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As a developer, what do I have to do with card names? Unsurprisingly, very little. The cards have playtest names when they come in from design, and they get real names from the creative team as we're doing development. (One day you're perusing the file and there's no more Hellzapoppin' Gizmo! Instead, some weirdo has changed its name to "Timesifter"!) So I don't have any huge amount of theory or insider stuff to throw at you this week, but I'll attempt to amuse you with on-topic snippets anyway.

How Do We Use Card Names?

We've done blocks based around cards' color, card type, and creature type, and had mechanics revolve around creatures' size. The cards' names, however, haven't been used much mechanically outside of *Unhinged*.

Here are some broad categories of cards that refer to other cards by name:

1) Self-Referential

- *"When Screaming Seahawk comes into play, you may search your library for a card named Screaming Seahawk, reveal it, and put it into your hand. If you do, shuffle your library."*
- *"Except for creatures named Akron Legionnaire and artifact creatures, creatures you control can't attack."*
- *"Kindle deals to target creature or player damage equal to the number of cards named Kindle in all graveyards plus 2."*

Cards like these use names to "look" for additional copies of themselves. It is interesting to note that putting the word "named" into this template is a fairly recent development; the printed version of Kindle actually says just "the number of Kindle cards in all graveyards" as opposed to "cards named Kindle." That is because if a word is used as a modifier of "card," it is now assumed to be a characteristic like color, type, or subtype. "Kindle" is none of those. "Goblin card," "red card," and "instant card" are all okay, but "Kindle card" would mean something with the type or subtype Kindle, of which there is none. So it has to be spelled out "cards named Kindle." Most of the templates in the other three sections below have been similarly updated.

2) Referential to Another Card

- *"Equipment named Sword of Kaldra, Shield of Kaldra, and Helm of Kaldra are indestructible."*
- *"At the beginning of your upkeep, if you don't control a creature named Keeper of Kookus, Kookus deals 3 damage to you and attacks this turn if able."*
- *"Sacrifice a creature named Feral Shadow, a creature named Breathstealer, and Urborg Panther: Search your library for a card named Spirit of the Night and put that card into play. Then shuffle your library."*

In the examples above, the "named" card is different than the card the ability is printed on. Each of these cards refers to one or more specific other cards that its ability affects. Using the cards' names is the only way to limit the abilities this precisely.

3) "Name a Card"

- *"As Booby Trap comes into play, name a card other than a basic land card and choose an opponent."*
- *"Name a nonland card. Search target player's graveyard, hand, and library for all cards with that name and remove them from the game. Then that player shuffles his or her library."*

- *"As Null Chamber comes into play, you and an opponent each name a card other than a basic land card. The named cards can't be played."*

This use of card name allows players to choose to affect a card that is not visible in any zone. Most of these cards need you to have decent knowledge of your opponent's deck, although a few—like Demonic Consultation and Wood Sage—only require knowledge of your own deck.

4) Looking for Matches

- *"Whenever Scalpelexis deals combat damage to a player, that player removes the top four cards of his or her library from the game. If two or more of those cards have the same name, repeat this process."*
- *"Remove target nonbasic land from the game. Search its controller's graveyard, hand, and library for all cards with the same name as that land and remove them from the game. That player then shuffles his or her library."*
- *"Remove the top card of your library from the game. You may put that card into your hand unless it has the same name as another card removed this way. Repeat this process until you put a card into your hand or you remove two cards with the same name, whichever comes first."*

This category is similar to #3, except that the card affected is in a visible zone. Cards like these have varying effects based on the "sameness" of cards' names. Some let you yank all cards with the same name from an opponent's deck, others punish or reward you for turning up duplicates.

What Else Can We Do With Names?

There is still a swath of space available that uses card names functionally in game play that hasn't been fully explored by our designers. One way that we have tinkered with a little is with cards that look for specific words in other cards' titles.

For instance, let's say we had planned long in advance to make a fourth piece of Kaldra Equipment a few years down the road. Armed with this knowledge, we could have templated Shield of Kaldra's first ability as:

"Equipment with the word 'Kaldra' in their name are indestructible."

There are a few problems with doing it this way, and I won't pretend to understand them all. (That's what Rules Managers and editors are for.) One probably involves putting a great deal of strain on our translators to make sure that they are using words for things like 'Kaldra' that don't appear anywhere else in card title in their languages. Another is that we don't need to open this particular can of worms if we can solve the problem in another way. Imagine, for example, that the Kaldra pieces were given their own subtype so that their type line was "Legendary Artifact – Kaldra Equipment." Then we could have just said "Kaldra Equipment are indestructible," and if we made another Kaldra piece in the future, it would work just fine.

The real reason why we didn't do it that particular time was that we wanted to hint at the existence of the card Helm of Kaldra before it was printed, which was a nifty little tease.

We almost revisited the single-word gimmick in *Champions of Kamigawa*. We couldn't group cards together via subtype, because we already had "Arcane," plus we wanted to lump together creatures and noncreatures, and they can't share common subtypes.

As an example, Hisoka could have had an ability like this:

"When Hisoka, Minamo Sensei comes into play, you may search your library for a card with the word 'Hisoka's' in its name, reveal it, and put it into your hand. If you do, shuffle your library."

With this ability, you could tutor for either the instant Hisoka's Defiance or the creature Hisoka's Guard.

As you can see from the set today, development didn't like it. It was a lot of extra words for very little extra functionality—there just wasn't much you could do with it other than search up one of those two run-of-the-mill cards. Part of the problem was the sheer number of legendary creature in the set. With 46 different potential factions, no one group contained enough cards to make it worth using this new way of subdividing cards.

Does that mean we've given up on the idea? Not at all. Just because *Kamigawa* wasn't the right place for it doesn't mean the right place won't come up in the future. We're always looking for the perfect place to implement new ideas, even if the ideas aren't particularly new and have been floating around the department for some time.

The Power of Names

Here's a fun little exercise involving card names and the power that certain words have. Each group is a list of five card titles from throughout **Magic's** history, four of which have something in common, and one of which has nothing to do with the others.

Our creative team generally tries to avoid situations like these, but there are only so many words to go around... Can you pick out the outliers?

1. Possessed Barbarian, Possessed Nomad, Possessed Portal, Possessed Centaur, Possessed Aven
2. Shiv's Embrace, Dauthi Embrace, Zephid's Embrace, Serra's Embrace, Gaea's Embrace
3. Phantom Whelp, Phantom Tiger, Phantom Nantuko, Phantom Nishoba, Phantom Flock
4. Zombie Master, Catapult Master, Raven Guild Master, Thornscape Master, Puppet Master
5. Beacon of Creation, Beacon of Tomorrows, Beacon of Unrest, Beacon of Destiny, Beacon of Destruction
6. Bottle Gnomes, Ticking Gnomes, Quarum Trench Gnomes, Copper Gnomes, Clockwork Gnomes
7. Aven Shrine, Goblin Shrine, Cabal Shrine, Nantuko Shrine, Cephalid Shrine
8. Guardian Angel, Avenging Angel, Crypt Angel, Lightning Angel, Serra Angel
9. Hidden Ancients, Hidden Gibbons, Hidden Stag, Hidden Horror, Hidden Predators
10. Gemstone Mine; Howling Mine; Orcish Mine; Urza's Mine; Mine, Mine, Mine!

[Click here for the answers.](#)

Last Week's Poll:

Which of these Organized Play programs do you attend at least once per month?

Neither	4393	51.8%
Friday Night Magic only	3236	38.2%
Both Arena and Friday Night Magic	583	6.9%
Arena only	262	3.1%
Total	8474	100.0%

This Week's Poll:

How many different **Magic**-related websites do you read regularly? None. Just this one. 2-45-89+

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