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# THE ORIGINAL MAGIC RULEBOOK

Posted in **Feature** on December 25, 2004



By John Carter

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*This week, for that holiday nostalgia fix, please enjoy this transcription of the original rulebook (Alpha edition, with some Beta updates intermixed) that came with **Magic: the Gathering**. I hope you have as much fun reading this as I did – we've come a long way!*



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## Introduction

Worzel felt the telltale prickling at the back of her neck; her domain was being challenged! *It's someone old*, she thought. *Someone I know... Thomil!* It had been a long time since he had challenged her. Quickly, she called her vassals into action. She would need much mana for this duel, much indeed.

The last time Worzel fought with Thomil, he had focused on the destructive magic of the mountains. It had been a close fight; she still saw in her nightmares the brigade of firebreathers that had pushed her to the brink of submission. Since then, Worzel had learned from a specialist in white magic that there were ways to protect herself from the raw force Thomil loved. Unfortunately, the white magician had been unwilling to part with the knowledge in exchange for her offered artifact; she had been forced to coerce it out of him in other, more violent ways. It took a while, but

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the ether were preventing her from making the necessary psychic bonds to any of those lands. She had precious little to draw on in the first place,

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so it could take a while before she managed to get a link to the plains. *Just having the knowledge to protect yourself isn't enough, she thought. Well, let's see if I can't stall him with my friends of the forest in the meantime.*

Worzel resisted the temptation to invest herself in blue magic, in case the rumor that Thomil had taken to raising serpents had any truth. Now she began to regret the loss of the Glasses of Urza, which might have given her some clue where the focus of his attack would be.

Thomil countered her creatures with a legion of undead. *Black magic, she thought. Thomil! I wouldn't have expected that from you.* Thomil had always enjoyed displays of pure power, but she had regarded him as a relatively clean fighter. *At least, cleaner than most.*

A sudden sense of horror came over Worzel as she felt a large drain on the mana plane— an *enormous* drain, accompanied by a stink of sulfur and the grave. Something big was coming.

*Learned some new tricks since we last met, eh?* muttered Worzel, under her breath. *Well, so have I, dear Thomil, so have I.*

It was going to be a tough fight.

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### ***Playing Your First Game***

You've just bought your first two decks of *Magic: The Gathering*, and you're ready to play. You should probably read through the rules first, and then come back to this page. Most of the basic information you need to play the game is right here. Page numbers in parentheses tell you where to go for more information on each topic.

You begin the game by shuffling your deck. Then, cut your opponent's deck, and turn over the top card as ante (p.7). Draw seven cards from your own deck for your hand, and determine who goes first (p. 7).

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Now, see if you can play any other cards in your hand. Compare the casting cost (p.14) to the mana you can draw from your lands in play (p.13). If you can play an appropriate card, tap your land (pp.9-10) and put the card you're casting onto the table.

Generally, it's a good idea to summon creatures (p.21) as soon as you can. Once you summon a creature, you have to wait a turn before you can attack with it. You can also play any artifacts (pp.16-17), enchantments (pp.17-18), instants, interrupts, or sorceries (all p.19).

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If you can cast a spell, you're doing well, If you can't, that's okay, too. It usually takes a few turns before you have enough mana to do anything. Meanwhile, you should figure out whether you need to discard (p.11). Then announce the end of your turn, and let your opponent have a go.

Remember to untap any tapped cards at the start of your next turn. After you do that, perform any upkeep (p.11), and draw a card.

If you managed to summon a creature last turn, you can now attack with it. To do this, tap the card and announce your attack. Your opponent must then decide whether and how to block your attacker (pp.24-25). Next, either or both of you may use fast effects (p.25). After all announcements have been made and all fast effects have been cast, damage is dealt (p.26). Any creatures that were damaged (p.23) and defeated should be placed into the graveyard (p.8). Keep track of any damage suffered by you or your opponent. If you are the first to reduce your opponent's life points from 20 to 0, you win!

Remember, *Magic* is a game of action and reaction, planning and improvisation. But in the beginning, it's simply a matter of doing what you can. You'll probably have to play through a duel or two before you get the hang of it. Once you figure it out, though, you'll see that the rules are simple; it's the interactions between cards that are complex and interesting.

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## Game Description

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strengths with which you can barter between games. Sometimes winning a duel can be a lot less profitable than a successful trading session, and it is always more dangerous! Be especially on your guard when playing new opponents. They will likely have spells and artifacts you have never seen before, and they will certainly have unique deck mixes and styles of play. Also, watch out for old rivals -- anyone can have a magical encounter with a stranger and pick up some new surprises. No matter who your opponent is, never forget the possibility of learning a trick or two with the same old cards.

### **Equipment**

To play, you need two decks of at least forty *Magic* cards each and at least twenty counters for each person. These counters represent life points. They can be pennies, poker chips, or whatever is convenient you can even keep track of life points on paper if you want to. It's also best to have a large, flat playing area on which to lay out the cards.

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### **The Duel**

One complete game of *Magic* is called a *duel*. A *set* is won by the first player to win three duels. A *match* is the best two of three sets. Players should agree before starting whether they are fighting a single duel, a set, a match, or some other competition. During the course of a single competition, players may never add or subtract any cards from their decks except those won or lost in the ante.

### **Setting Up**

First, shuffle your deck thoroughly and cut your rival's deck. You may also ask to shuffle your rival's deck if you wish. Turn the top card of your rival's deck face up and have your rival do the same with yours. Set the turned-up cards aside. They will be the ante, which the winner of the duel will keep. Take twenty counters to represent the twenty points you begin the duel with. Your life will go up and down during the course of a duel, and you may end up with more than 20 points—if you're lucky.

Draw the top seven cards of your deck to form your hand, and set the remaining cards aside, face down, as your library. The loser of the previous game takes the first

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