

MAGIC THE GATHERING – CHEAT SHEET

HOW TO READ A MAGIC CARD



- Mana Cost** The amount of mana it costs to cast the spell. **Serra Angel's** mana cost is **3****. See **"Mana and Casting Spells."**
 - Type Line** Every card in Magic has a type, and some cards also have subtypes or supertypes that provide more information. **Serra Angel's** type is **Creature**, and its subtype is **Angel**.
 - Text Box** Lists the rules and abilities of the card. **Serra Angel** has **Flying** and **Vigilance**. See **"Types of Abilities."** See Glossary for **"Flying"** and **"Vigilance."**
 - Power/Toughness** All creature cards have a power and toughness in the bottom right corner. **Serra Angel** is 4/4.
- A creature's **power** (the 1st number) is the amount of damage it deals in combat. Its **toughness** (the 2nd number) is the amount of damage that must be dealt to it in a single turn to destroy it.

TYPES OF CARDS

Lands

- Lands generate mana for you to use to cast spells and activate abilities.
 - Most lands can tap to generate mana as long as they are untapped.
 - Each **Basic Land** makes a mana of a particular color.
- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Plains
to add
White Mana | Islands
to add
Blue Mana | Swamps
to add
Black Mana | Mountains
to add
Red Mana | Forests
to add
Green Mana |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
- Some *nonbasic lands* can make **colorless mana** () (that can only pay for generic mana costs), some let you *choose* a color, and some enter tapped, which is a downside, but usually with some added benefit for the next turn.

: Add to your mana pool.
: Add one mana of any color to your mana pool.

Crumbling Necropolis enters the battlefield tapped.
: Add , , or to your mana pool.

- You can play one land on each of your turns by putting it from your hand onto the battlefield during either of your Main Phases.

PERMANENT SPELLS

Permanent spells include creatures, artifacts, enchantments, and planeswalkers. While lands are also permanents, they are not spells.

You can cast permanent spells during your Main Phases, and it remains on the battlefield until it's destroyed, sacrificed, exiled, or otherwise removed.

Some spells might be multiple types. For example, a creature can be an Artifact Creature, and counts as both types simultaneously.

Creatures

Creatures fight for you. They can attack during the Combat Phase of your turn and block during the Combat Phase of an opponent's turn. They always have a power and toughness rating in the bottom right corner. Creatures with 0 or less toughness die and are sent to the graveyard.

Creatures you cast enter the battlefield with **Summoning Sickness** and can't attack (or use an ability that has in its cost) until your next turn.

Creatures with Summoning Sickness are still allowed to block.

Artifacts and Enchantments

Artifacts represent machines or magical objects. Enchantments have persistent magical effect that affect the game as long as they're on the battlefield.

Planeswalkers

Planeswalkers come to your aid in your duel and start with an amount of **Loyalty Counters** shown in the bottom right corner.

You may activate one Loyalty Ability per turn on your Main Phases by adding or removing the amount of Loyalty Counters beside the ability. You can't activate the ability if it makes the Loyalty Counters drop to less than zero.

Most Planeswalkers have a very powerful Loyalty Ability that costs many Loyalty Counters. This ability is usually informally referred to as an "ultimate ability" or "ult". This **Liliana Vess'** ult is her **-8** ability.

Opponents' creatures can attack Planeswalkers, and they will lose Loyalty Counters equal to damage dealt.

Planeswalkers with 0 or less Loyalty Counters are destroyed.



NON-PERMANENT SPELLS

Sorceries and Instants have a one-time effect. You do what the card says, and then put the card into your graveyard. They are never on the battlefield.

Sorceries and Instants

Sorceries are spells that you can only cast during your Main Phases. Instants are spells that can be cast at any time, even during your opponent's turn or during combat.

TYPES OF ABILITIES

Static Abilities: Text that is always true while the card is on the battlefield.

Zombies you control get +1/+1.

Triggered Abilities: Triggered by a specific event occurring in the game. They will always start with the word "when," "whenever," or "at."

Whenever you cast a creature spell, draw a card.

Activated Abilities: You can activate whenever you want as long as you can pay the cost. **Always formatted "Cost: Effect."**

Some activated abilities cost mana. Others may contain the tap symbol which means that you must tap the card to activate the ability. You can't activate these abilities if the permanent is already tapped or if it's a creature with summoning sickness.

Dragon Hatchling's ability costs for every time you want to activate it.

: Dragon Hatchling gets +1/+0 until end of turn.

Mazemind Tome's ability costs **2** in addition to requiring you to tap it. If the artifact is already tapped, you can't activate its ability until the next time it's untapped.

2, , Put a page counter on Mazemind Tome: Draw a card.

TOKENS AND COUNTERS

Some spells or abilities create permanents, and they are represented by tokens. They can only exist on the battlefield and cease to exist once they leave and go to another zone (hand/library/graveyard/exile).

For example, the creature **Thopter Mechanic** generates a **1/1 colorless Thopter artifact creature token with flying** upon its death. This is represented by the token card on the right.



Counters are small markers (such as pebbles, dice, or cardboard markers) placed on an object or player to keep track of a number or attribute.

Thopter Mechanic lets you put **+1/+1 counters** on itself that boost its power and toughness while the counters exist on the card.



Counters are removed from the game as soon as the permanent they are on changes zones (moves to a hand/library/graveyard/exile).

MAGIC THE GATHERING – CHEAT SHEET

ON YOUR TURN

BEGINNING PHASE

Untap Step (No one can cast spells/activate abilities.)
 • Untap **J** all of your tapped permanents by turning them upright.

Upkeep Step (Players can cast instants/activate abilities.)
 • “At the beginning of your upkeep” effects trigger.

Draw Step
 • Draw a card from your library.
 • Afterwards, players can cast instants/activate abilities.

FIRST MAIN PHASE

- Play a land (only 1 per turn).
- You may cast spells as long as you have the mana to pay for them.
 ➤ See “**Mana and Casting Spells**”.
- Opponents can cast instants/activate abilities.

COMBAT PHASE

➤ See “Your Combat Phase” for detailed rules.

Beginning of Combat Step (Players can cast instants/activate abilities.)
 • “At the beginning of combat” effects trigger.

Declare Attackers Step
 • You may choose creatures to attack opponents/planeswalkers.
 • Then, players can cast instants/activate abilities.

Declare Blockers Step
 • Opponents may choose creatures to block attackers, if any.
 • Then, players can cast instants/activate abilities.

Combat Damage Step
 • Attackers and blockers simultaneously deal damage to each other equal to their power. Unblocked damage is dealt to opponents/planeswalkers.
 • Then, players can cast instants/activate abilities.

End of Combat Step (Players can cast instants/activate abilities.)
 • “At the end of combat” effects trigger.

SECOND MAIN PHASE

- Play a land (only 1 per turn).
- You may cast spells as long as you have the mana to pay for them.
 ➤ See “**Mana and Casting Spells**”.
- Opponents can cast instants/activate abilities.

ENDING PHASE

End Step (Players can cast instants/activate abilities.)
 • “At the beginning of your end step” effects trigger.

Cleanup Step (No one can cast spells/activate abilities.)
 • If you have more than seven cards in your hand, choose and discard cards until you have only seven.
 • All damage on creatures is healed.
 • “Until the end of turn” effects end.
 • Pass the turn.

YOUR COMBAT PHASE

Beginning of Combat Step
 Some triggered abilities are triggered at this step.

(Players have an opportunity to cast instants or activate abilities right now.)

Declare Attackers Step
 You choose which of your creatures will attack, and you choose which opponents they will attack. In games with multiple opponents, you can choose different creatures to attack different opponents simultaneously. **Tap** **☞** your creatures to show that they are attacking.

If no creatures are declared as attackers (or put onto the battlefield attacking), the Declare Blockers Step and Combat Damage Step are skipped.

(Players have an opportunity to cast instants or activate abilities right now.)

Declare Blockers Step
 Your opponents choose which of their creatures will block, if any. Tapped creatures can't be declared as blockers. Blocking with creatures does not cause them to become tapped.

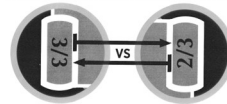
(Players have an opportunity to cast instants or activate abilities right now.)

First Strike Combat Damage Step
 Skip this step if there are no attacking or defending creatures with **First Strike** or **Double Strike**.

If any creatures in combat have the **First Strike** or **Double Strike** keyword abilities, they will deal their damage in an additional Combat Damage Step before the main Combat Damage Step.

(Players have an opportunity to cast instants or activate abilities right now.)

Combat Damage Step
 Once all blockers have been chosen, each creature – both attackers and blockers – simultaneously deals damage equal to its power.



A creature's **power** (the 1st number) is the amount of damage it deals in combat.



Its **toughness** (the 2nd number) is the amount of damage that must be dealt to it in a single turn to destroy it.

- An attacking creature that **isn't blocked** deals direct combat damage to the player it's attacking, and they lose that much life.

- An attacking creature that **is blocked** deals damage to the creature(s) that are blocking it, and vice versa.

- If one of your attacking creatures is blocked by multiple creatures, you decide how to divide its combat damage among them. You must assign at least enough damage to the first blocking creature to destroy it before you can assign damage to the second one, and so on.

- If a creature is dealt damage equal to or greater than its toughness over the course of a single turn (whether it be combat damage, damage from spells or abilities, or a combination of both), that creature is destroyed, and it's goes to its owner's graveyard (or “dies”).

- If a creature isn't dealt enough damage to destroy it in a single turn, that creature stays on the battlefield, and the damage wears off later at the end of the turn.

(Players have an opportunity to cast instants or activate abilities right now.)

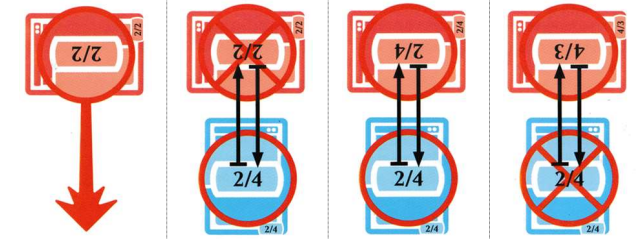
End of Combat Step

Some triggered abilities are triggered at this step.

(Players have an opportunity to cast instants or activate abilities right now.)

COMBAT EXAMPLES

Example 1: An opponent is attacking you with a variety of creatures:

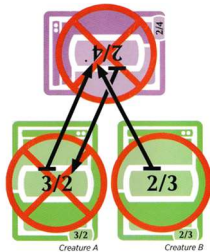


Their creature deals 2 damage to you. The red creature is destroyed. Both creatures survive. The blue creature is destroyed.

Example 2: Your opponent is the controller of a **black creature** and is making it attack you, and you have two **green creatures** that can block.

When you block one attacker with two or more creatures, your opponent must choose the order in which your blocks will take damage. The attacking player always chooses the order in which blocking creatures receive damage.

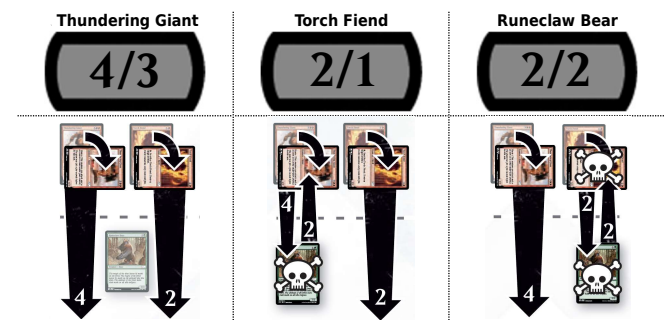
Your **green creatures** will deal a total of **5 damage** to the **black creature**, which is enough to destroy it.



Meanwhile, the **black creature** can deal enough damage to destroy one of your blockers (**Creature A**), but not enough to destroy the other one (**Creature B**). Since your opponent's creature will be destroyed in either case, they order **Creature A** before **Creature B** to destroy at least one of your creatures.

Once blockers have been ordered, damage is dealt. The **black creature** deals **2 damage** to **Creature A**, destroying it, and deals no damage to **Creature B**. The **green creatures** deal a total of **5 damage** to the **black creature**, destroying it.

Example 3: Your opponent has attacked with a **Thundering Giant** (4/3) and a **Torch Fiend** (2/1). Your only untapped creature is a **Runeclaw Bear** (2/2). What will you block?



Option A: You Don't Block	Option B: Block Thundering Giant	Option C: Block Torch Fiend
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You'll take a total of 6 damage from both unblocked creatures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Runeclaw Bear will die from combat with Thundering Giant. • You will take 2 damage from Torch Fiend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runeclaw Bear and Torch Fiend will destroy each other in combat. • You will take 4 damage from Thundering Giant.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might choose not to block if your life total is high, and you want to save your creature for a counterattack. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You didn't destroy any of your opponent's creatures, but you might block this way if your life total was low. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might block this way if you want to destroy one of your opponent's creatures and don't mind being dealt a little damage.

MAGIC THE GATHERING – CHEAT SHEET

TAPPING AND UNTAPPING

To tap a card is to turn it sideways to show that it has been used for the turn.

You do this when you use a land to make mana, when you attack with a creature, or when you activate an ability that has the tap symbol as part of the cost (means "tap this permanent"). When a card is tapped, you can't tap it again until it's been untapped (turned back upright). As your turn begins, during your untap step, untap your tapped cards so you can use them again.

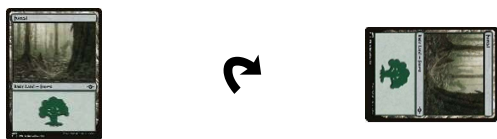
MANA AND CASTING SPELLS

Mana is the magical energy and resource used to cast spells and activate abilities. It is usually generated by tapping lands. There are five colors of mana in addition to colorless mana.



When you tap a basic land, one mana of that color is added to your Mana Pool, an imaginary "wallet" you can spend from until the end of the current phase in the turn.

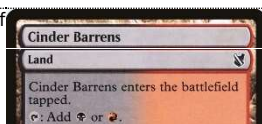
For example, tapping a Basic Forest Land will add to your Mana Pool.



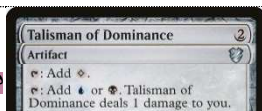
You have one untapped Basic Forest Land, and your Mana Pool is empty.

You have one tapped Basic Forest Land, and your Mana Pool has .

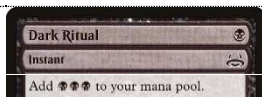
Some nonbasic lands let you have a choice of which type of mana you can tap it for, but usually with some sort of drawback. Cinder Barrens lets you add or . Its drawback is that it enters the battlefield tapped, making you wait until your next turn before it's useful.



Some non-land cards can be tapped to generate mana. The artifact Talisman of Dominance lets you choose to tap it to add to your Mana Pool or tap it to add or but with a small penalty of taking 1 damage.



Some spells can add mana directly to your mana pool. The instant Dark Ritual adds to your mana pool.



To cast a spell, you must pay its Mana Cost with mana in your Mana Pool.

Once a spell has been paid for and cast:

- If the spell is an instant or sorcery, it goes on **The Stack**, you follow the instructions on the card, and then you put the card into your graveyard.
- If the spell is a permanent (creature, artifact, enchantment, or planeswalker), it goes on **The Stack**, you put the card on the table in front of you. The card is now on the battlefield.

See "The Stack."

CASTING COST EXAMPLES

	Mana Value: 1
	This symbol means you need to pay one mana. This cannot be paid with any other kind of mana.
	Mana Value: 2
	These symbols mean you need to pay two mana. This cannot be paid with any other kind of mana.
	Mana Value: 3
	This symbol means you need to pay 3 of any kind of mana. That means , , , , , or .
	Mana Value: 2
	This symbol means you need to pay 1 of any kind of mana. That means , , , , , or .
	This symbol means you need to pay one mana. This cannot be paid with any other kind of mana.
	Mana Value: 5
	This symbol means you need to pay 2 of any kind of mana. That means , , , , , or .
	These symbols mean you need to pay three mana. This cannot be paid with any other kind of mana.
	Mana Value: 2
	This symbol means you need to pay one mana. This cannot be paid with any other kind of mana.
	This symbol means you need to pay one mana. This cannot be paid with any other kind of mana.
	Mana Value: 3
	This symbol means you need to pay 1 of any kind of mana. That means , , , , , or .
	This symbol means you need to pay one mana. This cannot be paid with any other kind of mana.
	This symbol means you need to pay one mana. This cannot be paid with any other kind of mana.
	Mana Value: 2
	These symbols mean you need to pay one of the following combinations of mana: , , , or .
	This symbol means you need to pay one mana. This cannot be paid with any other kind of mana.
	Mana Value: 5
	This symbol means you need to pay 3 of any kind of mana. That means , , , , , or .
	These symbols mean you need to pay one of the following combinations of mana: , , , or .

	Mana Value: 3
	This symbol means you need to pay 1 of any kind of mana. That means , , , , , or .
	Each Phyrexian Mana can be paid with either or 2 life. That means , and 2 life, or 4 life.
	Mana Value: 1
	This symbol means you need to pay which is mana from a snow source, e.g., a Snow-Covered Plains.
Example of a snow source:	
	Mana Value: 1 (Despite X)
	Some spells have X in the casting cost. You get to choose the number that X stands for.
	This symbol means you need to pay one mana. This cannot be paid with any other kind of mana
	Note: X is referenced in the ability.
Mana Paid	Resulting Effect
	You would target and destroy 0 artifacts, because X=0 and you only paid for the lone .
	You would target and destroy 2 artifacts, X=2, one for each mana after paying for the lone .
	You would target and destroy 4 artifacts, X=4, one for each mana after paying for the lone .
	Mana Value: 0
	You get to choose the number that X stands for.
	Note: X is referenced in the ability.
Mana Paid	Resulting Effect
	X=0. The creature would die due to having 0 +1/+1 counters on it, making its toughness 0.
	X=4. The creature would enter the battlefield with 4 +1/+1 counters and have power/toughness 4/4.
	Mana Value: 0
	You get to choose the number that X stands for and you must pay twice that number.
	Note that X is referenced in the ability.
Mana Paid	Resulting Effect
	X=0. The creature would die due to having 0 +1/+1 counters on it, making its toughness 0.
	X=1. The creature would enter the battlefield with 1 +1/+1 counter and have power/toughness 1/1.
	This is an illegal value for X. X must be an even number because you must pay twice that number.
	X=4. The creature would enter the battlefield with 4 +1/+1 counters and have power/toughness 4/4.

MAGIC THE GATHERING – CHEAT SHEET

YOU ARE A PLANESWALKER

You are one of the most powerful spellcasters in the Multiverse. Other planeswalkers will challenge you with arsenals of **spells** and legions of **creatures**. To emerge victorious, you must outwit them with weapons of your own. Those weapons are in your hands now. How you wield them will determine your **destiny**.

ABOUT THIS CHEAT SHEET

This Cheat Sheet is meant to be a supplemental learning tool and reference for players new to Magic the Gathering so they can glance at it during their turn. Rules, explanations, fonts, and images came from the following sources and are not owned by me:

- Magic Official Comprehensive Rules (Updated 11/18/2022)
- magic.wizards.com
- scryfall.com
- Game Night 2022 Rulebook
- 2014 Rulebook
- 9th Edition Rulebook
- MTG Wiki

Casey Warrer www.caseywarrer.com 12/24/2022

HOW TO PLAY

In Magic, you and at least one friend will each start the game with a deck of cards (called a library) and a life total. You will each cast spells and fight with creatures until life totals are reduced to 0 and one only player is left standing. There are multiple playstyles of Magic, but only two are covered on this cheat sheet.

Game Format	Library Size	Starting Life Total
Constructed	60+	20
Commander/EDH	100	40

At the start of the game, each player shuffles their library. Afterwards, other players may “cut the deck” and may shuffle the deck an additional time if they wish.

Each player then rolls a die until there is a winner with the highest roll. That player will go first. The turn order will move around the table clockwise.

Each player then draws 7 cards from the top of their library - but if you don't like your hand, you can take a **mulligan** to exchange it. It is usually recommended to mulligan if you have 2 or less land cards in your hand when you start the game.

See “**Mulligan Rules**.”

Once everyone is ready, the starting player begins their first turn. There are some gameplay differences depending on the number of players:

Number of Players	Gameplay Differences
2 Players	The starting player skips their first draw step to balance the advantage of going first.
3+ Players	Each player, including the starting player, draws a card on their first turn.

MULLIGAN RULES

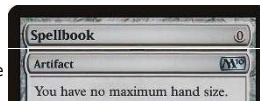
At the beginning of the game, after you draw your 7 cards, if you don't like your starting hand for any reason, you can take a mulligan. The choice to take a mulligan is made after the starting player is determined, but before doing anything else. To take a mulligan, shuffle your hand back into your library and draw a new hand of 7 cards. If you are satisfied with that hand, put one card from it on the bottom of your library. If not, you can take a mulligan as many times as you want, but you put one card on the bottom of your library for each mulligan you've taken this game.

In games with more than two players, the first mulligan for each player is “free”, meaning you don't have to put one card back. Below are some special mulligan considerations:

Game Setting	Game Format	2 Players	3+ Players
Official Games	Constructed	Standard mulligan	1 st mulligan is free
	Commander/EDH	Standard mulligan	1 st mulligan is free
Casual Games	Constructed	Standard mulligan	1 st mulligan is free
	Commander/EDH	1 st mulligan is free	1 st mulligan is free

GOLDEN RULES & MORE

When a card contradicts the rules of Magic, the card's rules win.



Example: You normally have a maximum hand size of 7 cards, but **Spellbook** lets you “break” that rule.

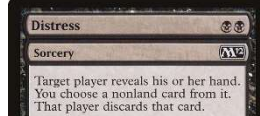
When a rule or effect allows something to happen, and another effect prohibits it, the prohibiting effect takes precedence.



Example: Even though **Vivien, Monsters' Advocate** allows you to cast creature spells from the top of your library, **Grafdigger's Cage's** ability prohibiting players from casting spells from libraries would take precedence.

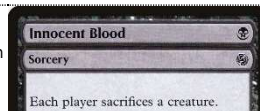


Any part of an instruction that's impossible to perform is ignored.



Example: You cast **Distress**, target an opponent, and then their hand is revealed. If their hand doesn't include any nonland cards for you to choose, you ignore the rest of the effects of the sorcery, and it is sent to the graveyard.

Any if multiple players would make choices and/or take actions at the same time, the active player makes their choices, then the next player in the turn order makes their choices, and so on.



Example: If **Innocent Blood** resolves, the active player makes their choice first, and then you go around the table for each other player to make their choices. After all players have made their choice, all creatures are sacrificed simultaneously.

COMMANDER RULES

Rule 0: These are the official rules. Your playgroup is welcome to modify them as you see fit. Get the approval of other players before the game begins.

Rule 1: Each player chooses a legendary creature as their commander for their deck. Some Planeswalkers are also legal if they say so on the card.

Rule 2: The cards in the deck must only be colors in the commander's color identity.

Rule 3: The deck must contain exactly 100 cards including the commander.

Rule 4: Except for basic lands, no two cards in the deck may have the same name. Some cards may have rules texts that overrides this restriction. (Singleton Format)

Rule 5: Players begin with 40 life.

Rule 6: At the beginning of a Commander game, your commander starts in the command zone, and while in the command zone, it may be cast by paying its casting cost in addition to “Commander Tax”, an additional 2 for each time that player has previously cast it from the command zone this game.

Rule 7: If a commander is put into its owner's graveyard, is exiled, or is returned to a player's hand or library from anywhere, that player may choose to put it into the command zone as a state-based action.

Rule 8: Being a commander is a property of the card for the entirety of the game, regardless of zone or control.

Rule 9: If a player has been dealt 21 points of combat damage by a particular Commander during the game, that player loses the game.

Rule 10: Abilities that bring cards you own from outside the game do not function in commander.

THE PLAY AREA

A game of Magic starts with only players' libraries and life counters on the table. The play area is divided into several game zones.

Library: Your library is your draw pile and remains facedown throughout the game. If you are forced to draw a card but cannot because your library is out of cards, you lose the game.

Hand: You start the game by drawing a hand of seven cards. The original hand you have when you start the game is called your “opening hand”. If you have more than seven cards in your hand as your turn ends, you must discard down to seven.

Battlefield: You and your opponents share the battlefield. Cards on the battlefield are called permanents and include lands, creatures, artifacts, enchantments, and planeswalkers. Instants and sorceries are never on the battlefield. You can arrange your permanents however you want, but your opponents must be able to see all of them. It is recommended to keep lands closest to you.

Graveyard: Each player has their own graveyard. Creatures and planeswalkers that die, sorceries and instants you cast, artifacts and enchantments that are destroyed, and cards you discard from your hand go here. Cards in your graveyard are always face up, and anyone can look at them at any time.

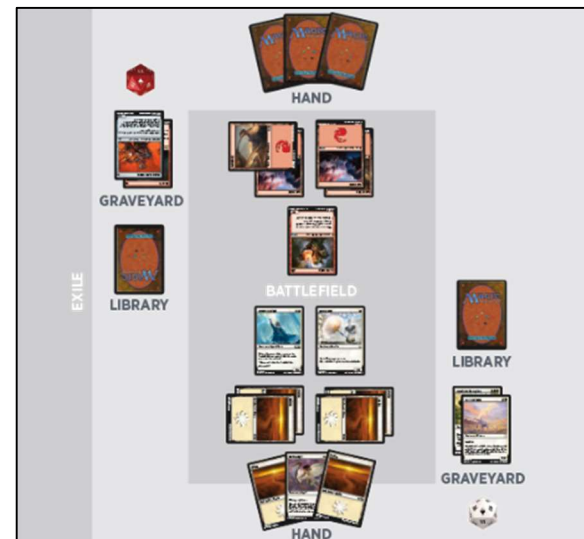
Exile: If a spell or ability exiles a card, that card is set apart from the rest of the game in the exile zone. Cards in exile are normally face-up. This is essentially a holding area for cards.

The Stack: The stack is the game zone where spells and abilities are put when they are played and where they wait to resolve. The stack system allows players to “respond” to the actions of other players before those actions take full effect.

See “**The Stack**.”

Command Zone: At the beginning of a Commander game, your commander starts in the command zone, and while in the command zone, it may be cast by paying its casting cost in addition to Commander Tax.

See Glossary for “**Commander Tax**.”



LEGEND RULE

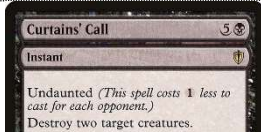
If a player controls two or more Legendary permanents with the same name, they must put all but one into their owner's graveyards.

MAGIC THE GATHERING – CHEAT SHEET

TARGETING

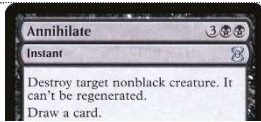
Some spells and abilities use the word “**target**” to describe something the spell or ability will affect.

You must choose all targets for a spell when you cast it, and for an ability when it triggers or when you activate it, and you can’t change your mind later. Opponents can respond to the spell with knowledge of the intended targets before it has any effect and targets may not be changed after seeing these responses.



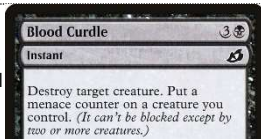
Example: You must choose both target creatures at the time of casting **Curtrains' Call**. If an opponent responds by making one of them indestructible, you can't take the spell back or change your mind about your targets.

Spells and abilities that require targets may only be played if valid targets can be chosen. If you can't meet the targeting requirements, you can't cast the spell or use the ability. If all targets are invalid, no part of the spell or ability has any effect, even if some parts of the spell or ability would've affected something other than the targets.



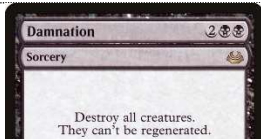
Example: You can't even begin to cast **Annihilate** if there are no nonblack creatures on the battlefield. You won't even be allowed to cast it to use it to draw a card.

A targeted spell will not resolve if its targets become invalid. When a spell resolves, it checks the targets to make sure they're still legal. If none are legal, the spell or ability is removed from the stack and does nothing at all. A spell or ability with at least one valid target remaining will still resolve, but any of its effects that related to invalid targets will not happen.



Example: **Blood Curdle** has you choose a target creature twice. If you targeted the same creature that you control, the spell would still resolve. It would destroy the creature and the second effect would “fizzle out.”

Targeting is always signified by the word “target” or another keyword that uses targets (such as equip or enchant). Damage, destroying, and choosing are not classified as targeting unless the word “target” appears.



Example: **Damnation** does not target any creatures, avoiding effects like Hexproof, Protection, Shroud, Ward, and more.

THE STACK

The stack is a game zone shared by all players where spells and abilities wait to resolve. Resolving a spell or ability simply means that its effect happens – but that doesn't happen right away! The stack gives players and opportunity to respond to one another's spells and abilities, making the game more interactive and fun.

When you cast a spell or ability, it goes on the stack. Triggered abilities also go on the stack. Spells and abilities remain on the stack until all players choose not to cast any new spells or activate any new abilities.

Each time you put a spell or ability on the stack, each other player has an opportunity to cast an instant spell or activate an activated ability in response, in turn order. If a player does respond with a spell or ability, or if something in the game has caused a triggered ability to trigger, that spell or ability goes on the stack on top of what was already waiting there. When all players pass, the spells and abilities on the stack begin to resolve.

Spells and abilities on the stack resolve on by one, beginning with the last one put on the stack. **The stack is LIFO: Last In, First Out.** After a spell or ability resolves, all players again get the change to respond. If no one does, the next thing waiting on the stack resolves. If the stack is empty when this happens, the current steps of the turn ends, and the game proceeds to the next step.

The following things **don't** go on the stack:

- If an ability produces mana, it doesn't go on the stack. You get the mana immediately.
- Static abilities don't go on the stack. They “turn on” as soon as the permanent with the ability comes into play.
- When you play a land, you just put it into play. Land cards aren't spells so they don't go on the stack.

Example 1: You own **Centaur Courser**, a 3/3 creature, and your opponent attempts to destroy it by dealing 3 damage with **Lightning Bolt**. When **Lightning Bolt** is on the stack, you respond with **Giant Growth**, an instant.

Giant Growth will make **Centaur Courser** become a 6/6 creature. **Lightning Bolt** will do three damage to **Centaur Courser**, which will now be 6/3, and will survive.



Example 2: Alternatively, if you cast **Giant Growth** first to pump up your **Centaur Courser**, an opponent can react to **Giant Growth** on the stack with **Lightning Bolt** targeting **Centaur Courser** as well, doing 3 damage, making it a 3/0 and sending it to the graveyard. Now, **Giant Growth** will fizzle out because the target is no longer valid and be sent to the graveyard from the stack as well.



SPECIAL GAME MECHANICS

Monarch: When a game starts, nobody is the monarch. Only one player at a time can be the monarch. The monarch has the following ability:

“At the beginning of the monarch's end step, draw a card. Whenever a creature deals combat damage to you, its controller becomes the monarch.”

If the monarch leaves the game, the turn player becomes the new monarch. If the turn player was the monarch, the next player in turn order becomes the new monarch.

Day/Night: When a game starts, it's neither day nor night. If it becomes day or night or if a daybound permanent enters the battlefield, track day/night for the rest of the game.

Day

- As it becomes day, transform all nightbound permanents.
- If a player casts no spells during their own turn, it becomes night next turn.

Night

- As it becomes night, transform all daybound permanents.
- Permanents enter the battlefield nightbound.
- If a player casts at least two spells during their own turn, it becomes day next turn.

Venture into the Dungeon: If you venture into the dungeon while you don't have any dungeons in the command zone you put the dungeon of your choice into the command zone and put a venture marker on the first room, at the top.

The next time you venture into the dungeon, you'll move to the next room by placing the marker on that room. When you enter a room, the room ability of that room triggers. After the final room ability resolves or otherwise leaves the stack, the dungeon is removed from the game. Removing it from the game results in you completing the dungeon. When you complete a dungeon, certain cards receive a bonus.

The next time you venture into the dungeon, you can choose the very same dungeon you were just in, or you can head into a new one.

Venture into The Undercity: If you're in a dungeon, advance to the next room. If you're not, enter Undercity.

Initiative: When a game starts, nobody has The Initiative. Only one player at a time can have The Initiative. The player with The Initiative has the following ability:

“Whenever one or more creatures a player controls deals combat damage to you, that player takes The Initiative.”

Whenever you take The Initiative and at the beginning of your upkeep, venture into Undercity. (If you're in a dungeon, advance to the next room. If you're not, enter Undercity. You can take the initiative even if you already have it.)”

If the player with The Initiative leaves the game, the turn player takes The Initiative. If the turn player had The Initiative, the next player in turn order takes The Initiative.

Adventure: Adventure spells are instants or sorceries that are on permanent spells. If an Adventure card is in your hand, you can do one of the following actions:

- You may cast the adventure spell from your hand for its adventure cost. If it resolves, the card will go to exile and be “on an adventure”. If it does not resolve for some reason (like due to a counter spell), it does not go to exile. For example, **Murderous Rider** has an adventure named **Swift End** that costs 1 that you can play from your hand. If it resolves, it will now be “on and adventure” in exile.
- You can cast the permanent spell and ignore the adventure spell. For example, **Murderous Rider** can be cast as a creature and **Swift End** will not be relevant at all.

The adventurer card can be cast as a creature while it's in exile “on an adventure.”

An adventurer card is a permanent card in every zone except the stack, as well as while on the stack if not cast as an Adventure. Ignore its alternative characteristics in those cases. While it's in your graveyard, **Murderous Rider** is a black creature card whose mana cost is 3 and can't be the target of anything targeting instants.



MAGIC THE GATHERING – CHEAT SHEET

QUICK GLOSSARY

KEYWORDS

Deathtouch: Any creature dealt any amount of damage by this creature is destroyed. Has no effect on players or planeswalkers.

Decayed: This creature can't block and when it attacks, sacrifice it at the end of combat.

Defender: This creature can't attack.

Double Strike: This creature deals First-Strike combat damage and normal combat damage.

First Strike: This creature deals combat damage before creatures without First Strike or Double Strike in an extra combat damage step before the normal combat damage step.

Fear: This creature can only be blocked by artifact creatures and/or black creatures.

Flash: This spell can be cast any time you could cast an instant.

Flying: This creature can only be blocked by creatures with Flying or Reach.

Goaded: This creature is forced to attack and to attack a player other than the player that caused it to be goaded.

Haste: This creature is not affected by summoning sickness.

Hexproof: This permanent or player cannot be the target of spells or abilities that an opponent controls.

Indestructible: This permanent can't be destroyed by damage or by effects that say "destroy," but it can still be put into the graveyard for other reasons, such as an effect that reduces its toughness to 0.

Landwalk: This creature can't be blocked if it's attacking a player that owns the specified type of land.

Lifelink: When this creature deals damage, you simultaneously gain that much life.

Menace: This creature can't be blocked except by two or more creatures.

Mentor: Whenever this creature attacks, put a +1/+1 counter on target attacking creature with power less than this creature.

Protection From [X]: Permanent or player cannot be damaged, enchanted, equipped, fortified, blocked, or targeted by [X].

Reach: This creature can block a creature with flying.

Shroud: This permanent or player cannot be the target of spells or abilities.

Vigilance: This creature doesn't become tapped when attacking.

COMMON COUNTERS

+1/+1 Counter: Increases a creature's power and toughness by one.

-1/-1 Counter: Reduces a creature's power and toughness by one.

Poison Counter: A player with 10 or more poison counters loses the game.

Shield Counter: Permanents with a Shield Counter gain "If this permanent would be destroyed as the result of an effect, instead remove a shield counter from it" and "If damage would be dealt to this permanent, prevent that damage and remove a shield counter from it."

Stun Counter: If a permanent with a Stun Counter would become untapped, instead remove a stun counter from it.

COMMON CARD TYPES

Aura: Type of enchantment that you attach to a player or permanent. When the permanent or player it's attached to leaves the battlefield, the Aura is sent to the graveyard.

Changeling: This object is every creature type everywhere, even outside the game.

Enchant: All Auras have this keyword ability, and it is always followed by the kind of object that the Aura can be attached to (for example, "enchant creature" or "enchant land"). When you cast the Aura, you must target that kind of permanent. When an ability of an Aura says, "enchant creature," it means "the creature the Aura is attached to."

Equipment / Equip [Cost]: A type of artifact that represents a weapon, armor, or other items that your creatures can use. Once an Equipment card is on the battlefield, you can pay it's equip cost to attach it to a creature you control any time you could play a sorcery.

- If the equipped creature leaves the battlefield, the Equipment "drops to the ground" and stays on the battlefield.

- You can move Equipment from one creature to another by paying it's equip cost.

Historic: Artifacts, Legendary spells, and Sagas are all Historic spells.

Legendary: A card supertype. A player may not control two or more legendary permanents with the same name.

ABILITIES AND COSTS

Blitz [Cost]: You may cast this card by paying [cost] rather than its mana cost. If this spell's Blitz cost was paid, sacrifice the permanent this spell becomes at the beginning of the next end step. As long as this permanent's Blitz cost was paid, it has haste and "When this permanent is put into a graveyard from the battlefield, draw a card."

Casualty [X]: As an additional cost to cast this spell, you may sacrifice a creature with power X or greater. When you cast this spell, if a casualty cost was paid for it, copy it. If the spell has any targets, you may choose new targets for the copy.

Connive: Draw a card, discard a card, and then put a +1/+1 counter on the creature this

creature if you discarded a non-land card this way.

Counter (a spell or ability): Countering a spell or ability causes it to have no effect. If a spell is countered, it's removed from the stack and put into its owner's graveyard. Once a spell or ability starts to resolve, it's too late to counter it. Lands aren't spells, so they can't be countered.

Cycling [cost]: Discard this card: Draw a card. Cycling is an ability that can be activated from your hand that happens at instant speed.

Disturb: You may cast this card transformed from your graveyard for its disturb cost. Eminence: Eminence abilities are triggered abilities that still trigger when a creature is in the command zone.

Exploit: When this creature enters the battlefield, you may sacrifice a creature.

Escape [Cost]: This creature can be cast from the graveyard rather for its Escape cost.

Flashback [Cost]: You may cast this card from your graveyard by paying [Cost] rather than paying its mana cost. If the flashback cost was paid, exile this card instead of putting it anywhere else any time it would leave the stack.

Goad: Target creature becomes Goaded until your next turn.

Investigate: Create a Clue token with the ability: "2, Sacrifice this artifact: Draw a card".

Kicker [Cost]: You may pay an additional [Cost] as you cast this spell. If a spell's controller declares the intention to pay any of that spell's kicker costs, that spell has been "kicked." **Multikicker [Cost]** lets you pay the additional cost multiple times.

Regenerate: The next time this permanent would be destroyed this turn, it isn't. Instead, tap it, remove all damage from it, and remove it from combat.

Riot: This creature enters the battlefield with your choice of a +1/+1 count or haste.

Scry [X]: Look at the top [X] cards of your library, then put any number of them on the bottom of your library in any order and rest on top of your library in any order.

Surveil [X]: Look at the top [X] cards of your library, then put any number of them into your graveyard and the rest on top of your library in any order.

Unearth [Cost]: Return this card from your graveyard to the battlefield. It gains haste.

Exile at the beginning of the next end step. If it would leave the battlefield, exile it instead of putting it anywhere else. Activate only as a sorcery.

KEYWORDS – GAME TERMS AND MECHANICS

★, ★/★: Some creatures' power and toughness are set by their abilities.

☞ (Tap): This ☞ symbol means "tap this permanent" (turn it sideways to show that it's been used). It appears in activation costs. You can't pay a tap cost if the card is already tapped, or if it's a creature with summoning sickness.

Additional Cost: Some spells have an additional cost to cast it and you must pay both the mana cost and its additional cost. If you can't pay the additional cost, you can't cast the spell.

Color Identity: A card's color identity is the combination of all colors its mana cost, any color indicator or color-setting characteristic-defining abilities on a card, and any mana symbols in the card's rules text. Mana symbols inside reminder text are ignored. Color identity also ignores colors when they are written as words. Cards which set the color of another object don't count towards their own color identity. Cards that have no colors following these rules have no color identity.

Colorless: Lands and most artifacts are colorless. Colorless is not a color. If something tells you to choose a color, you can't choose colorless.

Color: The five Magic colors are white, blue, black, red, and green. If a spell or ability tells you to choose a color, you must choose one of those five. A card's color is determined by its mana cost. For example, a color that costs 1♠ is blue, and a card that costs ♠* is both red and white.

Combat Damage: Damage done by a creature's power while they attack or block. Other types of damage are not combat damage, even if it's during the combat phase.

Commander: The central card of a commander deck which determines which other cards can be played in the deck by determining that deck's color identity.

- Commanders must be a legendary creature or a planeswalker that has an ability to allow it to be a commander. Two commanders are allowed if each has the partner ability or a similar ability.

- While in the command zone, it may be cast by paying its casting cost in addition to Commander Tax. ☞ See Glossary for "Commander Tax."

- If a commander is put into its owner's graveyard, is exiled, or is returned to a player's hand or library from anywhere, that player may choose to put it into the command zone as a state-based action.

- If a player has been dealt 21 points of combat damage by a particular commander, that player loses the game.

Commander Tax: An additional cost to the player casting it includes 2 for each time that player has previously cast it from the command zone.

Control: You control spells you cast, permanents that enter the battlefield on your side, and abilities that come from permanents you control. Only you can make decisions for things you control. If you control a permanent, only you can activate its activated abilities. Some spells and abilities let you gain control of a permanent, which usually means the card will move from their side to yours.

Controller: A spell or permanent's controller is the player who cast it unless another spell or ability changes who controls it.

Cost: A cost is something you have to pay to take most actions. You must pay a cost to cast a spell or activate an activated ability.

Counter (on a permanent): Counters are small markers (such as pebbles, dice, or cardboard markers) placed on an object or player to keep track of a number or attribute. Counters are removed from the game as soon as the permanent they are on changes zones (moves to a hand / library / graveyard / exile).

Damage: Damage reduces a player's life total and destroys creatures.

- Attacking and blocking creatures deal damage equal to their power.

- ☞ See Glossary for "Combat Damage."

- Some spells and abilities can also deal damage. Damage can be dealt only to creatures, planeswalkers, or players. Damage dealt to a player causes "loss of life" and is subtracted from the player's life total. If a creature is dealt damage equal to or greater than its toughness in a single turn, it is destroyed. Damage dealt beyond a creature's toughness is "excess damage."

Destroy: Destroyed permanents move from the battlefield to its owner's graveyard.

Discard: To take a card from your hand and put it into your graveyard. You get to choose which cards to discard unless it says otherwise.

Devotion: Devotion is a numerical value a player has, equal to the number of mana symbols of a certain color among the mana costs of permanents that player controls.

Draw: To take the top card of your library and put it into your hand. You draw one card during each your turns during the Draw Step. If a spell or ability lets you draw cards, it doesn't affect your normal draw for the turn. Putting cards into your hand counts as drawing them only if the spell or ability says "draw."

Enters The Battlefield: Some triggered abilities start with "When [this permanent] enters the battlefield, ..." When a permanent spell with an ability like this is successfully cast and is put onto the battlefield, the ability triggers right away. Some abilities also trigger when certain other permanents enter the battlefield.

Exile: Put the card into the Exile Zone. Exile is unaffected by Indestructible.

Fight: When you creatures fight, each deals damage equal to its power to the other.

Leaves The Battlefield: A permanent leaves the battlefield when it moves from the battlefield zone to any other zone (hand/library/graveyard/exile). If a card leaves the battlefield and later returns to the battlefield, it's like a brand-new card and doesn't

"remember" anything from the last time it was on the battlefield.

Mana Ability: An ability that generates mana. Mana abilities can be activated abilities or triggered abilities. Mana abilities don't go on the stack or wait to resolve – you simply get the mana immediately.

Mana Cost: Previously known as "casting cost". Mana Cost is equal to the default cost to cast a spell as defined on its card.

Mana Value: Previously known as "total casting cost" or "converted mana cost". Mana Value is equal to a card's Mana Cost ignoring colors. Cards without a mana cost, such as lands, have a mana value of 0.

Mill [X]: Put [X] cards from the top of your library into your graveyard.

Opponent: A person you're playing against is your opponent. If a card says, "an opponent," it means one of its controller's opponents.

Owner: The person who starts the game with a card in their deck is that card's owner. Even if your opponent gains control of one of your permanents, you're still its owner. The owner of a token is the player who controlled it when it entered the battlefield.

Permanent: A card or token on the battlefield. Permanents can be lands, creatures, artifacts, enchantments, or planeswalkers. Once a permanent is on the battlefield, it stays there until it is destroyed, exiled, sacrificed, or otherwise removed according to the game rules. You can't remove a permanent from the battlefield just because you want to, even if you control it.

Player: You and your opponents are all players. If a spell or ability lets you choose a player, you can choose yourself. You can't choose yourself if the spell or ability says, "an opponent."

Put onto the Battlefield: When a spell or ability tells you to put something onto the battlefield, you move that card into the battlefield zone. This is different than casting it – you just put it onto the battlefield without paying its costs.

Sacrifice: To move a permanent you control to its owner's graveyard.

Shuffle: Some cards will instruct you to shuffle. This is a keyword action that has you randomize the cards of your library, so that no one knows the order of its contents.

Source: Damage and abilities each come from a spell or permanent – the source of that damage or ability. Once an ability is on the stack, removing its source doesn't stop it from resolving.

Spell: All types of cards, except lands, are spells while you're casting them. For example, Angler Turtle is a creature card. While you're casting it, it's a creature spell, and when it resolves, it becomes a creature.

Reveal: To show a card to all players for a brief time.

Token: Some spells or abilities create permanents, and they are represented by tokens.

They can only exist on the battlefield and cease to exist once they leave and go to another zone (hand/library/graveyard/exile).

Trample: This creature deals excess combat damage to the player it's attacking, even if the creature is blocked.

X: When you see **X** in a cost, you get to choose the number that **X** stands for.

You: The word "you" on a spell or ability refers to the current controller of that spell or ability.