

KEYFORGE

MASS MUTATION

QUICKSTART
GAME DESIGN by RICHARD GARFIELD

WELCOME TO THE CRUCIBLE...

You are an Archon. Hailed by some as a god, respected by others for your wisdom, you were born—or perhaps created—on the Crucible, a world in which anything is possible.

OVERVIEW

KeyForge is a two-player card game in which each player takes the role of an Archon, and leads that Archon's deck against their opponent.

A player's deck represents a team that is attempting to gain Æmber and forge keys. The first player to gather three keys is able to unlock a Vault and win the game.

The defining feature of KeyForge is that no two decks are alike. This is not a trading card game—you cannot craft a deck. Rather, each deck must remain as it is. Every deck in existence is unique!

The goal of this Quickstart is to get you playing as soon as possible and guide you through your first few turns. The best way to learn the game is to dive right in! Set up the game using the following instructions. Then, read the rest of this Quickstart and begin your first game. If you encounter terms or rules that are not outlined in this Quickstart, they can be found in the most up-to-date version of the official KeyForge rulebook located at KeyForgeGame.com.

SETUP

To begin setup, each player chooses an Archon deck to play with during the game. Each deck is led by an Archon, whose name is on the deck's identity card, shown below. (For these decks, the identity card is also the deck list.) All the cards in the deck are marked with that Archon's name.

Each player places their identity card on the table in front of them, shuffles their deck, and places it next to their identity card. Three key tokens are placed near each player's deck with the unforged sides faceup.

Note: If players do not have key tokens (or any other tokens shown here), they can represent the tokens using other objects such as coins, beads, etc.



Identity Card



Deck



Unforged Key Tokens

Place all Æmber and damage tokens, as well as stun, power, enrage, and ward counters, within easy reach of both players to create the common supply.



Æmber Token



Damage Token



Stun Counter



Power Counter



Enrage Counter



Ward Counter

Randomly determine a player to take the first turn. This may be done by flipping a coin. **The first player draws seven cards, and the other player draws six cards.**

The players are now ready to begin the game.

WINNING THE GAME

The goal of the game is to forge three keys, which are represented by key tokens.

Each player begins the game with three unforged key tokens. When a key is forged, flip one token to its forged side.



Unforged



Forged

If a player has six Æmber at the start of their turn, that player **must** spend that Æmber to forge one key. The first player to forge all three of their keys wins the game.

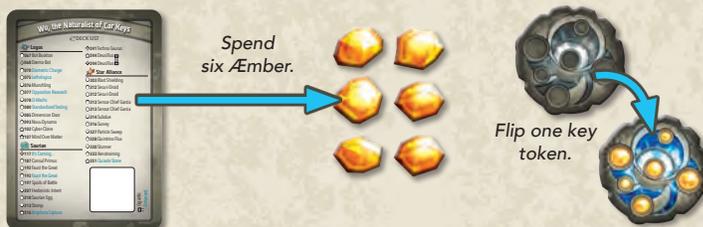
HOW TO PLAY

To play a game of KeyForge, players alternate taking turns until a player wins the game by forging three keys. While a player is taking a turn, they are the **active player**. During a turn, the active player performs five steps in order, each of which is described in this section.

STEP ONE: FORGE A KEY

The cost to forge a key is six Æmber. During this step, if the active player has six (or more) Æmber in their Æmber pool (on their identity card), they **must** spend six Æmber to forge a key. The active player places spent Æmber in the common supply and flips one of their unforged key tokens so the forged side is faceup.

No more than one key can be forged during this step each turn. If the active player does not have enough Æmber to forge a key, nothing occurs during this step.



STEP TWO: CHOOSE A HOUSE

Each identity card shows the three houses that make up its deck. During this step, the active player chooses one of these three houses and activates it. The chosen house is the **active house** for the remainder of the turn. The active player will only be able to play and use cards of the active house this turn, so choose carefully!

STEP THREE: PLAY, DISCARD, AND USE CARDS OF THE ACTIVE HOUSE

This is the step during which most of the game is played.

During this step, the active player may **play**, **use**, and/or **discard from hand** any number of cards that belong to the active house (chosen during step two). Eligible cards may be played, used, and/or discarded in any order.

Rules for playing, using, and discarding cards are described in further detail later in this Quickstart.

First Turn Rule: During the first player's first turn, that player may play or discard from hand **only one card** of the active house.

STEP FOUR: READY CARDS

During this step, the active player readies all of their exhausted cards.

All cards in play exist in one of two states: ready or exhausted. Generally, a card must be ready for a player to use it. Using a card typically causes it to become exhausted. The "ready cards" step is when the active player gets to ready their cards for their following turn.



Ready



Exhausted

STEP FIVE: DRAW CARDS

During this step, the active player draws cards from the top of their deck until they have six cards in their hand. If the active player already has six or more cards in their hand, no cards are drawn at this time. If a player needs to draw but has no cards remaining in their deck, that player shuffles their discard pile to create a new deck and continues drawing.

If the active player has enough Æmber on their identity card to forge a key, they announce "**Check!**" to their opponent, so that their opponent knows they are able to forge a key at the beginning of their next turn.

After this step, the active player's turn is over. The other player becomes the active player and takes their turn, beginning with step one.

QUICK REFERENCE

A turn sequence and icon key are provided here for easy reference.

TURN SEQUENCE

- 1 Forge a key.
- 2 Choose a house.
- 3 Play, discard, and use cards of the chosen house.
- 4 Ready cards.
- 5 Draw cards.

BONUS ICONS

- Æmber
- Capture
- Damage
- Draw

PLAYING CARDS

During step three of their turn, the active player can play any number of cards that belong to the active house.

BONUS ICONS (NEW)

Many cards have bonus icons in the upper-left corner. After a card with a bonus icon is played, the **first** thing the active player does is resolve each bonus icon on that card. There are four types of bonus icons:

Æmber (🟡): Gain 1 Æmber. Each time a player gains Æmber (for any reason), the Æmber is placed in their Æmber pool (on that player's identity card).

Capture (🟡👤): A friendly creature captures 1 Æmber from the opponent. (This Æmber is taken from the opponent's pool and placed on that creature.)

Damage (🔴): Deal 1 damage to a creature in play.

Draw (🔵): Draw 1 card.

PLAY ABILITIES

Some cards have a bold "**Play:**" ability. Such abilities resolve after the card's bonus icons are resolved, if it has any, and after the card enters play.

ENTERING PLAY EXHAUSTED

When a creature or artifact enters play, it enters play exhausted. This means that generally a player will not be able to use a card during the same turn that it is played.



Action card



Artifact



Creature



Upgrade

CARD TYPES

There are four types of cards that appear in decks: action cards, artifacts, upgrades, and creatures. There are different rules for how each type is played.

Action cards: When an action card is played, the active player resolves the card's "**Play:**" ability, and then places the card in their discard pile.

Artifacts: When an artifact is played, the active player places it in their play area behind their battleline (see **Creatures**). Artifacts enter play exhausted, but they remain in play from turn to turn.

Upgrades: When an upgrade is played, the active player chooses a creature and attaches the upgrade to that creature, placing it beneath (slightly overlapped by) the creature. Each upgrade remains in play from turn to turn and modifies the card to which it is attached.

If the card to which an upgrade is attached leaves play, the upgrade is discarded.



The number of Æmber symbols on the card is the amount of Æmber gained. This card grants one Æmber.



The "Soulkeeper" upgrade is attached to the "Snudge" creature.

KEYFORGE MASTER VAULT

Join the KeyForge community with the KeyForge Master Vault! With it you can manage your Archon deck collection, earn rewards and explore the world of the Crucible! The KeyForge Master Vault app is available for both iOS and Android, and at KeyForgeGame.com.



Creatures: Creatures enter play exhausted, in a line known as the **battleline**. This line is a row of creatures in front of the player. Each time a creature enters play, it must be placed on a flank — at the far left or the far right of its controller’s battleline. Creatures remain in play from turn to turn.



When the “The Vaultkeeper” creature is played, it is placed on the flank of the battleline.

If a creature leaves play, gaps in the battleline are removed by shifting the line inward.



When the “Adaptoid” creature leaves play, the battleline is shifted inward.

DISCARDING CARDS

During step three of their turn, the active player can discard from their hand any number of cards of the active house. This lets the player remove cards they do not want to play, freeing up space to draw new cards at the end of the turn.

THE DISCARD PILE

Any time a card is discarded (or destroyed) for any reason, it is placed in its owner’s discard pile. This is a faceup pile of cards next to that player’s deck.

USING CARDS

During step three of their turn, the active player can use any number of cards of the active house that they have in play.

Creature cards can be used to do one of three things: reap, initiate their action ability, or fight. Generally, upgrade and artifact cards can only be used to initiate their action ability.

REAPING

Any ready creature of the active house may be used to reap.

When a creature is used to reap, exhaust the card. Then, its controller gains one Æmber from the common supply and resolves all of the creature’s “**Reap:**” abilities if it has any.

INITIATING ACTION ABILITIES

Any ready card of the active house may be used to initiate its “**Action:**” ability, if it has one. To use a card’s “**Action:**” ability, exhaust the card and resolve the described effect.

If a card is already exhausted, its “**Action:**” ability cannot be initiated.

CARD ABILITIES

To resolve a card’s ability, a player follows the instructions described on the card. When resolving a card ability, resolve as much of the ability as possible. If the text of a card directly contradicts the text of the rules, the text of the card takes precedence.

FIGHTING

Any ready creature of the active house may be used to fight.

When a creature is used to fight, exhaust the card. Then, its controller chooses one creature controlled by the opponent as the target of the attack. A creature cannot fight if there is no enemy creature that can be targeted by the attack.

Each of the two creatures deals an amount of damage (which is explained later) equal to its power to the other creature. All damage from a fight is dealt simultaneously.

After the fight resolves, if the attacking creature survives the fight, resolve all of that creature’s “**Fight:**” abilities.

DAMAGE

If a creature is dealt damage (for any reason), place an amount of damage on the creature equal to the amount of damage dealt. If a creature has an amount of damage on it equal to or greater than its power total, the creature is destroyed and placed in its owner’s discard pile. If a creature has an armor value (to the right of a card’s title), the armor prevents that much incoming damage each turn. A “~” symbol indicates that the creature has no armor.



Example: Sally, who has activated house Saurian this turn, decides to fight using Thero Centurion (power 6). She exhausts Thero Centurion and chooses one of her opponent’s creatures, Moor Wolf (power 2). Thero Centurion deals 6 damage to Moor Wolf, and Moor Wolf tries to deal 2 damage to Thero Centurion, but 1 of this damage is prevented by Thero Centurion’s armor. The dealt damage is placed on the two creatures simultaneously. As Moor Wolf only has 2 power and now has 6 damage on it, it is destroyed and placed in its owner’s discard pile. Thero Centurion remains in play with 1 damage on it.

ADVANCED CONCEPTS

Some cards in the unique Archon decks might raise new questions. The following are a number of concepts, terms, and keywords players may encounter while playing the game. For more information, and an introduction to the setting, please visit KeyForgeGame.com to find the latest version of the complete KeyForge Rulebook.

ARCHIVES

A player’s archives is a facedown game area near that player’s identity card. Card abilities are the only means by which a player is permitted to add cards to their archives. During step two of a player’s turn, after they select an active house, the active player is permitted to pick up all cards in their archives and add those cards to their hand.

A player may look at their archives at any time. A player is not permitted to look at an opponent’s archives.

If the ability instructing a player to archive a card does not specify where the card is archived from, the archived card comes from that player’s hand.

CAPTURE

Captured Æmber is taken from an opponent’s Æmber pool and placed on a creature controlled by the capturing player. Players may not spend captured Æmber.

When a creature with Æmber on it leaves play, the Æmber is placed in the opponent’s Æmber pool.

Unless otherwise specified, Æmber is placed on the creature that captured it.

CHAIN, CHAINS, CHAIN TRACKER

When playing KeyForge, chains are sometimes required as an additional cost for certain card abilities. The tracker pictured to the right can be used to track the number of chains a player has.

If a player has at least one chain when refilling their hand during step five, they draw fewer cards based on the chain tracker. Then, they shed one chain and lower their chain tracker by 1.



Chain Tracker and Token

ENHANCE (NEW)

The enhance keyword has no effect during gameplay. Instead, each card with the enhance keyword has added the indicated bonus icons to random cards in your deck. (This has already happened during the deck generation process.)

ENRAGE

When a creature becomes enraged, place an enrage status counter on it. When a creature with an enrage counter on it is used, it must be used to fight, if able. After a creature with an enrage counter on it fights, remove all enrage counters from it.

While a creature has an enrage counter on it, it cannot be enraged again.

EXALT

When an effect instructs you to “exalt” a creature, take 1 Æmber from the common supply and place it on that creature.

When a creature with Æmber on it leaves play, the Æmber is placed in the opponent’s Æmber pool.

GIGANTIC CREATURES (NEW)

Gigantic creatures are rare creatures that are spread out over 2 cards, with one card containing the creature’s text box and the other its art. In order to play a gigantic creature, a player must have both halves of the creature in hand, and play those cards together as a single creature. While in play, a gigantic creature is treated as a single creature for the purposes of all card and game effects.

OMNI

The active player may trigger any “Omni:” abilities under their control during any of their turns, even if the card with the “Omni:” ability does not belong to the active house.

+1 POWER

When a creature is given a “+1 power counter,” one such status counter is placed on the creature. For each of these counters that is on a creature, that creature’s power is increased by one.

STUN

When a creature becomes stunned, place a stun status counter on it. While a creature is stunned, it cannot fight, reap, or use action or omni abilities.

A stunned, ready creature of the active house can be used by exhausting it to remove its stun status counter. If a card effect would cause a stunned creature to fight, reap, or use an action or omni ability, instead that creature is exhausted and the stun status counter is removed.

Constant abilities and abilities that do not require the creature to reap, fight, or be used are still active.

If a stunned creature is attacked, it still deals damage to the attacking creature during the fight.

While a creature is stunned, it cannot be stunned again.

WARD

When a creature becomes warded, place a ward status counter on it. When a creature with a ward counter on it would be damaged or leave play, instead discard each ward counter on it.

While a creature has a ward counter on it, it cannot be warded again.

KEYWORDS:

Assault (X) – Before this creature attacks, deal X damage to the attacked enemy.

Deploy – When you play a creature with the deploy keyword, it can be played anywhere into your battleline instead of on a flank.

Elusive – The first time this creature is attacked each turn, no damage is dealt by either creature.

Enhance – The listed bonus icons have been added to random cards in the deck.

Hazardous (X) – When this creature is attacked, it deals X damage to the attacker before the fight resolves.

Poison – Any creature dealt damage by this creature during a fight is destroyed.

Skirmish – When this creature is used to fight, it is dealt no damage in return.

Taunt – This creature’s neighbors cannot be attacked unless they have Taunt.

THE UNIQUE DECK GAME

KeyForge is a Unique Deck Game (UDG) in which every deck is unique.

Each Archon deck is a one-of-a-kind deck that is ready to play as soon as you open it. These decks can be played against one another, or against your friends’ decks. As no two decks are alike, every game is different!

Additional Archon decks are sold separately, and each deck adds a greater variety of possibilities to your collection. There are more than 400 different cards in the Mass Mutation card pool. With each deck, you will discover a new and singular mix of cards, tactics, and strategic potential.

Should you seek even greater competition, KeyForge tournaments and championship events are sanctioned and supported by Fantasy Flight Games Organized Play. Find us online at KeyForgeGame.com.



Two Unique Mass Mutation Decks



Mass Mutation Display

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