

Magic Academy v1.6

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Introduction

While not the only member of the magic academy genre, Harry Potter has come to dominate it. With it's strong elements combining the classic school boys stories with fairy tales and more modern conventions like Diane Duane's *So You Want to Be a Wizard* series. The allure of combining childhood nostalgia with fairy tale magic is strong, whether from combining similar forms of fantasy, or just the satisfaction of what you would do to the school bully if you could have cast magic. This game is meant to focus on the idea of magical academies, special hidden (or not so hidden) schools where young people grow up and become practitioners of the magical arts. An alternative is the magic club which allows the players to be more unusual as wizards in training, most of their classmates unaware, or loosely aware of their powers. Both options provide an opportunity to combine the trials of the school years, with more the dangerous and fascinating aspect of magic added to the mix.

Starting the Game

Unlike many RPGs, Magic Academy presents the players and their selected GM (Gamemaster) a significant amount of freedom in deciding how their school works. You can create a direct mimic of an existing fictional setting or create a school entirely of your own. Once you've created your school, you then create your student. This step also requires the group to come together and discuss things, to help ensure that the character's have a reason to become friends or at least allies in the face of dramatic events. Compromise and flexibility are an important part of the entire process. Remember that the game will be more fun if everyone is excited by what's been decided.

School Creation

Initially you should decide if you want to play in a Magic Academy or a Magic Club.

1. Magic Academies:

(a) Vital Statistics:

- i. Academy Name
- ii. Academy Location
- iii. Academy Motto or Seal
- iv. Age range - starting age and graduation age
- v. Choose boarding or commuting - Do the students live at the school, or do they live at home, or a mixture of the two?
- vi. Is it a public academy? - all children passing some test in the area are sent here, usually run by some agency or ministry.
- vii. Is it a private academy? - this school requires some payment or lineage, exceptional students may be accepted regardless.
- viii. Is it under some group? - the school is run under the auspices of some group: religious, political, even military.

ix. Is it known or hidden? - is the school: well known, known and avoided, an unmentioned part of the community, or a well kept secret.

(b) **Classes** (see Class List below)

- i. Choose the Academy's Required Class or Classes - These classes are required for all students each year.
- ii. Choose the remainder of the core classes, making a total of 5 classes. - This is the starting classes for first year students.
- iii. Choose another 5-10 electives - Each year after the first you can replace one non-required course with an elective.

(c) **Activities** (see Activities List below)

- i. Choose the Academy's Required Activity (if any) - Usually there is no such activity, but some academies may have them, such as military academies requiring drill work.
- ii. Choose the remainder of the core activities, making a total of 3 activities. - These activities are popular and competitive.
- iii. Choose another 2-12 activities that the academy supports.

(d) **Houses or Clubs** - Choose if your academy has Houses or other major social groupings. If so, for each house or club choose:

- i. House Name
- ii. House Motto or Seal
- iii. A preferred class or activity - this gets a +1 house bonus when acquired. Or, if this class or activity cannot otherwise be learned members of this house may take it as an elective or activity.

(e) Flesh out the history of your school, and it's relationships with the community and other magic academies.

2. **Magic Clubs in Mundane Academies:**

(a) **Vital Statistics:**

- i. Academy Name
- ii. Academy Location
- iii. Academy Motto or Seal
- iv. Age range - starting age and graduation age
- v. Choose boarding or commuting - Do the students live at the school, or do they live at home, or a mixture of the two?
- vi. Is it a public academy? - all children passing some test in the area are sent here, usually run by some agency or ministry.
- vii. Is it a private academy? - this school requires some payment or lineage, exceptional students may be accepted regardless.
- viii. Is it under some group? - the school is run under the auspices of some group: religious, political, even military.
- ix. Is it known or hidden? - is the school: well known, known and avoided, an unmentioned part of the community, or a well kept secret.

(b) **Mundane Matters** (see Mundane Matters List below)

- i. Choose the Academy's Required Matters - These mundane matters are required for all students each year.
- ii. Choose the remainder of the core matters, making a total of 5 matters. - This is the starting mundane matters for first year students.
- iii. Choose another 5-10 electives - Each year after the first you can replace one non-required mundane matter with an elective one.

- (c) **Activities** (see Activities List below)
- i. Choose the Academy's Required Activity (if any) - Usually there is no such activity, but some academies may have them, such as military academies requiring drill work.
 - ii. Choose the remainder of the core activities, making a total of 3 activities. - These activities are popular and competitive.
 - iii. Choose another 2-12 activities that the academy supports.
- (d) **Houses or Clubs** - Choose if your academy has Houses or other major social groupings. If so, for each house or club choose:
- i. House Name
 - ii. House Motto or Seal
 - iii. A preferred mundane matter or activity - this gets a +1 house bonus when acquired. Or, if this class or activity cannot otherwise be learned members of this house may take it as an elective or activity.
 - iv. Is the house or club magic? If so, instead of a preferred mundane matter or activity, select five classes. These may then be taken in place of mundane matters or activities. Optionally you may select a magical activity in place of one of the five classes, which can then be taken as an activity.
- (e) Flesh out the history of your school, and it's relationships with the community and other academies.

3. **Intensive Academies:** An intensive academy is an optional type of magical or mundane academy which focuses heavily on academics. Most academies provide five Classes or Mundane Matters and three Activities. An intensive one provides six Classes or Mundane Matters (the sixth is chosen as an elective), but only allows only one Activity. This mimics the academic focus found in Japanese schools as well as special charter schools. In addition, an very focused student may request the administration to take intensive years, which treat the academy as though it were intensive.

Classes, Activities, and Mundane Matters

The basis of both schools and characters is the Classes, Activities, and Mundane Matters taken. In general, these are called Subjects. These are used to build the abilities and flavor of your character. These lists are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to give a starting point to build your academies and clubs.

Classes

- Alchemy - Making potions, elixirs, salves, and transforming objects.
- Artificer - Making, maintaining, and charging magical items.
- Cosmogeny - Traveling, orienteering, and perceiving in our universe and others.
- Cursing - Hindering and manipulating chance.
- Divination - Finding information through any number of means.
- Elementalism - Manipulating the inanimate elements of the natural world.
- Geomancy - Altering magical environments, setting up large magical effects, finding sources of power.
- Glamour - Altering mental states, emotions, and perceptions.
- Healing - - Perceiving health, preventing illness, curing pains.
- Hortimancy - Altering, controlling, and developing plants and related creatures.
- Necromancy - Affecting and controlling the dead and causing decay and death.
- Shapeshifting - Altering one's own form, and sometimes others.

- Summoning - Calling beings from this or another universe.
- Warding - Resisting different forms of attack, preventing access to areas and people.
- Zoomancy - Altering, controlling, and developing animals and related creatures.
- Grimorie - Allows a student to cast spells from books and other records, it is used in place of the appropriate Class for such spells. Cannot be used for spells.
- Runic - Permits a spell from another class to be stored in a Rune, this allows the spell to be triggered by something. Each extra description on the Runic roll allows one detail to be added to the trigger or triggers. Cannot be used for spells.
- Unworking - Purely used to resist magical effects from other classes, and may always be used to perform an opposing action against spells. Cannot be used for spells.
- Arcane Language (Choose One) - Cannot be used for spells, but can communicate with magical creatures.
- History of Magic - Cannot be used for spells, but aids in identifying them.
- Philosophy of Magic - Cannot be used for spells, but aids in understanding them.

Activities

Note: Activities marked with a * are not generally available outside of Magic Academies.

- Mundane Matters (may be multiple activities if the students will frequently interact with the mundane world see list below)
- Magical Sports (Choose One)*
- Magical Dueling*
- Fencing / Kendo
- Mundane Sports (Choose One)
- Chess
- Computer (if appropriate)
- Camping
- Magical Gaming (Choose One)*
- Mundane Gaming (Choose One)
- Drama
- Choir
- Band
- Automotive
- Fan Club (Choose Type)
- Debate
- Politics (Choose Type)
- Drill / Marching

Mundane Matters

- Astronomy
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Health
- Shop (wood, metal, etc.)
- Mathematics
- History
- Geography
- Economics
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Art
- Literature
- Writing
- Language (Choose One)
- Religion (Choose One)

Student Creation

1. Create a name, and basic description of your student.
2. Choose a House or Club for your student, it is usually advised that all Players choose the same, or at least friendly Houses or Clubs.
3. Determine your student's Character and Composure scores:
 - (a) Character is used when attempting stressful and unusual situations, especially life threatening ones.
 - (b) Composure is used when attempting every-day actions, especially those related to academics. If you are making a composure roll you may avoid rolling if both your subject and your composure equal or exceed the number of successes you need.
 - (c) The sum of starting composure and character is based on your age. You may split them however you wish, but neither composure nor character may be below one.
 - 4-5 years old - 3 points - 0 subjects
 - 6-7 years old - 4 points - 1 subjects
 - 8-9 years old - 5 points - 2 subjects
 - 10-11 years old - 6 points - 3 subjects
 - 12-13 years old - 7 points - 4 subjects
 - 14-15 years old - 8 points - 5 subjects
 - 16-17 years old - 9 points - 6 subjects
 - 18+ years old - 10 points - 7 subjects
4. Determine Subjects (Classes, Activities, and Mundane Matters)
 - (a) List the core Classes or Mundane Matters of your Academy, leaving room for more. If you are a Magic Club member also make a list of club Classes.
 - (b) List any Activities you are interested in, also leaving room.
 - (c) Allot three fewer points than the sum of your composure and character to subjects (see the chart above).
 - (d) If you have attended the academy in previous years choose your subjects for each year you have attended and add one to each of them.
 - Magic Academy: 5 Classes, 3 Activities (or 6 Classes, 1 Activity if intensive)
 - Magic Club: 5 Mundane Matters, 3 Activities (or 6 Mundane Matters, 1 Activity if intensive), where you may replace any Subject with a Class offered by the club.
 - You must take any required Subjects every year.
 - Your first year you must take all core Classes or Mundane Matters, each following year you may elect to reduce that number by one, until only required ones remain.
5. Create three Histories:
 - A History is a sentence or phrase describing some important feature of the student, usually related to his or her past.
 - Histories either provide additional stories or avoid the need to roll for appropriate actions. If they provide a story element an experience point is gained at the end of the session.
 - Examples:
 - Substantial inheritance, from a great uncle.
 - Both parents died, raised by her grandmother.
 - Very good at climbing trees, as he had no friends until now.

Playing the Game

One of the staples of the magical school genre is that of conflict and adventure. Sometimes this the extraordinary performance of ordinary tasks, such as a competitions or tests. In others it is the performance of truly extraordinary things, such as life or death combat and outsmarting adults. In each case the outcome are determined by rolling dice. If it is an ordinary task, then you roll dice equal to the appropriate subject plus your composure. If it is an extraordinary situation you roll dice equal to your appropriate subject and your character. This is only required if the outcome is in doubt and of interest. In addition to reduce the required rolling you may choose not to roll on any composure roll, and instead accept a number of successes equal to your composure or the appropriate subject, which ever is lowest. Often this number will be lower than if you had rolled, but rolling is more risky, so this option should be taken if you are taking it easy, rather than going all out.

The Basic Roll

The basic roll is rolling six-sided dice equal to the number appropriate subject plus either composure or character, which ever is more appropriate. Any sixes rolled are re-rolled until no sixes remain. Each six that appeared counts as a success. Then the remaining dice may be added together in any combination, with the values rolled add up to 6 or more. Each combination adds an additional success.

Example:

Gerald's character, Halli has a composure of 3 and Choir at 2. Halli's trying to impress his classmates with his singing. He rolls 5 dice, 3 for the composure, and 2 for the subject. Initially he rolls a 1, two 3's, a 5 and a 6. He re-rolls the six, noting the success, it is now a 4. looking over his dice, Gerald puts the 1 and 5 together, as well as the two 3's, each of these is a success. The lone four doesn't count to anything. That makes a total of three successes, one from the 6, the other two by combining dice.

Example:

Candice is rolling 8 dice, character, 5 plus Basketball, 3, trying to jump to the top of the wall. She rolls two 3's, two 4's, a 5, and three 6's. She re-rolls three sixes, getting a 1, a 2, and another 5. She puts the two 3's together, and the 1 and the 5. This leaves her with a 2, two 4's, and a 5, and she has five successes already. She puts the 2 and 4 together and lastly puts the 4 and 5 together, 9 is much more than 6, but she doesn't have a choice. This gives her a total of 7 successes.

Opposed Rolls

When a roll is opposed, roll all opposing dice. These do not get re-rolled if they are a six. The values on these dice must be canceled for any successes to be accumulated. This can be done by using a success from a re-roll to cancel any die, or by using a combination (one or more dice) adding up to at least the value on the opposing die to be canceled.

Example:

Henry's character, Paul is attacking a Dream Ogre, using his Karate skills he picked up after school last year. His Character is 4 and his Karate is at 1. The Ogre has a Character of 3, and a Boxing of 2. So each gets to roll 5 dice. The Dream Ogre rolls two 3's, two 5's, and a 6. The six doesn't get re-rolled, since the Dream Ogre is defending. Henry rolls two 3's, a 4, and two 6's. He re-rolls the 6's to get a 4 and a 6. He re-rolls the 6 again, and gets a 5. So he has two 3's, two 4's, a 5, and the three 6's. He cancels the Ogre's 6 with one of his, and cancels the two 5's with one 6 and one 5. Lastly he cancels the two 3's with his two 3's. This leaves him two 4's and a 6. This means Paul gets two successes attacking the Ogre.

Extended Rolls

Some activities may extend over a stretch of time, like making an Artifact or writing a speech. These actions permit rolling several times as the process continues. There are several options based on the nature of the activity:

- No Risk Situation: simply roll until the total of successes adds up to those required.
- Risky Process: Each roll after the first is opposed by one more die than the last. Previous successes must be used like 6's to cancel the opposing dice, if they are not canceled as is.
- Connected Actions: If one action provides an advantage for a later action, provide the successes of the first action as additional dice rolled on the second action.

Cooperative Actions

If multiple people are attempting to aid the same action, this can be handled like an extended action.

- No Risk Situation: simply add the total successes of each roll.
- Risky Process: Each person after the first is opposed by one more die than the last. Previous successes may be used like 6's to cancel the opposing dice, if they are not canceled as is.
- Connected Actions: If one person's action provides an advantage for a another person, provide the successes of the first action as additional dice rolled for the second action. This may increase the dice for the second action up to double its starting dice.

Successes and Description

For most rolls, the required number of successes to achieve some degree of your goals is three. This is enough to simply succeed in typical actions. More difficult actions will often reduce the successes rolled. For each hazard or complication the GM can subtract one to three successes, which are spent overcoming this obstacle. For each three successes above that required for a simple success you may describe one extra detail about how you succeeded. This could be that you did so quickly, calmly, that you found something additional in the process. In any case three successes

Effect Level	Successes	Description
Simple Effect	3	You passed the test. You evaded the trap.
Extra Description	+3	And scored highly. And disarmed it.
Avoid Obstacles	+1 to +3	While on no sleep. While the water is rising.

Note also that the effect of failure is based on how many successes short you are. Thus an 8 year old student may not be able to achieve a simple success on a math homework, but by being only a successes short she will do very well considering her age. Likewise, failure by one or two successes usually means a partial success, or at least continued progress toward the goal.

Tools

Tools provide a bonus to a subject, or several subjects. Usually 1 to 3 additional dice to the appropriate subject. The following is a short list of some possible tools.

Name	Bonus Dice	Subjects	Description
Bat	+1	Baseball, Cricket	A simple wooden bat.
Conversational Elemental	+2	Arcane Language (Elemental)	Natural spirit phrase book.
Shoddy Trombone	+1	Band	Dented but still good.
Silver Cauldron	+2	Alchemy	A silver coated bowl.
Magic Wand	+1	Cursing, Glamour	A wooden magic wand
Archaic Saber	+3	Fencing, Kendo	Old, but has an edge.

Combat and Healing

Combat actions are simply opposed actions using physical or arcane subjects. On a simple effect, the target is wounded, giving all his or her composure rolls a 2 success obstacle, until healed. Wounds are not cumulative, but on a roll which causes a wound, extra description can be used to cause the target to become unconscious, or suffer another specific effect of their wound, such as drop something or break a bone. One particular use of extra description is to inflict a severe wound, which if not attended will be fatal, a second extra description can then be used to make the wound immediately fatal.

If the ordering of events is important, the person who rolled the highest number of successes after their obstacles achieves their goals first. If the GM does this, everyone who is involved rolls, and then he or she determines the order and result of the rolls.

Sometimes characters will be in danger from environments or events, such as poison or falling from a great height. These situations can also be treated as attacks, with a number of dice based on their severity.

Characters with Healing may attempt a composure roll to fix wounds over time, fixing each piece of description (such as a broken bone or blinded) or the wound itself over a day. This requires only a simple effect. Biology may be used in the same manner, but takes two weeks to heal description and wounds. Extra description for both rolls may speed this up within reason. Additionally a severe wound may be treated in the midst of things with a single Healing or Biology and character roll, a simple effect is all that is needed to make the severe wound a normal wound instead. A Healing and character roll may even be used to reverse the death of a recently killed person. This has at least a 3 success obstacle, if not more depending on the situation, and usually must be done right after the person was killed. In some cases Necromancy may be used in place of Healing for this type of roll.

Quick Play Rule (Optional)

To expedite less dramatic actions, opposing dice may be subtracted from the total rolled. If the opposition is larger than the dice that would normally be rolled the action simply fails.

Magic

Most Classes allow you to perform spells, which are general magical effects. Some, since they are more based on manipulating spells and understanding magic do not allow any spells, such as Unworking and History of Magic. Other Classes let you create things of magical power, such as Alchemy's potions and Artifex's magical objects. These creations usually contain spells from other classes, but Alchemy and Artifex can also be used for spells to manipulate these creations. Likewise Hortimancy, Geomancy, and Zoomancy are primarily used understand and interact with magical plants, places, and animals respectively. However each of these Classes can also be used manipulate and even create such things.

The remainder of the classes are almost always used for spells, although they also indicate general knowledge of that area of magic. Spells are not the only way to perform magic, but they are quick, often flashy, and certainly the kind of magic that most people expect in a magical academy.

Spells

Some spells are just magical assistants to mundane or other magical actions. These spells use the Connected action rules like any other subject. This includes Divination spells to search for secret passages and spells that enhance vigor and strength. Other spells oppose the actions of others, and are simply used as opposing dice for their rolls. This includes setting up wards, distracting others, and illusionary trickery. Thirdly, some spells are simply used for direct combat or healing. These, likewise use the combat and healing rules discussed in the previous section. This includes spells like elemental blasts, necromantic killing spells, and telekinetic strikes.

On the other hand direct spells have a specific effect to achieve, like any roll, require a simple effect to have any effect. Failing by one or two usually means producing a simple party trick, rather than a full spell. A simple effect is all that is required to cause a minor momentary effect, such as making light, transforming a hat into a bowl, or the like. Extra description can be used to add more effects or enhance existing effects.

Thus, transforming a hat into a copper alchemy bowl, would require the simple effect, plus extra description, for the bowl being specialized for alchemy. More difficult or esoteric base effects usually have obstacles due to their complexity and danger. Shapeshifting humans, making zombies, and traveling through time are all spells that will have, potentially multiple, obstacles.

Extra description can also modify other aspects of the spell:

Aspect	Explanation	Extra Descriptions Required
Special Effect	Like Showy, Stealthy, Quick, Coincidental, etc.	1
Indirect	Does something the class can't normally do	1
Persistent	Lasts about an hour	1
Long Term	Lasts about a day	2
Very Long Term	Lasts about a month	3
Permanent	Lasts indefinitely	4

Creations

Most creation is an extended risky process. The basic creation requires only a simple effect. Each extra description adds either a spell effect or for more permanent creations improvements such as a die of character or composure or three subject dice. When a spell is added there should be one or more rolls of the appropriate subject, which is part of the entire process (so the opposing dice continue to increase). The total successes are then used for that spell effect when it is used.

Most creation requires significant time and equipment to perform. Lacking these things may cause significant obstacles to all of the rolls involved.

Creatures and Adults

Not everyone and everything who will be encountered in magic academy will be a student. Animals, magical and mundane, as well as Adults are a frequent part of magical academy adventures.

Mundane Animals

The following are some examples of mundane animals, these can be used to get an idea for how other animals can be built.

Animal	Character	Composure	Subjects and Abilities
Lion	8	3	Wrestling 4
Horse	5	5	Running 5
Cow	2	4	none
Dog	3	2	Hunting 2
Cat	2	3	Drama 2
Hawk	2	2	Flying

Familiars and Magical Animals

Familiars are creature, often animal, allies of a wizard. As such they develop along side the wizards and start with some traits related to their wizard. Optionally a character may expend a History to possess a Familiar, or alternatively gain an additional History in exchange for declining a Familiar in a game where all characters receive one.

Familiars begin with a total of 5 Composure and Character, they gain two subjects, one of which must be an extra-curricular associated with it's natural form. If the game permits magic used by familiars the other subject may be a class. For advanced familiars, for each year the student has advanced the familiar either adds one to two subjects, as above, or allows the addition of one Composure or one Character.

Magical Animals are much like mundane ones, except they often have more subjects than mundane animals. To create a magical version of a mundane animal, add an additional subject or an ability like flight to the creature. For example a Griffin is a mix between an eagle and a lion, so use the lion mundane animal

and give it flight. Some animals will also have classes which allow them to possess spell-like magics, such as a basilisk's glare as a Necromancy spell. Some especially potent magical creatures, like dragons, should actually be built as adults.

Adults

After the formative years of the magic academy, adults will tend to grow in knowledge and ability more slowly. Many take years to master their abilities. Fewer more ever become recognized grand masters in their field. Lastly, the truly legendary adults have gone to the extent of achievement. Use the following table to build adults.

Rank	Total Subjects	Maximum in a Subject	Total of Character and Composure
Journeyperson	50 to 70	12	11
Master	70 to 90	14	12
Grand Master	90 to 100	16	13
Legendary	100 or more	20	14

Growing and Advancing

Over time students will advance as they take course and have their adventures. The following are the different ways that students can change and improve during their time at a magic academy.

Curriculum

Each year the student decides which subjects will be studied. This follows the same procedure for past years at the academy described in student creation. A student should decide which subjects he or she is taking at the beginning of the game year, and then at the end of that year those subjects will all be increased by one.

Experience

After each game session, players who attended and roleplayed receive one to three experience points depending on how well they portrayed their characters. They can also gain experience points from Histories that played a significant role in the story, usually involving some difficulty the character must overcome. These experience points may be used to increase subjects, composure or character. For subjects this costs one experience point for each point in the subject, and no subject may be learned from zero in this manner. For character and composure it costs ten experience points to raise either.

Changing Histories

When a History becomes obsolete or resolves, the player may remove the History and devise a new one to be developed. The player should then introduce it into the game sessions, this new History should be something the character can reasonably bring about. When this happens in game, the player may note this History and it from then on acts as normal History.