

# An Arcane Alphabet

This document contains a collection of spells and magical techniques usable by clerics, druids, illusionists and magic-users. While some of these spells will find general application, many of them are obscure and strange, being representative of the fringes of research in various branches of magic. These are the kind of spells which may be discovered in musty tomes in the ruined towers of mad wizards long since dead.

The spells are described in the Labyrinth Lord format, but can easily be used in any type of old-school D&D or clones thereof. Each spell is listed with the types of spell caster to whom it is available, sometimes also including a more detailed specification of a speciality or school of magic to which it belongs. These are merely suggestions as to the type of spell caster who may know or use these spells, and the decision of how to use this information is left open to each DM.



## Alabaster Homunculus

Available to: Magic-users  
Level: 6  
Duration: Permanent  
Range: Touch

This spell enables the caster to imbue a semblance of life into a small alabaster figure, which will then act as a servant. The figure must be an elaborately sculpted 1' high likeness of the caster, costing at least 1,000gp, and must be carved so as to contain an internal cavity with a lid or stopper in the top of its head. Once the statuette has been prepared, the spell is cast, requiring a 3 hour ritual. At the culmination of the spell casting, the magic-user must fill the cavity in the body of the statuette with a quantity of his own blood, giving the creature a translucent pinkish tinge. This blood, in conjunction with the magic of the spell, gives life to the homunculus, and results in the caster permanently losing 1hp. When the lid is placed on its head, the blood-filled homunculus slowly begins to animate.

In its normal state, the homunculus is inanimate, preferring to stand absolutely still, as if a normal statue. In this state the creature is utterly defenceless, and can be killed if the blood is poured out from its body. However during the casting of the spell the caster chooses a secret command word which can be used to activate the homunculus. When the command word is spoken (with unlimited range) the homunculus immediately awakens to do the caster's bidding. When activated, the caster has a vague telepathic link with the homunculus which allows him to give commands to the creature, and it in turn to silently give reports of its whereabouts. An activated homunculus has a movement rate of 90'/30', and is incredibly stealthy, having a 5 in 6 chance of being undetected by observers. The homunculus is small and weak, and while able to carry small items (such as a scroll or a key), it is incapable of combat. When active, it has an AC of 3, and 6 hit points. A homunculus can remain active for up to 24 hours per week.

Alabaster homunculi are typically created as guardians of a magic-user's home, as they can be contacted at any distance and be used to keep an eye on the place while the caster is away. They are also sometimes useful in emergency situations, as an aide to a magic-user who is endangered in his home. These homunculi, when inactive, usually stand in a secret location, where they are unlikely to be found or disturbed.



## Brimstone Monolith

Available to: Magic-users (elementalists & diabolists)  
Level: 9  
Duration: 4d6 rounds  
Range: 30'

This powerful and dangerous spell creates a short-lived dimensional rift, summoning forth the destructive powers of other planes of reality. Two different versions of this spell are known to exist, one used by elementalists and one used by diabolists. The elemental version opens a gateway to the elemental planes of fire and magma, while the diabolic version opens a gateway to hell.

The incantations required to complete this spell are more complex than usual, and require several rounds to cast. Each round of the casting a different effect occurs, as follows.

**1st round:** An *earthquake* occurs, as the 7th level cleric spell, centred on the caster.

**2nd round:** A monolith of brimstone rips through the fractured surface of the earth within range of the caster. The monolith is approximately 20' high and 10' in diameter. All creatures within 60' of the monolith, including the caster, but excluding those with immunity to fire, suffer 2d6 hit points damage per round due to the searing heat and flames which surround it.

**3rd round:** Upon the final round of the incantation, the dimensional gateway is opened, summoning forth creatures from the connected plane (see table below). The summoned creatures are *not* under the caster's control, and are bent on causing as much destruction as possible.

If the casting of the spell is interrupted in any way, the effects described for any subsequent rounds do not occur.

Once the spell is complete, the monolith begins to shudder, emitting a deafening roar, and shooting out jets of magma and sheets of flame. Every round after the third there is a 1 in 4 chance of a randomly chosen target within 100' being hit by one of the monolith's emissions, causing 5d6 damage (save versus wands for half damage).

To determine which creatures pass through the dimensional rift, roll 2d6:

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 2      | Imix, prince of evil fire creatures (AD&D Fiend Folio) / the arch-devil Bael.  |
| 3 - 5  | An efreeti and 1d4 8HD <a href="#">lava</a> or fire elementals / a pit fiend and 1d4 barbed devils.                        |
| 6 - 8  | 1d4 12HD lava, fire or earth elementals / 1d4 horned devils.   |
| 9 - 11 | 1d4 flame salamanders / 1d4 bone devils.   |
| 12     | A flame salamander, an efreeti and 1d4 8HD lava or fire elementals / a pit fiend, 1d4 horned devils and 1d4 barbed devils. |

The gateway allows travel both ways between the connected planes, thus it can be used (presumably in unusual circumstances) as a means of gaining entry into hell or the planes of fire and magma.

When the spell's duration comes to an end, the monolith recedes into the earth, all summoned creatures disappear, and the dimensional rift closes.

In addition to the dangers inherent in casting this spell, there is a 20% chance that the caster gains the attention of either Imix or

Bael. The attention of these beings is seldom sympathetic.



## Chalice of Asmodeus

Available to: Magic-users (diabolists) & clerics

Level: 5

Duration: 1 day

Range: Touch

This spell is known to evil clerics and to diabolist magic-users, and is used in a variety of rituals in honour of Asmodeus, the arch-fiend (AD&D Monster Manual).

First a suitable chalice must be acquired. It can be of any form or construction, but should have a total value of over 1,000gp, and must be *blessed* by a cleric devoted to Asmodeus. The chalice must then be filled with human blood, and this spell cast upon it. Once cast, the blood in the chalice is enchanted for the duration of the spell, and can have one of a number of effects on a being who drinks it.

Any character of good alignment drinking the blood from the chalice will be affected by a poison, causing 4d6 points of damage if they fail a saving throw, and 1d6 damage if the save succeeds. Any character of chaotic alignment drinking the blood will be affected by *sleep*. These two effects are combined for chaotic good creatures who drink the blood from the chalice.

When the blood is drunk by a character of any other alignment, they are affected by a powerful charm, causing them to implicitly trust all followers of the arch-fiend, including devils and imps. The charm effect lasts for the duration of the spell. Victims are typically coerced into making a pact with a summoned devil while under the influence of the charm, and will thenceforth have great difficulty breaking free of the control of their diabolic masters, even after the charm wears off.

The chalice is not consumed during the casting of this spell, and may be reused. After the first use it radiates evil magic.



## Deadcube

Available to: Magic-users

Level: 7

Duration: 6 turns

Range: 60'

This strange spell is aptly named, by those few who have dared to cast it. It brings into being a small rotating 6" iron cube engraved with a complex series of arcane runes and diagrams. The cube hovers above the magic-user's palm, and remains there for the spell's duration.

Each of the cube's six faces contains a dweomer, which can be activated only once. The powers of the faces are activated under several conditions, not all of which are under the caster's control. Firstly the caster may deliberately activate a face simply by touching it. Secondly, the power of a random face of the cube will activate as a reaction upon the casting of any magic-user spell within range. Lastly, the powers of all remaining faces of the cube will activate simultaneously if the cube itself is targeted with any form of magic (including *dispel magic*), or when the duration of the spell expires.

The powers of the faces are randomly determined when activated, by rolling 1d6 – it is not possible to predict which effect a face contains.

1. *Lightning bolt* affecting a random target within range.

2. *Prismatic spray* emanating from the cube and oriented in a randomly determined direction.
3. *Dispel magic* affecting all magic within range.
4. *Polymorph others* affecting a random target within range.
5. *Summon monster V*.
6. *Spell resistance* affecting a random target within range.

Note that all powers which are randomly targeted are quite able to target the cube's possessor.



## Egg of Life

Available to: Magic-users (nature mages) & druids

Level: 7

Duration: Permanent

Range: 5' per level

Through this spell, the caster wields the power to create life. A single egg (from any bird or reptile) is required, which must be cracked open upon casting the spell. The contents of the egg are enchanted, and upon falling onto the ground cause a chain reaction of magical growth to occur. Over the course of the following turn a panoply of life-forms spring into existence within the area of effect, creating a full habitat complete with plants, insects and small animals. The type of habitat created (forest, jungle, steppe, plains, etc.) can be chosen by the caster.

Note that geological conditions such as soil or water sources are not created or modified by this spell. Thus, while the plants and animals conjured will theoretically live to their natural lifespan, they may perish more rapidly if created in an otherwise hostile environment.



## Faithlessness

Available to: Magic-users

Level: 7

Duration: 1 round per level

Range: 30'

This mind-affecting enchantment causes a soul-crushing doubt to arise in the mind of a targeted clerical spell-caster. The affected cleric is thrown into such spiritual turmoil for the duration that his ability to cast spells is hampered, requiring a successful WIS check on 1d20 for success. This roll must be made per spell-casting attempt.



## Gelatinous Transformation

Available to: Magic-users

Level: 6

Duration: 2 rounds per level

Range: 60'

This spell causes a single object or creature to undergo a complete transformation into a gelatinous state, similar to an ooze or pudding. Creatures in this state cannot attack or cast spells, though they may be able to use psionic or mental abilities. They are able to move 20' per round, and can easily travel up walls, along ceilings, and through small holes and gaps. Gelatinous creatures are invulnerable to normal attacks, and can only be harmed by magic or fire.

An unwillingly targeted creature is allowed a saving throw versus polymorph to resist the spell's effects.

An object affected by this spell is transformed into an animate ooze controlled by the caster.

## apless Fool

Available to: Illusionists  
Level: 2  
Duration: 1 turn  
Range: Touch

Illusionists use this odd spell to attempt to get away with murder, and other such activities they would rather not be blamed for. It grants the recipient the ability, once within the spell's duration, to cloak a single action with an illusion. The cloaked action is made to appear to all observers like a slapstick accident. Thus, witnesses may perceive a murder victim to slip and fall on his own blade, or a stolen item may seem to fall into the sack of an unaware passer-by. On-lookers are allowed a saving throw versus spells to detect that all is not as it seems, though only the most eagle-eyed will see completely through the illusion and perceive what really occurred.

## ntone

Available to: Magic-users  
Level: 3  
Duration: 1 hour per level  
Range: 0

This spell effectively allows the caster to memorize extra spells which must be cast within the specified duration. Immediately following the casting of *intone*, the magic-user must be ready to memorize additional spells – up to 5 levels of spells in any combination.

The additional spells are not, in fact, *memorized* – the patterns of magical energy which are normally stored in the magic-user's mind are instead manifested as an aura of droning sounds which accompany the caster. It is thus easily possible to identify the caster as a magic-user, and other magic-users hearing the droning sounds surrounding the caster have a 10% chance per level of being able to identify which spells are encoded therein. The sound of the intoned spells also makes stealth rather difficult.

If the intoned spells are not cast within the duration, they fade away and are lost. They are also susceptible to disruption by the cleric spell *silence*, 15' radius.

## ellyfish

Available to: Druids (aquatic)  
Level: 2  
Duration: 1 turn per level  
Range: Touch

This spell affects a single fish, which becomes transparent and jelly-like for the duration. The fish's transparency makes it very difficult to see, causing opponents to suffer -3 to hit and granting it the ability to surprise 5 out of 6 times. The fish also gains 2d8 additional hit points due to its jelly form, with any damage being

first taken from these extra hit points.

This spell is popular among intelligent fish races such as kuo-toa.

## eeness of Sight

Available to: Magic-users  
Level: 2  
Duration: 1 turn per level  
Range: Touch

The vision of the spell's recipient is enhanced for the duration, with the following benefits: no penalty from long range missile fire, 1 in 6 bonus to finding secret doors, 20% bonus to thieves' find traps ability, +2 bonus to saving throws and INT attribute checks to resist or notice illusions.

## aughing Gnome

Available to: Illusionists  
Level: 3  
Duration: 1 hour per level  
Range: 60'

With this spell the caster can conjure forth an illusionary gnome which will follow the chosen target around for the duration. The illusionist can choose for the gnome to be a true illusion, visible to all, or to take the form of a phantasm, which only the target can perceive. Due to its unreal nature the gnome cannot be harmed in any way, and cannot be outrun or evaded, even by teleportation magic.

The gnome can have one of several effects, chosen at the point of casting:

- **Jovial gnome:** This gnome acts as a friendly and good-spirited companion, making jokes and pranks and generally trying to lift the spirits of the character it follows.
- **Boisterous gnome:** This gnome, apparently horrendously drunk, makes a huge amount of noise as it follows its target – laughing, shouting and singing.
- **Sneering gnome:** This gnome's humour is cynical and bitter, always trying to ridicule and degrade its target.

The effects of the gnomes are fairly subjective, and should be determined by the Labyrinth Lord on a situational basis as a result of the role-played interaction between the gnome and the targeted character. Possible effects include: a bonus / penalty to morale, the negation or worsening of fear effects, a bonus / penalty to attacks or abilities due to encouragement or disparagement.

Note that this spell does not allow a saving throw, as the words and actions of the gnome have an effect regardless of whether the target realises it is an illusion or not.

## arionette

Available to: Magic-users & necromancers  
Level: 1  
Duration: 1d4 rounds, plus 1 round per level  
Range: 60'

This spell allows the caster to attempt to control the actions of one or several creatures, as if pulling the strings of a puppet. Each round of the spell's duration the caster can attempt to control a single limb of any target within range. The target gains a saving throw versus spells to resist the forced movement, but if the save fails the magic-user gains complete control of the chosen limb for the round. Thus weapons or shields may be dropped, arms made to attack, legs made to trip, and so on. Any attacks or other actions made with a controlled limb suffer a -2 penalty, due to the lack of perfect precision with which they can be guided.

The necromancer version of this spell only works on corpses, including re-animated undead.

## o Way

Available to: Illusionists  
 Level: 8  
 Duration: See below  
 Range: See below

This powerful illusion takes two forms, one a permanent protection for the caster's home or other secret location, and one a short-lived impediment to pursuit.

The permanent version of the spell requires a whole day to cast, during which the illusionist must wander through the area to be affected (up to a mile radius), weaving it with magic. While casting the spell, the illusionist must sprinkle a specially prepared dust made from the ashes of a powerful illusion-using monster and ground black pearls worth at least 2,000gp. Once the spell is complete the affected terrain takes on a shifting, maze-like appearance – trees and bushes may seem to grow into bewildering twisting pathways, rock ridges may form a maze, or boggy ground may form an unnavigable series of paths. The maze created is purely illusionary, but its effects are so powerful that it becomes virtually impossible to navigate for anyone except the caster and those whom he chooses to grant access to. It is only possible for characters to find a way through the maze with long study and perseverance, requiring 1d4 days of wandering per point of INT below 20.

The short-lived version of this spell creates a similar maze, but affecting an area of up to 10' radius per level of the caster, and having a duration of one hour. During this time, any creatures entering the affected area become lost in the maze for a period dependent upon their INT (as per the *maze* spell).

The maze created by this spell is not affected by *dispel magic*; the only sure way to dispel it is with a *wish*.

## scillation

The process of converting symbols written on a page into magical patterns of energy stored in the mind is of the utmost importance to all magic-users. There is one tried and trusted technique which is known to do the job reliably and safely, so that's what most wizards practice. There are also lesser known, and less reliable techniques which have different effects. The technique of *oscillation* is one of these.

Rather than fixing the patterns of magical energy firmly in the magic-user's mind, oscillation sets up a complex field of fluctuating energies, encoding the desired spells as potentials in this energy field. The results of casting spells memorized by oscillation are unpredictable, yet somehow the dynamic energy field created seems able to encode spells more efficiently, allowing the wizard to cast

more spells per day.

Here's how it works:

- A magic-user can choose to memorize all his spells as normal, or to memorize them all via oscillation. A mixture of the two techniques is not possible.
- For each spell the magic-user is allowed to memorize (from his allowance of spells per day), he can oscillate *two* spells together. Thus pairs of oscillated spells should be noted.
- When casting an oscillated spell, either one or both of the paired spells will emerge, determined at random. Roll 1d6 and consult the table below.
- Paired spells cannot be identical (i.e. it's not possible to oscillate *magic missile* with itself), and generally cannot have a similar function (*allure* and *charm person* don't fit together). (If you're using any kind of system of schools of magic, like in AD&D, each spell in an oscillated pair must be of a different school.)
- When both spells in an oscillated pair manifest simultaneously, they generally have the same target or area of effect, in whatever way that makes sense.

### The Table of Oscillation (1d6)

1. First spell activates
2. First spell activates and the pair remains in memory (can be cast again)
3. Second spell activates
4. Second spell activates and the pair remains in memory (can be cast again)
5. Both spells activate
6. Both spells activate and the pair remains in memory (can be cast again)

It's up to the DM / LL to decide whether this technique is available to all magic-users, or has to be learned somehow. (Perhaps a magic-user might find a grimoire describing the technique.)

## re-emptive Strike

Available to: Magic-users (chronomancers)  
 Level: 5  
 Duration: 1 hour per level  
 Range: 0

This time warping spell gives the caster a chance to wreak vengeance on those who attack him even before they get the chance to do so. When the caster, so protected, is attacked during the spell's duration, he gains an additional combat round in which he can perform some extra action. This additional round occurs before the first normal round of the battle, giving the caster a chance to attack his enemies, or to protect himself, before anyone else can act. The caster does not even need to be aware of the attack for the spell to function, as time is immediately warped, granting him an additional moment to take action.

The time warping effect works only once during the spell's duration – once it has been triggered the spell ends.

## uadrangle

Available to: Magic-users  
 Level: 7  
 Duration: Special  
 Range: Touch

This spell allows the caster and three companions to define the four corners of a dynamic area of effect for a subsequently cast spell. The four people who are to form the quadrangle must be within touch range of each other when this spell is cast. Immediately following the casting of *quadrangle* the magic-user must cast an area affecting spell of 4th or lower level. The area of effect of this second spell is modified so that it is bounded by the imaginary lines connecting the four characters making up the corners of the quadrangle. If the corners of the quadrangle move, so the area of the spell's effect changes. The affected spell's duration remains as normal.



## Rotational Acceleration

Available to: Magic-users (dimensionalists)

Level: 6

Duration: 2d4 rounds

Range: 5' per level

This spell brings about a bizarre modification of the laws of force and movement within a bounded area, causing all objects and creatures in the affected area to enter eagerly into a state of rapid spinning. In the first round of the spell's effect, creatures in the affected area experience an odd sensation of falling and of losing control of their momentum. Spinning creatures suffer -4 to attacks in the first round. Most other actions, including spell casting, are impossible.

From the second round of spinning onwards, all actions are impossible, as the affected creatures spin and tumble with ever-increasing speed. Each round, affected creatures have a 50% chance of suffering 1d6 damage due to collisions, and a 25% chance of spinning wildly out of the area of effect. Carried items are very likely to fly off as a creature spins.

If a creature leaves the affected area, or when the spell's duration comes to an end, targets must make a saving throw versus paralysis. Failing the save means that the creature is overwhelmed with dizziness and suffers -4 to attacks for 1d4 additional rounds.

The spell only affects moving creatures or objects, and can be avoided by any creature able to grasp onto an immovable anchor such as a large tree or rock, or by anyone who is forewarned of the casting of this spell and is able to stand completely still.

Note that the caster *is* affected by the spell, but can easily avoid spinning by remaining stationary during the spell's duration.



## Subtle Deception

Available to: Illusionists

Level: 1

Duration: 1 day

Range: Touch

This simple glamour allows an illusionist to alter the appearance of a single normal object. The effects of the spell have a long duration, but, as the name suggests, they are not extensive. The spell allows a single quality of the affected object to be modified – its colour, weight, texture, flavour and so on. So, for example, a red cloak could appear green, a copper coin could be made to look like gold, or water could be made to taste like wine.



## Tessellate

Available to: Magic-users (dimensionalists)

Level: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 10'

This simple dimensional magic is used to instantly pack a group of objects into the smallest possible space. The objects to be packed must all be within range. Living creatures cannot be affected, neither can objects worn or held by creatures. As the spell is completed the affected objects are teleported instantaneously into a neatly packed cuboid. At the caster's option objects may be packed inside a container of suitable size, effectively increasing its carrying capacity by one third.



## Upper Hand

Available to: Illusionists

Level: 9

Duration: 1 turn per level

Range: 0

This spell creates the convincing illusion that the caster is accompanied by a band of followers, taking whatever general form the caster desires. The group of companions is dynamic and will adapt its number and volume so as to always appear to be a slightly larger or more formidable force than any observing opposition. Thus, an illusionist ambushed by a group of brigands may appear to be protected by a slightly larger band of knights, while an illusionist encountering an army poised for war may appear to be in command of a slightly larger or better equipped force.

If any of the illusionary companions is touched, it will dissipate immediately, giving the game away. Otherwise the companions are perfectly convincing, moving as a force of the appropriate size, making appropriate (if generic) sounds, and giving off an appropriate smell.



## Vacuum

Available to: Magic-users (dimensionalists & elementalists)

Level: 3

Duration: 1 round per level

Range: 240'

This spell causes the instantaneous removal of all forms of gas, including air, from a spherical volume of 5' radius per level of the caster, creating a vacuum. Creatures inside the vacuum suffer 1d4 damage per round due to de-pressurization, but may move freely. Air-breathing creatures will begin to suffocate if they remain in the affected area. Sound is also prevented from propagating through and from entering the vacuum, creating an area of absolute silence.

When the spell's duration comes to an end, the surrounding air rushes back in, filling the vacuum.

Due to its gas removing effect, this spell is occasionally useful as a defence against spells such as *cloudkill*.

## hale Speech

Available to: Druids (aquatic)  
Level: 3  
Duration: 1 hour per level  
Range: 100 miles per level

In addition to giving the caster the ability to communicate with whales, this spell, when cast underwater, allows him to send messages through the aquatic medium, which can be received and understood by a single recipient somewhere within the spell's enormous range. The recipient must be someone whom the caster knows personally, or has met at least once.

## enogamy

Available to: Magic-users (nature mages)  
Level: 8  
Duration: Permanent  
Range: Touch

This spell enables the caster to create an infinite variety of bizarre creatures by a process of genetic melding. Two living creatures of any species must be selected and contained within a laboratory for a period of 2d4 weeks. During this period the two creatures gradually begin to merge into a single being. Each week there is a 10% chance that the hybrid creature will die. If the process is successful, the resulting creature will have qualities and appearance reflecting both of its 'parents'. The Labyrinth Lord should determine which qualities are retained from which parent.

If intelligent creatures are melded with the spell, the resulting monstrosity has a 90% chance of being utterly insane.

## east Growth

Available to: Druids (myconic)  
Level: 1  
Duration: Instant  
Range: 5' per level

This spell causes the radically accelerated and greatly augmented growth of all naturally occurring yeast organisms within range. As yeast exists virtually everywhere, the result is that all creatures, objects and surfaces in range are rapidly engulfed in a slimy mass of frothing yeast. The yeast itself is normal and harmless, and can be wiped off with some effort. However all affected creatures suffer a 1 in 6 chance per round of slipping over, and a -1 penalty to attacks until they are free of the yeast.

This spell can also be used to accelerate a process of yeast fermentation, such as that used in beer brewing or bread making. Such processes can be completed instantaneously with an application of this spell.

## oetrope

Available to: Magic-users (chronomancers)  
Level: 9  
Duration: Permanent  
Range: 10'

This powerful spell creates an area of space where time is warped so tightly that a single moment is repeated over and over for all eternity. The area affected is a cylinder 10' high and 10' in diameter. Any creatures or objects in this area when the spell is cast, or anything subsequently entering the area is caught in the time loop. From the outside, the time loop appears to be a spinning column of light, wherein can be seen, semi-transparent and phantom-like, the last few seconds of normal existence of everything trapped inside.

The zoetrope is an extremely powerful dweomer, and is unaffected by *dispel magic*. A *wish* is sufficient to release a single creature or object from its confines, but if magic ever existed which could undo this spell entirely, it is now lost.

The casting of this spell carries a certain risk to the chronomancer, who has a 10% chance of accidentally being sucked into the zoetrope and trapped.

## Afterword

Everything in this document was created by Gavin of The City of Iron blog ([www.the-city-of-iron.blogspot.com](http://www.the-city-of-iron.blogspot.com)), as part of a series of alphabetically inspired posts in April 2011.

I hope you find some enjoyment in reading it, and that one or two of these spells might be discovered by adventurers in your campaign.

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