

**WORLDBUILDING**

# MAGIC SYSTEMS

*A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO WRITING  
MAGIC IN FANTASY*

# Introduction

*“Power swirled through their veins, burning tracks down their spine and bursting through the cracks in their mind.”*

Magic. It’s one of the defining characteristics of the fantasy genre. A writer has unlimited possibilities to choose from when building their world and the magic that shapes it. Flying. Shapeshifting. Characters wielding fire or healing with a touch. Magic potions and runic spells. Demon magic and necromancy. Witch marks and superheroes.

It can be overwhelming.

I recently went through the the teeth-gritting, hair-pulling, mind-aching journey of building a magic system for my novel. It took me nearly nine months to get a workable system. I’m still not done. I spent hours on the internet, researching other magic systems and how-to blogs and pitfalls — all in an attempt to create a truly awesome system of magic. You can see for yourself whether I managed it. If my book is ever finished, that is.

I decided to put together all of the research I gathered while trying to build my system to make it easier for someone else who might be having as much trouble as I did. I’ve designed this as a step-by-step guide with a lot of room dedicated to examples and references of great magic systems. Hopefully by the end, you have a working draft of your magic. I say draft because, like a story, there’s always room for revision. But this should get you started on the right path.

*Let’s make some magic...*

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# STEP ONE

## Magic System Overview

*The first step is to get a feel for your magic system.*

When I was building mine, I skipped this, and went right to picking abilities and figuring out how my powers worked. And I wasted a ton of time designing this hugely complex system of separate powers for different tribes that I didn't end up using — because it didn't fit with the story I wanted to tell.

I'd recommend **taking twenty minutes right here to do a free-write** on what you want from your magic system.

**If you aren't familiar with the process:** a free-write is just putting your pen on paper (or fingers on the keyboard) and writing for a set amount of time. Whatever comes into your head, write it down. No censorship. No stopping. No editing. It's a great way to generate ideas and get a bunch of thoughts onto paper.

For instance, when I did this free-write, I found two words: **dust and light**. Two words out of a few thousand. For me, those words sparked a feeling, an emotion, a world. They became the basis for my entire system of magic. Now you don't necessarily have to find a pair of words — just find something. It'll be different for every person. See the next page for questions you can ask yourself to get started.

The bottom line is you want to capture the **feeling of your magic**.

## Magic Free-Write

- **Ask yourself:** what emotions do you want your magic to create? In the reader? In your characters? In yourself? Do you want it to feel mysterious, mystical, disturbing, epic, powerful, sacred, moral, industrial, historical, epic?
- Or it could be an **aspect of the magic** you're interested in:
  - a specific power you want your character to have
  - a villain's power
  - a visual affect
  - a piece of imagery you want to use
  - how your character first discovers it and what they feel from that discovery (wonder, fear, desire, etc)
  - the general theme of the magic (nature, celestial, animal, etc)
  - name for the magic (like Allomancy or Mystics)
  - a moral problem you want your character to face
  - the cost of the magic
- You could also **think about the story you're telling:** Is it an epic saga akin to Stormlight Archive or Wheel of Time? Or is it a smaller, character driven story like Fire by Kristin Cashore? Or a story about political maneuvering within a single kingdom like Twelve Houses by Sharon Shinn? The type of story you're telling can help determine the magic system you use.
- **Keep in mind:** An ideal magic system will be built into the fabric of your world. It will affect the characters, plot, history, motivations, and themes of your story. We'll go into more detail about how your magic interacts with your world and plot later, so for now a general idea will work fine.

We're going to take all of the ideas you come up with and refine them into a solid, functioning, unique magic system.

# STEP TWO

## Choosing a Class

*The next step is to choose a class for your system.*

In my mind, magic systems fall into two major classes: **Ability-Based and Spell-Based**.

- **Ability-based** is your basic superhero system — mages have a certain ability (or abilities), which could range from controlling light to super-speed. Their powers aren't infinite. Mages could each have different, unique abilities, or they could choose from a set class (like Mistings from *Mistborn*).
- **Spell-based** is your more classic magic — mages use power to cast spells, all (or most) have access to the same range of powers, and there are near infinite spells to choose from.

Of course everyone is different, and you are more than welcome to skip this step if you don't feel that it applies to you, but I found it incredibly helpful to think of it this way when I was in the middle of designing my system. (Literally in the middle — it would have saved me a ton of time if I had decided which one of these I wanted in the beginning, rather than figuring out halfway through that I was trying to build both.)

Like I mentioned in Step One, **your choice should depend on the story you want to tell.**

- Think about your plot, world, and themes while we're going through the two classes: which one will highlight or enhance the story you are telling?
- Think about your characters: which class will fit them best?
- Which one would you have the most fun writing?

- **Ability-Based:** Some people have magic (whether it's from mutated genes, or some other source) and that magic gives each person an ability — it could be super-strength, flight, casting a fireball spell, or the ability to sense gold. Whatever it is, it's often unique to that person (though it doesn't have to be).
  - **Advantage** — great if you want an individualized system and a collection of characters with very different abilities to play with.
  - **Pitfall** — having overpowered characters or abilities that are too random can make your system feel arbitrary.
  - **Examples:**
    - **Mutants from X-men** (or basically any superhero story ever made). Every character's power is unique to them, with their own abilities, limitations, and weaknesses.
    - Gracelings from **Graceling Realm books by Kristin Cashore** — some people are born with a grace, a power or skill such as fighting, mind reading, weather sensing, or the ability to cook. Every character's grace is different, and even if two people can read minds, the *way* they read minds will differ (such as only sensing thoughts of themselves, or only reading emotions).
- **Spell-Based:** This is your more traditional magic system: there are a certain number of spells and powers that all mages (or wizards, or casters) are able to use. Though some people may specialize or have things they are more skilled at, everyone has the same ability or falls into one of a hand-full of preset classes.
  - **Advantage** — your world and magic feels consistent, expansive, and intricate. Can allow for interesting variety as your characters come up with new ways to use known powers (like Toph's metal bending in Avatar).
  - **Pitfall** — can become complex and difficult for your reader to follow. Needs to be well-thought out or risks being arbitrary.
  - **Examples:**
    - **Harry Potter** — all wizards have the ability to cast the same spells (though some have different skills and interests).
    - **Inheritance Cycle** — all wizards, witches, sorcerers, and Riders have the same range of spells and abilities (which is to say, basically anything they can think of and have the energy to create.)

# STEP THREE

## Theme

*The third step is to choose a theme for your magic system.*

Once you know the class of your magic system, you need to consider its theme. This is where that free-write about the feeling of your magic is going to come in. Look at what you came up with. The emotions you wanted to evoke. The atmosphere. This is going to become your theme.

- **For instance** — if you wanted your magic to feel disturbing, then maybe your theme will be necromancy or death magic.

**Your theme is there to limit your magic.** It will keep your system from feeling arbitrary, and will enhance the overall feeling of your world. It's going to help you focus your abilities, powers, and limitations to create a unique system.

### Examples of theme at work:

- **Mistborn by Brandon Sanderson** has a very strong theme — both in the aesthetics of the magic system (metal, industrial, and mathematical) but also in the types of powers available to his characters (abilities that would benefit a gang of thieves).
- **Avatar Last Airbender** uses the theme of the four elements — all of the different benders' powers have to do with either earth, water, fire, or air, and their powers are limited to those elements (or related powers like metal, blood, and lightning bending).
- Even **Harry Potter**, with its wide range of magic and abilities, has the loose theme of traditional witchcraft — black cats, brooms, cauldrons, robes and pointy hats. The magic and world has a flavor that is consistent.

Also, keep in mind that you can combine themes or have multiple forms of magic in your world, but because they will need to feel consistent and believable, it will be more difficult to deal with more than one theme.

## Possible Themes for Your Magic

- **Animalistic** — perhaps your character comes from a mountain tribe and they take on the attributes of animals to give them strength.
- **Blood** — power comes from blood magic, and perhaps can only be used on beings with living blood in their veins.
- **Celestial** — maybe your powers are based on the movements of the stars or the Zodiac.
- **Death** — necromancy, communing with ghosts, possession.
- **Demons** — magic comes from demons, or demon possession/bargains, and mages simply direct the demons' powers.
- **Divine** — those with powers have angel blood, or perhaps draw power from a guardian angel who is bonded to them.
- **Elements** — everyone can manipulate an element of the old world (air, water, earth, fire, wood, metal, etc).
- **Light** — mages use their power to manipulate light photons. Abilities could include invisibility, illusions, or light absorption.
- **Mind** — powers that deal with mind and thoughts (mind reading, psychic, telepathy, kinesis, etc).
- **Music** — magic is music, or is created and controlled through music. Different melodies produce different effects.
- **Nature** — inherent in nature, magic can only be used to affect the natural world/elements/animals/plants/etc.
- **Shadow** — those with magic can control shadows, or use them to hide, travel, or sap life from others.
- **Spirits** — maybe all magic comes from harnessing or bonding with spirits of nature, or spirits of the dead.
- **Tattoos** — images or runes tattooed on your skin give you certain powers or abilities.
- **Time** — perhaps all of the powers in your story have to do with time (time travel, slowing it down, speeding it up, or creating pockets).
- **Periodic Elements** — maybe every mage has the ability to manipulate one of the elements on the periodic table (oxygen, gold, carbon, etc).

There are an infinite number of themes you could choose from. You could be super specific (like people can only manipulate shadows) or super general (a magic that lets you control any form of living matter). Once you pick your theme, you need to stick to it to keep your magic from feeling too widespread or arbitrary. You'll use this theme to focus the source, casters, limitations and abilities of your magic.

## Sanderson's Three Laws of Magic

Now that you have a general idea of the structure of your magic system (and it can be very general) let's take a minute and talk about **Brandon Sanderson's Three Laws of Magic**. You may have noticed that I keep using his books as examples. One of the reasons is because he is probably my favorite fantasy writer, but the other reason is that he is ridiculously good at designing magic systems.

**I'm sure you've heard of his Three Laws, but if not, here they are:**

1. A author's ability to solve conflict with magic is directly proportional to how well the reader understands said magic.
2. Limitations > Powers.
3. Expand what you already have before you add something new.

**Now that you have your class and theme, we're going to use these laws to start designing the nitty-gritty details of our magic system.**

**Let's start with the first one.**

# STEP FOUR

## Hard or Soft System

*Now it's time to decide whether you want your magic to be soft or hard*

Think about your favorite magic systems from books or movies. Can you tell me how they work — their weaknesses, limitations, powers, and the rules that govern them? For some of them I bet you can. But others are a bit harder to pin down.

Some authors prefer to keep their magic shrouded in mystery and mysticism, while others love to lay out the rules and possibilities of their system with as much detail as a scientific experiment, with histories, theories, and runic charts in the back of the book (looking at you, Sanderson). Most systems are somewhere in the middle of the scale. You need to decide where you want yours to fall.

**Sanderson's First Law of Magic:** “An author's ability to solve conflict with magic is directly proportional to how well the reader understands said magic.”

- If your reader knows and understands your magic, then you can use your abilities, powers, and cool effects to solve problems.
- If your reader doesn't know the rules, the powers, or how your magic works, then any time you use it to solve problems or plot issues, it will feel like *deus ex machina*. Though you can still use magic to **cause problems** and **make things harder** for your characters.

**Consider your theme:** it can help you determine whether your system should be hard or soft.

- If you want your magic to feel mystical and mysterious, then having a softer system that isn't as well understood by your characters and your reader can add to that feeling.
- Whereas if you want magic that feels very systematic and organized, then you might want it to be on the hard side of the scale.

## Examples of Hard and Soft Systems

**Hard System:** the characters and reader understands how your magic works. They know the laws, limitations, cost, abilities, and weaknesses of that magic. They don't have to know everything, however, and you as the writer can keep certain parts shrouded in mystery (but it is important that *you* understand it).

- **Advantages:** your magic becomes more like a science, one that you can use to solve problems throughout your story. Your characters can use their powers in new and unique ways, and the reader can feel like they are learning and understanding the magic themselves as the story progresses.
- **Pitfalls:** once you set a rule, you need to stick to it. You can't change halfway through your story and give your characters a new ability because you accidentally got them into too big of a plot problem. Also some people might think this makes magic a bit too scientific, and takes out too much of the wonder and mysticism of the genre.
- **Examples:** Warbreaker by Brandon Sanderson and The Dresden Files by Jim Butcher

**Soft System:** The magic in your story is largely unexplained. No one is quite sure how it works, or what its limits are. This type of system creates the feeling of wonder and mysticism in your world.

- **Advantages:** You as a writer also don't have to spend an enormous amount of time building out the rules and limitations, because the reader and characters won't know much about them anyway (though you should always have a general idea). To a certain extent, you can also add new abilities and elements to your magic as you go along, so long as it doesn't contradict what you've written before.
- **Pitfalls:** this limits you from being able to use your magic to solve problems. If the reader doesn't understand it, or know how it works, then you don't want to use it to magically save the world.
- **Examples:** Lord of the Rings by J.R.R Tolkien and Song of Ice and Fire by George R. Martin

# STEP FIVE

## Your Magic's Source

### *The next step is to figure out your magic's source*

What is the origin of your magic? Power has to come from somewhere, assuming your world follows the laws of basic physics (which it doesn't have too, but I would recommend having some sort of accepted laws of reality).

#### **Examples of Magic Sources:**

- In **Star Wars**, the Force is an underlying field of magic that runs through all things. Essentially, it is energy that exists alongside the world.
- In the book **Dune** by Frank Herbert, a substance called spice gives one certain powers when ingested.

#### **A few things to think about:**

- Is your magic powered by the character themselves (does it exist inside them)? Or do they need to draw on an outer source?
- Remember that you can combine sources — such as in *Mistborn*, where ingesting metals gives the allomancers power, but that power is ultimately fueled by the god Preservation.
- **For the future:** the source of your magic is going to play a large part in the limitations, rules, and abilities of that magic. For instance, if magic is fueled by the caster's own life energy, it will severely limit the amount of spells they can cast. But if magic is an unlimited river of energy that runs through everything (like the Force), it will be much more abundant for huge epic magics.

**Consider Theme:** As before, think about your theme, and try to choose a source that remains consistent within that theme. For instance, if your theme is death, then a fitting source would be blood, bone, or soul energy. Also note, if you have an Ability-based system, the source should be the same for every person, even if it gives them different powers.

## Possible Sources of Magic

- **Blood** — magic is drawn from blood, either the act of spilling blood, or it's the blood itself that can be used to power abilities.
- **Demons, Angels, or Magical Beings** — magic comes from a bond with magical beings such as demons, angels, spirits, elves, or dragons.
- **Electricity** — magic is powered by electricity. This could be electricity in the modern sense, static, thunderstorms, or perhaps the electricity within the human brain.
- **Emotions** — magic is powered by emotions. The stronger the emotion, the stronger the power.
- **Gods or Higher Powers** — magic is granted to a certain few by gods or higher powers (perhaps through worship or sainthood). Similar to magic beings or creatures, but with a sense of the divine.
- **Inherent Energy** — magic is energy inherent in the world, and exists in a pool or ley lines, available to anyone with the skill to draw on it.
- **Life energy** — mages harness life energy to power their spells, either their own, others', or the energy in plants and animals.
- **Light** — magic is powered by light photons.
- **Magic Artifact** — certain artifacts contain magic, and those that possess those artifacts are imbued with power. Of course, the question remains, where did the artifact gain its power?
- **Magic Language** — certain words hold power, whether it's an ancient language or knowing an object's true name.
- **Nature** — magic is drawn from energy of the natural world. Perhaps the energy in a thunderstorm, sunlight, or cosmic rays.
- **Other Dimensions or Parallel World** — magic is energy siphoned from a parallel world or an alternate dimension.
- **Shifts in Reality** — magic is an illusion/manipulation of the truth of reality (think *Matrix*).
- **Souls or Consciousness** — magic uses souls, spirits of the dead, or a caster's own consciousness as a power source.
- **Substances** — ingesting a substance imbues magic: whether it's crushed demon bone, unicorn hair, fairy dust, or magic spice (like in *Dune*).
- **Radioactive Material** — magic comes from radioactive elements or materials.
- **Wild Magic** — magic is a living thing with its own agenda, and the mage is only the servant.
- **Unknown Science** — magic abilities or powers could be the result of misunderstood science (genetic mutations, radiation, nanites).

# STEP SIX

## Powers & Abilities

*Now we get to the fun part—what can your magic do?*

I'm sure you have some ideas already, but now is the time to solidify what powers your magic grants or what spells your characters cast.

**Stick to Your Theme:** The most important thing here is to limit your powers with your theme. If you don't, you'll lose the theme completely, and your system will feel arbitrary and overused. Try brainstorming a list of powers or abilities that could fall under your theme. Note that this is the same if you are designing a spell-based system of magic or an ability-based system.

- If you're having trouble coming up with powers, then make the limits of your theme more general. If your powers feel too disconnected and random, then make your limits more specific.
  - **Mistborn by Brandon Sanderson** — Mistings and Mistborn are able to wield certain power(s) unique to the metal they burn (a Coinshot can push metal away from them and a Thug can burn pewter for enhanced strength). But those powers fit inside of a predetermined system that is consistent within the world. You don't have any characters able to manipulate wood or throw lightning bolts. They fit inside of a theme.

**Here are some other questions to consider:**

- Do all of your characters share the same abilities? Do casters get to decide what their ability is (a conscious choice) or are they simply born with a certain range of magic? Are some things harder to do than others?
- Have you given your characters abilities that make them too powerful? Could they break the world, tear a hole in reality, or some other effect that would make your plot meaningless?

## Possible Powers and Abilities

- Shapeshifting
- Flight
- Super-strength
- Invisibility
- Enhanced senses
- Microscopic/atomic vision
- Sensing magic energies
- Healing
- Breath underwater
- Immunity to disease
- Don't require sleep or food
- Immunity to magic
- Ability to shield others from magic
- Super-speed
- Astral projection
- Mind-reading
- Telekinesis
- Control emotions
- Divination/future telling
- Teleportation
- Mind-control
- Communicate with the dead
- Ability to locate any object
- Detect/sense life
- Empathy
- Hypnosis
- Communicate with animals
- Creating Matter
- Altering matter
- Control elements
- Controlling the weather
- Transmutation
- Manipulate gravity
- Animate shadows
- Control periodic elements
- Manipulating metal
- Manipulate shadows
- Magnetism
- Conjure constructs  
(like gun powder or oil)
- Making food poisonous  
with a touch
- Manipulate light
- Conjure energy
- Illusion
- Forcefield/shielding
- Manipulate space/time
- Energy blast/absorption
- Control electricity
- Time travel
- Bonding demons/angels
- Summoning creatures
- Controlling animals
- Camouflage
- Control elements
- Green thumb (grow)
- Mutations (wings, cat eyes)
- Necromancy

**REMEMBER:** powers can be used in different ways. Try to consider all of the uses and ramifications of each ability you want. For instance in Avatar Last Airbender, Katara is able to blood-bend using the water in blood. If someone has power over the dead, can they also control dead plants, animals or even dead skin cells (such as hair)?

# STEP SEVEN

## Casting Your Magic

*You know what your magic can do, but how is it harnessed?*

Waving a wand, drawing a runic spell, gathering your will, burning metal, singing the right notes, or speaking an objects true name. Whether it's with a thought, a gesture, speech, or a material object, there are as many ways of casting a spell as there are spells to cast.

**Consider Your Theme and Story:** The important thing here is to find how your characters use magic: what fits with your story, theme, and characterization? Will your characters cast spells against the forces of evil on a desolate battlefield, or will they use rituals and herbs to heal the sick in a wooded cabin, or sing their magic into being to cast illusions for the royal houses? An elaborate ritual won't be very useful for a battle mage or a spy embedded in a foreign government.

### Examples of Casting:

- **Inheritance Cycle by Christopher Paolini** — in this series those who cast magic do so by speaking words of the ancient language. This, paired with their intent and focus, allows them to use magic to affect the world around them.
- **Twelve Houses by Sharon Shinn** — mystics use their magic like a muscle or an extension of their mind. They use their thoughts and will to shapeshift, create a wall of fire, or read someone's thoughts.
- **Elantris by Brandon Sanderson** — mages use power by drawing symbols, called Aons, in the air in order to channel the Aon Dor. Different symbols have different effects, and they must be precise and accurate, or they won't work.

## Possible Types of Casting

- **Magic Language** — certain words are used to trigger magic. Either a specific language or made-up words that simply act as a catalyst for the mage's power. If so, does pronunciation matter?
- **Thoughts and Will** — magic only requires an effort of will and a direction of thoughts, no outer action necessary.
- **Prayer** — similar to the above, but different in that it requires the mage to pray to or ask a higher being to cast the spell. Could be gods/demons/angels/spirits/magic entities. If so, can the being refuse? Does it require a specific ritual, sacrifice, gesture, or verbal signal?
- **Written** — a spell can be written in any number of ways: sketched in chalk, dirt, painted, written in ink or blood, carved into wood or bone, forged into metal, or tattooed onto skin. It could require knowledge of special runes or an ancient language. Does the material matter? Does their thoughts/intent? Are there spoken words to go along with the writing?
- **Reflex** — magic is more like a reflex of the nervous system. Similar to moving an arm. Could be accompanied by an effort of will, though not a very great one. Could also require reaching to the magic that lives inside them — in their mind or their soul.
- **Gesture** — certain gestures or specific hand motions cast different spells. Does intent matter as well, or do mages have to be extremely careful about their movements to avoid accidentally casting a spell?
- **Object** — is your magic cast with objects? A mysterious orb, a special pen, a mighty sword?
- **Rituals** — could be seen as a combination of many of the above. Do your spells require elaborate rituals with multiple elements? Runes transcribed in blood, with a chanted spell, a magic gem, and a special potion.

### Some things to keep in mind:

- Each act of casting will carry its own limitations and costs, just as when you were determining your source, so it's good to think ahead. Think of who is going to be casting your magic — what sort of casting will fit best with your chosen casters? If you have human mages who must study for years, perhaps ritual magic will be a fitting form.
- Also, remember that any of these can be combined, depending on how complex you want your magic casting to be.

# STEP EIGHT

## Magic Users

### *Who can use your magic?*

You know what your magic can do, you know its source, and you know how it's harnessed. Now you need to decide who has power.

**Consider Your Characters and Story:** how do those who use magic see themselves? How are they seen by others? Here are some questions for you to consider:

- How accessible do you want magic? Is it limited to a certain few or can anyone use it?
- If anyone can use it, do they? Or are there some who shun it?
- Are mages simply born with magic, or can it be gained through training? Does it have to be stolen or bargained for?
- Do people with magic think it's a curse or blessing? Are your characters proud of their powers, or ashamed by them? How does this affect their personalities and motivations?

**Consider Your Theme:** go back to the feeling of your magic. What is it? What type of person fits into it? What kind of world does your magic exist in? Is it hidden and mysterious or built into the very fabric of your culture and civilizations?

### **Examples of Magic Casters:**

- **Stormlight Archive** — the Radiants draw power from their bond with a spren, a spirit of the natural world, a sliver of a god.
- **Twelve Houses** — mystics are born with their power, passed through the blood. Some think their ancestors were blessed by a god, but most just believe it's genetic.

## Possibilities for Magic Casters

- **Everyone** — everybody has magic, or at least the possibility of it. Some people may be better at it than others, and some may have no talent with it at all, but it's there for everyone to try.
- **Magic Knowledge** — only those who have studied for years and learned the secret knowledge are able to wield magic. Perhaps this knowledge is restricted to a certain few (such as those of noble blood, those of a certain race, or those with money to pay for tuition), or perhaps it's available to any with the talent or desire to learn.
- **Magic Race** — only members of a certain race (or those bonded to a certain race, such as in the Inheritance Cycle or Stormlight Archive) are able to wield power. This could be elves, dragons, or a aliens from a distant planet. The humans or protagonists of your book only gain magic through their association, friendship, or dominion with the magic race. This could lead to tension between nations of the world, as some try to restore balance or gain power from others. Perhaps one race has magic and the other has advanced tech?
- **Supernatural Beings** — gods, demons, angles, ghosts, the dead, or beings from other dimensions are the only ones able to control magic. Your heroes and protagonists must either convince them to help, bind them, or find a way to steal their power.
- **Genetic Magic** — a certain percentage of the population has magic that others don't. Possibly because of exposure to a certain substance, or through a mutation in their genes, or simply because the magic exists in their blood (like in Harry Potter).
- **Spontaneous Magic**— some humans are granted magical powers. Could be completely random, or could be because of a set of criteria. In Brandon Sanderson's Cosmere, some humans are Invested with power by different Shards, or gods. On some worlds this is through physical pain, on some it's through emotional trauma, and on some it requires death and rebirth.
- **Chosen One** — your hero is special, gifted, and unique. Perhaps there are others like them, or perhaps they're the first in a thousand years who can use magic. Whether it's due to a higher power, a chance of fate, or an ancient curse, this gives them powers or access to powers that no one else has.

# STEP NINE

## Limitations

*Perhaps more important than what your magic can do: what can't your magic do?*

**Sanderson's Second Law:** Limitations > Powers.

- This law is basically saying that your magic's limitations should be stronger than your abilities. If your abilities are too overpowered, then your magic could end up breaking your story and plot.
- The limitations of magic bring tension, drama, and risk to the story. They keep magic from being an easy way out by making your characters work harder, which can in turn up the stakes of your plot.
- They can be the most interesting and engaging part of your system. For instance, mages that can control fire are pretty common, but what if a mage could only control fire if they were being burned at the time? That's unique, interesting, and has story potential.

In this section you're going to figure out your **Limitations**. You do this by determining the **Rules**, **Cost**, and **Weaknesses** of your magic. They may seem similar, and in some ways they overlap, but it's important to consider each separately to build a complete system of magic.

- **Rules** — what magic users must follow (could be breakable, with disastrous consequences, or absolute and above mortal control.)
- **Cost** — the price a mage pays to cast magic.
- **Weaknesses** — where does the magic fail? What can't it do? How can it be beaten?

While you're designing your limitations, consider what would happen if someone tried to break the rules of your magic or overcome its weaknesses and costs? What would happen if they succeeded? What would be the consequences of failure?

## Rules of Magic

You can think of these as the restriction or guidelines that your mages have to follow in order to practice magic. What can't your magic do? What are the limits or boundaries of its abilities? Remember, once you create your rules, you need to stick to them, otherwise your magic won't feel believable. As you are deciding your rules, you should also consider: can they be broken within the story? If so, what would happen? What consequences will your characters face if they try?

### Examples of Rules:

- **Belgariad by David Eddings** — the Will and the Word can do anything a mage needs it to, with the exception that it cannot destroy matter. To do so goes against the foundation of the world, and will have fatal results for the mage attempting to unmake anything.
- **Coldfire Trilogy by C.S. Friedman** — mages, called adepts, draw on the fae energy to power their magic. There are different types of fae including Earth, Solar, Dark, and Tidal. The last can only be accessed by women of the native species on the planet, and only at certain times as it fluctuates with the tides of the many moons.

### Possible Rules:

- Perhaps only a specific person can wield magic: either because it requires genetic ability, advanced study or knowledge, or exposure or access to a rare element, chemical, or technology.
- Maybe magic is limited to only certain situations or environments such as a specific time of day, time period, geological location, state of mind, emotion, ritual, or formula. Magic could require zero gravity to operate and so can only be done in space, or perhaps it requires complete darkness because it will react violently and uncontrollably to light.
- Perhaps your magic only works on certain substances — for instance, a mage can only control something if it has electricity, or if it is dead matter, or if it is made of a certain element.
- Magic can't bring back the dead, be used to destroy, or be used to affect something the caster cannot see.

## Cost of Magic

Your characters have cast a spell, they've saved the day, vanquished the evil, but at what price?

**Consider:** what are the limits of your magic in terms of cost? Sure, your hero could animate an army of a thousand zombies, but would they survive the process? If he would survive, then why doesn't he do it and defeat the villain in the first chapter? Remember, the higher your cost, the less your characters will use their magic.

- If you want it to be a common and everyday thing, then you need a small, manageable cost.
- If you want magic to be used only as a last resort, then have a high cost that few would think is worth paying.

### Examples of Cost:

- **Wheel of Time by Robert Jordan** — male channelers pay the price of insanity if they use their powers.
- **Obsidian Trilogy by Mercedes Lackey** — Wild Mages must pay a mage price for everything they ask of the magic. This could be as simple as planting a tree, or as difficult as sacrificing your life to save the world.

### Possible Costs:

- Energy, stamina, mana, life or soul power. Using too much could cause them to pass out, fall ill, go insane, or even die.
- Maybe it requires intense physical effort or concentration on the casters part. Martial arts training, physical fitness, memorization, study or a very specialized skill set.
- Magic could require expensive or rare materials or ingredients. Either because they cost money, and so can only be obtained by the powerful and rich, or because they require great sacrifice to acquire.
- Perhaps magic has consequences outside of the caster — using it could weaken the barrier between the living and dead, destroy a little more of nature, or cause someone in the world to spontaneously combust.

## Weakness of Magic

Where does your magic fail? What ways would the opposite side overcome the advantage of the mage's power, workaroud it, or make it useless? Weaknesses are intertwined with both the cost and rules of your magic, and so they may overlap. Take a look at your rules and costs and extrapolate to find the weak points of your magic.

- For instance, if a rule of magic is that a mage has to see something in order to cast a spell on it, a weakness would be that their enemies could simply stay out of sight, or find a way to blind their opponent in order to make their magic useless. Could an enemy permanently blind a mage, and take away their power forever?

### Examples of Weaknesses:

- **Inheritance Cycle by Christopher Paolini** — the act of using magic leaves the mage open to attack from enemy mages. In order to cast a spell, they must drop the defenses around their mind, which makes them vulnerable.
- **Mistborn by Brandon Sanderson** — Allomancers require metals to fuel power, so a simple way to take that power is to limit their access to metal. A more specific example: hazekillers use wooden tools and specific techniques to combat Coinshots and Lurchers, whose powers can only push and pull metals.

### Possible Weaknesses:

- Certain substances, environments, experiences, actions, or set of circumstances could render the mage powerless. (Be careful of this one, the kryptonite cliché is a bit old.)
- Magic requires time, energy, space, or a certain substance in order to work. Limiting this makes magic useless.
- Magic has certain weaknesses (to other magic or technology). For instance Fire magic might not work as well against Water magic.

# STEP TEN

## Extrapolation & Organization

*Special powers, unique abilities, and ancient secrets.*

**Sanderson's Third Law of Magic:** "Expand what you already have before you add something new."

- Before you start to add multiple abilities, schools, types, or magic systems together, consider the implications of what you already have: even an ability as simple as making plants grow could be used in dozens of different ways.
  - Could your character bring down a building by crumbling the foundation with tree roots? Could they grow a poison to take out an enemy? Could they grow foliage in order to hide from pursuers? Or grow a vine to climb up a cliff? How could your characters solve their problems, using what they have in different or unique ways?
  - Two characters with the same power can use that power differently. This can be a good way to go deep into characterization and personality, and really show how each character sees the world. Perhaps the power is manipulating bone — one character might use their power to heal, and mend, while another might use it to break bones and control their criminal empire.

**Go deeper, not wider:** a magic with unlimited power can be fun to play with, but it could be more unique to have a magic with a small collection of powers, that are each explored in depth.

**Exceptions to your rules:** if you want to have one character who has different powers or stronger abilities than all of the others (similar to a Chosen One), then consider having them break *one* rule, and one rule only. For example, in *The Last Airbender*, in every generation there is the Avatar, who can control all four of the elements, not just one.

# STEP ELEVEN

## Name of Magic

*Mages, wizards, allomancers, benders, elementals, furies — what is your magic called?*

**There's a lot to consider when naming your magic:** here are a few questions to ask yourself.

- **What's the magic itself called?** Magic? Mana? Force? Energy? Or something unique like Aon Dor or BioChromatic Breath?
- **What are mages called?** Wizards? Casters? Or something like Mistborn, Shapers, Riders, Radiants, or Powder Mages?
- **What is the act of magic called?** Do mages cast a spell? Or weave a thread of magic? Or burn metal? Or draw in Stormlight?
- **Are there multiple names for the magic or magic users?** If you have different cultures, nations or planets, perhaps they have their own words for mages. Like Dragon Riders and Argetlam (meaning silver hand) from Inheritance Cycle.

**Consider your theme, or an element of your theme:** what is the main focus of your magic? Does it have to do with fire? With metal?

With wood or plant growth? Whatever it is can help you decide your names and terms.

- Perhaps your characters are members of the thieves guild, and they've been hired to steal a magic gem from a corrupt lord. Perhaps magic in this world manifests as an ability to see through any wall, a skill perfect for thieving, so Thief is synonymous with mage.

**You also need to consider how your magic is organized:** Are mages split into categories? Are there different schools of magic? Does a mage get to choose which they belong to? If not, then what determines it (blood, birth, fate, personality, aptitude)? This can give depth to your system and provide tension or conflict as different factions, benders, or mages interact.

- Be careful when adding a bunch of categories that you don't overwhelm your theme. You want to make sure everything is balanced, even, and fits together in a way that makes sense.

## Possible Names for Your System

- **Traditional terms:** Wizards and Witches. Mages and Casters. Necromancers. Healers. Clerics. Shaman. Enchanter. Sorcerers. Warlock. Seer. Conjurer. Magician. Magnus. Diviner. Occultist. Medium. Thaumaturge. Soothsayer. Augurer. Illusionist. Spellbinder. Witch Doctor.
  - **Example:** In the Dresden Files by Jim Butcher, the main character is a wizard, a human with magic and a longer life span. Warlocks are wizards who use dark magic, and witches are the female version of wizards. The names are simple and traditional, but it doesn't get in the way of the fun, unique, and interesting magic system.
- **Use a common verb in a new way:** verbs are a great source of unique possibilities, especially for the act of casting spells. Do your mages weave their spells? Or perhaps they Breathe life into objects? It's helpful to think about how your magic is cast — if you have a music element, perhaps your mages are called Singers?
  - I've found that words that center around artistic or artisan type crafts are a very good starting place: Weld, Fuse, Burn, Carve, Sing, Paint, Flare, Weave, Mend.
  - **Example:** In Emperor's Soul by Brandon Sanderson, mages are called Forgers, because they use their power to rewrite, copy, or change (forge) the history of objects, people, or souls.
- **Something-mancers:** a common system is to use the root word -mancers or -mancy. As in Allomancers/Allomancy or Necromancers/Necromancy. Your abilities, magic, and theme can help you determine the prefix of the word. You could have anything from **Critomancy** (study of future using barley cakes) to **Sarcomancy** (manipulation of flesh).
- **Another language:** depending on where your story is set, perhaps you could draw inspiration from other languages for your name. This could be combined with any of my other suggestions (such as using the Chinese word for wizard (Wushi), or using the Russian word for carver (rezchik), or even a completely made up term from a fictional language in your world.

# STEP TWELVE

## Magical Artifacts, Weapons, & Creatures

*Dragons, unicorns, a wizard's tools of the trade, and an ancient sentient sword.*

This is where you get to decide what else magic affects in your world. You could have anything from a magic ring that lets the wearer see through walls, to a flaming sword to vanquish the undead, to a fairy companion to help you translate ancient tablets.

**Magic in Nature:** Does your magic have an effect on the natural world — the elements, weather, behavior of animals, or the growth of forests?

- Are there magic plants used for potions or poisons?
- Are there magic creatures — fairies, serpents, talking animals, werewolves, vampires, or, dragons. If there are magic creatures, are they as intelligent as humans? Or are they seen as simply wild animals?
- Are there gods, spirits, or higher beings? If so do they take action and shape events in the world, or do they stay out of things?

**Magic Artifacts and Objects:** Are there magical artifacts? Are they perhaps from an ancient race of magic wielders? Can this give non-magical people power or access to powers? Can regular objects be imbued with magic?

- What substances can hold magic, and why? For instance, in Stormlight Archive, the power of stormlight can be stored in gemstones. As a result gemstones are extremely valuable and used as both a form of money as well as a source of power by magic users.

**Magic Weapons:** What weapons do your magic users wield? Are there magic swords or powerful staffs? Or can even everyday objects become weapons? Think of something that fits with your characters' abilities.

- For instance, if your power had to do with manipulating and seeing truth in reflections, then something as simple as a mirror would be a powerful, effective, and subtle weapons for them to carry.

# STEP THIRTEEN

## Worldbuilding & Culture

*Your magic should be built into the foundation of your world.*

I've mentioned before that your magic should be built into your story. Ideally, if you tried to take your magic out of your world, nothing would make sense. This is the fun part. As a writer, your job is to show the effects of your magic in the lives of your characters, cultures, nations, and planets.

### **Some questions to consider:**

- How common is magic? Is it considered awe inspiring, rare, and mysterious? Or is it so common place as to be boring? Are magical creatures viewed as mystical and beautiful or are pixies an annoying household pest?
- How does it affect the economy? Do mages sell their services? Is being a mage expensive?
- Where do mages fall in the social structure? Are they akin to nobles, or to servants?
- Do they have a set of laws governing them or are they outside the law? What is the punishment for a mage who commits crimes?
- Is magic considered good or evil? Has it always been around? Is it embedded in the culture's history?

**Extrapolate:** Ask yourself — what happens when?

- What happens when mages are considered the property of the king?
- What happens when the price of using magic is that the crops of the kingdom die?
- What happens when the only cure for a deadly plague lies in the heart of a rare spider-monkey?
- What happens when powers can be used to take over neighboring countries with mind-control?

# STEP FOURTEEN

## Magic & Plot

*In the end, it's all about story — does your magic serve your plot?*

Your magic should not only be tied into the world of your story, it should also be tied into the story itself. It should be so intertwined into your structure, plot, and character motivations and identities that you cannot pull them apart.

### **Magic and Plot:**

- Does your magic help move the story forward?
- Do your characters use it to cause more problems than they solve? If they use it to solve problems, does it follow the rules you've set forth?
- What does your magic let you do or explore in your story that you wouldn't necessarily get to explore without magic? What moral questions does it pose?
- How does it connect to the theme of your story?
- If you took magic out completely, would all of your plot points make sense?
  - For instance, take magic out of Harry Potter, and much of the character motivations and goals cease to matter (Voldemort wouldn't be able to live forever without magic, and Harry wouldn't face problems like trying to stop the Basilisk from killing mudbloods).

### **Magic and Character:**

- Does your magic highlight your characters' personalities, choices, motivations, emotions, and struggles?
- Does it contribute to their growth or character arc? Do they have to overcome obstacles in order to use or better understand their magic?
- Would your character be the same person if they weren't a mage? Would they have the same goals, dreams, fears, and motivations?

# Just Like Magic!



*“Starlight fills the corners of the night, dancing in the space between worlds. Spinning dust in the hearts of stars, it creates worlds full of magic.”*

And that’s pretty much it. You now have a working magic system. As you start to write your story and further flesh out your world and characters, you’ll need to edit your magic accordingly. You’ll always be thinking of new things and exciting additions, but now that you have the bones, your magic system can grow to be functional, unique, and engaging for your readers.

As a reader my favorite magic systems are both complex and easy to understand. Personally I like knowing how the magic works and having the experience of discovering and understanding the secrets, complexities, and mysteries right alongside the characters in the story I’m reading.

But remember, this is just a guide, and you are more than free to break any of these rules for your magic. The important thing is to have fun and to build the system that **you** want to use in your book.

**Lastly, I’ll leave you with four examples of amazing magic systems.**

## Mistborn by Brandon Sanderson

- **Class:** This is an ability-based magic. Allomancers don't choose from a wide range of spells to cast; they have certain abilities that are limited to the metal they are able to burn. All abilities are the same (even though there are different ones to choose from — all Thugs have the same ability, as do all Coinshots and Tineyes).
- **Theme:** This system uses metal for its aesthetic, and the theme of a thieving crew to limit its abilities and make them feel like they fit.
- **Hard or Soft:** Allomancy falls on the hardest side of the scale. The magic is comparable to a science, with strict rules, limitations, and well understood abilities and origins (even if it isn't all revealed at one time).
- **Source:** The source of Allomancy is the power of the god Preservation. The source of a Mistborn or Mistings' individual abilities is metal, ingested and burned.
- **Abilities:** Abilities range from pushing on metal to manipulating others' emotions. The types of abilities come in pairs, for every push there is a pull. Each ability can be used in a range of different ways, and the characters in the story are adept at making use of their skills in unique ways.
- **Casting:** Allomancers use their abilities by burning metal. Tapping it with their mind, they use it to push on metal or fuel their body as easily as they would move their arm.
- **Mages:** Anyone with the right genes can become an Allomancer, though they aren't born one. The process is called Snapping, and happens only after extreme trauma.
- **Limitations:** An Allomancer is limited by the strength of their body and by the availability of metal.
- **Extrapolation & Organization:** Allomancy, Feruchemy, and Hemalurgy are three sides of the same coin. They complement and balance each other: in Allomancy power is gained, in Hemalurgy power is lost, and in Feruchemy no power is gained or lost.
- **Worldbuilding & Plot:** I can't even describe how intertwined the magic is to the world, plot, story, and characters (nor would I want to, because I wouldn't want to take away the joy of discovering it through the book). Let's just say that there would be no story and no world without the magic system, and the characters would be mere shades of themselves.

## Coldfire Trilogy by C.S. Friedman

- **Class:** Spell-based magic. All adepts and sorcerers (for the most part) have the same range of spell to choose from. Though some types of fae are better or more suited to certain workings.
- **Theme:** A loose theme of earth and space magic, with a wide range of abilities that gives it a traditional feel.
- **Hard or Soft:** This system is pretty solidly in the middle of the scale. The magic has some really interesting limits and weaknesses, but its range of abilities, source, and history remains a bit of a mystery.
- **Source:** Magic is powered by the fae, an energy field that surrounds and imbues the planet of Erna.
- **Abilities:** The fae can be used to see across continents, cast a knowing to gain insight into past or future events, heal, control animals, and other similar workings.
- **Casting:** Certain words and patterns are used to Work the fae to cause different effects.
- **Mages:** Those who harness the fae are split into two types: adepts and sorcerers. Adepts are born with the ability (and are the only ones who can see the fae without a casting) and sorcerers must learn to use it (and are therefore limited in their range of abilities and powers).
- **Limitations:** The fae is a natural phenomenon, as powerful as an earthquake, and humans are nearly powerless in the face of it. Many adepts and sorcerers have been killed trying to work fae too powerful for them. The planet itself is also a limitation, and it is capable of using a human's unconscious fears and hidden desires to kill them with accidental manifestations.
- **Extrapolation & Organization:** The fae is split into four different types: earth, dark, solar, and tidal. Most human adepts can only work earth. Only rakh (sentient indigenous species) women are able to work the tidal fae. Solar fae is also very rare, and has only ever been successfully worked by the Church. And only those with certain dark affiliations can work dark fae.
- **Worldbuilding & Plot:** The magic of Erna is used to create a unique, volatile, and interesting world, with fae currents, an alien species, and a planet that is nearly sentient. The magic is also integral in many of the characters' arcs, personalities, abilities, and quests.

## Belgariad by David Eddings

- **Class:** This is a spell-based magic. All sorcerers have access to the same spells through the Will and the Word.
- **Theme:** This is a more general, traditional system, without a very strong theme. This gives it a “can do anything” type of feel — which isn’t necessarily bad. And the story and world is amazing and engaging in spite of that.
- **Hard or Soft:** Like many systems, I would say that this one lies in the middle of the scale. There are enough rules and limits to give it structure and consequences, but there is still plenty of room for mystery and imagination to fill in the gaps.
- **Source:** The source of power is the sorcerer’s own will. The types, frequency, and amount of spells they can cast is therefore limited to their will and energy.
- **Abilities:** A sorcerer can do whatever they can imagine.
- **Casting:** They use the “Will and the Word” to change the universe around them. They gather their will and say what they want to happen, and it does.
- **Mages:** Only some have the ability to become a sorcerer. They are born with the potential.
- **Limitations:** A sorcerer cannot command anything to be “unmade” or they will be unmade themselves. They must also follow the basic rules of physics — moving a large rock with magic will take the same amount of energy as doing it by hand. If it takes more energy than the sorcerer has, then they will die.
- **Extrapolation & Organization:** Sorcerers, Witches, and Magicians all use slightly different versions of magic. Sorcerers use the Will and the Word, Magicians harness demons for power, and Witches harness spirits and other beings.
- **Worldbuilding & Plot:** The magic and it’s rules are tied into the plot itself (with the magic becoming an almost sentient character). The main character’s journey is also heavily tied into his growing abilities as a sorcerer.

## Fire by Kristin Cashore

- **Class:** I would categorize this as an ability-based system of magic. Monsters are creatures (or humans) with beautiful, unnatural coloring (red-furred leopard, or a green raptor) and certain mental powers. The monster's powers are limited to one area, and only a few abilities.
- **Theme:** This magic is centered around mental abilities, the strength of will, and the lure of beauty.
- **Hard or Soft:** This is a softer magic. There are limits, but they are mostly undefined. This fits extremely well because the story is more character driven and emotional (and because the magic isn't used for large plot-altering scenarios).
- **Source:** There's no defined source of the power, besides the strength and will of Fire's own mind.
- **Abilities:** Fire's monster blood gives her physical beauty and mental strength. Just the sight of her can overwhelm human's minds, and with focused attention Fire can read thoughts, plant suggestions, or outright control another's actions.
- **Casting:** Fire uses her abilities with thoughts and will.
- **Mages:** Only those born a monster possess this power. They are a genetic species different than normal humans and animals.
- **Limitations:** The only real limit of this power is the strength of the monster's mind. If Fire is stronger and more focused than those she wishes to control, she can overpower them. If their defenses are stronger than her, she won't be able to break through.
- **Extrapolation & Organization:** This world and magic is incredibly simple, and is the perfect example of taking a single idea and extrapolating for a deep story, character arcs, and world. If there are monster animals, are there monster humans? How would a human be treated? What if someone used their power for evil? Could you use such an invasive power for good?
- **Worldbuilding & Plot:** Fire's power, and how she learns to use it and reconcile it with her own morals and beliefs is a huge part of the story, and because of that the theme of the magic and the themes of the story and her journey mirrors each other. The monster animals are also built very well into the foundation of the society and world-building.

If you've found this booklet helpful, feel free to check out my Magic Systems Workbook (a downloadable and printable PDF) available for \$5 on my Etsyshop. It's a refined and expanded version of this free booklet, with even more examples, notes, and sources as well as space for your own notes, brainstorm, and ideas. You can find it here — —> <https://www.etsy.com/shop/SpeculativePages>

**STEP FOUR**

**STEP TWELVE**  
Magical Artifacts, Weapons, & Creatures

**Possible Sources of Magic**

- Blood — magic is drawn that can be used to power
- Demons, Angels, or Maj such as demons, angels, t
- Electricity — magic is f sense, static, thundersto
- Emotions — magic is p power.
- Gods or Higher Power (perhaps through wors sense of the divine.
- Inherent Energy — n

**Possible Powers and Abilities**

- Shapeshifting
- Flight
- Super-strength
- Invisibility
- Enhanced senses
- Microscopic or atomic vision
- Sensing magic energies
- Telekinesis
- Controlling emotions
- Divination or future telling
- Teleportation
- Mind-control
- Communicate with the dead
- Manipulate gravity
- Animate shadows
- Control the periodic elements
- Manipulating metal
- Manipulate shadows
- Manipulate space and time
- Energy blast or energy absorption
- Control electricity
- Time travel
- Bonding demons

*cient sentient sword.*  
You could have flaming sword to t tablets.  
— the elements,

**WORLDBUILDING**  
**MAGIC SYSTEMS**

Ideas of Source

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Megann is speculative fiction editor, writer, and artist. She recently graduated with a BFA in Creative & Professional Writing from Maharishi University of Management where she worked as an editor for *Metafore Magazine* for two issues. Throughout her time at college she was also a Writing Tutor at the University Writing Center for nearly three years, where she found a passion for helping writers improve their stories and writing abilities. She used this passion to help dozens of her fellow students workshop, revise, and edit their stories to publishable quality.

For her personal writing, she has recently published her first children's book titled *Bellow of the Beast*, co-authored with her sister, and she has a full-length fantasy/sci-fi novel in the works.

Visit her website at [MegannK.com](http://MegannK.com).



## Further Reading

*These are some resources and blogs that I found particularly helpful when designing my magic system.*

This **tvtropes** website is incredibly useful, because every page has examples of magic in popular media (at the bottom in folders) from tv shows, animation, comics, movies, and literature.

- <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/FunctionalMagic>
- <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/SoYouWantTo/WriteAFunctionalMagicSystem>
- <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/Whatevermancy> (list of **-mancer magic names**)

**Brandon Sanderson's** website has a ton of resources about craft, including essays on his three laws for magic systems. He goes into a lot more depth than I did in this booklet, so I'd definitely recommend checking them out.

- <https://brandonsanderson.com/writing-advice/>
- <https://brandonsanderson.com/sandersons-first-law/>

**C.R. Crowenson's** blog on magic is an amazing resource for every speculative fiction author. Take a look through his past posts for a ton of good stuff on all types of magic systems. He does a great job of defining limits, rules, and the difference between hard and soft systems and the benefits of each.

- <https://crrowenson.com/blog/>

This blog post is great if you're creating specifically an **ability-based system** (like superheroes).

- <https://mythcreants.com/blog/creating-a-magic-system-for-superpowers/>