

Spellcaster Options

A Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Supplement

Release 6

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Chris Gonnerman, and Contributors

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Introduction

This supplement provides many options for spell-using characters, and is designed for use with the Basic Fantasy RPG Core Rules, available as a free download at the website.

These optional rules are presented in an ala carte format for the GM to pick and choose from to suit the needs and flavor of the campaign. This supplement specifically avoids options which are the focus of other supplements such as 0-level spells (cantrips) or Magic-User subclasses.

Also note, previous versions of this supplement were called Magic-User Options, but this release includes some features that are relevant to Clerical spell-casting as well.

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☐ Alternate Magic-User Experience

To shorten the time a Magic-User spends at low levels, the following alternate experience table can be used. It makes second through fourth levels easier to gain, but from fifth level on the experience points required are the same as in the Core Rules.

Level	Exp. Points	Hit Dice	Spells		
			1	2	3
1	0	1d4	1	-	-
2	1,500	2d4	2	-	-
3	4,000	3d4	2	1	-
4	9,000	4d4	2	2	-
5	20,000	5d4	2	2	1

☐ Added Spell Variety

The GM may want to create a grimoire of spells for the campaign that incorporates the Core Rules spells and spells from other supplements which seem appropriate. If beginning magicians roll for spells, the GM will need to make lists to roll on.

Arcane Bolts

Some GMs believe that Magic-User characters are too weak at low levels or when all spells have been exhausted. Statistics do not support this (as explained in several posts on the Basic Fantasy RPG blog); however, it is also true that some GMs and players enjoy campaigns where Magic-Users can use minor magic to perform attacks instead of resorting to "ordinary" weapons. Several different versions of this

"arcane bolt" attack are suggested below; in general, the GM should choose just one for their campaign, though if Magic-User subclasses are included the GM may wish to make a separate selection for each. In general, any of these optional attacks is enacted by the Magic-User pointing at the intended target and possibly speaking a magic word or phrase.

☐ Arcane Dagger

An **arcane dagger** is a glowing, blade-like shard of magical energy. It is treated as a normal missile weapon, with an attack roll against the target's normal AC. The Magic-User adds their normal Attack Bonus (AB) as well as any Intelligence bonus and applies normal adjustments for range (short 10', medium 20', long 30'). On a successful hit the **arcane dagger** inflicts 1d4 points of damage. At first level the **arcane dagger** is treated as being equivalent to an ordinary weapon, and is thus unable to hit creatures that are only hit by silver or magical weapons. At 4th level the Magic-User becomes able to harm creatures normally hit only by silver weapons, and at 8th level the Magic-User can also hit creatures normally affected only by magical weapons. At 12th level all ranges are doubled. This attack can affect inanimate objects. An **arcane dagger** disappears after being used; no debris is left behind.

☐ Arcane Blast

This is a bolt of raw magic with a range of 30 feet which inflicts 1d4 points of damage. No roll is required to launch an **arcane blast**, but the target may save vs. Death Ray to avoid all damage. Since it is pure magic, it will affect creatures which are only affected by magical weapons, but like a **magic missile** it does not affect inanimate objects. At 6th level the damage is increased to 2d4, and at 12th level the range increases to 60 feet.

☐ Arcane Dart

An **arcane dart** is launched by a Magic-User using an ability roll, as explained in the Ability Rolls section of the Basic Fantasy RPG Core Rules. For convenience the relevant table is given below. If the GM does not use the Ability Roll mechanic for other purposes, it may not be appropriate to use this version in the campaign.

To launch an **arcane dart** the Magic-User must make an ability roll using Intelligence on the table below; the player (or GM) rolls 1d20 and adds the ability

bonus for Intelligence. If the result is equal to or greater than the number given on the table, the attack is successful and the bolt hits. This attack has a range of 30 feet and inflicts 1d4 points of damage; it affects creatures only affected by magical weapons, but not inanimate objects, much like the spell **magic missile**. At 9th level the range increases to 60 feet.

Level	Target
1	17
2-3	16
4-5	15
6-7	14
8-9	13
10-11	12
12-13	11
14-15	10
16-17	9
18-19	8
20	7

Armor Options

Core Rules Reminder: Magic-Users are already able to wear armor, but cannot cast spells while doing so, as explained in the **Weapons and Armor Restrictions** section of the Core Rules. It might be a good idea for a magician to carry a suit of armor in some way and put it on after the day's spells are exhausted. This isn't technically a rules option, of course, but it is an option. The GM may choose to apply one or more of the following additional options if desired.

☐ Spell Failure

Magic-users can cast magic spells while wearing armor, however spell-casting in armor may cause the spell to fizzle. Whenever a Magic-User casts a spell in armor, roll 1d20. If the roll is equal to or higher than the armor's base AC, the spell is successful. Otherwise, the spell fails and the spell slot is expended.

☐ Light Armor

Simply put, Magic-Users can cast spells normally while wearing leather or any lighter armor.

☐ Special Armor

Magic-Users can cast spells normally while wearing any light or medium armor, up to and including chainmail, provided that the armor must be custom made to allow them a full range of motion or otherwise support spell casting.

The following table is for use with this option. Additional armor types from the *Equipment Emporium* have been included in case the GM is using that supplement as well.

Armor Type	Cost (gp)	Weight	AC
Magician's padded or quilted	30	10	12
Magician's hide	20	30	13
Magician's leather	40	15	13
Magician's studded leather	60	25	14
Magician's ring mail	50	30	14
Magician's brigandine	160	30	15
Magician's chain mail	120	40	15

Bonus Spells

Players often ask why Magic-Users don't seem to get any benefits from their Intelligence, and Clerics from their Wisdom. Options are provided below that will increase the power or flexibility of spellcasters based on these bonuses. Most of these rules can be applied equally well to either class (or to subclasses, if such are used in your game).

☐ Bonus Slots

With this rule, spellcasters gain additional spell slots (i.e. uses per day) based on their relevant ability bonus. This allows the character to prepare more spells of certain levels than usual. Characters may not prepare spells above the level they can cast, so even though a character with an 18 intelligence gets a second level spell as a bonus spell, he or she can't prepare second level spells until reaching third level. If the GM uses the optional *0-Level Spells* supplement, then the cantrip column can also be used. Use the following table.

Intelligence	Bonus Spells	Bonus Cantrips
9-11	No bonus spells	0
12	No bonus spells	+1
13-15	1 x 1 st level spell	+1
16-17	2 x 1 st level spells	+2
18	2 x 1 st , 1 x 2 nd level spells	+3

☐ Improved Memorization

This option only works in combination with the **Liberal Casting** option. In this option, the spellcaster with a relevant ability bonus is permitted to memorize more spells than the number given for their class and level. The spellcaster can memorize one additional spell of each level he or she can cast for each point of ability bonus. Thus, a fifth level Magic-User with an Intelligence of 16 (+2) can memorize 4 first level, 4 second level, and 3 third level spells. Of course, a Magic-User must first learn these additional spells and add them to his or her spellbook, and just as obviously, Clerics using this rule have no such restriction.

Optional Spell Casting Mechanics

Many Game Masters wish to allow player character magic-users (and possibly clerics, as well) to cast a broader variety of spells. It is possible to increase the variety of spells a spellcaster can use per day in a variety of ways, as follows:

☐ Liberal Casting

In this system, spellcasters must **memorize** spells in order to use them. This should not be confused with **preparing** a spell, as found in the Core Rules; in this system, a memorized spell is not lost when it is cast.

The number of spells the caster may use per day is used in this system as both the number of spells that can be memorized, and the number that can be cast. However, the two functions are separated.

An example is probably the easiest way to explain this system. Consider a second level magic-user with **sleep**, **charm person**, and **shield** in his or her spellbook. A second level magic-user can memorize two spells per day; let's say he or she chooses to memorize **sleep** and **shield**. The magic-user may then cast **sleep** twice, or **shield** twice, or each spell one time per day.

If this rule is used, memorized spells are retained from day to day automatically, with the power to cast them being restored at the usual time (after the spellcaster has slept at least the minimum required time). If the spellcaster is reduced to zero hit points but lives (i.e. the GM is using one of the optional death rules as given in the Core Rules), the power to cast spells (sometimes called the "**available slots**") is lost for the day, but memorized spells remain memorized.

Changing memorized spells requires the use of the Magic-User's spell book, or the Cleric's holy symbol, as appropriate to the class. The character must also spend one turn per level of the spell to be changed to impress the knowledge into his or her mind, whether by study or by prayer.

This rule makes the spellcaster more powerful, but only moderately, and is particularly helpful in getting clerics to cast something other than **cure light wounds**.

☐ **Cast at Will**

This system is simpler, and more powerful. Under this rule, a spellcaster may employ any spell he or she knows (i.e. has in his or her spellbook), so long as the caster has an available slot of the correct level. Cast at will is sometimes called "**free casting**."

This rule makes the spellcaster much more powerful than usual, and should be applied with care. It is known to be less troublesome when applied to Clerics, as they do not have as many offensive spells.

☐ **Slot Demotion**

This rule may be applied to either the Liberal Casting or Cast at Will rules given above as an additional enhancement. Slot demotion allows a spell caster to use a higher level available slot to cast a lower level spell. This grants no particular bonus; casting **magic missile** with a 3rd level slot, for instance, neither makes the spell more powerful nor gives the caster any "change" back.

However, even with this limitation, this rule makes spell casters more powerful. A fifth level magic-user casting **magic missile** five times is quite a bit more powerful than one who can only cast it twice. Addition of bonus slots only compounds this increase in power.

☐ **Cheap Spell Transcription**

The GM may wish to eliminate the 500gp per spell level cost to transcribe a spell into a spellbook. In a low-treasure game, this can be a serious aid to a magic-user. They would still have to find these spells, of course, possibly paying a hefty sum to another magician for access to the spell.

☐ **Flavor**

Magic should reflect the magician's personality. The player chooses visual, auditory, and / or odiferous effects for his spells, though this has no effect on the spell's actual effect in the game. So, one magician's spells might all have a purple aura while another's might all crackle when cast. This option has no effect in terms of the rules, but it's a good dramatic effect that can make playing a magician more fun. It can also be used as a form of signature.

☐ **Free Cantrip Use**

For GMs who also use the *0-Level Spells* supplement, this allows magicians free, unlimited use of cantrips. These are minor spells with very little real effect in game terms, but they add a magical flavor to the Magic-User and the game. This could also be done on a limited basis, allowing a magician free use of only one or two cantrips, for example.

☐ **Detect Magic Ability**

This ability allows a Magic-User to detect arcane magic (i.e. magic created by a Magic-User) by touch and close examination on a successful roll of 1-2 on 1d6, adjusted by the Intelligence bonus of the character (1-3 on 1d6 at +1, 1-4 on 1d6 at +2, 1-5 on 1d6 at +3). Clerics can likewise sense clerical magic with a similar roll, using their bonus for Wisdom to adjust the die roll. At 9th level they gain the ability to detect the other kind of magic on a 1 on 1d8, adjusted in the same way as above.

☐ **Inherent Detect Magic**

Magic-User can detect magic in anything they touch. Magical items or creatures feel warm, cause a tingling sensation, or have some other unusual tactile effect. The Magic-User learns nothing specific about the magic other than that it is present. At 11th level the character is able to detect magic by holding their hand or face within 1 foot of the item and examining it carefully.

☐ **Inherent Read Magic**

This simply allows Magic-Users to **read magic** without a spell.

☐ Saving Throw Bonus

This option gives Magic-Users a bonus on saving throws vs. magic equal to their intelligence bonus. This represents their greater understanding of magic and ability to predict and therefore avoid spells cast at them. Because it represents the effects of a high level of training in magic, other character classes should not get this bonus, though Magic-User subclasses may be allowed to use it as well.

Weapon Options

Core Rules Reminder: In addition to the walking staff and dagger, a Magic-User can use any other weapon with a -5 penalty, as explained in the **Weapons and Armor Restrictions** section of the Core Rules. It wouldn't hurt for them to carry a crossbow or other, longer range missile weapon and take potshots when they can. Technically, this isn't an option, but it's a rule that is often ignored.

☐ Light Weapons

Magic-Users may use some light weapons, including the club and sling, in addition to the usual dagger and walking staff. The GM should provide a list for the players.

☐ Simple Weapons

Magic-Users may use all easily-learned weapons, such as the club, quarterstaff, spear, and crossbow, in addition to the usual dagger and walking staff. The GM should provide a list for the players.

Playing Without Optional Rules

The Magic-User can be a very challenging character to play at low levels. Use one, or at most two, of the following suggestions to improve their odds of survival without changing the rules.

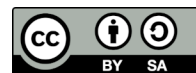
1. Start magicians (and only magicians) at second level. The other classes catch up around fourth level, which balances things out nicely.
2. Give the beginning Magic-User a weak or limited use magic item, or several magical scrolls.
3. Give the beginning magician a +1 Ring of Protection.
4. Give a starting Magic-User a guardian of some sort, such as a loyal guard dog that was raised and trained by the magician.

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Contributors: R. Kevin Smoot and Luigi Castellani

Cover Art:

Artwork:

Proofing:

