

[Introduction + Neutral Cards](#) [Priest changes](#) [Demon Hunter Basic](#) [Demon Hunter](#) [Druid](#) [Hunter](#) [Mage](#) [Paladin](#) [Priest](#) [Rogue](#) [Shaman](#) [Warlock](#) [Warrior](#)

AoO Introduction + Thoughts

I feel like I say this every expansion, but this might be the most powerful neutral set ever printed in Hearthstone. And, unlike other sets, there aren't super-powerful class cards as well. Outside a couple Demon Hunter cards + the entire Paladin set (and Rogue secrets), most of the class cards are good but situational cards. And, I would say that the Neutral set is actually better than most class sets. While they don't have the top-level potential of cards from the last year (Burrowing Scorpion aside, assuming it kills and stealths as much as I predict it to do), 8 of the non-legendary cards (and 5 commons) I have rated at an 80 or higher, and another 3 commons are at 75 or higher. Compared to DoD, which was an incredibly powerful set, only 7 cards were at 80 or higher (8 counting Hoard Pillager in Rogue, which I was off on by a good deal), with 5 commons among that set, and only 2 cards at 75 or higher. But, again, AoO doesn't have the Explorer cards or Embiggens or any of the Dragon synergy cards that have massive upside when they hit. Looking at 90+ class cards, there are 12 cards split across 10 classes (with Paladins having 4), which really isn't that much. Most classes have, on average, a worse power level than neutrals on average, which is saying something (more about being designed for constructed).

In addition, in a unique change, there is a massive shift in rarities among Neutral cards. There are only 3 Rare/Epic Neutrals listed, which is much less than in previous expansions. This means that most of these really good neutrals are going to show up more and be a larger part of drafts than cards like Wrapped Golem were in previous sets. This, in turn, should have a minor dilution effect on how many class cards show up/deck, as well as possibly an effect on class identity. If you have a case where classes are more inclined to pick neutrals that show up more than their own cards, then the meta becomes more about the neutral cards that show up all the time than the class cards in the set (see, DoD and Tyrant/Corrupter/Wyrm/Drakonid)

As such, if the meta is focusing on these powerful neutrals, what should we expect? Of the 11 I have at 75+, 5 are removal cards (6 counting Mo'Sharg Artificer and its potential with AoE), 3 are taunts, 2 are sticky over-statted minions, 1 is a freeze on a normally statted body. Going by all the class cards to paint a bigger picture, looking at all cards I have rated 75+:(and, many of these cards double-dip on effects, compared to neutrals which are good in one area), there are, among 10 classes, 5 AoE effects, 11 Small/Medium removals, 5 big removals, 9 card draw/gen effects, 6 taunts, 15 overstatted effects (in too many stats/curve or deathrattles or things like Evolve), and 2 heals.

Factoring this in, the removals and Overstatted effects kinda cancel each other out. The idea is, you go face when you have board control. Tons of removals means that board control is never going to be certain until you're out of cards/answers. The counter to this is overstatted stuff that can't be removed efficiently, but it becomes less effective when you have a board state in flux, as these overstatted cards are meant to cement the board state rather than just contribute to it (the classic Highmane on 6 in simpler times). This also leads to a much slower game than

[Introduction + Neutral Cards](#) [Priest changes](#) [Demon Hunter Basic](#) [Demon Hunter](#) [Druid](#) [Hunter](#) [Mage](#) [Paladin](#) [Priest](#) [Rogue](#) [Shaman](#) [Warlock](#) [Warrior](#)

normal because of this inability to get a board state that's in one person's favor or the other. Card draw/gen also pushes towards a later game, as do taunts. Plus, factoring in that so many of the power cards of the last year were mid to late-game power cards, the meta should be slow, although I predict that the games will generally be decided on T7-10 when the big power cards come out, and whoever is able to get theirs to stick will win from there.

As for the set, there are three new mechanics (one of which is Demon Hunter specific): Outcast, Dormant, and Prime, which are unique mechanics to grade for the tier list. With Outcast, which requires the card to be on the far left or right of your hand to get its effect, that will not be all that useful in Arena. Because of the nature of Arena and how you draft, your hand is going to be clunky, and it will be difficult to maneuver a card to that part of your hand, especially early game in the mulligan. In general, for DHs, any tempo cards I gave very little bonus to on Outcast, while super situational cards (like the 5 mana draw 3) were given much more of a boost, because you can and would want to reliably hold them until the right time to get said effect off.

With Dormant, your minion is untargetable for 2 turns then awakens afterward. This is not the first time we've seen this effect, as in Taverns of Time, Stasis Dragon (6 mana 10/10 Rush, Dormant) had this effect, and we've seen cards like Mechanical Whelp and Twilight Summoner have similar extremely weak bodies to set up strong bodies later on. For grading these, I applied an in-general rule of $\text{Mana Cost} \times 2 = \text{expected value you get out of the card}$, and going from there. My logic is that, in a fair game, if I were to play a 2 mana minion, you should play either a 2 mana removal or 2 mana minion to contest my guy, resulting in a net gain of 0. But, in this case, you can develop further on the board, and by the time my guy awakens, you should be at least +2 ahead on the board, if not more, and more importantly, have board control. So, to account for that, my minion should at the very least handle your board edge + give me my +2 mana back, so double the cost. Of course, this doesn't work all the time, as removals and AoEs become much less effective when your opponent knows they're coming, so I made small adjustments there, but that formed the basis of my evaluation of those cards.

Finally, there are the Legendary Prime cards, which are fairly statted cards that shuffle an OP effect into your deck that is honestly game-winning if drawn. This isn't an unheard of effect, as LoE and Un'goro Else both had these effects, as well as Forgotten Torch (and probably many other cards I'm forgetting), and as powerful as the shuffled cards were, there was always the issue of drawing them. 2 mana to draw 5 cards (UG Elise) could be considered as powerful as the rest of these Prime cards, but she only got about 10-15 points on normal Elise considering how long it took to set up. So with the Prime cards, rather than factor in how OP each Prime was, I in general gave each card 10-15 points and adjusted up or down depending on if it was a game-winning effect or merely just an overstatted minion.

Starting Class Tier List:

Finally, my predictions for how the classes will be at the start of the expansion. Much of this is factored into the power level of their AoO sets as well as the standard sets still in. Because of

[Introduction + Neutral Cards](#) [Priest changes](#) [Demon Hunter Basic](#) [Demon Hunter](#) [Druid](#) [Hunter](#) [Mage](#) [Paladin](#) [Priest](#) [Rogue](#) [Shaman](#) [Warlock](#) [Warrior](#)

micro-adjusts, these will change after the first couple of weeks. For a more in-depth reason why these classes are ranked as they are, check out my introduction to each class to see why.

- 1: Paladin
- 2: Rogue
- 3: Priest
- 4: Shaman
- 5: Demon Hunter
- 6: Mage
- 7: Warlock
- 8: Warrior
- 9: Hunter
- 10: Druid

Common:

Burrowing Scorpion (101): So, you know how Fire Plume Phoenix was a top tier card? Give it a better body, and stealth if it kills something. Yeah, shit's busted. The stealth will go off most of the time, especially in the late game, so this is an absolutely insane card, easy 100+ for me.

Bonechewer Vanguard (86): A big taunt that grows. You're unlikely to kill it in one go, and there are large heals out there so it can come back. Better than Bog Creeper/Furious Ettin, worse than Drakonid, still great.

Dragonmaw Sky Stalker (85): Eccentric Scribe all over again. The 6/4 of Scribe was better than 5/6 due to the deathrattle you didn't want to trigger, but the 3/4 here is better than 4 1/1s because board space became a thing with Scribe that hindered its potential. Scribe never performed that highly on HA, so the score might seem low, but giving it a point over Scribe.

Guardian Augmerchant (85): Great card. Think Elven Archer, except for 1 more attack, except it can also give your own minion Divine Shield. The one problem it has on Archer is it can't ping off Divine Shields, which matters, but the ability to give your own creature Divine Shield for a 1 health penalty more than makes up for it. The situationalness of not pinging off Divine Shields/Divine Shielding 1 health minions is the only thing holding me back from having this in the 90s, but this is a super premium card.

Rusteed Raider (81): 5/8 rush pretty much kills any 3 or 4 drop and leaves a body behind. Comparable to Militia Commander except that coming out a turn later, even with 3 more health, is much worse because Militia Commander pretty much kills anything on 3/4 and this can't kill everything on 4/5. Still premium, anything that removes and develops is.

Frozen Shadoweaver (78): A 3 mana 4/3 with a strong upside. Freeze is worth about 20ish points, puts it in the high 70s.

[Introduction + Neutral Cards](#) [Priest changes](#) [Demon Hunter Basic](#) [Demon Hunter](#) [Druid](#) [Hunter](#) [Mage](#) [Paladin](#) [Priest](#) [Rogue](#) [Shaman](#) [Warlock](#) [Warrior](#)

Scavenging Shivarra (76): Madder bomber for one more mana, but because it can't hit face it's significantly better. Or, a more aggressive/less restrictive Dynamatic. Because it's all minions, if your opponent has one large minion, this is a single target removal if your board is clear. It requires set-up, but this should always be a net positive for you. If it really hurts you, then just hold it for the right time, or trust the RNG gods.

Rocket Augmerchant (75): This is a better version of the Rush lackey. In general, if you're rushing something (except with Divine Shield), you're killing off the opponent so the damage doesn't matter. The attack buff does matter, but that's made up by the body and the ability to ping your opponent. Now, it's arguably the worst of the lackeys for the situationalness about it, but it's still real good. This is probably the most consistent of the 2/1 pings, lacking the upside of either one but still being extremely useful if you need that extra minion removal. The one massive downside, which is why it's not as high as it could be, is that with Rush, you want to Rush things with Divine Shield, and the ping nature means you're getting rid of that premium target to rush.

Bonechewer Brawler (75): Amani Berserker, except better because it can grow more (although 4 vs. 5 while first damaged does matter), with taunt. That's good.

Ethereal Augmerchant (68): If you're using this on an enemy, or on T1/2, the Spell Damage is irrelevant, so it's a better Elven Archer. If you're using this on yourself, the Spell Damage is relevant, and it's a massive swing. Situational, but certainly useful, only hindered by the situationalness of the upside.

Overconfident Orc (66): There's enough pings in the set that revamped Tar Creeper this isn't. It's an early-game taunt that blocks stuff, useful, but dies pretty easy after that first ping.

Disguised Wanderer (65): Compared to Cursed Disciple: The deathrattle of Cursed Disciple meant you couldn't easily kill off either 5/1. Here, you only need one ping to handle it, so in comparison to Cursed Disciple, it's slightly worse. However, you don't always have a ping, and for Demon Hunters in particular, taking 9 damage to deal with this is extremely scary. This is going to lead to weird board states where neither side wants to proc the 3/3 because the only way you proc the 3/3 is if you can protect/kill the 9/1 without issue. Which means, buff classes (Paladin/Priest/Druid) will see more use out of this because you can turn that 3/3 into a threat that has to be dealt with, which means they may not be able to deal with the 9/1 that follows. I would say ultimately worse than Disciple but still very comparable in power levels depending on the board state.

Imprisoned Vilefiend (64): Using my dormant calculations, 4 mana for a 3/5 rush is certainly worth it, better version of Stormwind Knight and probably a little worse than Swift Messenger. The one small side is that opponents can play around it to a degree, which hurts a little, but

[Introduction + Neutral Cards](#) [Priest changes](#) [Demon Hunter Basic](#) [Demon Hunter](#) [Druid](#) [Hunter](#) [Mage](#) [Paladin](#) [Priest](#) [Rogue](#) [Shaman](#) [Warlock](#) [Warrior](#)

there is only so much people can do, and any in-hand buffs become much more powerful because of its rush.

Supreme Abyssal (64): So, the problem with this card is, it's text means the opponent can ignore it. If you play a 12/12, but it can't go face, then it is almost never worth it to invest multiple things in order to get rid of it and instead better to exploit that it can only hit once a turn and can be blocked by freezes and taunts and handled by hard or soft removals. It is not a threat because it can't go face, which is largely why Icehowl, a better version of Digday, was 5 points worse. That is not to say this won't be useful, as there are a few large minions in the set that this can handle and will be necessary to handle, just that it will not be a great card for the reason all big cards that do not do anything are in spite of its stats.

Rustsworn Initiate (62): 2/2 summon a 1/1 is good, 60s, the spell damage isn't worth much though because of how situational it is to start with, and then making it not on command.

Felfin Navigator (52): This will occasionally do something, but not often, so a little better than a standard 4/4.

Rustsworn Cultist (43): Obviously better in token-generating classes. Card is still pretty weak. 1/1s without something to make them threats aren't great, and you need to hit this on I'd say 3 targets to make this a good card.

Soulbound Ashtongue (28): Going to pass on this one. 1 more health on a Dire Mole to take 4 (or more) damage isn't worth it, and buffing it means you just take more damage.

Terrorguard Escapee (22): These cards are always bad. It might average out to a 3/4 but giving your opponent stuff is never a good idea if you can avoid it.

Rare:

Scrapyard Colossus (90): You need to do a lot at 10 mana to be worth it. Colossus of the Moon, for example, as bustly overstated as it is, is only an above-average card. The double taunt is a lot. Evasive Drakonid and Winged Guardian just because of their Spell Immunity are super premium cards because of how difficult they are to remove. Wrapped Golem similarly is a busted card because of how difficult it is to remove. Every single taunt that has Reborn/Deathrattled into another taunt has been a good card. So yeah, super expensive, but with Spellbreaker out of the meta there's no real way to handle this outside Polymorph/Hex/Sap.

Blistering Rot (63): When an Echoing Ooze and a Shrieking Shroom have a baby. A more reliable version of Shroom with less upside but more benefits from buffs to protect it. I think overall will be better than Shroom due to the lack of RNG.

[Introduction + Neutral Cards](#) [Priest changes](#) [Demon Hunter Basic](#) [Demon Hunter](#) [Druid](#) [Hunter](#) [Mage](#) [Paladin](#) [Priest](#) [Rogue](#) [Shaman](#) [Warlock](#) [Warrior](#)

Infectious Sporeling (61): I don't know if this is a last-minute addition due to COVID but I appreciate this card existing. The thing with the card is, somebody has to kill it with something that isn't a minion, or the game basically shuts down. And I don't know if the card by itself is good or bad, I'd put it around Emperor Cobra levels on instinct, but this is going to be fun. By the way, if anyone ever asks what is the difference between Tempo and Value, give the example of playing Sporeling (1 mana) + the 2/1 Rush ping (1 mana) to kill the 10 mana 7/7 deathrattle 7/7 taunt, then playing another 1-mana spell to clear their sporeling. 3 cards and 3 mana to put a 1/2 on the board, while killing a 10 mana card of theirs.

Epic:

Mo'arg Artificer (85 in Mage/Shaman, 70 in Warlock/Demon Hunter/Priest, 50 in Paladin, 40 other classes): This has extremely high potential. This is, on curve, an overpowered minion whose effect won't matter, and in the late game, an activator for super powerful board clears. Imagine 8 damage Flamestrike, or 6 mana Holy Nova as a Flamestrike, or this with Lightning Storm or Consecration or Hellfire or other variants, you get a board clear effect because of this. Now, if you aren't a class that has access to a 2-3+ damage AoE, this is horrible. And it does work on single-target spells too, just not as powerful. In the late-game, it's a dead card, arguably worse than Millhouse Manastorm because of how screwed you could get by it, and the early game advantage isn't worth it. I think this could be insane in classes/decks with board clears but it's going to be a dangerous card to leave around, so you'll have to use it properly.

Waste Warden (80): Horrible wording because I don't know if Type means Tribe or the same minion (ala Silver Hand Recruits). That said, 5 mana flanking strike is still a real good, borderline great minion, with potential tribal/Shaman hate built in.

Replicat-o-tron (70 in Paladin, 60 Shaman, 40 in Druid/Priest, 20 in other classes): Average if you can use it on a 1/1 or a totem (so a 6/6 for 6, which is averageish, about a 60), obviously much better in Paladin or Shaman than other classes, but too gimmicky for Arena in general.

Legendary:

Magthteridon (90): This is a hard card to rate. Obviously, this can combo to be a 2-card Deathwing without the drawback, and that's insane. The only real way to prevent this from going off is to either Silence/Transform your own guys (in which case, you're using a card to deal with this) or something like a Brewmaster effect to prevent this from happening. So, it's not reliable, it gives your opponents things (that honestly, don't matter much because they don't

[Introduction + Neutral Cards](#) [Priest changes](#) [Demon Hunter Basic](#) [Demon Hunter](#) [Druid](#) [Hunter](#) [Mage](#) [Paladin](#) [Priest](#) [Rogue](#) [Shaman](#) [Warlock](#) [Warrior](#)

want to attack with them anyways), but it will almost always give you a massive board wipe that your opponent can only delay. Worse than Deathwing due to the conditions/stall, still should be on average a game winning card.

Al'arr (86): Your opponent will almost never trade this off if they are smart. Which means, to clear it, you need to be able to do 3 damage to it, twice, and the first time you will likely lose whatever you have that you ran into it. That is incredibly hard to do, especially on curve. This is potentially game-winning on 5 if you don't have the board/removal to handle it, and still really useful even if you do.

Maiev Shadowsong (79): Less of a silence effect and more of a super-freeze effect. Freeze effects are really powerful even if only for one turn, so a 2 turn Freeze that also functions as a silence would be incredibly strong. Frost Ele gets 20-25 points just because of its Freeze, so we're talking a good 40ish points or more attached to the body.

Kael'thas Sunstrider (57): Already scored, I disagree a bit with HA on this. There are enough instances where you have 3 spells in hand, and can cast two cheap spells to activate a 3rd incredibly expensive spell. It's not overly common, but it happens much more than you'd think in Shaman or Mage or Rogue. And there are a lot of cards that generate spells that will allow this effect to go off. I would say it's easily better than Archmage, not by much, but definitely a couple points above it.

Teron Gorefiend (51): This is a net negative effect. You immediately lose tempo if this goes off, and getting the minion back to full and buffs later does not make up for the immediate loss + the 2 to 3 turns it takes to get them back on the field because your opponent exploits this and freezes/taunts/transforms your minion. It's still a 3 mana 3/4 and there are fun things you can do with deathrattles/reborn, but I feel ultimately a lot worse than its base stats.