

THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRADING CARD GAME

EXPANDED RULEBOOK

This is an expanded version of the rulebook that comes in starter products.

The description of each phase of the turn has an outline describing each step of that phase.

The section of the rules about The One Ring has been rewritten for clarity.

(This version of the rulebook does not include alternate rules for the 7-site game.)

Most card games have just one deck of cards that never changes, but a trading card game (or TCG) works differently. In a TCG, you personalize your playing deck using cards from your collection.

The *Lord of the Rings* Trading Card Game provides two or more players with the same challenges that Frodo Baggins, bearer of the One Ring, faced on his fateful journey from Hobbiton to Mount Doom to destroy the Ring.

The premiere set, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, represents the first part of Frodo's journey from Hobbiton to Amon Hen on the Anduin River.

INTRODUCTION

Each player's cards include his own fellowship — a group of companions, each represented by a different card. Some other cards representing allies, possessions, artifacts, events, and conditions support and defend the fellowship.

On each player's turn, a marker representing that player's fellowship advances along the adventure path — a sequence of sites, each representing the scene of an episode in the adventure. All players, using cards that might be played from any player's adventure deck, share the same adventure path.

Each time a fellowship moves, minions played by one or more opponents may attack it; these minions may be supported by possessions, artifacts, events, and conditions of their own. The attacks will succeed or fail depending on the relative strengths of the characters and minions.

The minions of evil become more numerous as the fellowship moves farther into the wild lands of Middle-earth, resulting in greater risks to the fellowship and the Ring-bearer himself. In dire need, the Ring-bearer can save himself by putting on the Ring — but this puts him in peril of succumbing to the burden of the Ring, and losing the game.

If your fellowship survives its adventures to reach the final site first, you are the winner!

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

KINDS OF CARDS

The *Lord of the Rings* TCG has three basic kinds of cards: site, Free Peoples, and Shadow. There is also The One Ring, which is different from all other cards.

Site cards

Each player has an adventure deck with nine site cards. These cards are used to chart the progress of the game.



Free Peoples cards

Free Peoples cards represent the forces of good. Each player has his own fellowship, made up of a Ring-bearer and other companions. When you take your turn, you play and use your Free Peoples cards.

Free Peoples cards have a light colored circular field in the upper left corner.

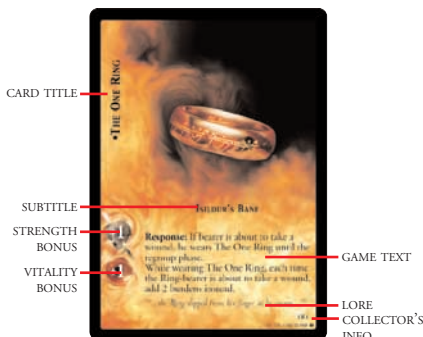


Shadow cards

Shadow cards represent the forces of evil and corruption. When another player takes his turn, you play and use your Shadow cards to hinder that player.

Shadow cards have a dark colored diamond-shaped field in the upper left corner.

The One Ring



This card represents the uniquely powerful item that is the focus of the story of *The Lord of the Rings*. Its card type is "The One Ring."

COMPANION



A **companion** is a character who is a member of your fellowship. This includes both the Nine Walkers who comprised the Fellowship of the Ring and others who fought alongside them or traveled with them.

ALLY



An **ally** is a character who helps your companions from afar but does not move with them. Each ally has a home, where that ally may fight alongside your companions.

MINION



A **minion** is a Shadow character that attacks other players' fellowships. Minion cards have a site number where a companion might have a signet.

POSSESSION



A **possession** or **artifact** is a weapon, suit of armor, or other kind of object used by a character. (There are no artifact cards in *The Fellowship of the Ring* set, but later products will have them.)

Many possession cards (and condition cards) play on a character. We say that the character "bears" the possession or condition (and is also called the "bearer" of that card).

Place these cards beneath the bearer, with the left edge of the possession or condition showing. The card title and any strength or vitality bonuses will therefore be visible during play.

EVENT



An **event** is a card played from your hand that represents an important occurrence. Discard an event when you are done playing it.

CONDITION



A **condition** is a card representing a significant change in the world, which stays in play until something discards it. Sometimes conditions are played on opponent's characters.

SITE



You bring a set of nine sites in your adventure deck. Each of those must have a different site number, with one for each number from 1 to 9. Sanctuary sites, numbered 3 or 6, have a different colored template from other sites.

CULTURE

Most cards are part of a specific culture. A card's color, its background texture, and an icon in its upper right corner indicate its culture.

You'll find that cards from the same culture work well together. Sorting your cards by culture can make building your own deck easier. However, your deck may contain cards from several different cultures if you like.

Site cards and The One Ring are not part of any culture.

Here is a listing of all the cultures currently available:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Free Peoples cards</i> | <i>Shadow cards</i> |
| Dwarven | Isengard |
| Elven | Moria |
| Gandalf | Ringwraith |
| Gondor | Sauron |
| Shire | |

You don't have to memorize these names, since cultures are always referred to with symbols. All you have to do is match the icons.

SIGNET



Some of the Free Peoples character cards have a signet icon, found in the lower left corner of the card. Cards with the same signet generally give bonuses to each other and work well in the same deck.

Each signet is based around an important character in the story. The available signets in *The Fellowship of the Ring* set are Aragorn, Frodo, and Gandalf.

VITALITY

All characters in the game have vitality. This number represents that character's life force, stamina, sturdiness, and will to live.

WOUNDS

When a character is wounded by an enemy attack, his vitality is depleted. Place a wound token on the character to illustrate this. Glass beads (preferably blood red) make good tokens for this purpose. Wounds are always placed on a character one at a time. When you "wound a character," you place only one wound.

Healing

When a wound is removed from a character, this represents resting or healing. If game text says you should "heal a character," the default meaning for that phrase is to remove one wound. You may not heal a character that does not have at least one wound.

Generally, your fellowship only heals (removes wounds) at a site with the keyword **sanctuary**. At the start of your turn when your fellowship is at a sanctuary, you may heal up to 5 wounds from your companions.

Allies do not heal in this way. There are allies that heal other allies, such as Elrond, Galadriel, and Hobbit Party Guest.

Killed

When the number of wounds on a character equals his vitality, that character is immediately killed. Place killed Free Peoples characters (companions and allies) in your dead pile. The **dead pile** is separate from and next to your discard pile. Place killed Shadow characters (minions) in your discard pile.

When you have a unique companion or ally in your dead pile, you may not play another copy of that card, or any other card with the same title. (You may play another copy of a non-unique card which is in your dead pile.)

A unique card has a dot (•) in its card title.

When you discard a companion or ally to use its game text or as a result of some other effect, don't place that card in the dead pile.

Exert

Sometimes you may **exert** a character by placing a wound on that card to show that the character takes an action that depletes his vitality.

Exerting a character is different from wounding a character, though both require placement of a wound token. Cards that prevent wounds may not prevent a wound token placed by exerting. Once placed, wound tokens are identical, whether placed from exerting or wounding.

No player may exert a character that is **exhausted** (only one wound away from death). Such a character cannot be chosen as a character who must exert.

Sometimes a card will allow you to exhaust a character. To exhaust a character means to exert that character as many times as you can.

When you exert a character to have an effect at that character's site, this usually represents physical exertion of some kind: working, fighting, stress, and so on. However, sometimes a character will exert to provide an effect at some other site, and in this case the exertion is symbolic (and may even represent something that theoretically happened in the past).

For example, Farmer Maggot can exert to heal Merry or Pippin. This is because in the story, Merry and Pippin stole vegetables that Farmer Maggot had worked hard to plant and cultivate. In the game, however, those vegetables had been planted at some time in the past.

When Merry or Pippin conceptually eats them to regain some strength, for simplicity you place a token on Farmer Maggot at that moment. This is a symbolic way of recognizing how his labor ultimately benefits the Fellowship.

TWILIGHT POOL

The twilight pool is an area on the table where twilight tokens are placed. The tokens in the twilight pool represent how dangerous the world is for the fellowship. Glass beads (preferably black) make good twilight tokens, but any convenient token will do. Keep a large reserve of twilight tokens handy.

Twilight Cost

In the upper left corner of each Free Peoples and Shadow card is that card's twilight cost. This is the number of twilight tokens that must be added to or removed from the twilight pool to play that card.

When you play a Free Peoples card, you must **add** a number of twilight tokens (from the reserve) to the twilight pool equal to that card's twilight cost.

When your opponent plays a Shadow card, he must **remove** a number of twilight tokens from the twilight pool equal to that card's twilight cost. A Shadow card may not be played if its twilight cost cannot be met by the tokens available in the twilight pool.

In game text, you will find phrases like "Add ●" which means, "Add 1 twilight token to the twilight pool."

As the fellowship grows and gains more power, its detection by Sauron's forces becomes easier. However, as Sauron directs his minions to search for the Ring, the Dark Lord expends valuable resources. The twilight pool represents these dynamic changes in the game.

SETTING UP THE GAME

Players need a supply of wound tokens (preferably red) and twilight tokens (preferably black). Each player will also need a player marker (a differently-colored token) that shows where his fellowship is on the adventure path.

Tokens can be coins, glass beads, paper clips, orc teeth, or any small common possession.

BUILDING YOUR DECK

Each player brings to the game at least 71 cards (and perhaps more):

- Frodo bearing The One Ring (2 cards),
- a draw deck of at least 60 cards, and
- a 9-card adventure deck.

Ring-bearer

You must start the game with one copy of Frodo (any version will do) bearing The One Ring (again, any version). These two cards are not part of your draw deck and do not count against your total of Free Peoples cards.

Draw Deck

Your draw deck must have at least 60 cards and must have an equal number of Shadow cards and Free Peoples cards, shuffled together. You may not have any copies of The One Ring or sites in your draw deck.

You may have up to four copies of each card title (ignoring subtitles) in your draw deck.

You may have four copies of Aragorn, King in Exile in your draw deck, or you may have two copies of that card and two copies of Aragorn, Ranger of the North. You may not have four copies of each of those cards, since they have the same title (although they have different subtitles).

Exception: Since one copy of Frodo is always part of your fellowship, you may have only three copies of Frodo in your draw deck.

Adventure Deck

Your adventure deck has nine different site cards, one for each of the nine site numbers. No other player may look through your adventure deck during the game.

You do not have to keep your adventure deck in any particular order. When you need to get a card from your adventure deck, look through it to get the correct one.

It's easy to tell who each site card belongs to, since only one copy of each site number is played to the adventure path. For example, site number 4 belongs to the player who has no site number 4 in his adventure deck.

If a site is replaced, take the old site from the adventure path and put it back in its owner's adventure deck.

GAME SETUP PROCEDURE

- Bid to see who goes first
- First player plays site 1
- Each player plays his starting fellowship
- Each player shuffles his draw deck
- Each player draws eight cards for his hand

WHO GOES FIRST?

Players will place secret bids for the right to determine who goes first in the game. The bidding is done with black tokens, which will become **burdens** on your Ring-bearer.

Don't bid too high, or your Ring-bearer will start with too many burdens and be close to being corrupted. (If he accumulates a number of burdens equal to his resistance, you lose the game.)

Each player places a number of burdens in his hand (you may bid zero). When all players are ready, simultaneously reveal the bids. The highest bid wins the right to choose where he goes in the turn order. Any choice is available.

Next, the second highest bidder chooses from the remaining positions in the turn order, and so on. Keep track of each player's bid, as these tokens will become burdens on his copy of Frodo.

If there are any ties, then the tied players resolve randomly who chooses first among them.

Tom, Chuck, Tim, and Mike are playing, and the initial bids are Tom 3, Chuck 4, Tim 3, and Mike 1. Chuck wins the right to choose, and he chooses to

Starting Fellowship

Your fellowship begins with Frodo bearing The One Ring. You may also begin with other companions (not allies) from your draw deck (which you may play in any order), as long as the total twilight cost of your starting companions is 4 or less.

You could choose Gandalf as your only other starting companion, since his twilight cost is 4. Alternately, you might choose Gimli and Legolas, who each have a twilight cost of 2.

You do not add twilight tokens for playing the cards in your starting fellowship. Site text is not active when the starting fellowships are played. You may use "When you play" game text on a starting companion.

Select and reveal starting fellowships in player order. (In tournament play, you may change your starting fellowship from game to game.)

Shuffle your draw deck, give the opponent on your right the opportunity to cut it, and draw eight cards to form your starting hand.



go first (placing 4 burdens on Frodo). Tom and Tim are tied, so they flip a coin, and Tom wins the tiebreak. He chooses second (placing 3 burdens on Frodo). Tim chooses to go fourth (3 burdens), leaving third for Mike (1 burden).

The first player sits down, and the others then sit in clockwise order around the table according to their choices.

Place your adventure deck (face down) and Frodo (face up) on the table. Place The One Ring under him (so the title is showing) and place the burdens that you bid on Frodo.

The first player places his copy of site 1 (from his adventure deck) on the table to begin the adventure path. Each player places his player marker onto site 1.

PLAYING THE GAME

Each player, going clockwise around the table, takes a turn according to the following **turn sequence**.

1. Fellowship Phase
2. Shadow Phase
3. Maneuver Phase
4. Archery Phase
5. Assignment Phase
6. Skirmish Phase
7. Regroup Phase

When one player finishes his turn, the next player in clockwise rotation (to his left) takes a turn and so on.

Although the turn order rotates to the left, note that many other procedures in the game actually rotate to the right (counter-clockwise).

TIMING WORDS

Before you learn more about the phases of a turn, you need to know how certain game actions link to those phases using timing words.

During each phase of a turn, one or more players are allowed to perform actions that use a timing word matching the name of that phase. Timing words are printed in boldface and followed by a colon.

The phrase “skirmish actions” means actions that look like this: “Skirmish: Make a Dwarf strength +2 and damage +1.” This is an action you perform during a skirmish phase.

Each of these actions lasts for the duration of the phase named in the timing word (unless otherwise specified).

There is also a special timing word, response, which is explained later in these rules.

Every event card has a timing word that defines when you may play that card from your hand. The game text on that event may be performed only once for each copy of that event played.

Discard an event after you play it, and before the next action is taken. Even after being discarded, an event often has an ongoing or delayed effect until the end of the phase, or until a specified phase or condition is met.

Other types of cards may use a timing word to indicate a part of their game text called a **special ability**, which may be used only while the card is in play. (The timing word defines when you may do so.) You may use each special ability as many times as you like, even repeatedly during the same phase.

The use of any special ability is optional. It does nothing until you choose to use it. You may only use one special ability at a time.

If one card says, “Fellowship: Play an Elf to draw a card” and another says, “Fellowship: Exert Galadriel to play an Elf for free,” you can’t do both as one action. You may draw a card or play for free (or neither), but you can’t do both at the same time.

I. FELLOWSHIP PHASE

During your fellowship phase, you first reset the twilight pool, and then you perform fellowship actions, including playing most Free Peoples cards. Finally, you move your fellowship forward along the adventure path.

FELLOWSHIP PHASE OUTLINE

- Free Peoples player resets the twilight pool
- Free Peoples player performs fellowship actions (and plays Free Peoples cards)
- Free Peoples player moves the fellowship to the next site and adds twilight tokens

Reset the twilight pool

At the start of each of your fellowship phases, you must remove all tokens from the twilight pool. (The twilight pool begins the game empty, so this is not necessary on the first turn of the game.)

Perform fellowship actions

If you are the Free Peoples player, you may perform fellowship actions during this phase, in any order.

Two fellowship actions are always available:

- Play a Free Peoples companion, ally, possession, artifact, or condition from your hand to the table.
- Discard a unique companion or ally card from your hand to heal a character who has the same title (it may have a different subtitle).

A unique card has a dot (•) in its card title.

You may find other fellowship actions on events in your hand, or as special abilities on cards you already have in play.

The phrase “fellowship actions” means actions that look like this: “Fellowship: Play an Elf to draw a card.”

Actions that happen “at the start of your turn” occur before you can take your first fellowship action.

Paying costs

To play a Free Peoples card, add a number of twilight tokens to the twilight pool equal to the card’s twilight cost.

Playing companions

Play companion cards in a row, near the other members of your fellowship already in play.

You may not have more than nine total companions in play and in your dead pile at any time. (Each copy of a non-unique companion in play or in your dead pile counts as a separate companion.)

If you have •Merry (a unique companion) and two copies of Dwarf Guard (a non-unique companion) in your dead pile, you may not have more than 6 companions in your fellowship.

You may not play a card from your hand to replace another card in play, even if those cards have the same card title or represent the same personality.

Playing allies

Allies are characters that do not count as members of your fellowship. Play them to a row behind your fellowship called your **support area**. An ally may be played during any of your fellowship phases (you do not have to wait until your fellowship is at the ally’s home). There is no limit to the number of allies you may have in play.

Your support area represents the whole of Middle-earth. Thus, as the game progresses, this area may contain Hobbits, Elves, Dwarves, and other characters who conceptually live and work in very different regions. The support area can also contain other kinds of cards (as indicated by their game text).

Playing possessions and artifacts

Play Free Peoples possessions and artifacts under a character, with the left edge of the card visible for its card title and **attribute modifiers** (bonuses for the character’s strength and/or vitality, written with a plus sign like “+2”). Some possessions or artifacts say they play to your support area instead.

Class

Each character may bear one possession or artifact of each class at one time. For example, a character may bear only one hand weapon, only one ranged weapon, only one armor, and only one cloak.

Some artifacts and possessions do not have a class. There is no limit to the number of artifacts and possessions without a class that a character may bear.

Aragorn may have several copies of the Athelas possession card (which does not have a class), but he may have only one Hand Weapon and one Ranged Weapon.

Most possessions and artifacts are carried and used by one person at a time. However, some “communal” items, such as pipeweeds, are shared by a larger group, and thus their text says to play them to your support area.

Playing conditions

Play Free Peoples conditions either under a character (like a possession, if the card says, “Bearer must be...”) or to your support area, as indicated in the game text of the condition card.



Moving your fellowship

During each of your fellowship phases, when you are finished performing fellowship actions, your fellowship must move forward to the next site on the adventure path.

How to move

Place your player marker on the next site on the adventure path. If there is no site there yet (as is the case for the first player on the first turn), then a new site must be played from the adventure deck of one of the Shadow players.

Place new sites in order by their site number. When the first player moves for the first time, place a site with the site number of 2.

To determine which Shadow player places the new site on the adventure path (from that player’s adventure deck), look at the site you are moving from. Each site has an arrow at the bottom center of the card. This indicates who is to play the new site, with  meaning the Shadow player to your right and  meaning the Shadow player to your left. (In a two-player game, there is only one Shadow player at a time, so that player always plays the new site.)

Cards from every adventure deck comprise the adventure path that all players advance through. As each game unfolds, the path evolves differently.

When you move your player marker to the next site, add tokens to the twilight pool equal to the Shadow number on the site you moved to.

In addition, for each companion in your fellowship, you must add one token to the twilight pool each time your fellowship moves.

The forces of Shadow, represented in the game by the Shadow cards in your opponent’s hands, now try to find and destroy your fellowship. As your fellowship grows in size, it becomes easier for the forces of Shadow to take action against you.

When the fellowship moves, first perform any actions that are triggered when the fellowship leaves the old site. Then perform actions that occur when the fellowship moves to the new site (including adding twilight tokens for its Shadow number and the number of companions).

2. SHADOW PHASE(S)

Each other player in the game, starting with the player immediately to your right, has one Shadow phase.

During each player's Shadow phase, that player may perform Shadow actions, including playing most Shadow cards. Each Shadow player may perform Shadow actions in any order desired during his or her Shadow phase.

SHADOW PHASE OUTLINE


- first Shadow player performs Shadow actions (and plays Shadow cards) using twilight tokens in the twilight pool
- next Shadow player (if any) performs Shadow actions (and plays Shadow cards) using remaining twilight tokens in the twilight pool
- repeat as needed until every Shadow player has his own Shadow phase

Perform Shadow actions

There is one Shadow action which is always available:

- Play a Shadow minion, possession, artifact, or condition from your hand to the table.

Each Shadow player may perform any Shadow actions during his Shadow phase. When he has completed all of the Shadow actions he wishes to perform, the next Shadow player to his right (if any) then performs a Shadow phase.

The phrase "Shadow actions" means actions that look like this: "Shadow: Play a  Orc from your discard pile."

Playing Shadow cards

A minion is played to the center of the table, across from the active fellowship. Artifacts, possessions, and conditions state in their game text where they play. The Shadow player must remove twilight tokens from the twilight pool as required when playing Shadow cards.

A Shadow player may not play a Shadow condition, possession, or artifact on another Shadow player's minion or to another player's support area.

However, Shadow cards may give bonuses or other game effects to other players' Shadow cards, and Shadow players may play events for other players' Shadow cards as appropriate.

You may exert another player's minion to pay a cost for your Shadow card or special ability.

Each minion is normally played to a certain range of sites beginning with the minion's site number. Thus, if the minion is played to a site that has a lower site number, that minion is **roaming**. The player must pay a roaming penalty by removing an additional two twilight tokens for that minion. (A few sites reduce the roaming penalty for minions played to that site.)

A Moria Archer with a site number of 4 must remove 2 more twilight tokens to play at site 2 or 3. If that same Moria Archer is played at sites 4 through 9, there is no roaming penalty.

That same Moria Archer could be played to site 3, paying the penalty for being a roaming minion, and survive the fellowship's first move to follow them on a second move to site 4. At that site, the archer would no longer be a roaming minion.

When the first Shadow player completes his Shadow phase, the next Shadow player does so. All Shadow players pay for cards by using the same twilight pool. The second Shadow player uses twilight tokens left over from the first Shadow player, and so on.

Shadow players may converse and plan among themselves, but they may not actually show each other the cards in their hands. They can make agreements, but those agreements are not binding.

When all Shadow players have each completed a Shadow phase, it is time for the maneuver phase. (If there are no minions in play at the end of the final Shadow phase, then skip directly to the regroup phase.)

3. MANEUVER PHASE

During your maneuver phase, you and your opponents may perform maneuver actions.

MANEUVER PHASE OUTLINE

- players perform maneuver actions

Perform maneuver actions

Maneuver actions are preceded by the timing word "**Maneuver:**" and appear on cards in play (these are also called "special abilities") or on events.

The event card "What Are They?" has a maneuver action that looks like this: "Maneuver: Spot a ranger to discard a roaming minion."

Players may perform maneuver actions using the following **action procedure**:

As the Free Peoples player, you get the first opportunity to perform a maneuver action, and then the player on your right gets an opportunity, and so on counter-clockwise around the table.

If a player does not wish to perform a maneuver action, he may simply pass. Passing does not prevent a player from performing an action later in the same phase.

However, when all players consecutively pass, proceed to the archery phase.

4. ARCHERY PHASE

During your archery phase, you and your opponents may perform archery actions and then conduct archery fire.

ARCHERY PHASE OUTLINE

- players perform archery actions
- determine archery totals for each side
- Free Peoples player assigns minion archery fire wounds to his companions
- Free Peoples player chooses one Shadow player
- that Shadow player assigns fellowship archery fire wounds to his minions

Perform archery actions

Archery actions are preceded by the timing word "**Archery:**" and appear on cards in play (these are also called "special abilities") or on events.

The ally card "Rúmil" has an archery action that looks like this: "Archery: Exert Rúmil to wound an Orc."

Players may perform archery actions using the action procedure described in the maneuver

phase. When all players consecutively pass, proceed to archery fire.

Archery fire

All Shadow players count the number of all their minions with the keyword **archer** to determine the "minion archery total." No matter how many Shadow players there are, there is only one minion archery total.

As the Free Peoples player, you also count the number of your Free Peoples archer companions to determine the "fellowship archery total." You may count archer allies if the fellowship is at their home, or a card has allowed them to participate in archery fire.

There is always a "default" archery total of zero for each side. The game text of a card (like a site or condition, for example) may add to your archery total even though you have no archers in play at that time.

You must then assign a number of wounds equal to the minion archery total to your companions (and participating allies) in any way you wish.

Archers fire a volley of arrows, one of which is sure to hit its mark. Veteran commanders place their hardiest warriors in the front ranks to receive fire, thereby protecting weaker combatants in the rear ranks.

After you have assigned archery wounds, you choose one Shadow player who must then assign a number of wounds equal to the fellowship archery total to his minions in any way he wishes.

Since these tokens are assigned as wounds and not from exertion, any player may assign enough wounds to kill his own minion or companion.

Wounds are assigned one at a time, so a character may not have more wounds assigned than that character's vitality. Ignore any leftover wounds that cannot be assigned.

If there are no minions left after the archery phase, then skip directly to the regroup phase.

5. ASSIGNMENT PHASE

During your assignment phase, you and your opponents may perform assignment actions, and then you may assign companions to defend against attacking minions. All assignment actions must be complete before proceeding to assign defenders.


ASSIGNMENT PHASE OUTLINE

- players perform assignment actions
- Free Peoples player may assign defending companions to attacking minions
- Shadow players must assign leftover unassigned minions to any defending companions

When the assignment phase is complete, each companion being attacked will lead to a separate skirmish phase.

Perform assignment actions

Assignment actions are preceded by the timing word "**Assignment:**" and appear on cards in play (these are also called "special abilities") or on events.

The event card "Frenzy" has an assignment action that looks like this: "Assignment: Assign an exhausted companion (except the Ring-bearer) to skirmish a  Orc."

Players may perform assignment actions using the action procedure described in the maneuver phase.

Many assignment actions assign a minion to a companion. All of these assignments are “one-on-one” — you cannot assign one character to another unless both of them are unassigned.

When all players consecutively pass, proceed to assign defenders.

Assign defenders

After the assignment actions are finished, there will usually be both minions and companions still unassigned.

The Free Peoples may now assign companions to those minions in any order (without needing events or special abilities). A player may not assign more than one companion to the same minion.

The Free Peoples player need not assign any companions to minions at all, leaving the Shadow players free reign to assign their minions.

Frodo and Aragorn face a single Uruk Soldier. The Free Peoples player assigns Aragorn to the Uruk-hai, thereby protecting Frodo from harm. He may not assign both Frodo and Aragorn to the Uruk Soldier.

All assignments of characters are on a one-to-one basis, with the following two exceptions:

- If your assigned companion has the keyword **defender +1**, you may assign that character at this time to one additional unassigned minion. Defender +2 allows that companion to defend against two additional unassigned minions, and so on.

Frodo and Aragorn face two Uruk Soldiers. The Free Peoples player could assign Aragorn to one and Frodo to the other. However, Aragorn has defender +1, so he may be assigned to defend against both Uruk Soldiers, leaving Frodo again unharmed.

- When you complete the assignment of companions, any unassigned minions may be assigned by the Shadow players to any companions (even if those companions were already assigned). The first Shadow player on your right may assign any of his unassigned minions, and so on counter-clockwise around the table.

Frodo and Aragorn face four Uruk Soldiers. The Free Peoples player uses Aragorn's defender +1 and assigns him to defend against two. Frodo must defend against another. This leaves one more Uruk Soldier, so the Shadow player may assign him as he wishes. He assigns the last Uruk-hai to Frodo, trying to kill the Ring-bearer.

If all minions are somehow removed from their assignments, then skip directly to the regroup phase.

6. SKIRMISH PHASE(S)

When the assignment phase is complete, each defending companion will fight in a separate skirmish phase. In an order decided by the Free Peoples player, skirmishes are resolved one at a time, by conducting a skirmish phase for each.

During each skirmish phase, you and your opponents may perform skirmish actions, and then you must resolve that skirmish. All skirmish actions must be complete before proceeding to resolve the skirmish.

Once a skirmish phase has finished, the Free Peoples player must select another skirmish, if any, and perform a skirmish phase.

SKIRMISH PHASE OUTLINE

- Free Peoples player chooses a skirmish
- players perform skirmish actions
- resolve that skirmish and assign wounds
- Free Peoples player chooses the next skirmish (if any skirmishes are left to be resolved)

Perform skirmish actions

Skirmish actions are preceded by the timing word “**Skirmish:**” and appear on cards in play (these are also called “special abilities”) or on events.

The event card “Cleaving Blow” has a skirmish action that looks like this: “Skirmish: Make a Dwarf strength +2 and damage +1.”

Players may perform skirmish actions using the action procedure described in the maneuver phase. When all players consecutively pass, proceed to resolve that skirmish.

Each skirmish action lasts only for the duration of a single skirmish.

Resolve that skirmish

If the total strength of one side is more than the strength of the other side, the side with the most strength wins that skirmish. (If there is a tie, the Shadow side wins.) Place one wound on each character on the losing side.

If Aragorn, with strength of 8, faces two Orcs, each with strength of 3 (total strength of 6), then Aragorn wins that skirmish and each losing Orc takes one wound.

When the winning side has one or more characters with the keyword **damage +1**, then each losing character takes one additional wound for each damage +1. (Damage +2 adds two wounds, and so on.)

To continue the above example, if Aragorn has damage +1, then each Orc takes two wounds.

But if both Orcs have damage +1 and strength of 4 (thus winning the skirmish with combined strength of 8), then Aragorn takes three wounds instead.

If the total strength of one side is at least double the total strength of the other side, all the characters on the losing side are killed (regardless of how many wounds or how much vitality each has).

In other words, if the weaker's side strength is doubled by the stronger side, the weaker side is overwhelmed. Some cards require the stronger side to triple the strength of the weaker side before overwhelming occurs.

This is also called being **overwhelmed**. When a character is overwhelmed, that character does not take any more wounds — he simply dies.

When the Ring-bearer is overwhelmed, he is killed, regardless of whether he wears the Ring. The One Ring's ability to convert wounds into burdens does not protect him from being overwhelmed, since no wound tokens are placed.

When resolving a skirmish, a side with a total strength greater than zero overwhelms a side whose total strength is zero. If both side's strength is zero, the Shadow side wins the skirmish (but does not overwhelm).

If all characters of one side are removed during a skirmish before strength has been totaled, the skirmish resolves with that side having zero strength.

If a skirmish is canceled, it ends immediately with no winner or loser.

If all characters of one side are removed from a skirmish before that skirmish begins, that skirmish does not occur.

A skirmish phase ends after all actions triggered by winning or losing that skirmish have resolved.

Surviving minions and companions may skirmish again this turn if the fellowship makes another move, or if there is a “fierce skirmish.” Surviving allies may also skirmish again if there is a “fierce skirmish.”

FIERCE SKIRMISHES

After all the normal skirmishes are resolved, surviving minions with the keyword **fierce** must be defended against again. Players complete another assignment phase, where they may assign a defender to each fierce minion, and then complete an additional skirmish phase for each fierce skirmish.

Lurtz is a fierce Uruk-hai minion. When he attacks, Aragorn is assigned to skirmish him. In the regular skirmish phase, Aragorn wins and Lurtz takes one wound. During the following fierce skirmish phase, the Free Peoples player may once more assign a companion to defend against Lurtz. This companion may be Aragorn or may be a different companion.

Only when all skirmishes have been resolved do the players move on to the regroup phase.

7. REGROUP PHASE

During your regroup phase, players may perform regroup actions, then each Shadow player reconciles his hand. Finally, the Free Peoples player decides whether to end his turn now or move again this turn.

REGROUP PHASE OUTLINE

- players perform regroup actions
- Shadow players reconcile
- Free Peoples player chooses to either move the fellowship again or reconcile and end his turn

Perform regroup actions

Regroup actions are preceded by the timing word “**Regroup:**” and appear on cards in play (these are also called “special abilities”) or on events.

The event card “An Able Guide” has a regroup action that looks like this: “Regroup: Spot a ranger to remove ●.”

Players may perform regroup actions using the action procedure described in the maneuver phase.

When all players consecutively pass, proceed to reconcile the Shadow players' hands.

Shadow players reconcile

Each Shadow player must reconcile his hand to eight cards, as follows:

- He may first discard one card from his hand.
- Next, if he has less than eight cards in his hand, he must draw cards until he has eight.

- Otherwise (when he has more than eight cards in his hand), he must discard from his hand until he has only eight.

Free Peoples player chooses

At the end of the regroup phase, if you are the Free Peoples player, you must select one of the following two choices:

- Move the fellowship to the next site (allowing the proper Shadow player to place a new site if needed), add tokens to the twilight pool (both for the Shadow number of the new site and for the number of companions in the fellowship), and return to the Shadow phase(s).
- Or, reconcile your hand (just as the Shadow players did above). Then the Shadow players discard all minions in play (and the cards they bear), and your turn ends.

Move limit

During each of your turns, your fellowship must move once, and may move a number of times up to your move limit.

In a two-player game, your move limit is two. In a multiplayer game (with three or more players), your move limit is equal to the number of your opponents when the game begins. During your regroup phase, you may decide to make another move, subject to the limit above.

WINNING THE GAME

A player wins the game when his fellowship is at site 9 and his Ring-bearer survives all skirmish phases.

A player may also win by becoming the only player left in the game (see below).

LOSING THE GAME

A player loses the game if his Frodo is killed and Sam is not part of his fellowship to carry on as Ring-bearer. (Alternately, if Sam has become your Ring-bearer, you lose the game if Sam is killed.)

A player also loses the game if his Ring-bearer becomes corrupted. If the Ring-bearer has a number of burdens on his card equal to his resistance attribute, he is corrupted. There are also card effects that can corrupt the Ring-bearer, regardless of how many burdens he might have.

If a player loses a game and there are at least two other players remaining, remove his player marker and all of his cards from play (and discard any opponent's cards that were on them).

Remove his sites on the adventure path in numerical order, and replace each one with an opponent's corresponding site, in counter-clockwise order starting with the player on his right.

OTHER IMPORTANT RULES

ALLIES

Allies are not companions and don't travel along the adventure path with your fellowship. Ally cards have a home site number indicated just after the card's type, on the same line (such as **ALLY • HOME 3 • ELF**). Each ally in your support area is considered to be at his home site.

Allies normally do not participate in archery fire and skirmishes. Special abilities on allies (such as archery actions or skirmish actions) may be used when the fellowship is at any site.

However, when your fellowship is at your ally's home, that ally must participate in archery fire and skirmishes. This doesn't mean that such an ally must take an archery wound or be assigned by the Free Peoples player to defend a skirmish, but that character is eligible to do so if the Free Peoples player so chooses.

When Elrond (an ally) is in your support area and your fellowship is at his home of Rivendell (site 3), he may fight alongside your fellowship.

Some card effects also allow allies to fight in this way, even when the fellowship is not at that ally's home. While an ally participates in archery fire and skirmishes, that ally is considered to be at the same site as the fellowship.

UNIQUENESS

Unique cards

Many character, possession, and artifact cards represent a thing that there is only one of. Those cards have a dot (•) before the card title, to tell you that you may only have one of those cards in play at a time. Two cards that have the same title but different subtitles represent the same thing.

You may have only one card with the card title of •Gandalf in play at one time. Other players may also have a card with the title of •Gandalf in play, but only one is allowed per player.

For Shadow cards, if a copy of a unique card is already in play and active, you may not play another card that has the same title (regardless of subtitles).

Non-unique cards

All cards that do not have a dot (•) before their card title are non-unique. This means that all players may have many copies of those cards in play at one time.

Many minions are non-unique because they represent the faceless hordes employed by Sauron in his search for The Ring. Possessions such as Athelas and Coat of Mail are non-unique because there are many of those possessions.

Most conditions are non-unique, and you may have multiple copies of these conditions in play at one time. The effects of these cards are cumulative.

The game text of the non-unique condition Saruman's Ambition says, "The twilight cost of your ☞ events is -1." While you have two copies of this condition in your support area, the twilight cost of your ☞ events is -2.

ACTIVE CARDS

During your turn, your Free Peoples cards and your opponents' Shadow cards are the only ones that are active. Inactive cards are not affected by the game and do not affect the game.

Your companions and your opponent's minions are active. Your opponents' companions are not.

Exception: Cards borne by active cards are active and cards borne by inactive cards are inactive.

An opponent's Shadow condition on another player's companion is not active because that companion is not.

Sites are always active. A site's game text may not be used unless the fellowship is there, although some cards may copy and use that game text. Site text is not active when the starting fellowships are played.

If the game text of a site has a Shadow special ability, you may use that special ability only when the active fellowship is at that site and you are a Shadow player.

You may not play another copy of a unique card that is already in play and currently active.

Occasionally in a multiplayer game, two copies of the same unique card may be in play at the same time.

Someone may play a copy of a unique Shadow card that the Free Peoples player already has in play, because that first copy is not currently active. When a third player becomes the Free Peoples player, both copies of the unique Shadow card are candidates to become active — but only one of them can be active at a time.

In this case, the active copy is the one belonging to the player closest to the right of the Free Peoples player.

THE ONE RING

Frodo always begins the game as your Ring-bearer. He bears The One Ring for you, just as he carried the Ring in his pocket or on a chain around his neck.

The One Ring is a special card which is neither a Free Peoples card nor a Shadow card. It has no twilight cost, and its card type is "The One Ring." There are two versions of The One Ring in *The Fellowship of the Ring* set: The Ruling Ring and Isildur's Bane.

When can he put on the Ring?

When you use the special ability on The One Ring, your Ring-bearer "wears" the Ring. Using the special ability on The One Ring is optional.

You may activate this game text as a response when the Ring-bearer is about to take a wound. Once activated, this special ability continues to be in effect until the regroup phase.

Your Ring-bearer cannot put the Ring on to save himself from being overwhelmed. When a character is overwhelmed, no wounds are taken and that character is killed.

What happens while he wears the Ring?

When your Ring-bearer wears The One Ring, each time he is about to take a wound, that wound is converted to a burden (two burdens instead with Isildur's Bane).

While wearing the Ring, your Ring-bearer can perform all normal actions such as moving and skirmishing. He may defend against attacking minions as usual.

There are special Shadow cards with powerful effects that can only be played while your Ring-bearer wears the Ring.

While Frodo wears the Ring, he enters the world of twilight, making him more vulnerable to the power of the Ring and the will of Sauron.

How does he become corrupted?

If your Ring-bearer ever has as many burdens as his resistance (usually 10), he becomes corrupted and you lose the game.

Your Ring-bearer may also become corrupted by a card effect. This takes effect immediately, regardless of how many burdens are currently on your Ring-bearer.

How does he take the Ring off?

At the start of the regroup phase, your Ring-bearer takes off the Ring and simply carries it again.

What happens when he is killed?

If your Ring-bearer is killed (even if he is overwhelmed), you lose the game.

Exception: Sam has a special ability on his card that is a response you may use when Frodo is killed (not corrupted). If Sam is in play at that moment, this allows you to transfer the Ring to Sam, and then he becomes your Ring-bearer.

One other companion may bear The One Ring: Frodo's faithful servant Sam. Only he has the fortitude and willpower to bear such a heavy burden, and only if his master has already fallen.

RESPONSE

Response is a timing word that allows you to play an event (or use a special ability) whenever the situation described in its game text happens. Sometimes this situation is called a "trigger."

You may respond more than once to the same situation.

Sometimes a response action interrupts another action to cancel it before it resolves. When this happens, that other action does not have its effect, but its costs and requirements are still paid.

After all required actions to a particular trigger have resolved, players may perform response actions responding to that same trigger using the action procedure.

COSTS AND EFFECTS

A cost or an effect could be adding/removing twilight tokens, exerting a character, discarding a card, or any number of other possibilities. The costs for an action are usually listed before the word "to" (so the action takes the form of "pay X to do Y," with X being the cost and Y being the effect).

Costs

If a card or special ability has a cost, you must pay that cost or you may not use that card or special ability.

If the cost of an event requires you to exert one of your characters and all your characters are exhausted, then you may not play that event.

Each time you pay a cost, you may only use that cost to fulfill the requirements of a single card.

If you have two conditions in play, each with a special ability that requires you to exert a Dwarf, you may not use both of those special abilities by exerting a Dwarf once.

Effects

If the effect of a card or special ability requires you to perform an action and you cannot, you must perform as much as you can and ignore the rest.

If the effect of an event requires you to discard 2 cards from your hand and you only have 1 card in hand, just discard the 1 card and ignore the rest.

If the effect of a card or special ability requires you to choose one of two different actions, you must choose an action that you are fully capable of performing (if possible).

The condition card "Worry" says, "choose to either exert the Ring-bearer or add a burden." If you cannot exert the Ring-bearer (because he is exhausted), you must add a burden.

If you meet all the requirements and pay all the costs for playing a card, you may play that card even if the card will have no effect.

If an action offers a player a choice of effects, that player must choose one that can be fully satisfied (if possible).

MISCELLANEOUS

Discard

The default meaning of the word "discard" found in game text is "discard from play." Discarding from other locations (such as from your hand, from the top of your draw deck, or from any other place) is always described in detail.

Discard piles are always face-up, and cards are discarded one at a time so all players can see which cards are being discarded.

You may look through your own discard pile at any time, but you may not look through an opponent's discard pile.

Drawing your last card

Whenever you draw the last card from your draw deck, you don't lose the game. Just continue playing with the cards you have left in your hand (and on the table).

Keywords

Keywords are bold words at the beginning of a card's game text (such as **search** or **stealth**). Six keywords (**archer**, **damage +1**, **defender +1**, **Ring-bearer**, **sanctuary**, and **fierce**) have special rules associated with them.

Modifiers

When all modifiers are applied to a number (like strength, vitality, a twilight cost, or an archery total), if its final value is less than zero, then that number is zero.

Moving cards between decks and piles

Whenever you move a card from one pile to another (such as shuffling a card from your discard pile into your draw deck), you must reveal that card to all players so they can verify that the correct card was moved.

Playing cards from your draw deck

Some cards allow you to play a card directly from your draw deck or discard pile. You must still pay any costs and meet requirements necessary for playing that card.

After you finish looking through your draw deck, reshuffle it and give the player to your right the opportunity to cut it.

The order of your discard pile is irrelevant, and you may place any card you wish on top after playing a card from there.

There is no penalty if you don't find the card you are looking for in your draw deck or discard pile.

Race

Each character card has its race indicated just after the card's type, on the same line (such as **COMPANION • MAN**).

*The race of "Man" includes women of the appropriate culture. A possession that requires a * Man bearer may be borne by a * female character who has the race of "Man."*

Note that in *The Lord of the Rings* TCG, Uruk-hai is a different race from Orc.

Reminder text

Any game text on a card that is italicized and in parentheses (*like this*) is reminder text. This is to help new players remember what certain keywords do. Reminder text can be ignored when playing the game.

The game text of Uruk Savage says, "Damage +1. (When this minion wins a skirmish, add 1 extra wound to the defender.)" The sentence in parentheses and italics is reminder text, and does not make Uruk Savage damage +2.

Required actions

Required actions are those that must happen when a specified requirement or trigger occurs. Events, special abilities, and actions that use the word "may" are not required actions.

Spot

This word in game text sets up a requirement for playing a card or using a special ability, in conjunction with a noun, such as, "To play, spot a Dwarf." This is equivalent to, "A Dwarf must be in play and active for you to play this card."

Normally, you don't have to spot all the cards in play that meet the requirement if you don't want to.

Bilbo's Pipe says, "spot X pipes." If there are 2 pipes in play (and active), you may choose to spot 2 pipes, 1 pipe, or none.

However, if a card says, "while you can spot" or "if you can spot," that means you don't have a choice and you have to spot anything and everything that meets the requirement.

Uruk-hai Armory says, "While you can spot an Uruk-hai, the fellowship archery total is -1." You can't make any choices to spot for this card (it either works or it doesn't).

Stack

Stacking a card is not playing a card. Stacked cards are face up and may be looked at by any player at any time. Stacked cards are inactive.

Timing conflicts

If two or more required actions are occurring at the same time (for example, more than one "at the start of each of your turns" actions), the Free Peoples player decides in which order they occur.

Transfer of Artifacts and Possessions

You may transfer an artifact or possession between your Free Peoples characters during your fellowship phase by paying the twilight cost for that artifact or possession again.

Both characters involved in the transfer must be at the same site. (Remember that an ally is always at his home site during your fellowship phase.)

An artifact or possession may be transferred only to a character who may bear it (as indicated by a "bearer must be" phrase in its text).

You may not discard a possession or artifact borne by a character in play without a special card effect that allows you to do so.

EXPANDED TURN SEQUENCE

1. FELLOWSHIP PHASE

Remove all tokens from the twilight pool
Perform **fellowship** actions
Move to the next site

2. SHADOW PHASE(S)—one for each Shadow player

Perform Shadow actions

3. MANEUVER PHASE

Perform **maneuver** actions

4. ARCHERY PHASE

Perform **archery** actions
Conduct archery fire

5. ASSIGNMENT PHASE

Perform **assignment** actions
Assign defenders

6. SKIRMISH PHASE(S)—one for each skirmish

Perform **skirmish** actions
Resolve that skirmish

7. REGROUP PHASE

Perform **regroup** actions
Reconcile Shadow players' hands
Either the Free Peoples player moves to the next site (*return to Shadow phase*) — or the Free Peoples player reconciles and Shadow players discard all minions in play

THE LORD OF THE RINGS™ TCG COLLECTOR INFORMATION

The Lord of the Rings TCG comes in 63-card *starter decks* (there are two different ones), 74-card *deluxe starter sets*, and 11-card *booster packs*.

But all cards do not appear with the same frequency. Some are *rare*, others are *uncommon*, and still others are *common*. Each 11-card booster pack contains 1 rare card and a mixture of 10 uncommon and common cards.

Sixty of the cards in your starter deck or deluxe starter set are *fixed*, since you get the same ones in each of that type of starter. Three of the cards in a starter are randomly inserted rare cards. The 74 cards in a deluxe starter set include an 11-card booster pack.

A complete set of *The Fellowship of the Ring*™ has 365 cards: 121 rare, 121 uncommon, and 121 common cards; plus two premium cards found only in the starter decks.

In the lower right corner of every card, you'll see a code like "1 R 34." The first number is the set number, with 1 indicating *The Fellowship of the Ring* set.

The letter is the rarity code, with **R** for *rare*, **U** for *uncommon*, **C** for *common*, and **P** for *premium*. Last is the number for that card in the set. In the example above, this is *Fellowship of the Ring* card number 34.

Get other premium cards by becoming a part of our exciting *The Lord of the Rings* TCG League.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS TCG FOIL CARDS

The Lord of the Rings Trading Card Game brings many brilliant images from the upcoming movie to life. These images look even cooler in their foil versions! *The Fellowship of the Ring* set features a complete, 365-card parallel foil set. These foils are diffraction foils, like the foils from Decipher's Reflections sets for our *Star Trek*™ and *Star Wars*™ games. On average, there will be about one foil in every six packs. The foil cards have differing rarities, and they appear approximately as follows:

- 1 common foil every 13 packs
- 1 uncommon foil every 18 packs
- 1 rare foil every 26 packs

The foil versions of the Aragorn and Gandalf premium cards are of common rarity.

These foils replace a common card in the booster pack. This means that sometimes a pack will have two rare cards (one a foil).

Players can also get these foil cards by playing in sanctioned *The Lord of the Rings* Trading Card Game tournaments. Every sanctioned tournament will have three foils to give out. A random rare foil will go to the winner, a random uncommon foil will go to second place, and a random common foil will be given out to a random participant. The foils for tournament prizes are taken from the parallel foil set and the same as the ones found in booster packs.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS ROLEPLAYING GAME

Roleplaying game fans will gain their own entrance to Middle-earth with Decipher's *The Lord of the Rings* Roleplaying Game. Currently under development, the full game system will launch in February 2002.

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Can't wait until February? New to roleplaying games? Start with the introductory boxed Adventure Game, "Through the Mines of Moria," available Fall 2001.

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Check out our website, send us an email or give us a call:

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- rules questions email: elrond@decipher.com
- customer service email: ccgcustomerservice@decipher.com
- telephone: 757-623-3600
- address: P.O. Box 56, Norfolk, VA 23501-0056

Visit: www.lordoftherings.net



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