

ENHANCED FOCUSES

*Making Spellcasting Focuses more than a
footnote on your equipment list*



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Enhanced Spellcasting Focuses



All characters use tools to express their abilities. Swords, daggers, greataxes, all can be enchanted or have mythic origins that amplify and complement class abilities. Caster classes have focuses that they channel their abilities through. However, these magical implements are purely mundane items. Whereas the Barbarian's Rage ability can be supplemented with a +1 or *Vicious Weapon*, other than the *Wand of the War Mage*, magic items that amplify or enhance a spellcaster's abilities a buried in lists of items that just replace the character's spellcasting, untethered from their abilities.

Fiction is full of magical implements that enhance a spellcaster's potency. Elder Wands, Holy Relics, and Mythic Jewels don't just give them new powers, but amplify their existing power, setting them apart from their peers. This supplement provides examples to make a character's spellcasting focus not just a forgotten bit of starting equipment, but a prized possession. As well as guidelines for creating your own Enhanced Focuses and incorporating them into your games.

Introducing Enchanted Focuses

These items work best as quest rewards that thematically link with the quest giver. The DM should match the themes of the item to the NPC giving the item and the character receiving it. Giving an Enhanced Focus becomes a part of the character's story. Making it more precious to the player than just its power boost.

Or you have them used by antagonists. A *blasting wand* taken off the corpse of an archmage after a wizard duel or an *overwhelming censor* recovered from the fallen paladin that stole it will resonate with a player. The goal is to make your table's stories more memorable, and the perfect item which fits a character's story can do just that.

Starting Guidelines

While the listed focuses have a form included in their description, don't feel bound to them. And if you think an Arcane Focus works better as a Holy Symbol or Druidic Focus in your story, reskin it.

Using Spellcasting Focuses

To use an Enhanced Focus, the character incorporates the focus into preparing their spells for the day. Focuses only interact with your class abilities or spells that you cast. Spells or abilities from other magic items, cast by allies, or from an outside power don't gain the benefits of the Focus.

A Focus has to be held in at least one hand to be used and one focus can be used at a time. For spells that use somatic components, a character can use a Focus to make the necessary gestures. If a spell has a material component without an associated cost, you can cast it with a Focus instead. If it has a material component that is consumed, you can hold the Focus in one hand, the material in the other, and still gain its benefits. Otherwise, the material component can be held in the same hand as the Focus.



Arcane Focuses

Al'mateer brushed embers from his robes, smearing blood in their place from a wound he didn't remember receiving. He stumbled forward through the dust and arcane remnants swirling in the air around him, his mind was filled with vengeance for his dead master. On the periphery of his vision, his allies dealt with the undead monstrosities his fallen foe had been controlling only seconds ago. Al'mateer left them to it as he breathed deeply with triumph on seeing the twisted corpse holding the staff of his dead master. He sneered, the assassin's foul minions falling around him, and freed the staff from the corpse's charred hands. "Kaerhal is avenged," he whispered as the corpse crumbled to dust.



Amulet of the Bulwark

Amulet, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This amulet is made up of braided and twisted bands of metal that seem to perpetually fold in on themselves. Abjuration spells that take an action to cast, can be cast as a bonus action. Abjuration spells that take a bonus action to cast can be cast as a reaction.

Blasting Wand

Wand, rarity varies (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This durable wand is made from ebony wood with brass fittings. Evocation spells cast with this wand have a bonus to spell attack & saving throw DC, as determined by the wand's rarity. +1 Rare, +2 Very Rare, +3 Legendary.

Biting Blade

Blade, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This blade has arcane symbols carved into jagged serrations along its edge. When a target is hit by, or fails a saving throw against a Necromancy spell, the target has disadvantage on its next saving throw against a spell you cast.

Codex of Casement

Tome, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This tome is full of paragons of fantastical creatures, the finest examples of their form. When conjuring creatures they gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Look at any artistic depiction of a wizard or arcane spellcaster and you inevitably see them holding some sort of magical implement: the evoker with flame bursting from their staff, a diviner staring deeply into a starry orb, a necromancer with a rune-covered crystal skull, a transmuter holding a locket with a powerful jewel. These items amplify the arcane power of its wielder, setting them apart, and enhancing their mastery of the art.

These iconic items can come in the following common forms:

Amulets are complex workings of precious metal and crystal that typically hang from a chain. They may also be worn as a brooch but to cast with them, they need to be held.

Blades are any implement incorporating a blade (ritual knives, daggers, swords, etc.) and crafted to channel arcane energies. They can also be used as a Dagger in combat.

Crystals can be naturally formed or carefully shaped translucent minerals that focus the mind. Crystals that glow with arcane power are common tropes.

Orbs are transparent crystal or glass, often spherical. Thought, they can be shaped into lenses, disks, skulls, or other forms that can fit in a hand.

Staffs are long stout rods, similar to quarterstaves, with carvings and inlays that can be made of many arcane materials.

Tomes are enchanted books full of arcane formulas that enhance and channel your spells.

Wands are short rods, carefully balanced to rest in the hand to encourage precision of movement. Controlling arcane energies like an orchestra conductor.



Creating Focuses For Your Game

The goal of enhancing a Spellcasting Focus is to not just give a character an edge but to encourage them to develop their character along a theme. It shouldn't just be an expression of their character, but tie them into the larger world. How does this item fit into your setting? Why was it created, and by whom? Who had it last, and how will the character get it? To illustrate this, as you move through the guidelines I will walk you through creating the four focuses featured at the beginning of each chapter, the *Elemental Staff*, *Stinging Vine*, *Icon of Dread*, and *Ghastly Draailier*.

Jeff's Evocation Wizard, Al'mateer, has a flame motif. He favors fire spells and Jeff has worked fire and flames into his design.

Jennifer has been playing her Land Circle Druid, Selvas, as contemplative and strategic. She makes a point of interacting with the terrain in combat, relying heavily on *entangle* and *spike growth*.

Molly has been working to integrate her Oath of Vengeance Paladin, Tellean, into the local religious hierarchy and giving me many opportunities to present plot hooks. Unfortunately, she hasn't been using his Channel Divinity or spells very often, so an enhanced focus should encourage that.

Tom has been having his Valor Bard, Oghamor, use intimidation and illusions in clever ways to make up for her low level, and I want to reward that.

Deciding on Enhancements

Once you know what you want the item to express or encourage, determine what spells or class abilities you want your item to enhance and how that enhancement fits into your themes. Enhancements should extend specific class abilities or groups of spells. What spells and class abilities does your Enhanced Focus interact with? Does it enhance a specific school of magic, damage type, or other class of spell? Do those spells require a saving throw or a spell attack?

Then decide what you want the enhancement to do. How will you enhance these spells or abilities? The biggest risk in creating your own Enhanced Focus is power level. 5e is broken into tiers of play, each with a corresponding rarity of magic items. Tiers represent a significant boost in power beyond the normal growth between levels. While an item can make you more powerful than a comparable character in the same tier, it should never make you more powerful than a character of the next tier.

Now determine how your enhancement will trigger. Are there any unexpected spells that trigger your enhancement? Can you modify the conditions of the enhancement to limit what spells trigger it? Can you tie the enhancement to a class ability to control how much it is used?

For Bards, you can trigger enhancements with Bardic Inspiration to control how often they are used. Keep an eye on the power level as they have multiple Bardic Inspiration uses per long and short rest above fifth level.

Ghastly Draailier

Daailier, uncommon (requires attunement by a bard)

As this Draailier's disk spins against its strings, an ominous tone fills the air, the light shifts to an unsettling tone, and your illusions take on a terrible form. Foes within 30ft that see an illusion spell you cast must make a saving throw against your spellcasting DC or be Frightened by the illusion until the end of their next turn.

Draailiers are a fairly complex mechanism that would need a developed economy with specialized craftspeople to build one for the battlefield. So it was constructed for the legions of the recently fallen empire. It could even still have markings of it's original legion, giving me a hook for an NPC to recognize it and make assumptions about the character. Since then, it has been handed around eventually ending up in the hands of a retired army musician from one of the breakaway kingdoms. Oghamor has gained the trust of the local veterans and took on the "banner bearer" role for the town guards, bolstering them during a recent combats. So it would make sense that handing it down would "carry on the legacy."



Icon of Dread

Emblem, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This icon glows faintly with a divine force bound within it. Channel Divinities and spells that require a saving throw cause the target to be Frightened on a failed saving throw for the duration of the Channel Divinity effect or spell.

While killing NPC's a character cares about to trigger their vengeance is an old trope, when used sparingly it works well. Tellan is an Order of Vengeance Paladin, so giving him something to avenge soon after Molly chooses his Order makes sense story wise. The Icon of Dread makes sense thematically as it will make his holy fury have a mechanical effect. As well it will encourage Molly to use his spells and Channel Divinity more often. Having him entrusted with a valuable relic and entitling him, "Warden Tellan the Dreadbearer", is a good reward for her roleplay efforts and would become a memorable part of her character even without the enhancement.



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Sprig of Rebirth 5
Spurned Shawm 10
Stinging Vine 5
Terror Blade 3
Terror Drum 10
Undeath Tome 3
Upheaval Banner 8
Venom Fang 5
Vicious Thorn 5
Wounding Fang 5
Writ of the grave 8
Zephyr Bundle 5

Focuses by Rarity

Uncommon

Deliberative Staf 3
Distracting Prism 3
Fascinating Duduk 9
Fixating Lyre 9
Focus Bundle 5
Ghastly Draailier 10
Hurricane Trumpet 10
Icon of the Grave 7
Piercing Pipes 10
Rally Drum 10
Upheaval Banner 8

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Resounding Missal 7
Slam Wand 3
Sprig of Rebirth 5
Spurned Shawm 10
Undeath Tome 3
Venom Fang 5
Vicious Thorn 5
Wounding Fang 5
Zephyr Bundle 5

Very Rare

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Biting Blade 2
Blasting Wand 2
Charming Baton 4
Desiccating Hand 4
Dryad Bough 4

Fortified Rod 3
Haze Crystal 3
Hypnotic Bloom 4
Master Wand 3
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