

A Different Arcane Archer

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"You want me to slow him down sir? Or are you sending in more guys for him to beat up?"
- Clint Barton

WoTC has failed to write an interesting Arcane Archer class for over twenty years. They clearly see the benefits of the class, as they keep releasing it, as a core option for each edition. They just consistently say "Wait that's too cool" and then nerf it down to nothing.

Arcane Archer

An Arcane Archer studies a unique method of archery that weaves magic into attacks to produce supernatural effects. Arcane Archers are some of the most elite warriors. They stand watch over the fringes of domains, keeping a keen eye out for trespassers and using magic-infused arrows to defeat monsters and invaders before they can reach settlements.

Arcane Adept

At 3rd level, you learn magical theory. You gain proficiency in Arcana and gain access to the Prestidigitation, Mage Hand, and True Strike cantrips.

Arcane Shot

At 3rd level, you learn to unleash special magical effects with some of your shots. When you gain this feature, you learn three Arcane Shot options of your choice (see "Arcane Shot Options" below).

When you fire an arrow from a shortbow or longbow as part of the Attack action, you can apply one (and only one) of your Arcane Shot options to that arrow. You decide to use the option when the arrow hits a creature, unless the option doesn't involve an attack roll. You have a number of uses of this ability equal to your proficiency modifier, and you regain all expended uses of it when you finish a short or long rest. When you slay a creature whose CR is within 2 of your own, and that has rolled initiative against you, you regain a single use of this ability.

You gain an additional Arcane Shot option of your choice when you reach certain levels in this class: 5th, 7th, 10th, 15th, and 18th level.

Arcane Shot Options

The Arcane Shot feature lets you choose options for it at certain levels. The options are presented here in alphabetical order. They are all magical effects, and each one is associated with one of the schools of magic.

If an option requires a saving throw, your Arcane Shot save DC is calculated as follows:

Arcane Shot save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Beguiling Arrow. Your enchantment magic causes this arrow to temporarily beguile its target. The creature hit by the arrow takes an extra 2d6 psychic damage, and must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all saving throws until the start of your next turn. After 18th level in this class the effect ends when the creature can pass a saving throw (most likely with disadvantage).

Bursting Arrow. You imbue your arrow with force energy drawn from the school of evocation. The energy detonates after your attack. Immediately after the arrow hits the creature, the target and all other creatures within 10 feet of it take 1d6 points of fire damage per point of your proficiency modifier. The fire damage ignores resistance and immunity when you reach 18th level in this class.

Delocating Arrow. You use abjuration magic to try to temporarily transport your target to a harmless location within 10ft. The creature hit by the arrow must also succeed on a Charisma saving throw or be teleported to an unoccupied location of your choice, within 10ft. After you reach 18th level in this class, the target can be moved up to 100ft.

Enfeebling Arrow. You weave necromantic magic into your arrow. The creature hit by the arrow takes an extra 2d6 necrotic damage. The target must also succeed on a Constitution saving throw, or the damage dealt by its weapon attacks is halved until the start of your next turn. After 18th level in this class the effect ends when the creature can pass a saving throw.

Grasping Arrow. When this arrow strikes its target, conjuration magic creates grasping, poisonous brambles, which wrap around the target. The creature hit by the arrow takes an extra 2d6 poison damage, its speed is reduced by half, and it takes 2d6 slashing damage the first time on each turn it moves without teleporting. Flying or swimming creatures are unable to continue to do so. The target, or any creature that can reach it, can use its action to remove the brambles with a successful Strength (Athletics) check against your Arcane Shot save DC. Otherwise, the brambles last for 1 minute. The poison damage and slashing damage both increase to 4d6 when you reach 18th level in this class.

Piercing Arrow. You use transmutation magic to give your arrow an ethereal quality. When you use this option, you don't make an attack roll for the attack. Instead, the arrow shoots forward in a line, which is 1 foot wide and 30 feet long, before disappearing. The arrow passes harmlessly through objects, ignoring cover. Each creature in that line must make a Dexterity saving throw.

On a failed save, a creature takes damage as if it were hit by the arrow. All damage is converted to force damage, and an extra 1d6 force damage is added. On a successful save, a target takes half damage. The beam of force extends to 100ft when you reach 18th level in this class.

Swarm Arrow. You weave illusion magic into your arrow. As it flies, it seemingly splits into a hail of arrows. Make one attack roll against your primary target and resolve as normal. All enemies within 30ft of the original target believe themselves to be subject to this same attack. Compare the original attack roll against the AC of each creature. Those who would be struck take damage equal to your Int modifier. When you reach 18th level in this class, this attack deals normal damage to each creature.

Shadow Arrow. You weave illusion magic into your arrow, causing it to occlude your foe's vision with shadows. The creature hit by the arrow takes an extra 2d6 psychic damage, and it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or gain the blind condition until the start of your next turn. After 18th level in this class the effect ends when the creature can pass a saving throw.

Magic Arrow

At 3rd level, you gain the ability to infuse arrows with magic. Whenever you fire a nonmagical arrow from a shortbow or longbow, it is treated as magical. The magic fades from the arrow immediately after it hits or misses its target. At level 7, your bow is treated as a +1 bow, at level 11 a +2, and level 15 a +3.

Curving Shot

At 7th level, you learn how to direct an errant arrow toward a new target. When you make an attack roll with a magic arrow and miss, you can use a bonus action to reroll the attack roll against a different target within 60 feet of the original target.

Ever-Ready Shot

Starting at 15th level, your magical archery is always available. You regain one use at the end of any round in which you have none.