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# Starting Over



## The origins of the mulligan rule

Mark Rosewater · Making Magic  
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Welcome to Mulligan Week! This week I'm going to take a moment to talk all about mulligans. To begin I guess I should answer the most obvious question, what is a mulligan? According to the Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (that's the actual title – and yes, I do own an unabridged dictionary), a mulligan is “a stew containing meat, vegetables, etc., esp. one made of any available ingredients”. Wait, that's not the right definition. Stupid multiple entries.



Let's try again. A mulligan is “a shot not counted against the score permitted in unofficial play to a player whose previous shot was poor”. That's closer, but still not quite right. Let's try the next definition. What do you mean that's it? Just my luck, I get the abridged unabridged dictionary. Hey “mise” isn't in here. And neither is “topdeck” or “ting”. And get this, “mill” has eighteen definitions none of which talk about moving cards from the top of the library to the graveyard.

I have to be honest. I'm not the biggest fan of dictionaries. Who are they to decide what are and aren't words? Word fascists. That's what I say. That would make them white for anyone who happens to be thinking about color philosophy at a time like this. See, they're evil and not black. But let's not open that kettle of fish. I always seem to cause controversy when I mention the word “evil” in my column.

What was I talking about? This is a theme week right? Is it Phasing Week (On Monday, Wednesday and Friday only)? Beeble Week? Repeats With a New Name Week? What's going on? Oh right, it's Mulligan Week. So let's... wait a minute. This column is a mess. It's mulligan week and I'm talking about how evil dictionary editors are. This isn't working. You know what, this is Mulligan Week, right? Okay, I'm calling a mulligan.

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