

## TURN SEQUENCE

Remove all tokens from the twilight pool  
Perform any “at the start of each of your turns” actions

### 1. Fellowship Phase

Perform **fellowship** actions  
Move to the next site

### 2. Shadow Phase(s) – one for each Shadow player

Perform **Shadow** actions

### 3. Maneuver Phase

Perform **maneuver** actions

### 4. Archery Phase

Perform **archery** actions  
Conduct archery fire

### 5. Assignment Phase

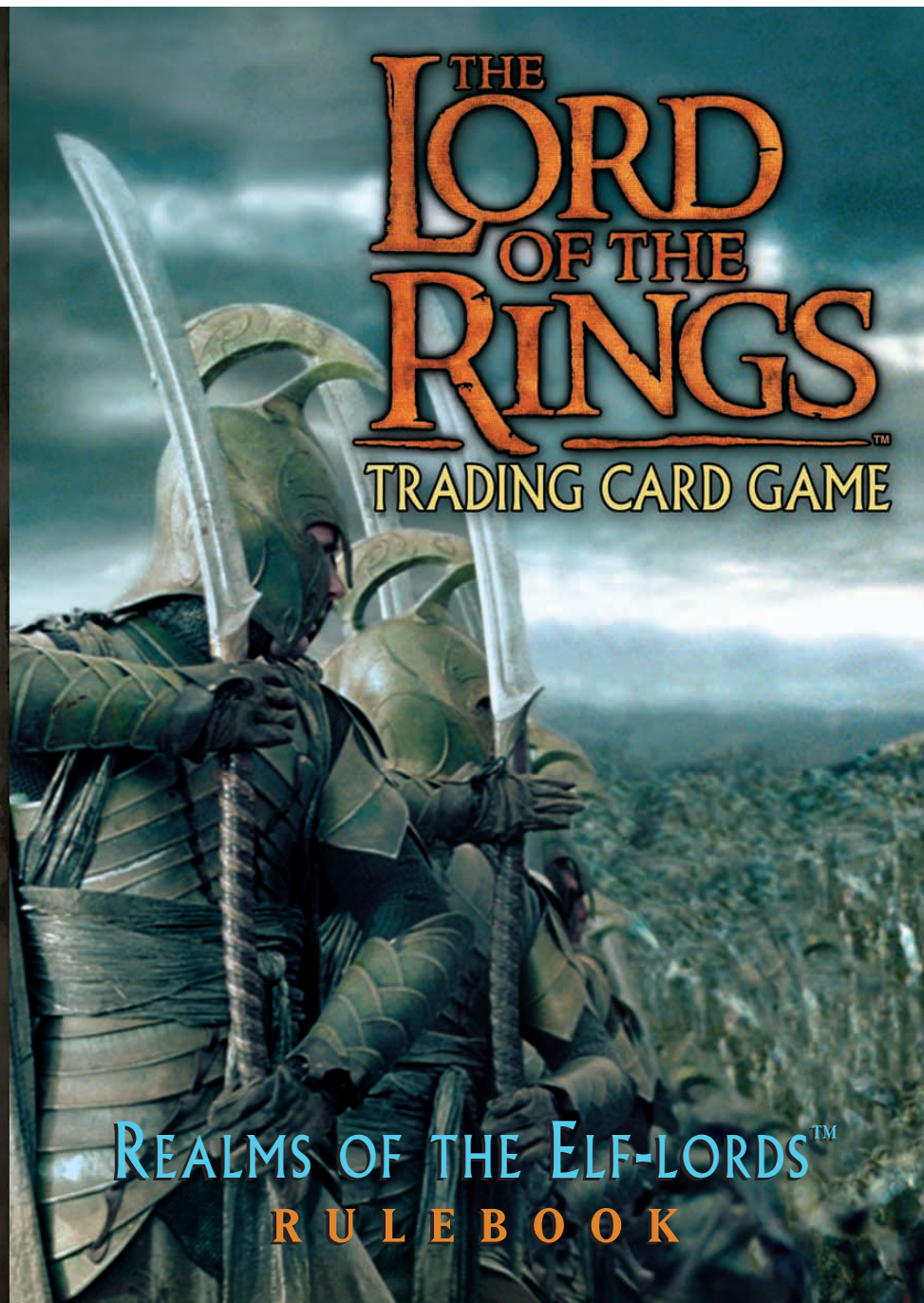
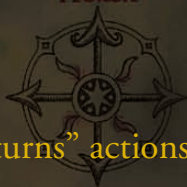
Perform **assignment** actions  
Assign defenders

### 6. Skirmish Phase(s) – one for each skirmish

Perform **skirmish** actions  
Resolve that skirmish

### 7. Regroup Phase

Perform **regroup** actions  
Reconcile Shadow players’ hands  
Either the Free Peoples player moves to the next site  
(*return to Shadow phase*) — or the Free Peoples player  
reconciles and Shadow players discard all minions





## COLLECTOR INFORMATION

The *Realms of the Elf-lords*™ expansion set for *The Lord of the Rings*™ TCG comes in 63-card *starter decks* (there are two different ones), and 11-card *booster packs*.

Each 11-card booster pack contains 1 rare card and a mixture of 10 uncommon and common cards.

Sixty of the cards in your starter deck are *fixed*, since you get the same ones in each of that type of starter. Three of the cards in a starter are randomly inserted rare cards.

A complete set of *Realms of the Elf-lords* has 122 cards: 40 rare, 40 uncommon, and 40 common cards; plus two premium cards found only in the starter decks.

In the lower right corner of every card, you'll see a code like "3 R 12." The first number is the set number, with 3 indicating the *Realms of the Elf-lords* set.

The letter is the rarity code, with **R** for *rare*, **U** for *uncommon*, **C** for *common*, and **P** for *premium*.

## WHAT'S NEW IN THIS RULEBOOK?

Changes to the rulebook since the beta version: Signet (page 7); Killed (8); Exert (9); Setting Up the Game (11); Starting Fellowship (14); Timing words (16); The Rule of 4 (17); The Rule of 9 (17); Roaming (21); Defender +2 (25); Damage bonus (26); Skirmish phase ends (27); Actions (30); Required or optional (30); Requirements (30); Phase actions (31); Effects (32); Allies (33); Unique cards (33); Active cards (35); The One Ring (35); Discard (37); Look at (38); Reveal (39); Transfer (40); and Index (40).

## THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRADING CARD GAME

Most card games have just one deck of cards that never changes, but a trading card game (or TCG) works differently. In a TCG, you personalize your playing deck using cards from your collection.

*The Lord of the Rings* Trading Card Game provides two or more players with the same challenges that Frodo Baggins, bearer of the One Ring, faced on his fateful journey from Hobbiton to Mount Doom to destroy the Ring.

The premiere set, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, represents the first part of Frodo's journey from Hobbiton to Amon Hen on the Anduin River.

**This is the gamma version of the starter rulebook from *The Fellowship of the Ring* set and includes additional examples and clarifications.**

## INTRODUCTION

Each player's cards include his own fellowship — a group of companions, each represented by a different card. Some other cards representing allies, possessions, artifacts, events, and conditions support and defend the fellowship.

On each player's turn, a marker representing that player's fellowship advances along the adventure path — a sequence of site cards, each representing the scene of an episode in the adventure. All players share the same adventure path, even though it is made up of cards from all the players.

Each time a fellowship moves, minions played by one or more opponents may attack it; these minions may be supported by possessions, artifacts, events, and conditions of their own. The attacks will succeed or fail depending on the relative strengths of the characters and minions.

The minions of evil become more numerous as the fellowship moves farther into Middle-earth, resulting in greater risks to the fellowship and the Ring-bearer. In great need, the Ring-bearer can save himself by putting on the Ring — but this puts him in greater peril of succumbing to the burden of the Ring, and losing the game.

If your fellowship survives its adventures to reach the final site first, you are the winner!

## IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

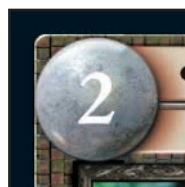
### KINDS OF CARDS

*The Lord of the Rings* TCG has three basic kinds of cards: site, Free Peoples, and Shadow. There is also The One Ring, which is different from all other cards.

#### Site cards

Each player has an adventure deck that consists of only nine site cards. These cards are used to chart the progress of the game.

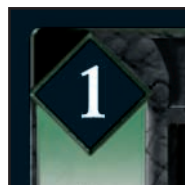
The adventure deck is separate from the cards drawn and played during the game, which are placed in the draw deck.



#### Free Peoples cards

Free Peoples cards represent the forces of good. Each player has his own fellowship, made up of a Ring-bearer and other companions. When you take your turn, you play and use your Free Peoples cards.

**Free Peoples cards have a light colored circular field in the upper left corner.**



#### Shadow cards

Shadow cards represent the forces of evil and corruption. When another player takes his turn, you play and use your Shadow cards to hinder that player.

**Shadow cards have a dark colored diamond-shaped field in the upper left corner.**

#### The One Ring

This card represents the uniquely powerful item that is the focus of the story of *The Lord of the Rings*. In the middle of the card under the image, The One Ring has its subtitle. Its card type is “The One Ring.”

Shaded areas like this tell you how to play your first game. After you play a couple of games with your starter deck, you can ignore these starter deck rules.

## CHARACTER (COMPANION, ALLY, MINION)



All characters use the same basic card layout. A **companion** is a member of your fellowship. An **ally** is a character that helps your companions from afar but does not move with them. (Each ally has a home, where that ally may skirmish alongside your companions.) A **minion** is a Shadow character that attacks other players' fellowships. (Minion cards have a site number where the signet is shown above).

## POSSESSION, ARTIFACT, EVENT, CONDITION



A **possession** or **artifact** is a weapon, suit of armor, or other kind of object used by a character. (There are no artifact cards in *The Fellowship of the Ring* set, but other products will have them.)

An **event** is a card played from your hand representing an important occurrence, which you discard after it has its effect on the game.

A **condition** is a card representing a significant change in the world, which stays in play until something discards it. Sometimes conditions are played on opponent's characters.





You bring a set of nine sites in your adventure deck. Each of those must have a different site number, with one for each number from 1 to 9. Sanctuary sites, numbered 3 or 6, have a different colored template from other sites.

## CULTURE

Most cards are part of a specific culture. A card's color, its background texture, and an icon in its upper right corner indicate its culture.

*You'll find that cards from the same culture work well together. Sorting your cards by culture can make building your own deck easier. However, your deck may contain cards from several different cultures if you like.*




Site cards and The One Ring are not part of any culture.

Here is a listing of all the cultures currently available:

### Free Peoples cards

-  Dwarven
-  Elven
-  Gandalf
-  Gondor
-  Shire

### Shadow cards

-  Isengard
-  Moria
-  Ringwraith
-  Sauron

*You don't have to memorize these names, since cultures are always referred to with icons in game text.*

## SIGNET



Some of the Free Peoples character cards have a signet, found in the lower left corner of the card. Cards with the same signet generally give bonuses to each other and work well in the same deck.

Each signet is based around an important character in the story. The available signets are Aragorn, Frodo, and Gandalf.

## VITALITY

All characters in the game have vitality. This number represents that character's life force, stamina, sturdiness, and will to live.

## Wounds

When a character is wounded by an enemy attack, his vitality is depleted. Place a wound token on the character to illustrate this. Glass beads (preferably blood red) make good tokens for this purpose. Wounds are always placed on a character one at a time. When you “wound a character,” you place only one wound.

## Healing

When a wound is removed from a character, this represents resting or healing. If game text says you should heal a character, the default meaning for that phrase is to remove one wound. You may not heal a character that does not have at least one wound.

Generally, your fellowship only heals (removes wounds) at a site with the keyword **sanctuary**. At the start of your turn when your fellowship is at a sanctuary, you may heal up to 5 wounds from your companions (not allies).

## Killed

When the number of wounds on a character equals his vitality, that character is immediately killed. Place killed Free Peoples characters (companions and allies) in your dead pile. The **dead pile** is separate from and next to your discard pile. Place all killed minions in your discard pile.

When you have a unique companion or ally in your dead pile, you may not play another copy of that card, or any other card with the same title. (You may play another copy of a non-unique card which is in your dead pile.)

*A unique card has a dot (•) in its card title.*

When you discard a companion or ally to use its game text or as a result of some other effect, don't place that card in the dead pile.

## Exert

Sometimes you may **exert** a character by placing a wound on that card to show that the character takes an action that depletes his vitality.

Exerting a character is different from wounding a character, even though both require placement of a wound token. Cards that prevent wounds may not prevent a wound token placed by exerting. Once placed, wound tokens are identical, whether placed from exerting or wounding.

No player may exert a character that is **exhausted** (only one wound away from death). Such a character cannot be chosen as a character who must exert. To exhaust a character means to exert that character as many times as you can.

If the cost of an action requires a character to exert X times, then that character must have X+1 or more vitality remaining or that action may not be performed.

*When you exert a character to have an effect at that character's site, this usually represents physical exertion of some kind: working, fighting, stress, and so on. However, sometimes a character will exert to provide an effect at some other site, and in this case the exertion is symbolic (and may even represent something that theoretically happened in the past).*

## TWILIGHT POOL

The twilight pool is an area on the table where twilight tokens are placed. The tokens in the twilight pool represent how dangerous the world is for the fellowship. Glass beads (preferably black) make good twilight tokens, but any convenient tokens will do. Keep a large reserve of twilight tokens handy.

### Twilight Cost

In the upper left corner of each Free Peoples and Shadow card is that card's twilight cost. This is the number of twilight tokens that must be added to or removed from the twilight pool to play that card.

When you play a Free Peoples card, you must **add** a number of twilight tokens (from the reserve) to the twilight pool equal to that card's twilight cost.

When your opponent plays a Shadow card, he must **remove** a number of twilight tokens from the twilight pool equal to that card's twilight cost. A Shadow card may not be played if its twilight cost cannot be met by the tokens available in the twilight pool.

In game text, you will find phrases like “Add ●” which means, “Add 1 twilight token to the twilight pool.”

## SETTING UP THE GAME

Players need a supply of wound tokens (preferably red) and twilight tokens (preferably black). Each player will also need a player marker (a differently-colored token) that shows where his fellowship is on the adventure path.

When playing with just a starter deck, take sites 1 through 7 and stack them face down on the table to form your adventure deck. Put sites 8 and 9 back in the box.

Take one copy of each of the cards indicated below (depending on which starter deck you have). Place them face up on the table, with Frodo bearing The One Ring (place it under Frodo with its title showing).

*Deluxe Starter:* Merry, Pippin, Sam, Frodo, The One Ring

*Aragorn Starter:* Aragorn, Frodo, The One Ring

*Gandalf Starter:* Gandalf, Frodo, The One Ring

*Gimli Starter:* Gimli, Farin, Frodo, The One Ring

*Boromir Starter:* Boromir, Merry, Frodo, The One Ring

*Legolas Starter:* Legolas, Gimli, Frodo, The One Ring

The rest of your cards form your draw deck.

For your first game, determine randomly who goes first. Then skip ahead to **Playing the Game**.

## BUILDING YOUR DECK

Each player brings to the game at least 71 cards:

- Frodo, bearing The One Ring (2 cards),
- a draw deck of at least 60 cards, and
- a 9-card adventure deck.

### Ring-bearer

You must start the game with one copy of Frodo (any version) bearing The One Ring (again, any version). These two cards are not part of your draw deck (they do not count against your total of Free Peoples cards).

## Draw Deck

Your draw deck must have at least 60 cards and must have an equal number of Shadow cards and Free Peoples cards, shuffled together. You may not have any copies of The One Ring or sites in your draw deck.

You may have up to four copies of each card title (ignoring subtitles) in your draw deck.

*You may have four copies of Aragorn, King in Exile in your draw deck, or you may have two copies of that card and two copies of Aragorn, Ranger of the North. You may not have four copies of each of those cards, since they have the same title (although they have different subtitles).*

*Exception:* Since one copy of Frodo is always part of your fellowship, you may have only three copies of Frodo in your draw deck.

## Adventure Deck

Your adventure deck has nine different site cards, one for each of the nine site numbers. No other player may look through your adventure deck during the game.

You don't have to keep your adventure deck in any order. Just look through it to get a card when you need to.

If a site is replaced, take the old site from the adventure path and put it back in its owner's adventure deck.

Since only one card with each site number is played to the adventure path, a site belongs to the adventure deck that's missing a site card with that number.

## WHO GOES FIRST?

Players place secret bids for the right to determine who goes first in the game. The bidding is done with black tokens, which will become **burdens** on your Ring-bearer.

*Don't bid too high, or your Ring-bearer will start with too many burdens and be close to being corrupted. (If Frodo accumulates 10 burdens, you lose the game.)*

Each player secretly places a number of burdens in his hand (you may bid zero). When all players are ready, simultaneously reveal the bids. The highest bid wins the right to choose where he goes in the turn order. Any choice is available.

Next, the second highest bidder chooses from the remaining positions in the turn order, and so on. Keep track of each player's bid, as these tokens will become burdens on his copy of Frodo.

If there are any ties, then the tied players resolve randomly who chooses first among them.

*Tom, Chuck, Tim, and Mike are playing, and the initial bids are Tom 3, Chuck 4, Tim 3, and Mike 1. Chuck wins the right to choose, and he chooses to go first (placing 4 burdens on Frodo). Tom and Tim are tied, so they flip a coin, and Tom wins the tiebreak. He chooses second (placing 3 burdens on Frodo). Tim chooses to go fourth (3 burdens), leaving third for Mike (1 burden).*

The first player sits down, and the others then sit in clockwise order around the table according to their choices.



Place your adventure deck (face down) and Frodo (face up) on the table. Place The One Ring under him (so the title is showing) and place the burdens that you bid on Frodo.

The first player places his copy of site 1 (from his adventure deck) on the table to begin the adventure path. Each player places his player marker onto site 1.

### Starting Fellowship

Your fellowship begins with Frodo bearing The One Ring. You may also begin with other companions (not allies) from your draw deck (in any order), as long as the total twilight cost of your starting companions is 4 or less.

You do not add twilight tokens for playing your starting fellowship. Site text is not active when the starting fellowships are played. You may use “When you play” game text on a starting companion. You may spot a card in your starting fellowship to play another such card.

Select and reveal starting fellowships in player order. (In tournament play, you may change your starting fellowship from game to game.)

## PLAYING THE GAME

Shuffle your draw deck, give the opponent on your right the opportunity to cut it, and draw eight cards to form your starting hand.

The first player places his copy of site 1 (from his adventure deck) on the table to begin the adventure path. Each player places his player marker onto site 1.

Each player, going clockwise around the table, takes a turn according to the following **turn sequence**.

- 1. Fellowship Phase**
- 2. Shadow Phase**
- 3. Maneuver Phase**
- 4. Archery Phase**
- 5. Assignment Phase**
- 6. Skirmish Phase**
- 7. Regroup Phase**

When one player finishes his turn, the next player in clockwise rotation (to his left) takes a turn and so on.

Although the turn order rotates to the left, note that many other procedures in the game actually rotate to the right (counter-clockwise).

### TIMING WORDS

Before you learn more about the phases of a turn, you need to know how certain game actions link to those phases using timing words.

During each phase of a turn, one or more players are allowed to perform actions that use a timing word matching the name of that phase. Timing words are printed in boldface and followed by a colon.

Each of these actions lasts for the duration of the phase named in the timing word (unless otherwise specified).

*There is also a special timing word, response, which is explained later in these rules.*

Every event card has a timing word that defines when you may play that card from your hand. The game text on that event may be performed only once for each copy of that event played. You may not play an event (except a response) during a phase that does not match its timing word.

Discard an event after you play it, and before the next action is taken. Even after being discarded, an event often has an ongoing or delayed effect until the end of the phase, or until a specified phase or condition is met.

Other types of cards may use a timing word to indicate a part of their game text called a **special ability**, which may be used only while the card is in play. (The timing word defines when you may do so.) You may use each special ability as many times as you like, even repeatedly during the same phase.

## TURN SEQUENCE

When your turn begins, remove all tokens from the twilight pool. (The pool begins the game empty, so this is not necessary on the first turn of the game.) Then you may complete any “at the start of each of your turns” actions.

### 1. FELLOWSHIP PHASE

During your fellowship phase, you may perform fellowship actions including playing most Free Peoples cards. Finally, move your fellowship forward along the adventure path.

#### Perform fellowship actions

If you are the Free Peoples player, you may perform fellowship actions during this phase, in any order.

Two fellowship actions are always available:

- Play a Free Peoples companion, ally, possession, artifact, or condition from your hand to the table.
- Spot a unique companion or unique ally with at least one wound and discard a card from your hand with the same card title (it may have a different subtitle) to heal that character.

*A unique card has a dot (•) in its card title.*

You may find other fellowship actions on events in your hand, or as special abilities on cards you already have in play.

***The Rule of 4: You may not draw (or take into hand) more than 4 cards during your fellowship phase.***

This applies to cards taken into hand by any means. This does not apply to cards drawn “at the start of each of your turns.” An effect that would require you to exceed this limit is performed as much as possible and the rest is ignored.

#### Paying costs

To play a Free Peoples card, add a number of twilight tokens to the twilight pool equal to the card’s twilight cost.

#### Playing companions

Play companion cards in a row, near the other members of your fellowship already in play.

***The Rule of 9: You may not have more than nine total companions in play and in your dead pile at any time.***

(Each copy of a non-unique companion in play or in your dead pile counts as a separate companion.)

You may not play a card from your hand to replace another card in play, even if those cards have the same card title or represent the same personality.

## Playing allies

Allies are characters that do not count as members of your fellowship. Play them to a row behind your fellowship called your **support area**. An ally may be played during any of your fellowship phases (you do not have to wait until your fellowship is at the ally's home). There is no limit to the number of allies you may have in play.

## Playing possessions and artifacts

Play Free Peoples possessions and artifacts under a character, with the left edge of the card visible for its card title and **attribute bonuses** (modifiers for the character's strength and/or vitality, written with a plus sign like "+2"). Some possessions or artifacts say they play to your support area instead.

## Class

Each character may bear one possession or artifact of each class at one time. For example, a character may bear only one hand weapon, only one ranged weapon, only one armor, and only one cloak.

Some artifacts and possessions do not have a class. There is no limit to the number of artifacts and possessions without a class that a character may bear.

## Playing conditions

Play Free Peoples conditions either under a character (like a possession, if the card says, "Bearer must be...") or to your support area, as indicated in the game text of the condition card.



## Moving your fellowship

During each of your fellowship phases, when you are finished performing fellowship actions, your fellowship must move forward to the next site on the adventure path.

### How to move

Place your player marker on the next site on the adventure path. If there is no site there yet (as is the case for the first player in the first turn), then a new site must be played from one of the Shadow players' adventure decks.

Place new sites in order by their site number. When the first player moves for the first time, place a site with the site number of 2.

To determine which player places the new site on the adventure path, look at the site you are moving from. Each site has an arrow at the bottom center of the card. This indicates who is to play the new site, with  meaning the Shadow player to your right and  meaning the Shadow player to your left. (In a two-player game, there is only one Shadow player at a time, so that player always plays the new site.)

When you move your player marker to the next site first perform any actions triggered by leaving the old site. Then perform actions that occur when moving to the new site. This includes adding tokens to the twilight pool equal to the Shadow number on the site you moved to.

**In addition, for each companion in your fellowship, you must add one token to the twilight pool each time your fellowship moves.**



## 2. SHADOW PHASE(S)

Each other player in the game, starting with the player immediately to your right, has one Shadow phase.

During each player's Shadow phase, that player may perform Shadow actions, including playing most Shadow cards. Each Shadow player may perform Shadow actions in any order desired during his or her Shadow phase.

### Perform Shadow actions

There is one Shadow action which is always available:

- Play a Shadow minion, possession, artifact, or condition from your hand to the table.

Each Shadow player may perform any Shadow actions during his Shadow phase. When he has completed all of the Shadow actions he wishes to perform, the next Shadow player to his right (if any) then performs a Shadow phase.

### Playing Shadow cards

A minion is played to the center of the table, across from the active fellowship. Artifacts, possessions, and conditions state in their game text where they play. The Shadow player must remove twilight tokens from the twilight pool as required when playing Shadow cards.

A Shadow player may not play a Shadow condition, possession, or artifact on another Shadow player's minion or to another player's support area. However, Shadow cards may give bonuses or other game effects to other players' Shadow cards, and Shadow players may play events for other players' Shadow cards as appropriate.

You may use (and exert) another player's character to pay a cost for your Shadow card or special ability.

Each minion is normally played to a certain range of sites beginning with the minion's site number. Thus, if the minion is played to (or currently at) a site that has a lower site number, that minion is **roaming**. The player must pay a roaming penalty by removing an additional two twilight tokens. (A few sites reduce or remove the roaming penalty for minions played to that site.)

*A Moria Archer with a site number of 4 must remove 2 more twilight tokens to play at site 3. If that same Moria Archer plays to site 4, there is no roaming penalty. If he survives the first move to 3, he would no longer be roaming at site 4.*

When the first Shadow player completes his Shadow phase, the next Shadow player does so. All Shadow players pay for cards by using the same twilight pool. The second Shadow player uses twilight tokens left over from the first Shadow player, and so on.

Shadow players may converse and plan among themselves, but they may not reveal to each other the cards in their hands. They can make agreements, but those agreements are not binding.

When all Shadow players have each completed a Shadow phase, it is time for the maneuver phase. (If there are no minions in play at the end of the final Shadow phase, then skip directly to the regroup phase.)

### 3. MANEUVER PHASE

During your maneuver phase, you and your opponents may perform maneuver actions (special abilities on cards in play with “**Maneuver:**” and events with that keyword).

#### Perform maneuver actions

Players may perform maneuver actions using the following **action procedure:**

As the Free Peoples player, you get the first opportunity to perform a maneuver action, and then the player on your right gets an opportunity, and so on counter-clockwise around the table.

If a player does not wish to perform a maneuver action, he may simply pass. Passing does not prevent a player from performing an action later in the same phase.

However, when all players consecutively pass, proceed to the next phase.

### 4. ARCHERY PHASE

During your archery phase, you and your opponents may perform archery actions (special abilities on cards in play with “**Archery:**” and events with that keyword) and then conduct archery fire.

#### Perform archery actions

Players may perform archery actions using the action procedure described in the maneuver phase. When all players consecutively pass, proceed to archery fire.

#### Archery fire

All Shadow players count the number of all their minions with the keyword **archer** to determine the “minion archery total.” No matter how many Shadow players there are, there is only one minion archery total.

As the Free Peoples player, you also count the number of your Free Peoples archer companions to determine the “fellowship archery total.” You may count archer allies if the fellowship is at their home, or a card has allowed them to participate in archery fire.

There is always a “default” archery total of zero for each side. A card may add to your archery total even though you have no archers in play at that time.

You must then assign a number of wounds equal to the minion archery total to your companions (and participating allies) in any way you wish.

After you have assigned archery wounds, you choose one Shadow player who must then assign a number of wounds equal to the fellowship archery total to his minions in any way he wishes.

Since these tokens are assigned as wounds and not from exertion, any player may assign enough wounds to kill his own minion or companion.

Wounds are assigned one at a time, so a character may not have more wounds assigned than that character’s vitality. Ignore any leftover wounds that cannot be assigned.

If there are no minions left after the archery phase, then skip directly to the regroup phase.

## 5. ASSIGNMENT PHASE

During your assignment phase, you and your opponents may perform assignment actions (special abilities on cards in play with “**Assignment:**” and events with that keyword).

Then you may assign companions to defend against attacking minions. All assignment actions must be complete before proceeding to assign defenders.

When the assignment phase is complete, each companion being attacked will lead to a separate skirmish phase.

### Perform assignment actions

Players may perform assignment actions using the action procedure described in the maneuver phase.

Many assignment actions assign a minion to a companion. All of these assignments are “one-on-one” — you cannot assign one character to another unless both of them are unassigned.

When all players consecutively pass, proceed to assign defenders.

### Assign defenders

After the assignment actions are finished, there will usually be both minions and companions still unassigned. You may now assign companions to those minions in any order (without needing events or special abilities). A player may not assign more than one companion to the same minion.

All assignments of characters are on a one-to-one basis, with the following two exceptions:

- If your assigned companion has the keyword **defender +1**, you may assign that character at this time to one additional unassigned minion. Defender +2 allows that companion to defend against two additional unassigned minions, and so on. A character with defender +2 (or greater) satisfies any requirement for defender +1.
- When you complete the assignment of companions, any unassigned minions may be assigned by the Shadow players to any companion (even if those companions are already assigned). The first Shadow player on your right may assign any of his unassigned minions, and so on counter-clockwise around the table.

If all minions are somehow removed from their assignments, then skip directly to the regroup phase.

## 6. SKIRMISH PHASE(S)

When the assignment phase is complete, each defending companion will fight in a separate skirmish phase. In an order decided by you, skirmishes are resolved one at a time, by conducting a skirmish phase for each.

During each skirmish phase, you and your opponents will perform skirmish actions, and then you must resolve that skirmish. All skirmish actions must be complete before proceeding to resolve the skirmish.

Once a skirmish phase has finished, the Free Peoples player must select another skirmish, if any, and perform another skirmish phase.

### Perform skirmish actions

Players may perform skirmish actions (special abilities on cards in play with “**Skirmish:**” and events with that



keyword) using the action procedure described in the maneuver phase. Each skirmish action lasts only for a single skirmish. When all players consecutively pass, proceed to resolve that skirmish.

### Resolve that skirmish

If the total strength of one side is more than the strength of the other side, the side with the most strength wins that skirmish. (If there is a tie, the Shadow side wins.) Place one wound on each character on the losing side.

*If Aragorn, with strength of 8, faces two Orcs, each with strength of 3 (total strength of 6), then Aragorn wins that skirmish and each losing Orc takes one wound.*

When the winning side has one or more characters with the keyword **damage +1**, then each losing character takes one additional wound for each damage +1. (Damage +2 adds two wounds, and so on.) This is called a **damage bonus**, and may be added or removed by various effects.

*To continue the above example, if Aragorn has damage +1, then each Orc takes two wounds.*

*But if both Orcs have damage +1 and strength of 4 (thus winning the skirmish with combined strength of 8), then Aragorn takes three wounds instead.*

If the total strength of one side is at least double the total strength of the other side, all the characters on the losing side are killed (regardless of how many wounds or how much vitality each has). This is also called being **overwhelmed**. When a character is overwhelmed, that character does not take any more wounds — he simply dies.

When the Ring-bearer is overwhelmed, he is killed, regardless of whether he wears the Ring. The One Ring's ability to convert wounds into burdens does not protect him from being overwhelmed, since no wounds are placed.

A skirmish phase ends after all actions triggered by winning or losing that skirmish have resolved.

Surviving minions and companions (and participating allies) may skirmish again this turn if the fellowship makes another move, or if there is a “fierce skirmish.”

## FIERCE SKIRMISHES

After all the normal skirmishes are resolved, surviving minions with the keyword **fierce** must be defended against again. Players perform another assignment phase and then complete a separate skirmish phase for each fierce skirmish.

*Lurtz is a fierce Uruk-hai minion. When he attacks, Aragorn is assigned to skirmish him. In the regular skirmish phase, Aragorn wins and Lurtz takes one wound. During the following fierce skirmish phase, the Free Peoples player may once more assign a companion to defend against Lurtz. This companion may be Aragorn or may be a different companion.*

Only when all skirmishes have been resolved do the players move on to the regroup phase.

## 7. REGROUP PHASE

During your regroup phase, players may perform regroup actions (special abilities on cards in play with “**Regroup:**” and events with that keyword). Then each Shadow player reconciles his hand.

Finally, the Free Peoples player decides whether to end his turn now or move again this turn.

### **Perform regroup actions**

Players may perform regroup actions using the action procedure described in the maneuver phase. When all players consecutively pass, proceed to reconcile the Shadow players' hands.

### **Shadow players reconcile**

Each Shadow player must **reconcile** his hand to eight cards, as follows:

- He may first discard one card from his hand.
- If he then has less than eight cards in his hand, he must draw cards until he has eight.
- Otherwise (when he has more than eight cards in his hand), he must discard from his hand until he has only eight.

### **Free Peoples player chooses**

At the end of the regroup phase, if you are the Free Peoples player, you must select one of the following two choices:

- Move the fellowship to the next site (allowing the proper Shadow player to place a new site if needed), add tokens to the twilight pool (both for the Shadow number of the new site and for the number of companions in the fellowship), and return to the Shadow phase(s).
- Or, reconcile your hand (just as the Shadow players did above). Then the Shadow players discard all minions in play, and your turn ends.

### **Move limit**

During each of your turns, your fellowship must move once, and may move a number of times up to your move limit.

In a two- or three-player game, your move limit is two. In a game with four or more players, your move limit is equal to the number of your opponents when the game begins. During your regroup phase, you may decide to make another move, subject to the limit above.

### **WINNING THE GAME**

A player wins the game when his fellowship is at site 9 and his Ring-bearer survives all skirmish phases.

For your first starter deck game, a player wins the game when his fellowship is at site 7 instead.

A player may also win by becoming the only player left in the game (see below).

### **LOSING THE GAME**

A player loses the game if his Frodo is killed and Sam is not part of his fellowship to carry on as Ring-bearer. (Alternately, if Sam has become your Ring-bearer, you lose the game if Sam is killed.)

A player also loses the game if his Ring-bearer becomes corrupted. If the Ring-bearer has a number of burdens on his card equal to his resistance, he is corrupted. There are also card effects that can corrupt the Ring-bearer, regardless of how many burdens he might have.

If a player loses a game and there are at least two other players remaining, remove his player marker and all of his cards from play (and discard any opponent's cards that were on them).

Remove his sites on the adventure path in numerical order, and replace each one with an opponent's corresponding site, in counter-clockwise order starting with the player on his right.

## OTHER IMPORTANT RULES

### ACTIONS

Nearly everything that occurs during the game is some kind of action. Players perform actions to play cards, use special abilities, move their fellowships, reconcile, and so on.

#### Required or optional

Every action is either optional or required. An optional action is defined as either: an event, a special ability, or an action that uses the word "may." All other actions are required actions.

If two or more required actions are occurring at the same time (for example, more than one "at the start of each of your turns" actions), the Free Peoples player decides in which order they occur.

#### Requirements

Check all requirements to perform an action (such as playing a card) before paying its costs. Some cards require you to see how many tokens are in the twilight pool, for example.

### Phase actions

Phase actions are performing special abilities and playing event cards (except responses). Each phase action must be completely performed before another can be taken.

### Costs and Effects

A cost or an effect could be adding/removing twilight tokens, exerting a character, discarding a card, or any number of other possibilities. The costs for an action are usually listed before the word "to" (so the action takes the form of "pay X to do Y," with X being the cost and Y the effect).

#### Costs

If a card or special ability has a cost, you must pay that cost or you may not use that card or special ability.

Each time you pay a cost, you may only use that cost to fulfill the requirements of a single card.

#### Effects

If the effect of a card or special ability requires you to perform an action and you cannot, you must perform as much as you can and ignore the rest.

*If the effect of an event requires you to discard 2 cards from your hand and you only have 1 card in hand, just discard the 1 card and ignore the rest.*

If the effect of a card or special ability requires you choose one of two different actions, you must choose an action that you are fully capable of performing (if possible).



If you meet all the requirements and pay all the costs for playing a card, you may play that card even if the card will have no effect.

*Exception:* If you perform an action that has playing a card from hand or discard pile as part of its effect, you must play that card.

### **Response actions**

Response is a timing word that means that you play an event (or use a special ability) whenever the situation described in its game text happens.

You may respond more than once to the same situation.

Sometimes a response action interrupts another action to cancel it before it resolves. When this happens, that other action does not have its effect, but its costs and requirements are still paid.

After all required actions to a particular trigger have resolved, players may perform response actions responding to that same trigger using the action procedure.

### **ALLIES**

Allies are not companions and don't travel along the adventure path with your fellowship. Ally cards have a home site number indicated just after the card's type, on the same line (such as **ALLY • HOME 3 • ELF**). Each ally in your support area is considered to be at his home site.

Allies normally do not participate in archery fire and skirmishes. Special abilities on allies (such as archery actions or skirmish actions) may be used as normal.

**However, when your fellowship is at your ally's home, that ally participates in archery fire and skirmishes.**

This doesn't mean that such an ally must take an archery wound or be assigned by the Free Peoples player to defend a skirmish, but that character is eligible to do so if the Free Peoples player so chooses.

The Shadow player may assign an unassigned minion to an ally when the fellowship is at that ally's home site.

Some card effects also allow allies to fight in this way, even when the fellowship is not at that ally's home. While an ally participates in archery fire and skirmishes, that ally is considered to be at the same site as the fellowship.

### **UNIQUENESS**

#### **Unique cards**

Many character, possession, and artifact cards represent a thing that there is only one of. Those cards have a dot (•) before the card title, to tell you that you may only have one of those cards in play at a time.

Two cards represent the same thing if they have the same card title (even if their subtitles or collector's info are different) or they have the same collector's info (even if their titles and subtitles are different).

For Shadow cards, if a copy of a unique card is already in play and active, you may not play another card that has the same title (regardless of subtitles).

You may not play a card from your hand to replace another card in play, even if those cards have the same card title or represent the same personality.

## Non-unique cards

All cards that do not have a dot (•) before their card title are non-unique. This means that all players may have many copies of those cards in play at one time.

Most conditions are non-unique, and you may have multiple copies of these conditions in play at one time. The effects of these cards are cumulative.

## ACTIVE CARDS

During your turn, your Free Peoples cards and your opponents' Shadow cards are the only ones that are active. Inactive cards are not affected by the game and do not affect the game.

*Your companions and your opponent's minions are active. Your opponents' companions are not.*

*Exception:* Cards borne by active cards are active and cards borne by inactive cards are inactive.

*An opponent's Shadow condition on another player's companion is not active because that companion is not.*

Sites are always active. A site's game text may not be used unless the fellowship is there, although some cards may copy and use that game text. Site text is not active when the starting fellowships are played.

*If the game text of a site has a Shadow special ability, you may use that special ability only when the active fellowship is at that site and you are a Shadow player.*

You may not play another copy of a unique card that is already in play and currently active.

Occasionally in a multiplayer game, two copies of the same unique card may be in play at the same time.

Only the 4 copies of a non-unique condition (or 1 copy of a unique condition) closest to the right of the Free Peoples player are in effect at any time. All other copies are also active, but their game text is ignored.

## THE ONE RING

Frodo always begins the game as your Ring-bearer. He bears The One Ring for you, much like when he carried the Ring in his pocket or on a chain around his neck.

The One Ring is a special card which is neither a Free Peoples card nor a Shadow card. It has no twilight cost, and its card type is "The One Ring."

There are two versions of The One Ring: The Ruling Ring and Isildur's Bane. There are three gameplay differences between these two cards:

- Isildur's Bane adds 1 point of vitality.
- The Ruling Ring can only respond during a skirmish (Isildur's Bane can respond any time your Ring-bearer is about to take a wound).
- While your Ring-bearer wears Isildur's Bane, you add two burdens for each wound he takes instead of one.

### When can he put on the Ring?

When you use the special ability on The One Ring, your Ring-bearer "wears" the Ring. Using this special ability on The One Ring is optional.

You may activate this game text as a response when the Ring-bearer is about to take a wound (The Ruling Ring can do this only during a skirmish).

Remember, wounds are always placed on a character one at a time. Once activated, this special ability continues to be in effect until the regroup phase.

Your Ring-bearer cannot put on the Ring to save himself from being overwhelmed. When a character is overwhelmed, no wounds are taken and that character is killed.

### **What happens while he wears the Ring?**

When your Ring-bearer wears The One Ring, each time he is about to take a wound, that wound is converted to a burden (two burdens instead with Isildur's Bane).

While wearing the Ring, your Ring-bearer can perform all normal actions such as moving and skirmishing. He may defend against attacking minions as usual.

There are special Shadow cards with powerful effects that can only be played while your Ring-bearer wears the Ring.

### **How does he become corrupted?**

If your Ring-bearer ever has as many burdens as his resistance (usually 10), he becomes corrupted and you lose the game.

Your Ring-bearer may also become corrupted by a card effect. This takes effect immediately, regardless of how many burdens are currently on your Ring-bearer.

### **How does he take the Ring off?**

At the start of the regroup phase, your Ring-bearer takes off the Ring and simply carries it again.

### **What happens when he is killed?**

If your Ring-bearer is killed (even if he is overwhelmed), you lose the game.

*Exception:* Sam has a special ability on his card that is a response you may use when Frodo is killed (not corrupted). If Sam is in play at that moment, this allows you to transfer the Ring to Sam, and then he becomes your Ring-bearer.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Discard**

The default meaning of the word “discard” found in game text is “discard from play.” Discarding from other locations (such as from your hand, from the top of your draw deck, or from any other place) is always described in detail.

When a card leaves play, any cards played on that card (or borne by that card) are discarded.

Discard piles are always face-up, and cards are discarded one at a time so all players can see which cards are being discarded.

You may look through your own discard pile at any time, but you may not look through an opponent's discard pile.

### **Drawing your last card**

Whenever you draw the last card from your draw deck, you don't lose the game. Just continue playing with the cards you have left in your hand (and on the table).



## Keywords

Keywords are bold words at the beginning of a card's game text (such as **search** or **stealth**). Six keywords (**archer**, **damage +1**, **defender +1**, **Ring-bearer**, **sanctuary**, and **fierce**) have special rules associated with them (see Index).

## Look at

When an effect says a player should “look at” a card, that card is shown only to that player.

## Moving cards between decks and piles

Whenever you move a card from one pile to another (such as shuffling a card from your discard pile into your draw deck), you must reveal that card to all players so they can verify that the correct card was moved.

## Playing cards from your draw deck

Some cards allow you to play a card directly from your draw deck or discard pile. You must still pay any costs and meet requirements necessary for playing that card.

After you are finished looking through your draw deck, reshuffle it and give the player to your right the opportunity to cut it.

The order of your discard pile is irrelevant, and you may place any card you wish on top after playing a card from there.

There is no penalty if you don't find (or choose not to play) the card you are looking for in your draw deck or discard pile.

## Race

Each character card has its race indicated just after the card's type, on the same line (such as **COMPANION • MAN**).

*The race of “Man” includes women of the appropriate culture. A possession that requires a \* Man bearer may be borne by a \* female character who has the race of “Man.”*

**Note that in *The Lord of the Rings* TCG, Uruk-hai is a different race from Orc.**

## Reveal

When an effect says to “reveal” a card, that card is shown to all players.

## Spot

This word in game text sets up a requirement for playing a card or using a special ability, in conjunction with a noun, such as, “To play, spot an Elf.” This is equivalent to, “An Elf must be in play and active for you to play this card.”

Normally, you don't have to spot all the cards in play that meet the requirement if you don't want to.

*Bilbo's Pipe says, “spot X pipes.” If there are 2 pipes in play (and active), you may choose to spot 2 pipes, 1 pipe, or none.*

However, if a card says, “you can spot,” that means you don't have a choice and you have to spot anything and everything that meets the requirement.

*Uruk-hai Armory says, “While you can spot an Uruk-hai, the fellowship archery total is -1.” You can't make any choices to spot for this card (it either works or it doesn't).*

## Transfer of Artifacts and Possessions

You may transfer an artifact or possession between your Free Peoples characters during your fellowship phase by paying the twilight cost for that artifact or possession again.

Both characters involved in the transfer must be at the same site. (Remember that an ally is always at his home site during your fellowship phase.)

An artifact or possession may be transferred only to a character who may bear it (as indicated by a “bearer must be” phrase in its text). You may not voluntarily discard a possession or artifact borne by your character.

## INDEX

action	15	costs and effects	31
action procedure	22	culture	6
active cards	34	culture icons	7
adventure deck	6, 12	damage +1	26
ally	4, 9, 18, 32	dead pile	8, 17
archer	23	defender +1	25
archery phase	22	discard	37
artifact	5, 18, 20	discard to heal	17
assignment phase	24	draw deck	12
attribute bonuses	18	event	5, 16
bidding to go first	13	exert	9
building your deck	11	exhausted	9
burden	13, 35	fellowship phase	16
cancel	32	fierce	27
card limits	12	Free Peoples cards	3, 10
character	4	healing	8
class	18	home	32
companion	4, 17	how to move	19
condition	5, 18, 20	keywords	38
contacting Decipher	41	killed	8
corrupted	36	kinds of cards	2
		losing the game	29
		maneuver phase	22

minion	4, 20	site number	6, 12, 21
move limit	29	skirmish phase	25
non-unique	34	special ability	16
overwhelmed	26	spot	39
possession	5, 18, 20	start of turn actions	16
race	39	starting fellowship	14
reconcile	28	support area	17
regroup phase	27	The One Ring	3, 35
replacing cards	33	timing conflicts	30
reset the twilight pool	16	timing words	15
resistance	36	tokens	8, 10, 11
response	32	transfer	40
roaming	21	turn sequence	15
sanctuary	8	twilight pool	9
setting up the game	10	uniqueness	33
Shadow cards	3, 10	vitality	7
Shadow number	19	what's new	front cover
Shadow phase	19	who goes first	13
signet	7	winning the game	29
site	2, 6, 34	wounds	8

## CONTACTING DECIPHER

Check out our website, send us an email or give us a call:

- website: [decipher.com](http://decipher.com)
- rules questions email: [elrond@decipher.com](mailto:elrond@decipher.com)
- customer service email: [ccgcustomerservice@decipher.com](mailto:ccgcustomerservice@decipher.com)
- telephone: 757-623-3600
- address: P.O. Box 56, Norfolk, VA 23501-0056

Visit: [www.lordoftherings.net](http://www.lordoftherings.net)



**NEW LINE CINEMA**  
An AOL Time Warner Company

© 2002 New Line Productions, Inc. The Lord of the Rings and the characters, names and places therein, TM The Saul Zaentz Company d/b/a Tolkien Enterprises under license to New Line Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Decipher Inc. Authorized User. TM, ®, & © 2002 Decipher Inc., P.O. Box 56, Norfolk, Virginia U.S.A. 23501. All rights reserved. ¶