

# Magic web developer Doug Beyer shows off a new site feature. Introducing the Sample Hand Generator

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- [Doug Beyer Archive](#)

Decklists are the heart and soul of **Magic** data on the Internet; they provide the mortar for all those cardboard bricks you find in booster packs. But in a way, a list of cards isn't enough. Just from the decklist, you don't really get a sense of how the deck plays, how it implements a plan, how it wins. To get the real *feel* of a deck, you have to shuffle it up, draw seven, and start seeing possibilities.

That's why I'm proud to introduce **magicthegathering.com**'s new Sample Hand Generator.

## **How do I find it?**

All the decks on **magicthegathering.com** now have a little icon in the upper right-hand corner. It looks like a fanned hand of **Magic** cards.

the  
sample hand generator  
button



Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
2 Svogthos, the Restless Tomb	3 Sensei's Divining Top	3 Phyrexian Arena
1 Miren, the Moaning Well	4 Darkblast	3 Plague Boiler
4 Overgrown Tomb	3 Life from the Loam	3 Viridian Shaman
4 Llanowar Wastes	2 Moldervine Cloak	3 Nightmare Void
6 Forest	1 Nightmare Void	2 Exile into Darkness
7 Swamp		1 Isao, Enlightened Bushi
13 other spells		
24 land		15 sideboard cards
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2 Festering Goblin		
3 Golgari Thug		
4 Stinkweed Imp		
3 Isao, Enlightened Bushi		
3 Greater Mossdog		
2 Nullmage Shepherd		
2 Dimir House Guard		
1 Nekkaraal		
1 Grave-Shell Scarab		
1 Kokusho, the Evening Star		
1 Ink-Eyes, Servant of Oni		
23 creatures		

Click that icon to launch the Sample Hand Generator. Here's a sample deck. Try it -- click that little fanned-cards icon. It'll launch a new window, so you can flip back and continue reading here.

Bennie Smith

## 5th Place - Virginia Champs 2005

### Okay, I have the thingy open. What's going on here?

You'll see a hand of **Magic** cards, a large preview card, a decklist, and some buttons. Mouse over the cards in the sample hand to preview them in a larger size, just like in the [Draft Viewer](#).

**new hand, mulligan, and draw card buttons**

**decklist**

**card size buttons**

**your hand**

**preview card image**

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Above the decklist are three buttons.

- The **New Hand** button: Click that button to draw a new hand of seven cards.
- The **Mulligan** button: Click this button to Paris mulligan your hand, drawing a new hand of one less card than before.
- The **Draw Card** button: Click this button to draw an extra card, up to three.

Below the decklist are three more buttons. Click these buttons to change the size of the cards in your hand, depending on how large your screen resolution is. If you choose the largest size, the preview card will disappear, since your whole hand will become the size of the preview card. Click a smaller card size button to make the preview card reappear.

### What can I do with this?

Play around with it -- generate sample hands of decks and learn some of their ins and outs. Want to see some Standard sample hands? Explore the [2005 Champs decklists](#). Extended? Try the [Pro Tour Los Angeles coverage](#), or last weekend's [three Extended Grand Prix](#). Vintage? Check out the [2005](#)

[Vintage Championships](#) from back in August. For casual decks, try looking through the archives of the [Building on a Budget](#) or [House of Cards](#) columns, or take a peek at, I don't know, a [Prismatic article](#) :)

## How accurate a model is this?

Nothing takes the place of actually playing a deck. But steps were taken to ensure that the Generator represents a realistic model of **Magic** opening hands. Its shuffler is random (well, as random as your browser's implementation of Javascript lets it be). Its deck model keeps track of what cards you've drawn, so you can't draw two copies of a 1-of. If you get mana-screwed a lot, it's likely due to the decklist, not the Generator.

## What if something doesn't work?

Caveat time. First of all, the Sample Hand Generator relies on some client-side XML processing through Javascript, which means you'll need an up-to-date browser such as Internet Explorer 5+, Firefox, Safari 1.2+, or Netscape 7+ to take advantage of it.

Second of all, there may be quirks with certain decklists -- card name misspellings, weird characters, or other strangeness -- that may cause the tool to choke. Some very old **magicthegathering.com** articles (before approximately May, 2002) used a different format to store decklists, and so won't jibe with the tool. Also, the card borders are all displayed as black, even if the cards shown are from a core set -- apologies for inaccuracies there.

Third of all, there are some things you can't do with the tool. There's no sideboarding -- all the sample hands are drawn from the maindeck. And you can't draw past three extra cards, or actually move cards around on the board; it's not meant to be a goldfishing tool, just a way to get a feel for how the deck's opening hands look.

Fourth of all, I'd really like it to work as well as possible. If you have a suggestion or complaint about the Generator, or you find a decklist that has a problem with the Generator, you can [use this email form](#) to email me about it, and I will try to fix it. Enjoy the [Sample Hand Generator](#).