

Welcome to the Learn to Play in Phases Activity Guide!

Edition: October 3, 2019

Let's Learn to Play!

The Pokémon Trading Card Game offers an incredible amount of variance and fun for those who've learned to master the rules, but it can be intimidating for new players, particularly if they're young. This Activity Guide breaks down the learning process into three separate activities that are designed to teach as they engage and entertain.

At the beginning, things are kept simple, and only a few of the basic concepts of the Pokémon TCG are explored. As you proceed, each activity will add a few more elements of the TCG in phases that provide an entertaining way to gain confidence with the rules, and eventually, learn the entirety of the game's core rules and mechanics.

Using This Guide

In addition to the activity itself, each section contains notes on the target audience, the cards that you will need to play, and the parts of the Pokémon TCG rulebook that you might want to look over before you start walking players through the experience.

We recommend that you familiarize yourself with these recommendations, and draw on them using your best judgment, based on the player's age and overall level of comfort with the Pokémon TCG.

Basic Battle Activity

The Basic Battle introduces players to some of the most fundamental elements of the game: **Benched** and **Active Pokémon**, **attacking**, **damage**, **Hit Points (HP)**, and getting **Knocked Out**.

Audience

The Basic Battle is a good place to start for aspiring Trainers who:

- Can do basic addition and subtraction.
- May not yet be strong readers.
- Want to see their Pokémon collection do more than sit in a binder!

Equipment

The Basic Battle can be completed without a deck—a total of six Pokémon cards is all that is needed to play!

Knowledge

To provide the best possible experience, the League/Club Leader should read over the following sections of the Pokémon Trading Card Game rules before taking aspiring Trainers through this activity:

- Zones of the Pokémon TCG (pg. 7)

Set Up!

Each player chooses three Pokémon from their card collection or from the cards provided by the League/Club Leader.

Each player places their Pokémon face down, with one as the Active Pokémon and two on the Bench.

Use a simple method to determine which player will go first.

Play!

Turn all Pokémon face up.

The first player chooses one of their Active Pokémon's attacks to begin the battle. Subtract the damage done by the attack from the HP of their opponent's Active Pokémon.

Then, it's the next player's turn!

Whenever a Pokémon gets hit by an attack that does damage equal to or greater than its remaining HP, it is Knocked Out and put in the discard pile. Then, the player whose Pokémon was Knocked Out chooses a Pokémon from their Bench to become the new Active Pokémon.

The game will end when one player has no Pokémon remaining. Their opponent is the winner!

Trainer Tips

Use damage counters or dice to keep track of the amount of damage each Pokémon has taken.

Play using only the numerical damage value found next to the attack name; ignore any other text the attack may have. To help, you could encourage players to choose Pokémon that have simple attacks, such as Salandit (UNM, 33).

Stage 1 Battle Activity

The Stage 1 Battle expands on the concepts introduced in the Basic Battle. Here, players will learn about **Basic Pokémon** and **Evolution, Energy**, cards in the **hand**, and the basics of **turn order**.

Audience

The Stage 1 Battle is a great starting point for aspiring Trainers who:

- Can do basic addition and subtraction.
- Have basic reading ability.
- Can identify different Energy types and card types, and link them to concepts.
- Have the patience needed to comfortably sit through longer turns than the Basic Battle.

Equipment

Each player will need a proto-deck of 12 cards to complete this step. Use Pokémon of a single type for a player's deck, and make their opponent's deck a different type. We suggest Water and Grass—this will set things up neatly for later on.

Example Deck A

3x Squirtle (TEU, 23)
2x Wartortle (TEU, 24)
1x Blastoise (TEU, 25)
6x Water Energy

Example Deck B

3x Bounsweet (UNM, 17)
2x Steenee (UNM, 18)
1x Tsareena (UNM, 19)
6x Grass Energy

Knowledge

To provide the best possible experience, the League/Club Leader should read over the following sections of the Pokémon Trading Card Game rules before taking aspiring Trainers through this activity:

- Pokémon TCG Basic Concepts (pg. 3–4)
- Parts of a Pokémon Card (pg. 5–6)
- Zones of the Pokémon TCG (pg. 7)
- Playing the Game
 - Parts of a Turn (pg. 9)

Set Up!

NEW! Each player places their three Basic Pokémon face down, with one as the Active Pokémon and two on the Bench. All the other cards are kept in the hand.

Use a simple method to determine which player will go first.

Play!

Turn all Pokémon face up.

Instead of just attacking, a player may now use the cards in their hand to help them do any or all of the following things during their turn:

- **NEW!** **Attach one Energy card** to one of their Pokémon.
- **NEW!** **Evolve** any of their Basic Pokémon into a Stage 1 Pokémon, or any of their Stage 1 Pokémon into a Stage 2 Pokémon.
- **Attack** their opponent's Active Pokémon—the turn always ends after an attack takes place.

Then, it's the next player's turn!

Whenever a Pokémon gets hit by an attack that does damage equal to or greater than its remaining HP, it is Knocked Out and put in the discard pile. Then, the player whose Pokémon was Knocked Out chooses a Pokémon from their Bench to become the new Active Pokémon.

The game will end when one player has no Pokémon remaining. Their opponent is the winner!

Trainer Tips

NEW! Players should now make sure they have the right number of Energy attached to their Active Pokémon if they want to attack.

Just as with the Basic Battle, players should track damage using damage counters or dice. Similarly, keep on disregarding any attack text other than the numerical attack damage, for now.

Stage 2 Battle Activity

The Stage 2 Battle expands on the concepts introduced in the Stage 1 Battle. Here, players will learn about the utility of **Trainer cards**, **Prize cards**, **retreating**, and drawing cards from the **deck**. Damage from attacks will also now be affected by **Weakness** and **Resistance**.

Audience

The Stage 2 Battle comfortably accommodates players who:

- Can do basic addition, subtraction, and multiplication.
- Are able and happy to read short pieces of text.
- Can identify different Energy types and card types, and link them to concepts.
- Have the patience needed to comfortably sit through longer turns than the Stage 1 Battle.

Equipment

Each player's proto-deck should now expand to around 21 cards in total. Include four simple Trainer cards to introduce the concept, plus three Pokémon of an additional type. Boost the number of Energy to account for the new Pokémon.

Example Deck A

3x Squirtle (TEU, 23)
2x Wartortle (TEU, 24)
1x Blastoise (TEU, 25)
3x Electabuzz (LOT, 71)
2x Potion (SUM, 127)
2x Hau (CES, 132)
5x Water Energy
3x Lightning Energy

Example Deck B

3x Bounsweet (UNM, 17)
2x Steenee (UNM, 18)
1x Tsareena (UNM, 19)
3x Turtonator (UPR, 27)
2x Potion (SUM, 127)
2x Hau (CES, 132)
5x Grass Energy
3x Fire Energy

Knowledge

To provide the best possible experience, the League/Club Leader should read over the following sections of the Pokémon Trading Card Game rules before taking aspiring Trainers through this activity:

- Pokémon TCG Basic Concepts (pg. 3–4)
- Parts of a Pokémon Card (pg. 5–6)
- Zones of the Pokémon TCG (pg. 7)
- Playing the Game
 - How to Win the Game (pg. 8)
 - Setting Up to Play (pg. 8)
 - Parts of a Turn (pg. 9)
 - Turn Actions (pg. 10–14)

Set Up!

The players should now set up the game according to the Pokémon Trading Card Game rules!

- **NEW!** Flip a coin to determine who goes first.
- **NEW!** Shuffle the deck, and draw the top seven cards.
- **NEW!** Check to see if there are any Basic Pokémon in those seven cards.
- Put one of those Basic Pokémon face down as the Active Pokémon.
- **NEW!** Put up to five more Basic Pokémon face down on the Bench.

NEW! The players are also now going to use Prize cards. They should take two more cards from the top of the deck and put them aside, face down.

Play!

Turn all Pokémon face up.

NEW! A player must now draw a card to start their turn.

Now, the number of things a player can do during their turn expands even further! They may do any or all of the following:

- **Attach one Energy card** to one of their Pokémon.
- **Evolve** any of their Basic Pokémon into a Stage 1 Pokémon, or any of their Stage 1 Pokémon into a Stage 2 Pokémon.
- **NEW! Play Trainer cards**—as many Item cards as they want, but only one Supporter card.
- **NEW! Retreat the Active Pokémon**, once per turn.
- **Attack** their opponent's Active Pokémon—the turn always ends after an attack takes place.

Then, it's the next player's turn!

Whenever a Pokémon gets hit by an attack that does damage equal to or greater than its remaining HP, it is Knocked Out and put in the discard pile. Then, the player whose Pokémon was Knocked Out chooses a Pokémon from their Bench to become the new Active Pokémon.

NEW! The player who achieved the Knock Out should also now choose a Prize card to add to their hand.

NEW! The game will end when one player has no Pokémon remaining, or when a player has no Prize cards remaining.

Trainer Tips

NEW! Players should be sure to pay the Retreat Cost by discarding the correct number of Energy if they want to retreat their Active Pokémon!

NEW! Damage done by attacks should now be modified by Weakness or Resistance. The players should carefully check whether either applies before working out the total amount of damage!

NEW! In addition to the right number of Energy, players should now make sure they have the right *type* of Energy attached to their Active Pokémon if they want to attack.

Just as with the Basic Battle, players should track damage using damage counters or dice. Similarly, keep on disregarding any attack text other than the numerical attack damage, for now.

Beyond Stage 2

Now that the players are familiar with the fundamental mechanics of the game, you may have them replay the Stage 2 Battle. This time, however, they should pay attention to the additional text below their Pokémon's attacks. It is here that they will be introduced to additional advantages that they can begin to work into true strategies, such as **damage multipliers** and **Special Conditions**. They may also find that certain effects require them to **flip a coin**, or **search** and shuffle the deck. Once the players have mastered the ins and outs of attacking, they should also be encouraged to read and use the **Abilities** of the Pokémon in their decks.

As the players become more confident with the mechanics they have learned so far, it will come time to modify the proto-decks further to incorporate more complex elements such as **Pokémon Tool cards**, **Stadium cards**, **Special Energy cards**, and powerful Pokémon such as **Pokémon-GX** or **Prism Star Pokémon**.