



GET YOUR GEAR AND GET READING!

This is it!

You have finished all of your skill-building and will now put your skills to the test in the Arena.

In this section of the workbook, I will guide you through the art of performing a Tarot reading.

There are several potential approaches, and they do overlap some. This is because on the art side of things one color bleeds into the next. Try out the different approaches, and see which technique works best for you. Let new techniques develop and flower.

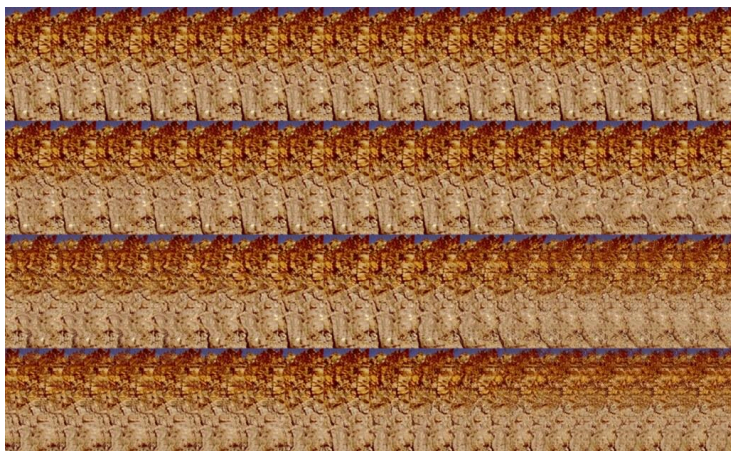
Be patient with yourself. Rome wasn't built in a day. Some readings will hit, and it will feel great, and others will fail to satisfy. Keep reading the cards.

The methods for reading covered in this section are as follows:

- Stereogram: the most artistic, spatial approach
- Puzzle: has a bit of structure to it and a methodology
- Language: approaches Tarot as a language and how to learn it

THE STEREOGRAM APPROACH

Remember those books with 3-D images? The pictures that look like a bunch of pixels until you hold the book a certain distance and angle it a certain way?



That's called a [stereogram](#). The image to the left is of a man repelling off a rock in 3-D.

Image courtesy of Eric Crowley on flickr.

Performing a Tarot reading is a bit like a stereogram.

Just as it's difficult for anyone to tell you how to "see" the man repelling off a rock in this image, it's difficult for me to tell you how to "see" something in a reading.

That said, the following are some tips to guide you.

- Which card or which part of a card immediately catches your eye?
- Look for repeating shapes, symbols, colors or items. See if they make a path or morph into something else. All you need to do at this point is observe, not interpret.
- Is there any obvious flow or development within the cards?
- Do the wands or any other suit or symbol seem to increase?
- Do the Court Cards seem to be gathered together and creating something?
- Zoom out on the reading periodically and see if you catch anything. It could be simple, like a lot of cup cards. Or it might be more subtle, like the way the person on one card is looking toward another card.

The stereogram part of the reading is not structured. It relies more on your intuition and right side of the brain. These are the insights that just "come to you" or that you "just know."

You can backtrack and say, "oh, it was because of this, that, and the other," but it often doesn't really make logical sense.

For me, these types of insights often come through as a feeling. I hook into an overall feeling of the situation surrounding the cards. It may be one person's feelings or a general vibe.

Once I hook into the feeling, the cards fall into context.

This is the problem a lot of beginning Tarot readers have. The cards themselves could represent a broad spectrum of people, situations, and emotions. So how do you know who is who and what is what?

As always, your intuition will help guide you.

When you first open a reading, it's like opening a book for the first time. If you want to get a feel for the book, you look at the cover, read the title, read the back, and look over the table of contents.

This is how we will open the reading, using the questions outlined above.

Notice that with the stereogram approach, we are just noticing, not interpreting.

When you do a lot of observation, noticing, and verbalizing what you see, the picture in the stereogram starts to appear!

One more analogy before we wrap up this section. Tapping into your intuition when reading the cards is like making pictures in the clouds. Maybe only you can see the seahorse. Look away, look back and now the seahorse is a raindrop. Now look at a different part of the sky. What's happening there?

 [Reading Tarot is Like Seeing Pictures in the Clouds | Free Online...](#)

Reading at a Glance



What emotions are present?

joy, grief, worry, sadness, pleasure, excitement,
fun, anger, fear

Empty rounded rectangular box for notes.

What's the overall impression?

"good", happy, depressing, fast-moving, stuck, lots of people, no
people, exciting, energetic, full of obstacles

Empty rounded rectangular box for notes.

What cards stick out to you?

Empty rounded rectangular box for notes.

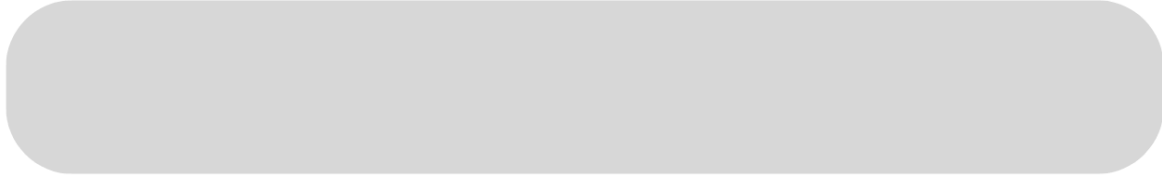
Any dominant cards?

Major arcana, court cards, particular repeating numbers, wands,
cups, swords, pentacles?

Empty rounded rectangular box for notes.

What's the first card and what's the last card?

How does that apply to the question?



What's the "best" card and the "worst"?

How does that apply to the question?



Does the querent show up in the reading?

What card represents them?



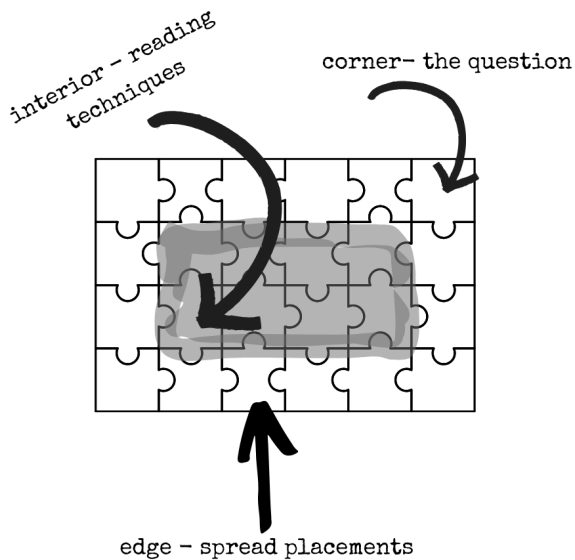
THE PUZZLE APPROACH

Performing a Tarot reading is also like putting together a puzzle.

You've got a box of 500 or 2500 pieces, all jumbled up, and they need to be connected together to form an image.

In the case of the stereogram, you need to relax and stop looking and seeing the way you normally look and see. When you use your eyesight in a less accustomed manner, the image appears.

In the case of the puzzle, you need a systematic approach, or protocol, to put the pieces together and create the final image.



When solving a jigsaw puzzle, my approach is to work from the outside in. First, I find the corner pieces, then the edge pieces, and connect them to make the outer frame of the puzzle. Then, I work my way inward until the puzzle is complete.

You can do the same with a Tarot reading.

corners - this is the question at hand.

edge pieces - these are the card placements of the spread.

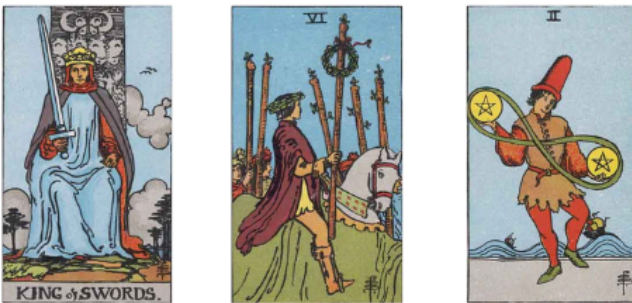
working toward the middle - these are the various techniques you will use to connect the card placements to create a story or scene which contains the answer to the question.

CORNERS AND EDGE PIECES

Corners - When will I finish the first draft of this workbook?



Edges - reading placements of July, August, September



center pieces - techniques used to interpret the cards pulled

Let's look at corners and edge pieces.

The question (or corners) is: When will I finish the first draft of this workbook?

The question is a timing question about finishing the workbook. The answers are in relation to the months of July, August, and September.

Will I receive answers about December? No. This may seem obvious, but a rookie mistake is to try to pull answers that are not within the parameters of the reading.

Will I receive answers about my mother's health? No.

Will I receive answers about what should be included in the workbook? No.

As a new reader, it's easy to get excited and overwhelmed and stray outside of the boundaries of the reading. Keep in mind the question and the card positions that create the sandbox of your reading, so to speak.

Stay focused on answering the question and using the spread positions to create the context of the answer.

Let's try another one.

The question (or corners) is: What are the pros and cons of living in Denver? I am thinking of moving or spending part of the year in Denver.

The edge pieces or spread positions are pros, cons, advice. So, this spread will illustrate the pluses and minuses of living in Denver and give some type of advice.

Will I receive any information about locations outside of Denver? Probably not. The only way that information could come in is through the advice card.

Will I receive information about the cost of living in Denver? Probably so. How can I be assured about getting information about the cost of living in Denver? Ask the question, "What's the cost of living in Denver compared to where I am now?" Furthermore, it's probably more efficient to google the cost of living in Denver than to ask the cards!

Some of this may seem glaringly obvious. I'm including these examples because it's oh-so-easy to get confused and overwhelmed when you don't ask a clear question and keep the edges of the spread in mind.

CENTER PIECES

Once the question is asked and the cards are laid, we have the corners and edge pieces.

Next, we need to start linking pieces together. The pieces may connect off the edges, or they might be linked together in a little cluster that we find a place for later. The way we find these connecting pieces is by scanning the available pieces and trying to find the connections.

For example, there's a lot of blue in this puzzle. There's not a lot of white. Someone's finger is in the upper left hand corner. Hey, this piece right here is the letter "W" in the sign, and so forth.

And, of course, you get lucky on a few pieces. You just pick them up and find where they connect without much effort.

Corners - When will I finish the first draft of this workbook?



Edges - reading placements of July, August, September



center pieces - techniques used to interpret the cards pulled

Going back to the example at the beginning of this chapter, let's take a look at the final row of this diagram.

To answer the question of when I will finish the first draft of this workbook, we need to look at the cards pulled.

The options are:

July - King of Swords

August - 6 of Wands

September - 2 of Pentacles

For this spread, I would approach it in this way: Which card seems to illustrate the draft being completed?

Even though I am trying to pick the one, best card to illustrate the draft being completed, I will make a few quick notes:

- there is movement in the cards (except for the King)
- three different suits are represented
- the wreath in the 6 of Wands becomes two pentacles in the 2 of Pentacles cards
- the best card is the 6 of Wands, 2 of Pentacles is the worst

After scanning and making mental notes, then I can think about what correspondences I have with each of the cards.

King of Swords - kings display mastery, and swords can indicate the written word

6 of Wands - the card can indicate a peak experience or success

2 of Pentacles - this card is about dancing with opposites or trying to juggle and keep balls in the air

Now it's time to make a judgment. I'm going with 6 of Wands, July.

The two contenders were June with the King of Swords and July with the 6 of Wands.

Why did I pick the 6 of Wands over the King of Swords? Because I felt like the King of Swords was representing another person and not myself. The King, I felt, was showing up as a mentor or guide, even just someone to model my work after. And the 6 was the actual victory.

Please note, intuition does not have a shelf life. It occurs in the moment and exists within the framework of a living spread. It makes no sense to extrapolate from this exercise that the King of Swords is always a mentor and the 6 of Wands is always a victory. What you want to focus on is the moment the divination comes through.

This is your touchstone.

IT'S JUST A STORY

Applying the storyboard method to a reading is the simple task of approaching each card as a panel in a comic book or graphic novel. What's the story as presented by each card?

Screenplay writers, TV writers, and app creators all use storyboarding as a method to develop the visual parts of their product. In our case, we have a story board (the visual part) and need to work backwards and discover the story.

Any Tarot reading is an act of discovery. When performing a reading, you are trying to discover or uncover something new (and helpful) for your client.

In order for that to happen, both you and the client must enter into a state of temporary suspension of disbelief.

Are you surprised that I said the *reader* needs to enter a state of temporary suspension of disbelief along with the client?

As a reader, you must approach every reading with fresh eyes, and be ready to discover whatever the cards have for you at that moment.

Now for the practical application of this method.

- Look over the cards and find the main character/characters.

Discovery - the act of finding something that had not been known before. - Cambridge Dictionary

suspension of disbelief - the temporary acceptance as believable of events or characters that would ordinarily be seen as incredible - to allow an audience to appreciate works of literature or drama that are exploring unusual ideas. The state is arguably an essential element when experiencing any drama or work of fiction. We may know very well that we are watching an actor or looking at marks on paper, but we wilfully accept them as real in order to fully experience what the artist is attempting to convey. - phrases.org.uk

- Use the spread placements to help create the context of the story.
- Speak briefly to what is happening *in each card*.
- How do the cards link together to form a storyline taking place in a particular environment or with the characters?
- You do not need to move through the cards in any particular order.
- Bonus tip: there may be a subplot within the story!

Where is the project I'm working on headed?



What I know



What I don't know



What if?



The next step

We start with the main character, in the first card, wearing a red cape and starting out on a journey in the dark.

In the next card, the character arrives at a Utopian scene, where stars shine brightly, and people live close to the land.

In the third card, the main character meets an untimely end. See the red cape. Yes, it's him.

The last card shows a new scene. The queen of the waters is seated on her throne, holding her ceremonial chalice. It serves as a source of inspiration and renewal for her. Lo and behold, it's daylight!

The water in each card serves as a throughline.

In the first card, the main character leaves a rocky shore. The second card finds a clean pool of water. The third card and fourth card are shorelines again.

So we might ask what the water symbolizes. I hypothesize the water symbolizes something vital to the process.

The question is: Where is the project I'm working on headed?

What I know is that I'm on my own in the dark with this. And that I want to go somewhere else to find answers. (Card #1)

What I don't know is that the perfect setting I seek is in the dark as well. (Card #2)

What if I just let it all go? (Card #3)

The next step is to bring the process around the project to someone who has more experience with it. Perhaps by letting go of the current iteration, I become more adept at it. (Card #4)

THE LANGUAGE APPROACH

Learning Tarot, as well as other divinatory arts like Astrology, can be likened to learning a language. Tarot and other divinatory arts are a symbolic language. So are dreams.

Sooo, if Tarot is a language, we should keep in mind the best practices for learning any new language.

Learning a new language involves:

- learning vocabulary
- learning grammar
- practice becoming conversational

For those of you who HATED English class and curl up into the fetal position when the words noun, adverb, and dependent clause are uttered, feel free to skip this section. It's absolutely okay.

This section is for the grammar geeks among us.

VOCABULARY LISTS WITHOUT THE TEARS

Yes, I know the idea of vocabulary lists will send shivers down the spines of many. Even if you never studied a foreign language, you still undoubtedly came across them in English class.

Furthermore, you have possibly already taken this route, trying to learn various tarot card definitions. There are so many! Which ones should you learn? And what about the nuances of each card?

First, revisit the [What About Definitions Chapter](#) of this book for guidance. The idea is to come up with a short set of correspondences, quickly, that you can start using right away.

This set of correspondences will transform and grow as you grow with Tarot.

Nothing will cut you off faster than not having a working vocabulary in a language.

So if you skipped the [what about definitions section](#), go back and do it now.

I'll be here when you get back.

An excellent method to improve and grow your vocabulary is the [Two-card spread](#). Make this spread a part of your practice as a beginner, and I guarantee your Tarot vocabulary will increase by leaps and bounds.

TAROT GRAMMAR

Another important step in learning a foreign language is learning grammar. Some languages conjugate verbs in multiple forms. Some languages use the syntax of subject, verb, object. Others use object, verb, subject. Some languages use special classes of words we don't have in English.

The point is, you need to understand the rules of grammar that the language you are learning employs. Otherwise, everyone gets confused. In English, *dog bites man* is a completely different sentence than *man bites dog*.

Luckily, or unluckily, Tarot doesn't have a syntax as far as I can tell. In Tarot, the order of the cards doesn't change the meaning.

In Tarot, most of the grammar type elements will come from the spread you are using. For example, if the spread position is "who can help me?" then obviously whatever card shows up here will be a person.

If the spread position is "what blocks me?" then the card in that position could be a person, circumstance or environment. The card in that position is functioning like a noun.

Although any of the 78 tarot cards could show up as any part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, and so on), we can have fun with this idea.

Pull out your original set of correspondences. Play around with the cards and the correspondences and see how the card might function as a different part of speech.

For example:



5 of Wands

Noun - a sporting event, a quick argument in a meeting, chaos, cosplay

Verb - participating in a sport, arguing in a meeting, encountering chaos, watching cosplay

Adjective/Adverb/Clauses - in a heated manner, chaotic, spirited, for the love of drama

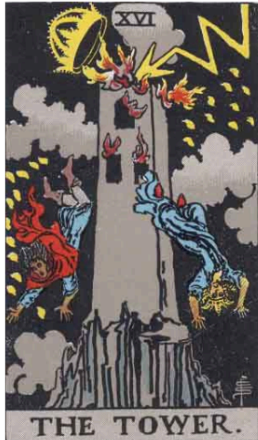
EXERCISE- THE ORACULAR SENTENCE



This exercise comes from *Tarot Face to Face* by Marcus Katz and Tali Goodwin.

- Divide the deck into three piles: Majors, Minors, Court
- Shuffle each pile and place back down in the order of Major, Minors, and Court
- The Majors serve as the nouns
- The Minors serve as the verbs
- The Court serves as the adverbs, describing the verbs
- You can ask a question (or not) with this exercise
- Pull a card from each pile, announcing it as you go

This exercise is called Oracular Sentence because the result is a sentence which has an oracular meaning. That is, a somewhat cryptic or mystical prognosis.



a shakeup

a disaster

a wake up call



a choice

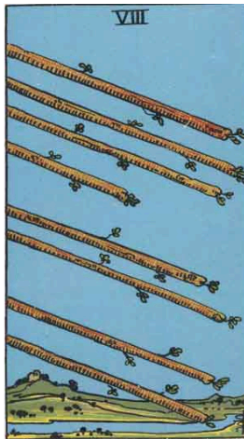
Love



settles into

knocks you on your butt

grabbing



made on the fly

shot out
repeatedly



money making opportunities

like a beginner

a financial opportunity



with great authority

with great passion

Play around with different ways to set up the Oracular Sentence. For example, use the Court Cards as nouns and Majors as verbs and the Minors as the environment.



A kind and giving woman

An empathetic woman



gets divorced as part of her self development

scary experiences



on a new path



A new hire

Looking for money



has a choice to make

making choices



in a tough environment

and standing up for yourself