

Four By Five Magic

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A variant magic system inspired by [FUDGE Four-by-Five magic](#) ^[1], Ars Magica, Harry Potter and the Belgariad.

Quote:

?My friend, magic is not stored in pretty book or scrolls. It is the power of the Will and the Word. Your Will take times to perfect and control; you follow your own path in it?s mastery. The Words can only be taught. There are only nine Words of Power, but they may take an age to fully comprehend their meaning. Often, the Will breaks before the Nine are found. Do you have the power. Well, do you boy??

Magic is nothing more than the speaking of two (or more) Words of Power in the Divine Tongue. These words take a lifetime to master all their subtle inflections and are far beyond the capabilities of most mere mortals; magic is the sole purlieu of the Magi. Multiclassing to, or from, the Magi class is impossible. Either you have the Gift and follow it to the end, or it is gone forever. To have the Gift is to be a Mage; to be a Mage is to possess the Gift.

Magi begin play at 1st level knowing three Words of Power - either Two Actions and One Realm, or Two Realms and One Action. They learn one new Word of Power every three levels (3,6,9,etc).

The Four Actions

- **Enhance** (augeo): Strengthen, Heal, Enlarge, Repair, Sharpen, etc.
- **Diminish** (infirmio): Weaken, Damage, Injure, Reduce, Break, Dull, Deteriorate, etc.
- **Communicate with** (defero): Sense, Read, Seek, Inform, Determine, Understand, etc.
- **Control** (tempero): Shape, Hold, Command, Form, Direct, Dictate, etc. Control is difficult to learn, and you may not learn Control spells until you have learned all of the other Actions

The Five Realms

- **Body** (corpus): Living body of sentient beings, animals, plants.
- **Mind** (mentis): That which normally inhabits and animates a body
- **Spirit** (animus): The essence or soul. Spirit is difficult to learn, and you may not learn Spirit spells

until you have learned at least three other Realms and three Actions

- **Energy** (navitas): Fire, water, air, magic, [electricity, etc.] - and, if the GM is willing, time.
- **Matter** (materia): Solid material with no mind - stone, metal, wood, leather, paper, [plastic, etc.]

Spells are cast by combining a Word with an Action and successfully making a Magical Attack (Level+MIND) check.

The DC for the check is dependant on the target of the spell.

Target	DC
Self	10
Willing	15
Inanimate organic	20
Unwilling	25
Inanimate inorganic	35

Each spell cast that day increases the DC by +2.

Spells that affect inanimate objects are generally permanent; an enlarged pebble will stay large, a broken belt will stay mended. Magically created fires, etc, will die down naturally. Living creatures will eventually revert back to their normal form, though any healed damage stays healed.

Every 5 (or part) points of success is equal to 1d8 effect. This can take the form of damage, healing or transformation; to turn one thing into another the total effect rolled must equal the difference between the two hit point totals. That's why it's so easy to turn commoners into toads, but Magi turn into dragons.

Examples

Maximus Verlinius, a Magi-1 knows the Words augeo, defero and navitas. his stats are STR10, DEX12 and MIND16. His Magical Attack is $1 + 3 = +4$. He suspects Todmore Fellhaven, his enemy, is in the next room, so casts defero navitas to detect any energy sources in the area. He rolls a 16, just reaching DC of 20. He senses the burning torch held by his enemy.

Maximus bursts into the room, shouting "Augeo navitas!", pointing at the torch. He rolls a natural 20, getting 24. The DC of the torch 22 (there's a +2 because it's his second spell today), so it explodes for maximum damage (a critical). Todmore takes 8 points of damage, staring in surprise at his opponent's sudden arrival.

Maximus' mentor is Creol Festerburn, a Magi-10 of great power. His stats are STR12, DEX10, MIND18. His Magic Attack is $10 + 4 = +14$. He knows the all of the Words of Action, plus navitas, specialising in fire-based magic.

Clutching a small coal in a brazier, Creol approaches the giant's lair. His apprentice stumbles over a tree branch, and the giant roars, appearing from the cave mouth. Creol utters a curse, then blows on the coal, whispering "Augeo navitas?". He rolls a 15 for a total of 29. That's 9 above the DC, so the flame from the coal erupts into a man-sized sheet of flame (2d8 of effect, total 5). Creol then shouts "Tempero Navitas!" and elemental eyes of coal appear in the flickering form. He rolled 18 for a total or 32, easily beating the DC of 22. 2d8 of effect rolls 12, higher than the previous 5, so the fire is under Creol's complete control.

The giant's roar stops mid stream as the fire elemental approaches to do battle.

[Magic](#)

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[1] <http://www.panix.com/~sos/rpg/4by5.html>