Keeper of the Cards: Card Building Guide

8th Edition

Introduction

This guide teaches how to design cards for Keeper of the Cards.

When designing a card, you have a great deal of free reign with regard to what that card does. However, resource cost (the number indicated on top of the green circle on the bottom) is strictly defined based on what statistics you assign to your card. As such, your job is to make cards that play well, but are not prohibitively expensive to use.

There are two types of cards: creatures, and spells. Creatures have an offensive power ("offense"), a defensive power ("defense"), and any number of abilities. Offense and defense must each be no lower than 0 and no higher than 99. Spells have only a single ability (which may itself be referred to as a "spell").

Constructing Abilities

Abilities are composed of as many as four components:

1. One activation condition (optional)

2. One activation cost (optional)

3. One target selection (optional)

4. One or more effects (required)

These components must be listed on the card in that order, and must be in the same paragraph (do **not** split the text of one ability into multiple paragraphs). You must choose components from the lists on the following pages only. Within these restrictions, you may design any ability you wish.

Many components have variables, indicated as "[x]", "[y]", or "[z]", in them. You are to choose a number for each of these components, replace "[x]", "[y]", or "[z]" with the chosen number, and replace any "x", "y", and "z" in the component's cost with the same respective numbers. Variable amounts must be positive, non-zero integers. You should also change any plurals referring to a variable to singular if you choose the number "1" for that variable.

Some components have variable limits, shown as standard inequalities in curly braces (e.g. "$\{x \leq 10\}$"). If such a limit exists, you must set a value for the variable that fits within the indicated limit. So for example, if a component includes the limit "$\{x \leq 10\}$", you are not permitted to set the value of [x] higher than 10.

If you choose to not give any abilities to a creature, use the text, "This card has no abilities."

You may give a name to any creature ability. If you do so, it must be designated at the beginning of the ability of the paragraph in all capital letters, followed by a colon (":"). One example might be, "HEALING: Roll 2 six-sided dice and increase your hitpoints by the result." Ability names, like card names, serve no function in the game; they are merely allowed for aesthetic purposes. Naming creature abilities is not required, but highly encouraged as it helps make the function of creature abilities clearer and aids in communication between players.

Caveats

Caveats are a special type of component which can only be used by creatures. Any creature may have no more than one caveat, listed before any abilities the creature has. Caveats always do something negative, but reduce the cost of the creature's power levels (offense and defense).

Revised Components

Revised components are components which have been changed compared to previous editions of the game. Revisions are indicated under each component. Old card text is considered to stand for the new revised text, and behavior is adjusted accordingly if necessary.

Redacted Components

Redacted components are components which are no longer legal for use. Any component which is crossed out on the lists on the following pages is redacted. Any card using a redacted component is considered to be a banned card (meaning it cannot be used in a game) and should be revised accordingly.

Revised Variable Limits

From time to time, variable limits may be revised. Any component which sets a variable higher than the current respective variable limit is considered to be a banned card (meaning it cannot be used in a game) and should be revised accordingly.

Resource Cost

Resource costs are determined mathematically by considering the powers and abilities of the card. Each effect and target selection has a designated cost, and each caveat, activation condition, and activation cost has a designated relief, listed on the following pages in parentheses prior to the respective card text.

Effect cost formulas may have the special variable "t" in them. In this case, replace the variable "t" with the calculated cost of the target selection. For example, if your target selection cost is 4 and an effect cost is listed as "3t", then that becomes 3*4, i.e. 12.

To determine the resource cost of a creature, add together the creature's offense and one fifth of its defense, subtract the creature's caveat relief (if any), and if less than 0, set to 0. Then add the creature's ability cost and round up to the next integer if it isn't one already. If less than 1, set to 1.

To determine the resource cost of a spell, take the spell's ability cost and round up to the next integer. If less than 1, set to 1.

To determine the total relief of an ability, add together the activation cost relief, if any, and the activation condition relief, if any.

To determine an ability cost for either a creature or a spell, subtract the total relief from the sum total of all effect costs (note: this does **not** include target costs, as those are factored directly into the effect costs via the special variable "t"). If less than 1, set to 1.

Or, to put it in mathematical terms (using Python programming syntax):

```
total_relief = condition_relief + cost_relief
ability_cost = max(1, sum(effect_costs) - total_relief)
creature_cost = max(1, math.ceil(max(0, offense + (defense / 5) - caveat_relief) + sum(ability_costs)))
spell_cost = max(1, math.ceil(ability_cost))
```

Creating the Card

Once you have decided the parameters of your card and calculated the resource cost, edit "card.xcf" in the GIMP (or another supporting image editor), and edit the text fields appropriately. Make sure the "Creature Template" layer is visible while the "Spell Template" layer is invisible if designing a creature, or vice-versa if designing a spell. If designing a spell, also make sure to remove the offense and defense numbers from the bottom-left and bottom-right of the card, respectively.

If the card is a creature and has caveats that create requirements for summoning, or if the card is a spell and has an activation condition, you should make the "Play Restriction" layer visible. You should also change the color of these kinds of caveats as well as all activation conditions on both spells and creatures in dark red (HTML code 800000), or another color that stands out. This will make it more obvious to players that they must satisfy certain conditions to play these cards.

You can paste an image to represent your card into the "Image" layer.

You may modify the look of the card as long as the layout remains the same and all important text (i.e. the ability text, offense, defense, and resource cost) is clearly legible. You may also resize any text if necessary to fit it on the card.

The standard size for cards is 2.5 inches wide and 3.5 inches tall (or 66mm x 91mm). This does not have to be exact as long as sleeves are used that are the same size and opaque when viewed from the back.

For the back of cards, an image is provided as "card_base/card_back.png". You can print a full sheet of card backs with sets/backs.pdf. You can simply print this onto the back of a sheet which has cards printed on it. This is optional as long as sleeves are used that are opaque when viewed from the back.

Caveats

Caveats are special conditions of creatures, used to weaken them in certain areas and reduce the resource cost of their power levels. Of course, caveats can only be given to creatures, not spells. The amount of relief a caveat provides is listed in parentheses. It is highly recommended (but not required) to color caveats that create summoning requirements dark red (HTML code 800000), or some other color that stands out.

- (x/2) {x≤14} "You must pay [x] hitpoints to summon this creature."

  - *Limit revised (6th Edition); was: {no limit}*

- (x) "You must exhaust [x] of your unexhausted creatures in play to summon this creature."

- (2x) "You must exhaust [x] of your unexhausted creatures in play chosen by an opponent of your choice to summon this creature."

  - *Revised from: "You must exhaust [x] of your unexhausted cards in play chosen by an opponent of your choice to summon this creature." (3rd Edition)*

- (x) {x≤7} "You must sacrifice [x] cards on the top of your deck to summon this creature."

  - *Limit revised (6th Edition); was: {no limit}*

- (3x/2) "You must sacrifice [x] random cards in your hand to summon this creature."

- (2x) "You must sacrifice [x] cards in play to summon this creature."

- (3x) "You must sacrifice [x] cards in play chosen by an opponent of your choice to summon this creature."

- (x/2) {x≤7} "You must destroy [x] cards on the top of your deck to summon this creature."

  - *Limit revised (6th Edition); was: {no limit}*

- (3x/4) "You must destroy [x] random cards in your hand to summon this creature."

- (x) "You must destroy [x] of your cards in play to summon this creature."

- (3x/2) "You must destroy [x] of your cards in play chosen by an opponent of your choice to summon this creature."

- (x) "You must destroy [x] of your resources to summon this creature."

- (3x/2) "You must destroy [x] of your resources chosen by an opponent of your choice to summon this creature."

- (1) "This creature cannot attack."

- (1) "This creature cannot defend."

- (1.5) "This creature cannot attack or defend."

Activation Conditions

Activation conditions indicate special conditions under which the spell or ability is to be activated. If a spell or ability has an activation condition, it may only be activated under that condition. Otherwise, it may only be activated during your own action phase. Only one activation condition can be used per ability. Some activation conditions also reduce the resource cost of the ability; the amount of relief an activation condition provides is listed in parentheses. It is highly recommended (but not required) to color all activation conditions dark red (HTML code 800000), or some other color that stands out.

- (3) "Activate when this card is damaged, but not destroyed."

- (2) "Activate when this in-play card is destroyed."

- (2) "Activate when this card as a resource is destroyed by paying this card's resource cost."

  - *Revised from: "Activate when this card as a resource is destroyed." (8th Edition)*

- (2) "Activate when this card in your hand is destroyed by paying this card's resource cost."

  - *Revised from: "Activate when this card in your hand is destroyed." (8th Edition)*

- (2) "Activate when this card in your deck is destroyed by paying this card's resource cost."

  - *Revised from: "Activate when this card in your deck is destroyed." (8th Edition)*

- (x) "Activate when at least [x] of your cards in play (excluding this card) are damaged, but not destroyed."

  - *Revised from: "Activate when another of your cards in play is damaged, but not destroyed." (8th Edition)*

- (x) "Activate when at least [x] of your cards in play (excluding this card) are destroyed."

  - *Revised from: "Activate when another of your cards in play is destroyed." (8th Edition)*

- (x) "Activate when at least [x] cards in your hand are destroyed."

  - *Revised from: "Activate when a card in your hand is destroyed." (8th Edition)*

- (x) "Activate when at least [x] cards in your deck are destroyed."

  - *Revised from: "Activate when a card in your deck is destroyed." (8th Edition)*

- (x/5) "Activate when your cards in play take a total of at least [x] damage."

- (x/5) "Activate when you take at least [x] damage."

  - *Revised from: "Activate when you take damage." (8th Edition)*

- ~~(0) "Activate in response to an opponent's summon."~~ *Redacted (7th Edition)*

- ~~(0) "Activate in response to an opponent's attack."~~ *Redacted (7th Edition)*

- ~~(0) "Activate in response to an opponent's card effect."~~ *Redacted (7th Edition)*

Activation Costs

Activation costs serve to reduce the resource cost of an ability by "paying" in other ways. Only one activation cost can be used per ability. The amount of relief an activation cost provides is listed in parentheses.

- (2x) "Remove [x] counters from this card."

- (x) {x≤14} "Pay [x] hitpoints."

  - *Limit revised (6th Edition); was: {no limit}*

- (x/2) "Exhaust [x] of your resources."

- (2x) "Exhaust [x] of your unexhausted creatures in play."

  - *Revised from: "Exhaust [x] of your unexhausted cards in play." (2nd Edition)*

- (4x) "Exhaust [x] of your unexhausted creatures in play chosen by an opponent of your choice."

  - *Revised from: "Exhaust [x] of your unexhausted cards in play chosen by an opponent of your choice." (2nd Edition)*

- (2x) {x≤7} "Sacrifice [x] cards on the top of your deck."

  - *Limit revised (6th Edition); was: {no limit}*

- (3x) "Sacrifice [x] random cards in your hand."

- (4x) "Sacrifice [x] cards in play."

- (6x) "Sacrifice [x] cards in play chosen by an opponent of your choice."

- (x) {x≤7} "Destroy [x] cards on the top of your deck."

  - *Limit revised (6th Edition); was: {no limit}*

- (3x/2) "Destroy [x] random cards in your hand."

- (2x) "Destroy [x] of your cards in play."

- (3x) "Destroy [x] of your cards in play chosen by an opponent of your choice."

- (2x) "Destroy [x] of your resources."

- (3x) "Destroy [x] of your resources chosen by an opponent of your choice."

Target Selections

Target selections are necessary for some effects to work. They serve to designate what cards an effect is used on. Only one target selection can be used per ability. Note: the costs listed here become the variable "t" on the ability's effect(s).

- (0.5) "Target this card."

- (x) "Target up to [x] cards in play."

- (x/(y+1)) "Target up to [x] cards in play with at least [y] counters."

- (x) "Target up to [x] of your resources."

    - *Revised from: "Target up to [x] resources." (6th Edition)*

- (x/2) "Target up to [x] exhausted cards in play."

- (x/2) "Target up to [x] cards in play selected by an opponent of your choice."

- (x/2) "Target up to [x] cards in the current chain." *Redacted (7th Edition)*

- (x) "Target up to [x] cards in your hand."

- (x/2) "Show all cards in your hand to one player of your choice and target up to [x] cards in your hand selected by that player."

- (x) "Target up to [x] cards in one player's hand randomly."

- (x/2) "Target up to [x] cards in one opponent's hand selected by that player."

- (x) "Target up to [x] cards on the top of one player's deck."

- (y²/x) "Have one opponent look at exactly [x] cards on top of your deck and target up to [y] of those cards selected by that player."

- (y²/x) "Have one opponent look at exactly [x] cards on top of their own deck and target up to [y] of those cards selected by that player."

- (x) "Target up to [x] cards in your graveyard."

- (x/2) "Show all cards in your graveyard to an opponent of your choice and target up to [x] cards in your graveyard selected by that player."

- (x) "Target up to [x] cards in one player's graveyard randomly."

- (x/2) "Target up to [x] cards in one opponent's graveyard selected by that player."

Effects

Effects are the main component of abilities, and at least one is required for any given ability. Every effect has a cost, listed in parentheses.

- (2xt) "Place [x] counters on each target."

- (xt) "Remove up to [x] counters from each target."

- (4xt) "Place [x] offense counters on each target; you can remove an offense counter from a card at any time to increase its offense by 1."

- (4xt) "Place [x] defense counters on each target; you can remove a defense counter from a card at any time to increase its defense by 5."

- (4xt) "Place [x] weakness counters on each target; you can remove a weakness counter from a card at any time to decrease its offense by 1."

- (4xt) "Place [x] damage counters on each target; you can remove a damage counter from a card at any time to roll a six-sided die and inflict damage to it equal to the result."

- (4xt) "Place [x] exhaustion counters on each target; you can remove an exhaustion counter from a card at any time to exhaust it."

- (4xt) "Place [x] dice counters on each target; you can remove a dice counter from a card at any time to re-roll any one die."

- (2t) "See all targets."

- (2t) "Exhaust all targets."

- (3t) "Send all targets to the resource zone of their owners (exhausted)."

- (8t) "Destroy all targets."

- (x+t) "Increase targets' offense by a total of [x]."

- (x/5+t) "Increase targets' defense by a total of [x]."

- (x+t) "Decrease targets' offense by a total of [x]."

- (x+t) "Roll [x] six-sided dice and inflict the result of each die as damage to one target."

- (x/4+t) "Inflict a total of [x] damage to targets." *Redacted (2nd Edition)*

- (3t) "Reveal all targets, then summon or cast any number of targets that are not in play (paying the usual costs)."

- (4t) "Switch control of each target in-play creature to a different player of your choice until the end of this turn."

- (3t) "Place all targets on top of owner's deck in any order."

- (4x) "Draw [x] cards."

- (2x) "Increase your hitpoints by [x]."

- (4x) "Roll [x] six-sided dice and increase your hitpoints by the result."

- (2x) "Roll [x] six-sided dice and increase your hitpoints by the result, then roll [x] six-sided dice and increase the hitpoints of one opponent by the result."

- (2x) "Roll [x] six-sided dice and inflict the result as damage to yourself, then roll [x] six-sided dice and inflict the result as damage to any one player."

- (xy) "You may re-roll up to [x] dice for the rest of this turn up to [y] times each."

  - *Revised from: "You may re-roll up to [x] dice for the rest of this turn (excluding the current chain) up to [y] times each." (7th Edition)*

- ~~(x/2) "Inflict [x] damage to any one player."~~ *Redacted (2nd Edition)*

- ~~(5t) "Negate attack of all targets."~~ *Redacted (7th Edition)*

- ~~(5t) "Negate activated effect of all targets."~~ *Redacted (7th Edition)*

- ~~(xy) "You may re-roll up to [x] dice in the current chain up to [y] times each."~~ *Redacted (7th Edition)*