

# PARAGON

TRIALS OF THE CHOSEN



RULEBOOK

***You are a Paragon. For ages, you have been in exile from the very world you helped create. Now, called to return, you must once again war with your brethren using the only tools available to you—the mortal races of Alaria.***

***Vest your power in beings called Avatars, equip them with powerful items and abilities, and engage in epic combat against your opponent's Avatars. Impose your will and conquer your enemies, bringing you one step closer to the eternal pantheon.***

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## Components

- \* 16 Avatar Cards
- \* 88 Ability Cards
- \* 112 Equipment Cards
- \* 2 Blue d10 Dice
- \* 1 Green d10 Die
- \* 20 Hearts Tokens

## OBJECTIVE

Defeat both of your opponent's Avatars to win. Typically, this is done by reducing their HP to 0. You also win if your opponent cannot draw a card from their deck at the start of each round.

## CARD TYPES

There are three card types in Paragon: Avatar, Equipment, and Ability. Each card type has its own rules and subtypes, which affect the game in different ways.

## BUILDING YOUR DECK

In order to play *Paragon: Trials of the Chosen*, you will need a deck of cards. A *Paragon* deck comprises **2 different Avatar cards, plus exactly 20 Equipment and/or Ability cards** (a single copy of each).

First, choose your 2 Avatar cards. They form the foundation of your deck, and will determine which Equipment and Ability cards you may add next.

## THE GOLDEN RULE

Whenever a card's text contradicts the rules in this rulebook, the card's text takes precedence. Some card effects are designed to purposely bend or manipulate the rules you see here.

Visit [www.ParagonECG.com](http://www.ParagonECG.com) for rules updates and information.

## Avatars

Avatars represent the physical manifestation of your power as a Paragon. They are the unique humans, monsters, and other creatures through whom you impose your divine will. By expending your energy, you may attach powerful cards to your Avatars and use their special effects to do your bidding.

*If you are a beginner, try choosing a pair of Avatars that share a discipline (border color).*



The diagram shows the Sir Aren, Oathkeeper card with callouts for its various attributes:

- CARD TYPE**: Points to the top-left corner of the card.
- ATTACK**: Points to the green Attack stat icon (1) in the top-left corner.
- HP**: Points to the red HP stat icon (16) in the top-left corner.
- EFFECTS**: Points to the text box containing the card's effect: "The first Armor card you attach to this Avatar each round comes into play ready." and "E: Shield target Avatar."
- DISCIPLINES**: Points to the Chivalry discipline bar at the bottom of the card.

The card itself features the following text:

**Sir Aren, Oathkeeper**

The first Armor card you attach to this Avatar each round comes into play ready.

**E**: Shield target Avatar.

**CHIVALRY**

"The Order requires loyalty beyond life."

Illus. Edward Elmore © 2020 Midwinter Mages 9/216 P

## Attack

A card's Attack stat represents how much damage it will deal when it declares an attack against another card. Avatars always have an Attack stat, while some Equipment and Abilities do as well.

## Hit Points (HP)

HP represents a card's health total. When an Avatar loses all of its HP, it falls. Flip it over to its Fallen side and ready it (position it in portrait orientation to indicate that it can be used), unlocking its ultimate potential. To learn more about the special rules behind Fallen Avatars, see Subtypes (p8).

When an Equipment or Ability loses all of its HP, immediately detach it from its Avatar and send it to the owner's discard pile.

### Equipment

Equipment cards drastically improve your Avatars' capabilities by providing stats and effects, but are vulnerable to being damaged themselves.

Equipment cards stay on the board as permanents, attached to an Avatar until destroyed.



The diagram shows the 'Unyielding Katana' card with callouts pointing to its various attributes:

- CARD TYPE:** Points to the sword icon in the top left corner.
- ENERGY COST:** Points to the blue energy cost icon (1).
- ATTACK/POWER:** Points to the green attack icon (1).
- HP:** Points to the red heart icon (3).
- SUBTYPES:** Points to the 'ONE-HANDED' and 'WEAPON' subtypes.
- EFFECTS:** Points to the text: 'Whenever an Avatar falls, you may attach this card from your discard pile to one of your Avatars.'
- DISCIPLINES:** Points to the 'CHRONOMANCY' and 'SHADOW' disciplines.

Additional card details include the name 'Unyielding Katana', the flavor text 'Inevitable, as death itself.', and the bottom text: 'Illus. Olga Volkova © 2020 Midwinter Mages 176/216 P'.

*Unyielding Katana may have low stats, but it's cheap, and it has an effect that potentially allows it to be used multiple times.*

## Power

A card's Power stat increases the Attack stat of the Avatar to which it is attached. Cards with Power may not declare attacks, nor will they deal reciprocal damage (p16) when attacked.

## Energy Cost

In order to play Equipment and Ability cards from your hand, you must spend energy from your energy pool (blue d10). Some card effects also require you to spend energy, or meet other requirements, in order to activate them.

### Abilities

Most decks benefit from including Abilities to complement their Equipment.

Abilities tend to impact the game as soon as you play them, but they are immediately detached and sent to your discard pile as a result.

*Haste has an implied HP of 0, which may not be modified. It is an invalid target for an attack, direct damage, healing, etc.*

CARD TYPE



STATS



EFFECTS



DISCIPLINES



## Effects

Most cards have effects that you may activate in order to perform strategic plays, described in the large textbox at the bottom of the card.

Unless otherwise stated, carry out a card's effects as soon as it comes into play.

## Implied Stats

If a card lacks a particular stat (such as HP), ignore the portion of any card effect that attempts to modify that stat. Cards with no printed value for a given stat have an implied value of 0 in that stat.

## Activated Effects

Denoted by a **bolded condition and a colon (:)**, activated effects must be manually triggered. Costs can include energy, exhausting the card (rotate it 45° clockwise in order to indicate its depleted state), or other things. There are never any refunds for paying an Activated effect's cost.

## Disciplines

Cards belong to one or two disciplines, printed at the bottom of the card and displayed on the borders in the corresponding colors. Avatar disciplines tell you which types of cards they may use. You may only add Equipment and Abilities to your deck if they share at least one discipline with at least one of your Avatars.





## CARD SUBTYPES

Some cards further describe their type by including one or more subtypes. A card's subtypes are printed above its effect text.

### Accessory

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While Weapon cards tend to focus on offense, and Armor cards defense, Accessories typically provide versatility. Accessories are similar to the Armor and One-Handed subtypes, in that each Avatar may only have one Accessory attached at a time.

### Ongoing

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Ongoing Abilities remain in play after you attach them, rather than immediately detaching like normal Abilities. Ongoing Abilities are always active while attached, thereby providing their effects continuously. There is no limit to the number of Ongoing Abilities that may be attached to an Avatar.

### Fallen

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When an Avatar loses all of its HP, detach all of its cards, then flip it to its Fallen side and ready it. Ignore all stats and effects on an Avatar's front side while it is Fallen, and vice versa.

You may not attach cards to Fallen Avatars, nor may you use them to channel energy. Instead, the spiritual energies of your Fallen Avatar allow you to **attach cards of any discipline to your remaining Avatar**. If your Fallen Avatar is revived, you may no longer play and attach off-discipline cards to the other Avatar, but that Avatar may keep any off-discipline attachments it has.

### One-Handed

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Each Avatar may have up to 2 One-Handed cards attached at a time. Attaching any more than that will force you to choose and detach one of the Avatar's current One-Handed cards first. A One-Handed card will also detach an Avatar's Two-Handed card.

## Two-Handed

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Each Avatar may only have a single Two-Handed card attached at a time. Attaching a Two-Handed card will force you to detach that Avatar's current One-Handed and Two-Handed cards.

## Weapon

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Weapon cards tend to enhance your Avatar's offensive capabilities. They are the most common type of Equipment card, and many cards in the game refer to Weapon cards in their effects.

## Armor

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You will often find defensive effects on Armor, of which each Avatar may only attach one at a time. Attaching another will detach that Avatar's current Armor card.

# STARTING THE GAME

## Sorting Your Deck

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When you finish adding all 20 Equipment and Abilities, **do not shuffle your deck**. Instead, secretly choose the order of the cards within. Although your deck will never be shuffled, some card effects may specifically change its order during the game.

If you are a beginner, you may wish to sort your deck by energy cost. Make sure the cards with the lowest energy costs are near the top of the deck, so that you can play them earlier in the game, when you have less energy to spend.

Another important factor to consider when sorting your deck is your **opening hand of 5 cards (note: there is no maximum hand size in Paragon)**.

These are the cards you will have access to at the start of the game, meaning they will ideally be versatile enough to implement your own opening strategy as well as stop your opponent's.

After you learn more advanced strategies, you will likely want to further tweak the order of your deck. You may change your deck's order at any time, except during a game.

During a game, you may pick up and look at any card in your deck whenever you choose, as long as you return your deck to a neatly organized pile afterward, you do not reorder it, and your opponent has a clear view of what you are doing the whole time.

## The Play Area

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You may arrange your cards on the play field however you choose, as long as each player is clear about the location of each card.

Consider placing your Avatars side-by-side, with your deck and discard pile next to them. Place attached cards above or below the Avatar cards. Players may not change the order of their decks or discard piles unless a card effect instructs them to do so.

## ROUND SEQUENCE

Every game of Paragon comprises several rounds (represented by the green d10), starting with round 1. The maximum round number is 10. Players may continue playing past round 10, but any rounds thereafter will still be considered round 10.

Rounds are carried out in three phases:

- \* Start Phase
- \* Main Phase
- \* End Phase

### Start Phase

The Start Phase primarily serves as a maintenance step, performed in the following sequence by both players simultaneously:

1. Execute any card effects in play that trigger at the start of a round. For example: "At the start of the round, deal 1 damage."
2. Ready all cards in play.
3. Set each player's energy pool to the current round number (round 1 = 1 energy, round 2 = 2 energy, etc.).
4. Each player draws a card. **If a player cannot draw due to an empty deck, they immediately lose the game.**

### Main Phase

During the Main Phase of each round, players alternate taking turns. The first player to take a turn is the player with initiative.

### Initiative

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Initiative allows you to take the first turn each round, and can be used by certain card effects to your advantage. Normally it is in your best interest to have initiative, but some strategies may favor reacting to your opponent's plays instead.

# TURNS AND ACTIONS

During your turn, you must take one action. You may not take actions on your opponent's turn. When your action is complete, your turn automatically ends (after triggering any "end of turn" effects), and your opponent's turn starts. All possible actions include:

- \* Play a Card
- \* Trigger an Activated Effect
- \* Declare an Attack
- \* Channel Energy
- \* Pass

## Play a Card

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Whenever you play a card, you are also attaching it to one of your Avatars. When you want to play/attach a card, first pay its energy cost (lose energy from your energy pool), then declare which Avatar you intend to attach it to by placing it face up near the Avatar.

**You may only play a card if it shares a discipline with the Avatar you wish to attach it to.**

Sometimes a card effect will tell you to attach a certain card to an Avatar. In that case, the card does not need to share a discipline with the Avatar (or meet any other requirements, such as paying its energy cost), since the card effect overrides that requirement. Such requirements must be met only when playing a card from hand.

**All cards come into play exhausted unless otherwise specified.**

## Trigger an Activated Effect

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Activated Effects always have a cost or condition that must be met before you can manually activate them. As an action, you can pay the cost and carry out the effect.

## Declare an Attack

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To declare an attack with a card, the following requirements must be met:

- \* The card is ready (positioned in portrait orientation).
- \* The card's Attack is greater than 0.
- \* There is a valid target in play for the card to attack. Your own cards, and cards with no printed HP, for instance, are not valid targets.

If you meet these requirements, you can use your action to declare an attack by exhausting the card (rotating it 45° clockwise), and announcing which target it is attacking. Then, just like with taking any other action, your opponent has a chance to respond.

At this point, damage has not yet been dealt. This is the phase during which players may attempt to play Instant cards and effects in order to manipulate the outcome of the attack (or for any other reason).

Any number of Instants and stacks may be resolved before the players agree to move on to the damage phase.

During the damage phase, reduce the defending card's HP by the attacking card's Attack value. If the defending card is a **non-Avatar** with an Attack value greater than 0, simultaneously reduce the attacking card's HP by the defending card's Attack value. This is called reciprocal damage.

Any Equipment or Ability cards that were reduced to 0 HP or less from the attack are immediately detached and sent to the owner's discard pile. You may attack with the same card as many times as you like within a round, as long as you meet the attack requirements.

## Channel Energy

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You may exhaust an Avatar you control in order to add 1 energy to your energy pool. You may do this as many times as you wish, as long as you have ready Avatars, but each channel takes an action.

## Pass

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To pass your turn is to do nothing. When both players pass in sequence, the round ends. Eventually you will run out of other actions to take in a round, so you will be forced to pass. You may also wish to pass even if you can take other actions, as a strategic delay.

Before the start of the first round, you and your opponent decide between yourselves who starts with initiative. In the event that you both have the same preference, use Rock, Paper, Scissors (or any reasonably fair method) to determine who chooses the first player with initiative.

The player with initiative also breaks all ties, such as deciding the order in which two otherwise-simultaneous effects are added to the stack. For example, at the start of the round, if neither player can draw a card due to both decks being empty, **the player with initiative wins the game**. Due to initiative, it is virtually impossible for players to encounter a stalemate situation in *Paragon*.

## End Phase

Similar to the Start Phase, the End Phase primarily serves as a maintenance step.

1. Award initiative to the player who passed first in sequence (**not** the first player to pass in a round). If the round was ended without both players passing (such as through a card effect), skip this step.
2. Execute card effects that trigger at the end of a round. For example: “At the end of the round, restore 1 HP.”
3. Start the next round, increasing the round number by 1. The maximum round number is 10, but the play sequence continues as normal thereafter.



## TARGETING

Some card effects require you to choose a target before activation. If the target becomes invalid before the effect resolves (such as by your opponent responding and making the target stealthy, for example), that part of the effect is cancelled. Continue trying to resolve the rest of the effect as much as possible.

Card effects that deal direct damage and healing (worded as “Deal X damage” or “Restore X HP”) **always require targets**, unless the effect text specifically says otherwise (such as “Deal X damage to all cards”).

## SCHOOLS AND DISCIPLINES

Every card in Paragon belongs to one of four schools: Magic, Martial, Mischief, or Mythos. Schools are known for their distinct fighting styles, allowing players to finely tune their decks using specialized disciplines. Magic includes Chronomancy and Pyromancy, Martial includes Brutality and Chivalry, Mischief includes Marksmanship and Shadow, and Mythos includes Divinity and Demonology.

## RESPONDING

Sometimes you will want to wait until just the right time to play a card, or your opponent will try to complicate your plans, and you will want to stop them before they can do it. Instant cards and effects provide that possibility, allowing for surprise plays.

## Instant

Whenever any player plays a card or takes an action, you may respond by playing an Instant card from your hand or activating an Instant effect on one of your cards in play.

When a player responds in this way, the Instant effect will be carried out before the card attaches or the action resolves. The Instant effect will activate, then the card/action will be carried out, if possible. Carrying out effects in this order is known as resolving the stack.

Instant cards and effects do not take up your one action per turn. You can use Instant cards and effects at almost any time, even on your opponent's turn.

## The Stack

It's possible for your opponent to respond to your responses, and for you to respond to those in turn. These responses can sometimes "stack up" before they all begin to resolve. The rule for remembering the order in which to resolve a stack of card effects is "first in, last out." Resolve the last response first, followed by the second-to-last, and so on.

For example, if your opponent plays "Flare," you may respond with your "Bolster" in order to prevent the damage from the effect of "Flare."

## Priority

After you declare an action or play a card, your opponent has the opportunity to respond. Whether they respond or not, you then get a chance to respond. Response priority alternates every time a response is added to the stack. When both players choose not to respond, resolve the stack.



## GLOSSARY

**Confuse:** When you become confused, move the top card of your deck to the bottom of your deck.

**Corrosive:** Destroy any Equipment that takes corrosive damage. Unless otherwise specified, corrosive damage only applies while attacking with a card, and not while dealing damage with that card's effects.

**Counter:** Some effects instruct the player to add counters to a card. A counter is any small physical object that keeps track of a certain card state.

**Destroy:** To destroy a card is to detach it from an Avatar and send it to its owner's discard pile.

**Discard:** To discard a card is to send it directly from your hand to your discard pile. If a card is sent from any other game zone to the discard pile, it is not considered "discarded."

**Draining:** When one of your cards deals draining damage to an Avatar, restore HP to your corresponding Avatar equal to the amount of damage dealt. Dealing draining damage to Equipment and Abilities will not restore your Avatar's HP. Unless otherwise specified, draining damage only applies while attacking with a card, and not while dealing damage with that card's effects.

**Exhaust:** Turn a card about 45 degrees sideways to indicate that it is exhausted. Exhausted cards must be readied before they can attack or activate "exhaust" effects.

**Exile:** To exile a card is to place it to the side, in a separate "exile zone," completely removed from play for the rest of the game. This is different from discarding a card, since there are ways to retrieve cards from your discard pile, but not from exile.

**Guardian:** Guardian cards protect your Avatars and their attached cards by restricting your opponent's attack choices. When your opponent tries to attack one of your Avatars or their attached cards, they must target that Avatar's Guardian cards first. Playing an ability is not considered attacking.

Guardian will only protect the Avatar to whom it is attached. If your opponent attacks one of your Avatars without Guardian, their targeting choices are not restricted.

**Ignite:** As an action, pay 1 energy and exile all ignite cards from your discard pile, then deal damage equal to the number of cards exiled this way.

**Lose (HP):** Losing HP is different from taking damage, because losing HP cannot be blocked in any way.

**Parry:** When you declare an attack against a card that has parry, the card with parry deals damage equal to its Attack **before** the attacking card deals its damage (in a separate step). Then, combat continues as normal.

**Piercing:** When you deal piercing damage to a card, any excess damage is dealt to the Avatar that the card is attached to. Unless otherwise specified, piercing damage only applies while attacking with a card, and not while dealing damage with that card's effects.

**Ready:** To ready a card is to return it to its face-up portrait orientation. A card must be ready before you can declare an attack with or activate an “exhaust” effect on it.

**Reciprocal Damage:** When a card attacks a non-Avatar card, the attacking card takes damage equal to the defending card’s Attack stat. Avatars do not deal reciprocal damage, but can receive reciprocal damage.

**Scout:** You may add the top or bottom card of your deck to your hand.

**Shielded / Shield Counters:** When a card becomes shielded, put a Shield Counter on it (see Counters). When a shielded card would take any amount of damage greater than 0, reduce the damage to 0 and remove the Shield Counter.

If a shielded card is dealt 0 damage, the shield (and therefore the Shield Counter) is not consumed. A card may not have more than one Shield Counter on it at a time. Attempting to add more Shield Counters will simply fail.

**Split:** When you declare an attack or activate an effect that deals split damage, you may choose different targets for each point of the damage.

If the amount of split damage increases or decreases before the attack or effect resolves, immediately add or remove the appropriate amount of targets.

**Stealthy:** Your stealthy cards cannot be targeted by your opponent. If your Avatar is stealthy, so are all of its attached cards. If a stealthy card takes damage (such as with an effect that hits multiple cards), it remains stealthy.

If a card becomes the target of an attack or card effect, and then becomes stealthy before that attack or effect resolves (such as with an Instant effect), the attack or effect will be canceled, since the target was invalidated.

## MULTIPLAYER “BATTLE ROYALE” VARIANT

- \* In a “battle royale” variant, each player has a separate 20-card deck and controls a single Avatar. The player with the last Avatar standing wins!
- \* Note: Not all cards are perfectly balanced for a game with more than two players. Players may experience overpowered strategies with this mode.

## COMMONLY MISSED RULES

- \* Avatars do not deal reciprocal damage.
- \* When one of your Avatars falls, your other Avatar gains its disciplines.
- \* Energy does not carry over between rounds.
- \* There is no maximum hand size.
- \* You can play Instant cards and effects on your opponent’s turn.
- \* If play goes beyond round 10, all subsequent rounds are considered round 10 and play continues as normal.
- \* If a player is unable to draw a card during the Start Phase, they lose. If both players are unable to draw, the player with initiative wins.