



THE
BOOK
OF
THE
MAGIC
ARTS

Game Rules

*During the Era of Light, humanity developed powerful means to defend
itself against the growing threat of the forces of darkness.
But monsters and catastrophes drove the people out of their cities that
towered into the sky.*

*Remnants of the once advanced civilization can still be seen today,
several hundred years after the fall of humanity, in the overgrown
landscape.*

Only a few souls remain.

*They live withdrawn, hidden and hard to reach, or in constant flight
from the darkness.*

In a lost world, only Heroes dare to defy the darkness.

SideQuest

Don't worry, the game is not as complicated as it looks.

This rulebook explains SideQuest, the card game, so that you can start playing right away.

In the Reference Guide you will find clear, complete rules for any questions about the details.



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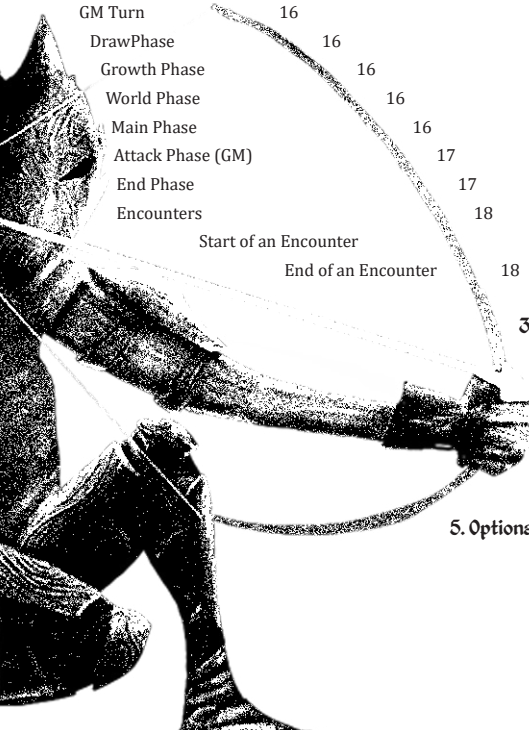
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✦ PART I ✦

1. Getting Started: What It's About

Game Idea and Victory Conditions

SideQuest is a cooperative-competitive card game for 1–3 **Heroes** against one **Game Master (GM)**.

The game is split into 2 sides:

- ▶ The Heroes, who try to defy the forces of darkness.
- ▶ The GM, who plays the darkness and its creatures and catastrophes.

The Heroes survive **Encounters**, collect **Equipment**, grow stronger and/or more **INTelligent**, and in the end fight the **Main Boss**.

The GM actively plays against the group by **summoning** creatures, **casting** spells, and changing the environment.

- ▶ The Heroes win if they defeat the Main Boss (☹).
- ▶ The GM wins if all Heroes reach 0 Life Points (**LP**) and are knocked out.

Game Dynamics and Variation

SideQuest changes its feel considerably depending on whether you face the GM as a single Hero or play as a group. The rules stay the same, but the way you make decisions and how tension builds shifts significantly.

In a game with only one Hero, the game feels like a challenging duel. But as soon as several Heroes sit at the table, the focus is no longer on improving a Hero's equipment, but on teamwork. It's about who attacks first, who summons a creature, when a spell is cast, and whether to take a risky decision. In multiplayer games, this creates tactical interplay where coordination, ordering, and small trades make the biggest difference.

Terms in orange can be looked up in the Glossary (p. 28).

2. Game Flow: How to Play SideQuest

Creating Heroes (Starting Values)

First you have to decide who wants to play a Hero and who wants to play the Game Master (GM)*.

Up to 3 Heroes can play, and there must be one GM.

Each Hero starts with:

6 LP + 6 free points that may be distributed among LP, STR (=❌) and INT (=⬆️) (example: 3 STR ❌, 2 INT ⬆️ and 7 LP).

STR ❌ and INT ⬆️ each have a maximum of 20.
There is no maximum for LP.

***Note:**

"Hero" sounds more exciting at first than "Game Master". But as the GM, you can drive your opponents to despair with cunning spells and overpowering creatures.

LP is a number you can track with a D20 or write down on a piece of paper. STR ❌ and INT ⬆️ are cards with the corresponding symbols, though you can also use alternatives such as apps, dice, etc.

Preparing the Decks

Hero Deck

Each Hero plays a Hero deck (60–80 cards) containing:

- ▶ Equipment (⬆️/⬆️)
- ▶ Spells (⬆️/⬆️)
- ▶ Creatures (⬆️)

The distribution of cards depends heavily on the Hero's strategy.

Copy rule: Up to 2 copies of the same card are allowed in a deck.

It is recommended to play with the preconstructed decks to preserve balance - changes should be kept to a minimum, as the game is not designed for building your own decks from scratch.

GM Deck and World Deck

The GM plays a GM deck (60–80 cards) containing:

- ▶ GM creatures
- ▶ GM spells
- ▶ **Secondary Boss**

and a World Deck.

The **World Deck** contains only World Cards, which change the environment.

Before the game begins, the GM sets aside one Boss creature of their choice (Main Boss) and shuffles another one into the GM deck (Secondary Boss)

Discovery Deck

Before the game starts, the Heroes and the GM each shuffle 10 cards into the **Discovery Deck**, or use a preconstructed deck (20-40 cards).

Important: Only **Discovery cards** (⊕) may be added to the Discovery Deck.

Cards from the Discovery Deck are played in the **Discovery Zone**. Creatures in this zone can be attacked from all sides.

Choosing a Difficulty Level

Before the starting **hands** are drawn, agree on a difficulty level.

It influences how much pressure the GM can build up per round.

By default, there are 4 Encounters (4 **Prize Cards**).

NORMAL:

In each GM turn, the GM gains **BP** equal to the **Hero Count (H)**.

HARD:

In each GM turn, the GM gains $H + 1$ BP **○**.

EXTREME:

In each GM turn, the GM gains $H + 1$ BP **○** and may draw +1 card.
The game is played with 5 Encounters (5 Prize Cards).

IMPOSSIBLE:

In each GM turn, the GM gains $H + 2$ BP **○** and may draw +1 card.
Heroes start with 3 LP.
The game is played with 6 Encounters (6 Prize Cards).

Preparing the Play Areas

Hero Play Area

All Heroes lay out their shuffled Hero deck, INT ⬆ deck and STR ⬇ deck, plus 4 Prize cards drawn face-down from their deck by default.

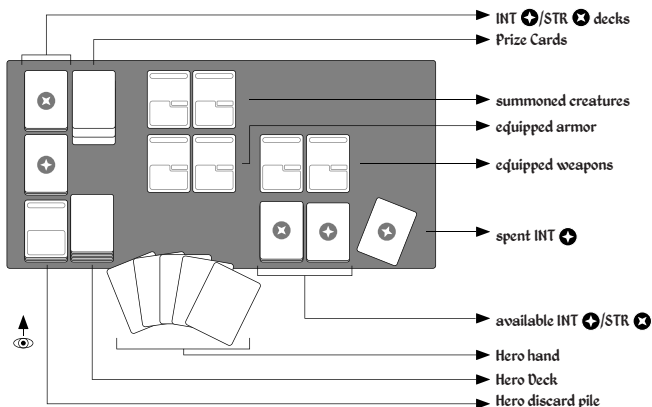
INT ⬆ and STR ⬇ are drawn from their respective decks and placed with the available INT ⬆ and STR ⬇ cards.

At the start of the game, the number of starting INT ⬆ and STR ⬇ cards defined during Hero creation is drawn.

INT ⬆ and STR ⬇ are placed separately:

- ▶ available INT ⬆
- ▶ spent INT ⬆ (rotated)
- ▶ available STR ⬇
- ▶ spent STR ⬇ (rotated, only through certain effects)

Overview:



The number of cards shown is for demonstration purposes only.

At the start of the game, no cards are active except the STR ⬇ and INT ⬆ determined during Hero creation.

GM Play Area

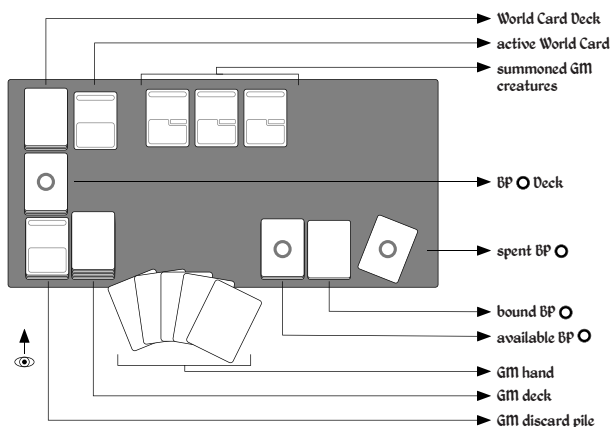
The GM lays out the shuffled GM deck, World Deck, and BP ○ deck.

BP ○ are drawn from the BP ○ deck and placed into separate piles depending on their state:

- ▶ **available BP ○**
- ▶ **bound BP ○** (turned over)
- ▶ **spent BP ○** (rotated)

World Cards (©) are revealed from the World Deck, visible to all players. New (active) World Cards are placed on top of the previous World Cards.

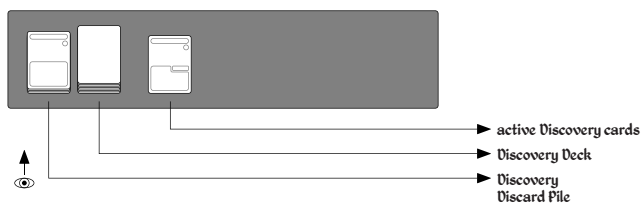
Overview:



Discovery Play Area

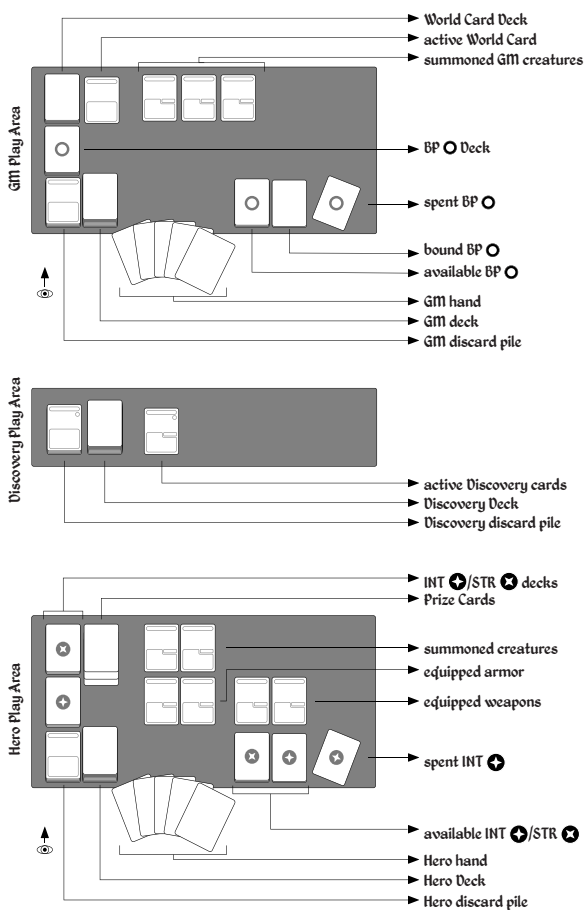
The shuffled Discovery Deck is laid out visibly for all players (usually centrally). Discovery cards are revealed visibly for all players.

Overview:



Complete Overview: Play Areas

*The number of cards shown is for demonstration purposes only.
At the start of the game, no cards are active.*



Game Setup

Game Start and Hand Cards

After all decks have been shuffled and laid out, all players draw 7 cards face down from their decks.

You keep these cards in your hand and show them to no one (not even your allies). These are your hand cards.

When coordinating, the card name or effect should never be named directly, but you may talk about what the card would do.

You can play/**summon** hand cards by binding or spending the necessary resources.

You receive resources and additional hand cards every **round**.

You can already take the number of INT and STR defined during your Hero creation from your resource piles and lay them out.

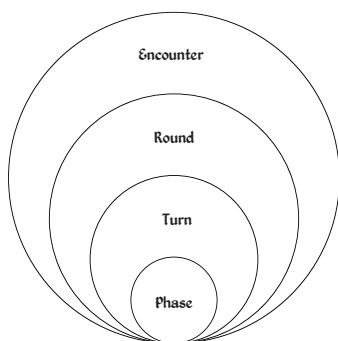
***Note:**

Effects of spells or creatures take effect from the moment they are played/summoned.

Round Sequence

Each round consists of:

1. Hero turn (shared)(Heroes begin the game)**
2. GM turn



*Heroes and the GM can only resolve actions during their own turn. Exception: Instants & effects.

**Heroes can play in parallel during their turn. For example, they can draw cards and increase resources at the same time. For spells and attacks, however, clear communication is important, since ordering and reactions are essential to the flow of the game.

Hero Turn

1. Draw Phase

At the beginning of the Hero turn, each Hero may draw 1 card from their deck.*

*Note:

In the first round of a game, the Draw Phase is skipped.

2. Growth Phase (Fate Roll)

Each Hero rolls a D6 once.

► On X = 1:

The Hero may increase INT ⬆ or STR ⬇ by +1.

However, they must discard one hand card and reveal one Discovery card (does not count as “discovering”).

► On X = 2–5:

The Hero may increase INT ⬆ or STR ⬇ by +1.

► On X = 6:

The Hero may distribute a total of +2 among INT ⬆/STR ⬇ (e.g. +2 STR ⬇ or +1 INT ⬆/+1 STR ⬇).

INT ⬆ or STR ⬇ are increased by +1 by placing a card from the respective resource deck with their available resources.

After growth, the Hero's INT ⬆ supply is refilled to its maximum (all spent INT ⬆ become available again).

3. Beg or Discover

Each Hero may perform exactly one of the following actions, once per turn:

- **Beg:** Ask another player to give you exactly 1 hand card of their choice.
- **Discover:** Draw 1 card from the Discovery Deck and reveal it.

If there are no creatures in the GM's play area and the GM was unable to summon a creature in their last turn to start a new Encounter, every Hero must Discover.

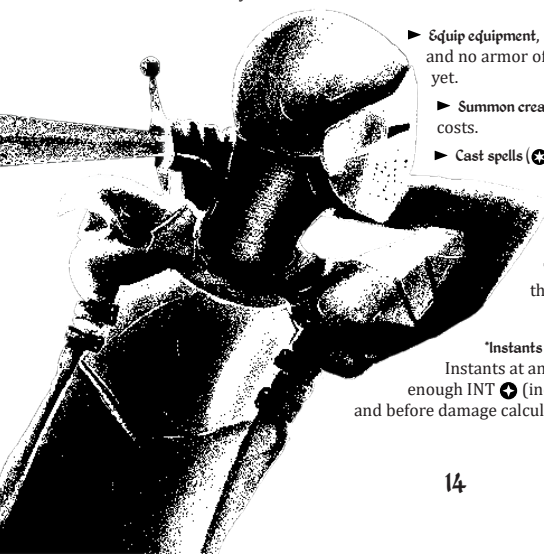
4. Main Phase

Heroes may now:

- **Equip equipment**, if the STR threshold is met and no armor of the same type is **equipped** yet.
- **Summon creatures** by paying the INT costs.
- **Cast spells** (⚡ & ⚡*).

► **Unequip equipment:** A Hero may unequip one piece of equipment (⚡/⚡) once per their own turn. The removed card goes to the **discard pile**.

***Instant**⚡: A Hero may play Instants at any time, as long as they have enough INT ⬆ (including during the GM turn and before damage calculation).



5. Attack Phase (Heroes)

Heroes must attack to reduce the DEF points of GM creatures using the ATK points of creatures or weapons.

If a card's DEF has been reduced to 0, the card is put into the discard pile.

Attacks are declared one at a time. After each individual attack, the GM gets a reaction window for Instants and effects. Only then is the next attack declared.

Heroes never attack the GM directly, only GM creatures or other attackable cards.

Hero Attack

Each Hero may declare exactly one Hero attack per turn.

For it, they choose exactly one equipped weapon.

The attack deals damage equal to that weapon's ATK value.

Without a weapon, the Hero deals 1 damage.

Creature Attack

Each Hero creature may attack once per turn. Creatures may also attack in the turn they were summoned.

6. End Phase

After the Attack Phase, Heroes may still perform standard actions (Summoning, Casting, Begging/Discovering).

At the end of the Hero turn, the hand limit is checked and, if necessary, cards are put from the hand into the discard pile until the number of hand cards matches the limit (players choose which cards they put into the discard pile).

More information on attacks, effects, and damage calculation in Chapter 4: Combat and Damage.

GM Turn

1. Draw Phase

The GM draws 1 card. The hand limit is 7.

At the end of their turn, a player must discard excess hand cards until they reach their **hand limit**. They choose which cards to put into the discard pile.

2. Growth Phase (Fate Roll)

The GM rolls a D6 once.

► **On X = 1:**

The GM gains H BP ○ (difficulty = normal) and may draw an additional card or reveal a new **World Card**.

A new World Card is determined as at the start of an Encounter.

► **On X = 2-5:**

The GM gains H BP ○

► **On X = 6:**

The GM gains H+1 BP ○

For demonstration purposes, the difficulty level NORMAL was used [here](#).

Across the entire Encounter, a maximum of H × 10 BP ○ may be bound.

Spent BP ○ that the GM spent on spells/Instant in the previous turn now become fully available again.

3. World Phase

At the beginning of an Encounter:

The GM draws the top 2 World Cards of the World Deck and temporarily takes them into their hand (they do not have to show them to the Heroes).

The GM decides which of the cards will be the active World Card for this Encounter by placing one of the drawn cards face up in the play area and the other face down back on top of the World Deck.

Each turn:

The effect of the active World Card is resolved.

4. Main Phase

The GM may now:

► **Summon GM creatures:** Each GM creature has a size (=BP ○ cost).

When summoning, BP ○ equal to this size are bound.

These bound BP ○ remain bound until the end of the Encounter, even if the creature leaves play.

► **Cast spells and effects:** Spells, effects, and Instant* often cost

BP ○, but these are not bound permanently.

***Instant ⚡:** The GM may play Instant at any time, as long as they have enough BP ○ (including during the Hero turn and before damage calculation).

5. Attack Phase (GM)

The GM can attack with their GM creatures.

Creatures under Heroes' control and Heroes themselves can be declared as targets of an attack.

Weapons/equipment cannot be chosen directly as the target of the attack.

When the GM attacks, they must announce all attackers at once and assign a target to each.

Only then do the Heroes react with **blockers*** and **Instants**. During the GM's attack declaration, the GM may not add further attackers.

6. End Phase

The GM may still play cards after the Attack Phase.

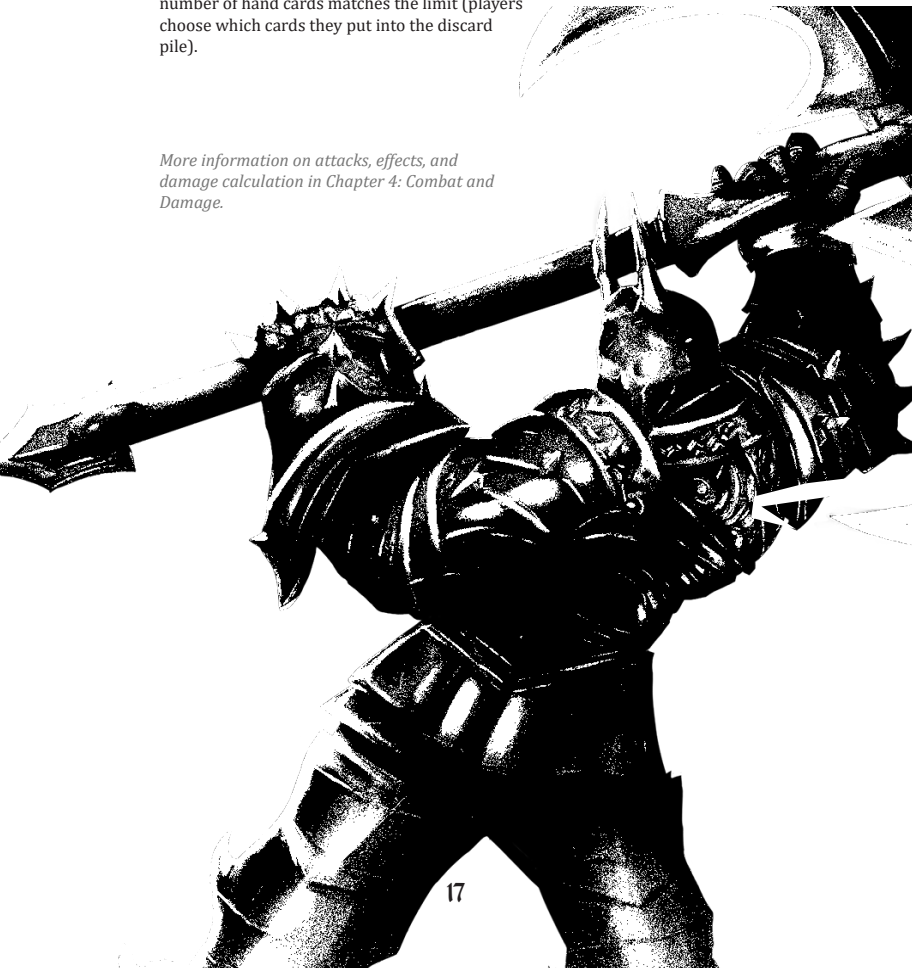
At the end of the GM turn, the hand limit is checked and, if necessary, cards are put from the hand into the discard pile until the number of hand cards matches the limit (players choose which cards they put into the discard pile).

More information on attacks, effects, and damage calculation in Chapter 4: Combat and Damage.

*Note:

Unlike the GM, Heroes can block the GM's attacks with their ARM/LP or with the DEF of creatures or weapons.

This means targets chosen by the GM can be redirected by Heroes.



Encounters

Start of an Encounter

An Encounter begins when the GM first summons a GM creature onto a GM play area with no active creatures.

At the beginning of an Encounter, the GM reveals a new World Card.

The GM must then, if possible, bring at least one GM creature into play.

If the GM cannot bring a GM creature into play, a Hero must reveal and resolve a **discovery card**. If the Heroes cannot agree, the GM determines which Hero reveals.*

*Note:

A game always begins with the Hero turn.

No Discovery card has to be drawn in this turn yet.

End of an Encounter

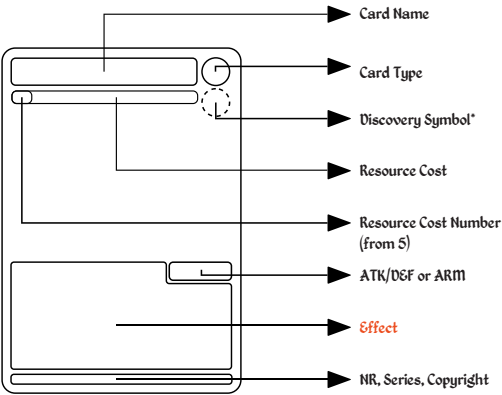
An Encounter ends when no GM creatures are active in the GM play area anymore.

The following actions are resolved:

- ▶ Each Hero reveals 1 Prize Card and takes it into their hand.
- ▶ Each Hero's hand limit increases by 1.
- ▶ All of the GM's bound BP **O** become free.



3. Card Overview



Card Types:

 Creature	 Spell	 Instant
 Armor	 Weapon	 Discovery Card
 GM Creature	 GM Spell	 GM Instant
 Boss	 World Card	

* Discovery cards:

Discovery cards show the Discovery symbol  below the card type.

Note: *Discovery & World Cards as well as Hero and GM cards have different card backs.*

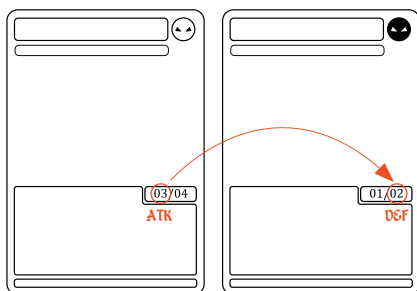
4. Combat and Damage

Attack Targets

Creatures or Heroes can attack to remove other creatures or Heroes from the game.

Attacks may be directed against:

- ▶ Heroes
- ▶ equipped armor pieces
- ▶ face-down cards (Hidden) in the creature zone
- ▶ creatures in another player's play area.
- ▶ neutral creatures in the Discovery Zone.



Basic principle:

An attack is always "one source → one target"

When a Hero or a creature attacks, exactly one target is chosen per source.

The source's ATK is subtracted from the target's DEF, ARM, or LP.

If DEF or LP drop to 0, the card (DEF) or the Hero (LP) is removed from the game.

Attacks Against Heroes Without Armor

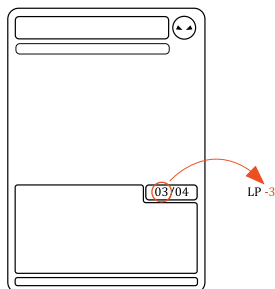
When a Hero without equipped armor is attacked, they can:

- ▶ block with exactly one of their own creatures
- ▶ block with an equipped weapon, if that card has DEF > 0
- ▶ not block and take the damage on LP.

If the Hero blocks (with a creature or equipment), the attacking creature's damage (Dmg) is assigned exclusively to the blocker's DEF value.

Even if the attacker's ATK is higher than the blocker's DEF, no excess damage is carried over to LP.

If the Hero does not block, the attacker's ATK is subtracted directly from LP.



Attacks Against Heroes With Armor

When a Hero with equipped armor is attacked, incoming damage is always dealt to the **ARM** of an armor piece first.

Before the armor piece is named, the Hero must announce whether they block:

- ▶ with a creature
- ▶ with a weapon

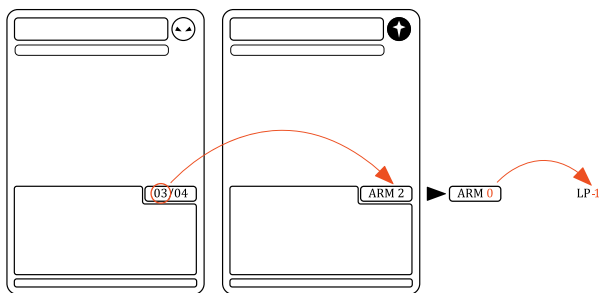
If blocked, damage is assigned exclusively to the blocker's DEF, and excess damage is not carried over.

If not blocked, the attacker must designate a specific armor piece (e.g. head or body) as the target before damage calculation.

The attack first reduces the ARM value of the targeted armor piece.

Armor with ARM 0 does not have to be put into the discard pile (its effects stay active, but incoming damage is not reduced).

If ATK exceeds ARM, the excess damage (ATK-ARM) is subtracted from LP.



Hero Attacks

A Hero may attack exactly once per their own turn.

They choose exactly one weapon, whose ATK is dealt as damage to the target.

Without a weapon, the Hero deals 1 damage.

Blocking and Damage Calculation

If a Hero is chosen as the attack target of a GM creature, they may choose a creature or weapon under their control (in play) as the new target of the attack.

This is possible once per turn per creature/weapon.

In addition, another Hero may decide once per turn to "intervene" and become the target of the attack themselves.

(see Reference Guide).

IMPORTANT:

The GM has no LP and cannot be chosen as the target of an attack.

5. Optional Additional GM Rules

To create an even more immersive adventure/roleplaying experience, the GM can introduce additional rules that do not directly interfere with the game mechanics.

The GM must announce and explain all additional rules applying to the respective game immediately before the game, in a way all players understand.

Here are some examples:

Note:

Not recommended for beginners.

Unforgiving Judgment:

For every mistake a Hero makes that the GM notices first, the GM draws 1 BP ○. *(A mistake here refers to, for example, a false claim about the impact of effects or attacks, showing or naming hand cards, as well as incorrect resolution of game actions of any kind, intentional or not.)*

What Is My Name?:

During Hero creation, Heroes choose any names for their Hero (themselves). Every time a Hero addresses another Hero by a name other than the one chosen at the start, the GM draws 1 BP ○. *(This also applies when Heroes have to help each other remember.)*

Impatient Power:

During a Boss fight, Heroes only have a time window for their turn, determined by the GM before the game begins. All actions declared before the end of this window are resolved. After that, the Hero turn ends automatically.

✦ PART 2 ✦

Reference Guide

Zones and Piles

Each player has their own deck and their own discard pile.

The Discovery Deck has its own discard pile.

World Cards are stacked on top of each other.

The Discovery Zone contains neutral cards that enter play from the Discovery Deck.

Neutral cards can be attacked, affected, and destroyed.

Hand Limit and Discarding

The standard hand limit is 7.

Heroes check their hand limit at the end of the Hero turn.

The GM checks it at the end of the GM turn.

After each completed Encounter, each Hero's hand limit increases by 1.

Mulligan (Redrawing Your Starting Hand)

Each Hero may redraw at the start of the game. To do so, they shuffle their starting hand into their deck and draw again.

- ▶ On the first mulligan, the Hero draws 6 cards.
- ▶ On the second mulligan, they draw 5 cards.
- ▶ On the third mulligan, they draw 4 cards, and so on.

The GM's starting hand should contain at least one GM creature with BP ○ < 4.

If this is not the case, they may keep drawing new hands.

Apart from that, the GM may not draw a new starting hand.

Resources

Heroes manage LP, STR ⚔ and INT ⚡.

- ▶ STR ⚔ is only a threshold for armor and weapons (it is only spent for certain effects*)
- ▶ INT ⚡ is spent for spells/creatures and is refilled after the
- ▶ Growth Phase during your own turn.

**Effects and abilities such as "Partner" spend STR ⚔ just like INT ⚡ (rotate the card) for the duration of the effect.*

The GM manages BP ○ in 3 states:

- ▶ available BP ○ (ready to use)
- ▶ spent BP ○ (spent on spells; available again at the start of the next GM turn)
- ▶ bound BP ○ (blocked by GM creatures until the end of the Encounter).

Card position: *spent resources are rotated slightly until they become available again.*

Bound BP ○ are turned over.

Spells and Effects

Sorceries (☼)

Sorceries may only be cast during your own turn and not while another action is being resolved.

Instants (☼)

Instants may be cast at any time, in particular:

- ▶ during the opponent's turn
- ▶ after an attack is declared
- ▶ before damage is calculated

Stack Principle

If several effects are played one after another within a reaction window, the effect played last is resolved first. Effects are fully resolved before moving on to the next effect.

INT ☼ Costs

Spells or effects with "INT ☼ X" require the Hero to spend X unspent INT ☼ (INT ☼ they have drawn from their INT ☼ deck over the course of the game). Spent INT ☼ are rotated sideways and remain spent until they are rotated back at the beginning of the Heroes' next Growth Phase and become available again. Available INT ☼ has no influence on creatures already summoned or spells already cast.

Dice Logic

For every action and effect that requires "rolling", a separate roll must be made, and it must be declared immediately beforehand which action or effect the roll is for.

Equipment: Slots, Classes, Equipping and Swapping

Slots and Classes

Each Hero has a total of 5 slots for **equipment** (☼ / ☼):

- ▶ **2 hand slots:** weapons ☼ can occupy these slots.
Some cards occupy both hands (Two-Handed).
- ▶ **3 body slots:** armor pieces/armor ☼ can occupy these slots.

Armor usually has the classes Head ☼ and Body ☼.

The 3rd slot is reserved for additional classes such as accessories ☼.

Never more than one armor piece of the same class may be equipped at the same time.

Set Effects

Effects with the "☼ + ☼" symbol only become active once 2 pieces of equipment of the same series are equipped (e.g.: *Light Leather Helmet + Light Leather Body Armor*). Set effects trigger once per set, not per individual card.

STR ☼ Threshold and Costs

A piece of equipment with "STR ☼ X" requires the Hero to have at least X unspent STR ☼ (STR ☼ they have drawn from their STR ☼ deck over the course of the game).

Effects with "STR ☼ X" require the Hero to spend at least X unspent STR ☼. These remain spent for the duration of the respective effect (e.g.: "Partner") or, for one-time spells/effects, until the beginning of the Heroes' next Growth Phase. Equipped armor stays equipped regardless of its STR ☼ threshold. However, weapons whose STR ☼ threshold exceeds the Hero's unspent STR ☼ cannot be chosen for a Hero attack.

Unequipping

A Hero may unequip one piece of equipment once per their own turn.
The removed card goes to the discard pile.

Attacking, Blocking, Intervening

Creature Attack

Each creature may make exactly one attack per its owner's turn. When attacking, its owner chooses exactly one target for the attack*. Not allowed: its owner, itself, and allied cards. The attack deals damage equal to the attacking creature's ATK value.

Creatures may also attack in the turn they were summoned, unless a card text restricts this.

Hero Attack

Each Hero may make exactly one Hero attack per turn.

They choose exactly one weapon for it.

The attack damage equals that weapon's ATK value.

Without a weapon, the Hero deals 1 damage.

Hero Attacks

Attacks are declared one at a time.

After each individual attack, the GM gets a reaction window for Instants and effects.

Only then is the next attack declared.

GM Attacks (simultaneous)

The GM declares all attackers at once and names a target for each attacker. Then the Heroes react. The GM may not add further attackers during this declaration.

Blocking as a Hero

When a Hero is attacked as a target, they may choose exactly one block option per attacker:

- ▶ one of their own creatures that has not yet blocked this turn
- ▶ a weapon that has not yet blocked this turn
- ▶ no blocker

When blocking with creatures or weapons, no excess damage is dealt to LP.

Creatures cannot block attacks on other creatures.

Attacks on Hero creatures can only be prevented by Instants or by a Hero intervening

Intervening

A Hero can block an attack on another Hero or one of their creatures by becoming the target of the attack themselves. Damage is calculated as in a regular attack on a Hero with armor (unblocked), with the exception that armor whose ARM value is 0 after damage calculation is put into the discard pile.

Damage (DMG), ATK, DEF and ARM

Creatures and weapons have ATK and DEF: (ATK/DEF).

ATK

ATK is a card's attack strength and the amount of damage dealt to the target of an attack.

DEF

DEF is the amount of damage a card can take in total.

When DEF drops to 0, the creature/weapon is put into the discard pile.

When a weapon is chosen as the target of an attack or as a blocker, incoming damage reduces its DEF. If DEF drops to 0, the equipment is destroyed and put into the discard pile.

Excess damage to DEF (when ATK>DEF) is not carried over.

ARM

ARM is the protection value of an armor piece. ARM is reduced by damage and protects LP by reducing incoming damage by its value. If ARM drops to 0, the armor stays equipped unless a card text removes or destroys it. Excess damage to ARM (when ATK>ARM) is carried over to the Hero's LP.

DMG

Damage dealt = DMG.

Damage to creatures and equipment persists as long as no card removes or regenerates it. It is recommended to track damage with markers or dice.

World Cards

World Cards change the environment by establishing effects that apply permanently and are resolved during the GM's World Phase.

At the beginning of an Encounter, a World Card is revealed and stays active until the next World Card change.

A new World Card is determined by the GM by temporarily taking the top 2 World Cards of the World Deck into their hand (they do not have to show them to the Heroes) and placing the new active World Card face up in the play area (the second World Card is placed back on top of the World Deck).

This applies to all actions that determine "a new World Card".

The new World Card is placed on top of the old one.

If the World Deck runs out, the pile is reshuffled with all cards below the current World Card.

Boss Level and Bosses

After each completed Encounter, each Hero reveals one Prize Card. The **Boss Level** corresponds to your progress across the Encounters.

After 4 completed Encounters (or depending on the difficulty level), the GM summons the Boss creature that was set aside, without paying BP.

This starts the Boss Encounter, which is resolved like a normal Encounter.

If the Main Boss is defeated, the Heroes win.

Deck Rules

If a player's deck runs empty, they must reshuffle their deck using the cards in their discard pile.

The standard decks are fully playable and built so that you can start right away without any adjustments. Deckbuilding only becomes relevant once you own more card options through expansion packs and want to shape your playstyle deliberately – for example by making certain strategies more reliable, compensating weaknesses, or building new synergies. The following deckbuilding rules ensure that personalized decks stay fair and continue to play the way SideQuest is meant to be: fast, tactical, and challenging. During the game, cards from the standard decks can be swapped and mixed. Especially for Discovery cards, which are combined into a shared Discovery deck, it is not essential to sort all cards back into their respective Hero/GM decks. Cards from the player decks should, however, be returned to their original deck at the end of the game.

- ▶ **Hero deck:** 60–80 cards, up to 2 copies of the same card. More than 80 cards reduces starting LP by 1 per additional card.
- ▶ **GM deck:** 60–80 cards recommended. A working starting distribution is 50% early creatures, 30% medium creatures and effects, 20% powerful creatures.
- ▶ **Discovery Deck:** contains only Discovery cards and Equipment.

Communication at the Table

SideQuest thrives on planning as a group without breaking character. Heroes may talk to each other and make agreements at any time, but should not name cards or card texts verbatim, and should not quote exact values or effect wordings.

Instead, describe your options in the language of the game world, for example:

Glossary: All terms at a glance.

In SideQuest, much is governed by clearly defined terms. This section explains all terms you need to play and to understand the card texts.

Roles and Counts

Hero

A player playing on the Heroes' side. Heroes have Life Points (LP) and resources (STR /INT ), and have their own deck, their own discard pile, and their own play area.

GM (Game Master)

The Heroes' adversary. The GM has no Life Points, but plays with their own deck, their own resources (BP), and their own play area.

Hero Count (H)

The number of all Heroes participating in the game. Many rules and values scale with H.

Player Count

The total number of participants: Heroes + GM.

Cards, Card Types, and Symbols

Card

A game object with a name, card type, costs/thresholds, text, and possibly values. Depending on its card type, a card is either played, played face down, summoned, cast, or discarded.

Creature



A unit brought into play by a card or an effect. Creatures have ATK/DEF and are placed in a creature zone. Creatures can attack. There are GM and Hero creatures. Creatures can attack once per turn (including the turn in which they entered play). There is no limit to the number of active creatures in play.

Spell



An effect card that is not a creature. Spells resolve their text and are then usually put into the discard pile, unless they are marked as permanent/lasting.

(Main) Boss



The Boss is a more powerful creature. It enters play automatically as soon as the last Encounter is completed, costs no BP, and defeating it decides the Heroes' victory.

Secondary Boss

The Secondary Boss is a Boss creature that is shuffled into the GM deck before the game and is summoned like a normal GM creature. If it is defeated, the Heroes advance 2 Encounters (Boss progress) after the current Encounter ends.

Sorcery



A spell that may only be cast during your own turn and may not be started while an attack or effect is being resolved, unless a card text explicitly allows it.

Instant



A spell that may also be cast outside of your own turn, especially during reaction windows (e.g., after an attack is declared and before damage is calculated). Instants may not be played face down.

Equipment



Cards a Hero can equip. Equipment includes weapons() and armor pieces(). Equipment has values (weapons: ATK/DEF; armor pieces: ARM).

Armor Pieces



Armor pieces include helmet, body armor/chest plate, and accessory (extra) (e.g.: ring or amulet).

Discovery Card



A card intended exclusively for the Discovery Deck. Discovery cards are played in the Discovery Zone and can have positive or negative effects. Discovery cards are neither Sorceries nor Instants, even if they trigger effects.

Discovery cards that are Equipment are taken into the hand of whoever reveals them.

Discovery cards that are creatures cannot be controlled and neither attack automatically nor block.

World Card



A card from the World Deck that changes the environment of an Encounter. A World Card generally applies for the duration of the Encounter or until it is replaced by a new one.

Rolling



Rolling is an action in which a player rolls a D6 and the result determines the strength or outcome of a card effect.

Actions and Procedures

Effect

An effect is any rules impact triggered by a card or an ability that changes the game state. Effects can, for example, deal damage, change values, move cards (draw, discard, destroy, return), create conditions, or temporarily replace rules.

summon

Bring a creature into play by spending its costs or fulfilling its conditions. Summoning applies to Hero creatures (INT ) as well as GM creatures (BP).

cast

Play a spell and pay/spend its costs. "Casting" is used for Sorceries and Instants.

equip

Place an equipment card into a matching slot, making it active. Equipping requires the matching equipment class/slots and possibly a STR threshold.

trigger

An effect occurs because a condition was met (e.g., "When this creature attacks..."). Triggered effects are resolved as soon as they trigger, unless a rule delays them.

activate

An effect is deliberately triggered by spending costs or fulfilling a condition (e.g., "Pay X: ..."). Activated effects count as their own effect process.

hidden/face down

A face-down creature is placed in the creature zone, can be attacked, but cannot attack and has no active effects while it is face down.

A face-down card must be revealed when it is chosen as the target of an attack, spell, or effect. Only its controller may reveal it regularly, during their own turn, but not in the turn it was played face down.

discard

An action in which cards are put from the hand into the discard pile.

Zones and Card Locations

Hand

A player's hand cards. Hand cards are hidden and may only be looked at by their owner.

Play Area / Side of the Field

The area where cards remain permanently or until they are removed. Typically you distinguish:

- ▶ the Hero play area (per Hero),
- ▶ the GM play area,
- ▶ the Discovery Zone.

Creature Zone

A part of the play area where creatures are placed. Face-down cards (Hidden) are also placed in creature zones, but remain inactive until they are revealed.

Discovery Zone

A neutral area into which cards from the Discovery Deck are placed or cast. Neutral creatures can be attacked from all sides. Neutral cards can be affected, destroyed, or removed by effects.

Deck

A player's or the GM's draw pile. Decks are face down, and by default the top card is always drawn.

Discard Pile

A pile for defeated, destroyed, or used cards. Each player has their own discard pile. There is also a discard pile for Discovery Deck cards, and, if needed, an area for older World Cards if you prefer to discard them instead of stacking them.

Game Structure and Progress

Turn

One complete sequence of a player (Hero or GM) within a round.

Round

A round consists of one shared Hero turn and one GM turn.

Fate Roll

A D6 roll a player makes at the beginning of their turn that influences growth.

Encounter

A continuous segment that begins as soon as the GM first summons a creature onto a previously empty GM play area, and ends as soon as the GM creature zone is empty again.

Prize Cards

Face-down cards a Hero sets aside from their deck at the start. After a completed Encounter, each Hero reveals one Prize Card and takes it into their hand as a reward. Prize Cards also serve as a progress marker.

Boss Level

A progress value resulting from completed Encounters, which can be determined from the removed Prize Cards. The Boss Level determines when the Main Boss appears (depending on your current progress rule).

Resources

LP (Life Points)

A Hero's Life Points. If LP drop to 0, the Hero is knocked out.

STR (Strength)



A threshold for equipping/using equipment. STR is not spent by equipping armor and is only spent/tapped by certain spells or effects, for the duration of the effect, or, for one-time effects, until the player's next Growth Phase. STR can be increased in the Growth Phase, up to a maximum of 20.

INT (Intelligence)



The Heroes' resource for spells, creatures, and abilities. INT  is spent/tapped until the player's next Growth Phase. INT  can be increased in the Growth Phase, up to a maximum of 20.

BP (Threat Points)



The GM's resource. BP exist in 3 states:

available BP

bound BP

spent BP

available BP/INT /STR



Resources drawn over the course of the game. They can be bound or spent for creatures, spells, or effects.

bound BP



BP bound by summoning GM creatures. They remain bound until the end of the Encounter.

Bound BP cards are turned over.

spent BP/INT /STR



Resources that have been spent. BP and INT become available again at the beginning of the player's next turn (Growth Phase). STR can also remain spent for the duration of an effect.

Spent BP cards are rotated (roughly 90 degrees).

Values, Damage, and Durability

ATK (Attack)

How much damage a creature or weapon deals when attacking, before effects modify it.

DEF (Defense)

How much damage a creature or weapon can take in total before it is destroyed. DEF does not regenerate. There is no excess damage.

DMG (Damage)

The damage actually dealt, reducing DEF/ARM/LP.

ARM (Armor Value)

The durability/protection value of an armor piece. ARM is reduced before LP take damage, provided the armor piece is the attack's target. ARM does not regenerate. Armor stays equipped even when its ARM is 0, unless an effect removes it. Excess damage is dealt to LP.

Effect Terms and Abilities

In SideQuest, most cards have effects.

Recurring effects shared across cards are called “abilities” and are not defined on every card.

The same applies to standard terms.

All effect terms and abilities are defined below.

Equip Action	<i>Equipping or unequipping a piece of equipment.</i>
Burn (N)	<i>The target takes N damage at the beginning of each turn until Burn is removed.</i> <i>Players whose creatures are affected by the Burn effect may roll a D6 once per turn; If the result is > 3, the effect is removed.</i>
Thorns (N)	<i>When the wearer of this equipment takes DMG from an attack, deal N DMG to the attacker.</i>
Trample	<i>With Trample, if ATK>DEF, the difference is dealt as DMG.</i>
Intimidating	<i>This creature may only be attacked once in total per round.</i>
Discover	<i>Draw 1 card from the Discovery Deck.</i>
Flying	<i>This creature can only be blocked by creatures with the “Flying” or “Reach” ability. If a Hero counts as Flying, the same rules apply as for creatures.</i>
Nimble	<i>When this creature is chosen as an attack target, it simultaneously deals damage equal to its ATK to the attacker (creature or Hero). (This damage is dealt directly)</i>

Fear (N)	<i>This creature cannot be attacked in the first N rounds after it was summoned. If no N is given, the effect applies in the first round after summoning.</i>
Immunity	<i>This creature cannot be the sole target of a spell or effect.</i>
Counter	<i>The countered spell or effect has no effect, but is discarded or counts as played as usual. The summoning of creatures or the activation of cards cannot be countered. Countered spells are put into the discard pile.</i>
Magic (N)	<i>Requires at least N unspent INT to be equipped/used.</i>
Sacrifice	<i>Put a card under your control into the discard pile to pay the cost or fulfill the condition of an effect. Sacrificed cards do not count as destroyed.</i>
Armored	<i>This creature takes no damage from weapons and creatures with the "Reach" ability.</i>
Paralyzed	<i>Cannot attack or block until the condition is removed.</i> <i>Players whose creatures are affected by the "Paralyzed" effect may roll a D6 once per turn; If the result is > 3, the effect is removed.</i> <i>Further details in the effect text can influence the duration of the effect.</i>

Partner (STR N)

If STR $\geq$ N, this creature may be bound to a Hero as a Partner.

A bound Partner creature is treated like equipment.

- *It cannot attack or block.*
- *DEF is treated like ARM*
- *ATK is added to every Hero attack.*

Some creatures have additional effects while they are partnered

All abilities and effects of the Partner creature only apply while the bond exists and end immediately when the partnership ends.

Once per Encounter, you may move a partnered creature from the Partner area back to the creature zone and treat it as a normal creature again.

Damage a creature has taken persists, regardless of whether it was partnered or unpartnered.

You may only partner with one creature at a time.

Reach

This creature can attack or block flying creatures.

Stealth

An attack with this card cannot be blocked by creatures whose ATK is higher than this card's ATK.

Empower

ATK is increased by X; X = the result of a D6 roll. X is determined anew each time it triggers.

Inertia (N)

This weapon can only attack N turns after being equipped.

Untouchable (N)

When a card with this ability becomes the target of an attack/spell/effect, check with a D6 roll;

on a result above N, the action has no effect.

Hidden (N)

This card is played face down and may be revealed regularly after N of your own turns. If no N is given, it may be revealed regularly at any time during your own turn.

A face-down card:

- ▶ *is placed face down in the creature zone*
- ▶ *can be attacked like a normal creature,*
- ▶ *has no active effects*
- ▶ *cannot attack*

When a face-down card is chosen as the target of an attack or effect, it must be revealed.

A regular reveal is only possible during your own turn.

Warden

This creature may block up to 2 attacks in one turn.

Value Suffix "H"

Values with the suffix H are multiplied by the Hero Count (H).

Resurrection (N)

If this creature would be put into the discard pile, you may return it to your hand instead, up to N times.

Tenacity (X)

Reduces damage taken by X, before damage calculation.

X = the result of a D6 roll.

General Provisions for Effects:

Effect texts referring to "this card" always mean the card itself.

For effects that require choosing a target, the card's type is named explicitly (e.g.: GM creature) and/or described with "that card".

Closing Words.

With this rulebook you have all the rules you need for SideQuest: from setup and Encounters to resources, equipment, and combat, all the way to timing, reactions, and deckbuilding.

Card texts provide exceptions or additional rules, but if you have a general rules question, this document is your reference.

In exceptional cases, the GM always decides.

A great deal of time, heart, and effort went into this project.

But if this game makes you laugh, curse, shout, debate, or simply enjoy it — bringing a spark of fantasy and lightness into your everyday life — it was worth it.

Have fun with SideQuest.

- Maximilian Hofer



You can find the latest updates and news here:

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SideQuest LCG – Rulebook
Version: R01-EN

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Contents:

1 GM deck:
20 BP cards
10 Discovery cards
14 World Cards
1 helper card

60 GM cards

3x Hero deck, each:
20 INT cards
20 STR cards
7 Discovery cards
1 helper card

60 Hero cards



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