

THE MEANING OF THE TAROT

Major Arcana Tarot Card Meanings

The Major Arcana Tarot cards form the foundation of the Tarot deck and consist of 21 numbered cards and one unnumbered card (the Fool). They represent a path to spiritual self-awareness and show the various stages we encounter as we search for greater meaning and understanding. In this way, they hold deeply meaningful lessons.

The Major Arcana Tarot card meanings illustrate the structure of human consciousness and, as such, hold the keys to life lessons passed down through the ages. The imagery of the Major Arcana Tarot cards is filled with wisdom from multiple cultures and esoteric traditions, including the Egyptian, Buddhist, Hindu, Sufi, Hebrew and Christian religions. The 22 Major Arcana cards are like the mandalas of the Tarot. Mandalas are detailed images painted onto canvas and used as spiritual study and meditation aids by the Tibetans. Cards of the Major Arcana include Temperance, Death, The Fool and The Hanged Man.

Therefore it is helpful to study the images of the Major Arcana cards and reflect on their messages. Look beyond the simple keywords and traditional Tarot card meanings, and seek out your own personal meanings of these significant cards. The more you understand about their symbolism, the deeper your understanding of what they represent.

The Major Arcana are not associated with the suits. They include the picture cards that represent principles, concepts and ideals. They are numbered one through 21, with the 22nd card (the "Fool") marked as zero. The Major Arcana cards represent strong, long-term energy or big events in some area of life.

The Minor Arcana cards represent the more minor, practical daily ups and downs in life. Cards of the Minor Arcana: Aces of wands, swords, cups, and pentacles.

Tarot Deck

There are many varieties of Tarot decks, and there is no standard number of cards across all decks. While the types of cards, the suits and their meanings are the same, the illustrations vary greatly. Decks are based on various themes such as nature, animals, fantasy, dragons, etc. I use the Rider-Waite deck, which was created in 1909 by A.E. Waite. The artist was Pamela Colman Smith.

The Tarot deck is made up of the Minor Arcana and the Major Arcana. Like regular playing cards, the Minor Arcana of the Tarot deck includes four suits. Rather than spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs, however, the suits are: wands, swords, cups, pentacles. Each suit has meaning regarding a specific approach to life. The cards within these suits are numbered one through 10 and also include the court cards - the king, queen, knight and page.