

# Magic Rules!

## Part 3: The Art of Creating a Magical System

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Instead of another article about writing the rules of magic, let's look at how to create rules for our magical system, what things you need to consider.

### General areas to think about:

- How might the source of the magic affect the rules you're looking to create?
- How will you work limitations into rules that work?
- What are the side effects (the consequences) to the user of magic and to others?
- How will the magic of different users work with or against each other? Can the magics cancel each other out? What, if any, side effect(s) might this cause?
- Is magic achieved through training or natural ability?
- How does the culture respond to the use of magic and how does this affect the user of magic? What is the place of magic in your world?
- What are the magic users understanding of the mechanics of magical powers? Are these views different from the reality of the situation? From the view of the antagonist?

- Consider the peoples that will make up your world. The more nonhuman characters involved, the more magical interplay might be acceptable.

### **NUGGET:**

Any rule of magic that you create must exist for a purpose. Don't throw something in because it's cute, or something you thought about doing. All of your magic rules must exist for a reason.

### **Assumptions about magic that can be found in normal (mundane) or in fantasy worlds:**

- Magic might be difficult to use, achieve, or sustain.
- Magic may be dangerous, not only to those it acts upon, but upon the wielder.
- Magic is evil. On the other hand, magic is good. Maybe it is neither, but depends on the outcome achieved.
- Magic might be rare, or magic might be commonplace.
- Magic is unpredictable. How can this be in terms of trying to create a "logical magical system?" Think chaos theory. Think in terms that we don't fully understand the physics of the forces as work in our own world. Could it be that magic is not fully understood in your fantasy world?

Which of these above assumptions might you use in your world to help you create your rule base?

### **Suggestions on creating rules that seem logical and work in your fantasy world:**

- Be consistent. The rules can't contradict each other. They don't change in the middle of your story or novel.
- Consider the rules that magicians from our mundane world use. How are they different than the magical system in your fantasy world:
  - Never perform a trick without first perfecting it.
  - Never let your audience see you sweat
  - Don't give away your secrets.
- Keep the list of rules short and simple. You might start out with many rules, but try to combine and condense these until you have five or less rules.
- Consider writing your rules based on the five Ws: who, what, when, where, why.

**NUGGET:**

Treat your rules with respect. They should be taken as seriously as earthlings take the force of gravity and or Newton's Law.

**Other considerations:**

- Develop a magical concept – What does your magic “look like?”
- What are the mechanics of your magical system?
- Write guidelines for the magic in your fantasy world.
- Think of magic in terms of skills – What magical “skills” will your characters have?

The magical rules must make sense in the context of your fantasy world and culture. Magic cannot exist in isolation. All things are connected.

**Guest Author Bio:**

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