

A Basic Guide to Deck Building in the Standard Format

(SUM-UNB)

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Introduction - What is the "Standard Format"?

In the Pokémon Trading Card Game, there are two formats¹ used for officially sanctioned [Play! Pokémon Events](#). These formats are **Standard** and **Expanded**. In the **Standard Format**, cards from approximately the last two years (currently Sun and Moon onward) are legal for play. The **Expanded Format** expands the field of available cards back to the Black & White expansion, which released in English in April 2011. Although events take place in both formats throughout the world, this guide will focus on the Standard Format for a few reasons:

1. The Standard Format is an easier format to learn. Because there are fewer cards for newer players to become familiar with, it is easier to become familiar with the most important cards of the format.
2. The Standard Format offers a less wild, wild west version of the Pokémon Trading Card game. The Expanded Format is sometimes referred to as the "degenerate" format because of how it plays. Expanded play often focuses on preventing your opponent from playing the game (1, 2) rather than setting up your board and knocking out your opponent's Pokémon.
3. The Pokémon Company appears to design cards more carefully with the Standard Format in mind. The degenerate nature of Expanded often is a result of card interactions that weren't considered in the design of newer cards.
4. Most importantly, the writer of this guide is not overly fond of the Expanded Format.

While this guide will focus on the Standard Format, many of the principles of deck building in it carry over to the Expanded Format as well.

When referring to specific cards, this guide makes use of the standard **Set Abbreviations**. You can see a list of these abbreviations in [Appendix V: Set Abbreviations and Symbols](#).

Rotation

Once each year, a handful of sets rotate out of the Standard Format, meaning that those sets become no longer legal for play in the Standard Format. This **Rotation** happens toward the end of August or the beginning of September, typically within a week of the Pokémon World Championships. Several weeks prior to rotation, The Pokémon Company International (commonly referred to as TPCi) announces which sets and other products remain legal for the following year. For the 2018-2019 Season, the following remained legal:

- Sun & Moon and any expansions released afterward
- Black Star Promo cards numbered SM01 and up
- Cards from the following products are also legal:
- Shining Legends
- Sun & Moon Trainer Kit—Lycanroc & Alolan Raichu
- McDonald's Collection 2017



Sun & Moon is the first legal set in the Standard Format.

Cards that are no longer legal for play in the Standard Format are said to have **Rotated** from the Standard Format. **Reprints** are new printings of cards from older sets in a newer set. When cards that were previously included in set that has rotated are reprinted in a set that is currently legal in the Standard Format, the reprint of the older card often makes older printings of the same card legal in the Standard Format again.

An example of a reprint is Pokémon Communication TEU 152 (pictured on the left below). Its reprint in Team Up made the prints of Pokémon Communication from HeartGold SoulSilver and Black & White legal again in the Standard Format.



Pokémon Communication
Item

Reveal a Pokémon from your hand and put it into your deck. If you do, search your deck for a Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

TEU 152 ♣ | HS 98 ♣, BLW 99 ♣



You can see a list of these cards at [PokéGym](#).

Reasons for Rotation

As a new player, the idea of cards you own rotating may be intimidating, but Rotation is important for the health of the Pokémon Trading Card Game. The Pokémon Company International describes rotation as follows:

At the beginning of every Championship Series season, Pokémon Organized Play removes older expansions from competition in the Standard format, with the goal of maintaining a healthy competitive environment. This rotation challenges existing players to create new strategies and enables new players to get involved in Play! Pokémon events using the most recent releases.

The two big driving factors behind Rotation then are:

1. Rotation drives players to develop new strategies. When old cards rotate out, strategies and combos that were once available to a player leave with them. Additionally, strategies and combinations that may have previously been unviable become possibilities. Think of it as opening a window in the Pokémon Trading Card Game—the old, stale air rushes out so that the air from the outside—which has been there the whole time—has a chance to come in and fill the room.
2. Rotation makes it easier for new players to get involved in the Pokémon Trading Card Game. Because only roughly the last two years of cards are legal in the Standard Format, players have a much lower risk of needing to pay high prices for old cards that are required for their decks to be competitively viable. This helps to keep the cost of entry into the Pokémon Trading Card game comparatively low.

The Idea of a Deck

A deck is a set of sixty cards that work together to execute a strategy to win. In the Pokémon Trading Card Game, there are three ways to win:

1. Draw all of your Prize cards.
2. Knock out all of your opponent's Pokémon in play.
3. Cause your opponent to deck out.

Basic Deck Strategy

New players often see card synergy as "these two Pokémon are both grass types, therefore, they work well together". In reality, however, the first grass type Pokémon may have no synergy whatsoever with the other and yet may have great synergy with a psychic-type Pokémon, where the second may have great synergy with a Dragon-type Pokémon instead.² The flip side of that misunderstanding is jamming too many types of Pokémon into a deck with their respective energies and expecting the deck to function. Both are harmful to the deck's ability to execute a winning strategy.

In the Pokémon Trading Card Game, there are four prominent strategies players use to help them defeat their opponent. The most common of these by far is the very straightforward **Aggression** strategy.

Aggression

In a phrase, "Hulk smash!" The goal of a deck whose primary strategy is aggression is to take decisive knockouts against the opponent's Pokémon as quickly as possible. The aggression strategy generally takes one of two forms: **Direct Aggression**, where the player knocks out their opponent's Pokémon, one at a time, in a way that will allow them to draw all of their prize cards before their opponent and **Spread**, a form of aggression that, instead of focusing on taking direct knockouts, focuses on racking up damage on the opponent's side of play so that, through the sheer volume of damage or by otherwise manipulating the damage, the player using said strategy can take multiple knockouts at once or in very quick succession.

Decks that focus on the aggression strategy have a secondary focus in setting up and maintaining a constant stream of attackers to knock out their opponent's Pokémon. This focus of streaming battle-ready attackers is critical to winning the **Prize Trade**—the exchange of knockouts each player takes against their opponent and the prizes they draw from those knockouts.

Control

The goal of a deck whose primary strategy is **Control** is to cut off the opponent's avenues to victory denying them access to energy, trainer cards, abilities, and other deck resources necessary to execute their deck's strategy. A control deck often slows down the pace of the game so

that it can execute a second strategy, like stall or aggression, driving the opponent toward more and more desperate plays to free themselves from the control deck's grasp.

Stall

The goal of a deck whose primary strategy is **Stall** is to deny the opponent the ability to take prize cards. This is done using Pokémon with high hit points, abilities, items, stadia, and supporters that remove, reduce, or prevent damage. By preventing the opponent from taking knockouts and drawing prize cards, the stall strategy drives the opponent toward losing by **Deck Out**—or running out of cards in their deck so that, at the beginning of their turn, they cannot draw a card.

The stall strategy is typically paired with an additional strategy, often control.

Mill

When a player's deck focuses on mill, it actively drives the opponent toward deck out by discarding cards from the opponent's deck and hand. In addition to driving the opponent closer to deck out, mill denies the opponent access to its resources by sending them to the discard pile.

Basic Deck Structure

Before we begin looking at what you can—and what you should—put into your deck, it's important to understand what can't be put into a deck.

Limits - What You Can and Can't Put into Your Deck

In the Pokémon Trading Card Game, a deck is made up of exactly sixty cards, including at least one Basic Pokémon. These sixty cards have to include all Pokémon, all Trainer cards, and all Energies you need to execute your strategy. In addition to a deck needing to be exactly sixty cards, there are a few other rules about the cards in your deck.

The Rule of 4

With only two exceptions in the Standard Format, you can only have up to four copies of a card with the same name in your deck. This means that a deck can only contain up to four copies of a card called "Cynthia", a Supporter card, and up to four copies of "Pokégear 3.0", an Item Card. This rule also applies to cards featuring Pokémon, though the rules about a Pokémon's name are a little different. Below is text from the [Official Pokémon Rulebook](#) about Pokémon names.

WHAT DOES AND DOESN'T COUNT FOR A POKÉMON'S NAME?

- Some Pokémon cards have extra information after their name, such as a Level or a symbol like ♣. A Pokémon's name changes how you can evolve or play certain cards. Level is not part of a Pokémon's name:
 - Gengar, Gengar LV. 43, Gengar LV. 44, and Gengar LV.X all have the same name.
- Symbols at the end of a Pokémon's name are part of a Pokémon's name:
 - Alakazam, Alakazam ♠, and Alakazam ♣ all have different names from each other
 - However, ♂ (Delta Species) is not part of a Pokémon's name. Aerodactyl and Aerodactyl ♂ (Delta Species) have the same name.
- An owner or form name in a Pokémon's name is part of the Pokémon's name:
 - Meowth, Alolan Meowth, and Rocket's Meowth have different names

When you are building a deck, you can have only 4 copies of a card with the same name in it, except for basic Energy cards. If your deck has 1 each of Gengar, Gengar LV. 43, Gengar LV. 44, and Gengar LV.X, you can't put any more cards named Gengar in your deck! However, you could have 4 Meowth, 4 Alolan Meowth, and 4 Rocket's Meowth.

When evolving, the "evolves from" Pokémon name must match the Pokémon being evolved. So Graveler can evolve from Geodude, or Geodude LV. 12, but not Brock's Geodude.

This rule means that a deck can have four copies of Magcargo and four copies of Magcargo-GX in the same deck! That's eight different cards with Magcargo in the name, and both Magcargo and Magcargo-GX evolve from Slugma. One thing to keep in mind, however, is that while you can include four copies each of Magcargo and Magcargo-GX, you still only can include four copies of Slugma, which is necessary to evolve into either Magcargo.

The Exceptions - Basic Energy and Prism Star Cards

In the Standard Format, the exceptions to the "Rule of 4" are **Basic Energy** and **Prism Star Cards**.

Basic Energy cards are cards that have "Energy" printed on the top-left part of the card, but have no special text explaining any special use. A deck can include up to fifty-nine of any Basic Energy card (provided the sixtieth card in the deck is a Basic Pokémon). In the Standard Format, there are nine Basic Energy cards:



Prism Star (◇) cards are especially powerful cards that go to the Lost Zone instead of the Discard Pile when discarded. While you can have as many Prism Star cards in your deck as you like, you may only have up to one copy of each Prism Star card in your deck. Below are a few examples of Prism Star cards.



Diancie ◇ FLI 74 ◇



Beast Energy ◇ FLI 117 ◇



Heat Factory ◇ LOT 178 ♣



Tapu Koko ◇ TEU 51 ♣



Black Market ◇ TEU 134 ♣

Banned Cards

The Pokémon Company International, the company that produces Pokémon cards for the United States and many other regions, maintains a [list of banned cards](#) at Pokemon.com. However, unlike the Expanded Format that relies heavily on a list of banned cards to maintain some semblance of playability, the Standard Format rarely sees cards on its ban list.

Currently, there are no cards on the list of banned cards for the Standard Format. All cards that have not rotated from the Standard Format are legal for play in Standard decks.

Fake Cards, Proxies, World Championship Cards, and Cards in Other Languages

Fake Cards

Counterfeit and other fake cards are not legal for play and should not be included in any deck. If you suspect a card or cards you own may be counterfeit or otherwise fake, there are a few videos on YouTube that can help with verifying one way or the other. Below are two that may prove especially helpful.

[How to Tell If a Pokémon Card is FAKE! – Leonhart](#)

[Fake Pokémon Cards vs. Real Pokémon Cards – Derium's Pokémon](#)

Proxies

Proxies—placeholder printouts of real cards—are not legal for play in any sanctioned tournament. Your local Pokémon League may allow for proxies during open play for testing purposes. In all other instances, proxies are to be treated exactly the same as other fake cards.

Autographed Cards, World Championship Cards, and Damaged Cards

Any cards marked by ink are not allowed in sanctioned play. Below is an excerpt from the document [Play! Pokémon Trading Card Game Rules & Formats](#).

2.9. Autographed Cards

Cards marked by pen, marker, etc., are not permitted for use in a sanctioned tournament. This includes autographed cards.

In addition to cards marked by ink not being legal, cards with alternate card backs, such as World Championship cards, are not legal for play and should be treated better-looking proxies. Other cards that specifically mention that they are not tournament legal on the card itself are also not legal in Play! Pokémon tournaments. Below is an excerpt from the document [Play! Pokémon Trading Card Game Rules & Formats](#).

2.10. Alternate-Backed Cards

Only cards printed with the standard local-language Pokémon TCG card back may be used in Play! Pokémon tournaments, and all cards in a deck must have the same card back. Cards printed with any other back may not be used in a Play! Pokémon tournament, even if sleeved with opaque card sleeves.

2.11. Cards Listed as Not Legal

Some cards appear with “NOT TOURNAMENT LEGAL” on the card. These cards are not legal in Play! Pokémon tournaments.

Additionally, cards that are damaged to the point where they could potentially be recognizable from other cards in the deck, even with sleeves, are also not permitted.

Cards in Other Languages

The languages of cards legal for play in your deck will vary based on where you live. In the United States, for example, only cards printed in English are legal for play. Below is an excerpt from the document [Play! Pokémon Trading Card Game Rules & Formats](#).

2.8. Foreign Cards

Players are restricted on which language cards they can use, based on the country in which they are playing.

The list below defines which languages are considered local in each region. Any languages not listed are considered foreign in that region.

Rating Zone	Region	Local Languages
North America	United States	English
North America	Canada	English, French
Latin America	Mexico	English, Spanish
Latin America	All other countries	English, Portuguese, Spanish
Europe	All countries	English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish
Oceania	All countries	English
Russia	Russia	English, Russian
South Africa	South Africa	English
-	Japan	Japanese
-	Korea	Korean

Players are not permitted to use foreign cards at Premier Events unless the exception below applies.

For the Pokémon TCG World Championships, International Championships, and for side events at either of these, regardless of which country they are hosted in, players are always permitted to use English cards as well as cards in any language that is legal in the player's home country.

Recent Releases or, When do New Cards Become Legal?

In the Pokémon Trading Card Game, new sets become legal for tournament play on the third Friday of the month they officially release. This is the third Friday of official commercial release, not the month in which early preview events, called Pre-releases, take place. Local Pokémon Leagues often allow the play of cards from these sets immediately after pre-release, especially during open play.

New promo cards such as those found in special collections become legal on the first or third Friday of the month after the product releases. Rather than trying to guess the state of legality for promo cards, you can also see when new cards become legal and what cards are already legal on Pokémon's website on the page [Pokémon TCG Promo Card Legality Status](#).

Errata – When What Cards Say and What Cards Do Differ

Errata are official changes to how cards interact with the game. The Pokémon Company International sometimes issues errata to correct an error or imprecision in a translation of a card's effect, to mitigate a card's negative impact on the game, or to update older prints of cards to newer effects. Players are expected to be familiar with all errata affecting cards in the format they are playing in and to use all cards' effects in accordance with the erratum's text, if an erratum exists.

Only one card originally printed in the Sun & Moon era has an erratum affecting its printed text: Cyrus ♦, visible below.



Cyrus ♦ – Original Text
Supporter

You can't play this card if you don't have any ⚡ or ⚡ Pokémon in play.

Your opponent chooses 2 Benched Pokémon and shuffles the others, and all cards attached to them, into their deck.

UPR 120 ▲

Cyrus ♦ – Erratum Text
Supporter

You can play this card only if your Active Pokémon is a ⚡ or ⚡ Pokémon.

Your opponent chooses 2 Benched Pokémon and shuffles the others, and all cards attached to them, into their deck.

UPR 120 ▲

In addition to Cyrus ♦, some cards that have been reprinted in the Sun & Moon era have errata issued so that the effects of older printings of cards with the same name match the current effect of the card in question. You can view a list of all issued errata at [Pokémon's official website](#).

The Deck Skeleton

The standard breakdown of the cards in a deck by type is as follows:

- 15 Pokémon
- 33 Trainers
 - 13 Supporters
 - 8-10 Draw Supporters
 - 3-4 Guzma
 - 17 Items
 - 6-8 Pokémon Search
 - 3 Stadia
- 12 Energies

These numbers form the skeleton of the deck: not every deck will follow it exactly—many of the best decks in the Standard Format often deviate by ± 3 cards from each main category. Some deviate from it more radically. What this skeleton is, however, is a good start for how to structure the first draft of your deck—a rough goal to target before you begin playtesting it.

Pokémon

At the core of every deck are the Pokémon that it is built around. Every deck must contain at least one basic Pokémon, but most decks run quite a few more. There are three types of Pokémon that go into decks. The first and most important of these is the **Main Attacker**. The Main Attacker is the Pokémon that whose primary job is to deal damage to or take damage from the opponent's active Pokémon.

Main Attacker

In any deck, the main attacker determines the deck's primary strategy and any secondary strategies necessary to win. Everything from how the deck needs to set up, what Trainer cards the deck runs, and what Energies the deck needs are determined entirely by the Main Attacker. However, not every Pokémon is adequate as a main attacker. A main attacker needs the following attributes in order to be viable in a deck:

1. The attacker must be able to setup quickly.

- The attacker must be able to do sufficient damage to the opponent's Pokémon before it is knocked out. (It must be able to trade favorably in the prize trade.)

In short, high numbers like high HP and high damage aren't everything. For example, Kommo-o-GX GRI 100, pictured below, has 240 HP. That's not bad. It's enough to withstand some of the popular attackers in the game. However, Kommo-o-GX's attacks leave a rather lot to be desired. In the Pokémon Trading Card Game, attacks are often thought of their cost in **Attachments**—or the number of separate energy attachments (and, often by extension, turns) it would take to have sufficient energy to use an attack. Kommo-o-GX's *Adamantine Press*, for example, requires a single attachment—one colorless (★) energy. In exchange Kommo-o-GX does thirty damage and prevents thirty damage when it is next attacked. Its other attacks, *Shred* and *Ultra Uppercut GX*, require a minimum of three attachments—a Lightning energy (⚡), a Fighting energy (👊), and a Double Colorless Energy (★★), a Special Energy Card that provides two colorless energies (*also pictured below*). Compare this with Gardevoir-GX BUS 93 that not only has an attack that can be powered-up with a single attachment, but an ability that adds to the effective number of attachments the player has during their turn.



Kommo-o-GX GRI 100 ⚡



Double Colorless Energy SUM 136 ★



Gardevoir-GX BUS 93 ⚡

In both of these examples, the main attacker we're examining is a Stage 2 Pokémon. This means that, from the start of the game, the player who plans to attack with these Pokémon in a deck will need at least two turns of **Setup**—or the time it takes to go from beginning the game to having a Pokémon that is ready to take knockouts against the opponent's Pokémon or for the player to be otherwise be ready to execute the deck's strategy to win. Kommo-o-GX must start out as a Jangmo-o and either evolve into Hakamo-o on a second turn, and then Kommo-o-GX on a third, or start out as a Jangmo-o and use Rare Candy the following turn to evolve directly into Kommo-o-GX. Similarly, Ralts evolves into Gardevoir-GX by way of Rare Candy or Kirlia. In both cases, two turns are necessary to evolve *into* the attacker, but because Kommo-o-GX requires three energy attachments to power up, it is slower to setup and gives the opponent more time to knock it out before it is ready to begin taking knockouts to draw its user prizes.

This means that Kommo-o-GX has neither attribute that would make it a good main attacker in a deck. It is slow to setup and is unlikely to trade favorably in the prize trade.

When considering the inclusion of any Pokémon in a deck, it is important to maximize the deck's consistency by carefully considering its **Line**—the counts of all stages of evolution necessary for a Pokémon. Below are a few common examples of Pokémon lines for Main Attackers. Note the inclusion of Ditto ♠ in Stage 1 decks and Rare Candy in Stage 2 Decks.

Stage 1 Pokémon	Stage 2 Pokémon
1 Ditto ♠	4 Basic Pokémon
4 Basic Pokémon	1 Stage 1 Pokémon
3-4 Stage 1 Pokémon	3-4 Stage 2 Pokémon
	4 Rare Candy

Because the Main Attacker is often the most important Pokémon in any deck, it receives a great deal of priority for card **Count**—or the number of a particular card included in a deck. The more of a particular card is included in your deck, the more likely you are to draw into it when you need it. Your most important cards should always have their counts as high as possible. Having higher Counts of your important cards decreases your chance of **Whiffing**—or failing to draw into—a critical card when trying to draw into it. (But don't forget the Rule of Four!)

When referring to Pokémon lines, it is often common to refer to them as in the examples below:

“A 4-3 line of Whimsicott-GX”

“A 4-0-4 line of Swampert”

In the first example, the speaker is referring to four copies of the Basic Pokémon (Cottonee) and three copies of the Stage 1 Pokémon, Whimsicott-GX. In the second example, the speaker is referring to four copies of the Basic Pokémon (Mudkip), zero copies of the Stage 1 (Marshomp), and 4 copies of the Stage 2 Pokémon, Swampert. Including fewer copies of the Stage 1 than of the Stage 2 also tells us that the speaker includes Rare Candy in their deck.

Pokémon lines are a critical consideration when deciding whether a Pokémon is a viable Main Attacker. If the Pokémon requires a lot of additional support to be viable (be able to setup quickly, do sufficient damage), it may be worth considering a different Main Attacker instead.

Secondary Attacker

Although not every deck includes one, Secondary Attackers are often critical parts of a functioning deck. A **Secondary Attacker** often fills in for the roles where the main attacker is either inadequate or even detrimental to the success of the deck's strategy. The most common roles of secondary attackers are:

1. A single prize attacker in decks that are focused on multi-prize attackers, like Pokémon GX or Tag Team GX.
2. Being quick to setup so that they can either act as a revenge attacker or carry the deck during parts of the game where the main attacker cannot.
3. Attacking for an alternate weakness.
4. Having a different weakness than the main attacker.



Ultra Necrozma-GX FLI 131 ⚡



Giratina LOT 97 ⚡



Malamar FLI 51 ⚡

As an example, we'll look at a deck focused around Ultra Necrozma-GX FLI 131 as the main attacker. Ultra Necrozma-GX is a **Multi-Prize Attacker**—or an attacker that causes the opponent to draw more than one prize when it is knocked out. Multi-Prize attackers trade additional attack power, utility, and/or hit points for the extra prizes they give up when knocked out. When playing against decks that contain few or no Multi-Prize Attackers, decks focused around Multi-Prize Attackers often have a difficult time keeping up in the Prize Trade. As a result, it is not uncommon for their decks to include one or more **Single-Prize Attackers**—Pokémon that give up only a single prize when knocked out.

A popular Single-Prize Attacker paired with Ultra Necrozma-GX is Giratina LOT 97. In addition to giving up only a single prize, Giratina also has the advantage of attacking for an alternate weakness—⚡. Ultra Necrozma-GX is ⚡-typed, which, like ⚡-typed Pokémon, do not have the advantage of dealing double damage as a result of hitting the defending Pokémon for weakness.

Additionally, as both Ultra Necrozma-GX and Giratina share their core energy costs (☉ energy)—they both benefit from a common utility Pokémon, Malamar FLI 51, making it easier to power up and attack with both Ultra Necrozma-GX and Giratina.

Decks with many Secondary Attackers, especially those decks built around having the right tools for a large variety of opposing decks, are often referred to as **Toolbox** decks.

Utility Pokémon

Utility Pokémon are Pokémon that are used for their abilities or for attacks which offer some beneficial effect, aside from merely attacking for damage. While some utility Pokémon are also capable of being damage-dealing attackers themselves, many utility Pokémon are used expressly for their utility.

See [Appendix III: Common Utility Pokémon](#) for a list of the most common Utility Pokémon and their roles in the Standard Format.

Trainers

Setup Engines

A **Setup Engine** is a card or a collection of cards included in a deck specifically to prepare it to execute its strategy by bringing out the Pokémon crucial to that strategy. In short, every deck needs a way to get setup. In the Standard Format, the two most popular ways to setup are the Lillie-Nest Ball Engine and Professor Elm's Lecture.

Lillie-Nest Ball



Lillie Supporter

Draw cards until you have 6 cards in your hand. If it's your first turn, draw cards until you have 8 cards in your hand.

SUM 122 ♣, SLG 62 ♡, UPR 125 ▲



Nest Ball Item

Search your deck for a Basic Pokémon and put it onto your Bench. Then, shuffle your deck.

SUM 123 ♣

Decks that use the Lillie-Nest Ball Engine run a minimum of 2 copies of Lillie and 3 copies of Nest Ball, and as many as four copies of each card. The more copies of Lillie you include in your deck, the more likely you are to have the much-loved “turn one Lillie”. Players will typically use all available resources in their starting hands—playing down stadia, using item cards, attaching an energy, and using cards like Ultra Ball to discard other cards that would otherwise not be possible to play from the hand during that turn—so that they can have as few cards remaining in their hand as possible. Doing so maximizes how many additional cards can draw, and, on turn one, Lillie draws up to *eight* cards, rather than the usual six. This makes it more likely for you to draw into the copies of Nest Ball included in the deck and also helps to draw into as many other resources as possible, including other basic Pokémon needed to setup.

Grass (♣) decks often replace Nest Ball with Net Ball. Psychic (♠) and Dragon (♣) decks may prefer to cut into their counts of Nest Ball or Ultra Ball in favor of Mysterious Treasure or will play Mysterious Treasure in addition to Nest Ball and Ultra Ball to maximize their chances to draw into Pokémon Search cards.



Net Ball Item

Search your deck for a Basic ♣ Pokémon or a ♣ Energy card, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

LOT 187 ♡



Mysterious Treasure Item

Discard a card from your hand. If you do, search your deck for a ♠ or ♣ Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

FLI 113 ♠

Aside from the Lillie-Nest Ball Engine, there are two other reasonably common Setup Engines—Professor Elm’s Lecture and Green’s Search.

Professor Elm’s Lecture is especially popular with decks that run many evolving Pokémon—Pokémon that need to be on the bench as fast as possible so that they can evolve as soon as possible.

Professor Elm’s Lecture



Professor Elm’s Lecture Supporter

Search your deck for up to 3 Pokémon with 60 HP or less, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

LOT 188 ♡

By contrast, the Green's Exploration Engine, in conjunction with a Supporter-Based Draw Engine in decks that play no or very few Pokémon with abilities, uses its flexibility to pick up the "missing pieces" it needs to be ready to go on the offensive.



Green's Exploration

Supporter

You can play this card only if you have no Pokémon with Abilities in play.

Search your deck for up to 2 Trainer cards, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

UNB 175 ♣

Other less popular options can be found in the appendices.

Draw Engines

Supporter-Based Draw Engines

For the majority of decks, a Supporter-Based Draw Engine is the ideal option. Most decks that rely on this draw engine run some combination of 0-4 copies of each of the three draw supporters below. Often, this works out to 3-4 each of Cynthia and Lillie and 0-2 copies of Erika's Hospitality.



Cynthia
Supporter

Shuffle your hand into your deck. Then, draw 6 cards.

UPR 119 ▲



Lillie
Supporter

Draw cards until you have 6 cards in your hand. If it's your first turn, draw cards until you have 8 cards in your hand.

UPR 125 ▲



Erika's Hospitality
Supporter

You can play this card only if you have 4 or fewer other cards in your hand.

Draw a card for each of your opponent's Pokémon in play.

TEU 140 ♣

Pokémon-Based Draw Engines

Pokémon-Based Draw Engines are largely limited to decks using the Green's Exploration Setup Engine. At present, only two Pokémon-Based Draw Engine draws a sufficient number of cards to *mostly* work on their own. More often, Pokémon-Based Draw Engines are paired with a small Supporter-Based Draw Engine to create a Hybrid Draw Engine.



Salazzle

Stage 1

Ability: Roast Reveal

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may discard a ♠ Energy card from your hand. If you do, draw 3 cards.

UNB 31 ♠



Dedenne-GX

Basic

Ability: Dedechange

When you play this Pokémon from your hand onto your Bench during your turn, you may discard your hand and draw 6 cards. You can't use more than 1 Dedechange Ability each turn.

UNB 57 ♠

In addition to the Pokémon above, Hybrid Draw Engines will make use of other Pokémon that wouldn't provide enough draw power to function on their own, but work as helpful supplements to provide increased card draw over the course of the game. You can see a list of many such Pokémon in [Appendix III: Common Utility Pokémon](#).

Draw Support Supplements

In addition to direct draw support, some decks will make use of other cards that, while not directly providing draw themselves, help to increase the access your deck has to its draw support.



Tapu Lele-GX 170 HP

Basic

Ability: Wonder Tag

When you play this Pokémon from your hand onto your Bench during your turn, you may search your deck for a Supporter card, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

GRI 60 ♠



Jirachi 70 HP

Basic

Ability: Stellar Wish

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), if this Pokémon is your Active Pokémon, you may look at the top 5 cards of your deck, reveal a Trainer card you find there, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle the other cards back into your deck, and this Pokémon is now Asleep.

TEU 90 ♠ SM161 ★



Pokégear 3.0

Item

Look at the top 7 cards of your deck. You may reveal a Supporter card you find there and put it into your hand. Shuffle the other cards back into your deck.

UNB 182 ♠ | HS 96 ♠

Pokémon Search

In order to attack your opponent's Pokémon and take prizes, you'll need to get your attackers onto the bench and ready to go. The two most important Pokémon Search cards are Ultra Ball and Nest Ball. For many decks, you'll immediately include four copies of each card.



Nest Ball

Item

Search your deck for a Basic Pokémon and put it onto your Bench. Then, shuffle your deck.

SUM 123 ♠



Ultra Ball

Item

Discard 2 cards from your hand. If you do, search your deck for a Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

SUM 135 ♠, SLG 68 ♠ | DEX 102 ♠, PLF 122 ♠, PLB 90 ♠, FLF 99 ♠, ROS 93 ♠, FCO 113 ♠

Decks that need additional Pokémon Search cards often make use of Timer Ball or Pokémon Communication.



Timer Ball

Item

Flip 2 coins. For each heads, search your deck for an Evolution Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

SUM 134 ♣



Pokémon Communication

Item

Reveal a Pokémon from your hand and put it into your deck. If you do, search your deck for a Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

TEU 152 ♣ | HS 98 ♣, BLW 99 ♣

And decks that can fulfill the type requirements often enjoy Mysterious Treasure, Nest Ball, and Electromagnetic Radar.



Mysterious Treasure

Item

Discard a card from your hand. If you do, search your deck for a ♣ or ♠ Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

FLI 113 ♣



Net Ball

Item

Search your deck for a Basic ♣ Pokémon or a ♣ Energy card, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

LOT 187 ♣



Electromagnetic Radar

Item

You can play this card only if you discard 2 other cards from your hand.

Search your deck for up to 2 in any combination of ⚡ Pokémon-GX and ⚡ Pokémon-EX, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

UNB 169 ♣

Whatever Pokémon Search you choose for your deck, test it! If it's not enough, add more. You can only lose if you can't get your attackers out and attacking faster than your opponent can do the same.

Energy

Energy Acceleration Engines

Like Draw Engines, Energy Acceleration Engines can be Supporter-based or Pokémon-based. Unlike Draw Engines, however, decks that make use of Energy Acceleration Engines tend to favor Pokémon-based energy acceleration over Supporter-based engines. You can see a list of Pokémon with energy acceleration potential in the [Appendices](#).

Supporter-based Energy Acceleration largely focuses around one of two cards—Welder, a popular option for ♣ decks, and Morgan, a much less popular option for decks that have few other options.



Morgan Supporter

You can play this card only if you discard Dana, Evelyn, and Nita from your hand.

Look at the top 12 cards of your deck and attach any number of Energy cards you find there to your Pokémon in any way you like. Shuffle the other cards back into your deck.

TEU 149



Welder Supporter

Attach up to 2 Energy cards from your hand to 1 of your Pokémon. If you do, draw 3 cards.

UNB 189

While every deck needs a Draw Engine, not every deck needs an Energy Acceleration Engine. Decks that are comprised primarily of lower attack cost attackers, especially those whose Pokémon attack with big damage for a single energy attachment, often exclude an Energy Acceleration Engine altogether.

Synergy, Consistency, Power, and Flexibility

Regardless of the exact skeletal breakdown of your deck, every card in your deck should positively contribute to the four core elements of a deck:

1. **Synergy:** The ability of each card in the deck to work together with other cards in the deck to form a coherent strategy.
2. **Consistency:** The ability of the deck to execute your strategy to win each time you play it.
3. **Power:** The ability of the deck to deal and/or withstand damage so that it has the time necessary to execute its strategy.
4. **Flexibility:** The ability of the deck to handle situations that are detrimental to the deck's ability to execute its strategy.

Crafting Your Deck

Theorycrafting

So, you've got an idea for a deck. Now, it's time to turn that idea into a deck list. Let's look again at the deck skeleton from before.

- 15 Pokémon
- 33 Trainers
 - 13 Supporters
 - 8-10 Draw Supporters
 - 3-4 Guzma
 - 17 Items
 - 6-8 Pokémon Search
 - 3 Stadia
- 12 Energies

As we build our deck, we'll start to fill in each portion of the skeleton.

Choose Your Main Attacker

For our example, we'll build around Whimsicott-GX UNB 140, pictured below.



Whimsicott-GX 190 HP
Stage 1

Ability: Fluffy Cotton

If any damage is done to this Pokémon by attacks, flip a coin. If heads, prevent that damage.

♥ Energy Blow 10+

This attack does 30 more damage times the amount of Energy attached to this Pokémon.

♥ Toy Box GX

Search your deck for up to 5 cards and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck. (*You can't use more than 1 GX attack in a game.*)

UNB 140 ✦

Now, Whimsicott-GX is *not* a basic Pokémon, but is a Stage 1 Pokémon. In order to use Whimsicott-GX, we'll need to include Cottonee, too. We can use the [Trading Card Database at Pokémon.com](https://www.pokemon.com/us/trading-card-database/) to see what Cottonee we have to choose from. In the Standard format, we have two different Cottonee cards available for us to consider.



Cottonee 50 HP
Basic

★ Continuous Tumble 10x

Flip a coin until you get tails. This attack does 10 damage for each heads.

GRI 90 ✦



Cottonee 50 HP
Basic

♥ Expand 10

During your opponent's next turn, this Pokémon takes 10 less damage from attacks (*after applying Weakness and Resistance*).

UNB 139 ✦

In general, Basic Pokémon that provide status effects through their attacks or abilities, that have a retreat cost of 0, that are able to look for other Pokémon, or that have more HP or a means of reducing damage done to them, are the best choice when selecting the basic Pokémon to include for your evolved Main Attacker. In this case, Cottonee UNB 139 is the better option because its attack, Expand, does a little damage while also reducing the damage it takes the following turn.

Because Whimsicott-GX and Cottonee are central to our deck's strategy and are our main attackers, it is critical that we include as many copies as we can. To start, we'll include 4 copies of each. This means our current deck list looks like this:

Total Cards: 8

Pokémon (8)

Main Attacker (8)

4 Cottonee UNB 139

4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (0)

Utility Pokémon (0)

Trainers (0)

Supporters (0)

Items (0)

Stadia (0)

Energies (0)

Choose Your Secondary Attacker(s)

Now, we need to consider a secondary attacker for our deck. When we look at Whimsicott-GX, we'll note that not only is it a Stage 1 Pokémon, it's also a GX Pokémon. A good alternate attacker for our deck would then be a basic, Non-GX Pokémon.

When looking at the Trading Card Database at Pokémon.com, we see that we have a few options here. Below are a couple of our options.



Xerneas ♦ 160 HP
Basic

Ability: Path of Life

Once during your turn, when this Pokémon moves from your Bench to become your Active Pokémon, you may move any number of Energy from your other Pokémon to it.

♥♥♥ Bright Horns 160

This Pokémon can't use Bright Horns during your next turn.

LOT 144 ♣



Mimikyu 70 HP
Basic

★ Filch
Draw 2 cards.

♥★ Copycat

If your opponent's Pokémon used an attack that isn't a GX attack during their last turn, use it as this attack.

TEU 112 ♣

Xerneas ♦ looks to be our best option. While Mimikyu's Copycat attack has a lower energy requirement (♥★), it will require two turns to setup without additional support. On the other hand, Xerneas ♦'s Bright Horns attack can be powered up through its Path of Life ability, making it easier to pull off a quick attack that can put our opponent behind in the prize trade.

Because Xerneas ♦ is a Prism Star card, we can include only one copy, so we'll add one to our deck list, which now looks like this:

Total Cards: 9

Pokémon (9)

Main Attacker (8)

4 Cottonee UNB 139

4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (1)

1 Xerneas ♦ LOT 144

Utility Pokémon (0)

Trainers (0)

Supporters (0)

Items (0)

Stadia (0)

Energies (0)

Choose Your Utility Pokémon

Choosing utility Pokémon can be a bit tricky. Very often, it's a balance between increasing the consistency of your deck and getting the benefit of abilities that help your attackers survive longer or attack harder. There are many very useful utility Pokémon, but choosing more than a few

means sacrificing other card slots that could be used for Supporters, Items, and Energies. Further, the more utility Pokémon there are in a deck, it's more likely that you'll start a game against your opponent with one of the utility Pokémon instead of your attackers.

Below are a few of the utility Pokémon worth considering in our Whimsicott-GX deck. Of these, we'll be using 1 copy each of Ditto ♦ LOT 154, Mr. Mime TEU 66, and Marshadow UNB 81.



Tapu Lele-GX 170 HP

Basic

Ability: Wonder Tag

When you play this Pokémon from your hand onto your Bench during your turn, you may search your deck for a Supporter card, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

★★ Energy Drive 20×

This attack does 20 damage times the amount of Energy attached to both Active Pokémon. This damage isn't affected by Weakness or Resistance.

☺ Tapu Cure GX

Heal all damage from 2 of your Benched Pokémon. *(You can't use more than 1 GX attack in a game.)*

GRI 60 ♣



Magearna 90 HP

Basic

Ability: Change Clothes

Once during your turn *(before your attack)*, you may put a Pokémon Tool card attached to 1 of your Pokémon into your hand.

☹★★ Rolling Attack 60

UPR 91 ▲



Ditto ♦ 40 HP

Basic

Ability: Almighty Evolution

Once during your turn *(before your attack)*, you may put any Stage 1 card from your hand onto this Pokémon to evolve it. You can't use this Ability during your first turn or the turn this Pokémon was put into play.

LOT 154 ♣



Comfey 70 HP

Basic

Ability: Flower Shield

Each of your Pokémon that has any ♡ Energy attached to it can't be affected by any Special Conditions. Remove any Special Conditions affecting those Pokémon.

☹★ Sweet Kiss 30

Your opponent draws a card.

GRI 93 ♣



Tapu Lele 110 HP

Basic

Ability: Charmed Charm

Whenever you attach a Pokémon Tool card that has "Fairy Charm" in its name from your hand to this Pokémon during your turn, you may leave your opponent's Active Pokémon Confused.

☹★★ Bright Horns 70

LOT 150 ♣



Mr. Mime 70 HP

Basic

Ability: Scoop-Up Block

Your opponent's Pokémon that have any damage counters on them, and any cards attached to them, can't be put into your opponent's hand.

★★ Psy Bolt 20

Flip a coin. If heads, your opponent's Active Pokémon is now Paralyzed.

TEU 66 ♣



Absol 100 HP

Basic

Ability: Dark Ambition

If your opponent's Active Pokémon is a Basic Pokémon, its Retreat Cost is ★ more.

☠★★ Shadow Seeker 30+

This attack does 30 more damage for each Colorless in your opponent's Active Pokémon's Retreat Cost.

TEU 88 ♣



Jirachi 70 HP

Basic

Ability: Stellar Wish

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), if this Pokémon is your Active Pokémon, you may look at the top 5 cards of your deck, reveal a Trainer card you find there, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle the other cards back into your deck, and this Pokémon is now Asleep.

♣★ Slap 30

TEU 90 ♣ SM161 ★



Dedenne-GX 160 HP

Basic

Ability: Dedechange

When you play this Pokémon from your hand onto your Bench during your turn, you may discard your hand and draw 6 cards. You can't use more than 1 Dedechange Ability each turn.

⚡★ Static Shock 50

⚡★ Tingly Return GX 50

Your opponent's Active Pokémon is now Paralyzed. Put this Pokémon and all cards attached to it into your hand. (*You can't use more than 1 GX attack in a game.*)

UNB 57 ♠



Marshadow 80 HP

Basic

Ability: Resetting Hole

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), if this Pokémon is on your Bench, you may discard any Stadium card in play. If you do, discard this Pokémon and all cards attached to it.

★ Red Knuckles

If your opponent's Active Pokémon is an Ultra Beast, this attack does 60 more damage.

UNB 81 ♠



Porygon-Z 130 HP

Stage 2

Ability: Crazy Code

As often as you like during your turn (*before your attack*), you may attach a Special Energy card from your hand to 1 of your Pokémon.

★★★ Tantrum 120

This Pokémon is now confused.

UNB 157 ♠

So, why did we choose each of these utility Pokémon?

Ditto ♠ LOT 154 was selected to give us one additional way to evolve into our main attacker, Whimsicott-GX. Ditto's ability, Almighty Evolution, allows it to evolve into any Stage 1 Pokémon, including Whimsicott-GX. Because it is possible to prize copies of our Cottonee, which we need so that we can evolve into our main attacker, having Ditto ♠ effectively provides us with a fifth Cottonee.

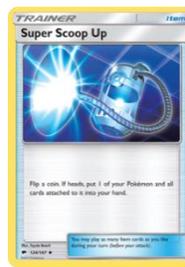
Mr. Mime TEU 66 was selected because Whimsicott-GX won't be able to knock out our opponent's Pokémon every turn. Cards like Acerola and Super Scoop Up could be used against us to deny us a knockout against a damaged Pokémon. Mr. Mime blocks the effects of Acerola and Super Scoop Up so that we are able to take knockouts more consistently.



Acerola Supporter

Put 1 of your Pokémon that has any damage counters on it and all cards attached to it into your hand.

BUS 112 ♣



Super Scoop Up Item

Flip a coin. If heads, put 1 of your Pokémon and all cards attached to it into your hand.

BUS 124 ♣ SLG 62 ♣ | N1 98 ♣, EX 151 ♣, RG 99 ♣, DS 100 ♣, DP 115 ♣, MD 87 ♣, UL 83 ♣, BLW 103 ♣, FFI 100 ♣

Marshadow UNB 81 was selected because Whimsicott-GX is very vulnerable to three stadia, Shrine of Punishment CES 143, Black Market ♦ TEU 134, and, especially, Power Plant UNB 183.



Shrine of Punishment Stadium

Between turns, put 1 damage counter on each Pokémon-GX and Pokémon-EX (both yours and your opponent's).

CES 143 ♣



Black Market ♦ Stadium

When a ♣ Pokémon (yours or your opponent's) that has any ♣ Energy attached to it is Knocked Out by damage from an opponent's attack, that player takes 1 fewer Prize card.

Whenever any player plays an Item or Supporter card from their hand, prevent all effects of that card done to this Stadium card.

TEU 134 ♣



Power Plant Stadium

Pokémon-GX and Pokémon-EX in play (both yours and your opponent's) have no Abilities.

UNB 183 ♣

For now, we'll include a single copy of each of these utility Pokémon. As we begin testing, we may come to the conclusion, for example, that we need an additional copy of Marshadow or that Mr. Mime is used less often that we would have hoped. We can revisit our selection and quantities of our utility Pokémon then and revise as necessary. With these three utility Pokémon added to the deck, our deck list now looks like this:

Total Cards: 12

Pokémon (12)
Main Attacker (8)
 4 Cottonee UNB 139
 4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (1)
 1 Xerneas ♦ LOT 144

Utility Pokémon (3)
 1 Ditto ♦ LOT 154
 1 Mr. Mime TEU 66
 1 Marshadow UNB 81

Trainers (0)

Supporters (0)

Items (0)

Stadia (0)

Energies (0)

Choose Your Setup Engine

Of the Setup Engines mentioned in the section on Setup Engines in this guide, two of them are potentially viable options. Because Whimsicott-GX, Xerneas \diamond , Mr. Mime, Ditto \diamond , and Marshadow all have abilities, we cannot make effective use of the Green's Exploration engine. This leaves us with either the Lillie-Nest Ball engine, or the Professor Elm's Lecture engine. To decide between the two, we can look at the HP of the basic Pokémon in our deck. Cottonee and Ditto \diamond have 50 HP and 40 HP, respectively, making Professor Elm's Lecture okay for them, but relying on Professor Elm's Lecture makes it more difficult to get Xerneas \diamond , Mr. Mime, and Marshadow out, as they have 160 HP, 70 HP, and 80 HP, respectively, meaning they don't fall within the 60 HP or less requirements for Professor Elm's Lecture. What's more, our deck is very reliant on being able to attach energies every turn, so we need to have as many means of drawing into those energies as possible. As Professor Elm's Lecture is a Supporter card, it would take away from being able to use a Draw Supporter.

It's safe now to rule out Professor Elm's Lecture as the best option, leaving us with the Lillie-Nest Ball engine. Adding these components to our deck list means our deck now looks like this:

Total Cards: 20

Pokémon (12)

Main Attacker (8)

4 Cottonee UNB 139

4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (1)

1 Xerneas \diamond LOT 144

Utility Pokémon (3)

1 Ditto \diamond LOT 154

1 Mr. Mime TEU 66

1 Marshadow UNB 81

Trainers (8)

Supporters (4)

4 Lillie UPR 125

Items (4)

4 Nest Ball SUM 123

Stadia (0)

Energies (0)

Choose Your Draw Engine

We'll keep it simple with our draw engine, sticking with a Supporter-Based Draw Engine, since we've already included Lillie in our deck. We'll add 4 Cynthia UPR 119 and 2 Erika's Hospitality TEU 140, bringing us to ten Draw Supporters. Additionally, to augment our Draw Engine, we'll also include Draw Support Supplementation in the form of 4 copies of Pokégear 3.0, which will not only help us access our Draw Supporters with more regularity, but will also help us get at other Supporters we'll be adding next.



Pokégear 3.0

Item

Look at the top 7 cards of your deck. You may reveal a Supporter card you find there and put it into your hand. Shuffle the other cards back into your deck.

UNB 182 ♣ | HS 96 🍀

Now that we've chosen our Draw Engine, we can add its cards to our deck list, which now looks like this:

Total Cards: 30

Pokémon (12)
Main Attacker (8)
 4 Cottonee UNB 139
 4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (1)
 1 Xerneas ♦ LOT 144

Utility Pokémon (3)
 1 Ditto ♦ LOT 154
 1 Mr. Mime TEU 66
 1 Marshadow UNB 81

Trainers (18)
Supporters (10)
 4 Cynthia UPR 119
 4 Lillie UPR 125
 2 Erika's Hospitality TEU 140

Items (8)
 4 Nest Ball SUM 123
 4 Pokégear 3.0 UNB 182

Stadia (0)

Energies (0)

Choose Your Utility Supporters



Guzma

Supporter

Switch 1 of your opponent's Benched Pokémon with their Active Pokémon. If you do, switch your Active Pokémon with 1 of your Benched Pokémon.

BUS 115 ♣

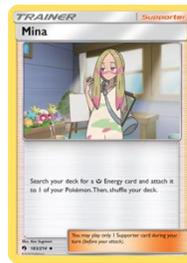
Next, we need to consider other Supporters—Utility Supporters that offer some other sort of beneficial effect. As a general rule, most decks will include 3-4 copies of Guzma, so we'll start by adding 3 copies of Guzma. Next, we'll consider a few other potential beneficial supporters.



Acerola
Supporter

Put 1 of your Pokémon that has any damage counters on it and all cards attached to it into your hand.

BUS 112 ♣



Mina
Supporter

Search your deck for a Fairy Energy card and attach it to 1 of your Pokémon. Then, shuffle your deck.

LOT 183 ♠

Acerola will help us make it harder for our opponent to take prizes by moving one of our damaged Pokémon from play back into our hand. It's very worth testing, as Whimsicott-GX already limits damage that can be done to it, potentially giving us time to rescue a damaged Whimsicott-GX. Mina adds some value, effectively searching out and providing an additional 30 damage for Whimsicott's Energy Blow attack and may be worth testing later down the line. But as we're already a little heavy on Supporters in the deck, we'll include just two Acerola for now.

Total Cards: 35

Pokémon (12)
Main Attacker (8)
 4 Cottonee UNB 139
 4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (1)
 1 Xerneas ♦ LOT 144

Utility Pokémon (3)
 1 Ditto ♦ LOT 154
 1 Mr. Mime TEU 66
 1 Marshadow UNB 81

Trainers (23)
Supporters (15)
 4 Cynthia UPR 119
 4 Lillie UPR 125
 3 Guzma BUS 115
 2 Acerola BUS 112
 2 Erika's Hospitality TEU 140

Items (8)
 4 Nest Ball SUM 123
 4 Pokégear 3.0 UNB 182

Stadia (0)

Energies (0)

Choose Your Pokémon Search

For Pokémon search, we already run 4 copies of Nest Ball because we're using the Lillie-Nest Ball Engine to get setup. Nest Ball is great to get many of our Pokémon out, but it can't get our Whimsicott-GXes because Whimsicott-GX is not a Basic Pokémon. 4 Ultra Ball are included in nearly every deck because of Ultra Ball's flexibility. Alternatives like Mysterious Treasure aren't possibilities for our deck, as the deck only runs two psychic types that Nest Ball already can get. Ultra Ball's discarding effect also helps to thin our hand for more potent draw with Lillie and opens us up to the potentially large draws provided by Erika's Hospitality. Ultra Ball, then, is our best option, and we'll include 4 copies.



Ultra Ball

Item

Discard 2 cards from your hand. If you do, search your deck for a Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

SUM 135 ✨, SLG 68 🗡️ | DEX 102 🐾, PLF 122 🐾,
PLB 90 🍄, FLF 99 🍄, ROS 93 🍄, FCO 113 ✨

After adding 4 Ultra Ball, our list now looks like this:

Total Cards: 39
Pokémon (12)
Main Attacker (8)
4 Cottonee UNB 139
4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140
Secondary Attacker (1)
1 Xerneas 💎 LOT 144
Utility Pokémon (3)
1 Ditto 💎 LOT 154
1 Mr. Mime TEU 66
1 Marshadow UNB 81
Trainers (27)
Supporters (15)
4 Cynthia UPR 119
4 Lillie UPR 125
3 Guzma BUS 115
2 Acerola BUS 112
2 Erika's Hospitality TEU 140
Items (12)
4 Nest Ball SUM 123
4 Pokégear 3.0 UNB 182
4 Ultra Ball SUM 135
Stadia (0)
Energies (0)

Choose Other Beneficial Items

Fairy-type Pokémon have special tools available to them in the form of Fairy Charms. While there are more than a handful of them, playing just a few of the most useful Fairy Charms ensures that the deck can still operate consistently while still getting the tools it needs through Adventure Bag. We'll include a single copy of each of the cards below.



Adventure Bag

Item

Search your deck for up to 2 Pokémon Tool cards, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

LOT 167 ♣



Fairy Charm ⚡

Item - Tool

Prevent all damage done to the ♡ Pokémon this card is attached to by attacks from your opponent's ⚡ Pokémon-GX and ⚡ Pokémon-EX.

UNB 172 ♣



Fairy Charm UB

Item - Tool

Prevent all damage done to the ♡ Pokémon this card is attached to by attacks from your opponent's Ultra Beast Pokémon-GX and Ultra Beast Pokémon-EX.

TEU 142 ♣



Fairy Charm Ability

Item - Tool

Prevent all damage done to the ♡ Pokémon this card is attached to by attacks from your opponent's Pokémon-GX and Pokémon-EX that have Abilities.

UNB 171 ♣

Additionally, we'll include a copy of Rescue Stretcher to give ourselves a way to recover our Pokémon so that we can give ourselves another way to get a Whimsicott-GX back out quickly after one is knocked out.



Rescue Stretcher

Item

Choose 1:

- Put a Pokémon from your discard pile into your hand.
- Shuffle 3 Pokémon from your discard pile into your deck.

GRI 130 ♣

This leave us with the following deck list:

Total Cards: 44

Pokémon (12)
Main Attacker (8)
 4 Cottonee UNB 139
 4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (1)
 1 Xerneas ♠ LOT 144

Utility Pokémon (3)
 1 Ditto ♠ LOT 154
 1 Mr. Mime TEU 66
 1 Marshadow UNB 81

Trainers (32)
Supporters (15)
 4 Cynthia UPR 119
 4 Lillie UPR 125
 3 Guzma BUS 115
 2 Acerola BUS 112
 2 Erika's Hospitality TEU 140

Items (17)

- 4 Nest Ball SUM 123
- 4 Pokégear 3.0 UNB 182
- 4 Ultra Ball SUM 135
- 1 Adventure Bag LOT 167
- 1 Fairy Charm Ability UNB 171
- 1 Fairy Charm ⚡ UNB 172
- 1 Fairy Charm UB TEU 142
- 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130

Stadia (0)

Energies (0)

Choose Your Stadia

We've got a few stadia to choose from. Wondrous Labyrinth ⬠ is an immediate inclusion in any ♡ deck, so we'll include the one copy we can. Wondrous Labyrinth will give us a little extra time to setup and recover after knockouts. It will also give us a way to remove hostile stadia like Power Plant and Shrine of Punishment.



Wondrous Labyrinth ⬠

Stadium

The attacks of non-♡ Pokémon (both yours and your opponent's) cost ★ more.

Whenever any player plays an Item or Supporter card from their hand, prevent all effects of that card done to this Stadium card.

TEU 158 ⚡

We could also consider Viridian Forest and even Sky Pillar, though for now we'll include neither.



Sky Pillar

Stadium

Prevent all effects of the opponent's attacks, including damage, done to Benched Pokémon (both yours and your opponent's).

CES 144 ♡



Viridian Forest

Stadium

Once during each player's turn, that player may discard a card from their hand. If they do, that player searches their deck for a basic Energy card, reveals it, and puts it into their hand. Then, that player shuffles their deck.

TEU 156 ⚡

Total Cards: 45

Pokémon (12)

Main Attacker (8)

- 4 Cottonee UNB 139
- 4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (1)

- 1 Xerneas ⬠ LOT 144

Utility Pokémon (3)

1 Ditto ♦ LOT 154
1 Mr. Mime TEU 66
1 Marshadow UNB 81

Trainers (33)

Supporters (15)

4 Cynthia UPR 119
4 Lillie UPR 125
3 Guzma BUS 115
2 Acerola BUS 112
2 Erika's Hospitality TEU 140

Items (17)

4 Nest Ball SUM 123
4 Pokégear 3.0 UNB 182
4 Ultra Ball SUM 135
1 Adventure Bag LOT 167
1 Fairy Charm Ability UNB 171
1 Fairy Charm ⚡ UNB 172
1 Fairy Charm UB TEU 142
1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130

Stadia (1)

1 Wondrous Labyrinth ♦ TEU 158

Energies (0)

Choose Your Energies

To get us ready to start testing, we'll begin with 12 energies. We may need to increase or decrease that count after we've tested the deck some, but this gives us a good baseline to get started. In addition to six basic Fairy Energy, we'll start with an even split of 3 Double Colorless Energy and 3 Triple Acceleration Energy.

Double Colorless Energy will help us to bulk up Whimsicott-GX's Energy Blow attack over time, while Triple Acceleration Energy will help us with higher damage output when needed.



Double Colorless Energy *Special Energy*

Double Colorless Energy provides ♠♠ Energy.

SUM 136 ♠, SLG 69 ♡ | BS 96, B2 124 ♢, HS 103 ♣, NXD 92 ♤,
LTR 113 ♠, XY 130 ♡, PHF 111 ♢, GEN 74 ♣, FCO 114 ♤, EVO
90 ♠



Triple Acceleration Energy *Special Energy*

This card can only be attached to Evolution Pokémon. If this card is attached to 1 of your Pokémon, discard it at the end of the turn.

This card provides ♠♠♠ Energy only while it is attached to an Evolution Pokémon.

If this card is attached to anything other than an Evolution Pokémon, discard this card.

UNB 190 ♠

Total Cards: 57

Pokémon (12)

Main Attacker (8)

4 Cottonee UNB 139

4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (1)

1 Xerneas ♦ LOT 144

Utility Pokémon (3)

1 Ditto ♦ LOT 154

1 Mr. Mime TEU 66

1 Marshadow UNB 81

Trainers (33)

Supporters (15)

4 Cynthia UPR 119

4 Lillie UPR 125

3 Guzma BUS 115

2 Acerola BUS 112

2 Erika's Hospitality TEU 140

Items (17)

4 Nest Ball SUM 123

4 Pokégear 3.0 UNB 182

4 Ultra Ball SUM 135

1 Adventure Bag LOT 167

1 Fairy Charm Ability UNB 171

1 Fairy Charm ⚡ UNB 172

1 Fairy Charm UB TEU 142

1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130

Stadia (1)

1 Wondrous Labyrinth ♦ TEU 158

Energies (12)

6 Fairy Energy

3 Double Colorless Energy SUM 136

3 Triple Acceleration Energy UNB 190

Choose the Rest

Finally, we need additional tools to help us find energy, get rid of opposing stadia and tools, and a means of recovery for some of our more limited resources. For these uses, we'll add 2 Energy Loto, 2 Field Blower, and 1 Diantha.



Field Blower

Item

Choose up to 2 in any combination of Pokémon Tool cards and Stadium cards in play (*yours or your opponent's*) and discard them.

GRI 125 ♦



Energy Loto

Item

Look at the top 7 cards of your deck. You may reveal an Energy card you find there and put it into your hand. Shuffle the other cards back into your deck.

GRI 122 ♦



Diantha
Supporter

You can play this card only if 1 of your ♡ Pokémon was Knocked Out during your opponent's last turn.

Put 2 cards from your discard pile into your hand.

FLI 105 ♡

Don't worry that this puts us over 60 cards. We'll cut a couple in a moment. For the moment, our deck list looks like this:

Total Cards: 62

Pokémon (12)
Main Attacker (8)
4 Cottonee UNB 139
4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (1)
1 Xerneas ♠ LOT 144

Utility Pokémon (3)
1 Ditto ♠ LOT 154
1 Mr. Mime TEU 66
1 Marshadow UNB 81

Trainers (37)
Supporters (16)
4 Cynthia UPR 119
4 Lillie UPR 125
3 Guzma BUS 115
2 Acerola BUS 112
2 Erika's Hospitality TEU 140
1 Diantha FLI

Items (21)
4 Nest Ball SUM 123
4 Pokégear 3.0 UNB 182
4 Ultra Ball SUM 135
2 Energy Loto BUS
2 Field Blower GRI
1 Adventure Bag LOT 167
1 Fairy Charm Ability UNB 171
1 Fairy Charm ⚡ UNB 172
1 Fairy Charm UB TEU 142
1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130

Stadia (1)
1 Wondrous Labyrinth ♠ TEU 158

Energies (12)
6 Fairy Energy
3 Double Colorless Energy SUM 136
3 Triple Acceleration Energy UNB 190

Cut Until You Get to 60 Cards

Right now, we're over sixty cards. We need to cut cards before we can say we have a completed deck list ready to begin testing.

We know that the deck is running a bit high on Supporters. With this many Supporters in the deck, our hand is likely to be clogged up with them which will make it difficult to use Lillie and Erika's Hospitality especially efficiently. Because we're running Pokégear 3.0, we can cut a copy of Lillie and a copy of Guzma, which will drop us down to sixty cards—exactly the number we need to have a list ready to start testing.

Total Cards: 60

Pokémon (12)

Main Attacker (8)

4 Cottonee UNB 139

4 Whimsicott-GX UNB 140

Secondary Attacker (1)

1 Xerneas ♦ LOT 144

Utility Pokémon (3)

1 Ditto ♦ LOT 154

1 Mr. Mime TEU 66

1 Marshadow UNB 81

Trainers (36)

Supporters (14)

4 Cynthia UPR 119

3 Lillie UPR 125

2 Acerola BUS 112

2 Erika's Hospitality TEU 140

2 Guzma BUS 115

1 Diantha FLI

Items (21)

4 Nest Ball SUM 123

4 Pokégear 3.0 UNB 182

4 Ultra Ball SUM 135

2 Energy Loto BUS

2 Field Blower GRI

1 Adventure Bag LOT 167

1 Fairy Charm Ability UNB 171

1 Fairy Charm ⚡ UNB 172

1 Fairy Charm UB TEU 142

1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130

Stadia (1)

1 Wondrous Labyrinth ♦ TEU 158

Energies (12)

6 Fairy Energy

3 Double Colorless Energy SUM 136

3 Triple Acceleration Energy UNB 190

Consider Your Options

You now have an initial deck list. Before testing, it's a good time to consider alternatives to your initial list. What cards might be valuable alternatives to those currently in your theorycrafted list?

Should you consider an alternative setup engine?

Is there a different secondary attacker or two worth testing?

Perhaps a different energy acceleration engine?

Are there tools you should consider that might be a superior option to what you're preparing to test?

Set those all those cards aside and prepare to reconsider them later as you go through testing.

Testing

Stages of Testing

Goldfishing

Goldfishing, or playing without an opponent, is a very basic and simple way to begin testing your deck. When Goldfishing, a player begins setting up play as normal, drawing a starting hand, choosing a starting Pokémon, placing prizes, and so on. The player then continues playing, setting up Pokémon, and attacking, progressing against their imaginary opponent. While Goldfishing does not and cannot help you in many ways, Goldfishing can be especially helpful in identifying basic consistency issues.

If you find your deck **Bricking** or **Dead Drawing**—becoming unable to draw into any cards that help you progress toward victory—with any significant degree of frequency, it may be time to head back to the drawing board. Often, Bricking is the result of a single deck trying to do too much. If your deck struggles to set itself up, even without an opponent, it needs more work. To quote Tord Reklev, a well-respected and highly-skilled player of the Pokémon Trading Card Game, “Your deck will never win if it can't function it the first place.”

Testing Against the AI Online

An alternative to Goldfishing is playing against the computer player in the Test Deck feature on the **Pokémon Trading Card Game Online**—or **PTCGO**. The [Pokémon Trading Card Game Online](#) offers ways to play your deck online, both against computer players and against other players.

However, getting the cards you need to construct your deck on PTCGO is a separate process from collecting the cards you need in print. Unlike playtesting in person, PTCGO requires you to own the cards you're looking to test. If you aren't already invested in PTCGO, this can take some time to prepare, though there are guides for how best to trade to get what you need on PTCGO. Beyond providing the resources below, this guide will not delve into PTCGO:

[Ou7c4st's Beginner's Guide to PTCGO](#)

[/r/PTCGO Wiki Guide to Earning Tokens](#)

[Ou7c4st's PTCGO Card Value Guide](#)

Initial Playtesting

So, you've got your deck and you're feeling pretty good about how it's working. Now, it's time to actually put in some proper games with it. One of the best ways to start playing your freshly-crafted deck is to bring it to your local Pokémon League. You can find your closest Pokémon League using the [Event Locator on Pokémon.com](#).

If you aren't able to attend your local Pokémon League, or if you'd like to play your deck more often, there is also the option of playing online via PTCGO. Initial playtesting is often little more than a casual game with other players. Initial playtesting helps you run your deck against a variety of possible matchups, helps you focus your skills on learning to play your deck better, and helps you to see holes wherever they may be.

Always make notes, mental or otherwise, while playtesting. Always be asking yourself these four questions:

1. What cards did you not see when you needed them?
2. What cards did you see too often?
3. Were your attackers able to win you the prize trade?
4. What cards did you find yourself wishing you had in your deck?

Focused Playtesting

As you begin to gear up for your first tournament—perhaps a League Challenge or League Cup—you'll want to prepare your deck to be ready to take on the most popular decks in the current meta. It's helpful to know what decks have been winning recent Standard tournaments so that you can try to test against these decks specifically. Limitless TCG provides an excellent resource for [recent tournament results](#). Plan to test against decks that have made it into the top 8 in the last month or so of tournaments.

Decks that have done well at recent large tournaments like Regionals and Internationals are especially popular with many players so being prepared to play against these decks can be especially helpful when preparing for your first tournament with your new deck. If possible, play against players who regularly play and regularly win using these top decks. Players that are more experienced with these meta decks are more likely to provide more useful games where testing is concerned.

As with initial testing, continue to make notes about your deck as you test.

Cutting Cards

As you play your deck more and more, you may find that cards you'd thought would be especially helpful for your deck often end up never being used. In such situations, it's often the case that **Cutting** a card, or removing it from the deck in favor of some other card, would benefit your deck. In a Seagrove TCG video titled [Deckbuilding with Tord Reklev](#), Tord Reklev said the following:

"Play a lot of games with your deck and see which cards you're actually using to win games. So, if you really like a card, but you never use it—if you play ten games and you still haven't used your card—then you should probably drop that card. Even though it could be really good against that one deck and situation, it's honestly not worth it anymore. So, try to make sure that you actually use all the cards in your deck. If you see that the card is not used and/or that the card is weak then you should probably swap it for something better."

Now that you've done some testing, you can start to see where your deck's weak spots are. Review your notes from your playtesting. Reduce counts for cards that you're seeing too often, increase counts for cards that you need to see more often. Swap secondary attackers, if necessary. Exchange one utility Pokémon for another if it may be beneficial. Include cards you found yourself wanting.

Then, it's time for some more testing.

Tournament Time

Your deck has been thoroughly-tested and is battle-hardened and ready for a tournament. Refer to your local Pokémon League or to the [Event Locator on Pokémon.com](#) to see tournaments taking place nearby.

In many ways, a deck is like a living, breathing thing. It will evolve the more you play it. You won't win every game—even the best players lose from time to time. But as you learn how best to play the deck you've crafted, you'll make changes that make it better and better. Every game is a playtest.

Knowing the Cards

For many players, one of the biggest hurdles for deck building is a lack of familiarity with the pool of cards available. In addition to simply playing the game a *lot*, which any player will do as they test, modify, and re-test their decks, there are a number of resources available to

players. Ultimately, knowing the cards just takes time and a little effort. As you know the cards available to you better, the better deckbuilder you'll be.

Pokémon Trading Card Database

Pokémon's official website has a [powerful, searchable database](#) that can help you dig through the many cards in the game to find just what your deck needs.

Pokémon TCG Card Dex

[Pokémon TCG Card Dex](#) is an official application for iOS and Android that provides a quick and easy resource to see cards from the Sun & Moon Base Set and newer.

Limitless TCG

[Limitless TCG](#) is a great resource for winning deck lists from skilled players from around the world. See what cards other players are considering in their decks.

PokéBeach

[PokéBeach](#) is an excellent source of news related to all things Pokémon, but especially news related to the Pokémon Trading Card Game. PokéBeach is a great way to learn about new cards coming in future sets so that you can get a jump start on your theorycrafting.

Bulbapedia

[Bulbapedia](#) is *the* wiki for all things Pokémon, with articles for each set and each card in the Pokémon Trading Card Game.

Appendices

The appendices at this end of this guide are a primer on important cards in the game. Use them to become familiar with many of the most common cards deckbuilders consider when putting together their decks.

Net Decking

Perhaps, after reading this guide, you decide you'd prefer not to try building a deck from scratch. It's understandable—many people are apprehensive about the complexities of deckbuilding and often resort to **Net Decking**—or copying a deck list from the Internet. Often, players will copy winning deck lists from recent tournaments exactly or tweak a few cards to better suit their play styles. These top-performing decks are often referred to as **Meta Decks**. Other players will instead take inspiration from winning decks, instead of copying them exactly.

The website Limitless TCG provides great resources for these purposes.

[Recent Completed Standard Format Tournaments](#) – Limitless TCG

[Best Decks by Points](#) – Limitless TCG

Decks that are similar to one another form an **Archetype**. Decks of the same archetype will most often share the same strategy and many of the same Pokémon, especially the same main attacker. Decks of the same archetype differ not only because of the play style of the player who built the deck, but also because the player who built the deck prepares the deck to handle the other decks it is likely to face—or the **Local Meta**.

Even players who do not net deck often review winning deck lists to see what their potential opponents are likely to include in their decks. This not only helps them to refine their own decks by honing them to handle their opponents' decks, but helps them to learn their opponents' decks' strategies so that they can work toward stopping them from executing those strategies to win. Decks that are intended to either directly counter meta decks or surprise the opponent with unexpected strategies—often strategies that a meta deck is not designed to be able to handle—are referred to as **Rogue Decks**.

No matter the route you take to building your deck, it's important to remember that decks that use more expensive cards generally perform well because of those cards. It can be tempting to try to build budget versions of pricier decks, especially decks that have placed well at recent tournaments. As a general rule, if you're after a less-expensive deck, it's better to build a deck that already works well with less-expensive cards. A current popular budget deck archetype is [Lost March](#).

Buying Cards for Your Deck

New players often ask the following question: "What packs should I buy to get the cards I need to make a good deck?" The only correct answer to this question is *none*. You can buy packs all day and not get what you're after. You'll save a lot of money buy simply buying the cards you need for your deck as **Singles**—individual cards—from a trusted seller online. In the United States, the most popular option for buying singles is [TCGPlayer](#). In Europe, [Cardmarket](#) is popular.

eBay is also always an option, but there are a few things to be aware of when looking for singles on eBay. Ensure that the seller is listing authentic Pokémon cards, not "flash cards" or "recreations" of existing cards. Unscrupulous sellers will often try to pass these cards off as authentic with the pictures they show for their listings, but will include such descriptions in small text or buried in the item's description to try to protect themselves from [eBay's Money Back Guarantee policy](#). One should also exercise special caution to avoid purchasing cards that are not legal for tournament play, like oversized (jumbo) cards, cards in languages not considered local to your region, damaged cards, or the World Championship deck cards mentioned earlier in this guide. Should you elect to buy singles on Amazon, the same warnings apply.

In addition to buying singles, it can sometimes be advantageous to buy theme decks to get your collection of staple cards started. **Staples** are cards that frequently appear in deck lists and appear in several archetypes. Theme decks often contain several staples that can help get you started. It's not often cheaper to buy staples this way, but it is always an option worth considering. For a while, for example, a copy of Cynthia UPR 125 was going for \$8, but the Ultra Prism theme deck Mach Strike included two copies of the card, in addition to other staples. At the time, the theme deck could easily be found for \$12-14 at local shops. This made picking up a copy of the Mach Strike theme deck a very good value for its price. That said, Cynthia's price has since been driven down by the release of the Team Up theme decks Relentless Flame and Torrential Cannon, which also both include two copies of Cynthia.

Staples by Theme Deck

In the lists below, each deck lists staples included in [Appendix II: Staple Cards](#). Staples in **bold** below appear in nearly every deck.

Sun and Moon ☀			Guardians Rising 🌌	
Forest Shadow 🌲	Roaring Heat 🔥	Bright Tide ⚡	Metal Sun 🌞	Hidden Moon 🌑
1 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 1 Lillie SUM 122 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 1 Professor Kukui SUM 128 2 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Ultra Ball SUM 135	1 Oranguru SUM 113 1 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 1 Lillie SUM 122 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 1 Professor Kukui SUM 128 2 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Ultra Ball SUM 135	1 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 1 Lillie SUM 122 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 1 Professor Kukui SUM 128 2 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Ultra Ball SUM 135	1 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 2 Switch SUM 132 2 Timer Ball SUM 134	1 Energy Loto GRI 122 1 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 2 Switch SUM 132 2 Timer Ball SUM 134

Burning Shadows 🔥		Crimson Invasion 🌑	
Rock Steady 🌲	Luminous Frost ❄	Destruction Fang 🌑	Clanging Thunder ⚡
1 Acerola BUS 112 1 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 1 Escape Rope BUS 114 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 2 Timer Ball SUM 134	1 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 1 Escape Rope BUS 114 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 2 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Wishful Baton BUS 128	1 Oranguru SUM 113 1 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 1 Escape Rope BUS 114 1 Great Ball SUM 119 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130	1 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 1 Escape Rope BUS 114 1 Lillie SUM 122 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 1 Switch SUM 132

1 Wishful Baton BUS 128		1 Sophocles BUS 123 1 Switch SUM 132 2 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Wishful Baton BUS 128	2 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Ultra Ball SUM 135
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Ultra Prism

Forbidden Light

Mach Strike	Imperial Command	Tropical Takedown	Twilight Rogue
2 Cynthia UPR 119 1 Escape Board UPR 122 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 2 Timer Ball SUM 134	1 Escape Board UPR 122 1 Lillie UPR 125 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 2 Sophocles BUS 123 2 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Ultra Ball SUM 135	1 Energy Loto GRI 122 1 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 1 Escape Board UPR 122 1 Escape Rope BUS 114 1 Field Blower GRI 125 1 Lillie UPR 125 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 2 Sophocles BUS 123 2 Ultra Ball SUM 135 1 Weakness Policy BUS 126	1 Cynthia UPR 119 1 Escape Board UPR 122 1 Escape Rope BUS 114 1 Field Blower GRI 125 1 Lillie UPR 125 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 1 Switch SUM 132 2 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Weakness Policy BUS 126

Celestial Storm

Lost Thunder

Leaf Charge	Hydro Fury	Blazing Volcano	Storm Caller
1 Oranguru SUM 113 1 Guzma BUS 115 1 Lillie UPR 125 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 1 Switch CES 147 1 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Ultra Ball SUM 135	1 Escape Rope BUS 114 1 Lillie UPR 125 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 1 Switch CES 147 1 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Ultra Ball SUM 135	1 Guzma BUS 115 1 Lillie UPR 125 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 1 Sightseer LOT 189 1 Switch CES 147 2 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Ultra Ball SUM 135	1 Escape Rope BUS 114 1 Lillie UPR 125 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 1 Switch CES 147 2 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Ultra Ball SUM 135

Team Up

Unbroken Bonds

Relentless Flame	Torrential Cannon	Battle Mind	Lightning Loop
2 Cynthia UPR 119 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 2 Switch CES 147 2 Timer Ball SUM 134	2 Cynthia UPR 119 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 2 Switch CES 147 2 Timer Ball SUM 134	2 Cynthia UPR 119 2 Lillie UPR 125 2 Switch CES 147	2 Cynthia UPR 119 2 Lillie UPR 125 2 Switch CES 147

Theme Decks by Staple

	Forest Shadow	Roaring Heat	Bright Tide	Metal Sun	Hidden Moon	Rock Steady	Luminous Frost	Destruction Fang	Clanging Thunder	Mach Strike	Imperial Command	Tropical Takedown	Twilight Rogue	Leaf Charge	Hydro Fury	Blazing Volcano	Storm Caller	Relentless Flame	Torrential Cannon	Battle Mind	Lightning Loop	
Oranguru SUM 113		1						1						1								
Energy Retrieval SUM 116	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1										
Great Ball SUM 119								1														
Lillie SUM 122, UPR 125	1	1	1						1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1			2	2	
Nest Ball SUM 123	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2			

	Forest Shadow	Roaring Heat	Bright Tide	Metal Sun	Hidden Moon	Rock Steady	Luminous Frost	Destruction Fang	Clanging Thunder	Mach Strike	Imperial Command	Tropical Takedown	Twilight Rogue	Leaf Charge	Hydro Fury	Blazing Volcano	Storm Caller	Relentless Flame	Torrential Cannon	Battle Mind	Lightning Loop	
Professor Kukui SUM 128	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2			
Switch SUM 132, CES 147				2	2			1	1				1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	
Timer Ball SUM 134	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2			
Ultra Ball SUM 135	1	1	1						1		1	2		1	1	1	1					
Energy Loto GRI 122					1							1										
Field Blower GRI 125												1	1									
Rescue Stretcher GRI 130				1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1					
Acerola BUS 112						1																
Escape Rope BUS 114						1	1	1	1			1	1		1		1					
Guzma BUS 115														1		1						
Sophocles BUS 123								1			1	2										
Weakness Policy BUS 126												1	1									
Wishful Baton BUS 128						1	1	1														
Cynthia UPR 119										2			1						2	2	2	2
Escape Board UPR 122										1	1	1	1									
Sightseer LOT 189																1						

Notes from the Guide

¹ A third officially-sanctioned format, **Unlimited**, does exist. In this format, all cards printed since the first set, Base Set, are legal. Cards that have been reprinted since their first printings must use the newest wordings of their effects when played. Although the Unlimited format is officially sanctioned, the Unlimited format is not used for official events. No cards are banned in this format.

² In this particular example, the referenced cards would be [Jumpluff LOT 14](#) and [Shaymin ♦ TEU 10](#). Jumpluff does not work well with Shaymin ♦ because, although both are grass-types, Shaymin ♦ relies on having a lot of energy out in play to do high damage. Jumpluff, on the other hand, has a very low attack cost and prefers not to attach energy at all until it has fully evolved. In contrast, Jumpluff has good synergy with a psychic-type attacker, [Natu LOT 87](#). Both require the player to get as many Pokémon into the Lost Zone as they can to increase their damage--increasing the damage of one also increases the damage of the other. Similarly, Shaymin ♦ pairs well with [Rayquaza-GX CES 109](#) as both like to rack up damage with energy in play--and Rayquaza-GX even helps to get that energy into play faster.

Appendix I: A Look at Theme Decks - Or, What Not to Do

Below are the deck lists for three of the most popular theme decks from the Sun & Moon Era. For each theme deck, we'll examine the deck's skeleton, and highlight the good, the bad, and the ugly about each deck.

Relentless Flame



Relentless Flame	
Pokémon (22)	Trainers (18)
<i>Main Attacker (7)</i>	<i>Supporters (12)</i>
3 Charmander TEU 12	2 Brock's Grit TEU 135
2 Charmeleon TEU 13	2 Copycat CES 127
2 Charizard TEU 14	2 Cynthia UPR 119
	2 Hau CES 132
<i>Secondary Attacker (12)</i>	2 Pokémon Fan Club UPR 133
3 Nidoran ♀ TEU 54	2 Professor Kukui SUM 128
2 Nidoqueen TEU 55	
2 Nidoqueen TEU 56	<i>Items (6)</i>
3 Ponyta TEU 17	2 Nest Ball SUM 123
2 Rapidash TEU 18	2 Switch CES 147
	2 Timer Ball SUM 134
<i>Utility (3)</i>	Energy (20)
3 Farfetch'd TEU 127	20 Fire Energy

Skeleton

- 22 Pokémon
- 18 Trainers
 - 12 Supporters
 - 8 Draw Supporters
 - 0 Guzma
 - 6 Items
 - 0 Stadia
- 20 Energy

The Good

- Charizard is a good attacker who can accelerate energy to itself.
- The deck has two copies each of two highly-played cards, Cynthia and Nest Ball.
- The deck contains these other useful cards:
 - 2 Professor Kukui
 - 2 Switch
 - 2 Timer Ball
- The deck has okay draw support for a theme deck, with eight draw supporters.

The Bad

- The deck has no way to quickly stream attackers. Charizard is a Stage 2 Pokémon, which means that it takes a minimum of three turns to get a Charizard ready to attack. There are ways to reduce the time it takes to prepare a Stage 2 attacker, like Rare Candy, but the deck plays no copies of the card.
- Nidoqueen is also a Stage 2 Pokémon and suffers the same delay in being ready to attack.
- The deck relies heavily on Rapidash to stall so that it can buy time to get setup.

- The deck runs too many energies. Often, you'll be drawing energies instead of other cards you need.
- The deck contains no stadia.

The Ugly

- The deck plays two Stage 2 evolutionary lines (Charizard and Nidoqueen), but has next to no Pokémon search cards like Ultra Ball or Pokémon Communication to search for the Pokémon the deck needs when it needs it.
- The deck runs too many Pokémon. Having so many Pokémon, especially with this many different evolutionary lines, makes the deck inconsistent.

Leaf Charge



Leaf Charge	
Pokémon (23) <i>Main Attacker (7)</i> 3 Treecko CES 8 2 Grovyle CES 9 2 Sceptile CES 10 <i>Secondary Attacker (4)</i> 2 Chinchou CES 49 2 Lanturn CES 50 <i>Utility (12)</i> 3 Electrike CES 51 2 Manectric CES 52 2 Snover FLI 3 2 Abomasnow FLI 4 1 Dunsparce CES 110 1 Furfrou FLI 99 1 Oranguru SUM 113	Trainers (17) <i>Supporters (10)</i> 2 Copycat CES 127 2 Hau CES 132 2 Professor Kukui SUM 128 1 Guzma BUS 115 1 Lady FLI 109 1 Lillie UPR 125 1 Tate & Liza CES 148 <i>Items (7)</i> 2 Nest Ball SUM 123 1 Exp. Share SUM 118 1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130 1 Switch CES 147 1 Timer Ball SUM 134 1 Ultra Ball SUM 135 Energy (20) 11 Grass Energy 9 Lightning Energy

Skeleton

- 23 Pokémon
- 17 Trainers
 - o 10 Supporters
 - 8 Draw Supporters
 - 1 Guzma
 - o 7 Items
 - o 0 Stadia
- 20 Energy

The Good

- Sceptile is a decent attacker who can attack for a low energy cost.
- The deck contains a copy each of five highly-played cards: Oranguru SUM 113, Guzma, Lillie, Rescue Stretcher, and Ultra Ball. It also contains two copies of another highly-played card: Nest Ball.
- The deck contains these other useful cards:
 - o 2 Professor Kukui
 - o 1 Switch

- 1 Tate & Liza
- 1 Timer Ball
- The deck has pretty reasonable draw support for a theme deck, with eight draw supporters and Oranguru SUM 113.

The Bad

- The deck has no way to quickly stream attackers. Sceptile is a Stage 2 Pokémon, which means that it takes a minimum of three turns to get a Sceptile ready to attack. There are ways to reduce the time it takes to prepare a Stage 2 attacker, like Rare Candy, but the deck plays no copies of the card.
- The deck's secondary attacker, Lanturn, has a high attack cost for its only attack, Lightning Strike (⚡⚡⚡). It also has a Manectric that can attack, but its damage output is less than ideal—and its primary function, aside from early game pressure, is energy acceleration anyway.
- The deck runs too many energies. Often, you'll be drawing energies instead of other cards you need.
- The deck contains no stadia.

The Ugly

- The deck plays too many evolutionary lines, but it also has next to no Pokémon search cards like Ultra Ball or Pokémon Communication to search for the Pokémon the deck needs when it needs it. Search relies entirely on having Lucario UPR 67 on the bench, making it a prime target.
- The deck runs too many Pokémon. Having so many Pokémon, especially with this many different evolutionary lines, makes the deck inconsistent.

Mach Strike



Mach Strike ▲	
Pokémon (24)	Trainers (16)
<i>Main Attacker (7)</i>	<i>Supporters (7)</i>
3 Gible UPR 96	2 Cynthia UPR 119
2 Gabite UPR 98	2 Hau SUM 120
2 Garchomp UPR 99	2 Professor Kukui SUM 128
	1 Looker UPR 126
<i>Secondary Attacker (9)</i>	<i>Items (9)</i>
3 Yungoos UPR 112	2 Nest Ball SUM 123
2 Gumshoos UPR 113	2 Timer Ball SUM 134
2 Hippopotas UPR 68	1 Big Malasada SUM 114
1 Hippowdon UPR 69	1 Escape Board UPR 122
1 Type: Null UPR 115	1 Escape Rope BUS 114
<i>Utility (8)</i>	1 Pal Pad UPR 132
3 Riolu UPR 66	1 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130
1 Lucario UPR 67	
2 Solrock BUS 69	Energy (20)
2 Spiritomb UPR 53	20 Fighting Energy

Skeleton

- 24 Pokémon
- 16 Trainers
 - 7 Supporters
 - 7 Draw Supporters
 - 0 Guzma
 - 9 Items
 - 0 Stadia
- 20 Energy

The Good

- Garchomp is a good attacker who can be searched out by its lower stages of evolution.
- The deck has two copies each of two highly-played cards, Cynthia and Nest Ball. It also contains one copy each of two other highly-played cards: Escape Board and Rescue Stretcher
- The deck contains these other useful cards:
 - o 2 Professor Kukui
 - o 2 Timer Ball
 - o 1 Escape Rope
 - o 1 Pal Pad

The Bad

- The deck has no way to quickly stream attackers. Garchomp is a Stage 2 Pokémon, which means that it takes a minimum of three turns to get a Garchomp ready to attack. There are ways to reduce the time it takes to prepare a Stage 2 attacker, like Rare Candy, but the deck plays no copies of the card.
- The deck relies heavily on Cynthia to boost Garchomp's damage from 100 to 200 to take knockouts. Sometimes, you'd prefer to hold onto the cards in your hand, but it costs Garchomp's attack 100 damage.
- The deck runs too many energies. Often, you'll be drawing energies instead of other cards you need.
- The deck contains no stadia.

The Ugly

- Garchomp's Royal Blades requires three energies to attack (♣♦♠). As the deck runs no copies of Double Colorless Energy, this means that an energy must be attached to it every turn it is out in play, starting from when it is the basic Pokémon, Gible. This leaves the Gible vulnerable to being knocked out by an opponent, potentially wasting the energies.
- The deck plays too many evolutionary lines, but it also has next to no Pokémon search cards like Ultra Ball or Pokémon Communication to search for the Pokémon the deck needs when it needs it.
- The deck runs too many Pokémon. Having so many Pokémon, especially with this many different evolutionary lines, makes the deck inconsistent.

Appendix II: Staple Cards

Owning a **Playset**—a set of four copies (or a single copy of Prism Star cards)—of each card on this list ensures that, should you choose to in the future, you'll be able to change decks with minimal purchases and trades. Staples in **bold** below appear in nearly every deck. Some cards have been printed more than once, like Lillie, which appears as Lillie SUM 122, Lillie SLG 62, and Lillie UPR 125. A single playset of these is adequate, regardless of which set or sets the playset comes from.

Additionally, some staple cards currently legal in the Standard Format were also printed in sets prior to the Sun & Moon era. These older prints of cards are also often legal for play. You can see a list of these cards at [PokéGym](#).

Sun & Moon ✨	Guardians Rising 🌱	Burning Shadows ⚡	Shining Legends ✨
Oranguru SUM 113 Energy Retrieval SUM 116 Great Ball SUM 119 Lillie SUM 122 Nest Ball SUM 123 Professor Kukui SUM 128 Rare Candy SUM 129 Switch SUM 132 Timer Ball SUM 134 Ultra Ball SUM 135 Double Colorless Energy SUM 136 Rainbow Energy SUM 137	Alolan Vulpix GRI 21 Tapu Lele-GX GRI 60 Choice Band GRI 121 Energy Loto GRI 122 Energy Recycler GRI 123 Enhanced Hammer GRI 124 Field Blower GRI 125 Rescue Stretcher GRI 130	Acerola BUS 112 Bodybuilding Dumbbells BUS 113 Escape Rope BUS 114 Guzma BUS 115 Sophocles BUS 123 Weakness Policy BUS 126 Wishful Baton BUS 128	Marshadow SLG 45 Zorua SLG 52 Zoroark-GX SLG 53 Great Ball SLG 60 Lillie SLG 62 Switch SLG 67 Ultra Ball SLG 68 Double Colorless Energy SLG 69
Crimson Invasion ⚡	Ultra Prism ⚡	Forbidden Light ⚡	Celestial Storm ⚡
Counter Energy CIN 100	Cynthia UPR 119	Judge FLI 108	Acro Bike CES 123

Crimson Invasion	Ultra Prism	Forbidden Light	Celestial Storm
	Escape Board UPR 122 Lillie UPR 125	Mysterious Treasure FLI 113	Energy Recycle System CES 128 Rare Candy CES 142 Shrine of Punishment CES 143 Steven's Resolve CES 145 Switch CES 147 Rainbow Energy CES 151
Dragon Majesty	Lost Thunder	Team Up	Unbroken Bonds
This set contains no staples.	Blitzle LOT 81 Zebstrika LOT 82 Alolan Ninetales-GX LOT 132 Ditto ♦ LOT 154 Professor Elm's Lecture LOT 188 Sightseer LOT 189	Jirachi TEU 99 Erika's Hospitality TEU 140 Pokémon Communication TEU 152	Dedenne-GX UNB 57 Marshadow UNB 81 Green's Exploration UNB 175 PokéGear 3.0 UNB 182

Appendix III: Common Utility Pokémon

Draw Engines



Oranguru

Basic

Ability: Instruct

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may draw cards until you have 3 cards in your hand.

SUM 113 ♀, SM13 ☆



Zoroark-GX

Stage 1

Ability: Trade

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may discard a card from your hand. If you do, draw 2 cards.

SLG 53 ♀, SM84 ☆



Swampert

Stage 2

Ability: Power Draw

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may discard a card from your hand. If you do, draw 3 cards.

CES 35 ♀



Zebstrika

Stage 1

Ability: Sprint

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may discard your hand and draw 4 cards.

LOT 82 ♀



Pidgootto

Stage 1

Ability: Air Mail

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may look at the top 2 cards of your deck and put 1 of them into your hand. Put the other card on the bottom of your deck.

TEU 123 ♀



Salazzle

Stage 1

Ability: Roast Reveal

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may discard a ♣ Energy card from your hand. If you do, draw 3 cards.

UNB 31 ♀



Dedenne-GX

Basic

Ability: Dedechange

When you play this Pokémon from your hand onto your Bench during your turn, you may discard your hand and draw 6 cards. You can't use more than 1 Dedechange Ability each turn.

UNB 57 ♠

Energy Acceleration



Vikavolt

Stage 2

Ability: Strong Charge

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may search your deck for a ⚡ Energy card and a ⚡ Energy card and attach them to your Pokémon in any way you like. Then, shuffle your deck.

SUM 52 ♠, SM28 ★



Magnezone

Stage 2

Ability: Magnetic Circuit

As often as you like during your turn (*before your attack*), you may attach a ⚡ Energy card from your hand to 1 of your Pokémon.

UPR 83 ▲



Malamar

Stage 1

Ability: Psychic Recharge

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may attach a ⚡ Energy card from your discard pile to 1 of your benched Pokémon.

FLI 51 ♠, SM117 ★



Quagsire

Stage 1

Ability: Wash Out

As often as you like during your turn (*before your attack*), you may move a ⚡ Energy from one of your Benched Pokémon to your Active Pokémon.

DRM 26 ♠



Zeraora-GX

Basic

Ability: Full Voltage GX

Attach 5 basic Energy cards from your discard pile to your Pokémon in any way you like. (*You can't use more than one GX attack in a game.*)

LOT 86 ♠



Naganadel

Stage 1

Ability: Charging Up

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may attach a basic Energy card from your discard pile to this Pokémon.

LOT 108 ♠



Blastoise

Stage 2

Ability: Powerful Squall

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may look at the top 6 cards of your deck and attach any number of ⚡ Energy cards you find there to your Pokémon in any way you like. Shuffle the other card back into your deck.

TEU 25 ♠



Starmie

Stage 1

Ability: Strange Wave

Search your deck for up to 3 in any combination of ⚡ and ⚡ Energy cards and attach them to 1 of your Benched Pokémon. Then, shuffle your deck.

TEU 65 ♠

Search and Digging



Alolan Vulpix Basic

O Beacon
Search your deck for 2 Pokémon, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

Role: Pokémon Search

GRI 21 ♣, GRI 21a ♣



Tapu Lele-GX Basic

Ability: Wonder Tag
When you play this Pokémon from your hand onto your Bench during your turn, you may search your deck for a Supporter card, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

Role: Supporter Search

GRI 60 ♣, GRI 60a ♣



Alolan Ninetales-GX Stage 1

Ability: Mysterious Guidance
When you play this Pokémon from your hand to evolve 1 of your Pokémon during your turn, you may search your deck for up to 2 Item cards, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

Role: Item Search

LOT 132 ♣



Jirachi Basic

Ability: Stellar Wish
Once during your turn (*before your attack*), if this Pokémon is your Active Pokémon, you may look at the top 5 cards of your deck, reveal a Trainer card you find there, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle the other cards back into your deck, and this Pokémon is now Asleep.

Role: Trainer Digging

TEU 99 ♣



Dragonite Stage 2

Ability: Fast Call
Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may search your deck for a Supporter card, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

Role: Supporter Search

TEU 119 ♣

Other Utility



Alolan Muk Stage 1

Ability: Power of Alchemy
Each Basic Pokémon in play, in each player's hand, and in each player's discard pile has no Abilities.

Role: Ability Lock

SUM 58 ♣



Lycanroc-GX Stage 1

Ability: Bloodthirsty Eyes
When you play this Pokémon from your hand to evolve 1 of your Pokémon during your turn, you may switch 1 of your opponent's Benched Pokémon with their Active Pokémon.

Role: Gusting Effect



Marshadow
Basic

Ability: Let Loose

When you play this Pokémon from your hand onto your Bench during your turn, you may have each player shuffle their hand into their deck and draw 4 cards.

Roles: Draw, Disruption

SLG 45 ♡



Magcargo
Stage 1

Ability: Smooth Over

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may search your deck for a card, shuffle your deck, then put that card on top of it.

Role: Draw Manipulation

CES 24 🗨



Ditto ♦
Basic

Ability: Almighty Evolution

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may put any Stage 1 card from your hand onto this Pokémon to evolve it. You can't use this Ability during your first turn or the turn this Pokémon was put into play.

Role: Evolutionary Flexibility

LOT 154 ♡



Absol
Basic

Ability: Dark Ambition

If your opponent's Active Pokémon is a Basic Pokémon, its Retreat Cost is ★ more.

Role: Retreat Disruption

TEU 88 ♡



Diancie ♦
Basic

Ability: Princess's Cheers

As long as this Pokémon is on your Bench, your ♠ Pokémon's attacks do 20 more damage to your opponent's Active Pokémon (*before applying Weakness and Resistance*).

Role: Damage Amplification

FLI 74 ♡



Meganium
Stage 2

Ability: Quick-Ripening Herb

Once during your turn (*before your attack*), you may use this Ability. Choose 1 of your Basic Pokémon in play. If you have a Stage 2 card in your hand that evolves from that Pokémon, put that card onto the Basic Pokémon to evolve it. You can use this Ability during your first turn or on a Pokémon that was put into play this turn.

Role: Evolution Acceleration

LOT 8 ♡



Mr. Mime
Basic

Ability: Scoop-Up Block

Your opponent's Pokémon that have any damage counters on them, and any cards attached to those Pokémon can't be put into your opponent's hand.

Role: Recovery Disruption

TEU 66 ♡

Appendix IV: Common Trainers

Supporters

Draw Supporters

Shuffle Draw



Cynthia
Supporter

Shuffle your hand into your deck. Then, draw 6 cards.

UPR 119 ▲



Tate & Liza
Supporter

Choose 1:

- Shuffle your hand into your deck. Then, draw 5 cards.
- Switch your Active Pokémon with 1 of your Benched Pokémon.

CES 148 ⚡

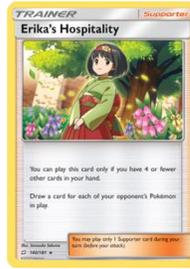
Raw Draw



Lillie
Supporter

Draw cards until you have 6 cards in your hand. If it's your first turn, draw until you have 8 cards in your hand.

SUM 122 ✨, SLG 62 ♡, UPR 125 ▲



Erika's Hospitality
Supporter

You can play this card only if you have 4 or fewer other cards in your hand.

Draw a card for each of your opponent's Pokémon in play.

TEU 140 ⚡

Discard Draw



Sophocles
Supporter

Discard 2 cards from your hand. If you do, draw 4 cards.

BUS 123 ✨, SLG 65 ♡



Sightseer
Supporter

You may discard any number of cards from your hand. Then, draw cards until you have 5 cards in your hand. If you can't draw any cards in this way, you can't play this card.

LOT 189 ♡

Disruption Draw



Judge Supporter

Each player shuffles their hand into their deck and draws 4 cards.

FLI 108 ♠

Utility Draw



Professor Kukui Supporter

Draw 2 cards. During this turn, your Pokémon's attacks do 20 more damage to your opponent's Active Pokémon (before applying Weakness and Resistance).

SUM 128 ♣



Mars Supporter

Draw 2 cards. If you do, discard a random card from your opponent's hand.

UPR 128 ▲

Niche Draw



Looker Supporter

Draw 3 cards from the bottom of your deck.

UPR 126 ▲



Underground Expedition Supporter

Look at the bottom 4 cards of your deck and put 2 of them in your hand. Put the other cards back on the bottom of your deck in any order.

CES 150 ♣ | SK 140 ♣, RR 97 ♣



Welder Supporter

Attach up to 2 Energy cards from your hand to 1 of your Pokémon. If you do, draw 3 cards.

UNB 189 ♣

Setup Supporters



Pokémon Fan Club
Supporter

Search your deck for up to 2 Basic Pokémon, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

UPR 133 ▲ | FLF 94 ♣, GEN 69 ♣, FCO 107 ★



Apricorn Maker
Supporter

Search your deck for up to 2 Item cards that have the word "Ball" in their name, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

CES 124 ♣



Steven's Resolve
Supporter

Search your deck for up to 3 cards and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck. Your turn ends.

CES 145 ♣



Professor Elm's Lecture
Supporter

Search your deck for up to 3 Pokémon with 60 HP or less, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

LOT 188 ♣



Green's Exploration
Supporter

You can play this card only if you have no Pokémon with Abilities in play.

Search your deck for up to 2 Trainer cards, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

UNB 175 ♣

Utility Supporters



Mallow
Supporter

Search your deck for 2 cards, shuffle your deck, then put those cards on top of it in any order.

GRI 127 ♣



Acerola
Supporter

Put 1 of your Pokémon that has any damage counters on it and all cards attached to it into your hand.

BUS 112 ♣



Guzma
Supporter

Switch 1 of your opponent's Benched Pokémon with their Active Pokémon. If you do, switch your Active Pokémon with 1 of your Benched Pokémon.

BUS 115 ♣



Kiawe
Supporter

Search your deck for up to 4 ♣ Energy cards and attach them to 1 of your Pokémon. Then, shuffle your deck. Your turn ends.

BUS 116 ♣



Plumeria
Supporter

Discard 2 cards from your hand. If you do, discard an Energy from 1 of your opponent's Pokémon.

BUS 120 ♣



Volkner
Supporter

Search your deck for an Item card and a ⚡ Energy card, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

UPR 135 ▲



Diantha
Supporter

You can play this card only if 1 of your ♡ Pokémon was Knocked Out during your opponent's last turn.

Put 2 cards from your discard pile into your hand.

FLI 105 ♠



Lisia
Supporter

Search your deck for up to 2 ♦ (Prism Star) cards, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

CES 137 ♠



Faba
Supporter

Choose a Pokémon Tool or Special Energy card attached to 1 of your opponent's Pokémon, or and Stadium card in play, and put it in the Lost Zone.

LOT 173 ♣



Bill's Analysis
Supporter

Look at the top 7 cards of your deck. You may reveal up to 2 Trainer cards you find there and put them into your hand. Shuffle the other cards back into your deck.

TEU 133 ♠

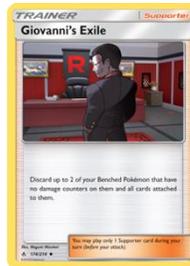


Morgan
Supporter

You can play this card only if you discard Dana, Evelyn, and Nita from your hand.

Look at the top 12 cards of your deck and attach any number of Energy cards you find there to your Pokémon in any way you like. Shuffle the other cards back into your deck.

TEU 149 ♠



Giovanni's Exile
Supporter

Discard up to 2 of your Benched Pokémon that have no damage counters on them and all cards attached to them.

UNB 174 ♣



Lt. Surge's Strategy
Supporter

You can play this card only if you have more Prize cards remaining than your opponent.

During this turn, you can play 3 Supporter cards (including this card).

UNB 178 ♣



Red's Challenge
Supporter

You can play this card only if you discard 2 other cards from your hand.

Search your deck for a card and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

UNB 184 ♣



Ultra Forest Kartenvoy

Supporter

During this turn, damage from your Ultra Beasts' attacks isn't affected by any effects on your opponent's Active Pokémon.

UNB 188 ♣

Items

Pokémon Search



Great Ball

Item

Look at the top 7 cards of your deck. You may reveal a Pokémon you find there and put it into your hand. Shuffle the other cards back into your deck.

SUM 119 ♣, SLG 60 ♡ | RG 92 ♣, DS 90 ♣, PK 77 ♣, SF 85 ♣, EPO 93 ♣, BCR 129 ♣, XY 118 ♡, BKP 100 ♣



Nest Ball

Item

Search your deck for a Basic Pokémon and put it onto your Bench. Then, shuffle your deck.

SUM 123 ♣



Timer Ball

Item

Flip 2 coins. For each heads, search your deck for an Evolution Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

SUM 134 ♣



Ultra Ball

Item

Discard 2 cards from your hand. If you do, search your deck for a Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

SUM 135 ♣, SLG 68 ♡ | DEX 102 ♡, PLF 122 ♡, PLB 90 ♡, FLF 99 ♡, ROS 93 ♡, FCO 113 ♣



Mysterious Treasure

Item

Discard a card from your hand. If you do, search your deck for a ♣ or ♠ Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

FLI 113 ♣



Net Ball

Item

Search your deck for a Basic ♣ Pokémon or a ♣ Energy card, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

LOT 187 ♡



Pokémon Communication

Item

Reveal a Pokémon from your hand and put it into your deck. If you do, search your deck for a Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

TEU 152 ♣ | HS 98 ♣, BLW 99 ♣



Electromagnetic Radar

Item

You can play this card only if you discard 2 other cards from your hand.

Search your deck for up to 2 in any combination of ⚡ Pokémon-GX and ⚡ Pokémon-EX, reveal them, and put them into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

UNB 169 ♣

Evolution Acceleration



Rare Candy Item

Reveal and Pokémon from your hand and put it into your deck. If you do, search your deck for a Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand. Then, shuffle your deck.

SUM 129 ♣, CES 142 ♣ | SS 88 ♣, EM 83 ♣, HP 90 ♣, GE 102 ♣, UL 82 ♣, DEX 100 ♣, PLB 135 ♣, PRC 135 ♣



Dusk Stone Item

Search your deck for a Mismagius, Honchkrow, Chandelure, or Aegislash, including Pokémon-GX, that evolves from 1 of your Pokémon in play, and put it onto that Pokémon to evolve it. Then, shuffle your deck. You can use this card during your first turn or on a Pokémon that was put into play this turn.

UNB 167 ♣

Tools



Exp. Share Item - Tool

When your Active Pokémon is Knocked Out by damage from an opponent's attack, you may move 1 basic Energy card from that Pokémon to the Pokémon this card is attached to.

SUM 118 ♣ | NXD 87 ♣, DRV 18 ♣, PRC 128 ♣



Choice Band Item - Tool

The attacks of the Pokémon this card is attached to do 30 more damage to your opponent's Active Pokémon-GX or Active Pokémon-EX (before applying Weakness and Resistance).

GRI 121 ♣



Bodybuilding Dumbbells Item - Tool

The Stage 1 Pokémon this card is attached to gets +40 HP.

BUS 113 ♣



Weakness Policy Item - Tool

The Pokémon this card is attached to has no Weakness.

BUS 126 ♣ | PRC 142 ♣



Wishful Baton Item - Tool

If the Pokémon this card is attached to is your Active Pokémon and is Knocked Out by damage from an opponent's attack, move up to 3 basic Energy cards from that Pokémon to 1 of your Benched Pokémon.

BUS 128 ♣



Escape Board Item - Tool

The Retreat Cost of the Pokémon this card is attached to is ★ less, and it can retreat even if it's Asleep or Paralyzed.

UPR 122 ♠



Metal Frying Pan Item - Tool

The ♡ Pokémon this card is attached to takes 30 less damage from your opponent's attacks (after applying Weakness and Resistance) and has no Weakness.

FLI 112 ♣



Counter Gain Item - Tool

If you have more Prize cards remaining than your opponent, the attacks of the Pokémon this card is attached to cost ★ less.

LOT 170 ♣



Spell Tag Item - Tool

When the ⚡ Pokémon this card is attached to is Knocked Out by damage from an opponent's attack, put 4 damage counters on your opponent's Pokémon in any way you like.

LOT 190 ♣



Buff Padding Item - Tool

If the Pokémon this card is attached to has a Retreat Cost of exactly 4, it gets +50 HP.

TEU 136 ♣



Fairy Charm Ability Item - Tool

Prevent all damage done to the ♡ Pokémon this card is attached to by attacks from your opponent's Pokémon-GX and Pokémon-EX that have Abilities.

UNB 171 ♣



Fairy Charm ⚡ Item - Tool

Prevent all damage done to the ♡ Pokémon this card is attached to by attacks from your opponent's ⚡ Pokémon-GX and ⚡ Pokémon-EX.

UNB 172 ♣



Stealthy Hood Item - Tool

Prevent all effects of your opponent's Abilities done to the Pokémon this card is attached to. Remove any such existing effects.

UNB 186 ♣

Recovery

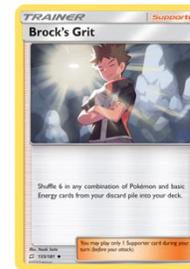
General Recovery



Oranguru Basic

★ Resource Management
Put 3 cards from your discard pile on the bottom of your deck in any order.

UPR 114 ▲



Brock's Grit Supporter

Shuffle 6 in any combination of Pokémon and basic Energy cards from your discard pile into your deck.

TEU 135 ♣ | EVO 74 ✖

Supporter Recovery



Lusamine Supporter

Put 2 in any combination of Supporter and Stadium cards from your discard pile into your hand.

CIN 96 ♣



Pal Pad Item

Shuffle 2 Supporter cards from your discard pile into your deck.

UPR 132 ▲ | FLF 92 ♣

Pokémon Recovery



Rescue Stretcher

Item

Choose 1:

- Put a Pokémon from your discard pile into your hand.
- Shuffle 3 Pokémon from your discard pile into your deck.

GRI 130 ♣

Energy Utility

Energy Search

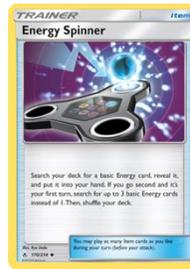


Energy Loto

Item

Look at the top 7 cards of your deck. You may reveal an Energy card you find there and put it into your hand. Shuffle the other cards back into your deck.

GRI 122 ♣



Energy Spinner

Item

Search your deck for a basic Energy card, reveal it, and put it into your hand. If you go second and it's your first turn, search for up to 3 basic Energy cards instead of 1. Then, shuffle your deck.

UNB 170 ♣

Energy Recovery



Energy Retrieval

Item

Put 2 basic Energy cards from your discard pile into your hand.

SUM 116 ♣, SLG 59 ♣ | BLW 92 ♣, PLB 80 ♣, PRC 126 ♣, EVO 77 ♣



Energy Recycler

Item

Shuffle 5 basic Energy cards from your discard pile into your deck.

GRI 123 ♣ | AOR 72 ♣



Energy Recycle System

Item

Choose 1:

- Put a basic Energy card from your discard pile into your hand.
- Shuffle 3 basic Energy cards from your discard pile into your deck.

CES 128 ♣ | DR 84 ♣, UF 81 ♣, PK 73 ♣



Fire Crystal

Item

Put 3 ♠ Energy cards from your discard pile into your hand.

UNB 173 ♣

Other Utility



Switch Item

Switch your Active Pokémon with 1 of your Benched Pokémon.

SUM 132 ⚡, SLG 67 ⚡, CES 147 ⚡ | BS 95, B2 123 ⚡, EX 157 ⚡, RS 92 ⚡, RG 102 ⚡, DS 102 ⚡, DF 83 ⚡, DP 119 ⚡, SW 128 ⚡, SF 93 ⚡, HS 102 ⚡, BLW 104 ⚡, BCR 135 ⚡, KSS 38 ⚡, ROS 91 ⚡, EVO 88 ⚡



Escape Rope Item

Each player switches their Active Pokémon with 1 of their Benched Pokémon. Your opponent switches first. *(If a player does not have a Benched Pokémon, that player doesn't switch Pokémon.)*

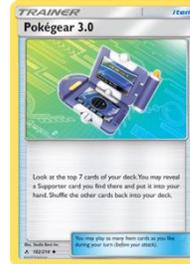
BUS 114 ⚡ | PRC 127 ⚡



Field Blower Item

Choose up to 2 in any combination of Pokémon Tool cards and Stadium cards in play *(yours or your opponent's)* and discard them.

GRI 125 ⚡



Pokégear 3.0 Item

Look at the top 7 cards of your deck. You may reveal a Supporter card you find there and put it into your hand. Shuffle the other cards back into your deck.

UNB 182 ⚡ | HS 96 ⚡

Stadia



Aether Paradise Conservation Area Stadium

Basic ⚡ Pokémon and Basic ⚡ Pokémon *(both yours and your opponent's)* take 30 less damage from the opponent's attacks *(after applying Weakness and Resistance)*.

GRI 116 ⚡



Altar of the Moone Stadium

The Retreat Cost of each Pokémon *(both yours and your opponent's)* that has any ⚡ or ⚡ Energy attached to it is ⚡ less.

GRI 117 ⚡



Brooklet Hill Stadium

Once during each player's turn, that player may search their deck for a Basic ⚡ Pokémon or Basic ⚡ Pokémon, put it onto their Bench, and shuffle their deck.

GRI 120 ⚡



Devoured Field Stadium

The attacks of ⚡ Pokémon and ⚡ Pokémon *(both yours and your opponent's)* do 10 more damage to the opponent's Active Pokémon *(before applying Weakness and Resistance)*.

CIN 93 ⚡



Lysandre Labs Stadium

Pokémon Tool cards in play *(both yours and your opponent's)* have no effect.

FLI 111 ⚡



Ultra Space Stadium

Once during each player's turn, that player may search their deck for an Ultra Beast card, reveal it, put it into their hand, and shuffle their deck.

FLI 115 ⚡



Shrine of Punishment Stadium

Between turns, put 1 damage counter on each Pokémon-GX and Pokémon-EX (both yours and your opponent's).

CES 143



Sky Pillar Stadium

Prevent all effects of the opponent's attacks, including damage, done to Benched Pokémon (both yours and your opponent's).

CES 144



Heat Factory Stadium

Once during each player's turn, that player may discard a ♣ Energy card from their hand. If they do, they draw 3 cards.

Whenever any player plays an Item or Supporter card from their hand, prevent all effects of that card done to this Stadium card.

LOT 178



Life Forest Stadium

Once during each player's turn, that player may heal 60 damage and remove all Special Conditions from 1 of their ♣ Pokémon.

Whenever any player plays an Item or Supporter card from their hand, prevent all effects of that card done to this Stadium card.

LOT 180



Thunder Mountain Stadium

The attacks of ⚡ Pokémon (both yours and your opponent's) cost ⚡ less.

Whenever any player plays an Item or Supporter card from their hand, prevent all effects of that card done to this Stadium card.

LOT 191



Black Market Stadium

When a ⚫ Pokémon (yours or your opponent's) that has any ⚫ Energy attached to it is Knocked Out by damage from an opponent's attack, that player takes 1 fewer Prize card.

Whenever any player plays an Item or Supporter card from their hand, prevent all effects of that card done to this Stadium card.

TEU 134



Viridian Forest Stadium

Once during each player's turn, that player may discard a card from their hand. If they do, that player searches their deck for a basic Energy card, reveals it, and puts it into their hand. Then, that player shuffles their deck.

TEU 156



Wondrous Labyrinth Stadium

The attacks of non-♥ Pokémon (both yours and your opponent's) cost ★ more.

Whenever any player plays an Item or Supporter card from their hand, prevent all effects of that card done to this Stadium card.

TEU 158



Dust Island Stadium

Whenever either player switches their Poisoned Active Pokémon with 1 of their Benched Pokémon with the effect of a Trainer card, the new Active Pokémon is now affected by that Special Condition.

UNB 168



Martial Arts Dojo Stadium

The attacks of non-Ultra Beast Pokémon that have any basic ♣ Energy attached to them (both yours and your opponent's) do 10 more damage to the opponent's Active Pokémon (before applying Weakness and Resistance). If the attacking player has more Prize cards remaining than their opponent, those attacks do 40 more damage instead.



Power Plant

Stadium

Pokémon-GX and Pokémon-EX in play (*both yours and your opponent's*) have no Abilities.

UNB 183 ♣

Appendix V: Set Abbreviations and Symbols

Set Abbreviations and Symbols

For Standard Sets

Sun & Moon Era

- ☀ Sun & Moon (SUM)
- 🌿 Guardians Rising (GRI)
- 🔥 Burning Shadows (BUS)
- 🌟 Shining Legends (SLG)
- 🌸 Crimson Invasion (CIN)
- 🔮 Ultra Prism (UPR)
- 🚫 Forbidden Light (FLI)
- 🌌 Celestial Storm (CES)
- 🐉 Dragon Majesty (DRM)
- ⚡ Lost Thunder (LOT)
- 🤝 Team Up (TEU)
- 🕵 Detective Pikachu (DET)
- 🔒 Unbroken Bonds (UNB)

For Expanded Sets

XY Era

- 🌺 Kalos Starter Set (KSS)
- 👉 XY (XY)
- 🔥 Flashfire (FLF)
- 👊 Furious Fists (FFI)
- 👁 Phantom Forces (PHF)
- 👊 Primal Clash (PRC)
- 🚪 Double Crisis (DCR)
- 🌪 Roaring Skies (ROS)
- 🌍 Ancient Origins (AOR)
- 🚪 BREAKthrough (BKT)
- 🌐 BREAKpoint (BKP)
- 📅 Generations (GEN)
- 🌟 Fates Collide (FCO)

🏰 Steam Siege (STS)

🔄 Evolutions (EVO)

Black & White Era

- 🟦 Black & White (BLW)
- 📌 Emerging Powers (EPO)
- 👉 Noble Victories (NVI)
- 🌸 Next Destinies (NXD)
- 👁 Dark Explorers (DEX)
- 🐉 Dragons Exalted (DRX)
- 🐉 Dragon Vault (DRV)
- 🌸 Boundaries Crossed (BCR)
- 🌟 Plasma Storm (PLS)
- 👊 Plasma Freeze (PLF)
- 🔥 Plasma Blast (PLB)
- 👑 Legendary Treasures (LTR)

For Unlimited Sets

Diamond & Pearl Era

- 👉 Diamond & Pearl (DP)
- 🌟 Mysterious Treasures (MT)
- 👁 Secret Wonders (SW)
- 👊 Great Encounters (GE)
- 👑 Majestic Dawn (MD)
- 👊 Legends Awakened (LA)
- 👁 Stormfront (SF)
- 👊 Platinum (PL)
- 👊 Rising Rivals (RR)*
- 👊 Supreme Victors (SV)
- 👁 Arceus (AR)
- 👊 HeartGold & SoulSilver (HS)

🌟 Unleashed (UL)

👁 Undaunted (UD)

👁 Triumphant (TM)

👁 Call of Legends (CL)

EX Era

- 👁 Ruby & Sapphire (RS)
- 👁 Sandstorm (SS)
- 👁 Dragon (DR)
- 👁 Team Magma vs. Team Aqua (MA)
- 👁 Hidden Legends (HL)
- 👁 FireRed & LeafGreen (RG)
- 👁 Team Rocket Returns (RR)*
- 👁 Deoxys (DX)
- 👁 Emerald (EM)
- 👁 Unseen Forces (UF)
- 👁 Delta Species (DS)
- 👁 Legend Maker (LM)
- 👁 Holon Phantoms (HP)
- 👁 Crystal Guardians (CG)
- 👁 Dragon Frontiers (DF)
- 👁 Power Keepers (PK)

Neo Era

- 👁 Southern Islands (SI)
- 👁 Neo Genesis (N1)
- 👁 Neo Discovery (N2)
- 👁 Neo Revelation (N3)
- 👁 Neo Destiny (N4)
- 👁 Legendary Collection (LC)
- 👁 Expedition Base Set (EX)

👁 Aquapolis (AQ)

👁 Skyridge (SK)

Base Set Era

- 👁 Base Set (BS)
- 👁 Jungle (JU)
- 👁 Fossil (FO)
- 👁 Base Set 2 (B2)
- 👁 Team Rocket (TR)
- 👁 Gym Heroes (G1)
- 👁 Gym Challenge (G2)

For Special Sets

👁 McDonald's Collections (MCD)†

- 👁 2011 McDonald's Collection
- 👁 2012 McDonald's Collection
- 👁 2013 McDonald's Collection
- 👁 2014 McDonald's Collection
- 👁 2015 McDonald's Collection
- 👁 2016 McDonald's Collection
- 👁 2017 McDonald's Collection
- 👁 2018 McDonald's Collection

* Officially, Platinum Rising Rivals and EX Team Rocket Returns share the same abbreviation. For clarity, players will sometimes use TRR to specify EX Team Rocket Returns.
† Though there are multiple McDonald's Collection sets, all McDonald's Collection sets officially share the same abbreviation.

Set Symbols for Sets in the Standard Format

[Card Mavin](#) has an excellent resource that lists each core Pokémon Trading Card Game set beside its set symbol. [Bulbapedia](#) has a comprehensive list of core sets, mini sets, and promo sets, also alongside their set symbols. Below is a list of core sets and their respective symbols for each set currently legal in the Standard Format.

Sun & Moon		3 February 2017	Celestial Storm		3 August 2018
Guardians Rising		5 May 2017	Dragon Majesty		7 September 2018
Burning Shadows		4 August 2017	Lost Thunder		2 November 2018
Shining Legends		6 October 2017	Team Up		1 February 2019
Crimson Invasion		3 November 2017	Detective Pikachu		29 March 2019
Ultra Prism		2 February 2018	Unbroken Bonds		3 May 2019
Forbidden Light		4 May 2018			

Appendix VI: Pre-release Deck Building



Building a deck for a **Pre-release Event**—an event where players get together a few weeks before a new set’s official release to play with cards from the new set—differs significantly from building a deck for the Standard or Expanded Formats. In a pre-release event, all players play in a **Limited Format**—where players are restricted to deck building resources provided to players to use in the event itself. This puts all players on a roughly level playing field and invites a much more laid-back, casual atmosphere.

At a pre-release event, players are provided with a **Build & Battle Box** from the set for which the pre-release event is being held. A Build & Battle box contains the following resources to help you build your deck:

- 4, 10-Card Pokémon Trading Card Game Booster Packs from the Pre-release’s set (Each pack also contains a basic energy card)
- A 23-card Evolution pack, including 1 of 4 promo cards from the set

In addition to your Build & Battle Box, the venue holding the pre-release event will provide basic energy cards to help you complete your deck. Pre-release decks are comprised of forty cards instead of the regular sixty and games played using pre-release decks are played with four prize cards instead of six. Like a regular deck, a pre-release deck must still include at least one basic Pokémon. Unlike a regular deck, the “Rule of Four” that restricts players to up to four copies of cards with the same name does not apply. (Decks are still restricted to up to a single copy of each Prism Star Card, however.)

Below is an example of what could come in a Build & Battle Box’s Evolution Pack. These particular Build & Battle Box Evolution pack’s contents were seen in PrimetimePokémon’s [Team Up Build & Battle Box Opening](#). The cards in the kit have been broken into six categories: (1) Main Pokémon Type (Promo Type), (2) Secondary Pokémon Type, (3) Miscellaneous Pokémon, (4) Draw Supporters, (5) Pokémon Search, (6) Other Trainer Cards.

Main Pokémon Type



1 Zapdos SM159



1 Emolga TEU 46



3 Blitzle TEU 44



2 Zebstrika TEU 45

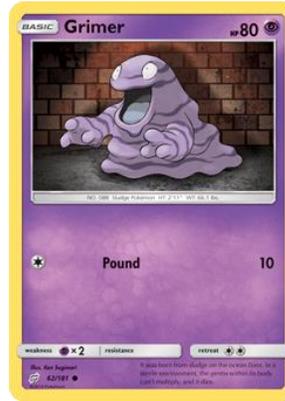
Secondary Pokémon Type



1 Nidoran ♀ TEU 54



1 Nidorina TEU 55



3 Grimer TEU 62



2 Muk TEU 63

Miscellaneous Pokémon



1 Farfetch'd TEU 127

Pokémon Search



2 Pokémon Communication TEU 152

Other Trainer Cards



1 Switch CES 147

Draw Supporters



1 Tate & Liza CES 148



1 Hau CES 132



1 Ingo & Emmet TEU 144



1 Cynthia UPR 119



1 Looker UPR 126

As you open the four booster packs that are included in your Build & Battle Box, continue to use the same categories to sort the cards, sorting new types of Pokémon into their own piles. From there, you'll have four options for how to continue with the construction of your deck.

1. Build around the Evolution Pack.

When you build around the Pokémon included in your Evolution Pack, you add

2. Build around *part* of the Evolution Pack.

Instead of using both types included in your Evolution Pack, you may instead choose to use

3. Build around your pulls.

The semi-nuclear option has you ignoring the Pokémon in your Evolution pack entirely, building around one or two types of

4. Build around a Pokémon-GX.

So, you've pulled a Pokémon-GX and you have the evolution line necessary to play it. Awesome.

additional Pokémon of the same types, including additional Pokémon from the same evolution lines, if possible.

only one. This may be to focus your deck on a single type (not a bad idea if you have a lot of Pokémon of the same type) or to introduce a new type from your pulls, in addition to reinforcing the type you've kept in the deck with additional Pokémon from the same evolution lines, if possible.

Pokémon you've pulled from the booster packs included in your Build & Battle Box. Be sure to choose Pokémon that can do adequate damage for minimal attack costs, with decent HP.

This may be your best option. Here you have two different avenues of attack—to either go with just the GX and the bare minimum to get it evolved up, or to build around the GX, adding in Pokémon of the same type and Pokémon with colorless attack costs.

No matter which strategy you choose, keep in mind the following loose deck skeleton for a pre-release deck:

15 Pokémon
10 Trainers
15 Energies

Pokémon to Include

Pokémon you include in your deck should be at least one of the following:

1. **A Good Attacker.** A good attacker does reasonable damage for a reasonable attack cost. The higher the stage of evolution, the less reasonable an attack cost becomes. Low attack costs for mid to high damage are always best.
2. **A Possessor of a Helpful Ability or Attack.** A Pokémon with abilities or attacks that draw additional cards, help you to search for Pokémon in your deck, or interrupt your opponent's strategy. **Call for Family** and similar attacks are especially helpful in pre-release decks as they can help you search for your stronger Pokémon when you don't start with them.
3. **A Beefy Staller.** A Pokémon with high HP can sometimes be helpful to stall your opponent long enough to get your primary attackers setup and ready to knock out your opponent's Pokémon.
4. **A Status-Happy Staller.** A Pokémon with attacks or abilities that leave the opponent's Pokémon Paralyzed, Confused, or Asleep can be the difference between winning and losing in a pre-release tournament. Because there are limited ways to switch out of status effects in a Limited Format like a pre-release, even little bits of damage from Poison and Burn can add up to a victory in the long run.

Trainers to Include

During a pre-release, you should pretty much always include any trainers that are in some way beneficial to the deck you're building. If a trainer is not helpful to your deck, exclude it. For example, you would not include a Net Ball—a card that helps only decks built around a Grass-type Pokémon—in a deck built around fire- and water-type Pokémon.

If you find yourself with an abundance of trainers and need to cut a few out, always prioritize Trainer cards that help you draw cards or help you find your Pokémon.

A Note on Energies

Unlike in Standard deck building, it is quite common for a pre-release deck to be built around two types of Pokémon (and, often, two main attackers) instead of being built around a single Pokémon. As noted earlier, a lot of pre-release decks will run roughly 15 energies (give or take a few), but will have to split those 15 energies between two types. As an example, consider a deck with a Fire-type attacker and a Water-type attacker. A few things will help you decide how to split the energies between Fire and Water. Look for the following:

1. Does either attacker require *only* its type of energy to attack? Does the Fire-type attacker, for example, require one fire and one colorless for its primary attack?
2. Does one attacker have an especially high energy cost? Does the water-type attacker, for example, require three water energies to power up its attack?
3. Does either attacker have an attack that can be powered up entirely by either energy type?
4. Do secondary attackers have the ability to attack with colorless energies as the entirety of or part of their attack cost?

For a very quick-and-dirty guesstimate on how many energies you should consider running, figure out how many energies of each specific type are required to power up all of your main attackers' most cost-expensive attacks at once. If you have three copies of your main fire attacker and two copies of your main water attacker, and the Fire-type main attacker's cost is **♣♣♣** and the Water-type main attacker's cost is **♠♠♠**, you would say that, at a minimum, you need 6 fire, 6 water, and 3 copies of either energy. As your Water-type attacker can *only* take water energies, you could weigh the use of the three "either" energy slots more in favor of Water energies, perhaps including 2 **♠** and 1 **♣** for your last energies.

Other Helpful Notes for Pre-release

In addition to bringing yourself and the money required to participate in the pre-release event, here are a few other things you should consider bringing with you that won't be included in your Build & Battle Box or otherwise provided to you:

- Deck Sleeves. Bring a minimum of 40 for your pre-release deck. This will help to keep your new cards protected so that you can play with them long into the future. My personal recommendation is [Dragon Shield Mattes](#).
- Dice. Bring at least a single coin flip die and five damage counter dice. Bring more if you can. With Tag Team GXes running amok, damage piles up faster than ever. You don't want to run out of dice to keep track of damage.
- Playmat. While not required to play, a playmat is a good item to have with you to help extend the life of your deck sleeves.
- Perfect Fit or Penny Sleeves. These are the sleeves you'd use to protect the valuable cards from your kit that you'd don't end up playing with in your deck. Don't have them? Use some spare deck sleeves.

Above all else, remember that Pre-release Events are primarily fun ways to get your hands on cards from the newest set early. Far more so than even in regular play, pre-releases are very luck-dependent and your deck is unlikely to be especially consistent. Just sit back, crack your packs, and prepare for a casual, fun time. Don't stress too hard about winning.

Appendix VII: Some Deck Math

Mulligan Chance by Number of Basic Pokémon in Deck

Below is a breakdown of the percent chance your deck has of a mulligan based on the number of Basic Pokémon you've included in your deck. As the number of Basic Pokémon increases, the percent chance for a mulligan decreases. It is necessary to weigh the chance of a mulligan against other factors, like consistency. If you include a lot of Basic Pokémon to avoid a mulligan, it could cut into your deck's ability to draw the cards it needs.

Also see [TheMathTCG: The Probabilities Behind the Opening Hand](#) on Six Prizes.

# Basics	% Chance
1	88.33%
2	77.85%
3	68.46%
4	60.05%
5	52.54%

# Basics	% Chance
6	45.86%
7	39.91%
8	34.64%
9	29.98%
10	25.86%

# Basics	% Chance
11	22.24%
12	19.06%
13	16.28%
14	13.86%
15	11.75%

# Basics	% Chance
16	9.92%
17	8.34%
18	6.99%
19	5.82%
20	4.83%

Chance to Draw Specific Basic Pokémon in Opening Hand by Count in Deck

		Total Number of Basic Pokémon in Deck				
		1	2	3	4	5+
Copies	1	11.67%	11.67%	11.67%	11.67%	11.67%
	2		22.15%	22.15%	22.15%	22.15%
	3			31.54%	31.54%	31.54%
	4				39.95%	39.95%

Chance to Top Deck Card Based on Quantity in Deck and Cards Remaining in Deck

Deck Size	4 Copies	3 Copies	2 Copies	1 Copy
1				100.00%
2			100.00%	50.00%
3		100.00%	66.67%	33.33%
4	100.00%	75.00%	50.00%	25.00%
5	80.00%	60.00%	40.00%	20.00%
6	66.67%	50.00%	33.33%	16.67%
7	57.14%	42.86%	28.57%	14.29%
8	50.00%	37.50%	25.00%	12.50%
9	44.44%	33.33%	22.22%	11.11%
10	40.00%	30.00%	20.00%	10.00%
11	36.36%	27.27%	18.18%	9.09%
12	33.33%	25.00%	16.67%	8.33%
13	30.77%	23.08%	15.38%	7.69%
14	28.57%	21.43%	14.29%	7.14%
15	26.67%	20.00%	13.33%	6.67%
16	25.00%	18.75%	12.50%	6.25%
17	23.53%	17.65%	11.76%	5.88%
18	22.22%	16.67%	11.11%	5.56%
19	21.05%	15.79%	10.53%	5.26%
20	20.00%	15.00%	10.00%	5.00%
21	19.05%	14.29%	9.52%	4.76%
22	18.18%	13.64%	9.09%	4.55%
23	17.39%	13.04%	8.70%	4.35%
24	16.67%	12.50%	8.33%	4.17%
25	16.00%	12.00%	8.00%	4.00%

Deck Size	4 Copies	3 Copies	2 Copies	1 Copy
26	15.38%	11.54%	7.69%	3.85%
27	14.81%	11.11%	7.41%	3.70%
28	14.29%	10.71%	7.14%	3.57%
29	13.79%	10.34%	6.90%	3.45%
30	13.33%	10.00%	6.67%	3.33%
31	12.90%	9.68%	6.45%	3.23%
32	12.50%	9.38%	6.25%	3.13%
33	12.12%	9.09%	6.06%	3.03%
34	11.76%	8.82%	5.88%	2.94%
35	11.43%	8.57%	5.71%	2.86%
36	11.11%	8.33%	5.56%	2.78%
37	10.81%	8.11%	5.41%	2.70%
38	10.53%	7.89%	5.26%	2.63%
39	10.26%	7.69%	5.13%	2.56%
40	10.00%	7.50%	5.00%	2.50%
41	9.76%	7.32%	4.88%	2.44%
42	9.52%	7.14%	4.76%	2.38%
43	9.30%	6.98%	4.65%	2.33%
44	9.09%	6.82%	4.55%	2.27%
45	8.89%	6.67%	4.44%	2.22%
46	8.70%	6.52%	4.35%	2.17%
47	8.51%	6.38%	4.26%	2.13%
48	8.33%	6.25%	4.17%	2.08%
49	8.16%	6.12%	4.08%	2.04%
50	8.00%	6.00%	4.00%	2.00%

Appendix VIII: List of Resources

- [Pokémon Trading Card Database](https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg/pokemon-cards/) - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg/pokemon-cards/>
[2019 Season Pokémon TCG Format Rotation](https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-news/2019-season-pokemon-tcg-format-rotation/) - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-news/2019-season-pokemon-tcg-format-rotation/>
[2020 Season Pokémon TCG Format Rotation](https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-news/2020-season-pokemon-tcg-format-rotation/) - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-news/2020-season-pokemon-tcg-format-rotation/>
[Pokémon TCG Promo Card Legality Status](https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg-promo-card-legality-status/) - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg-promo-card-legality-status/>
[Pokémon TCG Banned Card List](https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg-banned-card-list/) - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg-banned-card-list/>
[Pokémon Event Locator](https://www.pokemon.com/us/play-pokemon/pokemon-events/find-an-event/) - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/play-pokemon/pokemon-events/find-an-event/>
[Official Rule Book](https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg/rules) - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg/rules>
[Play! Pokémon General Event Rules](https://assets.pokemon.com/assets/cms2/pdf/play-pokemon/rules/play-pokemon-general-event-rules-en.pdf) - <https://assets.pokemon.com/assets/cms2/pdf/play-pokemon/rules/play-pokemon-general-event-rules-en.pdf>
[How to Tell if a Pokémon Card is Fake](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2v4g4XXoPe0) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2v4g4XXoPe0>
[List of Banned Cards](https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg-banned-card-list/) - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg-banned-card-list/>
[Fake Pokémon Cards vs. Real Pokémon Cards](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jUlx62gUk) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jUlx62gUk>
[Set Symbols](https://cardmavin.com/pokemon-card-set-symbols) - <https://cardmavin.com/pokemon-card-set-symbols>
[Standard Legal Card List](http://pokegym.net/index.php/current-standard-legal-card-list/) - <http://pokegym.net/index.php/current-standard-legal-card-list/>
[Staples and Other Playable Cards by Set](https://www.reddit.com/r/pkmtcg/comments/9np7e2/) - <https://www.reddit.com/r/pkmtcg/comments/9np7e2/>
[Pokémon Trading Card Game Online](https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg/play-online/download/) - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-tcg/play-online/download/>
[Recent Completed Standard Format Tournaments](http://limitlesstcg.com/tournaments/?time=3months&zone=all&type=all&format=standard) - <http://limitlesstcg.com/tournaments/?time=3months&zone=all&type=all&format=standard>
[Best Decks by Points](http://limitlesstcg.com/decks/?time=3months&format=standard) - <http://limitlesstcg.com/decks/?time=3months&format=standard>
[Stats on Starts by Brent Halliburton](https://sixprizes.com/2014/11/12/stats-on-starts/) - <https://sixprizes.com/2014/11/12/stats-on-starts/>

[Odds in Pokémon](https://www.pojjo.com/Features/X-Act/2005/Odds%20in%20Pokemon%203.htm) - <https://www.pojjo.com/Features/X-Act/2005/Odds%20in%20Pokemon%203.htm>
[Hypergeometric Calculator](https://stattrek.com/online-calculator/hypergeometric.aspx) - <https://stattrek.com/online-calculator/hypergeometric.aspx>
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