

Magic and Sorcery

The Basics of Magic

Magic, like all things in Fate Fantasy, is all about *Aspects* and *Facts*. While a variety of skills allow you to put new aspects on your opponent, magic is the most flexible of it all. It acts as both a defence and offence and revelation and divination skill.

Magic is a specialised skill – you have to put in a skill point to use it. While most adventurers start with Average (+1) in Magic, other magic users may have Magic at a lower score. You will also need at least two aspects which link you to magical training to be able to use this skill.

Using Magic

So you have the Magic skill. How do you use it? Here are the ways which you can use magic:

- Declare an Aspect or a Fact
- Discover an Aspect
- Tag an Aspect
- Remove an Aspect
- Creating objects or summoning (conjunction)
- As an attack or defence
- Countering another Spell

Once you have decided on your spell, you roll your Magic skill and match it against the spell's Difficulty Level.

Difficulty of Spells

Before we launch into the list of all the wonders you can do with Magic, it's a good idea to discuss the difficulty level of casting spells. All use of Magic requires you to beat a base roll of Abysmal (-3). The following, however, increases the difficulty:

Range	
Range is yourself or touch (2 metre)	+0
Range is one zone	+1
Range is three zones	+2
Range negotiable with GM	+4
Area of Effect	
Affect one target	+0
Affect one zone	+1
Affect up to four zones	+3
Area of Effect negotiable with GM	+5
Duration	
Instant	+0
Up to 10 Combat Rounds	+1
Entire scene	+2
Negotiable with GM	+4
Permanent	+6

Take note that if a spell has a range of 2 metres and it is targeting someone, the spell caster must hit his opponent as well with a separate Athletics or Unarmed Combat roll.

More about Duration

You only have to declare a spell's duration longer than Instant if the effect is immediately reversible. For example, a spell which emits light in the dark needs to have duration, for once the spell expires, the darkness returns.

If the effect of a spell has caused an effect which wouldn't be cancelled without any magical means, its duration can be instant. For example, if a spell sharpens a blade, the blade stays sharpened after the spell expires because nothing is dulling the blade. This is also applicable to damaging spells.

However, for healing spells (another fantasy staple), you are restoring torn flesh, muscles and maybe even bone, or any other magical effect which **creates**, the duration has to be permanent. Put it in another way – to destroy is easy, to put together what you have destroyed, is hard.

Declaring Aspects and Facts

With magic, you can pin aspect and fact on living and non-living targets alike. You have to describe the effect of the spell on the target if it should work. You have the following options:

- Declare an Aspect. Remember that aspect, just because it is there, doesn't mean it is significant at that very moment. It requires an opportune moment (represented by using a Fate Point or to be discovered with a skill) for it to become important. However an aspect placed by a spell always have **one free tag**.
- Declare a Fact: A fact is an Aspect which does not require tagging and is always active. Usually, a Fact is applied to non-living objects, or even the scene itself. Unlike Aspect, a Fact is always important throughout the scene.
- Declare a Consequence: This is the same as Facts, except as applied on enemies and other characters.

As described in the chapter on Aspects and Consequences, there are three levels of Facts/Consequences, and they are minor, significant and major. Some examples, pertaining to typical usage of magic, are listed here.

Minor	Significant	Major
Disrupt sense of balance Make a weapon heavier to lift Make limbs stiffen Change ambient lighting Fall into a light sleep	An ankle sprain Disarm opponent Paralyze someone Modify aspects of weather Cause a non-responsive slumber	Fracture a leg bone Destroy opponent's weapon Turn someone to stone Total weather change Sleep through an earthquake

Remember that an Aspect requires a Fate Point to invoke but it has the advantages of being situational and are easier to tag with magic. The chart below shows the increment to difficulty level.

By default, Aspects are sticky for an entire scene. If you choose to make an Aspect fragile (that is, it disappears after the first tag), it becomes easier.

Aspects	
Creating an Aspect	+1
Aspect is fragile	-1
Immediate Tag	+1
Facts	
Minor Fact	+2
Significant Fact	+3
Major Fact	+5
Consequences	
Minor Consequence	+2
Significant Consequence	+3
Major Consequence	+5

Multiple Declarations

You can make multiple declarations (three Aspects with the same spell, for example). Just add the difficulties up together and apply them to the range and duration difficulty.

Removing Declarations

Like declaring an Aspect or Fact, the rules for using magic to remove them is pretty much the same (use the same charts). However, the intended effect is different so here are some guidelines. Removing Aspects is more of “dispelling” than “weakening”. To sum up, here is what you can and cannot do while trying to remove Aspect:

- You cannot remove any permanent Aspects or Facts unless they are placed by others (most likely through magic or poison)
- You can remove natural Aspect for a while (“suppressing” them).
- You can remove consequences permanently.

Of course, the player cannot simply declare “I am going to remove the young child’s *Fear of the Dark* Aspect”. He has to come up with a good magical explanation, such as “I am going to make the child more courageous”.

It is important to remember that when an Aspect is removed, it does not mean that any implied trait linked to it is gone. It is just that it would not be important enough to make a difference. If a character with the Aspect “Heroic Courage” has it suppressed for a while, he does not become a coward immediately. Rather, the spell makes it impossible to tag the Aspect (which has a result of him having a lower chance of holding his ground if some terrifying horror appears in front of him).

Sometimes you have to decide between removing and creating Aspects. As an example, let's go back to the character with "Heroic Courage" again. If you wish to make him *more likely* to be a coward, you can either put the Aspect "Afraid" on him or remove "Heroic Courage" (or even do both!).

The only way to get someone to behave the way you want him to is to nail him with a consequence.

How to remove a Declaration?

The rules are pretty much the same as declaring Aspects and its other relatives above. You can combine a declaration and a remove together in a spell too – the difficulty modifier for the removal is depends on the scale of the Aspect or Fact (That is, trying to remove a significant consequence is a +4 difficulty).

Discovering Aspects

When using magic to reveal aspects, you cannot just say "Tell me what aspects he has". You have to phrase the request in the form of a question and specify which domain the aspect is in. Simply asking for "What weakness does the troll has" is not descriptive enough, as there is no domain in the question. A valid one would be "What elemental weakness does the troll has?" with the domain being the elements of nature. Other valid questions include:

- What emotions are the mayor feeling now? (Domain: emotions)
- Is there any structural weakness in the siege tower? (Domain: structure)
- What magical properties do the artefact has? (Domain: magical nature)

An attempt to reveal an Aspect gives a +1 to a roll while to reveal all of its Aspects (related to your question) is a flat +4. The range, area of effect and the size of the target would affect the difficulty as roll.

Tagging an Aspect

Magic allows you tag an Aspect either remotely or through long distance, which are usually impossible.

Of course, the GM should ask for a plausible explanation for what is going on. For example, if the enemy has an irrational fear of bats, an illusionist can tag it by creating an apparition of ghostly bats flying towards him. A simple "I tag his fear of bats" should be outright denied.

Remote tagging of Aspect can be achieved through traditional means, such as a voodoo doll or a hex placed by the sorcerer himself. As usual, the more explanation and background the player gives into the tagging, the more reasonable the GM should be.

Tagging Aspects usually just involve the range and target parameters, though any attempts to invade someone's mind magically would be met with a Resolve defence.

Attempts that directly assault a body by magical forces should be defended with Aura (see the section on Defending against Magic towards the end).

When combined with other spells, tagging one Aspect is free. For every one other Aspect tagged, the difficulty of the spell goes up by one.

Conjuration and Summoning

The art of conjuration deals with creating something out from nothing but magical power itself, while summoning allows you to bring forth creatures to do your bidding. Both are the same in most cases – where they differ, we will make notes.

Base Difficulty

The basic difficulty depends on two factors:

1. How rare is it?
2. How good is it?
3. (For conjuration) How large (or how many) is it?

For rarity, judge whether the target is common, uncommon, rare or unique (in some cases, near unique). Hence, calling forth a wolf to help you in a forest is easier than trying in a city. Conjuring water in a desert is tougher than usual.

For conjuration, raw materials are always easier to conjure than something that has been processed (hence, unprocessed copper is easier to conjure than a copper sword). Creating something from thin air also imposes additional difficulty – having a small sample of what you intend to conjure helps tremendously.

The next question to answer is “How good is it?” For every +1 difficulty level you add to the spell, the quality of the creature or item improves by +1 (from a base level of Average, which is 0). For creatures, its quality determines its default skill grade for whatever the creature could usually do (example: wolves can hunt, track and attack) while for items, it is how many aspects it can have.

Certain abilities allow you to have more advances with summoned beings. The *Gifted Companion* ability allows you to trade 1 quality for one Aspect, for example.

Availability	
Common	+0
Uncommon	+1
Rare	+2
Impossible	+3
Unique	+4
Complexity	
Raw, unprocessed	+0
Simple processing (stick, crude flints)	+1
Medium processing	+2
Complicated processing	+3
Good craftsmanship	+1
Expert craftsmanship	+2

Conjuration Modifiers	
Every 1 level of Quality	+1
Lacks sample	+1
Large enough to fit/fill a pouch	+1
Large enough to fit/fill a sack	+2
Large enough to fit/fill a barrel	+3
Large enough to fit/fill a wagon	+4
Negotiable with GM	+6
Summoning Modifiers	
Every 1 level of Quality	+1
Summoning a swarm of creatures (insects and etc.)	+1

The other method of determining the base difficulty is to use the ladder adjectives. Conjuring dirt is a mediocre form of magic (-2) while getting a steel sword manifesting out from thin air would be Good (+4). Bringing forth an enchanted sword could easily be a +6 or more.

Combat with Magic

One of the usual uses of magic in a fantasy game is as a mean of attack and defence. As per the cardinal rule of Magic in Fate Fantasy, *why* or *how* the spell increases effectiveness in combat must be reasonable (if not dramatic!).

While spells which declare or remove aspects require the caster to beat a difficulty level, spells which actively attack or defend is usually a contested roll.

Attacking

When striking someone with a spell, you have to decide the skill your target will use to defend. The choices are usually:

- Athletics, for a blasting spell (Fire balls, bolt of lightning)
- Resolve, for spells which affect the target mentally
- Aura, for spells which affect the target's body directly

Calculate the difficulty of the spell as per the guidelines listed for range and duration, with a +2 Difficulty modifier for attempting to cause stress. Your Magic roll will have to beat the spell's difficulty and your target's roll. To determine damage (and to calculate shifts), use your target's roll.

No Resist

You can also take another +2 modifier to your roll which derives your opponent of any chances of defending against the spell (unless he also has the Magic skill – then he can use it to try to negate the spell).

Defending

Simply attempt to roll your Magic skill and get it equal or higher than the incoming attack's roll. There is no need to apply any difficulty modifiers unless you are

defending a group of people remotely (yes, you can do this via a combination of range and area of effect modifiers).

In combat, if you defend more than one person at a time, you are considered as blocking them defensively (see the rules for blocking in combat).

Countering Spells

There may be cases when other spellcasters would not let your attempts to create magic go unchecked. The two ways which this can be done are:

1. When you are casting a spell, an opponent spell-caster can attempt to roll his Magic as well, seeking to roll higher on you. In combat situation, he will have to block you first or interrupt your turn.
2. After a spell is cast and if its duration longer than 1 combat round, you can attempt to dispel it by rolling your Magic at a -1 penalty, with the target difficulty being the roll used to cast the spell.
3. If you are a target of the spell, you can always attempt to use Magic as your defence first. If your Magic roll fails, then you can use the relevant skill to fight off the unwanted spell.

Example Spells

Listed here are good old favourite spells usually found in fantasy games depicted using the rules above. For each spell, the calculation used is shown as examples.

Befuddle

Cause a target to become disoriented, breaking his concentration and messing up his coordination. He gets the aspect "Disoriented".

*Add Disoriented Aspect +1, Range: One Zone +1, Target: One +0, Duration: 10 Combat Rounds +1, Base Difficulty -3, **Total +0***

Grease

The wizard throws forth a drop of oil, which when hitting the ground, grows to be a pool of dark, slippery slime. All those within the area of effect gain the "Slippery" aspect.

*Add Slippery Aspect +1, Range: 2m +0, Target: 1 Zone +1, Duration: 10 Combat Rounds +1, Base Difficulty -3, **Total +0***

Weakening Blast

Throw forth a blast of energy that drains the victim of his physical strength, attaching to him the Aspect "Weakened".

*Add "Weakened" Aspect +1, Range: One Zone +1, Target: One +0, Duration: 10 Combat Rounds +1, Base Difficulty -3, **Total +0***

Protection

Weaves an aura of protective energy around the spell-caster, which gives him the aspect “Armoured by Magic”.

Add Aspect “Armoured by Magic” +1, Range: Yourself +0, Target: One +0, Duration: 10 Combat Rounds +1, Base Difficulty: -3, Total +0

Withering Blast

As Weakening Blast, but instead of just sapping your target’s strength, you wish to cause him physical stress as well.

Add “Weakened” Aspect +1, Range: One Zone +1, Target: One +0, Duration: 10 Combat Rounds +1, Cause Damage +2, Base Difficulty -3, Total +2

Magic Missiles

Unleash a barrage of magical force bolts which strike unerringly at your opponent.

Range: One Zone +1, Target: One +0, Duration: Instant +0, Cause Damage +2, No Resist +2, Base Difficulty -3, Total +2

Creeping Vines

Roots and vines burst forth from the ground, rooting those affected in the area to the ground, causing them unable to move from their spot and interfering with their actions.

Add Minor Consequence “Rooted to the Spot” +2, Add Aspect “Distracted by Vines” +1, Range: One Zone +1, Base Difficulty -3, Total +1

Strangling Vines

As the Creeping Vines spell above, but this time the vines are thorny and they attempt to strangle their targets to death! The damage component is only calculated once.

Add Minor Consequence “Rooted to the Spot” +2, Add Aspect “Distracted by Vines” +1, Range: One Zone +1, Cause Damage +2 Base Difficulty -3, Total +3

Shield against Spells

Weave a protective barrier oneself which protects oneself from magic. The next spell which affects the target must bypass the shield and receive a -1 penalty to the Magic roll.

Add Minor Fact “Protected Against Magic” +2, Range: Self +0, Target: One +0, Duration: 10 Combat Rounds +1, Base Difficulty -3, Total +0

Fireball

Throw a ball of fire into the midst of your enemies which explodes to engulf them, covering an area of one zone. The blaze is intense enough to ignite flammable materials and cause minor burns to the victims.

*Add Minor Consequence "Minor Burnst" +2, Add Minor Fact "Flammable materials are ignited" +2, Range: One Zone +1, Area of Effect: One Zone +1, Cause Damage +2, Base Difficulty -3, **Total +5***

Time Stop

Causes time to freeze for everyone but the wizard himself may act or move for the next ten combat rounds (or 1 minute).

*Add Major Fact "Time freeze" +6, Add Significant Consequence "Paralyzed" +4 Range: Self +0, Target: One Zone +1, Duration 10 Combat Rounds +1, No Resist +2, Base Difficulty -3, **Total +10***

Open

Unlocks simple locks and swing or lift anything that has a hinge to it.

*Remove Minor Fact "Locked" +2, Range: 2 metre +0, Target: One +0, Duration: Instant +0, Base Difficulty -3, **Total -1***

Fetch

Throws an invisible lasso around a small object and tows it towards the magic user.

*Add Minor Fact "Moves towards caster" +2, Range: One Zone +1, Target: One +0, Duration: Instant +0, Base Difficulty -3, **Total +0***

Cure Wounds

Cuts are mended, burns are soothed and physical damage is undone with this spell.

*Remove Minor Consequence "Lowest Physical Stress" +2, Range: Touch +0, Target: One +0, Duration: Permanent +6, Base Difficulty -3, **Total +5***

Reprise

Temporarily suspend the effects of physical wounds

*Remove Minor Consequence "Lowest Physical Stress" +2, Range: Touch +0, Target: One +0, Duration: Entire Scene +3, Base Difficulty -3, **Total +3***

Call Sword

Summon a magical sword