

SPELLBOOK



A STORYTELLING PARLOR GAME FOR THREE OR MORE PLAYERS

In *SPELLBOOK*, players assume the roles of Apprentice Sorcerers competing to develop amazing new spells, cantrips, and magic rituals. The Apprentices are guided in their studies by the Professor, another player who judges their spellcrafting acumen. Because *Spellbook* is an offshoot of the *Sword & Backpack* notebook RPG and part of Rothbard & Gazpus's Almanac System, all you need to play is a blank grimoire (a Moleskine or Moleskine-like notebook of any size, though we recommend 5x8¼"), a pencil, and some inspiration drawn from the world around them. The object of the game isn't to "win" per se; instead, the players should aim to dazzle and delight each other with flights of cleverness and weirdness, and the ultimate goal is to eventually fill their personal Spell Book with incantations to read and revisit over the years.

Each player should possess a small notebook—this is their Spellbook, and each page should be dedicated to one spell, though spells can take up more than one page if necessary or if inspiration requires it. Each spell will have four different sections to be written on the page, its **TITLE**, its **PHYSICAL COMPONENT**, **CASTING INSTRUCTIONS**, and its **EFFECT**.

HOW TO PLAY

To begin, prepare a number of small slips of blank paper. Give each Apprentice ten of these slips; each Apprentice should write down a single “magic” word or short phrase (nouns, verbs, names, locations, concepts) on five of the slips, and a physical component on the other five, until they’ve submitted ten ideas—five words and five physical components. The Professor then separates the magic words and physical components and selects one of each according to their whims and/or magical instincts and announces them to the assembled players with a flourish. Once the magic word and the physical component are announced, the players have ten minutes to write their spell. The players must incorporate the magic word into the **NAME** of their spell, and the **PHYSICAL COMPONENT** must be incorporated into the spell both thematically and into the **CASTING INSTRUCTIONS**.

When time is up, the players present their spells to the Professor, who judges them on their creativity, flair, etc., and gives each spell a grade of their devising. The winner gets bragging rights and a prize of the Professor’s choosing (within reason and the boundaries of taste). For instance, one of the losers might have to go get the next round of drinks, or do something embarrassing, or both (see “Additional Gameplay Ideas/Optional Rules” below). Play then continues with another player taking on the role of Professor, and so on until everyone tires of the game and decides to move on.

THE SPELLS

NAME: Written across the top of the page, the name of the spell can be as short or as complicated as you want. The only prerequisite is that it **MUST** incorporate the word you've been given. Other than that, anything goes.

PHYSICAL COMPONENT: A Physical Component could be coins, matches, dice, cards, chalk, ash from a fire, tape, a leaf, a nail, a bottle of wine, and so on. The possibilities are limitless. The Physical Component is part of the Casting Instructions.

CASTING INSTRUCTIONS: This is the trickiest—and most fun—part of the game. A proper spell must have some sort of a theatrical element to it, whether it's a ritual, an intricate waving of the hands, a collection of magical words (rhyming or not), or something else distinctive and cool.

EFFECT: What the spell does to the caster or the world around them.

ADDITIONAL GAMEPLAY IDEAS & OPTIONAL RULES

- After the name and the physical component are announced, the Professor may announce a new requirement for the spell's casting instructions. This requirement is only limited to the Professor's imagination and/or good sense.
- Speaking of physical components, we can't emphasize this enough: LOOK AROUND YOU. The world of physical components and ways they can be incorporated into spells is only limited by one's imagination. Think about rituals. Twist them. Shape them to your vision.
- Sketches, occult diagrams, and so on should be encouraged.
- The Professor decides upon a title or an effect that the players must use.
- Making a bet never hurt anybody. Well, that's not true, but still, it can at least make a game of *SPELLBOOK* more interesting. Wagering on who will buy the next round of drinks is a nifty idea. The wagering possibilities are endless.
- Trading spells: Apprentices should feel free to trade spells by copying them by hand or pasting/taping reproductions into their spell books.
- Do What Thou Wilt Shall be the Whole of the Law: Make up your own house rules. Go ahead. You don't have to ask for our permission.