Tom Lehmann

Res Arcana™

Rules



Contents

40 Artifact cards



10 Mage cards



10 Monument cards



150 essence tokens (30 of each)



Elan Life Calm Death Gold



5 Places of Power
(double-sided)





First Player token



8 Magic items



12 "5x" essence chips



4 reference cards

summary tile



Overview

2-4 alchemical mages vie for control of ancient monuments and Places of Power.

As a mage, use your magical essences and items to build artifacts, activate their powers, and command dragons. The mage with the most points wins!

Each mage begins with 1 of each essence, 3 artifacts in hand, and 1 magic item.

During a round, you'll collect essences and then do 1 action each turn, until everyone passes. The goal is to have the most points, 10 or more, when victory is checked.

Essences



Elan Life Calm Death Gold

Components

Mages and items are chosen during setup and begin in play. Each round, when a player passes, they will turn in their item for a new one.

Each player has a personal deck of 8 artifacts, 3 of which form their initial hand. Artifacts are put into play by paying their placement cost in essences. Some artifacts are also Dragons or Creatures. A few artifacts are worth points.

Monuments and Places of Power are claimed from the center by paying their placement cost in essences. Once claimed, a monument or Place of Power cannot be taken by another player. Monuments and Places of Power provide the majority of players' points.

Components with Collect abilities provide essences at the start of each round.

Many components have 1 or more powers. Powers have both a cost and an effect. Many costs include turning that component; once a component is turned, its powers, except for certain "React" powers, cannot be used.

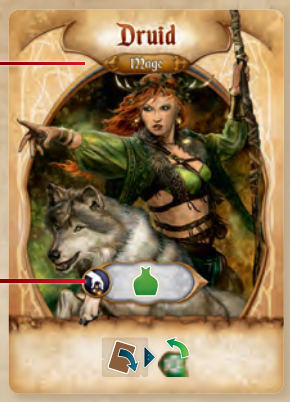


turning

At the end of each round, victory is checked. If no player has won, components are straightened and play continues with a new round.

Which mage will best use their artifacts, magic items, actions, and essences to earn 10+ points and win?

Mage



Mage

Collect ability

Item



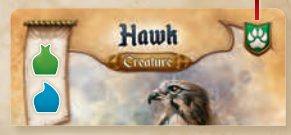
Artifact



placement cost

powers

victory point



Creature



Dragon

Place of Power



victory points

Monument



Setup

1. Put the 8 magic items, tray of essences, and 5x essence chips in the center to form the supply.
2. Next to them, set out the 5 Places of Power.
   First Game: use their sides.
   Later games: for each Place of Power, randomly select which side to use.
3. Shuffle the monuments. Set out 2 of them face up and form a draw pile with the rest.
4. Give 1 of each essence (including Gold) to each player, to form their initial essence pools.
5. Select a First Player, who takes the First Player token.
6. Shuffle the mages and artifacts separately. Deal 2 mages and 8 artifacts to each player. Return the others to the box. Each player examines their cards.

Tip: Do you have dragons, creatures, or ways to make gold? This may suggest Places of Power that will work well for you or if you can buy several monuments.

After examining their cards, each player shuffles their artifacts to form their deck, offering it to an opponent to cut, and then draws 3 artifacts as their initial hand.

Each player then selects 1 Mage. Reveal them. Return unused mages to the box.

First Game: instead, give each player a preset 3-card hand, labeled 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 in their lower right corners, and the matching mage. Deal 5 artifacts face down (unseen) to form each player's deck.

7. In counter-clockwise (reverse) order, starting with the player to the right of the First Player, each player chooses 1 magic item. Begin play with the First Player.



Play

A game typically lasts 4-6 rounds. In each round, do these steps:

1 Collect essences:

- do any Collect abilities, and
- may take essences from components.

2 Do actions, 1 per turn, clockwise from the First Player:

- place an artifact,
- claim a monument or Place of Power,
- discard a card for 1 Gold or any 2 other essences,
- use a power on a straightened component, or
- pass: exchange magic items and draw 1 card.

Continue until all players have passed.

***Pass* procedure:**

a. if you are first to pass, take the First Player token,

b. swap your magic item for a different magic item,

c. draw 1 card.

3 Check victory (10+ VPs).

If no one has won:

- straighten all turned components, and
- begin the next round.

1. Collect

Each player does their Collect abilities and/or takes essences from their components (in any order).

A *component* is an artifact, mage, magic item, monument, or Place of Power.

For each Collect ability on your components, take from the supply the essences shown and add them to your essence pool:

- If an essence has a number, take that number of that essence from the supply; otherwise, take 1.
- If "**+**"s separate the essences, take all of them.
- If "**/**"s separate the essences, choose 1 of them.
- If a number of is listed, choose any mix of essences that equal that number, subject to any restrictions after this symbol, such as ( ): no Gold or Death.

Players may also take any essences on their components during this step.

You may take essences off some components and not others, but if you take any essences off a given component, you must take *all* of them.

Fine Points



The essences supplied are not a limit. As needed, put an essence on a "5x" essence chip to be 5 essences of that color. You may make change at any time.

Some components (e.g. Cursed Forge) list a Collect *cost* and an effect which occurs if this cost is not paid. These may be resolved after taking other essences.

Two artifacts, the Vault and Windup Man, produce effects *if* you choose to leave all their essences on them. See page 10 for details and examples.

You may take all the essences from a Place of Power (but doing so will result in a loss of victory points).

Players usually collect their essences simultaneously, but may request that this step be done in player order, clockwise, starting with the First Player.

2. Actions

Starting with the First Player and continuing clockwise, each player does 1 action until all players have passed. A player who passes cannot do an action later in this step.

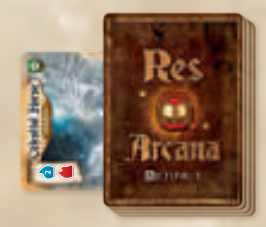
Actions:

- **Place an artifact** from your hand in front of you, paying its cost.
- **Claim a monument** or **Place of Power** from the center, placing it in front of you and paying its cost.

  As all monuments cost 4 Gold, you may claim either one of the two monuments on display or the top card of the monument deck. If you claim a monument on display, replace it with the top card from the monument deck (if possible).

  Once claimed, a monument or Place of Power can not be taken by another player. The supply of monuments and Places of Power is limited.
- **Discard an artifact** from your hand to gain 1 Gold or any 2 other essences (either the same or different).

  Tuck a discarded artifact sideways, face up, under your artifact deck (to distinguish your discards from your turned artifacts). Your discards may be inspected by other players at any time.



Tip: Do not try to place all of your artifacts. Instead, discard some of them to gain the essences needed to place the others.

- **Use a power** on one of your straightened components (see page 7). Powers on turned components cannot be used (except some React powers, see page 7).

  A *component* is an artifact, mage, magic item, monument, or Place of Power.
- **Pass**, ending your actions for this round (see page 8).

Cost

A component's *placement cost* is shown in its upper left corner. Pay the essences shown to the supply.



If an essence has a number, pay that number of that essence to the supply; otherwise, pay 1.

If the essence is , pay any essence. If it lists a number, such as 3, pay any mix of essences equal to that number.

Some artifacts are also Dragons ( ), Creatures ( ), or both (the Sea Serpent). Some discounts reduce the cost to place any artifacts, while others only reduce the cost to place Dragons.

All placed or claimed components begin play straightened.

Fine Points

Two artifacts (Magical Shard, Prism) have a cost of "0"; they may be placed for free (as an action).

Tip: As artifacts can instead be discarded from hand for essences, there is still an implicit cost to place them.

Discount abilities that reduce a placement cost (Artificer, Dragon Bridle, Dragon Lair) are cumulative with each other and possibly a power (Crypt, Dragon Egg, Sorcerer's Bestiary) being used to place a component. If a cost is reduced below 0, it becomes 0.

Powers

Many components list 1 or 2 *powers*. Powers have a cost and an effect, separated by a triangle.



To use a power, pay its cost (putting any essences spent in the supply) and apply its effect (taking any essences gained from the supply).

A power's cost often consists of several parts, separated by "+"s. You must pay *all* of its cost to use a power.

A power may require *turning* its component sideways as part (or all) of its cost. Once a component is turned, unlike abilities, you may not use its powers (except some React powers) until it is straightened.



A power whose cost does not involve turning its component can be used multiple times in a round, but each use of that power is a separate action.

Many effects direct you to put the gained essences on the component, instead of in your essence pool, to be collected on a future round or to become victory points on Places of Power.



Play Example

Paul has claimed the Catacombs of the Dead, a Place of Power, and has 12 Death.

He uses its first power to spend 5 Death to put 1 Death from the supply on it.

On his next action, he does this again.

On his third action, he uses its second power, turning the Catacombs to put 1 Death from the supply on it.

Paul has 2 Death left and the Catacombs is now worth 3 victory points, 1 for each Death on it.





A React power is used out of turn, in response to its condition occurring. Using one is not an action. A React power, unlike other powers, can be used if its component is turned sideways, unless its cost involves turning the component (as then the power's cost cannot be paid).

Life Loss

Some effects inflict *Life loss* 2 on rivals, except those who have passed. Each rival must lose the indicated number of Life essences from their pool. For each Life essence a rival does not have, they must instead, if possible, lose any 2 other essences in their pool (including Gold).



Many React powers enable a player to ignore a given Life loss effect. Many powers that inflict Life loss (e.g. Dragons) provide each rival with an immediate React power which, *if* its cost is paid, enables that rival to ignore the Life loss.

Fine Points

Some effects provide a number of essences. Choose any mix of essences equal to that number, subject to any restrictions, such as (−−): no Gold or Life.



Some powers involve discarding or destroying your artifacts. Discarding is from hand, whereas *destroy* is to discard *from play*. Put the card in your discard pile (tucked sideways under your deck). If there are essences on the destroyed card, return them to the supply. A turned artifact can be destroyed (by another component's power).

Powers (cont.)

Some effects direct you to draw a card. If you have no cards in your deck *and* you need to draw, reshuffle your discards to form a new deck.

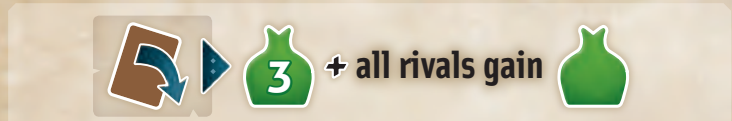
Some effects (Divination, Hawk, Oracle) direct you to draw 3 cards from a deck. If there are fewer than 3 cards in that deck (after reshuffling, if it is your artifact deck), draw them all, and then replace/discard that number of cards.



Some effects (e.g. Chalice of Fire, Reanimate, Witch) enable you to *straighten* a turned component, making its powers available again. The Druid can straighten only Creature artifacts.

Some powers (e.g. Athanor, Philosopher's Stone, Prism) have costs that include some number of essences that must be the same. Their effects convert them all to the same number of a different essence, such as Gold.





Some effects direct your rivals to gain essences from the supply. Rivals who have passed *do* gain these essences.



Some effects (e.g. Hypnotic Basin, Treant) gain essences equal to the number of essences of a rival. You may choose any opponent – including one who has passed – for this effect. Count only the essences in that player's essence pool. Those essences are not removed.



Some effects (e.g. Corrupt Altar, Fiery Whip, Sacrificial Dagger, Sacrificial Pit) produce a mix of essences based on an artifact's placement cost. Total the number of essences in the cost, adjust this by any modifier, and then take this number of essences from the supply, in any mix (subject to any listed restrictions). The essences you take need not include any essences listed in that artifact's cost.

Passing

A player who cannot or does not wish to do an action must *pass*.



If you are the first to pass in a round, take the First Player token – worth 1 point when checking victory – and flip it over to its Passed side.



Swap your magic item for a *different* one in the supply, flipping the new magic item over to its Passed side.

Then, draw 1 card (if possible). If you have no cards in your deck, reshuffle your discards to form a new deck.

Once a player passes, that player cannot do more actions that round and ignores all Life loss, but can still gain essences from rivals' powers.

3. Victory

After all players have passed, check if any player has 10 or more points from their placed artifacts, monuments, Places of Power, and the First Player token.

If at least one player has 10+ points, the game is over and the player with the most points wins!

> If several players are tied for most points above 10, then the player among them with the most essences *in their essence pool*, with Gold essences counting double, wins. If several of these players are still tied, they share their victory.

If no one has 10+ points, straighten all turned components, flip over the First Player token and magic items from their Passed sides, and begin the next round.

Fine Points

Count all Place of Power victory abilities and victory points on turned components when checking victory.

The Places of Power Cursed Forge, Sacred Grove, and Sacrificial Pit each provide 1 or 2 points in addition to their points for the essences on them.

The First Player token provides 1 point for the player who holds it when checking victory.

A player who has claimed the Coral Castle or Sorcerer's Bestiary may use its power to check victory immediately in the middle of a round (to win once they have 10+ points and are ahead, before another player gains more points).

The Golden Statue's React power (to spend 3 Gold for 3 temporary points) may always be used when checking victory, whether or not its owner has passed.

Draft Variants

After you become reasonably familiar with the artifacts, you may wish to try these variants.

For 2-4 Players

This variant replaces setup step 6.

After players receive their 2 mages, deal 4 artifacts to each player. Each player keeps 1 artifact and passes the other cards to the left (clockwise). Repeat this keep-1-and-pass-the-rest until there are no more artifacts to pass.

Then, deal 4 more artifacts to each player. Each player keeps 1 of these artifacts and passes the others to the *right* (counter-clockwise). Repeat this keep-1-and-pass-the-rest until there are no more artifacts to pass.

Each player should have 8 artifacts. After examining them, shuffle them to form your initial deck, offer it to an opponent to cut, and draw your initial hand of 3 artifacts.

Then, choose mages and magic items normally. Begin play.

Match Play for 2

This adds a face up draft in the middle of a 3 game match.

Play game 1 using the standard setup rules.

After game 1, players retain their mages and place all 16 artifacts from game 1 face up between them. Do setup steps 1-4. The loser of game 1 chooses who will be First Player for game 2. The First Player chooses 1 from the face up artifacts. Players then alternate choosing 2 artifacts until only 1 artifact is left for the First Player, who takes it.

Shuffle your deck for your opponent to cut. Draw your initial hand before choosing magic items. Begin game 2.

After game 2, if you are tied with 1 win apiece, play game 3. Do setup steps 1-4 normally, with each player keeping their mage and the artifacts they drafted after game 1.

The loser of game 2 chooses who is First Player for game 3. Shuffle your deck for your opponent to cut and draw your initial hand. Then, choose magic items and begin play.

Enjoy!

Component Fine Points

See also Powers, Fine Points, on pages 7 and 8.

Mages

Artificer: this discount applies only to artifacts, not Places of Power or Monuments.

Transmuter: some of the non-gold essences you take can be the same as those you turn in. If you have fewer than 2 essences in your pool, you may not use this power.

Artifacts

Athanor: this artifact has two powers. The first is used to build Elan on it (which may be taken during the Collect step if desired). The second requires turning in 6 Elan *from this artifact* to convert any number of some essence, all the same, into that number of Gold.

Corrupt Altar: its second power may be used to destroy the Corrupt Altar itself.

Crypt: the artifact being placed by its second power must be in your discard pile. If the artifact's placement cost is Gold and 1 other essence, reduce its cost to the Gold.

Fiery Whip: its second power can *not* be used on itself.

Guard Dog: its first power (to straighten itself) can be used when the Guard Dog is turned (unlike most powers).

Mermaid: its power is to place 1 Calm, Life, or Gold essence from its owner's pool on one of their components. (Typically, this is used to place an essence on a Place of Power that scores for it.)

Sacrificial Dagger: its second power requires both destroying this artifact *and* discarding a card from hand.

Windup Man: its Collect ability increases the number of essences on this artifact (for a future round), provided its owner takes no essences from it during the Collect step.



Example. *In round 1, its owner uses the Windup Man's power to put a Gold on it. During round 2, its owner leaves this Gold on it during Collect, adds 2 more Gold to it, and then uses its power to put an Elan on it. During round 3, its owner leaves the Elan and 3 Gold on it during Collect and adds 2 Gold and 2 Elan. In round 4, its owner takes 5 Gold and 3 Elan from this artifact in the Collect step.*

Vault: its Collect ability gains its owner any 2 non-Gold essences ("interest"), if there is 1 or more Gold on the Vault that its owner does not take.

Example. *In round 1, its owner turns the Vault to put a Gold from the supply on it. In round 2, its owner leaves this Gold on it during Collect, takes 1 Calm and 1 Life from the supply, and uses its power to add a Gold to it. In round 3, its owner takes 2 Gold from it instead of 2 non-Gold essences from the supply.*

Magic Items

Transmutation: some of the essences you take may be the same as those you turn in. You must have at last 3 essences in your essence pool to use this power.

Monuments

Golden Statue: the points provided by this React power *are temporary*, lasting until the end of this victory check.

Places of Power

Cursed Forge: during the Collect step, either pay 1 Death (the curse) or turn this Place of Power. See page 5.

Dragon's Lair: this power requires turning both this component *and* a Dragon.



Sacred Grove: this power requires turning both this component *and* a Creature.



Sorcerer's Bestiary: this Place of Power scores 3 points for the Sea Serpent (which is *both* a Dragon and Creature).

Glossary

Ability: a Collect effect, placement discount, or victory formula on a component that automatically applies (when appropriate) whether or not that component is turned.

Component: an artifact, mage, magic item, monument, or Place of Power.

Creature: a type of artifact.

Destroy: to discard an artifact from play, not from hand. Destroyed artifacts are placed in your discard pile.

Discount: a reduction in the number of essences needed to place a given component. Placement discounts cannot reduce a cost below zero.

Dragon: a type of artifact.

Essence: Calm, Death, Elan, Gold, or Life.

Essence Pool: essences a player has, not on components, that they can spend to pay costs.

Life Loss: a rival's effect which requires you to either use a React power to ignore it or pay the indicated number of Life. For each Life you cannot pay, you must lose 2 other essences from your pool (if possible). Players who have passed ignore Life loss.

Mage: a component that begins in play. A mage is not an artifact and cannot be destroyed.

Magic item: a component type taken from the supply during setup and swapped when passing.

Monument: a component type claimed from the center. A monument is not an artifact and cannot be destroyed.

Passed: a player who has passed cannot do further actions that round and ignores all Life loss, but still gains any essences provided by rivals' powers.

Place of Power: a component type claimed from the center. A Place of Power is not an artifact and cannot be destroyed.

Placement Cost: the cost in essences to place an artifact or claim a monument or Place of Power.

Power: a cost and an effect on a component. Except for React powers, using a power requires its component be straightened (not yet turned sideways), takes an action, and involves paying its cost and applying its effect.

React Power: a power that may be used out of turn if its condition occurs. A React on a turned component may be used if its cost does not involve turning that component.

Rivals: your opponents (not you).

Straighten: to turn a sideways component straight, ready to be used again.

Turn: to turn a component sideways, usually as part of a power's cost.

Credits

Design and rules
Tom Lehmann

Cover and card illustrations
Julien Delval

Graphic Design
Cyrille Daujean

Production
Ted A. Marrioti

Playtesting and Advice
Elmar Blaschek, Jim Boyce, Stephan Brissaud, Chad Cook, Dave Eisen, Beth Heile, David Helmbold, Jay Heyman, Trisha and Wei-Hwa Huang, John Knoerzer, Chris Lopez, Herbert Maderbacher, Adrien Martinot, Aliza Panitz, Bernhard Petschina, Larry Rosenberg, Ron Sapolsky, Karin Seiberl, Greg Silberman, Kevin Thornbury, Gabriel Warshauer-Baker, Dan Blum, Lisa Bjornseth, Melissa ane Will DeMorris, Bianca van Duyl, Chis Esko, Jim Fairchild, Mike Fitzgerald, Rachel Gay, Jennifer Geske, Astrid, Eric, and Franz Grundner, Sam Hillaire, Bryan Howard, Joe Huber, Aeos James, June King, Ron Krantz, Matt Leacock, Herb Levy, Chris Lopez, Dan and Julie Luxenberg, Brian Modreski, Rory Morse, Sebastien Pauchon, Mary and Ravindra Prasad, Andreas Preiss, Alberto Rivera, Dan Rosart, Adam Ruprecht, Rob Smolka, Günther Spitzner, Simon Weinberg, Kevin Wilson, Mary Wolf, Jason Woolever, Michelle Zentis and Don Woods.

Author's Special Thanks
William Attia and Conny Richter.

Sand Castle Games' Special Thanks
Julien Delval, François Kayat, Maud Daujean, Lydie Tudal, Vishal and Raashina Gauri, Hélène and Tanguy Gréban, Virginie Gilson, Céline Boutet, Cat Mauras, Didier Weiss, Benoit Valdelièvre, Mathilde Pignol, Curt Bererton, Antoine Bauza, and all our enthusiastic friends who helped this game to be published.

Setup

- **Set out the Places of Power.**

  First Game: use their sides.

- **Set out 2 monuments.** Form a draw pile with the others.
- **Give 1 of each essence** (including Gold) to each player.





- **Select a player to go first,** who takes the first player token.
- **Deal 2 mages and 8 artifacts** to each player. The rest will not be used for this game. Look at all 10 cards.

  Each player shuffles their artifacts and draws 3 to form their initial hand.

  Each player selects 1 mage. Reveal them. Remove the others.

  First Game: give each player a preset 3-card artifact hand (labeled 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 in the lower right corners) and matching mage. Deal 5 artifacts unseen to form each player's deck.

- In *reverse* order (starting with the last player), **each player chooses a magic item.**



You are now ready to begin.

Round Summary

1 Collect essences:

- do abilities,
- may take essences from components.

2 Do actions, 1 per turn:

(clockwise from First Player)

- place an artifact,
- claim a monument or a Place of Power,
- discard a card for 1 Gold or 2 other essences,
- use a power,
- pass (see below),

until all players have passed.

Pass steps:

a. if first to pass, take First Player token,
b. swap your magic item for a different magic item,
c. draw 1 card.

3 Check victory: does any player has 10+ VPs?

- if not, straighten components; begin next round.

Winning: most VPs

- if tied, the tied player with most essences in their pool wins;
- each Gold in pool counts as 2 essences.

Table of Contents

Overview 3
Setup 4
Play 5
1. Collect 5
2. Actions 6
- Cost 6
- Powers 7-8
- Life Loss 7
- Passing 8
3. Victory 8
Draft Variants 9
Component Fine Points 10
Glossary 11

Sand Castle Games
304 S. Jones Blvd #3342,
Las Vegas NV 89107 - USA

Res Arcana © 2019 / Sand Castle Games inc.