

MAGIC The Gathering® **Old School**



Short introduction to Oldschool Cube format

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MTG CUBE is a good format for multiplayer social play. A Cube is a cardpool of typically 360 or 450 cards (or even 720 cards!) divided into stacks ("Booster packs") of 15 cards that all participating players draft from.

For your first cube, I recommend using 360 cards. A 360-card cube can support exactly eight players. If you create three fifteen-card "booster packs" for each player, this means that every single card in your cube will be drafted, which is the most optimal way to experience your cube.

When constructing your Cube, you first must consider some principles for the construction:

1) Rules format

You need to select an old-school format and apply the rules to your cube construction: Eternal Central, Atlantic or Swedish banned and restricted rules? The Cube shown on this site follows the Swedish B/R rules

2) Cube Type

You need to decide if your Cube should be a singleton Cube - only containing a single copy of each card or a Normal Cube with up to 4 copies of each card except from the one copy restricted cards. A singleton cube can be constructed more balanced than a cube that contains many four-offs

3) Design principles

Color Balance: (*Mandatory*) The most important aspect of balance is to have the same number of cards per color. Here's a good starting point for your 360-card cube

Here's a good starting point for your 360-card cube:

60 white cards

60 blue cards

60 black cards

60 red cards

60 green cards

30 non-basic lands

30 colorless artifacts

For especially an old school cube, the number of desirable artifacts and special lands to include, plus the 40 dual lands, will likely drive you towards a higher number of total non-basic lands and artifacts. This is also fine as long you maintain the color balance.

Alternative starting point: Recommendation would then be to go with 50 cards of each color (250 cards in total) plus 60 special lands and 40 artifacts.

Color Integrity Cube:

An choice is if you want your cube to be designed so it represents the original design principles both *between* each color and *within* each color based on the MTG Core set. What does this mean? From the Core set design Blue has the most instants, Green the most creatures, White the most enchantments and Red the most sorceries etc. This is the design principle *between* the colors. Looking only at *one* color in the core set and count the distribution of creatures, instants, sorceries, and enchantments cards in that color is the design principle *within* this color. For example, 53% of the blue cards in the core set is creatures. By adhering to this principle, the advantage is that you will get the original old school feeling of the colors and maintain the strengths and weaknesses among the colors as thought into in the Core set. The downside is that the colors in your Cube is less balanced and inherits that Blue is a very strong color and might be preferred by players in the drafting.

If you want to apply this design principle to your 360-card cube starting point, the distribution of creatures, sorceries, instants and enchantments should look like this:

	TOTAL	Creatures	Instants	Sorceries	Enchantments	Special Lands	Artifact Creatures	Artifacts
WHITE	60	36	11	4	9			
BLACK	60	34	7	13	6			
BLUE	60	31	14	6	9			
RED	60	33	10	11	6			
GREEN	60	37	12	5	6			
Artifact/ Special lands	60	0	0	0	0	30	10	20
	360	171	54	39	36	30	10	20
	100%	48%	15%	11%	10%	8%	3%	6%

If you want to apply this design principle to your 360-card cube using the alternative starting point with the higher number artifacts and special lands, the distribution of creatures, sorceries, instants and enchantments should look like this:

	TOTAL	Creatures	Instants	Sorceries	Enchantments	Special Lands	Artifact Creatures	Artifacts
WHITE	50	30	9	3	8			
BLACK	50	28	6	11	5			
BLUE	50	26	12	5	7			
RED	50	27	8	10	5			
GREEN	50	31	10	4	5			
Artifact/ Special lands	110	0	0	0	0	60	10	40
	360	142	45	33	30	60	10	40
	100%	39%	13%	9%	8%	17%	3%	11%

Archetype Cube:

A much more popular design principle for an old school Cube is the “archetype Cube design”. This design still adheres to the mandatory Color Balance principle - but instead of applying the color integrity principle when considering how many sorceries, instants, enchantments, and creatures to include for each color - the selection of cards is driven by what type of decks you want to be possible to create from your cube. Often up to 20-25 deck types can be covered in a 360 card cube - as the most popular archetype decks also use some of the same cards. Some archetype deck to list and go for could be Erhnam-geddon, The deck, Dead Guy Ale, Robot deck, White Weenie etc...

Of course, in a cube drafting process it is very difficult for players to build an optimal tier 1 archetype deck. But Cube format is more casual social play and also not aimed at highly competitive play. Most often players can build “the main engine” of an archetype deck and then have to build around this with the best cards possible to support the deck from the drafting process.

Multicolor cards: (*Optional*) Multicolored (Gold bordered legends) cards can be included as part of the cube design if desired. If included, you should use the alternative starting point limiting the base colors to 50 cards each and they should be counted in as part of the artifacts and special lands. From experience it is not recommended to include multicolored cards as many of these are quite difficult to cast in Cube drafting format, where often only two-colored decks are created. If you chose to do so it is best in Singleton Cubes and they should amount to maximum 10-15 cards.

Singleton Cube: If you have selected the Singleton type of Cube, the Color balance principle is still applied. The optional color integrity principle can also work well in a singleton Cube as a singleton cube is better balanced by nature and applying the color integrity principle will not change this.

Other principles: You can select whatever other special building rules or constraints you desire for your cube. This can specially be relevant if you construct your cube from your card collection - not using proxies. Here your card collection might limit the content of the Cube. Cube format is a good format for applying proxies to fill in the gaps until you expand your collection, or you could even construct the cube based on 100% proxies. The Cube box is a mobile unit and cube format is played with multiple players, where one person brings all the cards in the cube that everyone plays with. In addition, it is a very casual format and has a big social aspect to it (that often includes drinks on the table). A Cube based on proxies can in some situations be a good choice.

Some house rules to consider applying to your cube design can be:

- Non-Powered Cube (without Power 9 cards)
- Gentlemen’s Cube (Without Library of Alexandria and Mind Twist)
- Only 3 or 4 colored cube (excluding a color or two)

- Pauper Cube (Only using Common cards)
- No Color Hosers (Do not include color hate cards like protection circles, Flashfires, Tsunami, Gloom, Karma etc...)