

Deckbuilding Basics

Kevin: I'm glad we got 35 decks built

Tom: I'm glad I got this powerpoint done

Kevin: I'm glad I have my voice back

Tom: I'm glad you write these silly conversations

Black Lotus

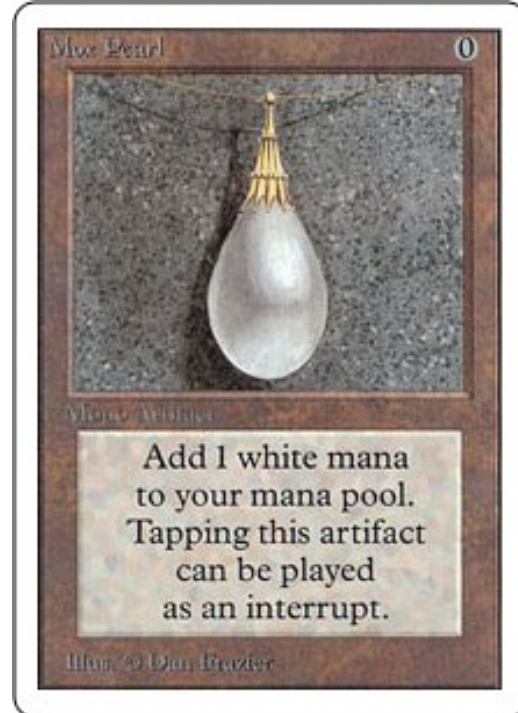
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Mythic Artifact

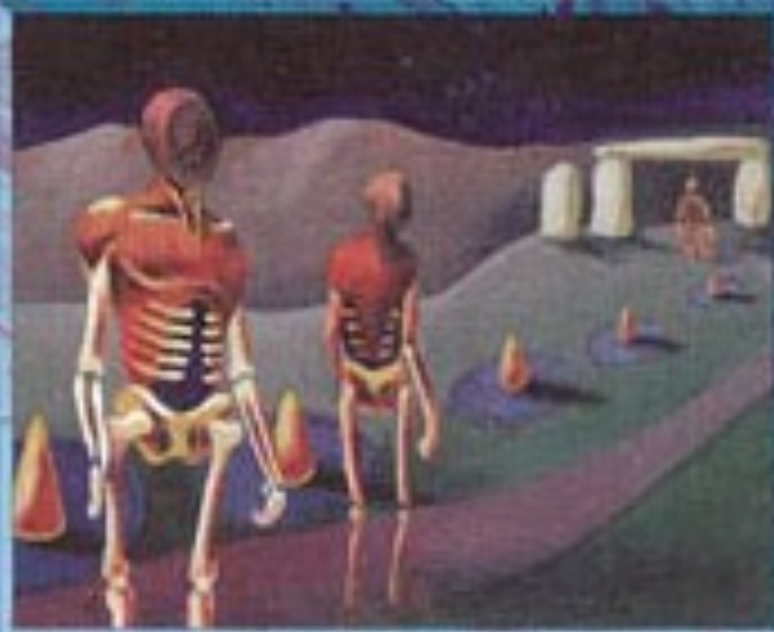
Adds 3 mana of any single color of your choice to your mana pool, then is discarded. Tapping this artifact can be played as an interrupt.

Illus. © Christopher Rush



Time Walk

1



Duration

Take an extra turn
after this one.

Illus. © Amy Weber

Timetwister

2



Sorcery

Set Timetwister aside in a new graveyard pile. Shuffle your hand, library, and graveyard together into a new library and draw a new hand of seven cards, leaving all cards in play where they are; opponent must do the same.

Illus. © Mark Pedin

Ancestral Recall

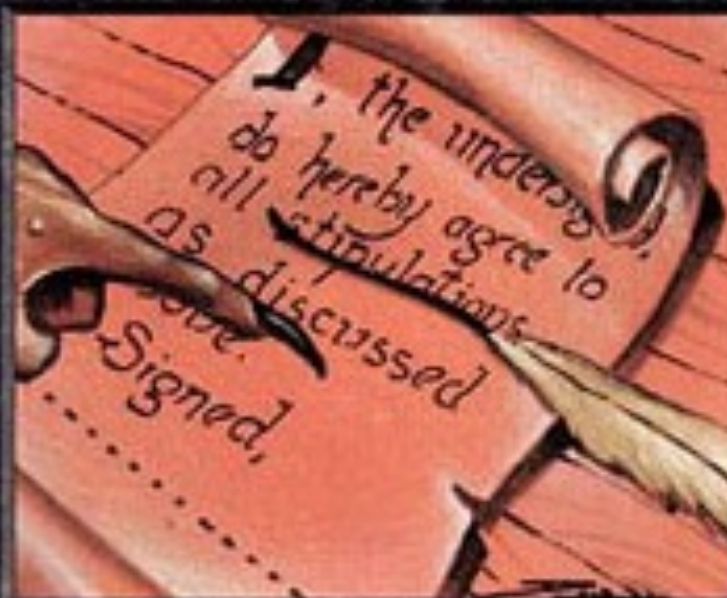


Instant

Draw 3 cards or
force opponent
to draw 3 cards.

Illus. © Mark Poole

Contract from Below



Sorcery

Discard your current hand and draw eight new cards, adding the first drawn to your ante. Remove this card from your deck before playing if you are not playing for ante.

Illus. © Douglas Shuler

Basic Rules

- No less than 60 cards for constructed decks
- No more than 4 of any one card, with the exception of basic lands
 - Or this



Basic Rules

- No less than 60 cards for constructed decks
- No more than 4 of any one card, with the exception of basic lands
- Other Rules dictated by the format
- Formats include Standard, Extended, Legacy, Vintage, Two-Headed Giant, EDH, Type 4, etc

Banned/Restricted

- Banned cards can't be played in a deck if it is banned in that format
- Decks can only have at most 1 copy of restricted cards in the deck
- In our environment any cards not given by us are banned and no cards are restricted

Terms

- Burn
- Bounce
- Counter
- Board Sweeper
 - “Wrath” effect



3 Basic Deck Types

- Aggro
- Combo
- Control



Aggro

- Fast aggressive creatures or spells
- Deal damage quickly
- Tempo is very important
- Seeks to defeat your opponent before they can complete their game plan

B/R Aggro

Cody Stringer, top 8 at PTQ Austin in San Antonio, Standard

4 Dragonskull Summit
3 Graven Cairns
12 Mountain
4 Swamp

4 Anathemancer
4 Boggart Ram-Gang
4 Demigod of Revenge
4 Figure of Destiny
4 Hellspark Elemental

2 Banefire
4 Flame Javelin
4 Lightning Bolt
3 Magma Spray
4 Volcanic Fallout



Combo

- Usually a few cards with good synergy
- Can race against aggro, but will more often lose to control
- Goal is to get a certain combination of cards on the board that should either
 - Win immediately
 - Lock out your opponent

Channel



Sorcery

Until end of turn, you may add colorless mana to your mana pool at a cost of 1 life per one mana. Play these additions as interrupts. Effects that prevent or redirect damage cannot be used to counter this loss of life.

Illus. Richard Thomas

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Fireball



Sorcery



Fireball deals X damage divided evenly, rounded down, among any number of target creatures and/or players.

Fireball costs **1** more to cast for each target beyond the first.

— Dave Dorman

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Cascade Swans

Joel Calafell, top 8 at Grand Prix Barcelona, Standard

41 Lands (of various types)

4 Bloodbraid Elf

4 Swans of Bryn Argoll

4 Seismic Assault

1 Primal Command

2 Captured Sunlight

2 Bituminous Blast

2 Ad Nauseam



+



= massive card drawing

Control

- Seeks to “control” board position to stop opponent’s plan
 - Wants to “stabilize” the board
- Typically has a “finisher” to actually win
- Usually puts focus on card advantage and tries to slow opponents tempo
- Often play style is “draw-go”

5 Color Control

Gabriel Nassif, 1st at PT Kyoto Standard

27 Lands (amazing, amazing mana base)

- 3 Wall of Reverence
- 1 Celestial Purge
- 4 Volcanic Fallout
- 4 Mulldrifter
- 4 Broken Ambitions
- 4 Cryptic Command
- 3 Broodmate Dragon
- 2 Cruel Ultimatum
- 4 Esper Charm
- 3 Plumeveil
- 1 Pithing Needle
- 1 Terror



What is Card Advantage?

- Card advantage is the idea of having more cards than your opponent
- Can exist either by
 - Drawing more cards
 - Removing opponent's cards
- More cards means you have more options and if you're drawing cards it means a better chance at getting what you need.

Cards that generate card advantage



Cards that generate card advantage



Cards that generate card advantage



Cards that generate card advantage



Why hate on enchant creatures?



Tempo

- Tempo is a measure of board position and a race against the opponent
- Dead turns, where you have nothing to play, are bad for tempo
- Cards like Unsummon can be good if you use it to bounce an opponents creature while strengthening your board position

Cards that generate tempo



Cards that generate tempo



Card Advantage v. Tempo

- Card advantage and tempo generally work in opposition
- Why?
- Card advantage usually sacrifices tempo
- Tempo usually requires using cards

Let's look again...



Let's look again...



But not always...



Aggro & Card Adv & Tempo

- Aggro wants to set a fast tempo
 - can accept loss of card advantage



Control & Card Adv & Tempo

- Control wants to control the tempo
 - Often depends on card advantage to gain incremental advantage



Combo & Card Adv & Tempo

- Combo is whatever goes
 - Will sacrifice card advantage to gain tempo and “go off”
 - May also attempt to gain massive card advantage to find the pieces to “go off”

Mana Curve

- The mana curve of a deck is how many cards of each mana cost you have.
- The higher the mana curve the more lands or acceleration needed in a deck
- Usually 20-24 lands in a deck

Mana Acceleration



Rating Cards

- Some tips on judging cards

Squire

1 ✪



Creature — Human Soldier



*“Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe.
And wonderly delyvere, and of greeete
strengthe.”*

—Geoffrey Chaucer,
The Canterbury Tales

Illus. Dennis Detwiller

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1/2

Glory Seeker



Creature — Human Soldier



The turning of the tide always begins with one soldier's decision to head back into the fray.

— Dave Dorman

2/2

Savannah Lions



Creature — Cat



*Even the brave are scared by a lion
three times: first by its tracks, again by
its roar, and one last time face to face.
—Somali proverb*

Carl Critchlow

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2/1

Shock



Instant



Shock deals 2 damage to target creature or player.

Lightning Bolt



Instant





Lightning Bolt deals 3 damage to target creature or player.

The sparkmage shrieked, calling on the rage of the storms of his youth. To his surprise, the sky responded with a fierce energy he'd never thought to see again.

— Christopher Moeller

Infest

1  



Sorcery



All creatures get -2/-2 until end of turn.



"This is why we don't go out in banewasp weather."

—Rannon, Vithian holdout

Karl Kopinski

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Hideous Laughter




2  



Instant — Arcane



All creatures get -2/-2 until end of turn.

Splice onto Arcane    (As you play an Arcane spell, you may reveal this card from your hand and pay its splice cost. If you do, add this card's effects to that spell.)

Greg Staples

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Mana Leak



Instant



Counter target spell unless its controller pays 3.

The fatal flaw in every plan is the assumption that you know more than your enemy.

— Christopher Rush

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Counterspell



Instant



Counter target spell.

The pyromancer summoned up her mightiest onslaught of fire and rage. Jace feigned interest.

— Jason Chan

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Stormfront Pegasus

1 



Creature — Pegasus




Flying

"At summer's end, the pegasus herd stampedes across the sky. Their silent footfalls taunt the clouds and bid the rains to come."

—Stormfront fable

2/1

rk post

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Kelinore Bat

2 



Creature — Bat



Flying

The nesting bats of Kelinore sleep soundly while the sun passes, nestled among their grisly collections.

2/1

 Dave Kendall

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Tarmogoyf

1



Creature — Lhurgoyf

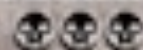
Tarmogoyf's power is equal to the number of card types among cards in all graveyards and its toughness is equal to that number plus 1.
(The card types are artifact, creature, enchantment, instant, land, planeswalker, sorcery, and tribal.)

— Justin Murray

★/1★

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Necropotence



Enchantment



Skip your draw step.

Whenever you discard a card, exile that card from your graveyard.

Pay 1 life: Exile the top card of your library face down. Put that card into your hand at the beginning of your next end step.

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Picking a Deck to Build

- Find a theme you want to use
- Search through card databases to get an idea what's out there.
- Test test test!

Playtesting

- Playing your deck against different kinds of decks.
- Do you wind up with too many lands all the time? Cards you never play?

Sideboards

- Exactly 15 or 0 card sideboard
- Typically include cards for specific matchups
 - ex. artifact hate, like naturalize
- Only be 4 of any particular card between both the sideboard and the deck
- Cards must be switched 1-for-1 between matches in a round