



The GameMaster's Apprentice
The GameMaster's Apprentice decks are a set of system- and setting-neutral support tools for writers and GameMasters. The complete Quickstart Guide and Instructions documents can be found on DriveThruRPG as free downloads (go to Larcenous Designs' website, listed below, and click on "Storefront"), but this set of instruction cards will get you started by briefly explaining a few of the many options the GMA decks provide!

While these instructions use the Fantasy Deck as an example, the basics here apply to all GMA decks, from the genre-neutral Base Deck to Horror, Sci-Fi, and more!

The GameMaster's Apprentice. ©2014-2017 by Larcenous Designs, LLC
www.LarcenousDesigns.com
Writing and Design: Nathan Rockwood
Art and Graphic Design: Elena Asofsky and Max Johnson
Additional Art: Carl Olsen, Cathelineau, Delapouite, Lorc, Skoll, and Willdabeast of www.Game-Icons.net; used under <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>
©Larcenous Designs, LLC GMA Instruction Card 2/12



GMA Key Card

- 1: Difficulty Generator: Bell-curved number from 1-10.
- 2: Likely Odds: Yes/No answers; Good gives Yes 75% of the time, Even gives Yes 50%, and Bad, 25%.
- 3: Dice Wheel: The results of random die rolls. Starts with the a d4 represented by a triangle, and goes: d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20, d% (d00 and d10).
- 4: Old Norse Runes for tarot-like interpretation.
- 5: Elemental Symbols; Earth, Fire, Air, and Water.
- 6: Random Events: A Verb, Adjective, and Noun. Draw one card for each and combine into a phrase.
- 7: Sensory Snippets: From top to bottom, something to hear, see, feel, and smell/taste.
- 8: Tag Symbols: 10 symbols in unique combinations of three. Interpret based on associations, or use a table.
- 9: Scatter Die: Directional arrows, plus 'hit' and 'miss.'
- 10: Belongings: A category of items, followed by three examples. Choose one, or come up with a related item.
- 11: Names: One probably-masculine, probably-feminine, and probably-gender-neutral name per card.
- 12: Catalyst: An inciting incident for a story seed.
- 13: Location: A random location for a story seed.
- 14: Virtues and Vices: Character motivations and weaknesses. Draw one card for each for true randomness.
- 15: Prompt Icons; this field is only on the Fantasy Deck. A unique picture for freeform interpretation.

©Larcenous Designs, LLC GMA Instruction Card 4/12

Make a Character

- 1: Draw three cards.
- 2: Take a Name from one, the Virtue and Vice from the next, and the Belongings from the third.
- 3: Interpret these in context with each other.
Options: Add a Sensory Snippet, a Prompt Icon, or a set of Tag Symbols to add more detail.
Mechanics: Use the Difficulty Generator to set the character's relative power level or friendliness; '1' might mean instant hatred or a weak minion, while '10' might mean love at first sight or a powerful boss monster.

Make a Random Encounter

- 1: Draw two (optionally three) cards.
- 2: Take the Verb from one and the Noun from another. If using three cards, take the Adjective from the third.
- 3: Combine into a phrase; "Fight Purity" might suggest an attack by religious zealots, and "Fight New Purity" might mean an invasion of crusading armies.
Options: Use the Catalyst and Location; use the Prompt Icons as well as or instead of the text; look at the Sensory Snippets for more details.
Mechanics: Use the Difficulty Generator to set the relative or absolute difficulty of actions, or the level of danger or significance. '1' means easy or pure fluff; '10' means sure death or world-changing importance.

©Larcenous Designs, LLC GMA Instruction Card 5/12

Answer Questions

All of these questions were answered using the example card from #3 of this set of instruction cards. In actual play, draw a new card for each question!

Q: "What's in the room?"
A: Look at Sensory Snippets or Tag Symbols. 'The jangle of arms and armor...' and 'Brutally oversized weapons...' sounds like an orc preparing for a fight!

Q: "Is there more than one orc in the room?"
A: Look at Likely Odds (probably Good) for Yes or No; in this case it's 'No.'

Q: "How powerful is the orc?"
A: Look at the Difficulty Generator for the orc's power level. A 6 out of 10 probably means near the high end of average.

Q: "I rolled a critical! What happens?"
A: Look at the Sensory Snippets or the Prompt Icon. The icon here suggests that you cut off the orc's hand!

Q: "What do we find on the orc's body?"
A: Look at the Belongings. 'Small Change' suggests only a few copper pieces or silver shavings, so not much!

©Larcenous Designs, LLC GMA Instruction Card 6/12

Elemental Symbols

Interpret these symbolically to add broad-stroke ideas to characters, scenes, encounters, enemies, etc.

- ☀ Fire brings aggression and energy.
- 💧 Water brings nurturing calm and hidden depths.
- 🌬 Air brings movement and curiosity.
- 🌍 Earth brings endurance and stability.

Tag Symbols

Interpret all three on one card together; each trio or set is unique, and all possible sets appear once. Use them to add nuance to characters, scenes, encounters, enemies, etc. Read them symbolically or make a table (see the instruction document for more examples).

- 🏰 Tower: Obstacle, fortress, location.
- 👑 Crown: Royalty, intrigue, power.
- ❤ Heart: Family, friendship, romance.
- 💀 Skull: Loss, change, death.
- ☀ Sun: Clarity, revelation, discovery.
- 🌙 Moon: Confusion, misunderstanding, subterfuge.
- ⚔ Sword: Conflict, disagreement, battle.
- 🛡 Shield: Protection, defense, safety.
- 🎯 Target: Goals, objectives, distance.
- 🪄 Wand: Magic, technology, strangeness.

Norse Runes - First Eight

Interpret runes like tarot cards; they can give you ideas for adding detail or nuance to a scene!

- ᚱ Fehu: Livestock/Wealth. Property, prosperity, fertility, increase, social success.
- ᚱ Uruz: Auroch/Wild Ox. Energy, health, strength, tenacity, courage.
- ᚢ Thurisaz: Thor/Giant. Reactionary, defensive destruction. Instinct, willpower, and regeneration; lightning, electricity.
- ᚦ Ansuz: Ancestral Spirit/A God. Revelation, insight, power of words/names; divine intervention.
- ᚷ Raido: Wagon/Journey. Travel, evolution, moving forward, gaining perspective.
- ᚫ Kenaz: Beacon/Torch. Creativity, inspiration, harnessed power, world-changing ability.
- ᚨ Gebo: Gift/Exchanges. Generosity, balance, contracts, relationships, partnerships.
- ᚰ Wunjo: Joy/Happiness. Harmony, spiritual reward, pleasure, comfort, glory.

Tag Symbols Blanks

Make your own table for important situations!

Table For: _____

🏰 Tower: _____

👑 Crown: _____

❤ Heart: _____

💀 Skull: _____

☀ Sun: _____

🌙 Moon: _____

⚔ Sword: _____

🛡 Shield: _____

🎯 Target: _____

🪄 Wand: _____

Norse Runes - Second Eight

Interpret runes like tarot cards; they can give you ideas for adding detail or nuance to a scene!

- ᚸ Hagalaz: Hail/Weather. Uncontrollable forces, (nature, the subconscious); crisis before harmony.
- ᚦ Naudiz: Need/Distress. Resistance, requirements to be met, endurance, patience, survival, trial, test.
- ᚱ Isaz: Ice/Frustration. Mental blocks; confusion to be unravelled; stalled until knowledge is gained.
- ᚷ Jera: Good Year/Harvest. Effort realized, fruitful results, hope, earned success, cycles of time or life.
- ᚱ Eihwaz: Yew Tree/Reliability. Dependability, trustworthiness; protection; honesty; well-chosen goals that will be accomplished.
- ᚱ Perthro: Dice Cup/Mystery. Chance, secrets, the occult; initiation, destiny; setting out on the path.
- ᚱ Algiz: Elk/Protection. Shield, shelter, wards against evil, a guardian; connection to the gods.
- ᚱ Sowilo: The Sun/Life-Force. Success, honor, life, positive changes, victory; cleansing fire, power.

Tag Symbols Blanks

Make your own table for important situations!

Table For: _____

🏰 Tower: _____

👑 Crown: _____

❤ Heart: _____

💀 Skull: _____

☀ Sun: _____

🌙 Moon: _____

⚔ Sword: _____

🛡 Shield: _____

🎯 Target: _____

🪄 Wand: _____

Norse Runes - Third Eight

Interpret runes like tarot cards; they can give you ideas for adding detail or nuance to a scene!

- ᚱ Tiwaz: Tyr/Leadership. Authority, justice, rationality, success in competition, self-sacrifice.
- ᚱ Berkano: Birch Tree/Birth. Fertility, birth, growth, liberation; renewal, new beginnings, love, family.
- ᚱ Ehwaz: Horses/Travel. Physical transportation; slow but steady progress; teamwork, trust, ideal marriage or partnership.
- ᚱ Mannaz: Mankind/The Self. The individual, skill, forethought, ability; humanity, social order.
- ᚱ Lagiz: Water/Regeneration. Healing, rest, renewal; dreams, the underworld, the imagination.
- ᚱ Ingwaz: Monarch/Seat of Power. Control, answering to nobody; authority without implying justice.
- ᚱ Dagaz: Dawn/Day. Awakening, breakthrough; a new venture, positive change; hope, security.
- ᚱ Othala: Birthright/Home. Inheritance, home, spiritual heritage, fundamental rights, source of safety, that which is most important.