

MODERN BASICS

Feats of Mysticism & Magic: A Flexible Magic System for OGL Games



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Introduction

Class-based systems with character advancement handled through levels, like the various D&D games and their OGL spin-offs, have their strengths. They give players easy access to pre-canned character concepts—want to play a sword-swinging hero in shining armor? The fighter class is for you. Want to play a necromancer commanding an undead hoard? Try a wizard or a cleric.

What few of them can handle effectively are characters that don't quite fit into the J.R.R. Tolkien and Jack Vance-derived fantasy tropes (more or less) that the systems remain more or less locked into. While it may be simple enough to create a David Eddings-style Church Knight by swapping the Paladin's divine spell-list for that of the mage or sorcerer, Fritz Leiber's the Gray Mouser is more difficult to model. And the class-based modern and science fiction game systems only present greater difficulties. How would I make Mercedes Lackey's Diane Tregarde using the OGL Modern rules?

The solution in most systems is, of course, customizing characters through feats and skills, and multi-classes to add spell-casting abilities to otherwise non-spellcasting classes.

But I've always found this to be a sub-optimal solution.



As early as 1995, while at TSR, I suggested a reinvention the level-based spellcasting system during the concepting stages of a boxed set titled *The New Adventures of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser*. The idea never made it to the freelance designers or was rejected, because the set was *AD&D Second Edition* streamlined rather than reinvented. I didn't bother making the case during the design work on *Ravenloft: Domains of Dread* during that same period.

However, with the Open Gaming License, and the expanded flexibility of the skill system and feats mechanic that game into being with the Wizards of the Coast *D&D Third Edition* design, there was no longer any reason to not create a flexible spell-casting system for the game that didn't rely on levels or classes.

About this Product

Feats of Mysticism & Magic: A Flexible Magic System for OGL Modern takes advantage of the feats and skills mechanic preset in most d20 System OGL roleplaying games. It replaces the existing class-based spell system with feats that give any character class the ability to wield magic. It has been used in conjunction with OGL Modern, in modern-day and far-future space opera settings, but there's no reason it can't be applied to any rules set or setting.

Using This Product

The material in these pages is intended to fit seamlessly with the feats and skills system of OGL Games, with GMs and players adding the material as they would add any new skills or feats to the game.

I recommend, though, that the rules be used from the beginning of a campaign, unless they are brought into play through "discovery" or a new magical reality. In such a case, the GM may have to waive the restrictions on some feats available only to 1st-level characters. (Although there are feats that allow for characters to gain access later as well.)

It was play-tested with the assumption that it completely replaces existing spell-casting classes and magic systems. However, this need not be the case. For game groups who want to retain all existing classes and mechanics, these rules can still provide non-spellcasters magical abilities without the need for character concept-breaking multi-classing while possibly offering a little extra kick to classes that wield divine or arcane spells.

Open Gaming Content

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Mastering Magic

Spellcasting in this system is separated from classes but is instead governed by character level and how players apply the skill points and feats characters earn while advancing in levels.

The types of magic a character can wield is determined by the feats they have, and whether they successfully cast a spell or not is determined by how many ranks they have in the Spellcasting skill.

Learning Spells

Characters learn arcane spells from other spellcasters or by studying ancient lore. Divine spells are granted by supernatural beings as rewards for a character's devotion to them.

Characters know the following number of spells per level:

Table 1: Base Known Spells

Character Level	Spell Level									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	5	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	6	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	6	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
8	7	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
9	7	4	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
10	8	5	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
11	8	5	5	3	2	1	1	0	0	0
12	8	6	5	3	2	2	1	0	0	0
13	8	6	6	3	3	2	1	1	0	0
14	9	7	6	4	3	2	2	1	0	0
15	9	7	7	4	3	3	2	1	0	0
16	9	8	7	4	4	3	2	1	1	0
17	9	8	8	5	4	3	3	2	1	0
18	9	9	8	5	4	4	3	2	1	1
19	9	9	9	5	5	4	3	2	2	1
20	9	9	9	6	5	4	4	3	2	2

Spell-levels are the same as those listed in the spell descriptions in the rules this material is incorporated into.

Casting Spells

In order to successfully cast a spell, characters must roll a Spellcraft skill check equal to the following target number:

$$10 + \text{Spell Level} + \text{Situational Modifier} = \text{DC}$$

To successfully cast a 1st-level spell under normal circumstance, a character must at minimum have a result of 11 when adding their Spellcraft ranks and bonuses to the d20 roll.

Failing a Spellcraft skill check means the spell was not cast, so the character can try again. However, the target may now be aware of the character's failed attempt to attack him, so another attempt may not be feasible.

A character can try to cast any spell he or she knows, assuming he has access to the appropriate spell foci, spell components, or ritual materials or locations. There is no need to memorize or prepare a particular spell; like the class requirement the need to "memorize" spells is done away with in this more flexible system.

Table 2: Base Spells Cast Per Day

Character Level	Spell Level									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	5	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	5	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	6	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	6	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	7	5	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
8	7	6	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
9	8	6	4	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
10	8	7	5	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
11	9	7	5	4	2	2	1	0	0	0
12	9	8	6	4	2	2	1	0	0	0
13	9	8	6	4	3	2	2	1	0	0
14	9	8	7	5	3	3	2	1	0	0
15	9	9	7	5	3	3	2	1	0	0
16	9	9	8	5	4	3	3	2	1	0
17	9	9	8	6	4	4	3	2	1	0
18	9	9	8	6	4	4	3	2	2	1
19	9	9	9	6	5	4	4	3	2	2
20	9	9	9	7	5	5	4	3	3	2

Caster levels mentioned in spell descriptions is equal to character level under this system.



Feats for 1st-level Characters

These feats are the foundation of the feat-based magic system. They can only be taken during character creation. Without one of these feats, characters will never become powerful spellcasters; under this system, characters either have a talent for magic, or they don't.

For game systems that include arcane and divine spell-casting classes, skills designated as class skills for those classes become class skills for characters with these feats.

Arcane Aptitude [General]

You can harness magic energies through rituals and formulas.

Prerequisites: Int 10+

Benefit: Arcane skills become class skills. The character gains access to Arcane feats.

Special: Can only be taken by 1st-level characters.

Child of Magic [General]

Magic is literally in your flesh and blood, due to ancient family heritage.

Prerequisites: Int 13+, Wis 13+, Cha 13+

Benefit: The character gains access to Arcane and Divine feats.

Special: Can only be taken by 1st-level characters.

Spark of the Divine [General]

Your soul is closely tied to spiritual energies, be they divine or demonic. He can call upon these powers when necessary.

Prerequisites: Wis 10+

Benefit: Divine skills become class skills. The character gains access to Divine feats.

Special: Can only be taken by 1st-level characters.

Learning Magic at Higher Levels

As previously mentioned, if characters don't take appropriate feats at 1st-level, they can never become powerful spellcasters under this system. However, there are a few feats in the next section that will grant limited spellcasting ability and certain Divine abilities.

Spellcasting and Magic Feats

Once the character can use spells, these feats improve and expand upon their spellcasting feats. Some are repeated or adapted from the *OGC Modern Standard Reference Document*, because they are key to this feat-based system.

Since this system basically replaces spellcasting classes, this section also includes a series of Turn Undead feats and associated feats that enhance that ability.

Acolyte [Divine]

You have confidence in your skills and patron.

Prerequisites: Spark of the Divine

Benefit: The character gains a +2 bonus to Spellcraft checks to cast 0 – 3rd level spells.

Adept [General]

You have a superior talent for channeling magical energies.

Prerequisite: Arcane Aptitude, Child of Magic, or Spark of the Divine. Able to cast 2nd-level spells.

Benefit: The character can cast one extra 0 – 2nd level spell per day of either Arcane or Divine spells.

Awakened Spirit [General]

An encounter with the supernatural or a form of spiritual reawakening has left you with certain divine gifts

Prerequisites: Character Level 2+, no access to Divine feats.

Benefit: The character can cast a number of Divine Spells per day equal to his Wisdom bonus and gains access to Divine feats.

Command Undead [Divine]

You can gain control over undead creatures.

Prerequisites: Turn or Rebuke Undead.

Benefit: The character makes an attempt to turn or rebuke undead. If successful, the character can give mental orders to a commanded creature as an attack action, prompting it to obey him. The character can command any number of creatures whose total Hit Dice don't exceed his character level. He may voluntarily relinquish command in order to establish command on different creatures.

Normal: Without this feat, undead flee or cower in the face characters who make successful turn or rebuke checks.

Conjurer [Arcane]

You have keen insights into the workings of basic arcane magic.

Prerequisites: Adept

Benefit: The character gains a +2 bonus to Spellcraft skill checks when casting 0 – 3rd level arcane spells.

Counter Turning [Divine]

You may dispel the turning effect on undead creatures brought on by other characters.

Prerequisites: Turn or Rebuke Undead

Benefit: The character makes a turning check as if attempting to rebuke. If the turning check result is successful, then the creatures are no longer turned. The character rolls 2d6 to see how many Hit Dice worth of creatures she can affect in this way.