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# What We're Pointing At

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Latest Developments  
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First off, a big thanks to all of you that participated in last week's [pointing exercise](#). I hope thinking about *Tenth Edition* cards for Limited play was helpful preparation for your [Game Day experience](#).

Now that Game Day is over and most of you had a taste of actually playing the format, let's compare your pointing results with those from R&D. But first, a caveat about the system. We call what we do "Limited pointing" and not "Sealed Deck pointing" because we give the cards one number that more or less covers their power in both Sealed Deck and Booster Draft. I fully understand that some cards get more powerful from format to format, especially those that require some critical mass of support to play well, like Slivers or the "collect me" cards from *Coldsnap* (such as [Surging Flame](#) and [Krovikan Mist](#)). But it is a much simpler system just to give them one number, which is more or less an average of the card's usefulness in the two formats, and that number does a lot to help us keep the colors balanced in Limited and casual Constructed.



While pointing's goal is to accurately reflect power level, the best way to think about any given card is on a "happiness scale," assuming that what would make you the most happy was winning.

## White

Name	Rarity	Your Pointing	R&D's Pointing
<a href="#">Wild Griffin</a>	C	2.04	2.27
<a href="#">Pacifism</a>	C	2.7	2.5
<a href="#">Angel of Mercy</a>	U	2.34	2.94
<a href="#">Righteousness</a>	R	1.76	1.17

You guys are definitely getting better at this. The interesting argument is [Angel of Mercy](#) vs. [Pacifism](#). We typically believe that the Angel is one of the top cards white can hope to get—it is a life-saver, a great blocker, and a way to win the game, all for five mana. It is also incredibly splashable. [Pacifism](#) is solid and necessary, but it doesn't pack the punch the Angel does. At its essence, you will always play [Pacifism](#) if you play white, but the Angel makes you *want* to play white in the first place.

As for [Righteousness](#), most of R&D would rather not play the card if at all possible, as combat tricks tend to favor the aggressor. It looks like about half of you consider the card playable in white all the time.

Our highest pointing white common, uncommon, and rare in *Tenth Edition*: [Pacifism](#) (2.5), [Angel of Mercy](#) (2.94), [Wrath of God](#) (4.02).

## Blue

Name	Rarity	Your Pointing	R&D's Pointing
<a href="#">Cloud Sprite</a>	C	1.4	0.99
<a href="#">Cancel</a>	C	1.98	1.41
<a href="#">Puppeteer</a>	U	2.25	2.42
<a href="#">Arcanis the Omnipotent</a>	R	2.91	3.29

Not a lot of points of differentiation here. [Cloud Sprite](#) is a card I really hope I don't have to play (it isn't even a good chump-blocker), [Puppeteer](#) is about as good as [Pacifism](#) overall, and Arcanis is in the bomb category.

I'm guessing the triple blue kept many of you from giving Arcanis his due, but after a certain point a card's mana requirements are worth bending your deck to accommodate. If Arcanis survives to use his tap ability even once, it's hard to lose the game. Arcanis ranked second only to [Mahamoti Djinn](#) in our pointing of all the blue cards in the set even though he is quite difficult to cast.

Our highest pointing blue common, uncommon, and rare in *Tenth Edition*: **Snapping Drake** (2.47), **Persuasion** (3.05), **Mahamoti Djinn** (3.35).

## Black

Name	Rarity	Your Pointing	R&D's Pointing
<b>Dusk Imp</b>	C	1.62	2.15
<b>Assassinate</b>	C	2.33	2.17
<b>Rain of Tears</b>	U	1.27	0.89
<b>Nightmare</b>	R	2.45	2.62

As was the case with **Wild Griffin**, R&D points **Dusk Imp**, the three-mana two-power flier, higher than the players. I guess the belief here is that the efficient two-power flier is the meat and potatoes of most Limited decks and should be rated quite highly.

**Assassinate** gets more and more disappointing every time I have it in my deck; it is kind of like a **Dehydration** that isn't good against **Prodigal Pyromancer** and **Merfolk Looter**. Having to be hit by the creature before you can deal with it is a significant drawback, especially because it never helps you push through with your own creatures by killing potential blockers. If I had to repoint the set again, I might rate it below **Dusk Imp**.

**Rain of Tears** is essentially unplayable. It is hard to cast and may not even slow your opponent down. I guess it's a feasible answer to **Treetop Village** and the like, but that makes it a sideboard card at best.

Our highest pointing black common, uncommon, and rare in *Tenth Edition*: **Terror** (2.9), **Nekrataal** (2.92), **Ascendant Evincar** (3.33).

## Red

Name	Rarity	Your Pointing	R&D's Pointing
<b>Incinerate</b>	C	3.32	3.02
<b>Smash</b>	C	1.04	0.55
<b>Cone of Flame</b>	U	2.7	3.13
<b>Manabarbs</b>	R	1.19	0.63

If it weren't for **Blaze**, **Cone of Flame** would be the best red uncommon in the set, and tends to swing the game wildly in the favor of the player casting it, especially because it can hit opponents. It replaced **Flame Wave** as the back-breaking uncommon of choice in the set, and definitely deserves a rating of over 3.

**Smash** is quality sideboard material, and with the sheer number of playable uncommon artifacts—and bomb rare ones—it may deserve a pointing closer to your 1.04 than our 0.55. **Manabarbs**, on the other hand, is so riotously uncontrollable that I have a hard time imagining scenarios where my deck would be ahead often enough that I'd want to include the card. I'm sure it'll happen with someone, though, and it'll make for great stories.

Our highest pointing red common, uncommon, and rare in *Tenth Edition*: **Incinerate** (3.02), **Blaze** (4.28), **Shivan Dragon** (3.49).

## Green

Name	Rarity	Your Pointing	R&D's Pointing
<b>Kavu Climber</b>	C	2.02	1.96
<b>Giant Growth</b>	C	2.51	2.08
<b>Enormous Baloth</b>	U	1.9	1.73
<b>Hurricane</b>	R	2.63	2.49

Wow, these numbers are pretty close. The only real point of differentiation is **Giant Growth**—you consider it a card that pulls you into green, and we merely think it's a card that you'll play if you happen to be green. For a card to get a 2.5 from me, I'd have to occasionally be willing to first-pick it in a draft (granted I'm usually looking for cards that are 3s or higher), and I don't rate **Giant Growth** that highly.

Our highest pointing green common, uncommon, and rare in *Tenth Edition*: **Civic Wayfinder** (2.2), **Overrun** (3.28), **Troll Ascetic** (3.15).

## Colorless

Name	Rarity	Your Pointing	R&D's Pointing
<b>Terramorphic Expanse</b>	C	3.4	2.14

Mind Stone	U	2.68	1.99
Platinum Angel	R	3.96	3.55

If you adhere strictly to the words on the scale, you'll end up pointing colorless cards too highly. I know; it happened to me. I can remember doing pointing for *Ninth Edition* and asking then-lead Brian Schneider, "According to this, how is **Fellwar Stone** not, like, a 5? I'm going to play that thing just about every time no matter what." I was then informed that the scale points out specifically that the guidelines "break down for artifacts and gold cards" and that a "happiness meter" should be used, which, to me, as I mentioned at the beginning of this article, translates roughly into draft pick order.

Would I ever pick **Fellwar Stone** over **Mahamoti Djinn**? No. Over **Terror**? No. Over **Wind Drake**? Maybe once in a while. So that means it must fall in the 2.0-2.5 range.

Your 3.4 on **Terramorphic Expanse** means you pointed it higher than **Incinerate**. Now, I'm sure none of you think the Expanse is the more powerful of the two cards, and I'd expect, if given the choice, you'd rather have **Incinerate** in your Sealed Deck than the Expanse, which is why the Expanse rates what it does in R&D. I fully admit that the wording on the scale is misleading; even as I write this people here are working to revamp the text on the scale to make it clearer.



Our highest pointing colorless common, uncommon, and rare in *Tenth Edition*: **Terramorphic Expanse** (2.14), **Icy Manipulator** (3.33), **Loxodon Warhammer** (4.64).

Watch for another article by me this coming Monday about the making of *Tenth Edition*, and maybe we'll do some more pointing some time in the future as well.

## This Week's Poll

**Did you attend Game Day last weekend?**

Yes, at one store.  
 Yes, at multiple stores.  
 No.

[Submit my Vote](#)

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