

Necromancer class

<http://www.necropraxis.com/2014/06/16/necromancer-class/>

Level progression, HP, saves, attack, weapons, armor, and spell slots as magic-user.

- Prepare and cast only necromancy spells
- Maintain control over up to 1 HD worth of undead per level
- Assert control over undead as an action
- Direct any or all controlled undead as an action
- Create and repair undead minions up to 1 HD per level per downtime
- Will not generally be served by mortal retainers other than apprentices



Spells and magic items

Necromancers begin with three first level necromancy spells. Given that the chance of finding many necromancy spells during play without fudging is low, necromancers of any level may research new spells during downtime. This requires 1000 XP-equivalent currency units per spell level and takes one downtime action irrespective of spell level. Necromancers may only research new spells of a level that can be prepared. Necromancers may craft scrolls of known necromancy spells following the rules used by magic-users and may only use scrolls, wands, staves, or other wizardly magic items that have a strong necromancy component.

Control and direct undead

Necromancers may maintain control over a number of HD worth of undead equal to level. No check is required, but asserting control takes an action if done in combat. Intelligent undead deserve a saving throw and a necromancer only gets one try when attempting to influence such beings. Directing newly controlled undead must wait for another action.

Most created undead have dim and limited intelligence. They can only follow crude commands and are unable to perform complicated tasks. An action such as “pull that lever” is about the limit of undead sophistication. As an action, a necromancer may direct (or modify previous directions for) any or all currently controlled undead. Directions must be clear and vocalized but need not be overly specific. For example, “attack those orcs” is acceptable; there is no need to declare exactly which orc should be attacked.

Actions available include *attack* (a target), *defend* (a person), *follow* (a person or thing), *guard* (a location), *move* (to a nearby place), *patrol* (an area), and *retrieve* (a nearby item). Minions will intuit needed movement given an attack command, but may not choose the smartest route on their own. Minions instructed to *defend* will hold actions and use opposed combat rolls to determine the success of a potential interception.

This structure means that a necromancer can either take an action themselves during a turn (such as cast a spell) or redirect minions but not both. Undead will continue to follow existing directions until new directions are provided.

Undead become uncontrolled upon the death (though not unconsciousness) of a necromancer master and uncontrolled undead without directions are hostile to all life. A necromancer may release undead minions from service at will.

Create undead

During downtime, necromancers may create or repair a number of HD worth of undead equal to level. This may result in a necromancer having created more undead than can be controlled. Excess undead are uncontrolled and hostile to all life. The propensity of necromancers to create uncontrolled “spares” that often get loose is no small part of the profession’s generally poor reputation. Strictly speaking, no resources are needed other than corpses that have not been previously animated, though in practice a private ritual sanctum is necessary for the sake of privacy (necromancy being widely vilified as black magic). Created undead are by default a form of zombie. Other undead may be controlled but must be discovered in play or created with the aid of augmentation spells.

HD may be allocated as desired between multiple minions. For example, a fourth level necromancer may create 4 minions of 1 HD each, one minion of 4 HD, or some other combination. Undead minions attack and save as a creature of the appropriate HD, have an AC bonus equal to HD, move in combat as a lightly encumbered human (three-quarters of an unencumbered human’s rate), and gain no benefit other than style from armor. Damage is by weapon or 1d6 from fearsome unarmed strike. Undead are not effective porters and have a tendency to hide or vandalize carried objects other than raiment or armament when unsupervised.

Weapons

Even if being strict about weapon usage, it is suggested that necromancers be allowed to wield sickles and scythes because of the symbolic value of these tools to the craft of necromancy.

- Sickle: as dagger, not throwable, 1d4 damage
- Scythe: as staff, requires two hands, slashing rather than bludgeoning, 1d6 damage

Good sources of necromancy spells for use with traditional class-and-level fantasy games:

- [DMGR7 The Complete Book of Necromancers](#) (\$10 PDF at the time of this writing)
- [Theorems & Thaumaturgy](#) (free)

Image is a cropped version of [Death and the Miser](#) from the Dance of Death by Hans Holbein the Younger.
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Originally from: <http://www.necropraxis.com/2014/06/16/necromancer-class/>