

Witch Bolt 5e | Is it a borderline useless 2021

Witch Bolt 5e

The witch bolt 5e: Casting Time: 1 activity. A ray of crackling, blue power lances outside toward a creature within reach, forming a sustained arc of lightning between you and the goal. Make a ranged spell attack against that creature. On a hit, the target takes 1d12 lightning damage.

On every one of your turns for the length, you may use your actions to cope with 1d12 lightning damage to the target automatically. The spell ends if you use your effort to perform anything else. The spell also ends if the goal is outside the spell's range or if it has total cover out of you.

At Higher Levels. Once you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or greater, the initial damage increases by 1d12 for each slot degree above 1st.

Spell Lists. Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard



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Damage in Witch Bolt 5e

But if you reach the first roll, it's 1d12 damage + a free 1d12 damage each subsequent turn for a full minute, for a total of 6d12 damage. However, it's just a concentration spell, which means that you may still attack while it is activated. An Eldritch Knight or a Blood Hunter would be mad with this charm. That sounds utterly broken!

Range: 30 ft

Duration: Concentration up to 1 minute

A ray of crackling, blue energy lances outside toward a creature is within reach, forming a continuing arc of lightning between you and the goal. Make a ranged spell attack against that monster. On a hit, the target takes 1d12 lightning damage.



On each of your turns for the duration, you may use your actions to deal 1d12 lightning damage to the target automatically. The spell ends if you use your activity to perform anything else. The spell also ends if the goal is outside the spell's range or if it has complete cover out of you.

At Higher Levels. If you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or greater, the initial damage increases by 1d12 for every slot degree over 1st.

The damage each round takes your actions to apply this. And if you make use of your activity for anything else that the spell stops.

Cantrip attack in Witch Bolt 5e

Better to attack with a cantrip every turn.

Each of the targets must do on it is turn goes away from behind. Or you pay which if zapped with magical would be a natural reaction to do, so yeah it doesn't last very often.

That seems like the kind of spell which operates well in unique situations.

Instead of considering it as a direct damage option, use it to keep enemies away from something/someone. When they don't move out after the first hit, then they get a fried turn. Forces the enemy to make a decision.

Alternatively, hit the enemy with it and have another caster use Hold Person on the goal to keep them in range. Or a fighter knocks them prone every turn so they can not run away.

Maybe you can use it in imaginative ways. Rather than targeting a single foe, consider luring a few enemies into a shallow pond and hit the pond instead. Maybe the DM will permit you to damage every enemy with a d6 or anything to simulate the pond electrified and skillet everyone standing within it.

There may make better choices in terms of straight-up dealing damage. Still, Bolt provides exciting options and unique types of strikes aside from just standing there, hitting the bad man every round.



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Homebrew Rules for Witch Bolt 5e

I have been working in an Eldritch Knight character and opting to get a thunder/lightning theme for her evocation charms – Shocking Grasp, Thunderwave, Chromatic Orb, etc.. Flavour-wise, I like Witch Bolt, but it seems useless in practice.

Notably, for the Eldritch Knight, 1d12 damage per round is a lot less than she could do with weapon strikes.

Do you have some homebrew principles which could make the spell more valuable and worth having a spell slot? Here are a few different ideas I had (probably would not use all of these):

Alternately, the target has to make a Constitution rescue throw in their turn to move away or take action. Otherwise, they are stunned by this turn. The goal is “grappled” from the Bolt until the spell ends or concentration breaks.

The caster can utilize rapid-fire weapons while casting the Bolt with their flip side (thematically, this seems like something that an Eldritch Knight would do).

Creatures

Any creatures that attempt to cross the Bolt (forming a direct line between the caster and the target) will require 1d12 damage.

Do one of these ideas seem reasonable, or do you have some better ideas? I thought of a few of the little consequences that might be limited to if when someone throws Witch Bolt 5e with a higher-level spell slot. Still, I also need it to be more appealing as a first-level spell option.

Also, has anybody found effective techniques to use Witch Bolt as it's written? I have heard there are ways to work together with party members to snare an enemy and keep them from leaving the spell's range, but that does not correct the low damage per turn.

There is no injury in swapping damage types on spells so long as you're mindful that some resistances are more prevalent (flame, cold) than others (force).

Within that mind, instead of house ruling Witch Bolt, I would

recommend just changing the damage type and flavor of the Catapult spell to lightning. It would also have far fewer balance considerations than your proposed modifications to Witch Bolt 5e.

Witch bolt 5e and twinned spell, do it operate?

So I was only thinking about how witch bolt (a sorcerer spell) allows you to utilize your actions? How to cause 1d12 automated lightning damage after you first cast it. I was wondering when using twinned spell (that you can since it generally only affects one monster). Witch bolt would enable me as a sorcerer to target both monsters. My action on subsequent turns cause the 1d12 lightning damage to both or target one creature with both witch bolts and then use my activity to trigger 2d12 lightning damage?

Twinned does demand a second distinct target. Then it takes complete action to fall the subsequent damage on a goal, not all aims. So you attack both and do initial damage. Then it is possible to use your action to put harm on one or another until it expires. Then use it on the other man.

It isn't as superb as double the harm. Still, it does ensure the spell may last a bit longer. Because who loves doing this against something that a turn ahead of the rogue crits. It with a sneak attack along with your spell ends with just a single extra 1d12. Now you may have a backup goal.

I think you can twin cast it, but you can not concentrate on both at the same time. I believe that it could be" you cope 1d12 lightning to one target, you cope 1d12 lightning to another goal, then you select that goal you keep concentration on it.

How effective is Witch Bolt 5e?

In ideal scenarios, your target is in vision and does not have any cover for its full duration. It is a fantastic means of

dealing a constant 1d12 damage each turn. Be aware that having a high-level spell slot only increases the harm on the initial hit, determined with your attack roll.

There are likely better spells for the more generous spell slot (as well as the same degree 1 slots). Still, at low levels, it is a beautiful way to be conservative with your slots since it doesn't require a spell slot to continue harming.

Outside of the other states, the witch bolt excels when something is vulnerable to lightning damage.

I like picking this up in my Eldritch Knight. Still, as my character improved, I find it easier to whack things and cast spells when I need to get beyond an elemental weakness.

It is fair at the beginning in witch bolt 5e and becomes very ineffective at higher levels.

On subsequent rounds, the spell just does 1d12 damage, individually from the spell slot machine used. After level 5, cantrips are much better if you strike, after degree 11, they are better all of the time. They also don't require concentration.

Restraining charms usually require immersion also, so it is quite hard to keep the target in the scope. The range itself is so low that many monsters may efficiently utilize their move to get to you and beat you out of concentration or consciousness.

The initial damage is barely more significant than Fire Bolt on degree 1 and worse than Scorching Ray at a second level slot.

All these collectively mean Witch Bolt is quite feeble. For amounts 1-4, in case you've got a grappler on your party, it's ok, but not spectacular even afterward. Later it is

underpowered.

Witch Bolt 5e is borderline useless.

It takes concentration. Its range is so short that enemies can leave it in one turn unless someone reduces their speed.

The very fact that it finishes if you do not continue to use your action on it makes it rather stiff.

Even if used on the first turn of battle, many fights will end well before the complete duration has died.

Above all, its damage is so low that there is always a better option.

A single longsword attack deals precisely the same average damage using a Strength modifier of only +2.

Sure, the weapon strikes will overlook X% of turns. Still, Witch Bolt will even miss X% of the time or less (ideally your weapon attack bonus will be at least as massive as your spell attack bonus.) What's more, Eldritch Knights gain charm slots very slowly. (3 times as slow as spellcasters) thus wasting a slot is a big problem.

With an attack bonus of +5, the Eldritch Knight's strikes will hit 65 percent of the time. Finally, let's assume that you have four turns to deal with the damage.

Witch Bolt 5e average damage over four endings:

Should you do the math, Witch Bolt comes with expected damage of 22.55 over four rounds and contains an average price tag of 1.5 spell slots. (Or put differently, about 1/3 of the time you have to pay two slots and lose one turn's worth of harm.)

On the other hand, Magic Missile can't miss and deals an average of 10.5 damage. Three longsword strikes will include an average of $7.5 * 3 * 0.65 = 14.625$ to get a total of 25.125 more than four rounds, and only prices one spell slot.

Therefore Magic Missile is already a much better option even without taking critical hits into account. (Any of those weapon strikes can score a necessary, but the next endings of Witch Bolt can not.)

If you're able to hit two creatures, it is a no-brainer.

These are very conservative numbers for a Fighter! Any Fighting Style apart from Armor or Security would raise the harm further. If we are talking about a version human with Polearm Master or Crossbow Expert, Witch Bolt does not stand a chance.

Probability $0.8775 \times 0.1225 \times 0.8775 \times 6.5$ Damage 19.5

Probability Damage $0.8775 \times 19.5 \times 0.1225 \times 0.8775 \times 6.5$

There are only two results as you're using two turns at a time. The math works out to an expected 17.8 harm over four turns at an average cost of 1.14 slots. Less likely to be ineffective, but also less damage.

Against a very high AC enemy, Tomb Raider may appear appealing because the subsequent damage rounds ensured. Still, your chance of missing and wasting the flip is also much higher. Enemies with higher AC – especially at lower CRs – are usually wearing medium or heavy armor. And also don't have good Dexterity economy throws, so you're much better off relying on Magic Missile or Burning Hands.



Witch Bolt 5e

For a Wizard/Sorcerer

They'll deal less damage with their cantrips compared to an Eldritch Knight does with weapon strikes. They get much better access to immersion spells (e.g. Sleep, Grease) along with also the spell slots to make use of those. At level 3, Flaming Sphere or Scorching Ray will kill matters considerably quicker, and Web becomes another candidate for concentration.

Witch Bolt 5e is worse than Hex + Eldritch Blast in [each practical](#) situation. $1d10 + 1d6$ add up to 9 damage per round on average. That is 23.4 damage over four rounds.

It happens once you choose the 65% strike rate into consideration and costs one slot because Hex has no savings.

In addition to that Hex's capacity to inflict drawback on ability checks can help you or other party members hide by providing the enemy disadvantage on Perception tests, or assist them in grappling that enemy by damaging their Athletics or Acrobatics.

The final nail in the coffin is that Witch Bolt is just suitable for one monster. One can implement Hex to two monsters or more, and at a dungeon has the potential to last until your next short rest. The other range on Hex and Eldritch Blast help make this possible since you'll be out of assault range more often and thus produce less concentration saves.

y'all, I don't use Witch Bolt much, but I just critted with it at third level and dealt like 36 damage, which is more damage than I deal in some entire combat sessions lmao

– Ginny Di-ceased ☐ (@itsginnydi) [July 12, 2020](#)