

Rulebook

Sirlin games



Rulebook version 46

What is Codex?

Codex is a customizable (but not collectable) card game inspired by real-time strategy (RTS) video games. Construct tech buildings, train units, level up heroes, and try to destroy your opponent's base. War now rages across the Fantasy Strike world and each faction is using its unique strengths to try to come out on top.

Highlights about the game:

- Build your deck as you play without your opponent knowing your choices right away.
- A codex full of answers for whatever's thrown at you.
- Heroes that can level up and that each have their own spells.
- "Patrol zone" combat system makes turns goes quickly.
- No randomness in resources.

Object of the Game

Destroy the opponent's base—it's a building with 20 hit points.

Game Mode	# of Players	Notes	Page
1-Hero	1 vs 1	Learn the rules to this mode first. Each player has 1 hero.	2
3-Hero	1 vs 1	Each player has 3 heroes. This is the standard mode for competitive play.	11
Two-Headed Dragon	2 vs 2	Team up for 2v2 madness.	14
Free-for-all	3 - 5	Everyone gets to play the whole time (no player elimination).	15

Components

(Core Set)

- 229 cards total
  - 2 10-card starting decks (one red, one green)
  - 2 worker cards (x4 on one side, x5 on the other)
  - 6 hero cards (three red, three green)
  - 72 red cards for your codex (2 copies of 36 cards)
  - 72 green cards for your codex (2 copies of 36 cards)
  - 33 token cards
  - 24 mini cards for add-ons and specs
- 2 codex binders
- 2 game boards
- Dial to track hit points of bases (assembly required)
- Chits for tracking gold, damage, hero XP, etc.
- Rulebook

(Deluxe Set)

- 702 cards total
  - 8 10-card starting decks (two neutral, plus six other colors)
  - 8 worker cards
  - 20 hero cards
  - 72 codex cards for each of 6 colors
  - 48 codex cards for the neutral faction
  - 72 token cards
  - 30 mini cards for add-ons and specs
  - 12 map cards
- 6 codex binders
- 2 high quality playmats
- 3 extra player boards
- Dial to track hit points of bases (assembly required)
- Chits for tracking gold, damage, hero XP, etc.

Codex 1-Hero Mode

If you have already played the Codex Starter Set (featuring the Bashing and Finesse heroes), then you already know how the gameplay system works and you can skip to page 10 to learn about playing 3 heroes at a time.

If you haven't played Codex before, it's best to start with controlling only 1 hero because you'll have a lot fewer cards to read in order to get going. Let's go over the basic concepts you'll need to understand, then we'll put them all together. Here's a quick list of what you'll learn:

- Card Drawing and Deckbuilding
- Gold and Workers
- Spells and Heroes
- Tech Buildings (and what they produce) and Add-ons
- Combat
- Parts of the Turn

Then you'll be ready to set up your first game. Once you know how to play the 1-hero mode, you'll only need to know a few extra things to play the 3-hero mode.

Card Drawing and Deckbuilding

Cards in your hand are one of the main resources in Codex. The more cards you have, the more options you have. You start the game with a deck of just 10 cards and you draw 5 of them for your initial hand. Each **draw phase**, you must discard your entire hand (yes, really) then draw that number of cards plus two, but stop drawing once you have 5. For example:



Discard a hand of 0 cards ➙ draw 2
Discard a hand of 1 card ➙ draw 3
Discard a hand of 2 cards ➙ draw 4
Discard a hand of 3, 4 or 5 cards ➙ draw 5

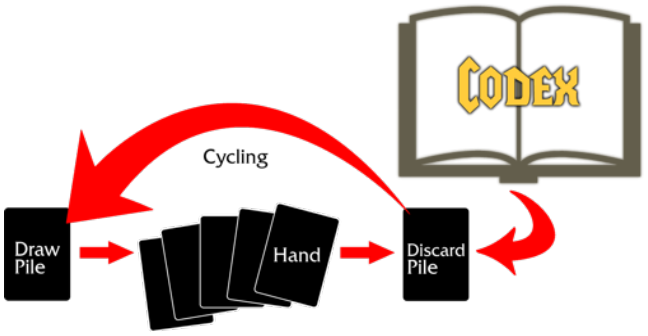
The point of this is that if you use a lot of cards in one turn, you won't be able to draw as many cards next turn. It might take a couple turns to fully recover and get back to drawing 5 cards.

If you would draw a card when your deck is empty, then you shuffle your discard pile and it becomes your deck again, then continue drawing. In other words, your cards will eventually cycle back to your hand, even after you use them.

Note: you can only reshuffle this way once per main phase. If you manage to empty your draw pile a second time during your main phase, you can't draw any more cards during that main phase because you're probably up to something no good!

You won't cycle just those same cards over and over though. Each **tech phase**, you'll add two cards from your codex to your discard pile, face down. Your codex is a set of 24 extra cards (2 copies of 12 different cards) that you have access to during a game. In the 3-hero vs 3-hero mode, you'll have three times as many cards in your codex and you should put them in the included physical binders to store them. For now, you can keep your 24 codex cards off to the side. You can put them in a binder if you want, but it's few enough that you don't need to.

Each player has their own private codex cards. Every time you put two cards from your codex face down into your discard pile, other players won't know what you put there. They won't even know if you put two copies of the same card there, or one copy of two different cards. All discard piles are face down specifically to hide your deckbuilding choices (though you can look at your own discard pile any time). Think of it like a **fog of war**: your opponents are temporarily blind to what you're planning and they'll only figure out which cards you "teched for" later on when you play them.



Gold and Workers



Gold is the other main resource that you manage in Codex. You need it to play cards, to activate abilities, and to level up heroes (we'll get to all that later). The large number inside the gold coin in the upper left corner of a card is its gold cost, so that's what it costs to play.

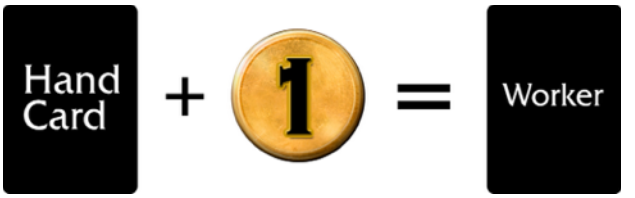
You get gold from your workers. Player 1 starts the game with a "worker x4" card in play, which represents four workers. Player 2 uses the other side, which has worker x5. During your upkeep each turn, you get one gold for each of your workers. Track it on your worker card with gold chits, dice, or whatever implement you prefer.



Worker x4

The gold you accumulate stays in your gold pile until you spend it. That means you can stockpile it across turns if you don't spend it all. There is a limit though: you can't have more than 20 gold at a time. If you'd get more than that, the overage disappears and you still will just have 20. (It also means you should probably spend some more gold!)

You can hire up to one additional worker on each of your turns. To do that, pay 1 gold, then put a card from your hand face down near or underneath your worker card. That facedown card represents your new worker.



Destroyed or sacrificed workers are always trashed; they don't go to the discard pile.

Try to hire a worker each turn if you can. Sometimes you just can't spare the 1 gold or the 1 card that turn to do so though.

Spells and Heroes

You can't just play spells willy-nilly! **You MUST have a hero in play to cast a spell.** The *heroes* cast the spells, after all.

Spells are usually one-shot effects. That means they resolve, then go to your discard pile. Some are Ongoing Spells though, which means they stay in play until something says they don't. Sometimes ongoing spells have "channeling" which means they'll be destroyed if the hero who cast them leaves play. Other times they say they "attach" to something, and if that something is destroyed the ongoing spell gets discarded too. But if they don't attach to anything and don't have channeling, they'll stick around until something specifically destroys them. Ongoing spells themselves can't be attacked.



Spell

Heroes wait in your command zone to be summoned (not in your deck) so you always have access to them. When you summon them, they arrive at level 1. While they're in play, you can level them up for a cost of **1 gold per level**. You can level them up multiple times during your turn (for example, pay 4 gold to level them up 4 times). Also, if an opposing hero dies, your hero **levels up twice for free** if it's in play!

As heroes level up, they get better ATK and HP stats and they gain more abilities. They don't lose the abilities from their lower levels. Whenever a hero reaches its middle level band or its max level, **heal all damage on it** (exciting!).



Hero

When a hero reaches max level, you can't level it up any further. To cast a hero's **ultimate spell**, that hero had to be under your control AND max level at the start of your turn (heroes can't cast ultimate spells the turn they arrive). Ultimate spells are so powerful that they require some preparation, so remember to level up your hero to max the turn before you'll cast its ultimate spell.

When your hero dies, it returns to your command zone and loses any levels gained. It loses all other modifiers such as +1/+1 runes, too. You can't re-summon it until after your next turn. (You might turn it face down for a turn to help remember that.)

Tech Buildings (and what they produce)

Tech buildings allow you to play units, upgrades, and other buildings. You start the game with just your base (it counts as a tech building), which allows you to play tech 0 cards—the ones in your starting deck. You can also build your tech I, tech II, and tech III buildings to make more powerful units, upgrades, and buildings.

You need a **tech I building** to play **tech I cards**.



Units are the meat of your forces: they can attack and protect your other forces by patrolling (see the Combat section, page 5).

Upgrades give you some kind of bonus or ability. They can't be attacked, and can't attack or patrol either.

Buildings can't attack or patrol. Unlike upgrades, buildings CAN be attacked.



Requirements to Build Tech Buildings



You must have at least 6 workers to make your tech I building, then you can pay 1 gold to start building it. It doesn't finish constructing until the end of your turn, so you can't play tech I units or build your tech II building until your next turn.

You need 8 workers and a tech I building in order to make your tech II building. You need 10 workers and a tech II building in order to make your tech III building.

It's important to protect your tech buildings. If one gets destroyed, **your base takes 2 damage.** You can **rebuild it without paying any gold**, but you still have to wait until the end of your turn for it to finish construction and you won't be able to construct anything from it until it finishes.

Tech buildings don't have anything to do with spells; you need a HERO to cast a spell. Tech buildings are just for producing units (and upgrades and other buildings).

Tech Buildings
Your **base** → Lets you play tech 0 cards in your starting deck.

Tech I building, requires 6 workers to build → Lets you play tech I cards.

Tech II building, requires 8 workers and a tech I building to build → Lets you play tech II cards.

Tech III building, requires 10 workers and a tech II building to build → Lets you play tech III cards.

Add-ons



Your base can have at most one add-on at a time. When playing 1-hero mode, you have access to the surplus and tower add-ons (in the 3-hero mode, you'll also get the tech lab and heroes' hall.) Use the mini-cards with tower on one side and surplus on the other to mark which add-on you build.

Add-ons are not "tech buildings," but they also take until the end of your turn to finish building and if they are destroyed, your base takes 2 damage. You can sacrifice your own add-on if you want (and deal 2 damage to your base), in order to make room for a new add-on.

The **surplus** add-on lets you draw a card each turn. Simple and powerful! Build a surplus when you're limited by cards rather than gold.



The **tower** can detect one stealth or invisible thing per turn. That detection lasts until the end of that turn. Usually stealth and invisible attackers can ignore your patrollers (see the Combat section below), but if you have a tower then the first one of those that attacks you per turn can't ignore your patrollers. On your turn, the tower (optionally) lets you reveal one invisible thing, which lets you attack it and target it with a spell or ability. Finally, the tower deals 1 combat damage to each enemy attacker that it can see (at the same time that attacker deals combat damage). It has anti-air, so it can hit fliers too. Build a tower when you need a bit more defense.

Combat

You can attack as many times as you want during your main phase. Each attack is one-on-one, meaning one attacker and one defender. You can attack anything of your opponent's with hit points: any unit, hero, or building. Your opponent doesn't make any decisions during your attacks because they already set up their defenses on their own turn.



ATK / HP

Patrol Zone



Your **patrol zone** is your main line of defense against attacks. It has five slots which can each hold one (ready) unit or hero. Exhausted units or heroes can't patrol (so you can't usually attack with something and patrol with it that same turn).

During your main phase, you can move units and heroes into and out of your patrol zone however you like and rearrange them however you like, but they don't actually count as patrollers (or even count as being in those slots) until they're locked in. When you end your main phase, your patrollers are locked in until your next turn. These patrollers protect your valuable forces because opponents can't attack your other forces until they deal with your patrollers. Your **squad leader** is especially important because opponents must deal with it before they can even get to your other patrollers.

Each of your five patrol slots gives a different bonus **on opponents' turns**:

- Squad Leader: Gets 1 armor while patrolling and must be dealt with first.
- Elite: Gets +1 ATK.
- Scavenger: Finds 1 gold for you if it dies while patrolling.
- Technician: You draw a card if it dies while patrolling.
- Lookout: Gets resist 1. (Opponents must pay 1 gold to target it with spells or abilities.)

The armor your squad leader gets means the first damage it takes each turn it patrols is absorbed, rather than damaging its HP. That makes it a sturdy protector.

Attacking

You can attack with any unit or hero that you controlled at the beginning of your turn. (In other words, your forces have arrival fatigue the turn they arrive and that wears off the following turn.)

To attack, exhaust your attacker (turn it sideways) and say what it attacks. Your attacker can attack anything of your opponent's that has hit points: any unit, hero, or building. However, if it CAN attack the opponent's **SQUAD LEADER**, then it can't attack anything else. Otherwise, if your attacker CAN attack any other **PATROLLER**, then it can't attack a non-PATROLLER (you can choose which patroller you want to attack).

If your attacker CAN'T attack a certain patroller, that attacker can just ignore that particular patroller. For example, a ground unit without the anti-air keyword can't attack a flying unit, so if there's a flying patroller, your ground unit doesn't have to attack the flier; it still has to attack any other patrollers that it can though, if it chooses to attack at all.

Attackers deal their ATK to the HP of the thing they're attacking. The thing being attacked simultaneously deals its ATK to the HP of the attacker. If any units die (by taking damage equal or greater than their HP or by having 0 hp from debuffs) then put them in their owner's discard pile face down. Damage persists across turns, so track how much damage is on each unit, hero, and building.



Parts of a Turn

Now that you know how the game system works, we can put it all together and see what you do each turn.

Ready

Ready (straighten) any exhausted (sideways) cards that you have in play.

Upkeep

Get 1 gold for each of your workers.
Also do anything that any card tells you to do during your upkeep.

Main Phase

This is the bulk of your turn. You can do these things in any order:

- Hire a worker (maximum of once per turn)
- Build a tech building or add-on
- Summon your hero from your command zone
- Level up your hero if it's in play
- Play cards from your hand or abilities on cards already in play
- Perform any number of combats (one at at time)
- Lock in your patrol zone. **This ends your main phase.**

Discard/Draw (you can call it the "Draw Phase")

Discard your entire hand face down. Next, draw the same number of cards from your draw pile that you just discarded, plus two more cards, but capped at 5 cards.

Tech

Pick two cards from your codex to set aside. They'll go face down into your discard pile just before your next turn starts.

You can either choose two copies of the same card or two different cards. Your opponent doesn't need to wait for you to decide; they can start taking their turn as soon as you end your main phase. You don't have to commit to your teching decision until the start of your following turn, but your game will go faster if you figure out your plan while the opponent takes their turn.

Teching two cards per turn is mandatory **until you have 10 workers**. At that point, you can tech 0, 1, or 2 cards. (Usually 0 is a good idea so you don't bloat your deck.)

Game Setup

Each player chooses one hero to play. Recommended choices for your first game:

- Deluxe set: neutral Bashing hero for one player, and neutral Finesse hero for the other.
- Core set: any of the three red heroes for one player, and any of the three green heroes for the other.

Put your hero card in the command zone of your board or playmat. That's where it waits to be summoned.



Put your worker card in the worker area at the bottom of your mat. It reminds you that you start the game with 4 workers (or 5 for player 2) and gives you a place to track your gold.



Find your 10 starting cards. Take the 10-card starting deck that matches the color of your hero. Starting deck cards all have a dot in the upper left corner so you can tell them apart from your other cards. Each player shuffles their own 10-card starting deck, then draws 5 cards for their opening hand.

Each player should get the 24 cards that go with their hero. For example, if you chose the red Blood hero, then you should find the 24 cards (2 copies of 12 different cards) that say Blood at the bottom. Some say Blood Magic, while others say Blood Tech. None of them have a red dot in the upper left corner though—those are your starting deck cards, not your codex cards.

You can put these 24 cards in a stack next to you, or you can put them into your own codex. Your codex is a card binder that holds all the cards you can add to your deck during the game. In this 1-hero mode, there aren't that many cards, so you don't actually need to use your binder, but you can if you want. (When you play the 3-hero mode, you'll have three times as many cards, and at that point you are STRONGLY URGED to use the codex binders!) If you do use your codex binder for this mode, you can arrange your cards in there however you like. Each pocket is designed to hold 2 cards, so you can put both copies any given card in a single slot.

Map Cards (deluxe set only)

Map cards are optional. Each map changes some rule about the game. If you'd like to use them, then randomly choose one before the game starts (or choose one with any method you like). The map's rule change will affect all players for the duration of the game. Try different maps to have a really different Codex experience!



Tracking Materials

The included chits help you track various quantities in Codex. Have them nearby when you play so you can grab them whenever needed.

Gold Track how much gold you have at any given time.	
Damage Track damage on units, heroes, and buildings.	
XP Track the levels of your heroes (they start at level 1 when they arrive).	
+1/+1 and -1/-1 runes Some spells can put these on units or heroes. (+ runes and - runes cancel each other out).	
Constructed buildings Mark your tech I, II, and III with these when you build them.	
Other runes Whenever a card says to mark something with some sort of rune that isn't +1/+1 or -1/-1, you can use these.	
+2/+2 dancer bonus The Finesse spell Two Step can give this bonus to pairs of units. Use the same color chits for each pair of dancers. (Deluxe set only.)	

Hit points for bases

These dials track the damage on bases for both players.



Sample Turns

Get a friend to play with and randomly determine who goes first.

Player 1's First Turn

Skip your ready step because you have nothing in play yet to ready. Get 4 gold during your upkeep.

Play a unit from your hand to the table, but save 1 gold for a worker. The gold cost of each card is in the upper left of the card, so make sure to pay those as you play your units. If you want, you could summon your hero from your command zone—that costs 2 gold. Put the unit or hero you just played into your squad leader position in your patrol zone. If you have another unit or hero, put it in the elite or technician position in your patrol zone.

Make sure to hire a worker. To do that, pay 1 gold, then put any card from your hand face down next to (or partly under) your worker x4 card. Even though that cost gold to do, that new worker will give gold on every future turn of the game. It's a great investment!

End your main phase now. If you have any gold left over, you get to keep it for next turn. Discard your hand face down, then draw that many cards plus two, capped at five. (You should be drawing five cards here.)

Your opponent can start taking their turn while you look through your codex cards to choose which two to "tech" (meaning which two to add to your discard pile, face down). Get either 2 copies of a spell, or 2 copies of a tech I unit; you decide.

Player 2's First Turn

Do pretty much the same thing player 1 did, but remember that you start with 5 workers rather than 4.

Put a unit or hero in your squad leader slot and if you have another unit, put it in your elite slot. Discard your hand, draw (probably five cards), then start teching two cards from your codex to your discard pile while player 1 starts their next turn.

Player 1's Second Turn

Get your gold from your upkeep; you should have 5 workers now so you'll get 5 gold. Make sure to hire a sixth worker this turn. Once you have a sixth worker, you're allowed to make your tech 1 building.

Spend another 1 gold to start construction of your tech I building. It won't finish until next turn, but it will be good to have it ready if you draw any tech I units next turn.

You have 3 gold left (unless you saved any gold from your first turn). Use it however you like: on a spell if you have your hero in play, or to level up your hero, or on another unit.

Attack if you can set up any favorable trades. You'll have to use your own judgment there. Remember that you'll have to attack the opponent's squad leader first, and the first point of damage you do to it will be absorbed by armor. Any damage beyond that will persist across turns. If you can kill the squad leader, then you can attack another patroller. Once there aren't any patrollers, you can attack anything you want. Attacking heroes and tech buildings can cripple your opponent, but you'll eventually have to attack their base to win.

After you finish your attacks, if any, put one of your units or heroes into your squad leader slot. You can only put READY units or heroes in your patrol zone though; if you attacked with them, you had to exhaust them (turn them sideways) and they won't be able to patrol this turn. If you don't have any patrollers, your opponent will be able to attack whatever they want.

Discard your hand, draw that many cards plus two, capped at five, then tech 2 cards from your codex to your discard pile, face down.

Player 2's Second Turn

Ready your units and heroes, then during your upkeep, get 1 gold per worker you have, which should be 6 gold. Otherwise, follow the same instructions from player 1's second turn.

Decide if you want to lean more heavily on your spells (remember, they require your hero to be in play) or on tech I units (they require your tech I building to be fully constructed). Also, if your hero is damaged, consider leveling it up to the next level band so that it will heal all its damage.

Finish The Game

Keep going until someone destroys the other's base! If you manage to make a tech III unit, that someone will probably be you.

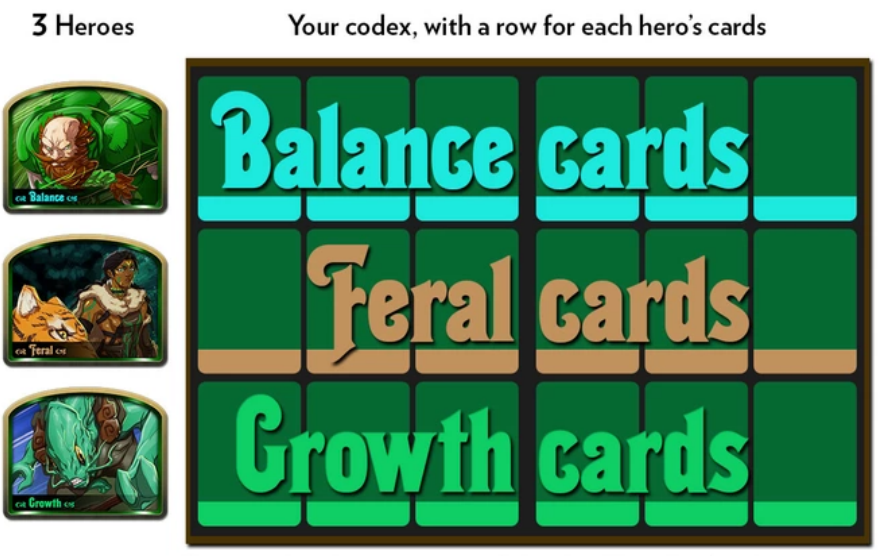
Codex 3-Hero Game

The 3-hero format is deeper and more balanced for tournament play than the 1-hero format. Try it out once you know the rules for playing 1 hero.

Start by picking any 3 different heroes you want! For now, have one player pick the three red heroes and the other player pick the three green heroes. The player with the red heroes gets the red 10-card starting deck, while the other player gets the green 10-card staring deck. Whenever you have more than one color of hero on your team, you designate one hero as your "main," which just means that you'll get the starting deck that matches that hero's color.

Next, build your codex. You get all the cards that go with each of those 3 heroes. For example, if you chose the Balance, Feral, and Growth heroes then your codex will contain 24 cards from each of those specs (2 copies of each of 12 different cards per spec). It's best to store these in one of the included card binders—that's your codex after all. Put 2 copies of each card in the same pocket in your card binder so that you'll use 36 pockets in all.

You can arrange them however you want, but you might want to have each spec on a different row of your codex. For example, top row Anarchy, middle row Blood, and bottom row Fire. Here's a suggested layout:



Codex pages 1 & 2					
Spell	Spell	Spell	Ultimate Spell	Tech I	Tech I
Spell	Spell	Spell	Ultimate Spell	Tech I	Tech I
Spell	Spell	Spell	Ultimate Spell	Tech I	Tech I

Codex pages 3 & 4					
Tech II	Tech II	Tech II	Tech II	Tech II	Tech III
Tech II	Tech II	Tech II	Tech II	Tech II	Tech III
Tech II	Tech II	Tech II	Tech II	Tech II	Tech III

Summoning Heroes

Put all three of your heroes in your command zone at the start of the game. It's public knowledge which heroes are there, so your opponent can look at your heroes if they want.

You can summon any of your heroes, but not all of them at once. You start the game with a **hero limit** of 1. That increases to 2 while you have a tech II building fully built, and it increases to 3 while you have a tech III building. So at the start of the game, you can summon any one of your heroes, but while that hero is still in play, you can't summon a second one; you'd need a tech II building to do that.

Hero limit	You need:
1 hero	Just your base
2 heroes	Tech II building
3 heroes	Tech III building

The hero limit is only checked at the moment that you would summon a new hero. That means if your tech buildings get destroyed, you don't have to sacrifice your heroes. You can even get tricksy and summon one hero, let it die, then summon a different one to stay under the 1 hero limit before you have a tech II building.

And speaking of heroes dying, whenever a hero dies, one (in-play) opposing hero levels up twice for free. **The active player chooses which hero** if there are multiple opposing heroes, and they can only choose a hero that actually can level up at least once.

Casting Spells

Your starting deck spells are called "minor spells." They are tied to a specific color rather than a specific spec. For example, the red minor spells say "Red Magic" at the bottom, rather than "Anarchy Magic", etc. That means any red hero can cast them. If you only have a non-red hero in play, you can STILL cast a minor spell, **but you have to pay 1 extra gold**.

If you're using the neutral faction's starting deck from the Bashing vs. Finesse starter set, you don't have to pay an extra gold because any hero can cast neutral spells without penalty.



The rest of the spells—the ones from your codex—are tied to a spec, such as "Blood Magic." Those aren't so lenient and you can't pay extra gold to cast them with the wrong hero. You MUST have the Blood hero in play to cast a Blood spell and if you don't have him, then you just can't cast it. Likewise, only the Anarchy hero can cast Anarchy Magic, and so on. We can't have just anyone casting Anarchy magic spells, you know!



Tech

Your tech buildings allow you to make units, and also sometimes upgrades and buildings. As usual, your base itself lets you play tech 0 units, upgrades, and buildings. Your tech I building is very lenient in that it lets you play tech I units, upgrades, and buildings of any spec! The catch is that **if your heroes are more than one color, the first tech building or add-on you build costs 1 extra gold**. (Neutral heroes from the starter set don't count as being a color, so you won't pay the extra gold with a team of red / red / neutral but you would with red / red / green.)



At the tech II level, you have to specialize. When you start building your tech II building, declare which spec it's going to be. You have a mini-card for each spec, and you'll place the mini-card of the spec you want to build on your base. Your tech II (and then later your tech III) buildings are tied to that spec and they can only produce units, upgrades, and buildings that match that spec. Once you make this choice, it's locked in for the rest of the game.

Add-ons

What if you don't want that spec choice to be locked in for the rest of the game? Good news, you get two new add-on choices and one of them can help you. In addition to the **surplus** and **tower**, you can now put a **tech lab** or **heroes' hall** into your add-on slot. As usual, you can only have one add-on at any given time.



When you build the **tech lab**, you get to unlock a spec (place that spec mini-card on your base too). This is in addition to the spec that you choose when you build your tech II building. So for example, you might build your tech II building and declare Anarchy spec, then build a tech lab and declare Fire spec. Now you can build stuff from EITHER of those specs. You could build the tech lab first and it would be the same effect, but the tech lab wouldn't actually help you until you had a finished tech II building.

If your tech lab is destroyed, you can't make things from its spec anymore until you rebuild it. When you rebuild it, you could choose another spec if you want. When your tech II building is destroyed, you can't make any tech II stuff, even if you have a tech lab. You can never change the spec choice of your tech II, even when you rebuild it.



The **heroes' hall** simply allows you to have one more hero in play than usual. You can now try two hero spell combos without even having a tech II building. If your heroes' hall gets destroyed, you don't have to sacrifice any heroes you already have in play.

Two-Headed Dragon

This mode is for 4 players to play a 2v2 team game.

Setup

Sit next to your teammate because you can show each other your cards and you can discuss strategy with your teammate at any time. Your team has a single, shared base with 30 hit points. If your team's base is destroyed, your team loses the game.

Besides your base (and information), you don't share any other resources with your teammate. You each have your own hand of cards, your own codex, draw pile, discard pile, tech buildings, patrol zone, etc. You have your own workers and your own gold that can't be shared. You each have one add-on slot to your base, so it's possible to have a total of two add-ons, but you can't have two of the same add-on.

Each player on the team that goes first starts with 4 workers. Each player on the team that goes second starts with 5 workers.

Your Team's Turn

You and your teammate take your turn simultaneously. During your team's upkeep, you each get gold from your own workers. You can each play cards from your hand, do attacks, and so forth during this shared turn.

The other team has two patrol zones. The patrol zones protect both players, so even if one opponent's patrol zone is empty, you still can't attack that player's buildings if you could have attacked patrollers in his partner's patrol zone. You also might be facing two squad leaders. If so, that just means if your attacker can attack one of the squad leaders, it must (you can choose which one). At the end of your turn's main phase, you lock in your patrollers, but you can't put your patrollers in your teammate's patrol zone.

The most important rule to remember is that "you means you." For example, if an effect "gives your units +1/+1" then it does not give your teammate's units the bonus; only YOUR units. If an effect counts up how many green units "you have" then that doesn't count green units your teammate has. Even effects where "you" is implied only affect you, such as "Take an extra turn after this one." YOU take an extra turn, but your teammate does not get to act during that extra turn.

Effects that refer to "friendly" units or heroes really do work with your teammate, though. For example, if an effect says "give +1/+1 to a friendly unit" then you could choose one of your own units or one of a teammate's units. Friendly forces means all forces you and your teammate control.

You're ready for 2v2 action!

Free-for-all

This mode is for 3 - 5 players. There can be only one winner and while there are no teams, you'll find yourself needing to create temporary alliances at some points during the game.

Setup

Player 1 starts with 4 workers, as usual. Players 2, 3, 4, and 5 each start with 5 workers. In addition, player 3 gets a 1/1 neutral mercenary tech 0 unit during their first upkeep (it doesn't have haste, so it can't attack on their first turn). Players 4 and 5 get two and three 1/1 mercenaries on their first upkeeps, respectively.

Player #	Starting Workers	Starting 1/1s
1	4	-
2	5	-
3	5	1
4	5	2
5	5	3

Objective

The game ends when any player's base is destroyed. At that moment, **whoever's base has the most hit points wins the game**. If there's a tie for highest base hit points, then the tied players each take one more turn and see if the tie is broken. Repeat this process if there's still a tie at the end of those turns (though usually you won't have to).

Repairing Your Base

All bases have a new ability in this mode: Pay 3 gold to repair 1 damage from your base. You can play this ability any number of times per turn, as long as you can pay for it. If your base gets low on health, you're not necessarily out of the game!

Free Gold

Whenever you kill an enemy unit on your turn, you get 1 free gold in this mode. You can get a maximum of 3 gold per turn this way. Don't just sit on the sidelines in free-for-all, you get rewarded for making things happen!

Lending Patrollers

If one player's base is heavily damaged, you might think that you and your friend could both attack them to eliminate them. But there is no player elimination in this mode, so actually you'll just end the game and lose immediately if you don't have the least damaged base. In this case you need to think about how to *protect* that weak player, not how to finish them off.

Each turn, you lock in your patrollers at the end of your main phase as usual. During this time (after your main phase is over) you can also LEND your units and heroes as patrollers to other players. Simply place your unit or hero in any open slot in any other player's patrol zone. This lets you help protect a weak player to buy you more time before the game ends. Remember, you want to be the one with the least damaged base, and if you aren't, try to prolong the game until you are.

Whenever you lend a unit or hero to someone, you get it back during that player's upkeep (so you won't be able to actually protect the opponent immediately after you in turn order this way). You really did lose control of the lent patroller while it was away and they really did gain control of it while it was helping them. If it dies, it will go back to YOUR discard pile and you'll get the Scavenger / Technician patrol zone bonuses. Exchanging control of units and heroes doesn't trigger any "Arrives" abilities and it doesn't change the state of them either. For example, if you lend a unit with a +1/+1 rune, it will still have the +1/+1 rune when you get it back. When you get back a lent unit or hero, it won't go to your patrol zone.

We hope you enjoy this unusual free-for-all mode!

Factions and Colors

There are six main factions in Codex, each with their own color. Within each color are three specializations, or "specs". There's also a neutral faction with two specs. The neutral faction is a simple intro to Codex. The core set includes the red and green factions, while the deluxe set contains all of that and four expansion factions too.

Renegades (Neutral)

The Renegades don't consider themselves part of any faction. They view Flagstone as corrupt, the Blood Anarchs as crazy, and the Whitestar monks as just too boring. River Montoya leads a group of agile, dancing fencers and thespians, while Troq Bashar is part of an eclectic entourage of beasts and rugged individuals.



Blood Anarchs (Red)

The Blood Anarchs are a shaky federation of pirates, robbers, brigands, and trouble-makers. Their equipment is sometimes shoddy or stolen. They employ captured monsters and mercenaries of several races. The Blood Anarchs rush down their enemies, and don't bother with defense. They have no single leader, though the unpredictable Captain Zeno Zane (aka "Zane the Insane") is perhaps the most feared.



Moss Sentinels (Green)

The Moss Sentinels respect the beauty and power of nature and defend it from those who would corrupt or defile it. The small critters and large beasts of the forests and marshlands assist the Sentinels, and even the trees themselves come alive. From legions of squirrels to shapeshifters to dinosaurs, the Sentinels' creatures are wild and overpowering. Their leader is Calamandra Moss, the tiger magus.



Flagstone Dominion (Blue)

Flagstone is the realm's capital city, and a paragon of morality, due process, and family values. Their government keeps a watchful eye over their citizens to make sure they make the right choices. Flagstone's laws are strictly enforced, and their army keeps the peace across the land. Flagstone's leader, Sirus Quince, speaks the truth to all.



Blackhand Scourge (Black)
North of the realm, a shadowy presence has festered and spread. The Blackhand Scourge proliferates plague and death wherever they go. They raise the bones of the dead to serve them. Their power has increased tenfold since their leader Vandy Anadrose—now known as The Queen of Demons—made a pact with nefarious, otherworldly beings who seem to serve her for the moment. These demons wield terrifying power, but it comes at a price.



Whitestar Order (White)
Many of the strongest, most disciplined warriors of the realm have banded together to form the Whitestar Order, based at Morningstar and led by stone golem Garus Rook. Their training grounds are home to enlightened monks, mighty barbarians, and agile ninjas with their cute animal friends. Their strength comes from both their teamwork and skill in combat. The Whitestar Order holds a series of fighting tournaments called Fantasy Strike, intended to bring together the many different peoples of the realm in hopes they learn to question Flagstone's rule.



Vortoss Conclave (Purple)
The Vortoss are an ancient, forgotten race who most believe are just a myth. They are said to have developed advanced technology, far beyond that of even our current times. They are also said to have been historians and mystics. Both the magic and technology of the Vortoss centers around time—control of its ebb and flow. Their race became unstuck in time, and the present-day scientist Max Geiger made contact with them, and now serves as their emissary.



Other Odds and Ends

Exhaust



Exhausting a card means turning it sideways to show that it's been used that turn. You can't exhaust it again until you ready it. You **ready** (straighten) all your cards at the beginning of each of your turns.

Attacking exhausts your units and heroes and that prevents them from attacking again or patrolling that turn (only *ready* units and heroes can be in a patrol zone). If you can ready them somehow with an ability though, they CAN attack again or patrol.

All card types have arrival fatigue, which means the turn they come under your control, they can't use abilities that require exhausting as part of the cost. If they are units or heroes, it means they also can't attack the turn they come under your control. If a card has haste though, it CAN attack and use exhaust abilities the turn it comes under you control.

[cost] ⇀ [effect]



You must pay all of a cost (the text before the arrow) to get an effect (the text after the arrow). When resolving an effect, do as much as you can. If it tells you to do two things, but one is impossible for you, you still do the other thing.

Target



Spells with a target icon in their type line means they "target" something. Units and heroes with that icon mean they have an ability that "targets" something. This matters because anything in the **lookout** slot of the patrol zone has resist 1, meaning opponents must pay 1 gold to target it with a spell or an ability. Also, some units are completely untargetable by spells or abilities.

Tokens

Some cards put a token into play. For example, the Growth hero can put a Water Elemental token into play when he reaches max level. Token units have all the properties of normal units, but they don't have standard cardbacks so they can never be shuffled into your deck or go to your hand. If a token ever leaves play, it's destroyed. Also, all tokens count as tech 0 units.

+1/+1 and -1/-1 Runes

These adjust the ATK / HP of the unit or hero they are on. Units or heroes with 0 or less HP die immediately. +1/+1 and -1/-1 runes destroy each other if they would go on the same object.

Legendary Cards

If a unit (or any other card type) is marked as a "legendary unit" then you can't have more than one copy of it under your control. If a second copy of it would come under your control, instead the second copy is discarded. You can never, ever have two copies of a given legendary unit at the same time, even if some other rules implies you can. This supersedes all other rules about legendaries.

This only applies to legendary units with the same name, for a given player. You CAN have two legendary units with different names and you also CAN have a legendary unit with the same name as one an opponent controls.

Do As Much As You Can

If a card says to do X and Y, but it's impossible to do X, then you still do Y. Do as much as you can whenever resolving an effect.

Nothing Is An "Instant"

In some card games, you can activate abilities, then "before they resolve," play so-called instant abilities. Codex does not have instants, so in general you have to finish resolving something before you can do something else. For example, if an effect said "Sacrifice a unit. If you do, give an other unit +2/+2 this turn" you couldn't sacrifice a unit, then activate some other ability, or hire a worker, or summon a hero, etc., before giving the other unit +2/+2. You'd have to completely finish your first ability before moving on to doing something else.

You also can't interrupt combat to hire a worker, summon a hero, play a card, build a building, activate an ability, etc., unless a card specifically says that you can. A *triggered* ability (such as "Whenever you attack, your units get +1/+1") might kick in during another action, but you can't use activated abilities or other actions you initiate yourself before resolving any effects or combats in progress.

Owner vs. Controller

Cards you "own" are the cards you started the game with. Usually, the cards you own and cards you control are the same, but some effects let you take control of an opponent's card. In this case, you now "control" the card but the opponent still "owns" it. Effects that return a card to someone's hand say to return it to the *owner's* hand because otherwise you might have a card with someone else's card sleeves in your hand.

Whenever an effect doesn't specify owner or controller, it means controller. Owner is so rare that we spell that out specifically when it's needed. Things like "Your units get +1/+1" mean "units you control get +1/+1" not "units you OWN get +1/+1".

Active Player Decides

Any effect requiring a decision always refers to the active player. When it's your turn, you can make decisions, but other players can never make decisions on your turn. This allows the game to be played fully asynchronously, meaning you can take your turn then mail it to a friend, then she can take her turn and mail you her set of decisions, etc. In the unusual event that an effect specifically asks an opponent to make a decision on your turn, instead nothing happens.

Further Reading

Have more questions? Check the extensive list of rulings for Codex at www.sirlin.net/rules.
Join the forums at www.fantasystrike.com.
Rate Codex on boardgamegeek.com and join the discussion there, too.
Follow Sirlin Games on Facebook (facebook.com/SirlinGames) or Twitter (@SirlinGames).

Keywords and Glossary

Armor
Armor absorbs damage before HP and is then destroyed. (Note: the Squad Leader's armor refreshes each turn.)

Armor Piercing
Ignores armor.

Arrives: Do X
When this arrives in play, do X.

Anti-air
Can attack fliers, but can ignore patrolling fliers. Deals combat damage to fliers it fights or that fly over this while it patrols.

Attacks: Do X
Whenever this attacks, do X. This triggers after you declare your combat target and after you exhaust your attacker, but before combat damage is dealt.

Boost X
You may pay an additional X when you play this to get the boost effect.

Channeling
Stays in play. Sacrifice it when you lose the hero that cast it.

Deathtouch
Combat damage this deals to units or heroes, even to their armor, kills them.

Detector
Opposing stealth and invisible forces are visible to you. (The Tower add-on can detect once-per-turn.)

Dies: Do X
When this is put into your discard pile from play, do X.

Disable a unit or hero
Exhaust it and it doesn't ready during its next ready step. Sideline it if it was patrolling.

Ephemeral
Dies at end of turn.

Fading
Arrives with X time runes. Remove one each of your upkeeps. When you remove the last, sacrifice this.

Flying
Can fly over ground patrollers. Ground forces without anti-air can't attack this or deal combat damage to it when attacked. ("Fly over" means "used flying in order to ignore a patroller.")

Forecast
Starts off in the future, not in play. Put X time runes on this and remove one each upkeep. When you remove the last, it arrives.

Frenzy X
Gets +X ATK on your turn.

Haste
Can attack and exhaust the turn it arrives.

Healing X
During your upkeep, heal X damage from all friendly units and heroes.

Illusion
Illusions die when [targeted] by spells or abilities.

Indestructible
If this would die, exhaust it and remove all damage and attachments from it instead. You can't sacrifice it.

Invisible
To opponents without a detector, this is untargetable, unattackable, and can sneak past patrollers. While patrolling, this is attackable.

Leaves: Do X
When this goes from in play to not , do X.

Legendary
You can't have more than one copy of a legendary thing with the same name in play. If a second copy of it would be under your control, instead the second copy is discarded. This supersedes all other rules, even those that would seem to allow two copies.

Long-range
Defenders without long-range deal no damage to this when it attacks.

Max level: Do X
When this hero reaches its max level, do X. (You can't level it up further once it's already max level.)

Obliterate X
Whenever this attacks, destroy the defender's X lowest tech units first. If the thing you attacked is now gone, you may select a new thing to attack.

Overpower
Excess combat damage this would deal to a patroller hits something else this could attack. (It will not cascade to a third thing.)

Readiness
Doesn't exhaust to attack, but can only attack once per turn.

Resist X
Opponents must pay X gold each time they would [target] this with a spell or ability.

Sacrifice a thing
Destroy a thing you control. This does not target, so you can sacrifice untargetable things. It goes to the discard pile unless it was a hero or a worker. Heroes go to the command zone and workers are trashed when sacrificed.

Sideline a unit or hero
Move it out of the patrol zone.

Sparkshot
When attacking a patroller, deals 1 damage to an adjacent patroller. (Adjacent means right next to; if there are empty spaces between patrollers, then they aren't adjacent.)

Stealth
Can sneak past patrollers if that opponent has no detector.

Swift strike
Deals its combat damage before units and heroes without swift strike.

Trash
Trashing a card means removing it from the game; it doesn't mean putting it in the discard pile. Even indestructible cards can be trashed.

Unattackable
You can't attack this. (If it's patrolling, you can ignore it.)

Unstoppable
Can ignore patrollers when attacking.

Untargetable
Can't be the [target] of spells or abilities.

Upkeep: Do X
During *your* upkeep, do X.

Quick Reference

Each Turn

- **Ready** — Ready (straighten) all your cards.
- **Upkeep** — Get 1 gold for each of your workers.
- **Main phase** — Do most of your stuff!
- **Discard/Draw Phase** — Discard your hand, draw that many cards + 2, but capped at 5.
- **Tech Phase** — Put 2 cards from your codex into your discard pile, face down. You don't have to finish this until the start of your next turn.

During your main phase, you can:

- Hire at most one worker.
- Build a tech building or add-on (or both).
- Play any cards from your hand.
- Summon your hero from your command zone.
- Level up your hero as many times as you want.
- Attack as many times as you want (one at at time).
- Lock in your patrol zone by ending your main phase.

Workers

- Player 1 starts with 4 workers; player 2 with 5.
- To hire more workers: pay 1 gold, then put any card from your hand face down near your worker card.
- Hire at most one worker per turn.
- Destroyed / sacrificed workers are always trashed; they don't go to the discard pile.

Heroes

- Are not "units".
- Start at level 1.
- Each level up costs 1 gold, can do multiple per turn.
- Heal all their damage when they level up to mid rank or max level.
- **You need a hero to cast a spell.**
- Need a hero that was max level at the start of the turn to cast an Ultimate Spell.
- When a hero dies return it to the command zone (it loses all runes, levels it gained, etc.) and you can't re-summon it until after your next turn.
- Whenever a hero dies, one (in-play) opposing hero levels up twice for free. The active player chooses which hero if there are multiple opposing heroes, and they can only choose a hero that actually can level up.

Tech Buildings

- They don't finish constructing until the end of your turn.
- When a tech building is destroyed, your base takes 2 damage. You can rebuild it for 0 gold (still takes a turn to build).
- **Tech I building.** You need 6 workers to build it. It allows you to play tech I (bronze-bottomed) cards.
- **Tech II building.** You need 8 workers and a tech I building to build it. It allows you to play tech II (silver-bottomed) cards.
- **Tech III building.** You need 10 workers and a tech II building to build it. It allows you to play tech III (gold-bottomed) cards.

Add-on

- Add-ons are "buildings" but not "tech buildings."
- They finish building at the end of your turn, and your base takes 2 damage if your add-on is destroyed.
- You can only have one add-on at a time. You can sacrifice your own add-on to make room for a new one. Your base takes 2 damage if you do.

Attacking

- Attack as many times as you want per turn, one attacker at a time.
- To attack, exhaust your attacker and say what it attacks. It must attack the opposing squad leader if it can. Otherwise, it must attack a patroller (of your choice) if it can. If there are no patrollers it can attack, then you can attack any opposing unit, hero, or building.
- You don't have to attack.

Patrolling

- Your patrol zone has five slots, each with a different bonus.
- Only ready units and heroes can patrol.
- You can rearrange your patrollers however you like each turn. They are locked in when you finish your main phase. They don't actually count as patrolling during your turn, only on opponents' turns.

Damage

- Damage is persistent, so track it across turns. Units, heroes, and buildings do not automatically heal each turn.
- Heroes do heal all their damage whenever they reach the their middle band of levels and whenever they reach their max level.



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