

The Key to the TAROT

Based on The Pictorial Key to
the Tarot by Arthur Edward
Waite

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Introduction

Reading Tarot cards can reveal insights into your past, present, or future. The premise is simple: the Querent asks a question, and then the Reader draws the cards and interprets the results.

Tarot reading has been used for divination since the 1700s, and every Reader develops his or her own methods for interpreting the cards. There are some fundamentals, but Readers are encouraged to explore and develop their own unique approach.

The Deck

The Tarot deck contains seventy-eight cards: twenty-two Major Arcana and fifty-six Minor Arcana.

The Major Arcana represent the journey through life, and the archetypical stages that everyone experiences. Everyone begins life as the Fool, and ends life as the Fool.

The Minor Arcana represents the actions, thoughts, feelings, and material struggles that we all encounter in our lives. The Querent seeks to learn from every experience.

The Minor Arcana are made up of four suits and fifty-six cards, like a traditional deck of playing cards. Face cards consist of Knave/Page, Knight, Queen, and King. Each suit is associated with one of the elements.

Clubs/Wands/Staffs corresponds to Fire, Cups to Water, Coins/Pentacles to Earth, and Swords to Air. The cards in each of the suits take on the symbolism and essence of the corresponding element: Fire/Action, Water/Emotions, Earth/Work, and Air/Thought.

Spreading the Cards

A spread is a layout for the Tarot cards which provides a framework for the reading. Spreads often follow a predefined theme where the position of the cards is relevant to how they are interpreted.

There are numerous different types of spreads. Certain spreads tend to work well for different types of questions. This guide will provide a starter spread, but you can research and find many predefined spreads. As you become more experienced, consider developing your own unique spreads.

Three-Card Spread

The past/present/future three-card spread is the best and most commonly used starting spread. This simple spread is ideal for novice Readers and simple questions. Cards are drawn and read in the following order: 1) Past, 2) Present, and 3) Future.



Past



Present



Future

1. **The Past:** This card symbolizes the Querent's past experiences, recent or distant, that pertain to the Querent's question.
2. **The Present:** This card represents the Querent's current situation.
3. **The Future:** This card indicates a possible future outcome for the Querent, or a goal the Querent should strive for regarding their question or issue. The Querent can have an impact on his or her future via their thoughts and actions.

Tips

Become familiar with your deck. Buy a journal and take a page to write about each card, starting with the Fool, in the Major Arcana, and going through all seventy-eight cards, in sequence.

Look at the pictures and use the explanations in this booklet to connect each card with one of your life experiences. Since the cards are archetypal, you have experienced all seventy-eight at least once. Perhaps you've experienced certain cards repeatedly. Write your corresponding life experience with each card in your journal.

The explanations in this booklet refer to the card being “upright” or “reversed”. After shuffling, drawing, and turning over the cards, some may

be upright while others will be upside down (or reversed). Reversed cards turn the meaning “upside down.”

Pay attention to the symbolism in the artwork; the symbolism enhances, and provides nuance, to the meaning of the cards.

Tarot cards are not deterministic and life is not fated. The future is never set. The Querent can always alter his or her future by changing their course of action, changing their thoughts, or adjusting their feelings.

The Major Arcana

The Fool (0)



Meaning: The Fool represents a leap of faith, which is the beginning and ending of the Major Arcana journey we all take through life. We are the Fool. The Fool archetype is about curiosity and open-mindedness, going with the flow of life, and managing our way through the unknown.

Symbolism: A young man and his dog travel the land together and he is about to walk off the edge of a cliff. The flower in his hand represents innocence; the dog is likely to grab him and prevent him from coming to harm. The bag on his staff contains all his possessions and the food he needs for the day.

Upright: optimism, a journey without a destination, a new beginning, curiosity, and potential

Reversed: foolishness, gullibility, and ignorance

The Magician (I)



Meaning: The Magician represents choices and creative problem-solving, a connection between imagination and reality. The Magician archetype is the first encounter for the Fool, indicating that we all must make crucial decisions on our life journey.

Symbolism: A young magician is in the process of casting a spell. The infinity symbol above his head shows that he has attained elevated knowledge. By pointing at the sky and the ground, he acknowledges the connection between heaven and earth. The wand in his hand, along with the objects of the other suits (pentacle, cup, and sword), shows his command over fire, earth, water, and air.

Upright: choices, problem-solving, diverse knowledge, solutions, and cleverness

Reversed: deception, conning, mistakes, something broken beyond repair, and failure

The High Priestess (II)



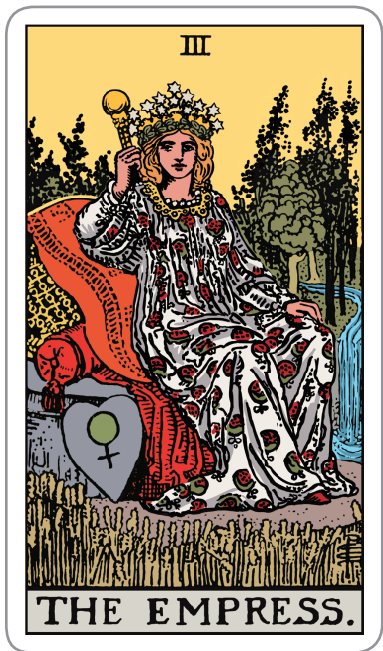
Meaning: The High Priestess represents the knowledge and enlightenment that we attain overcoming difficulties. The High Priestess archetype is the second encounter for the Fool, indicating that we must learn about our intuition, how to trust it, and when to seek out guidance from others.

Symbolism: A young woman wizened by difficult experiences awaits acolytes who will come to her for guidance. A scroll rests in her lap showing her connection to learned knowledge. She sits between a black and white column, showing her connection to death and life. The pomegranates in the art behind her are the fruit of the underworld. The full moon in her headdress and the crescent moon at her feet represent her powerful intuition, developed by overcoming hardship.

Upright: divination, wisdom from experience, insight, and counseling

Reversed: gossip, bad advice, incomplete knowledge, and misrepresentation

The Empress (III)



Meaning: The Empress represents the feminine divine, the essence of beauty, abundance, and nourishment. The Empress archetype is the third encounter for the Fool, teaching you about the natural world, how to care for the world, how to nurture yourself, and how to care for others.

Symbolism: A regal woman sits on cushions atop a stone throne out in the wilderness. She wears a crown of stars and holds a scepter, they are symbols of her power and divine grace. A heart shield with the symbol of Venus, the planet that rules the astrological sign Taurus, rests beside her outdoor throne. Venus represents the body and Taurus represents the earth. A field of wheat is in front of her, and a healthy forest behind her. She symbolizes the abundance of both; the grain feeds the world and the forest provides the materials for shelter.

Upright: nurturing, abundance, the feminine divine, and sovereignty over the natural order.

Reversed: hardships, scarcity, bareness, and neediness.

The Emperor (IV)



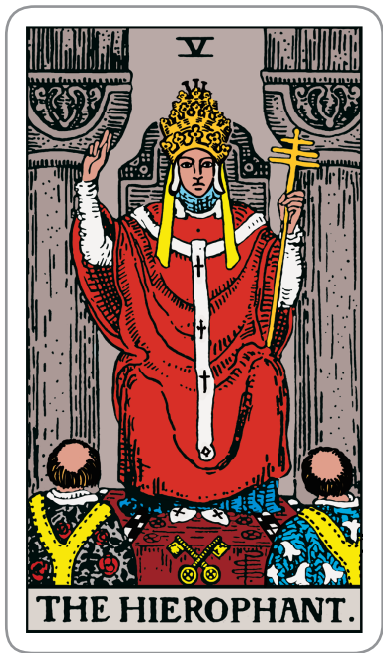
Meaning: The Emperor represents the masculine divine, the essence of command, order, and power. The Emperor archetype is the fourth encounter for the Fool, teaching us how to establish order from chaos, how to shape the natural world to our needs, and how to build civilization.

Symbolism: A elder man sits on a throne with the heads of four rams, which symbolize his masculinity. He holds an Ankh scepter, representing life and power, and a gold ball, representing earthly wealth and his rulership of civilization. The burgundy cloth around his upper body, and red robe covering his lower body, indicate the energy he wields to maintain his authority. He wears armor underneath his clothing, shown by the greaves and sabatons on his legs. He wears a crown on his head that he earned; it was not inherited.

Upright: authority, the rule maker, order, stability, and sovereignty over society and civilization

Reversed: abuse of power, cruelty, dictatorship, and narcissism.

The Hierophant (V)



Meaning: The Hierophant represents wisdom attained through scholarship and exploring the world, the knowledge and potential wisdom we attain in our effort to make sense of life. The Hierophant archetype is the fifth encounter for the Fool, indicating that we need to go beyond intuition and emotion, and use intellect and experience to solve some problems. Or, we need to find someone with those qualities to help us.

Symbolism: A priest offers a blessing to two supplicants. He wears the clothing of his station as a learned man; his wand and crown are symbols of holy power. On the alter before him are two keys, indicating he has the keys to divine and mundane knowledge, which he uses to unlock messages and information for those who seek his wisdom.

Upright: wisdom, authority, knowledge, doctrine, and advice

Reversed: arrogance, elitism, hypocrisy, and charlatanism

The Lovers (VI)



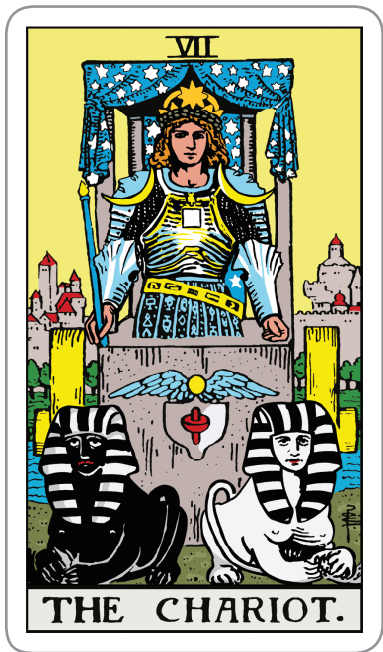
Meaning: The Lovers represents partnership, especially a profound connection with someone that is both intimate and romantic. The Lovers archetype is the sixth encounter for the Fool, indicating that we cannot fully experience life until we connect with someone intimately and deeply.

Symbolism: An angel oversees the union of Adam and Eve, acknowledging their relationship. On Adam's side, behind him, is a flaming tree, representing the passion in the relationship. On Eve's side, behind her, is the Tree of Knowledge with the serpent wrapped around the trunk and entwined in the branches. They each bring something different to the relationship that holds the attention of the divine.

Upright: commitment, status through union, connection, and soul mate

Reversed: jealousy, unfaithfulness, arguments, and separation or divorce

The Chariot (VII)



Meaning: The Chariot represents willpower and drive; the intense focus we need to establish our identities and stand out in some important and useful way. The Chariot archetype is the seventh encounter for the Fool, teaching us how important it is to have conviction and intensity in our lives.

Symbolism: A warrior sits in a chariot. Two sphinxes, one black and one white, are at rest, but ready to act when the charioteer commands them. There is a star in his crown and on the cloth at the top of his chariot, indicating his connection to divine will. He waits outside the city, as a protector. He will act when called upon. He may be considered a young prince who one day could become the Emperor.

Upright: victory, willpower, intensity, drive, and control

Reversed: anger, delay, indecision, and interference

Strength (VIII)



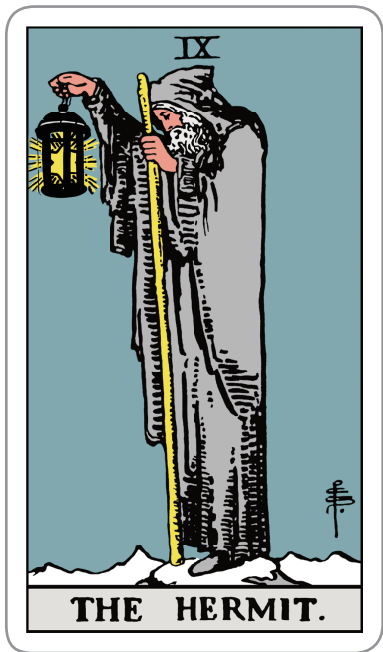
Meaning: Strength represents our fortitude to live life, overcome struggles, and persevere. The journey through life will require strength to live fully and completely. Strength, as an archetype, is the eighth lesson for the Fool, showing us that life is a marathon and not a sprint. We must find the strength within that will help us survive and thrive.

Symbolism: A young maiden strokes the head of a lion. They are symbols of civilization and instinct co-existing and supporting one another. The infinity symbol above them indicates that the relationship is eternal. Her white robe represents innocence, and her garland belt and robe are symbols of abundance. She greets the lion with compassion and he will be her protector.

Upright: power, courage, compassion, and gentle strength

Reversed: weakness, anger, abuse of power, and threat

The Hermit (IX)



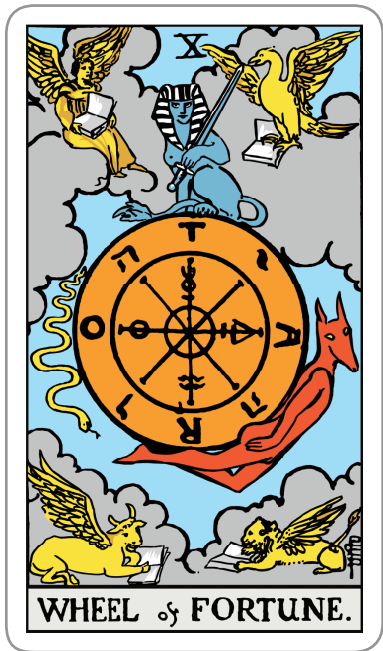
Meaning: The Hermit represents our individual pursuit for personal truth in a world of competing truths. The Hermit archetype is the ninth encounter for the Fool, teaching us that sometimes we must detach from the flow of life to discover ourselves, bringing what we learn in isolation back into the world of social connections.

Symbolism: A elderly man travels across a stark landscape with his lamp lighting the way. He travels forward in search of truth. His hood covers his head and his head is tilted downward, both representing the solemn pursuit of truth. His staff is both for his support on the long journey and defense against any threats. The grey robe symbolizes neutrality and the absence of emotion; he will learn what he learns and accept the truth no matter what is revealed.

Upright: introspection, discovery, wisdom, truth-seeking, and taking time away from society

Reversed: loneliness, escapism, depression, and being cast out

Wheel of Fortune (X)



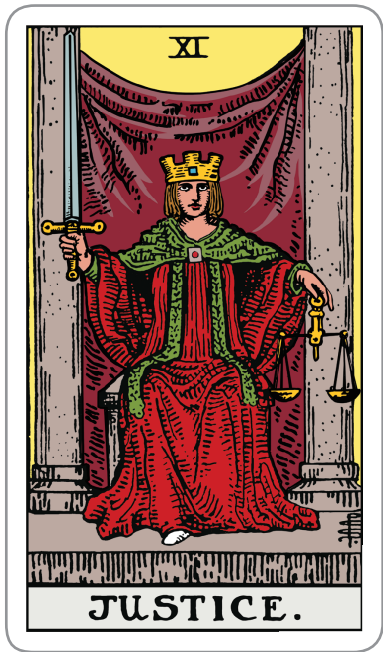
Meaning: The Wheel of Fortune represents experiences and circumstances outside our control. The Wheel of Fortune archetype is the tenth encounter for the Fool, indicating that we exist in a dance between fate and free will. This card teaches the lessons of fate, the external world, and how others with more power than us force us to react.

Symbolism: The wheel itself contains numerous symbols of power. At the top is a sphinx with a sword, showing both the mystery and decisiveness of life experience. A serpent is to the left of the wheel, and a demonic looking spirit is to the right, under the wheel. One symbolizes the potential for sudden death and the other the “wicked” power of free will. Four angelic beings at each corner symbolize the fixed signs of the Zodiac: a lion for Leo, the bull for Taurus, the woman for Aquarius, and the griffin for Scorpio.

Upright: what is inevitable, destiny, and the passage of time

Reversed: misfortune, powerlessness, and unpleasant circumstances

Justice (XI)



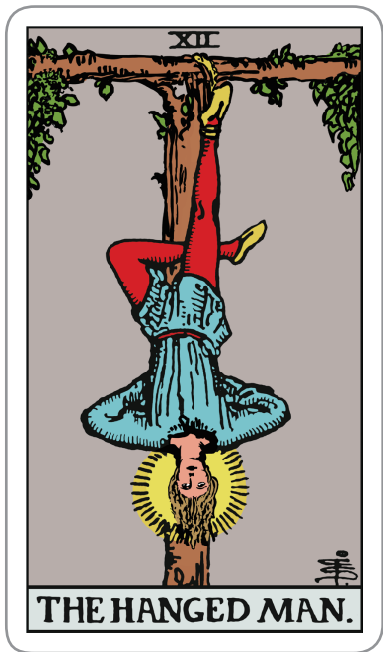
Meaning: Justice represents detached decision-making, logic, and the power of knowledge outside emotions. Justice, as an archetype, is the eleventh teacher for the Fool, showing us the importance of objectivity and analysis for determining outcomes and making important decisions. Life can be fair if we act with integrity.

Symbolism: A stern woman sits ready to receive complaints and solve disputes. She holds a scale in one hand, representing fairness and logical analysis, which she will use to make her determinations. The sword in the other hand indicates, that once a decision is made, she will offer a clear and final answer that will be accepted and honored. Her crown is less ornate than that of the Empress, Emperor, Hierophant, and Chariot, showing that her role is among the people, not leading them.

Upright: detached decision-making, responsibility, consequences, logic, and cause and effect

Reversed: injustice, missing information, indecision, and bureaucracy

The Hanged Man (XII)



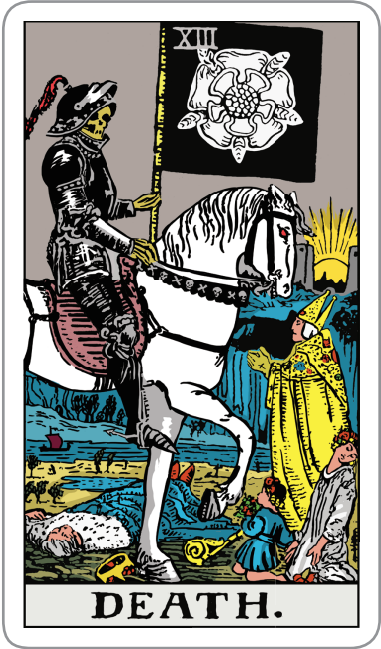
Meaning: The Hanged Man represents knowing sacrifice, when we realize we must accept a short-term difficulty for a long-term gain. The Hanged Man archetype is the twelfth encounter for the Fool, showing us the importance of devotion, surrender, and sacrifice as ways forward that are just as powerful as the willfulness of the Chariot lesson.

Symbolism: A young man hangs upside down, but appears relaxed and calm. He knows he must wait and learn by being patient, as well as by changing his perspective, which is what happens when you view the world from a reversed position. The light around his head symbolizes the insight and wisdom he gains from his changed viewpoint.

Upright: knowing sacrifice, change in perspective, and patience

Reversed: helplessness, impatience, confusion, and selfishness

Death (XIII)



Meaning: Death represents endings in the cycle of life, and the power of regeneration. Death, as an archetype, is the thirteenth encounter for the Fool. This card reminds us that life is finite, which helps us appreciate how well, or poorly, we are doing in our pursuit of life experience and soul growth.

Symbolism: The skeletal figure of death rides across the land collecting souls. No one escapes his visit, as exhibited by the figures of royalty, the priesthood, a common maiden, and child. His flag has a symbol that is the shape of a rose, representing his role in the cycle of life, also depicted by the rising/setting sun in the background. Death's arrival is always assured, and rarely welcomed.

Upright: death/rebirth, transformation, inevitability, and cycles

Reversed: arrogance, depression, hopelessness, and severe grief

Temperance (XIV)



Meaning: Temperance represents balance and equilibrium that has the chance to develop with greater life experience. Temperance, as an archetype, is the fourteenth encounter for the Fool, indicating that we need to step back, from time to time, and assess where we are to determine if we are in or out of balance.

Symbolism: An angel pours water down from one cup into another, and up from the bottom cup to the top cup, which symbolizes the flow of life down to earth and up to heaven. One foot is in the water and one on the land, indicating the connection between emotions/ imagination/spirit and the physical/practical/limited world. The sun rising in the background and star-like light behind his head both represent truth and wisdom.

Upright: calm, health, well-being, balance, common ground, and harmonious action

Reversed: imbalance, disruption, anxiety, frustration, and pettiness

The Devil (XV)



Meaning: The Devil represents consequences we face as our choices become more significant the farther into life we travel. The Devil archetype is the fifteenth encounter for the Fool, teaching us that we are responsible for our lives and our choices. If we make selfish choices that harm others, we will not enjoy the outcomes.

Symbolism: Lucifer Morningstar, the Fallen One, watches human souls make choices that slowly change them into demons. The chains around their necks are loose enough to slip over their heads, but they make no effort to escape. The reversed pentagram shows the victory of matter over spirit, which is the improper order of the soul's development.

Upright: self-interest, temptation, consequences, and choice.

Reversed: unwise choices, lust, wanton abandon, and manipulation

The Tower (XVI)

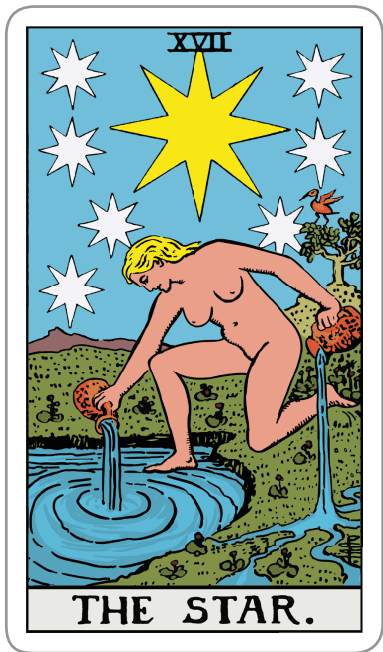


Meaning: The Tower represents sudden, unexpected change that takes something we have built over time and quickly forces us to start over or reset. The Tower, as an archetype, is the sixteenth encounter for the Fool, teaching the lesson that life is a construct; it can be “blown up” at any time and force us to make unexpected adjustments.

Symbolism: A tower with a crown is struck by lightning and human figures fall from the tower. The dislodged crown symbolizes the inevitable end of any human-made structure. Nothing, and no one, is secure from nature’s wrath, which is a greater force than civilization.

Upright and Reversed: unexpected change, sudden catastrophe, and traditions failing

The Star (XVII)



Meaning: The Star represents hope, and vision for the future. What do we see as our life purpose and how do we get to it? The Star, as an archetype, is the seventeenth encounter for the Fool, indicating that we all need hope and optimism for the future. We need to have dreams to enjoy this life.

Symbolism: A nude young woman pours water into a pool and onto the land while kneeling beneath a guiding star. The star is her hope, and pouring water into the pool and onto the land shows the connection between the physical and spiritual worlds. Her nudity symbolizes innocence. The fertile land, the healthy tree, and the bird represent life and renewal.

Upright: hope, inspiration, promise, purpose, and faith

Reversed: doubts, confusion, delusion, and despair

The Moon (XVIII)



Meaning: The Moon represents the feelings we need to explore and express. The Moon, as an archetype, is the eighteenth encounter for the Fool, illuminating our deepest feelings so we can understand the emotional framework that gets reinforced, suppressed, and shaped by our family and closest relationships.

Symbolism: A full moon with a woman's face inside rests in the top middle of the card, inside of the shining Sun, emphasizing that her light comes from the Sun. The moon sits between two pillars and a dog and a wolf over a waterway leading to a lake. This position indicates our need to balance and navigate our emotions. The lobster is a shelled creature representing our need to keep our emotions protected with a hard outer casing.

Upright: dreams, positive emotions, intuition, and soul purpose

Reversed: delusion, nightmares, negative emotions, and despair

The Sun (XIX)



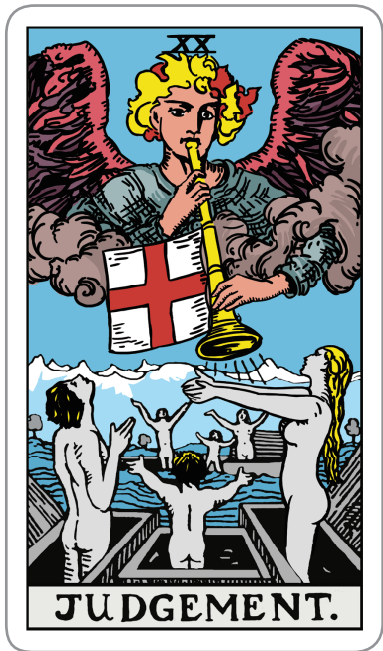
Meaning: The Sun represents revelation and the light of truth. The Sun, as an archetype, is the nineteenth teacher for the Fool. It teaches us the lesson of honest revelation and how we deal with clear truths in our lives. What do you learn when you see a situation, or a person, for what they really are?

Symbolism: The stern-faced sun looks down upon a boy, riding a horse, in front of a wall with sunflowers growing in the background; his standard is a long red cloth, indicating the power of the life-giving star and promise of youth. His nudity symbolizes innocence, and his flower crown represents his potential power.

Upright: revelation, greatness, vitality, and truth

Reversed: excessive pride, arrogance, blocked action, and lies

Judgement (XX)



Meaning: Judgement represents significant and life-changing decisions, as well as the judgements from the world around us. Judgement, as an archetype, is the twentieth lesson for the Fool, teaching us the need to use all we have learned through encounters with others, and the lessons we need to make the most important choices in life.

Symbolism: An angel blows her trumpet to call the departed souls for judgement. They answer her call, as they must, and will be judged to determine if they are to be punished or rewarded.

Upright: deciding for others, being judged, consequences, and closure

Reversed: prejudging, stereotyping, lazy thinking, and abuse of power

The World (XXI)



Meaning: The World represents the ending of a cycle to prepare for a new, repeating journey for the Fool (us.) The World, as an archetype, is the twenty-first encounter for the Fool, showing us that life is constantly changing, and we are meant to build on our experiences. In this ending is another beginning.

Symbolism: A semi-nude woman dances in the middle of a garland of vines, having reached the end of a process. The heads of the beasts and the face of the woman represent the four fixed signs of the Zodiac: the bull for Taurus, the lion for Leo, the eagle for Scorpio, and the woman for Aquarius. These fixed signs symbolize the stability needed for new disruptions to begin, ushered in by the return of the Fool (the zero card).

Upright: fulfillment, completion, conclusion, the sum of your efforts, and success

Reversed: stagnation, failure, and final obstacle

The Minor Arcana

The Suit of Wands

The Suit of Wands is associated with the element of fire, representing passion, energy, willpower, and strength. The cards of this suit provide archetypes of human actions and reactions. The Fool takes his or her journey through this suit to make choices, seek adventure, and deal with challenges.

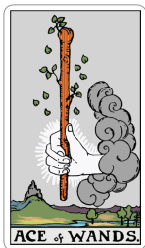
Ace

Meaning: You need to be inspired or excited; something or someone needs your spark.

Symbolism: A divine being holds a single staff over the valley as a symbol of new energy for the land.

Upright: inspiration and spark

Reversed: lacking energy, and hinderance.



Two

Meaning: You need to choose a direction and take steps to move forward.

Symbolism: A man ready to set out on his journey holds a globe in one hand and staff in the other, representing new possibilities. The staff beside him represents his accomplishments.

Upright: determination, and confidence

Reversed: fear, and indecision



Three

Meaning: The path is clear; you need to invest your time and energy to succeed.

Symbolism: The man holds one staff, while two staffs are behind him. He has a destination charted and is ready to embark on his adventure.

Upright: adventure and optimism

Reversed: delays and broken promises



Four

Meaning: Gather friends and family around you and celebrate together.

Symbolism: Two figures approach the four staffs to celebrate an important day or major accomplishment.

Upright: celebration and socializing

Reversed: unfinished work, and no time to celebrate



Five

Meaning: Conflict and competition are necessary to keep moving forward.

Symbolism: A group of young men challenges one another, using competition and conflict as the way to determine their strength, as well as who their leader should be.

Upright: conflict or competition

Reversed: poor leadership and trouble-making



Six

Meaning: Victory and success are yours; be sure you act with dignity.

Symbolism: A successful leader makes his return from battle; his staff has a garland of victory at the top and he wears a garland crown.

Upright: victory, and desires fulfilled

Reversed: public humiliation, and failure



Seven

Meaning: You are right; hold your ground. Any lack of integrity will be your downfall.

Symbolism: A warrior defends the land, using valor to hold off those attacking him. He can succeed because he holds the higher ground.

Upright: courage and valor

Reversed: treachery, and lack of conviction



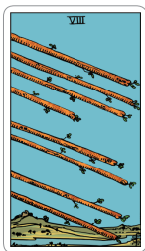
Eight

Meaning: Be focused and intense; let nothing distract you from your goal.

Symbolism: Eight staffs point in the same direction, representing clarity of intent and the focus needed to bring creative ideas “down to earth.”

Upright: intensity and drive

Reversed: frustration and confusion



Nine

Meaning: You have a duty to uphold; others look to you as a role model.

Symbolism: An injured warrior remains loyal and ready in the face of adversity, resolved to set an example for others.

Upright: loyalty and discipline

Reversed: disloyalty and stubbornness



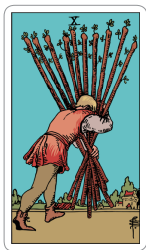
Ten

Meaning: It is time to say “no” and set limits; you do not have enough energy right now.

Symbolism: Ten wands weigh heavily on the figure carrying them, but the situation calls for persistence and sacrifice; the wands are a burden that must be carried.

Upright: obligations, and devotion

Reversed: exhaustion, and oppression



Page

Meaning: You have a lot of excitement, but you need to find some focus.

Symbolism: A young man full of energy waits to be inspired and given direction. The salamander on his clothing represents passion, immortality, and the ability to withstand fire.

Upright: enthusiasm, and creativity

Reversed: unpredictability, and foolishness



Knight

Meaning: You need to go on an adventurous quest; get out of your routine and explore.

Symbolism: A warrior rides a stallion, carrying his staff on a quest for adventure. The salamander on his clothing represents passion, immortality, and the ability to withstand fire.

Upright: driven and passionate

Reversed: headstrong and reckless



Queen

Meaning: You need to show confidence; if not, fake it until you feel it!

Symbolism: A powerful woman displays her energy confidently awaiting supplicants for her favor. She holds a flower in her hand, a symbol of her fertility. Her staff shows her power to judge, and the black cat is a symbol of feminine wiles.

Upright: confident, and honorable

Reversed: insecure, and vindictive



King

Meaning: Show others how it is done; you need to lead by doing.

Symbolism: A powerful man is seated on a throne waiting for the right moment to act; he contemplates battle strategies. The salamander on his clothing represents passion, immortality, and the ability to withstand fire.

Upright: role model, and independence

Reversed: selfish and impatient



The Suit of Cups

The Suit of Cups is associated with the element of water, representing emotions, feelings, and relationships. Cups indicate what is happening in the heart rather than the head.

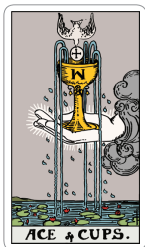
Ace

Meaning: Open your heart to a new relationship or reinvigorate an old one.

Symbolism: A divine hand holds a cup above the land; the water pouring out nourishes the land. A dove delivers a silver coin that will be dropped in the cup, indicating abundance.

Upright: new love and new emotional connection

Reversed: misplaced feelings towards someone and emotional immaturity



Two

Meaning: Enjoy a mutual attraction and shared positive feelings with someone.

Symbolism: Two lovers hold hands and exchange cups and vows, while a spirit animal watches over the ceremonial connection.

Upright: attraction and connection

Reversed: unrequited love and rejection



Three

Meaning: Gather your closest friends and celebrate something ... anything!

Symbolism: Three women dance in celebration, showing their appreciation for life. The grapes and pumpkins represent abundance.

Upright: celebration and sharing

Reversed: overindulgence and discord



Four

Meaning: Find some time to meditate, or at least rest; your emotions need soothing.

Symbolism: A man contemplates three cups in front of him while a divine hand delivers a new need he will have to address but does not yet see, feel, or understand.

Upright: rest and meditation

Reversed: boredom and isolation



Five

Meaning: You have a disappointment you must accept; hidden possibilities have not revealed themselves yet.

Symbolism: A man in mourning stares down at three spilled cups; behind him are two upright cups. He does not realize it yet, but all is not lost.

Upright: disappointment, and sadness from loss

Reversed: depression and despair



Six

Meaning: Reach out to someone you care about and share a memory or create a new one.

Symbolism: A young man gives a cup to a young girl so they can both feel the joy of sharing.

Upright: happy memories, and the positive legacy of childhood

Reversed: unhappy memories, and the negative legacy of childhood



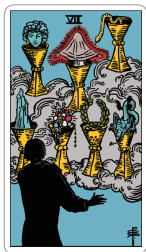
Seven

Meaning: You have an important decision, and you need to know what motivates you to make the choice you want or need to make.

Symbolism: A man has many choices before him, so he needs to select the cup containing what he desires most.

Upright: choices and motivations

Reversed: wishful thinking and inaction



Eight

Meaning: You must let go of someone who was once emotionally important to you, but no longer has any value.

Symbolism: A man walks away from eight cups, leaving behind unwanted and empty relationships that filled his life with joy a long time ago.

Upright: letting go and moving on

Reversed: denial, and attempts at bargaining for something now worthless



Nine

Meaning: Embrace and accept what truly makes you happy. Your fulfillment is most important right now.

Symbolism: An accomplished man sits satisfied in front of nine cups, which symbolize the fulfillment that comes with successful work.

Upright: contentment and self-satisfaction

Reversed: arrogance and selfishness



Ten

Meaning: Profound joy in relationship is what you need, or need to appreciate (if you have it). Happiness with a partner is key.

Symbolism: A man and woman embrace while their children play under a rainbow. Their life is full and joyous.

Upright: mature love, and blessed union

Reversed: disagreements, and unhappiness in relationship



Page

Meaning: Emotions are strong but flowing wildly; they need a proper container.

Symbolism: A young man looks at a fish in his cup, which symbolizes imagination, and the need for him to understand and express his emotions.

Upright: imagination, and charisma

Reversed: emotionally stunted, and confused



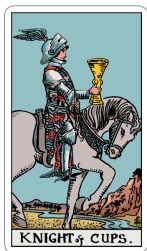
Knight

Meaning: The warrior carries a cup with an important elixir or cure, to be delivered where it is needed, regardless of the challenges.

Symbolism: A warrior rides on a quest to find his passion and purpose.

Upright: romance, and seeking what you love

Reversed: possessive and clingy



Queen

Meaning: You need to act with conviction regarding a significant relationship.

Symbolism: A regal female sits upon a throne by the sea with an ornate chalice in her hand; she is relaxed, but focused. She is a symbol of emotional conviction.

Upright: nurturing and emotionally supportive

Reversed: passive aggressive, and overly sensitive



King

Meaning: Accept and embrace your responsibility for the care of others as your way to be empowered and lead.

Symbolism: A wise man sits upon a throne in the sea, holding a cup and scepter. He is a symbol of compassionate leadership.

Upright: influential, and responsible

Reversed: narcissistic, and cruel



The Suit of Swords

The Suit of Swords is associated with the element of air, representing intellect, logic, thought, and decisions. Since this suit deals with the mind, many of the cards reflect the dangers of negative thinking and poor decision-making. When these cards appear in a reading, they often provide a warning for the Querent.

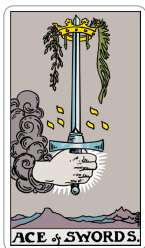
Ace

Meaning: Time to decide; consider a new way of thinking; use logic regarding the situation or relationship.

Symbolism: A divine hand holds a single sword upright over the land with a crown around it, indicating the decisions that will need to be made by its people and rulers.

Upright: new thoughts, and logic

Reversed: ignorance, and misinformation



Two

Meaning: Be at peace with your decisions; do not look back or revisit decisions that brought you to this point.

Symbolism: A woman sits blindfolded, holding two swords; she awaits questions she will help decide and conflicts she will help negotiate. The blindfold symbolizes impartiality.

Upright: an important decision, and need for logical resolution.

Reversed: self-deception, and obstinance



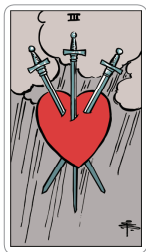
Three

Meaning: You are getting mixed results and must find a way to face the frustration and sorrow of the situation or relationship.

Symbolism: Three swords pierce a heart in a storm; the heart is whole but filled with pain from each sword piercing it.

Upright: sorrow, and cognitive dissonance

Reversed: self-pity, and anxiety



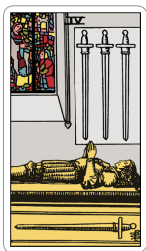
Four

Meaning: You need a mental break; you need to disengage to save your sanity.

Symbolism: A warrior rests in a holy temple; there are three swords on the wall above him and one sword by his side. He takes advantage of a period of peace.

Upright: rest, and contemplation

Reversed: burnout, and stress



Five

Meaning: There is a loss or defeat you must accept and work to overcome.

Symbolism: A warrior collects the swords of the defeated after they have left the battlefield, vanquished and heading towards home.

Upright: defeat, and argument

Reversed: despair, and distrust



Six

Meaning: You need to move from one “shore of thinking” to another; you are currently in-between and need to complete the journey.

Symbolism: A ferryman takes a woman and her son to a new land; the six swords represent the transition from an old way of thinking to a new one.

Upright: transition, and old giving way to the new

Reversed: fear of the unknown, and forced change in thinking



Seven

Meaning: It's time to take your ideas and thoughts elsewhere. You may need to do so quietly and secretly.

Symbolism: A thief carries five swords away in the hopes of using them for his own profit. He leaves two behind in his haste to escape.

Upright: secrecy, and stealth

Reversed: theft, and deception



Eight

Meaning: Restrictions to your thinking, often self-imposed. You need to address and break a pattern of negative thinking.

Symbolism: A woman is bound and blindfolded, surrounded by eight swords, showing us how completely trapped she is.

Upright: trapped, and restricted

Reversed: victimhood, and hopelessness



Nine

Meaning: There is a fear you need to face. This card also warns you to protect yourself from the cruelty of others.

Symbolism: A man wakes from a nightmare with nine swords above him, indicating that he must take care of himself or suffer the fate of the 10 of Swords.

Upright: warning, and foreboding

Reversed: torment, and cruelty



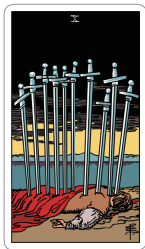
Ten

Meaning: A warning card indicating that you need to accept that a situation or relationship is ruined and it is time to move on.

Symbolism: A man lies on the ground run through by ten swords; his choices ruined him and brought him to a dead end.

Upright: warning to change thinking, and “the writing is on the wall”

Reversed: destruction and ruin



Page

Meaning: Lots of ideas, but no focus. Great energy for generating new thoughts, but eventually choices must be made.

Symbolism: A young man wants to be a warrior, but he needs training and a purpose.

Upright: curious, and excited

Reversed: easily distracted, and unfocused



Knight

Meaning: Use clear-headed and logical thinking to achieve your goals; be decisive.

Symbolism: A warrior rides his steed into battle with clear purpose.

Upright: clarity, and decisiveness

Reversed: brash decision-making, and fanaticism



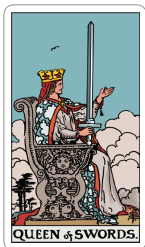
Queen

Meaning: The situation or relationship calls for detached and logical thinking; be strategic.

Symbolism: A regal woman sits on her throne, ready to answer questions and offer guidance with her wisdom and strategies for life.

Upright: strategic, and just

Reversed: cold hearted and insensitive



King

Meaning: You oversee the decision and do not need input from others; make your choice and inform everyone else once you have decided. You may be called to negotiate a dispute.

Symbolism: A young king makes important decisions; his sword represents his clarity and decisiveness as a leader.

Upright: the final decision-maker and judge

Reversed: intimidating, and argumentative



The Suit of Pentacles

The Suit of Pentacles is associated with the element of earth, representing prosperity, health, security, and stability. Pentacles deal with tangible possessions. Money may be the first thing that comes to mind with this suit, but the cards more generally refer to the material world and what we need to take care of ourselves.

Ace

Meaning: Now is the time to start something that will be real in the world.

Symbolism: A single pentacle is offered to humanity by a divine hand, representing the potential to shape and manifest outcomes in the material world.

Upright: investment, and getting started

Reversed: delay, and difficulty getting started



Two

Meaning: Time to experiment and try different actions to get better results.

Symbolism: A man dances while juggling two pentacles, representing the constant change needed to keep the material world alive and moving. Ships travel the undulations of the ocean to deliver goods and keep commerce flowing.

Upright: adaptability, and activity

Reversed: interference, and stagnation



Three

Meaning: Hard and consistent work is what is need to succeed and push forward.

Symbolism: A cleric and merchant approach a craftsman to enlist his services, knowing he has the skills to make what they want.

Upright: creativity, and teamwork

Reversed: missing skill, and incompetence



Four

Meaning: Be careful with your resources; it's a good time to save and be conservative with finances.

Symbolism: A man, with a stern look on his face, sits on a stone bench in front of a city background. The four pentacles represent the hard work and serious effort it takes to accumulate wealth and feel financially secure.

Upright: conservation, and cautiousness

Reversed: miserliness, and hoarding



Five

Meaning: Be prepared to face material difficulty; you may need to ask for help or borrow money to get through a difficult time.

Symbolism: A man and a woman seek shelter from the storm but cannot stop to rest because they are not allowed to enter the haven; they must keep going.

Upright: debt, and illness

Reversed: loss of resources, and persistent health problems



Six

Meaning: Share your wealth and success; be grateful for what you have achieved.

Symbolism: A man of wealth and means decides to give money to the poor. The scales symbolize fairness in what is given and the judgment of worthiness for those asking for help.

Upright: shared wealth, and valued role in community

Reversed: greed and stinginess



Seven

Meaning: Time to consider how you will invest your success; put resources back into what you have that is successful, or start a new venture.

Symbolism: A man tends a bush of pentacles; his hard work has paid off and he will have plenty for himself and plenty to sell.

Upright: long-term planning, and dedicated persistence

Reversed: lack of vision, and wastefulness



Eight

Meaning: Use your skill and experience to improve your financial status and improve your security.

Symbolism: An artisan perfects his craft making new pentacles of the finest design.

Upright: craftsmanship and expertise

Reversed: deception regarding skill, and laziness



Nine

Meaning: Focus on your purpose and use it to attain the wealth you desire; be your best to earn the most.

Symbolism: A mature woman shows the wealth of individual achievement and the positivity associated with a productive life.

Upright: financial independence, and empowerment

Reversed: egotism, and pride



Ten

Meaning: Embrace or seek the fulfillment that comes with a partnership that will help you both attain a great and safe life.

Symbolism: A family of three generations explores the city together with their dogs; they are the picture of wealth and happiness.

Upright: long-term gains, and inheritance

Reversed: missed opportunities, and burdensome obligations



Page

Meaning: Experiment; try not to get lost in starting but not finishing anything.

Symbolism: An able-bodied young man holds a pentacle in front of him; he contemplates where he will seek his fortune and find his direction in life.

Upright: apprenticeship, and practice

Reversed: lack of ability, and lack of ambition



Knight

Meaning: Time to take decisive action that leads to concrete results; find the solution and act on it.

Symbolism: A warrior travels to deliver the pentacle, which is a symbol of commerce between two kingdoms and amongst people.

Upright: goal-driven, and reliable

Reversed: stubborn, and misdirected



Queen

Meaning: Get your life in order; review your finances and make sure all important legal documents are in place. Assess your material life and fix anything that needs attention.

Symbolism: A regal female holds a pentacle in her hands, representing the wealth she can share with a worthy supplicant.

Upright: stability, and necessity

Reversed: instability, and desires leading to debt



King

Meaning: Use your wealth, status, and influence wisely; others look to you for leadership.

Symbolism: An accomplished man has attained enough wealth that others come to him to borrow money and receive guidance to succeed in their earthly affairs.

Upright: power, and prosperity

Reversed: corruption, and excess



