

Luminous

CARD GAME



Player Handbook

14+



2 players



Welcome to the land of the Ancients; beware what they've left behind.

Once, the continent of Ardua was home to the most advanced of human civilizations. Now, their ruins and their relics are all that remain. When mankind finally settled its shores once more, they found a wilderness fraught with peril... and yet, for the bold, there are godlike treasures and ancient mysteries to discover. Nearly four centuries have passed since humanity's rediscovery of this forgotten continent, and their settlements now dot the land. Their influence continues to grow, but every bit is hard won and must be defended.

Because mankind is not alone.

To the south, the Kynda have declared themselves rightful inheritors of the continent and continue to push the borders of their forest slowly north. In the west, rumors persist of a subterranean species encroaching into human territory; tales of people being stolen from their beds and dragged underground haunt the people of the western reaches.

Even within mankind's numbers, bitter rivalries and factionalism threaten to bring disaster. The noble houses of the capital jockey for power, while a navy of upjumped pirates plague the rivers and eastern coasts. The cultists of Kamarua make their horrific sacrifices and grow in power upon their secluded isles.

Hope runs low for a peaceful future, and the wise know it's only a matter of time before conflict swallows all.

And now, into the midst of brewing chaos, lands a castaway who will tip the balance and throw Ardua into open war. Choose your Favored and rally your forces, for only the victors will determine Ardua's fate.



Using this guide

Luminous is a fast-paced card game requiring savvy resource management and clever combat planning. Freeform turns allow for combat tricks and cat-and-mouse style back and forths to take center stage. This guide will teach you the basics for playing your first game and serves as a reference for keywords and battle concepts. We hope you enjoy playing the game as much as we enjoyed making it.



Want more help learning to play?

If you're brand new to card games or want a more guided experience learning the game, please follow the QR code to our new player experience.

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Part 1: The Basics

Game Setup

A game of Luminous is played between at least two players.

Win Conditions

Each Favored starts with a specific life total that you can find on the right-hand side of the card. To win, you must reduce the opponent's Favored to 0 life. Alternatively, if you are the second player to draw a card from your empty deck, you win.

Deck Guidelines

Each deck is led by a Favored. The main deck size is fifty (50) cards, which can include three (3) copies of any standard card and up to two (2) unique cards. Each player also brings an 18 card orb pile. The orb pile consists of six (6) basic orbs of each color (orange, green, & purple).



FAVORED CARD

Beginning a Game

- 1 Shuffle your deck. Present the deck to your opponent for an opportunity to cut the deck.
- 2 Randomly decide who will be the starting player (by rolling a die, flipping a coin, or the last person who picked a flower). If you are playing more than one game in a match, the player who lost the last game chooses the starting player.
- 3 Both players draw four cards to form their opening hand.
- 4 Now each player may choose to mulligan.
 - The starting player may put one card from their hand on the bottom of their deck.
 - The other player(s) may put two cards from their hand on the bottom of their deck. **⚠ If a player puts any cards on the bottom of their deck this way, they draw that many cards.**
- 5 The starting player may begin their first turn.
- 6 The starting player does not draw a card during their first draw step.

Game Zones

Each place that a card can exist is referred to as a zone.



1 Main Deck

Your main deck is randomized and is placed face down. No player may look at the cards in a main deck unless a card tells them to do so.

2 Discard Pile

Your discard pile is face up, and all cards in it are public knowledge. Cards go to the discard pile when they are discarded, destroyed, or when a spell card finishes resolving its effects.

3 Void

The void is face up and public knowledge unless a card is sent there face down. A card that is “voided” will be added to its owner’s void.

4 Orb Pile

Your orb pile is placed face up outside the game zone. The contents of each player’s orb pile are public knowledge.

5 Favored Zone

Your Favored zone is where your Favored is placed when play begins. Favored cannot leave play.

6 Relic Zone

Place relics here when played. They’re protected behind your units.

7 Unit Zone

Place units here when played. Units can be expended or readied here. Move units to the combat zone whenever they attack or block.

8 Combat Zone

When a unit enters combat, place it here expended to indicate that it has either attacked or blocked, then proceed to a combat phase.

Parts of a Card



Cost: Essence cost and orb checks

There are two parts of a card's cost, the essence cost and the orb check. See **page 20** for a more detailed breakdown of how to play a card.

Name

The name of each card distinguishes it from other cards. You may only have three (3) standard cards in your deck.

Type

A card's type defines its properties. See **page 8** for card types.

Attack

The attack of a unit defines how much damage it will deal in combat.

Health

The health of a unit defines how much damage it can take before it's destroyed. When a unit reaches 0 health, move it to the discard pile. Damage is healed at the end of each turn.

Ability Text

The ability text defines what the card does and how it interacts with other cards. Some text involves keywords like **ARRIVE**. These words are stand-ins for the longer definition of the ability. You can find all the keywords in the glossary starting on **page 24**.

Flavor Text

This has no relevance to how the card plays in the game. It exists to express the lore and immerse you in the world of Luminous.

Card Types

Each card in Luminous has a type. Types define where a card starts when it enters play, how it can be played, and how it interacts with the play area.

Unit

Your main fighting force. When you play a unit, it is put into the play area. A unit cannot attack or  **expend** for abilities the turn it enters play. Units die if they are dealt damage equal to or greater than their health in one turn, and they recover their health at the end of every turn.

Relic

Items with various helpful and harmful abilities. When you play a relic it is put into play. Like units, relics cannot expend for abilities the turn they enter play. Relics have a durability value, and when their durability reaches 0 they are destroyed. Unlike units, they do not recover durability at the end of the turn. Units may attack relics instead of the opposing Favored.

Spell

Spells are powerful incantations to turn the tide of battle. When you play a spell, it goes to the discard pile after resolving its ability text.

Unique

Unique cards are more powerful than standard cards. Because of this, players may only include a single copy of any one unique card in their deck. Additionally, a deck may only contain two (2) total unique cards.

FAST

Fast is a modifier that adds the ability for the card to be played during combat and on your opponent's turn as long as you have priority. Units, relics, and spells can all be fast.

Favored

The Favored you choose lets you and your opponent know what faction you're playing and what cards you can play in your deck. Favored never leave play and start the game in the play area.

KEY CONCEPT

Expend

To expend a card, set it in landscape position. Expended cards may not attack, block, or expend to activate abilities.



Orb

The resource you will use to play your cards. Basic orbs exist separately from your deck in a zone called the orb pile. The orb pile is face-up, public information, and non-randomized. Orbs that are not basic are included in your main deck instead of your orb pile.

An orb is ready to expend the turn it is played. Orbs expend to create an essence of its color to pay for the cost of a card or ability. Expend orbs to create essence to pay the essence cost.

KEY CONCEPT

Orb Checks



An orb check is performed after the essence cost is paid. To perform the orb check, make sure you have orbs of the correct color in play that were not used to pay for the essence cost. No double dipping! The position of the orb that performs the orb check doesn't matter.

Token

Tokens are not put into your deck during deck construction and are created by the effects of other cards. Most card effects “play” the token, triggering any on-play effects. If a token would go into any zone other than the play area, it is removed from the game instead.

Once played, a **Luminous Bloom** remains there until sacrificed for a Luminous Essence.



Part 2: Gameplay

Playing a Turn

Turns by default consist of three phases: Start Phase, Main Phase, and End Phase. Players may frequently enter into an optional Combat Phase.



Start Phase

During the Start Phase, the active player completes these three steps in order:

- ❶ **Ready Step** - Ready all cards you control.
- ❷ **Effect Step** - Any effects that happen at the start of turn happen now.
- ❸ **Draw Step** - Draw a card.

KEY CONCEPTS

Active Player

If it is your turn, you are considered the active player. If it is not your turn, you are considered the non-active player.

Ready

To ready a card, set it in portrait position. A ready card may now expend to attack or activate abilities this turn.

Main Phase

Once the Start Phase is over, the Main Phase begins and the active player is given priority.

KEY CONCEPT

Priority

Priority, or the ability to perform an action, is passed from one player to the next after each action is taken. A player may only take actions while they have priority. A player may choose to pass (take no action) any time they have priority.

During the Main Phase, the active player may take one of these actions:

- Play an orb. (This doesn't pass priority.)
- Play a card from their hand.
- Activate the ability of a card they control.
- Attack an opponent's Favored or relic with a ready unit they control. (This creates a Combat Phase. Only one unit may attack at a time.)
- Pass priority.

Main Phase (cont'd)

Priority is passed to the other player after an action is performed and abilities have resolved. See *Playing a Card* (page 20) to learn about playing cards and resolving abilities.

The non-active player may perform one of these actions while they have priority:

- Play a fast card from their hand.
- Activate the ability of a card they control.
- Pass priority.

◇ ————— ◇
! When both players pass consecutively without performing an action the Main Phase ends and the End Phase begins.
◇ ————— ◇



Playing an orb

Once per turn while they have priority during their main phase, the active player may play an orb. Playing an orb does not pass priority.

The active player may play a basic orb from their orb pile and may only play one orb each turn.

Once a player has six (6) basic orbs in play, they may no longer play orbs from their orb pile. Their options become one of the following:

- Play a Luminous Bloom token.
- Pivot (return one ready basic orb they control to their orb pile to play a new orb from their orb pile).

Combat Phase

A **Combat Phase** is created each time the active player expends one of their units to attack an opposing Favored or relic. Any number of Combat Phases may exist, so long as the player has enough units to declare as attackers.

⚔ Attack step

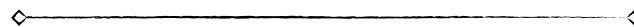
The active player has expended one of their units to attack the opposing Favored or a relic. We are now in the attack step. This is the step where players would resolve any effects triggered by a unit expending to attack. The most common example of this is the ability **WAVE** (page 25). Once all triggers have resolved, move to the Block/effect step.

🛡 Block/effect step

Attacking was the action of the active player, so the first player to be given priority inside the combat phase is the defending player.

The actions the defending player may perform during combat are:

- Block with any number of units. Blocking expends the units.
- Play a fast card.
- Activate the ability of a card they control.
- ⚠ Pass priority.



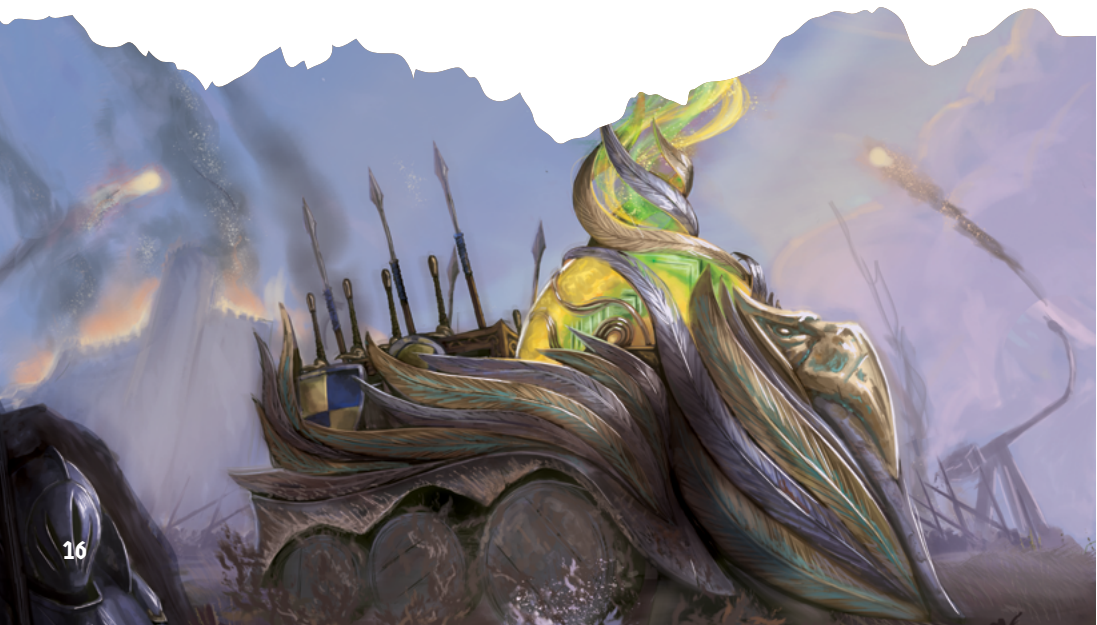
- ⚠ Passing without taking an action before you have blocked forfeits your ability to block in this combat phase. **You may only block if you have not yet passed this combat.**



The actions the attacking player may perform during combat are:

- Play a fast card.
- Activate the ability of a card they control.
- Pass priority.

When both players pass consecutively without performing an action, the block/effect step ends.



☀ Combat damage step

Players are not given priority during the combat damage step. The combat damage step resolves one of two ways:

If the attack was blocked:

The attacking unit deals damage equal to its attack distributed as the controller chooses to the blocking units. The blocking units deal damage equal to their attack to the attacking unit. Combat damage is dealt simultaneously. Units dealt lethal damage are destroyed and put into their owner's discard pile.

If the attack was not blocked:

The attacking unit deals damage equal to its attack to the opposing Favored or relic.

Any triggers from combat damage being dealt or units being destroyed now resolve. An example of this is a unit with **CONTACT** dealing damage to an opposing Favored. Once triggers have resolved, the Combat Phase ends, return to the Main Phase, and the active player is given priority.



End Phase

During the **End Phase**, the active player does these three (3) steps in order. Priority is not given to either player during this phase. No actions may be taken during this phase.

- ❶ **Effect step** - Effects that trigger at the end of turn happen.
- ❷ **Reset damage step** - Damage on units is removed.
- ❸ **Cleanup step** - Effects that last until end of turn are removed. The active player discards down to six (6) cards in hand.

Playing a Card & Resolving Effects

To play a card, follow these steps:

Announce the card or ability

Announce that you are playing a card or activating or triggering an ability by saying its name and revealing it to all players.

Pay the cost

Expend orbs and/or sacrifice Luminous Bloom tokens to create the essence needed to pay for the essence cost. Then, if the card has an orb check, make sure that you have an orb in play of that color that was not used to pay the essence cost for this card. The orb check does not care if the orb is expended.

Resolve the card or ability

If it is a spell or activated ability, declare choices and perform the effect listed in the ability text. Spells go to the discard pile after performing their effects. If it is a unit or relic, put it into play.

Resolve any effects that were triggered from the card entering play, such as **ARRIVE** abilities.

Batches: resolving multiple triggered effects

Scenarios may come up in which multiple effects happen (or “trigger”) at the same time, creating a **batch**.

- The active player (the person whose turn it is) resolves their triggers first in any order they choose.
 - ◇ If resolving triggers creates new triggers, they resolve in the same batch.
 - ◇ The choice of which trigger to resolve is made after the previous trigger finishes, so a player may choose either a new or old trigger to resolve next.
- When all of the active player’s triggers have resolved, the non-active player may begin resolving their triggers.
- Repeat this process until there are no triggers in the batch to resolve.

Basically, to resolve a batch, the active player finishes all of their triggers in whatever order they want before the non-active player is allowed to begin doing the same until everything has been done.

Key Concepts

Cost

Effects may reference a card's cost, in this case it is looking for the total number of symbols in both Essence Cost and Orb Check combined.

Draw

Moving a card from a zone into your hand. If not otherwise specified, you would draw the card from your deck. Draw X means putting X cards from that zone into your hand, where X is a numerical value.

Discard

Moving a card from a zone into your discard pile. If not otherwise specified, you would discard the card from your hand. Discard X means putting X cards from that zone into your discard pile, where X is a numerical value.

Destroy(ed)

A destroyed card is removed from play. Often moving the card to the discard pile. However, when a token is destroyed, it does not enter the discard pile.

Expend(ed)

A card is expended by turning to the landscape position. An expended card cannot attack, block, or expend to activate abilities.

Ready

A card is readied by turning it to the portrait position. A card that has been readied may attack or expend to activate abilities this turn. Even if a unit has already attacked this turn, readying it will allow it to attack again.

Sacrifice

To sacrifice something, the owner of the card must choose to destroy it. This may be required to pay a cost, like sacrificing a Luminous Bloom token.

Void

A voided card is moved from its current zone to the Void. Cards in the Void are inaccessible for the rest of the game.

Golden Rule

If an effect would contradict these rules, obey the effect of the card.



Part 3: Keyword Glossary

Battle Keywords

DASH This card may expend to attack and activate abilities the turn it is played.

FLIGHT This unit may only be blocked by units with Flight or Watchful.

LUNGE In combat, the attacking unit with Lunge deals damage before units without Lunge. A unit dealt lethal damage this way is destroyed and does not deal damage in the normal damage step. Lunge has no effect while blocking.

OVERWHELM Any past-lethal damage dealt to a unit caused by this card is dealt to the unit's controller. A blocking unit with Overwhelm does not deal excess damage to the opponent.

BARRIER Opposing players must attack your relic with Barrier before they can attack your Favored or other relics you control without Barrier.

WATCHFUL This unit may block attacking units with Flight.

Trigger Keywords

ARRIVE triggers when the card enters play.

DEPART triggers when the card is put into the discard pile from play.

CONTACT triggers when the unit deals combat damage to an opposing Favored (not relics). This effect resolves even if the unit died to combat damage.

NTH WAVE triggers when the unit is declared as the Nth attacker of the turn. *Example: Second Wave will trigger when the unit with Second Wave is the second unit to attack that turn.*

Effect Keywords

Bolster X: Put X durability counters on a relic you control. Put x durability counters on this relic.

Pivot: Return one ready basic orb to your orb pile to play an orb from your orb pile.

Suggested Starting Decklists

The following decklists are provided to give you a place to start. For two people using one box, use the two-player experience below. If you are making one deck using all cards, skip to **page 28**.

Two-player experience decklists

It's possible for two players to use one set of *The Wanderers* to play, though the full experience is meant for both players to have access to every available card during deckbuilding. Follow these decklists to build two decks using all cards available in *The Wanderers* and play a game of *Luminous* with two people.



DECK 1

Favored

1x Jeddos, Brother of the Yard

Uniques

1x The Lodestar

1x Breaker's Chains

Units

3x Hedge Tinker

3x Ancient's Servant

3x Wilderroad Sentry

3x Jeddos's Junk Brigade

3x Toll Collectors

3x Disciple Apostate

3x Undercity Expropriator

Spells

3x Walk Back

3x Order the Mind

Relics

3x Unstable Salvage

3x Glass Garden

3x Ancient's Eye

3x Vortex Cannister

3x High Command

3x Reliquary Tome

3x Essence Refractor

DECK 2

Favored

1x Silgar, Apex Predator

Uniques

1x Quinn, Crown Prince

1x Essence Burst

Units

3x Field Recruiter

3x Trail Guide

3x Delcan Operative

3x Diving Dragonspawn

3x Vinehorn Stag

3x Xanthe Raider

3x Kynda Infiltrator

3x Freelance Delver

3x Ashen Owl

3x Silgar's Elite

3x Hive Queen

Spells

3x Hired Research

3x Take Flight

3x Sudden Death

3x Cataclysmic Echo

Relics

3x Kinetic Harness

2-players
using 1 box

Jeddos, Brother of the Road

Relics are the name of the game for those using Jeddos as their Favored. Build up your repository of relics, use them to augment the strength and abilities of your units, and beat your enemy through technological superiority. Players who like a slower, more controlling pace might enjoy starting here.

Favored

1x Jeddos, Brother of the Yard

Uniques

1x The Lodestar

1x Breaker's Chains

Units

3x Trail Guide

3x Hedge Tinker

3x Undercity Expropriator

3x Disciple Apostate

3x Diving Dragonspawn

3x Ancient's Servant

3x Jeddos's Junk Brigade

Spells

3x Walk Back

3x Order the Mind

3x Cataclysmic Echo

Relics

3x Unstable Salvage

3x Glass Garden

3x Ancient's Eye

3x Vortex Cannister

3x High Command

3x Reliquary Tome



Silgar, Apex Predator

Silgar's battle skill focused Favored ability makes him an ideal choice for players who want to go wide, deploy their forces, and overwhelm their opponent with brute strength.

Favored

1x Silgar, Apex Predator

Uniques

1x Quinn, Crown Prince

1x Standard of Glass

Units

3x Hedge Tinker

3x Field Recruiter

3x Ancient's Servant

3x Toll Collectors

3x Xanthe Raider

3x Kynda Infiltrator

3x Freelance Delver

3x Chartered Expeditioner

3x Silgar's Elite

3x Scar City General

Spells

3x Walk Back

3x Take Flight

3x Sudden Death

3x Strengthen the Mind

Relics

3x Kinetic Harness

3x Mobile Armory



Rya Jin, Windswept Wanderer

With a Favored ability granting benefits for playing cards during your opponent's turn, Rya Jin is the perfect pick for players who want to control the tempo and put a wrench in the plans of your enemies.

Favored

1x Rya Jin, Windswept Wanderer

Uniques

1x Velna, Exiled Magebreaker
1x Kamarua's Gospel

Units

3x Field Recruiter
3x Trail Guide
3x Delcan Operative
3x Diving Dragonspawn
3x Vinehorn Stag
3x Wilderroad Sentry
3x Ashen Owl
3x Rya's Horizon Guard
3x Jungle Dragon

Spells

3x Hired Research
3x Walk Back
3x Expand the Mind
3x Wander the Stacks
3x Sudden Death
3x Cataclysmic Echo

Relics

3x Vortex Cannister



Acknowledgements

I never would have had the courage to show this world I had been building and the game I was making if my wife, Amsi, had not pushed me to share this with others.

To Alpha Strike Games, our local game store, my first job and the store that I first tested Luminous at.

To everyone along the way that listened to my ideas or shared thoughts. To everyone that was willing to test the game, whether it was on scraps of paper, sharpied cardboard cards, or eventually printed out designs. Thank you for your honesty and insights to help shape this game into what it has become.

To our amazing artists and illustrators: You helped bring the world of Luminous to life.

To this amazing Luminous team: Thank you for believing in this idea when it was just a seed. You are co-owners and co-founders and this world is just as much yours as mine now. It blooms larger than it ever would have without each of you.

This release is only the beginning. We are dedicated to our community and players, to supporting local game stores, and to creating a premium AI free product for many years to come.

Welcome to the world of Luminous!
Colin Bevis, Founder and Creator of Luminous

Luminous

CARD GAME



No generative AI was used in the creation of this product.

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