

THE AETHERMAGE



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Aether Magic, Reborn

What feels like forever ago, I published a new spellcasting class called the Aethermage. It was the intersection of a desire to break the wizard's monopoly on intelligence-based magic and a personal interest in exploring certain mechanical design concepts. It did well for its goals.

Even so, as I look back on it after gaining a great deal more design experience, I feel dissatisfied. As an older design, it does not meet my current quality standards. Furthermore, my design priorities have shifted from raw experimentation to focusing on a clean representation of a concept.

With this in mind, I decided it's time for the concept of the aethermage to be given a new mechanical framework. Its best representation, I believe, is in the form of a sorcerer subclass. Its core concepts can be communicated by a combination of new spells, new metamagic options, and a handful of class features. Therefore, that's what I have created.

I hope you enjoy this subclass! If so, please remember to leave a review, and check out my other work on the Dungeon Masters Guild as well!

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AETHERMAGE

For all the variety of spellcasters in the worlds of D&D, they all have one thing in common: the aether, the invisible raw material from which magic is shaped, is untouchable—locked behind an unseen interface known as the Weave. Spellcasters of all sorts use some combination of sounds and gestures to set the strands of the Weave into resonance, sending ripples through the aether behind it to produce a spell.

But you're different. Maybe you had an epiphany, maybe you inherited a sixth sense from a magical ancestor, or maybe you're just talented. Whatever the reason, you have an intuitive grasp of how the unseen aether is expressed through magic, allowing you to shape raw aether with your bare hands instead of using the Weave as an interface.

Below are the class features gained by selecting the aethermage sorcerous origin. Following these features are some new metamagic options for all sorcerers, as well as some new sorcerer-exclusive spells.

Alternative Understanding

Unlike other sorcerers, your magic is not fueled by emotion or some force in your body. Instead your intuitive grasp of what happens behind the Weave allows you to produce magical effects. This magical understanding has several effects.

Your spellcasting ability as a sorcerer is either Intelligence or Wisdom (your choice) instead of Charisma.

You gain proficiency in either the Arcana skill (if you chose Intelligence for your spellcasting ability) or the Insight skill (if you chose Wisdom).

You can cast *detect magic* at will without expending a spell slot, and you learn the *identify* spell. Neither of these spells count against your number of spells known, and both are treated as sorcerer spells for you.

Aethershaping

You shape your spells by hand instead of by using traditional gestures and vocalizations to resonate the

strands of the Weave. When casting a sorcerer spell, your own hands count as arcane foci, you can ignore any verbal components of the spell, and the spell gains a somatic component if it doesn't have one already.

Into the Aether

Beginning at 6th level, you are adept at dissolving yourself into the aether and re-materializing elsewhere. You learn the *misty step* spell and can choose to cast it by expending a sorcery point instead of a spell slot. This spell does not count against your number of spells known.

Effortless Levitation

By 14th level, floating on currents of aether has become second nature. You gain a permanent magical flying speed of 40 feet.

Spell Turning

Beginning at 18th level, you can even manipulate the aether in other casters' spells. When a creature casts a spell that targets you, you can use your reaction and spend 3 sorcery points to turn the spell. You are no longer targeted, and the caster is targeted instead. You must be aware of the casting to use this ability.

METAMAGIC OPTIONS

Below are new options for a sorcerer's Metamagic feature. While these are designed to support the themes of the aethermage, they are available for any sorcerer to choose.

Overlapping Spell

When you are already concentrating and you cast a spell that requires concentration, you can spend 1 sorcery point to maintain concentration on both spells instead of ending the first spell. At the end of your turn, one of the spells you're concentrating on ends (your choice).

Reshaped Spell

When you cast a spell that affects an area, you can spend 1 sorcery point to alter the area, as described below. A creature included in more than one area for a modified spell is still only affected once.

Cone. The new area is three lines. Each line is 5 feet wide and as long as the original cone.

Cube, cylinder, or sphere. The spell is split into three areas. Each new area is the same shape as the original, and half the radius or width of the original area. Round up to the nearest increment of 5 feet. A spell whose original area has a radius or width of less than 10 feet cannot be modified in this way.

Line. You can bend the line in any direction, at a number of points up to your spellcasting ability modifier. Each bend can be up to 90 degrees and must be no closer than 5 feet from any other bend.

NEW SPELLS

These new spells are designed to support the themes of the aethermage, but could be appropriate for any sorcerer.

AETHER OVERLOAD

1st-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

You flood the mind of a creature you can see within range with excessive amounts of aether. The creature must make a Charisma saving throw, taking 3d6 psychic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

If a creature is damaged by this spell while concentrating, that creature suffers disadvantage on the resulting Constitution saving throw to maintain concentration.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 1st.

AETHER SIPHON

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you see a creature within 60 feet of you casting a spell that targets you or includes you in its area

Range: 60 feet

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

You attempt to absorb the magic that's directed toward you. If you do not have the Font of Magic feature, this spell fails.

If the creature is casting a spell of 3rd level or lower, its spell fails and has no effect. If it is casting a spell of 4th level or higher, make an ability check using your spellcasting ability. The DC equals 10 + the spell's level. On a success, the creature's spell fails and has no effect.

When you successfully counter the creature's spell, you regain expended sorcery points equal to that spell's level.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the interrupted spell has no effect if its level is less than or equal to the level of the spell slot you used.

AETHERIC APOTHEOSIS

8th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when your hit points would be reduced to zero

Range: Self

Components: S

Duration: 1 round

You and anything you are wearing or carrying disappears without a trace. At the beginning of your next turn, you reappear in an unoccupied space of your choice within 500 feet of where you disappeared.

Upon re-materialization, you have hit points equal to your hit point maximum, any nonmagical poisons or diseases are removed from your system, and you can choose to end the effects on yourself of any spell of 4th level or lower.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 9th level, you can materialize in an unoccupied space anywhere on the same plane of existence, as long as it's a place you've been before.