

SCIENTIFIC SORCERY

ALCHEMY OCCUPIES A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE WORLD OF fantasy roleplaying games. In worlds dominated by magic and dragons and gods that shake the foundations of reality, alchemy seems but a simple science. In our own world, alchemy was the first step into the far less mystical world of modern chemistry. In these fantastic worlds of fiction, alchemy can be so much more. Below is a way to define alchemy not as a single class, but rather as a diverse toolkit of possibility. Study in this ambitious science brings new perspective, bridging that vast gap between magic and science.

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NEW BACKGROUND

ALCHEMIST'S APPRENTICE

You are an alchemist of some renown, having established yourself in the field after a lengthy apprenticeship to a well-established master. Forgoing the mercantile side of the profession, you've lived your life tinkering, experimenting, and improving upon alchemical concoctions. While lacking the support of a guild, your master's teachings advanced your mastery of the art. You may not have the mercantile success that comes with guild membership, but that's allowed the freedom to ponder new ways to improve each tincture you brew.

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine, Nature

Tool Proficiencies: Alchemist's supplies

Language: One of your choice

Equipment: A set of alchemist's supplies, one vial of acid, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing four empty vials and 5 gp.

Alchemical Specialization

Alchemists generally dwell in large cities where they can develop and enhance their craft, but it is not unusual to find them even in the smallest of villages. Often eccentric and obsessed with a particular field of study, most alchemists choose a specialty to master. Choose or randomly determine your specialization.

d8 Alchemical Specialization

- 1 Snake oils and "miracle" cures
- 2 Deadly toxins
- 3 Restorative elixirs
- 4 Explosives and inflammables
- 5 Glues, solvents, and similar agents
- 6 Acids, bases, and everything in between
- 7 Cosmetic aids and alterations
- 8 Hangover cures and minor medicinals

Feature: Chemical Exposure

As an alchemist, you've likely been exposed to a wide range of chemicals by design or otherwise. Consequently, you've learned to quickly identify what properties a nonmagical substance might have—ideally before it causes any damage to you or your work by sampling a portion or inhaling the scent. Your experience limits accidental injury during such analyses. At the GM's discretion, this feature may work with magical substances, but accidental exposure is much more likely.

Suggested Characteristics

Alchemists are well known for their hard work and obsessive nature. Even non-adventuring alchemists are eccentric at best. They value science and knowledge above almost all else, and are particularly vulnerable to blurring the lines of morality if it means furthering their craft.

d6 Personality Trait

- 1 The past is the greatest teacher, the future the worst student.
- 2 I deal in facts and only facts, though I may often withhold them when speaking to my rivals.
- 3 I'll readily curry favor with others... if I think I can use them later.
- 4 I am a stickler for the fine line between alchemy and magic.
- 5 Through discovery, I discover myself.
- 6 Nature provides for me; I innovate for it.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Scientific Method.** Structured learning is key to societal and social success. (Lawful)
- 2 **Treatment.** Innumerable people can benefit from my talents. (Good)
- 3 **Experimentation.** Imagination is boundless. The law is not. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Greed.** Wealth is worth any of its consequences. (Evil)
- 5 **Knowledge.** A day's learning is never done. (Neutral)
- 6 **Mastery.** Only in the relentless pursuit of perfection can one achieve excellence. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 My master's reputation was falsely ruined. I just need to prove it.
- 2 Alchemy may always be evolving, but I want to revolutionize it.
- 3 The thieves that stole my greatest work don't know that I'm still after them.
- 4 The natural world is the source of my reagents, so my work must help protect it.
- 5 I know my craft can help heal and protect the meek.
- 6 I am a living library of knowledge, and seek an apprentice of my own.

d6 Flaw

- 1 For all my work, I can't save two coppers!
- 2 I'll do whatever it takes to be the best and stay there.
- 3 I need to keep notes for everything, or I'm bound to forget.
- 4 Everything I've learned I stole from someone else.
- 5 Alchemy was not my first love, but it will be my last.
- 6 The accident that caused my master's death wasn't her fault—it was mine.

Variant Alchemist's Apprentice: Self-Made Master

Not every alchemist is fortunate enough to earn an apprenticeship. Instead, you may simply have an innate knack for alchemy or learn it through extensive trial and error. You might never have had someone teaching you the ropes, but you've learned them the hard way—your way. As a result of your unorthodox education in alchemy, however, you tend to approach problems a little differently. Your acids are just as caustic, your poisons as deadly, and your tonics as soothing, but you lack the careful, practiced methodology that apprenticeship teaches.

If you wish to be a self-made master, use the Unorthodox Alchemy feature, below. You may trade your skill proficiency with Medicine for Survival, if you learned your trade in the wilderness, or for Deception, if you practiced it in secret.



Variant Feature: Unorthodox Alchemy

You may select this background feature instead of Chemical Exposure.

Your alchemy is a little different from everyone else, but that's what makes it special. Your unique way of approaching the science grants you an esoteric knowledge of the world. When attempting to recall a piece of Arcana or Nature lore, you often have an idea on how to learn more, even if you don't know anything specific. Usually, this method involves experimental, time-consuming, and potentially dangerous alchemy. Your GM might rule that there are certain things you cannot know nor further explore via alchemy.

NEW ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

Alchemists are masters of haphazard improvisation and calculated improvement. Even lacking the right tool, the alchemist is almost always working up a new concoction. Here you'll find a few new items to add to the alchemist's arsenal, and a new variant rule for crafting them.

On an average day, a craftsman produces about 5 gp worth of marketable goods. Alchemy is no different—but oftentimes, alchemists lack the required downtime. To quickly produce alchemical items, you may make a DC 10 Intelligence (Alchemist's Tools) check. Your daily progress is doubled for every 5 points by which you exceed this DC. If you fail by 5 or more, you ruin the day's ingredients, losing the day's raw materials and 5 gp of progress. You may attempt to craft during an adventuring day, but doing so imposes disadvantage on your crafting check to represent various complications and interruptions.

Alchemical Torch

Cost 25 gp; Weight 1 lb.

The rough, sticky tar at the end of this torch traps air, keeping it burning through even the most adverse conditions. An *alchemical torch* burns for 1 hour and continues to smolder in heavy rains, strong winds, and underwater (albeit poorly when submerged, shedding only dim light in a 5-foot radius). Dimmer than a normal torch, it burns for 1 hour and sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet. If you make a melee attack with a burning *alchemical torch* and hit, the tar binds to the target, dealing 1 fire damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.

Facemold Paste

Cost 50 gp; Weight 1 lb.

This thick clay can be produced in any color and is easily moldable over skin. After it sets, it is almost indistinguishable from the real thing. With

1 minute of work, you can use *facemold paste* to create a convincing disguise, even if you are not proficient with or lack a disguise kit. When using *facemold paste*, you may add twice your proficiency bonus to any check made to make or maintain the disguise. *Facemold paste* remains convincing for only 3 hours before starting to flake off and is immediately identifiable as fake upon touch.

Glacial Effector

Cost 100 gp; Weight 1 lb.

The shard of porous material within this flask explodes into a violent endothermic reaction upon exposure to air. As an action, you can throw this flask up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. Make a ranged attack against a creature or object, treating the glacial effector as an improvised weapon. On a hit, the target takes 1d4 cold damage and must make a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be flash-frozen. On a failure, its speed is halved and it can use either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both. A creature can end this effect by using its action to make a DC 10 Strength check to break free of the ice.

Midnight Dust

Cost 75 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

This powdered substance reacts with natural light, significantly dimming the area around it. As an action, you can throw a pouch of *midnight dust* into the air, creating an area of darkness (as the *darkness* spell) within a 20-foot cube. The dust remains in the air for 1 minute or until a wind of moderate or greater speed disperses it, and has no effect on magical light.

Smoke Bomb

Cost 100 gp; Weight 3 lbs.

This metal sphere's casing is pockmarked with holes and capped with a thick fuse. When lit, it spews suffocating black smoke, heavily obscuring a 10-foot cube for 1 minute. Air-breathing creatures within the smoke must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, or have disadvantage on all rolls made while breathing the fumes.

A wind of moderate or greater speed suppresses the smoke effect. Rounds where the smoke is suppressed still count against the effect's 1-minute duration.

Sparksprig

Cost 75 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

Wire coiled around this short length of charred wood crackles with electricity, rapidly discharging when snapped. As an action, you can snap a *sparksprig* to create a stroke of lightning 20 feet long and 5 feet wide, arcing out from you in the direction you choose. Each creature in the line must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d4 lightning damage and be stunned for 1 round.

NEW FEATS

While alchemy is a broad science, not every alchemist displays their prowess in the same way. The following feats represent only a few of the many disparate specialties in alchemy, and offer new and unique bonuses for prospective alchemists.

ALCHEMICAL ARTILLERIST

You have specialized in the numerous dangerous chemicals at the alchemist's fingertips, gaining the following benefits:

- ▶ Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- ▶ You may treat thrown alchemical weapons as simple ranged weapons with the finesse and thrown (range 20/60) qualities, instead of as improvised weapons.
- ▶ Throwing alchemical weapons at long range doesn't impose disadvantage on your ranged weapon attack rolls.
- ▶ When attacking with alchemical weapons, you deal 1 additional die of damage.

EXPEDITIOUS ALCHEMY

You can produce alchemical items much more quickly than normal.

As part of a short or long rest, you can produce a single unstable alchemical item. An unstable alchemical item functions in all ways like its normal counterpart, except it remains potent for only 24 hours. Items crafted in this way cost no gold pieces, but their volatile nature prevents you from carrying more than one at a time. Crafting a new unstable alchemical item immediately renders the previous one inert. You must be proficient with and have access to a set of alchemist's tools to benefit from this feat.

PERNICIOUS POISONER

You have trained in the art of poison, gaining the following benefits:

- ▶ You gain proficiency with poisoner's kits, and may treat alchemist's supplies as a poisoner's kit.
- ▶ You craft poisons twice as quickly as normal, doubling all daily progress made while crafting.
- ▶ You may create concentrated poisons by mixing two doses of the same poison together, imposing disadvantage on all saving throws to resist the poison.
- ▶ You always have advantage on saving throws against poison effects.

