



WAR OF THE RING™

THE CARD GAME



A GAME BY
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INTRODUCTION

In *War of the Ring – The Card Game*, 2 to 4 players compete on two teams, the Shadow against the Free Peoples. Each player has a unique card deck representing the strengths and weaknesses of the different factions involved in the war.

The Free Peoples desperately try to complete their quest to destroy the One Ring, while at the same time defending their homelands from the encroaching hordes of Sauron and his evil allies.

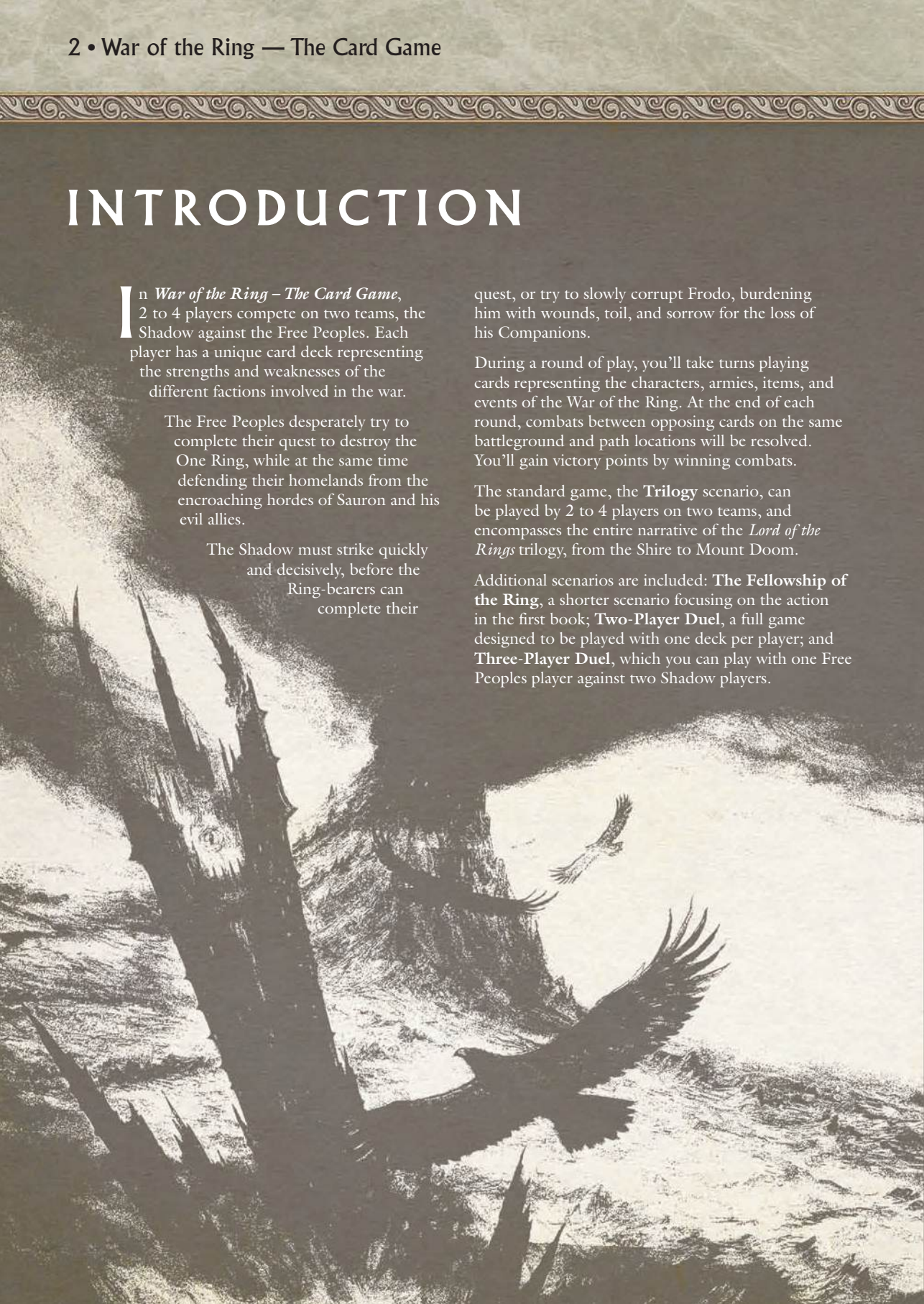
The Shadow must strike quickly and decisively, before the Ring-bearers can complete their

quest, or try to slowly corrupt Frodo, burdening him with wounds, toil, and sorrow for the loss of his Companions.

During a round of play, you'll take turns playing cards representing the characters, armies, items, and events of the War of the Ring. At the end of each round, combats between opposing cards on the same battleground and path locations will be resolved. You'll gain victory points by winning combats.

The standard game, the **Trilogy** scenario, can be played by 2 to 4 players on two teams, and encompasses the entire narrative of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, from the Shire to Mount Doom.

Additional scenarios are included: **The Fellowship of the Ring**, a shorter scenario focusing on the action in the first book; **Two-Player Duel**, a full game designed to be played with one deck per player; and **Three-Player Duel**, which you can play with one Free Peoples player against two Shadow players.



COMPONENTS

120 FACTION CARDS



60 Free Peoples



Dúnedain



Elf



Dwarf



Hobbit



Rohan



Wizard



60 Shadow



Isengard



Monstrous

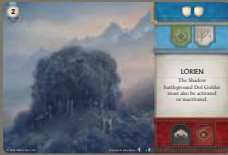


Southron



Mordor

41 LOCATION CARDS



7 Free Peoples Battlegrounds



7 Shadow Battlegrounds



27 Paths



41 TOKENS



1 Starting player token



4 Ring tokens
(2 per side)



20 Combat tokens
(5 per icon)



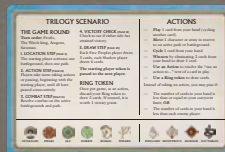
16 Corruption tokens



1 Turn order marker



1 Turn order tracker



4 Player aids (2 per side)



4 Player aids (2 per side)

SETUP

1. SELECT A SCENARIO

These rules are written with the assumption that you are playing the **Trilogy** scenario with 4 players. If you want to play a different scenario, or want to play with fewer than 4 players, see *Scenarios*, pages 20–22.

2. PREPARE THE PLAYERS' DECKS

In *War of the Ring – The Card Game*, each player will use a specific deck.

Each deck consists of cards from one or more **factions**. Each faction has a unique color scheme and a symbol in the upper left corner to distinguish it.

FREE PEOPLES



SHADOW



In the Trilogy scenario, players are named for a prominent character in their deck. The two Free Peoples players — Frodo and Aragorn — play as a team against the two Shadow players — The Witch-king and Saruman.

Players' decks are composed of the following factions:

- 1. FRODO — FREE PEOPLES**
Dwarf, Hobbit, Rohan, and Wizard
- 2. THE WITCH-KING — SHADOW**
Mordor
- 3. ARAGORN — FREE PEOPLES**
Dúnedain and Elf
- 4. SARUMAN — SHADOW**
Isengard, Monstrous, and Southron

Note: Sometimes players may be referred to by one of the factions in their deck: for example, “*The Hobbit player draws 2 cards.*” Note that the actual card drawn might not be a Hobbit card, as the deck will contain other factions. The text is identifying the player that draws — not the card drawn.

- Each player prepares their deck by taking all the cards of the appropriate factions, then shuffling it carefully.
- Each player takes a **Ring** token and a **player aid**.
- The Frodo player takes the **starting player** token.

3. ARRANGE THE BATTLEGROUND AND PATH DECKS

- Separate the Shadow and Free Peoples **battleground** cards. Shuffle each of the two battleground decks separately.
- Next, assemble the **path** deck. Do not shuffle together all the path cards: stack them so that the three path 1 cards are on top, followed by the three path 2 cards, and so forth through to path 9.

4. DRAW CARDS (AND CYCLE)

- Each player draws 7 cards, then must **cycle** 2 of the cards drawn, leaving a hand of 5 cards.
- To cycle a card, place it face down in your **cycle pile**, to the right of your draw deck (see *Cycle*, page 13).

THE TURN ORDER TRACKER

The **turn order tracker** helps to keep track of the standard turn order when you can't sit around the table, or when you play with fewer than 4 players. At the start of the game, place the starting player token and the turn order marker on the “Frodo” space of the tracker. Advance the turn order marker whenever a player takes a turn, and advance the starting player token at the end of each round.



THE PLAY AREA

The diagram below shows the table setup for a 4-player Trilogy scenario game, with the players arranged around the table so the order of play proceeds clockwise. Of course, you may prefer having the two teams facing each other, or some other arrangement.



Each player will have a:

- Hand of cards (not shown).
- Draw deck (face down). 1
- Cycle pile (face down): Cards that are cycled are placed here. 2
- Eliminated pile (face down): Cards that are **eliminated** are placed here. 3 These cards will not be reused in the game — be sure to keep them well separated from your cycle pile!
- Reserve area: An area on the table where cards are played “in reserve” (see page 11). 4

Common areas include:

- The path deck 5 and the two battleground decks 6 placed where they are accessible to all players.
- Combat and corruption tokens, set to one side, for use later in the game. 7
- Each team designates a place on the table to be its **Scoring Area** 8 (see page 18), where the team will place battlegrounds, paths, and corruption tokens (Shadow only) after winning a combat.
- Leave some space in the center of the table where combats can be fought around active paths and battlegrounds. 9

LOCATION CARDS

There are two types of location cards, battlegrounds and paths, used to represent the two concurrent narratives presented in *The Lord of the Rings*: the battlegrounds of Minas Tirith, Helm's Deep, and elsewhere, where the great armies of Middle-earth clashed, and the perilous paths taken to complete the quest of the Fellowship.

Battlegrounds and paths are **activated** when they enter the game (unlike faction cards, which are **played**).

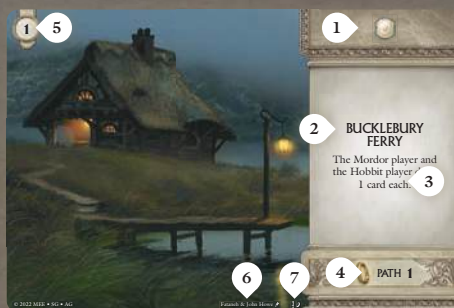


BATTLEGROUND

1. **Defense icons** (see *Battleground Combat*, page 16).
2. **Defending faction icon(s)**: These factions may defend this battleground with icons.
3. **Title**.
4. **Activation text**: Resolve the effect of this text when the battleground is activated or reactivated.
5. **Attacking faction icon(s)**: These factions may attack this battleground with icons.
6. **Victory point value**: The team winning combat on this battleground will score this number of victory points (see *Scoring and Victory*, page 18).
7. **Card artist**: No game effect.
8. **Card ID**: No game effect.

Unless specifically allowed by a card text, you may only play or move a character or army card to a battleground if its faction is indicated as either an attacker or defender.

Other cards may refer to a battleground by name, but sometimes a battleground will be referred to by one of its factions. For example, “*any Dúnedain battleground*” refers to any battleground that shows the Dúnedain icon as either the attacker or defender.



PATH

1. **Defense icons** (see *Path Combat*, page 14).
2. **Title**.
3. **Activation text**: Resolve the effect of this text when the path is activated.
4. **Path number**: This measures the quest's progress, through paths numbered 1–9. It is also used to determine which characters can participate in a combat on this path.
5. **Victory point value**: If the Free Peoples win the combat on this path, they score this number of victory points. The Shadow scores a variable number of victory points for winning path combat (see *Outcomes of Path Combat*, page 14).
6. **Card artist**: No game effect.
7. **Card ID**: No game effect.

Other faction cards refer to paths using their name, or by their path number.

Note: There are no paths higher than path 9. Ignore any game text that activates a path higher than path 9.



FACTION CARDS

Faction cards represent the armies, personalities, special items, and main events of the War of the Ring. Each player, in the Trilogy scenario, will play with a unique deck of 30 cards, belonging to one or more different factions.

In this section, the structure of these cards is presented in detail.



ARMY



CHARACTER



ITEM



EVENT

1. **Faction:** This determines which deck the card belongs to and which battlegrounds it can be played or moved to. It is often referenced in game text.
2. **Card type icon:** Army, Character, Event, or Item.
3. **Battleground attack icons.**^[1]
4. **Battleground defense icons.**^[1]
5. **Leadership attack icons.**^[2]
6. **Leadership defense icons.**^[2]
7. **Allowed paths** (characters only): These are the paths to which this card may be played or moved. Numbers separated by a dash also include all paths between those numbers.
8. **Path combat icons.**^[1]
9. **Faction and Type:** Text version of the icons at the top of the card.
10. **Title.**
11. **Game text:** Additional effects, rules exceptions, or ways in which the card may be used. **Boldface** in the game text is used to indicate that the text applies with a specific timing. Game text may also contain a bold initial word that indicates a characteristic of that card (for example, “Nazgûl” or “Weapon”). This characteristic is only considered when referred to by another card’s text or a rule; otherwise, it can be ignored.
12. **Allowed wielders** (items only): These are the characters that may wield this item.
13. **Card artist:** No game effect.
14. **Card ID:** No game effect.
15. **Flavor text:** No game effect. Not every card has flavor text.

^[1] A * symbol indicates that the number of icons depends on the card’s game text.

^[2] A smaller circled icon is a **leadership icon** (⊗ / ⊙) — see *Characters in Battleground Combat*, page 16.

SHORTHAND CARD REFERENCES

- Some cards will refer to a character by just the first name. For example, “Sam Gamgee” is shortened to “Sam”.
- “Gandalf” can mean either “Gandalf the Grey” or “Gandalf the White”.
- Cards may be referred to by their card type. For example, “character” instead of “character card”.
- Some text refers to keywords on cards. For example, “Nazgûl” or “Weapon”.

THE GAME ROUND

The game is played over a varying number of game rounds (up to a maximum of 9), using the following sequence:

1. LOCATION STEP

The starting player first activates one battleground and then one path. (See *Location Step*, on the facing column.)

2. ACTION STEP

Players take turns taking actions or passing, beginning with the holder of the starting player token, and proceeding in player order. (In the Trilogy scenario, the order is Frodo, The Witch-king, Aragorn, Saruman, then back to Frodo, and so forth.) Players continue taking turns until all have passed consecutively. **When all players have passed consecutively, the Action step ends.** (See *Action Step*, page 10.)

3. COMBAT STEP

Combat is resolved on each active battleground and on the active path. (See *Combat Step*, page 14.)

4. VICTORY CHECK

Check to see if either side has attained victory. (See *Scoring and Victory*, page 18.)

5. DRAW STEP

In the Trilogy scenario, each Free Peoples player draws 3 cards, and each Shadow player draws 4 cards.

Finally, the starting player token is passed to the next player in order — thus, in the Trilogy scenario, The Witch-king will be the starting player on round 2, Aragorn on round 3, and so on.



LOCATION STEP

Each round, during the Location step, the starting player will first activate one battleground and resolve its text, then that player will activate one path and resolve its text.

Whenever you activate (or reactivate) a battleground or path, place it face up in the middle of the table and then resolve its activation text.

Most of the time, paths and battlegrounds are activated during the Location step; however, they may also be activated by certain faction cards during the Action step. These rules apply in both cases.

ACTIVATING BATTLEGROUND

In the Trilogy scenario, the battleground activated during the Location step is selected at random from those in the battleground deck of the starting player's team.

In the rare case your own side's battleground deck has been depleted, draw a battleground from the other side's battleground deck. In the even rarer case where both battleground decks are depleted, do not activate a battleground during the Location step.

When a battleground is activated due to a card's game text or activation text, do not select it at random; if more than one battleground matches a card's text, the activating player may choose one. After you take a specific battleground from a deck, shuffle it.

There is no limit to the number of battlegrounds that can be simultaneously active.

REACTIVATING BATTLEGROUND

Sometimes a card's text may direct you to **reactivate** a battleground. This means that, instead of taking it from its battleground deck, it is taken from a scoring area.

When you reactivate a battleground, its activation text is resolved again. Note that the attackers and defenders do not change. See also *Combat in Reactivated Battlegrounds*, page 16, for additional rules regarding reactivated battlegrounds.

Example: If Dol Guldur is reactivated, Lórien is also activated or reactivated.



ACTIVATING PATHS

In the Trilogy scenario, in the Location step of the first round, the starting player selects a random path 1 card from among the three available.

On subsequent rounds, the path activated during the Location step is selected at random from among the path cards with a number one higher than the last path activated in the prior round.

For example, if the last active path on the prior round was path 5, any remaining path 5 cards are set aside, and a random path 6 is activated.

Only one path can be active at a time. If a card's game text activates a path, the currently active path is replaced. However, before the new path's activation text is resolved, combat is immediately resolved on the path being replaced — in the middle of the Action step! This combat is in addition to the path combat that will be resolved during the Combat step.

When a card allows you to activate a different path, you may choose among the eligible paths — it is not chosen at random.

Unlike battlegrounds, a specific path cannot be activated more than once per game. You cannot use a faction card's text if it would require you to activate a path that has already been activated in this game.

RESOLVING COMBAT

Battleground combat is always resolved during the Combat step.

Path combat is resolved during the Action step whenever a new path is activated. It is also always resolved during the Combat step.

See pages 14–17 for the full rules about combat resolution.



WHO CAN SEE WHAT

You must always allow other players to examine a card when some aspect of the face of the card is being referenced, such as when a specific card is taken from your draw deck.

You may inspect your own cycle pile and eliminated pile, which is helpful in determining if a particular card is in your draw deck. You may always inspect face up cards in play.

You may not show any other players your hand. Conversations between teammates must take place at the table, in public. You may talk to your teammate about what cards you have, but that means the other team will also know.

ACTION STEP

During the Action step, players take turns taking **actions**, beginning with the starting player, and then proceeding in the order specified in the scenario (Frodo, The Witch-king, Aragorn, Saruman in the Trilogy scenario).

When it's your turn, you may **take one action**, or possibly **pass**. Play continues around until all players have passed consecutively. You will usually have more than one turn per Action step, but you cannot take more than one action per turn.

Possible actions in a player's turn are:

- **Play** 1 card from your hand.
- **Move** 1 character or army in reserve to an active path or battleground.
- **Cycle** 1 card from your hand.
- **Winnow** by eliminating 2 cards from your hand to draw 1 card.
- **Use an Action** to resolve the text of a card in play indicating you may “use an action to...”.
- **Use a Ring token** to draw cards.

Playing a card is explained on the facing column. All other actions are explained on page 12.

Instead of taking an action, you may **pass**, but only when:

- The number of cards in your hand is less than or equal to your **carryover limit** (see below); **OR**
- The number of cards in your hand is less than each enemy player.

You may pass on one turn and still take an action on your next turn, provided the Action step does not end before your next turn.

CARRYOVER LIMIT

The **carryover limit** is the maximum number of cards a player can have in hand at the end of the Action step. **Every player begins the game with a carryover limit of 2 cards.**

ENDING THE ACTION STEP

The Action step ends when all players have consecutively passed their turns.

PLAYING A CARD

When you play a card, take the card from your hand, and use it in some manner, depending on the card's type, as indicated below.

- **Every time you play a card, you must cycle a different card from your hand immediately, before resolving the game text on the card played.** When you cycle a card, place it face down on your cycle pile (see *Cycle*, page 13).
- If you want to play the last card in your hand, you must forsake a card (see *Forsake*, page 13), since you have no other cards in your hand to cycle.

PLAYING AN ARMY

When you play an army card, place it face up on an active battleground or in your reserve area.

To play or move an army to a battleground, its faction must be one of those indicated as an attacker or defender there. Armies may not be played or moved to paths.



ARMY
ICONS

PLAYING A CHARACTER

When you play a character card, place it face up on an active path, an active battleground, or in your reserve area.

To play or move a character to a battleground, its faction must be one of those indicated as an attacker or defender there.

To play or move a character to a path, that path's number must be listed on the character's card.



CHARACTER
ICONS

IN PLAY, FROM PLAY

A faction card is **in play** when it is either in reserve, on a battleground, or on a path. Cards in your draw deck, cycle pile, or eliminated pile are not in play.

GANDALF AND ARAGORN

Each of these two heroes of the trilogy is represented by two cards.

Whenever you play Gandalf the White, Gandalf the Grey is **removed** from the game: the card is eliminated, no matter where it is (draw deck, cycle pile, hand, or in play).

Likewise, whenever you play Aragorn, you must remove Strider, wherever the card is.

PLAYING AN ITEM

An item is always played onto a character card, which becomes its **wielder**. In addition to their game text, many items add combat icons to the wielder.



ITEM
ICONS

- An item can only be played on one of the wielders indicated on the card, and the wielder must already be in play.

- If a wielder is moved from reserve to a path or battleground, the wielder's items move with it.

- Icons on an item card are added to the icons of its wielder. In combat, items with defense icons cannot cancel attack icons separately from the character wielding it, unless the item affects the location and not the wielder (for example, Phial of Galadriel).



- If a wielder is eliminated, any items with the wielder are also eliminated.
- If the wielder is cycled, any items with the wielder are also cycled.
- Items cannot be transferred between wielders.

The wielder might not be of the same faction as the item. In this case, the following special rules apply:

- When an item has a different faction than its wielder, it can move with its wielder to any battleground the wielder can be moved — items are not subject to the faction restrictions of battlegrounds for armies and characters.

- An item is always cycled to its original player's cycle pile, even if the wielder is controlled by a different player.



- An item on a wielder in reserve can only be forsaken on behalf of the player controlling the wielder, who is not necessarily the player that played the card.

PLAYING AN EVENT

When you play an event card, immediately resolve the game text on the card, then eliminate the card. Event cards are never “in play” and cannot be placed in reserve.



EVENT
ICONS

PLAYING TO THE RESERVE AREA

- Cards played to your reserve area cannot be moved in the same round.
- Game text that applies when a card is in the reserve area is immediately effective. **Unlike moving a card, there is no requirement to wait the next round before you use a card's reserve game text.**

To remember which cards have been played to your reserve in the current round, you may wish to rotate them, turning them back at the beginning of the next round.

Example: If you play Elrond to reserve, your carryover limit is increased immediately. If you later move or eliminate Elrond, your carryover limit is immediately decreased.



Likewise, The Reaver can be cycled the same round it is played to force each Free Peoples player to forsake 1 card.

RECYCLING THE CYCLE PILE

When you deplete your draw deck, you must immediately recycle your cycle pile. To do so, shuffle your cycle pile, and place it face down on the table as your new draw deck. If you were in the middle of drawing cards when you triggered the recycle, after recycling finish drawing until you've taken the required number of cards.

Sometimes a recycle is caused by game text. If so, shuffle the cards in your cycle pile into your draw deck.

SPECIAL CASES

- When a card directs you to perform multiple actions, do them in the order presented.
- When a card directs you to cycle, forsake, or eliminate a card, this requirement is in addition to the card that must be cycled as the usual cost of playing the card.
- Many cards direct you to “draw” a number of cards, then “play” one or more of those drawn, and then “cycle the rest” (that is, all unplayed cards). In this case, the cards that you're directed to cycle satisfy the requirement to cycle a card for each one played. For example, if you play Éomer and draw an army card, one of the four other cards you cycled satisfies the requirement to play the army.
- Although the opportunity may arise, you can never play the exact same character or item card twice in the same round. This may happen, for example, when a card gets cycled from play in the middle of a round and is recovered from the cycle pile later that round.



OTHER ACTIONS

CYCLE (FROM YOUR HAND)

Cycle a card from your hand, placing it face down on your cycle pile. (Taking a Cycle action is rare, but some situations require it!)

MOVE

Move an army or character card from your reserve to an active path or battleground.

- You cannot move a card where you could not play that card.
- You cannot take a move action for a card that was played to your reserve this round.

Some character cards have game text that is resolved specifically when the card is **played**. This text is not resolved when the card is **moved**.

Example: If Prince Imrahil is moved from reserve to an active battleground, the “When played...” text is ignored.



“USE AN ACTION” OF A CARD IN PLAY

Resolve the text of a card in play that specifies you may “use an action” to do something.

When a card text requires you to use an action to do something, that text does not apply if you did not take an action.

Example: If Lembas is eliminated during a Shadow player's turn, the Free Peoples do not receive its benefit.



USE A RING TOKEN

In the Trilogy scenario, as an action, once per game, you may use your Ring token to draw 2 cards. Discard the token as a reminder.

If the Ring token is not used during the Trilogy scenario, it is worth 1 victory point during final scoring after path 9.

The use of Ring tokens can be different depending on the scenario you play (see *Scenarios*, pages 20–22).

WINNOW

Eliminate 2 cards from your hand, and then draw 1 card.

GAME PROCEDURES

This section describes the meaning of important game terms.

CYCLE

When you **cycle** a card, place it face down on your cycle pile. You may always examine your own cycle pile.

When a card's game text directs you to cycle a card, this is in addition to the card that must be cycled to play the card (for example, Prince Imrahil).

If you have no cards left in your hand, and you are required to cycle a card from your hand, you must forsake a card instead. (See *Forsake*, on this page.)

This includes when you want to play the last card in your hand.

DRAW

Take the top card of your draw deck. While drawn cards will usually end up in your hand, there are several exceptions (for example, Théoden).

There is no limit to the number of cards you can have in your hand, except at the end of the Action step when you cannot have more than your carryover limit.

ELIMINATE

When you *eliminate* a card, place it face down in your eliminated pile. You may always examine your own eliminated pile.

Once a card is eliminated, it will not re-enter play.

Whenever you eliminate a card, examine it for text that applies when it is eliminated (for example, Frodo). If the card has such text, reveal the card to the other players and resolve the appropriate game text. Otherwise, do not reveal cards eliminated from your hand or your draw deck to the other players.

When you are directed to eliminate a card, but you are unable to do so, there is no further penalty. However, in a case where you may voluntarily eliminate cards to gain some benefit, you cannot gain the benefit if you cannot eliminate. For example, you cannot winnow (see page 12) if you do not have 2 cards in your hand to eliminate.

FORSAKE

When you are directed to **forsake** a card, you must eliminate a card, choosing one of the following:

- A card of your choice from your hand; **OR**
- A card of your choice from your reserve (you may forsake an item separately from its wielder); **OR**
- The top card of your draw deck.

You cannot examine the top card of your draw deck before making the decision to forsake the card! However, you must examine it after making your choice, as with all eliminated cards, since some cards have directions to follow when eliminated or forsaken.

MOVE

When you are directed to **move** a card, use the same rules and restrictions as a move action (see page 12).

REACTIVATE/ACTIVATE (BATTLEGROUND OR PATH)

When you are directed to **activate** or **reactivate** a battleground, or to activate a path, follow the rules on page 8.

REMOVE

When you are directed to **remove** a card, you must immediately eliminate that card no matter where it is: draw deck, cycle pile, hand, or in play. If a card is removed from your draw deck, reshuffle the deck.

RUNNING OUT OF CARDS

When your draw deck and cycle pile both run out of cards because you draw all of these into your hand, continue playing with the few cards you have remaining. If you completely run out of cards (from your draw deck, cycle pile, and hand), there is no penalty if you cannot eliminate a card when required.

TAKE FROM DRAW DECK

When you are directed to take a specific card from your draw deck, secretly examine your draw deck and take the card, and then reveal it to the other players so they can verify you took the correct card. Afterwards, reshuffle your draw deck.

COMBAT STEP

During the Combat step, combats are resolved on each active battleground and on the active path. In addition, path combat might be resolved during the Action step, if a new path is activated.

During the Combat step, the starting player decides the order the combats are resolved.

Combat is resolved even if only one team has cards on the path or battleground, or if neither team does.

PATH COMBAT

On a path, the Free Peoples side is always the defender and the Shadow is always the attacker. Follow the steps below to resolve a combat.



1. Count the number of skull icons on Shadow cards and tokens on the path.
2. Cancel a number of skull icons equal to the number of black circle icons on the path itself, including any defense tokens added to the path (black circle icons or defense tokens on characters are considered in the next step).
3. If there are any remaining skull icons, the Free Peoples player(s) must cancel as many of them as possible, eliminating their cards from the path until either the number of black circle icons eliminated equals or exceeds the number of remaining skull icons, or they run out of cards.
4. Any leftover Free Peoples cards on the path are cycled.

A Free Peoples character must be eliminated if it cancels even a single skull icon, regardless of how many black circle icons it has (remember that items with defense icons cannot cancel attack icons separately from the character wielding them).

At the end of path combat, all Shadow characters in that combat are eliminated.

Note: If the Free Peoples players cannot decide which characters to eliminate, the Shadow players can decide for them.

COMBAT TOKENS

Certain cards will add combat icons according to their game text (for example, *Nenya, Ring of Adamant*).

Combat tokens have been provided to keep track of icons added by a card.

These tokens can either improve the defense value of a path or battleground, or improve the attack or defense value of one of the cards on the path or battleground.



Remember that a defense icon added to a path or battleground always cancels out attack icons before the defending characters and armies are affected.

An icon added to a character or army is considered to be part of that character or army, and cannot be used to cancel out attack icons separately.

OUTCOMES OF PATH COMBAT

In the Trilogy scenario, if the Free Peoples can cancel out all the skull icons, the Free Peoples place the path in their scoring area, where it is worth the number of **victory points** printed on the path.

If the Free Peoples cannot cancel out all the skull icons, the Shadow team adds as many corruption tokens as there are uncanceled skull icons remaining to the Shadow scoring area, along with the path. Keep the path card face down as a reminder that its victory point value does not apply.



PATH COMBAT EXAMPLE

ATTACKERS

The Commander (☠) and
The Destroyer (☠) with
Black Rider's Mount (☠).



DEFENDERS

Gimli (●) and
Legolas (●) wielding
Bow of the Galadhrim (●).

There are three attack (☠) icons. One of the ☠ icons is canceled by the path's defense. Two more must be canceled. Eliminating Gimli would still leave one ☠ icon to cancel, so Legolas would be eliminated, too. Bow of the Galadhrim cannot be eliminated without eliminating Legolas (an item cannot cancel attack icons separately from its wielder). The Free Peoples player decides to eliminate Legolas and Bow of the Galadhrim to cancel both ☠ icons. Gimli is cycled. All attackers are eliminated.

The Free Peoples win the combat and add Egladil to their scoring area.

If Legolas and Gimli were not on the path, two corruption tokens and Egladil (face down) would have been added to the Shadow scoring area.

BATTLEGROUND COMBAT

On a battleground, one side is the defender and the other side the attacker. On a Shadow battleground, the Shadow side is always the defender, and the Free Peoples side is the attacker; on a Free Peoples battleground, the Free Peoples side is the defender and the Shadow side is the attacker.

The attacking and defending factions of a battleground are fixed by the battleground card, regardless of how it is activated. For example, on Dol Guldur, Mordor is always the defending faction; Elf and Wizard are always the attacking factions.



ATTACK

DEFENSE

Follow the steps below to resolve a combat.

1. Count the number of ✘ icons on attacking cards.
2. Cancel a number of ✘ icons equal to the number of ♥ icons on the battleground itself, including any defense tokens added to the battleground (♥ icons or defense tokens on characters or armies are considered in the next step).
3. If there are any remaining ✘ icons, the defending player(s) must cancel as many of them as possible, eliminating their cards from the battleground until either the number of ♥ icons eliminated equals or exceeds the number of remaining ✘ icons, or they run out of cards.
4. Any leftover defending cards on the battleground are cycled.

A defending card must be eliminated if it cancels even one ✘ icon, regardless of how many ♥ icons it has.

At the end of battleground combat, all attacking cards are eliminated.

Note: If the defenders cannot decide which characters or armies to eliminate, the attackers can decide for them.



COMBAT IN REACTIVATED BATTLEGROUND

If a battleground from one side's battleground deck is reactivated from the other side's scoring area, the battleground's ♥ icons are ignored — they do not cancel out the attackers' ✘ icons.

For example, if Dol Guldur is reactivated from the Free Peoples' scoring area, the Shadow players do not get the benefit of its ♥♥ icons during combat resolution; however, the Shadow players are still be considered the defenders, and Dol Guldur's activation text is still resolved.

OUTCOMES OF BATTLEGROUND COMBAT

If the defender can cancel out all ✘ icons, the defender wins. Otherwise, the attacker wins.

The winning side takes control of the battleground and places it in its scoring area (see *Scoring & Victory*, page 18).

CHARACTERS IN BATTLEGROUND COMBAT

Some characters are mighty warriors, equal to an army of enemies. But most characters only gain combat icons (or gain additional icons) when leading an army. These **leadership icons** are represented as a smaller icon within a circle.



LEADERSHIP (ATTACK)

LEADERSHIP (DEFENSE)

For a leadership icon to be counted in combat, the character must have an army of the same faction on the same battleground. The army is said to **support** the character. An army can only support one character.

On defense, when taking losses to cancel out attack icons, an army and the character it is supporting can be lost separately; the leadership icons will still be counted, in the current combat, if one is eliminated and not the other.

If a character in combat is wielding items, remember that items cannot cancel attack icons separately from the character.

BATTLEGROUND COMBAT EXAMPLE



ATTACKERS

Galadriel (⌘ + ⌘) wielding NENYA, Ring of Adamant (⌘), supported by an army of High Elves (⌘ ⌘).



DEFENDERS

An army of Mordor Orcs (♣), Gorbag & Shagrat (+♣), supported by an army of Olog-hai (♣♣).



There are 5 attack (⌘) icons, including Galadriel's leadership icon. 2 icons (⌘ ⌘) are canceled by the battleground defense icons (♣♣). The remaining 3 icons (⌘ ⌘ ⌘) must be canceled by eliminating defending cards.

The Mordor player eliminates both the Mordor Orcs and the Olog-hai. All attack icons have been canceled, therefore the Shadow wins.

All attackers are eliminated, Gorbag & Shagrat is cycled, and the Shadow adds Dol Guldur to its scoring area.

Saving the Olog-hai was not possible; if the Shadow had eliminated Gorbag & Shagrat instead, one ⌘ icon would not have been canceled, and the Olog-hai would have ended up eliminated, too.

SCORING AND VICTORY

In the Trilogy scenario, to calculate your team's score, you must look at battlegrounds, paths, and tokens in your scoring area.

SCORING

BATTLEGROUNDS

Each battleground in your team's scoring area is worth the number of victory points printed at the top left of the card.



PATHS

- Each path in the Free Peoples team scoring area is worth the number of victory points printed at the top left of the card.
- The Shadow team earns victory points for paths based on how many corruption tokens resulted from the outcome of the path combat; the path itself is not worth any victory points for the Shadow. Place the path card face down in your scoring area.

CORRUPTION TOKENS



Corruption tokens track the amount of corruption added during the game. Whenever you add 1 corruption, place 1 corruption token in the Shadow scoring area.

Corruption tokens are usually added due to path combat, but may also be added or removed as directed by card text.

If a card directs you to remove a corruption, but there are none to remove, the directions are ignored.

Each corruption token is worth 1 victory point for the Shadow team.

RING TOKENS

In the Trilogy scenario, each player's unused Ring token is worth 1 victory point for the team. Ring tokens are only considered during the final scoring, after combat on the last path is resolved.

VICTORY CHECK

During the Victory Check step, each team calculates its score.

- If the difference between the two teams' scores is 10 or more, then the team with the higher score wins and the game ends.
- After combat is resolved on the last path of a scenario, the team with the higher score wins. In the case of a tie, the Shadow wins.



SCORING EXAMPLE

FREE PEOPLES

Battlegrounds: Helm's Deep, Minas Tirith, Lórien, Orthanc — 9 Victory Points



SHADOW

Battlegrounds: Minas Morgul, Dol Guldur — 3 Victory Points



Paths: Bag End, The Council of Elrond, Lothlórien, Henneth Annun — 4 Victory Points



Paths: Weathertop, Khazad-dûm, Amon Hen, Cirith Ungol, Crack of Doom — 7 Corruption Tokens



TOTAL: 13 VICTORY POINTS

TOTAL: 10 VICTORY POINTS

In this example, the Free Peoples win with a final score of 13 to 10 after path 9 is resolved.

SCENARIOS

Several scenarios have been provided to allow you to experience *War of the Ring – The Card Game* in different ways:

- The **Trilogy** scenario is designed to be played by two teams of 2 players each (or fewer than 4 players playing in the same way) and provides the most complete game experience.
- The **Two-Player Duel** offers quicker setup and game play than the Trilogy scenario when there are just 2 players. The **Three-Player Duel** is a variant of this scenario, playable with 3 players.
- The **Fellowship of the Ring** scenario is a short two-player game, great for teaching new players, or when time is limited.

The Trilogy, Two-Player Duel, and Three-Player Duel scenarios use every path and battleground included. The Fellowship of the Ring scenario only uses the location cards listed.

We recommend using the turn order tracker when you play the Three-Player Duel or the Trilogy scenario with less than 4 players. Use the side of the tracker matching the scenario you are playing.

Note that the decks are named after important characters from the story, but there is no other significance to the names.

Check our website www.aresgames.eu for additional scenarios.

TRILOGY SCENARIO

This 2–4 player scenario follows the entire narrative of the trilogy, from Bag End to Mount Doom.

STARTING PLAYER AND TURN ORDER

The Frodo player begins the game with the starting player token. Frodo is followed by The Witch-king, Aragorn, and Saruman.

1. **FRODO — FREE PEOPLES**
Dwarf, Hobbit, Rohan, and Wizard
2. **THE WITCH-KING — SHADOW**
Mordor
3. **ARAGORN — FREE PEOPLES**
Dúnedain and Elf
4. **SARUMAN — SHADOW**
Isengard, Monstrous, and Southron

SETUP

Each player draws 7 cards, then must cycle 2 of the cards drawn, leaving a hand of 5 cards.

DRAW STEP

During the Draw step, each Free Peoples player draws 3 cards, and each Shadow player draws 4 cards.

RING TOKENS

Each player starts with one Ring token, which can be used once per game.

PLAYING THE TRILOGY SCENARIO WITH 2 OR 3 PEOPLE

If you're playing with 3 people, one person will control both Shadow decks, and the other 2 will each play one of the Free Peoples decks. If there are just 2 of you, each of you will control both decks of your team.

When you are playing more than one deck, play the two completely separately, as if you were two separate people. Make sure to keep separate hands, draw decks, cycle piles, eliminated piles, reserve areas, etc.

Any rules that refer to “you” or a “player” are directed to the “deck” and not to you as a person. The rules are written with the assumption that each player is controlling one deck.

TRILOGY RING TOKEN



Once per game, as an action, you can use and discard your Ring token to draw 2 cards.

At the end of the game, for each token which has not been used, players add 1 victory point to the final score of their team.

TWO-PLAYER DUEL

This scenario is designed specifically for 2 players. It sets up and plays a bit quicker compared to the Trilogy scenario with just 2 players. Pay careful attention to the special rules of this scenario, as they diverge from those of the Trilogy scenario.

STARTING PLAYER AND TURN ORDER

The Gandalf player begins the game with the starting player token.

1. **GANDALF — FREE PEOPLES**
All Free Peoples cards
2. **THE WITCH-KING — SHADOW**
All Shadow cards

SETUP

- The Gandalf player draws 4 cards.
- The Witch-king player draws 6 cards.
- Neither player cycles any cards.

DRAW STEP

During the Draw step, the Gandalf player draws 4 cards, and The Witch-king player draws 6 cards.

RING TOKENS

Each player starts with one Ring token, which can be used once per round.

SPECIAL RULES

- **Path Scoring:** After path combat, the Gandalf player only places the path in the scoring area if the total of ● icons exceeds the total of ☠ icons. If there are the same number of ● and ☠ icons, neither side receives victory points for the path.

DUEL RING TOKEN



Once per round, as an action, you can use your Ring token to draw the top 3 cards of your draw deck. Then, you must eliminate 1 card from hand and cycle 1 card from hand. Flip your Ring token as a reminder that you have used it in this round.

- **“Each Player”:** When game or activation text directs “*each Free Peoples player*” or “*each Shadow player*” to do something (such as draw, cycle, or forsake), follow the directions twice. If a card directs each player to do 1 or more of these actions, complete all the directions once, and then do it again. Note that this doubling is not performed every time you’re directed to draw, cycle, or forsake — only when each player on a team is directed to do so.

Example: If Egladil is activated, the Gandalf player draws 2 cards, cycles 1, then draws another 2, and cycles another 1.

THREE-PLAYER DUEL

In this variant of the Two-Player Duel, one Free Peoples player, Gandalf, plays against two Shadow players, The Witch-king and Saruman. The Gandalf player uses similar rules to the Two-Player Duel, while the Shadow players use similar rules to the Trilogy scenario, playing two separate decks.

STARTING PLAYER AND TURN ORDER

The Gandalf player begins the game with the starting player token. Gandalf is followed by The Witch-king, then Gandalf plays again, then Saruman.

1. **GANDALF — FREE PEOPLES**
All Free Peoples cards
2. **THE WITCH-KING — SHADOW**
Mordor
3. **GANDALF — FREE PEOPLES**
4. **SARUMAN — SHADOW**
Isengard, Monstrous, and Southron

SETUP

- Each Shadow player draws 7 cards, then must cycle 2 of the cards drawn, leaving them with a hand of 5 cards each.
- The Gandalf player draws 6 cards, and cycles none.

DRAW STEP

During the Draw step, the Gandalf player draws 6 cards, and each Shadow player draws 4 cards.

RING TOKENS

Each player starts with one Ring token, which can be used once per game by the Shadow players, following the Trilogy scenario rules; and once per round by the Gandalf player, who can use it following the same rules as in the Two-Player Duel.

SPECIAL RULES

The Two-Player Duel special rules for *Path Scoring* and “*Each Player*” are applied.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

This two-player short scenario follows the journey described in the first book of the trilogy — from the Shire to the shores of the Anduin.

STARTING PLAYER AND TURN ORDER

The Balrog of Moria player begins the game with the starting player token.

- 1. THE BALROG OF MORIA — SHADOW**
Monstrous (8): Balrog of Moria, Barrow-wights, Caradhras the Cruel, Cave-troll, Flocks of Crebain, Hill-troll, Goblins of the Misty Mountains (2).
Mordor (18): Black Breath, Black Rider’s Mount, Grishnákh, Mordor Orcs (3), Morgul Blade, Nazgûl’s Mantle, The Ringwraiths Are Abroad, all Nazgûl cards (9).
Isengard (4): Palantír of Orthanc, Saruman, Saruman’s Staff, Uglúk.
- 2. GANDALF — FREE PEOPLES**
Dúnedain (3): Blade of Westerneße, Boromir, Strider.
Dwarf (2): Dwarven Axe, Gimli.
Elf (13): All cards in this set: Arwen, Bow of the Galadhrim, Elrond, Elven Cloak, Galadriel, High Elves (2), Legolas, Lembas, Mirror of Galadriel, Nenia, Ring of Adamant, Phial of Galadriel, Vilya, Ring of Air.
Hobbit (8): Bilbo Baggins, Fatty Bolger, Frodo Baggins, Merry Brandybuck, Mithril Coat, Pippin Took, Sam Gamgee, Sting.
Wizard (4): Gandalf the Grey, Narya, Ring of Fire, Gandalf’s Staff, Glamdring.

SETUP

Each player draws 7 cards, but then must cycle 2 of the cards drawn, leaving a hand of 5 cards.

Only the following location cards are used:

BATTLEGROUND

Round 1: Minas Morgul

Round 2: Rivendell

Round 3: Moria

Round 4: Lórien and Dol Guldur

Round 5 (if necessary): Orthanc

Round 6: (if necessary): Morannon

PATHS

Path 1: Bucklebury Ferry, Gildor’s Encampment

Path 2: Inn of the Prancing Pony, The Old Forest

Path 3: Fords of Bruinen, Imladris

Path 4: Caradhras, Khazad-dûm, The Doors of Durin

Path 5: Egladil, Dimrill Dale, Lothlórien

Path 6: Amon Hen

DRAW STEP

During the Draw step, the Gandalf player draws 3 cards, and the Balrog of Moria player draws 4 cards.

RING TOKENS

Ring tokens are not used in this scenario.

SPECIAL RULES

- This scenario begins on path 1 and ends on path 6; it may last between 4 and 6 rounds. Only the paths listed are used.
- The battlegrounds are not chosen at random, but are activated in the order specified.



GLOSSARY

ACTIVATE: Take a hitherto unused battleground or path location from the appropriate deck and place it face up on the table. If you activate a path and there is already an **active path** in play, combat must be resolved on the active path before resolving the new path's activation text.

ACTIVE PATH/BATTLEGROUND: A path or battleground that was **activated** earlier this round for which combat has not yet been resolved.

ATTACK ICONS: ✖ (battleground), ☠ (path).

CARRYOVER LIMIT: The maximum number of cards you can have in your hand at the end of the Action step. It is also the maximum number you may have to be allowed to pass your action, even when you have the same or greater number of cards than an opponent.

CYCLE: Place a card in the cycle pile. When your draw deck runs out of cards, shuffle the cards in your cycle pile and use them to replenish your draw deck.

DEFENSE ICONS: ■ (battleground), ● (path).

DRAW: Take a card from the top of the draw deck.

ELIMINATE: Place a card in the eliminated pile. Eliminated cards are permanently out of the game.

FACTION: Dúnedain, Dwarf, Elf, Hobbit, Rohan, Wizard, Isengard, Monstrous, Mordor, Southron. Each is represented by a specific icon and card template.

FORSAKE: Choose a card to **eliminate**, from your hand, your **reserve**, or the top of your draw deck.

IN PLAY: A faction card is in play when it is face up on the table, either in **reserve**, on a battleground, or on a path.

LEADERSHIP ICONS: ⊗ (attack), ⊙ (defense). Leadership icons are counted only if the character is **supported**.

LOCATION: A battleground or path.

MOVE: Move a faction card from your **reserve** to a path or battleground.

PASS: Skip a turn, either because you have fewer cards than each opponent, or you are at or below your **carryover limit**.

PLAY: Take a card from hand and put it in play, or in the case of an event card, resolve its game text and put it in the eliminated pile. Usually, you must **cycle** 1 card from hand when you play a card.

REACTIVATE: Like **activating** a battleground, except it is taken from a scoring area. See *Combat in Reactivated Battlegrounds*, page 16.

RECYCLE: Shuffle the cards in your cycle pile (sometimes together with any remaining cards in your draw deck) to form a new draw deck.

REMOVE: **Eliminate** a card from wherever it is, **taking** it from your draw deck or cycle pile, if it is not in play.

RESERVE: Cards **played** to your reserve are placed face up on the table, but not on a **battleground** or **path**. Cards played to your reserve cannot be **moved** later in the same round.

SCORING AREA: The set of battleground and path cards collected by a team after winning combats, and any corruption tokens the Shadow may have accumulated.

SUPPORT: For a character's **leadership icons** to count, the character must be on the same battleground as a supporting army of the same **faction**. An army can only support one character.

TAKE, FROM A DECK OR PILE: Locate and take a specific card from a draw deck (reshuffling afterwards) or pile.

TYPE: Army, Character, Event, Item.

WIELDER: A character **in play** with an item on it.

WINNOW: **Eliminate** 2 cards from hand to **draw** 1.

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THE CARD GAME

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