

The **Arcana Check**

A PRICE TO PAY

MAGICAL ITEMS FOR D&D 5E



A hero's spirit burns brighter than most...

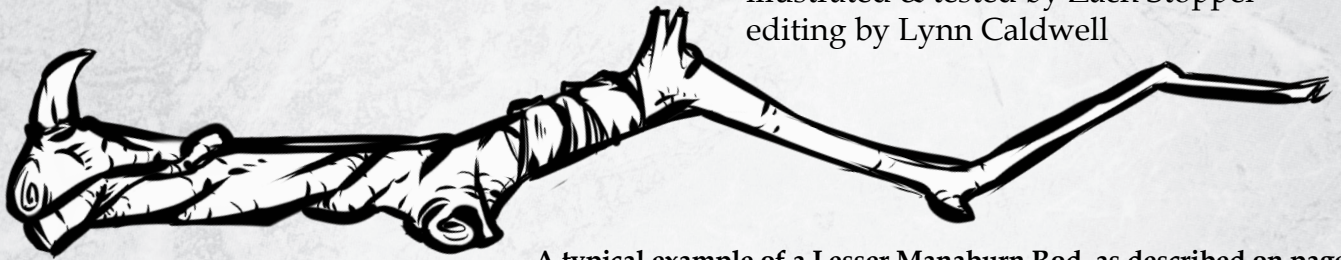
THE ARCANA CHECK PRESENTS

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A typical example of a Lesser Manaburn Rod, as described on page 3

And from that font of energy, clever mages and the forgemasters of the long-fallen places crafted items that draw on this power. The strongest of these items can drain a hero and bend reality, but others are made of simpler stuff, granting martial prowess in exchange for just a sip of the soul.

These items exist to make the concept of Hit Dice in D&D 5e a little more interesting. As early as 5th level, Hit Dice become one of the most plentiful resources a character has, and grant the comfort of knowing that significant recovery is only a short rest away. Players regain half their Hit Dice on a long rest, which shades further interest

into the mechanic, as even the lowliest monsters can erode a party's health. But what if this slow erasure of the health pool came from another source? These items let your heroes make a dark bargain to gamble now against later.

The power of these items tempts even the strongest-willed heroes (because after all, they're the ones best-suited to wield such weapons) and can channel destruction on a scale that give the gods themselves pause.

But later, in the darkness, if the job isn't done and the heroes are panting for a breath they can't quite catch, these same items can well spell their doom. In this place, there is no power without a price to pay.

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LIFEDRINKING WEAPON

Does not require attunement

When you catch sight of this weapon from the corner of your eye, it seems to emit a black mist that gropes its tendrils at passersby. Focus on the weapon, though, and this effect vanishes, leaving most people wondering if they'd seen anything at all. When the weapon strikes true, this mist emerges into plain sight, reaching for the arteries and veins the way a drunkard reaches for the night's first ale.

When you make a weapon attack using this item, you can activate the Lifedrinking feature by expending and rolling 1 Hit Die without any modifiers. You may add this Hit Die to the attack roll or to the damage roll, but not both.

Half the damage of the weapon attack is converted to necrotic damage whenever you use this feature.

Lifedrinking Weapons can show up in many forms, and are as likely to be short swords as they are to be javelins.

CURSED LIFEDRINKING WEAPON

Conditional attunement: see description

This weapon presents as a normal Lifedrinking Weapon, but, whether the countless ages passing have pickled it in its own corruption or a mad wizard created the weapon as a trap, the result is an item that slowly tries to kill its user.

When you make a weapon attack using this item, you can activate the Cursed Lifedrinking feature by expending and rolling 1 Hit Die without any modifiers. You may add this Hit Die to the attack roll or to the damage roll, but not to both.

Half the damage of the weapon is

converted to necrotic damage whenever you use this feature.

After you've done this, you become attuned to the weapon and cannot become unattuned until the curse is removed. If you have 3 attuned items already, your oldest attuned item is no longer attuned. While attuned, attempting to remove the Cursed Lifedrinking Weapon from your person will result in it reappearing at your side when you move 5 feet away. Attempting to draw another weapon will result in the Cursed Lifedrinking Weapon being drawn instead.

Whenever you make an attack with this weapon and do not choose to use its Cursed Lifedrinking feature, you must pass a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw; if you fail, the Cursed Lifedrinking feature will be automatically triggered.

If you use the weapon's Cursed Lifedrinking feature and do not have a Hit Die, roll a death saving throw instead and add the result to the attack or damage roll. Death saving throw failures accumulated in this way do not reset until you receive magical healing, and can kill a character, as per the death rules (See "Death Saving Throws," *Player's Handbook*, page 197.).

LESSER MANABURN ROD

Requires Attunement

Requires: Cleric, Wizard, Bard, Warlock, Sorcerer, Rogue (Thief only)

This rod of simple wood has a core of crystalized negative mana, and the runes etched along the sides of the rod allow a fully committed channeler of arcane or divine energies to touch the core with their spirit, causing an intense reaction.

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As an action, you can use the Lesser Manaburn Rod to create a spell slot. To do so, roll 1 Hit Die. Do not add your Constitution modifier. The level of the spell slot you create, as well as the number of Hit Dice consumed by this feature, is equal to the dice roll. The spell slot dissipates at the end of your next long or short rest. If you expend more Hit Dice than you have available, roll a death saving throw for each Hit Die you lack. Whether you pass or fail, the creation of the spell slot is successful. Death saving throw failures accumulated in this way do not reset until you receive magical healing, and can kill a character, as per the death rules (See "Death Saving Throws," *Player's Handbook*, page 197.).

You may only spend Hit Dice that you gain from required classes to create spell slots with this item.

If a character without any spell slots, such as a Thief or a character using Manaburn Goggles, uses this feature, they may use the spell slot they create to duplicate the last or next spell they cast with a spell scroll, provided the spell slot is of a high enough level to do so.

This item counts as a spellcasting focus, so long as you have at least 1 Hit Die from a required class remaining. When you have exhausted these Hit Dice, the Lesser Manaburn Rod becomes inert and can no longer be used as a focus until your Hit Dice are regained.

Anyone, attuned or not, can break the Lesser Manaburn Rod in half, exposing the negative mana to the world and causing an explosion. The player whose character broke the Lesser Manaburn Rod must immediately expend and roll all of their Hit Dice. The result of this roll is both the radius of the explosion in feet and the amount of

force damage that it deals. Creatures that die in this explosion are converted to mana, body and soul, and cannot be resurrected by any means.

GREATER MANABURN ROD

Requires Attunement

Requires: Cleric, Wizard, Bard, Warlock, Sorcerer, Rogue (Thief only)

Often more ornate than its rougher-hewn cousin, a Greater Manaburn Rod consists of a negative mana core floating in a layer of ether, suspended in a case of positive mana. While dangerous, this configuration allows the item to be used much more quickly than the simpler Manaburn Rod.

As a bonus action, you can use the Greater Manaburn Rod to create a spell slot. To do so, roll 1 Hit Die. Do not add your Constitution modifier. The level of the spell you create, as well as the number of Hit Dice consumed by this feature, is equal to the dice roll. The spell slot dissipates at the end of your next long or short rest. If you expend more Hit Dice than you have available, roll 1 death saving throw for each Hit Die you lack. Whether you pass or fail, the creation of the spell slot is successful. Death saving throw failures accumulated in this way do not reset until you receive magical healing, and can kill a character, as per the death rules (See "Death Saving Throws," *Player's Handbook*, page 197.).

You may only expend Hit Dice that you gain from required classes to create spell slots with this item.

If a character without any spell slots, such as a Thief or a character using Manaburn Goggles, uses this feature, they may use the spell slot they create to duplicate the

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last or next spell they cast with a spell scroll, provided the spell slot is of a high enough level to do so.

This item counts as a spellcasting focus, so long as you have at least 1 Hit Die from a required class remaining. When you have exhausted these Hit Dice, the Greater Manaburn Rod becomes inert and can no longer be used as a focus until your Hit Dice are regained.

Anyone, attuned or not, can break the rod in half, exposing the negative mana core to the world and destabilizing its protective mana sheath, causing an explosion. The player whose character broke the Greater Manaburn Rod must immediately expend and roll all of their Hit Dice. The result of this roll is both the radius of the explosion in feet and the force damage that it deals. Every creature exposed to this force damage is considered vulnerable to it. Creatures that die in this explosion are converted to mana, body and soul, and cannot be resurrected by any means.

ARCING MANABURN ROD

Requires Attunement

Requires: Cleric, Wizard, Bard, Warlock, Sorcerer, Rogue (Thief only)

This crystalline rod is made entirely of mana, and sends out sparks whenever it is held by a person capable of attuning to it. Without another material keeping the wielder from touching the mana directly, the results of using it are much more intense.

As a bonus action, you can use this rod to create a spell slot. To do so, roll 1 Hit Die. Add your spellcasting modifier (or Intelligence modifier, if you do not have

a spellcasting modifier). The level of the spell you create, as well as the number of Hit Dice consumed by this feature, is equal to the result of this roll. You cannot expend more than 9 Hit Dice in this way in a single use. The spell slot dissipates at the end of your next long or short rest. If you expend more Hit Dice than you have available, roll a death saving throw for each Hit Die you lack. Whether you pass or fail, the creation of the spell slot is successful. Death saving throw failures accumulated in this way do not reset until you receive magical healing, and can kill a character, as per the death rules (See "Death Saving Throws," *Player's Handbook*, page 197.).

You may only spend Hit Dice that you gain from required classes to create spell slots with this item.

If a character without any spell slots, such as a Thief or a character using Manaburn Goggles, uses this feature, they may use the spell slot they create to duplicate the last or next spell they cast with a spell scroll, provided the spell slot is of a high enough level to do so.

This item counts as a spellcasting focus, so long as you have at least 1 Hit Die from a required class remaining. When you have exhausted these Hit Dice, the Arcing Manaburn Rod becomes inert and can no longer be used as a focus until your Hit Dice are regained.

Anyone, attuned or not, can break the rod in half, exposing the negative mana to the world and causing an explosion. The player whose character broke the Arcing Manaburn Rod must immediately expend and roll all of their Hit Dice, adding their Constitution modifier or spellcasting modifier (whichever is highest) to each one. The result of the dice is both the radius of

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the explosion and the force damage that it deals. Every creature exposed to this force damage is considered vulnerable to it. Creatures that die in this explosion are converted to mana, body and soul, and cannot be resurrected by any means.

HATEFUL BLOODSTONE

Does not require attunement

Requires: Wizard, Sorcerer

When you hold this pulsing crimson crystal and utter the command word etched in its facets, it casts *magic missile*. As an action, expend and roll 1 Hit Die. The result is the level of the resulting *magic missile* spell.

CROSSBOW OF THE BLACK DRAGON

Requires Attunement

Fashioned from the bones of a black dragon, this ash-grey bow was carved before the dragon's power had faded from the world.

As an attack action, you may expend 2 Hit Dice to cast *Melf's acid arrow* with this weapon (See "Melf's Acid Arrow," *Player's Handbook*, page 259.). *Melf's acid arrow* deals damage twice; once on the turn you cast it, and once on the following turn, if the attack is successful. Roll the expended Hit Dice, and add 1 of them to the initial attack roll. Add the other to the damage dealt by *Melf's acid arrow* at the start of the creature's next turn. The combined roll of the Hit Dice (adding your Constitution modifier to each) is the spell's attack modifier.

If a Crossbow of the Black Dragon ever has a +1 or higher bonus, that bonus is also added to the level of the *Melf's acid arrow* spell.

The weapon can also be used normally,

without activating this feature; half of its damage is converted to acid, regardless of what type of bolt is fired from it.

MANA SCEPTER OF CALCULATED CHAOS

Requires Attunement

Requires: Wizard

A certain order of wizards made an intense and gruesome study of wild sorcerers, attempting to learn how to control chaos itself. Very few of these attempts were successful, and this scepter is one of them. Rather than understand the chaos, this scepter attempts to help the user anticipate it. The 'gem' in the center of its spiraled top is actually a faceted glass phylactery filled with teeth - presumably, the victims of the experiment that died to power this creation.

You may use this scepter to cast *chaos bolt* (See "Chaos Bolt," *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, page 151.) by expending and rolling 1 Hit Die. Intelligence is your spellcasting modifier for this spell.

The number rolled on your Hit Die is added to the damage of the spell, which arcs to a new target, whether it would normally have done so or not. Every instance of *chaos bolt* cast through this scepter adds this Hit Die to the damage, but it must be rerolled (without expending another Hit Die) when the spell arcs to a new target.

If your Hit Die rolls an odd number, you must also roll on the Wild Magic Surge table (See "Wild Magic Surge," *Player's Handbook*, page 104.).

This item counts as a spellcasting focus, so long as you have Wizard Hit Dice remaining.

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AMULET OF IMMORTALITY

Requires Attunement.

This amulet glints with red-tinted gold, and is carved with symbols of eternity and of life. On the back, however, a skull is etched into the metal.

Whenever you make a death saving throw while wearing this amulet, expend and add 1 Hit Die to the result. If doing so brings your result above 20, immediately regain 1 hit point. If you do not have Hit Dice available, your death saving throws are taken at disadvantage.

BOOTS OF THE BLOOD DRAGOON

Requires Attunement

These red-metaled boots include greaves, and go up to the knee. The boots flourish at the knees, heels, and ankles in a pattern that suggests a dragon's wing. When an attuned wearer jumps while saying the command word, which is found on the back of either boot, the flourishes spring to life, flapping and sending the wearer much higher than they normally would have gone.

Whenever you take a high jump, you may expend any number of Hit Dice. Once you do so, you may target a creature. Roll the Hit Dice you choose to expend. Each point adds 2 feet to your high jump, but also carries you 2 feet in the direction of the creature you targeted. Once you are directly over the creature, remaining points on the Hit Dice add 4 feet to the height of your jump instead.

When you roll the falling damage you would normally take as a result of landing from this jump, take half of that damage and add the remainder to a melee weapon attack roll upon landing.

If this melee weapon attack against the

creature is successful, add the full falling damage to the attack damage; if the creature is Large or smaller, it is additionally knocked prone. If the attack is unsuccessful, the creature still takes half of this falling damage. Either way, the creature is also moved 5 feet away from you in a direction you choose.

WAND OF AGATHYS

Requires Attunement

Requires: Warlock

When a warlock picks up this innocuous-seeming wand, the terms of their pact are immediately written upon it in a language only they can read.

Whenever you cast a cantrip, you may choose to expend and roll a Hit Die, adding your Constitution modifier to the result. When you do so, gain the result as temporary hit-points that last until your next long or short rest. If you expend all of your Hit Dice in this way, you may cast *armor of Agathys* at will, without expending a spell slot, but with the benefit of casting it at the highest level you potentially could. This ability fades when you gain Hit Dice again.

SHIELD OF SACRIFICE

Requires Attunement

Requires: Paladin, Cleric

This simple kite shield bears a stark cross on the front.

Whenever you grant someone magical healing, you may expend and roll 1 Hit Die and add the amount shown to the amount healed. If you fall to zero Hit Dice as a result of using the feature of this item, you gain +2 to your AC and saving throws.

MANABURN GOGGLES

Requires Attunement

The blue crystal lenses of these goggles do very little to protect their wearer's vision, but any arcane or divine writing that the wearer sees are immediately clarified.

While looking through these goggles, you ignore the class restrictions of spell scrolls. If your class does not have a spell list, you must pass the associated arcane check with any spell scroll you attempt to cast (See "Spell Scroll," *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 200.).

Spell scrolls used in this way are consumed as normal.

An attuned wearer of these goggles can use them to preserve a spell scroll, though the process is taxing and alters the spell. To cast a spell scroll without expending it, you must instead expend and roll 1 Hit Die. You may add the result of this roll to the spell save DC of the spell, the damage of the spell, the attack modifier of the spell, or the healing done by the spell.

Spell scrolls used in this way are not consumed.



An adult Humanoid poses in a pair of Manaburn Goggles

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VERSION 1.0.1

The Arcana Check uses Semantic Versioning, which has 3 numbers separated by a period. The numbers can be read as: Major.Minor.Patch

Major. A change that alters the entire concept of a document, such as removing or completely changing a feature. First releases begin as 1.0.0.

Minor. A change that adds something about a hack, such as swapping a spell in a spell list, changing the damage of an ability, or adding a new feature.

Patch. A change that addresses typos and exploitable features.

PATCH NOTES

12-10-18

1.0.0

Official release

1.0.1

Fixed typos in the Greater and Arcing manarod section.

Thanks, Illuminous_Knight, for pointing these out!



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The Arcana Check is

[POWERED BY PATREON](#)

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