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Welcome Back to Saturday School



John Carter · Saturday School
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Summer is drawing to a close, so that means it's time to hit the books. For this class, that means the Comprehensive Rules and the other documents that make up the library of Magic rules knowledge. Several of you may have attended Saturday School before--and for the curious, we have an extensive history of lessons from Rune Horvik in the [Saturday School Archive](#). Starting today, I will be your new teacher. My name is Carter.

This series is called Saturday School for a reason. Your objective is to study and grow strong (to steal a classic phrase from The Dojo), and my objective is to help you do just that. This column focuses on helping people familiarize themselves with the rules. Many of the questions might seem basic, but they keep getting asked so that means there's more learning to be done. There will be both basic and intricate questions for all the hungry minds out there.

Schools have rules, and we are no different. These are the guidelines you'll want to know about when attending Saturday School:

1. Read the card. Many times a question answers itself when you double check a card's wording.
2. Check the archives if there is a particular card that is causing you trouble. This is actually a reminder more than a rule.
3. I will answer questions that had been previously addressed in the archive if it seems appropriate--especially if a new version of the question can shed more light on the problem.
4. Not all questions submitted will be answered. If you need an answer, especially a quick answer, pick the brains over at the [MtG Rules Q&A Forum](#).
5. I may lump several questions together under a common topic-- keep an eye open for general reviews that sound like something you've asked.
6. If your opponent swears it works, go ahead and ask me anyway. Trust me on this one.

Some of the curricula will be very "old school," like this:

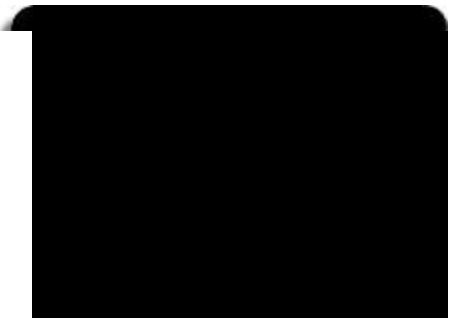
Q: If I were to sacrifice a **Tree of Tales** artifact land, would Lithatog get +1/+1 or +2/+2?

A: You may sacrifice a **Tree of Tales** to either of the abilities, but you'll only get the bonus once.

Additionally, we'll have several new school items and approaches. For example, we will give extra-credit answers that go beyond the simple rules answer:

Q: If I have a **Worldgorger Dragon** in my graveyard and I bring it back into play with an **Animate Dead**, can my opponent destroy the Dragon in response to the loop being created? --Jay Feinstein

A: Yes. **Worldgorger Dragon's** ability triggers and uses the stack like normal. Well-timed removal can break the cycle.

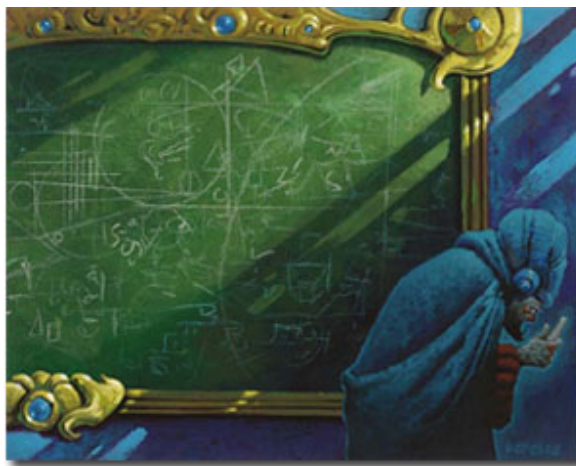


Extra Unlike other creature enchantments, **Animate Dead** and similar cards enter play as global enchantments, trigger to return a creature, and then become local enchantments. Using **Stifle** on **Animate Dead**'s triggered ability causes the enchantment to do nothing and stay in play.

In general, the focus will be in the rules of the game, but we'll sometimes field a question or two about tournament issues that may not appear in the rules for the game but do appear in the rules for tournaments.

Q: What is a sideboard?

A: A sideboard is a number of cards not used in your deck that is kept with your deck. In constructed events, the sideboard must be fifteen cards or zero cards, and cards are swapped one-for-one. In a limited event, your sideboard is everything you didn't put in the original deck and those cards may be swapped as you see fit so long as the deck stays at or above the minimum size. Swapping (also known as sideboarding) is done after the first game of a match is over, and you reset your sideboard once the match is complete.



Occasionally, we'll have bonus parts to Saturday School. A cram session is a review of a section of the rules, such as state-based effects, that has multiple details. Cram sessions will give a high-level view of the rules and then fill in the details with questions and examples. Field trips are real questions taken directly off the floor at a Pro Tour, Grand Prix, PTQ, or Prerelease event. Both of those are a bit like watching the rules at work.

And yes, the survey at the end is still in use. Sometimes the questions will address a recent line of thought. Sometimes they'll help give me a sense of the audience I'm writing for (and what drives them). And sometimes

they'll collect data so we can understand how people approach the rules. There is not necessarily a "right" answer in the survey, but there always will be an explanation once the results are available. (This survey and the next one are of the "getting-to-know-you" variety.)

So there's a taste of what's to come with the new school. I hope you've been paying attention; there just might be a test.

-- Carter

If the Comprehensive Rules are the most important document for learning the game, what rules document is the second most important?

- [High Level Tournament Information](#)
- [MtG Floor Rules](#)
- [Oracle Card Database](#)
- [Penalty Guidelines](#)
- [Universal Tournament Rules](#)

Submit my Vote

John Carter has played **Magic** continuously since January 1995 and been a judge since 1996. Among his judging activities Carter has worked almost every type of event imaginable; he signed on with the Delphi Group to revise and expand the Delphi practice tests, and he helped modernize the rules for the casual 5-Color format.

If you can catch him not playing **Magic** or testing judges, you might find Carter watching X-Files, playing various computer games, vacuuming the cat, or hypnotized by the History Channel. He is currently a level III judge and has judged in countless events, including dozens of PTQs in the Mid-South, Mid-Atlantic, and Northeastern United States regions since 1997, every prerelease since *Mirage* (except for *Exodus*, which he competed in – slacker), plus many Pro Tour and Grand Prix events. Welcome to the **magicthegathering.com** team Carter!



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