

Magic House Rules and Tips

Being a mage 101: I have made significant house rules to priorities and mages. If you want to be a mage, you can play either a full mage, a mystic adept, an adept, or an aspected mage (sorcerers, conjurers, alchemists, and travelers). Each of these types of magicians is capable of different things, but when we tally them all together, what mages can potentially do can be divided into relatively neat categories. To date, no individual

Sorcery: Sorcery encompasses the talents of spellcasting, ritual spellcasting, and counterspelling. Spellcasting is straightforward- it creates immediate and localized magical effects that dissipate quickly. Ritual spellcasting take far longer (measured in hours) but allows mages to cast spells that can target someone from vast distances, last longer, or have effects of far greater magnitude. Counterspelling is most often used to protect oneself and one's allies from hostile magic, but can also be used to dispel persistent magical effects.

Learning Spells and Rituals: It works exactly as detailed in core rulebook.

Conjuring: Conjuring includes the disciplines of summoning, binding, and banishing. A mage can learn to summon up to five different types of spirits, based on their tradition, with a quick summoning spell (called an evocation). The spirit will owe the mage a number of services – the mage gives them directions and the spirit carries them out to the best of their abilities. Each tradition associates a spirit type with a category of spells, and spirits will use methods in that general umbrella to fulfill tasks. If a task cannot be fulfilled as such, the spirit will refuse. For example, a the Hermetic tradition categorizes fire spirits as combat spirits and earth spirits as manipulation spirits. If such a mage ordered each spirit to stop a pair of fleeing vehicles, the earth spirit might create a patch of mud to catch it or raise earthen spikes to cut its axles (depending on its powers), while a fire spirit would simply attack it until it was disabled. Neither would be able to heal a wounded comrade, though the earth spirit could transport them to a hospital. Mages have a reputation in the spirit world based on how they treat spirits, and this reputation affects how out-of-their way a spirit will go in fulfillment of their duties.

Binding a spirit allows a mage to keep it in the material plane for the long haul, send them on remote tasks, and perform certain other special duties. Most importantly, a bound spirit is not restricted in the type of tasks it will perform for a mage. Keep in mind most spirits hate being bound, and frequently binding them will negatively affect your spirit reputation. With a bit of roleplaying, a spirit can be persuaded to be bound willingly (for a time) to avoid this penalty, but they will want a fair trade of some sort.

Game Info: If you summon a spirit, you do not control it. You give it orders, and it will interpret them based on its nature and your spirit reputation. A bound spirit is more or less under your direct control while performing a services, but works as an NPC between services, and they will occasionally try to break free based on your treatment of them.

Banishing is the method of choice for dealing with spirits, efficiently returning them to their home metaplane. It's not always a one-shot dispersment (sometimes banishing takes a few attempts), but it's usually more efficient than dispatching a spirit the old-fashioned way.

Learning Summoning: Each spirit type has an associated evocation, which mages learn just as they would spells. Conjurers begin play knowing a few evocations automatically, while mages must divide their “spell slots” between spells and invocations as they desire.

Summoning High-Force Spirits: This is a dangerous proposition. If a mage summons a spirit with a Force higher than their own Magic stat, the spirit will try to break free from the mage's control each time a task is given. If they succeed, they have the option of remaining on the material plane as a free spirit. In addition to unpredictable but immediate consequences, this creates a lot of negative fallout within the local magical (and often legal) communities, and punitive measures in some form are sure to follow.

Alchemy (Advanced Option): I say advanced option because even though there isn't anything barring new characters from using alchemy, it is DEFINITELY more difficult to play an alchemist than a mage. If you are still curious, keep reading, otherwise, it's best to leave alchemy alone for new characters.

Alchemists utilize the abilities of alchemy, enchanting, and disenchanting. Alchemy is the art of attaching a spell to an object for later use. A the spell can be set to trigger either on a timer (useful for traps and legwork), physical contact (useful for setting traps), and upon a mental command from the alchemist (good for most situations, but slightly harder to create). This whole process is called a preparation. Preparations are slightly less powerful than spells, and they don't last forever, but alchemists have the advantage when they can prepare – they are able to create a set of planned preparations for an upcoming task, recover from the drain, and then go to the job with some ready-to-use “spells” as well as being fresh enough to make new preparations as the situation demands. Spellcasting and alchemy have their distinct advantages and disadvantages, but ultimately are quite redundant in their ultimate use, and it is rare for a mage to learn them both (it's a very poor investment of character-building resources).

Artifaging, on the other hand, is at least slightly useful to everyone. It is used to create foci, which mages can use to improve their spellcasting abilities and various ways, as well as to refine reagents or create special alchemical compounds.. Both of these can be purchased, but a mage will have easier and cheaper access to them if they make them themselves.

Disenchanting is used to dispel permanent magical effects, such as someone's bond to a focus, and to break down magical items into usable reagents.

Learning Preparations and Enchanting Recipes: This functions pretty much like in the core rulebook, but, since preparations and spells are so similar, someone skilled in the use of both has an easy time translating them. If you have a spell and want to learn its corresponding preparation (or vice versa), it costs only 3 karma, and you can easily design the formula yourself, eliminating the need for purchasing it or finding a teacher.

Astral Perception: Nearly all awakened characters are able to astrally perceive, peering into the astral plane to read auras and see shit that would otherwise be invisible. This also allows them to engage entities in astral combat, though if they are limited to perception (unable to project), their astral form is tethered to their physical, and they can be easily outmaneuvered by purely astral foes.

Mages and travelers alone have the ability of astral projection. In addition to the abilities of astral perception, they are able to project their astral forms out of their physical bodies, exploring and scouting the astral far more thoroughly and becoming much more able to engage in astral combat. Their awareness also is amplified while projecting, allowing them to act more quickly, though they are limited in the spells they can cast on non-astral entities. Keep in mind that while projecting, a mage's body is very vulnerable. Assensing is the catch-all skill needed for those skilled at astral perception, and astral combat is how they fight astral entities their own way (instead of slinging spells into the astral plane).

Adept Abilities: Adepts' talents are magic that only affects the self, often passively. By channeling their mana, an adept is able to hit harder, run faster, and jump farther. Some display feats that are clearly magical but still strictly personal, such as the ability to cling to a ceiling without aid. It's common to see these abilities put to use in enhancing an adept's combat abilities, but many are also able to use these skills to enhance other skills, and they can make great faces, wheelmen, or stealth specialists. Those with the ability to astrally project can also eventually learn to reach the metaplanes.

Who Can do What?

Mage: They get the whole shebang. They can astrally project, and can learn any of the

magical talents except for adept abilities. They are the rarest type of magician, and their skillset is a little more spread out, but their ability to unite all of the tools at the disposal of the Awakened means they can pull off tricks and combos no one else can.

Priorities and Mages

Mages begin with a certain number of “spell slots” they use to chose spells, preparations, rituals, and spirit evocations as they wish. They also get a few free ranks in magical skills of their choice. These skill ranks can be further improved during character creation, to a maximum of 6.

Priority A: Magic 6, 12 spell slots, 5 ranks in two Magical skills.

Priority B: Magic 4, 9 spell slots, 4 ranks in two Magical skills.

Priority C: Magic 3, 6 spell slots, 3 ranks in one Magical skill.

Priority D: Magic 2, 3 spell slot, 2 ranks in one Magical skill.

Adept: Adepts are physical mages. They begin with a number of power points to spend on adept powers equal to their Magic stat. Any time their magic stat permanently increases, they automatically gain an additional power point. They are not able to astrally perceive, but can learn to do so with the appropriate power (they can never project). They can learn and cast special adept rituals, substituting a specific skill for the usual ritual casting test.

Adepts, Traditions, and Drain: Adepts must belong to a tradition, just as a mage must. They resist drain using Body + their tradition's Attribute.

Priorities and Adepts

Adepts begin with a few free ranks in active skills of their choosing, OR they may begin knowing a few free martial arts technique from one style of their choice. These skills can be increased during character creation, to a maximum of six, and the adept may learn additional style techniques, to a maximum of 5 for a new character.

Priority B: 6 Magic, 4 ranks in one Active skill OR 4 martial techniques from one style.

Priority C: 4 Magic, 3 ranks in one Active skill OR 2 martial techniques from one style.

Priority D: 2 Magic, 2 ranks in one active skill OR 1 martial technique from one style.

Mystic Adept: Mystic adepts can cast spells, rituals, and adept rituals, as well as learn adept powers. They may also learn spirit evocations and make use of the Conjuring skill group. They can astrally perceive, but not project, and are unable to utilize the Enchanting skill group.

Mystic Adepts and Drain: Mystic Adepts are a little more stat-intensive than other mages. They always resist drain using their tradition's attribute, but add Willpower to resist drain from spells and Body to resist drain from adept powers. Many mystic adepts focus on passive powers that do not result in drain to get around this.

Spellpower and Attunement: Mystic Adepts must also, to a degree, split their magical focus between their ability to cast spells and their adept enhancements, represented by 2 additional stats. Spellpower is substituted for a mystic adepts Magic stat whenever they are casting spells or summoning spirits. Attunement is substituted for their Magic stat when it is used to calculate the adept powers. For any other relevant effects (including ritual spellcasting, binding), they use their actual Magic stat. At any give time, a mystic adepts maximum Spellpower and Attunement are EACH equal to their total Magic stat. When their magic stat increases, the mystic adept also increases EITHER Spellpower or Attunement by a like amount, but must spend karma to raise the other. Any time an mystic adept's Attunement increases, they also gain a power point.

Priorities and Adepts

Mystic Adepts begin with a Spellpower and Attunement of 1 each. They then receive a number of points to spend on increasing them equal to their Magic stat (thus a mystic adept with 6 Magic, splitting them evenly between the two, would have 4 Spellpower and 4 Attunement). A mystic adept begins knowing 2 spells per point of Spellpower and with 1 power point per point of Attunement. They may select either spells or rituals with these spell slots. They also begin with a few free ranks in magical or active skills of their choice.

Priority A: 6 Magic, 5 ranks in one Magical skill, 5 ranks in one Active skill.

Priority B: 4 Magic, 4 ranks in one Magical skill, 4 ranks in one Active skill.

Priority C: 3 Magic, 3 ranks in one Magical skill OR 3 ranks in one Active skill.

Priority D: 2 Magic, 2 ranks in one Magical skill OR 2 ranks in one Active skill.

Sorcerer: Sorcerers, as their name implies, may learn to use any of the skills associated with sorcery. They are able to astrally perceive, but not project. They are unable to use any form of conjuring or

adept abilities.

Priorities and Sorcerers

Sorcerers begin knowing a certain number of spells, a certain number of rituals, and with free ranks in the Sorcery skill group. Their ranks in the skill group can be increased during character creation, to a maximum of 5. Unlike skill groups learned from other sources, sorcerers may split the skill group and increase the various sorcery skills individually during character creation.

Priority A: 6 Magic, 8 spells, 4 rituals, 5 ranks in Sorcery skill group.

Priority B: 5 Magic, 6 spells, 3 rituals, 4 ranks in Sorcery skill group.

Priority C: 4 Magic, 4 spells, 2 rituals, 3 ranks in Sorcery skill group.

Priority D: 2 Magic, 4 spells, 1 ritual, 2 ranks in Sorcery skill group.

Conjurer: Conjurers may use any skills associated with conjuring. They can astrally perceive, but not project. They cannot use any form of sorcery or adept abilities.

Priorities and Conjurers

Conjurers begin knowing a certain number of spirit evocations, and a number of free ranks in the Conjuring skill group. In addition, conjurers begin with a few bound spirits. These spirits have a force equal to the conjurer's magic stat and they each owe a specified number of services. Beginning with bound spirits normally means that the conjurer begins with a slightly negative rep in the spirit world, but they can subtract their starting number of bound spirits by one to ensure they have bargained with the spirits and the binding was mutual or contractual, eliminating this penalty (this means Priority D conjurers using this option do not begin with any bound spirits). Character's should make sure to invest enough Charisma to have the appropriate number of spirits bound.

Priority A: Magic 6, 5 evocations, 5 ranks in Conjuring skill group, 3 bound spirits owing 4 services.

Priority B: Magic 5, 4 evocations, 4 ranks in Conjuring skill group, 3 bound spirits owing 3 services.

Priority C: Magic 4, 3 evocations, 3 ranks in Conjuring skill group, 2 bound spirits owing 3 services.

Priority D: Magic 2, 2 evocations, 2 ranks in Sorcery skill group, 2 bound spirits owing 2 services.

Alchemist: Alchemists may utilize the enchanting skill group. They can astrally perceive, but not project. They cannot use any form of sorcery or conjuring, or learn adept abilities.

Priorities and Adepts

Alchemists begin play knowing a few preparations, as well as a few formulae for foci or alchemical compounds of their choice. They also get free ranks in the Enchanting skill group.

Priority A: Magic 6, 8 preparations, 4 formulae, 5 ranks in Enchanting skill group.

Priority B: Magic 5 6 preparations, 3 formulae, 4 ranks in Enchanting skill group.

Priority C: Magic 4, 4 preparations, 2 formulae, 3 ranks in Enchanting skill group.

Priority D: Magic 2, 2 preparations, 1 formula, 2 ranks in Enchanting skill group.

Medium: Mediums (called apprentices or shamanic adepts in some traditions) are an unusual type of aspected magician who is attuned to only a single facet of their tradition. They can cast spells of a single category (combat, health, manipulation, detection, or illusion) and summon the type of spirit their tradition associates with that category. Their raw magical power is usually not as great as that of other mages. They may use rituals and binding, and they may bind spirits they cannot normally summon if they come across them, just as any other magician can. Mediums almost always have the Mentor Spirit quality.

Priorities and Mediums

Mediums begin with a number of spell slots that they may use to learn spells from their chosen category, or rituals (so long as the ritual does not require spells outside their category). They automatically know their associated spirit evocation if they have ranks in summoning, and they begin with a few free ranks in Magical skills.

Priority B: Magic 5, 5 spell slots, 4 ranks in two Magical skills.

Priority C: Magic 4, 3 spell slots, 3 ranks in two Magical skills.

Priority D: Magic 2, 1 spell slot, 2 ranks in one Magical skill.

Explorer: Explorers possess the ability to astrally project (not just perceive), and that's about it. They

can't cast any spells, summon any spirits, or enchant anything. They can still become quite capable of astral combat and assensing, and can eventually learn to reach the metaplanes.

Priority C: Magic 5, 6 ranks in 2 Magical skills

Aware: The aware are individuals with just enough magical talent to let them astrally perceive.

Priority D: Magic 3, one rating 4 Magical skill.

Magical Lodges: Every mage needs one of these, and more info can be found in the core rulebook, but any awakened character except for explorers and the aware begin with an established lodge with a force equal to the Magic stat.

The Arcana Skill: This skill is required for initiating and magical research, but it's a pointless tax of an active skill. I'm counting it as a knowledge skill instead.