



ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

PRACTICAL MAGIC: WIZARDS

Presented by Jason Koh

Wizards of the Coast, Dungeons & Dragons, and their logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast LLC in the United States and other countries. © 2015 Wizards. All Rights Reserved.

These Slides are not affiliated with, endorsed, sponsored, or specifically approved by Wizards of the Coast LLC. This Notebook may use the trademarks and other intellectual property of Wizards of the Coast LLC, which is permitted under Wizards' Fan Site Policy. For example, Dungeons & Dragons® is a trademark[s] of Wizards of the Coast. For more information about Wizards of the Coast or any of Wizards' trademarks or other intellectual property, please visit their website at (www.wizards.com).

OUTLINE

- Theorem 1: The Foundation of Magecraft
 - a. What is a Wizard?
 - b. Strengths/Weaknesses
 - c. Defining Mechanics
- Theorem 2: Mastering the Arts Arcane
 - a. Wizard Roles
 - b. Arcane Traditions
 - c. Multiclassing Options
- Theorem 3: The Great Work
 - a. Common Tactics
 - b. Action Economy & the Wizard
 - c. Spell Picks
- Theorem 4: Careers in Wizardry
 - a. Races & Feat Choices
 - b. Survival Tips
- Q&A



FUNDAMENTUM MAGICAE

Theorem 1: The Foundation of Magecraft

WHAT IS A WIZARD?

- An erudite practitioner of the arcane arts, who bends and reshapes reality to their will through esoteric knowledge and occult study.
- Wizards bring unparalleled in- and out-of combat magic, as well as skills that benefit from a high Intelligence score, to the table.
- A properly played Wizard is a game-changer and an asset at any table.



THE GREATEST CLASS IN D&D, OBVIOUSLY.

YOU'RE A WIZARD, GARY.

- It's not the class that's OP. It's the player.
- Playing a wizard requires that YOU, the player, be incredibly inventive, diligent and knowledgeable about the rules.
- Reading a guide on the Internet will NEVER be enough. Always innovate.
- **RTFS! (Read The Fucking Spell)!**



BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION EVER

STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES

STRENGTHS

- Book-based Ritual Casting and access to 9th level magic, including several Wizard only spells.
- Capable of learning every spell on their spell list, given the resources and opportunity.
- Some Arcane Traditions can be incredibly beneficial/powerful, especially in the hands of a creative/competent player.

WEAKNESSES

- Can be squishy.
- Very resource intensive, especially if you intend to scribe and/or purchase components for every spell.
- The most technical class in the game, with the highest skill ceiling.
- Effectiveness is 100% dependent on the player.

WHAT MAKES A WIZARD A WIZARD?

- In history and folklore, wizards are often depicted as reclusive scholars, viziers, the mentors of kings, or enigmatic warriors who wield both sword and spell.
- Often Intelligent, not necessarily Wise, but always badass because they use magic creatively and are always full of surprises.
- Don't pander to stereotypes, and don't be creepy. **You are NOT your class.**



DON'T BE "THAT GUY".

DEFINING MECHANICS

- Middling Hit Points per level (4)
- Proficiency in a common save (Wis) and an uncommon save (Int)
- No Armor Proficiencies, terrible Weapon Proficiencies, and no Extra Attack (unless you pick a specific Arcane Tradition or Multiclass)
- Pick two from a fairly restricted list of Int & Wis Skills.
- Spellcasting (and book-based Ritual Casting)
- Ability to learn every single Wizard spell in existence (including outside your +1)
- Arcane Recovery (a bit meh since 1/day, but handy in a pinch)
- Arcane Tradition
- Spell Mastery & Signature Spells (end-game stuff)

SKILL PROFICIENCIES

- Arcana, History, Investigation and Religion (Int based).
- Insight and Medicine (Wis based).
- Two (or three) other skills contingent upon your Background/Race.
- The right Skills will contribute greatly to your continued career/survival in wizardry.



MAKING ARCANA CHECKS, CLEARLY.

SPELLCASTING

- Wizards begin their careers with six 1st level spells known.
- They can learn up to 9th level magic and ALL the rituals in their spell list (including outside their +1).
- They can master spells for EVERY occasion, given the time and resources to do so.
- 40 Class Exclusive Spells, including several rituals, combat and utility spells.



HAVE I MENTIONED SPACE LASERS?

LEARNING NEW SPELLS/SCRIBING

- Wizards learn 2 new spells of a Spell level they can cast whenever they level up. Additionally, they can scribe spells from scrolls and spellbooks they find on adventures.
- Scribing a spell costs 2 hrs and 50 gp per Spell level (e.g. 2 hrs and 50 gp for Level 1, 4 hrs and 100 gp for Level 2, etc).
- You can scribe 8 hrs worth of spells (i.e. 4 spell levels) per downtime day.
- Scribing from a scroll requires an **Arcana check (DC 10+ Spell level)**.
- Wizards can scribe spells from outside their +1 using the standard scribing rules.
- Season 9 rules still allows somewhat easy access to scrolls of up to 5th level, so Wizards greatly benefit (however, it is quite expensive due to the gold cap).

LEARNING NEW SPELLS/SCRIBING

- In **Eberron AL (Oracle of War)**, you cannot buy scrolls to learn spells or scribe spells from other sources without campaign documentation.
- Once per adventure that you gain a level (any class, so long as you have at least 1 wizard level), you can scribe one spell into your spellbook at the normal cost.
- Some Adventure Records allow you to copy/learn additional spells, but those are rare.

RITUAL CASTING

- Second best Ritual Caster in the game.
- Cast ANY Wizard spell with the Ritual tag **WITHOUT** having it prepared. Most other Ritual Casters **MUST** have those spells prepared to cast them.
- Standard Ritual Casting rules apply i.e. 10 minutes + and relevant components.
- Fun rituals include: *Find Familiar*, *Phantom Steed*, *Telepathic Bond*



THAT LOOKS FAMILIAR.

ARCANE TRADITIONS

- Arcane Traditions reflect specialization in certain types of magic and grant additional features.
- You gain one defining feature at 2nd level, a utility feature at 6th level, another defining feature at 10th level and an Arcane Tradition capstone at 14th level.



*SOME ARCANE TRADITIONS ARE
CLEARLY BETTER THAN OTHERS.*

OTHER ABILITIES

- Arcane Recovery (1/day, during a Short Rest) lets you recharge some spell slots (caps at 10th).
- Spell Mastery (18th level) lets you pick a 1st and 2nd level spell. You can freely cast them at base level without expending slots when you have them prepared.
- Signature Spells (20th level) lets you pick two 3rd level spells. They are auto-prepared and you can cast them 1/rest.



*COOL WIZARDS DON'T LOOK BACK AT EXPLOSIONS,
ESPECIALLY IF THAT'S YOUR ONE SIGNATURE SPELL.*



ARS ARCANORUM

Theorem 2: Mastering the Arts Arcane

Magicians

WIZARD ROLES

- Controller
- Damage Dealer
- Skill Monkey
- Support/Utility
- Tank



*HOW 'BOUT THAT FOR A MUSCLE WIZARD?
WITH THE RIGHT SPELLS, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.*

ARCANE TRADITIONS (PHB)

ABJURATION

- Arcane Ward (2nd) grants a valuable HP buffer when casting an Abj spell.
- Projected Ward (6th) can save lives.
- Improved Abjuration makes you better at Counterspelling/Dispelling than the average Wizard by adding Prof bonus (10th).
- Inbuilt SR and DR vs Spells (14th).

CONJURATION

- Minor Conjunction (2nd) can create utility tools/items/cover.
- Benign Transposition (6th) is great for battlefield positioning/movement and refreshes on casting a Conj spell.
- Focused Conjunction (10th) helps you maintain concentration when taking damage.
- Summoned mobs gain 30 thp each (14th).

ARCANE TRADITIONS (PHB)

DIVINATION

- Portent (2nd) lets you replace ANY attack, save, ability check with pre-determined rolls.
- Expert Divination (6th) adds in slot recovery (caps at 5th level).
- Third Eye (10th) helps with vision modes and grants True Sight.
- A third Portent roll is incredibly powerful (14th).

ENCHANTMENT

- Hypnotic Gaze (2nd) can inflict Charm/Incap/Speed 0 but requires you to be within 5-ft. Has some uses.
- Instinctive Charm (6th) is helpful for redirecting damage but uses Reaction.
- Split Enchantment (10th) twins your spell.
- Alter Memories (14th) helps mitigate Charm drawbacks.

ARCANE TRADITIONS (PHB)

EVOCATION

- Sculpt Spells reduces friendly fire (2nd).
- Potent Cantrip still inflicts half damage on successful save (6th).
- Empowered Evocation adds Int mod to one damage roll (10th).
- Overchannel (14th) lets you Maximize spells of 1st to 5th level at the cost of taking necrotic damage.

ILLUSION

- Learn *Minor Illusion*, and make both Sound and Visuals with it.
- Malleable Illusions let you change the effects of an illusion with a duration of 1 min or more freely (6th).
- Illusory Self (10th) uses your reaction and mitigates one Attack.
- Illusory Reality (14th) makes one element of an illusion real for 1 minute as a bonus action.

ARCANE TRADITIONS (PHB)

NECROMANCY

- Recover some hp when killing with spells (2nd).
- Learn *Animate Dead* and make stronger undead pets with more hp/prof bonus to damage. (6th).
- Inured to Death grants Necrotic resist and your max hp can't be lowered (10th).
- Command Undead (14th) lets you dominate an undead (Cha save vs. your Spell DC) with some minor restrictions.

TRANSMUTATION

- Transmute 1 cu of matter a listed type of matter into another. Has some utility.
- Transmuter's Stone is quite powerful at lower levels/tiers (6th).
- Learn *Polymorph* (10th), cast on self without expending slot to turn into CR 1 or lower beast.
- Master Transmuter (14th) sacrifices Transmuter's Stone item for powerful effects inspired by Alchemy.

ARCANE TRADITIONS (SCAG)

BLADESINGING (ELF/HALF-ELF ONLY)

- Gain proficiency in Light Armor, a single one-handed melee weapon, Performance skill. Also, gain the Bladesong ability, which is OP (2nd).
- Gain an extra Attack (6th).
- Song of Defense lets you sac spell slots as a reaction to mitigate damage at rate of Spell Level x 5 (10th).
- Song of Victory (14th) adds Int mod to melee weapon damage.



REPEAT AFTER ME. ANIMATE OBJECTS.

ARCANE TRADITIONS (XGE)

WAR MAGIC

- Arcane Deflection burns your reaction to add +2 AC/+4 Save if you are hit/fail a save. Locks you to using only Cantrips till end of your next turn (2nd).
- Add Int mod to Initiative.
- Power Surge builds up when you Counter/Dispel, and adds weak damage to spells cast. (6th).
- Durable Magic grants +2 AC/Saves when you are concentrating on a spell (10th).
- Deflecting Shroud does weak damage when you use Arcane Deflection (14th).

ARCANE TRADITION RANKINGS

DIVINATION

- Great for all around play and utility

BLADESINGING

- Central to many gish (hybrid) builds, especially those who want to emphasize weapon attacks rather than spellcasting.
- Quite viable for multiclassing.

EVOCATION

- Reasonably good for blasters, especially if you decide that your whole reason or existence is Magic Missile.

NECROMANCY

- Excellent for pet builds, though it has a slow start.

ARCANE TRADITION RANKINGS

WAR MAGIC

- Possible trap pick.
- Some potential when dipping, but the 6th level and 14th level abilities are borderline useless.

THE REST

- Automatically superior to other classes because Wizard.
- Offers many fun options, but requires creative gameplay to be effective.



JUDGE THE WAR MAGE HARSHLY. JUDGE.

MULTICLASSING OPTIONS

FIGHTER

- A 2 dip for Action Surge to cast two 1 Action spells in a round.

HEXBLADE

- A 1 dip for Hex Warrior and Hexblade's Curse works with builds that emphasize damage. Pairs well with Magic Missile.

SORCERER

- 3 dip for Metamagic and Sorcery Points. Divine Soul is great.

PALADIN

- Viable if you intend to get up close and personal in melee. 2 dip pairs nicely with Bladesinging, and up to 6 for the Aura. A little MAD, but a great foundation for a Gish.

OTHERS

- Bard (Lore) for some dice manipulation.
- Tempest Cleric if fishing for Chromatic Orb crits and maximizing damage.



MAGNUM OPUS

Theorem III: The Great Work

COMMON TACTICS

- A good wizard will have a mix of single target and AOE control/damage spells, movement spells, protective spells, and utility spells prepared. Do NOT prepare Rituals unless the adventure is time sensitive.
- Always have your pet or familiar out and ready to contribute.
- Be situationally aware. Understand the board state, preempt the enemy, and plan how to thwart them.
- Be efficient. Always cast the spell that will have the most impact in any given situation, whether it is in, or out of combat.



YOU'RE A WIZARD. GO BIG, OR GO HOME.

COMBAT/ACTION ECONOMY CHECKLIST

MOVE

- Am I making use of my Move to get into a better position?
- Am I positioning myself in a way that grants my other party members some benefit?
- Am I NOT standing in fire?

ACTION

- Am I casting a spell that will have the most benefit in my situation?
- Am I attacking or casting a spell as a filler?

BONUS ACTION

- Am I using my Bonus Action to control *Animate Objects*, *Bigby's*, *Spiritual Weapon* or pets?
- Am I using other Bonus Action fillers granted by multiclassing?

COMBAT/ACTION ECONOMY CHECKLIST

REACTION

- Am I using *Counterspell* to shut down a hostile magic user?
- Am I using my Reaction to defend myself with *Absorb Elements*, *Shield* or another ability?

OTHER TIPS

- Wizards have multiple Reaction fillers. Don't fall into the trap of using the first thing that comes to mind.
- Focus on making big, game changing plays. That is your job, so do it well.
- Always have your Familiar use the Help action if it is active.



PLAN TACTICALLY, PLAY EFFECTIVELY.



READ THE FUCKING SPELL

Because you're supposed to be a genius and stuff.

LEARN TO READ!

COMMON WIZARD MISTAKES

- Not reading the Spell!
- Casting a Bonus Action spell unnecessarily.
- Breaking your own Concentration by casting another Concentration spell.
- Casting the wrong spell for the occasion.
- And all these can be mitigated IF YOU READ!



DON'T ACCIDENTALLY THE MAGIC!

WHAT TO SCRIBE?

ALWAYS

- Pick a mix of spells for combat, exploration and utility.
- Identify spells that complement each other without taking up too many Actions.
- Look out for spells that grant benefits without taking up your Concentration.
- Learn utility spells/rituals because D&D is NOT just about combat.

DON'T

- Focus only on spells that deal a single type of damage. Cold, Fire, Lightning are commonly resisted, while Poison is useless against most things in the MM.
- Pick only non-combat spells because you're a pacifist (go fuck yourself, you're not contributing).
- Be obsessed with only doing one thing. You're a Wizard. You're expected to do EVERYTHING.

A NOTE ON CANTRIPS

CANTRIPS

- You can learn up to 5 Cantrips in your entire career. Once learned, they cannot be changed and must be within your +1.
- You CANNOT scribe Cantrips.
- SCAG allows Blade Cantrips (great for Bladesingers, Gishes).
- XGE includes EE Cantrips, which can be decent.

RECOMMENDED PICKS

- *Acid Splash* – Not often Resisted, can hit a nearby target.
- *Chill Touch* – Great way to stop healing even if it does little to no damage on certain creatures.
- *Create Bonfire* – Excellent AOE filler.
- *Mage Hand* – Great all round utility.
- *Message* – Helpful for communication and exploration.
- *Ray of Frost* – Ranged Spell Attack, speed reduction.

SOME WIZARD SPELL CHOICES

AOE DAMAGE

- *Dragon's Breath* (Bonus Action cast, works on Familiar/Pet/otherwise useless Ally)
- *Erupting Earth* (makes physical DT)
- *Fireball* (acceptable low-levelled AOE)
- *Meteor Swarm* (clears the board)
- *Psychic Scream* (hits uncommon save, possibly perma stuns)
- *Sunburst* (has some great, if niche uses)
- *Synaptic Static* (hits uncommon save, hurts and debuffs)
- *Vitriolic Sphere*

SINGLE TARGET DAMAGE

- *Chromatic Orb* (pick your element)
- *Disintegrate* (excellent when paired with *Polymorph*)
- *Magic Missile* (can't miss, hard to resist)
- *Mental Prison* (doubles as solid ST Control, and can also trigger with forced movement for significant damage)

SOME WIZARD SPELL CHOICES

ZONE EFFECTS/CONTROL

- *Evard's Black Tentacles* (great AOE/zone grapple)
- *Forcecage* (Cha save or can't get out with magic)
- *Grease* (excellent at low levels)
- *Reverse Gravity*
- *Sickening Radiance* (exhaustion stacks)
- *Sleet Storm* (large area DT/Prone/breaks Concentration)
- *Slow*
- *Wall of Force*
- *Watery Sphere*
- *Whirlwind*

SINGLE TARGET EFFECTS/CONTROL

- *Banishment*
- *The Hold* line
- *Feeblemind* (against other casters)
- *Maze*
- *Phantasmal Force*
- *Polymorph* used offensively (Seahorse)

SOME WIZARD SPELL CHOICES

BUFF/UTILITY

- *Antimagic Field*
- *Greater Invisibility*
- *Haste*
- *Invulnerability*
- *Shapechange*
- *Some Investitures*
- *True Polymorph*
- *True Seeing*
- Various Rituals (see next slide)

NON-CONCENTRATION BUFFS

- *Darkvision*
- *Fire Shield*
- *Foresight*
- *Longstrider*
- *Mage Armor*
- *Mind Blank*
- *Mirror Image*
- *See Invisibility*

SOME WIZARD SPELL CHOICES

OTHERS

- *Animate Object*
- *Bigby's Hand*
- *Clone*
- *Conjure Elemental*
- *Gate*
- *Planar Binding*
- *Simulacrum*
- *Summon Greater Demon*
- *Tiny Servant*

USEFUL RITUALS

- *Alarm*
- *Comprehend Languages*
- *Contact Other Plane*
- *Detect Magic*
- *Find Familiar*
- *Identify*
- *Leomund's Tiny Hut*
- *Phantom Steed*
- *Rary's Telepathic Bond*
- *Tenser's Floating Disc*
- *Unseen Servant*
- *Water Breathing*

THE ALL POWERFUL WISH

- *Wish* fills in gaps in your magical knowledge.
- It can replicate ANY spell published of 8th level or lower. This means you can duplicate spells from ANY spell list e.g. *Find Greater Steed*, *Planar Ally* (a.k.a. Rent-a-Solar) and so forth, and the spell is cast IMMEDIATELY, without other related costs or components.
- *Wish* also offers certain effects that may cause you to suffer from *Wish* fatigue (can't cast *Wish* again).
- Don't be shy about using *Wish* when you gain access to your 9th level slot.



**NOTHING SAYS WISH FULFILMENT LIKE THE
WISH SPELL.**



CAREERS IN WIZARDRY

Because people love builds, right?

RACES & FEAT CHOICES

- No self-respecting Wizard is STUPID even if the player is not the brightest.
- You will benefit from having high Intelligence. Some Dexterity is great, and a Constitution bonus can offset your abysmal hit points.
- Variant Human and High Elf are the best choices.
- Gnome, Half-Elf, Tiefling are also somewhat acceptable.



*GEE. I WONDER WHAT THEY TOOK WITH
THEIR BONUS FEAT.*

RACES & FEAT CHOICES

- **Alert** will allow you to go earlier in combat, and that matters since you are the primary Controller/Play Maker.
- **Lucky** is always helpful, especially when you least expect it. It is also a great way to mitigate your squishiness.
- **Observant** is a decent way to bump an odd stat in Int/Wis, and also helps greatly with general adventuring.
- **Resilient (Dex/Con)** can balance out an odd stat and also help with a typically weak save.
- **War Caster** can help with Concentration and also when you're casting while wielding multiple items.
- Some race specific feats like **Prodigy** can also be a decent pick.

SURVIVAL TIPS

- Your first few levels as a Wizard will be hardest.
- Focus on survival, pinging enemies with Cantrips or a Light Crossbow as needed.
- Hoard all the spells (and spell books). Scribing can be expensive in Season 8.
- Don't be afraid to Respec between Level 1 to 4. Start with a higher Con, and reassign your stats before you play your first game at 5th level.



*NOTE THAT CONFIDENT EXPRESSION.
WE ALL KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.*

SURVIVAL TIPS

- Don't be afraid to take calculated risks. Don't blow your load all at once (and run out of slots). At the same time, don't be stingy if you need to pull off a big play to end combat or win the day.
- Make friends and influence enemies (via various spells). What you can't do, your pets and helpers can do for you.
- Don't rely only on one or two tried and tested formulas/tricks.
- Surprise your DM.



*PLAYING A WIZARD IS LIKE PLAYING
CHESS. PLAN SEVERAL MOVES IN ADVANCE.*

BUILD CONCEPT: THE ARCANЕ FUSILIER

- Uses synergies between Evoker 10 (Empowered Evocation), Hexblade 1 (Hexblade's Curse) and Fighter 2 (Action Surge) to put two volleys of upcasted *Magic Missiles* in the air for lethal damage.
- Inflict $(1d4+1 + \text{Int mod} + \text{Prof bonus}) \times$ number of *Magic Missiles* in damage per volley.
- Retains the use of your Reaction to *Counterspell* the enemy's *Shield*.



*MAGIC MISSILE SPAM HAS NEVER LOOKED
THIS GOOD.*

BUILD CONCEPT: THE ARCHER

- A Fighter 2/Wizard X with Crossbow Expert/Sharpshooter works reasonably well when paired with a *Simulacrum*.
- You can also have the Simulacrum cast *Haste* or another related spell on you while you have *Tenser's Transformation* active.
- Actually works, and yes, the Archer class isn't always made up of Archers.



AN ARCHER HAD TO MAKE IT INTO THIS
SOMEHOW.

BUILD CONCEPT: THE ORACLE

- A Wizard (usually Diviner) touched by the gods (reflected in Divine Soul Sorcerer 3) who gets glimpses of the future through Portents.
- Wizard primary (up to 17th level), with Divine Soul capped at 3rd for the Metamagic (pick from Heighten, Quicken, Subtle or Twin), access to valuable Divine spells like *Guidance* etc.
- *Favor of the Gods* is an excellent panic button and can help with poor Saves.



YES. THIS WIZARD CAN CAST SILENCE.

BUILD CONCEPT: THE LUCKY BASTARD

- Multiclassing Lore Bard 3 or 6 and Divination Wizard X can lead to some interesting synergies, especially with Portents and Cutting Words.
- Take Lucky as a feat to improve your odds and further mess with the DM's rolls and use your Magical Secrets to fill gaps and pitfalls.
- Not as MAD as you think.
- Might also make for some interesting RP opportunities.



*BET YOU HE'S USING A PORTENT ON THAT
DECEPTION CHECK.*

BUILD CONCEPT: MASTER OF THE MENAGERIE

- Be a Necromancer. Cast *Animate Dead* enough times to make friends, and arm your friends.
- Use and abuse spells like *Conjure Elemental*, *Planar Binding*, *Summon Greater Demon* and the like liberally to make more friends.
- Have everyone in a *Demiplane* or **Portable Hole** ready and waiting to beat shit up.



WHO SAID THAT WIZARDS NEEDED TO BE
FOREVER ALONE?

BUILD CONCEPT: THE WIZARDIN

- Combines a Gish friendly Arcane Tradition (such as Abjuration or Bladesinging, or *gasp* War Magic) with Paladin 2, 3 or 6.
- Remains a Wizard primary, but with the option to Smite, as well as access to reasonably good buffs. Go 14 in Wizard to hit your Arcane Tradition capstone and gain access to *Simulacrum* and *Tenser's Transformation*.
- A bit MAD, but quite doable for Half-Elves.



*HIT PEOPLE WITH SWORDS. HIT THEM
VERY HARD.*

Q&A