dead every day. The conjurer only gets 1 hour, so your strength is building up an army of undead. This is a lot weaker if you have to cast animate dead during your adventuring day to try to build up your army. Hidden uses for zombies: help action and grapple. A full broadside of skeleton archers can also provide surprisingly impressive damage. Necromancy is probably best from about **level 6-8** where you have enough skelies to have fun, and they can still hit stuff.

Transmutation:

Transmutation Savant: (55 Spells)
Minor Alchemy: Welp, this is just asking for trouble. I hope you like being an outlaw after you try to pass that wood off as a silver bar.
Transmuter Stone: A painless way to gain proficiency in con saves. This is really helpful if you plan to use a lot of concentration spells. If you know you are going to need a specific resist 8 hours in advance, you will just prep resist elements, but this lets you give one more person resist without using a concentration slot.
Shapechanger: Looks like it's purely utility. Not a lot of scary stuff at CR1. Turn into a bird and fly away to escape that TPK, I guess? At this level you have other scouting options. At level 10 this honestly feels like a non-feature.
Master Transmuter: I'm guessing this will mainly find use as Panacea or Restore Life. In either case, it's fairly powerful. Panacea gets really strong when combined with shapechange. Turn into something with a ton of hp, and then get a free full heal when you are low.

Thoughts on Transmutation: It's a weird collection. It's mostly focused on non-combat applications, but Panacea + shapechange could be pretty useful. I think there are more compelling choices for combat and noncombat, both.

Tasha's Subclasses:

Bladesinging:

Training in War and Song: A solid feature. Letting you pick up light armor means you can probably forgo mage armor. Your weapon will most likely be the rapier (or scimitar if you plan to use two-weapon fighting). You can get a strength weapon… but don't. The skill pickup is flavorful but probably not that useful.
Bladesong: With light armor, 20 int and 16 dex you are now sitting at 20AC. With shield spell, and 20 int/dex you are looking at 27 AC. That's… pretty serious. Oh and you also get a concentration bonus, move speed, and acrobatics bonus. With Tasha's update you get to use this a lot less often, but it's still incredible.
Extra Attack: With Tasha's update this becomes an incredible damage bump. Previously you had to choose between extra attack and a cantrip, now you get both, AND you can still use two weapon fighting or other "when you attack" bonus actions. A huge buff. This guide used to say "If singers got the EK's level 7 feature instead of extra attack, they would be perfect (and probably OP)." Instead they got this and it's better.
Song of Defense: Alright let's do a little experiment. Ancient blue dragon does ~88 damage with a breath attack. I hope you brought potions of lightning resist. Reduce that to 58 damage with a level 6 spell song of defense, then resistance reduces it to 30. Not too shabby.
Song of Victory: Hopefully you now have your dex up to 18 or 20. This is a decent damage feature that also applies to the new melee attack cantrips. It won't make you a damage monster, but it has a pretty significant effect on your at-will damage, particularly if you are making 3 attacks. That said, at this level you have a lot of better spells to cast.

Thoughts on Bladesinging: Okay, first the bad news. You have great AC but your hp still sucks. Your rapier does great damage (particularly from level 5 on), but the extra damage comes at a big risk. Your optimal path is to stay at range and abuse your crazy high AC, concentration checks, and damage reduction to keep powerful concentration spells going (animate objects). Once you run out of spells, you

can feel free to close to melee, since if you die it's no big loss anyway (what good is a wizard with no spells?).
If you don't mind playing risky, getting in there and attacking with your rapier is viable. The class is solid all around regardless of how you plan to play it. The new melee cantrips work extremely well with the class and it begs for Rogue multiclass which we will talk about more in the multiclassing section.
Also, try to pick up stealth from a background.

Order of Scribes:

Wizardly Quill: Just flavor. Although time to copy spells could be pretty useful, particularly in games with very little downtime (most published adventures).
Awakened Spellbook: This is a pretty decent feature. The ability to switch damage types is slightly limited, but if your DM gives you plenty of spells to copy it should be fine. Fast rituals are really nice. Lots of times all your rituals are useless because you don't have 10 minutes to prepare.
Manifest Mind: Bleh. Find familiar that needs your bonus action to move. Not a good level 6 feature.
Master Scrivener: Basically one extra spell per day, pre chosen from your spell book. Good for a spell you will probably only need once. Maybe mage armor, or something like see invisibility?
One with the Word: Completely negates any damage (not just from an attack), so that's nice. Clearly you can't use this very often or you will have no spells known. Probably only used to prevent death.

Thoughts on Order of Scribes: The rating here really depends on how many extra spells you get to copy during your game. If your DM never hands out spells as rewards this is **RED**. If you get a metric ton, it's probably **green**. Even in the best case, though, the features aren't super impactful, and are generally outshined by other schools.

Xanathar's Guide to Everything Subclasses:

War Magic:

Arcane Deflection: +2 AC is kinda crap, just use shield. I do like the saving throw bonus, but then it says I can't cast real spells on my next turn. Overall, a poor feature, especially when compared with bladesinging.
Tactical Wit: A really solid feature, on par with the alert feat (one of the highest rated).
Power Surge: Um, this sounded really cool at first, but 1) unless you see a lot of spellcasters, you will probably get nearly no use out of it, 2) the damage is pretty bad. Also, I thought I was using my reaction for arcane deflection, to get the saving throw bonus…
Durable Magic: This also seems fairly unimpressive when compared to either bladsinging or the similar conjuration ability. That said, it works for all concentration spells, which does include animate objects and polymorph self, so there is some use there.
Deflecting Shroud: Really, really unimpressive capstone. Again, when I use arcane deflection, I can't cast real spells, so this is some compensation for my next turn, but it's probably not enough to ever get me to use Arcane Deflection.

Thoughts on War Magic: I would have expected some heavy or medium armor, maybe some features to synergize attacks with spells, extra hp, etc. Instead we get a weird mix of a feature that probably hurts you more to use than not, and a clump of features that are outshined by other subclasses. A 2 level dip into this would probably be pretty good for a EK or Arcane Trickster, since you don't mind not being able to cast spells for a turn, but bladesinger is still better for that.
Probably the best use I see of this class is a **polymorph mage**. You get high initiative, so you can cast poly right away, then you have bonuses to concentration and there's nothing saying you can't use arcane

deflection while polymorphed, now with no downside! It actually sounds kinda fun too. Too bad polymorph has a fairly short viable level range.

Wildemount Subclasses:

Chronurgy Magic:

Chronal Shift: Really similar to portent, the divination ability, and I said that might be the best wizard subclass feature. This one you don't get to pre-roll, but you can use it after you get the result. I think it's just as good.
Temporal Awareness: Just as good as War mage's tactical wit. A great feature.
Momentary Stasis: Situational, but potentially very strong. You are giving up a turn to maybe deny a turn, but your allies can't attack it, so have everyone heal up, or ready an action to go off as soon as the monster moves again.
Arcane Abeyance: Lots of potential here. Give your fighter a bead of haste, or give your rogue a bead of greater invisibility. Let them concentrate on their own buffs for once. Also, a melee is in a better position to cone of cold or fear than you usually are. Action economy and free concentration all in one.
Convergent Future: This is incredible. Just being able to decide that a roll succeeds or fails isn't something you are supposed to be able to do in dnd. With the amount of save or suck in the wizard spell list, this basically just lets you delete anything that doesn't have legendary saves.

Thoughts: Probably the best subclass so far. It's like Divination, but with even more features. Can't go wrong with this, folks.

Graviturgy Magic:

Adjust Density: A weird feature with no direct application in combat, but it doesn't allow a save, so that's interesting. Normally you can't just force someone to have disadvantage without a save. Potentially really good for grapplers. Also some skill check applications. Hard to combo with your gravity spells because of concentration. Welp.
Gravity Well: You will be able to use this every turn, which is nice, but how often does 5' matter? Depends on how often you fight directly next to lava. Can be useful as a free disengage. Combine with shield for a free reaction to move 5' and force an attack to miss (of course, shield usually does that anyway). Has some cheese potential with booming blade, but without that it will be unimpressive in most games, I suspect.
Violent Attraction: Read: 5d10 free damage per long rest. That's pretty okay, but kinda meh for a 10th level feature. 10d10 damage if you are constantly dropping people, but then you are using spells that do less damage. Evoker's damage feature is stronger.
Event Horizon: Pretty strong effect. 30' radius with pretty decent crowd control. I hate that it takes an action to activate though. By 14th level I probably have better stuff to cast.

Thoughts: If you are comboing Adjust Density with a grappler or some other kinda cheese, then there's potentially some use. Otherwise, nothing here seems that useful. Gravity well's free disengage is nice, and you could potentially combo it with booming blade to create those nice catch-22s. The best use here is probably as a two level dip for a grappler.
If you are small and you want to be able to have your mage hand carry you around, adjust density could work for that.

Spells

Notes on Spell Selection

Knowing vs preparing:

When learning new spells it is important to realize that you will know far more spells than you can actually prepare, and you can prepare more spells than you can actually cast. For this reason, it's important to try to learn a variety from the following four classes of spells.

Rituals: Get some rituals. Never prepare them. You can cast them without having them prepared and without using spell slots. Since you can't prepare everything, picking up extra rituals adds to your utility directly.

Situational Spells: Resist element spells, Scrying spells, social spells. etc. Try to predict what type of situation you will be in today, and prepare accordingly. These are spells that you will prepare based on the situation at hand, when you know it in advance.

Contingency Spells: These are spells you usually prepare, but don't usually cast. Feather fall is a great example. When you need them, you need them NOW, and you usually won't know 8 hours in advance. These are generally the first to get sidelined when you bring in the situational spells.

Bread and Butter Spells: These are the spells you spam. If you are an evoker it's fireball etc. If you are a conjurer, it's summon elementals. If you are running a social campaign, suggestion. Don't get a ton of these, but try to target a few different elements, saves, etc.

Concentration:

Don't prepare a dozen concentration spells. You can't use them at the same time. Wizards are even more limited than sorcs in this respect with no quicken, and no twin spells.

Spell Ratings

Some stuff is hard to rate based on situational utility. I will leave most of that stuff green, since it's not a trap, but might be highly situational.

Note that these ratings are assuming that you are forced to make a choice (learning new spells at level up, or only able to afford to buy so many). In general, if you have the opportunity to learn a spell, then learn it! Your real power is your versatility, and you never know when the most obscure spell could be just what you need.

Notation (School | Defense | Damage Type)(R)(C)

Using the following abbreviations for schools: Abj=abjuration, Cnj=Conjuration, Div=Divination, Enc=Enchantment, Evo=Evocation, Ilu=Illusion, Nec=Necromancy, Tra=Transmutation

Using the following abbreviations for what defense the target resists with: AC=Armor Class, Str=Strength, Dex=Dexterity, Con=Constitution, Int=Intelligence, Wis=Wisdom, Cha=Charisma, HP=Hit Points (e.g. Sleep) None=The spell automatically hits, "--"=The spell does not directly affect an enemy.

A damage type in brackets e.g. [Bashing] indicates that the spell does not do damage but an effect caused by the spell does damage of that type (E.g. Bigby's Hand). "--"=The spell does not directly damage an enemy.

An "R" following the notation indicates that it is a ritual.
A "C" following the notation indicates it requires concentration.

Cantrips

Acid Splash(Cnj|Dex|Acid): Works with empowered cantrip, for what it's worth. Otherwise the aoe is situational and low damage. Won't benefit from empowered evocation. It's okay if you need a close range attack, but I would focus on leaving in that situation, rather than damage. Bladesingers should just use one of their melee cantrips.
Blade Ward(Abj|--|--): Trap. Use the dodge action instead.
Chill Touch(Nec|AC|Necrotic): Incorporeal undead are immune and a few others are resistant to necrotic damage, but in general necrotic is a solid damage type. Also, keep in mind that the "on hit" features work even if they don't take damage. The disadvantage effect can be very powerful, and the healing debuff will shut down vampires and many other regenerating/healing enemies. It's slightly less damage than a firebolt, but adds some great utility in specific cases.
Dancing Lights(Evo|None|--)(C): Requires concentration, but if you can cast this on enemies and stay hidden, your friends can rain down death on them from outside its range.
Firebolt(Evo|AC|Fire)**:** A solid general option due to long range and good damage. The only problem is fire resist is the most common. I recommend you pick up at least one other damaging cantrip.
Friends(Enc|--|--)(C)**:** Makes someone like you, and then hate you. If you can think of 10 uses for that off the top of your head then this is the spell for you.
Infestation (Cnj|Con|Poison): Its poison (which is bad) and the random movement is pretty unreliable.
Light(Evo|--|--)**:** Nice for someone in the party to have this, but eh, torches.
Mage Hand(Cnj|--|--): If you ever need to stick your hand into something that is likely a trap, make your rogue do it. If you don't have a rogue, use mage hand.
Mending(Tra|--|--)**:** Situational utility
Message(Tra|None|--)**:** Situational utility
Minor Illusion(Ilu|Int|--)**:** Portable cover, distraction, social tool. Can take the place of prestidigitation in many cases.
Poison Spray(Cnj|Con|Poison)**:** Check the range. It's good damage, but being so close is generally a bad idea. One of the few cantrips that does work with evokers potent cantrip, however; it does not get empowered evocation.
Prestidigitation(Tra|--|--)**:** Read the description. This isn't a replacement for minor illusion as many players try to make it.
Ray of Frost(Evo|AC|Cold): The slow probably won't matter often. Shorter range. Good alternative if the enemy is fire resistant, though. If your party is good at **counting squares** and using spacing, then the slow could be really good.
Shocking Grasp(Evo|AC|Lightning): A way to potentially escape melee without wasting an action on disengage. Can be delivered by your familiar and is one of only a very few spells that can be used for non-lethal damage (since it's a touch attack). On the other hand, if you are actually in danger, you should probably not gamble on shocking grasp. Just misty step or disengage.
True Strike(Div|--|--)(C): Eats your turn so maybe you can hit next turn. If there were some really nasty high level spells that required an attack this might have some value, but nope. It's only your first attack roll, too, so you can't combo it with scorching ray.

XGtE Spells:
Booming Blade(Evo|Ac|Thunder): There's some back and forth with this spell and your attack damage if

you are a bladesinger. At level 5 this is way better than an attack, at level 6 with your extra attack feature, this falls off if you can't guarantee the extra damage. If you have rogue's cunning action, you can hit an isolated target and then move away, **forcing** them to either take the thunder damage or waste their turn. Just make sure you have enough dex to make it worthwhile.
Control Flames(Tra|--|--)**:** There's a bit of nice utility here with controlling the brightness of your torches. This seems to be more useful than light. If you need to see far, double the range of the light, or lower it way down if you are trying to sneak.
Create Bonfire(Cnj|Dex|Fire)(C)**:** A decent damage pickup for conjurers. Decent damage that repeats each round, and good range. Also has some utility. No one wants to use concentration on a cantrip after like level 2, though. Useful in conjunction with the pyrotechnics spell. (I guess this was errata'd but I don't care, thats dumb.)
Frostbite(Evo|Con|Cold): The damage on this looks low, but if you are an evoker, it gets both your empowered evocation and your potent cantrip. That combined with the disadvantage rider makes this a solid choice. Just keep in mind it's a Con save, so don't throw it at big things.
Green-Flame Blade(Evo|AC|Fire): **Light blue** for anyone taking dex (or str, I guess) to 20. You can potentially hit an easy-to-hit target, and use the auto-damage on a harder to hit target. Thats nice. This is almost always going to be more damage than your normal attack if you can hit 2 targets, but I will go into that math later.
Gust(Tra|--|--): Hard to think of a lot of use cases where mage hand wouldn't serve you better. Just pushing one guy 5ft doesn't seem like it's worth a pick.
Infestation (Cnj|Con|Poison): Con saves are often low for low level enemies, but they quickly skyrocket, making this hard to land. In addition, poison is a terrible damage type, half the MM is immune. The damage is also absurdly low. I would only pick this up if you have some way to cheese the very random and unreliable forced movement (maybe with a druid with spike growth?).
Lightning Lure(Evo|Str|Lightning): Cantrip forced movement. This is only blue if you actually want people close to you. I.E. Eldritch Knight or Bladesinger. Great combo with damaging terrain, especially cloud of daggers.
Mold Earth(Tra|--|--)**:** Seems far too situational for one of my coveted cantrip slots.
Shape Water(Tra|--|--): As above, far too situational.
Sword Burst(Cnj|Dex|Force): Force damage is always great. That said, I don't recommend getting surrounded to make this work, even if you are a singer. If you find yourself in that position, misty step might be a better spell to use. However, this could be useful at higher levels to wipe up swarms of low level guys without burning resources.
Thunderclap(Evo|Con|Thunder): As with frostbite, you get empowered evocation and potent cantrip, but the 5ft range makes it very dangerous to use. **Better** if you are making a melee warmage type wizard or bladesinger.
Toll the Dead (Nec|Wis|Nec): Heyo! A 1d12 cantrip with a 60' range. This could definitely take the place of firebolt in most kits. There are actually fewer things immune to necro than fire, as well. The Wis save portion can be a bit tough, as it tends to be a decently high save for lots of people, but mixed in this is a solid pick.

Wildemount Spells:
Sapping Sting (Nec|Con|Nec): Repeat after me: "I ready an action to cast Sapping Sting at the target right before the fighter/paladin attacks it". I mean seriously, a ranged, at-will con save or prone? Battle masters have to use a maneuver to knock prone, and it only works if they land an attack AND the enemy fails a save. This is seriously broken. There's really no reason to use any other damage cantrip, except for the relatively short range. Honestly, I recommend DMs to ban this.

TCE Spells:
Mind Sliver (Enc|Int|Psy): Int save, psychic damage, lowers their next save. Lots to like here. Lots of monsters out there with really bad Int.

Level 1

You aren't going to be doing a ton of damage with these spells. Try to focus on utility, disables, and defense, and wait out the low levels of wizard. Your party will be much more impressed by a well timed sleep than a magic missile.

Alarm(Abj|--|--)(R): Ritual. This is your first tool for making extended rests a lot easier. If you can spare the pick for it, this can be very useful. For **Abjurer**, this is a painless way to recharge your arcane ward between fights, unless your DM bans it.
Burning Hands(Evo|Dex|Fire)**:** One of your first aoe options. Not great damage, requires you to be close, small area. Despite all that, it's not a terrible choice since aoe is very strong at level 1 if you can set it up properly.
Charm Person(Enc|Wis|--)**:** Upgraded friends. This isn't useful in combat, but it's not too hard to come up with a hundred or so out of combat uses for it. Gets way better once you have alter memories if you are an enchanter.
Chromatic Orb(Evo|AC|Choose)**:** Damage is too low to be worth a level one slot, and it doesn't scale well. Has some utility since it can be any damage type.
Color Spray(Ilu|HP|--)**:** I prefer sleep. This only lasts one round, and requires you to be close.
Comprehend Languages(Div|--|--)(R)**:** Green because it's a ritual. It's somewhat dependent on what kind of game you run, but this is nice since it doesn't need to be prepared.
Detect Magic(Div|--|--)(RC): This low level ritual will be useful your entire career.
Disguise Self(Ilu|Int|--)**:** Use this with charm person to scam people with no repercussions. Your DM will hate you. If no one in your party has proficiency with disguise kit, this is a lot **better**.
Expeditious Retreat(Tra|--|--)(C)**:** Bonus action cast makes this somewhat useful. 2 levels of rogue gets you this at will, though. The concentration requirement also hurts a lot.
False Life(Nec|--|--)**:** It's actually quite a bit of hp at level 1. Quickly becomes less powerful after that.
Feather Fall(Tra|--|--)**:** A situational contingency spell that can save your party's life. **Mandatory** if you are a flying race.
Find Familiar(Cnj|--|--)(R): A ton of utility tied into a single spell. No reason to pass on this.
Fog Cloud(Cnj|--|--)(C)**:** Skip it early on, but it is a useful spell even at mid levels, when other level 1 slots aren't as good.
Grease(Cnj|Dex|--): Same as fog cloud.
Identify(Div|--|--)(R)**:** It's a ritual, and it could be nice to have, but I wouldn't waste a pick on it. You get 99% of this spell by just taking a short rest with the item in question. Could be useful if you suspect an item is cursed.
Illusory Script(Ilu|--|--)(R)**:** It's a ritual but it's way too situational to pick up unless you are doing a spy game.
Jump(Tra|--|--)**:** Marginally useful movement buff, but too costly. You will have access to levitate soon anyway.
Longstrider(Tra|--|--)**:** Unimpressive movement buff, but it lasts a long time, and should work while flying, too. No concentration needed.
Mage Armor(Abj|--|--)**:**This is your unarmored defense feature in spell form. It's a spell slot tax, but generally worth it. As you level, the level 1 slot becomes less valuable, but mage armor stays great. Pick this one up eventually regardless, but If your DM loves to target you, and you have no armor, this is **mandatory**. If you only occasionally get targeted, you can stick with shield at low levels. **Skip** it if you are in armor that gives at least 3 AC. You can also cast this on others. Creatures that don't wear armor and have high dex are great targets. E.g. certain druid forms, your conjured air elemental, your animated ghast, etc.
Magic Missile(Evo|None|Force)**:** Scales alright, auto hit damage. Force is almost never resisted, but watch out for enemies with the shield spell. Not a bad pick, but I would wait for scorching ray or cloud of

daggers.
Protection from Evil and Good(Abj|--|--)(C)**:** This is another of those nice level one spells that is useful all game. Has a hard time competing for your concentration slot, though.
Ray of Sickness(Nec|AC+Con|Poison)**:** Low damage and requires 2 rolls to get to the poison effect. Poison is also the worst damage type. I would pass.
Shield(Abj|--|--)**:** +5 ac as a reaction is incredible. **Gold** for abjurers, bladesingers, or anyone else on the front lines. You will be casting this your whole career.
Silent Image(Ilu|Int|--)(C)**:** Lots of potential here, especially if you are an illusionist, but it is up to you to make it useful.
Sleep(Enc|HP|--)**:** Gold at level 1. Usefulness quickly drops off as it doesn't scale that well, **Red** past around level 5 but it will always be useful against a swarm of low CR baddies.
Tasha's Hideous Laughter(Enc|Wis|--)(C)**:** Prone and incapacitated is awesome, however the int requirement and the save every round make this inferior to sleep until later levels. Later on, this is an effective crowd control option from a level 1 slot. When it saves from your party hitting it, it's still prone until it gets a turn, so that's nice.
Tenser's Floating Disk(Cnj|--|--)(R)**:** It's a ritual, so it's not a bad spell to pick up, but its usefulness is somewhat limited since you can't ride it.
Thunderwave(Evo|Con|Thunder)**:** A better alternative to burning hands. The push is nice, the damage starts out very slightly lower, but the area is big, and it scales better. The LOUD noise is likely to attract unwanted attention, though. If you want some aoe damage, this is a good choice.
Unseen Servant(Cnj|--|--)(R)**:** Being a ritual saves this from being terrible since it's only a slightly upgraded mage hand, and mage hand is free. That said, if you already have mage hand, don't waste a pick on this.
Witch Bolt(Evo|AC|Lightning)(C): I thought this was going to be great when I first saw it. d12 auto damage? Just get advantage on that one attack then go to town, right? Unfortunately the fact that it ends if you are ever more than 30 ft away makes this one a loser. Also a guaranteed d12 every round isn't that useful when fights are generally over in 3 rounds or so, and you could have cast sleep or Tasha's instead.

XGtE Spells:
Absorb Elements(Abj|AC|Varies): This is a great pickup for later in your career when your level 1 slots aren't being used as offensively. "But I don't make melee attacks!" you say. Who cares? This is shield for elemental damage! One round of not being killed by a fireball or breath attack is often all you need to turn defeat into victory. Even if you are a gnome, this will save you from breath attacks where spell resist will not. Even better for bladesingers, but i'm not sure if it's enough better to go **gold**. It's close though.
Catapult(Tra|Dex|Bludgeoning): Tweet confirmed that this spell only does damage if they fail the dex save. With that change, I wouldn't bother picking it up. Magic missile is more expected damage from a level 1 slot and a better damage type. From a level 2 slot you can cast the vastly superior cloud of daggers or scorching ray.
Cause Fear: (Nec|Wis|--)(C): Like Tasha's, this is a solid CC option out of a level 1 slot. Unlike Tasha's it's not quite as reliable. Fear only prevents enemies from approaching or attacking you. Tasha's shuts them down entirely.
Earth Tremor(Evo|Dex|Bludgeoning)**:** This is a weird one. Low damage, and you just surrounded yourself with difficult terrain. If you have a way to not care about that, it could be pretty good, but honestly, you likely just made your own escape more difficult, particularly if you failed to knock one of the enemies prone. On the other hand, this is a **great power** to increase the stickiness and control of a melee warcaster wizard.
Ice Knife(Cnj|AC/Dex|Piercing/Cold): Here's a decent alternative aoe damage source. Good potential damage on the primary target and likely easier to target than thunderwave or burning hands if you like to stay at range, but the aoe damage is low.
Snare: (Abj|Dex|--): This sounds fun, and could actually be quite useful in combat if you have a chance to set it up and lure enemies into it. It's not concentration, so you could have several of these ready to go. beforehand. Useless if you can't set it up beforehand, though.

Wildemount Spells:

Gift of Alacrity (Div|--|--): It's really **purple** at level 1. But, this is a great way to use a level 1 spell slot when you are **higher level**. No concentration, 8 hour buff that's useful to everyone. If you can grab this as a scroll or something later on and transcribe it go for it, but I really don't see you casting it at all before level 5 or so.
Magnify Gravity (Tra|Con|Force): This feels really strong at low level when enemies have poor con saves and you don't have any aoe crowd control. One of the few ranged aoe options at level 1 as well. If you can catch melee enemies more than 15 ft away, this becomes a turn denial. Pretty decent.

TCE Spells:
Tasha's Caustic Brew (Evo|Dex|Acid)(C): 2d4 damage is low, even for a level one spell but it upranks well. You win if they take 2 rounds of damage or use their action to remove it. You lose if they die before then. Casting from a level 2 slot, this does ~10 damage per round, compared to Aganazzar's ~13.5 flat damage. With a level 3 slot this actually surpasses fireball damage if it gets 2 rounds of damage off (assuming they fail the save: it does way less damage if they succeed). Only downside is concentration, but that's a big downside.

Level 2

Much the same as level one, focus on utility and crowd control here, with the potential exception of scorching ray or cloud of daggers.

Alter Self(Tra|--|[Varies])(C)**:** It's actually a decent variety of effects to choose from. The most common use is likely as an upgraded disguise self, so if you found that one useful, you might find this one great.
Arcane Lock(Abj|--|--)**:** In a vacuum I would rate this blue, since it can be used to give you free long rests inside dungeons. However, it's only green because Leomund's Tiny Hut is available at lvl 3, and doesn't take a spell slot. Still, if you want to take extra precautions, arcane lock the door and then cast a tiny hut. If your DM still finds a way to ambush you, it was going to happen regardless of your preparations.
Blindness/Deafness(Nec|Con|--)**:** A decent con-save disable, which can be great vs those pesky high dex low level monsters. Most importantly, no concentration required!
Blur(Ilu|--|--)(C)**:** Its concentration. Get mirror image instead.
Cloud of Daggers(Cnj|None|Slash)(C)**:** It is easy to avoid, but works well in a doorway and the damage scales *very* well. It also auto-hits! Cast at level 4+ this thing offers great damage, only surpassed by scorching ray. If you have **forced movement** in your party (Sentinel feat) you can make the enemy take this damage when you move them into the area, and then as soon as they start their turn. If you or someone is a **grappler**, you can move them into this and hold them there until they die. If you have any way to get 2 turns of damage out of this it becomes one of your best single target damage spells. It's a particularly attractive option for non-evokers.
Continual Flame(Evo|--|--)**:** A level 2 spell and 50 gp to make a torch? Come on. However, **Cast this at level 3** and it will counter magical darkness. Forever.
Crown of Madness(Enc|Wis|--)(C)**:** I don't really like this spell. It seems too easy for the enemy to simply not stand next to any of his allies and make the spell useless. Blindness and hold person seem much more useful.
Darkness(Evo|--|--)(C)**:** Might end up hurting you as much as helping, but there are situations where this could really come in handy. Stays useful at high levels.
Darkvision(Tra|--|--)**:** Maybe pick this one up later. It's replaced by a racial feature many in your party will likely have, and unless you are the scout, a torch/light cantrip does the job fine.
Detect Thoughts(Div|Wis+Int|--)(C)**:** Really useful for social situations.
Enlarge/Reduce(Tra|Con|--)(C)**:** Only advantage on checks, not attacks. **Gold** for grapple builds though. Also, an enlarged flying familiar can technically carry a small character. If you can get away with this it's faster than levitate, but doesn't last as long.
Flaming Sphere(Cnj|Dex|Fire)(C): Efficient spell slot use for long fights, but the damage is pretty bad and it eats your concentration. However, it **combos** REALLY well with pyrotechnics.
Gentle Repose(Nec|--|--)(R)**:** Leave it to the cleric. They can do this as a cantrip. But it's a ritual, so not

horrible if you find it lying around.
Gust of Wind(Evo|Str|--)(C)**:** Annoy any flyers in the area, or blow away a fog cloud. Not terribly useful, tbh.
Hold Person(Enc|Wis|--)(C)**:** Advantage and auto crits for your party. Need I say more? You are starting to get a taste of what is to come. A fantastic choice, but don't complain when they save.
Invisibility(Ilu|--|--)(C)**:** Stays useful all game and can be ranked up to target more party members. This can be used to help your rogue sneak in very dangerous situations without too much worry. It is also a great escape spell. You can't hit what you can't see!
Knock(Tra|--|--)**:** Grab it if you don't have a rogue. Also, why isn't this a ritual?
Levitate(Tra|Con|--)(C)**:** This is a somewhat useful movement buff and a hard CC spell all in one. Targets float harmlessly to the ground, unless the ground is lava. Also, the ability to just fly away from melee enemies this early in the game is potentially broken. However, the inability to move laterally without something to push off of is really limiting in practice.
Locate Object(Div|--|--)(C)**:** Really not sure why this isn't a ritual. Super situational.
Magic Mouth(Ilu|--|--)(R)**:** Also super situational, but at least this one is a ritual.
Magic Weapon(Tra|--|[Magic])(C)**:** The +1 attack and damage is pretty unimpressive, but having a magic weapon when you need it is invaluable. Pick this up later on if some of your hitters still don't have them.
Melf's Acid Arrow(Evo|AC|Acid)**:** The damage on this sucks for a spell that only does damage.
Mirror Image(Ilu|--|--)**:** Great defensive buff that works great without ever needing higher level slots.
Misty Step(Cnj|--|--)**:** I've downgraded this from sky blue to dark blue. It still has uses to disengage, escape grapples, or travel through enemies and still have your action and move. However, in actual gameplay the limitation of not being able to cast a level 1+ spell in the same turn really hinders it. Disengage is often just as good. If you have some really good cantrips (Bladesinger), or something else to use your action on, this is still sky blue.
Nystul's Magic Aura(Ilu|--|--)**:** Not a real rating. Disguise yourself as another creature type. Could be valuable in certain edge case situations, but you will likely not get a lot of use out of this.
Phantasmal Force(Cnj|Int|Psychic)(C)**:** Lots of fun to be had here, depending on your DM. It's pretty easy to recognize targets with low int saves. Beasts, for one, will pretty much autofail this. It's one of about 3 intelligence save spells, so you can hit targets that are difficult to hit with more common options. If you manage to get it on, it takes an action against your DC to have a chance, even when they interact with it. Use it to create illusions of things that you'd like to do, but can't because their saves are high (web an ogre, for example, because he'll bust out of the real ones).
Ray of Enfeeblement(Nec|AC/Con|--)(C)**:** If you are going to give them a save every turn, why not use hard CC like hold person or tasha's? I guess it's useful on low int creatures like beasts, but see phantasmal force, above.
Rope Trick(Tra|--|--)**:** Free short rest. **Blue**, I guess, if you have a monk, warlock, and/or fighter, and your DM is stingy with short rests. Using a daily resource to refill short rest resources seems like a bad trade until you have more slots, though.
Scorching Ray(Evo|AC|Fire)**:** Grab this or cloud of daggers so you have some direct damage until disintegrate. Does good damage now, and has great scaling with higher level slots. If you are an evoker, you no longer get to add a billion damage to this, but it's still a competitive damage option. Let me just say that even evokers shouldn't be casting this too often. If you just want to do single target damage, you are in the wrong class, but there are just times when that's what you need. It's still blue, though, because it's objectively one of your best single target damage options.
See Invisibility(Div|--|--)**:** Try to learn it later. It can really help with some encounters, but it's value is somewhat diminished if one of your allies has faerie fire.
Shatter(Evo|Con|Thunder)**:** Low damage, small area, but I guess if you are desperate for some AoE it's passable, and it's easier to target than thunderwave / burning hands.
Spider Climb(Trn|--|--)(C)**:** Or, you could cast levitate
Suggestion(Enc|Wis|--)(C)**:** This looks a lot to me like an 8 hour disable with no save ends condition AND an amazing social encounter ability all rolled into one. It's also a ton of fun coming up with ways to make your suggestions sound "reasonable".
Web(Cnj|Dex/Str|--)(C)**:** This is your first look at the amazingness of wall spells. Start experimenting with ways to divide encounters into 2 smaller encounters and watch your DM's head explode.

XGtE Spells:
Dragon's Breath: (Tra|Dex|Varies)(C): Long duration, bonus action cast, pick your element, lots of things to like here. Damage is a little low, but this is a great way to deal with swarms of weak enemies early on in your career. Can be cast on others. Make your druid into a fire breathing bear. Fun!
Mind Spike (Div|Wis|Psy)(C): Rogues beware! Wizards now have a solid option to stop the hide action at early levels. Also an okay way to foil invisibility, but you have to somehow hit them first.
Shadow blade: (Ilu|AC|Psy)(C): Let's get this out of the way: If you are a traditional back-row spell slinger this is useless to you. Okay, now, if you are someone who uses a lot of melee attacks (eldritch knights, bladesingers, etc.) This is the premier level 2 spell slot for you, unless you have access to spiritual weapon. Not only are the damage and properties incredible, dim light is very common in dungeons and caves. Combined with darkvision and the elven accuracy feat, this sword is just incredible. It's a bit janky to use with bladesong since they are both bonus actions, but I trust you will work it out. You will prefer haste and G.invis later on, so you can't exclusively rely on this, but it's still a nice trick in dim/dark light situations.
Warding wind: Sort of an interesting spell that can accomplish a few things. The defense vs ranged attacks and difficult terrain are welcome (keep in mind they can affect you and your party as well). The ability to push away gas could also come in handy. It's a decent amount of utility from a level 2 slot.
Aganazzar's scorcher(Evo|Dex|Fire): Another decent small AOE damage option. It's not spectacular, but with the right setup this could put a hurting on a group. Same damage as shatter or thunderwave, but in a line.
Dust devil (Cnj|Str|Bludgeoning)(C): Low damage, but a 10 square mobile push platform could have some really fun uses and Str saves are really rare. Unfortunately, creatures have to end their turn next to it, so it will probably not get that much action. Still has some use for area denial.
Earthbind (Tra|Str|--)(C): So, your DM is throwing flyers at you when you are level 3? This will show him! Honestly, it's not a terrible pick up at any level. In many cases it will be easier to bring that flyer down to you than to fly the whole party. Strength save so don't expect this to work on dragons.
Maximilian's earthen grasp(Tra|Str|Bludgeoning)(C): Poor man's bigby's, but quite good. Access to a ranged restrain will be useful your whole career, and sometimes you don't want to spend that level 5 slot on a Bigby's even when you get it.
Pyrotechnics (Tra|Con|--): A 10-ft radius blind, and all you need is someone to throw a torch (or cast bonfire). Combo this with a flaming sphere and you have a mobile 10ft radius blind platform rolling around the battlefield. This seems really good and fun! I bet you could find some uses for the smoke too. (Apparently this combo was eratta'd but I don't care because that's dumb).
Skywrite (Tra|--|--)(R)(C): Huh. Well it's purely utility so I'm going to leave it Green but, this could be pretty hilarious and useful. Easily send messages over long distances, make ill omens for your more tribal enemies, stuff like that. Also ritual! Yay!
Snilloc's snowball swarm(Evo|Dex|Cold): Another decent AOE, now in the cold variety. This is probably a better pickup than Aganazzar, since the 3x3 is easier to set up than the line, and it's cold instead of fire, which you already have a ton of. It does less damage, though.

Wildemount Spells:
Fortune's Favor (Div|--|--): Like gift of alacrity, this is a good way to use low level spell slots when you are really **high level**. Don't waste a pick on it now, but picking it up as a scroll later on isn't a bad idea. If you are divination, you can uprank this to recharge another spell with Expert Divination. Also 100gp cost at level 3 is yikes.
Immovable Object (Tra|[Str]|--): First of all, the math on this makes no sense. Maximum lift is 30x your str score, so 300lbs for a 10 str person (that's generous lol). However, a 10 str person can roll a 20 on a strength check to move this 4000 lb immovable object. Wah? There's probably some fun uses for this, but I can't imagine using one of my highly valued picks on it. It TECHNICALLY doesn't say the item can't be worn or carried, so there's that, I guess, expect your DM to look at you funny when you try to use this on someone's worn armor, though. Also notice it costs money.
Wristpocket (Cnj|--|--)(R)(C): It's concentration! LOL. Honestly, this should be a cantrip. If you want to sneak something in or out of a place, just use invisibility! I GUESS if you want to do a sleight of hand

wizard, then sure, knock yourself out.

TCE Spells:
Augury (Div|--|--)(R): A neat pickup that's very flavorful for divination wizards. Really nice as a ritual for you, since you never have to prep it.
Enhance Ability (Tra|--|--)(C): A solid support spell for non-combat skill encounters. A bard with adv on charisma checks, or a rogue with advantage on dex can get a lot done.
Tasha's Mind Whip (Enc|Int|Psy): Potentially decent damage and crowd control if used correctly. CC doesn't work when your barbarian runs up next to the target right after you hit it. It's an int save, though so if you are good at picking targets it's quite strong.

Level 3

Okay. Things just got real. Level 3 is when you start to come into your own, and start showing the party why they brought a wizard. Lots of great spells here, and you can really start to dominate encounters.

Animate Dead(Nec|--|--)**:** Your first army of undead ability. No concentration needed, and when you first get this zombies are still pretty strong. If you want to take full advantage, try to get your 4 or 5 zombies during down time, and cast this once a day to "reassert" control. Also, have your zombies use grapple to restrain the enemies for you, or use help to give you advantage. Necromancers get this automatically at level 6.
Bestow Curse(Nec|Wis|Necrotic)(C): The effects are okay and no save ends condition, but it's touch range, and requires concentration, and there are so many good options at this level. Your familiar can cast it for you, though.
Blink(Tra|--|--)**:** The best defense is... not being in the same plane of existence as the enemy. Combine with mirror image for near immunity to attacks.
Clairvoyance(Div|--|--)(C)**:** Never walk into an ambush again.
Counterspell(Abj|--|--)**:** Situational, but if you think you might fight any other casters this is the king of "contingency" spells. Stealing a turn from the BBEG caster with your reaction is just too effective to pass up. If you are abjuration spec, this is **gold**. Also note that counterspells can be counterspelled.
Dispel Magic(Abj|--|--)**:** Tons of utility here. Get rid of those annoying buffs the enemy caster has, or remove magical effects, traps, etc. Even **better** for abjurers.
Fear(Ilu|Wis|--)(C)**:** 30 foot cone of hard AOE with no save ends condition. Just be aware many creatures are immune to fear. I think hypnotic pattern is better, though. Clarify with your DM if this triggers Booming Blade.
Feign Death(Nec|--|--)(R)**:** I'm having a hard time thinking of a use-case for this. So many other choices at this level, this is just totally out of place.
Fireball(Evo|Dex|Fire)**:** Finally some real AOE, right? When you pick up fireball at level 5, it can simply end encounters on its own. I would say it is worth getting for any school, but is pretty much **mandatory** for evokers. Damage falls off a bit as you level though, so be prepared for that.
Fly(Tra|--|--)(C)**:** Lasts a long time and trivializes certain encounters.
Gaseous Form(Tra|--|--)(C)**:** If you have to choose, Fly seems more useful.
Glyph of Warding(Abj|Dex|Choose)**:** Should be a ritual, imo. You can make a trap. There might be some uses but it's hard to justify vs the other options.
Haste(Tra|--|--)(C)**:** Depends on your party composition. This is much more potent on a sorcerer with twin spell, but it's still pretty good. Anyone with **really strong single attacks** makes a particularly good target for this, such as a Paladin with Improved Divine Smite, a Bladelock with Lifedrinker, etc. Stays useful in a level 3 slot without needing up-rank. **Don't use it if you are at risk of losing concentration.**
Hypnotic Pattern(Ilu|Wis|--)(C)**:** Hard CC with no save ends condition in a 30 ft cube. This is your upgraded sleep. Stays useful in a level 3 slot without needing up-rank.
Leomund's Tiny Hut(Evo|--|--)(R)**:** Nearly a free extended rest, and it's a ritual. Cast this every time you rest outside of an inn. Or inside an inn. Or at your house. Why not?
Lightning Bolt(Evo|Dex|Lightning)**:** Harder to use than fireball, but at least it's not fire damage.

Magic Circle(Abj|Cha|--): Situational since it takes 1 min to cast. If you manage to set it up in advance, though it will trivialize encounters with that enemy type.
Major Image(Ilu|Int|--)(C)**:** Full on illusion. Basically a win button vs non-intelligent creatures. Illusionists will want this to take advantage of **illusory reality**.
Nondetection(Abj|--|--)**:** I mean, this is a useful spell, but you just have too many other choices at this level.
Phantom Steed(Ilu|--|--)(R)**:** Just get an actual horse. Way too many other choices here.
Protection from Energy(Abj|--|--)(C)**:** Would be great, but it's only one target and requires concentration. Still useful if you know you are going to be fighting dragons, but potions of resistance are better.
Remove Curse(Abj|--|--)**:** Good, but leave this to the cleric. You have other things to choose from. Still, it's not a terrible thing to have in your book if you happen to find it lying around.
Sending(Evo|--|--)**:** Seriously? 1 message as a level 3 spell? This would be marginal utility at level 1.
Sleet Storm(Cnj|Dex|--)(C)**:** Slightly upgraded grease that hits flyers. Good, to be honest, but it can't compete at this level.
Slow(Tra|Wis|--)(C)**:** Cast haste (or an actual crowd control) instead.
Stinking Cloud(Cnj|Con|--)(C)**:** Con AoE crowd control. Plenty of things this won't affect, though. If they save once, they will move out of the zone, making this worse than fear or hypnotic pattern without some kind of specialized setup**.**
Tongues(Div|--|--): Upgraded comprehend languages. Comes in handy when combined with disguise self.
Vampiric Touch(Nec|AC|Necrotic)(C)**:** Has some edge case uses (**grappler** or **gish**) but in general the healing isn't worth getting that close. There is some potential for serious healing when used by a **necromancer**, though. Also, **Bladesingers**, I guess.
Water Breathing(Tra|--|--)(R)**:** Grab it if you are doing an aquatic campaign. At least it's a ritual.

XGtE Spells:
Erupting earth (Tra|Dex|Bludgeoning): Okay, this is interesting. It's about half the area of a fireball, and less damage starting off, BUT it scales better. Cast at level 6 this will do more damage than a level 6 fireball (assuming you aren't an evoker.) Cast at level 8, this will do more damage than a fireball even if you are an evoker! It also surpasses cone of cold at level 7 for non-evokers. Suffice to say, this is a solid pickup that will get stronger as you go, and a great damage option for non-evokers, as the smaller area can actually make it easier to target without hitting your allies.
Flame arrows (Tra|[AC]|[Fire])(C): Pretty unimpressive. If it didn't take a concentration slot, it would be much better. As it is, this has to go directly up against haste, (and MMM, below) and it doesn't compare favorably under most conditions. At higher levels, if you have a ranged fighter making 3+ attacks per round, it gets **better**. I still prefer front loaded damage, though.
Melf's minute meteors (Evo|Dex|Fire)(C): So Melf finally came up with a good spell for this edition. Compared to flame arrows, this is way better, 4d6 in an aoe as a bonus action for 3 rounds. Cast this before the fight starts whenever you can and, in general, don't bother upranking it. RAW with the new errata, you only get to apply Evoker damage bonus on this spell to one meteor, so it's not really any more impressive for evokers. **Bladesingers** should take a close look at this, since they can use it in conjunction with their stronger cantrips and attacks. Also, note that firing a meteor is **not** casting a spell, so you can do the fire meteor bonus action AND cast a regular spell in the same turn.
Tidal wave (Cnj|Dex|bludgeoning): A bit of damage and an aoe prone can be very nice if you have a melee heavy party to take advantage of it. It's a pretty decent size area, and should be pretty easy to line up.
Wall of sand (Evo|None|--)(C): This could be okay depending on your party setup. If you have a phalanx, you can place this right on the enemy battle lines and blind them all with no save allowed. That said, they can simply fall back to the other side and benefit from the same protection. Decent for shutting down ranged attackers, but fog cloud might serve just as well, and is only level 1.
Wall of water (Evo|--|--)(C): Suggestions are welcome here, but I just don't see this spell stacking up well in most situations. Maybe if you know an enemy will be sending fire spells in a particular direction, but it is inferior to wall of sand for blocking ranged attacks, inferior for restricting movement, and the frozen effect

is difficult to take advantage of for fairly low effect.
Catnap (Enc|--|--): Not a fan of this one, not a ritual, limited number of targets, rope trick is a level lower. Too much cost just to save a little time. If you only have 3 people in your party, a level 3 spell slot is even more valuable.
Enemies abound: (Enc|Int|--)(C): Int save, which we like, decent single target CC, and a great way to start a fight within the ranks of less intelligent enemies. Remember that scene in Return of the King?
Life transference: (Nec|--|--): Going with green here because it's actually a lot of healing, despite the drawback, but I'm tempted toward purple.
Summon lesser demons (Cnj|--|--)(C): Not a lot of demons at this low of CR, so you shouldn't have much variety, I think. It's a good way to get summons on the field 2 levels before conjure minor elemental, and the demons will be useful as long as you position them well. However, unlike the minor elementals, lesser demons have to be dismissed as soon as there are no other nearby enemies. Still, not a bad pick for conjurers.
Thunder step (Cnj|Con|Thunder): The damage is better than misty step + a cantrip, longer range, and you get to bring a friend. All in all, it's a good pick.
Tidal Wave (Cnj|Dex|Bludg): A nice big area of damage and prone, can also hit low altitude flyers. Not bad.
Tiny Servant (Tra|--|[Bludg]): I think animate dead is a similar yet better spell, but maybe for some strange reason, you don't want to be surrounded by rotting animated corpses. Weird.

Wildemount Spells:
Pulse Wave (Evo|Con|Force):Fus Ro DAH! Compared to fireball its 2d6 less damage, a smaller area, and a cone, however you get force damage, and a nice push or pull. If you often find yourself in position to do cone attacks, it's not a bad choice. (Bladesingers, War wizards, etc). If you DM likes to have deadly terrain (pits, lava, etc.) it's probably **sky blue**. Evokers can sculpt it, so that's nice.

TCE Spells:
Intellect Fortress (Abj|--|--)(C): A great defensive option to keep your barbarian from being charmed. Try to grab it if you are fighting mindflayers or vampires or whatever. Unfortunately since its concentration, you will lose it as soon as you fail one of those stun saves. Try to be a small target while you are maintaining this.
Speak with dead (Nec|--|--): A good way to ruin a murder mystery plot ;).
Spirit shroud (Nec|[AC]|Varies)(C): Best case, you are a TWF bladesinger. This is an extra 3d8 per round. That's okay, but you get more from shadow blade, which is a level lower. Haste is better still, if you don't mind the risk.
Summon fey (Cnj|--|--)(C): Teleporting, at will charms, or free advantage. (Note that it can't see in its own magical darkness). See below.
Summon shadowspawn (Cnj|--|--)(C): All of the options are great. Watch out with despair slowing your teammates though. See below.
Summon undead (Cnj|--|--)(C):Great condition immunities, flight!, great damage, the zombie has a PARALYZE. See below.

Let me just say that these tasha's summon spells are fantastic. No more scouring the monster manual or worrying about what random creatures you will get. No more waiting while 6 giant goats take their turn. They uprank nicely giving conjurers a reliable option at any level. They don't require your action to attack and last an hour. Mondo damage (2d6+6 wut?) and upranked to level four they get 2 attacks. O_o Incredible. Conjurers should be getting at least one of these. Everyone else should be looking really hard too. If you are really strapped for picks (you are) you can always wait and pick up one of the level 4 versions.

Level 4

Level 4 is full of great choices, again. The list is shorter now, but no less powerful. At this point you can freely choose specialized abilities, as you should have a solid base of useful stuff available from level 1-3.

Arcane Eye(Div|--|--)(C): This spell is still broken. Map out an entire dungeon, including bad guys, with one spell cast. Most doors have a one inch gap at the bottom or at a peep hole.
Banishment(Abj|Cha|--)(C): Cha save or die for some enemies. 1 min removed from play for others.
Blight(Nec|Con|Necrotic): Better damage than scorching ray when you get it, but scorching ray scales better. Crossover point is at level 7 slot. Won't benefit from any evocation features for you nukers out there, but can offer some nice healing for necromancers.
Confusion(Enc|Wis|--)(C): This is a decent size area that will generally turn-deny enemies and create chaos, but it's not more effective than hypnotic pattern in most cases, and has a save ends. Also does not add that tasty incapacitated status.
Conjure Minor Elementals(Cnj|--|--)(C): This spell ranks up nicely and offers some serious presence on the field. **Conjurers** should get this since it gets crazy with your level 14 feature. **Avoid** if your DM controls what comes out and is going to screw you (Sage Advice Jul 2015).
Control Water(Tra|--|--)(C): Can't really rate this one. It's your first "alter landscape" level of power spell, and could be amazing if you spend a lot of time near water. Useless if your campaign isn't near large bodies of water, though.
Dimension Door(Cnj|--|--): The ultimate in tactical teleportation. Too bad it takes an action.
Evard's Black Tentacles(Cnj|Dex+Dex/Str|Bludgeoning)(C): Well positioned, this spell can turn the tide, but it requires some good placement. You need to hit them 3 rounds in a row to get past lvl 3 fireball damage, so you are really here for the restrained condition, but restrained is pretty good.
Fabricate(Tra|--|--): A potentially great utility spell that is impossible to rate. 10min cast time means no making walls or unmaking bridges during combat.
Fire Shield(Evo|--|Fire/Cold): Low damage and a resistance that can be gained from a level 3 spell, doesn't require concentration though.
Greater Invisibility(Ilu|--|--)(C): Put it on the rogue. Laugh. Bladesingers, put it on yourself, laugh at the rogue.
Hallucinatory Terrain(Ilu|Int|--): Hard to rate this. Potentially has some game changing consequences, like luring an enemy army into a swamp or some other trap. Not sure if you can do anything useful with illusory reality, though.
Ice Storm(Evo|Dex|Bludgeoning+Cold): Low damage, but hits flyers and makes difficult terrain. An okay way to diversify damage types for evokers, but I would just hold off for cone of cold.
Leomund's Secret Chest(Cnj|--|--): I'm not saying this spell is useless, but, it requires a hugely expensive component, isn't a ritual, and is really niche. It also isn't terribly useful.
Locate Creature(Div|--|--)(C): Get ready to scry and fry. Want to know exactly which room that dragon or necromancer is in? 1k feet should cover most dungeons. On the other hand, Arcane Eye is better in most tactical cases.
Mordenkainen's Faithful Hound(Cnj|AC|[Piercing]): A higher level version of alarm that's not a ritual, and can attack things but can't move. Meh.
Mordenkainen's Private Sanctum(Abj|--|--): Can enhance the safety of your long rests. Save a cast for this if you think that tiny hut won't be sufficiently safe. Also really useful for spy campaigns so you can talk in private without worrying about scrying.
Otiluke's Resilient Sphere(Evo|Dex|--)(C): Dex save to get an enemy off the map for 1 min. Could also be used to protect a wounded ally.
Phantasmal Killer(Ilu|Wis|Psychic)(C): Phantasmal Killer, oh how you have fallen. As of the errata, the target only gets one save now, not two, but it's still just frightened and some low damage and requires concentration. Still a pass.

Polymorph(Tra|Wis|--)(C): Woah. Honestly, I'm tempted to go gold here. The fact that you basically get free HP out of the transformation is incredible. At level 8, you can transform into a T-Rex. Yes. You can be a T-Rex. Do I really need to say anything else? Admittedly, there's no higher level beasts, yet, but this spell will still have utility for the free HP or the crowd control aspects. If you plan to turn yourself into a T-Rex often, you will want to look at the war caster feat, so you don't lose concentration. In general it's probably better to polymorph an ally. Works particularly well on a character that doesn't already have super powerful melee attacks. If your DM allows plane shift material (I wouldn't) there are a couple CR10 legendary gargantuan beasts to choose from as well.
Stone Shape(Tra|--|--): Maybe it's because I just read polymorph, but this seems kinda unimpressive.
Stoneskin(Abj|--|--)(C): This will really make those fights with hard hitting brutes easier, but watch out for the component cost. Polymorph is better now, but past level 12 or so this might actually be better.
Wall of Fire(Evo|Dex|Fire)(C): Your first real wall spell. Good positioning of one of these can end some fights quickly. Try to make it so the enemies can't escape the damaging area, or make it so that low hp creatures won't want to come near it, letting you deal with them at your leisure. It's less upfront damage than a fireball, but if you can get more than one round of damage out of it, it's an amazing pick. It also lets you control positioning, which shouldn't be underestimated. The psychological effect is probably better than the damage.

XGtE Spells:
Elemental bane(Tra|Con|Varies)(C): Feels more geared toward a sorcerer, but if you feel yourself falling into the trap of only one element, this can be a way to deal with that problem. It's not worth using just for the extra damage, unless you have some sort of way to get **multiple party members** doing the same damage type. Note that the extra damage is once per turn, so you can't cheese this with scorching ray.
Storm sphere (Evo|Con/AC|Bludgeoning/Lightning)(C): Big area of difficult terrain and damage that's not fire. The real selling point is the potential to have 3 attacks per round on subsequent rounds. 1 attack from the storm for free, the bonus action lightning bolt (potentially with advantage), and then your normal action. Bladesingers should pay attention here.
Vitriolic sphere (Evo|Dex|Acid): Acid is a great damage type, so this could be worth picking up for that reason alone, but the damage is also really good, although slightly backloaded. It also scales slightly better than fireball, so if you plan to up-rank, it's a great choice, regardless of spec. If your DM lets you maximize both damage rolls with overchannel, **Evokers** should pick this one up for sure.
Watery sphere (Cnj|Str|--)(C): Very similar to Evard's, but strength instead of dex, and no damage. Still, AoE restrain is very useful.
Charm Monster (Enc|Wis|--): No concentration and hour duration makes this quite a doozy, particularly for Divination wizards. Can potentially turn enemies into allies, at least for a while. Plenty of stuff is charm immune though, so watch out.
Sickening radiance (Evo|Con|Rad)(C): Comparable damage to wall of fire in a sphere. Exhaustion is a powerful condition, after you get a few levels stacked on. Con save is not ideal, but radiant damage is nice.
Summon greater demon (Cnj|--|--)(C): Slightly more reliable than the lesser demon version, and overall still useful if they break free depending on positioning. Barlgura (MM) is very strong and Babau (Volo's) has some useful innate spellcasting. Overall a really solid spell, that definitely competes with Conjure elemental. I also like its rank-up potential. It won't provide you with the same long-term benefit as conjure elemental, though, as it will save long before the hour duration is up.

Wildemount Spells:
Gravity Sinkhole (Evo|Con|Force): Since it's a sphere, it might be awkward to figure out who is in it when you cast it 20' above the ground. Who doesn't love doing calculus in their dnd session? Including fall damage, it's actually more damage than a fireball cast at the same level. The value really goes up if you can take advantage of the repositioning with lethal terrain or dragging them through a spike growth, etc.

TCE Spells:
Divination (Div|--|--)(R): Another solid ritual pickup, and a great use of your ritual casting feature.

Divination wizards, rejoice!
Summon aberration (Cnj|--|--)(C): All these options are great.
Summon construct (Cnj|--|--)(C): Heated body is great. Careful of the clay's potential for friendly fire.
Summon elemental (Cnj|--|--)(C): Not as strong as a conjure elemental (even when upranked) but still, more reliable. Won't attack you if you lose concentration.

These summons are not nearly as strong as the Barlgura you can get from summon greater demon, but they make up for it with reliability. You aren't going to have your own summon smackin' you in the face. (and some people might not want to summon literal demons ::shrug::) If you picked one of these up at level 3, you probably don't need another, unless you are just looking for variety.

Level 5

Honestly, level 5 is a weird grab bag. There's a lot of stuff in here that's hard to rate. I can't really directly compare a spell like scrying to conjure elemental, but I try to rate them relative to similar spells that are available. This is the highest those silly half-casters will ever get to, but you are just getting started.

Animate Objects(Tra|--|--)(C)**:** These objects in general will have better combat stats than the minor elementals you can summon, but there are some small drawbacks. Carry a bag of 10 tiny objects with you, use your free action "interact with object" to dump them on the ground. You now have a horde of flying attackers with 10d4+40 total potential damage, and opportunity attacks. Wow. Oh, also they have blindsight 30, so (have a friend) cast darkness on them and watch (or don't because you can't see) the carnage.
Bigby's Hand(Evo|[Varies]|[Force])(C)**:** This is blue because it gives you a way to turn your bonus action into damage or crowd control. A 6 square push is no joke, and the grapple is also great. Don't forget to add your empowered evocation bonus to the damage!
Cloudkill(Cnj|Con|Poison)(C)**:** So, this lasts for a really long time. If you can find a way to trap the enemies with it, it's game over, otherwise, the damage is kinda low, and enemies will just leave the area. Also Poison damage is terrible.
Cone of Cold(Evo|Con|Cold)**:** Ah, cone of cold. Huge area, good damage, not fire. Much to like here. **Evokers** should definitely pick this up, as it has the best burst potential with overchannel.
Conjure Elemental(Cnj|--|--)(C)**:** Keep in mind there are other "elementals" such as Salamanders, Xorn, etc. which qualify for this. That said, the generic elementals are likely your best choice. They are really strong and come loaded with nice abilities. This is rated light blue for the conjurers or anyone built to make concentration checks. Otherwise, it's risky since losing concentration means you just added a nasty hostile creature to the map. Very strong if you can control it. Earth Elementals notably have tremor sense, which makes another nice combo with darkness. Great uprank potential here too. Invisible stalker sounds fun. Additional content has added additional options, check out the elemental myrmidons from MTF and the fluxcharger in Ravnica. **Avoid** this spell if your DM controls what comes out and is going to screw you (Sage Advice Jul 2015).
Contact Other Plane(Div|--|--)(R)**:** Hey! A high level ritual. Try not to go insane, but this can potentially be game breaking in the right hands. It really depends on how much you GM is willing to let you abuse this.
Creation(Ilu|--|--)**:** I should probably refrain from rating this, but for a 5th level spell it seems too limited in usefulness.
Dominate Person(Enc|Wis|--)(C)**:** Honestly, suggestion will probably suffice 90% of the time. When you really need fine control, this is the spell. Interestingly, it doesn't say that they know they were charmed. This is mainly non-combat stuff, but it is basically a win button in that case. Keep in mind that dominating the king will likely get you into a lot of trouble (if they find out).
Dream(Ilu|Wis|Psychic)**:** Well. There's no way I can rate this. It sounds like fun to mess with people, but I'm not sure how useful it would be. **Combine this with geas** to increase the potency of the damage they take when they disobey by removing their ability to heal during a rest.
Geas(Enc|Wis|--)**:** This is suggestion with a 30 day duration and no concentration. This is light blue for everyone if you can figure out a way past the 1 min casting time. Find a powerful enemy. "Follow and

protect me." Nice. Necromancers can consider using this on one of their wights (not immune to charm) to bypass the need to reassert control each day.
Hold Monster(Enc|Wis|--)(C)**:** Upgraded hold person. Autocrits for your party. Enjoy.
Legend Lore(Div|--|--)**:** Neat but ultimately way too situational. If you need this spell, go seek it out, but it's not one of your free picks, that's for sure. Could be useful if you think an item might be cursed.
Mislead(Ilu|--|--)(C)You can recreate this effect with invisibility and a familiar, or an arcane eye, etc. Does have some use when combined with contingency.
Modify Memory(Enc|Wis|--)(C)**:** So you ended up charming, ripping off, and/or killing too many people and now everyone hates you. Well, you are in luck. Here's your out.
Passwall(Tra|--|--)**:** Annoy your DM by walking through walls and destroying his dungeon design. Some small potential to create holes in the floor under your enemies or windows to throw them out of.
Planar Binding(Abj|Cha|--)**:** This spell can get you a long term, if not somewhat disobedient, pet. Figure out a way to trap the creature and just keep casting this until it works. Don't forget the expensive material, though. The most straightforward use is to cast it on an elemental you conjure. Semi-permanent elementals that don't require concentration are very nice. Once you can start casting this at higher levels, you can actually build up an army of bound elementals. That's pretty sweet.
Rary's Telepathic Bond(Div|--|--)(R)**:** This makes your party a tactical powerhouse if used correctly. Then again, some parties play as if they have this regardless.
Scrying(Div|Wis|--)(C)**:** Good ol' scrying. Used the world over to frustrate DMs. Recurring villains beware.
Seeming(Ilu|Cha/Int|--)**:** Awfully high level for mass disguise self. Still, you know if this spell is good for your party.
Telekinesis(Tra|Str|--)(C)**:** Lots of abuse potential here. Moving 1k lb objects gives me plenty of ideas. Also, move your enemies off ledges or just straight up in the air. And you can keep retrying every turn. It's worth noting that this is a spellcasting check vs their strength **check**. (Not a save, no legendary saves!) By this point you should succeed pretty regularly with that unless it's a dragon or something. Also useful as a ranged disarm.
Teleportation Circle(Cnj|--|--)**:** Certainly convenient, but I don't think a DM will expect you to have this. There are generally other ways to get around.
Wall of Force(Evo|--|--)(C)**:** Cut an encounter in half. If none of the enemies have disintegrate this just works, and that's incredible.
Wall of Stone(Evo|Dex|--)(C)**:** 9 times out of 10 wall of force is a better choice, but this offers some flexibility that wall of force does not. You can make it permanent, you can also make battlements or murder-holes for your ranged friends to shoot from. You can also build your own castle 😆

XGtE Spells:
Control winds (Tra|--|--)(C): A cool collection of effects, and the ability to seriously hamper ranged attackers in a huge area has some great potential. Downdraft has the potential to seriously dominate dragons or other flyers. Surprisingly, this is a solid pick.
Immolation (Evo|Dex|--)(C): Ick. No. single target damage that only gets to level 5 fireball damage after 2 rounds and 2 failed saves, and no scaling. Would be slightly better if it didn't eat your concentration, but even then, unimpressive.
Transmute Rock (Tra|Str/Dex|Bludgeoning): Rating assumes you spend a lot of time in areas with rock, such as caves or dungeons. In this case, wow. 40ft cube of shut down everything, and it doesn't even require concentration. One of the few spells that can almost compete with wall of force for battlefield control.
Danse macabre (Nec|--|--)(C): The bonus to attacks is a nice change, helping these to actually hit something. They can have a reasonable alpha: about 45 damage if they all hit. They have no HP, so they are going to die pretty fast. Overall, I think I prefer using my level 5 slot for an earth elemental or demon. **Necromancers**, however, should consider this as they will be hitting very hard with the class bonuses. Steps on your animate dead bonus action, though.
Dawn: (Evo|Con|Radiant): Radiant damage is a nice type, the area is pretty big. Damage is 0.5 less than a wall of fire cast at level 4. I think wall of fire is better since you can shape it, but this covers a bigger radius.

Enervation (Nec|Dex|Nec)(C): Hey, a necromancy spell that's not a con save. I kinda like this, and it works well with using your bonus action to control your skeletons. Neat, but not very powerful.
Far Step (Cnj|--|--)(C): A decent upgrade to misty step, but i don't really want to use my concentration or a level 5 slot on this, I would rather use animate objects, and use the dodge or disengage action every turn. Would be more tempting as a level 3 slot or no concentration.
Infernal calling (Cnj|--|--)(C): Too much going on here for a rating to be meaningful. If you have a talisman (whatever that is) it's amazing. It's pretty good if you know their true name too (however you do that). Overall, it's probably easier to just uprank Summon greater demon.
Negative energy flood (Nec|Con|Nec): Less damage than cone of cold and it's only single target and you can't even control the zombie! Or, really weak healing for one undead, PASS.
Skill empowerment (Tra|--|--)(C): Sure, there are times when this might be worth it, for that really important check, but it's pretty rare, and there are other ways to get expertise. And, it's not like you can just whip out this spell in the middle of a conversation to get a bonus to your persuasion.
Steel wind strike (Cnj|AC|Varies): Okay, this is super cool, and the damage is actually really nice, on par with chain lightning, one level up. Also offers some decent repositioning options. You bladesingers will really like this one for style points. Try to get advantage before casting (shadow blade, g. invis).
Synaptic static (Enc|Int|Psy): Int save, which we like, but can't hit beasts and the like. Will be hard to know what you can use it on. Overall the effect isn't bad, but i feel like the targeting challenge brings it down a notch.
Wall of light (Evo|Con|Rad)(C): Another wall spell that wishes it was wall of force. That said, it's a huge area of blind and okay damage. Your action is probably better spent on something aside from the attack it grants, but it's there if you want to save spell slots.

Wildemount Spells:
Temporal Shunt (Tra|Wis|--): Sort of a counterspell that works on attacks and spells and uses a save instead of a caster check. Great action economy and turn denial. Use this when fighting two or three strong guys to get one off the field. Or, if you are fighting one, use the turn to heal, set up damaging terrain, or just ready an action to whack it when it comes back.

Level 6

Congrats! Your first level of spells that those silly half casters will never see. At level 6 your spells should be dominating at least a single encounter such as removing a large number of monsters at once from the fight, dealing an absurd amount of damage, or turn denying a legendary creature. There's some clear winners in that regard here.

Arcane Gate(Cnj|--|--)(C)**:** Unfortunately, both portals have to be on the ground, but 500ft is a long way. Have your fighter shove the enemy into the portal, then close it. Assuming they have to run back to you, you just bought yourself 6 or so turns to deal with his friends. Fun, but too difficult to set up to be worth the spell slot. The spell is green, though, because of its ability to aid your mobility in and out of combat.
Chain Lightning(Evo|Dex|Lightning)**: "**Choose up to 4 targets" is the main draw here. This is actually nice if you aren't an evoker, otherwise your sculpt spell feature makes this a lot less important. It is more damage per target than a fireball at this level. Not a terrible choice in any case.
Circle of Death(Nec|Con|Necrotic)**:** This is a huge area, but the damage is really low. Pick this up if you think you will need to deal with an army of low level dudes and you are evil.
Contingency(Evo|--|--): Lets you break action economy and save a spell for when you really need it. You can cast this up to 10 days in advance, so it also saves you spell slots. I've added a section at the end for some suggested contingency combos. Keep in mind that using a contingency spell with concentration will end any spell you are currently concentrating on.
Create Undead(Nec|[Varies]|[Varies])**:** These creatures are not strong. They are going to get destroyed by the enemies you face at this level. If you can get your army going in advance of the adventure, there are some uses, though. Ghouls can do paralysis, ghasts have that and a poison aura, but the big seller is

wights. Each wight you control can raise up to 12 zombies themselves. Now you're thinking with zombies. Consider using your control undead or Geas on the wight so you don't have to keep recasting this.
Disintegrate(Tra|Dex|Force)**:** The big daddy of damage spells. Even adjusted for the zero damage on miss, this is the highest damage single target spell available. That said, at level 6 your action might be better spent on something besides damage (like Otto's). However, this is **gold** if you have a reliable way to make enemies auto-fail reflex saves, such as a monk's stunning fist. Note: Don't use this on legendaries that have auto-saves left, unless you just want to force them to burn one. Since this does no damage on a save, you really need to choose your targets well to make best use of it.
Drawmij's Instant Summons(Cnj|--|--)(R)**:** Not a bad spell to cast on your spellbook and magic items. Also a ritual, so feel free to pick it up if you get the chance.
Eyebite(Nec|Wis|--)(C)**:** I feel like over the course of most fights you will get better results out of a level 3 hypnotic pattern. Most fights are over in 3-4 rounds, so if you could target that many with your hypnotic pattern, you are better off with that. On the other hand, this works on targets immune to illusion. This is a lot more effective for sorcerers who can use it in conjunction with quickened spells.
Flesh to Stone(Tra|Con|--)(C)**:** This is blue because the save ends condition isn't that meaningful. If you land the initial attack, the creature is restrained for 3 rounds, minimum. That's enough to end most encounters. If you managed to actually petrify them, it's just a bonus.
Globe of Invulnerability(Abj|--|--)(C)**:** Most NPC spellcasters are going to throw their best stuff at you first, making this slightly less useful, but there are certainly a lot of scary things at level 5 and down that you don't want to be hit with.
Guards and Wards(Abj|[Varies]|[Varies])**:** Do you have a keep or tower? Ward it up like a real wizard.
Magic Jar(Nec|Cha|--)**:** This complicated mess is basically possession. Yep, that could be useful. This is a particularly good way to use some low rolling portent dice. With a bit of creative shenanigans you can turn this into a save or die spell.
Mass Suggestion(Enc|Wis|--)**:** Get your army of minions going now. The mass aspect of this spell means it will work on someone!
Move Earth(Tra|--|--)(C)**:** Um? It's certainly an impressive effect but i'm not sure what you want this for, maybe you could reroute a river or something.
Otiluke's Freezing Sphere(Evo|Con|Cold)**:** Very slightly lower damage than a level 6 fireball, but huge area, and some other nice effects. Also cold damage and con save. Good pick if you didn't grab cone of cold.
Otto's Irresistible Dance(Enc|None/Wis|--)(C)**:** An amazing enchantment spell. The target doesn't get a save unless they spend their action! Otherwise, no movement, disadvantage on attacks, and all your allies get advantage on them. This is extra potent vs legendary creature's auto save feature. Even if they use the auto-save, it still wastes their entire turn. That's just incredible.
Programmed Illusion(Ilu|Int|--)**:** This is marginally more useful than a major image, which is a level 3 spell. I dont think it's worth a pick, personally.
Sunbeam(Evo|Con|Radiant)(C)**:** Damage is lowish at this level, but the blinding rider is nice. The real draw is the ability to keep casting this every turn. Better on a sorc, but you could do worse. Also you have to shout sunBEAM in your best Frieza voice every time you cast it.
True Seeing(Div|--|--)**:** You will likely wish you had this before now. There are encounters where this is a godsend.
Wall of Ice(Evo|Dex|Cold)(C)**:** Not a bad spell on its own, but why would you use this instead of wall of force? The damage alone doesn't justify the wall's fragility in my opinion.

XGtE Spells:
Investiture of flame (Tra|Dex|Fire)(C): Meh. Not enough damage to spend an action on at this level, and the level 6 slot is too much to pay for resistance.
Investiture of ice (Tra|--|--)(C): If you tend to stay back and cast, this isn't very useful. **Okay** rating for Melee warmages or bladesingers who want to get in the front lines and control the battle.
Investiture of stone (Tra|Dex|--)(C): Another **okay** pickup for melee mages or bladesingers. For traditional wizards it's probably better than ice, due to the stoneskin effect, but still unimpressive.
Investiture of wind (Tra|Con|bludgeoning)(C): The combination of fly speed and disadvantage on ranged attacks against you is decent. The action likely won't get used that often, but this is at least an okay

defensive choice for traditional wizards, just don't lose concentration and plummet to your death. Always have featherfall.

All of the investiture spells should probably be bonus action to use their ability, but the introduction of bladesinger has made them slightly more attractive. There are simply much more potent things to concentrate on, with lower level slots.
Create homunculus (Tra|--|--): Oh look, a fun new alternative to find familiar… That's a level 6 spell, not a ritual, costs 1k gold, and requires your hp to heal. Hahahahah.
Mental Prison: (Ilu|Int|Psy)(C): Hello there. Okay damage even on a failed save, restrained condition with no save ends, can't see out, and big automatic damage if the creature tries to attack you. And all with an Int save. If it weren't for the charmed immunity bit, this would be perfect. Still, it's a winner.
Scatter (Cnj|Wis|--): 120 ft is a long way, enough to turn-deny most creatures. It's a great way to rearrange the battlefield to your liking. It's called scatter, but let me suggest grouping them up instead, either for your buddy's cone of cold, or planting them 120 feet away to have a nice convo with that raging Barlgura you summoned last turn.
Soul cage (Nec|--|--): A decent bit of utility in one spell, shame it's limited to humanoids only. Eyes of the dead could be really great for scouting. Depending on your campaign type, this could really come in handy. If nothing else it's 12d8 healing, which ain't bad.
Tenser's Transformation (Tra|--|--)(C): I was sad that this wasn't in the PHB, because it's a fun spell to mess around with. Maybe surprisingly, it's actually quite good. Too bad you can't combine it with shadow blade. You need to be built correctly to use it, high Dex (or str), and ability to make concentration checks. In the right hands it could be quite powerful. Since it gives exhaustion, I would save this as an "end of day" spell. Please also note that it works with ranged weapons!

Wildemount Spells:
Gravity Fissure (Evo|Con|Force): As with lower level spells, grouping stuff up is still nice, but you can use lower level spells to do that. An upranked gravity sinkhole is more damage than this. Notice that the enemies within 10' get save to take no damage, while the ones in the line get save half. This has the upside of being really really long. Only grab this if you think you will have a 100' line of enemies marching in narrow ranks to attack.

TCE Spells:
Summon Fiend (Cnj|--|--)(C): As before, these are still really good. Flying ranged that can see through magical darkness. woof.
Tasha's otherworldly guise (Tra|--|--)(C): It's basically Tenser's light. You do get flight, which is great (but can be had for a level 3 slot), but no extra damage, no advantage on attacks, and no temp hp. Upsides are bonus action cast and no exhaustion. I'm rating it lower than Tenser's because it doesn't add that much for bladesingers, who I suspect would be the primary users. Bladesingers would be better off with shadowblade (or a summon). But other wizards who want to hit stuff for fun and not get exhausted might enjoy it. **War wizards** in particular would probably find it interesting.

Level 7

Even more than level 6, your tactical level 7 spells have the ability to dominate a single encounter. More than that, though, your strategic spells really come into their prime. Spells such as Mord's Mansion, Etherealness, and Simulacrum have the ability to completely alter the game balance in your favor.

Delayed Blast Fireball(Evo|Dex|Fire)(C)**:** The base damage is the same as a level 7 fireball, but in theory you can get this thing up to 22d6. That has some serious potential, but it requires some forethought to make it worthwhile. In any case, it's never worse than a fireball.
Etherealness(Tra|--|--)**:** Mass etherealness (cast at 8 or 9) has some serious potential for cheese. Once you have scryed the location of the bbeg, just ethereal the party, walk to his lair, and ambush him as you all pop into reality pre-buffed (8 hour duration, no concentration!). Good game.

Finger of Death(Nec|Con|Necrotic)**:** Worse damage than disintegrate on a hit and no scaling, but this does damage on a miss, unlike disintegrate. Necrotic is slightly more commonly resisted than force (don't use against ghosts, etc.). 1 zombie is pretty unimpressive at this level, unless you can convince your DM it's a zombie version of the creature you killed, rather than a MM "Zombie". It still has uses as a scout or to set off traps. In general, use this instead of disintegrate if you think the monster has a decent chance of dodging your disintegrate.
Forcecage(Evo|Cha|--)**:** Upgraded wall of force. No escape, and you can shoot at the trapped stuff. Cheese on the highest level vs targets with no ranged options. You can also use this creatively for a guaranteed push effect. Notice the duration and lack of concentration. Combine with cloudkill if you are mean.
Mirage Arcane(Ilu|None|--): A bigger and more effective version of hallucinatory terrain. Not a real rating for this. If you need this type of effect, you will know by now. Now, if you are an **Illusionist** this spell becomes nearly game breaking. Cast this up to 10 days in advance, and you now have complete control over the terrain of an area via malleable illusions, and you are able to create structures at will and use your illusory reality to make them real. I would argue that making holes is both directly damaging, and not an "object" so that's out, but you can make difficult terrain, or better yet create real iron "structures" trapping any enemies inside. "Wall of iron" at will, if you will.
Mordenkainen's Magnificent Mansion(Cnj|--|--)**:** The be-all end-all of safe long rests. Cast this at the end of the day if you want to be assured you won't be ambushed. Also a great way to entertain dinner guests.
Mordenkainen's Sword(Evo|AC|Force)(C)**:** Some extra bonus action damage on subsequent turns, but not impressive. You should be ending encounters with a level 7 spell, not getting a bit more damage on your next turn.
Plane Shift(Cnj|AC+Cha|--)**:** Get out of fail free card. Just teleport to the plane of free beer and wenches when things turn south. The offensive use isn't great since it requires an attack roll and a failed save.
Prismatic Spray(Evo|Varies|Varies): Less damage than a cone of cold unless you roll an 8. The effects are ok, but you can't rely on them.
Project Image(Ilu|Int|--)(C)**:** Major image covers 90% of what this spell does, and allows you to make images of things that aren't you. Don't get this unless you specifically need an illusion with 500 mile range.
Reverse Gravity(Tra|Dex|--)(C)**:** 50 ft radius crowd control ending with a fall and only allows a save if there is something to grab hold of. My abuse potential radar is going off. This might be a hilarious way to make use of one of those hallucinatory terrain spells. Look, the forest is now a wide open field with nothing to grab.
Sequester(Tra|--|--)**:** I'm leaving this green but this is more of a storyline dependent spell. I don't see you getting use out of this every day.
Simulacrum(Ilu|--|--)**:** Wat? You just gained another party member, congrats. Make another you. The Simulacrum can't regain spells, but who cares, you now have double your spell list for one day. Make another tomorrow if you need to! If you don't want to spend a lot of time (and money) making new simulacrums, or repairing them, consider making a copy of a ranged character, like a rogue. Keep him out of trouble and it will provide a consistent source of damage with very little maintenance required. 1,500gp is nothing to pay for this kind of power. Before you pick this up, though, consider if you will have access to the materials and downtime required by the spell. In pre-made adventures, in particular, these factors could make the spell impossible to use. If you manage to make it to wiz 17 this becomes even more bonkers combined with wish.
Symbol(Abj|Varies|Varies)**:** Upgraded trap spell. Not a lot of daily use for this.
Teleport(Cnj|--|--)**:** Good utility here and abuse potential when combined with scrying. Not light blue only because etherealness also covers most of your scrying abuse needs, and works every time, unlike this.

XGtE Spells:
Whirlwind (Evo|Str+Dex|Bludgeoning)(C): This spell just seems fun to use. It does require 2 failed saves to get them inside the whirlwind, but once they are in it, they are going to have a bad time. The damage is okay, and it's mobile, making it a good choice for longer fights. The ability to move this around and potentially restrain a number of characters, and then drop them 30ft makes this a solid choice.

Crown of Stars(Evo|AC|Rad): A nice upgrade to melf's as it does not take concentration. The total potential damage output of this spell is insane, but it's spread over 7 rounds. Still, really efficient damage that can be used at the same time as a concentration spell.
Power word pain (Enc|HP/Con|--): Just use Otto's Irresistible dance. If you somehow know exactly how much HP they have, then I guess it's **Purple**, since it would be slightly better than otto's on spellcasters.

Wildemount Spells:
Tether Essence (Nec|Con|--)(C): This one is hard to rank, it's almost purely useful to combine with some other cheese. So it's goodness is directly related to how much you build around it. You could link an enemy to your party member who's polymorphed, to another enemy you just threw in lava or someone else put hold monster on (then go to crit town). You could use it to multiply healing out of combat (or in combat, but thats scary) The disadvantage bit cancels out the fact that two enemies need to fail the save, but if you can get an enemy to fail a con save at this point, there are more direct ways to mess up it's day.

TCE Spells:
Dream of the blue veil (Cnj|--|--): Look, this is 100% a DM tool for plot points. Don't go picking it up and expect to be able to teleport out of your DM's low magic homebrew setting into Eberron to go magic item shopping. I'm looking at you, Jeff.

Level 8

Oddly, level 8 is in some ways less impressive than level 7. Since you only get one of these per day, feel free to go back and pick up some other lower spells if you like.

Antimagic Field(Abj|--|--)(C)**:** If you managed to get a **grapple** wizard all the way to level 8 spells, this is what you came for. Just grab the enemy wizard and turn this on. Game over. For everyone else, this is an excellent contingency spell.
Antipathy/Sympathy(Enc|Wis|--)**:** There are some potentially powerful ways to use this to control an encounter, or even a day's worth of encounters, if you know you will be fighting a lot of a specific creature type, you can basically have an aura of fear. The fact that you can even cast it days in advance of needing it bumps it up 2 ranks in my opinion. Here's a fun trick: cast sympathy on a rock. Have your rogue sneak up and throw it into a crowd of baddies. Once they all gather 'round, delayed blast fireball. Pick up the rock, wipe of the scorch marks, repeat on the next room.
Clone(Nec|--|--)**:** A solid life-insurance policy. You could do worse than casting this on your whole party. It also appears to let you unnaturally extend your lifespan. Neat.
Control Weather(Tra|--|--)(C)**:** Cinematic effects that might have some practical application depending on your story. Can't really rate this effectively.
Demiplane(Cnj|--|--)**:** There is some potentially fun shenanigans here. Think of all the nasty things you can trap inside your demiplane, and then release at opportune times. More for fun than effectiveness at this level, though. Keep in mind that if you are stuck inside, you can't create a door to the outside, so you might want to keep a copy of plane shift in there. BrunsenBrurner points out that this is a great place to store your clone, along with all the toys you need to recover from a TPK, such as a copy of your spellbook, sapphires used to trigger Drawmiji's instant summons on your magic items, etc. Just make sure you have a way to get out. If you want to go through all that trouble, the spell is **much better**.
Dominate Monster(Enc|Wis|--)(C)**:** As with dominate person, it gets a save every time it takes damage. This might be an okay way to turn deny one big evil guy, but other than that it's mostly for non-combat purposes. I'm rating this lower because at this tier such a spell is less impressive.
Feeblemind(Enc|Int|Psychic)**:** Might as well be int save or die for casters. Since it's an int save use this on any caster except wizards. Necromancers can combine this with command undead to gain permanent control over more intelligent undead. Who wants a pet death knight?
Incendiary Cloud(Cnj|Dex|Fire)(C)**:** Good damage, but small area and generally you won't hit more than once with it. If you have a way to trap enemies in a damaging terrain, there are lower level spells that will

generally work just as well. Try wall of fire or cloudkill. At this level just doing some damage in a small area is not enough.
Maze(Cnj|None/Int|--)(C)**:** It automatically hits. The creature then has to spend at least one round trying to get back. Also there are plenty of scary things that will never make a DC20 int check (it's not a save). Used correctly this is really good.
Mind Blank(Abj|--|--)**:** This could be really useful if you could cast it on your whole party to be immune to charm effects, but you only get 1 level 8 spell per day. Marginal at this level, but it might be much better for you socialites. Might be useful to fix the barbarian's abysmal wisdom save if you are fighting vampires or something.
Power Word Stun(Enc|HP|--)**:** Bleh. If it has less than 150 hp, just kill it. Also, your monk can do this 10 times per short rest by now. **Purple** if, somehow, you know exactly when the enemy has 150hp or less.
Sunburst(Evo|Con|Radiant)**:** Slightly less damage than fireball, but huge area and a blind condition. A go-to spell for clearing large numbers of enemies off the field quickly.
Telepathy(Evo|--|--)**:** While this has some really interesting flavor implications, since you can make an int 1 creature understand your thoughts, it likely has limited practical use over telepathic bond.
Trap the Soul(--|--|--)**:** This is a typo and is not actually on your list.

XGtE Spells:
Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting (Nec|Con|Necrotic): Ah, finally some damage love for necromancers. Damage is on par with a level 8 fireball. It's necrotic, which is a nice damage type… but the area is a bit small. Oh well, it's still a **good** choice for necromancers, since with Grim Harvest it's probably a serious heal too.
Illusory dragon (Ilu|Wis/Int|Varies)(C): Now this is what a level 8 tactical spell should look like. Crowd control, spammable damage with your choice of energy, and a large illusion that can distract enemies. You can even move it. In order to even have a chance to see through the illusion they have to spend an action. This is the kind of spell that can single handedly turn the tide of a large scale battle.
Maddening darkness(Evo|Wis|Psy)(C): Honestly, it sounds terrifying, but the damage isn't that great, and I don't see too much point in it unless you specifically need that level 8 darkness for some reason.
Mighty fortress(Cnj|--|--)**:** Can't really rate this one, but man, it's cool. I might take it next time just for fun.

Wildemount Spells:
Dark Star (Evo|Con|Force)(C): It's a big area of difficult terrain, silence, and darkness all in one. Also a bit of damage. In theory, this is a guaranteed turn deny against anything with less than 80 move speed. Combos really well if you have a devil sight warlock. I really like any turn denial that just works, no save required, so i'm rating this highly. This is the best "get back in the fiery water" spell we have seen so far. Your party members might have a hard time dealing damage to the enemies inside, but as long as there's something else to attack, this stays really useful.
Reality Break (Cnj|Wis|Varies)(C): Sorry, hold monster is better and is a 5th level spell.

Level 9

We finally arrived. The big game changers. At this point, if your spell isn't trivializing an encounter or making the DM bang his head on the table, what are you doing? I probably shouldn't need to say this, but by this point you probably know what kinda climex your campaign is heading for. You should probably base your picks on what you know about your game rather than my ratings. Here they are anyway:

Astral Projection(Nec|--|--)**:** Go to the astral plane. If you need this, then you need it. Otherwise, skip it.
Foresight(Div|--|--)**:** For 8 hours, one party member is unstoppable. At any other level, this would be gold, but this is level 9. No concentration.
Gate(Cnj|None|--)(C)**:** Some decent utility. Abuse potential involves pulling a powerful creature into a

force cage and casting planar binding on him repeatedly.
Imprisonment(Abj|Wis|--)**:** It's a one minute cast, so it requires some planning to use. Really it's a plot device spell used to seal away the immortal bad guy. You might try to capture something really powerful and unintelligent, and then let it loose on your enemies. Still, it would require a specific opportunity to make the best use of this.
Meteor Swarm(Evo|Dex|Fire+Bludgeoning)**:** Light the world on fire. 1 mile range, stupidly large area, and nearly 3x the damage of a level 9 fireball. You can't hit a creature with more than one meteor now, so it's not as amazing as it once was but it's still really serious.
Power Word Kill(Enc|HP|--)**:** Seriously? Meteor swarm does an average of 140 damage on a hit, spread across a billion squares. I need a rating worse than red.
Prismatic Wall(Abj|Varies|Varies)**:** 50d6, petrify, blind, and restrained for anything that tries to walk through. Also it's huge and lasts 10 min. Doesn't require concentration. Party members can walk through freely to destroy whatever is trapped within. If it fails that first restrain save it might take that every round (it's not clear on this point). Ouch. Forcing a boss to walk through this could be a great way to burn through some of those legendary saves. Don't use it on anything that can teleport.
Shapechange(Tra|--|--)(C)**:** Change into an ancient brass dragon, and when they finally get through your hp, you just come out at full health and with all the rest of your spells ready to go. Downsides of this spell: you will have to make concentration checks, and you will likely be taking a lot of damage in your new form. You have to have seen the thing you are changing into. You don't get the new form's spells. It takes an action to switch forms. You probably lose access to your magic items. All that has caused me to downgrade it from sky blue.
Time Stop(Tra|--|--)**:** Now neutered, Time Stop is basically suck. You can only use it to buff yourself or run away. Instead of spending Time Stop + buff spells, how about just turning into a dragon.
True Polymorph(Tra|Wis|--)(C)**:**Turn your friends into dragons (or pit fiends). Permanently, if you like. Animating creatures, turning the bbeg into a bunny. So many options here. Consider a cloak of invisibility or something to get off the grid while you concentrate on this.
Weird(Ilu|Wis|--)(C)**:** Low damage and a weak crowd control effect. Nope.
Wish(Cnj|Varies|Varies)**:** Gold just for the basic function. Any 8th level spell or lower. From any list. yep. All the other effects are gravy, although the consequences are pretty stiff. Also, i'm gunna quote MelloRed here: Wish -> Simulacrum: 1 action, no component cost.

XGtE Spells:
Invulnerability(Abj|--|--)(C): Doesn't protect you from crowd control, but let's be honest, probably not a lot of things out there you can't kill with 10 min of this. Not sky blue because it eats up your concentration and doesn't trivialize entire encounters like some of these spells.
Mass Polymorph: (Tra|Wis|--)(C): There are better crowd control spells. For buffing, T-rex is still the best beast, and it stopped being impressive 5 spell levels ago.
Psychic scream (Enc|Int|Psy): I lol'd when I read this description. Mindblown.gif. Honestly, it's a decent CC option and a bit of damage, but nothing too impressive. I like the int save, but the 2 int minimum could result in it not working every once in a while.

Wildemount Spells:
Ravenous Void (Evo|Con|Force)(C): So, the enemy has to cross 100' of difficult terrain without failing a strength save, or end up in the middle. This could be a great way to burn off legendary saves, or crush an army (see also meteor swarm for that). Restrained is a strong condition, but it doesn't stop spells. Don't bother on anything that has dimension door. Ideally, you need to start 120' away for it's best use. In theory, it's 50d10 auto damage to anything in the middle. While it's restrained you can spam ranged attacks (and disintegrate) with advantage.
Time Ravage (Nec|Con|Nec): I really don't see a ton of use for this with most parties. Could be used for extortion? Again, if you have burned through all the legendary saves, and you can get them to fail a con save, there are better choices.

TCE Spells:
Blade of Disaster (Cnj|AC|Force)(C)**:** Bonus action worth about 67 damage (assuming hits). Add a

booming blade and attack and you get about 111 damage per round. Add advantage and you are up to 127 damage. Worth noting that you can also combine this with bigger spells on subsequent turns. The only direct comparison here is Meteor Swarm, but that's a save and any boss has legendary resistance at this level. Attack rolls are easier to land vs bbegs. Overall, earns its spot for king of single target damage.

Feats

Just some feats you might look at:
Actor: Works really well with disguise self. If you are making a charismatic illusionist, it's not a bad choice.
Alert: Particularly useful for wizards, since an early crowd control or AoE can decide a fight before it starts.
Crossbow Expert: This has some nice features for ranged attacks, but you have enough save spells to not have to worry about it.
Defensive Duelist: A mini shield spell. It's ok if you run out of shield spells, or don't want to burn those slots for whatever reason.
Dragonmark: In general, picking up a dragonmark is a great choice. It adds directly to your utility and gives you more spells per day. I'm not going to go through all of these but some that stand out are:

> **Finding:** Clairvoyance once per day is pretty nice, and the others are handy.
> **Handling:** Conjure animals! Amazing for a conjurer. **Avoid** if your DM controls what comes out and is going to screw you (Sage Advice Jul 2015).
> **Healing:** Free healing is never bad to have, but cure wounds won't scale that well for you.
> **Passage:** Misty step is pretty nice, and the others are handy.

Elemental Adept: If you are an evoker, most of your best stuff is fire. But you can live without it by having just a little variety in your spellbook.
Healer: This is basically 7+level hp for free every short rest. See if you can find a hireling that can do this. If not, someone in the party should have it, and you are a good choice, since you don't have as many feat needs.
Inspiring Leader: Less HP than healer, and requires 13 CHA, but it can be used before combat. If you have the charisma, and someone else has healer, maybe grab this for even more free healing.
Keen Mind: +1 int and some cool flavor. Not sure how useful the navigational benefits are. Maybe look at the explorer background first. Accurately recalling anything you have seen in the past month can be particularly useful for illusionists or charmers.
Lightly Armored: Eh, take a level of multiclass and get medium (or heavy).
Linguist: +1 int, and some situational usefulness. If you are playing the type of game where this is useful, go for it.
Lucky: Poor man's portent… but what if you had this AND portent? Go hafling too just for the lolz.
Magic Initiate: Unless you somehow have a great wis or charisma score, skip it. Magic Initiate wizard might be useful, but it's still pretty low on your priority list.
Observant: Bonuses to Perception are nice, and you can get +1 int! Nice. Also, how do you passively investigate something?
Resilient: Can be a good pickup with **Dexterity** or **Con** saves.
Ritual Caster: You can pick up a bit more versatility in rituals with this, but you don't really need it. If you do go this route, I recommend bard for access to the most new rituals. Cleric also has some nice rituals.
Skilled: Honestly with backgrounds, you probably have plenty of skills. If you really wanted more skills on an arcane caster, look at bard.
Spell Sniper: This has some nice features for ranged attacks, but you have enough save spells to not have to worry about it.
Tough: More hitpoints is good.
War Caster: If you really need to make a lot of concentration checks then this one is important; however, Resilient (Con) might be better and is more useful in general. Now if you are making a melee fighter wizard multiclass… like… some sort of war caster… it might be **more useful**. (Also look at eldritch knight in that case.) Potentially required for melee bladesingers.

XGtE Feats:
Dwarven Fortitude: It's an interesting feat, since there is a lot to be said for setting up a nice concentration spell like conjure elemental and then using the dodge action every subsequent turn. It's not a bad tactic, but probably not worth the feat (and questionable racial choice) to improve that tactic.
Elven Accuracy: Obviously, only for melee attackers like bladesingers or war wizards. Even more so, really only for those with a reliable way to create **advantage** (shadow blade anyone?) This is effectively giving you 3d20 on your attack roll. Assuming you have a 55% chance to hit normally, advantage gives you an 80% chance to hit, and this takes it to 90%. Hard to beat that. Oh, also nearly 3x the crits.
Fade Away: Solid. Short rest recharge, no concentration required. Great against gangups, multi-attackers, etc. Allows reposition without using your action on disengage. Oh you also get +1 int. Hmm, maybe **light blue**. Can't combine with shield, though.
Fey Teleportation: Fade Away is better imo. You can get misty step normally, and you still have the cantrip limitation since this is a spell cast. The short rest recharge is nice though.
Flames of Phlegethos: The reroll is worth about 0.4 damage per die. Or, on an 8d6 fireball, that's 3.2 more damage per target. It also helps even out really unlucky rolls. The 1d4 fire damage is nothing to write home about, and the light might cause problems. Overall, I like alert better for a pyromancer, but it's not a terrible pick. Dragon sorcs probably like it more since they could add +Cha to that 1d4.
Svirfneblin Magic: (Requires Deep Gnome) This is a great feat which adds some really nice daily spells and they key off Int. More versatility and casts per day in one package. A solid choice. Nondetection is an abjuration spell, so **Abjurers** should seriously consider this as a painless way to recharge their ward between fights.

TCE Feats:
Eldritch Adept: Devil's sight. (War caster is better than eldritch mind). Gets better the more people in the party that have it.
Fey Touched: Bless, command, hex, gift of alacrity. All decent pickups.
Fighting Initiate: Bladesingers could pick up dueling or TWF style. Might be better off just grabbing 2 levels of fighter.
Metamagic Adept: Bladesingers would enjoy being able to quicken spells, but you can only do it once a day so ehhh. Better option: Take transumted spell so you can fix some damage type issues (acid flavored cloudkill, anyone?) and subtle spell for sneaking or when you are silenced.
Poisoner: Poison damage still sucks, but if you have no other way to use your bonus action, this is a decent way to turn it into damage.
Shadow Touched: Inflict wounds is the only available spell that's not already on your list. meh.
Telekinetic: Bonus action push, based on your casting stat, that you can use to force booming blade catch 22s. I'm getting all weepy. And you can use it to reposition your allies, potentially nudging them into range or giving free disengages. And you get +1 int. Someone hold me.
Telepathic: Great for scouts to report to the party silently and you can speak while self-polymorphed.

Equipment

In 5e, you can't really just go to the store and buy robes of the archmage, but let's pretend. Maybe your DM is nice and lets you choose an item now and again. Or maybe you are trying to choose what item to attune to. Obviously, static bonuses to your saves or attacks are always great, as is anything that can increase your int above 20. Permanent Invisibility is always great, etc. I don't want to go into every single magic item, so I will talk about some that you might not consider that are actually really good.

Shield/Armor +1,+2,+3: If you can wear them, they don't require attunement, making it a no-brainer.
Amulet of Health(A)/Ioun Stone of Fortitude(A)/etc.: Ways to improve your con are always great and it's especially true for you since you have low HP and need to make concentration checks.
Belt of Giant Strength(A)/ Gauntlets of Ogre Power(A)/etc.: Strength items? Really? Yes. Grabbing

one of these (the fighter won't need it anyway), and a 1 level dip into rogue for athletics expertise, makes you into one of the best grapplers in the game.
Dust of Disappearance: Potion of invisibility is very rare, while this is just uncommon, and this affects your whole party. Great for strategic retreats!
Ioun Stone of Mastery(A): Increase to proficiency = increase to everything, including your save DCs.
Potion of Resistance: These are only uncommon consumables, so they are cheap if your DM will let you buy them. Great for dealing with dragons since you can only use protection from energy on 1 person.
Ring of Evasion(A): Combine it with a potion of resistance if you want to survive/maintain concentration through a dragon breath.
Robe of the Archmagi(A): Yes, I know it's obvious but I had to include it because it's the best thing ever. +2 to save DC for your spells.
Spell Scrolls / Spellbooks: Buying spell scrolls, trading spells with other wizards, buying spellbooks, etc. It's always a good idea. You never know when having a certain spell can save your butt.
Weapon of Warning(A): Oh yea! Can't be surprised, advantage on initiative rolls. All you have to do is keep it on your person. One of my favorites.
Winged Boots(A): Safe flight with no concentration and no spell slot. Everyone in your party should try to get these if they don't naturally have a fly speed.
Sentinel Shield: Like a weapon of warning but doesn't require attunement. Useful if you can use shields.

Multiclassing

This Multiclassing section was originally developed by KaptainKrunch on the WotC Forums. I have included it here with my own personal modifications.

I don't feel like multiclassing is required for your wizard to be optimal. **Wizard 20** offers distinct advantages as well, and is perfectly viable.

If you DO decide to multiclass this guide should get you going in the right direction!

Multiclassing isn't a trap like it was in 3.5 or Pathfinder

- In 3.5, even ONE level in another class meant losing a level 9 spell slot - Now that all classes can only have 1 level 9 slot that isn't the case.
- Caster Level has pretty much been completely abolished - replaced by casting spells in higher slots. Again this makes the level 9 slot important, but everything else candy.
- Certain class combos don't even lose you spell slots.

The RULE OF TWO

For the Wizard, losing Signature Spells hurts, but the trade-off is sometimes worth the dip. Giving up your level 19 feat is almost always worth it - since the three most optimal dips offer at least light armor (and two offer medium armor - two feats worth.) Besides that you're only losing 4 free spells known (Which could be replaced with wealth) and 2 preparation slots. See below for what you gain instead.

What happens when you break the rule of TWO?

The second you take that third level you lose the juicy juicy **Spell Mastery** ability. Consider what you gain from level 3 - is it better than spell mastery? In most cases the answer is probably no. Spell mastery is just plain sweet.

And what about more than 3? As soon as you do that you lose the ability to cast **Wish**. Forget the other

level 9 spells - that alone says you better have an amazing trick if you're going to burn that bridge.

TWO EARLY?

Looking at your multiclass from level 20 makes a dip seem like a great idea, but during your journey to that mark every dip pushes back ALL of your class features - and most games even end before you hit that high level.

As a wizard, here are some key points that you might consider waiting until before your dip so you don't push everything else back.

After Level 5: Level 3 spells are a huge turning point for wizard. Fireball in particular is very potent when you are level 5 but drops off as you increase in level. If you want to get the most out of it, get to level 5 ASAP. Dipping before 5 means no fireball for you until 6 or 7.

After Level 8: Taking any dips before level 8 means you're going to have to wait that much longer to enjoy the benefits of 20 intelligence (And since it's extremely hard to increase your spell DCs, this is a MAJOR benefit.) After 8 you've hit the peak of your intellect and can safely dip away.
If you dip before level 8 it means you'll be waiting until up to level 10 for that 20 INT, making this one of the most important cutoffs to consider.

After Level 10: For most Specializations your best School power is at level 10.

After level 14: For the next school power. Before level 14, your wait is until level 16 if you want to see the evoker's overcharge ability.

After level 17: To get your wish spell ASAP.

After level 18: Honestly, if you've made it all the way to level 18 without dipping, you're at a point where there is absolutely no reason NOT to dip - this is the safest place to dip if you're an impatient guy.

Note that waiting isn't the same as not getting it at all. Delaying certain abilities doesn't mean that you're not a fully functional party member in the meantime - or even a suboptimal one. It just means you get to look forward to one or two features. "Too early" is not the crushingly big mistake of breaking the Rule of Two - unless you know your campaign is going to end before you can enjoy a build specific toy.

TWO LATE?

Similarly, the longer you wait for your dip, the less time you get to enjoy the benefits. If you're grabbing one level Cleric for that Medium Armor proficiency, but you wait until your 20th level to get it - yeah you're going to still appreciate the defense boost - but it's just less meaningful at that point.

While you might be impatient for a Wizard feature or two, when deciding when to take your dip you really need to consider if the benefits for NOW outweigh the wait for later. This should go without saying, but here are a couple of specific suggestions to consider

Benefits if you start as your Dip Class: Rogues get an extra skill if you start as one as opposed to grabbing it later, and as a Fighter you get to enjoy having proficiency in Constitution (often regarded as the best save - and certainly important for keeping your concentration spells up) instead of Wisdom, as well as heavy armor instead of medium. Once you enjoy some of the exclusive initial benefits of a starting class, if you intend to take a second level you should re-evaluate the benefits again, otherwise go back to "Two Early" for more pushback guidelines.

For Armor Proficiency: Light armor is worse than Mage Armor unless you find something magical, and medium armor isn't better unless you have Scale Mail, a Breastplate, or Half Plate. A good guideline on when you should take your dip to enjoy the benefits of armor is to take it when you obtain that armor. If you find a set of half-plate, shove it in your handy haversack, plop it on your BSF's back, or stick in a safe place and once you hit next level take your dip class.
It's worth noting that Fighters don't start with Medium armor - but if you start as a Cleric you can get Scale Armor right away as well as a shield. So if you go Cleric it doesn't hurt to start as one.

Heavy armor can be worthwhile if you are willing to take the movement speed penalty or you are a dwarf. It is probably not worth the investment to 15 str unless you are making a gish.

Bladesingers:

Check out NADRIGOL's post here to see some comparisons between a few typical multiclass paths:
http://www.enworld.org/forum/showthread.php?450158-Treantmonk-s-Guide-to-Wizards-5e/page32&p=6818344&viewfull=1#post6818344

What class dips offer the most to the Wizard?

Cleric

Wisdom isn't a primary stat, but it's not one that hurts either. The best part about dipping Cleric though is that you get Medium Armor and a shield, Access to all 1st level Cleric spells (With at least two memorizations a day), and 1st level Domain powers. I consider this dip more valuable than Signature spells. Another great part about Cleric is that it's a dip that doesn't cost you any growth in your spell slots.

If you go Cleric and you plan on dipping before level 12, I HIGHLY recommend starting as a human so you can pick up Warcaster from level 1. This will let you cast while wielding a shield and your arcane focus. This is a bit tangential - but relevant- keep in mind that Quarterstaffs are versatile weapons, and arguably all of the magic staves in the DMG count as the same (Most of them specify that they function as a quarterstaff.) As mentioned already by this guide, a shield and half plate will get you to a non-magical AC of 19.

1 Level - Knowledge domain is probably the best overall domain to pick for your single level dip and it's the only one I'd consider consistent with the sky blue rating. All four of the bonus skill options are intelligence based - it's almost like the designers were asking Wizards to come in and steal the thunder. Expertise in said skills will almost ensure that you will never fail a knowledge check unless you have one of those cheeky DMs that just likes to keep things a mystery.
Tempest and War also get you into heavy armor if you don't mind being slow or a dwarf.

2 Levels - Tempest Domain gets maximized lightning bolts and thunder spells once per short rest. This is a stunted way to get maximum damage without going Evoker so it gives you the limited option to get your cake and eat it too.
Knowledge domain is still a good choice here - adding some great versatility to an already versatile class.
Trickery domain gives a projected image that you can cast spells from safely. Very flavorful if you're an illusionist.
War Domain lets you add +10 to an attack roll for landing that important spell

6 Levels - Breaking the rule of two and going Tempest Domain might be worth it here to get another

maximized thunder or lightning spell per short rest, but I think the primary draw is adding a 10' push to all of your electric spells. With some creativity this could be very strategic while still doing excellent damage - especially with all of your electric wizardry added to the mix. This is my personal favorite "Mystic Theurge" approach, as it gives you level 3 cleric spells and level 7 Wizard Spells by level 20, but as you can see by my rating, I only recommend it as a concept and not as a winner-takes-all approach. If you don't care about your level 14 school power then taking Cleric to level 7 gets you level 4 spells while keeping your level 7 Wizard spells.

Fighter

Fighter, along with the rogue, is one of the easiest dips from a stats perspective. You already want Dex, and that's all the Fighter requires. Like the cleric, one dip gets you shields and medium armor (and Human is recommended for Warcaster if you dip before level 12), but thanks to Fighting style you can turn that AC bonus up from 19 to 20 by taking Defense Style. This is the style I recommend unless you're doing some Gish. Get your staff and shield and enjoy the benefits of full plate without needing the strength modifier (And hey, if you happen to have a 16 in your Dex, you might consider picking up Medium Armor mastery after you max your INT for a total of 21 AC.)

It is also viable to take Fighter as your level 1 and wear heavy armor, taking the move speed penalty or being a dwarf.

I already mentioned that starting as a fighter gets you Constitution as your main save proficiency, but it's also worth noting that you get +4 hp by starting as a fighter (or +2 hp in the long run.) In general the second edition mentality of starting Fighter before you go Wizard holds true in 5e as you get a solid foundation in survival before you tackle the wonders of arcane magic.

2 Levels - If you go fighter, take 2 levels. If you don't take 2 levels, just go Cleric - there's just less sacrifice for the benefits. But action surge is well worth losing your second 5th and 6th spell slots.

Let's talk a little about Action Surge. Action surge is Quicken Spell on steroids. Quicken spell still requires your bonus action, Action surge let's you keep your bonus action, and then gives you another full action. These actions don't have to be spells but you'd be danged if you wasted this on anything else.

Imagine the possibilities. Let's say you already have Bigby's hand up from a previous round. You cast fireball and crush with your Bigby's hand, and then throw another fireball... That's more damage in a round than the Sorcerer could dream of.

And get this, action surge comes back to you on a short rest.

Compare Action Surge to taking 3 levels of Sorcerer for quicken spell. As a Sorc you lose Spell Mastery, you have to sacrifice spell slots to get your sorcery points back (Though you can get those slots back from spell recovery), and you don't get to wear fashionable Half-plate with your stick and board. Oh, and you had to bump your DUMP stat up to 13 to qualify for Sorcerer- not so with the Fighter.

Fighter rocks. Take two from fighter, even if it's your 19th and 20th levels.

7 levels - This is specifically for Bladesinger / Eldritch Knight to pick up War Magic. With this combo you can use Green Flame Blade or Booming Blade, then get another bonus action attack. You also get the wonderful action surge, fighting style, decent HP, con saves (if you start fighter) and some spell slots. I know it's tempting, but you give up a lot. You will never get your wizard 14 feature, you give up 9th level slots, and your highest spell known is level 7. Is the trade worth it? Maybe. It’s a decent boost to your staying power and damage in melee, at the expense of your highest level once per day powers. If that sounds appealing, give it a try. It might even be worth going 10 levels (probably not). See below.

10 levels - Breaking the rule of 2 is worth mentioning for Eldritch Strike. Eldritch strike imposes a disadvantage on a saving throw for a spell you cast. It's arguable whether this applies to existing spells or if it has to be a spell you cast after imposing the penalty. RAW is slightly ambiguous, but I could see a majority interpreting it as the latter. But, if your DM counts it as the former, then 10 Fighter levels combined with 10 Wizard levels is a great combo for spells like Hold Monster. If you grab enchantment school, you can twin your hold monster spell and then use your two attack actions to help keep them paralyzed while you slowly whittle them away or let your party take them down. Highly recommend you use a bow if this is possible.

Whether or not your DM lets you do this though you're not going to see any major benefit from Eldritch Strike until level 13 when you first pick up Hold Person, and you don't get hold monster and Eldritch Strike until level 19 - at least. But it's a neat trick overall if you make it that far.

Warlock

The charisma requirement sucks, but Warlock serves one slightly cheesy purpose for the Abjuration Wizard: Armor of Shadows. I will discuss this below.

2 Levels - Being able to cast Hex is neat, but Eldritch Invocations are the real reason you're here. For two levels you get two invocations - and here are some of my picks (and some popular mentions I'd advise against.)

Agonizing Blast, Eldritch Spear, and Repelling Blast - Eldritch blast is great and always adds a nice fallback for your action, whether you have few other options or if you just want something to do while concentrating on something else. Unfortunately the Wizard just has to sacrifice too much to really make it worth it. Because it still uses Charisma for the to-hit modifier you'd really want to boost that CHA to 20, and at that point you should really start questioning whether you're playing the right class. BUT, if you take Warlock as a couple of levels after you hit level 16 and can spend your last two ability modifiers on CHA, this becomes a decent choice - just not a particularly recommended one.

Armor of Shadows - Note that this is sky blue only for Abjurers, probably **Dark Violet** for anyone else. Armor of Shadows lets you cast a 1st level abjuration spell on yourself at will - Arcane Ward gives you a temporary HP shield the first time you cast an abjuration spell, and it recharges bit by bit every time you cast an abjuration spell after that. Casting this on yourself outside of combat gets you twice your Wizard Level in HP, and refreshing the shield is like a few hit dice without the need for a short rest. This is cheesy cheesy, and your DM may choose to ban it.

Devil's Sight - More useful if you're human and could use the Darkvision, but the added benefit of being able to pierce darkness spells adds that extra dash of strategy to your repertoire. If you want to use darkness + earth elemental or animate objects, this lets you control them more tactically inside the darkness as well.

Eldritch Sight - Did you play Pathfinder before 5e? Bummed about losing Detect Magic as a cantrip? Well now you can have it back. I personally think Detect magic is well worth a 1st level slot, and you don't always have time to cast it as a ritual. This gives you the Wizard eyes that will drive your DM nuts as you scan all the things.

Eyes of the Runekeeper - Highly contingent on how important language is to your campaign, but worth considering if you find it coming up all the time.

Mask of Many Faces - Like most at-will spells, the way this saves your spell slots makes it worth considering. Disguise self is more useful for Cha based characters for most of the related antics, but it's better than trying to stealth your way around if all you want to do is blend in.

Misty Visions - Silent Image uses concentration, which is a bummer, This is a blue pick primarily for Illusionists, particularly after they get their level 14 power. For everyone else it's **Green**.

3 Levels - Break the Rule of Two for a pact benefit. In my opinion Pact of the Chain is the best dip pact of the bunch for any full caster class, but the cost to the Wizard is probably too high - and since they don't even get access to Contagion it's not even quite cheesy enough to put on your character's quesadilla. The improved familiar can deliver touch attacks like nothing else though - being invisible and all. I really like the idea of this, but it's really just better to get a Lore Bard with Contagion and go to town with your disco eldritch laser rave (Or smack them with a flesh to stone after stunting their constitution save.)

Sorcerer

Yeah, I see those green eyes of yours, coveting the Metamagic that the Sorcerer stole from us... THAT WAS OUR PRECIOUS! Ahem, anyway, dipping to get it back - kind of costly. You 100% have to break the Rule of Two and lose spell mastery to get Metamagic, and you really run the risk of losing your Wish spell the more you dip for it. But there are some good points to the Sorcerer/Wizard combo; If you start as a Sorc, you enjoy Constitution as your primary save and while you may risk your high level aptitude you still maintain your high level slots. Another nice thing about being a Wizard and dipping Sorc is that you automatically get back a few of your spell slots on a short rest. This effectively gives you the Sorcerer's capstone ability several times per day if you only crunch up 1st level slots into precious Sorcery points.

3 Levels +- Really this is the minimum a Wizard should ever stick in Sorcerer. Heighten Spell and Quicken Spell are my two primary picks for a 3 level dip. Twin spell is also good for doubling up on that Haste buff depending on your party composition. The other picks are sub-par in my opinion. But having only 3 sorc points won't get you very far before you have to start burning spell slots.

6 Levels - Gets you bonus damage on a specific element if you go draconic blood (and why wouldn't you.) 6 levels also gets you a good amount of twin spell action for your buck, if you want to pick up that metamagic again. You really need to pump up the CHA to make this worth it, but if you do just that and go Evoker you're looking at a +10 damage to your fire spells or what have you with 20 INT and CHA. Oh and if you're level 17 you can use twin spell on Flesh to Stone which is notably not on the Sorcerer's spell list - probably for this exact reason.

Rogue

Easy to get into, but the benefits just aren't as good as Fighter or Cleric. Thanks to getting expertise at first level, the primary reason for dipping rogue is to expand your overall repertoire through skills rather than improving your defenses or your spellcasting. Depending on your campaign this could make it a better choice than the top tier picks.

1 Level - If this is your first level you get 2 bonus skills - one if you take the dip later. I don't really recommend stopping at 1 level, but if you find a fancy magical leather armor and don't plan on dipping anything else, Knowledge Cleric is probably still better. But with the Rogue you get an extra skill instead of a defense boost like the fighter, and unlike Cleric your Expertise can be spent on any skills; so you can make up for a stat deficiency in say... Stealth or a Charisma based skill, instead of just improving something you're already good at.

2 Levels- Cunning action is like having an improved Expeditious Retreat at-will and without requiring concentration. It's a good power and probably better than the feat you sacrificed to get it. Even **better** for a bladesinger that wants to abuse booming blade.

3 Levels - Doing some tricks with your mage hand might be neater than Spell mastery if you're heavily skill focused and skill monkeying around is part of your schtick. You'll really need a high dex to make this worth it, but if your DM isn't using Feats, Dex is probably the best stat for your ability modifier anyway.

9 Levels - I mostly bring this one up to compare to Magical Ambush to Eldritch Strike. The rogue has one primary advantage over the Fighter in the "disadvantage on saves" game - and that's that you can still access Flesh to Stone by the time you hit that lofty level 20. This is NOT better than the Sorcerer's heighten spell though, and it takes only 3 Sorcerer levels to get a similar benefit (Though you can only do it once per long rest unless you chow down on some of your slots.) Sorcs also get full caster levels though and the Wish spell where the Rogue is left high and dry.
As a hybrid class though you get more expertise, evasion, and respectable sneak attack than a straight Wizard. I still rate this low for general recommendation since if you really want a hybrid skill monkey caster the Bard already exists (and that same Bard can also dip 3 levels into the Sorcerer for Heighten Spell.)

Bard

The bard does have one notable choice:

2 Levels- Jack of All Trades gets you a bonus ability checks that are relevant to your interests, like initiative and counterspell or dispel magic. But, with the Charisma requirement and nothing else much to offer other than a bonus skill slot, two levels is a hefty price to pay. Value for Value, 2 levels in Bard is worth at least a feat since you get light armor and a skill slot, so the question here is whether Jack of All Trades is worth giving up Signature Spells. If you happen to be an enchanter or illusionist and you want the Cha anyway, this isn't a terrible high level pick since you get to keep your spell slots. I definitely wouldn't recommend doing Bard before level 8 though and there are basically no benefits for taking your first level as a Bard.

3 Levels - 3 more skills or Medium armor is basically a feat choice, but you get to throw in Expertise as well. Depending on the campaign this may be more enticing than Spell Mastery.... But even in a non-combat campaign Spell Mastery is dang good.

6 Levels - While Magical Secrets might be tempting, going past level 3 loses your Wish spell which basically duplicates Magical Secrets anyway. Also Magical Secrets will use CHA, not INT. If you jelly of the Bardic Secrets, then go play a bard.

Paladin

Might seem a bit weird at first, and unfortunately requires CHA 13, but there is one thing worth pointing out here.

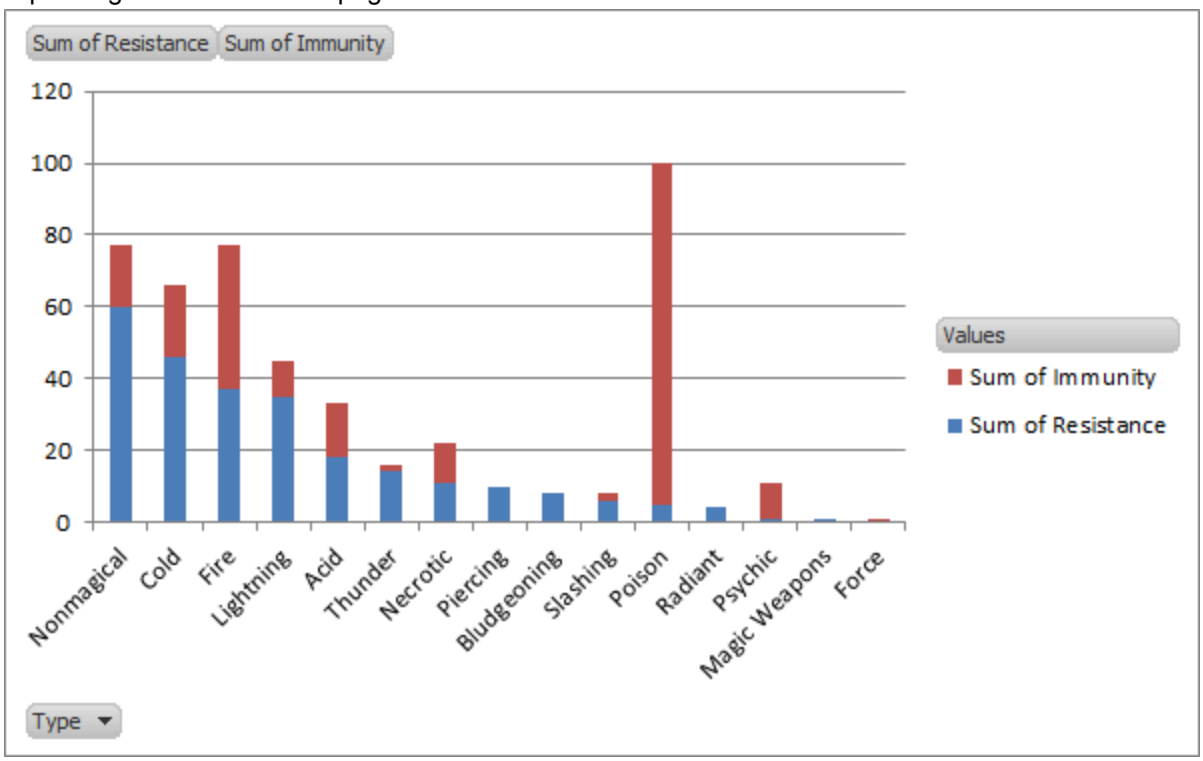
2 Levels - Divine Smite. This is obviously only for gishes or Bladesingers. Did you want burst? Rules as written, you can smite on a green fire blade or booming blade attack since it’s a “melee attack”. Throw on full wizard spell progression for tons of smite and you have a recipe for serious burst potential. You also get a bit of hp and a fighting style. Nice.

Analysis Section

I'm about to get into a lot of math-craft here. If you aren't into min-maxing or you don't get excited by spreadsheets, you might want to skip to the "Useful Spell Lists" section.

Discussion of resistances

http://i.imgur.com/OwBe9xR.png



Source: http://www.giantitp.com/forums/showthread.php?379165-MM-Resistances-Immunities-Vulnerabilities-and-Damage

The chart shows what many of us already knew: our most common damage types, fire and cold, are also the most commonly resisted. Somewhat unexpectedly, physical damage types (p/s/b) resistances are pretty uncommon. There are a good number of spells that do these kinds of damage, making them solid picks. Cloud of Daggers, Bigby's, erupting earth, etc.

Acid is significantly better and one of our new elemental spells, Vitriolic Sphere, is top tier and also does acid damage.

Necrotic is also a surprisingly solid choice. One would expect undead to be uniformly immune to it, but that is not the case. In general, only incorporeal undead (ghosts etc.) are immune.

Now poison. Wow. In general, don't bother. It seems like half the MM is immune to poison. Undead, constructs, elementals, all immune to poison. Of course, you can still use poison spells if you choose targets wisely, but there's really no reason to pick a poison spell over the other available options most of the time, so why force it?

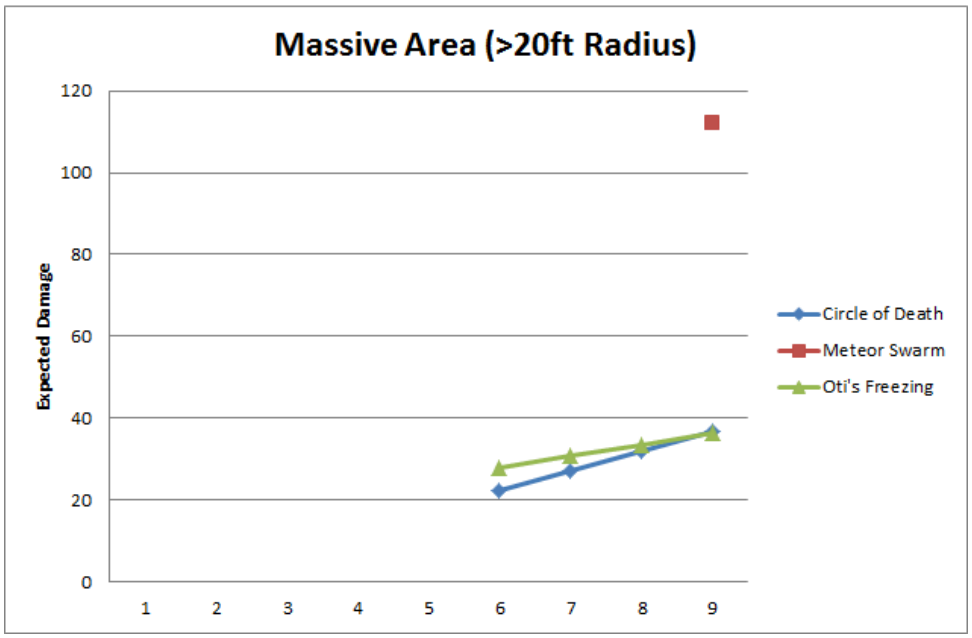
Radiant and force remain your top picks for spells that will affect the most number of enemies.

Comparative Damage for spells

Thanks to MelloRed for some feedback on our damage analysis section, we now have a better approximation of expected damage. The system we are using to approximate damage assumes you hit 60% of the time on any given attack or save, and miss 40% of the time. i.e. average damage number are multiplied as follows:

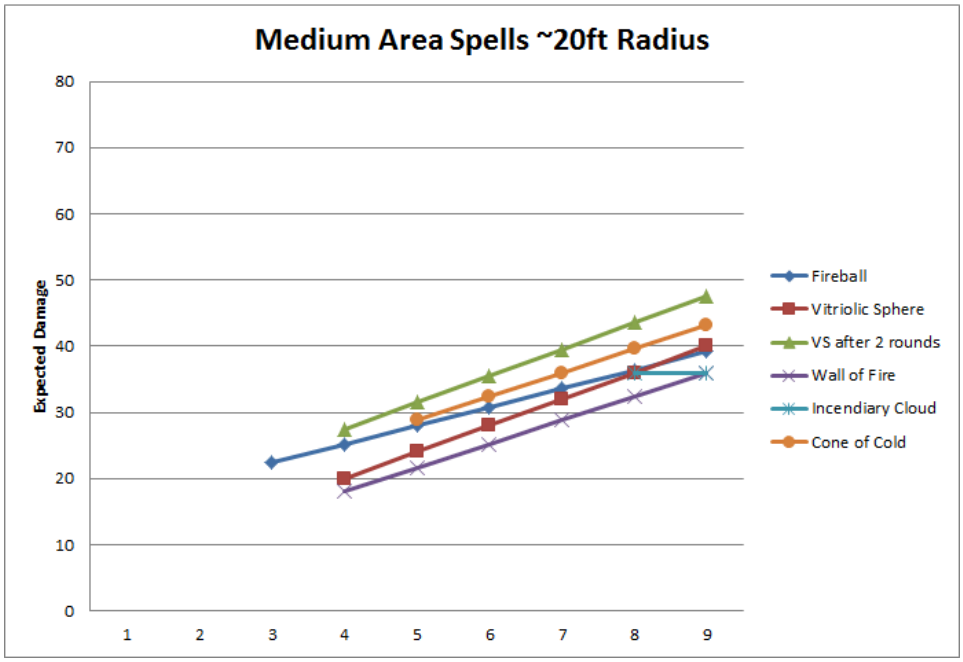
auto-damage = *1 (full damage)
Half damage on a miss/save = *0.8
No damage on a miss/save = *0.6

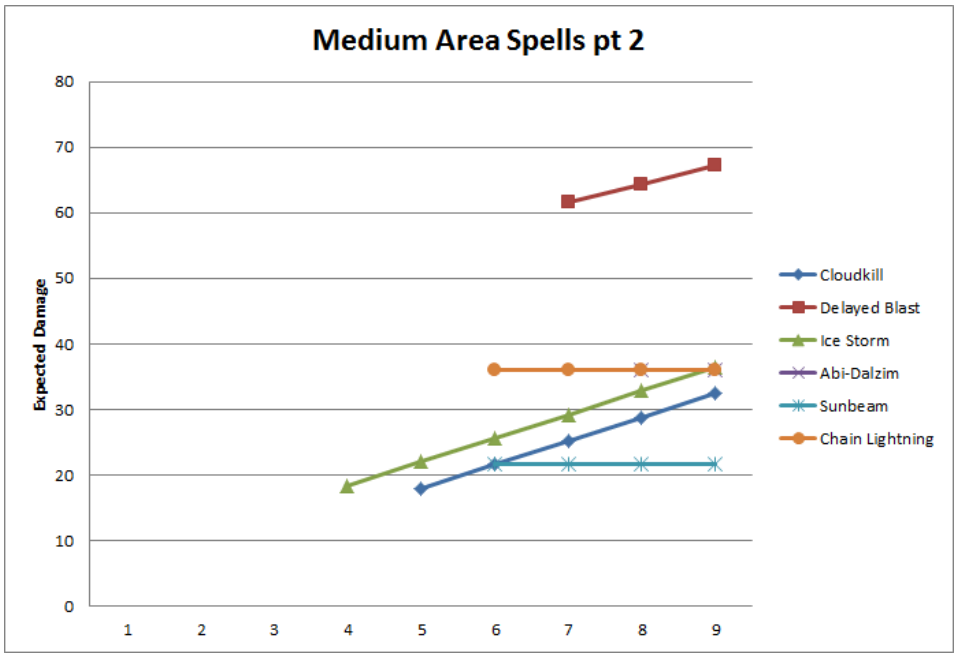
http://i.imgur.com/zcDIsLg.png



Massive area spells are dominated by Meteor Swarm. It clearly earns its spot as king of evocation, and its level 9 slot. It also has a much bigger area than our other "big" spells.

http://i.imgur.com/uFcDDpt.png http://i.imgur.com/2aaNgkD.png

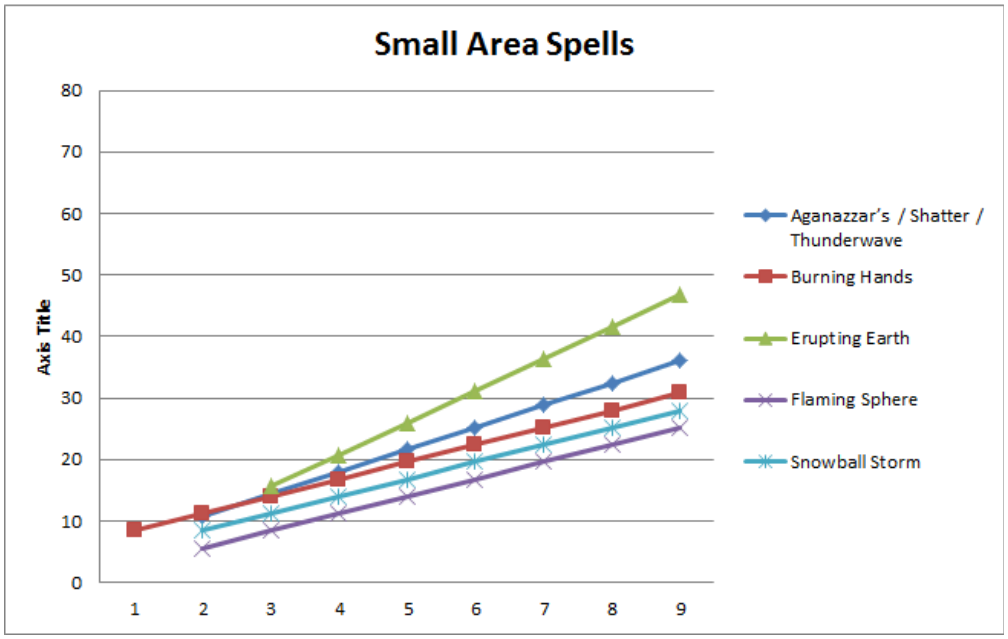




(Abi-Dalzim is hiding behind chain lightning)

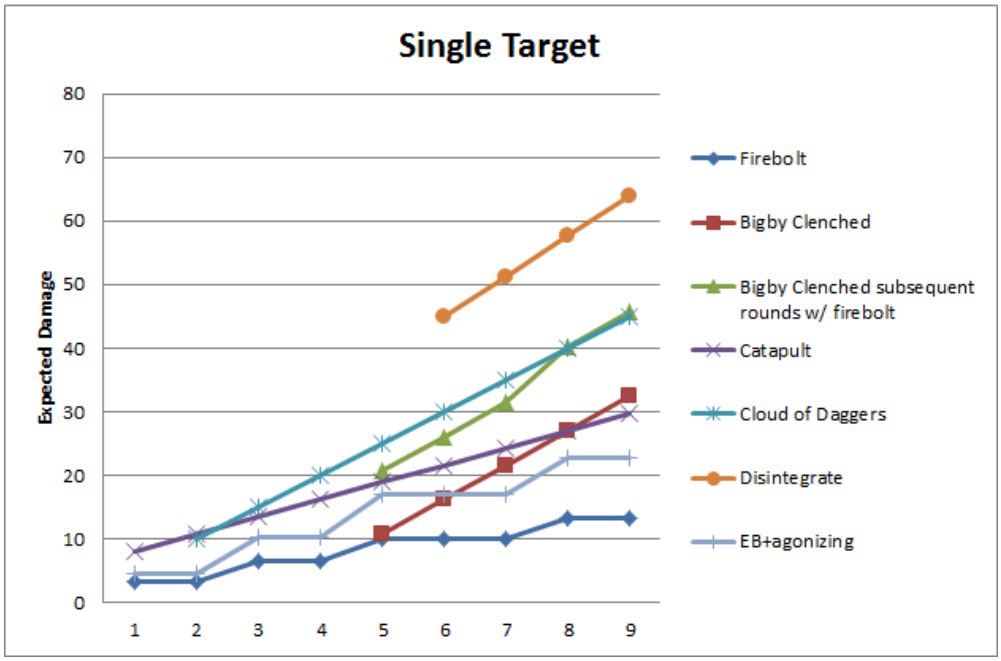
Lots of interesting things going on in our medium size group. We can see how fireball / Lightning bolt divide the group nicely down the middle. Fully charged delayed blast has an outstanding damage profile, but good luck getting 1 min to concentrate on that. Vitriolic Sphere is very interesting, as it manages the highest damage over its 2 rounds, and its upfront damage is only slightly lower than fireball. Wall of Fire and sunbeam offer low damage, but have the ability to repeat on subsequent rounds, and sunbeam has a blind rider. Chain lightning offers great damage when it shows up, but its lack of scaling put it behind cone of cold when using higher level slots.

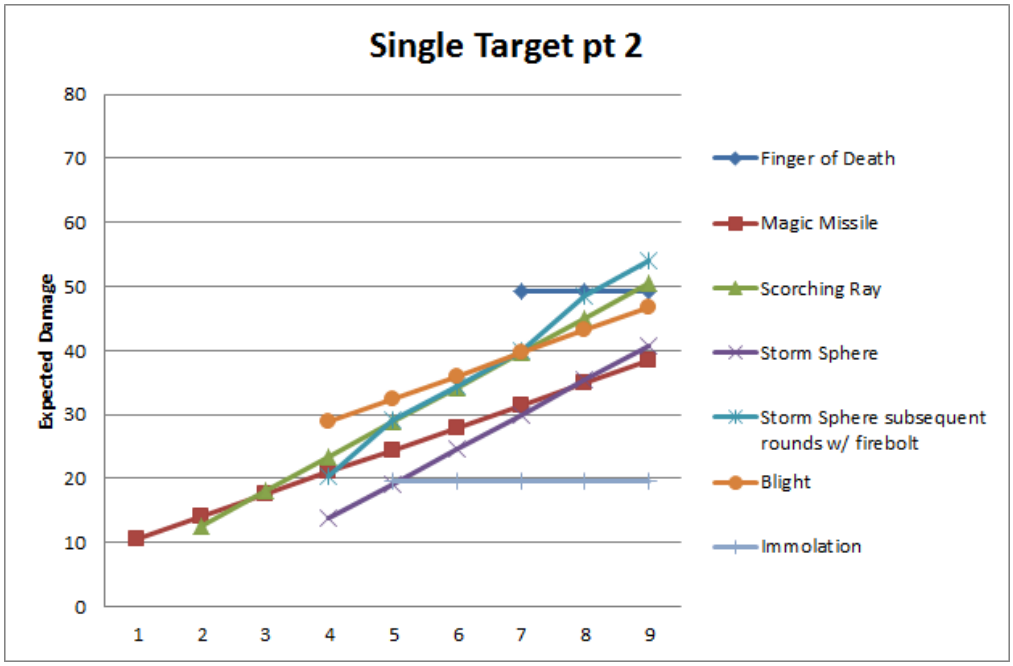
http://i.imgur.com/I2jaW0N.png



Our small area spells are pretty straight forward. These lower level spells don't generally scale as well into the higher levels, with the exception of erupting earth! That sucker packs a punch. If you are in a situation where you can trade the area for damage, it's a viable spell to cast out of a high level slot.

http://imgur.com/3QFFDwc http://i.imgur.com/XN1gzZZ.png





Cloud of Daggers: Good damage, with the potential for two hits per round. With forced movement, grapple, or good tactical positioning, the spell really shines.

Despite disintegrate's no damage on hit, we see that it actually still offers pretty solid expected damage on account of its insanely high hit damage. Definitely always worth a cast if the enemy is stunned or can't make reflex saves.

We also see that Immolation is terrible.

Catapult got the tweet nerf. It only does damage if they fail the reflex save. It's pretty much inferior to your other choices.

Scorching Ray hangs nicely with the pack offering nice scaling across all spell levels.

Storm sphere is also worth noting. Combining it with an un-bonused firebolt gives very solid round to round damage output, but you can also combine it with harder hitting spells to add a really nice 2nd round single target nova.

The real truth about blast spells:

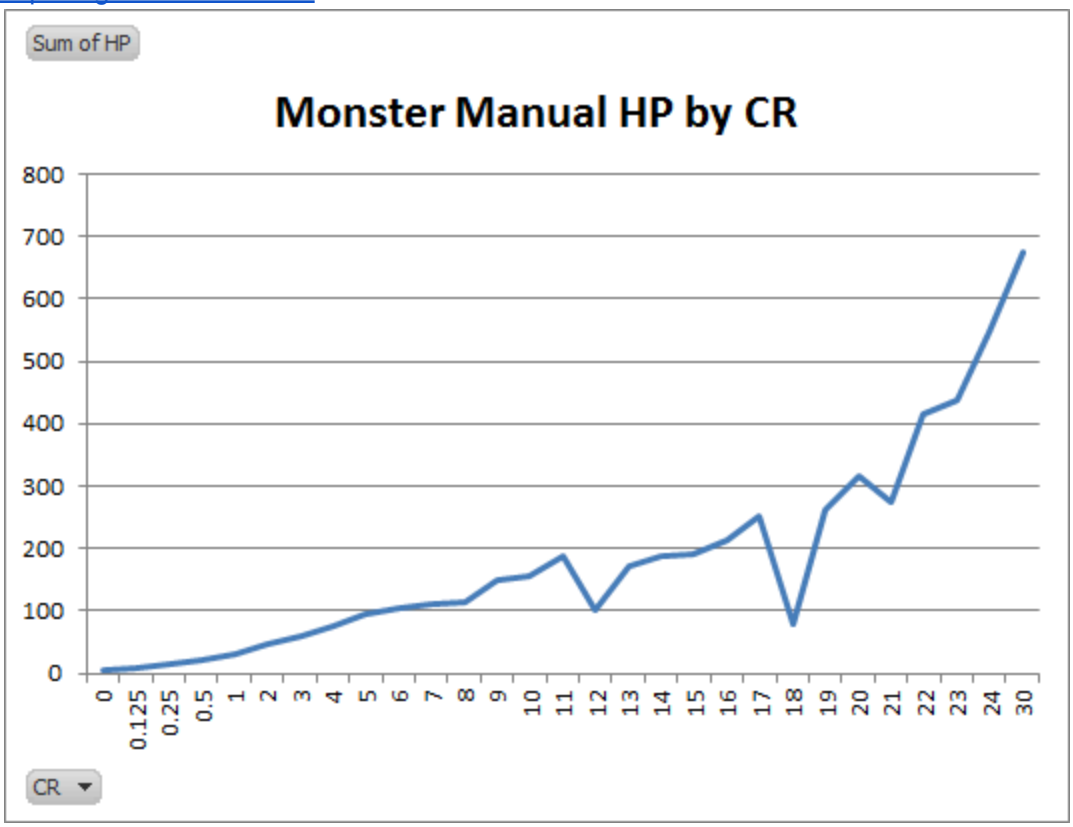
Blast spells are a ton of fun, and are always useful versus crowds of enemies, but the truth is that they just don't really scale that well. Fireball does a fantastic 8d6 damage when you get it at level 5, but it only increases by 1d6 per spell slot after that. This scaling is mirrored by all of your damage spells. I've rated these spells in comparison to one another, but that might not be the most accurate way to consider them. I was first introduced to this problem by Treantmonk here:
http://community.wizards.com/forum/player-help/threads/4216706

Treantmonk looks at a straight line connecting magic missile damage to meteor swarm damage and presents it as the optimal damage line. He also notes that no other spells hit that damage line. I don't

exactly disagree with his logic, however; I think we can go deeper.

Here is a chart I made of monster HP vs CR from the Monster Manual.

http://imgur.com/dXLdVCC



Interestingly, monster HP does not scale linearly.

AoE Blast Spells

Let's look at how monster hp scales vs your expected damage from spells. We will start with fireball. Assume you are facing a single target of CR=your level, and you use fireball in your highest available slot, with a 60% hit rate. Here is the number of fireballs you should expect to need to use to defeat that enemy:

CR	Number of Fireballs Required To Kill on Average
5	4.290816326
6	4.681919643
7	4.408369409
8	4.574829933
9	5.357142857
10	5.526785714
11	6.13997114
12	3.295454545
13	5.128968253
14	5.550595238
15	5.240384615
16	5.862637363
17	6.439504372
18	2.040816327
19	6.683673469
20	8.073979592
21	6.983418367
22	10.57397959
23	11.17984694
24	13.92857143
30	17.24489796

http://imgur.com/9w5K7kD

Well, this is interesting. From levels 5-16 i.e. 3rd to 8th level slots, you go from needing 4.3 fireballs to needing 5.8 fireballs to kill a monster. ~2 extra fireballs. That kinda sucks, right?

However, it is worth noting that as you gain additional lower level slots and your highest level slot goes up, the opportunity cost of burning a high level slot on fireball also decreases, because you have more spells remaining. When you only have 1 third level slot, using it on fireball is a huge opportunity cost, but it's also a huge benefit. When you have 7th level slots, burning a 7th level slot leaves you with a ton of extra slots remaining, so the benefit doesn't have to be as great. I think this is the reason for the inconsistent scaling.

However! This does not help you with action economy or help you compare the utility of what else you could do with that 7th level slot. You still have to compare apples to apples, would you be better off using that 7th level slot for a upranked fireball, or a Forcecage?

Also: your highest level slot is an extremely limited resource!

It is also worth noting that as your level increases you are also likely to face larger numbers of lower CR creatures, a situation where an AoE blast spell clearly shines.

You also probably won't actually cast fireball out of every slot level, so let's assume you choose a roughly "best in slot" blast spell for each level. For 1-2 its Burning hands, for 3-4 its fireball, for 5-8 it's cone of cold, and for 9 its meteor swarm. Now your chart looks like this:
http://imgur.com/qkjzJ0x

CR	HP	Best In Slot Damage	Number of Spells Required To Kill on Average
0	3.806452	8.4	0.453149002
0.125	8.217391	8.4	0.97826087
0.25	14.52273	8.4	1.728896104
0.5	19.74286	8.4	2.350340136
1	29.42857	8.4	3.503401361
2	46.85714	8.4	5.578231293
3	59.12903	11.2	5.27937788
4	76.5	11.2	6.830357143
5	96.11429	22.4	4.290816326
6	104.875	22.4	4.681919643
7	111.0909	25.2	4.408369409
8	115.2857	25.2	4.574829933
9	150	28.8	5.208333333
10	154.75	32.4	4.776234568
11	189.1111	36	5.253086419
12	101.5	39.6	2.563131313
13	172.3333	33.6	5.128968253
14	186.5	33.6	5.550595238
15	190.75	36.4	5.240384615
16	213.4	36.4	5.862637363
17	252.4286	112	2.25382653
18	80	112	0.714285714
19	262	112	2.339285714
20	316.5	112	2.825892857
21	273.75	112	2.444196429
22	414.5	112	3.700892857
23	438.25	112	3.912946429
24	546	112	4.875
30	676	112	6.035714286

That's a bit better, but we are still consuming a very limited resource to get this damage output.

Now, it's been said that fighters are the kings of damage in 5e. So let's compare.

I'm going to use yunru's optimized Eldritch Knight 11/Rogue 9, running Hex from level 4 onwards, assuming Sneak Attack is always possible. I'm primarily using this because he already did the math for me at all levels.

http://imgur.com/TRrKhSs

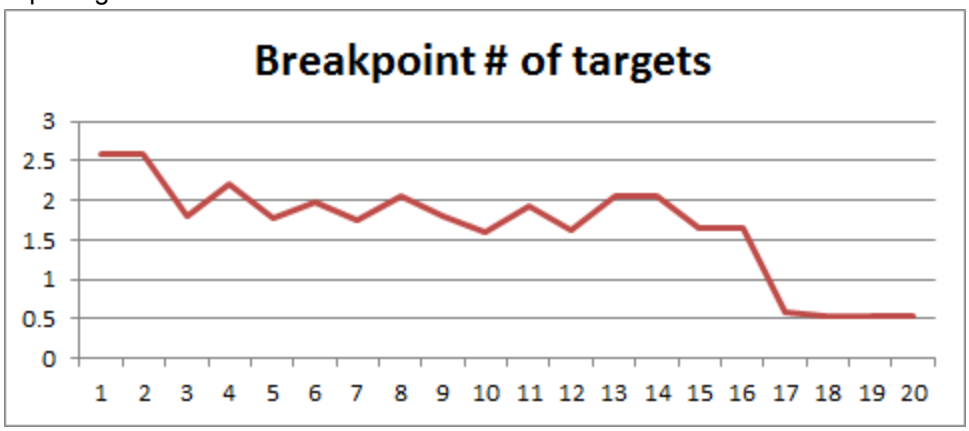
Level	Enemy AC	To-Hit	Attack #	DPR	Dex	AC	HP	S. A. Dmg	Feats
1	14	7	2	21.7	16	17	13		Crossbow Expert
2	14	7	2	21.7	16	17	22		
3	15	7	2	20.15	16	17	31		
4	15	7	2	24.7	16	17	40		Magic Initiate
5	15	8	3	39.9	16	17	49		
6	16	9	3	44.1	18	18	58		
7	16	9	3	44.1	18	18	67		
8	16	10	3	51.75	20	19	76		
9	17	11	3	51.75	20	19	85		
10	17	11	3	51.75	20	19	94		
11	17	11	4	69	20	19	103		
12	18	11	4	64.42835	20	19	108	3.5	
13	18	12	4	69.01367	20	19	113	3.5	
14	18	12	4	69.01758	20	19	118	4.5	
15	19	7	4	59.81178	20	19	123	4.5	Sharpshooter
16	19	7	4	59.90328	20	19	128	5.5	
17	19	8	4	66.34375	20	19	133	5.5	
18	20	8	4	59.99479	20	19	138	6.5	
19	20	8	4	59.99479	20	19	154	6.5	
20	20	8	4	60.0863	20	19	159	7.5	

Now with all this data we can look at how many targets our wizard has to target in order to equal the **at will** damage of this fighter/rogue. Yunru is using a much more sophisticated “to hit” calculation for his fighter, compared to my “60% hit” estimate, but saves are all over the chart, so it’s very difficult to come up with a system. Let’s just take this as a rough approximation.

http://imgur.com/3Ff0JES

Level	Wizard BIS Damage	Fighter Damage	Breakpoint # of targets
1	8.4	21.7	2.583333333
2	8.4	21.7	2.583333333
3	11.2	20.15	1.799107143
4	11.2	24.7	2.205357143
5	22.4	39.9	1.78125
6	22.4	44.1	1.96875
7	25.2	44.1	1.75
8	25.2	51.75	2.053571429
9	28.8	51.75	1.796875
10	32.4	51.75	1.597222222
11	36	69	1.916666667
12	39.6	64.42835	1.626978535
13	33.6	69.01367188	2.05397833
14	33.6	69.01757813	2.054094587
15	36.4	59.81177813	1.643180718
16	36.4	59.90328438	1.645694626
17	112	66.34375	0.592354911
18	112	59.99479063	0.535667773
19	112	59.99479063	0.535667773
20	112	60.08629688	0.536484794

http://imgur.com/bfNfmoS



Now, hitting this breakpoint number lets you match the fighter's damage output for 1 round. This also does not take into consideration the fighter's action surge.

You only ever have 1-2 of these max level slots PER DAY. Let's say you are level 9 and just got your shiny new Cone of Cold. You hit 2 targets with it. Congrats, you matched the fighters damage output for one round and you are now out of your highest level slot. Assuming your combats last 3-4 rounds you probably want to try to hit 2x-3x the breakpoint number of targets to equal the fighters damage output for that fight. Of course, your lower level slots will only do 1d6 less damage per slot level, so you can exceed the fighter's damage output if you can consistently hit above the breakpoint number each round, even if you have to use to spell slots 1-2 levels lower than your max. However, this is still not sustainable over a

full adventuring day. Overchannel can help with maintaining this breakpoint by making one of your lower level slots function at a much higher level once or twice per day. For example, the breakpoint of a level 5 overchanneled cone of cold is ~1 for all relevant levels.

Single Target Damage:

Okay that's great and all but what about single target damage? I heard that scorching ray does bonkers damage, right?

Well, scorching ray used to do bonkers damage before the errata. It's actually pretty easy to compare "optimal" wizard picks to our fighter, above, so let's do that.

Our wizard is going to use magic missile for slot 1-2, scorching ray 3, blight 4-5, disintegrate 6-8, and meteor swarm at 9.
http://imgur.com/JEuGZKM

Level	Fighter DPR At Will	Wizard Best Spell Slot Damage
1	21.7	10.5
2	21.7	10.5
3	20.15	14
4	24.7	14
5	39.9	18
6	44.1	18
7	44.1	28.8
8	51.75	28.8
9	51.75	32.4
10	51.75	32.4
11	69	45
12	64.42835	45
13	69.01367188	51.3
14	69.01757813	51.3
15	59.81177813	57.6
16	59.90328438	57.6
17	66.34375	112
18	59.99479063	112
19	59.99479063	112
20	60.08629688	112

Long story short, even using your highest level slot, you can only hope to surpass the fighter's single target damage in 2 cases: (1) meteor swarm, (2) disintegrate with an auto hit. Disintegrate does ~double the listed expected damage if you can force the enemy to auto-fail its reflex save. Stunning fist or hold person can accomplish this, for example.

Wrapping it up:

After all of this you may think that damage spells, especially single target damage spells, should be avoided at all costs. However, this is not necessarily the case. Dead is still the best debuff, and you can offer a ton of versatility to your party by being able to bring a couple damage spells, a bit of CC, and a bit of utility. Sometimes the only answer is “kill it with fire”. Sometimes there are more efficient answers.

The fighter we are comparing to has a very small number of tools compared to a wizard and is totally optimized for maximum damage output. Damage is just one of your tools. When used in the right situations, it can be a very helpful tool.

The case for free overchannel on cantrips:

Thanks to the new errata, you can no longer use overchannel on cantrips. This is sad because it wasn’t really overpowered and offered a nice benefit to Evoker.

My opinion that overchannel is fine without the errata, and here is the reason.

1. Evocation is the damage focused build for wizard and should be compared to other damage focused builds. You give up some pretty sweet features to get access to overchannel, so it should be good.
2. Overpower spell costs go up even when you use overchannel on a cantrip. If you ever want to use an overchanneled cone of cold, you have to not use any overchanneled cantrips beforehand, or take a ton of damage anyway. Thats a big opportunity cost.
3. Maths:

Eldritch Blast at level 20: 42 damage (completely at will)
Polearm Master Fighter at level 20: 49.5 damage (completely at will)
2x Eldritch Blast (warlock 2/sorc 18) at level 20: 84 (10 times per day + 4/short rest from warlock slots) (nearly at will)
Overchannel Firebolt at level 20: 45 damage (at will after you have used your higher level overchannels for the day)

There’s a reason why no one is making sorc/wizard multiclass cheese for quickened overchannel cantrips. It’s just not overpowered. Stop the overchannel discrimination!

Useful Lists:

List of Things to Do with Your Bonus Action:

This non-comprehensive list includes some things you might choose to use your bonus action on. Some of these actions might require a multiclass or feat, but I have tried to stick to things that would be attractive or feasible for someone who is primarily wizard.

Non-Spells

Cunning Action - Dash, Disengage, or Hide (requires rogue 2)

Two Weapon Fighting - Make an attack with your offhand weapon if you took the attack action
Quicken spell - requires sorcerer multiclass
Bladesinging - Turn it on

Spells

Cantrips:
Dancing Lights - Move the lights

Level 1:
Expeditious Retreat - Cast the spell
Expeditious Retreat - Take the Dash Action
Hex / Hunter's Mark - Cast or move spell (requires multiclass or feat)
Shield of Faith - Cast the spell (requires multiclass or feat)
Thunderous Smite - Cast the spell (requires multiclass or feat)
Unseen Servant - Interact with object

Level 2:
Dust Devil - Move the dust devil
Flaming Sphere - Move the sphere
Gust of Wind - Change the wind direction
Magic Weapon - Cast the spell
Misty Step - Cast the spell
Spiritual Weapon - cast or attack with the spell (Requires multiclass and high wisdom or charisma)
Shadow Blade - cast the spell
Dragons Breath - cast or attack with the spell

Level 3:
Animate Dead - Command servants
Melf’s Minute Meteors - Attack with a meteor

Level 4:
Storm sphere - Make lightning attack

Level 5:
Animate Objects - Command objects
Bigby’s Hand - Use the hand
Mislead - Switch senses
Far Step - Cast the spell or teleport on later turns

Level 6:
Arcane Gate - Rotate the gates
Create Undead - Command servants

Level 7:
Mordenkainen’s Sword - Attack with the sword
Project Image - Switch senses

Crown of Stars - Attack with spell

List of Conjuration spells that require concentration:

The following list is a useful resource for conjuration spec wizards. Thanks to awaken_D_M_golem for compiling this.

Cantrips:
Create Bonfire

Level 1 Spells:
Fog Cloud [Conjuration] (V,S; Concentration) (Druid, Ranger, Sorcerer, Wizard)

Level 2 Spells:
Cloud of Daggers [Conjuration] (V,S,M; Concentration) (Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)
Flaming Sphere [Conjuration] (V,S,M; Concentration) (Druid, Wizard)
Web [Conjuration] (V,S,M; Concentration) (Sorcerer, Wizard)
Dust Devil

Level 3 Spells:
Sleet Storm [Conjuration] (V,S,M; Concentration) (Druid, Sorcerer, Wizard)
Stinking Cloud [Conjuration] (V,S,M; Concentration) (Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard)
Summon Lesser Demons

Level 4 Spells:
Conjure Minor Elementals [Conjuration] (V,S; Concentration) (Druid, Wizard)
Evard's Black Tentacles [Conjuration] (V,S,M; Concentration) (Wizard)
Watery Sphere
Summon Greater Demon

Level 5 Spells:
Conjure Elemental [Conjuration] (V,S,M; Concentration) (Druid, Wizard)
Far Step
Infernal Calling

Level 6 Spells:
Arcane Gate [Conjuration] (V,S; Concentration) (Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Level 7 Spells:
None

Level 8 Spells:
Cloudkill [Conjuration] (V,S; Concentration) (Sorcerer, Wizard)
Incendiary Cloud [Conjuration] (V,S; Concentration) (Sorcerer, Wizard)
Maze [Conjuration] (V,S; Concentration) (Wizard)

Level 9 Spells:
Gate [Conjuration] (V,S,M; Concentration, Expensive Components) (Cleric, Sorcerer, Wizard)
** Wish [Conjuration] (V) (Sorcerer, Wizard)

List of single target Enchantment spells:

For enchantment spec wizards:

Level 1 Spells:
Charm Person
Tasha's Hideous Laughter

Level 2 Spells:
Crown of Madness
Hold Person
Suggestion

Level 3 Spells:
Enemies Abound

Level 4 Spells:
Charm Monster

Level 5 Spells:
Dominate Person
Geas
Hold Monster
Modify Memory

Level 6 Spells:
Otto's Irresistible Dance!

Level 7 Spells:
Power Word Pain

Level 8 Spells:
Dominate Monster
Feeble Mind
Power Word Stun

Level 9 Spells:
Power Word Kill

Contingency Combos:

Suggested fun / useful ways to use your contingency spell
Trigger -> Spell

- "About to be hit by disintegrate" -> Otiluke's Resilient Sphere
- "Unable to cast a spell as an action during combat (while above 1 HP)" -> Otiluke's Resilient Sphere
- "Surprised in combat" -> Greater Invisibility
- "Surprised in combat" -> Mislead
- "About to take more then 1 point of elemental damage" -> Protection from Energy
- "About to take more then 1 point of Fire or Cold damage" -> Fire Shield
- "About to be attacked by a creature without true sight in combat" -> mirror image
- "I am reduced to less than half HP" -> Polymoprh

- “An ally or I am attacked by an invisible creature” -> See Invisibility
- “I am noticed by a non-party member while trying to sneak” -> Invisibility
- “I am about to be hit by a piercing / slashing / bludgeoning attack” -> Stoneskin
- “A non-party member is speaking a language I don’t understand -> Comprehend languages
- "Wink twice with your left eye within 2 seconds" -> any target-self 5th level spell you want to cast as a free action

Example Builds:

Katabasis the Cruel:

High Elf Necromancer 5
Neutral Evil

Str 8
Dex 16
Con 12
Int 18
Wis 14
Cha 8

Background: Criminal
Skills: Stealth, Arcana, History, Perception, Deception

Spells:
Cantrip: Chill Touch, Minor Illusion, Shocking Grasp, Mage hand
1st level: Find Familiar (Bat), Tasha’s, Detect Magic, Shield, Mage Armor, Protection from Evil and Good, Alarm
2nd level: Blindness/Deafness, Cloud of Daggers, Scorching ray, Suggestion
3rd level: Animate Dead, Leomund’s tiny hut

Mouse

Human (Variant) Evoker 8:
Chaotic Good

Str 10
Dex 16
Con 14
Int 20
Wis 10
Cha 8

Background: Urchin
Feats: Observant
Skills: Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Arcana, Investigation, Perception

Spells:
Cantrip: Light, Minor Illusion, Shocking Grasp, Firebolt
1st level: Find Familiar (Rat), Tasha’s, Detect Magic, Shield, Mage Armor, Alarm, Sleep

2nd level: Phantasmal Force, Scorching ray, Invisibility, Hold Person
3rd level: Fireball, Leomund's tiny hut, Counterspell, Hypnotic Pattern
4th Level: Arcane Eye, Greater Invisibility, Wall of Fire, Banishment

Sources included:

Player's Handbook
Dungeon Master's Guide
Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide
PHB Errata (http://media.wizards.com/2015/downloads/dnd/Errata_PH.pdf)
Elemental Evil Players Companion
(http://media.wizards.com/2015/downloads/dnd/EE_PlayersCompanion.pdf)
Sage Advice July 2015 (http://dnd.wizards.com/articles/features/sageadvice_july2015)
Xanathar's Guide to Everything
Eberron: Rising from the Last War
Explorers Guide to Wildemount
Modenkainen's Time of Foes
Guildmasters' Guide to Ravnica
Volo's Guide to monsters
Tasha's Cauldron of Everything

Further Reading:

Treantmonk's Wizard Guide:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IeOXWvbkmQ3nEyM2P3lS8TU4rsK6QJP0oH7HE_v67QY/edit
Treantmonk's Wizard Spell Guide:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZHzEjiHvtDItZE2ixfoYwqi7brTO-ag8uBJndE5saro/edit