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Do you have a question about **Magic: The Gathering** or *Wizards of the Coast*? Send it, along with your full name and location, to ask@wizards.com. We'll post a new question and answer each day.

February 28, 2002

Q: "Why did you get rid of 'bury'? It seems much easier to write 'Bury target creature' than to write 'Destroy target creature. That creature cannot be regenerated.'"

-- Curtis Seaman, Fort Collins, CO

A: From **William Jockusch**, Research & Development:

"We were trying to decrease the number of definitions in the rules. It is true that 'bury target creature' is easier to write, but it depends on the reader knowing what 'bury' means, which means we have to define it somewhere in the rulebook. This way we don't have to, and there is one less word a new player needs to learn when they are first playing our game."

February 27, 2002

Q: "Do you have any specific rule on the expansion sets that contribute to a basic set? If so, what sets would be included in *8th Edition* and when it is released?"

-- Jorge Artur Guimarães, Lisbon, Portugal

A: From **Elaine Chase**, Research & Development:

"All of *Invasion* block (*Invasion*, *Planeshift*, and *Apocalypse*) and *Odyssey* block (*Odyssey*, *Torment*, and *Judgment*) will be eligible for reprinting for the first time in *8th Edition*. There is also a possibility that a few cards from this year's large expansion, *Onslaught*, will make it in, much like *Elvish Champion* appeared in *7th Edition* before *Invasion* was fully considered for reprints. And, as always, you can expect to see old favorites make an appearance."

February 26, 2002

Q: "All the art on white *Torment* cards that I've seen appears grainy and pixilated. Why is that?"

--Erik Peterson, Albuquerque, NM

A: From **Randy Brühl**, Magic Assistant Brand Manager:

"You've got a sharp eye. Most people don't notice the difference..."

"While I'd like to tell you that it was black's dominance of the *Torment* expansion that caused this, it's not. A mistake in our production process resulted in a reduced image resolution for *Torment*'s non-premium white cards. We've identified the problem and have implemented a new process to make sure this will not happen in future print runs."

February 25, 2002

Q: "How come you've created scores of creature tokens, but never a single land or enchantment token (i.e. a token that counts as a land or as a global enchantment)?"

-- Alexander Blumke, Geneva, Switzerland

A: From **Mike Elliott**, R&D senior designer:

"Since we use counters on many cards, having local enchantment tokens would probably be very confusing for many players, especially if you had an enchantment token on a creature token. So we will probably never do local enchantments as tokens. The rules allow for tokens to be of a type other than creatures, so we could conceivably make land tokens or global enchantment

tokens if we ever decide to introduce these into the game. We would just have to minimize the confusion associated with having other types of tokens on the table, potentially in the same environment as creature tokens, since we tend to do creature token generation cards all the time."

February 22, 2002

Q: "Given what we've learned about **Magic** over the past 8+ years, are there any elements of the game that you now wish you had designed differently? I'm particularly interested in those aspects which would be hard to change now."

-- Jeremy White, Needham, MA

A: From **Richard Garfield**, creator of **Magic: The Gathering**:

"While **Magic** has changed a lot over the years, and for the better, there is very little I would have changed in the initial design. That is because it was designed fine for the initial players, with the flexibility to evolve to be good for today's more knowledgeable players. For example, the card balance originally was much less sophisticated - but players were less sophisticated also, so it just made the game more exciting for them. As players became good enough to appreciate better balance we were able to provide it. Also, ante cards were a lot of fun originally for some players at little cost to others - but they don't mix well with today's tournament driven game, and so they are best left out at this point.

"One of the things I might change, however, might be using the *Sixth Edition* rules as the initial rules - I think these rules are better for both the unsophisticated and the sophisticated player."

February 21, 2002

Q: "Is there actually a card called 'Wall of Schizophrenia?' I think it was available at the 2000 Invitational, but I've yet to find anyone else who has heard of it. Please help me... I collect walls and would like to know if I have to look for this one."

-- Ryan Johnson, Menifee, CA

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, R&D Senior Designer:

"Every year at the **Magic** Invitational (**Magic**'s equivalent of the all-star game), I run a format called Duplicate Limited. Duplicate Limited is simply a limited format with one major twist: all the players receive the exact same set of cards. To add a little extra fun, I often create new cards specifically for the event. This adds an extra skill testing element as players have to evaluate cards they have never seen before.

"Wall of Schizophrenia was a card I created for the [2000 Magic Invitational](#) held in Kuala Lumpur. The card text was:

Wall of Schizophrenia

3 2 2

Creature - Wall

5/3

Trample

CARDNAME may block any number of goblins or wizards each combat.

CARDNAME cannot block elephants, carnivores, or walls.

"The only copies of the card were the 16 stickered versions (much like an R&D playtest card) I used at the event. After the Invitational ended, I let the players keep the cards, so the only physical copies in existence are in the hands of the sixteen invitees.

"If you're wondering why I made a 5/3 trampling wall, you should know that I also created a new creature enchantment called 'Undercover Disguise' for 3 4 that read: 'You may play CARDNAME any time you could play an instant. As CARDNAME comes into play, choose a creature type. Enchanted creature is the chosen creature type.'

February 20, 2002

Q: "When a player is suspended for cheating, why is that player's rating not reset to 1700, especially in cases of ratings-based cheating?"

-- Chris Cade, San Francisco, CA

A: From **Chris Zantides**, DCI Policy Manager

"The DCI does not reset or alter people's ratings for various reasons, chief among them is the integrity of the ELO rating system. For example, if a 2000 rating player were set to 1700 they would be inadvertently taking a serious amount of points from other 1700 ranked players.

"When the DCI discovers and investigates ratings based fraud, all tournaments that are discovered to have been fraudulent are removed from at the next ratings run i.e. the next time the

database is updated.

"For more information on the ELO systems, please see Appendix A of the [Universal Tournament Rules](#)."

February 19, 2002

Q: "How do you justify the low casting costs of cards such as **Spiritmonger** and **Pernicious Deed**? Maybe its just me, but a 6/6 for 5 is broken and something you'd never have done before without a drawback. Were these cards playtested?"

-- Dan Bretherton, Matamata (Hobbiton), New Zealand

A: From **Worth Wollpert**, Research & Development:

"The costing of many of the cards in *Apocalypse* threw a lot of folks for a loop, for sure. There are a couple different ways in which cards can get released that seem 'undercosted.' In your question you cite **Spiritmonger** and **Pernicious Deed**. The way these two cards came up with their respective costs is actually quite different. Spiritmonger had been playtested to infinity by any number of folks here in R&D, and while we certainly found him to be good, he didn't seem dominant in our Standard environment (and in our defense, I think it's fair to say he's not dominant in real world Standard now). We kept piling ability after ability on him, and somewhere in there we realized that as long as one of the abilities wasn't some sort of evasion (trample, flying, 'fear,' etc...) he really couldn't be 'broken.' So we released that monster as he stood for many months near the end of *Apocalypse* development. Regarding the Deed, that was one of those cards that we had our eyes on for a long time, but just decided that the cost was prohibitive as it was, (it was **2** for a long, long time). Only when VP of R&D Bill Rose got his hands on the file near the R&D 'pencils down' time did a mana get lopped off of Deed, and many, many other cards as well. (**Phyrexian Arena** and **Vindicate**, to name a couple, both used to cost **1** more.) Bill thought that we needed to spice up the set for constructed, he wasn't happy at the lack of *Apocalypse* cards in our Future Future League that we use to test new sets' effects on Standard. Hope some of this info sheds some light on how things get done here, most of the time you guys get to enjoy the juicy changes in the real world far longer than we do here."

February 18, 2002

Q: "Why do Legendary Lands no longer tap for the color of mana associated with their abilities? It makes perfect sense that **Pendelhaven** produces green mana and **Urborg** produces black mana. Why shouldn't **Yavimaya Hollow** produce green mana or **Keldon Necropolis** produce red mana? I know that you don't want to repeat the mistake made with **Tolarian Academy**, but the power level of typical Legendary Lands, along with the fact that they are Legendary, makes it seem reasonable that they should produce the color of mana associated with their ability."

-- Keith MacLeod, Blue Lake CA

A: From **Robert Gutschera**, Research & Development:

"There's no standard policy that prevents Legendary Lands from tapping for their associated color; it's just worked out that way recently. There are good reasons why it should often work out that way, though. R&D doesn't want to make Legendary Lands that are just plain better than the corresponding basic land (if we did that, then every single deck using that color would use that land, and it would get boring). So if the land taps for colored mana, and it has another ability too, it would have to have a disadvantage - 'comes into play tapped' being one of the favorites. We don't want to keep writing 'comes into play tapped' on every land (it's OK to do sometimes, but not all the time). And more complex disadvantages can take up a lot of space (remember there's also the space of the tapping for mana itself), which might detract from the main ability of the land.

"So we're more likely to make a Legendary Land that doesn't tap for colored mana. But who knows, we might make some that do again someday."

February 15, 2002

Q: "What is up with Tahngarth's double pictures? On some cards, like **Sleeping Potion** and others, he's brown with long horns, but on **Tahngarth**, **Talruum Hero** and others, he has white and red patches of fur and wacky curved horns! Will the real Tahngarth please stand up?"

-- Andres Solano, Trenton, NJ

A: From **Rei Nakazawa**, **Magic** creative text writer:

"Actually, there are two answers to your question! First of all, not all minotaurs are made equal. Some of them, like the one on **Sleeping Potion**, are not Tahngarth, but other members of his Talruum minotaur tribe (see **Talruum Minotaur**, **Talruum Piper**, and **Talruum Champion** for other examples). Secondly, as you probably already know, during the *Tempest* storyline, Tahngarth was captured and exposed to Phyrexian mutation rays that turned him into the form you see on his card (check out **Tahngarth's Rage** for what he looked like before, and **Torment** - the card, not the

expansion - to see his reaction). **Volrath** was planning to put a **spinal graft** on him, in order to control him and make him **Greven il-Vec's** new first mate, but fortunately, **Gerrard** rescued **Tahngarth** before this plan could be put into effect."

February 14, 2002

Q: "In the game's credits, how many times had the name 'Charlie Catino' been misspelled in the history of **Magic**? Can you list every version of the name?"

-- Tobias Bosselmann, Potsdam, Germany

A: From **Charlie Catino**, Research & Development:

"I have no idea. I don't understand how it keeps happening! I have worked on many **Magic** sets - probably a dozen or so, and a few associated **Magic** products. So the answer to your question is probably around 15. But I also want to mention that I have worked on games other than **Magic** as well - so the total is probably in the 20's. Probably my two favorites ones are actually from Pokemon and MLB Showdown. For baseball, I am Charlie Bambino (I like this one because I like to think that when I play softball I hit like Babe Ruth). Pokemon contributed my personal favorite - Charlie Catinachu."

February 13, 2002

Q: "Wizards press releases say that **Magic: The Gathering** is printed in nine languages. Which ones? And which languages were some of the early expansions printed in?"

-- Wayne Stubbs, London, UK

A: From **Tanya Zambrowsky**, Production:

"Currently we produce in the following languages; this applies to the *Invasion Cycle* (*Invasion*, *Planeshift*, and *Apocalypse*) and *Odyssey Cycle* (*Odyssey*, *Torment*, and soon *Judgment*):

English
Japanese
Chinese Traditional
Chinese Simplified
Spanish
Portuguese
French
German
Italian

"The first expansions to be printed in a foreign language were *Legends* and *The Dark*, both printed in Italian. The first foreign basic set edition was *Revised*, printed in French, German, and Italian."

February 12, 2002

Q: "With the bringing back of old creatures (i.e. atogs in *Odyssey*), I want to know if you would consider bringing back slivers. Because, unlike atogs, their abilities are beneficial to all other creatures of that type, and there are more abilities than just '+1/+1 until end of turn.' Well, I could go on forever about why I think slivers are better but please consider it."

-- Roberto DeSandoli, Tampa, FL

A: From **Randy Buehler**, Research & Development:

"We in R&D are always looking back at older sets and trying to figure out what worked and what didn't work. When something worked out well, we ask ourselves whether we should bring it back. I've talked to a lot of people who like slivers, so I'd say it does fall into that category of stuff we might bring back someday."

February 11, 2002

Q: "I have noticed that **Patagia Golem** and **Obsianus Golem** have received the creature type 'Golem' for *6th* and *7th Editions*. However, they weren't always specified as such. Is it safe to assume, then, that any artifact creature with 'Golem' in the name also has the creature type 'Golem' (e.g., **Basalt Golem**, **Matopi Golem**)?"

-- Erik Olson, Benicia, CA

A: From **Paul Barclay**, TCG Rules Creation & Writing:

"Yes. Every artifact creature with 'Golem' in its name has creature type 'Golem.' There are also a few other Golems that don't have the word 'Golem' in their names. Here are every single artifact creature that has one or more creature types, direct from the Oracle card reference:"

Angel: Copper-Leaf Angel

Chimera: Brass-Talon Chimera, Iron-Heart Chimera, Lead-Belly Chimera, Tin-Wing Chimera

Dragon: Draco, Teeka's Dragon, Tek

Gnome: Bottle Gnomes, Clockwork Gnomes, Copper Gnomes, Ersatz Gnomes, Patchwork Gnomes, Ticking Gnomes

Golem: Alloy Golem, Basalt Golem, Brass Herald, Coal Golem, Complex Automaton, Crosis's Attendant, Crystal Golem, Darigaaz's Attendant, Dromar's Attendant, Emblazoned Golem, Flint Golem, Hollow Warrior, Igneous Golem, Junk Golem, Lead Golem, Limestone Golem, Matopi Golem, Obsianus Golem, Patagia Golem, Rith's Attendant, Rusting Golem, Sand Golem, Soldevi Golem, Sparring Golem, Steel Golem, Straw Golem, Thran Golem, Treva's Attendant

Golem Legend: Karn, Silver Golem

Licid: Transmogrifying Licid

Sliver: Metallic Sliver

Spellshaper: Toymaker

Wall: Crenellated Wall, Living Wall, Mobile Fort, Necropolis, Shield Sphere, Shifting Wall, Snow Fortress, Walking Wall, Wall of Junk, Wall of Shields, Wall of Spears

"The Oracle card reference lists the text of every **Magic: The Gathering** card, including rulings, errata, and all functional changes. It can be found [here](#)."

February 8, 2002

Q: "I'd like to know why the quality of aggressive one-casting-cost creatures has declined so much since *Tempest* block, especially to the point where even the most aggressive *Invasion* block decks didn't have any real first-turn play. Why are **Jackal Pups**, **Rogue Elephants**, and **Savannah Lions** quickly becoming distant memories?"

--Greg Jacob, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

A: From **Brian Schneider**, Research & Development:

"**Magic** at the time of *Tempest* was too fast. **Magic** at the time of *Urza's Saga* was way too fast. Not for me, mind you - I like my games to end as quickly as possible. But for others, the abundance of overpowered 'one drops' (not to mention broken combo cards) proved nightmarish and tiresome. How many times can you lose to a first turn Pup (or **Tolarian Academy**) before you just quit playing? Aggressive 'one drops,' like broken combo pieces, tend to make games short - too short - and R&D decided it would be best to slow them down - a lot.

"Since the 'broken period,' the emphasis shifted from making overpowered, under-costed weenies to making the world safe for **Magic**'s endangered species - the 5th turn. An effort was made to make bigger creatures better and, in the end, weaken aggressive cheap creatures. So... why are Jackal Pups, Rogue Elephants, and Savannah Lions quickly becoming distant memories? Because they're too good at making the game too short.

"One last note: some of the best one-casting-cost creatures ever created were printed *after* *Tempest* - **Ramosian Sergeant**, **Grim Lavamancer**, and **Basking Rootwalla**. While they may not be as 'aggressive' as the ones you've named... they may well be as powerful."

February 7, 2002

Q: "Is there any particular reason to have a **Masticore** in the art of **Deep Analysis**? Does it have something to do with the *Torment* storyline, or is it just for the bad pun in the flavor text?"

--Nathaniel Stevens, Philadelphia, PA

A: From **Doug Beyer**, web developer and **Magic** flavor text writer:

"The bad pun is mine, but that text was based on the art concept, not the other way around. During a card's development, the creative team decides the concept for the card art first, then sends that concept, along with the card's tentative rules text, to a group of flavor text writers. We, the flavor text writers, offer several flavor text suggestions over a period of time, and the creative text team selects one to end up on the card. In this case, the art concept for **Deep Analysis** described scientists examining an ancient (read: no longer in Standard) artifact. When I read that it was going to be a **Masticore** on the scientists' table (chosen simply because it's so recognizable), I couldn't resist poking a little fun. I was happy to find that the team liked my little joke."

February 6, 2002

Q: "**Magic** has a number of cards with names that begin with 'LI.' In Spanish this is pronounced like a 'y' (like tortilla), so **Llanowar Elves** would be pronounced 'Yanowar Elves' and **Llawan** would be 'Yawan.' How is a leading 'LI' pronounced in Magicese?"

-- David W. Burhans, Columbus, OH

A: From **Brandon Bozzi**, creative administrator:

"Words in **Magic** that begin with 'LI' are pronounced like 'Lloyd' or the English pronunciation of

'llama' - just like a single 'L.' For example, in the sentence, 'Llawan told Lloyd to ride his llama through Llanowar,' all the 'll' words sound the same."

February 5, 2002

Q: "Who decides where the major tournaments such as Worlds are held? Is it sort of like the Olympics where a representative from each place tells you why they should have the honor of hosting Worlds?"

--Justin Wan, Vancouver, BC

A: From **Diana Johns**, Organized Play Senior Events Manager:

"Nope, not quite the Olympics, though some areas have offered enticing reasons why an event should come to their area!

"Actually, there is a fairly extensive list of criteria for making location decisions, and an Organized Play committee looks at that list each time we need to move an event. Before we can choose an actual location, we have to set the schedule of premier events. Worlds, for multiple reasons, is consistently held in August. We then work back from there to set the rotation of premier events (like the Pro Tour circuit), using criteria such as preferred geographic area, media potential, prerelease dates, time of year, and type of format. Once an area is chosen - Asia, for instance - the committee discusses cities in that area. Once a viable list of choices is compiled, the show management team will visit the cities on a site tour to check out the venues and hotels. They then present the top choices, and from there a decision is made. Typically we are looking a minimum of two years ahead, so right now we are already working on 2004. The World Championships is an event we move from continent to continent each year. The current rotation is Asia Pacific, Europe, North America. The rotation started with the 1999 Tokyo World Championships, followed by Brussels, and then Toronto. We are back to the top of the rotation this year with Sydney, Australia."

February 4, 2002

Q: "Will the *Odyssey* story run through several blocks like **Gerrard** and the **Weatherlight** did?"

-- David Leung, Ontario, Canada

A: From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** creative director:

"Our current plans are to continue the story of **Kamahl** and the **Mirari** for the *Odyssey* block and the block after it. If the story becomes well-liked by players, we'll consider extending it. If not, we'll move on to a different story for the block that begins in October 2003."

February 1, 2002

Q: "Are there any plans to 'reset' amateur status of players? There are many people like myself who have only two Pro Tour points and have had those two points for a while. I think we should at least get a chance to recover our amateur status... especially if we got those two points before it was ever announced that the 1700 ratings flag would be replaced by the amateur flag at Grand Prix."

-- Prakash Madhav, Cincinnati, OH

A: From **Chris Zantides**, DCI Policy Manager:

"At this time, there are no plans to reset the amateur status of players. As with all professional games, once a player has crossed the threshold of amateur and competed on a professional circuit, there is no going back. The DCI feels that once a player has played in the professional arena (the Pro Tour) or done well in Grand Prix, they can no longer be considered an amateur."



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