



# Decuma BETA 1.1

*The Game before the Game or The R&D for you RPG  
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## **Required supplies:**

- A printed Decuma Tarot Deck or A traditional tarot deck (78 cards) and a Decuma Card Guide
- A large blank paper and drawing implements
- Character concepts or completed characters for the campaign

## **Understanding tarot cards:**

**You don't need to know tarot to play this game, but these basics might help!**

The **Minor Arcana** cards come in four suits. They are the Wands, Cups, Swords and Coins. In Decuma, these cards create relationships and details about the game's location, and are designed to be interpreted by players individually with consent/agreement from other players. In an official Decuma tarot deck, these are the blue and red backed cards.

The **Major Arcana** cards all have unique names, such as "The Empress" or "The Moon," and do not belong to any of the suits. There are 22 of these cards in a tarot deck. Major Arcana cards establish the group dynamics in Decuma and should always be interpreted by whole group consensus. If you are using a Decuma tarot deck, these are the purple backed cards.

**The direction of the cards is important!** In tarot readings, the direction a card is facing changes its meaning. The same is true in Decuma! Put them down vertically in front of you and as cards are flipped over leave them as they lie. Read the question that is facing you.

*Decuma uses these cards to develop three things: relationships, location and group dynamics.*

## **Relationships:**

*Relationships* are connections between two or more player characters. Wand and Cup cards create relationships. A "\_\_\_\_\_" on a relationship card should be filled with another PC's name.

## **Location:**

The *Location* is where most of the RPG campaign will be taking place, such as a specific continent, kingdom, boomtown, spaceship, haunted house, etc. It can be as large or small as the campaign requires. They also create NPCs by asking questions about "someone." Sword and Coin cards create your location.

## **Group Dynamics:**

The *Group* is all the PCs together, usually referred to in RPGs as "the party." In Decuma, Major Arcana cards create group dynamics. These group dynamics can involve details that have already been created, or be totally new things.





## Playing Decuma

### Preparing the Space:

- Put the blank paper and drawing implements where everyone can reach them
- Place an X-card on the table. The mechanics of *Decuma* require this.
- Separate the tarot deck into 3 piles and shuffle each pile:
  - - Major Arcana (purple in *Decuma* deck) : create **GROUP** dynamics
  - - Cups & Wands (red) : establish **RELATIONSHIPS** between the PCs
  - - Swords & Coins (blue) : create our **LOCATION** and NPCs

### Prepare:

- The GM should review the use of safety tools such as the X-card (included in a *Decuma* deck). These are important for people to feel safe in a creative, collaborative endeavor. (visit [goldenlassogames.com/tools](http://goldenlassogames.com/tools) for more info)
- The GM and the group should fill out the Agreements Card in the *Decuma* deck. If you are using your own tarot deck, make sure everyone is in agreement about where you will be creating your location (Mars, a ship etc), setting (genre, time period, etc) and overall tone of the game.
- Go around the group and have each person introduce their character. Things like race, class, skills, and backstories are very helpful in *Decuma*.

### The Spread

- To start, the GM will deal 2 **Relationship** (Cup & Wand) cards, 2 **Location** (Sword & Coin) cards and 1 **Major Arcana** card to each player. The players keep them face down and do not look at them.
- Each player should lay the cards out so they know which are Relationship, Location and Major Arcana without looking at them. (In a *Decuma* deck this is easy because the different colors on the backs of the cards.)
- GM draws 5 MAJOR ARCANA cards and, without looking, lays them face down in front of themselves.
- Return the undealt cards to the three piles to the center of the table.
- The GM should introduce the Location Map (the paper and drawing implements) and add one thing to the paper to start the creation of the location. This can be an outline of a kingdom's borders, the outline of a spaceship, a road through the middle of town, the temple in the settlement, or anything else they want to add.
- Now the players should add something to the Location. Anything they want that fits the Agreements!

### Reading Phase One: Relationships

- The GM flips over one of the Major Arcana cards in front of them and reads the question facing them out loud. The players DO NOT ANSWER yet. They will answer this card at the end of the Phase.





- In any order, the players take turns flipping over one of their Relationship cards and answering the question that is facing them. Do not flip the card around! If they don't like the question or think it doesn't fit their character, they can tap the X-card and draw another card from the Relationship pile.
  - A player should have the agreement and consent of another player before forming a connection. If a player doesn't like an idea, they can tap the X-card or state they don't agree and a different solution should be found.
  - The GM and other players should feel free to ask follow up questions, make suggestions, add details and deepen the answers to the questions, with the consent of the card holder.
- After every player has flipped over a Relationship card, the group will answer the question from the GM's card at the top of the round. This should be answered together.

### **Reading Phase Two: Location**

- The GM and the players repeat the steps in Phase One, but the players will be turning over Location cards instead.
- As each player answers their question, they should add something to the Location Map to represent their answer and label their addition with a name or phrase.
  - This includes abstract things like cultural norms and NPCs! Be creative! These can be posters, signs, monuments, shops, buildings, furniture, etc.

**Reading Phase Three and Four** - Repeat Phase One and Two until the players have turned over all of their Relationship and Location Cards.

### **The Final Reading: Major Arcana and Group Dynamics Questions**

- After you finish Phases One through Four, the GM flips over their last Major Arcana cards and reads the question facing them out loud, just like previous rounds.
- In any order, the players take turns flipping over their Major Arcana cards (it should be the only card they have left) and reading the question out loud.
  - The Player leads a group discussion to answer it. The player is the final arbiter of what the answer will be but it should include input from the group.
- After every player has flipped over a card, the group will answer the question from the GM's card at the top of the round.

### **Ending the Game –**

- If you are playing Decuma as a stand-alone game, have everyone share an epilogue for their character to close out the session.
- If you are using Decuma to start a campaign, have everyone recap their character's information before jumping into the world you've created!

HAVE FUN!





## Decuma Variations

*Decuma is incredibly flexible! It can be tweaked to fit your needs and your ideas of fun!*

### **The Hermit**

Only want to create a location and not relationships? Deal 3 Location cards and one Major Arcana card. Play the basic rules with only Location cards.

### **The Lovers**

Already have a detailed location and only want to make relationships? Deal 3 Relationship cards and one Major Arcana card. Skip the map making and just play the basic rules with only Relationship cards.

### **The High Priestess**

Trust your instincts more than Fate! Play the basic rules, but everyone can flip their cards and choose which of the two questions to answer.

### **Judgement**

Want to see what blind Fate wants for your campaign? Mix the Relationship and Location cards into one large pile instead of separating them. Shuffle them together and then pass out four random cards to each player and one Major Arcana card. Play the basic rules.

### **The World**

Play a single Phase of Major Arcana or Relationship cards at the start of a session during your campaign! This adds new depth, complications, allows players to use events and NPCs from the game and keeps things fresh!

### **The Emperor**

Why let Fate have all the power? The GM will draw 3 Relationship and 2 Location cards for themselves, in addition to their usual 5 Major Arcana cards. They will flip these 5 minor arcana cards over in front of them so they can see the questions. Play the basic rules. Through the game, the GM may hand these cards players at any time to orchestrate connections and ideas they want in the game. The players will answer these in addition to the regular cards that they turn over.

### **The Hanged Man**

Play the basic rules, but keep doing rounds of 5 cards until you complete the whole tarot deck!

*Have a variation of your own? Awesome! Enjoy playing Decuma however you like doing it!*





# Decuma Card Guide

You may use this guide to play *Decuma* with any 78 card tarot deck!

## RELATIONSHIP CARDS - Wands & Cups

RIGHT-SIDE UP	Wands	UPSIDE DOWN
The ambition you see in _____ scares you.	<b>Ace</b>	The lack of ambition in _____ frustrates you.
You knew and trusted _____ before coming to our location. How did you meet?	<b>2</b>	You knew _____ before coming to our location and were jealous of them. Why?
_____ 's connections helped you get something important. Who got it and what was it?	<b>3</b>	_____ could help you get something you want if you'd ask. What keeps you from asking?
You know that _____ will protect our group, no matter the cost.	<b>4</b>	You think that _____ will cut and run if things got risky.
You're always competing with _____ and trying to one-up each other.	<b>5</b>	You avoid setting off _____ 's ego, but it's difficult.
You partnered with _____ to do something shady. What was it?	<b>6</b>	You found out about _____ 's dubious past. How did you find out?
You find yourself strangely drawn to _____. What captures your attention?	<b>7</b>	You had a thing with _____ but it didn't work out. What went wrong?
You go to _____ when something has to be done right the first time!	<b>8</b>	_____ 's priorities baffle you.
You did something to help _____ get ahead. What did you do?	<b>9</b>	You used _____ to get ahead. What did you do? Do they know?
You and _____ are working together on something important. What is it?	<b>10</b>	You and _____ blow off steam together. What do you do?
_____ is always up for a new challenge, but you're not sure they look before they leap.	<b>Page</b>	You been thinking about _____ 's untapped potential for some time.
You tried to impress _____ and succeeded! What did you do to impress them?	<b>Knight</b>	You tried to impress _____ and failed! What did you do, and how did you fail?
You have strong feelings for _____ and told them. How did that go?	<b>Queen</b>	You have feelings for _____, but haven't told them. Why not?
_____ convinced you to do something risky and you did it! What did you do?	<b>King</b>	_____ convinced you to do something risky and you regret it! What did you do?





RELATIONSHIP CARDS CONTINUED

RIGHT-SIDE UP	Cups	UPSIDE DOWN
When you need advice, you always go to _____.	<b>Ace</b>	When they need advice, _____ always comes to you.
You have a strong connection with _____ and it grows stronger every day. Why?	<b>2</b>	You had a strong connection with _____ but it seems to be fading. What has changed?
You harmed _____ once, but they don't know that it was you.	<b>3</b>	_____ harmed you once, but they don't know you realize it was them.
_____ makes you wonder what life would be like if you had chosen a different path.	<b>4</b>	_____ hurt you, but you didn't tell them. What was it and why don't you say anything?
It's obvious that _____ is dealing with something serious and you can relate.	<b>5</b>	It's obvious that _____ has dealt with something serious that you don't understand.
You told _____ about something you left behind. What was it and why did you leave it?	<b>6</b>	You want your relationship with _____ to change, but aren't sure how to approach them.
_____ reaffirms everything you believe in.	<b>7</b>	_____ makes you think of things in a way you never have before.
You want _____ to try something new. What is it and why haven't they done it yet?	<b>8</b>	_____ wants you to try something new, but you aren't interested. What is it and why avoid it?
You shared an epic failure with _____ but it brought you closer.	<b>9</b>	You are envious of _____'s success, and have trouble hiding it.
You shared a deep desire with _____. What made you trust them?	<b>10</b>	You shared a heartbreak or dark secret with _____. What made you trust them?
You think you can learn a thing or two from _____.	<b>Page</b>	_____ is always sticking their nose in other people's business.
_____ can usually read you like a book, whether you want them to or not.	<b>Knight</b>	You suspect that _____ has deep feelings for you, but they haven't said anything.
You helped _____ when they were at their lowest. How did you help them?	<b>Queen</b>	You refused help from _____ when you were at your lowest. Why did you refuse?
_____ gave you good advice at a crucial moment. What happened?	<b>King</b>	_____ gave you bad advice and you paid the price. What happened?





### LOCATION CARDS - Swords & Coins

RIGHT-SIDE UP	Swords	UPSIDE DOWN
Our location has a place of spiritual significance to you. What is it?	<b>Ace</b>	Our location has a place that you feel is cursed or bad luck. What is it?
You are torn between two people in our location. Who? Why are they at odds?	<b>2</b>	Someone in our location has solicited you to do something you don't want to do. Who are they and what is it?
Where in our location do you go to better yourself?	<b>3</b>	Where in our location do you go to let off steam and act out?
Our location lost someone important. Who did we lose and how?	<b>4</b>	Someone vital left our location but returned. Why did they leave? What brought them back?
Someone in our location is in direct competition with you or one of your friends. Who is it?	<b>5</b>	Someone in our location brings up sad memories for you. Who is it? What do they remind you of?
You used to be close to someone in our location, but that ended. Who? What happened?	<b>6</b>	You have unfinished business with someone in our location. Who? What is it?
Our location occasionally participates in a competitive event. What is that event?	<b>7</b>	Our location has been banned from a prestigious event. What is it and why were we banned?
Where are those who break rules in our location sent? What happens there?	<b>8</b>	How are exceptional members of our location recognized?
Someone we trusted betrayed our location. Who was it and how did they betray us?	<b>9</b>	Many people in our location just won't face reality. What hard truth are they avoiding?
Someone you idolized in our location let you down. Who was it? How did they let you down?	<b>10</b>	You idolize someone in our location. Who is it and why are they inspirational?
What is a positive turn of phrase that is used in our location?	<b>Page</b>	What is a negative turn of phrase that is used in our location?
Our location has a respected leader that we trust. Who is it and what makes them trustworthy?	<b>Knight</b>	A leader in our location takes advantage of their position. Who is it and what are they doing?
You impressed a group that was important to our location. What did you do and who was it?	<b>Queen</b>	Your actions cut you off from a group that's important to our location. Who? What did you do?
There is a wise person in our location from whom people seek advice. Who are they?	<b>King</b>	An important connection in our location gets you what you need but at a price. Who are they?





LOCATION CARDS CONTINUED

RIGHT-SIDE UP	Coins	UPSIDE DOWN
Our location has a valuable resource. What is it? How does it help us?	<b>Ace</b>	Our location had a valuable resource but it is gone now. What was it and why is it gone?
Someone in our location makes sure everything gets done. Who is that person?	<b>2</b>	Someone has lots of ideas for our location but might have shady motives. Who is it?
Which event or holiday is celebrated more than any other in our location?	<b>3</b>	Our location has an event or holiday that puts everyone in a solemn mood. What is it?
A powerful group supports our location. Who is it and how do they support us?	<b>4</b>	A powerful group is against our location. Who are they and why do they hate us?
A group of people in our location purposefully damaged something. What was damaged? Why?	<b>5</b>	Upset people in our location demand to be heard. Who are they and what do they want?
Our location was generous with someone and earned goodwill. What happened?	<b>6</b>	Our location was generous with someone but they took advantage of us. What happened?
Some people in our location are superstitious. What do they believe brings good luck?	<b>7</b>	People in our location are superstitious. What do they believe brings misfortune?
What kind of art is popular in our location? How do we get to enjoy it?	<b>8</b>	Something is censored in our location. What is censored and why?
What resources are squandered in our location? What do we use them for?	<b>9</b>	Who controls the resources in our location, and are they honest?
Our location is celebrated for something that happened in the past. What happened?	<b>10</b>	Our location has a tragic past. What tragedy occurred here?
Our location started an improvement project. What is it and how will it help us?	<b>Page</b>	There is an annoying problem in our location that we haven't been able to fix. What is it?
Our location has a major benefit or advantage over other locations like it. What is that benefit?	<b>Knight</b>	Our location has a major flaw compared to other locations like it. What is that flaw?
Our location has a large recognizable feature. What is it?	<b>Queen</b>	Our location had a recognizable feature that was destroyed. What was it and who destroyed it?
Someone in our location is adverse to change. Who? Why is routine so important to them?	<b>King</b>	Someone in our location is obsessed with wealth. Who? What rumors have you heard about them?







## MAJOR ARCANA - Group Dynamics

RIGHT-SIDE UP		UPSIDE DOWN
How did our group first meet, and what went well?	<b>Fool</b>	How did our group first meet, and what went wrong?
What does the group believe is the reward for good deeds?	<b>Magician</b>	What does the group believe is the punishment for evil deeds?
Everyone point to the character in the group they trust the most.	<b>High Priestess</b>	Everyone point to the character in the group they trust the least.
There is someone that everyone in our group cares about. Who is that person?	<b>Empress</b>	There is someone that everyone in our group dislikes. Who is that person?
Our group supports a set establishment. Who are they and why do we support them?	<b>Emperor</b>	Our group defies a set establishment. What establishment and why are we against them?
What is one line that no one in the group will cross?	<b>Hierophant</b>	What line has the group already crossed?
There is another group that are our allies. Who are they and why do we trust them?	<b>Lovers</b>	There is another group outside that are our rivals. Who are they?
Together, our group reached an important milestone or goal. What was it and how did we reach it?	<b>Chariot</b>	Together, we failed to reach an important milestone or goal. Why did we fail?
If someone was going to describe our group, what would they say is our greatest strength or virtue?	<b>Strength</b>	If someone was going to describe our group, what would they say is our biggest challenge or flaw?
Our group was given information that we acted on. What were we told, and what happened?	<b>Hermit</b>	Our group was given information that we ignored. What did we learn, and what happened?
Our group had a streak of good luck and did something amazing. What was it?	<b>Wheel of Fortune</b>	Our group had a streak of bad luck and nearly ended. What happened?
Each person of the group should pick one word to describe a positive aspect of their personality.	<b>Justice</b>	Each person in the group should pick one word to describe a negative aspect of their personality.
Each person of the group should decide what keeps them in the group or returning to the group. (Shared at GM's discretion)	<b>Hanged Man</b>	Each person in the group should decide what tempts them to leave our group. (share at GMs discretion)
Our group is trying to change our location. What are we trying to change and why?	<b>Death</b>	Our group is trying to keep our location from changing. What is changing and why do we want it to stay the same?
Our group talked our way out of a serious situation. What was it and what happened?	<b>Temperance</b>	Our group fought our way out of a serious situation. What was it and what happened?





### MAJOR ARCANA CONTINUED

Our group owes a large debt. What do we owe and to whom?	<b>Devil</b>	Our group is owed a large debt. What are we owed and by whom?
Our group broke something important. What was it and why/how did we break it?	<b>Tower</b>	Our group saved something important. What was it and how did we save it?
Something important happened that gave our group shared purpose. What was it?	<b>Star</b>	Something happened that broke the trust in our group. What was it and how did we get past it?
Our group distrusts a well-known figure that everyone else supports. Who are they and why do we distrust them?	<b>Moon</b>	Our group supports an infamous figure that everyone else distrusts. Who are they and why do we support them?
What do we do as a group to celebrate?	<b>Sun</b>	What do we do as a group when we are feeling down?
Our group revealed a major truth about someone powerful. Who was it and what did we reveal?	<b>Judgement</b>	Someone powerful revealed something negative about our group. Who was it and what did they reveal?
We were involved in a mystery, what happened and how was it resolved?	<b>World</b>	We were involved in a mystery that was never solved. What happened? Why wasn't it solved?

