



WELCOME TO THE DOJO

The Intuition Dojo is where your journey truly begins. Here in the dojo we will:

- *practice using our intuition to connect to the tarot cards.*
- *discuss how our approach might differ from other approaches to Learning Tarot.*
- *explore a little Tarot history.*



A BRIEF TAROT HISTORY

What is Tarot?

Tarot is a deck of 78 cards similar to our modern-day playing cards with the addition of 22 Trumps. The first known decks are from Italy in the 15th century and were used to play a card game called Tarocco. There are indicators that the cards were used for divination at that time.

Early decks had a varied number of Trump cards. For example, the Minchiate Tarot (which is still available today) has 97 cards total.

In the 1700s and 1800s, tarot cards were used for divination purposes along with playing cards and other card decks such as Lenormand.

The Rider Waite Smith deck was published in 1910 and kicked off a broadened interest in Tarot and the esoteric knowledge contained within the deck.

One of the aspects of the Rider Waite Smith deck that made it revolutionary was the images on the “pip” or numbered cards.

Tarot is similar to the English language in that it is an amalgamation of several occult traditions. One can see symbols and images from astrology, alchemy, and kabbalah throughout the cards. Additionally, many esoteric systems such as astrology, alchemy and kabbalah have been *overlaid* on Tarot; however, I think it's important to remember as you study Tarot that there are no 1-to-1 correspondences between Tarot and any other system of occult knowledge.

WHY TAROT?

There are many methods and ways of fortune-telling or seeing the future. So why Tarot?

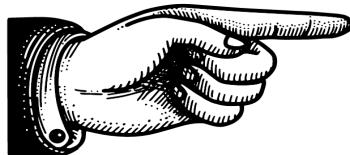
I believe Tarot's biggest appeal is its visual nature, which lends itself so well to intuitive reading. Among the images lurk symbols of all different types and from different traditions. Like varied dishes and cuisines from around the world, each Tarot deck offers a different sensual experience.

And what's more, Tarot, with all its variation, has a specific structure. I personally feel that this structure gives Tarot a bit more teeth than an Oracle deck.

An Oracle deck can have any number of cards and any theme. It might have words or descriptions on the cards or not. Personally, I like to use Oracle decks for a 1-card punctuation mark at the end of a reading. I don't use Oracle decks for an entire reading. But that's me.

Some Oracle decks are rather complex, like those of Colette Baron Reid. Her Oracle decks have a system behind them, but I have had a hard time wrapping my head around the system. This may or may not be true for you.

The following pages include the three components of the tarot deck structure and examples of each.



Tarot Structure

22 Major Arcana



← Card Number

Major Arcana

← Card Name

Tarot Structure

16 Court Cards:
King, Queen, Knight, Page



Court Card

Court cards can have alternate names like prince or princess, mother or daughter.

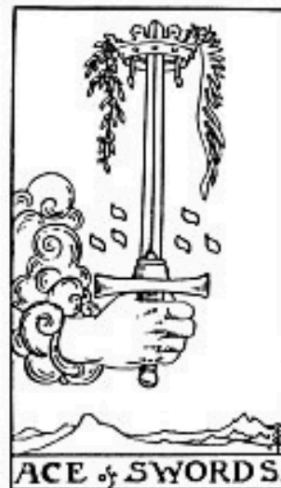
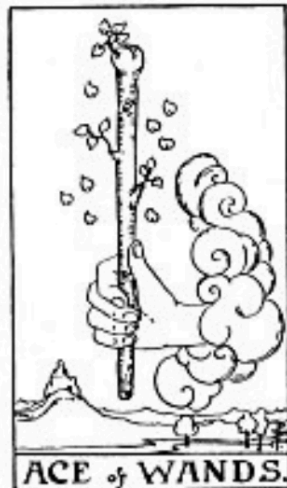
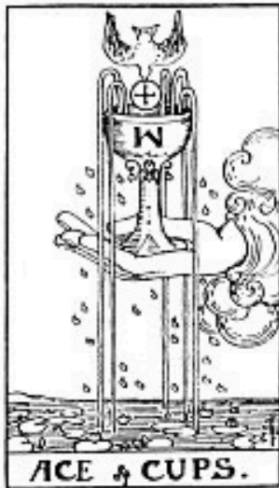
There is one King, Queen, Knight and Page for each suit.

← Card Name

Tarot Structure

40 numbered cards: A-10

4 suits: wands, cups, swords, pentacles



Aces of the 4 Suits

Suits can have alternate names like batons or rods for wands, discs for pentacles.

NO RIGHT APPROACH TO TAROT

Just as there is no true Tarot, there is no right approach to reading Tarot. What do I mean by this?

You've probably heard all sorts of things about reading Tarot. One common misconception is that you need to be gifted your first deck.

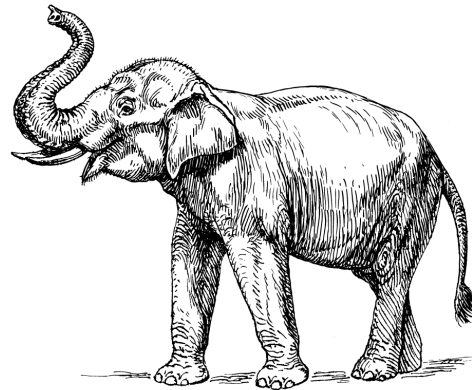
If you have any interest in Tarot, you've probably come across the Celtic Cross. So what's the deal with the Celtic Cross? It seems to be the "official Tarot spread." Do you need to use it to read?

And, while we are on it, the Rider Waite Smith appears to be the "official deck," which I dealt with a little bit in the last section.

So how do you separate superstition from real guidance?

The Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant

A group of blind men heard that a strange animal, called an elephant, had been brought to the town, but none of them were aware of its shape and form. Out of curiosity, they said: "We must inspect and know it by touch, of which we are capable". So, they sought it out, and when they found it they groped about it. The first person, whose hand landed on the trunk, said, "This being is like a thick snake". For another one whose hand reached its ear, it seemed like a kind of fan. As for another person, whose hand was upon its leg, said, the elephant is a pillar like a tree-trunk. The blind man who placed his hand upon its side said the elephant, "is a wall". Another who felt its tail, described it as a rope. The last felt its tusk, stating the elephant is that which is hard, smooth and like a spear. - [Wikipedia](#)



The moral of the story is we tend to claim something as truth based on our own limited experience with it.

I had a sense of this for a long time, and found it most helpful when I came across Benebell Wen’s critical theory technique.

The critical theory technique is very academic. 🙄

Don’t worry about wrapping your head around it. Just be aware that different schools of thought or approaches to Tarot exist.

I’ve included her chart and a link to her video on the topic so you can explore it yourself.

Holistic Tarot Companion Course | Handout to Video 8
www.benebellwen.com

Critical Theory Technique to Interpreting Tarot Cards			
Traditional Literary	Historical context		Artist’s intentions
	Biography of the deck creator		Expert opinion (tarot books)
Formalist/ Structuralist	What’s contained within the four corners of the card	Close reading of the imagery (storytelling)	Structure and layout of card imagery (expressions, colors, directionality)
Post- Structuralist	Go beyond the four corners of the card to derive meaning	Metaphysical correspondences (astrology, Kabbalah, Hermeticism, etc.)	Reader response factor (how a specific reader reacts to the card imagery)
Marxist	Class conflicts or conditions portrayed		Understand the bargained-for exchange
	Socioeconomic distinctions in the card imagery		Economic system or ideology expressed in the card imagery
Cultural Materialist	Interpreting the card through the present-day zeitgeist		
	Relevance of the tarot archetype or archetypal constellation in real-time; reading the card imagery as a metaphor for today’s culture and society		
Psychic	Telepathy	Clairsentience	Clarcognizance
	Clairvoyance	Clairaudience	Preternatural source

In this book, we will be using the 4 corners approach (formalist/structuralist), and the psychic (which I call intuition), with a smidge of pop culture (culturalist materialist).

RESOURCES ON TAROT HISTORY AND APPROACH

[Critical Theory Technique to Interpreting Tarot Cards | Benebell Wen](#)

 Tarot Card Interpretation and Critical Theory

[What Every Newbie Tarot Reader Should Know About The History and Myths Of Tarot](#) - by Mary K. Greer

[Tarot Underground on YouTube- Major Arcana Explained](#)

WHAT ABOUT “DEFINITIONS”

The moral of the story is that we don't have one single or “right approach” to Tarot, which also extends to “standard” definitions. I find that many beginning readers impede their progress by focusing on the so-called “standard” definitions.

If anything, these definitions serve as a way for Tarot readers to talk among themselves, similar to jargon. Unfortunately, many have confused “definitions” with a usable set of correspondences that can support the totality of possibilities expressed through the deck. This is simply not the case.

Since there is no true Tarot and no “right” approach, you can easily see that there are no “right” definitions.

I'm sure you can imagine that a Tarot reader in Greece and a Tarot reader in Peru might have slightly different definitions or interpretations for some of the cards, a certain dialect or perspective, if you will.

I'm sure you can also imagine what would happen if an isolated tribal people in Africa or South America got a hold of a tarot deck. All the images would mean something completely different to them.

With that in mind, take Tarot “definitions” with a grain of salt.

trust your,
JOURNEY



If you allow someone else's opinion to hold more weight than your intuition, you will kill your reading ability.

In fact, I'm going to make a stronger statement than that. My take on definitions is that they are *useless* to a beginner.

As a beginner, your main objective is to create a connection with the cards using your own intuition.

Later on you can join in on the conversation with other readers as you become more connected to the "lingo."

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENCES

This book is full of exercises to help you tap into your intuition and come up with your own set of correspondences, a term I believe is actually more accurate than “definitions” in this case.

And yes, those definitions have a way of sneaking in. Don’t sweat it when they do. They are part of my Tarot speak as well. No need to panic. Just acknowledge and get back to connecting to the card on your own.

So why do I prefer the use of “correspondence” and not “definition”? Take a look at how [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#) defines these two terms.

definition (noun)

- 1 *a: a statement of the meaning of a word or word group or a sign or symbol*
b: a statement expressing the essential nature of something
c: a product of defining
- 2: *the action or process of stating the meaning of a word or word group*
- 3: *a: the action or the power of describing, explaining or **making definite** and clear*

correspondence (noun)

- 1 *a: communication by letters or email*
b: the news, information, or opinion contributed by a correspondent to a newspaper or periodical
- 2 *a: the agreement of things with one another*
b: a particular similarity
c: a relation between sets in which each member of one set is associated with one or more members of the other

Definitions seek to express the essential nature of something as well as mark outlines or limits. Note that it says “make definite” above.

Any tarot card does not “definitely” mean anything.

Correspondences seek out agreement between things and look for overlaps.

The way I see it, when reading Tarot or using any other form of divination, we are looking for agreement and overlap. We are looking for the overlap between inner and outer worlds, between the spiritual realms and the mundane. You may have heard it expressed as pattern recognition.

The point here is that in my mind, correspondence seeks to include through pattern overlap. Definition seeks to separate by excluding.

No judgment on either approach. But when it comes to your intuition, and your imagination for that matter, these functions color outside the lines.

Basically, you can't glean new information if you are fixated on what you already know.

For example, if you know that bananas and skis are two different discrete items, it will be difficult for you to imagine how bananas could be used as skis.

When we read Tarot, we are skiing with bananas.



EXERCISES TO CONNECT INTUITIVELY

Let's talk about how you let your intuition guide you to your own set of definitions.

But wait, you say, I just want you to tell me what each card means.

So sorry, Paduwan. To become a great Tarot reader you need to connect to the cards, let them speak, and write down what they say.

I've got three exercises for you to demonstrate how easy it is to tap into your intuition and get the cards talking.

1. Tarot Speed Dating (see below)
2. [Tell Me About My Day](#)
3. [Four Corners Method](#)

EXERCISE - TAROT SPEED DATING

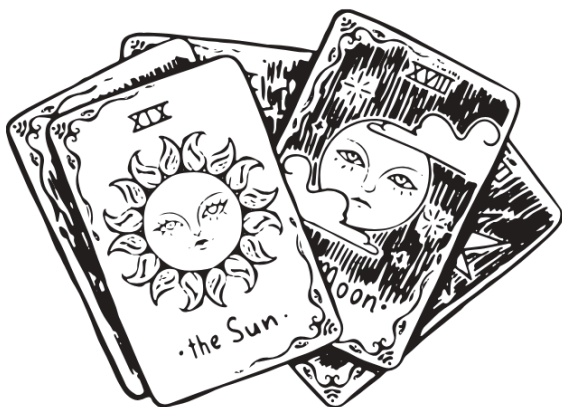
This is the quickest way to familiarize yourself with the deck and to get to know the cards. Have fun with the worksheet that follows, but first let me give you a few pointers:

- Use one sheet per card.
- You do NOT have to fill in the entire sheet. Work quickly and fill in what comes to you.
- Card, number, and suit spaces are for the details of the card such as: 8 of Cups, 8, Cups. When you get further along you can add associations with "8" and "Cups."
- Feeling or mood: is it happy, calm, active, scary, frenetic?
- Movie or song: do any come to mind? It can range from movie scenes or characters to song lyrics.
- First impressions: this looks like a positive card and that there are people who are around to help.
- Title: if you gave the card a title, what would it be?
- Metaphor or quote: any quotes or sayings that seem to apply? For example, "a journey begins with a single step." How about a metaphor? "It's like herding cats."

- Memory: does it remind you of an event or someone you knew? A dream?
- Direct speech: if this card was going to speak, what would it say?
- Draw it: make a quick sketch of the card.
- Reflections: overall, what kinds of messages, images, and emotional landscapes are you connecting with this card at this moment?

Tarot Speed Dating

- Break the deck into sections so you can work in short bursts. Divide the cards in any way that works for you, whether that is random stacks of 15 cards, or by suit, or however you wish.
- Use the worksheet on the next page or a page of your journal to write down what you discover for each card. Use one page per card.
- Quickly go through each card jotting down what comes in the moment. Spend no more than 3 minutes for each card.



Card

Feeling or Mood

Movie or Song

Title

Number

Suit

First Impressions

Metaphor or Quote:

Describe It

Memory

Direct Speech or Draw It

Reflections:

EXERCISE - TELL ME ABOUT MY DAY

You may have heard of the daily draw exercise. This is where you pull a card or two at the beginning of your day with the intention that the card(s) will indicate something about the day ahead.

I find that, for a beginning reader, this puts too much pressure on you to interpret and “predict the future.” Predicting the future is another one of those intuition killers.

In this exercise, we are going to reverse engineer correspondences by pulling a card (or cards) at the END of the day.

Here’s how to do it:

At the END of the day, ask the cards to describe what happened during the day. Then, pull a card.

- Practice matching the images on the card to events of the day.
- If nothing seems to match up, then just take a guess as to what the card is reflecting back to you. It’s okay to take a try.
- Write down your insights in your Tarot journal
- Note: it’s not always about you! Sometimes the cards are describing someone else. If you think so, you can call them and validate. You don’t need to tell them the cards said it.



Good news: there’s no Tarot Police! No one is going to come arrest you for “breaking the rules” of Tarot interpretation. Be open and experiment.

Remember, you build your relationship with Tarot from the inside, not by looking to outside authorities.

I've also included an exercise for pulling two cards at the end of the day once you start feeling a little more confident. The **2-Cards a Day Exercise** has you deliberately choose one card and randomly pull another.

When you deliberately choose a card, you are actively looking for something in the deck.

When you pull a card at random, you are receiving the information.

Each feels a bit different.

You will need both skill sets of actively looking and intuitively receiving to be a great Tarot reader. Let's start now.



Tell Me About My Day

a few words about your day based on
card #1:

1 - card
randomly
chosen at the
end of the day

2 Cards a Day

a few words about your day based on
card #1:

1 - card
deliberately
chosen

What is card #2 reflecting to you
about your day?:

2 - card chosen
at random

Are there any connections between card 1 & 2?:

EXERCISE - FOUR CORNERS METHOD

This method for gleaning meaning is deceptively simple. Simply describe what you see. If a particular action, object or character in the card grabs your attention, talk about it.

At times, tarot cards can be quite literal, and this is the method that will bring out those literal meanings in a reading.



For each pip card, make a journal entry describing what is happening. For example, the 5 of Wands: several young men meet in a field and joust around with hockey sticks.

For this exercise, what you describe will vary from deck to deck. That's a good thing!

Deck creators will highlight different aspects of each card as they see fit. For example, the 7 of Swords might be very dark and sneaky in one deck and more playful in another.

When you use the Four Corners Method, your correspondences will change with your deck. To be honest, your correspondences will *always* morph and change as you read because intuition happens in the moment, and every moment is different.

4 Corners Method

name of card

deck

Describe the card:

- what people or “actors” are present?
- where are they?
- what is happening on the card?
- any animals or plants?
- what time of day is it?
- any symbols you recognize?

STORYTELLING AND TAROT

After you have practiced the Four Corners Method for a while, you will be able to see how storytelling can arise from the cards.

Storytelling might include people, animals, or objects in the cards speaking.

Storytelling might include what happened right before the scene or right after.

Storytelling can (and should) spill over onto the surrounding cards.

This is where directionality comes into play. Directionality is when you make note of whether the person in one of the cards is looking at or can see a person in another card.



The Queen of Swords and the Page of Cups can see each other.
If the order was reversed, they would not be able to see each other.



The interpretation of this is somewhat obvious. If the people are looking at each other, then there is a connection. They are communicating, and they are on the same page.

If the people are *not* looking at each other, then the opposite is true. And sometimes, there is something in the way of the person's line of sight. What is it? Use your storytelling abilities to suss it out!

Tarot uses visual imagery to speak to us, similar to works of art, including movies and comic books.

Take a moment to consider how silent movies, comic books and graphic novels build a story through images. As the saying goes, a picture is worth 1,000 words. Can you see how vast amounts of knowledge could be stored in the imagery of Tarot?

EXERCISE - STORY TIME

Time to get your storytelling hat on!

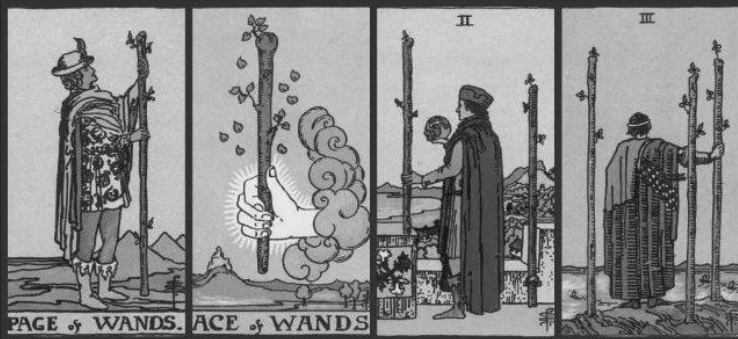
Lay out the Ace-10 cards of a suit in succession in a block formation. Use each card in the deck to create a story, similar to how comic books tell stories through the picture panels.

If you get stuck, ask a kid. Children live in the right side of their brains and can instantly access the storyteller.

I've included an illustration of the suit of wands on the next page, and you can read my [blog post](#) about it.

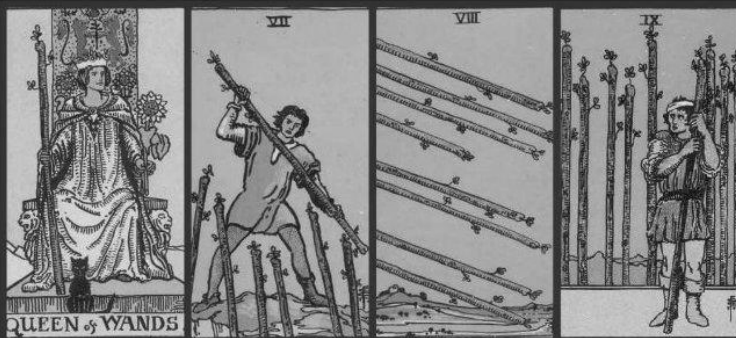
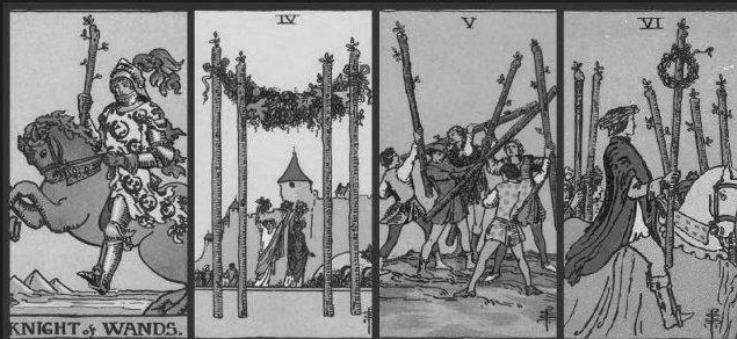
Passion and Strength

the story of wands

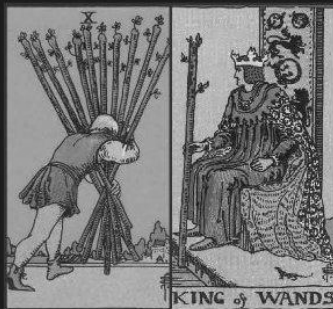


birth of
an idea

tiger by
the tail



guardians



mastery



Story Boarding the Suits

Use either of these approaches to story board:

- storyboard
- eye witness



STORY BOARD

For the storyboard lay out the 10 cards of any suit in two rows. Create a story starting with the Ace and ending with the 10 using the sequence of the pictures.



EYE WITNESS

For the eye witness simply describe what is happening in each card as if you were an eye witness to the scene. Feel free to embellish the details. For example: 5 of wands - there are several young men in the field by the school. They have lacrosse sticks and are jousting about. I think they are having fun.

Feel free to play around with the sequence of the cards. If the 10 fits better in the middle of the story, so be it!

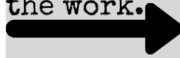
Suit: Pentacles



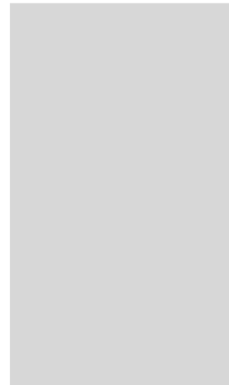
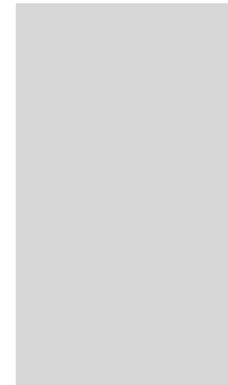
The vision or dream of creating something in the real world.



2: Wee!, or character starts the project, starts dancing with the work.



3: He got hired and his clients are telling him what they want.



Suit:

Title of
the story