

ARCLASH

Omniversal Combat System

v 0.1.6 (April 11, 2023)

Welcome to Arclash!

Arclash is a game for two or more players, using 30-card decks of Character and Support cards. Players Advance their Characters to higher levels and engage in Battle, using Support cards to bolster their Character or affect opponents' Characters.

The victor of each Battle is the player who has the Character with the greatest Power, and that player receives Points equal to the level of the Character(s) defeated. Once a player reaches an agreed-upon number of Points, they win the game.

Each player's deck cannot contain more than 2 copies of any card. Two cards with the same name are not necessarily the same card - but two cards with the same set number are the same card.

A player may also only include 1 copy of 1 Level 4 Character in their deck.

CHARACTER CARDS



POWER: A Character's strength.

LEVEL: How Advanced this Character is. Players begin with a Level 1 Character.

TRAITS: Properties of this Character which can allow other cards to conditionally target it for effects.

ADVANCEMENTS: Which Characters this card can Advance from (and any additional costs to do so).

ABILITY TEXT: The effects of this card. A Character which Advances from this card retains these effects, as well.

CARD NO.

ARTIST

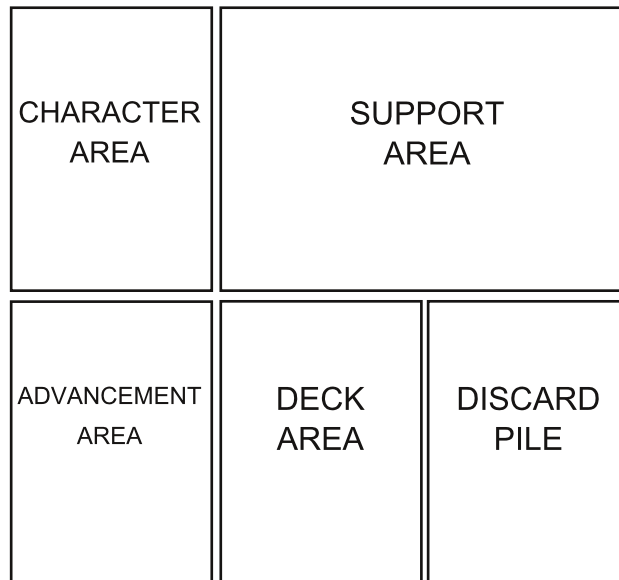
CARD NAME

SUPPORT CARDS



ABILITY TEXT: The effects of this card. Support effects typically end when the Support card is discarded after Battle.

CARD NAME



Players set up play by first deciding on a winning score (e.g. 10, 15, 20). Then, each player finds a Level 1 Character in their deck and sets it face down in their Character Area. Next, they shuffle the rest of their deck and set it face-down in their Deck Area. Finally, each player reveals their chosen Character, and draws 8 cards from their deck.

Each player takes their turn simultaneously. A turn proceeds through the following phases:

1. START

Resolve any in-play card effects that say they take place at the Start of the turn.

2. ADVANCE

a. If a player has a Character card in their hand which can Advance from the Character they currently have in play, they may place it face-down from their hand into the Advance Area.

b. Once each player has either chosen to do this or pass, each player reveals the card in their Advance Area. They then pay any costs the card requires, and place it atop the Character in their Character Area.

This combination of cards is known as the "**Character Stack**", and the highest level card should be placed on top so that the Ability Text of the previous Level is still visible. The Character on the top of the Stack is the current Character, but the Abilities of the previous Levels and their effects are still considered in play.



If it turns out that a player cannot pay any associated costs or meet Advancement requirements, the Advancement card is discarded instead.

c. Each player may then Advance again, repeating the Advance Phase until all players have finished Advancements or passed.

3. BATTLE

Battle progresses through three stages.

a) Beginning Stage

First, resolve any in-play card effects that say they take place at the start of Battle.

b) Support Stage

Then, starting with the player whose Character has the lowest Power and then moving clockwise, each player may play a Support card from their hand into their Support Area. (If more than one player's Character is tied for the lowest Power, use a fair method such as rolling a die or tossing a coin to decide which player goes first.) The effects of Support cards trigger as soon as they come into play, unless they state otherwise.

A player who cannot or chooses not to play a Support card passes to the next player and may not play any further Support cards during this phase.

Players may continue to play Support cards in the same order, until all players have passed.

c) Damage Stage

All players compare the current Power of their Characters, considering all bonuses and penalties provided by active card effects. The player with the Character whose Power is highest wins the Battle. Combine the total Levels of the defeated Characters, and add that sum to the winning player's score.

Any Character who lost the Battle must discard the top Advancement card of their Character Stack. A Level 1 Character is NOT discarded as a result of a loss of Battle. In the event of a tie, all players whose Characters tied for the highest Power should participate in a fair contest (rock-paper-scissors, a coin toss, a die roll) to determine the winner of the Battle.

4. RECOVER

Discard all Support cards in each player's Support Area. Level Down any Level 4 Characters (Discard the Level 4 Advancement Card from that player's Character Stack.)

Each player draws cards until they have 8 in hand again. If at any time a player would be unable to draw because their deck is empty, they shuffle their discard pile back into a new deck and draw.

Then, each player may choose to discard the entire Character Stack they have in play, and place a new Level 1 Character face-down in their Battle Area.

Finally, each player who placed a face-down Character during this phase reveals it.

Then the turn ends, and the Start Phase begins again.

DESIGNING CARDS FOR ARCLASH

When designing Character and Support cards for Arclash, consider the following (loose) guidelines to try and keep cards fair:

Characters should have a Strength that befits their Level. For Level 1, a Character's Strength should generally be 400 or less. Level 2 should be 650 or less. Level 3, 800 or less, and Level 4 can get as high as 999. Obviously, this game is focused on creativity, so you can stretch these guidelines, but consider making sure your powerful cards are still fair. Balance can come in the form of a drawback to the Character - no ability text, for example, or a penalty such as requiring the player to discard cards before Battle.

Characters can Advance as far as Level 4, but as Advancements become increasingly powerful, a designer should consider adding additional costs to the Advancement - such as discarding cards, or even more specific costs such as discarding a specific card, or having a certain number of cards in your discard pile. You should phrase this on the card like so: "Advance from [requirement] Level X and Discard 2 Cards."

Advancement can mean many things. Perhaps it is as straightforward as a Character Advancing into an older or more powerful version of themselves. Maybe they change to a different stance, or combat proficiency, or adopt a new weapon. Perhaps they change form altogether. Or, you could consider portraying an Advancement through a whole Lineage of characters, or you could have each new Advancement be a member of a party coming together to bolster the strength of the original group. Advancement could be as simple as a Character going from being tired to being awake. Be creative with it!

For card synergy, traits AND names can both be vital. Sometimes, words appear in [brackets] on a card text. This means you should look for cards which have the bracketed words in their Traits, or in their Card Name. For example, you might say that a card works if your Character is a [Serpent], or you might be as specific as saying it has to be [Snake Jeff of the Abyss] Level 2.

Support cards are played during battle and their effects will accumulate before Damage is exchanged. With this in mind, **try to keep Support cards from being overwhelmingly powerful**, and instead, focus on providing a small benefit or detriment to your Character or an opponent's. If the ability is powerful, such as providing a very large amount of Power, or forcing other Characters to lose an Advancement card, consider associating it with a dice roll to incorporate an element of chance.

SUGGESTED CHARACTER STRENGTH CHART

LEVEL	POWER RANGE	BUFF/DEBUFF MULTIPLIER	DRAW/SEARCH ABILITY	ADVANCE REQUIREMENT	SPECIAL
1	0 - 400	x25/x25 with limits. +100/-50 max	1 Card Partial Search	N/A	Consider dice rolls as an ability limitation.
2	300-650	x25/x25 +150/-100 max	1-3 Cards Partial Search	0 or 1 Discard	Consider abilities which expand on a Level 1 effect.
3	550-800	x50/x25 +300/-200 max	2-4 Cards Full Deck Search	1 or 2 Discard	Remember that this level will usually be your goal.
4	700-999	x50/x50 +500/-300 max	4-6 Cards Full Deck Search	3 Discard, Level Down after Battle	This Level must be discarded after Battle.

This chart is a suggestion for how to scale the Power and Abilities of Characters you design. Each column offers a reasonable range in which you might work when creating certain kinds of abilities.

LEVEL: The Level of Advancement of the Character in question. This will range from 1 to 4. Remember that only 1 copy of only 1 Level 4 will appear in a deck, and that it will Level Down (de-Advance) after Battle.

POWER RANGE: The general range of Power found at a specific Level. Consider balancing your Power versus the strength of your Abilities. If a Character leans closer to the high end of a Power Range, try to consider somewhat restricted abilities to keep your Character's design fair.

BUFF/DEBUFF MULTIPLIER: Often, card effects "buff", or increase the power of a player's Character, or "debuff" - decrease the power of their opponents' Characters. Depending on the Level of your Character, this Ability might be limited in its scale. For example, at Level 1, you might multiply a dice roll or a count of Characters in play by 25 and add it to your Character's Power - but since it's only Level 1, you should consider cutting that dice roll in half first, or only allow the player to count Characters with a specific phrase in their Name or Traits. But, at Level 3, you might simply roll a die and multiply the result by 50. In this section, the suggested Buff strength is written first, followed by the suggested Debuff strength (*buff/debuff*).

DRAW/SEARCH ABILITY: Other times, card effects have you search your deck or discard pile for one or more cards. Depending on the Level of a Character, a player should be prompted to search either a portion (i.e. the top 5 cards, the top half, only the discard pile) of their deck, or, at higher Levels, allowed to search their deck in full. Lower Level Characters should only find few cards, while the highest Levels might find as many as 6.

ADVANCE REQUIREMENTS: Apart from needing to Advance from a card with a certain phrase or word in its name or traits, as Levels increase, you should consider adding the additional cost of discarding cards from hand to Advance a Character. For example, to Advance to a Level 3, you could write "Advance from any [example] Level 2 and Discard 2 Cards" in the Advancement text.

DESIGNING SUPPORT CARDS



Support Cards are the bread and butter of Battle. During Battle, Support cards are how a player will strengthen their Character, weaken an Enemy, find additional cards, or enact any number of other effects. In this arena, the choice is up to you, as the card designer; but there are certain restrictions that should be considered in the interest of keeping Support cards fair.

The card "Medusa Arms 'Ophiuchus'" is a solid example of a balanced Support card. It provides a reasonable amount of Power to the Character - 50 - and then checks your Character's name and traits before determining if it should also subtract 25 Power from your opponents' Characters. The card's balance is such that buff is reasonable, but the debuff is only half as strong as the buff, and the debuff requires that a condition be met.

When designing Support cards, consider these points:

+50 is an even and balanced amount for your buffs. You should incorporate conditions into any buff that would be higher than +50, such as a dice roll, coin toss, or the presence of specific cards or traits.

If a card both buffs AND debuffs, it should only debuff for half as much as it buffs. If a card both buffs AND draws, it should buff for less than the average 50.

An effect which includes drawing a card should only draw 1 unless a condition is met, for example, discarding a card from the hand, or having a Character with a certain trait or name.

If a card would Level Down a Character or Characters as part of its effect, you should attach that effect to an element of chance, such as a coin toss, dice roll, or even something like having players guess the position of a certain card in your hand.

Effects which force the opponent to discard from their hand or deck should require a condition be met if they discard more than 1 card.