

Eä d20

Magic in Middle-earth



*Developed by Hawke.
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1.0 Introduction to Magic in Middle-earth

Magic in Middle-earth is different than most typical D&D campaigns based on the standard D&D rules.

Magic is less prevalent as the flashy fireball casting wizard type, but is much more present in a more subtle and “natural” way. The entire Tolkien Universe, Eä was brought into being by the Song of Creation by Illuvatar and those under him, the Valar.

Magic is more dangerous to use unnaturally, especially in the later ages, to use, because it can be felt by others attuned to magic at great distances. Evil magic corrupts. Minds can be broken driving a magic user insane. Powerful magic leaves traces that can be felt hours, days, even many years afterwards.

The vast majority of humans and Hobbits in Middle-earth, especially in the Third and Fourth Ages, go through life blissfully unaware of the magic that pervades the very fabric of the world, and especially shy away or even condemn those that use “blatant” magics.

There is magic in the power of words, oaths, curses, and most especially in music and song. This comes very much from the Song of Creation's influence.

The spells in this document are formatted to fit the D&D description format as closely as possible, with some fields added:

Spell casting DC

Spell Alignment/Taint Points

Sanity Check (yes or no)

Sanity Points Loss

Spell Broadcasting & Residue Base Points

Ages (Time Periods) Allowed

Sorcery and Sorcerers are considered evil in Middle-earth. The Sorcerer Character class in a Middle-earth campaign can NOT be of “Good” or “Neutral” alignment as long as they continue to cast sorcery magic. This is because Sorcery taps into the powers of Morgoth and the parts of the Song of Creation “tainted” by Morgoth before his imprisonment.

See the “Spell Tainting” section for information on Good and Neutral aligned casters casting “Evil” magic, taint, insanity, and the consequences thereof.

This document will eventually contain complete spell lists from D&D 3.5 Players Handbook, Dungeon Masters Guide 3.5, Unearth Arcana 3.0, Complete Arcane 3.5, Complete Divine 3.5, Decipher's LotR, ICE's Middle-earth Role-Playing, & ICE's Rolemaster Spell Law.

For it's initial draft however, this document will merely set the rules and formulas for modifying D&D magic to fit Tolkien's world more appropriately.

1.1 Ideas and rules sources

Many of the ideas in this document were gleaned from combining rules and ideas from:

- WotC D&D 3.5
- WotC D&D UA 3.0
- Decipher LotR
- WotC The Wheel of Time d20
- Swords & Sorcery
- ICE MERP
- ICE Rolemaster
- Various House Rules
- Articles from Michael Martinez
- Articles from Chris Seeman
- Discussions on the www.merp.com mailing lists and forums

Use the Spell Points Option in D&D 3.0 Unearthed Arcana, Page #153.

Also follow the “House Rule: Daily Spell List” on the same page.

Do NOT use the Bonus Spell Points & Bonus Spells Option on UA 3.0 Pg 154.

Zero level spell (cantrips) = ½ Spell Points use.

1.2 Formulas overview

Formulas for determining spell modifiers:

Spellcasting DC = $(10 + (3 \times \text{Spell Level})) - \text{Spellcaster level} (+ \text{Race \& INT Mods})$

Spellcasting DC Failed Fortitude DC Check = $\text{Spellcasting DC} + \text{Spellcasters Fortitude Bonus}$

Spell Points Cost = Spell Level

Spell Taint Points = $1d3 \times \text{Spell Level}$

Sanity Check = Yes for any Evil aligned spells

Sanity Points Loss for failed Sanity Check = $1d6 - 1 \times \text{Spell Level}$

Spell Broadcasting & Residue Base Points = $\text{Spell Level} (\text{multiplied by Location Alignment Chart})$

A natural 20 roll = critical success, typically double the success (duration, damage, range, etc.) see spell descriptions for detailed benefits and/or refer to Spell Critical chart.

A natural 1 roll = fumbled, spell fails to cast and/or backfires, spell points lost. Refer to Spellcasting Failure chart(s).

$(10 + (3 \times \text{spell level})) - \text{spell caster level} + \text{racial mod} + \text{INT mod}$.

Wizard level 1, spell level 1, No Race mod, No INT Mod, DC = 12

See the Ea-d20-10.0-Magic-InMiddle-earth.ods Spreadsheet for a detailed listing of BASE DC for every caster level up to level 20, and spell levels up to level 9.

2.0 Spell points and fatigue

Spellcasters must make additional Fatigue checks when Spell points at 25% of total SP and a final additional one when SP's fall at or below 10% total possible SP.

Failed Fatigue Check makes the spell caster fatigued at -1 on all rolls. If already fatigued, either by magic or as per fatigue rules in PH 3.5, then the spellcaster becomes exhausted and at -6 to all rolls and can not cast any more spells until recovered as per PH 3.5 Exhaustion rules.

3.0 Spellcasting DC & Fatigue risks

Spellcasting DC, if failed, Fortitude Save DC

The Spellcasting DC is in addition to the usual Concentration checks when appropriate as per the standard D&D 3.5 rules.

No matter what the circumstances are, the spellcaster has to roll to see if the spell casts properly.

Magic is exceedingly difficult to utilize and control. These rules modifications should more accurately reflect the risks. Only with many years of development (and levels) do the risks become somewhat reduced.

Spellcast DC is $(10 + (3 \times \text{Spell level})) - \text{Spell casters level (+/- bonuses)}$

Note that a "natural" roll of 1 ALWAYS results in a Spellcast DC failure check against Fortitude Save.

Cantrips are automatically DC 2. The spellcaster just needs to NOT roll a 1 and all is well when casting cantrips.

These rules apply to ALL types of spellcasters, Arcane, Divine, etc.

A failure of the Spellcasting DC followed by a failure of the Spellcasting Fortitude Save DC requires consulting the *Spellcasting Failure Results Chart 3-1*.

Spellcasting DC, critical success

If a spellcaster rolls a natural 20 when casting a spell (all levels except cantrips/zero level spells), then the caster did astoundingly well and manages to greatly increase the normal benefits of the spell cast. The spellcaster makes a second d20 roll and consults *3-2 Spell Critical Success Table*.

3.1 Spellcasting Failure Results

The Spellcasting Failure Table “DC missed by” is the number of the difference between what was needed to succeed, vs. fail on the Fortitude Saving throw.

For example, if Blathor first rolled a 3 on the Spellcasting DC (Failed), then rolled only a 5 (plus 1 Fortitude bonus) +1 = 6, he'd fail by 9-6=3. And the first row effects would apply.

<i>Table 3-1 Spellcasting Failure Results</i>	
DC missed by	Result
1 – 5	The spellcaster suffers a severe headache and fatigue. As a result, she suffers a -1 penalty on all skill and ability checks, attack rolls, and saves. She recovers when she is able to rest for at least six hours.
6 – 10	The spellcaster suffers headache and fatigue resulting in a -2 penalty on all rolls. She is stunned by the pain and can not take any action for 1 round. She also takes 1d6 points of damage and cannot cast any spells for 1 hour.
11 – 15	The spellcaster suffers headache and fatigue resulting in -3 penalty on all rolls. She is dazed and confused and can not take any action for 1 turn. She also takes 2d6 points of damage and cannot cast spells at all for 24 hours.
16 – 20	The spellcaster suffers headache and fatigue resulting in -4 penalty on all rolls. She collapses, is conscious but stunned and disoriented and can not move or take any other action for 1 minute. She also takes 3d6 points of damage and cannot cast any spells for 48 hours.
21 – 25	The spellcaster suffers headache and fatigue resulting in -5 penalty on all rolls. She collapses and becomes unconscious for 1d20 hours. She also takes 4d6 points of damage and cannot cast any spells for 1 week.
25+	The spellcaster suffers excruciating agony from head to toe and a horrible headache. She collapses and lapses into a coma for 1d20 days. She is completely exhausted resulting in -6 on all rolls which does not begin any recovery during comatose period. She also takes 4d6 points damage, and can not cast any spells for 1 month after regaining consciousness.

<i>CHART 3-2 Spell Critical Success</i>	
D20 roll	Result
1 – 5	The spellcaster only uses one SP less than the spell normally requires (for 1 st level, no SP used)
6 – 10	The spellcaster only uses one half of the SP normally required for the spell (for 1 st and 2 nd level, no SP used)
11 – 15	The spell effect is as though 1 level higher than normal for all variables.
16 – 19	The spell spell effect is as though 1.5 levels higher than normal for all variables.
20 (natural)	The spell effect is as though double the level of normal for the caster for all variables.

4.0 Spellcasting Broadcast & Residue Overview

4.1 Broadcasting

Some spells can “broadcast” that magic is being used to other parties. For example using some types of magic when the Nazgul are near, is likely to draw them nearer.

Spell “alignment” affects how much a spell broadcasts, as well as the spell level.

Neutral spells have a broadcast level equal to the level of the spell being cast. This is however, cumulative in a geographic area. If a spellcaster casts multiple spells. The broadcasting and residue points accumulate.

Evil Spells have a broadcast level equaling from 3 to 10 times the spell level depending on the location. If in a neutral area, the broadcast is fivefold. If in an evil area, it is only threefold. This is because evil magic is in spite of the Song of Creation, and so all evil magic leaves a stronger residue and broadcast than neutral and good magic, even in an evil place. Also since evil magic is linked to Melkor/Morgoth those creatures are more sensitive to each other's magic. Sauron will certainly notice even an evil spell if cast in Mordor. If in a blessed/holy/good place, it is at least 10 times the spell level and can be higher based on Dms judgement.

Good spells only broadcast 2x the spell level in neutral areas. This is based on the idea that the “Song of Creation” is basically “Good” and so good spells don't stand out as much from the “Background noise” of the Song of Creation, as much as evil spells do (See exceptions in evil locations). Good spells in a good location only broadcast at normal spell level. Good spells cast in an evil location broadcast at 10 times (or more depending on GM's judgement) the spell's level. This is because it stands out so strongly in opposition to the evil location in contrast.

4.2 Residue

Spellcasting residue is the lingering effects detectable even hours, days, months, years, centuries, or even eons later.

The residue is calculated by the broadcast points accumulated in an area, and then slowly subtracting based on the following:

4.3 Residue Fading versus Location

<i>Spell Broadcast Residue fading versus location chart</i>		
Spell Alignment	Location Alignment	Residue loss rate
Neutral spell	Neutral location	Location loses 1 residue point per day
Neutral spell	Good location	Location loses 1 residue point per day
Neutral spell	Evil location	Location loses 1 residue point per day
Good spell	Neutral location	Loses 1 point per week
Good spell	Good location	Loses 1 point per day
Good spell	Evil location	Loses 1 point per month
Evil spell	Neutral location	Loses 1 point per week
Evil spell	Good location	Loses 1 point per month
Evil spell	Evil location	Loses 1 point per day

Use MERP 2nd Edition chart for geographical mods.

Spell residue can be detected by Detect Magic and similar spells.

Spell broadcasts can be detected by Detect Magic and similar spells. And also if strongly opposite in alignment, can be sensed by some creatures and persons. For example Nazgul, Maiar, Elves have a strong sense of magic, especially when in opposite alignment.

A spot check for broadcast for some races and classes, will indicate roughly if opposite aligned magic has occurred and roughly the direction or distance.

If underground, only good to about 500'.

If in the open, can be scores of miles.

More information provided in the “Races” Section.

5.0 Spell Alignment & Taint risks

See UA 3.0 Pages 189-190 for explanation of taint, points, cleansing, and effects.

6.0 Sanity & Spellcasting risks

Sanity see UA 3.0 pages 194-210

7.0 Examples in Action

For example:

Blathor a 1st level Wizard, with +1 Fortitude Save Bonus casts the 1st level Arcane Spell, Magic Missile.

This is a Spellcasting DC of 12 ($(10 + (3 \times 1)) - 1 = 12$).

If he fails the DC, then he must now roll a Fortitude Save at the same DC as the spellcast DC (DC 12) was plus the spellcasters Fortitude Saving Throw Bonus. In this example he would need to roll an 11 or higher because of his +1 Fortitude bonus. If succeeds, the spell merely misfires and he loses the spell point(s). If he fails the Fortitude saving throw however, he must cross reference the *spell backfire chart*.

Sample Spell:

Acid Fog

Conjuration (Creation) [Acid]

Level: Sor/Wiz 6, Water 7

Spellcast DC: $(10 + (3 * 6)) = 28$, minus level of spellcaster

Fortitude DC: 28 minus level of spellcaster + Fortitude Save Modifier

Spell Points Cost: 6

Spell "Alignment": Neutral

Spell Taint points: None

Sanity check: None

Spell "Broadcasting & Residue Level": 6

Components: V,S,M/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

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Sample Spell:

Animate Dead

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Clr 3, Death 3, Sor/Wiz 4

Spellcast DC: Clr/Death=19-spellcaster level, Sor/Wiz=22-spellcaster level

Fortitude DC: as Spellcast DC + Fortitude Save Modifier

Spell Points Cost: Clr/Death=3, Sor/Wiz=4

Spell Alignment: Evil

Spell Taint points: Clr/Death=1d3 x 3, Sor/Wiz=1d3 x 4

Sanity Check: Yes

Sanity Points Loss for failed Sanity Check: Clr/Death=1d6-1 x 3

Sor/Wiz=1d6-1 x 4

Spell Broadcasting & Residue Base Points: Clr/Death=3, Sor/Wiz=4

Components: V,S,M

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8.0 Updated Core Spell Lists Summary

Below you will find a list based on the D&D Player Handbook 3.5.

For details on the spells, simply consult the relevant book.

Each spell has the added fields of:

Spellcast DC

Spell Alignment/Taint Points

Sanity Check (yes or no)

Sanity Points Loss

Spell Broadcasting & Residue Base Points

Ages (Time Periods) Allowed

Notes (anything else that may differ from PH listing)

All other factors remain the same as in the PH listing of the spell.

8.1 Bard Spells

8.2 Cleric Spells

8.2 Cleric Spells

8.3 Druid Spells

8.4 Paladin Spells

8.5 Ranger Spells

<i>Lvl</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Spell</i>	<i>Base Cast DC</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Taint Pts</i>	<i>San Chk</i>	<i>Sanity points Loss</i>	<i>Broadcast & Residue Base Points</i>	<i>Ages</i>	<i>Notes</i>
2	Necro	Blindness / Deafness	16	E	1d3 x2	N	-	2	All	-
2	Necro	Command Undead	16	E	1d3 x2	Y	1d6-1 x2	2	All	-
2	Necro	False Life	16	E	1d3 x2	Y	1d6-1 x2	2	All	-
4	Conj	Dimension Door	22	N	-	Y	1d6-1 x4	4	1,2	-
4	Ench	Crushing Despair	22	E	1d3 x4	N	-	4	All	-
4	Ench	Geas, Lesser	22	E	1d3 x4	N	-	4	All	-
4	Necro	Animate Dead	22	E	1d3 x4	Y	1d6-1 x4	4	All	-
4	Trans	Polymorph	22	N	-	V	1d6-1 x4	4	All	4
5	Conj	Teleport	-	-	-	-	-	-	None	5
5	Div	Contact Other Plane	25	N	-	Y	1d6-1 x5	5	2,3	-
5	Ench	Dominate Person	25	E	1d3 x5	Y	1d6-1 x5	5	All	-

<i>L v l</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Spell</i>	<i>Base Cast DC</i>	<i>A l</i>	<i>Taint Pts</i>	<i>San Chk</i>	<i>Sanity points Loss</i>	<i>Broadcast & Residue Base Points</i>	<i>Ages</i>	<i>Notes</i>
6	Conjuration	Acid Fog	28	N	-			6	All	-
7	Transmutation	Animal shapes	31	N	-	Y		7	All	-
8	Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]	Antipathy	34	V	V			8	All	-
9	Necromancy	Astral projection	37	N	-	V		9	1, 2	Some changes to what the "Astral Plane" covers

Base Cast DC = $10 + (3 \times \text{Spell Level})$

Al. = Spell Alignment (Affects risk of acquiring Taint Points)

San Chk = Sanity Check ("Y" yes or "N" no or "V" varies (see notes section of spell for V listing))

Sanity Points Loss

Spell Broadcasting & Residue Base Points

Ages (Time Periods) Allowed

Notes (anything else that may differ from PH listing)

V= Varies, see Notes

Notes:

1. If protect from Evil, then spell is Good Aligned, If Protect from Good, then Evil Aligned Spell, etc.
2. Taint points if used to protect against good.
3. If summon any variant Evil Creature then Taint points and Sanity Check (and points) apply.
4. Recipient of spell must roll sanity check
5. This spell not allowed at for use by anyone

Formulas for determining spell modifiers:

Spellcast DC = $(10 + (3 \times \text{Spell Level}) - \text{Spellcaster level})$

Spellcast DC Failed Fortitude DC Check = $\text{Spellcast DC} + \text{Spellcasters Fortitude Bonus}$

Spell Points Cost = Spell Level

Spell Taint Points = $1d3 \times \text{Spell Level}$

Sanity Check = Yes for any Evil aligned spells

Sanity Points Loss for failed Sanity Check = $1d6 - 1 \times \text{Spell Level}$

Spell Broadcasting & Residue Base Points = $\text{Spell Level} \times \text{Location Alignment Chart}$

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