

Witchcraft Terms

A

- Acolyte: one who attends or assists in a ritual, service, or procession.
- Adept: a person who is skilled in magic, witchcraft, or mysticism.
- Air: one of the four (or five) elements; the element of the East; associated with intuition, learning, thought, creativity, and knowledge.
- Alchemy: a branch of High Magic developed in the Middle Ages which sought to magically and/or chemically turn base metals into gold through the use of a Philosopher's Stone; also known as transmutation.
- Alexandrian: A tradition of Wicca descended from the teachings of Alex Sanders, the "King of Witches."
- Altar: a flat surface used for religious, spiritual, and magical rituals, preferably of natural material.
- Amulet: a magically charged object that deflects specific energies, usually negative, to protect the bearer.
- Angel: a spiritual being who acts as a messenger between the Divine and physical realms.
- Animal-Psi or Anpsi: psychic phenomena involving animals and humans.
- Animism: the belief that the divine is within everything and everything has a spirit with free will vs energy to be directed.
- Anoint: to smear or rub with oil
- Arcana: the two halves of a tarot deck; divided into Major and Minor; Major consists of 22 trumps while the minor consists of 56 suit cards.
- Arcane: ancient or secret wisdom.
- Archetype: universal images and symbols commonly used to represent deities in forms that we can understand.
- Asperger: a bundle of fresh herbs or a perforated object used to sprinkle water before, during, or after a ritual for purification purposes.
- Astral Plane: an invisible world parallel to our own often used for travel.

A

- Astral Projection: the process of separating your astral body from your physical one to travel in the astral plane.
- Astrology: the study of the effects of the movements and placements of planets and other heavenly bodies on human lives and behaviors; a form of divination.
- Athame: a ritual blade, usually double-edged with a black handle; it is never used to cut anything in the physical realm.
- Aura: life energy that surrounds all living things.

B

- Balefire: a traditional bonfire held on the sabbats, especially Beltane.
- Banish: to magically send away or repel, especially negative energies or entities, from a person, home, or ritual area.
- Bell: a ritual tool used to invoke directional energies, ring in the sunrise on a sabbat, stir up energies, or frighten away faeries and harmful spirits.
- Beltane: a fire festival falling on May 1st that celebrates fertility, fire, and abundance.
- Besom: witch's broom is often used to sweep away negative energies from a space, as a protection symbol, or as a guard to doors cut in a magical circle.
- Bind: to magically restrain.
- Black Magic: negative magic used to harm or manipulate someone, something, or a situation; sometimes referred to as the "left-hand path."
- Blessing: the use of magic to benefit an object or being.
- Blood of the Moon: a woman's menstrual cycle which is also her most powerful time, especially if it occurs on or around the full moon or new moon.
- Boline: a white-handled knife used for practical purposes such as cutting herbs or inscribing candles.

B

- **Book of Shadows:** a book of magical workings that can include spells, rituals, and magical lore; also known as a BOS. See grimoire.
- **Burning Times:** a reference to a period during the Middle Ages when many were accused and executed by the church or by public officials for supposedly practicing witchcraft.

C

- **Candlemas:** another name for Imbolc; the first of the fire festivals falling on or around February 1st to usher in spring.
- **Call:** to invoke divine forces as in calling quarters.
- **Cardinal Points/Directions:** North, South, East, and West.
- **Cartomancy:** divination through the use of cards. See tarot cards.
- **Cauldron:** a three-legged pot, often of cast iron, used to cook potions, for scrying, and as a censer; symbolizes rebirth and the Goddess.
- **Censer:** a heat-proof container used to burn incense; associated with element Air.
- **Ceremonial Magic:** school or method of magic that places emphasis on long, complex rituals; often referred to as ritualism.
- **Chakras:** the seven psychic centers of power associated with different parts of the body in the Tantric system of anatomy; often associated with a color.
- **Chalice:** a cup used in rituals to represent water and the feminine principles of creation.
- **Channeling:** a New Age word for mediumship; involved allowing a spirit or entity to speak through the individual.
- **Charge, To:** to infuse an object with personal power.
- **Charm:** an object that has been charged with power for a specific task by saying an incantation over it.

C

- Circle: a sacred place in which a ritual or magical workings takes place; also used to describe a group of witches or Pagans who work together in an informal way.
- Clairvoyance: the faculty of perceiving things and/or events in the future.
- Cleansing: the process of removing negative or unwanted energies from an object, person, or place; can be accomplished through a variety of means such as burning sage or sweeping with a besom.
- Cone of Power: psychic energy raised and focused by an individual or group mind to perform a specific task or to achieve a purpose.
- Consecration: the act of cleansing, blessing, and charging an object or place with positive energy.
- Correspondences: sets of ideas, concepts, and beliefs about objects, sabbats, plants, animals, or colors.
- Coven: a group of thirteen or fewer witches who work together in an organized fashion to perform magical workings and religious ceremonies.
- Covenstead: the place a coven meets.
- Craft, The: a old term used by Freemasons to refer to their activities and beliefs; currently used by Neo-Pagans and modern Witches to refer to their activities and beliefs. See witchcraft.
- Crone: aspect of the Goddess represented by an old woman; associated with wisdom, waning moon, crow, black, Mabon, and Samhain.
- Crystal: stones associated with various properties used to enhance magical workings. See gemstones.
- Cult: a system of religious devotion toward a particular figure or object; often used negatively.
- Curse: magical spell to harm an object or being.

D

- **Daemon:** a spirit or being below the Gods in power.
- **Dagger:** ritual knife used to sever psychic bonds, cursing, initiating, and exorcising.
- **Damping:** lowering the power level of psychic energy fields.
- **Dedication:** a ritual in which a witch dedicates themselves to the Craft.
- **Deity:** a god or goddess.
- **Demon:** a personification of evil; an entity of evil and destructive nature.
- **Demonology:** Medieval science of studying demons.
- **Deosil:** clockwise direction; symbolic of life and positive energy and magic. Pronounces jostle.
- **Divination:** the magical art of using tools and symbols to find hidden information about the past, present, or future; often uses psychic talents. See runes and tarot cards.
- **Dowsing:** a technique of using a rod or pendulum to find underground water, minerals, or anything invisible; can be used to magically find a person, place, or element.
- **Drawing Down The Moon:** a ritual performed during the full moon to empower oneself with the moon's essence.
- **Drawing Down The Sun:** a lesser-known and lesser-used ritual performed to empower oneself with the sun's essence.
- **Druid:** a person who practices druidism; meaning "oak" and "solid and true;" modern-day druids follow ancient and contemporary wisdom.
- **Dualism:** a religious doctrine stating all spiritual forces are split in two.
- **Duotheism:** a style of religion in which there are two deities, usually of the opposite gender.

E

- Earth: one of the five elements associated with stability, wisdom, knowledge, strength, growth, prosperity, and North.
- Earthing: connecting with the Earth's natural energy, usually through the feet. See grounding.
- Earth Magic: a form of magic that draws on the powers of the Earth.
- Earth-Mother: the female personification of the life force of the Earth. See Gaia.
- Eclectic Witch: an all-purpose term applied to Wiccan and witchcraft traditions that don't fit into any specific category; usually pull from a variety of traditions, making the craft their own.
- Elementals: the personification of the elements. See gnome, undine, sylph, and salamander.
- Elements: Earth, Air, Water, Fire, and Spirit (Aether) Said to be the essential elements to all life.
- Empath: a person with the ability to apprehending the mental and emotional state of another individual.
- Enchantment: the state of being under a spell.
- Entity: a being, spirit, or living creature or its personification.
- Ethics: a part of philosophy dealing with matters of "right" vs "wrong."
- Esbat: a ritual performed on the full or new moon.
- Evocation: to call something forth from within like memory or emotions.
- Exorcism: severing an unwanted psychic connection within an object, person, or place; dismissal of an unwanted spirit, demon, or ghost.

F

- Fairy or Faerie: a small being of the human form with magical powers; may be invisible or visible.
- Faerie Burgh: a mound of earth that covers a faerie colony's home.
- Familiar: an animal that has a spiritual bond with a witch; maybe on a physical or astral plane.
- Fates: the three goddesses who preside over the birth, life, and death of humans.

E

- Fire: one of the five elements associated with the South, passion, destruction, and power.
- Folk Magic: the magical practice of projecting personal power and energies into natural objects to bring about desired changes.
- Folklore: traditional sayings, stories, faerie tales, or cures with a particular locale.
- Folktale: a story handed down among a people.

G

- Gaia/Gaea: the personification of Mother Earth. See Earth Mother.
- Gemstone: stones associated with various properties used to enhance magical workings. See crystal.
- Ghost: the spirit of a dead animal or person existing in a non-physical manner.
- God/Goddess: masculine/feminine aspect of a deity.
- Gnome: earth elemental; correspond with the direction North; ensure the stability of Earth and offer a rooting or grounding quality when called upon. See earth.
- Green Man: another name for the God; often represented as a face surrounded by or made of leaves; associated with fertility.
- Green Witch: nature-based and earth-oriented form of witchcraft that draws on folklore, folk religion, and folk magic.
- Grey Magic: magic that is neither black nor white; morally neutral; not performed for specific beneficial or hostile reasons.
- Grimoire: a compilation of spells, ritual information, formulae, correspondences, history, and all other magical information; does not contain journal entries or outlines of magical workings.
- Grounding: the process of centering one's self with the Earth before and after magical workings, rituals, or astral experiences.

H

- Hag Stone: stones containing a naturally occurring hole; believed to provide protection against diseases and evil.
- Handfasting: a Pagan wedding historically of Celtic tradition.
- Hearth: a fireplace and the surrounding area; a symbol of one's home.
- Hearth Witch: a witch who performs magic in and around the home, usually centered around the hearth and kitchen; often healers.
- Heathenism: a Pagan religion focused on Germanic beliefs, usually Norse, with the basic premise that everything spiritual is also practical.
- Hedge Witch: a form of earth-based witchcraft that is shamanistic in nature; the main function for a hedge witch is to be a mediator between the spirits and people; commonly referred to as a wise man or wise woman; often healers.
- Herbalism: the study and use of plants for medicinal and magical purposes.
- Horned God: one personification of the God; not to be confused with Satan or the Devil. see god.
- Horoscope: a forecast of a person's future and character based on the relative positions of the planets and stars at the time of the person's birth.
- Hypnosis: an altered state of consciousness where one's bodily and sensory control, suggestibility, and the ability to concentrate are increased. See mesmerism.

I

- Imbolc: the first of the fire festivals using sympathetic magic to usher in spring. See Candlemas.
- Incantation: words used during a ritual or spell that are chanted or sung.
- Incense: ritual burning of herbs or oil during magical workings or rituals to better help the witch(es) attune with the goal of the working.
- Initiation: the process of being introduced and admitted into a coven; usually done as a ritual.
- Invocation/Invoke Invoke means "to call upon" and is usually used when someone calls upon a law, right, or authority.

K

- Karma: the Hindu belief that one's thoughts and deeds are counted for or against them or added to their spiritual path across multiple lifetimes. See Threefold Law.
- Kitchen Witch: a witch working in or around the home but predominantly in the kitchen to bring peace and harmony to them and their families; usually healers; focus on magical workings in the kitchen, especially regarding food. See Hearth Witch.
- Kettle: a vessel used for boiling liquids or cooking food.

L

- Lady: another name for the Goddess. See Goddess.
- Lammas: the first of the three harvest festivals falling on August 1st; a celebration of the harvesting of grains; fresh bread is baked and blessed from the first harvest of wheat. See Lughnasadh.
- Litha: a festival held on Midsummer when the sun is strongest; honors the Sun, strength, and vitality. See Midsummer.
- Lord: another name for the God. See God.
- Lughnasadh: See Lammas

M

- Mabon: a mid-harvest festival honoring the changing seasons and the second harvest; often referred to the pagan "Thanksgiving."
- Mage: a general term for anyone performing magic. See magus.
- Magi: Zoroastrian priests; powerful magicians.
- Magic(k): the projection of energies to bring about a change using focused will and emotion.
- Magic Circle: a sphere constructed of personal power around a witch or coven in which magical workings are performed; protects the witch(es) from outside forces.
- Magician: general term for someone performing magic.

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- Magos: the Greek word for "magi."
- Magus: singular form of "magi."

M

- Maiden: the first aspect of the Triple Goddess; symbolizes new beginnings and creation.
- Mantra: sounds used for as an associational device or to induce trance.
- May Pole: a phallus symbol of Beltane; often danced around on Beltane.
- Meditation: a mental exercise such as reflection or contemplation for the purpose of reaching a heightened spiritual awareness.
- Medium: a psychic who is able to communicate with various spirits.
- Mesmerism: a form of telepathic interaction which consists of suggestions backed by the insistent power of the sender; Charles Dickens was also famous for practicing mesmerism.
- Mesopaganism or Meso-Paganism: a general term for a movement that started as a way to revive what their founders believed to be the best aspects of ancient pagan ways.
- Midsummer: see Litha.
- Monotheism: a style of religion following only one deity.
- Mother: the second aspect of the Triple Goddess which symbolizes motherhood and fertility.
- Mundane: worldly, ordinary, common, or simple; often refers to the physical plane.
- Mystic: one who practices mysticism.
- Mysticism: the belief that one can directly connect with a deity or truth through meditation and intuition.
- Myth: lore about any land or peoples that makes up their mythology.
- Mythology: a collection of myths.
- Mythos: a myth or mythology; a set of beliefs or assumptions about something.

N

- **Necromancer:** a magician who specializes in summoning spirits of the dead.
- **Neo-Paganism:** a modern religious movement that incorporates beliefs and ritual practices from traditions outside the mainstream (pagan sources).
- **New Age:** the mixing of metaphysical practices with a structured religion such as Wicca.
- **Nine Herbs Charm:** an old English charm used to treat poison and infection; one of only two Old English mentions of the herb Woden.
- **Numerology:** divination through the use of numbers and numerical values of letters.

O

- **Occult:** "hidden;" applied to a range of beliefs and activities that are outside mainstream religions and philosophies; can refer to anything secret, magical, or supernatural.
- **Old Religion:** a name for Paganism that pre-dates Christianity; sometimes used as another name for Wicca.
- **Oracle:** a priest or priestess acting as a medium through whom advice and prophecy are sought.
- **Ouija Board:** a board containing letters, numbers, and the words yes and no which is used for divination and speaking with supernatural beings.
- **Out of Body Experience:** one's consciousness being outside one's physical body as during astral projection.
- **Ostara:** a festival on the Vernal Equinox to celebrate spring, new life, and sexuality.

P

- Pagan: general term for followers of magical, shamanistic, and polytheistic Earth-based religions.
- Paganism: a term used to describe religious and spiritual practices that are not Christian, Judaic, or Islamic.
- Paganing: when a baby is presented to the God and Goddess and given a craft name; at the age of 13, the child can choose their own name.
- Paleopaganism: general term for the nature-based faiths of tribal Europe, Africa, Asia, Americas, Oceania, and Australia.
- Palmistry: divination using the folds and other features of the hands; palm reading.
- Pantheism: belief in many deities as simply aspects of a single source.
- Pantheon: a collection or group of deities in a particular religious structure.
- Paranormal: supernatural or unusual.
- Pendulum: any small object on a string use in divination.
- Pentacle: a pentagram surrounded by a circle.
- Pentagram: a five-pointed star representing the four (or five) elements; used in magical workings for a variety of purposes.
- Polytheism: belief in the existence of many unrelated deities and lesser beings.
- Poppet: anthropomorphic (human-like) dolls representing a particular person in magical workings.
- Priest or Priestess: a cleric who is a leader of a given religion, cult, or coven.
- Projective Hand: generally your dominant hand; hand from which personal power is sent from the body; the hand in which tools such as a wand or athame is held.
- Prophet: a person who speaks for a deity.
- Psychic: see Medium.

Q

- Quarters: the four corners and/or watchtowers in a magical circle. Mostly seen in Wiccan traditions.

R

- Receptive Hand: the hand through which energy is received into the body; usually the opposite of the dominant hand.
- Rede: the basic tenet of witchcraft according to Wiccans; "An it harm none, do what thou will."
- Reincarnation: the belief that one has lived before in another lifetime and will continue to live again after physical death.
- Ritual: an ordered sequence of events, actions, and directed thoughts designed to produce an altered state of consciousness or bring about the desired change.
- Runes: a set of symbols that are used in divination and magical workings.
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S

- Sabbat: one of the eight festivals celebrated by Wiccan witches. Include Samhain, Yule, Imbolc, Ostara, Beltane, Litha, Mabon, and Lammas.
- Salamander: elemental of fire; associated with the direction south, energy, passion, and power.
- Samhain: the pagan new year; celebrated on October 31; a time for honoring the dead and the Crone; final harvest festival.
- Scry, To: to gaze into an object to still the conscious mind and contact the psychic mind.
- Scrying: a form of divination in which one gazes into an object until visions appear.
- Seer: one who can see the hidden.
- Shaman: a person with an animistic belief who uses enters the spirit world; to represent the human world within the spirit realm.
- Shamanism: the animist practice of shamans; usually ritualistic or magical.
- Sigil: a magically oriented seal, sign, or glyph used in magical workings.
- Skyclad: the act of performing magical workings or rituals in the nude.

S

- Smudging: An American Indigenous method of smoke medicine that includes burning sacred plants for healing. This is not smoke cleansing.
- Sol: another word for sun.
- Solitary: a pagan who works and/or worships alone.
- Solstice: the two times of the year when the sun reaches an extreme northward or southward motion; June 21-22 and December 21-22.
- Sorcerer or Sorceress: a term used to describe a man or woman who uses magic.
- Spell: a magical ritual often accompanied by spoken words; does not have to be religious in nature.
- Spiritualism: a religion based on the belief in life after death; usually use mediums to contact the dead.
- Sprites: disembodied spirits, elves, daemons, or dairies; often associated with sylphs. See sylph.
- Staff: a ritual tool corresponding to the wand or athame.
- Summerland: the pagan "heaven;" land of the dead.
- Supernatural: rare, unusual, or different; paranormal in nature.
- Sword: symbol of the element air; used for directing energies and for severing psychic bonds or links.
- Sylph: air elemental; associated with the east, knowledge, intelligence, and communication.
- Sympathetic Magic: the concept of like attracts like; the most common way spells are cast.

T

- Talisman: an object charged with the personal power to attract specific energy or outcome to the wearer; not an amulet.
- Tarot Cards: a set of 78 cards that feature pictures and symbols used for divination.
- Theology: the study of religion; concerns the nature of the deity and the deity's relation to the world.

T

- **Threefold Law:** a Wiccan karmic principle that energy released, both negative and positive, will return to the original source three times over.
- **Tomte:** a Scandinavian house gnome or elf with a long beard, conical red cap, and no taller than three feet; protects their families estate, including property, animals, and house; loves honey and milk.
- **Totem:** a natural object or animal that has a spiritual significance to an individual or group and is adopted as an emblem.
- **Tradition:** any various sects of Wicca, witchcraft, or paganism.
- **Trance:** an altered state of consciousness, usually undertaken to connect with the astral or spiritual plane.
- **Triple Goddess:** one goddess in all of her three aspects. See Maiden, Mother, and Crone.

U

- **Undine:** water elemental; associated with west, emotions, and purification.
- **Universe:** all existing matter and space.

V

- **Vampire:** a person who needs another persons' energy to survive. Through means of caloric (blood) energy or psychicenergy.
- **Vibration:** oscillation of fluid or energy given off by objects, living and nonliving.
- **Visualization:** the process of forming mental images; used in the craft to increase personal power, direct energy, and set a goal for a spell or ritual.
- **Voodoo:** a folk religion and tradition which combines elements of Roman Catholic ritual and African witchcraft.

W

- Wand: a ritual tool used for directing energy; representative of fire in some traditions.
- Warlock: a derogatory term referring to a male witch; translates to "oath-breaker" or "liar;" arose during the Burning Times though mostly fictional.
- Water: one of the four (or five) elements; associated with the direction west, purification, intuition, compassion, and emotions.
- Web Weaving: networking with other witches and pagans through conversations, emails, blogs, message boards, etc to gather information and assist each other.
- Wheel of the Year: the Wiccan calendar and full cycle of the seasonal year.
- White Magic: magic performed with "good" intentions; benefit the parties involved and do not bring harm to others.
- Wicca: a modern Pagan religion with spiritual roots in nature; belief in and worship of the God and Goddess; practice witchcraft; very ritualistic; believe in Threefold Law,
- Widdershins: counter-clockwise motion; used for negative magical purposes such as dispersing negative energies or banishing.
- Witch: one who practices witchcraft; describes both male and female practitioners.
- Witchcraft: the craft of a witch; uses magic in conjunction with personal power and the energies of stones, herbs, colors, etc, to bring around the desired change; not associated with Satanism; not a religion but a practice.
- Witch Doctor: a medicine man/woman or shaman who uses magic to heal, divine, and protect others from "evil."
- Wizard: derives from "wys-ard" which means "wise one;" originally referred to someone who was wise; sometimes used to refer to a male who practices magic.
- Wyrd: the concept of fate or person destiny in Anglo-Saxon culture; modern English word for weird.

X

- X: a place holder; a magical symbol used in place of an unknown or secretive object.
- Xenophobia: a fear of what is new, different, or strange.

Y

- Yin-Yang: Chinese symbol representing polarity and the connectedness between opposites.
- Yule: festival held on the Winter Solstice (shortest day of the year) to celebrate the birth of the God, the coming of light, and the Holly King.
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Z

- Zen: Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism that emphasizes the value of meditation and intuition; total state of focus that incorporates a togetherness of mind and body; peacefulness.