

THE WARLOCK

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The warlock is a unique kind of spellcaster. It regains its spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest, and casts those spells at the highest spell level (to a maximum of 5th level). It gains the ability to cast 6th through 9th level spells at the same rate as other full spellcasters, although it lacks the versatility the other classes have with those slots. Its different way of gaining spell slots, is only a part of the uniqueness of the warlock. It's a highly customizable class with access to Eldritch Invocations that grant it a host of options to tweak and enhance its gameplay, alongside its Pact Boon feature, that can shift the warlock's approach to combat. While the warlock is more combat focused than other spellcasters, its invocations grant it a range of utility options, and when provided sufficient short rests, the warlock can be less sparing of its spell slots.

The warlock is the best class because it is highly customizable and has a range of subclass options that can propel it to take on many different roles, giving a warlock player a lot of leeway in how the character fits in with the party. Pact Magic is a fantastic take on spellcasting, allowing the warlock to function at full power without needing to work about managing multiple spell slots, and regain its expended spells with only a short rest, fitting it in with the fighters and monks that may be in its party.

OPTIONAL CLASS FEATURES

The warlock class receives new features and subclasses in this section. You gain class features in the *Player's Handbook* when you reach certain levels in your class. This section offers additional features you can gain as a warlock. Unlike features in the *Player's Handbook*, you don't gain the features here automatically. Consult with your DM on whether you gain a feature in this section if you meet the requirements. These features can be selected separately from one another; you can use some, all, or none of them.

If you take a feature that replaces another feature, you gain no benefit from the replaced feature and don't qualify for anything in the game that requires it.

ELDRITCH LONGEVITY

1st-level warlock feature which modifies the Pact Magic Feature

You longer regain all of your pact magic slots when you finish a long rest and don't gain pact slots as indicated on the Warlock table. Instead you gain a number of pact magic spell slots equal to half of your warlock level (rounded up), and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest. Additionally, you regain one expended pact magic slot when you finish a short rest.

OCCULT LEANINGS

1st-level warlock feature

You choose your occult leaning from the options below.

Arcanist. You uncover rituals from study of forbidden or forgotten tomes and other esoteric sources. You use Intelligence instead of Charisma for your spellcasting ability and for your warlock features.

Petitioner. You contact a powerful entity of some sort via rituals and forged a pact with it for the promise of power. You use Charisma for your spellcasting ability and for your warlock features.

MULTICLASS LEANINGS

Warlocks who take the Arcanist leaning must still meet the 13 Charisma score requirement to multiclass.

PACT BOON OPTION

When you choose your Pact Boon feature, the following option is available to you.

PACT OF THE LENS

Your patron gives you a jeweled lens which can be worn over an eye or affixed to your forehead like a third eye. While wearing it, you have a heightened sense of awareness. You can tell when any psionic power or spell is being manifested or cast, even if it lacks detections or components, provided you can see the manifester or spellcaster.

In addition, after finishing a long rest, choose one skill proficiency you lack; you can add half your proficiency bonus to checks you make with the chosen skill.

If you lose the lens, you can perform a 1-hour ceremony to receive a replacement from your patron. This ceremony can be performed during a short or long rest, and it destroys the previous lens. The lens turns to ash when you die.

ELDRITCH INVOCATION

OPTIONS

When you choose eldritch invocations, you have access to these additional options.

CALL OF THE WILD

You can possess a beast you can see within 60 feet of you. It must succeed on a Charisma saving throw against your spell save DC or become possessed by you. Your body enters a state of suspended animation, and you can control the creature as you see fit, using its statistics. After 1 hour or if you choose to release the beast, the possession ends and you return to your body.

Once you possess a beast this way, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

EARTHEN TRAVERSAL

Prerequisite: 7th-level warlock

You gain a burrowing speed equal to half your walking speed.

EXPERT SPELL CRAFT

Prerequisite: 9th-level warlock, Practiced Spell Craft invocation

You gain one 3rd level spell slot which you can use to cast any of your spells. This spell slot doesn't scale with your Pact Magic feature. When expended, you regain this spell slot when you finish a long rest.

In addition, choose one 3rd-level spell from the wizard list. This spell counts as a warlock spell for you, but can't be cast using your Pact Magic spell slots. The spell doesn't count against the number of warlock spells you can know.

MASTER SPELL CRAFT

Prerequisite: 12th-level warlock, Expert Spell Craft invocation

You gain one 4th level spell slot which you can use to cast any of your spells. This spell slot doesn't scale with your Pact Magic feature. When expended, you regain this spell slot when you finish a long rest.

In addition, choose one 4th-level spell from the wizard list. This spell counts as a warlock spell for you, but can't be cast using your Pact Magic spell slots. The spell doesn't count against the number of warlock spells you can know.

PIERCING THE VEIL

Prerequisite: 9th-level warlock, Pact of the Lens feature

You perceive the auras of creatures and objects and can see a spiritfont, such as a haunting or poltergeist. Perceiving an aura allows you to see invisible creatures and objects.

PRACTICED SPELL CRAFT

Prerequisite: 7th-level warlock, Rudimentary Spell Craft invocation

You gain one 2nd level spell slot which you can use to cast any of your spells. This spell slot doesn't scale with your Pact Magic feature. When expended, you regain this spell slot when you finish a long rest.

In addition, choose one 2nd-level spell from the wizard list. This spell counts as a warlock spell for you, but can't be cast using your Pact Magic spell slots. The spell doesn't count against the number of warlock spells you can know.

PSIONIC SPELLS

You can manifest a warlock spell you know as a psionic power. It no longer requires verbal and somatic components; instead it has the gesture and glow detections. It has a maintenance time equal to its duration and requires concentration if it isn't instantaneous. Once you cast a spell this way, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

PSYCHIC BLAST

Prerequisite: eldritch blast cantrip

You can choose to manifest eldritch blast as a psionic power without spell components, but with the beam detection.

RUDIMENTARY SPELL CRAFT

Prerequisite: 5th-level warlock

You gain one 1st level spell slot which you can use to cast any of your spells. This spell slot doesn't scale with your Pact Magic feature. When expended, you regain this spell slot when you finish a long rest.

In addition, choose one 1st-level spell from the wizard list. This spell counts as a warlock spell for you, but can't be cast using your Pact Magic spell slots. The spell doesn't count against the number of warlock spells you can know.

THIRD EYE

Prerequisite: 12th-level warlock, Pact of the Lens feature

You can cast true seeing without using a spell slot. Once you do so, you can't cast it this way again until you finish a long rest.

TACTICAL VISION

Prerequisite: Pact of the Lens feature

You are hyperaware of threatening foes. A hostile creature can't benefit from having an ally within 5 feet of you.

TEMPORAL REINSTATEMENT

Prerequisite: Pact of the Blade feature

Your pact weapon automatically produces ammunition, or it returns to your hand after throwing it.

PSIONIC MANIFESTATIONS

The Psionic Spells and Psychic Blast invocations allow the warlock to manifest a warlock spell as a psionic power, consistent with the rules presented in The Psychic and Spiritual Handbook. If you aren't using psionic powers, these effects can be simplified to make them act as spells without verbal and somatic spell components.

PACT OF THE CHAIN

OPTION

When you choose a familiar's form, the chaos wisp is added to the special forms you can select.

CHAOS WISP

Tiny Elemental, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 10 (3d4 + 3)

Speed 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 4 (-3) | 18 (+4) | 13 (+1) | 7 (-2) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) |

Damage Resistance bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison and the damage type from your Elemental Weave feature

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages understands Common and Primordial

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Illumination. The wisp sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius sphere and dim light in an additional 10 feet. The light acts as if cast by a 1st-level spell.

ACTIONS

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) acid, cold, fire, or lightning damage (you choose when you summon the wisp).

OTHERWORLDLY PATRONS

The following options are available to you when you choose your Otherworldly Patron: Ancestral, Elemental Chaos, the Beast, and the Void.

ANCESTRAL

Aspects of the past aren't always content to remain a piece of history, and continue to affect the fates of the present and the future. The Ancestral Patron includes such aspects, be they ancestral spirits or a force that continues in spite of its time having passed. A warlock can connect with this ancestral force and gain its knowledge and power, whether or not the force belongs to the warlock's forbears; the spirits of past don't care who carries their voice and will forward, only that their wishes be fulfilled.

EXPANDED SPELLS

1st-level Ancestral feature

The Ancestral patron lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

ANCESTRAL EXPANDED SPELLS

| Spell Level | Spells |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1st | <i>bless, heroism</i> |
| 2nd | <i>augury, detect thoughts</i> |
| 3rd | <i>clairvoyance, spirit guardians</i> |
| 4th | <i>death ward, divination</i> |
| 5th | <i>Bigby's hand, legend lore</i> |

AEGIS OF THE PAST

1st-level Ancestral feature

As its messenger, the ancestral force aids you. Whenever you are hit by an attack, you can take a reaction to reduce the damage you take from the attack by an amount equal to your warlock level.

WISDOM OF THE AGES

6th-level Ancestral feature

The ancestral force shares its knowledge with you. Whenever you make an Intelligence or Wisdom check or a check using a tool, you can choose to add your Charisma modifier.

DEFY FATE

10th-level Ancestral feature

You are protected from harm from the ancestral force. You have advantage on saving throws against spells and powers.

THE ANCESTRAL HOST

14th-level Ancestral feature

The spirits of the past all but beg to be restored to the present. As an action, you can summon a spectral force comprised of the ancestral host. It could appear as a swirl of wraith-like ghosts, spectral humanoids, or a soft glow. The host covers a 30-foot radius centered on you that moves with you. The area within the host is lightly obscured. Within the host, you and your allies are immune to the charmed and frightened conditions, and creatures you choose can't benefit from the invisible condition. At the end of each of your turns, each creature you choose within the force must make a Charisma saving throw or become frightened, and must spend an extra foot of movement for each foot moved within the force until the end of your next turn.

Once summoned, the ancestral force remains for 10 minutes or until you are reduced to 0 hit points or die, or you use your action to dismiss it. After using this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

ELEMENTAL CHAOS

This patron is a powerful elemental being, possibly one of the Princes of Elemental Evil. It cares little for worldly desires, rather embracing primordial chaos and change through its element.

EXPANDED SPELLS

1st-level Primal feature

Elemental Chaos lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

ELEMENTAL CHAOS EXPANDED SPELLS

| Spell Level | Spells |
|-------------|---|
| 1st | <i>burning hands, fog cloud</i> |
| 2nd | <i>flaming sphere, gust of wind</i> |
| 3rd | <i>lightning bolt, sleet storm</i> |
| 4th | <i>conjure minor elementals, wall of fire</i> |
| 5th | <i>cone of cold, wall of stone</i> |

BONUS CANTRIPS

1st-level Elemental Chaos feature

You learn two cantrips of your choice from the sorcerer list. Each counts as a warlock cantrip for you, but doesn't count against your number of cantrips known.

PRIMAL COMPOSITION

1st-level Elemental Chaos feature

Once each turn, when you take or deal at least 10 points of damage, you regain a number of hit points equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1 hit point). The damage must be acid, cold, fire, or lightning.

In addition, whenever you deal acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder damage with a warlock spell, you can choose to change some or all of the damage to acid, cold, fire, or lightning.

ELEMENTAL SLIDE

6th-level Elemental Chaos feature

You can shift your form into elemental material for 1 minute, which can be air, fire, or water. During this time, you gain benefits based on the element you choose.

Air. You can pass through an opening as small as an inch without squeezing and gain a fly speed of 60 feet.

Earth. You have resistance to piercing and slashing damage and gain a burrow speed equal to your walking speed which you can use to move through earth without disturbing it.

Fire. You gain a climb speed equal to your walking speed and can climb while leaving your hands free. In addition, whenever a creature within 5 feet of you hits you with a melee attack, it takes fire damage equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1 damage).

Water. You can pass through an opening as small as an inch without squeezing, gain a swim speed of 60 feet, and can breathe air and water.

You can assume this form a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

PRIMAL WARD

10th-level Elemental Chaos feature

Whenever you finish a short or long rest, choose a damage type which must be acid, cold, fire, or lightning. Until you use this feature again, you have resistance to that damage type.

In addition, whenever an elemental creature attacks you, that creature must make a Wisdom saving throw against your warlock spell save DC. On a failed save, the creature must choose a different target, or the attack automatically misses. On a successful save, the creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours. The creature is aware of this effect before it makes its attack against you.

ELEMENTAL STORM

14th-level Elemental Chaos feature

As an action, you call upon the elements to strike everything within a 30-foot sphere centered at a point you can see within 300 feet of you. The sphere remains for up to 1 minute or until you dismiss it using a bonus action. Each creature and unattended object within the sphere is slammed by earth, fire, water, and wind in a chaotic juxtaposition of elements, and takes 2d12 damage at the end of each of your turns. On each of your turns, roll a d6, the number rolled indicates the damage type all targets take: 1: acid, 2: bludgeoning, 3: cold, 4: fire, 5: lightning, 6: thunder. A creature must make a Dexterity saving throw, and on a successful save, only takes half of the damage.

THE BEAST

The Beast is an apex predator that is the paragon of the hunt. It believes in culling the weak and adhering to the cycle of predator and prey. The Beast could be the powerful spirit of an animal, a terrifying monster such as a dragon, or even an aspect of the Wild Hunt.

EXPANDED SPELLS

1st-level Beast feature

The Beast lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

THE BEAST EXPANDED SPELLS

| Spell Level | Spells |
|-------------|--|
| 1st | <i>ensnaring strike, faerie fire</i> |
| 2nd | <i>enlarge / reduce, pass without trace</i> |
| 3rd | <i>conjure animals, nondetection</i> |
| 4th | <i>dominate beast, grasping vine</i> |
| 5th | <i>commune with nature, destructive wave</i> |

BEAST BLESSING

1st-level Beast feature

You gain proficiency in the Nature skill and add the *shillelagh* cantrip to the cantrips you know. It counts as a warlock spell for you and doesn't count against the number of cantrips you know. Moreover, you can cast the *shillelagh* spell on any simple melee weapon or a pact weapon if you take the Pact of the Blade boon.

TRIGGER SCENT

1st-level Beast feature

When you hit a creature with an attack, or a creature fails a saving throw against one of your warlock spells, you can choose to mark it. For the next 4 hours, you know the direction it is in from your position, provided it is within 1 mile of you, and you have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks made to track it.

When you hit a marked target with a weapon attack, including the attack that marks it, you deal an extra 1d4 weapon damage to it. When you reach certain levels in this class, this bonus damage increases at: 6th (d6), 10th (d8) and 14th (d10).

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1 use). You regain one expended use when you finish a short rest, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

PREDATOR

6th-level Beast feature

You are instilled with the spirit of the primal hunter, granting you the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) and Wisdom (Perception) checks.
- You gain a swim and climb speed equal to your walking speed.
- Your jump distance is doubled.
- Whenever you score a critical hit against or reduce a hostile creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack, you regain a number of hit points equal to your proficiency bonus.

BESTIAL REFLEX

10th-level Beast feature

When you are hit by a melee attack, you can take a reaction to make your attacker reroll the d20 and you choose which roll it keeps. If the attack misses you, you can make one melee weapon attack against your attacker as part of the same reaction.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus and regain all expended uses after finishing a long rest.

PRIMEVAL HUNT

14th-level Beast feature

As a bonus action, you can incite your allies for 1 minute to aid in the hunt. Whenever an ally attacks a target that is marked by your Trigger Scent feature or which is under the effects of one of your warlock spells, it has advantage on its attack roll and deals 1d4 extra damage on a hit.

You and your incited allies can sense the marked target, while it is within 60 feet of any of you; the target gains no benefit from being invisible or hidden against you.

Once you use this feature you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

THE VOID

Your patron is an enigma, as it is an embodiment of destruction and emptiness, and ultimately nothingness. The Void is a state of inexistence that exists as palpably as the Material Plane. It is the antithesis of all, and the synthesis of the end.

It is unclear to scholars whether warlocks of this patron have contracted with the embodiment of nothing, or whether they draw their power from their own nihilistic beliefs.

EXPANDED SPELLS

1st-level Void feature

The Void lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

THE VOID EXPANDED SPELLS

| Spell Level | Spells |
|-------------|---|
| 1st | <i>dissonant whispers, sanctuary</i> |
| 2nd | <i>blindness/deafness, see invisibility</i> |
| 3rd | <i>protection from energy, slow</i> |
| 4th | <i>Evard's black tentacles, phantasmal killer</i> |
| 5th | <i>cloudkill, passwall</i> |

GRIP OF THE VOID

1st-level Void feature

As a bonus action you summon a void force into a space you can see with 120 feet of you. The void force occupies a 10-foot cube and lasts for 1 minute. Within the cube, a creature must expend an additional 5 feet of movement for each foot moved. At the end of each of your turns, you can use the void space to grapple one creature within it (escape DC equals your spell save DC). The force can only grapple one creature at a time.

As a bonus action, you can move the void force up to 60 feet, or 30 feet if it grapples a creature and you drag the creature with the force.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier.

EMPTY SELF

6th-level Void feature

As a bonus action, you can fade from existence, becoming invisible for 10 minutes. Regardless of a creature's ability to detect invisible targets, it can't make an opportunity attack against you and has always has disadvantage on attack rolls to hit you. In addition, while in this state, you are immune to divination spells, clairsentience powers, and similar effects that would scry on you or attempt to detect your presence.

You cease being invisible if you make an attack, cast a spell, manifest a power, or take a bonus action to end the effect. You can't interact with an object while invisible this way.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

REALTY BREAK

10th-level Void feature

A creature that ends its turn in contact with the void force from your Grip of the Void feature takes 1d8 force damage.

While your Grip of the Void feature is active, when you are targeted by a ranged attack or the magic missile spell or similar effect that fires a projectile that doesn't require an attack roll, you can take a reaction to shift a portion of the void force to protect you. The attack automatically fails and deals no damage. Moreover, any ammunition used for the attack is destroyed.

NOTHINGNESS

14th-level Void feature

As an action, you conjure into being a "null space" within 60 feet of you. Up to eight 5-foot contiguous cubes of space are removed from existence. Any unattended object within the area is destroyed. A creature within the null space or that attempts to enter it, is shunted to the nearest unoccupied space and must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or become poisoned for 1 hour from having its existence torn. Immunity to the poisoned condition doesn't prevent the condition from this feature unless the creature has a CR greater than 20. A poisoned creature can use its action to make a new saving throw, ending the condition for it on a success, as it reassembles its connection to existence.

Null space is empty and can be seen through, but it can't be entered or passed through, serving as full cover. An unattended object thrown into the space winks out of existence, but isn't destroyed. After 10 minutes, the null space is restored to normal; objects that winked out of existence return to the point they disappeared, but destroyed objects don't return. Only a wish spell or similar effect can restore an object destroyed by this feature. At the DM's discretion, certain magical items may be transported to another plane of existence, such as the Astral Plane or the Far Realm, rather than be permanently destroyed.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

MAKING YOUR OWN WARLOCK SUBCLASS

YOU MAY DECIDE THAT YOU WANT TO CREATE YOUR own warlock subclass that best fits your campaign. Before embarking on this task, you want to be sure that no existing warlock subclass meets your design goals. One of the greatest flexibilities offered in 5e class design is how easy it is to re flavor the features. If there is a subclass that can meet your mechanical needs and stylistic vision, it is best to simply use that and save a lot of time in designing, writing, and playtesting.

If, however, you find that no existing subclass achieves the fantasy or has the mechanics to match your vision, this section will guide you toward making a sorcerer subclass that fits the 5e D&D model. The guidelines will help you create the features for your subclass and detail how you should balance the class to fit within the official options and those offered by Therin Creative and similar content creators.

Please note that despite the guidance offered herein, your subclass may need further tuning. Be certain to spend the time to playtest your subclass.

CLASS CHASSIS

The warlock is a Charisma-based spellcaster with access to the strongest ranged damage cantrip in the game. Since it has fewer spell slots between rests, the warlock has to be more strategic than other spellcasters, planning for the encounters ahead. It is also the most customizable class in the game, and one warlock might have more utility than another warlock which has more tactical options. Warlock can be a tricky class to play, let alone design, as a result of its customizability.

HIT DICE

With a d8 Hit Dice, the warlock has midrange hit points. Paired with its armor use, this places it on par with the rogue class in ability to survive at a glance, but the warlock lacks other feature to enhance its defense. This allows the warlock the take an attack or two before it needs to shift its focus to escape. A subclass can dramatically change this posture.

PROFICIENCIES

The warlock has rudimentary proficiencies, with light armor and simple weapons. It also has a small roster of skill proficiencies. This fits the warlock's theme of taking shortcuts to achieve power, and it relies heavily on its spells and the boons of its patron to fill the gaps.

ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT

The warlock uses standard progression for the Ability Score Improvement (ASI) feature (4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level). Warlocks shouldn't gain additional ASI features as that is the domain of the fighter and rogue classes and not something a subclass generally grants.

PACT MAGIC

While the warlock is a full spellcaster, able to cast up to 9th-level spells, it uses a different system to determine how many spells it can cast and at what power. Pact Magic spell slots recover on a short or long rest, which

both limits and removes restrictions on the warlock's spellcasting. In general, a warlock tries to only use one (or two at higher levels) spells per combat, but if it has enough breaks, it can cast a terrifying number of spells per adventuring day. Pact Magic spell slots are also cast at the highest level (to a maximum of 5th level), so each warlock spell will be potent when cast.

From tier 3, Pact Magic is accompanied by Mystic Arcanum, which provides spells for 6th through 9th level. While far more restrictive than Spellcasting feature classes, this serves as customization point for the warlock, which is one of the class's more unique perks.

INVOCATIONS AND PACT BOON

These features make the warlock a very customizable class. Invocations can add utility, defensive, and offensive power to the class. Pact Boons can shift the playstyle for the class or allow hybrid approaches. Invocations can further enhance the Pact Boon feature allowing greater shifts in play. Because the warlock class is very customizable, its subclasses don't require any customization to feel good to play.

RIBBON FEATURES

Like many spellcasters, the warlock class doesn't grant ribbon features. It is expected that spells and invocations will cover thematic and utility functions.

OTHERWORLDLY PATRON FEATURES

Otherworldly Patrons grant features at 1st, 6th, 10th, and 14th level. This pattern is common among full spellcasters as it fills in the gaps left when gaining a new spell level.

POWER OF A FULL SPELLCASTER

The warlock class is a full spellcaster with access to some strong spells. While it lacks in its number of spell slots at a glance, it regains those slots on a short rest. Pact Magic also enables the warlock to cast its spells with the highest potency, and this allows the warlock to exploit certain spells, such as the *summon fey* spell, in ways standard spellcasters can't. Pay careful attention to the warlock's baseline power potential, and recognize that its subclass have no lifting to do in regards to how much damage the class can output.

BUILDING AN OTHERWORLDLY PATRON

Once you understand the class chassis, you're one step closer to building a subclass. You'll also want to review existing subclasses to get a feel for their design and balance. This section will aid you in understanding what your subclass features should accomplish.

Before starting on the formal work to build your subclass, devise its theme and role. What is your subclass's purpose? What roles does it fill in an adventuring party? How are its mechanics interesting and unique? Why would a player choose your subclass?

Let's start by looking at some existing warlock subclasses.

Archfey. With the Archfey Patron, the warlock becomes more of a beguiler, adding more enchantment effects to its kit. This patron is more about subtlety than combat, and thrives in campaigns where trickery is more rewarded than brute force. Players choose this otherworldly patron because they want to tap the flavor of the fey or have an attachment to the Feywild and they want to focus more on charms and illusions.

Fiend. The Fiend Patron is the iconic patron, a character that bargained with a demon or devil to obtain knowledge and power. It blends defense with offensive, serving as a warlock that can inflict harm and likely survive the consequences of that harm. Players choose this otherworldly patron because they seek to be the iconic warlock with a connection to some fell power in the service of darkness or in spite of it.

Hexblade. The Hexblade patron skews the warlock in the direction of a melee fighter, offering it strong features from 1st level. It is considered the best way to play a melee-focused warlock by many. Players choose this otherworldly patron to engage in melee using its spellcasting ability instead of needing Strength or Dexterity. It can be problematic as an enticing multiclass for other classes because of its front-loaded power and options.

Fathomless. The Fathomless patron can serve as a waterborne patron or even some kind of horrific one. Players choose this otherworldly patron because they want to summon power from the depths of the sea, and to play a more combat-potent warlock.

Beast. With a patron that can be a predator's spirit, something akin to the Wild Hunt, or even a really powerful creature, the Beast patron is a weapon-based alternative to the Hexblade. Players choose this otherworldly patron to hunt their foes with preternatural, primal power.

Each otherworldly patron presents a unique theme and has features and spells that support that theme and lend the subclass toward certain styles of play that encourage players how to customize their warlock, but at its core, each is a warlock, with all the invocation options and spells powered through Pact Magic.

BUILDING THE SUBCLASS

This guide covers building an otherworldly patron consistent with official published material. An Otherworldly Patron expands the kit of the warlock class. Each subclass adds components in a way that shifts the engagement of the class for the player.

Subclass features are granted at 1st, 6th, 10th, and 14th level. Each Otherworldly Patron feature level should grant only one subclass feature in addition to the Expanded Spells feature, unless the subclass needs bonus cantrips or proficiencies to be able to engage in its playstyle, in which case it needs an additional feature. Consult the Warlock Subclass Features table for when you should grant features.

There are exceptions for the rule of only granting a single subclass feature:

- Ribbon features are frequently weak on their own, so in certain cases you may grant a second, minor feature, which could be another ribbon feature.
- The feature has some complex interactions that are much clearer when separated. Often this is indication that something should be cut, but in rare cases, it makes sense to split a feature for comprehension.
- You are expanding an existing feature in a minor way. Sometimes it's better to include the enhancement in the core feature, and at other times it could be a note in another feature.

WARLOCK SUBCLASS FEATURES

Warlock Level Feature

| | |
|------|---|
| 1st | Expanded Spell List, Expansion Feature (Pool) |
| 6th | Expansion Feature (Pool) |
| 10th | Defensive Feature |
| 14th | Mastery Feature |

EXPANDED SPELL LIST

1st-level [Your Warlock Subclass] feature

Each warlock subclass adds a roster of spells (two for each spell level from 1st through 5th) to the ones it can choose when it learns a new spell. This is how you customize the warlock spell list to ensure the subclass has access to appropriate spells for its theme and role.

Unlike other classes with a similar feature, the warlock doesn't automatically know these (unless you use an optional class feature to transform this one), so keep this in mind if you want a feature gained at higher level to modify one or more of the warlock's spells. If you plan to enhance a specific spell, you should grant that spell through that feature instead of this one, even if it means delaying the level it could have been cast.

If you include spells outside the *Player's Handbook*, it is recommended that you offer alternative spells from it so groups without the referenced book can utilize your content without additional work on the DM's part. If the spell is one you created for the subclass, include its description after the subclass (or an appropriate section for a compendium of content).

[YOUR WARLOCK SUBCLASS] SPELLS

Spell Level Spells

| | |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| 1st | 1st-level spell, 1st-level spell |
| 2nd | 2nd-level spell, 2nd-level spell |
| 3rd | 3rd-level spell, 3rd-level spell |
| 4th | 4th-level spell, 4th-level spell |
| 5th | 5th-level spell, 5th-level spell |

INVOCATION SPELLS

You may want to avoid adding spells to the Expanded Spell list that the warlock can cast via certain Eldritch Invocations. Invocations are capable of casting the following spells: *alter self*, *animate dead*, *arcane eye*, *bane*, *bestow curse*, *compulsion*, *confusion*, *conjure elemental*, *detect magic*, *disguise self*, *false life*, *freedom of movement*, *invisibility*, *jump*, *levitate*, *mage armor*, *silent image*, *polymorph*, *slow*, *speak with animals*, *speak with dead*, and *water breathing*. The *hold monster* spell can also be cast, but it has added restrictions, so doesn't clash as strongly as other invocations.

If you feel the spell fits the subclass, and you want it to be able to be frequently cast, you can disregard the invocation.

EXPANSION FEATURE (POOL)

1st-level and 6th-level [Your Warlock Subclass] feature

The warlock class predominantly uses Expansion Feature in order to uniquely develop each patron's gifts. However, the type of Expansion feature it uses tends to be more limited in scope. For most warlocks, the 1st-level and 6th-level Expansion features are often one Defensive Feature and one Utility Feature. Therefore, if you grant a Defensive Feature at 1st level, you want to grant a Utility Feature at 6th level, or vice versa.

In the case that your warlock subclass is expanding the class's combat role in a lateral direction, such as how the Hexblade Patron moves the warlock into melee fighter territory, you can replace one of these features with a Combat Expansion Feature. Your goal is to enable the new combat style as a competitive alternative to the eldritch blast cantrip.

It is also reasonable to pair a minor Combat Expansion or Enhancement Feature to a Utility or Defensive Feature for the warlock class, but you want to design it in a way that doesn't increase the subclass's damage budget more than 10% (and ideally closer to 6%).

DEFENSIVE FEATURE

10th-level [Your Warlock Subclass] feature

At 10th level, the warlock subclass should grant a defensive-oriented feature. While resistances, imposing disadvantage, or hardness are basic ways to accomplish this, you can be more creative if your theme demands. Adding some combat benefit with a limited use, such as the Fathomless Patron's Grasping Tentacles feature does, is an example.

You might also choose to twist this feature to enhance an earlier subclass feature in a way that adds a sort of defense benefit. It could also double as utility. The Genie Patron, for example, interacts with the genie's lamp, adding a layer of utility in addition to providing a speedy short rest (which is its defensive option, opting for recovery over prevention).

MASTERY FEATURE

14th-level [Your Warlock Subclass] feature

This is the warlock's most interesting Expansion Feature, serving as a unique reward for advancing into higher levels of play. Often this feature expands the warlock's combat prowess, and can even add some damage with certain limits.

You want to design a feature that fully fleshes out some concept of your subclass, and you have a pretty wide range of options. You also can swap this feature with an Enhancement feature in cases where you may have established a meaningful identity with an earlier feature, as in the cases of the Hexblade and Geist patrons.

If your earlier features have already improved the warlock's ability to deal damage, you should aim for a utility or defensive function for this feature. For example, the Fathomless Patron already delivered its combat features at 1st and 10th level, so it added a traversal effect for its final feature.

In the end, you want your warlock subclass to add no more than 10% damage to the class across all levels of play, and even then, you want to aim lower. The warlock, under a standard adventuring day with access to at least two short rests, is already a very powerful class in terms of damage potential, so you don't need to increase this aspect for the warlock to do well in battle.

CHANGE LOG

0.2 PLAYTEST VERSION

- Elemental Chaos no longer has distinct elemental paths, you get all four. This further delineates it from its elemental sibling, the Genie.
 - Expanded spell list changed and only has PHB spells from it.
 - Subclass now gains two extra cantrips so you can get elemental damage cantrips if desired.
 - Primal Composition function merged into Elemental Weave, which is renamed to Primal Composition.
 - Primal Composition no longer increases damage directly, but does allow you to freely swap damage types.
- The Beast
 - Now works with both ranged and melee weapons so you have the hunter with a bow fantasy.
 - Beast Blessing allows *shillelaugh* to work with any simple melee weapon, so dagger and handaxe are supported (2024 revised version will likely lose *shillelaugh* since Pact of the Blade is available from 1st level and will do what the intent of this feature does.
 - Predator simplified and no longer has a totem-like choice.
 - Some expanded spells switched. All now come from the PHB.
- The Void
 - Miasma replaced with a new feature (Grip of the Void) to be more consistent with the warlock chassis.
 - New 10th-level feature makes Grip of the Void harmful.
 - Void Barrier and Unmake Existence effects synthesized into a new feature that encompasses Nothingness.
 - Some expanded spells switched. All now come from the PHB.
- Added Ancestral Patron, which is a pact made with an ancestor spirit or force (not necessarily yours).
- Chaos Wisp is now simply an option for all warlocks with Pact of the Chain.