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# Math, Q&A, and Our First Field Trip



John Carter · Saturday School  
Saturday, August 21, 2004

Now that I've had a chance to say hello, let's start hitting the books.

## Some Math

**Q:** What happens when both **Familiar Ground** and **Goblin War Drums** are in play? Are all my creatures unblockable? –C. Stewart

**A:** Yes, they're all unblockable. Can't be blocked by more than one + cannot be blocked except by more than one = unblockable.

**Q:** If I have two **Furnace of Rath** in play and **Lighting Bolt** a creature, is the damage doubled, tripled, or quadrupled? –D. Pellett

**A:** The three damage is doubled and doubled again =  $3 \times 2 \times 2 = 3 \times 4 = 12$  damage.



Furnace of Rath... Rath...

## Recent Cards

**Q:** My opponent attacks with a 10/10 creature, My **Tangle Asp** equipped with a **Fireshrieker** blocks. Will my **Tangle Asp** survive or what? – H. Thinggaard

**A:** No. The **Tangle Asp**'s deadly bite only kicks in "at end of combat" (after both damage steps). Having first-strike won't help in this case.

**Q:** How do I use **Leonin Bola** and what does it do? – E. al-Madni

**A:** **Leonin Bola** turns any of your creatures into a "tapper"-- a creature that taps to tap another creature.

**\*Extra\*** Because **Leonin Bola** is an equipment, you can pass it around to your creatures any time you could play a sorcery. Thus, you could equip and activate multiple creatures on your turn to force damage through to an opponent. Another favorite maneuver is to equip a creature that doesn't tap to attack (such as **Yotian Soldier**) with the Bola. Then you declare the creature as an attacker, and after declaring all you attackers, use the tapper ability granted by the Bola to knock on opponent's creature out of the way before they can declare blockers.

**Q:** For **Molten Rain** to deal 2 damage to target land's controller, does the destroy effect have to happen? For example, if I target a **Darksteel Citadel** with my **Molten Rain**, the Citadel will not be destroyed, but will its controller still take the damage for it being a nonbasic land? --R. Boyer

**A:** Yes. The destroy effect does happen, it just doesn't *do* anything. **Molten Rain** still deals the two damage even if the land is indestructible (or in regenerated).

**\*Extra\*** Non-basic lands that are turned into Mountains with **Blood Moon** are still non-basic. **Molten Rain** will deal two to the controller when destroying those as well.

**Q:** I play a **Slith Ascendant** against my friend and equip it with the **Banshee Blade** and **Fireshrieker**. Do both **Slith Ascendant** and the **Banshee Blade** get two +1/+1 counters? --M. Howard

**A:** Each one will get a pair of counters. Here's what happens in detail: **Slith Ascendant** deals 1 point of first strike to the opponent triggering itself and the **Banshee Blade** (1 counter goes on each). The Ascendant then deals 3 points of regular damage to the opponent making itself a 3/3 and getting a +2/+2 bonus that goes wherever you put the Blade.

**Q:** Was playing in a tournament, a guy used **Condescend**. He said he paid one blue and zero x, **Condescend** was countering itself and unless he paid zero mana... He was doing this just to get the scry 2 affect, is this a legal play? Can a counter spell counter itself? -- J. Balbuena

**A:** No. Spells, by definition cannot target themselves; he'll need some other spell on the stack in order to play **Condescend**.

**Q:** If there is an **Arcbound Wanderer** in a graveyard and someone plays **Roar of Reclamation** what happens? --S. Bennett

**A:** The **Arcbound Wanderer** most likely wanders back into the graveyard. Putting a sunburst card into play except by playing it usually means that the sunburst equals zero.

**\*Extra\*** The sneaky exception is that copy cards can take their mana payment into account when making a copy of a sunburst card. You can copy a **Pentad Prism** with **Sculpting Steel** and by spending three different colors for the **Sculpting Steel**, the copy of the Prism will get three counters.



**Q:** I was playing with my friend with my Ravager-Affinity deck against his **March of the Machines** deck. He cast the March and in response I cast **Naturalize**. He said I couldn't do that because all my artifact lands were all sent to graveyard already. --E. Tan

**A:** Technically, "in response" to the March means the March is on the stack. Your lands are essentially lost, but not without a fight. If you tap them for the appropriate mana before the March resolves, then after they become newly dead creatures, you'll be able to use the floating mana to send the March to the graveyard as well.

## Old-ish and Older Cards

**Q:** In a recent game of my cleric deck against my friend's rat deck, he used **Crypt Rats'** ability for 2 damage. I had four clerics and a **Doubtless One** in play. What happens to **Doubtless One**? --Hiriyou and Olethros

**A:** Those dirty rats! Clerics tend to be weenies, thus "ratting for 2" is likely to wipe several out. Once you're done tossing the dead ones in the graveyard, check

again to make sure you didn't miss anyone. I expect you'll find a **Doubtless One** that's so forlorn over the loss of his buddies that he's shrunk and can't wait to join them.



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**Q:** Say I have a **Panoptic Mirror** with **Threaten** imprinted on it in play plus a **Greater Harvester**. Can I throw the **Greater Harvester's** ability on the stack so that I can first steal my opponent's monster and then sacrifice it for my **Greater Harvester**? –Lyndon

**A:** Yes. Since you control both triggers (Mirror and Harvester), you stack them in any order you want.

**\*Extra\*** **Grab the Reins** will give you a similar effect with added flexibility. You could choose either portion of the Grab when playing it, or play the entwine cost when playing the copy and have all sorts of steal-and-kill fun.

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**Q:** Can I prevent a card like **Terror** with **Holy Day**? If not with which card? – U. Hoedel

**A:** **Holy Day** only prevents combat damage. Being scared to death is different, but a cozy **Razor Barrier** or a nice hug from your **Mother of Runes** is perfectly good at chasing away the boogieman.

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**Q:** I have an **Imagecrafter** in play and my opponent has an **Elvish Champion** and a **Symbiotic Elf** in play. If I change **Symbiotic Elf's** creature type to "taco" will it still be an elf with a +2/+2 and a forestwalk? –E. Steve

**A:** There are no tacos in **Magic** (yet). Were you to choose a [legal creature type](#) other than elf, then the Champion would disown the **Symbiotic Elf**. The poor would-be taco would lose the +1/+1 (not +2s) and have to stumble through the forests like the rest of us.

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**Q:** If I have a card that affects 'zombies' and I have a **Smokespew Invoker** in play who is a "zombie mutant" does it still affect him even though he is a "zombie mutant" instead of just a "zombie"? –B. Jahosaphette

**A:** Yes. Being a mutated zombie qualifies you for membership in the Mutant club as well as Zombie of the Month club. Zombies aren't very picky.

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**Q:** If I imprinted **Abeyance** to **Isochron Scepter**, and used its ability to play **Abeyance** at the beginning of my opponent's turn during his main phase, would my opponent be able to do anything at all?? –J. Trastevere

**A:** At the beginning of an opponent's turn and during the main phase are far far apart. If you used the Scepter as early as possible on his or her turn (ie: during their upkeep), then they'd be stuck just playing artifacts, creatures, enchantments, and lands. Oh, and they'd get to smash face, too.

**\*Extra\*** Try **Orim's Chant** for more fun. You won't get to draw a card, but your opponent will be even more helpless (especially if you pay the kicker when playing the copy).

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**Q:** I am playing my black deck against my friend's modular deck. He has 4 modular creatures in play, including an **Arcbound Ravager**. If I play a **Spike Cannibal** and he sacrifices all of his modular creatures to the Ravager in response, what happens to the counters, are they moved to the Ravager or the Cannibal? –J. Kelbaugh

**A:** Eventually the Spike gets them all. Sacrificing modular guys to the Ravager doesn't really matter except that the Ravager, and thus the Cannibal, will wind up with more counters.

**\*Extra\*** To keep the Cannibal on a diet, feed all the modular guys to the Ravager, and then have the Ravager eat himself. This way there are no +1/+1 counters for the Cannibal to feast on.



*Spike Cannibal, art by Joel Biske*

**Q:** I have a question about the effect of **Chains of Mephistopheles**. What happens when you draw more than one card?

For Example: Chains is in play and a player casts an **Ancestral Recall**. – S. Klöckner

**A:** Let's look at the current wording for **Chains of Mephistopheles**...

"If a player would draw a card except the first one he or she draws in a draw step, that player discards a card from his or her hand instead. If the player discards a card, he or she draws a card. If the player doesn't discard a card, he or she puts the top card of his or her library into his or her graveyard."

If a player plays an **Ancestral Recall** normally what would happen is this:

If they have any cards in hand, they'd discard a card, and then draw. This would be repeated twice more without interruption.

If they have no cards in hand, they'd "mill" themselves for three.

**\*Extra\*** Because of that phrase "except the first one he or she draws in a draw step", there is a trick to Chains. The technology is that if you can draw during an opponent's draw step, the first card is free for you just like your normal draw was free. Take the **Ancestral Recall** example:

Play **Ancestral Recall** during the *opponent's* draw step.

The first card would be the first one drawn by you in that draw step, so the Chains don't apply. For the next two draws, you'd go back to the "discard and then draw" effect.

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## A bit of tournament rules history

**Q:** Is there an old "no mana mulligan" or "parry" rule? –J. Golec

**A:** Is there? No. There was an old mulligan that applied if you had all lands or no lands. This was replaced by the current mulligan system called the "Paris" (not "parry") mulligan. The Paris mulligan was named after the first constructed Pro Tour to use the mulligan way back in April of 1997.

**\*Extra\*** Before the Paris mulligan existed, you couldn't take a mulligan if you had any mixture of lands and spells. Try imagining looking at an opening hand of 5 expensive spells and two **Temple of the False Gods**, and you'll see that Paris is the place to be.

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Alright class, it's time to hop on the *Magic* bus! Our first Saturday School field trip takes us to Elizabeth, New Jersey for [Grand Prix New Jersey](#). The GPNJ venue has hosted Regionals as well as the NJ prereleases, but it's better known as a recreational sports complex. From the GP room we could overlook bumper cars and indoor soccer fields with paintball and rock climbing as well. David Vogin was flown in from France to head judge, and here are the types of questions that pro players and up-and-comers threw at the staff last weekend.

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**Q:** If I **Mindslaver** my opponent, and on his Slavered turn I make him **Magma Jet** himself, does he get to see the scry cards?

**A:** Yes. You control what he does, but he does get to see what is going on in all its agonizing detail.

**Q:** If I **Tel-Jilad Justice** an artifact and my opponent sacrifices it to an **Arcbound Ravager**, what happens?

**A:** The Justice is countered for lack of target. You do not get to scry.

**Q:** What if I entwine a **Reap and Sow** that targets an artifact lands, and they sacrifice that to a Ravager?

**A:** Once again, all the targets are illegal, so the whole spell is countered.



**Q:** Can I tap my **Sylvok Explorer** for mana if the only land my opponent controls is a **Mirrodin's Core** with no counters?

**A:** Yes, you can tap the Explorer for one mana of any color. The land need not be able to produce mana right then, just have an ability that could produce colored mana.

**Q:** I tap **Aether Vial** to put a creature into play, my opponent **Oxidizes** it, so I feed it to my **Atog** in response. What happens?

**A:** The **Atog** gets +2/+2. The **Oxidize** gets countered. And when the **Aether Vial's** ability resolves, it checks for how many counters it had when it left play to decide what creature card you may put into play.



## Poll Results

If the Comprehensive Rules are the most important document for learning the game, what rules document is the second most important?		
Oracle Card Database	3640	62.2%
MtG Floor Rules	953	16.3%
Universal Tournament Rules	809	13.8%
High Level Tournament Information	258	4.4%
Penalty Guidelines	190	3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5850</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The second most important rules document is the Universal Tournament Rules. The Comprehensive Rules cover **Magic** as a game. The UTR covers tournaments in general. Shortly after that is the **MtG** Floor Rules in specific. And for the highest level events, there is the High Level Tournament Information document. Should these rules be broken, the Penalty Guidelines will then offer ideas on what to do.

The most commonly referenced document, however, is the Oracle Card Database, but it is just a "dictionary" of cards and doesn't contain any actual rules.

## New Poll

What sort of Magic person are you?

Casual player

- Casual player, certified judge
- Pro player
- Pro player, certified judge

Class dismissed.

--Carter



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