

NOVEL MECHANICS

PROFICIENCY SCALING

The bond between an adventurer and her weapons is no small thing - a sword might just be a bit of steel to some, but to its owner, that steel has come between her and death, and brought swift ends to her enemies.

As the adventurer grows in skill, her weapon becomes more and more deadly, until both wielder and weapon are renowned - or reviled - for their might.

The basic premise is that a weapon with *Proficiency Scaling* increases in power alongside its wielder's Proficiency Bonus. A player can only reap the benefits of a *Proficiency Scaling* weapon if they already have proficiency with the weapon type.

In the example below, this means that only characters who are proficient with rapiers can unlock the potential of *Passage*.

The enchanted rapier *Passage* serves as a good example to illustrate how this could work. Originally designed for a particularly acrobatic Kobold Rogue, *Passage* is a rapier than can be thrown and then teleported to by its attuned wielder.

PASSAGE

| Proficiency Bonus | Effect |
|-------------------|--|
| +2 | +1 Rapier, <i>Ingress</i> |
| +3 | <i>Feign</i> |
| +4 | +2 Rapier |
| +5 | <i>Frequent Flyer</i> |
| +6 | +3 Rapier, <i>Ingress</i> range up (40/60) |

Ingress: Once per short rest, you may make a ranged attack with *Passage* by throwing it (20/40 range). If you choose to do this, you will appear in the space that *Passage* lands, regardless of whether the attack hits or misses. On a miss, the DM will determine where the blade falls.

Feign: When using *Ingress*, you may choose to teleport to *Passage* AFTER the attack hits or misses. If you choose not to teleport, you may use a bonus action on any subsequent turn to call the blade back, so long as it is within range.

Frequent Flyer: You may use *Ingress* 3 times per short rest.

As you can see, by scaling *Passage* with Proficiency, we get a fairly granular way to increase weapon power alongside player power, and opportunities to build and iterate upon existing items. This is also a thematic way to illustrate that characters are honing their skills as they level up; they aren't renowned simply for *finding* a magical weapon - they're renowned for the skill with which they wield it.

SEAL CASTING

Casting spells is a difficult and vulnerable task; those gifted with the arcane spark still need to combine sound, motion, and material to shape their spells - at least, in most cases.

A particular school of arcane study has come up with a novel way to cast spells - through the use of hand seals, which, when woven together, provide both the *Verbal* and *Somatic* components with spells. So skilled are some, that their ability to shape magic with seals can even compensate for a lack of *Material* components, shaping what material they need from the well of magic that fuels their spells.

Seal casting is an alternate flavor to the typical spellcasting rules. By learning an set of hand seals (usually through rigorous study), casters can forgo certain components (V, S, and even M at higher levels) of spell casting. They also do not need an arcane focus.

In order to Seal Cast, the arcanist must have both hands free when spellcasting.

OPTIONAL UPGRADE: ABSTRACT CASTING

Once a Seal Caster has reached a certain level of mastery, they may have the option to pursue *Abstract Casting*; casting that requires no components, and can be performed entirely in the mind of the caster by imagining a set of arcane symbols.

One approach might be to have the Seal Caster (or even a normal caster) learn to hold one arcane symbol in their mind at a time. These might be split up by schools of magic, spell level, etc.

Seal casting assumes that your game is following the basic rules of spellcasting somewhat strictly - if your rules for spellcasting are more lenient or substantially different (which is fine!), you may see diminished returns from offering this option.

OPTIONAL COMPLICATION: CONTROL

Casting without the use of an arcane focus can be a risky thing - without a conduit to channel arcane energy, even more focus than usual is required - and even the best Seal & Abstract Casters sometimes slip up.

Magical Control is an optional rule related to these alternate casting methods - it introduces a chance (perhaps in the form of a DC Skill check, or tied to Proficiency) for a spell cast using Seal or Abstract Casting to have unintended consequences.

The simplest method is to utilize the *Wild Magic* Table from the PHB, but feel free to introduce your own complications, or come up with spell-specific ones on the fly.