

# The Four Elements and the Major Arcana

Element	Fire	Earth	Air	Water
Gender	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Zodiac	Aries, Leo, Sagittarius	Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn	Gemini, Libra, Aquarius	Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces
Colors	Red, Orange	Green, Brown	White, Yellow	Blue, Purple
Animals	Reptiles, Insects, Lizards	Land Mammals	Winged Creatures	Water Creatures
Suit	Wands	Pentacles	Swords	Cups
Expression	I do	I am	I think	I feel
Attributes	Powers of vitality: passion, creativity, life force, growth, sexuality, humor, anger, spirituality, energy, motivation	Material resources: money, wealth, home, physical goods, health, practical matters, stability, groundedness, solidity	Powers of the mind: thought, honesty, communication, clarity, logic, intelligence, discernment, reason, integrity	Matters of the heart: emotion, love, compassion, feelings, intuition, fluidity, flow, relationships, family

To the four classic elements are attributed all aspects and functions of human life. The four elements provide the framework for many esoteric systems, including Wiccan magick, astrology, palmistry and, of course, tarot.

There is a fifth element, which is ether, or spirit. The Major Arcana is often considered the suit of ether, while the four elements are ascribed to the four suits of the Minor Arcana. This is fitting because the Major Arcana, or “Greater Secrets,” contains the greatest spiritual messages and lessons of all the 78 cards.

The Major Arcana contains Card 0, The Fool, who represents each one of us on our journey through life. The Major Arcana cards 1-21, and the four suits of the Minor Arcana, symbolize the events, lessons and characters we meet upon that journey. The Major Arcana is often called “The Fool’s Journey,” as each card marks an important milestone on the Fool’s path to spiritual enlightenment.

Although the Major Arcana is ascribed to the fifth element, there is a credible tradition by which each card is also ascribed to one of the four elements. This is a useful tool as we reach into each Major Arcana card in an effort to discern its meaning and wisdom.

Fire	Earth	Air	Water
Emperor	Empress	Fool	High Priestess
Strength	Hierophant	Magician	Chariot
Wheel of Fortune	Hermit	Lovers	Hanged Man
Temperance	Devil	Justice	Death
Tower	World	Star	Moon
Sun			Judgment*
Judgment*			

\* Judgment can be ascribed to either Fire or Water.

## Questions for Discussion and Contemplation

How is each card’s element expressed in its meaning and lesson? Which ones make sense, and which ones are harder to understand? Does Judgment make more sense as water or fire?

Which ones correlate with your personal Sun Sign, or Rising Sign?

How does this help you understand and interpret the Major Arcana cards?

## Major Arcana Elemental Reading

Draw one card at random from each elemental group. Look at the four cards you have drawn to get a sense of how you are nurturing each element in your life, and balancing them together. See what additional information you can derive about your life from these four cards.