

An illustration of a character from the game Eternal, wearing a wide-brimmed hat, a red cape, and ornate armor. The character is holding a glowing yellow staff in their right hand and a sword in their left. The background is dark and atmospheric, featuring a large, dark, horned creature in the shadows.

ETERNAL[®]

Advanced Rules

Look who wandered in...

Most of what you need to know to play *Eternal* is covered by the tutorial contained in *The Empty Throne* campaign: *Crush your enemies. See them driven before you. Hear the lamentations of their avatar emotes.* That sort of thing.

If you haven't played through that campaign yet, this would be a good time to do so before pushing onward. All of the basics of using your cards to summon units, cast spells, and forge weapons are there. You can also find definitions of standard game terms in the in-game Glossary, found under Options. This document is intended for players who already have a handle on how the game works, and want to take a look under the hood.

Our goal is that, once you've played a few games, the rules in *Eternal* generally work in the way you'd expect. But with so many possible card interactions, there are bound to be some surprises along the way. In those moments, your best bet will be to connect with other *Eternal* players on Reddit, Discord, or the Steam forums to share and learn from each other's experience.

So welcome to *Eternal*! Dig in, have fun, let us know what you discover.

We'll see you in the game!

– The Dire Wolf Digital Team



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1.0 BASIC PRINCIPLES

Eternal is a card game between two players.

1.1 GAME STRUCTURE AND GOAL

A game of *Eternal* is divided into turns. Each turn belongs to one of the players and is followed by a turn that belongs to the other player. Turns alternate until one of the players wins the game in one of the following ways:

- A player wins if the other player's health drops to 0 or lower.
- A player wins if the other player has no cards left in their deck at the end of any turn.
- A player wins if the other player concedes or runs out their turn timer three turns in a row.

1.2 GAME ZONES

A game of *Eternal* takes place across several different game zones:

- Each player has a **deck** zone, where their cards are initially kept in a fixed order from top to bottom until drawn. Cards in a player's deck zone are not seen by any player.
- Each player has a **hand** zone, where the cards they have drawn are kept until they are played. Cards in a player's hand zone are visible to them, but not to other players.
- Each player has a **playmat** zone, where most cards that have been played go. The playmat zone is the primary zone where cards can affect the game. Cards in a player's playmat zone are visible to all players.
- Each player has a **power** zone, where power cards that have been played go. Cards in a player's power zone are visible to all players.
- Each player has a **void** zone, where cards that have been already played or discarded are placed. Cards in a player's void zone are visible to all players.
- Each player may have a **market** zone, if they included merchant cards in their deck during deck construction. Merchants can draw cards from the Market into the player's hand during the game. Cards in a player's market zone are visible to them, but not to other players.

1.3 PLAYING CARDS

Throughout the game, players will play cards from their hands. How a card works when played depends on its type.

- **Power** cards are the basic resource of the game. When a power card is played, that player gains one power (and one maximum power). They also execute any text on the power card, often unlocking influence, which comes in five types (Fire, Time, Justice, Primal, and Shadow). The power card is then put into the power zone. Players can only play one power card each turn.

All card types other than power cards require the player to meet certain conditions before they can be played. Each non-power card has a power cost and an influence requirement; a card cannot be played unless the player has at least as much current power as the card's power cost and has at least as many of the correct type of influence as the card's influence requirement. When a player meets these conditions and plays a card, that card's power cost is deducted from their current power, but their maximum power is unaffected. (Power replenishes, so the player will be able to play more cards as the game progresses.) Influence is never deducted; it is only checked to see if a card can be played.

If a card is played by a game effect instead of being played from the hand by the player's choice, no power is spent and influence requirements are not checked.

- **Unit** cards are the characters that serve the player in battle. When a unit card is played, it is put into the playmat zone.
 - Units on the playmat have two states they can be in: *ready* or *exhausted*.
 - *Ready* units can be used in battle, as described below in 3.0 Game Flow. Units are ready when they enter the playmat zone, unless a game effect says otherwise.
 - *Exhausted* units can't be used in battle until they ready again. Units ready at the start of their owner's turn.
- **Attachment** cards are a group of several card types.
 - **Weapon** cards are played on a unit that is already on the playmat and that belongs to the same player as the weapon. The weapon adds its stats and abilities to the unit's. A player selects the unit they want to attach a weapon to when they play the weapon.
 - **Curse** cards are played on enemy units that are already on the playmat. A player selects

the unit they want to attach a curse to when they play the curse.

- **Relic** cards attach to the player directly.
- **Relic Weapon** cards attach to the player directly. They allow the player to attack enemy units as described in the Direct Attacking section. A player can only have one relic weapon at a time; if a second relic weapon is played, the previous one is killed.
- **Cursed Relic** cards attach to the enemy player directly.
- **Spell** cards are temporary, although they can have permanent effects on the game. When a spell card is played, its text is executed and the card is then placed in its owner's void zone.
 - Many spells affect specific other game objects. For these spells, the player usually selects which object(s) they want to affect when they play the spell. For example, the spell Torch says "Deal 3 damage," which requires the player to choose which unit or player the damage will be dealt to.
- **Site** cards are played to the playmat zone where they take up space like a unit.
 - While on the playmat, sites provide an ongoing ability and play cards from their Agenda until they are killed.
 - Sites can be attacked by enemy units as described in the Battle Phase section.
 - A player can only have one site at a time; if a second site is played, the previous one is killed.

1.4 CARD ABILITIES

Most cards have game text that describes their special abilities.

Game text on Power and Spell cards is executed when you play the card.

Game text on Unit, Attachment, and Site cards describes the card's abilities that influence the game while in the playmat zone. These abilities **only** function in the playmat zone unless they indicate otherwise. Abilities for these card types take one of the following forms:

- **Skills** are bolded terms with no additional text, like "**Quickdraw**" or "**Flying**." Each skill has a specific function described in the game's glossary.
 - A skill on a unit belongs to the unit itself.

- A skill on a weapon gives that skill to the unit it is attached to.
- A skill on a relic weapon gives that skill to the player it is attached to, which means it applies to that player's spells and other relic cards.
- **Triggered** abilities happen when another specific game event occurs. Sometimes the event that triggers the ability is defined by a bolded condition, like "**Summon:**" or "**Empower:**" while in other cases it is written out. When that event occurs, execute the text that follows it in the ability description.
 - Example: "**Summon:** Give a unit +1/+1."
 - Example: "When you play a spell, you gain 2 health."
- **Activated** abilities happen when the player decides to use them during their own main phase. They always have a cost, like paying a certain amount of power or exhausting a unit, which must be paid in order to use the ability. When the cost is paid, execute the text that follows it in the ability description.
 - Example: "Pay 5 to draw a card."
 - Example: "Exhaust Stormcaller to deal 1 damage."
 - Note that unlike attacking, unit abilities that require the unit to exhaust can be used the turn the unit is played.
- **Ongoing** abilities require no input, and don't define a triggering event or a cost that needs to be paid to use them. These abilities affect the game for as long as the card is in the playmat zone.
 - Example: "Units can't fly."

1.5 KILLING, DEATH, AND DAMAGE

Many game effects "kill" certain cards. When a card in the playmat zone is killed, it is moved to the void zone. (Cards outside the playmat zone can't be "killed," so any effect that kills something always refers to the playmat zone.)

In addition to cards or abilities that directly state they kill something, there is one other common way for things to be killed: **damage**. Damage can be dealt to players, units, and sites by various game effects – most commonly the battle step (see 3.3 Battle Phase below), but sometimes by spells or other cards.

- When a unit takes damage, its health is reduced by that much. If its health is reduced to 0, it is killed. At the end of each turn, units automatically heal any damage they had taken this turn.

- Players, however, take damage permanently – damage to players does not heal automatically. Once a player is reduced to 0 health, they lose the game.
- When a site takes damage, its durability is reduced by that much. When a site's durability is reduced to 0, it is killed. Durability doesn't restore at the end of turns.

2.0 GAME SETUP

Each player begins the game with a deck of cards. Each player's deck must meet the following criteria:

- For Ranked and Casual formats, a minimum of 75 cards and a maximum of 150 cards.
- For Draft format, a minimum of 45 cards and a maximum of three times the size of the draft pool (due to the composition rules that follow).
- At least 1/3 of the cards in the deck, rounded up, are power cards.
- At least 1/3 of the cards in the deck, rounded up, are non-power cards.

When the game begins, these steps occur:

- Each player starts the game with 25 health.
- A player is randomly chosen to take the first turn.
- Each player's deck is shuffled.
- Each player draws 7 random cards from the top of their own deck.
- If a hand does not contain at least 1 power card and 1 non-power card, it is returned to the deck, the deck is reshuffled, and a new hand is drawn. This process repeats as many times as necessary for the player to receive a hand with at least 1 power card and 1 non-power card.
 - This process is not displayed to the players.
- Each player may choose to keep their hand, or redraw a new hand.
- If a player chooses to redraw, their hand is returned to their deck, the deck is shuffled, and they draw a new hand of 7 cards.
- The new hand will have a 1/3 chance to contain exactly 2 power cards, a 1/3 chance to contain exactly 3 power cards, and a 1/3 chance to contain exactly 4 power cards. The remainder of the hand will be non-power cards.
- In some game modes, a player who redrew their hand may redraw their hand one more time, drawing a new hand of just 6 cards. Like the first redraw, it will

contain 2, 3, or 4 power cards with the remainder of the hand being non-power cards.

- Once any redraws have completed, proceed to the starting player's first turn.
- All draw triggers for cards in opening hands will occur at the beginning of the first turn.

3.0 GAME FLOW

Each turn is divided into different phases described below. The "current player" described here is the player whose turn it is.

3.1 START PHASE

At the start of the turn, follow these steps:

1. All of the current player's units ready.
2. The current player's power is set to their maximum power.
3. The current player draws a card from the top of their deck into their hand.
 - a. However, the first player to take a turn in a game does not draw a card on their first turn.
4. Any abilities that trigger at the start of the turn or that triggered from events during the Start Phase are played at this time.
5. The game proceeds to the First Main Phase.

3.2 FIRST MAIN PHASE

- Once per turn during the main phase, the current player may play a power card from their hand.
- The current player can also play non-power cards and activate abilities. They can play as many cards and abilities as they wish to and have available, as long as they can meet the requirements for each as described above.
- The current player may select and assign their units as attackers.
 - A unit must meet all of the following conditions in order to be chosen as an attacker:
 - It is ready.
 - It was not played this turn (unless it has the **Charge** skill).
 - It has greater than 0 strength.
 - There are no abilities or game effects that stop it from attacking.
 - The current player can select any number of their units that meet these conditions. The

player only gets one Battle Phase per turn, so they must choose all units that they want to attack with at the same time.

- Once the current player has chosen all units that they want to attack with and selected the Attack button, the game moves into the Battle Phase (see below).
- If the player does not want to assign any attackers or play any more cards, they can choose to end their turn and go to the End Phase (see below).

3.3 BATTLE PHASE

The Battle Phase begins when the current player selects the Attack button. This phase is broken into a series of steps:

3.31 DECLARATION STEP

- If any of the attacking units have the **Berserk** skill, the current (attacking) player may choose to have them attack a second time this turn.
- If the defending player has a site, the attacking player may have all of the attacking units attack the site instead of the player. The attacking player cannot split their attack between the site and the player.

3.32 DEFENSE STEP

- The defending player can play fast spell cards or cards with the **Ambush** skill (see Ambush and Fast below).
- Once the defending player is done playing cards, they may select and assign units as blockers.
 - Only ready units can be chosen as blockers.
 - When the defending player chooses a unit as a blocker, they choose a single attacker for that unit to block.
 - Multiple blockers can be assigned to the same attacker.
- When the defending player has chosen all units that they want to block with or chosen to not block the game moves into the Pre-Fight Step (see below).

3.33 PRE-FIGHT STEP

- The current (attacking) player now has a chance to play fast spell cards.
- If the defending player assigned any blockers, they can also play fast spell cards.
 - If the defending player assigned no blockers, they only get the chance to play fast spells if the attacking player plays one first.
- Once both players have no more fast spells to play, proceed to the Fight Step.

3.34 FIGHT STEP

- Each attacking unit deals damage equal to its strength to the unit blocking it, or if it wasn't blocked, to the defending player or site.
 - If a unit was blocked by multiple units, it divides its damage among them.
 - If it doesn't have enough strength to kill all blockers, the attacking player chooses one blocker to deal damage to. The attacking unit spends its damage on that unit until it has spent enough to kill that unit. If it has any damage remaining, then another blocker is chosen. This continues until the attacking unit has dealt all of its damage.
- Each blocking unit deals damage equal to its strength to the unit it is blocking.
- Units that are reduced to 0 health from this damage are killed.
- Each unit that attacked or blocked and survived becomes exhausted.
- If any of the surviving attacking units used their **Berserk** skill this attack, ready them and return to the Defense Step. If they attacked a site and it wasn't killed, they attack it again. Otherwise they attack the enemy player.
- Then proceed to the Final Main Phase.

3.4 FINAL MAIN PHASE

- This phase is the same as the First Main Phase, except that the current player can no longer assign attackers for a Battle Phase.
- If the current player didn't play a power card during their First Main Phase, they can do so now.
- Once the current player has no more cards or abilities they wish to play, proceed to the End Phase.

3.5 END PHASE

At the end of the turn, follow these steps:

3.51 END PHASE INTERRUPT STEP

- The enemy player can play fast spells or cards with the **Ambush** skill.
- If they play a card with **Ambush**, the current player is given the chance to play fast spell cards only.
- When the enemy player (or both players after an **Ambush**) has no more cards to play, proceed to the End of Turn Triggers Step.

3.52 END OF TURN TRIGGERS STEP

- Any abilities that trigger at the end of the turn are played at this time.
- Then proceed to the Discard Step.

3.53 DISCARD STEP

- If the current player has 10 or more cards in hand, they must discard down to 9 cards.
 - If this causes any abilities to trigger, the current player still has to discard down to 9 cards after those abilities finish.
- Then proceed to the Cleanup Step.

3.54 CLEANUP STEP

- Any player with no cards left in their deck loses the game.
- All damage is removed from all units.
- Units with the **Endurance** skill ready.
- Card effects that last for "this turn" are removed.
- Then proceed to the next turn.

4.0 SPECIAL ACTIONS

This section details more intricate rules around particular cards or actions.

4.1 AMBUSH AND FAST

A player usually can only play their cards during their Main Phase, but two special classes of cards can be played at other times.

- Units with the **Ambush** skill can be played during an enemy's regular attack (as a surprise blocker), during an enemy's direct attack (see 4.3 Direct Attacks), or at the end of the enemy player's turn (as a surprise attacker for your turn).
- Spells with the **Fast** designation can be played on the enemy turn or as a reaction to a variety of enemy effects.

4.2 REACTING TO ENEMY ACTIONS

Most of the time, when you do something in *Eternal*, it happens immediately. However, three specific types of action allow for **reactions** from the other player:

- Spell cards
- Curse cards and Cursed Relics

- Triggered and activated abilities that directly influence another player
 - This includes affecting another player's cards (in the playmat zone or in other zones), their health total, or any other object or property belonging to another player.
 - This does not include effects like (for example) playing a weapon to give one of your own units +3/+3, even though that can indirectly influence another player by dealing more damage.

When a player takes one of these actions, the other player has the opportunity to play a fast spell card as a reaction. This spell will take effect before the action it is reacting to, so it can help protect something or otherwise change how the original spell or ability will affect the game. After the reaction finishes, an additional reaction can be played if the player has yet another fast spell (and the power to play it). This continues until the reacting player is finished.

Note that, because reactions are themselves spell cards, the original player might be able to react to a reaction with their own fast spell. This uses the same rules.

For spells and abilities that require the player to choose what they affect, the other player can sometimes take that choice into account when reacting:

- If a spell or ability affects a player, unit, or site on the playmat, that choice is made before the other player decides how to react.
- If a spell or ability affects a card outside the playmat zone (such as in the void zone), the other player must react before they see what is affected.
- Remember that abilities which don't affect the other player or their cards can't be reacted to in any case.

4.3 DIRECT ATTACKS

There are two situations in *Eternal* that offer the ability to make a direct attack:

- A ready unit with the **Killer** skill
- A player with a relic weapon attached to them

A direct attack can only be performed during a Main Phase. To make a direct attack, the player chooses their unit with **Killer**, or their own avatar if they have a relic weapon, and chooses an

enemy unit to attack (Sites cannot be direct attacked). Abilities that trigger from attacking or blocking will occur, then the attacker and the defending unit deal their strength in damage to each other.

Because a direct attack is an ability that affects an enemy, it can be reacted to as described above. If the defending player plays a unit with the **Ambush** skill as a reaction, the direct attack is transferred to the new unit.

In addition to the normal case, a player with a relic weapon can attack the enemy player directly **if** the enemy player has no units on the playmat.

A player can only make one direct attack with a relic weapon per turn, even if they play a new relic weapon card after the attack.

A unit with **Killer** that makes a direct attack expends its **Killer** skill, so it can also only make one such attack unless it regains the skill somehow, like being granted by another card or by leaving the playmat and returning. It also becomes exhausted.

4.31 ARMOR

Armor is a special value on relic weapons which represents how tough they are. Armor has the following rules:

- When a player equips a relic weapon, they gain the armor value of that relic weapon.
- A player can also gain armor due to game effects. If a player already has armor when they equip a relic weapon, or gains armor from an effect while they already have a relic weapon, it is added to the relic weapon's armor. (For example, if a player has 3 armor and plays a relic weapon with 2 armor, they will then have 5 armor. That weapon's natural armor value is increased to 5 for the rest of the game.)
- While a player has armor, any damage they take is deducted from their armor before it is deducted from their health. When a player loses all of their armor, any relic weapon they have equipped is killed. When a player's relic weapon is killed, the player loses all of their armor.
- If a player plays a new relic weapon when they already have one equipped, the previous weapon (and all of its armor) is killed before the new weapon enters the playmat.

5.0 ACTION REFERENCE TABLE

Phase / Step / Action	Current Player	Enemy Player	Game Actions and Notes
Start Phase	None	None	The current player draws, refreshes power, etc.
First Main Phase	All cards/abilities	None	The current player can select and commit attackers.
Defense Step	None	Ambush units Fast spells	The enemy player can select and commit blockers.
Pre-Fight Step	Fast spells	Fast spells*	* The enemy player can play fast spells only if they commit blockers.
Fight Step	None	None	Battle damage is dealt.
Final Main Phase	All cards/abilities	None	
End Phase Interrupt Step	None*	Ambush units Fast spells	* If the enemy player plays an Ambush unit, the current player can play Fast Spells during this step.
Discard Step	None	None	The current player discards down to 9 cards.
Cleanup Step	None	None	Damage wears off units, temporary effects expire, etc.
Reacting to Spell/Curse	Fast spells*	Fast spells*	* A player cannot react to their own spell; only the other player gets to react.
Reacting to Ability	Fast spells*	Fast spells*	* A player cannot react to their own ability; the other player may react only if it affects them or their cards.
Reacting to Direct Attack	None*	Ambush units Fast spells	* If the enemy player plays an Ambush unit, the current player can play fast spells.

6.0 MISCELLANEOUS

6.1 MAXIMUM UNITS

Eternal only allows a player to have 12 units in their playmat zone at a time. A site counts as 2 units toward that maximum. If a player already has 12 units, use the following rules:

- Effects which would create new units fail to have that effect.
- The **Destiny** skill will fail to play the unit and discard it instead.
- If the player wants to play a new unit card out of any zone, they must choose one of their units to be killed in order to make room. They cannot choose a Site to be killed in this way.
- The player can even choose for the new unit being played to be killed immediately. It will still enter the playmat zone briefly, which can help the player affect other cards, such as with the unit's Summon ability.

6.2 MAXIMUM CARDS IN HAND

In addition to discarding down to 9 cards during the Cleanup Step, *Eternal* only allows a player to have 12 cards in their hand zone at a time. If a player already has 12 cards in hand, any card that goes to their hand is immediately discarded to the void.

6.3 PLAYING FREE CARDS

There is a limit to how many cards can be played for free (such as with the **Destiny** skill or when created by another card) during a single turn. Once 50 cards have been played in this way during a turn, any further cards will either remain in the player's hand (for **Destiny** cards) or not be created at all.

6.4 SIMULTANEOUS EFFECTS

When multiple cards or abilities try to take effect at the same time (usually because multiple triggered abilities are waiting for the same triggering event) the order in which they are executed is determined automatically by the game. If any of those cards or abilities can be reacted to, they will still wait until after any reactions to take effect.

6.5 TIEBREAKERS

Most games of *Eternal* end when a player is reduced to 0 health, but if this happens to both players at the same time, the following tiebreakers are used:

- The player at a lower health total loses.
- The player with fewer cards in their deck loses.
- The player who took the first turn loses.