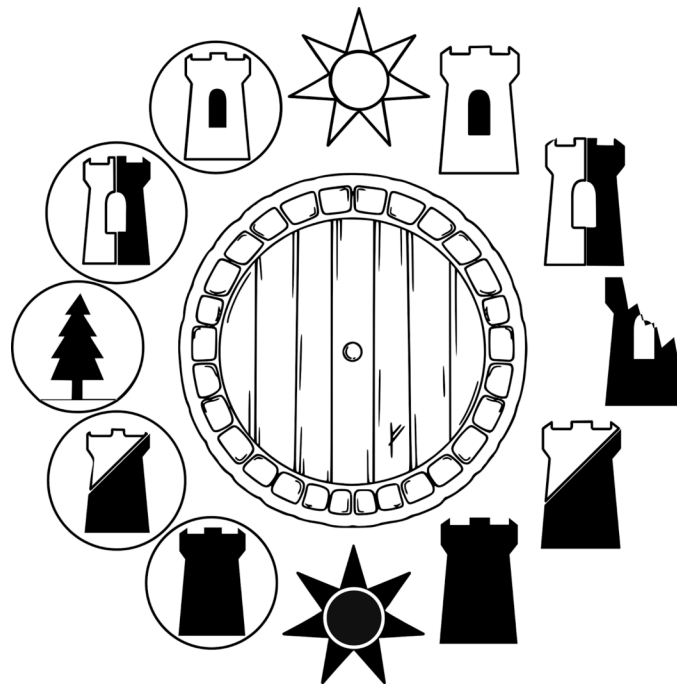


THE RED BOOK

OF

middle-earth

COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME



THE RED BOOK OF MIDDLE-EARTH COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME, First Edition

© IV 2022 by Aragorn II, son of Arathorn II, Elessar, heir of Elendil and Isildur, Lord of the Dunedain of Arnor, Captain of the Host of the West, King of Gondor and the Western Lands.

© *S.R.* 3442 by Frodo Baggins, son of Drogo, Elf-friend and Ring-bearer.

© *S.R.* 3442 by Bilbo Baggins, son of Bungo, Ringwinner, Luckwearer, and Barrel-rider.

The original *Red Book of Middle-earth Collectible Card Game* has not been preserved, but many copies were made, especially of the first three volumes, for use by the descendants of Master Samwise. The most important copy, however, had a different history. It was kept at Great Smials but was written in Gondor, probably at the request of the great-grandson of Peregrin, and completed in *Shire Reckoning* 3442 (IV 2022). Its western scribe appended this note: C Davis, King's Writer, finished this work in IV 2022. It is an exact copy in all details of the Thain's Book in Minas Tirith. That book was a copy, made at the request of King Elessar, of the Red Book of the Periannath, and was brought to him by Thain Peregrin.

THE RED BOOK OF MIDDLE-EARTH CCG

“It seemed to him that he had stepped over a bridge of time into a corner of the Elder Days, and was now walking in a world that was no more.”

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PREFACE

In the *Middle-earth Collectible Card Game (MECCG)*, dreams and legends spring to life out of the grass. More like a role-playing board game, *Middle-earth* offers a full range of characters, artifacts, and locations from *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* for the player to arrange adventures as Gandalf did. Players can thematically recreate passages from the books, send mixed-up companies on outlandish adventures, or optimize card attributes, values, and ratios. Have Bilbo burgle Smaug, fly the eagles to Mount Doom, or micromanage Rivendell’s inhabitants using the seven Dwarven rings, the three Elven rings, and *The One Ring*.

The appeal of *Middle-earth* is not just in the story-telling and beautifully painted pre-film artwork, but in mechanics that allow astute awareness and skillful card control to reverse a strong lead, in design that offsets strength against applicability with counterbalances for every mechanic and strategy, and where random card draw and dice rolls can bring hope unlooked-for or despair, or be largely irrelevant through careful deck design and mid-journey planning.

PUBLICATION

MECCG was published by Iron Crown Enterprises (ICE) between 1995 and 1998. It was printed as two base sets (*The Wizards* and *The Lidless Eye*) and five expansions (*The Dragons*, *Dark Minions*, *Against the Shadow*, *The White Hand*, and *The Balrog*).

THE RED BOOK

The Red Book is an introduction to *Middle-earth*. *Aragorn’s Rulesguide for Hasty Hobbits* is a prepared set of *MECCG* rules for playing *Frodo’s Uncommon Decks Given Freely*.

ARAGORN'S RULESGUIDE FOR HASTY HOBBITS

“If you bring a Ranger with you, it is well to pay attention to him, especially if the Ranger is Aragorn.”

Pippin never reckoned being cut off from Aragorn and wished that he had read more rules and maps in Rivendell. Resolved to never go on another long and fruitless halfling hunt, Aragorn has tracked down rules, errata, and clarifications to prepare this *Rulesguide for Hasty Hobbits*. It is intended to be used with *Frodo's Uncommon Decks Given Freely*, a set of 3 beginner decks. Aragorn has limited the scope to *The Wizards* base set and *The Dragons* expansion while traversing certain rules that are overcomplicated or irrelevant to the *Uncommon Decks*. An introduction to deck building and additional rules are given at the end.

GAME CONCEPT

Sauron is preparing war against Middle-earth and the free people need a leader to rekindle hearts to the valour of old. You and your opponent each play as a wizard (like Gandalf and Saruman) and take turns controlling companies of **characters** that journey across the **regions** of Middle-earth to marshal forces against Sauron. They travel between towns, fortresses, and lairs (**sites**) discovering artifacts (**items**), meeting **allies**, and rallying forces (**factions**) while defeating **creatures** (played by your opponent) along the way. The more powerful these characters, resources, and defeated creatures are, the more **marshalling points** they award you (the number in the upper-left card corner). The player with the most marshalling points at the **Free Council** is chosen to lead the free people against Sauron. *Aurë entuluva!* Day shall come again!

GAME AND TURN SUMMARY

The game begins with both players revealing their starting company at *Rivendell*. They each draw a hand of **8** cards and roll to go first. The players take alternating turns consisting of the following phases in order. After both players **exhaust** their play decks, the game ends with the *Free Council*. The setup, turns phases, and *Free Council* are described in the following sections.

Untap Phase—Untap non-site cards and heal wounded characters/allies at a haven (to tapped).

Organization Phase—Play one character and reorganize your companies, characters, and items.

Each company may choose to declare movement to a new site.

Long-event Phase—Discard old long-events and play new ones.

Movement/Hazard Phase—Each of your companies moves separately, one at a time. Both players draw cards and then your opponent plays a number of hazards against the company up to their *company size*. After, both players draw (or discard) to return to **8** cards in hand.

Site Phase—Each of your companies may enter their site separately, one at a time. If they choose to enter, they face the site's automatic-attacks (if any). Then, a character at an untapped site may tap to play an item, ally, or faction that is *playable* at their current site. This taps the site.

End-of-Turn Phase—Each player may discard 1 card and then draw (or discard) to return to **8** cards in hand. The *Free Council* may be *called* to end the game.

GAME COMPONENTS AND SETUP

This section describes the cards, decks, and piles in the play area and explains the various symbols, values, and attributes of the cards. Take out a few different cards for reference.

GAME COMPONENTS

Cards—There are five types of cards: *characters* (blue/eye), *resources* (copper/eye), *hazards* (black/eye), *sites* (white/map), and *regions* (geography/map). A card may be either *untapped* (upright), *tapped* (rotated 90°), or *wounded* (rotated 180°). *Resource* cards can only be played on your turn. *Hazard* cards can only be played in your opponent’s *movement/hazard phase*.

Play Deck—A face-down deck containing resources, hazards, and characters that you **draw** from during the game. It is *exhausted* when the last card is drawn. When this happens, return discarded sites to your location deck and shuffle your discard pile into a new play deck.

Discard Pile—A face-down pile of cards that have been discarded from play or from your hand. Short-events and non-defeated creatures are discarded after they *resolve*. When a card leaves play, discard each non-character card controlled by or placed with it to its owner’s pile.

Marshalling Point (MP) Pile—A face-up pile containing *defeated* creatures and *stored* items.

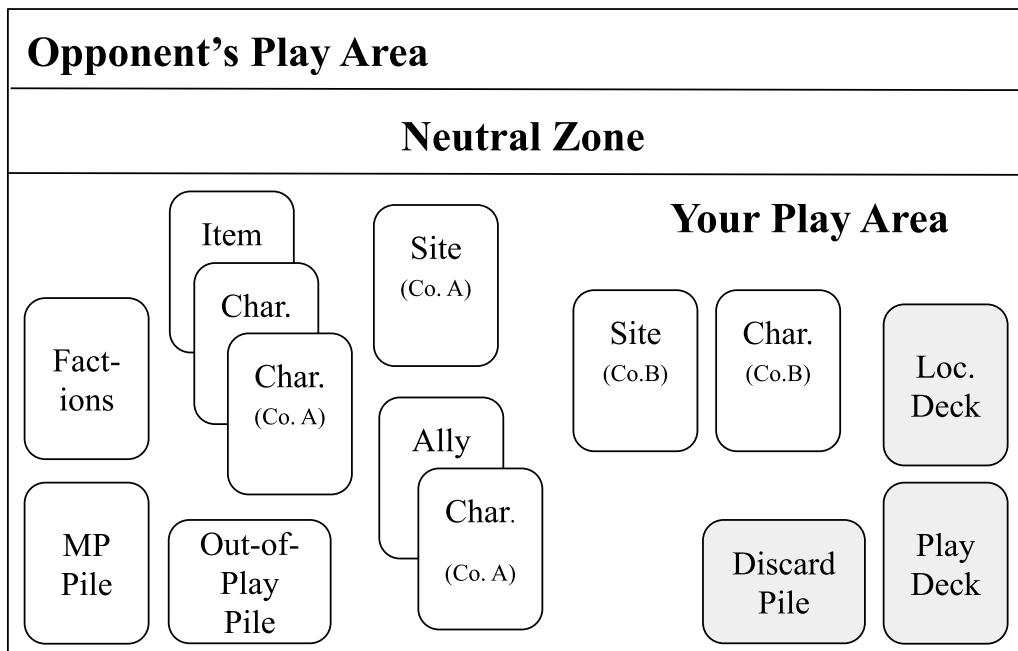
Out-of-Play Pile—A face-up pile for characters *eliminated* by a *body check* or *corruption*.

Location Deck—A deck containing your *sites* and *regions*. The location deck is not drawn from but is freely accessible as needed. It contains only **one copy** of each non-haven site.

Map—A region map may be used to depict *region movement* instead of using region cards.

Dice—Always use two six-sided dice (**2D6**) when making a roll. Any modification to a dice roll must be made **before** the dice are rolled.


Play Area—You may position your cards as you choose as long as their organization is **clear to your opponent**. A neutral zone can be used for *non-targeted* cards that affect both players.





CARD ATTRIBUTES

An attribute is a characteristic of a card stated in its text or depicted in the card frame.

Marshalling Points (MP)—The number in the **upper-left corner** of certain cards. You receive points from characters and resources in play and from cards in the marshalling point pile.

Mind—The number on the head  in the **left sidebar** of a character card. This is the amount of *general influence* or *direct influence* needed to control them. Each player has **20 points of general influence** to control the combined mind value of all their non-*follower* characters.

Direct Influence—The number on the black hand  in the **left sidebar**. A character can use their direct influence to control other characters (called *followers*) or to influence faction cards.







Prowess/Body—The numbers on the shield  in the **lower-left corner**. Prowess (left) is used for *strike* dice rolls against *attacks*, while body (right) is defense against *body check* dice rolls.

Corruption—The number in the **lower-right corner** of certain cards. Items and events can have *corruption points* while some characters have (+ or -) *corruption check* dice roll modifiers.

Skills and Race—The list of terms in the **center bar** of each character and ally card. Skills and race can be conditions for cards or effects. Allies with skills can be used to play such cards.

Event Type—*Short*, *long*, or *permanent-event* is listed in the **center bar**. Short-events are discarded after they are played but some have effects that last for a specific period. The effects of long-events and permanent-events last until they are discarded. An event will state any conditions or situations required to play it. An event **must** have an immediate effect on a current situation unless it is a non-targeted long or permanent-event affecting a class of cards.

Site Types—The symbol in the **upper-left corner** of site cards is their *site type*. The types are  Haven,  Free-hold,  Border-hold,  Ruins & Lairs,  Shadow-hold, and  Dark-hold.

Region Types—The symbol near the **lower-left corner** of region cards is their *region type*. The types are  Coastal Sea,  Free-domain,  Border-land,  Wilderness,  Shadow-land, and  Dark-domain. The *type* of a region is shown on its region card and on the region map.

Site Path—The **left sidebar** of a site card has a sequence of *region types* that is the *site path* from that site to its **nearest haven**. Region cards also have *region type* symbols that can be used as a *site path* (see *Organization Phase*).

Keywords—Terms listed in *italics* at the beginning of the **card text** on certain cards, before the *play conditions*. Most keywords do not have specific rules but are referenced by other cards.

GAME AND TURN SEQUENCE

GAME SETUP



Take your *constructed deck* and separate it into your starting company (with their minor items), your play deck (resources, hazards, and characters), and your location deck (sites and regions). Place each of them face-down. Your opponent does the same and then you both reveal starting companies simultaneously. Your company starts at *Rivendell*. Place that site card next to them. Then shuffle your play deck, let your opponent cut it, and draw a hand of **8** cards (no mulligans). After, roll dice against your opponent (reroll ties). The higher roll takes the first turn.

UNTAP PHASE

Untap your tapped non-site cards and heal wounded characters and allies that are at a haven to the tapped position. Site cards do not normally untap and are typically used only once per deck.

ORGANIZATION PHASE

During your organization phase you may play or discard one character, organize companies and followers, transfer and store items, and declare movement to a new site, in any order.

Each player has **20** points of *general influence* and some characters have *direct influence* . Each point of influence can be used to *control* one point of a character's *mind* . By the end of the organization phase, the mind of each of your characters (but not allies) **must** be controlled by general or direct influence. If not, return any newly played character to your hand and then discard characters until each one is controlled by general or direct influence.

Play/Discard One Character—Once per turn you may **play** a character at their homesite or at a haven; **or** you may **discard** a character at their homesite or at a haven instead. A *unique* character cannot be played if that character is already in play or has been *eliminated*.

Reorganize Characters—Characters can be moved between control by general influence and direct influence. A character controlled by direct influence is called a *follower* and is placed with the controlling character. A follower may **not** control another follower.

Transfer Items—A character may *transfer* an item to another character (not an ally) in their company. The bearer transferring the item must first make a corruption check (see *Dice Rolls*).

Store Resources—A character at a haven may *store* an item they bear into the marshalling point pile. The character storing the item must first make a corruption check (see *Dice Rolls*).

Split/Join Companies—Companies at a haven may split into multiple companies or join together. A company at a non-haven may split into multiple companies if they each move to different sites (one company may stay at their current site). The maximum *company size* is **7** characters (*hobbits* count as half, round up). Allies do not count towards company size.

Plan Movement—Each company may choose to stay at their current site or they may plan their movement to a new site using *starter movement* or *region movement*. A company declares movement to a particular site by either playing a new site card **face-down** on their current site or by **specifically identifying** a site card (face-up or face-down) used by another company.

Starter Movement—A company can move between a non-haven site and its *nearest haven* using the *site path* on the non-haven site card. They can also move between havens.

Region Movement—A company can move to a new site by placing up to **4 adjacent** region cards face-down (including the regions for the current site and the new site). The region cards are used for their *site path*. A **region map** can be used instead of region cards.

Remove Corruption—A character may ignore the requirement to tap to attempt to remove a *corruption* card if they choose to suffer **-3** to their roll. They cannot then make another attempt.

LONG-EVENT PHASE

Discard your existing resource long-events and then play any new resource long-events. After, your opponent discards their hazard long-events.

MOVEMENT/HAZARD PHASE

Each of your companies takes a separate movement/hazard phase in the order you choose. For each company, follow these steps in order:

1) Begin Moving—If the company moves, reveal any face-down site and region cards; determine their *site path*; and draw cards. Both players draw **1** card up to the number facing them on the *new site* if it is a non-haven; or they draw using the *site of origin* if the *new site* is a haven. You do not draw cards if your company has only 1- or 2-mind characters.

2) Determine the Hazard Limit—The hazard limit is either the *company's size* (hobbits count as half, round up; allies do not count) or **at least 2**. It does not change if a character leaves play.

3) Play Hazards—Your opponent may play a number of hazards up to the *hazard limit* against this company. A *targeted* hazard that is **playable on** a particular company, character, or site can only be played against the *phasing* company. *Non-targeted* hazards (played in the neutral zone) can be played regardless of which companies, characters, or sites are actually affected.

Creatures—A creature creates an **attack** consisting of one or more **strikes** against the company (see *Dice Rolls, Combat*). Creatures are playable using the *site type* and *region type* symbols in their left sidebar and *site names* and *region names* in their text. In advance, the hazard player must choose which one of these the creature is **keyed to**. Against a **moving company**, the creature must be keyed to the company's *new site* by name or by type; to a region type in the company's *site path*; or to a region name on their *site of origin, new site*, or a region card. Against a **non-moving** company, the creature must be keyed to the company's *current site* by name or by type. Non-moving companies do not move through regions or have a site path.

Corruption—Only one *Corruption* card can be played on a character per turn.

Timing Rules—A player may **declare** an **action in response** to their opponent's action to interrupt it. If a player did not give their opponent a chance to respond, they **must** back up upon request. Actions include playing a card and tapping or discarding a card to activate an effect. A series of actions declared *in response* is called a **chain of effects**. These actions are *resolved* in **reverse** order (last in; first out; no further declared actions when resolving). An action is **negated** if the *conditions* it requires are removed from play before it resolves. Cards that create attacks (like *creatures*) and *corruption* cards cannot be played *in response*.

Example: A hazard creature is played (it is declared and resolved), creating an attack. Then, a scout character **taps to declare** the “*Scout Only*” resource *Concealment* to cancel the attack. **In response** to *Concealment*, the hazard *Call of Home* is declared *targeting* the scout. No further actions are declared and the chain of effects resolves in reverse order. First, *Call of Home* resolves: the scout's player rolls (too low) and the scout is returned to their hand. Next, *Concealment* would resolve except it is **negated** because *Call of Home* removed the “*Scout Only*” condition of *Concealment*. The attack is not canceled. *Concealment* is discarded.

4) Stop Moving—After hazards, remove the moving company's *site of origin*. It is discarded if it is a non-haven and it was tapped. Havens, untapped sites, and region cards are returned to the location deck. Then, you and your opponent **draw** (or discard) cards to return to **8** cards in hand. After **all** movements, characters at the same non-haven site **must** form a single company.

SITE PHASE

Each of your companies takes a separate site phase in the order you choose. For each company, follow these steps in order:

1) Decide to Enter the Site—Choose whether the company *enters* their site or not. If they enter, they must face any *automatic-attacks*. If they do not enter, they must *do nothing* during their site phase (no resources can be played). Some cards require the company to *do nothing* (*River*).

2) Face Automatic-attacks—Any automatic-attack(s) at the site attack the company, in order.

3) Play a Resource at the Site—A character at an **untapped site** may **tap** to play an *item*, *ally*, *faction*, or *information* card that is **playable** at that site and is not a *unique* card in play or stored. This **taps** the site and one character may tap to play a minor item (even if minor items are not normally *playable*). The automatic-attack need not be *defeated* to play a resource.

Item—The site will state what types of items are **playable** there: *minor*, *major*, *greater*, and/or *gold ring*. The character that tapped is the one who will bear the item (place it under the character). A *hoard item* may only be played at a site with a Dragon automatic attack.

Ally—An ally will state which site(s) it is *playable* at. The character that tapped is the one who takes control of the ally (place it under the character). The mind of the ally does **not** need to be controlled by influence (it is used in certain dice rolls). **An ally cannot be transferred.** Allies are not characters but can participate in **combat** and play cards requiring **skills**.

Faction—A faction will state which site(s) it is *playable* at. To be successfully played, factions require the character that tapped to make an **influence attempt** (see *Dice Rolls, Influence*). If the **influence check** is greater than the number in the faction's text, the faction is successfully played into the play area (the site taps). If not, discard the faction (the site does not tap).

Information Permanent-event—The site card will state whether *Information* is *playable*. A permanent-event that requires information will state any other requirements to play it.

END-OF-TURN PHASE

You and your opponent may each discard **one** card. Then, you both draw (or discard) cards to return to **8** in hand. If both player's decks have been *exhausted*, the *Free Council* starts immediately. If only your deck has exhausted **or** if you have accumulated **20** marshalling points before exhausting, you may *call* the Free Council to begin after your opponent's next turn.

FREE COUNCIL

1) Corruption Checks—Each character makes a corruption check (see *Dice Rolls, Corruption*), starting with the player who took the last turn. Resources may be used to affect these checks.

2) Adjust Marshalling Points—If your opponent has zero (or negative) *character*, *item*, *ally*, or *faction* marshalling points (but not creature *kill* or *miscellaneous* event points), your points of that type are doubled. No more than half of your marshalling points can come from any one type. If your points of one type are greater than your combined points of all other types, reduce the greater points to be equal to the combined points.

3) Victory—The Council chooses the Wizard with the most marshalling points to lead the free people. If tied, increase each character's *corruption point total* by one and return to Step 1.

DICE ROLLS AND MODIFIERS

There are a variety of dice rolls with different modifiers and results. In *Middle-earth*, a dice roll is typically called a *check* and is often used to determine the result of an *attempt* to do something.

COMBAT: STRIKES AND BODY CHECKS

Combat occurs when a company faces an *attack*. Attacks have one or more *strikes* with the attack's prowess. Attacks are faced one at a time. Characters are normally tapped or wounded by a strike but may suffer a -3 modifier to remain untapped. Allies count as characters for combat.

Attack Cancellation—A company facing an attack may *cancel* it before strikes are assigned such that the strike dice rolls are not made. If the attack was from a creature, discard it.

Strike Assignment—The defender *may* choose **untapped** characters or allies to face **one** strike each. Then, the attacker assigns strikes until each strike is assigned to **one** character or ally; **or** until each character and ally is assigned **one** strike. Some attacks automatically assign strikes or let the attacker choose. A card or effect that would change the number of strikes must be played before strike assignment. Any remaining strikes are **excess strikes** used as **-1** modifiers.

Strike Dice Rolls—The defender chooses the order in which characters resolve strikes. The character's prowess and the strike's prowess are modified according to the **Strike Sequence**. Then the character makes a dice roll modified by their prowess against the strike's prowess.

Strike Sequence—Determine any modifications to prowess in the following order:

- 1) **Items**—The character's prowess and body can be modified by one *weapon*, one *armor*, and one *shield* they bear (up to any maximum) in the order chosen by the defender.
- 2) **Effects**—The character/ally's prowess is modified by resource and hazard effects in play.
- 3) **Attacker's Modifiers**—The attacker can choose to use any number of **excess strikes** as **-1** prowess modifiers against the character/ally. The attacker may also play hazards (counting against the hazard limit) that affect the prowess of the character, the attack, or the strike.
- 4) **Defender's Modifiers**—The defender may choose for an **untapped** character or ally to suffer a **-3** modifier to **avoid being tapped** by the strike (they can still be wounded). A character or ally in the company that was not assigned a strike may tap in *support* to give **+1** prowess to the character. The defender may also play resources that affect the prowess of the character, the attack, or the strike, but only one resource that requires a skill.
- 5) **Status**—The character's prowess is modified by **-1** if they are **tapped** or by **-2** if **wounded**.

Strike Results—The character may remain untapped; or be tapped or wounded by the strike:

Untapped—An untapped character remains untapped if they chose to suffer the **-3** prowess modifier and their modified roll was **greater** than or **equal** to the strike's prowess. If the roll was greater, the strike **failed**. If it was a tie, the strike was **ineffectual**.

Tapped—A character is **tapped** if they did not suffer the **-3** modifier and their modified roll was **greater** than (strike *failed*) or **equal** to (strike was *ineffectual*) the strike's prowess.

Wounded—A character is **wounded** if their modified roll was **less** than the strike's prowess. The strike **succeeds**. After any *special actions* of the strike (like rolling a corruption check or discarding an item), the **attacker** rolls a **body check** that might *eliminate* the character.

Body Checks—The **attacker** makes a roll modified by +1 if the character or ally was already wounded before the strike. Before the body check, cards and effects may be used to modify the body check or the character's body. If the modified roll is **greater** than the character's body, they are **eliminated** and each **unwounded** character (but not an ally) in their company can take control of **one** of their items. After, place the eliminated character in your **out-of-play pile**.

Defeating Attacks—Most attacks have no body attribute (–) and their **failed** strikes are automatically **defeated**. If the attack has a body attribute and a strike **fails**, the **defender** immediately rolls a body check against the attack's body. If the modified roll is greater than the attack's body, the strike is **defeated**. If all **assigned** strikes of an attack are **defeated**, the attack is **defeated**. A defeated creature card is placed in the defender's **marshalling point pile**. If the creature is not defeated then it is discarded to its owner's pile. A player cannot defeat their own hazard for marshalling points. The defeated hazard is placed in their out-of-play pile instead.

CORRUPTION CHECKS

A character's *corruption point total* is the sum of the *corruption points* of all cards controlled by, placed with, or played on that character (allies are not affected by corruption). A character in the company may tap in *support* to give a +1 modifier. To make a *corruption check*, make a roll, apply any modifications, and compare the modified roll to the character's *corruption point total*:

Pass—If the modified roll is **greater** than the character's corruption point total, they pass the test and nothing happens.

Fail—If the modified roll is **equal to or less than** the character's corruption point total, the character **fails** the test and is **discarded** along with any non-follower cards they control. If the modified roll was less than their corruption point total by **two or more**, the character is **eliminated** instead. Effects that prevent a character from being discarded (like *Magical Harp*) also prevent them from failing if they would be discarded (but not eliminated).

INFLUENCE ATTEMPTS AND CHECKS

An *influence attempt* refers to an effort to have an effect (*influence*) on a card in the game, which may be unsuccessful. An *influence check* refers to the determination of whether the dice roll satisfies a required condition or not. A character makes an influence attempt by making a dice roll modified by their **unused** direct influence (after controlling *followers*). When attempting to influence a faction, apply any *Standard Modifications* on the faction that match the character's race. A faction will also state which number the *influence check* is against. Influence attempts may be called for in other situations (see *Additional Rules and Mechanics*).

RING TESTS

Gold Rings are *playable* at certain sites. A *gold ring item* may be *tested* using a card or effect to determine which type of *special ring item* it is: *Lesser Ring*, *Magic Ring*, *Dwarven Ring*, or *The One Ring*. When *tested*, make a roll, apply any modifications, and check the text of the gold ring item to see which types of *special rings* match the modified roll. Discard the gold ring from its bearer when tested and replace it with a *special ring* from your hand that matches the roll (if available). Neither the character nor the site tap when *testing* and playing a *special ring item*.

ADDITIONAL RULES & GAME MECHANICS

Middle-earth provides a variety of rules and game mechanics beyond those described in *Aragorn's Rulesguide*. The following list is an introduction to some of these rules and mechanics.

The One Ring Victory—*The One Ring* can be destroyed at Mount Doom to win immediately.

Wizards—In addition to playing as a wizard, you can *reveal* yourself as a powerful wizard character card. However, you immediately lose the game if they are corrupted or eliminated. In tournament games, you get a -5 marshalling point penalty instead of losing immediately.

Deck Construction—The starting company may include 1 to 5 characters (no Wizards) with a total mind of 20 or less. The play deck must include between 25 and 50 resources and an equal number of hazards, including up to 3 copies of a given non-unique card and 1 copy of a unique card. The play deck may also include up to 10 characters and up to 2 Wizards (the same or different). Tournament games use 30/30 resource/hazard play decks, allow for 3 Wizards, and require at least 12 creatures (some hazards count as half a creature). The location deck includes up to 1 copy of each non-haven site but may include any number of havens or region cards.

Character Draft—In tournament games, starting characters may be drafted and revealed one at a time from a pool of 10 draft characters to mitigate the loss of characters from duplication.

Sideboard—Your constructed deck can include a sideboard of cards that are accessible **during** the game: when *exhausting* your play deck, by tapping a *Wizard*, by discarding a *Nazgul*, etc.

Multi-Deck Games—The game may continue until both decks have been exhausted two, three, or four times. In the popular *2-deck game* format, the Free Council is called when each deck has exhausted twice and may be called after exhausting once if you have 25 marshalling points.

On-guard—The hazard player can place one *on-guard* card (resource, hazard, or character) face-down with the company and, if it is a hazard, reveal it during the site phase.

Influencing the Opponent's Cards—Once per turn, a character can tap to make an influence attempt against the opponent's card at the same site to discard it (and play their own copy). The opponent makes a roll modified by their unused general influence and attributes of the card.

OFFICIAL RULE SOURCES

MECCG not only has several expansions with new rules but the base rules were clarified and changed over time. And tournaments have separate rules. Unfortunately there is no complete and final ruleset. The primary rules are spread across these sources: *Middle-earth: The Wizards (METW) Unlimited Rulesbook* (1996), *Middle-earth: The Wizard's Companion* (1996), *Middle-earth: The Dragons (METD) expansion rules* (1996), *Middle-earth: Dark Minions (MEDM) expansion rules* (1996), *Middle-earth: The Lidless Eye (MELE) Rulesbook* (1997), *Middle-earth: The Lidless Eye Companion* (1997), *Middle-earth: Against the Shadow (MEAS) expansion rules* (1997), *Middle-earth: The White Hand (MEWH) expansion rules* (1997), *Middle-earth: The Balrog (MEBA) rules* (1998), the *Challenge Decks/Balrog Rules Summary* (1998), the *Council of Lórien (CoL) Tournament Policy number 3* (1998), and version 15 of the *Collected Rulings File (CRF)* (1999). The *Wizards*, *Dragons*, *Dark Minions*, and *Lidless Eye* Player Guide books include additional clarifications.

FRODO'S UNCOMMON DECKS GIVEN FREELY

“Wise the Lady Galadriel may be, yet here she has met her match in courtesy.”

The ship bearing Frodo and Gandalf from the Havens passed into the West, arriving onto white shores. There, Frodo used spare cards in his collection to build three decks of *uncommon* power to introduce his new elf friends to the *Middle-earth Collectible Card Game*. The decks are built with common and uncommon cards from *The Wizards* and *The Dragons*, with no rares and no fixed characters or resources (F2–F5 fixed sites are used). Duplication of cards is minimized and limited to C2 commons. Frodo's hope is that long-time players, being wise and fearless and fair, would build these decks from spare cards and loan or gift them to new players (if Galadriel is at Lorien or she is not in play, the corruption check is automatically successful). If you have been gifted these decks and are no longer using them, please pass them along to the next hobbit.

Objectives

The main objective of the *Uncommon Decks*, along with *Aragorn's Rulesguide*, is to provide a starting point for a new player and Tolkien fan that is interested in learning *MECCG* but is either intimidated by the rules or does not have access to cards. New players will experience various game mechanics and learn basic resource and hazard themes and strategies. The decks also provide a foundation for further deck building. These decks are balanced against each other and are designed to have more variety than the *Gandalf & Saruman Starter Set* decks while being simpler, quicker, and cheaper than the *Challenge Decks*.

Special Rules and Tips

- *Frodo's Uncommon Decks* are designed to be played using *Aragorn's Rulesguide*.
- Hobbit characters may be brought into play at Rivendell, not only their home site (Bag End).
- The decks have 20 resources and 20 hazards and should first be played using the *1-deck game* rules (those given in *Aragorn's Rulesguide*). If the games feel too short, try playing a 2-deck game where the *Free Council* may be *called* if your play deck has exhausted once and you have 25 marshalling points and it is automatically called when both decks have exhausted twice.
- Sometimes the first turn of the game is tragic since your opponent might have a hand that was full of hazards. You might also have bad luck. Do not despair. You will draw more characters and resources. Your opponent may even have bad luck themselves.
- In general, if a card is unlikely to be playable by your next turn, it is best to discard it unless it is crucial to your resource strategy. This gives the opportunity to draw a card that is useful.
- The decks generally have more marshalling points than can be played before exhausting the deck. It is fine to discard one to keep your hand flowing, but do not discard several MP cards.
- When planning movement, try to limit your exposure to multiple different *region types* if possible. Also, plan your movement to avoid your opponent's hazard strategy.
- Get experience with creatures and combat before worrying about giving up easy kill points.

APPRENTICE BURGLAR

'I don't pretend to understand what you are talking about, or your reference to burglars, but I think I am right in believing that you think I am no good. I will show you.'



Resources	Hazards	Characters	Sites & Regions
Marshalling Points	Creatures	Starting	Caves of Ulund
Durin's Axe	Abductor	Bifur	Dale
Enruned Shield	Ambusher	Brand	Dancing Spire
Hauberk of Bright Mail	Brigands	Gloin	Gold Hill
Magical Harp	Brigands	Cram	Grey Havens
Men of Dale	Corpse Candle	Merry	Irerock
Men of Dorwinion	Dunlending Raiders	Potion of	Lake-town
Men of Northern	Giant	Prowess	Lorien
Rhovanian	Giant	Oin	Mount Gundabad
Orcrist	Huron		Rivendell
	Old Man Willow	Play Deck	Sarn Goriwing
Support	Slayer	Bofur	Shrel-kain
Bounty of the Hoard	Thunder's Companion	Bombur	The Lonely Mountain
Burglary	Watcher in the Water	Dori	The Wind Throne
Dwarven Hoard		Nori	Anduin Vales
Fast Asleep	Events	Ori	Angmar
Fellowship	Call of Home		Dorwinion
Halfling Stealth	Despair of the Heart		Grey Mountain Narrows
Halfling Strength	Lure of Expedience		Gundabad
Necklace of Silver and	Lure of Nature		Heart of Mirkwood
Pearls	Lure of the Senses		High Pass
Not at Home	River		Northern Rhovanion
Sting	Weariness of the Heart		Rhudaur
Thorough Search			Withered Heath
Thoror's Map			Woodland Realm

Oin and Gloin found a map to hoarded dragon treasure and have goaded Merry into becoming their burglar, with Bifur, Bofur, Bombur, Dori, Nori, and Ori in tow. Brand, the grandson of Bard the Bowman, joins the dwarves to rally the men of Wilderland to prepare dragon defenses.

The resource themes are hoards, hobbits, dwarves, and multiple item-play. The hazard themes are Men and Giant creatures and *corruption*.

Starting Company

Bifur, Brand, Merry, Gloin, and Oin form the starting company. Oin follows Gloin and Bifur follows Brand. Merry carries the *Potion of Prowess* while Gloin packs the *Cram*.

Resource Strategy

The dragon hoards are full of legendary weapons and armor. Once the dwarves get their hands on one it will be easier to recover the rest. If your starting hand has a non-warded item or *Dwarven Hoard*, the company can stop by Mount Gundabad first. If you have no items in hand, consider moving to Lorien to heal while you draw more cards (and your opponent drops hazards).

The resources highlight the strengths and weaknesses of dwarves and the utility of hobbits. Dwarves excel at creating large companies, fighting orcs, and have several items and effects with special dwarf abilities. However, they are weak to corruption, poor at influencing, and typically have low body. A counterbalance to dwarves, hobbits have comparatively high minds (making them more difficult to control), but they are masters of utility effects and almost impervious to corruption. The deck also has several resource effects that allow multiple items to be played at the same site, reducing the company's need for movement and their exposure to creatures.

Hazard Strategy

Ruffians and highway-robbers are on the loose, scaring Bree-land peasants and bullying bewildered hobbits. The *Men* hazards are plentiful in the border-lands and holds, spreading into wilderness and even free-domains. *Giants* cover the deep-wilderness, but the deck has blindspots in ruins & lairs and dark and shadow sites and regions. Still, companies often go to such sites to play items and this strategy includes plenty of *Corruption* cards to make those items dangerous.

Notes and Tips

- A *hoard* item can only be played at a site with a Dragon automatic-attack.
- *Potion of Prowess* is most useful for an early advantage.
- Since using the *Magical Harp* requires a corruption check, Merry does well to play it.
- Faction points are crucial since item points will likely be reduced to half of your total points.

Related Cards for Deck Modification

Bard Bowman, *Gimli*, and the *Iron Hill Dwarves* are useful fixed cards to add to this deck. The wizard *Alatar* might be a good choice since he has an ability to join the main company in combat, but that would break any *Fellowship*. For rares, *Arkenstone* and *Necklace of Girion* are neat and thematic. *Emerald of the Mariner* is especially helpful when transferring items.

For hazards, *Rank Upon Rank* boosts *Men* and *Giant* attacks. *Lawless Men* and *Sellswords Between Charters* are *Men* creatures that expand coverage. And of course there is *Assassin*.

A BIT OF INFORMATION

*‘Our whole life for months has been one long meddling in the affairs of Wizards,’
said Pippin. ‘I should like a bit of information as well as danger.
I should like a look at that ball.’ ‘Go to sleep!’ said Merry.*



Resources	Hazards	Characters	Sites & Regions
Marshalling Points	Creatures	Starting	Amon Hen
Align Palantir	“Bert” (Burat)	Anborn	Bandit Lair
Beautiful Gold Ring	Carrion Birds	Arinmir	Dimrill Dale
Dwarven Ring of	Hobgoblins	Imrahil	Dol Amroth
Thelor’s Tribe	Orc-guard	Pippin	Edhellond
Fair Gold Ring	Orc-lieutenant	Elven Cloak	Gladden Fields
Knights of Dol Amroth	Orc-patrol	Healing Herbs	Isengard
Magic Ring of Lore	Orc-patrol	Wacho	Lorien
Men of Lebennin	Orc-raiders		Minas Tirith
Palantir of Minas Tirith	Orc-raiders	Play Deck	Ost-in-Edhil
Palantir of Orthanc	Orc-warband	Beretar	Pelargir
	Orc-warriors	Fili	Rivendell
Support	Orc-warriors	Halbarad	Anduin Vales
Concealment	Orc-watch	Ioreth	Anfalas
Escape	“Tom” (Tuma)	Voteli	Anorien
Far-sight	“William” (Wuluag)		Belfalas
Ford			Brown Lands
Hey! Come merry dol!	Events		Gap of Isen
Many Turns and Doublings	Call of Home		High Pass
Master of Wood, Water, or Hill	Host of Bats		Hollin
Ringlore	Minions Stir		Lebennin
Secret Passage	River		Redhorn Gate
Test of Lore	Weariness of the Heart		Rhudaur
Trickery			Rohan
			Wold & Foothills

No Took ever beat a Brandybuck for inquisitiveness until now. Pippin cannot wait for wizard-wheedling in the morning. He's off to gaze into the mysterious depths of a palantir again.

The resource themes are palantiri, rings, the sage skill, attack avoidance, and attack cancellation. The hazard themes are *Orcs* and *Trolls* with multiple body check effects.

Starting Company

The starting company is formed by Anborn, Arinmir, Imrahil, Pippin, and Wacho. Pippin takes the *Elven Cloak* and *Healing Herbs*. Anborn follows Imrahil. Wacho follows Arinmir.

Resource Strategy

Any fool can look into a palantir and be questioned by the Dark Lord to the ruin of us all. It takes a *sage* to resist Him and see useful information. This deck is an exhibition of the sage skill, which is used to *test* rings, *use* palantiri, make use of *Information*, and more.

Testing gold rings to play a magic ring, one of the seven Dwarven Rings, and even *The One Ring* is a novel and iconic mechanic of *Middle-earth*. However, it requires holding a lot of cards. *Far-sight* can be used to get whichever ring you do not have: the gold ring or the special ring. *Palantir of Minas Tirith* can let you see what cards are coming and *Palantir of Orthanc* can recover discarded rings or tests (though it may be more effective when recovering hazards).

Not every marshalling point can be played before the deck exhausts, but at least *Palantir of Minas Tirith* can be *Aligned* safely, and the *Dwarven Ring* can be tested with *Ringlore*.

Hazard Strategy

The hazard-side includes a battalion of *Orcs*. They are fairly weak but are playable across most of the map, including border-lands and ruins & lairs. Their large number of strikes means that even weaker characters will probably have to face one. But don't let your opponent have all the fun rolling dice: *Carrion Birds* and *Host of Bats* cause additional body checks when a character is wounded. All the *Trolls* need to do now is decide how to roast the dwarves.

Notes and Tips

- *Healing Herbs* can untap a character that faced a strike before its bearer resolves their strike.
- *Elven Cloak* can cancel an attack keyed to wilderness, even if two wilderness were required.
- *Master of Wood, Water, or Hill* can change the region type a creature was keyed to *in response* to that creature, thereby *negating* it. The creature is discarded but counts against the hazard limit.
- *Orc-warband* and *Lieutenant* receive their bonus even if the previous *Orc* attack was canceled.

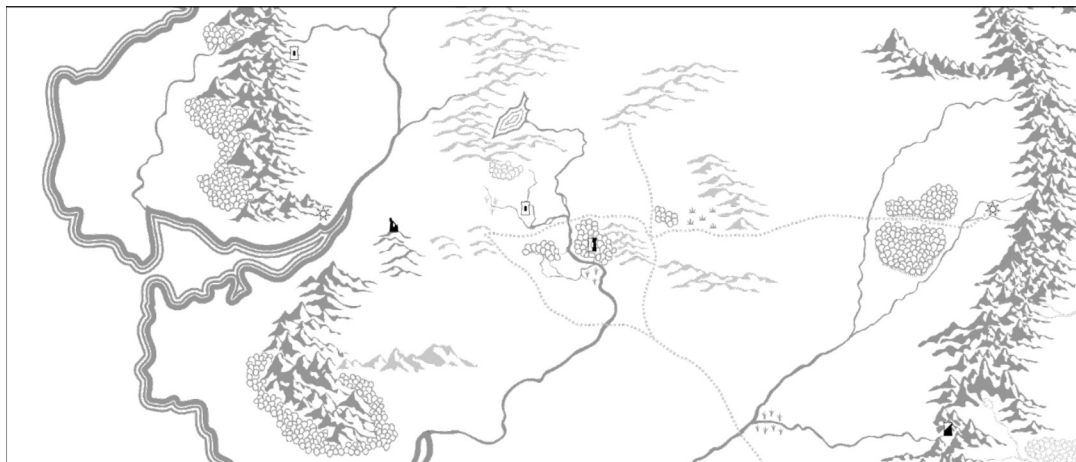
Related Cards for Deck Modification

The fixed packs include powerful sages like Glorfindel, Celeborn, and Thranduil. Gandalf is a sage with an ability to test rings and Saruman is a sage that can use palantiri. *Treebeard* is a powerful sage ally. There are 3 rare palantiri in *METW*. The 7th is the *Ithil-stone*, represented as both an *MEAS* item and a *MEDM* quest—*Fate of the Ithil-stone*. Rings greatly benefit from *MEDM Leaf Brooch* and *MEBA Rumours of Rings* (feel free to make a proxy card).

For hazards, *Little Snuffler* from *MEDM* disrupts *scout* effects, *Uruk-lieutenant* is a *MELE* rare that boosts *Orc-Lieutenant*, and *Two or Three Tribes Present* can be used to play a bunch of orcs.

HARBOURS BEYOND THE WHITE TOWERS

'I've heard tell that Elves are moving west. They do say they are going to the harbours, out away beyond the White Towers.' Sam waved his arm vaguely: neither he nor any of them knew how far it was to the Sea.



Resources	Hazards	Characters	Sites & Regions
Marshalling Points	Creatures	Starting	Bag End
Bill the Pony	Cave-drake	Balin	Blue Mountain Dwarf-hold
Blue Mountain Dwarves	Cave-drake	Haldir	Edhellond
Book of Mazarbul	Dire Wolves	Legolas	Grey Havens
Glamdring	Giant Spiders	Elf-stone	Himring
Goldberry	Giant Spiders	Orophin	Isle of the Ulond
Palantir of Elostirion	Land-drake	Sam Gamgee	Lossadan Cairn
Red Book of Westmarch	Lesser Spiders	Star-glass	Moria
Sword of Gondolin	Light-drake		Old Forest
Sword of Gondolin	Wargs	Play Deck	Rivendell
	Wargs	Dwalin	The White Towers
Support	Wolves	Eomer	Zarak Dum
A Short Rest	Wolves	Eowyn	Andrast Coast
Block		Galdor	Angmar
Dodge	Events	Ghan-buri-	Arthedain
Echo of All Joy	Awaken Denizens	Ghan	Cardolan
Emerald of Doriath	Call of Home		Elven Shores
Fair Travels in Wilderness	Fell Winter River		Eriadoran Coast
Lapse of Will	Wake of War		Forochel
Lore of the Ages	Weariness of the Heart		Hollin
Lucky Strike	Worm's Stench		Lindon
Risky Blow	Worn and Famished		Numeriador
Star of High Hope			Redhorn Gate
			Rhudaur
			The Shire

The elves are moving west but they are not *sailing west*. Not yet. They are searching for ancient elvish artifacts. They bring book-writers Sam and Balin with them to record the tale.

The resource themes are combat (weapons, prowess, and strikes), long-events, and influence management. The hazard themes are *Dragons*, *Drakes*, *Wolves*, and *Spiders* with long-events.

Starting Company

Balin, Haldir, Legolas, Orophin, and Sam Gamgee form the starting company. Haldir follows Legolas who bears the *Elf-stone*. Orophin follows Balin. Sam carries the *Star-glass*.

Resource Strategy

The company seeks three weapons, the *Book of Mazarbul*, and the *Palantir of Elostirion* (the tallest of the three White Towers). Not every resource needs to be played—but the weapons are crucial for staying untapped to play additional resources, and the *Book of Mazarbul* is worth the most MP. Note that the *Palantir* cannot be moved and is a poor choice to play early.

Elf-stone, *The Red Book of Westmarch*, and *Emerald of Doriath* provide enough influence for additional characters to be played, which are not only worth MP but can go play more resources.

A small company can form at Grey Havens for quick trips to Bag End and the Old Forest.

Hazard Strategy

Some burglar must have roused a dragon because the wilderness is heavy with *Worm's Stench*. *Spiders* and *Animals* are out in the *Wake of War* and *Wolves* are roaming the border-lands. Many of these creatures require deep-wilderness but this also means they are strong enough to be played without needing a follow-up. The hazards include long-events which can hinder your own companies, especially before they get weapons. Plan your following resource turn to determine whether the hazard long-event should be played or not.

Notes and Tips

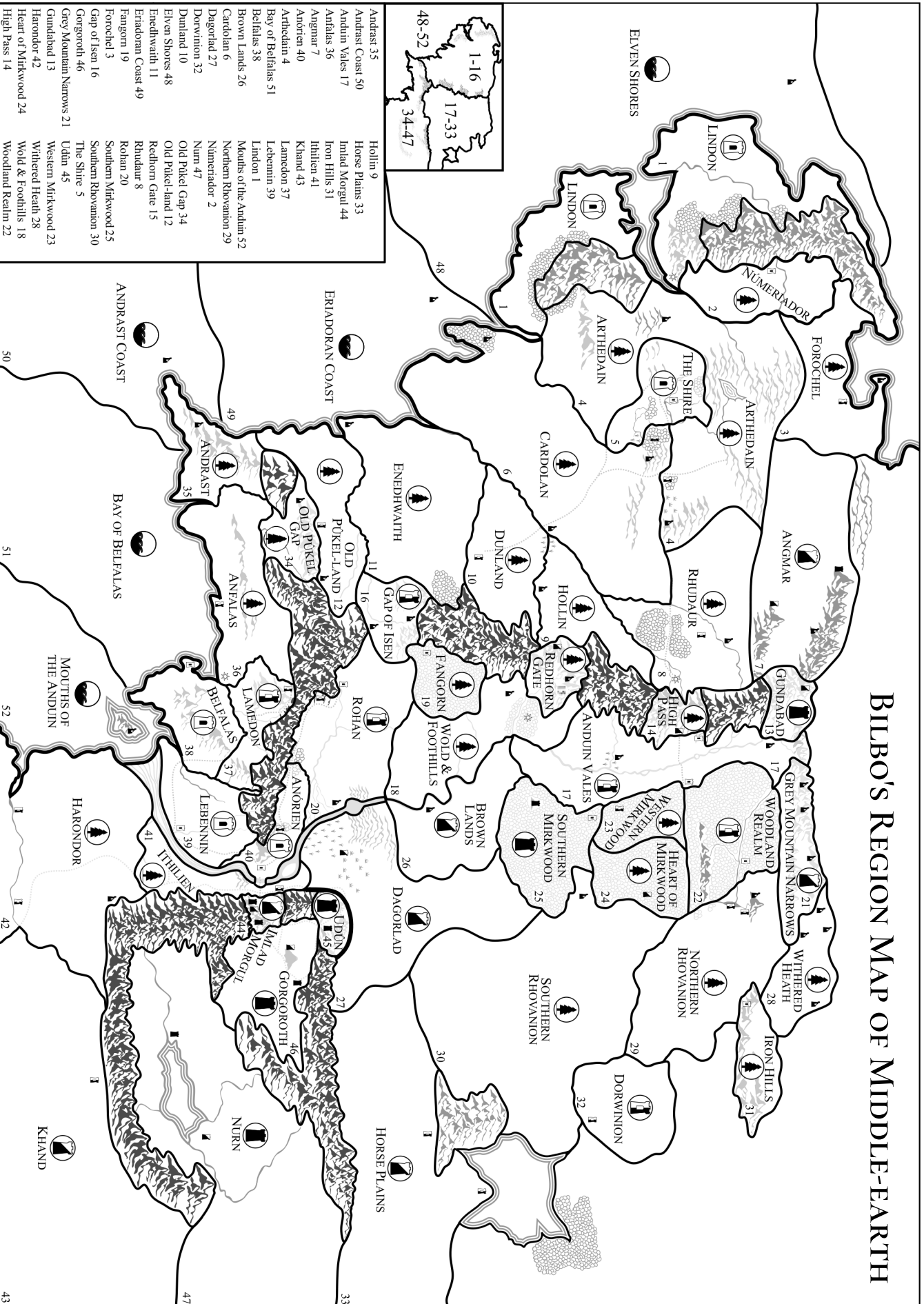
- *Glamdring* does not require the Warrior skill, unlike most other weapons.
- The *Palantir of Elostirion* is “pre-aligned,” so to speak. It does not require the bearer to be able to *use* a palantiri as the other palantiri do. It only requires a sage. By the way, *Bill the Pony* **does not** bypass the movement restriction of *Elostirion* (the effect is considered movement).
- Tapping *Book of Mazarbul* lets you set your hand size to **9** cards instead of 8.
- With *Block* or *Dodge*, a character does not need to suffer the **-3** modifier to stay untapped.

Related Cards for Deck Modification

For fixed cards, Elladan, Elrohir, and Gildor are strong elf rangers; Glorfindel is unstoppable; and Aragorn can play *Rangers of the North*. For Wizards, Pallando is handy for Grey Havens decks while Radagast does well with so much wilderness around Rivendell. Cirdan, *Great Ship*, *Elves of Lindon*, and *Tom Bombadil* are classic additions to decks operating in this area.

For hazards, *MEAS Full of Froth and Rage* boosts spider and animal prowess. *Neeker-breakers* (a promo card) is a novel *animal* creature effective against low-mind characters. And *METD* includes numerous dragon and drake creatures and events to pair with your spiders and animals.

BILBO'S REGION MAP OF MIDDLE-EARTH



- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Andrast 35 | Hollin 9 |
| Andrast Coast 50 | Horse Plains 33 |
| Anduin Vales 17 | Inland Morgul 44 |
| Arifas 36 | Iron Hills 31 |
| Angmar 7 | Ithilien 41 |
| Anorien 40 | Khand 43 |
| Arthedain 4 | Lamedon 37 |
| Bay of Belfalas 51 | Lebennin 39 |
| Belfalas 38 | Londin 1 |
| Brown Lands 26 | Mouths of the Anduin 52 |
| Cardolan 6 | Northern Rhovanion 29 |
| Dagorlad 27 | Númerador 2 |
| Dorwinion 32 | Nurn 47 |
| Dunland 10 | Old Pukel-gap 34 |
| Elven Shores 48 | Old Pukel-land 12 |
| Eredwath 11 | Redhorn Gate 15 |
| Eriadoran Coast 49 | Rhudaur 8 |
| Fangorn 19 | Rohan 20 |
| Forochel 3 | Southern Mirkwood 25 |
| Gap of Isen 16 | Southern Rhovanion 30 |
| Gorgoroth 46 | The Shire 5 |
| Grey Mountain Narrows 21 | Udun 45 |
| Gundabad 13 | Western Mirkwood 23 |
| Harondor 42 | Withered Heath 28 |
| Heart of Mirkwood 24 | Wold & Foothills 18 |
| High Pass 14 | Woodland Realm 22 |

