

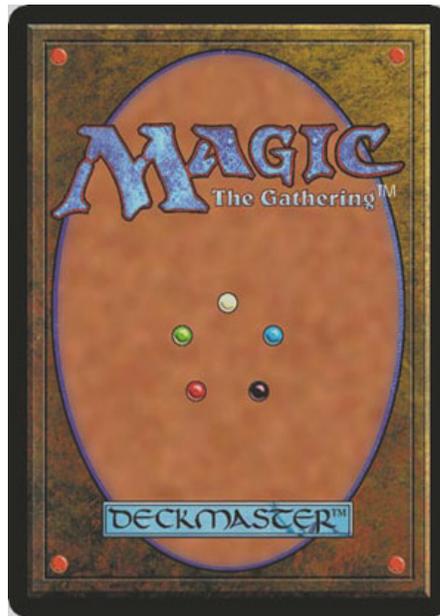
The Guilds of Magic and the Color Philosophies of Magic: the Gathering

A Quick Lesson on Chordie's Nerdy Brain that Nobody Asked For

So, first thing first: I'm sure you have a very important question for me. ~~Why are you writing this? Why am I reading this? Who even cares?~~ What is this color philosophy? The answer to that is fairly simple. For those who have never played the trading card game Magic: The Gathering or those who didn't care so much about the lore, the game is centered around cards of five colors (six, if you consider "colorless" to be a color, which the game's rules do not) and combinations of those colors. They are White, Blue, Black, Red, and Green. Each color has a different strategy, each strategy its own strengths and weaknesses. Making decks with multiple colors allows for strategies that have more reach and coverage, but each color added makes the deck more difficult to keep consistent.

Now, those five colors have two facets to them during game development: philosophy and mechanics. As I've mentioned already, each color has a range of strategies it contributes well to, and that is reflected in the abilities seen on the cards. Thus, when the development team wants to make a card that, say, gains you lots of life, that will usually fall into green or white (unless it also drains it from your opponent, in which case it becomes a black card). To make the Magic world rich and flavorful, the colors all have philosophies attached to them, giving each personality. Does this life gaining spell stem from someone altruistically aiding another? It's probably white. Does it involve some sort of commune with nature? Green.

So, now you have some basic context, but let me explain what the flip I'm actually talking about. Here's a breakdown of the color philosophies in terms of their core values and the things they lead to, good and bad. I've left brief outlines before each explanation in case you don't feel like reading everything.



As seen on the back of the cards, the colors are organized in a pentagon. The order is important, as colors next to each other have some overlap in philosophy and colors across from each other have opposing philosophies. I will proceed clockwise from white.

White

- Core: Order
 - Virtues: Community, Morality
 - Vices: Oppression, Lack of Importance of the Individual

White is the color of order. It wants to push back the dark, bring everyone in together, and form a society of peace and love. This drive for order can bring a strong sense of togetherness and community, and is often a strong base for moral individuals, but white is not without its flaws. Oftentimes, white tends to have a big ego. It can be dogmatic, holier-than-thou. Moreover, white's intense focus on the group gives it strong utilitarian values, most of the time, and this philosophy tends to reduce focus on the

individual. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but can often lead to being one in the face of corrupt or oppressive leadership (of which the latter stems from the intense focus on making sure everything is peaceful and organized). An extreme negative example of white is the evil, oppressive Orwellian government, while the elusive perfect government that truly does the best for all of its people is the zenith.

Blue

- Core: Knowledge
 - Virtues: Invention, Understanding, Progress
 - Vices: Detached, Overly-Analytical, Cold

Blue is the color of knowledge, and always the one I've identified with most. It cares about pre-planning and controlling all the variables, in an experiment or otherwise. On its good days, blue is making new and amazing technologies to share with the world, researching things that further our understanding of life and the world around us. Blue is looking at the stars, the earth, the atoms and thinking "How?" But blue struggles with being empathetic, with emotional baggage. To blue, everything has a logical solution, and when all you have is a hammer, all your problems start to look like nails. Moreover, blue can be outright cold, pushing away the influence of emotion for the sake of a strictly reasonable approach. While this is not inherently bad, blue sometimes fails to realize that there is more to how we see the world than logic.

Black

- Core: The Self
 - Virtues: Ambition, Self-Advancement
 - Vices: Amoralism, Selfishness

Everyone, meet black. He's... misunderstood. When you tell someone new your first thought in any situation is yourself, they probably won't start off with a very high opinion of you, and so black gets a bad rep. Of course, there's a little black in almost everyone. Often, it is the desire to see oneself succeed that pushes us to do more and better, to aspire and achieve. However, selfishness is easy to feed in this mindset, and when all you care about is you, sometimes you stop caring about when the people in your way get hurt. Black is nestled nicely between blue and red, and it can be seen in its tendency to follow a solid plan and its passion to do what is necessary to succeed. This brings me to...

Red

- Core: Passion, Individuality
 - Virtues: Friendship, Creativity, Free Will
 - Vices: Impetuosity, Chaos, Rage

Red is an abused little color in game. So often do the developers take this beautiful, volatile color and form it into cards that make things explode, or cards about things that are very angry. Red, of course, is [so much more](#). It is the color of passion, of feeling, and of experiencing the world without restrictions. Red cares dearly for its friends and for their (and its) right to live freely as they choose. But red is not to be mistaken for altruistic. Though it loves beyond almost anything those that it is close to, everyone else tends to seem as a challenge. Red is impulsive, fast to act, and, yes, often easy to anger. Red is the color of chaos, as well, and though I have it listed under vices, the "goodness" of chaos depends on the situation in which it is introduced. The

utter mayhem in the pillaging of a small farming town is obviously quite negative, but the revolution that brings down a corrupt leader seems so righteous. Red doesn't care much for stopping and thinking and, for better or worse, charges right into the fray.

Green

- Core: Natural Order
 - Virtues: "Live and Let Live," Growth and Change, Respect for Nature
 - Passive, Apathetic

Green is the color that most loves nature and respects the order of the world around us. To green, nature had it right all along and humans are usually just messing it all up. They tend to have a "live and let live" mentality, however, often figuring nature will sort things out while they do nothing and let it run its course. That said, they are not afraid to stand up and fight when they are challenged. In the wild, it's survival of the fittest. All the same, when it is not necessary to fight, green is apathetic. Often they see the plights of others (usually outsiders to a community) and figure that is how it was intended to be, or perhaps the result of messing with nature too much. Either way, not their problem.

And those are the colors! I know this is ultimately supposed to be about magiq, not Magic, so let's get into the Guilds. In bold is my interpretation of the guild's primary color, the rest being secondary or tertiary.

Thornmouth - **Blue**/(Black)

Home sweet home! As I mentioned before, blue is the color I relate to the most. When I took the test for the first time and ended up being “sorted” into Thornmouth, I knew right away that it was where I belonged. There was never a shred of doubt. This is about as blue as it gets, ultimately. Driven by the thirst for knowledge, often detached from the rest of the world, and with no clear goals on what all the fruits of learning will be applied to, Thornmouth is an easy guild to classify. It could be noted that we seek knowledge primarily, if not almost exclusively, for personal advancement, so an argument could be made for being Blue/Black, though that is up to personal interpretation (as is all of this, really).

Ebenguard - **White**

Also not a very surprising verdict. Ebenguard consider themselves to be on the moral high ground in all that they do. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it can be easy to become dogmatic this way. An Ebenguardian who lets his righteousness get to his head can very easily end up in a mindset of “I am right and everyone who disagrees with me is an enemy of The Golden Balance. Note that, like Thornmouth, it is possible for this guild to dip into black, but that is on a person-by-person basis and not representative of the guild as a whole. At the end of the day, Ebenguard is a guild that stands for the good in the world, and even the Guide itself warns to temper oneself and refrain from becoming an elitist.

Flinterforge - **Red**/Blue

Thorny’s neighbors on the compass, and those who have the know and the drive to make some pretty damn cool stuff in their Forges. Ultimately, it is the sheer passion that drives Flinterforge. The spark of an idea that ignites into a roaring desire to *do* and *create*. This guild is quite interesting in that its colors are almost both primary, but it seems to me that the ferocity with which a Flinterforge takes on The Day’s Work nudges red just above blue as the primary color. Flinterforge works with purpose and drive to

make for the sake of making, which contrasts with Thornmouth who may want or require a reason to do a certain thing.

Gossmere - **White**/Red/Green

Gossmere is the guild that loves to love others. Their doors are open to those in need, be they sick and hungry or just way too drunk and need a place to crash for the night. Their firm respect for The Common Drum, their desire to help any and all who may need it, and their intense emotion make them a tri-color guild. First and foremost is white, of course. They are guided by their morality, their desire for a peaceful and happy community, be they the teacher or the healer or the valiant knight. Pushing that morality (and sometimes pushing one to neglect oneself in favor of another) is the passion and the emotion, and all to improve the lives of all as their hearts beat to the Drum. I could have reduced this White/Red or White/Green, but both felt simply incomplete. As for the last combination...

Balimora - **Red**/Green

What happened to Weatherwatch? Why are both colors in bold, Chordie? ~~Who the hell let you write this?~~ Welcome to Balimora, the guild of chaos. You may quick to point out that even the Guide says that "Natural rule is a lie" and so green should not be a Balimorean color, much less a primary one. Balimora respects the savagery of nature, the chaos that is present in the world. But they also know, unlike pure green, that it is not enough to do nothing. They are deeply reverent of nature, but see themselves as the ones who must fight the crushing darkness and beat back the scouring light until neither has a stronger foothold... and then kickstart some trouble anyway. Balimora is passionately driven by the appreciation and dedication to nature and The Great Chaos, putting them solidly in green/red.

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P.S. - If you're reading this, Steve, my refusal to drink your stupid antler potion last thursday did not mean that you could break into my room (how?! It's glitter proof...) and put antlers on all my possessions.

Weatherwatch - **Black/Red**

Never content to sit still and let the world pass them by, the mages of Weatherwatch heed the call to adventure and set off to challenge the world in search of The Further Fire. This is a quest of ambition and passion, of self-satisfaction and spontaneity, of want to become a legend. Sharp tongues and sharper blades guide them, their bravery matched only by their impulse, and tempered by their wits. Black/Red just wants to experience life to its fullest with no restrictions, and Weatherwatch is the perfect embodiment of that.

Bonus: Me - **Blue/Red**

Much like magimystical currents, nothing is permanent. I've classified and reclassified myself many times, but this is who I am right now. While I am not necessarily pouring over tomes 24/7 seeking book knowledge, I am one who puts reason above all in how I see the world. I try to think objectively, and it isn't always easy, but it is what I strive to do. That said, I also do not completely neglect my emotional side. There are no people more important to me than my friends and family, and I would go to great lengths to keep them safe and happy. When I am letting my emotions take control, they are strong, be it an overwhelming joy or a seething rage. There's little middle ground between those and my neutral state.