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> **Layer 1:** Copy effects are applied.
> **Layer 2:** Control-changing effects are applied.
> **Layer 3:** Text-changing effects are applied.
> **Layer 4:** Type-changing effects are applied, including effects that change an object's card type, subtype, and/or supertype.
> **Layer 5:** Color-changing effects are applied.
> **Layer 6:** Ability-adding and ability-removing effects are applied.
> **Layer 7:** Power- and/or toughness-changing effects are applied.
>> **7A:** Effects from characteristic-defining abilities are applied.
>> **7B:** Effects that set power and/or toughness to a specific number or value are applied.
>> **7C:** Effects that modify power and/or toughness are applied.
>> **7D:** Power and/or toughness changes from counters are applied.
>> **7E:** Effects that switch a creature's power and toughness are applied.

The application of continuous effects as described by the layer system is continually and automatically performed by the game. All resulting changes to an object's characteristics are instantaneous. If an effect should be applied in different layers and/or sublayers, the parts of the effect each apply in their appropriate ones.

Within a layer or sublayer, determining which order effects are applied in is usually done using a timestamp system. An effect with an earlier timestamp is applied before an effect with a later timestamp. A continuous effect generated by a static ability has the same timestamp as the object the static ability is on, or the timestamp of the effect that created the ability, whichever is later. A continuous effect generated by the resolution of a spell or ability receives a timestamp at the time it's created. An object's timestamp is the time it entered the zone it's currently in, unless it's an Aura, Equipment, or Fortification that's attached to another object or player. If an Aura, Equipment, or Fortification becomes attached to an object or player, the Aura, Equipment, or Fortification receives a new timestamp at that time. If two or more objects would receive a timestamp simultaneously, such as by entering a zone simultaneously or becoming attached simultaneously, the active player determines their timestamp order at that time.

Within a layer or sublayer, determining which order effects are applied in is sometimes done using a dependency system. If a dependency exists, it will override the timestamp system. An effect is said to "depend on" another if (a) it's applied in the same layer (and, if applicable, sublayer) as the other effect; (b) applying the other would change the text or the existence of the first effect, what it applies to, or what it does to any of the things it applies to; and (c) neither effect is from a characteristic-defining ability. Otherwise, the effect is considered to be independent of the other effect.

An effect dependent on one or more other effects waits to apply until just after all of those effects have been applied. If multiple dependent effects would apply simultaneously in this way, they're applied in timestamp order relative to each other. If several dependent effects form a dependency loop, then this rule is ignored and the effects in the dependency loop are applied in timestamp order.

Some continuous effects affect game rules rather than objects. For example, effects may modify a player's maximum hand size, or say that a creature is indestructible. These effects are applied after all other continuous effects have been applied.

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Previously, the action of casting a spell, or casting a card as a spell, was referred to on cards as "playing" that spell or that card. Cards that were printed with that text have received errata in the Oracle card reference so they now refer to "casting" that spell or that card. Some effects still refer to "playing" a card. "Playing a card" means playing that card as a land or casting that card as a spell, whichever is appropriate.

To cast a spell is to take it from where it is (usually the hand), put it on the stack, and pay its costs, so that it will eventually resolve and have its effect. Casting a spell follows the steps listed below, in order. If, at any point during the casting of a spell, a player is unable to comply with any of the steps listed below, the casting of the spell is illegal; the game returns to the moment before that spell started to be cast. Announcements and payments can't be altered after they've been made.

Announce - The player announces that he or she is casting the spell. That card (or that copy of a card) moves from where it is to the stack. It becomes the topmost object on the stack. It has all the characteristics of the card (or copy) associated with it, and that player becomes its controller. The spell remains on the stack until it's countered, it resolves, or an effect moves it elsewhere.

Choose Options - If the spell is modal the player announces the mode choice. If the player wishes to splice any cards onto the spell, he or she reveals those cards in his or her hand. If the spell has alternative or additional costs that will be paid as it's being cast such as buyback, kicker, or convoke costs, the player announces his or her intentions to pay any or all of those costs. A player can't apply two alternative methods of casting or two alternative costs to a single spell. If the spell has a variable cost that will be paid as it's being cast (such as an {X} in its mana cost, the player announces the value of that variable. If a cost that will be paid as the spell is being cast includes hybrid mana symbols, the player announces the nonhybrid equivalent cost he or she intends to pay. Previously made choices (such as choosing to cast a spell with flashback from a graveyard or choosing to cast a creature with morph face down) may restrict the player's options when making these choices.

Target - The player announces his or her choice of an appropriate player, object, or zone for each target the spell requires. A spell may require some targets only if an alternative or additional cost (such as a buyback or kicker cost), or a particular mode, was chosen for it; otherwise, the spell is cast as though it did not require those targets. If the spell has a variable number of targets, the player announces how many targets he or she will choose before he or she announces those targets. The same target can't be chosen multiple times for any one instance of the word "target" on the spell. However, if the spell uses the word "target" in multiple places, the same object, player, or zone can be chosen once for each instance of the word "target" (as long as it fits the targeting criteria). If any effects say that an object or player must be chosen as a target, the player chooses targets so that he or she obeys the maximum possible number of such effects without violating any rules or effects that say that an object or player can't be chosen as a target. The chosen players, objects, and/or zones each become a target of that spell. (Any abilities that trigger when those players, objects, and/or zones become the target of a spell trigger at this point; they'll wait to be put on the stack until the spell has finished being cast.)

How to Distribute - If the spell requires the player to divide or distribute an effect (such as damage or counters) among one or more targets, the player announces the division. Each of these targets must receive at least one of whatever is being divided.

Total cost - The player determines the total cost of the spell. Usually this is just the mana cost. Some spells have additional or alternative costs. Some effects may increase or reduce the cost to pay, or may provide other alternative costs. Costs may include paying mana, tapping permanents, sacrificing permanents, discarding cards, and so on. The total cost is the mana cost or alternative cost, plus all additional costs and cost increases, and minus all cost reductions. If the mana component of the total cost is reduced to nothing by cost reduction effects, it is considered to be {0}. It can't be reduced to less than {0}. Once the total cost is determined, any effects that directly affect the total cost are applied. Then the resulting total cost becomes "locked in." If effects would change the total cost after this time, they have no effect.

Mana abilities - If the total cost includes a mana payment, the player then has a chance to activate mana abilities. Mana abilities must be activated before costs are paid.

Pay all costs - The player pays the total cost in any order. Partial payments are not allowed. Unpayable costs can't be paid.

Once these steps are completed, the spell becomes cast. Any abilities that trigger when a spell is cast or put onto the stack trigger at this time. If the spell's controller had priority before casting it, he or she gets priority. Some spells specify that one of their controller's opponents does something the controller would normally do while it's being cast, such as choose a mode or choose targets. In these cases, the opponent does so when the spell's controller normally would do so. If there is more than one opponent who could make such a choice, the spell's controller decides which of those opponents will make the choice. If the spell instructs its controller and another player to do something at the same time as the spell is being cast, the spell's controller goes first, then the other player. Casting a spell that alters costs won't affect spells and abilities that are already on the stack. A player can't begin to cast a spell that's prohibited from being cast. If an effect allows a card that's prohibited from being cast to be cast face down, and the face-down spell would not be prohibited, that spell can be cast face down.

Activated abilities have a cost and an effect. They are written as "[Cost]: [Effect.] [Activation instructions (if any).]" Previously, the action of using an activated ability was referred to on cards as "playing" that ability. Cards that were printed with that text have received errata in the Oracle card reference so they now refer to "activating" that ability. The activation cost is everything before the colon (:). An ability's activation cost must be paid by the player who is activating it. Some text after the colon of an activated ability states instructions that must be followed while activating that ability. Such text may state which players can activate that ability, may restrict when a player can activate the ability, or may define some aspect of the activation cost. This text is not part of the ability's effect. It functions at all times. If an activated ability has any activation instructions, they appear last, after the ability's effect.

To activate an ability is to put it onto the stack and pay its costs, so that it will eventually resolve and have its effect. Only an object's controller (or its owner, if it doesn't have a controller) can activate its activated ability unless the object specifically says otherwise.

Activating an ability follows the steps listed below, in order. If, at any point during the activation of an ability, a player is unable to comply with any of those steps, the activation is illegal; the game returns to the moment before that ability started to be activated. Announcements and payments can't be altered after they've been made. The player announces that he or she is activating the ability. If an activated ability is being activated from a hidden zone, the card that has that ability is revealed. That ability is created on the stack as an object that's not a card. It becomes the topmost object on the stack. It has the text of the ability that created it, and no other characteristics. Its controller is the player who activated the ability. The ability remains on the stack until it's countered, it resolves, or an effect moves it elsewhere. The remainder of the process for activating an ability is identical to the process for casting a spell.

A creature's activated ability with the tap symbol ({T}) or the untap symbol ({Q}) in its activation cost can't be activated unless the creature has been under its controller's control since the start of his or her most recent turn. Ignore this rule for creatures with haste. If an activated ability has a restriction on its use (for example, "Activate this ability only once each turn"), the restriction continues to apply to that object even if its controller changes. If an object acquires an activated ability with a restriction on its use from another object, that restriction applies only to that ability as acquired from that object. It doesn't apply to other, identically worded abilities. Activated abilities that read "Activate this ability only any time you could cast a sorcery" mean the player must follow the timing rules for casting a sorcery spell, though the ability isn't actually a sorcery. Activated abilities that read "Activate this ability only any time you could cast an instant" mean the player must follow the timing rules for casting an instant spell, though the ability isn't actually an instant.

<u>A</u>ll <u>C</u>razy <u>T</u>eens <u>H</u>ave <u>T</u>ried <u>M</u>agic <u>P</u>ills