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**GAMING ACCESSORY**

**Old School Adventures™ Accessory PX2 Extra**

# **PLANAR PRIMER**

**For use with BX/LL-Compatible Rulesets**



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# The Planes of Existence

## What is a Plane?

The planes of existence are different realities with interwoven connections. Except for rare linking points, each plane is effectively its own universe, with its own natural laws. Although the number of planes is limited only by imagination, they can all be categorized into five general types: the Material Plane, the transitive planes, the Inner Planes, the Outer Planes, and the countless demiplanes.

## Material Plane

The Material Plane is the most Earth-like of all the planes, and operates under the same set of natural laws that our own world does. This is the default plane for most adventures.

The Material Plane tends to be the most Earth-like of all planes and operates under the same set of natural laws that our own real world does. The “size” of the Material Plane depends upon the campaign—it might conform only to the single world on which your game is set, or it might encompass an entire universe of planets, moons, stars, and galaxies. The Material Plane is the default plane for most roleplaying.

## Transitive Planes

These three planes have one important common characteristic: each is used to get from one place to another. The Astral Plane (although technically an Outer Plane) is a conduit to all other planes, while the Ethereal Plane and the Shadow Plane both serve as means of transportation within the Material Plane, which they’re connected to. These planes have the strongest regular interaction with the Material Plane and can be accessed using various spells. They have native inhabitants as well.

Transitive planes have one important common characteristic: they “overlap” with other planes, and as such can be used to travel between these overlapping realities. These planes have the strongest regular interaction with the Material Plane and are often accessed by using various spells. They have native inhabitants as well. Example transitive planes include the following.

### Astral Plane

A silvery void that connects the Material and Inner Planes to the Outer Planes, the astral plane is the medium through which the souls of the departed travel to the afterlife. A traveler in the Astral Plane sees the plane as a vast empty void periodically dotted with tiny motes of physical reality calved off of the countless planes it overlaps. Powerful spellcasters utilize the Astral Plane for a tiny fraction of a second when they teleport, or they can use it to travel between planes with spells like astral projection.

### Ethereal Plane

The Ethereal Plane is a ghostly realm that exists as a buffer between the Material Plane and the Shadow Plane, overlapping each. A traveler in the Ethereal plane experiences the real world as if the world were an insubstantial ghost, and can move through solid objects without being seen in the real world. Strange creatures dwell in the Ethereal Plane, as well as ghosts and dreams,

many of which can sometimes extend their influence into the real world in mysterious and terrifying ways. Powerful spellcasters utilize the Ethereal Plane with spells like blink, etherealness, and ethereal jaunt.

### Dream Plane (The Dreamlands)

The Dream Plane (or Dreamlands) is a region populated by the thoughts, desires, and phantoms created by the minds of dreamers everywhere.

### Shadow Plane

The eerie and deadly Shadow Plane is a dark, desaturated “duplicate” of the Material Plane, where “mirrored” locations are subject to the degradation created by shadow. It overlaps with the Material Plane but is smaller in size (existing mainly as pocket universes), and is in many ways a warped and mocking “reflection” of the Material Plane, one infused with negative energy (see Inner Planes) and serving as home for strange monsters like undead shadows and worse. Powerful spellcasters utilize the Shadow Plane to swiftly travel immense distances on the Material Plane with *shadow walk*, or draw upon the mutable essence of the Shadow Plane to create quasi-real effects (e.g., *shadow evocation*) and creatures (e.g., *summon shadow*).

## Inner Planes

These six planes are manifestations of the basic building blocks of the universe. Each is made up of a single type of energy or element that overwhelms all others. The natives of a particular Inner Plane are made of the same energy or element as the plane itself. The Negative Energy Plane, the Positive Energy Plane, the Plane of Air, the Plane of Earth, the Plane of Fire, and the Plane of Water are all Inner Planes.

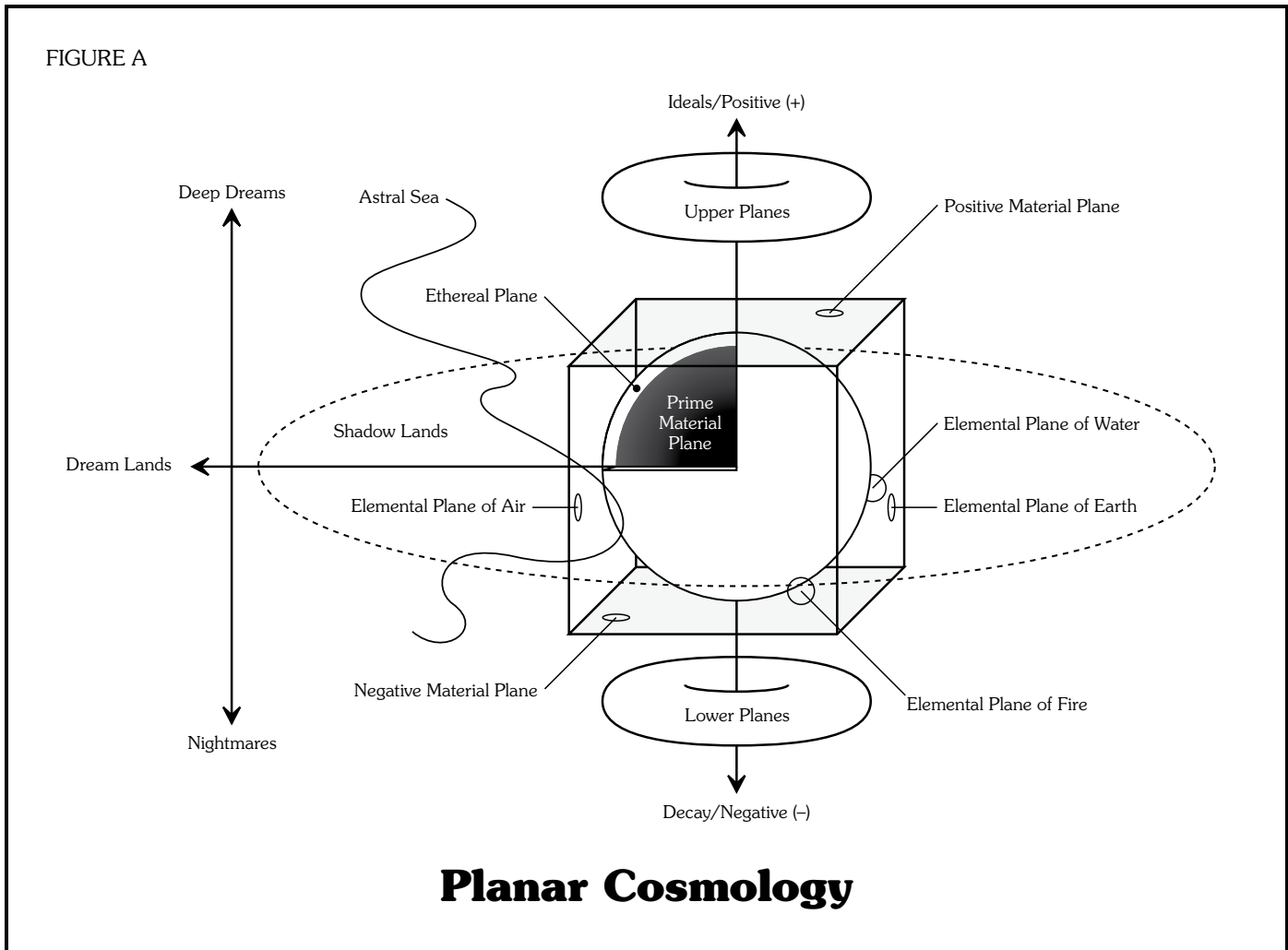
The Inner Planes contain the building blocks of reality—it’s easiest to envision these planes as “containing” the Material Plane, but they do not overlap with the Material Plane as do the transitive planes. Each Inner Plane is made up of a single type of energy or element that overwhelms all others. The natives of a particular Inner Plane are made of the same energy or element as the plane itself. Example Inner Planes include the following.

### Elemental Planes

The four classic Inner Planes are the Plane of Air, the Plane of Earth, the Plane of Fire, and the Plane of Water—it is from these planes that the creatures known as elementals hail, yet they house many other strange denizens as well, such as the genie races, strange metal-eating xorns, unseen invisible stalkers, and mischievous mephits.

### Energy Planes

Two energy planes exist—the Positive Energy Plane (from which the animating spark of life hails) and the Negative Energy Plane (from which the sinister taint of undeath hails). Energy from both planes infuses reality, the ebb and flow of this energy running through all creatures to bear them along the journey from birth to death. Clerics utilize power from these planes when they channel energy.



### Outer Planes

Beyond the realm of the mortal world, beyond the building blocks of reality, lie the Outer Planes. Vast beyond imagining, it is to these realms that the souls of the dead travel, and it is upon these realms in which the gods themselves hold court.

The denizens of the Outer Planes form the mythologies of civilization, comprising angels and demons, titans and devils, and countless other incarnations of possibility. The deities live on the Outer Planes, as do creatures such as celestials, fiends, and other outsiders. The Outer Planes are also the final resting place of souls from the Material Plane, whether that final rest takes the form of calm introspection or eternal damnation.

Each of the Outer Planes has an alignment representing a particular moral or ethical outlook, and the natives of each plane tend to behave in agreement with that plane's alignment. The Upper Planes tend to be places of law, justice and good; the Lower Planes tend to be places of evil and chaos.

Each campaign world should have different Outer Planes to match its themes and needs (e.g., a Norse-themed cosmology might include the higher planes of Asgard, Vanaheim, Alfheim and Nidavellir, and the lower planes of Hel, Muspelheim and Niffleheim).

### Demiplanes

This catchall category covers all extradimensional spaces that function like planes but have measurable size and limited access. Other kinds of planes are theoretically infinite in size, but a demiplane might be only a few hundred feet across. There are countless demiplanes adrift in reality, and while most are connected to the Astral Plane and Ethereal Plane, some are cut off entirely from the transitive planes and can only be accessed by well-hidden portals or obscure magic spells.

### Layered Planes

Infinities may be broken into smaller infinities, and planes into smaller, related planes. These layers are effectively separate planes of existence, and each layer can have its own features and qualities. Layers are connected to each other through a variety of planar gates, natural vortices, paths, and shifting borders.

Access to a layered plane from elsewhere usually happens on the first layer of the plane, which can be either the top or bottom layer, depending on the specific plane. Most fixed access points (such as portals and natural vortices) reach this layer, which makes it the gateway for other layers of the plane. The plane shift spell generally deposits the spellcaster on the first layer of the plane.

## How Planes Interact

### Separate Planes

Two planes that are separate do not overlap or directly connect to each other. They are like planets in different orbits. The only way to get from one separate plane to the other is to go through a third plane, such as a Transitive Plane.

### Coterminous Planes

Planes that touch at specific points are coterminous. Where they touch, a connection exists, and travelers can leave one reality behind and enter the other.

### Coexistent Planes

If a link between two planes can be created at any point, the two planes are coexistent. These planes overlap each other completely. A coexistent plane can be reached from anywhere on the plane it overlaps. When moving on a coexistent plane, it is often possible to see into or interact with the plane with which it coexists.

## Methods of Transition

### Portals

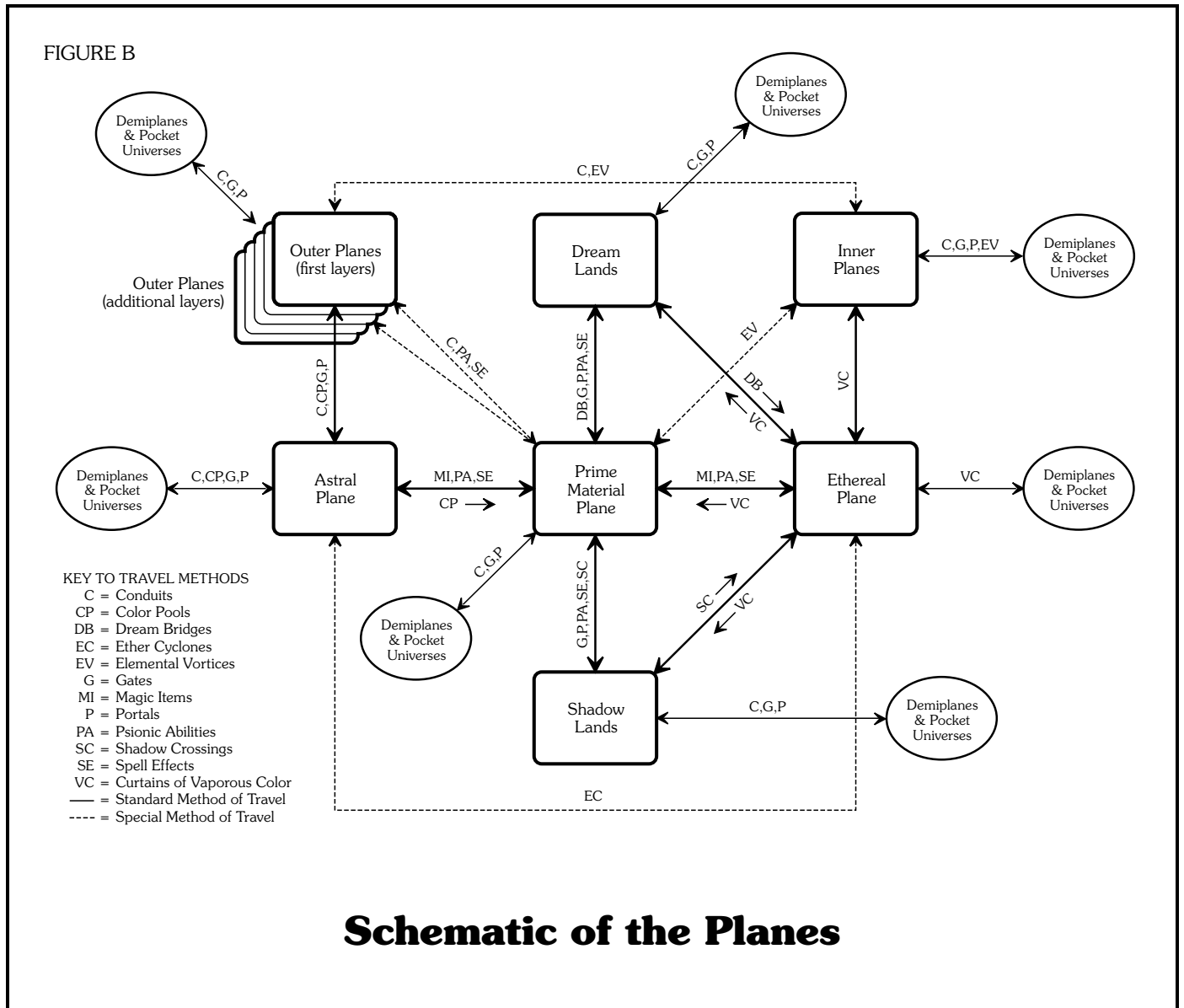
Portals are bounded by pre-existing openings (usually doors and arches); the portal is destroyed when the opening is. Portals also require portal keys to open; a key is usually a physical object, but it can also be an action or a state of being. Naturally occurring portals will often appear at random; some portals only exist for a brief period of time, or shift from one location to another.

### Conduits

Conduits are also naturally occurring, but they are natural phenomena, the planar equivalent of whirlpools and tornadoes. Conduits are only known to occur in the Astral and Ethereal Planes. A type of conduit known as a color pool is a common gateway from the Astral Plane to the Outer Planes.

### Vortices

A vortex is a link from a Prime Material world to the Inner Planes, which begin in areas of intense concentration of some



element (e.g., the heart of a volcano might be a vortex to the Plane of Fire). There also used to be living vortices (plural of vortex) which the sorcerer-monarchs of the desert planet have managed to maintain, like siphoning water through a hose, and use to empower their “priests,” the templars.

### **Gates**

Gates are portals that are not bounded by physical apertures; gates are rare, and usually appear as a result of magical spells and rare planar phenomena.

### **Planar Bleeding**

Planar bleeding occurs when regions of two planes coexist; such phenomena are usually short-lived, and disastrous for their environs. Planar bleeding between the Shadow Plane and Material Plane is somewhat common compared to other occurrences, though still reasonably rare.

### **Planar Pathways**

Planar pathways are special landscape features appearing in multiple planes or layers of a plane. Travel along a planar pathway results in travel along the planes. Pathways are crucial tactically, because they are very stable compared to portals or gates, and do not require magic spells or portal keys. One notable planar pathway is the River Styx, which flows across the Lower Planes and parts of the Astral Plane. Another is the River Oceanus, which flows through the Upper Planes.

### **Spells and Magic Items**

Planes may also be accessed using certain spells and magic items. These magicks, however, may not always provide control to the user over where he or she goes, and may not always provide for the user’s return. A list of plane-related spells and magic items has been provided in **Appendix C: Plane-related Magicks**.

## **Other Considerations**

### **Time Parameters**

Each plane is subject to its own passage of time, relative to the other planes. Time in some planes may pass faster or slower than in other planes.

### **Physical Parameters**

Not all planes will feature familiar topography, nor will they necessarily conform to the accepted rules of physics (including gravity). Each plane is also subject to its own environmental conditions. For example, the Plane of Fire will be of a heat unbearable by most, and the amount of smoke and ash in the air will make breathing impossible for some. By comparison, characters without the water breathing ability will most assuredly drown in the liquid that fills the Elemental Plane of Water.

### **Physical Needs**

Most characters will require food and drink to maintain their health. Such resources may be a rarity on some planes. For example, water is a precious commodity on the Plane of Fire.

### **Magic Use**

While most magic works normally in the Ethereal and Astral Planes, many spells may have altered function, or not function

at all, in other planes. For example, a fireball spell requires air to use, so it would be useless in the Elemental Plane of Water. Furthermore, clerics may find themselves quite distant from their deity, which may lead to the failure of higher level spells.

### **Economic Concerns**

Money and other valuables may have little to no use on some planes, while seemingly mundane items may be of great value.

## **Ethereal Travel & Encounters**

The Ethereal Plane may be accessed by a variety of means, including psionics, magical spells, and magic items. The Ethereal Plane is coexistent with the Material Plane, with access to the material plane being provided by a series of colored veils known as **ethereal curtains** (a portal specific to the Ethereal Plane). Travel on the ethereal plane is both fast and tireless.

Hazards on the Ethereal Plane include ether cyclones which can blow travelers to other parts of the Ethereal Plane (or to other planes entirely), as well as a variety of creatures which function partially or fully in ethereal form. Being a transitive plane, many encounters on the Ethereal Plane will be with other ethereal travelers and visitors.

Most spells and attacks made in the Ethereal Plane will generally effect only those on the same plane, but can affect those who exist in the Ethereal Plane and another plane at the same time. Any damage taken while in ethereal form is treated as actual (hit point) damage. Most magic functions normally on the Ethereal Plane. Those creatures in an ethereal state have no need of food, drink, rest or sleep.

## **Astral Travel & Encounters**

The Astral Plane may be accessed by a variety of means, including psionics, magical spells, and magic items. The Astral Plane touches only the Prime Material plane and the initial level of the other planes. Travel to parallel worlds is accomplished through astral travel. Depending on the specific cosmology used, the Astral Plane will provide direct access to a number of planes through openings known as **astral color pools** (a portal specific to the Astral Plane). Like the Ethereal Plane, travel through the Astral Plane is both fast and tireless.

Hazards on the Astral Plane include the possibility of having one’s silvery cord snapped or cut, the presence of monsters, and the appearance of psychic storms. Normally, the psychic winds which blow across the astral plane are no stronger than a light breeze. However, under certain circumstances, these winds can become so turbulent as to cause astral travelers to get lost, drive them onto other planes, or even effect their minds (e.g., with *confusion*, *fear*, or *feeblemind*).

Most spells and attacks made in the Astral Plane will generally effect only those on the same plane, but can affect those who exist in the astral plane and another plane at the same time. Those creatures in astral form have no need of food, drink, rest, or sleep. If the material body is killed while the astral body is in that form, the creature must remain in astral form (and may not return to a physical plane).

# Plane-related Magic

## Plane-related Magic Items

### Amulet of the Planes

Allows the wearer to transport themselves or another creature to a different plane of existence or alternate dimension. Will transport up to as many as 8 willing creatures if they are in a circle holding hands. Unwilling creatures get a saving throw vs. spells or they will be instantly transported and the effect ends. May be used once per day. Roll on the following table when used:

Roll	Result
01-03	transported within 5-500 feet of intended destination
04-20	transported within 1-4 miles of intended destination
21-50	transported within 5-500 miles of intended destination
51-90	transported to randomly location on destination plane
91-99	transported to wrong (but contiguous) plane
00	if used on individual; transported to random plane; if used on group: each member is transported to a different randomly-determined plane

### Armor of Etherealness

As +3 plate armor, but confers etherealness (as oil of etherealness, including wearer and all non-living items carried) upon use of a command word. Ethereal abilities may only be used one time per day and lasts for 4d4+4 turns.

### Cubic Gate

Each face of this cube is keyed to a specific plane (one of which will always be the Material Plane). The planes to which the other five faces are keyed should be determined by the person that manufactured the item. Pressing a side once opens a gate to a random point on the plane to which that side is keyed, with a 10% chance of an outsider (randomly determined) coming through the gate. The gate may be closed by pressing the same side a second time. If a side is pressed twice in rapid succession, all those standing in a 10' radius will be transported to random point in the plane to which the side is keyed. May only be used for up to 6 total "taps" per day.

### Oil of Etherealness

When this oil is applied to a character's skin, clothing and possessions, it confers etherealness (i.e., it "shifts" the subject into the Ethereal Plane). The normal recipe contains enough oil to anoint 1 character and his standard equipment, takes 4 rounds to apply, and 3 additional rounds to take effect. Lasts for 4d4+4 turns unless wiped/washed off.

### Ring of the Planes

As an amulet of the planes, but may only be used by the single creature wearing the ring.

### Robe of Stars

This dark blue or black robe is embroidered with small white or silver stars. Once per day, upon use of a command word, it will

allow its wearer (and all of his or her equipment) to the physically travel the Astral Plane for 6+16 turns.

### Staff of Passage

This magic item generally provides the following psionic powers as spell-like abilities (all at the 6th psionic level): *astral projection* (2 charges), *dimension door* (1 charge), *dimension walk* (1 charge), *phase shift* (1 charge), *teleportation* (2 charges).

### Well of Many Worlds

This item appears identical to a *portable hole*, but will immediately cast anything placed inside it to another world (randomly determined). The hole is actually a two-way portal, and will allow other "out" from the other world. If moved, the hole will open to a different (randomly determined) plane.

## Plane-related Spells

**Gate** Range: 30'  
Duration: Special

*This spell should be considered a 9th level spell for both clerics and magic users (meaning clerics should not be allowed to use this spell any sooner than 17th level, and magic-users may cast this spell no earlier than 15th level).*

This spell allows the user to create an interdimensional connection between his or her current plane of existence, and another plane. The gate may then be used to permit planar travel or used to call a creature from the secondary plane. The gate, once created, will have a "front" (which allows creatures entering the gate to be transported) and a back (which allows creatures to pass "through" it, but without transporting them).

**As a mode of planar travel:** The gate will open at a desired point, stay open for up to 1 full round, and permit all who choose to enter and pass through the gate while open. Deities and other rulers of a realm, should they so desire, can prevent a gate from opening in their presence or personal demesnes.

**Calling creatures:** To use the spell in this manner, the spellcaster must name the entity (deity, demi-god, demon, god, or similar) being called. The other end of the gate will open in the being's immediate vicinity and "pull them through" (willingly or unwillingly). There is a 100% chance of an entity being pulled through the gate, though the chance of the actual entity called depends on the spellcaster's level, alignment, and knowledge of the planes.

### Other Plane-related Spells

At the GM's discretion, the following psionic abilities may be permitted to clerics and magic-users (for use as spells) as outlined below (number on left represents level of spell, number in parentheses indicates experience level required to cast):

Ability	as Cleric Spell	as MU Spell
astral projection	7th (C:17)	9th (MU:21)
dream travel	—	7th (MU:15)
phase shift	5th (C:7)	7th (MU:15)



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