

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



What Do You Know, Part I

Mark Rosewater
Making Magic

Monday, November 26, 2007



From time to time I'm asked by different people to make announcements in my column. This week the person asking was me. Being that I'm pretty fond of myself (can you tell?), I decided to honor my request. Next week is the fourteenth annual **Magic: The Gathering** World Championships. We've decided to ramp things up and turn the entire weekend into a **Magic** extravaganza, basically a **Magic** convention featuring the World Championships. There will be all sorts of cool things to do. Click [here](#) for more info. Also, if you're interested in hearing me wax nostalgic about the World Championships, I did that a couple years back. Click [here](#).

But that isn't what I wanted to plug. Not exactly. You see, every year at Worlds I carry on a tradition that goes back to my very early days at Wizards of the Coast. In fact, the event in question predates my time at Wizards. It even predates my involvement at Wizards. I am talking about the "Question Mark" **Magic** Trivia Game Show. I have always been wild about trivia so it made perfect sense when I got into **Magic** to start running trivia game shows at conventions, which I did for numerous years in Los Angeles before I made the permanent trek up to Washington. These game shows led me to start doing trivia shows at all the Pro Tours (back in the day when I went to every Pro Tour).



Mark hunts for trivia at U.S. Nationals 2003.

Now that I travel less often my trivia shows have been confined to once a year at the World Championships. I've had a trivia show at every Worlds since the third one in 1996. And the tradition goes on this year—check our [Worlds page](#) for info on when and how you can participate. The way it works is this: People come in teams of three. Every team gets to participate. The game show is run like a Swiss tournament with an elimination style Top 8. Every team who bothers to stick around until the end will win something and while I can't give away the grand prize just yet, it's going to be something pretty cool.

So what does this have to do with my column? Well, to help people better prepare for the event (or to get a taste of what it will be like if you are unable to attend) I have decided to turn my column today into a trivia quiz. I've only once before ever had a trivia quiz in my column, and that one was [dedicated to Soldiers](#). (Hey, it was Soldier Week.) The questions are of a variety of difficulties and I've tried to pick things where the answers are interesting even if you can't answer the question. This way you can try to see how well you can do or you can just learn some new **Magic** factoids.

I will ask one question for each **Magic** set that's been released to date. Because that number has grown kind of large, I've broken down this column into two parts. Part II will appear in two weeks (as next week is a theme week). This way the column appears the week before and the week after the event I am plugging. Less talking; more trivia.

Question #1 (Limited Edition Alpha)

What Alpha card was considered misprinted back in 1993 yet was later errataed back to its Alpha functionality?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Red Elemental Blast.



PRODUCTS

MAGIC ONLINE

Standard States/Champs Top 8 Decklists

MESSAGE BOARDS

Magic General Forum
magicthegathering.com Forum

RULES

The original card was an interrupt but was mistakenly printed with the card type instant. It later became an instant when *Sixth Edition* rules eradicated the interrupt card type.

Question #2 (*Arabian Nights*)

The original *Arabian Nights* *Aladdin's Lamp* had two of what?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Colorless mana circles in its cost.



At the time, the colorless mana bubble was too small to hold a ten (modern layouts have since solved this problem) so they put two five-cost mana bubbles instead. And yes, this caused a lot of confusion back in the day, mostly because people thought the extra five was a typo.

Question #3 (*Antiquities*)

How many cards in *Antiquities* do not have the word "artifact" or "artifacts" appear anywhere on the card?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Three: Strip Mine, Urza's Mine, and Urza's Tower.



If you think sets are heavily themed now, check out the dedication Antiquities had to its theme. All of the cards with the exception of some colorless lands either affected artifacts, were unaffected by artifacts, used artifacts, or were artifacts. What about *Urza's Power Plant*? (I said some of these questions would be hard.) It has the word "artifact" in its flavor text.



Question #4 (Legends)

What ability appears for the first time in **Magic** in *Legends* on one creature, yet there are two other cards in the set that neutralize the ability?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Plainswalk.



Great Wall is even crazier when you realize that in the history of **Magic** (thirteen years after the card was printed) there have still only been three more creatures ever printed with plainswalk.



And this is counting a *Portal Three Kingdoms* card and an *Unhinged* card with snow-covered plainswalk that's making fun of how infrequently the ability shows up. All right, all right, **Greater Morphing** and **Illusionary Presence** can grant

themselves plainswalk.



Question #5 (The Dark)

This set includes one of only two cards in existence where the same person designed the card, named the card, wrote the flavor text, and illustrated the card. What is it?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Elves of Deep Shadow



Jesper Myrfors was the lead designer for *The Dark* as well as being the art director of **Magic** at the time. The other card?



Okay, that's the last trivia question where I invoke myself in the answer. (Well, at least in Part I.)

Question #6 (*Fallen Empires*)

How many cards in *Fallen Empires* either naturally have flying or have the ability to grant a creature flying?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Two. Kites and Knights (aka *Goblin Kites* and *Vodalian Knights*).



The only creature to have the ability doesn't even have it outright. It needs to be activated. The other is a card that grants flying leading to the death of the creature half the time. Can you tell that the design team (Skaff Elias, Jim Lin, Dave Petty, and Chris Page) didn't like flying? They also created *Ice Age*, which is equally famous for its limited amount of flying. For the super trivia buffs, there is one other card in *Fallen Empires* that mentions flying.



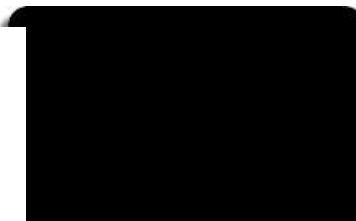
You see, it is powerless against an activated Knights or a creature who's been tossed in the air by the Kites.

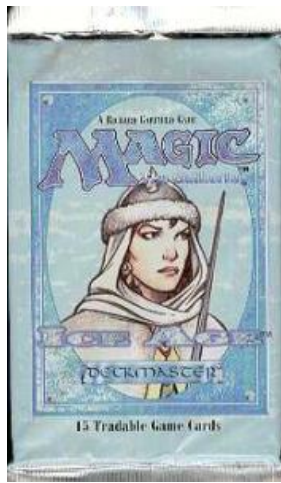
Question #7 (*Ice Age*)

There were five different *Ice Age* booster pack images, one of which pictured a creature in the art that isn't the creature represented by the card it comes from. What is the card?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Karplusan Yeti.





Look in the background. See that creature behind the couple. That's the Yeti. Somehow he wasn't good enough to make the flow wrap.

Question #8 (Homelands)

Who are the planeswalker lovers of the *Homelands* story? (Hint: Both their names appear in card titles in the set.)

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Serra (yes, of *Angel* fame) and Feroz.



Can you tell who got more of the limelight? It's also interesting to note that "Serra" also shows up in this card:



This isn't as unconnected as it seems, as Richard Garfield got the name **Serra** from the word "serrated" as he was trying to evoke a sense of toughness for the angel.

Question #9 (*Alliances*)

What *Alliances* card was nicknamed "Good Buddy"?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Lord of Tresserhorn.



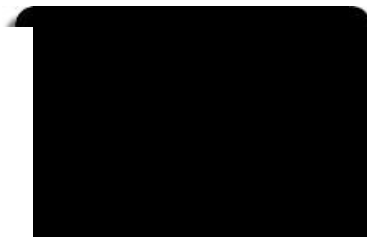
For those that might not know the expression. A way to say goodbye in CB slang (CBs were a type of radio used by truckers back in the 70s) was "10-4, good buddy." "10-4" was a way to say "okay" that you heard the other speaker. "Good buddy," at the time, was a term for a friend. The card was actually designed as a 9/4 but the development team (my first as a fresh young developer) changed it to 10/4 because we specifically thought it would be funny to refer to him as Good Buddy.

Question #10 (*Mirage*)

Waiting in the Weeds had the creature type of its tokens changed when the art came back showing different creatures in the art than were referenced in the rules text. What creature type was supposed to be premiered in **Magic** on this card?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Squirrels.





Called Unseen Wildlife in design, the card was given the following art description: (the bolding is mine)

"Dozens of small hungry critters scurry in the low undergrowth of the jungle. In this picture, we cannot tell what the critters are. We can only see the eyes."

The art director at the time didn't understand that having the creature represented in the art would functionally change what the card did and thus didn't have the artist change it. Squirrels would have to wait for another day. For the full squirrel story, check out my column on the subject, [Squirrel Of My Dreams](#).

Question #11 (Visions)

What staple design convention started in *Visions* (on four cards)?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Creatures with "comes-into-play" effects.



While there were creatures that had effects that happen when they came into play (such as **Clone** or **Kjeldoran Dead** or **Pyknite**), they were always related directly to the creature (or the card advantage of the card). With **Visions**, **Magic** started having spells that were essentially grafted onto creatures. **Man-o'-War** was an **Unsummon** that came with a 2/2 body. The two were completely unconnected mechanically.

If you ever want to win a **Magic**-themed bet, by the way, ask someone to name all the "comes-into-play" creatures in **Visions**. **Man-o'-War**, **Nekrataal**, and **Uktabi Orangutan** are a famous trio. Everyone seems to forget poor **Knight of the Mists**.

Question #12 (*Portal*)

What was blocking called in *Portal*?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Intercepting. It was thought at the time that it was an easier word to help beginners grasp the concept. It became quickly apparent, though, that having different terms for basic actions really got in the way of a smooth transition from the introductory game to the real one. The term was changed back for *Portal Second Age*.

Question #13 (*Weatherlight*)

Weatherlight's name was what first for a **Magic** expansion?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

It was the first **Magic** expansion name that was not an English word. (Okay, it was a made-up compound word of two English words.) The reason the decision was made was that this was the starting point of the *Weatherlight* Saga and it was decided that the name should reflect the big push towards story. For a lot more on this topic join me next week.

Question #14 (*Tempest*)

Tempest's **Dirtcowl Wurm** is a famous first. What was it the first card to ever do?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Be a Prerelease card.



While Prereleases started in full force during *Mirage* block (*Ice Age*, *Homelands*, and *Alliances* each had one Prerelease), it wasn't until *Tempest* that the idea of a Prerelease card was introduced.

Question #15 (*Stronghold*)

For the first time ever during *Stronghold*, the flavor text of one card got carried over onto the flavor text of a second card. (One word—"Charge!"—was repeated between the two pieces of flavor text.) What were the two cards?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Awakening and **Primal Rage**.





The scene showed Eladamri leading his people on an attack on **Volrath's Stronghold**. It didn't end well.

Question #16 (*Exodus*)

What did the *Exodus* expansion symbol do that had never been done before?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

It came in three colors denoting rarity. *Exodus* was also the beginning of collector numbers. These steps were taken by the brand team at the time to make collecting the cards easier.



Question #17 (*Portal Second Age*)

What real-world item appears in numerous *Portal Second Age* illustrations but never in the art of another **Magic** expansion?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Guns. Rifles to be exact. It was decided after this product that firearms were a poor fit for the **Magic** multiverse, and they've never returned. (Yes, Urza block did feature mechs—same creative team for both sets, by the way.)





Question #18 (Unglued)

What is the converted mana cost of B.F.M. (Big Furry Monster)?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Fifteen.



Why fifteen? Because that's how many black mana symbols could fit on the right side of the card. I thought it would be cooler to have the name on one half and the mana cost on the other. One other bit of trivia about the card. In design, the card was a 100/100. Bill Rose, then the Head Designer, forced me, as lead designer of *Unglued*, to change it to a 99/99 to save the specialness of a three-digit power / toughness. No, really. We haven't yet found the right place to use it.

Question #19 (Urza's Saga)

In *Urza's Saga*, R&D tried to repeat a popular old card but was unable to find a workable template (or workable rules; you say potato, I say potato). Because this happened last-minute during templating, we were forced to create a new design that matched the existing art. This went on to be one of the many powerful cards from *Urza's Saga*. What card did we try to print and what card got made in its stead?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

We were trying to repeat **Clone**. We ended up with **Morphling**.





Wait, didn't we reprint **Clone** in *Onslaught*? Yeah, we did. The copying rules got cleaned up making templating rather easy.

Question #20 (*Urza's Legacy*)

The woman pictured in the art of **Tinker** would many years later get her own legendary creature card. Who is it?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

It's the artificer Jhoira.



She was a student at the **Tolarian Academy** during the *Urza's Legacy* story, before the explosion of the academy I believe.

Question #21 (*Urza's Destiny*)

Masticore was an attempt to make an improved version of what card?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Mishra's War Machine from *Antiquities*.





Mission accomplished. It turns out discarding a card a turn isn't too costly an upkeep if the card in question will win the game for you.

Question #22 (*Portal Three Kingdoms*)

Portal Three Kingdoms has the record for the largest number to ever appear in a **Magic** title. What is the number?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

100,000 from the card **Borrowing 100,000 Arrows**.



Del, **Magic** Senior Editor, tells me that under current editing rules the name would have to be written out and thus would never fit on the card. Don't look for this one coming to a base set anytime soon. Of course, the card does also exist as **Theft of Dreams**.



Question #23 (*Mercadian Masques*)

In the art of *Unmask*, we learn that archvillain Volrath, a shapeshifter, has been aboard the *Weatherlight* disguised as whom?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Takara, Starke's daughter. If you look at the art you can see that Volrath's features have been pulled away to show Takara. Yeah, a little backwards, I know.



Gerrard and company rescued "Takara" from *Volrath's Stronghold* when they rescued Sisay, Tahngarth and Karn. In the original version of the story, Volrath was going to be disguised as Tahngarth. (But more of this story another time.)



Question #24 (*Nemesis*)

What *Nemesis* creature would later go on to star in a **Magic: The Gathering** commercial? (Hint: He hates focus groups.)

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Rhox. The commercial is available on [YouTube](#).





After the one with "[Bob from Accounting](#)" this is my second favorite ever **Magic** ad.

Question #25 (Prophecy)

The *Mirage* story involved four Wizards, none of which ended up as legendary creature cards in the block. Three—Teferi, Kaervek, and Mangara—later ended up with legendary creature cards during the *Time Spiral* block. The fourth had her legendary card in *Prophecy*. Who is it?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Jolrael, Empress of Beasts.



Why did they take so long? I honestly don't know.



Question #26 (Invasion)

Fires of Yavimaya was part of a five-card cycle. Name the other four.

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Angelic Shield, Seer's Vision, Smoldering Tar, and Sterling Grove.



The cycle was all allied-color gold enchantments each with a static ability and a sacrifice effect. The two were designed to be synergistic with one another. It's interesting how cycles like this can be rather tight yet overlooked by the majority of the player base.

Question #27 (Planeshift)

What was the official nickname for the largest new mechanic in *Planeshift*?

Click [here](#) to see the answer.

Gating. These were the permanents that required bouncing a permanent of the same type that shared a color with the card. The idea was that you were using a new way to summon the creatures. Gating is a term for teleporting items magically. Examples of gating cards below:





Halftime

We're halfway there so I guess it's time to say goodbye for this week. Remember that Part II will be in two weeks when I'll finish going through the second half of **Magic** expansions. I am curious if you all are enjoying a trivia column and whether you'd like to see more in the future. (Well, more than the one two weeks from now.)

Join me next week, when we go aboard a mighty ship.

Mark Rosewater

*Mark Rosewater is Head **Magic** Designer. What this fancy title means is that he's in charge of **Magic** design. This gets him a lot of mail (which he actually reads). When not alternatively destroying and saving **Magic**, he likes to spend time with his family, do stereotypically geeky things (play games, read comics, watch a lot of science fiction, etc.) and write about himself in third person.*



[Discuss](#) on the message boards



[Respond](#) via email



[Mark Rosewater](#) archive

[About Us](#) | [Jobs](#) | [New to the Game?](#) | [Inside Wizards](#) | [Find a Store](#) | [Press](#) | [Help](#) | [Sitemap](#)

© 1995-2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Terms of Use](#) - [Privacy Statement](#)

