

How to Use This Book

In 1910, a metaphysician named Arthur Edward Waite published instructions for a tarot spread he called “An Ancient Celtic Method of Divination.” It was an ingenious spread—quick, versatile, and so easy to use that even beginning tarot readers could get specific answers to their questions.

Since then, the Celtic Cross has become a perennial favorite among tarot readers. The spread is so popular, in fact, that most can even overlook one minor detail: Waite’s “Ancient Celtic Method” isn’t ancient, and it isn’t Celtic, either. (In fact, Waite’s secret society, the Order of the Golden Dawn, developed the spread for new members of the group just a few years before he introduced it to the general public.)

Nevertheless, for the last hundred years, the Celtic Cross has become a mainstay of tarot readers, who like the fact that they can use it to explore any subject or concern. Time after time, the Celtic Cross will offer a clear, concise overview of practically any situation.

The Celtic Cross

The Celtic Cross is an eleven-card spread. Each card represents a separate facet of a single issue. The first card, the significator, represents the subject of the reading. The second card illustrates the

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

situation. The third card, which crosses the first two, describes any conflicts or opposing influences. Additional cards in the spread depict the foundation of the issue, the recent past, the highest ideals, the near future, self-image, public image, hopes and fears, and the most likely outcome of the current situation.

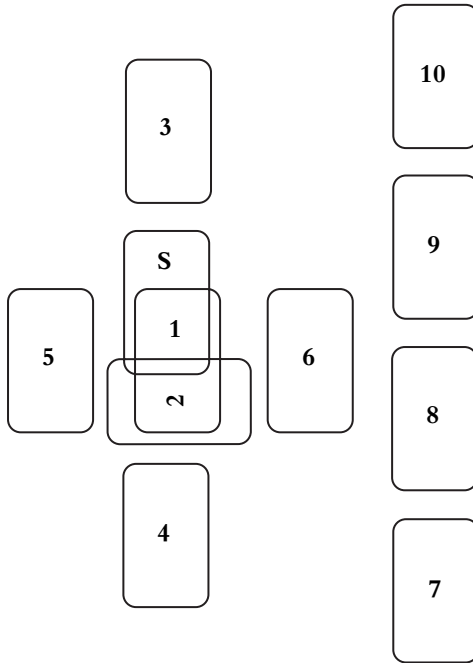
The Celtic Cross spread is easy to memorize. After you lay the significator at the center of the spread—because it is, of course, the central focus of the reading—you can use this mnemonic chant to help you remember where the rest of the cards go:

1. This covers you.
2. This crosses you.
3. This crowns you.
4. This grounds you.
5. This is behind you.
6. This is before you.
7. This is your self.
8. This is your house.
9. These are your hopes and fears.
10. This is what will come; this is the most likely outcome of your current path.

The card positions aren't arbitrary, and they didn't come about by coincidence. In fact, the Celtic Cross spread works so well because it is designed to reflect the way we think and the way we see the world.

Naturally, we all see the world from our own point of view—which seems, to each one of us, to be a central vantage point. We look back at our pasts and forward to our futures. We find a foothold in whatever foundation we have developed and we look up for guidance from our highest ideals. We picture ourselves in our own minds—and then we see other people reflect our words and

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



THE LAYOUT FOR THE CELTIC CROSS SPREAD.

actions back to us. Finally, before we dare to consider the most likely outcome of our current existence, we pause to contemplate our fondest hopes and our deepest, darkest fears.

In the years since its introduction, the Celtic Cross has served as the framework for countless tarot readings. The Celtic Cross also serves as the framework for this book. Each chapter of *Tarot Journaling* is based on the information the Celtic Cross spread is designed to impart. This book is an example of the fact that, like a journal, a written record can bring a tarot reading to life.

You don't need to know the ins and outs of the Celtic Cross to use this book. You don't need to be a master of the tarot or a long-time, experienced journaler. You just need a few basic supplies and a willingness to explore your life with the tarot as your guide.

If you are ready to start shuffling and let the cards fall where they may, gather your cards, your journal, and a pen, and you can get started.

The Basics: A Tarot Tutorial

While you don't need to be a tarot expert to use this book—or to create a tarot journal—your work will be easier if you understand the basic structure and symbolism of the tarot deck.

The tarot is a deck of seventy-eight cards divided into two sections: the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. The Minor Arcana has four suits. Each suit has ten numbered cards and four court cards, much like a standard deck of playing cards.

While that might seem like a lot to comprehend, it's actually an elegant design. Each component fits neatly inside the one that comes before it, like a set of Russian nesting dolls. Individually, each section of the deck seems complete in and of itself—until you open it and find there's another whole world tucked neatly inside.

What's more, the structure and the symbolism of the tarot deck is grounded in the real world. Because it reflects our shared experience as human beings, it's easier to understand than you might think.

The Major Arcana: Cosmic Forces

The Major Arcana, which is Latin for “greater secrets,” is made up of twenty-two cards. The greater secrets are the big mysteries of life—like how we live, learn, fall in love, and find our true calling. For the most part, Major Arcana cards represent powerful cosmic forces that are usually outside our control.

The Major Arcana cards use a series of images to depict our journey through life, starting with the card of the Fool—a naive,

innocent traveler about to embark on a journey of adventure and excitement. The Major Arcana cards also depict archetypal images that you will probably recognize immediately, such as the Lovers, the Hermit, Death, and the Devil.

Each one of those Major Arcana cards represents a universal concept, such as freedom, wisdom, patience, and optimism. Many of them also depict ancient gods and goddesses, who once served as role models for ordinary mortals. In today's more scientific parlance, each one of the Major Arcana cards represents an archetype.

Archetypes are universal expressions of the human condition. All cultures and civilizations, no matter where they sit in time or space, share similar archetypes—like the wandering fool, the powerful magician, and the mysterious, wise woman. Not coincidentally, those are the first three cards of the Major Arcana.

Each card of the Major Arcana depicts one stage in human development. All together, the Major Arcana cards combine to portray an allegorical view of our journey through life. The journey is sometimes called the Fool's journey, in honor of the Fool card who leads the parade. The rest of the Major Arcana consists of the Magician, the High Priestess, the Empress, the Emperor, the Hierophant, the Lovers, the Chariot, Strength, the Hermit, the Wheel of Fortune, Justice, the Hanged Man, Death, Temperance, the Devil, the Tower, the Star, the Moon, the Sun, Judgement, and the World.

The Major Arcana cards are usually easy to tell from the rest of the deck, because they are typically numbered with Roman numerals: I, II, III, and so on.

Set the Major Arcana cards aside and you will find that the second half of the tarot deck is equally fascinating. It consists of the fifty-six cards of the Minor Arcana.

The Everyday Cards of the Minor Arcana

The term *Minor Arcana* stands for the “lesser secrets” of the tarot. While the Major Arcana cards depict cosmic forces, Minor Arcana cards illustrate ordinary people and events. The Minor Arcana cards are no less important than their Major Arcana counterparts, but they do focus more on the activities of everyday life: going to work or taking time to play. Minor Arcana cards tend to depict average people doing commonplace things like dancing, napping, eating, and shopping.

The structure of the Minor Arcana will probably seem familiar to you if you have ever played card games like poker, rummy, or bridge. Just as a deck of playing cards is divided into the four suits of clubs, hearts, spades, and diamonds, the Minor Arcana is divided into the four suits of wands, cups, swords, and pentacles. Wands correspond to clubs; cups correspond to hearts; swords correspond to spades; and pentacles correspond to diamonds.

The Four Suits of the Minor Arcana

In tarot, each suit is more than just a way to divide the deck into manageable groups. In fact, each suit of the Minor Arcana is symbolic, because each one represents a separate realm of existence.

Wands. The fiery suit of wands represents the realm of spiritual existence. Wands cards usually picture freshly cut branches from leafy trees, symbolic of the fire and burning passions of our spiritual life, our inspirations, and our primal drives—our quest for fire. Wands symbolize the fire and passion of spirit. One way to remember that is by picturing each wand as a flaming torch that can be used for light and heat—or, in other words, enlightenment and inspiration. (In some tarot decks, wands are called rods, batons, staves, or staffs.)

Cups. The watery suit of cups corresponds to the world of emotion. The cups cards, which usually depict drinking, toasting, and celebration, are centered on our relationships and commitments to other people. Cups, like their playing-card counterparts, the hearts, symbolize the richness and satisfaction of emotional life. Remember that cups hold water and wine—the essence of life—and cups can be used to toast our friends and family. (In some tarot decks, cups are called chalices.)

Swords. The airy suit of swords depicts the heady issues of thought and the intellect. The suit also symbolizes communication—because we can use words like weapons, both to defend our own ideas and to attack those with whom we disagree. (In some tarot decks, swords are called blades.)

Pentacles. The earthy pentacles cards symbolize the tangible realities of physical life. In the tarot, pentacles usually look like coins, and they represent the things we can touch, the things we can feel, and the things we treasure, both material and spiritual. (In some tarot decks, pentacles are called coins or discs.)

Numbered cards. There are ten numbered cards in each suit. Each card represents one step in a series of events, from beginning to end. Aces represent beginnings; tens represent conclusions.

Aces: new beginnings

2: duality and balance

3: blending and growth

4: solid foundations

5: upsetting the balance

6: re-establishing the balance

7: new awareness

8: re-evaluation

9: near completion

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

10: completion, prepare to begin again

Pages: lessons, news, messages

Knights: adventures, protection

Queens: safeguard, nurture

Kings: organization, defense

The Court Cards

The only structural difference between a deck of playing cards and the tarot's Minor Arcana is the addition of a few extra court cards. In addition to Jacks, which are called Knights in tarot, each suit of the Minor Arcana includes a King, Queen, and a Page. Occasionally, court cards carry other titles, such as Knave, Prince, and Princess. In most tarot decks, however, the four figures constitute a complete royal family: father, mother, son, and daughter.

Court cards have a wide range of functions. They can represent other people, or they can reflect aspects of your own personality. In a tarot reading, even cards that obviously refer to other people in your life actually relate to how you see yourself, and how you project your own likes, dislikes, and personality traits onto other people. For the most part, court cards tend to illustrate what you secretly think and feel about yourself, by helping you recognize and identify traits that you like and dislike in others.

Choosing a Tarot Deck

In order to keep a tarot journal and try the exercises in this guide, you will need a deck of tarot cards—ideally, a traditional tarot deck with seventy-eight cards.

The deck that serves as the de facto standard is Arthur Edward Waite's *Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot*. That's the same deck that Waite was writing about when he first introduced the Celtic Cross spread.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Waite designed the deck in 1909, and he hired artist Pamela Colman Smith to execute his designs. She took the groundbreaking step of adding a scenic illustration to every single card. Previously, only Major Arcana cards featured people and places; Minor Arcana cards generally consisted of a repeated motif, such as six cups in a row, or seven swords.

Pamela Colman Smith's innovation revolutionized the tarot. Suddenly, tarot card readers could interpret images, rather than memorize the meaning of each card or rely on their psychic impressions.

While the Rider-Waite-Smith deck is a perennial bestseller, it is not the only deck on the market. In fact, the Rider-Waite-Smith deck has engendered hundreds of derivative decks, such as the *Universal Tarot* and the *Gilded Tarot*—both good choices for use with this book. Other decks that lend themselves to use with a journal include James Wanless's *Voyager Tarot*, Anna Franklin and Paul Mason's *Sacred Circle Tarot*, and the *Robin Wood Tarot*.

If you are interested in myths, legends, classic stories, or the like, you might want to choose a specialty deck that reflects your interests, such as Anna-Marie Ferguson's *Legend: The Arthurian Tarot*, David Sexton's *Tarot of Oz*, or D. J. Conway and Lisa Hunt's *Celtic Dragon Tarot*. If you feel especially creative, you could even adapt the exercises in this guide to work with other types of divination decks, such as Anna Franklin and Paul Mason's *Fairy Ring Oracle* or Silver Ravenwolf and Nigel Jackson's *Witches Runes*. Ultimately, for the purposes of this book, you can use any tarot or tarot-style deck you like.

Actually, forget about finding a deck that you merely *like*. You will have the best results if you use a deck that you *love*.

The deck you choose should fascinate you. You should be mesmerized by the colors, the lines, the forms, and the style of each card. You should be attracted to the characters pictured in the cards. You should like their faces, their hairstyles, their body language, and their

clothes. You should be inspired by their landscape and intrigued by their architecture. You should be able to recognize several of the artist's symbols—meaningful touches such as accessories, props, power animals, and astrological references. In fact, you should be able to imagine yourself living in that world—because on some level, you will be.

If you don't already own a deck of tarot cards, you can find one at most bookstores. When you go shopping for your deck, try to visit a store or a website that has a wide range of sample cards on display. Make sure that every card in the deck is fully illustrated; some decks, especially those that are reproductions of ancient historical decks, use a simple repeating pattern or motif for some cards, particularly in the Minor Arcana; those sorts of designs usually are not as inspiring as individual illustrations.

Look for art that appeals to you, in color, symbolism, and design. Examine the details of each image. Take time to shop around for an alternate reality that you really like. You're going to be spending a lot of time there.

Choosing Cards

For some of the suggestions in this book, you will work with one card at a time. For others, you will try your hand at simple card layouts and spreads. You can choose the cards you work with in several ways.

Follow the numbers. You could work your way sequentially through the deck. Start with the Fool, move on through the remaining twenty-one cards of the Major Arcana, and then work through the four suits of the Minor Arcana: wands, cups, swords, and pentacles.

Play favorites. Alternately, you could start with cards you especially like—or dislike. Start with all of the cards face up. Flip through them quickly. Set your favorites aside, and then narrow your choice down to the cards you need for the exercise.

Try your luck. On the other hand, you might like to take a ride on the Wheel of Fortune and let the deck choose a card for you. Clear your mind. Shuffle the deck and choose a card, either by cutting the cards or dealing the top card from the deck. Alternately, you could spread your deck face down across a tabletop and move your hand or dangle a pendulum over the cards until you feel drawn to the one you need.

No matter how you find your card—or your card finds you—don't worry that you might somehow get the “wrong” one. In tarot journaling, as in tarot reading, you will always get the card you were meant to see.

Order, Order!

When you read tarot cards, no one expects you to keep the deck in order. In fact, you are expected to shuffle the cards thoroughly, stirring and mixing and randomizing them until some are right-side up, some are upside down, and some have even been dropped on the floor.

When you read this book, you don't have to follow along in any particular order, either: you can work through the exercises in any sequence you like. You can start at page one and work your way through to the appendices and the blurb on the back cover. If you like, you can flip through the pages and pick an exercise at random—just as you can shuffle the deck and pick a card at random. You can start with the suggestions that interest you most, or you can choose an exercise based on a card that interests you.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Most of the activities in this guide can be used with any card in the traditional seventy-eight-card tarot deck. Most can be easily adapted to your specific needs. Some might even lead you to create your own activities for the cards—and truly make your tarot journal your own.