

**MAGIC**  
The Gathering®

**PORTAL™**



**RULEBOOK**

Play through  
the play guide first



Once you see how  
the game works, use  
this book to answer  
specific questions you  
might have.

# Contents

<b>Welcome to Magic: The Gathering®</b>	1
<b>Important Terms</b>	2
<b>Rules</b>	7
Attacking	7
Cleanup	9
Color	10
Creatures	10
Draw	11
Intercepting	12
Lands	13
Set Up	14
Summon Creatures and Sorceries	14
Turns	17
<b>Advanced Play</b>	19
Building Decks	19
Multiplayer Rules	21
Standard Magic	22
<b>Getting Help</b>	26

# Credits

**Design and Development:** Bill Rose, Dan Cervelli, and Joel Mick, with contributions from Mike Elliott, William Jockusch, Mark Rosewater, Henry Stern, and Jonathan Tweet

**Play Guide and Rulebook:** Jonathan Tweet

**Editing:** Darla A. Willis, with contributions by Britt Scott

**Flavor Text Design:** Pete Venters, Jonathan Tweet, and Darla A. Willis

**Project Coordination:** Paul Verner

**Card Art Direction:** Sue Ann Harkey

**Packaging Design:** Segal Communications, Inc., and Craig Wingking

**Production:** Jeremy Bills, Dave Hill, Karol Fuentes, Eric Nancarrow, Steve Nashem, Hans Reifenrath, Big “D” Scheffer, Jefferson M. Shelley, and Paul Allen Timm

**Print Coordination:** Tom Federline and Kathy Watkins

**Market Research:** Kyle Murray

**Playtest Assistance:** Jennifer Clarke Wilkes

**Brand Consultant:** Jeff Conrad

**Brand Manager:** Shirley Carlson

**Associate Brand Manager:** Mendy Lowe

**Magic: The Gathering** was designed by Richard Garfield, with contributions from Charlie Kuhlteenoe, Skaff Elias, Don Felice, Tom Fontaine, Jim Lin, Joel Mick, Chris Page, Dave Pettey, Barry “Bit” Reich, Bill Rose, and Elliott Segal. The original graphic design was done by Jesper Myrfors, Christopher Rush, and Lisa Stevens.

*Special thanks to all of our playtesters, project team members, and the many others too numerous to mention who have contributed to this product.*

*Very special thanks to Peter Adkison for recognizing good ideas while having them himself, and for recognizing good people while being one himself.*

©1997 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved. Illustrations may additionally be protected by separate copyrights. Wizards of the Coast, DECKMASTER, and **Magic: The Gathering** are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. *Portal*, the tap symbol (☞), the mana symbols (\*, ♠, ♣, ♡, ♠), the offense and defense symbols (♣/♠), and the pentagon of colors are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. U.S. and foreign patents pending.



Illus. D. Alexander Gregory

## Welcome to Magic: The Gathering®

The rules in this rulebook are arranged by topic so that you can look up any rule quickly during a game.

**Don't try to learn the game by reading straight through this booklet.** Instead, find a friend and play out the guided game that comes with this set. Alternatively, you can play through the guided game by yourself. In either case, you'll see how the game plays by example. You can then use this rulebook to remind you of the rules.

**Don't open the decks until you're ready to play through the guided game.** The guided game depends on the cards being in a particular order.

**This booklet has four sections:**

**Important Terms:** Look here for the meaning of a word or phrase on a card or in the rules.

**Rules:** Look here for the complete rules of play.

**Advanced Play:** Once you've learned how to play, look here for ideas on how to make new decks, how to play with more than two people, and how to use cards and rules from other Magic card sets.

**Getting Help:** Look here for how to contact us.

## Important Terms

**Ability** : Any *rules text* in a *creature's text box* defines that creature's ability or abilities. It's called an "ability" even if it makes the creature weaker. See p. 11.

**Attack** : When you attack, your *creatures* attempt to deal *damage* to your opponent. See p. 7.

**Black** : A *card* with ♠ ("black") in its *cost* is a black card. See p. 10.

**Blue** : A *card* with ♠ ("blue") in its *cost* is a blue card. See p. 10.

**Cards** : Every card is either a *land*, a *summon creature*, or a *sorcery*. The card type, listed below the art, tells you what kind of card it is.

**Cleanup** : The last part of a *turn*, when *nonlethal damage* to *creatures* is erased. See p. 9.

**Color** : There are five colors in **Magic** : *white, blue, black, red, and green*. See p. 10.

**Color Symbol** : The symbol that shows what *color* a *summon creature* or *sorcery* is, and therefore what type of *land* you must *tap* to pay its *cost* : \* (*white*) for plains; ♠ (*blue*) for islands; ♠ (*black*) for swamps; ♠ (*red*) for mountains; or ♠ (*green*) for forests.

**Cost** : The number and type of *lands* you must *tap* to play a *summon creature* or a *sorcery*. Every *summon creature* and *sorcery* shows its cost in the upper right corner of the *card*. See p. 14.

**Creature** : A *summon creature card* is a creature when it's *in play*. Only creatures have *offense* (♠) and *defense* (♠). See p. 10.

**Damage** : When a *creature attacks* or *intercepts*, it deals damage equal to its *offense*. Also, some *sorceries* deal damage to creatures or players (or both). A creature that takes damage equal to or more than its *defense* in one turn is *destroyed*.

**Deck**: The deck of **Magic cards** that you begin a game with and that you *draw* from. *Cards* in your deck are not *in play*. See p. 19.

**Defense**: The second number in the lower right corner of a *creature card*, indicating the amount of *damage* it takes to *destroy* that creature. A creature's defense has nothing to do with its ability to *intercept* (but everything to do with whether it survives a fight, whether it's intercepting or being intercepted). The shield symbol (♣) symbolizes defense. See p. 11.

**Destroy**: To put a *creature* or *land* into the *discard pile* from play. "Destroy" is different from "discard."

**Discard**: To put a *card* from your *hand* into the *discard pile*. "Discard" is different from "*destroy*." When you have to discard a card at random, mix up your hand and let your opponent pick the card without seeing the cards' faces.

**Discard Pile**: A pile of a player's used *cards*. *Sorceries* go to the player's discard pile after they are *played*. *Creatures* go to the player's discard pile when they take *lethal damage* or are *destroyed* some other way. Cards in your discard pile are not *in play*. **You can look through any player's discard pile at any time to help you remember what cards have already been played and discarded.**

**Draw**: To take the top *card* from your *deck* and put it in your *hand*. "Draw" can also mean a game in which neither player wins. See p. 11.

**Flavor Text**: Words in italics at the bottom of the *text box* are flavor text. Flavor text tells you something about the imaginary world in which the game of **Magic** takes place, but it has no effect on what the *card* can do.

**Forestwalk**: See **Landwalk**.

**Flying**: A *creature* with the *ability* flying can be *intercepted* only by other creatures with flying. Note that creatures with flying can still intercept "ground creatures" as normal.

**Green:** A *card* with ♣ (“green”) in its *cost* is a green card. See p. 10.

**Hand:** The *cards* you hold. Cards in your hand are not *in play*.

**In Play:** *Creatures* and *lands* that are face up in front of the players (and not in the *discard pile*) are in play. You can use lands and creatures only when they are in play. *Tapped* cards are still in play (even though they can’t be “used”).

**Intercept:** To “ambush” an *attacking creature*. See p. 12.

**Islandwalk:** See **Landwalk**.

**Land:** A *card* that you *tap* to pay for *summon creatures* and *sorceries*. See p. 13.

**Landwalk:** A *creature* with the *ability* landwalk can’t be *intercepted* if the defending player has any *lands* of the right kind *in play*. A creature won’t actually have an ability called “landwalk,” but rather will have “plainswalk,” “islandwalk,” “swampwalk,” “mountainwalk,” or “forestwalk.” For example, a creature with forestwalk can’t be intercepted at all if the defending player has any forests in play. The other forms of landwalk work similarly.

**Lethal Damage:** *Damage* to a *creature* that is enough to *destroy* it.

**Life Total:** Each player starts the game with 20 life. If a *creature* or *sorcery* deals you *damage*, deduct that amount from your life total. Some *cards* also specify that you lose or gain life when you *play* them. There’s no limit to how high your life total can go. If you drop to 0 life or less, you lose.

**Lose:** You lose if your *life total* drops to 0 or less or if you have to *draw* but don’t have any *cards* left in your *deck*.

**Mountainwalk:** See **Landwalk**.

**Nonlethal Damage:** *Damage* to a *creature* that isn’t enough to *destroy* it.

**Offense** : The first number in the lower right corner of a *creature card*. Offense is how much *damage* the creature deals in combat. The sword symbol (†) symbolizes offense. See p. 10.

**Owner**: The person who started the game with that *card*.

**Play**: To take a *card* from your *hand* and put it on the table. *See also In Play*.

**Red**: A *card* with ♣ (“red”) in its *cost* is a red card. See p. 10.

**Reminder Text** : Words in parentheses and italics after *rules text* are reminder text. They explain the rules without changing the effect of the card.

**Rules Text** : Bold words in a *card’s text box* that define any special rules or *abilities* associated with the card.

**Set Up**: You start with a *deck* of at least thirty-five *cards*, seven cards in your *hand*, and 20 life. See p. 14.

**Sorcery** : A *card* that produces an immediate effect and then is placed in your *discard pile*. See p. 16.

**Summon Creature** : A *card* that brings a *creature* into play to fight for you. See p. 15.

**Summoning Sickness** : A *creature* can’t *attack* the turn you *play* it because it has summoning sickness. It can still *intercept*. Each of your creatures has summoning sickness from the time it’s played until it starts your turn *in play*. A few creatures have an *ability* that allows them to *tap* to have an effect; these creatures can’t tap in this way while they have summoning sickness.

**Swampwalk** : *See Landwalk*.



**Tap:** To turn a *land* or *creature* sideways to show that it's being "used" until the beginning of your next *turn*. Lands are *tapped* when they pay for *sorceries* and *summon creatures*. Creatures are tapped when they *attack*. Some creatures have an *ability* that allows you to tap them to have a stated effect. Some *cards* can tap creatures (even if that creature isn't attacking).

**Tapped:** Tapped *lands* can't be used to pay for *summon creatures* or *sorceries*, and tapped *creatures* can't *attack* or *intercept*, but other than that, treat tapped and untapped *cards* exactly alike.





**Text Box:** The box on each *card* underneath the art. It might contain *rules text* (in **bold**), *reminder text* (in *italics* and parentheses) and *flavor text* (in *italics*).

**Turn:** A player's turn begins with that player *untapping* any *cards* he or she has that are *tapped* and ends with the player indicating he or she is done. Players take turns one after the other. See p. 17.

**Untap:** You untap all your *creatures* and *lands* at the beginning of your *turn*. Some *cards* make you untap cards at other times.

**White:** A *card* with \* ("white") in its *cost* is a white card. See p. 10.

**Win:** You win if your opponent's *life total* drops to 0 or less or if he or she has to *draw* but doesn't have any *cards* left in his or her *deck*.

**X:** Some *sorceries* have "x" in their *costs*. Each time you *play* the sorcery, you decide what x will be. For instance, Blaze has a cost of x  (pronounced "X plus red"). When you play Blaze, you can decide that x is 4. If you do, then treat it as if its cost were 4 . (That is, *tap* a mountain and four other *lands* to *play* it.) The effect of these sorceries depends on what x is. In the case of Blaze, it deals "x *damage*" to any one *creature* or player. If you pay 4  to play Blaze, you'll deal 4 damage. If you pay 1 , you'll deal 1 damage, and so on.

# Rules

## Attacking

When you attack, you try to damage your opponent with some or all of your creatures. (See also “Intercepting” on p. 12.)

### Attacking Rules to Remember

**Your creatures always attack your opponent, never your opponent’s creatures.**

**You never pay a creature’s cost to make it attack.** You pay the cost only when you play the creature.

**For each attacking creature, the defending player decides either to intercept it or to take damage from it.** The defending player handles the attacking creatures one at a time.

**The defending player may intercept an attacking creature with one or more creatures, but only with untapped creatures.** (In other words, interceptors may gang up on an attacker.) Each defending creature may intercept only one attacking creature. A creature with summoning sickness can intercept. (See also “Multiple Attackers and Multiple Interceptors” on p. 12.)

**An intercepted creature deals all its damage to the creature or creatures that intercepted it.** Even if its offense ( $\dagger$ ) is higher than the interceptor’s defense ( $\heartsuit$ ), the intercepted attacker deals no damage to the opponent.

### Attacking Strategy to Keep in Mind

Attack when you can deal damage to your opponent or destroy your opponent’s creatures.

### Complete Attacking Rules

**Your creatures may attack your opponent.** You can attack with as many creatures as you like, and they must attack all at the same time. Note that you attack your opponent—you can’t attack his or her creatures directly. Your creatures

fight your opponent's if and only if he or she chooses to intercept any of your attacking creatures.

**A creature can't attack the turn it's played** . Creatures that you brought into play this turn can't attack because they have summoning sickness.

**Tap the creatures that attack** . When declaring your attack, tap all of your attacking creatures. Tapping shows that the creatures are being "used up" until the beginning of your next turn.

*You don't pay the creature's cost when it attacks* . "Tapping a creature" means turning the creature card sideways, not tapping lands to pay its cost again.

**For each attacking creature, the defending player decides whether to intercept it or take damage from it** .

**In order to intercept an attacking creature, the defending player must declare one or more untapped creatures as interceptors** . Tapped creatures can't intercept. The defending player can declare more than one interceptor for a single attacking creature, but it only takes one creature to intercept an attacking creature, no matter how big the attacking creature is.

**A defending creature can't intercept more than one attacking creature** . Once the defending player has declared a creature as an interceptor, that creature can't intercept any other creatures that turn. This rule is why an intercepting creature doesn't take damage from more than one attacker. You never tap a creature to have it intercept.

**An attacking creature and the defending creatures that intercept it deal damage to each other** . The attacking creature deals its offense (†) in damage to any creature or creatures intercepting it. If there's more than one creature intercepting an attacker, the attacking player decides how to split the damage among the interceptors. Intercepting creatures each deal their offense in damage to the attacking creature they intercept. After all the damage has been dealt, any creature that's taken lethal damage (damage equal to or greater than its defense [⊙]) is sent to the discard pile.

**Intercepted creatures deal no damage to the opponent** . Intercepted creatures don't deal any damage to the defending player, even if they deal more than enough damage to their interceptors to destroy them.

**Unintercepted attacking creatures deal damage to the defending player** . If an attacking creature isn't intercepted, it deals damage equal to its offense (†) directly to the opponent.

**Once each attacking creature has been intercepted or has dealt damage to the defending player, the attack is over.**

*EXAMPLE ATTACK : Bill attacks with a Rowan Treefolk ( 3†/4⊙ ) and a Snapping Drake ( 3†/2⊙ , flying ). Ann has to deal with each attacker separately.*

*First, Ann intercepts the Snapping Drake with her Armored Pegasus ( 1†/2⊙ , flying ). Because the Pegasus is the only creature with flying that Ann has, it's the only creature that can intercept the Drake. The Drake destroys the Pegasus, the Pegasus deals 1 damage to the Drake (which survives), and Ann takes no damage herself (even though the Drake dealt more damage than it took to destroy the Pegasus).*

*Then Ann intercepts the Treefolk with her Grizzly Bears ( 2†/2⊙ ) and her Regal Unicorn ( 2†/3⊙ ). The Treefolk's offense is 3, so it can destroy either the Bears or the Unicorn, but not both. Bill decides to have the Treefolk destroy the Unicorn. The Unicorn and Bears together deal 4 damage to the Treefolk, destroying it.*

## Cleanup

**At the end of the turn, you take care of "cleanup."**

**Let your opponent know when you're done with your turn** . Very often, your opponent doesn't know when you're done. Your opponent might think that you're not doing anything because you're deciding whether to play a card.

**At the end of the turn, all nonlethal damage done to creatures goes away.** Damage doesn't build up from turn to turn, but it does build up over the

course of a single turn. If a creature takes some damage in combat and more from a sorcery on the same turn, that damage is added up to see whether the creature has been destroyed. If it hasn't, the damage is erased.

## Color

The five colors of **Magic** each represent a different type of magical power. Each color has distinct strengths and weaknesses, providing it with its own flavor and personality:

- ✱: **White** is the magic of light and order. Its strengths are small creatures and protection. White's enemies are black and red.
- ♠: **Blue** is the magic of mental energy and of air and water. It gives a wizard lots of flying creatures and plenty of tricky spells. Blue's enemies are red and green.
- ♣: **Black** is the magic of darkness and decay. It easily destroys creatures and can weaken an opponent's magic powers. Black's enemies are green and white.
- ♠: **Red** is the magic of chaos and the elements of earth and fire. Its chief strength is the ability to deal damage directly to creatures and opponents. Red's enemies are white and blue.
- ♣: **Green** is the magic of natural energy and growth. A wizard with green magic can summon large forest creatures and draw on the life energy of the woods. Green's enemies are blue and black.

## Creatures

**Once you play a summon creature card, it becomes a creature.** Creatures are the troops you use to attack your opponent or to intercept his or her attacking creatures. (See p. 15.)

**Once played, a creature stays in play turn after turn.**

**A creature's offense is the amount of damage it deals.** Every creature card has an offense and a defense rating in its lower right corner. The first number (♠) is its offense. (See p. 8.)

**A creature's defense is the amount of damage it takes to destroy it** . The second number (♠) in the lower right corner of a creature card is its defense. If a creature takes that much damage in a single turn, it's destroyed.

**Some creatures have special abilities** . These abilities are always listed in the creature's text box. (They're called abilities regardless of whether they make the creature better or worse.) Most special abilities, such as "can't attack" or "can't intercept," have clear meanings. Two special abilities, flying and landwalk, have their own rules, which are described on p. 3 and p. 4, respectively.

**Some abilities apply only when the creature is played, when it's destroyed, or when it attacks** . For example, Fire Imp reads "When Fire Imp comes into play from your hand, it deals 2 damage to any one creature." When the specified event happens, the ability automatically takes effect. For example, if you play Fire Imp, you *must* deal 2 damage to a creature, even if all the creatures in play are yours.

If the creature's ability takes effect when it attacks, that happens before the opponent declares interceptors. For instance, Seasoned Marshal reads, "If Seasoned Marshal attacks, you may choose to tap any one creature." You tap the creature before your opponent declares interceptors.

## Draw

**To draw means to take the top card of your deck and add it to your hand.** Usually you draw at the beginning of each turn, after untapping, but some sorceries cause you to draw again later in your turn.

**You automatically draw a card each turn** .

**If you're out of cards when you have to draw one, you lose** . When you draw your last card, you're still okay. You lose this way only if you have to draw and can't because you're out of cards.

## Intercepting

Intercepting means having one or more of your untapped creatures “ambush” an attacking creature.

### Intercepting Rules to Remember

**It's always up to the defending player to choose which creatures intercept which attackers.** Attacking creatures can never choose which defending creatures they fight, if any.

**Only untapped creatures can intercept.** Creatures with summoning sickness can intercept. An intercepting creature doesn't tap.

**A creature with a low defense ( ♡ ) can intercept a creature with a high offense ( † ).**

**An attacking creature and the creatures that intercept it deal damage to each other at the same time.** (It's great when you can intercept a creature and destroy it!)

**An intercepted attacker deals no damage to the defending player, no matter how high its offense is.**

See p. 7 for more rules on intercepting.

### Multiple Attackers and Multiple Interceptors

**The attacking player can attack with multiple creatures.** He or she must announce which creatures are attacking and tap them before the defending player has to make any decisions about intercepting. (It's often a good idea to attack with your biggest creatures or with the ones that are hardest to intercept.)

**The defending player handles each attacking creature one at a time, in any order that he or she likes.**

**For each attacking creature, the defending player decides either to intercept it or to “let it through” and take damage from it.** (It’s often better to take damage than to lose a creature.)

**The defending player can intercept an attacking creature with any number of creatures.** (You often want to “gang up” on big creatures in order to destroy them.)

**An attacking creature distributes its damage among the creatures that intercept it.**

If a creature intercepts an attacker, it can’t intercept any others. (This is why a defending creature doesn’t take damage from more than one attacking creature.)

**Remember, when several attackers are intercepted by several defenders, handle each attacking creature individually.** You can’t intercept a group of attackers at one time.

### **Intercepting Strategy**

Try to destroy your opponent’s attacking creatures. Your opponent’s creatures are vulnerable when they’re attacking because you get to decide which defenders intercept which attackers.

### **Lands**

**The cards that have a grayish background are lands.** Lands pay for your summon creatures and your sorceries.

**You may play one land each turn** . If you don’t have any lands in your hand, you can’t play any. If you have more than one land, you have to choose which one to play. You don’t have to play a land if you don’t want to, even if you have one in your hand.

**Lands stay in play** .

**You tap lands to pay for your summon creatures and your sorceries** .  
(See p. 14.)



## Set Up

**Each player starts with a deck of at least thirty-five cards, a hand of seven cards drawn from that deck, and 20 life** . Before play begins, each player shuffles his or her deck and offers it to the opponent, who may shuffle and cut it.

Players' hands are private.

**Optional: You can draw a new hand if you have all lands or no lands** .

As a friendly, optional rule, you can reshuffle your deck and draw a new hand if you draw either no lands or nothing but lands in your opening hand of seven cards. If you “take a mulligan” in this way, you must show your opponent your hand. In addition, your opponent then has the option to reshuffle his or her deck and draw a new hand as well (without showing you his or her hand first).

**The player who lost the last game goes first** . If you haven't played yet, flip a coin to see who goes first.

**If your opponent's life total drops to 0 or less, you win** .

**If your opponent is out of cards and has to draw, you win** .



## Summon Creatures and Sorceries





**Any card with a cost in its upper right corner is a summon creature or a sorcery.**

**You may play a summon creature or a sorcery if you can pay its cost** .

All summon creatures and sorceries require a certain amount of magical energy to play. You get this energy by tapping your lands. The more powerful a summon creature or a sorcery is, the more lands you usually have to tap to play it.

There are five different land types that pay for the summon creatures and sorceries of the five different colors. Each color has a color symbol that is found both in the text box of the land and in the cost of the summon creatures and sorceries associated with it. Plains pay for white spells (\*), islands for blue (♠), swamps for black (♣), mountains for red (⚔), and forests for green (♣). Notice that each land's color symbol is colored to match the color of the summon creatures and sorceries it can pay for.

**The number and type of lands required to play a summon creature or a sorcery make up its cost.** Each time a specific color symbol appears as part of the cost, it means that you need to tap one land of the appropriate type to play that card. Thus, a cost of “ ” can be paid only by tapping two mountains. Most costs also include a number, which can be paid with any type of land. The number shows how many other lands (of any type) you have to tap to pay the rest of the cost.

*EXAMPLE : To play a Raging Minotaur, which has a cost of 2   (“two plus red red”), you have to tap two mountains to pay  , plus two other lands of any type (including other mountains) to pay 2.*

**You may play summon creatures and sorceries before and after attacking.** You never have to play a summon creature or a sorcery. It’s always up to you.

## About Creatures

**Summon creatures become creatures.** When you play a summon creature, you’re magically creating a creature to fight for you. The summon creature card is used to represent the creature you’ve created, so when you play a summon creature, you simply put that card into play face up in front of you. Once you’ve summoned a creature, it stays in play and fights for you until it’s destroyed—you *don’t have to pay a creature’s cost make it attack*.

Every summon creature card has two numbers separated by a slash in its lower right corner. These two numbers represent the creature’s offense and defense, respectively. Offense is the amount of damage a creature deals when it attacks or intercepts. (See p. 8.) Defense is the amount of damage it takes, in any one turn, to destroy the creature. Any time a creature has taken damage equal to or exceeding its defense during a single turn, that creature is said to have taken lethal damage; it’s placed in its player’s discard pile.

**Whenever a creature comes into play, it has summoning sickness, which means that it can’t attack until your next turn.**

## About Sorceries

**Sorceries take effect instantly** . They go to the discard pile when played. Sorceries do a wide variety of things, including enhancing your creatures, harming your opponent's creatures, and harming your opponent directly.

**Playing a sorcery is very similar to playing a summon creature.** To play a sorcery, you must pay the required cost in tapped lands and make any necessary choices about the effect that the sorcery will have. Once you've paid the cost and made any choices, the sorcery generates its effect and is put into your discard pile.

**Sorceries affect only cards in play unless they specifically state otherwise—by referring to cards in a player's deck, hand, or discard pile, for example.**

*EXAMPLE : Time Ebb reads, "Return any one creature to the top of its owner's deck." This means that it can be played on any creature in play (including one of your own). If your opponent has Grizzly Bears, Hulking Goblin, and Devoted Hero in play, you can return any one of those creatures to the top of your opponent's deck, or you can return one of your own creatures to the top of your deck.*

**When a card's text contains the words "any one [or two, and so on] creature [or land, or what have you]," that sorcery can be played only if there is something or someone on which to play the card.** For instance, you can't play Time Ebb if there aren't any creatures in play. If a card affects the game without using the "any one" phrase, you can play it even if it has no effect.

*EXAMPLE : Steadfastness reads, "All your creatures get +0<sup>†</sup>/+3<sup>♠</sup> until the end of the turn." You may play Steadfastness even if you have no creatures in play. (Why would you want to play a card that has no effect? There are some cards that penalize you for having certain cards in your hand, so you might rarely want to play a card just to get it out of your hand.)*

**Sorceries that affect the size of creatures are written in a special format that follows the format used for a creature's offense and defense.** For example, the sorcery *Monstrous Growth* increases a single creature's offense by 4 and its defense by 4 until the end of the turn. It's written as "Any one creature gets +4  $\spadesuit$ /+4  $\heartsuit$  until the end of the turn."

**A few sorceries can be played on your opponent's turn.** The sorceries that you can play out of turn state in their rules text exactly when they can be played.

## Turns

Throughout the game, the players alternate taking turns. The following outline shows the basic turn structure.

- 1) **Untap:** Untap all your creatures and lands.
- 2) **Draw:** Draw a card from your deck.
- 3) **Land:** You may play a land, if you have any in your hand.
- 4) **Play cards:** You may play as many summon creatures and sorceries from your hand as you wish, as long as you can tap enough lands to pay for them.
- 5) **Attack:** You may attack your opponent with your creatures. This occurs in two steps, described below.

**Announce attackers** —You may attack your opponent with any or all of your creatures; however, creatures that have *summoning sickness* can't attack. You must announce all your attackers at one time. Attacking with a creature taps it. You don't have to attack (and sometimes it's a good idea not to).

Attacking creatures *always* attack your opponent; they *never* attack your opponent's creatures.

You *never* pay a creature's cost to make it attack; you pay a creature's cost *only* to play it in the first place.

**Declare interceptors** —For each attacking creature, the defending player decides whether to intercept the creature or take damage from it.

**Taking damage.** An attacker that the defending player doesn't intercept deals an amount of damage equal to its offense ( $\spadesuit$ ) to the defending player.

**Intercepting** To intercept an attacker, the defending player must declare one or more untapped creatures as interceptors; each untapped creature can intercept only a single attacker. The attacking creature and the creatures that intercept it fight each other. A creature's offense ( $\uparrow$ ) is the damage it deals out; a creature's defense ( $\heartsuit$ ) is the damage it takes to destroy it. An intercepted creature deals all its damage to the creature or creatures that intercept it; it doesn't deal any damage to the defending player (even if its offense [ $\uparrow$ ] is higher than the interceptors' defense [ $\heartsuit$ ]).

- 6) Play cards:** Both before and after attacking, you may play as many summon creatures and sorceries in your hand as you can afford.
- 7) Cleanup:** All nonlethal damage dealt to creatures during this turn is erased. This ends the turn.



Illus. Gerry Grace

# Advanced Play

## Building Decks

In *Magic*, half the game is playing your cards well. The other half of the game is choosing which cards to play with. This section is about building new decks to play with.

## Deckbuilding Rules

The rules for building your own *Portal* deck are very simple: Take at least thirty-five cards of your choice, of any type and color, and put them together. Leave the rest of your cards out. Now you have your deck.

Building a deck is simple. Building a *good* deck is a little trickier. That's what the rest of this section is about.

## Booster Packs

Additional *Portal* cards are sold in *Portal* booster packs. You can use these cards to improve your decks. (See p. 25 to read about other types of boosters.) A *Portal* booster pack contains the following cards:

- 1 strategy card
- 2 lands
- 5 theme cards
- 8 random cards

The strategy card describes a particular type of deck that you can build with cards from this starter set and that booster pack. There are five strategy cards, one for each of five different deck designs. (Of course, you can design your own decks however you like. These strategies are just suggestions.) You can't tell from the art on a booster pack what type of strategy card is inside.

The two land cards and the five theme cards support the kind of deck that the strategy cards describes. They're all good cards for a deck of that type.

The eight random cards are of all types and colors. Some (by chance) will work with the deck type on the strategy cards, but most won't. Don't put a card in your deck just because it showed up in a particular booster pack.

## Building a First Deck

To build a deck, first sort all your cards by color, including cards from booster packs. Make five piles, one with plains and white cards, one with islands and blue cards, and so on.

Next, choose a strategy card from a booster. The strategy card explains how to build a thirty-five-card deck from cards in two colors. (You have more than thirty-five cards in those two colors combined, so leave some cards out.)

## Building a Second Deck

If your opponent doesn't own his or her own Magic cards, you need to provide him or her with a deck from your own cards.

If the two colors on a strategy card you have don't overlap the two colors in the first player's deck, build the second deck as the strategy card instructs.

If you need to build a second deck without a strategy card, simply choose two of the remaining colors and follow these guidelines:

- ♣ If you have six lands for a particular color, the deck should include nine cards of that color.
- ♣ If you have seven lands for a particular color, the deck should contain ten or eleven cards of that color.
- ♣ If you have more than seven lands for a particular color, use just seven of them, plus ten or eleven cards of the appropriate color.

Built this way, a deck may fall short of the thirty-five card minimum, but don't worry about that until you have enough cards to make two thirty-five cards decks with two colors each.

Now you have two decks to play against each other. You can sort the cards again and start over any time you like.

## Building More Decks

The more cards you get, the more options you have for building decks. You can build one-color decks, three-color decks, or two-color decks not found on a strategy card. (You can try four- and five-color decks, too, but it's harder to make them work.) You might want several decks, each with a different strategy. Every time you get more booster packs, you can replace some of your old cards with the new cards or rebuild your decks completely.

## Sharing Cards

Instead of having decks assembled ahead of time, you can build decks just before you play. Here are two ways to do that.

**Prebuilt Minidecks** : You make five “minidecks,” one for each color. A minideck has six lands and eight summon creatures and sorceries. (You usually want more summon creatures than sorceries.) Set aside cards that aren’t included in the minidecks.

At the start of play, one player chooses one color, then the other player chooses two colors, then the first player choose one more. The two players split the fifth color, with each player getting three lands and four random summon creatures and sorceries. This system gives each player a three-color, thirty-five-card deck, and there are thirty different ways to split up the colors.

If you have enough cards, you can make minidecks of seven lands and eleven other cards each. In this case, each player gets two colors, with the fifth color left out. This system gives each player a two-color, thirty-six-card deck.

**Color Draft** : If you have a lot of cards in each color, you can play color draft. Divide all the cards up by color. One player chooses a color, then the other chooses two colors, then the first player chooses one more. Leave the fifth color out.

Now each player builds a deck from the colors they’ve “drafted.” You can play several games against each other, replacing cards from your chosen colors each time.

## Multiplayer Rules

Sometimes you’ll want to play **Magic** with more than two players. Here’s a simple way to play with several people.

Every player has his or her own deck, just as in two-player **Magic** (so you’ll need more cards than come in this starter set).

The player to your left is your opponent. When the rules refer to your “opponent,” that’s the person they mean. Thus, when your creatures attack, they attack the player on your left. Also, because *Lava Axe* says it deals damage to “your opponent,” it deals damage to the player on your left.



When your opponent is defeated, he or she is out of the game. You gain 5 life and earn 1 “victory point.” The defeated player’s opponent becomes your opponent.

When only one player is left, the player with the most victory points is the winner, even if that player was defeated earlier. (If players tie, the one who lasted longest wins.)

Some cards don’t work well in multiplayer games, but most work just fine.

## Standard Magic

There are several lines of **Magic** cards, and *Portal* is one of them. This section tells you something about the other kinds of **Magic** cards. Your *Portal* cards are compatible with other **Magic** cards, but you’ll need to know a few extra rules in order to play with players who have cards from the other lines.

### Types of Magic Cards

The “standard” line of **Magic** cards is simply called “**Magic: The Gathering**” and is identified by what edition is in print. So if you hear players saying that they have “*Fifth Edition*<sup>TM</sup> cards,” that means cards from the fifth edition of the standard **Magic** line. The most current edition in print is also called the “basic set” of **Magic**.

In addition to the standard line, there are expansion sets. An expansion set has a name associated with it to identify that set, such as *Mirage*<sup>TM</sup> or *Visions*<sup>TM</sup>. (*Portal* is essentially an expansion itself.) Cards from expansions tend to be more complex than cards from the standard line. (*Portal* is the exception to this rule.)

### Standard Magic Rules

When playing standard **Magic**, certain new rules apply. At your option, you can apply these rules when you play with your *Portal* cards. When you play people who are used to playing standard **Magic**, they’ll expect you to follow these rules.

**Deck Size and Content:** In standard **Magic**, a deck must include at least forty cards. If you have a thirty-five-card deck, add two lands and three other cards, and you’ll be set.

Many players use “tournament-legal” decks when they play. A tournament-legal deck follows certain rules for what it can and must contain. The basic rules

for making a tournament-legal deck are that it must have at least sixty cards and that it can't have more than four of any card (except for plains, islands, swamps, mountains, and forests). Some players will expect you to play with such a deck. To build a sixty-card deck, try about twenty-four lands and thirty-six other cards.

Tournament-legal decks follow some other rules as to which cards are banned from official tournaments and which cards are restricted to one per deck. If you're using just *Portal* cards, this shouldn't be a problem. If you're using cards from other sets, too, then you might want to talk to other players about making your deck tournament legal.

**Declaring Interceptors (Blockers):** Instead of dealing with each attacking creature individually, the defending player must declare all interceptors (called "blockers" in standard *Magic*) at one time. After that, you resolve the various fights. All damage is considered to be simultaneous (even if you actually resolve each fight one at a time). The defending player needs to declare interceptors all at once and then resolve damage all at once because in standard *Magic* there are many cards that can affect combat after blockers are declared and before damage is dealt.

**Discard Phase:** At the end of your turn, if you have more than seven cards in your hand, you need to discard cards of your choice until you have only seven left. You can have any number of cards in your hand during your turn and during your opponent's turn. It's only at the end of your turn that you have to drop your hand size to seven.

**Play or Draw:** The player who goes first doesn't draw a card on his or her first turn. That way one player gets to play first and the other gets to draw first, thus making the game fairer. Whoever lost the last game gets to decide whether to play first or draw first.

**Losing** A player doesn't lose immediately when his or her life total drops to 0 or less. Instead, the player stays in the game until the end of a "phase" or the beginning or end of a turn. ("Phases" are the parts of a turn, during which you can do some things but not others. You untap your cards during your "untap phase," for instance.) This rule means that even if a player's life total is less

than 1, he or she may be able to play a card or use the effect of a card in play to get his or her life total back to 1 or higher.

**New Cards:** Standard **Magic** has new types of cards, new abilities for creatures, different types of lands, and so on. Someone using standard cards is going to be able to do things you can't do with *Portal* cards.

## New Terms

Standard **Magic** uses different terms for many of the concepts you've learned for *Portal*.

Some of the new terms represent new concepts. You'll need to look these terms up in a standard rulebook or ask a more experienced player what they mean. Lots of terms, however, are simply different names for things you already know.

**Block** means "intercept."

**Casting Cost** means "cost." In standard **Magic**, there are types of costs other than the cost to play a card.

**Deck** means the whole set of cards you're playing with. The stack of cards you draw from is called your *library*. You can say, "I have eight swamps in my *deck*, I've played two of them, and I have one in my hand, so there must be five left in my *library*."

**Graveyard** means "discard pile."

**Library** means "deck," the stack of cards you draw from.

**Permanent** means any card that stays in play (such as a creature or land).

**Power** means "offense." In standard **Magic**, there's no special symbol (such as ⚡) to identify power.

**Spell** means any card besides a land.

**Summon** means to play a summon creature card.

**Target** means roughly "any one [or two, or however many is appropriate]." The standard Stone Rain card says "Destroy target land," and "target land" means "any one land." "Target creature" means "any one creature." "Target nonblack creature" means "any one creature that's not black."

**Toughness** means "defense." In standard **Magic**, there's no special symbol (such as ♣) to identify toughness.

**Wall** means a creature whose “summon line” says “Summon Wall.” In standard **Magic**, creature cards have different phrases on their summon lines, with the phrase indicating the type of creature they summon. A creature that says “Summon Wall” is a Wall. Walls have a special rule associated with them: they can’t attack. In addition, certain cards help or hurt Walls, but not other creatures.

♣ means “tap.” This symbol means that you need to tap a card to create the described effect.

## Translating Portal Cards to Standard Magic

When playing **Magic** with someone who doesn’t know the terms used in *Portal*, you can refer to this list.

**Any one** [or two, or however many is appropriate] refers to “targeting.” When a card refers to “any one” of something, its effect is “targeted.”

**Cost** means “casting cost.”

**Deck** means “library.”

**Defense** means “toughness.”

**Destroy** means “bury” when a creature destroys itself or when a card specifically destroys one of your own creatures.

**Discard pile** means “graveyard.”

**Intercept** means “block.”

**Offense** means “power.”

**Your opponent** means “target opponent.”

## Standard Magic Cards For Your Decks

The best non-*Portal* cards to add to your *Portal* decks are from the standard line of **Magic: The Gathering** cards. First, buy a deck. Decks come with rule-books, so you’ll be able to look up all the new terms you see on your new cards. After that, you can just buy booster packs.

You can also get cards from the standard line and other sets by trading with **Magic** players. Trading has the added advantage that it puts you face-to-face with players who can explain how the cards work.

Remember that card sets with titles (such as *Mirage* or *Visions*) are more complex than cards from the basic set. Don’t add cards from other expansions to your decks until you’ve learned the new rules for cards from the standard line.

## Getting Help

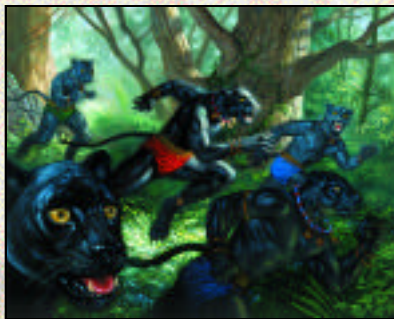
**Our customer service line is (206) 624-0933.** Feel free to call with quick rules questions between 8 A.M. and 9 P.M.(PST), Monday through Saturday. Just ask to speak to a customer service rep! You can also write to Wizards of the Coast, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, attn: Magic Customer Service. If you have rules questions or requests for information email us at <[questions@wizards.com](mailto:questions@wizards.com)>. If you have general comments, including any regarding damaged product, email us at <[custserv@wizards.com](mailto:custserv@wizards.com)>.

In the UK call 0345-125599, email <[uk@wizards.com](mailto:uk@wizards.com)>, or write Wizards of the Coast UK Ltd., P.O. Box 1562, Glasgow, G2 8BW, SCOTLAND, attn: Magic Customer Service.

In France call +33-1-43-96-35-65 or write Wizards of the Coast, France, BP 103, 94222 Charenton Cedex, FRANCE, attn: Magic Customer Service.

In other European countries call +32-14-44-30-44, fax +32-14-44-30-88, email <[custserv@wizards.be](mailto:custserv@wizards.be)>, or write Wizards of the Coast, Belgium, P.B. Box 34, 2300 Turnhout, BELGIUM, attn: Magic Customer Service. You can also send email or postal mail to our UK office.

**Don't miss our World Wide Web page!**  
<http://www.wizards.com>



Illus. Eric Peterson