BUILDING BLOCK MAGIC

Building Block Magic
By Robert Ziefel

robertzprojects.com

Table of Contents

Introduction

Building Block Magic is an attempt to create a universal system of magic that can be used across a variety of genres from superheroes to high fantasy, in stories or Role Playing Games. Naturally, most RPGs come with their own system of magic; In this case you would replace that system outright. This can allow you to change the feel of a game while still maintaining the other familiar rules you are used to. If a setting is being created from scratch, such as for a game without magic or a book, this system can step in and serve as a starting point.

Focusing on creativity and quickly building spells, unlike other systems that require pages and pages of prebuilt spells, this system instead gives you a set of basic rules to create your own spells, so they can be customized to your exact needs and created on the fly when needed. (Don't worry, some example spells are included) "But hold on," I hear you saying. "A universal system is clearly impossible, because the magic system inherent to a world *informs* the world. Its politics, level of technology, how wars are handled-" Indeed, I hasten to assure you, oh reader, I agree with this assessment but if you hear me out- "And furthermore," you interrupt, a little rudely I might add, "if I'm making a world where everyone has HP in the hundreds, how does that square with another person using this same system to create a world with health below 20, or heaven forbid some kind of narration system that plays fast and loose with the very concept of health and the narrator sort of decides when you've taken enough damage to put you out of a fight?"

All good points, I assure you. We'll get to all that. Skip to the end of this document to see a helpful worksheet ("oh no, homework????") to help you customize all of these variables and more, creating the basis for your individual magic system that can fully integrate into your world and be completely different from someone else who simply chose different defaults. Consider this document a guide, such that the magic used in your world is self-consistent, spells all work the same way, and it allows for various styles of "play" depending on each character's needs. For example, not everyone wants to interact with the magic system on the same level. Where one person might say "I just want to throw the occasional fireball" another might say "I want to actually learn how fireball works, tear that magic apart, and build a fireball with a greater radius. I can absorb the MP cost for the more advanced spell because I put a lot of points into WIS." Building Block Magic can accommodate both! The first person will be happy just buying a basic fireball spell and leaving it at that, while the second can tinker with the very concept of a fireball, balancing range, damage, radius and even secondary effects with the cost of the spell.

Terms and vocabulary

Mana: Mana is the mystical energy that is manipulated to produce spells. This we call "doing magic." The only place Mana doesn't exist is magically dead areas, and in general is replaced as quickly as it is used. (So one doesn't really have to worry about the world they are in "running out." Unless this is plot relevant, of course.) Where it comes from: produced by all living things in small amounts, simply part of nature like gravity, flowing from other dimensions, is up to you.

Types of Mana:

Ambient or Free Mana: simply the amount of energy a particular area has. Typically visualized as a gas, flowing through space unimpeded. Mana that collides with a practitioner can be absorbed into them, if they have used some, thus creating space for it. Unless forcibly manipulated in some way or the Mana user is deep underground, it can be assumed that the amount of Mana is always sufficient for the needs of those using it. Working various materials in an area of high Mana density can change their properties. For example, making them more receptive to further enchantment, or strengthening their innate properties like making metal more durable or creating magical inks. Certain spells or magical devices can measure the Mana density so areas can be compared.

Distilled Mana: that which has been taken into the practitioner's body for use in creating magic. Typically visualized as a liquid, held within the practitioner until forced out through the core (see Mana Core) during the spellcasting process.

Aspected Mana: Mana which has been passed through the core and is ready to be combined in the aura (see Aura) to create a spell. Has a "flavor" related to the aspect of the spell that is being cast. "Helpful" for utility magic, "elemental" for magic that creates elemental effects, "energetic" for movement magic, etc.

Aura: An energy field that surrounds most, if not all, living animals and "where the magic happens." If your setting has sentient plants, they probably have one as well. People with special powers or the right magic can see or feel the aura of others, gaining information about them. The color can indicate general emotional state, while the brightness can indicate level of corruption. The aura interacts with Aspected Mana, allowing the practitioner to combine the Mana into a spell, which is then ejected from the aura towards the recipient.

Mana Core: Only those with a Mana core can manipulate Mana to produce magic. Think of the core as a glass sphere, a container, that exists inside the soul. This container naturally gathers ambient Mana and stores it, ready to be used. Spell formula also interact with the core, being "engraved" on the surface as the Mana user acquires the spell they wish to cast. To cast a spell, the core releases Mana through the inscribed formula, making the Mana take specific shapes, like shining a light on a paper cutout. Those shapes are the pieces of the spell that is being cast, which are combined and released through the aura of the practitioner. *How* a core is gained: at birth, through ritual, study, the gods, a system, everyone just has one like they have a nose, is up to you.

Cultivation: This is the name for the activity of modifying the core. You cultivate to learn magic, to "forget" magic, and to increase the number of spells that will fit on the surface of the core. During the spell learning process, the formula, however it is transmitted, is etching itself into the sphere that serves as the core. To no longer have that spell "memorized" you must cultivate the core to smooth out that section so it can be reused. Purposefully injecting Mana into the core can cause it to grow, thus increasing the surface area and allowing more spells to be engraved onto the surface or simply to have a greater capacity like filling up a balloon. While there is no hard and fast rule for forgetting a spell as there is learning one, you would be justified in saying a character must cultivate a certain number of hours, perhaps equal to the weight, to smooth out the core. Those that are cool and hip will agree to give a bonus to those with the meditation skill as assisting this effort and reducing the time needed.

What is magic anyway?

"Magic is the inducement of Mana into creating an effect upon our physical Reality."
– Kiri Flamecrash
– Ar'Kendrithyst by Arcs (Read it on Royal Road today!)

We've all been exposed to magic in media: from ninjas doing hand signs, little kids swishing and flicking wands, and heroes hanging in the sky with no explanation while they fire laser beams out of their eyeballs. All of these types have something in common. Those doing "the magic" are simply changing the world around them in some way either due to study, some source of power they draw from, or through some kind of mental energy. Building Block Magic allows you to easily modify how fast the energies return to a character, ranging from almost instantly (superheroes for the most part) to so slowly only one spell can be performed a day. The key is consistency. Having a world where one magic user has unlimited access to power while another has only limited access can, of course, be explained narratively but that needs to be decided upon at the beginning. Someone with unlimited power showing up in the middle of a story makes everyone else start questioning why they can't have unlimited power too. Or it makes them want to beat that person up, which is great if they are evil!

Some may try to convince you there are "hard" and "soft" magic systems, but this is the wrong way to look at things. No matter how "soft" the magic system is, someone isn't walking to the store to buy bread and accidentally summoning a demon lord. (Though this would be a very "interesting" world to live in, if that's the case) All magic has "rules," even if those rules are not understood fully by those using the magic. Otherwise, the story you're trying to create is just all over the place, and if anything can happen and be shrugged off by "lol, magic am I right?" then you have to ask yourself "why isn't anyone trying to determine the rules and stop all this madness?" Magic would certainly be studied just like anything else, after all. So all magic systems would tend towards being understood, the longer they existed and were studied. Of course, narratively you could have a magic system pop up out of nowhere and the characters have to figure it out, which is fine. But that's still a march towards knowledge and away from ignorance. A stance we should all be striving to attain, no?

So in specific terms, "magic" is the method of choosing a recipient of change: be that yourself, another person, an object, or something that doesn't even exist yet, and then working a change upon that thing. This is a "spell" even if you don't call it such in your particular world. Changing your shape. Healing a broken bone. Creating a light show or a chair to sit on out of nothing. In general then, a practitioner goes through these steps when they wish to cast a spell.

1) Prep the area to receive the spell. This is done by expelling some amount of distilled Mana into the area, giving the spell something to traverse, like the idea of light traveling through the aether. The more Mana is expelled as part of this process, the further the spell can go. Consider this zone the area where the mage can change reality according to their will. Advanced techniques could change the shape of the zone, or allow it to persist. See the skills section.

2) Create the spell matrix. Spells are fragile things, and must be protected while active. Consider this step to be creating a small box for the spell to be placed into. The walls of the box could be extremely thin, breaking upon impact with the recipient, or as hard as steel and thus last almost forever. The greater the amount of Mana placed into the walls, the longer the spell will persist for. This part is done within the aura, from the Mana projected from the core, and causes the aura of the practitioner to glow. Thus, anyone around knows that person is casting a spell! Alternately, if a focus of some kind is used, such as a wand or hand gestures, this is where the focus would come into play. It should be manipulated in some way that shows the mage is casting a spell. As long as there is some indication it's fine, so that the recipient of the spell can dodge the attempt. Into this spell matrix go the following parts of the spell:

a) Is the recipient restricted? Spells that work upon specific things require less Mana, as the spell doesn't have to account for as many variables when activating. So for example a spell that only heats up water would require less Mana than a spell that can heat up various things like water, metals, wood, the air, etc.

b)   Quality of recipient to change. Spells are about changing the world, and nearly any quality of an object can be modified with magic. The temperature of something, the color, the weight, the sharpness. Even a person's emotional state or their very memories. If it can be described, a spell can change it.

c)   Command the change. As our spell knows what sort of thing to work on, and what quality to change, it must now be commanded to do so. For example if our spell works on mice, and the quality of the mice we wish to modify is their size, to create a mouse of unusual size the command would be "grow." If we wished to have hot water, then the spell is restricted to liquid, the quality temperature, and the command "increase."

3) Cast the spell. With the box created, it can now be "thrown" at the recipient. The practitioner releases the box by ejecting it from their aura, which streaks towards the recipient as a visible beam or ball. Or again a finger is pointed, or the focus is held aloft and the spell activated with a word. If the box hits the recipient, the spell takes effect.

To distill this description we use the following shorthand, creating a magical formula:

distance Mana can go->duration of spell->is spell restricted->quality to change->change quality

In Building Block Magic, the main work of the spell is done by the quality-verb structure. Naturally, a spell that does more has more weight in the world, either taking more resources, time, or effort to cast. For example, a fireball you would at a minimum be restricted to *fire, create* some amount of it, and *move* it towards the recipient. Optionally, you could have the fire *expand* when it hit the recipient or change the spell in other ways. A more advanced spell would *create* fire, give it the ability to *move*, *track* the recipient, then *explode* near the recipient. You build up the spell piece by piece, adding behavior to create the magic needed to do what you want. So to even further simply the above template we get this:

zone->duration->restriction->quality->verb

the simplest type of spell that can be created. More complex spells build upon this so it could look like:

zone->duration->restriction->quality->verb->verb->verb
zone->duration->restriction->quality->noun->quality->verb->verb
And other variations in kind.

Fueling Magic

Now we start getting into the specifics of how your personalized magic system will function. The first question to be asked is "what does magic cost?" The default for Building Block Magic is the old standby: Mana Potential or MP. Let's first determine how much Mana a character has access to, then we can know about how many spells or how large a spell one character can perform.

Mana Potential represents how much total magic a person has the potential to do. (Get it?) In worlds with magic, Mana is typically represented as being a mystical energy that exists just about everywhere and fuels magic in various ways. People then either draw upon this resource in general or have a store of it internally to draw upon. It is good to limit magic use, at least in the beginning, to allow more experienced characters larger amounts of Mana to use in spellcasting. If characters are aware of this cost is up to you. They may simply know they can't cast several fireballs in succession but don't realize the exact "cost" of each one. It is simply a bookkeeping method "behind the scenes" tracked as points to prevent mages having unlimited power. Even in those worlds where the characters don't seem to use Mana and can cast without limit, they are still rate limited in the size of the magic they can create. What story have you seen where the character casts the exact same spells at the beginning of the story as at the end? In these cases, they still have MP, limiting the amount of magic they can do at once, but simply restore it very quickly making it seem like their MP is unlimited.

One of the first considerations for MP is "How much to assign each character?" Easiest to simply assign a flat number, but we can do better. For example make the amount of MP a function of how the

character manipulates Mana. If done through study, perhaps tied to intelligence. If accomplished by painting runes in the air, manipulation is best. If done through hand signs, reflexes might be used. Decide upon a scale to use for your world. Is a person with a 10 intelligence the smartest person around, or does intelligence scale into the hundreds or thousands? Multiply this value by some factor, ranging from .5 to 100 or more, depending on how much magical energy you want a typical character to access. The stat chosen will most likely be consistent across the world, meaning all people cast magic the same way. Naturally if you want some magic users to cast through study while others do so though willpower, that's fine, but again this should be decided upon at the beginning. This allows for worlds that all have the same magic system or various ways an individual could manipulate magic but still share the same "spell list." (Naturally if you wanted the separate types to have different spell lists, like having "berserkers" that focus only on combat magic while still having fairies that focus on nature magic that's fine too!)

The next consideration is rate of recovery. Is this in seconds? Minutes? Hours? The faster the rate of recovery the more magic a person can do at one time, but the more bookkeeping must be done. Keep in mind, the faster this is, the more your characters become "superheroes" in the world instead of mages. To return to the swish and flick example, magic in some worlds seems to cost nothing- the characters can do all the magic they want in a day- yet struggle at the beginning to do simple spells. They may have low MP, or a high difficulty for even the most benign of spell, but a high rate of recovery, for example. One method would be to have a set rate measured in hours, but supplement that recovery with skills. Either a meditation type skill that accelerates it, drawing ambient Mana from a location (which could also be finite and rate limited in recovery), drinking potions, drawing Mana from crystals or specific locations or even creatures. The possibilities are fairly vast, and may require tweaking if the amount of magic used in your setting becomes unbalanced. A good rule of thumb is, make the rate initially equal to the amount of Mana one has per day, (so a person with 100MP max gains 100MP per day) and those that wish to accelerate this can take various skills or perks to either have more, or recover it more quickly. (See the relevant section)

Another important consideration is how to expand the Mana Pool available to a character. In a system with set levels this could be as easy as "character gains 10 MP per level" and leave it at that. You probably know about how many levels you'll give out over the course of the adventure and about where your characters start, magic wise. Do they end up where you want? If no, simply adjust the numbers. Are the characters "cultivators" meaning they simply meditate and draw magical energies into themselves, expanding their "core" while sacrificing time they could be using to improve other skills? Can they consume something to enlarge the pool? Is it tied to a skill of some kind, that can be increased naturally as the character gains experience? Or perhaps every time the MP pool is depleted, it naturally gains a single extra point when it fully recovers. Obviously that last one is dependent on how quickly MP returns to the character's pool- you don't want your characters simply sitting around for a month emptying and filling their pool while the world burns around them because they didn't heed the call to adventure and go to defeat the Dark Lord.

Meat and Potatoes

Let's talk about how spells are made, as that's what you're really here for. With apologies to those with dyscalculia, we're going to have to get into the math part of the system. It's just addition though, so take it slow. I believe in you! Let's build a spell to put out a small fire, using the spell formula:

Zone 5->Instant 1->Fire 5->Size 10->Decrease 10 = weight 31

As you can see, each part of the spell has a number next to it, that's the MP cost of that part of the spell. Add up the numbers to get the total "weight," of the spell. Let's look at each part individually, as the spell can be said to be completed *in sequence* when cast. The first part of the spell is used for designating the zone that magic can affect. Magic always begins inside the aura of the caster and radiates outward, so spells that can affect reality further from the mage have more weight to them. (Mana decays quickly once shaped into a spell effect, everyone knows that. So it takes more Mana to "go the distance" so to speak.) So, we take the following table for this:

Weight	Zone Distance
1	Personal only
2	Touch based
5	A 5m radius around the mage
+1	Additional 5m away

To figure out the weight for a zone distance greater than 5m, it's a little tricky I admit, but this formula (gasp! "You promised only addition!" I lied.) can be used:

$$(Xm - 5)/5 + 5 = weight$$

As an example of 100m from the caster set X = 100m
$$(100 - 5)/5 + 5 = 24$$

Makes sense, right? You take out the 5m you got for the first 5 weight, figure out how many 5m "steps" you took, then put the 5m back in. That's the weight of that portion of the spell.

So our "put out fire" spell can be used at a range of up to 5m. If it had been "zone 2" we would have to *touch* the fire to use the spell. (Not a great idea) If it had been "zone 1" we could only use the spell if we *ourselves* were on fire. Hopefully you get the idea. Any spell that deals with distance uses this table. Imagine you are simply drawing a line in space from the caster up to the distance in the table, and the spell travels from you to there. Usually accompanied by some sort of visible "beam" or at least needing to point at the recipient to allow for a dodge attempt. (See "resisting magic" later in the document) For example, a spell to teleport oneself 100m could be (and yes, I know we haven't covered weights for the other portions of the spell, bear with me):

Zone 24->Instant 1->Self 2->Space 16->Exchange 16= weight 59

As a description this spell might be: "instantly allow magic to go up to 100m away, targeting myself, and take the space 1.6m around me (that's how tall I am) and exchange it with the space there." This doesn't seem like very much as you could easily walk 100m without that much effort. This better serves as a base for a ritual magic spell, see the ritual magic section.

To be clear, this weight specifies a maximum range, not the *only* range. This teleport spell could only take you 1m if you just wanted to use it to get past a door. The intent is built into the spell when it is cast. Intent is tricky to quantify in a spell formula so just assume the magic is aware of what you want it to do.

Next up is the duration of the spell. The longer you want the spell to last, the more MP it takes. This comes from a table:

Weight	Duration
1	Instant
2	Fleeting
3	Maintained
10	Lasts up to 60 minutes
15	Lasts up to 24 hours
20	Lasts up to 7 days
25	Lasts up to 4 weeks
30	Lasts up to 12 months
40	Permanent until dispelled

Let's define these terms:

Instant- the spell happens in an instant and can't be held onto. Good for destroying something, giving someone else Mana, reshaping stone, things like that. As soon as you meet the conditions for casting the spell, it goes off. So you better be ready for it.

Fleeting- The spell sticks around until it is used. A fireball of "instant" must be thrown right away. A fireball of "fleeting" allows you to hold it ready and throw it some time after finishing the casting. Casting a spell on a blade that was "fleeting" would allow one attack before the magic was used up. Naturally some common sense must be used here, you can't use a "fleeting" spell on a sword and then wait two weeks to hit someone. It must be used within some reasonable timeframe. (Unless, again, it's related to narrative in which case go nuts?)

Maintained- The spell sticks around, possibly draining Mana or otherwise taking concentration from the mage. See the magic particulars section, there are plenty of ways to keep a mage from having 100 spells going at once.

So for example if we wanted our spell to stay active to perhaps counter a stream of fire shot from a trap, it would be weight 3. If we cast this spell on an object at weight 10, it wouldn't burn for an hour. At weight 40, unless a dispelling was used, the recipient of the spell would never catch fire again. To balance this out, magic cast at any level may be restricted in your setting. Your characters may have to discover the secrets of longer lasting magic on their own, by studying magic itself. Spell formulas at higher weights would be only available for sale on the black market, if at all, as those that discovered it on their own may jealously guard that secret. If any weight is *completely* restricted, as a natural law of the setting, magic itself simply won't operate at this level and any weight above whatever threshold you set is pointless. (For example 10 being the highest weight a duration can have, so spells cannot last more than an hour without being refreshed.)

Next in the formula, we see if the spell is restricted in some way- Fire has been chosen for this example. Nearly anything can be specified, from darkness, to books, poison, or time. If a spell is restricted to a single type of physical object, that's the least MP intensive spell to create. A concept or element is slightly more expensive, while a spell with no restriction is the most expensive. Here's a list of the weights you will use as part of the spell's restriction:

2: A specific thing such as "the specific metal 'iron'," "a single pair of shoes," or "only right arms"
5: A pure element "fire" or "air," or the concept of something such as "darkness" or "choice." You will find a list detailing many sample elements later in the document.
10: No restriction.

Now we see what *quality* we want the spell to modify. This could be heat, light, color, smell, but in this case we want to change the *size* of the flame. You'll recall it has a 10 weight, which informs the spell how much of whatever it is we're working with. The larger (or smaller) is the thing we want to work with, the more MP we must put into changing it.

Weight	Area
1	defined by an imaginary 10cm cube
+1	+10 cm to each side of the imaginary cube
10	Defined by an imaginary 1m cube
+10	+1m to each side of the imaginary cube

So a meter is 10 weight, 2.2 meters is 22 weight, and so on. As you can probably tell, a spell acting on a wide area will quickly become too weighty to use very often. There are ways around this, again, see the ritual section or Spell Modification. Note that this space must be contiguous, but two otherwise identical spells (formula/weight wise) cast by two people could be different shapes. The spell doesn't *have* to be a cube, it just has to have the volume of the cube to match the weight. If you're casting a spell to make a broomstick fly it

would be far taller than wide or long. Only the most dedicated of mages would work out the area and create the most efficient spell possible. Most simply work with cubes. For example: a spell with a weight of 5 could be a square of 50cm to a side or a rectangle of 10cm x 500cm x 25cm. 10cm is the smallest dimension you can work with, a spell simply doesn't work if you try and use a 1mm area for example. You can *manipulate* smaller things such as a tiny pebble or a single droplet of water for some reason, because those will fit into the 10cm area. You can't make a spell that only has a 1 weight but is 1mm thick and make a tripwire 10m across. There has to be a certain Mana density for it to do anything useful, and that Mana density occurs only at 10cm.

Naturally, not everyone is interested in performing the math needed for this sort of manipulation, so approximations can be used, again, *only if you still want to make the most efficient spell possible*. If you just want your world to use squares, go for it. But for those wanting rectangles but less math, for example creating a spell that works on a table that's only 3cm thick but 2m long, the weight could be far less than 20. The following table was created taking the longest dimension of the spell and the average dimensions of the other two. This will hopefully give you an approximation you can work with. So if you wanted your spell to be 4m and 20cm a 10 has a 400cm maximum, while the 4 has a 20cm dimension. Halfway on the table is about 6, so call it that and move on with your life. It's not worth squeezing every MP out of the spell unless you really, really like doing the math- in which case, do it.

Weight	Dimensions
2	10cm x 10cm x 80cm
3	15cm x 15cm x 120cm
4	20cm x 20cm x 160cm
5	25cm x 25cm x 200cm
6	30cm x 30cm x 240cm
7	35cm x 35cm x 280cm
8	40cm x 40cm x 320cm
9	45cm x 45cm x 360cm
10	50cm x 50cm x 400cm
20	100cm x 100cm x 800cm
50	250cm x 250cm x 2000cm
100	500cm x 500cm x 4000cm

This weight can also refer to "step" so 10 can be one step away, for example a spell to freeze mist would be a 20 weight because you are "stepping" from mist to water to ice. A spell to age someone 6 years would be a 6. A spell to raise temperature 4 degrees would be 4.

Back to our example. We see that we are specifically manipulating the "size" of the flame, and "size 10" means we have a cube 1m to a side our flame must fit into. Trying to put out a burning building 1m at a time may not work out too well. There are ways around this too, see the skills section.

But what if the thing we're manipulating has no "size" because it's an emotion or the concept of brotherly affection? In this case, simply give this part of the spell a 5 weight, because we'll take care of how much area is being changed in the next step.

Finally we have our verb, or what we want the spell to do. To put out a fire, a good verb is *decrease*. (The verb can be approximate; the magic knows your intent to some degree when casting the spell.) You can find a list of many verbs later on as well. Again this needs to be a 10 because we wish to take our 1m fire down to nothing. We're working with 1m of fire, so we need the entire weight of 10 behind that part of the spell. If we only wanted to decrease it by half we could, using only a 5 weight. Much of the time the weight of the verb matches the weight of something previous to that in the formula. For example, if we created a 10cm fireball our move verb would be 1 weight because we are only moving 10cm of fire. However if we created a 1m fireball (a 10 weight in the spell) we would need a move verb with a weight of 10, again to cover the entire

fireball we wish to move. What about that pesky emotion thing again though? How "big" is a spell that can change an emotion or concept, or anything without a defined size like color? We are still asking magic to work upon an area, either a person (1.5m tall?) or the two brothers (standing next to each other 1.5m tall and 2m across). So the same formula applies. Simply "surround" whatever it is you're working on with the correctly sized box.

The speed of a spell can be somewhat variable, it appears at the caster and radiates out from there. In our fireball example from above

Zone 6->Fleeting 2->Fire 10->Create 1->Move 1

We see "Zone 6" and so the fire can exist anywhere in a 10m radius around the caster. This spell can also move itself with "move 1" so we need to know what speed it moves at. In essence, the spell has the same amount of "travel" as its maximum distance. If you want this to be in an instant, or one second or turn or some other time increment, it will depend on your system, but a fireball going 10m per *turn* is going to be quite slow indeed. It is recommended to use the smallest time increment you can, while not making it so fast it cannot be dodged. We're not making bullets or lasers here. You may now realize that yes, a spell operating in an area 10m wide would be twice as fast as a spell operating in an area 5m wide. While this has "real world" implications because hitting someone with a rock going twice as fast would do more damage, damage is a function of the spell (fire 10 in this case) so don't worry too much about that part.

The verb can also have a weight directly related to the impact of the spell on reality. A 20 "destroy" would be twice as damaging as a 10 "destroy." Other verbs such as refine, bestow, or increase would change in power as more weight was added to the verb. A spell to increase the number of beans in a sack given weight "5" would create 5 beans. But that same spell with the verb "increase 25" would create 25 beans. (Creating food with magic is a bad idea, see below)

So the spell description would be: "Target a fire, no more than 1m on a side and 5m away, and decrease it to a maximum of 0m." This could simply be to make it smaller, or put it out entirely. Verbs can be fairly flexible, after all. However, this spell could never make fire or increase the size of a fire, so a better spell would have the verb "change" or "modify." That spell could decrease 1m of fire or take a small spark and increase it to a 1m cube. You have complete control over the target as long as it fits in the area of the cube specified by the weight and description of the spell. A spell to create a thin wall always creates that same wall. Only with Mana Shaping (see the skills section) could you change the thickness of the wall on the fly. Now you see what was meant above, about the characters finding less than ideal spells at first and having to "fix" them on their own. This is detailed in the example spell section as well.

Now let's do a creation spell. Recall our base formula:

zone->duration->restriction->quality->verb

In this case, restriction is the thing we are creating with the weight being related to "how much" we are getting, and quality is going to be the volume what we created appears in. The verb then allows what we just created to do something. Here's an example spell: Create 5 vines up to 5m away that instantly grow from nothing out of the ground to entangle the recipient creature. The vines appear in a circle 1m around the recipient and immediately move to restrain them.
Zone 5->Maintained 3->Vines 5->Create 10->Restrain 15 = weight 28

Let's begin with "Vines 5," as "Maintained 3" is simply from the table and we know "Zone 5" allows the spell to go 5m from the caster. We want vines, so that's next in the formula with a 5 weight, so we will get 5 vines. And here you may be thinking "but shouldn't it be "vines 2" because it's a specific thing, and that's

what the table above says?" Good catch. Creation spells are a little different. When the recipient of your spell already exists there is no need to specify "how much" there is, only that the spell is a unrestricted (10 weight), restricted to a specific object (2 weight), or a concept or element (5 weight). Now we are telling the spell to convert Mana into matter, or emotion, or concept, or what have you. So we need to specify how much. Rather than making the formula more complex (fire 5->amount 10->create 1) which would also make it more expensive, we simply slot in the appropriate weight here. In this case, 5, for 5 vines. If we had a 10 weight there, we would get 10 vines. Returning briefly to the fireball example to show what happens when the amount is not individual things:

Zone 6->Fleeting 2->Fire 10->Create 1->Move 1

You can now see we are creating "10 units" of fire. 20 "units" of fire in the same area would, logically, be more damaging, brighter, hotter, as expected. If we were creating ice it would be twice as cold. This is how we calculate damage and other effects should our spell hit something. In this case, consider the fire to do "10" damage to the recipient. What this means may vary and is discussed elsewhere. We return now to our vines example.

Next is "Create 10." We know each +1 weight to the formula adds 10cm to the spell so this gives us a 1m cube of area to work with, roughly. There's no specific part of the spell that calls out exactly how the vines are situated in the 1m cube, so it could be up to the caster, random, always at the edges, whatever you decide upon for your world that makes sense.

Now we want to restrict the movement of the recipient, a 1m box is good enough for this unless they are *very* wide. Our verb is to restrain them. Where does the 15 weight for this come from, giving our total spell a weight of 28? Shouldn't it be simply 10, for a 1m box? We're putting in extra Mana to make this spell harder to resist. We'll cover this next, but for now simply know that using verbs like damage, restrain, or banish, the weight given is the effect of the spell. In this case, someone making an opposed check (strength, escaping, dodge) of greater than 15 can break out of the spell. (Naturally this will have to be adjusted if a 2 year old has a strength of 15 but that just means the Mana pool will be bigger in any case and everything will still work out.) Similarly if a spell is "damage 10" but your world's inhabitants have 1,000 health at birth, it's not going to do anything. Scale these values appropriately. It may be that "damage 10" means 100 damage or 1, based on how much health those in the world have. In this way you can make sure spells don't need 100 MP or more to barely scratch someone.
"But didn't you just say the "units" of fire was the damage?" Another good question dear reader. The "damage" verb as I have just described is reserved in cases like this; perhaps instead of restraining your foe you wished the vines to lash out and hurt them.

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Vines 5->Create 10->Move 10->Damage 10 weight 43

This would cause the vines to move on their own, lashing out to damage anyone that touched them. You see? A recipient could make a resistance check against their "move 10" verb, perhaps dodge or an evasion skill, and be damaged for "10" should they fail to evade.

Here's another example, this one using an area for the verb;

Zone 2->Instant 1->Paper 2->Writing 3->Remove 3
Remove all writing on a piece of paper you are touching. The weight of the "remove" verb is only 3 because a standard size sheet of US paper is slightly less than 30cm long and that's the longest edge we're worried about. Trying to target a poster or a billboard would require more weight on the remove verb or Mana Shaping (see the skills section).

And that's basically all there is to it. Start a spell with the distance, then duration, name the restriction, if any, use quality/verb pairs or a series of verbs to build the effect of the spell. Use the tables and sample spells to get a feel for it, and you can easily create whatever spells you need at the time. Every part of the spell means something, and leaving some part out may mean the spell works, simply not in the way you intend. For example creating vines and not telling them to do anything would hardly be worth it. If your spell looked like this

Zone 1->Maintained 3->Vines 10->Create 10 = weight 23

Around *you*, (inside your aura to be specific, as "zone 1" means the spell can't go further than that away from you) 1m worth of 10 vines would grow as the spell doesn't target anything, not even hiding you because there's no verb. They would just fall at your feet and do nothing. Same with the destroy writing spell. This spell doesn't actually do anything.

Zone 2->Instant 1->Writing 5->Remove 5

Yes, you specify the spell is restricted to writing but now the spell is looking for some quality of the writing to change. Writing becomes the "noun" but there is no "quality" to remove. Paper->Writing works because the writing is a quality of the paper that can be manipulated. Writing->Remove doesn't work because there are many qualities of the writing- the color and type of ink, the brightness, the thickness, and so on.

The weight of magic

So now that you know each part of a spell has a weight, you can see that simple spells are easier and complex spells are harder. Let's show some concrete examples:

Simple Fireball: At your hand create a small (10cm across) ball of fire, that moves in a straight line at a speed of 10m per second and does <damage> upon impact.
Zone 6->Fleeting 2->Fire 10->Create 1->Move 1 = weight of 20

Homing Explosive Fireball: Create a small (10cm across) ball of fire in your hand, that tracks a creature at a speed of 10m per second and upon impact explodes in a 2m radius doing <damage> upon impact to the creature.
Zone 6->Fleeting 2->Fire 10->Create 1->Move 1->Creature 10->Track 1->Explode 20 = weight of 51

So as you can see, adding the verb "explode" and giving the spell the ability to track the recipient more than doubled the weight of the spell. In the spell creation section, we'll get into how much weight to assign each part, and while this may seem complex, it adds a lot of flexibility into the system. Spells can be more or less efficient in the world. A spell that has a high weight for a minor effect might be purchased more cheaply than a spell with less weight, or has more effects for the same weight. A character that buys a cheap spell can "take it apart" to see why it's so weighty and try fixing it. If an RPG, this benefits the person running the game because they can sell almost-but-not-quite what the person "buying" the spell wants, forcing them to use more resources to cast it or take more time trying to fix it. The mage gets to interact with the rules of the world (the very reason they probably became a mage in the first place) and the person running the game controls what magic is in the world.
    For now, take a look at the example spells to get a feel for spell weights. Then you'll be able to more accurately determine how much "fuel" you want your characters to have. You can directly say the weight of the spell is the cost, or that there is a universal reduction in weight perhaps by a half or even two thirds, if you want more magic to be done during the course of a day. So even if you give each character a set amount, not based on any stat, you can still get a feel for how much magic they can do.

Spell Grammar

This system is fairly forgiving, as long as you can come up with a noun-quality-verb structure for what you want to the spell to do. However, there is a consideration; What if you put the terms in another order? The spell is "put into the box" in order, and thus is applied in that order as well.

distance->duration->restriction->verb->quality

Take clothes->protection->enlarge and clothes->enlarge->protection. The second spell makes the clothes larger (if effect, they protect a larger area), the first increases their protective quality. If the recipient of the spell has the quality already, you tell it that quality before working upon it. However, if it doesn't have the quality, you put it at the end.

Here's what is meant by that.

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Liquid 5->Change 2->Poison 2(turn a liquid into a poison)
 vs
Zone 5->Maintained 3->Clothes 5->Protection 5->Enlarge 10 (Make clothes absorb 10 more damage before breaking. Recall that "protection" is a nebulous quality without a defined size, so it has a 5 weight here.)

Clothes protect, but not every liquid is a poison. Here's what happens if you reverse the terms in the liquid spell;

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Liquid 5->Poison 2->Change 2(change the type of poison, has no effect on liquids that are not a poison)
A better spell that did the same thing would be
Zone 5->Maintained 3->Poison 2->Change 2->Poison 2
because you know you're casting it on a poison to change the type, it may as well be cheaper to begin with.

Here's another example of how changing just the order changes the spell

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Unrestricted 10->Poison 15->Delay 10(make a poison act 10x slower)
Zone 5->Maintained 3->Unrestricted 10->delay 10->Poison 15(poisons a creature 10 minutes later)
Zone 5->Maintained 3->Poison 15->creature 5->Delay 10(turn the poison already inside a creature into one that makes them delay all actions they want to take by "10" whatever that means in your setting)
Zone 5->Maintained 3->Poison 2->Delay 15->creature 5 (invalid spell, a poison does not have the innate quality "delay" to act upon)

Magic Particulars

A Time to Cast: In many mediums, even complex spells seem to take no time to cast as the action seems to "pause," such that the caster of the spell can take the spotlight and not simply be punched in the face by their opponent. You must decide how long spells take to cast. In mediums with discreet actions, you may choose to decide that all spells simply take one action. They are a button that is pressed in the soul and a spell effect comes out, consuming the needed MP as it does so with no effort on the part of the caster. Another valid method would be to say a number of actions must be expended related to the weight of the spell. Most systems abstract time in some way, so simply decide how much time you want a spell of a certain weight to take, and work from there to say how long it takes in your world.

Maintenance: What does "maintained" mean for your world? If you cast a spell on yourself that creates magical armor for an hour you don't have to think about it again. But casting a spell you maintain is somewhat different. Usual options are to have the spell drain some Mana from you at some interval, or perhaps make other actions done by the mage more difficult as they concentrate on keeping the Mana connection from themselves to the spell open. For this type, decide if it's a flat number based on number of Maintained spells (-1 for each spell?) or some ratio based on spell weight. (-1 for every 10 weight of the spell)

Maintenance Again: Spells can be cast Maintained or instant, what does this mean? For instance, a shaping spell that turns a slab of rock into a statue could be made as an instant spell, and the rock will not go back to the way it was before the spell was cast. But most other spells, if not Maintained or made at least somewhat permanent, will revert their changes very quickly. For example, a spell that creates a thick smoke in the air cast as an instant spell will create smoke, and then the smoke will be gone. Casting it and maintaining the spell will keep the smoke around, but once maintenance is ended, once again the smoke will vanish in the blink of an eye. A spell that changes someone's shape, when ended, returns them to normal. A spell to give a sword a sharper edge would have to be made permanent or that edge would be lost. You perhaps get the idea. The general rule of thumb here is, if something is being created; smoke, a shape, an edge, it won't stick around. If something is being physically changed; the shape of a stone, temperature of a rock, color of someone's hair, that change will persist.

"Ah, but isn't changing the shape of a stone and the shape of a person the same thing?" you ask. Not quite. You could make a "creature shaping" spell and painfully force the animal into a new shape of similar mass just like you make a sculpture out of a block of marble. But that would be a *physical* change, not a magical one. (It would probably also be extremely painful!) An instant, magical change of something reverts, a physical, slower change would not.

What ends a spell: Let's return to our fireball speed example of
        Zone 6->Fleeting 2->Fire 10->Create 1->Move 1
Is this fireball simply going to travel forever, especially if it misses the recipient? There's nothing in the formula that specifies a *maximum* distance, only that it can initially travel 10m from the caster and goes 10m per time increment. Obviously a spell must be able to persist away from the caster: maintained, timed, and possibly "permanent" spells do exist. (Casting a spell to keep your toilet clean for a year is pointless if you have to sit in the same room for the entire year, right?) Is this spell the same?

To put it in practical terms, consider a spell to be created with a purpose in mind. In this case, that purpose is to hit and damage something. As the spell is "Fleeting 2" hitting something ends the spell. It has accomplished that purpose and goes away. But what if the recipient is 20m away from the caster when the spell is cast? The fireball has been created and is on the move, and has yet to accomplish the purpose. It would then move another 10m in whatever time increment you have decided spells move at. Say the recipient now dodges it. The fireball moves another 10m and cannot hit the recipient because it's gone past it. The purpose can't be fulfilled, and the spell ends. A *Maintained* fireball is a bit different; it can be controlled by the caster using the Move verb. Up to a point. Within the initial radius of "zone 6" the caster has control of the spell using the verbs, in this case "Move 1." However, once past that radius the spell becomes "undirected." It

would simply go in whatever direction the caster last directed it to go in, not caring if it hit something or not. Yes, it would simply keep going until the caster ran out of MP to maintain it, the fireball hit something else along the way, or the caster ended the spell themselves.

This applies to any Maintained or semi-permanent spell. As soon as the caster passes out of the original range, the spell simply and "mindlessly" continues doing whatever it was created to do. The connection between the mage and the spell is broken, so while the spell persists, unless the spell specifically had some verb allowing outside control, it would not be mutable.

Food and water: All spells follow the rules of magic, and this is no different. I feel it deserves a special mention to avoid any confusion; You make food with magic that lasts an hour and you eat it, an hour later all benefit from that food vanishes. You can make permanent food at 40 weight, but having a dispel spell cast on you would undo it, so if all you ate is magical food for a month, you would instantly die. So most people don't rely on magical food or drink. Much better to simply leave growing spells to the farmers and make sure food is inexpensive. As for water, use spells that condense water out of the air or purify less savory sources (you know what I mean) if you're that desperate. Simply making water out of nothing is a bad idea, at least in the long term. (I mean go ahead and splash yourself with conjured water to cool down, or put out a fire. Just don't drink it.)

Dispelling Magic: This brings us to a good point. If you can just get a bunch of spells with a permanent weight cast on yourself, making you stronger, faster, smarter, armored, better with a blade, etc. why don't you? You can! You can have as many spells cast upon you (or objects) as you want. But if that magic is now disconnected from anyone maintaining it, a very simple dispel magic

zone 2->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->spell 5->Stop 20 = weight 38

will destroy all your "permanent" spells in a 2m radius, which is large enough to cover a person. All those advantages you enjoyed a moment ago are now gone. There is no consideration for the weight of the original spells because there is nothing behind them. They are in a sense fragile, like a pane of glass. Easily shattered, because there is no connection to the Mana Core of the caster any longer. Any spellcaster worth their salt is going to have a dispelling spell on hand and cast it at the start of every fight just to make sure. It's just common sense. Any spellcaster that does not do this deserves to be beaten up.

As for dispelling a Maintained spell? There could be several options you can adopt. One method would be some sort of contest of wills between the two mages. The dispelling magic and the original spell clash, and both mages make some kind of stat check to see which spell prevails. Another option would simply say the amount of weight given to the dispelling magic must equal or exceed the original weight. For example, a restraining spell is used on a creature

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Unrestricted 10->Movement 5->Deny 20   43

Our dispelling magic above would be inadequate because the weight of the restraining spell is 43. You would need a spell like this

Zone 2->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Spell 10->Stop 20   43

to dispel the restraining spell. Yes, in theory you can have spell 5->Stop 25 and accomplish the same thing. The area and the effect are bigger. The point is the dispelling magic has the needed weight, it's not completely relevant how it got there. (Unless for your world it is, of course, then make sure everything has the "right" weight)

An option that can be chosen apart from dispelling magic is simply wounding the mage. This may disrupt their concentration enough to lose any spells, though you may be generous and give them some sort of "resistance check" to losing their spells in this way.

Resisting Magic: Another important topic is how recipients avoid being affected by spells. As previously stated, all magic begins with the caster and must be somehow delivered to the recipient. (See the skills section) So the recipient should always get some kind of dodge because the magical energies should be visible enough and slow moving enough to avoid. But what happens if they are not avoided? Some systems allow a "resistance check" which seems counter-intuitive. Take the swish and flick example again- when a restraining spell cast by a young witch targeted another young boy, did that boy get the opportunity to "fight off" that magic? No, of course not. He simply fell over. It's magic- he was hit by magic. No amount of wishing the spell away should be capable of doing so. But the option is there. Strictly physical contests should allow resistance. For example the restraining vines from above could be ripped up or worked past with a bit of effort, so some common sense on a case by case basis will need to be used. Magical vines are something physical a character can struggle against. A mystical paralysis, not so much.

Learning Magic: Spells have to come from somewhere. This can be: granted by prayer from a deity, given by a system, researched over the years with diligent study and traded between mages, or innate to the character. This last type probably doesn't allow for gaining other spells, how often do "superhero" type characters change their powers? It would take a scripted event of some kind to do that. You will need to think about this and incorporate it into your world. The otherwise identical world of magic is very different if spells can be learned from books checked out of libraries or are only purchased for hundreds or thousands of local currency. If magic is restricted, who is doing that restricting and why? This is more a world-building exercise and included only to remind you it is an important consideration.

Even if you can check spellbooks out of libraries, that doesn't mean you're in the clear. Spells could be difficult to learn and master or easy. Decide upon some standard for your characters- can they learn a spell in an afternoon? An hour? A number of hours related to the weight of the spell? If some characters can learn spells faster (due to innate intelligence, some perk or background of the character) then they are probably weaker or slower to do other things to make up for it.

But How Many: An important consideration once you know how the characters learn spells is how many they can learn. A chess master might memorize thousands of board positions, and every magic user yearns to be an "archmage" or "thousand master" but those are specialized elites. How many spells does the "average" mage know? There are many options here as well: based on memory, based on some arbitrary capacity chosen by "the gods," or a numeric restriction based on the size of the core. Let's take them all in order. You could simply say a character knows a number of spells based off some multiplier of a stat, like a knowledge based stat. Or in a point buy system you could have a certain number for each point you put into your spell capacity. You could also tie the number of spells directly to the amount of MP the character has. This is a bit unfair because all spells start the same way, so you're being "penalized," if you will, for knowing a lot of spells that last 1 hour. You can remove this redundancy by saying each part of the formula is only counted once. Thus having three spells that have a weight of 10 for lasting an hour only count "10" towards how many you can know. This is best for worlds where the characters use "manual casting." In other words, they develop their spells on the fly using the parts of formulas they know rather than complete spells. These last two are the most thematic of the options, as spells are supposed to be engraved on the core anyway, so you're directly tying the number of spells to the maximum MP. If you want to learn more spells, you must also increase the size of your core, which has the happy side effect of giving you more MP. Balance the amount of MP vs weight and how many spells you think is "fair" for a character to know. If you're in a low MP world and still want a lot of spells to be known, again a multiplier can be applied giving you 2x or 3x "capacity" above your maximum MP for known spells. It will also have to be balanced against how quickly they can be learned, as above. If one can simply carry a spellbook with plenty of useful spells and learn them in a few minutes as needed that's very different than if it takes an entire day to learn the most basic of spells.

Here's a concrete example, a spell list for a fairy I put together. I had her stats between 1-10 and chose a 50x multiplier on her knowledge stat of 5, giving her 250MP as a starting character. I gave her a "perk" that doubled this amount, and created the following spells, in no particular order;

Spell Name	Formula	weight
Augment Strength	Zone 1->1 hour 10->Self 2->Strength 5->Enhance 25	43
Fireball	Zone 6->Instant 1->Fire 5->Create 1->Move 1	18
TK object	Zone 5->Maintained 3->Unrestricted 10->Location 20->Move 20	58
Heal	Zone 2->Instant 1->Healing 5->Create 10->Apply 10	28
Grow plants	Zone 5->Maintained 3->Plant 5->Growth 10->Accelerate 10	33
Grow Self	Zone 1->1 hour 10->Self 2->Growth 20->Apply 20	53
Become Light	Zone 2->Maintained 3->Self 2->Light 5->Become 3	15
Blink 20m	Zone 8->Instant 1->Self 2->Space 3->Exchange 3	17
Become Unseen	Zone 2->Maintained 3->Self 2->Light 5->Ignore 3	15
30m divination	Zone 10->Maintained 3->Self 2->Mind 5->expand 30	50
Unlock	Zone 5->Instant 1->Lock 2->State 5->Reverse 5	18
Strong Dispelling	Zone 5->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Spell 5->Stop 50	71
Reflect Magic	Zone 2->Instant 1->Spell 5->Direction 5->Reverse 20	33
Measure Quality	Zone 2->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Properties 10->Know 10	33
See in Darkness	Zone 1->1 hour 10->Eyes 2->Dark 5->ignore 3	21
Manipulate Metal	Zone 6->Maintained 3->Metal 5->Shape 10->Change 10	34
Reveal lies	Zone 1->1 hour 10->Self 2->Truth 5->Know 10	28
Wash something	Zone 5->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Filth 5->Wash 10	31
Repair an object	Zone 2->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Damage 10->Repair 10	33

Many of these spells already have a reduced cost because of the simple fact she's only 22cm tall. She doesn't need the magic she works on herself to extend very far, resulting in a savings. But using the method, "knowing a number of spells, the weight of which is equal to the MP of the character" doesn't work in this case because the total weight is 632. Way too much! Using the second method and taking each separate part of the formula on its own, thus removing duplicates, allows her to have an excess capacity of 9. You'll notice several spells with a variation on the formula, like grow self and grow plants, because I figure she took whatever spell she learned first (probably grow plants) and learned to apply it to herself just to reuse as much as the formula as she could. I felt this was a decent spell list for an NPC fairy to know, she didn't have a crazy high MP and 19 spells is decent. I've been in games where, as a starting character, I had 50+ spells and games where I had 6, so it's just a matter of how the world is set up. (They were both different universes, and thus different rule sets) The world this fairy came from had fairly easy access to magic so she would be a typical "person" living there. Adjust all of this to fit your narrative as needed, but I was happy with her list and could then measure everyone else against that standard.

Magical Execution: I'm talking about execution in the computer sense of the word, not just killing someone with magic. The formula for a spell is taken in order. Let's return to our "put out a fire" spell from before but make it maintained.

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Fire 5->Size 10->Decrease 10 = weight 33

As you see, there is no "move" verb in this spell so wherever the 1-5m range you first specify is all you get. You couldn't put out a forest fire by walking around with this spell it would have to be cast in 1m "chunks." All this does is make sure that while you maintain that spell, 1m chunk of forest can't catch fire again. But what if you added a move verb? You can. The problem is, where would you put it?

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Fire 5->Move 10->Size 10->Decrease 10 = weight 43

That allows you to "pick up" 1m worth of fire, move it up to 5m per <agreed upon time segment>, and then decrease it. Now you might say "that's fine, I can move 1m of fire to overlap with another 1m of fire, and they both get decreased! I get two castings of the spell for the price of one!" Wrong. You targeted the first 1m of fire, not the second 1m. You can't "go back" in the formula. Using this spell to move a chunk of fire atop another doesn't allow the second chunk to be changed in any way. Let's put it elsewhere:

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Fire 5->Size 10->Decrease 10->Move 10 = weight 43

This spell is very odd, and you should have a stern talk with whoever sold it to you. It decreases fire, then tries to move it. I guess if you wanted a bonfire to be smaller and "over there" it could be useful but how often is that going to happen? You see how the order matters and can make a spell less efficient?

Where does magic appear: Let's say you are creating a long "bar" of fire, directing the fire shooting out of a palm, that you want to sweep it across a battlefield. Your formula for the spell looks like this;

Zone 6->Maintained 3->Fire 10->Create 7->Move 7 = weight of 33

Let us imagine this spell's dimensions are 20cmX20cmX850cm. Note "zone 6" because as your spell can only go about 5m anyway until it becomes undirected, you want to use the minimum MP you can.

"But wait," you now pause, quite uncertain. "Magic starts at the caster, technically inside the aura. If I'm making 8.5m of fire right next to me aren't I burning myself to a crisp?"

While it is true that magic begins at the aura, recall that to start this spell, the mage ejected it from the aura and thus it traveled a certain distance. The spell is not Fleeting -> so once it was built it must take effect, but the mage does have enough control over it to allow it to go 1cm or 5m away before the fire is created. You would have to make sure the spell specified the fire had an origin and went away from you, rather than the origin being the center and having the fire shoot out both sides. Which in this case *would* fry you. After all, a spell to create a *spinning bar* of fire would look exactly the same as the above, only the intent would be different. Magic can't protect the user against bad outcomes from their spells. The distance the spell went from the aura would then depend on the comfort level of the mage, and the situation. Realistically, you can't make a spell that directly pours fire from your hand, unless you make yourself immune to being burned by fire. Because any amount of fire near your hand is going to burn you.

Working against the mage: Much of this document focuses on how the mage works against the world, but some consideration must be given to how the world works against the mage. Some concepts are built in: the aura of the mage clearly shows they are about to do magic. The spell they cast can be dodged. Magic can take much longer to cast than simply swinging a sword or pulling a trigger. But what if mages are *still* too powerful? Other restrictions can be placed upon them.

1) If mages are gathering MP and do not simply cast a spell "in one action" they can be made more vulnerable during this period. Any movement while they are casting a spell causes them to lose any gathered MP, forcing them to start over. So naturally they will become target #1 once their aura lights up, so they must at least dodge and start their spell again if attacked. Or be forced to use lesser weight spells so they get a chance to act and so their damage potential is limited.

2) Another good restriction would be to make the zone somewhat visible, even to those that don't do magic. Then anyone facing the mage would know the exact limit of the next spell they were going to cast, and could simply stay out of the mage's zone, and thus be perfectly safe.

3) To further slow the mage, the action of creating the zone and then creating the spell could be separated. They are listed in the formula together as a convenience, so you always know the total weight of any spell, but that could be dropped off and the mage *must* create a zone of some size as their first action. (Perhaps using a separate skill created for that purpose.) All magic they do for that encounter is thus limited to that space. (Unless they drop it and create a new one, of course.) Naturally this reduces the cost of subsequent spells, as the zone calculation can be dropped off. But coupled with the above restriction of a visible zone, attackers would have nothing to fear from a mage a few meters away, as long as they stay away from the zone covered by the mage. What about the mage trying to dodge thrown rocks or whatever? Good question! If you wanted to be nice, this zone could remain, as it's been created separately from any spell. The zone shouldn't move with the mage, (unless it does, again how nice do you want to be?) but as long as they stayed within it, the zone could remain up. But it too could go away if the mage moved too much.

Ritual

Ritual magic is an important consideration because typically magic can only affect the local area around the practitioner. Done alone, with specially prepared Mana "batteries" -or simply a very high MP regeneration rate- or with others to provide their Mana at the same time, rituals can make spells usually impossible for one person possible. For example: scrying spells or teleportation spells are hardly worthwhile for the average mage because Mana expenditure is typically measured in meters away from them. A single person would hardly be able to see further than they would normally be able to manipulate Mana because they simply couldn't put enough magical energy into a single spell. Ritual magic can change that.

The term "ritual magic" could be a misnomer, as ritual calls to mind circles of power, candles, incense being burned, skyclad woman dancing in the woods… Sorry what was I saying? The point is one person simply sitting quietly for a few <time intervals> in order to accumulate enough Mana for a longer distance spell could be considered a ritual casting. This is completely up to the design of the world, but should be allowed in order to work longer distance spells. There is a skill of Spell Empowering (see the skills section) but ritual goes a step beyond that. Basically allowing many, many actions of Mana expenditure at a time instead of a single burst.

For ritual casting, a specialized formula would have to be used, replacing the component that usually determines distance with a variable. The spell is then partially cast and held until the desired quantity of Mana has been reached. Naturally, all participants must know this specialized formula, unless in your world they themselves are simply functioning as the "batteries" and are otherwise uninvolved. It is up to you if special physical materials are required, or if it is all performed in the mind. (There could even be bonuses to having materials but no penalty for their absence.) You must also decide how effective the ritual is; does it follow the rule that every 10 MP gains you a meter of distance, or does it convert to kilometers so the ritual doesn't literally take forever just to do a scrying spell? This also brings up the question of time. Do you want 1 MP per second? 10 MP per minute? If a ritual is going to work on the kilometer scale at the start, perhaps 10 per minute is a good starting point.

To create a ritual two things would be required; knowledge of the spell that you wish to perform and time to convert that spell into a ritual. This would be best done with a magical theory check (see the skills section) at some difficulty. A good rule of thumb to convert a spell is one hour per noun/verb pair that makes up the spell. You would only have to convert the spell in this way once, as long as it was written down, so you can remember it for next time, anyway. These directions can then be followed by anyone with the ritual magic skill (see the skills section).

Perks

Perks are a way of making some characters exceptional. Even in a world where everyone is born able to do magic, some people would have a greater capacity for Mana, or for gathering it. These could also be given by various deities, bargained for with demons, or added artificially with crystals and the like implanted into the body. Level rewards, if your system has levels, are also a likely consideration. Most systems have some kind of reward mechanism, or a way to start one character having more capacity than another.

In theory, these could also be turned against a character, having the opposite effect on them to gain in another area. For example, the opposite of the Expanded Mana Core would halve the total MP the character would have, but thus allow them to gain Faster Mana Recovery or Lesser Maintenance Cost. Which is not to say that all of these are created equally, but a point buy system could assign a cost to each of these and thus balance them out.

Some of these could also be considered "skills," allowing the characters to work at them at their own rate, further customizing their "build." I consider these to have a much larger impact than simple skills however, and should probably be treated differently.

Expanded Mana Core: A character with this perk has more MP than they typically would be expected to. Every time it is given, decide on how much extra is given. If a regular occurrence with a "level up" the amount could be smaller, such as 10 MP per level. If more expensive or only available to new characters, a tough "personal quest," or expensive materials being consumed in the processes perhaps double capacity per time "purchased."

Faster Mana Recovery: A character with this perk can recover their Mana more quickly than they would be normally expected to. Every time it is given, decide on how much the rate changes. If a regular occurrence with a "level up," the amount could be smaller, such as an extra 10 MP per hour. If more expensive or only available to new characters, a tough "personal quest," or expensive materials being consumed in the processes, perhaps double the rate per time "purchased."

Faster Spell Casting: Simply put, if your world requires more than one "action" of casting, reduce that rate for characters with this perk. The amount will depend upon how time is represented and this perk should be allowed multiple times, each time dropping the time required by some minor amount. I would hesitate to allow it being taken too often, or capping total time saved to 1/2 the normal rate, if you didn't pick "all spells take one action," it was for a reason and someone breaking that rule "of the universe" should truly be a world power.

Lesser Maintenance Cost: If your world applies some penalty to a mage with active spell effects, take this to lower it. That could mean half the MP is drained per interval, the severity of the penalty is reduced, whatever is in line with what you choose to impose upon the mage. If the penalty starts high, consider allowing this multiple times with a similar reduction each time.

Mana Disruption: Use your aura to interact with a spell as it is being cast by another. This disrupts the original spellcaster and causes their spell to fail. Naturally, they would have to be close enough to touch the other caster, or use Aura Shaping to mingle the auras, and there should be some sort of opposed contest for this. Taken more than once, it could have additional effects such as: steal the MP the original caster would have put into the spell; Steal the spell itself, allowing the thief to direct the spell instead of the caster with no MP cost; Learn the spell the target was going to use. Or the person taking this perk could have access to a special skill, and the better they are at the skill the more effects they can master.

Mana Physicality: Allow Mana to be used to bolster the physical body of the mage. For a set amount of MP, perhaps 10:1, allow an action or round to pass where the mage increases a physical stat directly with MP. This could also be taken multiple times, lowering the amount of Mana needed by a certain amount each time. The ratio of course depends on how much Mana one has, and what range of stats the characters enjoy. Having 100 Mana and 1,000 strength means adding another 2 or 3 to that strength number is mostly meaningless. Having 1,000 Mana and 3 strength means adding 3 is doubling your strength.

Skills

A note on skills: Some of these skills will be mandatory, others optional. You will have to look them over, decide which to implement, and how to implement them. Can mages get better at them with some kind of XP system? Do they "level" with the character? Should a number of hours of practice be required, when not adventuring? This should follow however other skills in your system are handled, and simply slot in, so to speak, next to them. Skills can also be upgraded, so your players have even more to work towards. Once they have reached the maximum skill level in whatever system you are using, the skill can be "reset" and become a new skill that can be bought up again. These upgraded skills are listed with the original skill.

Another consideration is that not all skills are created equal. For example, it would be an odd system that specified individual instruments in terms of their learning difficultly. On your character sheet you would just note down the character could play "Instrument X" at a certain level. But if "instrument X" was the tin whistle, far fewer hours of practice would be needed vs. say the piano. They take different amounts of practice to master, and that can be reflected for these skills as well. If you want your characters to automatically succeed at some of these things, but not others, by all means give them the maximum rating right at the start, or make them easier to advance. Or simply decide no check is needed, the skill is simply inherent to the world and always succeeds.

Aura Shaping (optional): When a spell is cast it originates from one point on the caster, inside the aura, and radiates outward. Usually the hand but any mage that experiments will certainly discover a spell can instead have an origin of any part of the body, as the aura covers the entire person. This skill allows the aura to be shaped, meaning the origin could be placed away from the body, for example extending the aura to cast a spell around a corner without risking a limb. At higher skill levels, the aura could be split such that two or more castings of the spell can be done simultaneously. Naturally this increases the weight of the spell by the number of castings.

Upgrade: Aura Expansion. Your aura extends to 1m past your body at all times. Spells can now originate from any point within 1m of you and the base difficulty now relates to expanding past that point. This upgrade can be performed multiple times, adding 1m to your aura each time.

Imbuing (optional): Magic can already be made semi-permanent by having a weight of 40 placed into the formula, should you choose to allow that weight in spells. However, this leaves the object you are placing the magic into vulnerable to a simple dispelling. This skill compensates for that, requiring time and possibly material components, to create long lasting magical objects. Choose a method that works for your world, such as etching runes, placing crystals, or simply casting the same spell over and over again until it is completely self-sustaining. (Perhaps 100 times per 10 weight of the spell?) The object can then resist a dispelling in some way, or if dispelled, begins to work again once the dispelling is gone. (The typical dispelling spell would be instant, so it wouldn't disrupt the item for longer than "an action" whatever that means in your setting)

This skill is also what would be used to create single use items such as healing potions, or an emergency teleport crystal. You wouldn't want that sort of thing dispelled, would you? Naturally, some might want to chance it, and very cheap "healing potions" and the like would be available for sale, simply given an expiration date. As you can spend as much time as you want (in theory) putting Mana into the object, the usual restriction of 10 MP per 1m would no longer apply. So for instance you could cast a teleport spell into a specially prepared object, each time adding the Mana to the effective distance the object will take you. Given the usual rate of MP regeneration, this would make such items quite expensive, as many days of work would be required for a single one. But there's no reason such an item couldn't exist for sale.

If you do not allow the 40 weight component, I would highly recommend including this method, even if it's only for large magical artifacts and is a "lost art" that could be rediscovered as part of the character's adventures.

Magical Theory (required): This skill represents a character's knowledge about magic in general. The particulars of crafting spells in the world, estimating how much Mana a spell they just saw cast consumed, or how to convert a spell into a ritual.

Mana Recovery (optional): Even with the assistance of a "system" to help someone cast spells, it is highly unlikely such casting would be "perfect." In other words, Mana may leak away from the spell and be lost. This skill, used after a successful casting of a spell, can recover MP used to a certain degree. A good starting point would be a maximum of some fraction of the MP used, gathered with a secondary action, as a normal skill check for the system. Waiting any longer than that means the Mana has already dissipated too much to recover.

Upgrade: Mastery of Recovery. Double the amount of Mana recovered when using this skill.

Mana Sense (mandatory): Get a feel for the magic that surrounds you. A wide ranging skill that could tell the Mana density of a certain area, detect lingering Mana after a spell was cast, feel out magical traps, determine the effects of magical objects. The better you do in this skill, the more information you should get from it. In highly magical societies, mastery of this skill could even compensate for loss of sight, allowing you to navigate simply by "seeing" where the absence of Mana is. (If it does not penetrate solid objects, that is.) Even granting you a form of "X-ray" vision as you can feel the shape of magic beyond barriers or further than you might see, for example in a fog bank or at night.

Upgrade: Manasphere Witness. Witness the past of an object or get a glimpse of its future. No longer need to roll magic sense, you can see the flow of magic with an act of concentration. Make a check in this skill at an increasing difficulty the further into the past or future you wish to see.

Mana Shaping (mandatory): Spells assume an area which is a cube, ranging from 10cm to a side to basically as big as you want, if you have the MP for it. The actual shape is determined on a per spell basis, meaning two spells of the same weight could have a different shape. The shaping skill can modify that "box" to be other shapes, when the spell is cast. For example, a fireball spell such as this one:

Zone 7->Maintained 3->Fire 10->Create 10->Move 10

could be turned into a fire wall with Mana Shaping, turning the 100cm cube into a wall 10cm in width, 1000cm long and 100cm high. (And you thought all that geometry you learned wouldn't come in handy in your life!) It could be curved, or it could become a bar of fire 10cm in width, 10cm in height, but 10,000cm long. As long as volume stays consistent it can really be any shape. As with other skills decide upon a difficulty for this; either adding weight to the spell, requiring an action before the spell is cast, or taking time after the spell is cast to manually shape the spell. The greater the change to the spell, the more difficult it should be. This 100m bar of fire should probably be fairly difficult to pull off, after all. Your "Zone X->" would have to support this as well, being a 24, so the magic could go that far away from you. In this example, the bar could only be 15m long.

Meditation (optional): Increase the amount of MP you regenerate in some way. This could be to turn the regeneration of X MP per hour into X MP per minute, or simply provide a flat increase, for example gaining you 1 MP per minute. Alternatively, how well you perform this skill could have an impact on how much you recover. Beginners would have to concentrate and probably stay still while more advanced users could be considered meditating even in times of stress or on the move.

Upgrade: Serenity. Those around you feel more at peace simply due to your calming demeanor. Foes are more likely to stand down, and tempers do not flare as easily around you. You are a master of your emotions and can subtly influence the emotions of others. Continue to allow increased regeneration as though the maximum regeneration was applied to the new base level skill.

Ritual Magic (mandatory): This is the skill allowing rituals to be performed. (See the ritual magic section.) Naturally, the uninitiated wouldn't be able to simply walk up to a book of rituals and start performing them flawlessly. Thus, more skill can be gained at this type of spell-casting, so it deserves a skill of its own. Probably more related to memory and intellect (or even personality?) than anything physical, as it can be assumed in most cases the practitioner can move around, light candles, and the like without falling on their face in the middle of it.

Spell Aiming (mandatory): Hit someone with a spell you have just cast. It doesn't matter if you are throwing magical energy physically, pointing a wand at someone, or simply willing the magic to travel from yourself to your recipient. This takes practice and can go wrong. If you fail to hit your target, you may hit someone nearby, a structure, a vehicle, or the magic may simply fizzle before it impacts something. This skill is opposed by the recipient's normal dodge attempt as if you were throwing, say, a rock at them.

Upgrade: Spell Control. Spells no longer need to travel in a straight line. A spell can be directed to multiple recipients along its path within the usual range per action.

Spell Casting (optional): If your character must perform some action, be it the old swish and flick, words and gestures, or simply having the correct thoughts to cast a spell, this skill covers it. Decide upon what target must be met when calculating this skill, be it based on the weight of the spell or something more complex like each action of casting gathers a certain amount of Mana that can be put into the spell. Penalty for failure could range from nothing happening to the magical energies actually damaging the caster. Decide upon some characteristic your characters have (willpower, manipulation) and some target difficulty (flat number per spell, or based on spell weight) to have them make checks in this skill before casting.

Upgrade: Expanded Core. You may gather Mana from outside sources, allowing you to cast spells beyond your usual MP limit. You must have MP to begin this process. Make all usual checks, ignoring an MP of 0 if reached while casting. This Mana is pulled from nearby sources including other living creatures, which will lose the Mana you gain in a logical ratio. Example: You gain 6 Mana and three people are around you. Each one loses 2 Mana. If there is no creature nearby Mana is pulled from the ether at half the usual efficiency.

Spell Construction (optional): One of the benefits of the Building Block magic system is the fact that each section of the spell can be separated from the whole. Using this skill, you can create new spells by combining the various pieces of spells you already know. First use the Deconstruction skill to pull apart the two (or more) spells you wish to combine. When you have "learned" the various pieces, put them together with this skill. Decide upon a time-frame for this and a difficulty, perhaps a number of hours for every 10 weight of the spell you are creating. Success means you have correctly created a working spell formula, internalized it, and can begin your first casting of it. Failure means the spell did not go together well, and either requires far more MP than it should, cannot be cast at all, or the first casting results in unintended effects. It could also mean the spell didn't go together and further study is all that is required to make it do so.

Note: not all pieces of all spells can or should be combined, trying to create too bizarre a spell should be "rewarded" appropriately.

Spell Deconstruction (optional): Using this skill you can examine the individual pieces of a spell, pulling them "out" of a spell formula for use elsewhere. Decide upon a time-frame for this and a difficulty, perhaps a number of hours for every 10 weight of the spell you are pulling apart. Success means the spell has been pulled apart, ready to be combined into a new spell. Failure simply means more study is required. A critical failure, if present in your world, may mean the spell itself has been damaged and must be re-learned.

Spell Modification (Optional): Modify one or more parts of your spells on the fly, increasing or decreasing their weight and thus their range or numeric potential. This could be a flat change equal to the skill, or a skill check could be used to add more uncertainty when casting. Does this add to the time needed to cast a spell, or is it simply a flexing of the magical muscles, if you will, pouring more Mana into the spell as it is cast, or a relaxing to apply less? Note that this could easily be abused to allow the most basic of spells to become extremely overpowered by simply spending all of one's MP on them. With so many ways to get MP back or modify the rate of recovery, this could be done multiple times an hour, so just keep it in mind. In either case, any positive change to the weight of a spell increases the MP cost by a like amount, while a negative change reduces it. Only one part of a spell can be modified at once in this way. (Though in theory you could spend multiple actions, modifying various parts each time.) Failing this skill check could mean a couple of things depending on how easy this is made, how much MP the characters have, and how punishing

you want to be for attempting it: Another attempt can be made without penalty on the next action, the mage must start over and loses the MP they have gathered, or that the MP is simply reabsorbed into the Mana core.

Upgrade: Mana Bursting. The time to perform Spell Modification is greatly reduced, and the effective MP forced into the spell is doubled.

Zone Shaping (optional): The first term of the spell always determines how far away the magic can reach. But how many times does a mage wish to cast a spell *behind* themselves? This skill allows the modification of the area defined by the zone portion of the spell. For example, if the weight was "Zone 5" then instead of 5m in front of the mage and 5m behind (a 5m radius) the effect could be "double front." In other words, 10m in front of the mage and 0m behind them. The better this skill is performed, the narrower the magical "corridor" can become. While this does not directly increase the weight of the spell, it should take some concentration on the part of the mage either making spells slower to cast, or in some way more difficult. This skill would also be used to move the zone, if allowed, rotating the "front" or "corridor" as the mage willed it. Again, the greater the change, the more skillful the mage would need to be to get it exactly where they wanted it.

Upgrade: Zone Persistence. Once a zone is created by the mage, it can persist as long as the mage is stationary. In this way, every subsequent spell performed in that area drops "Zone ->" from the weight, and uses the original distance specified. The zone can be created without casting any spell, simply setting it up however the mage chooses, using the usual weight calculation.

Example Worldbuilding

Let's go through the process and turn a vague idea into a unique magic system using these rules. The vague idea I have is for a world where everyone can do magic, but given a rather low regeneration rate, only some people take up being a full time spell-caster. Most know a cleaning spell, maybe a minor healing spell, and a spell or two related to their chosen profession. The world is heading to a sort of industrial revolution, mages are in charge of things, and I want some kind of focus or reliance on crystals of some sort. Adventurers exist, and are actively encouraged in the world, to seek out "evil necromancers" and the like, but in reality this is a distraction from the actual corruption present in politics, which is more invisible. Shoot I made it too much like the real world- well, let's press onward.

So to start, I check the "Everyone" box on the worksheet (see Worldbuilding Worksheet). Magic has been around since the beginning on this world, and as it's a survival trait, very few people don't have a Mana Core by this point. Magic is studied and formalized, so I'll check off "Mostly" and "Possibly" for the next question on the worksheet. Then Yes for "Do they currently understand it." It's magic, so there's always more to learn, and anyone that doesn't know as much as the most learned in the world can always better themselves. I won't require a focus so I'll check "No" on that one. I will check "Yes" on restricting permanent magic, but allow characters to discover it on their own. Any permanent magic found to be floating around the world is dispelled by the powers that be, and they will try to track down those that know the secret, so be careful! Now we have to think about some numbers.

I'll choose a stat range of between 1-20 for my chosen people. This means the average person has a 10 in things like strength and charisma, though I want Mana Potential to be calculated by… Actually it's my world I'm adding a Mana stat. So there. So it's not based on anything but itself, even though magic still does take study and perhaps words and gestures. I'll put a 10x multiplier in place, so a baby will have 10 MP, an unaltered mage (we'll get to that) with a stat of 20 will have 200 MP and thus regenerate 8 MP per hour while not meditating. This world still has a 24 hour cycle and 200/24 is 8ish. The Mana stat can be useful for sensing magic, maybe even overwhelming someone's magic if say two fireball spells crash together. It could happen.

For restoring Mana, I want all three options, and here's where we get a first taste of those crystals I mentioned. Natural recovery will be set at base MP per day, so those with 100 MP get back about 4 per hour. With a good 8 hours of sleep they would get 33 MP back. Not great, but I'll allow the perks and skills to increase both total capacity and speed recovery. Actually just sleeping could double the rate, I don't see why not. For "External Source" I'll just write down "crystals." I'll explain them later.

To expand the Mana Pool, I'll allow cultivation, but this isn't a "levels" based world so it won't be automatic. Someone cycling their Mana Core several hours a day for a week can gain 1 MP capacity that week. Casting any spells during this time resets the timer, destroying their progress. So most don't follow this track. Externally, crystals can be used (or more accurately absorbed in a special ritual) to expand the capacity, to a certain upper limit.

For damage resistance I'll choose a similar formula to MP. It can be tied to something like "Vitality" and be a 5x multiplier. So a baby will have 5HP per extremity, and an adult with a 10 will have 50 HP per extremity. So someone can get hit with 5 "typical" 10 weight damage spells before that limb is simply ruined. Of course getting hit in the body or head for that same damage would kill the person. Better have some damage absorption spells or healing spells on hand if you get into a fight! Of course a mage with higher than average MP could create some 50 weight damaging spells and kill someone in one shot. Better work on your dodges.

Next is maintenance. For every 10 weight of a spell you're maintaining, 1 MP is lost every minute. You can also pass maintenance onto a crystal, which drains it instead. This must be done by touch, immediately after casting the spell. A crystal can only hold one spell at a time like this.

Magic users should be somewhat vulnerable while casting, so I will check the "Some amount of time" box for the next section. There would have to be some kind of time keeping system implemented into the world, but I believe a second of casting per 10 weight of the spell is reasonable. A mage casting a 30 weight spell would probably be equivalent to three sword swings all things considered. But that's one thing I would

have to tweak to make sure it was fair. Any special modifications to the spell, such as shaping it or recovering Mana, would basically be thought and so only add half a second to the total casting time, at the beginning or end, as appropriate.

For maintaining magic while threatened, I would check the "MP cost of the dispelling magic must equal or exceed original cast" box and "Wounding the mage" but they can make some sort of resolve check to not lose the spell if wounded.

I would only check "Dodge" for resisting magic, for the reasons explained in the section above.

To learn spells they can be Researched or Taught so I would check those two boxes. Research meaning either pulling spells apart to make new ones, or through expensive and possibly dangerous magical experimentation to completely make a spell you don't have any pieces of. You would need a fairly good understanding of magic itself to even attempt such a thing, I might even add a new skill "magical research" or general "magical knowledge" you would need to make checks in. Crystals would feature heavily in teaching magic, see their section for more details.

For rituals I would check all the boxes, but make materials optional. The ritual is more about you, and your connection to magic. It doesn't care if you light a candle or burn incense, but you might feel the act of doing so centers you and so provides a bonus. The materials would be whatever you find that helps keep you on track, be that a metronome, the sounds of running water coming from a nearby stream, or only being able to do rituals during a thunderstorm. A ritual has a maximum of 5 participants, one lead and one at each of the cardinal directions, and automatically is measured in x10 kilometers. In other words the first 5 weight allows 10km, every additional weight to the spell adds 50km. In exchange a ritual takes at least one minute, 10 MP can be added every minute, per participant.

As for perks, the Expanded Mana Core and the Faster Mana Recovery are both double, and can be taken a maximum of 5 times normally, total. In other words, you could take 3 levels of Expanded Core and 2 of Recovery, or 4 of Recovery and 1 of Expanded. As noted above, this is because crystals are being used, and the body can only (safely) contain 5 of them. This is expensive and can be risky; starting with these perks would require backstory explanation as to how they were afforded. For Faster Spell Casting I would say you can take it once, at character creation, and it drops the casting time to 1 second for every 8 weight of the spell instead of every 10.

Let's talk about these pesky crystals I keep mentioning. They are mined in caves, where there is a good Mana saturation. In the beginning they were seen as more of a contaminant than anything, where people were trying to mine metals and the like. It was only through an accident (all the greatest achievements have been made by accident, change my mind) that it was determined these crystals react very favorably to Mana. Then experiments were done and it was found they had several useful properties:

1) In the beginning, teaching magic was hard because it had to be done person to person. Basically, the person with the spell would transfer it to another person, allowing them to engrave it upon their core. They then had to be trusted to return it to the teacher. Writing a spell down could aid someone else in researching it themselves, but the fastest way was the direct way. Thankfully, it was discovered that crystals can serve as a stand-in for this. By holding a crystal, you can transfer Mana to it, as well as a copy of the formula from your core. The student then extracts some portion of the Mana from the crystal, (equal to the weight of the spell) engraves it onto their core, and returns the formula for the next person. Once the amount of Mana placed into the crystal is exhausted, that crystal has been "used up" and can no longer be used. Basically you would have to make sure the crystal could support another cycle and if not, you discard it and use another when doing the learning. Basically absorbing the spell, engraving it yourself, and dumping it into a new crystal for the next person.

This would be a great mechanic as well, every story with magic seems to have some "lost civilization" or spells that used to be used but no longer are. Someone horded the spell crystals or they were destroyed, so there is no way to engrave that spell anymore. It would have to be researched anew. This leads also to another great mechanic: you go to buy a spell or I guess rent the crystal that contains it, the crystal you get could have a spell that's complete garbage, while technically doing what you want. You're incentivized to pull spells apart, and make them better to bring the costs down or to further customize them. After all, how often are you

going to get the exact quality-verb pairs in the spell you want right off the bat? Or maybe the spell is touch only and you would prefer it to be ranged? Make the mage work for it!

It also leads to a situation where the people in charge regulate spells they don't want cast all the time by deliberately making them very costly, either monetarily for the crystal or the MP cost. For example, you would not want a spell that destroys the soul being cast all over the place, so, make it super hard to buy or with such great inefficiencies it costs hundreds of MP to cast. Who would be able to create the next iteration of the crystal with that kind of weight to the spell? It would be impossible to propagate!

2) Crystals can hold spells; placing Mana in them beforehand, you can pass a spell off to a crystal and have that Mana tick down instead of your own. This would probably be reusable, as it's less complex than the other uses. If it got out of hand, I might further modify it such that once a spell is held by a crystal, it can't hold another type of spell or it shatters, so a person isn't using the same crystal for all their spells. Make them buy and keep track of different ones. Some testing would have to be required on that score.

3) Related to this, a crystal could serve as a temporary Mana store while you're out in the field. Put extra Mana into it, and if you run low, simply absorb it again to restore your MP. Done slowly (perhaps at a rate related to skill?) the crystal could be reused many times. If you needed MP right-the-heck-now you could simply break the crystal in your hand, absorbing the MP all at once. Bye bye crystal. So there's no "Mana potions" because only crystal can hold Mana, but there's still ways in a pinch to get back some MP and continue a fight, ritual, etc.

4) Making items. In the Imbuing section, one option is to make physical components needed to hold spells on a permanent basis. In this world, that would be smaller chunks of crystal. But there's another catch to this process too- When you place a spell into an object, you are literally removing part of your Mana core and sacrificing that spell to go into the crystals. The same as with learning a spell, to use it externally it must be removed from the core. But now it's stuck in the crystals you used and attached to the object! Thus you lose the spell you have put into the item, and must relearn it, so hopefully you put it into another crystal beforehand. You would need a crystal for every quality-verb pair in the spell, so even the simplest of objects would need at least 3 crystals. They don't have to be visible, but they do have to be connected with certain "pathways" on the object so mainly covers would be used to protect them. This can be another way to make sure magical items don't get out of hand, if someone is using a troublesome item just figure out where the crystals are and break them. Either physically or with magic. I could see a spell being created

Zone 5->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Crystal 2->Break 10

The crystals themselves can be pretty small, so they can fit in a decorative manner on most things. One of the crystals must be a "battery" either of a type that allows a mage to charge the item- it would have the same maintenance cost as if the spell was freshly cast on the item and being maintained by a mage- or allow it to drain a person's Mana who is using it. Probably one or the other could be used, but not both. I can see a market for "false" items too, that have uncharged crystals in their design so a person could fake wealth by displaying a lot of "magical items" that aren't actually magical. Or a heist that replaces one item with an identical one that isn't magic. I could also see mages "packaging" the network of crystals up into larger forms (think Materia from That Certain Game) to more easily protect the crystals themselves, attaching it at one point rather than several. It's the magical conduits placed into the object that let the magic flow, some items would have conduits, others would not. But there could be a standard size for objects large enough to support it, so they can be more easily swapped around. Imagine a weapon platform on a castle wall, an imbuing sphere that causes ice damage would only need to be there when the place was under attack. Otherwise that sphere could be on a sword worn by a soldier, so their weapon did ice damage. They would simply transfer it before manning the weapon.

This wouldn't have to be done on a small scale, either. Teleport gates, street lights, defensive barriers around cities could all be powered with a collective Mana pool from a large, central, crystal. Naturally all citizens will happily donate their Mana to this effort, not needing to be "taxed" and thus providing no story conflict at all. No sir!

One final benefit would be allowing an item to be reconfigured more easily, for example swapping ice

for fire. As long as the "circuit" is maintained, replacing ice->create for fire->create in the item, I see no reason that couldn't work. Might want to exhaust the Mana battery first though, just saying.

And there you have it. The beginnings of a complete magic system and surrounding world. I'm not saying it's balanced just yet, just some random musings but it's a start. You see how the worksheet can be used to customize how you want things done, and how that leads to what makes your specific world work. There are a lot of considerations yet, like exactly how many spells one knows as a "starting character" and how much crystals cost. But I would need to come up with the whole economy for that, this is just worried about the magic system.

The following pages are the list of elements, verbs, and sample spells. The worksheet follows that. I hope this method of magic system creation helps you in your endeavors, be they RPG, book, or movie! (It could happen?)

Example Spells

Here are some sample spells to get you started. First we'll cover the elements, nouns, and verbs which are of course non-exhaustive as anything you can think of can realistically become an "element" for the purposes of a spell. And there are lots of verbs, use whatever verb you need to describe what your spell is doing, this list again is just a starting point.

Elements or nouns: Angel, Animosity, Anti-Magic, Blood, Book, Choice, Contract, Creation, Creature, Curse, Danger, Dark, Death, Decay, Demon, Destruction, Dream, Energy, Ether, Fae, Fatigue, Fear, Filth, Force, Form, Gloom, Healing, hunger, Hypnosis, Knowledge, Language, Lie, Life, Light, Line, Love, Magic, Malevolence, Map, Memory, Mind, Movement, Obscurity, Pain, Paradox, Plant, Position, Sanity, Self, Shadow, Sickness, Sleep, Spirit, Thirst, Time, Truth, Undead, Vampire, Weapon, Weather
Unlisted but still available are the usual suspects such as fire, ice, wind, etc. You already know those.

Verbs: Allow, Animate, Attract, Banish, Bestow, Change, Combine, Create, Damage, Decrease, Deny, Destroy, Disable, Empty, Enable, Enlarge, Explode, Fill, Grow, Hide, Implode, Increase, Jam, Link, Move, Overwrite, Protect, Reduce, Refine, Repeat, Repel, Restore, Restrain, Reveal, Reverse, Seize, Separate, Shape, Share, Summon, Target, Teleport, Track, Trigger

Cleaning spells

It would be tempting to use "Destroy" in these spells but one must consider if spells can be pulled apart in your setting. If they can, this would be an easy way to learn the destroy verb and then work it into much more deadly spells. Thus, other less dangerous verbs such as "decrease" are used here. Always remember that the verb you give your magic users today can come back and haunt you later.

Zone 5->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Impurity 10->Decrease 10   36
Clean an object. Any impurities contained in a 1m cube on or in the target are decreased to nothing. Can turn a mug of coffee into pure water, remove dirt from a dropped piece of toast, or clean a stubborn pan.

Zone 5->Instant 1->Bench 2->Filth 20->Banish 20   48
Destroy filth (i.e. dirt, dried blood, mucus, stains) on a bench 2m to a side, up to 5m away. Be consistent with what the spell considers "filth."

Zone 2->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Surface 5->Sterilize 5   23
Kill all the bacteria, viruses, molds, and the like from a touched surface up to a cubic meter in size.

Zone 5->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Filth 2->Wash 2   23
"Wash" a target object up to 20cm to a side. This cleans the surface of any dirt, stains, or other "filth" up to 5m away.

Other Spells

Creature growth
Zone 5->Maintained 3->Unrestricted 10->Size 15->Fill 40   73
A creature (and their equipment) up to 5m away and 1.5m tall and can grow to fill an area 4m tall. (A good example of a spell where the verb doesn't exactly matter, it's just there as an aid to finding the weight. The verb could be expand, or grow, or increase it's really the weight for the meters you want to work with that counts)

Mental attack

Zone 5->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Thoughts 5->Damage 10   31

Do 10 damage to the thoughts of the recipient. This would most likely give them some kind of mental illness. (If you didn't specify "thoughts," it would just be mental damage, i.e. they would get a headache or be blasted unconscious. Here you are specifically targeting the thoughts of the creature, so they can no longer think clearly, so while they wouldn't be in pain, their thoughts would be totally jumbled.) How this was healed: over time, or only via magic, would be setting dependent.

Increase toughness

Zone 2->1 hour 10->Unrestricted 10->Toughness 5->Refine 20   47

For the next hour, a creature (but not their equipment or clothes, because only "creature" was specified) has their toughness increased by 20. Basically any damage done to them would have to exceed 20 before it affected them.

Summon creature

Zone 5->1 hour 10->Creature 2->Create 10->Mind 2->Create 10->Combine 5   44

Create a magical creature up to 1m in height that can follow your directions and remains in existence for 1 hour. Creature is as you envision it. Creature would need additional spells cast upon it to do anything that a natural creature could not. (So a dragon like creature could fly with wings, but not breathe fire unless a spell granted them that ability) In this spell, the "create->mind" becomes the quality that is modified by the verb "combine."

Reveal time

Zone 1->Maintained 3->Time 10->Future 5->Reveal 20   39

Reveal the future up to 10 years to the caster, up to 2m away from them. As a Maintained spell, the caster must "fast forward" time to a certain extent to see events of interest. (This spell uses the "step" mechanic, replacing "time 10" with another weight could allow them to see more or less of the future)

Destroy magical link

Zone 5->Instant 1->Person 5->Contract 5->End 20   36

Instantly destroy any magical link binding the recipient to another. In most cases the "end" verb must be equal or greater in weight to the link affecting the recipient. (A good example of there not being "elemental link" but "contract" element encompassing such magical links.)

Endless sustenance

Zone 2->Maintained 3->Person 5->Hunger 5->Restrain 5->Thirst 5->Restrain 5   30

While Maintained the recipient does not get hungry or thirsty.

Swap damage

Zone 2->Instant 1->Creature 2->Damage 5->Self 2->Damage 5->Exchange 5   22

Swap the damage you have taken with the area on the touched creature. Note that "damage" here is being regarded as "elemental damage" so 1 or 100 damage can be exchanged without increasing the weight of the spell. However at a 5, if the wound was more than 50cm across (for example on a giant or a dragon or something) only 50cm of it would be exchanged.

Enemy alert

Zone 10->24 hours 15->Enemy 2->Create 1->Sound 2   30

For the next 24 hours, anything crossing a 30m threshold around the caster- which would be considered an enemy to the caster- creates a loud sound, alerting the area. I say "loud" but it's only "sound 2" so it probably wouldn't be all that loud?

Bestow mind

Zone 5->4 weeks 25->Object 10->Mind 5->Bestow 5->Move 10->Control 5   65

For the next month, an inorganic object no larger than 1m (as governed by "move 10") has a mind of its own. You can control the object at will, giving it orders which it will carry out to the best of its ability. Objects have limited movement unless granted by other spells, but a broom could sweep, a ball could roll around to amuse a cat, or a skateboard could roll around with someone on top of it.

Bounce weapon

Zone 5->Instant 1->Weapon 2->Speed 2->Reverse 10   20

Any weapon, up to 100cm in length, that is within 5m of you has its speed "reversed" in effect bouncing it away from you. Naturally you must be cautious that an enemy may figure out this radius and throw their weapon away from you just as it enters that space, thus bouncing it towards you.

Enrage creature

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Rage 5->Create 15->Bestow 15   43

Enrage a 1.5m tall creature, causing them to attack without regard for friend or foe. What "Rage 5" means is up to the interpretation of the world's creator. 5 may mean they are slightly enraged and will back down quickly, while "Rage 20" means they are very enraged. As with all verbs, "Bestow 15" can inform mentally shaking off the effects of the spell, with some kind of check beating that number.

Want-it-need-it

Zone 2->1 hour 10->Desire 20->Create 1->Imbue 1 34

For the next hour, the 10cm or smaller object this spell has been cast upon becomes the most desired object around. Everyone will do whatever they can to acquire it. (Caution, you may not want to give the object up after casting the spell. Perhaps this spell is best paired with another, making you immune to the effects?)

Hide door

Zone 2->1 hour 10->Door 2->Noticeability 20->Diminish 20   54

Cause a door, up to 2m tall, to be overlooked or otherwise ignored for one hour.

Corpse speak

Zone 2->Maintained 3->Corpse 2->Bestow 5->Speech 5   17

Speak with a touched corpse. (Has a 5 weight because it's basically targeting the head, so the volume doesn't have to be that big.)

Cure deafness

Zone 2->Permanent 40->Ears 2->Reveal 5->Sound 5   54

Cure deafness in the recipient, until dispelled.

Finger blade

Zone 2->Maintained 3->Finger 2->Bestow 5->Edge 2   ->Damage 1   15

Allow your finger to cut through things, as though it was a knife, doing 1 damage per turn. (Probably good enough for paper or cloth, increase weight of damage to cut tougher materials.)

Link books

Zone 2->Permanent 40->Book 2->Writing 5->Book 2->Writing 5->Share 5   61

Permanently link two touched books, no bigger than 50cm, together, such that anything written in either is reflected in the other.

Fake Sleep
Zone 5->24 hours 15->Creature 2->Sleep 5->Imitate 50   77

For the next 24 hours, any creature entering the 5m space defined by the spell gets the benefits of sleep without actually sleeping. This can result in increased healing, MP regeneration, loss of fatigue, as makes sense for your setting.

Repair object
Zone 2->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Damage 5->Repair 5   28

Repair "5 damage" to an object within a 50cm cube. (Most systems track damage to objects, for example walls or armor, as a number, as with everything else modified by how tough your characters are. If a creature such as a human can take "10 damage" then a concrete wall should be able to take "100 damage" or more.)

Elemental Spells

These could have strange effects as everything is considered an element. What exactly happens when you hit someone with elemental "Book" or "Illusion" or "Happiness?" For the most part, probably nothing. Now a vampire could be harmed with elemental Light, and a werewolf with elemental Silver. So for the most part, common sense should be used if a character combines a spell to hit someone with elemental "Writing." This section will focus on more traditional elements to do damage. The exception is Healing. Hitting someone with elemental Healing heals living creatures and damages undead creatures. Keep in mind the "damage" part of the spell is how much is healed or hurt as per the type of creature struck.

Elemental weapon
Zone 2->Maintained 3->Sword 2->Imbue 10->Poison 5   22

Imbue an element onto a weapon, up to 1m in length, allowing that weapon to do "typed" damage. In this case poison. Useful if facing a creature vulnerable to a specific type of damage. You just have to find/learn the spell of the correct element.

Accelerate healing
Zone 2->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Healing 5->Accelerate 10   28

Accelerate a creature's healing by "10" whatever that means in your system. Using the "step" method this could be one "wound category" or a single day's worth of healing.

Heal wound
Zone 2->Instant 1->Healing 10->Create 5->Apply 5   23

Create a 50cm area of elemental healing and apply it to a wound, healing 10 damage, by touch. If your system does not track damage per area separately, heal up to 10 damage on the creature as you see fit without needing to touch the wounded area.

Ice attack
Zone 5->Fleeting 2->Ice 10->Create 1->Move 1   19

Create a small (10cm across) ball of ice, that moves in a straight line at a speed of 5m per second and does <damage> upon impact and potentially chilling them.

Electric aura
Zone 1->Maintained 3->Electricity 5->Create 15->Aura 5->Imbue 15   44

Create a 2m aura of electricity around yourself doing 10 damage to anyone it comes in contact with. Speed of damage would vary based on how your system tracks combat time. *Technically* the electricity has no range, because "Zone 1" is usually only the self and so it couldn't extend past the person casting the spell. However, in this case "aura 5" was added to the spell, and the aura is where the magic comes from anyway, so this effect sits right above the skin, allowing it to shock those touched by the caster.

Air corridor

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Air 5->Create 3->Move 3->Damage 10   29

Cause a corridor of air, 10cm x 10cm x 270cm to blow continuously. Anyone stumbling into it would be knocked over, and take damage. Damage must be specified here because air isn't usually damaging. The distance knocked over would not be very much as it's only "air 5." You would want "air 20" or more to really knock someone over. In this case the recipient might get a resistance check against being knocked over, equal to "air." But they would still take damage because they were hit by the spell.

Force wall

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Force 20->Create 10->Protect 10   48

Create a wall of force up to 5m away, .25m thick, 2m high, and 2m across. Can absorb 20 damage before breaking.

Crack earth

Zone 5->Instant 1->Ground 5->Stability 2->Crack 50   63

Target the ground 10m in front of you and cause a 5m crack to appear. While this doesn't have a "damage" component, shoving 5m of earth aside is going to cause problems for any creature or structure at that spot. Handle accordingly.

Forcefire ball

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Force 10->Create 1->Fire 10->Create 1->Combine 1->Move 1   37

Create a sphere of force, taking the form of a 1m ball of fire. Move it within 5m of yourself and have it damage everything it touches. (A good example of "why not just create fire?" You could, and save some weight of the spell. But this spell includes force, so it would be harder to get away from. The force aspect would pin someone down if you slammed this on top of them. Otherwise they could just roll away from the fire.)

Conflagration

Zone 16->Maintained 3->Fire 10->Create 300   329

Create a cube, 30m to a side, of fire directly in front of you. The fire does "10" damage to everything is this area.

Different ways to make a personal flight spell

Zone 10->Maintained 3->Self 2->Position 20->Change 20   55

Move yourself in any direction, up to 1m per action. Take to the air and fly, if you dare.

Position in this spell is set to 20 to get all 2m of your position. Any less and you risk leaving part of yourself behind as you move. Could be messy. If you know you are less than 2m tall you can reduce the weight of the spell accordingly.

Zone 1->Maintained 3->Bird 5->Create 15->Combine 15   39

Combine yourself with elemental bird, granting yourself wings and allowing you to fly. You would have to practice with the wings until you were proficient. You would probably take on other bird like features and characteristics while the spell was going.

Zone 5->Maintained 3->Air 5->Restrain 10->Location 2->Move 10   35

Create a platform of solidified air 1m x 1m x 10cm, up to 5m away from yourself. The solidified air can be moved 5m per action while maintained.

Zone 10->1 hour 10->Force 5->Create 10->Move 10   45

Create a 1m x 1m x 10cm platform of raw force, which lasts an hour, and can move 30m per action while maintained. (Again, you would want to shape it to be more of a platform than a cube)

Spells with Variables

Create element
Zone 2->Maintained 3->Element 5->Create 1   9
    Create a 10cm cube of the element that persists until you end the spell. This spell would need to be learned per element. You'll notice this doesn't have the quality->verb portion of the template. That's because the element isn't doing anything but sitting there as part of the spell.

Barrel rejection
Zone 2->Maintained 3->Barrel 2->Allow 5->Object 2   14
    Cast upon a barrel, allow the target <object> up to 20 cm to pass into it. Each object would be a different spell. Other objects would not be allowed into the barrel. Good for separating rice or grain from insects, or filtering rain water. Anything too tightly bound together, for example having a spell for copper and throwing two plates, one copper and one tin that are screwed together, would make that object bounce out.

Elemental translation
Zone 1->1 hour 10->Element 5->Become 5->Element 5   26
    This spell has two variables, and each pair of Elements would be a different spell. Useful if a mage knows- for example- a great many ice magic spells but knows they are going to face an enemy immune to ice magic. Rather than learning a bunch of new spells, they can just learn one. With this spell going, for the next hour all their "Element 1" spells will be cast as though they were "Element 2" in the formula. So it could be ice->poison, force->fire, wind->earth.

Hasten biology
Zone 5->Maintained 3->Area 20->Process 5->Hasten X   33+X
    This spell has a variable cost, rather than a variable element. It can be used to hasten a natural biological process, such as turning a larva into a butterfly, hide into leather, or biological material into compost. Any process within a 2m area can be made faster, with the variable part of the spell determining how much faster. Using the "step" system, every 10 weight would essentially give you 2 minutes of process for every 1. Thus doubling the speed of the process. So 20 weight would be 3 times as fast, 30 weight would be 4 times as fast.

Splitting arrow
Zone 6->Fleeting 2->Projectile 5->Quantity 2->Split 5->Split 5->Split 5   30
    This spell has a variable number of "splits" at the end. In theory you could research/buy/make the spell with any number of them tacked on, limited only by your available MP to cast in combat. So when fired the projectile launched splits into identical copies of itself and travels 10m. As the spell is fleeting they exist long enough to strike a target and then vanish. This would count as a shotgun style attack (if present in your world) otherwise you would have to simply make a ruling on how many projectiles struck the target based on the attack and defense numbers of the participants.

Bad Spells and how to fix them

Sleep spell
    Zone 5->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Fatigue 5->Increase 20   41
    Put the recipient to sleep. Somewhat setting dependent as to how much "fatigue" is needed to force someone to sleep. If not enough fatigue is given by the spell, it may simply make them tired.
    Zone 5->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Sleep 5->Bestow 15   36
    Instantly bestow sleep upon a recipient creature, up to 1.5m tall. Better, but can still be improved upon.
    Zone 5->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Sleep 5->Reverse 15   36
    If cast upon a sleeping recipient, they wake up. If awake, put them to sleep. This spell is what one should go for because it's more versatile, and doesn't depend on game mechanics such as in the fatigue example.

Reveal disease

    Zone 2->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Sickness 5->Reveal 20   38

      Reveal disease in the recipient. A decent enough starting point there's nothing wrong with the spell per se. But you would want to work towards the second version;

    Zone 2->Instant 1->Unrestricted 10->Sickness 5->Reveal 1   19

      Normally a spell targeting a person would need to have enough weight to cover the entire person, making the spell much more expensive to cast. In this case, if a person is sick pretty much any 10cm cube of them you target will show signs of the disease. So the less weighty spell is the better one in this case. If you suspected something like a brain tumor you would want to cast it at the head, but just figuring out if one had the flu or a cold the spell could be cast anywhere on the body.

Stop time

    Zone 5->Maintained 3->Time 5->Area 20->Restrain 5   38

      Halt the flow of time in a 2m cube around yourself

    Zone 5->Maintained 3->Self 2->Time 5->Allow 5->Area 20->Time 8->Restrain 5   50

      The first spell is extremely dangerous because with time stopped, how are you going to stop maintaining the spell? It's a trap spell, basically freezing the caster in time unless someone else comes along and dispels the effect. The second spell is much better, because you have exempted yourself from the temporal effect and can still move around. Note that in this case time is still only stopped 2m around you, it's still passing outside the effect of the spell. You can't simply stop time for the entire universe no matter how hard you try.

Spell rebound

    Zone 5->Instant 1->Spell 5->Effect 10->Reverse 5   26

      Reverse a magical effect up to 5m away from you. Probably not what you want. If you used it on a fireball, it wouldn't negate the fireball; it would make an ice cube hit you instead. An argument could be made for what exactly "reverse" means in this case, but as there's no "move" verb, the argument about direction would be difficult to win.

    Zone 5->Instant 1->Spell 5->Direction 5->Reverse 20   36

      If you want to bounce a spell back, you want to reverse the direction of it and as with dispel magic, your reflection spell would have to have more weight than the spell you are reflecting to make it work correctly.

Rain protection

    Zone 1->1 hour 10->Force 1->Create 20->Protect 1   33

      Basic protection spell, creating a skin of force around yourself and lasting an hour to protect you from 1 damage. (As "Zone 1" is the self, the magic can't go past that point.) Basically enough to turn aside rain, wind, or snow. Even heavy hail probably wouldn't do 1 damage; it would turn that aside as well. It depends on how magic is Maintained in your system if this is cheaper, in the long run, for the hour of protection. Feel free to change it to Maintained if that's cheaper.

    Zone 1->1 hour 10->Self 2->Weather 5->Ignore 5   23

      Ignore any effect of weather, be it cold, rain, or sun (you will not be sunburned). You will still get wet or get snow on you with this spell, but you'll be able to ignore it and remain perfectly comfortable. It's half the cost, but the original spell keeps you dry, so it may not be "bad" just a question of personal taste.

Reverse aging

    Zone 2->Permanent 40->Unrestricted 10->Aging 5->Halt 5   62

      Cause the recipient to stop aging. In a magical world this is probably not as great as you might think. Anti-magic would be everywhere. Banks, at a minimum. Stadiums. Stores to prevent magical theft. One would have to be very careful where they went to not get dispelling magic cast on them which breaks the spell. Probably would not be very restricted simply due to that fact.

Zone 2->Instant 1->Human 2->Age 5->Reduce 10   20

Reverse the age of the person, up to 10 years, the weight of the Reverse portion of the spell. This is a better spell, even if it must be performed every so often, because it can't be dispelled. It's like the shape-shifting example above, you are simply returning the person to a previous state, not magically keeping them in one state or another. Given the low weight of this spell, expect it to be highly restricted in basically any setting. (Watch out for other negative effects of this spell, for example you may lose the memories of years your age is reduced by, other spells could compensate for this.)

Ritual Spells

These spells assume CM has become 10xM and M has become 10xKM for the sake of formula distances. 10mp can be added to the ritual every 1 minute.

Teleport
Zone 1->Instant 1->Self 2->Space 20->Exchange X   X+24

Teleport yourself (as long as you are not more than 2m tall) to a known location or distance 50km per 1 weight past 5. (You still need the first 5 weight of the spell to get you the first 50km) Teleporting can be dangerous as you may intersect objects or people at your destination. This form is safe- for you- because you are exchanging the space you occupy with the space you wish to occupy. If you happened to clip a person or object, that part of them would go to where you were. Possibly cutting them in half. A variant such as Zone 1->Instant 1->Object 1->Space 20->Exchange X would be useful for teleporting 10m worth of goods to a known location where they can be moved by someone at the destination (if on a schedule) fairly safely.

Create portal
Zone 2+X->Maintained 3->Space 5->Location 2->Space 5->Location 2->Synchronize 5   X+24

While you maintain the ritual, cause two spaces, one right before you, and one within 50km per 1 weight past 5 to synchronize. In effect, creating a portal that can be stepped through.

Note that as a ritual, all values that would be in M are in KM including "Zone" so a value of "Zone 5" here would in theory allow the end of the portal nearest you to be up to 5km away. This version of the ritual could have its uses but would be very dangerous and thus, regulated. Thus it has been restricted to "touch" distance with "Zone 2" by default.

Scrying
Zone X->Maintained 3->Person 2->Location 5->See 5   X+15

If a targeted person is within 50km per 1 weight past 5, you see their location for the duration of the ritual.

Create rain
Zone 5->Maintained 3->Create X->Sky 2->Clouds 2->Rain 5->Separate 5   X+22

While you maintain the ritual, target the sky up to 5km above you and create 10m of cloud cover per 1 weight of the spell. Rain begins to fall from those clouds.

Fortify structure
Zone 2->Permanent 40->Structure 2->Protection X->Enlarge 5   X+49

Until dispelled, increase the amount of damage a structure up to 50m tall can withstand before being destroyed.

Worldbuilding Worksheet

Can anyone in your world do magic?
__ Everyone
__ A chosen few
__ Hardly anyone
__ Some ratio of people _____
   Chosen how _____

Can the practitioners of magic understand the underlying basis of how it works?
__ Completely (It's some kind of explicit system giving it to them)
__ Mostly (They have gotten some training)
__ Possibly (They can continue to study and learn)
__ Hardly (No amount of study can help, magic is simply chaos incarnate)

Do they currently understand it?
__ Yes because _____
__ No because _____

Magic requires some kind of focus
__ Yes
__ No

Permanent magic is restricted
__ Yes
   __ But it can be learned about
__ No

How is MP calculated?
   __ Stat of _____ multiplied by _____
   __ Flat number _____
   __ Other _____

How is MP restored?
   __ Natural amount of _____ per _____
   __ External source _____ _____ _____ _____
   __ Skills _____ _____ _____

How is MP pool expanded?
   __ Set _____ per _____
   __ Cultivation taking _____ per _____
   __ Skill increase _____
   __ Other _____

Damage of spells?
   __ As the typical adult has an HP of _____, damage is a ratio of weight to HP of _____ per _____
                         weight damage

How are spells maintained?
___ Drains _____ MP per _____
___ Penalty to other actions done by the mage totaling _____

_____
___ Other _____

How long do spells take to cast?
___ Instantaneously such as "one action"
___ Some amount of time equal for all spells _____
___ Variable amount of time per spell _____

How is Maintained magic dispelled?
___ Any anti-magic spell automatically wins
___ Some sort of contest of wills between mages
___ MP cost of the dispelling magic must equal or exceed original cast
___ Wounding the mage
      ___ Mage can hold onto spell by _____
___ Other _____

How to resist magic?
___ Dodge
___ Some kind of "resistance check" based on a stat of _____
___ Other _____

How do people learn spells?
___ They don't. You start in the story with all the magic you'll ever know
___ Given by a higher power (A system, the gods)
___ Researched in this way _____
___ Taught by others in this way _____
On this scale, 1 being easiest, about how difficult is it for spells to be memorized?
      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

How many can they know?
___ Arbitrary number _____
___ Based on stat _____
___ Based on weight
      ___ Based on complete spells
      ___ Based on formula parts

Ritual Considerations
___ Minimum time to perform the ritual _____
___ Materials Required?
      What kind of materials _____
___ Maximum participants _____
___ Automatically converts CM to KM?
___ An amount of _____ Mana can be added to the ritual every _____

Perks
___ Expanded Mana Core gives _____ MP per _____
___ Faster Mana Recovery increases normal rate by _____
___ Faster Spell Casting decreases casting time by _____

Optional Skills
__ Aura Shaping
__ Imbuing
__ Mana Recovery
__ Meditation
__ Spell Casting
__ Spell Construction
__ Spell Deconstruction
__ Spell Modification
__ Zone Shaping