

THE FIRST SIX GAMES AND FIRST STORE NIGHT CHECKLIST

Start free in MTG Arena, then choose one paper bridge. Magic Academy is best when a local store offers a welcoming session. The Foundations Beginner Box is the strongest guided home lesson. A two-deck Starter Kit works when a friend and a theme are already waiting. Play six paper games before buying random boosters, then attend a beginner-friendly event with one playable deck, opaque sleeves and a clear request for help.

Best free first step?	Finish Arena's tutorial and color challenges, then replay without rushing the prompts.
Best guided paper product?	The Foundations Beginner Box for a structured lesson at home.
Best human bridge?	Magic Academy or a beginner event whose organizer confirms the format and teaching expectation.

USE THIS WHILE YOU PLAY

Choose the door that solves your next hour

Arena, Academy, the Beginner Box and a Starter Kit are not rivals. Arena removes cost and teaches interface-driven turns.

What Arena teaches well, and what it quietly does for you

Arena is excellent at legal actions. It highlights playable cards, enforces timing, counts mana and resolves triggers.

Beginner Box, Starter Kit or Starter Collection?

The Foundations Beginner Box is designed to teach. Its value is not raw card count; it is the order in which decisions arrive.

REVIEW THE DECISION, NOT ONLY THE RESULT

1. Choose the door that solves your next hour

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2. What Arena teaches well, and what it quietly does for you

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3. Beginner Box, Starter Kit or Starter Collection?

The Foundations Beginner Box is designed to teach.

4. The first six paper games are a curriculum

Game one is for phases and tapping lands.

5. Cross from software to cardboard deliberately

Set the paper board the way Arena displays it: lands together, creatures forward, graveyard visible, exile clearly separate.

6. Your first store night begins before the first match

Contact the store first.

7. The smallest useful physical kit

One legal deck, opaque sleeves, a box that fits the sleeved deck, required tokens and a life counter are enough.

8. Buy after the game identifies the problem

After six games, choose the next purchase from evidence.

SOURCE BOUNDARY

Current format, ban, timing, and legality facts are checked against Wizards of the Coast and Scryfall. Dated metagame rankings are identified as editorial snapshots. Marketplace and community attention are never converted into invented sales or win-rate claims.

Unofficial Puzzlewick reference. Current publisher rules and policy take precedence. Reviewed September 8, 2026.