

Slayers Skills

About Skill Rolls

In my own fantasy world (if I ever ran one) spells for this setting would be based purely on skills. In other words you wouldn't have to pay character points for the spells, you'd only have to buy the skill. In order to cast a Shamanist spell you would need the Power Skill "Shamanist Magic." To cast a spell you take a -1 penalty to your casting per 10 active points in the spell but you reduce the penalty by one for each -1/4 worth of limitations on the spell. There are three branches of magic: Shamanist, Sorcery and White Magic. In order to cast any spell you must have the proper Power Skill and they cannot be used at a penalty to cast any other magic. However there is no restriction to keep you from buying two, or all three, skills.

The Spell limitation in this case means that you can only cast a spell if you have learned it somewhere. You cannot simply cast a fireball spell upon acquiring the Sorcery Skill. You need the skill and you need to have learned the spell. The GM might let you start the game with some previously learned spells but acquiring the spells through role-play can be very rewarding as well. How long it takes to learn a spell is up to your gaming group to decide. In the Slayers stories some of the characters pick up new spells simply by seeing someone else cast them a time or two. If you want your character to be able to figure out spells like this then Analyze Magic Skill is probably the best way to model it. The tried and true method of finding someone to teach you a spell, or finding a spell book, are probably the most common method of expanding a character's spell arsenal.

It should also be noted that throughout the stories characters often improvise with spells that they know well. They add certain special effects (for instance an Elmekia Lance spell with an Area Effect Explosion). Such modification of spells could be handled in two different ways: (1) Increase the Skill Roll penalty by one per +1/4 Advantage or, (2) base the new penalty on the new Active Point cost. Personally I'd probably tack on an additional one or two point of penalty to reflect the unorthodox nature of such a casting. The additional penalty could be eliminated once the character became used to their new version of the spell.

Incantations and Gestures seem to be something that are required for just about any spells. Gestures may be something that can be skipped for certain spells (GMs call) but Incantations seem to be universally required for all spells.

Many of the spells below can be cast in stronger or weaker forms. The DC of the attack can be boosted or decreased. In most cases you should allow a character to no more than double the DC of an attack. Remember that the active point cost, END cost and Skill Roll penalty will all increase. You should never let an obviously weak spell be boosted up to the point that it can compete with a Dragon Slave or other truly powerful spell.

Just as spells can have advantages added to boost their effect (at the cost of a greater Skill Roll penalty), many spells can be made easier by the addition of more limitations. Longer casting time and concentration are ones that seem to be used often. Most of the time when a spell is cast only the name of the spell needs to be spoken to fulfill the incantation requirement but some spells have longer, optional, incantations. When I know the longer incantation, I will include it with the spell description. Using the full incantation seems to be a big help. My suggestion is that when a character uses the full incantation they be given an additional +2 bonus to their Skill Roll. (Optionally if the player recites the incantation, in character, at the gaming table give them a +3 bonus).

Magical Skills, Talents, Perks and Colleges

Since the Point Costs associated with many of the spells of Slayer Hero are so high I have opted to use a purely skill-based magic system. Characters do not have to buy their spells. Instead buying the skill, talent and perk needed to cast the spells is the only expense.

There are several colleges of magic in Slayers Hero: Sorcery (or Black Magic), Shamanistic (further divided into five elements), White Magic and Divine Magic. In order to cast a spell from particular college a caster has to have the skill and perk associated with that college of magic. The magic skills do not default to each other in any way. If a character has the Sorcery Skill and no other magic skills then Sorcery Spells will be the only sort of magic that they can use. Magic Skills are all Characteristic-based skills the characteristic needed will be either INT or EGO depending on the college. Specifics about the magic skills are found with the write-up of each spell college.

Two things are required for a character who hopes to be able to wield the power of magic. First they have to have a natural talent or gift. If this were not the case the world would quickly be overrun with people using magic. Though the characters of the Slayers anime all use magic (except Gourry) they are far from the norm. This conjecture is supported by the reaction of normal people to magic. The vast majority of people that the Slayers encounter in everyday life are not capable of using magic and react with alarm and surprise when they see magic being used. Most people know about magic and know to be wary of it. In addition to natural talent a prospective magic-user must have training although a person with great talent or intelligence can self-teach to some extent.

The inborn talent to use magic is represented by the purchasing one of two different Talents: Latent Magic-user (5 Points) or Awakened Magic-user (10 points). (If you are using Hero Designer simply buy these as Custom Talents with no skill roll). If a character ever wishes to be able to cast magic spells they must at least buy the Latent Magic-user talent.

The talent Latent Magic-user means that the character has the potential to learn magic but they haven't yet. Though the potential is there they have never studied or attempted to use magic and until they awaken they can progress no further. Most latent characters are aware of their potential but as to why they sense this nobody knows. The specifics are left up the GM to decide how, or if, this works in their campaign.

A character with the talent Awakened Magic-user is fully capable of learning the skills and buying the perks required to master magic. They are active magic-users.

In order to learn the magic skill for a particular college of magic a character must buy the perk associated with it. The table below lists the perks, their costs and what they grant.

Sorcerer: The character can buy the Sorcery Skill which enables them to use Sorcery (Black Magic). The character can also learn any sorcery spell provided they have a method. Cost = 10 points.

Shamanist (1 element): The character can buy the Shamanist Skill but can only use the skill with spells from one of the five elements. The element must be chosen when the perk is bought and it cannot be changed but the character can later upgrade this perk to one of the more costly Shamanist Perks. Cost = 2 Points.

Shamanist (2 elements): The character can buy the Shamanist Skill but can only use the skill with spells from two of the five elements. The elements must be chosen when the perk is bought and it cannot be changed but the character can later upgrade this perk to one of the more costly Shamanist

Perks. Cost = 4 Points.

Shamanist (3 elements): The character can buy the Shamanist Skill but can only use the skill with spells from three of the five elements. The elements must be chosen when the perk is bought and it cannot be changed but the character can later upgrade this perk to one of the more costly Shamanist Perks. Cost = 6 Points.

Shamanist (4 elements): The character can buy the Shamanist Skill but can only use the skill with spells from four of the five elements. The elements must be chosen when the perk is bought and it cannot be changed but the character can later upgrade this perk to one of the more costly Shamanist Perks. Cost = 8 Points.

Shamanist (all elements): The character can buy the Shamanist Skill and can use that skill with any Shamanist spell regardless of its element. Cost = 10 Points.

Priest, Priestess or Shrine Maiden: The character can buy the White Magic Skill which enables them to use those spells. The character can also learn any White Magic spell provided they have a method. Cost = 5 Points.

Divinity: The character can buy Divine Skill which enables them to use spells of the Divine college. No character can have this Perk and the Sorcerer Perk. This perk will generally only come into play if you have a character playing the part of a Gold Dragon. The Divine College of magic is unknown to humans. Cost = 10 Points.

A reasonable argument could be made that if you buy the Divinity perk you should automatically gain access to all White Magic too. I am still thinking that one over.

As far as I have been able to determine there is no reason why a character cannot buy the perks for various magical colleges. Most mundane NPC magic-users restrict themselves to a single college but important NPCs and PCs should not be restricted in this manner. In fact many of the principle Slayers characters know spells from multiple colleges. Lina herself knows spells of Sorcery, Shamanism and even a White magic spell or two. It should probably be uncommon for a character to have perks from both Sorcery and White Magic since in many ways these are diametrically opposed colleges. Divine Magic may actually be a stronger version of White Magic but for purposes of this game they are considered separate colleges. Divine magic is essentially unknown within the Mazoku barrier. The only human users of Divine magic (if there are any) will be from the Outside World. But then magic of any sort seems quite a bit rarer beyond the barrier. In reality it is probably only members of the Golden Dragon race that have access to Divine magic.

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