



Nireye

THE INTERMEDIATE COURSE

TAROT 201

Reading beyond
the individual card.

RIDER-WAITE-SMITH BASED
2026 EDITION



PREREQUISITE: TAROT 101
KEEP THE CONCLUSION PROVISIONAL.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What this course assumes

You should already know the 78-card structure, four suits, basic number and court models, one- and three-card spreads, and the ethical boundaries from Tarot 101.

01

RELATIONSHIPS

How cards reinforce, tension, specify, condition, redirect, and answer one another.

02

PATTERNS

How suit, element, number, courts, Majors, absence, order, and position shape a spread.

03

EVIDENCE

How to separate observation, hypothesis, alternative, and confidence.

04

DESIGN

How to create neutral positions and fair comparison spreads.

05

PRACTICE

How to test interpretive quality through feedback, revision, and a final assessment.

This edition uses upright cards in most examples. Reversals are treated as modifiers after the relationship between cards is identified.



NAME WHAT IS UNIVERSAL AND WHAT IS NOT

The method depends on the deck image

This course demonstrates the Rider-Waite-Smith deck. Pamela Colman Smith's scenes make gaze, gesture, weather, distance, and direction available as evidence.

MORE PORTABLE

Question, position, sequence, repetition, contrast, and the discipline of testing alternatives.

IMAGE-DEPENDENT

Figure direction, eye line, visual rhyme, landscape, color, architecture, and scene-to-scene interaction.

DECK-SPECIFIC

Titles, numbering, elemental correspondences, symbolism, and the guidebook tradition of the deck.

WHEN SCENES ARE ABSENT

In a Marseille-style pip card, give more weight to suit, number, arrangement, position, and the deck's own guidebook. Do not invent a gaze that is not drawn.

The same card name can produce a different composition in another deck.





THE STRUCTURAL METHOD

Meaning is no longer read in isolation

A card keeps its semantic range. The spread selects, modifies, and connects part of that range.

1

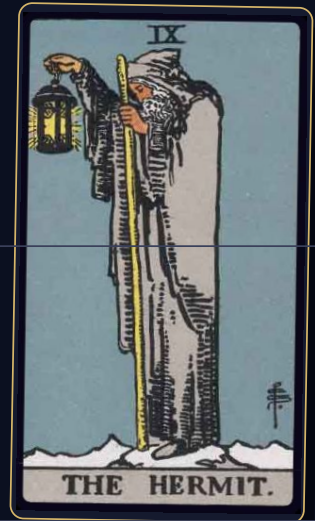
POSITION

Advice: the card must recommend a stance, not merely describe a person.

2

CARD

The lantern, limited field of light, solitude, and slow posture support careful inquiry.



3

RELATIONSHIP

Beside the Chariot, the Hermit may slow momentum or ask whether direction is internally chosen.

4

PATTERN

If the spread also lacks Wands, the pause may become more relevant - but it does not prove there is no motivation.

Claim: "Pause and investigate your own criteria before accelerating." Confidence: moderate, pending the question and neighboring positions.

A STARTING GRAMMAR

Three basic types

These categories are a first pass, not a complete taxonomy. A pair may support more than one reading.



REINFORCEMENT

Both can support directed force. Alternative: the Chariot may push Strength's restraint toward overcontrol.



TENSION

Clarity and uncertainty coexist. Alternative: the pair may describe a cycle rather than opposition.



PROGRESSION

Release precedes renewal. Reversing the order would change the story.

First ask what is observable. Then propose the relationship. Then write one alternative that also fits.



SIX MORE USEFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Do not force every pair into three boxes

SPECIFICATION

The second card narrows how the first is expressed.

Emperor + Two of Pentacles: authority specified as coordination.

COMPENSATION

One card balances or supplies what the other lacks.

Queen of Cups + King of Swords: feeling balanced by discernment.

CAUSE / EFFECT

One card supplies conditions that lead toward the other.

Ten of Wands + Four of Swords: overload leading to enforced rest.

SURFACE / ROOT

One card shows appearance; the other suggests an underlying dynamic.

Six of Wands + Five of Pentacles: visible success over material insecurity.

CONDITION

One card states what must be present for the other.

Justice + Ace of Wands: initiative conditioned by clear criteria.

QUESTION / RESPONSE

The first creates a problem the second addresses.

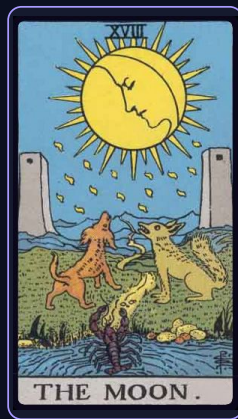
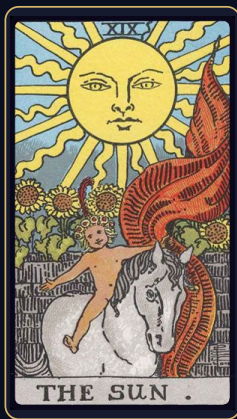
Moon + Hermit: uncertainty answered by slower investigation.

Other possibilities include scaling, suppression, redirection, and the same theme appearing at different levels. Name the relation only when the cards and positions support it.

DIRECTION IS PART OF THE CLAIM

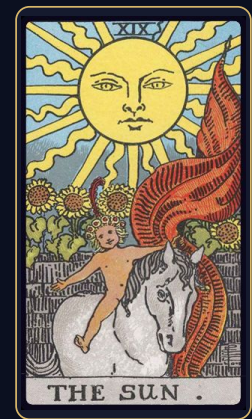
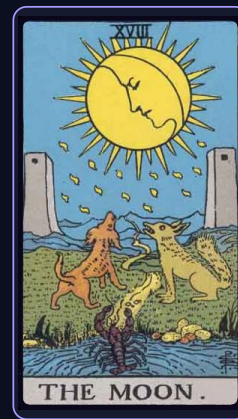
Order changes the story

A pair is not automatically directional. Direction comes from reading order, time positions, syntax, or an explicit layout.



SUN / MOON

Clarity gives way to ambiguity, or conscious certainty meets what it cannot yet explain.



MOON / SUN

Uncertainty moves toward disclosure, visibility, or renewed confidence.

SEQUENCE CHECK

Is the order actually encoded by the spread, or am I imposing left-to-right reading because it feels natural in my culture?

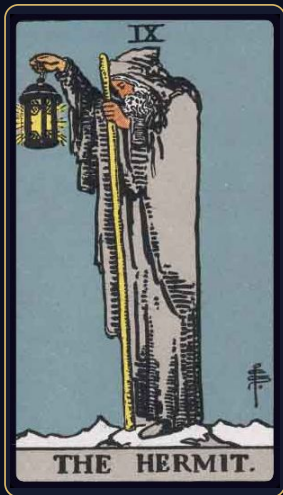
REVERSAL NOTE

Identify the relationship first. Then ask how a reversed card blocks, internalizes, exaggerates, or revises its role in that relationship.

IMAGE AS SYNTAX

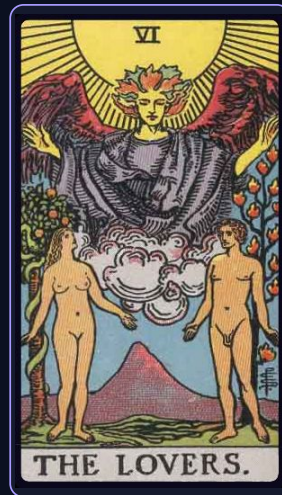
Look across the borders

The examples below are separate demonstrations, not one spread. Visual evidence gains meaning only after position and question are known.



GAZE OUT

A figure looking beyond the spread can suggest withdrawal, memory, avoidance, or attention elsewhere.



RELATION

Figures, distance, and empty space can create dialogue, alignment, separation, or witness.



RHYME

Repeated lightning, crowns, walls, water, colors, or weather may connect cards even without matching suits.

Cards without people still create direction through roads, rivers, architecture, object placement, light, weather, and the density of the scene.

A visual rhyme is evidence of connection, not proof of one fixed meaning.

SEPARATE SEEING FROM CLAIMING

Scan the whole spread

Example only: no question or positions are supplied, so every interpretive claim must remain provisional.



OBSERVATION

Four Wands cards, including the Queen of Wands. Strength is the only Major and occupies the center. No Cups appear.

HYPOTHESIS

Action, initiative, pressure, or creative identity may dominate. Strength may organize the spread because it is both central and the only Major.

ALTERNATIVE

The question may simply concern a project, making the Wands concentration appropriate rather than excessive. Missing Cups may be irrelevant.

CHECK

What is the question? Do the positions make the center authoritative? Is "Three, Eight, Ten" functioning as sequence or merely increasing numbers?

Absence may become relevant evidence. It is never proof that a feeling, person, or event does not exist.



CLIMATE, NOT ARITHMETIC

Balance depends on the question

This RWS-based model uses Fire-Water-Air-Earth. Other schools may assign elements differently.

F

FIRE / WANDS

initiative, appetite, identity

productive for launching; exhausting when action has no recovery

W

WATER / CUPS

feeling, values, receptivity

connective in relationship work; flooding when boundaries disappear

A

AIR / SWORDS

thought, language, decision

useful for analysis; corrosive when everything becomes argument

E

EARTH / PENTACLES

body, labor, resources

grounding for implementation; rigid when security blocks movement

Interaction is contextual: Fire and Air may amplify action; Water and Earth may sustain it. The same pairing can also create volatility or stagnation. Position and question decide.

No Earth is not automatically a grounding problem in a reading about imagination.



THEME OR COINCIDENCE?

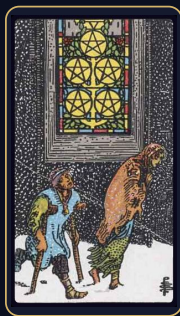
Repetition raises a question

It does not answer the question by itself. Repetition becomes meaningful when it connects to the topic and positions.



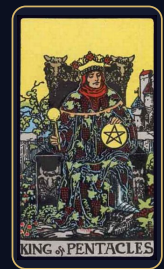
THREE FIVES

Possible theme: friction, adaptation, change, or instability across several suits. Check what each position asks.



SEVERAL COURTS

Possible theme: people, roles, communication styles, or different levels of mastery. Check whether the question is social.



REPEATED MAJOR ACROSS READINGS

Record it, but do not call it fate. Look for a repeated question, context, or interpretive habit.

THE SAME CARD

With one deck this usually means the card was returned and redrawn later. Across multiple decks, duplicate imagery may be intentional or coincidental.

STATISTICAL CAUTION

Humans notice striking repeats. Treat repetition as a prompt for inquiry, not supernatural proof.

ONE SPREAD, TWO COHERENT STORIES

A story is a hypothesis

Positions: Setup - Pressure - Turn - Direction. The cards support more than one defensible sequence.



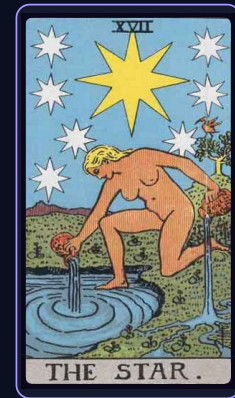
SETUP



PRESSURE



TURN



DIRECTION

PRIMARY HYPOTHESIS

Private knowledge meets external convention. Their conflict destabilizes the old structure; the direction becomes renewal and greater openness.

PLAUSIBLE ALTERNATIVE

Uncertainty seeks teaching or belonging. A sudden revelation disrupts inherited assumptions; the direction becomes hope and recovery rather than "truth finally exposed."

CHOICE CRITERION

Prefer the version that better matches the question, the exact position wording, and details supplied by the querent. Preserve the remaining uncertainty.

KEEP BOTH VOICES

Do not make difficult cards agree



Use "What does each card want, fear, or protect?" as a metaphorical exercise - not a claim that the cards are agents.

JUSTICE / DEVIL

Criteria and consequences are visible, while attachment or constraint remains powerful.

DEVIL / JUSTICE

An attachment is brought toward examination, accountability, or an explicit decision.

ADVICE / OBSTACLE

Justice as advice may ask for criteria; Devil as obstacle may show compulsion. Reverse the positions and the reading changes.

A cautious synthesis: "I can see the consequences and a standard of fairness, but I remain attached to the familiar option."



EVERY POSITION MUST ACCEPT ANY CARD

Compare options fairly

Avoid positions that assume a fact, such as “Why is my partner lying?” Rewrite them so any card can answer without distortion.

A SYMMETRIC SIX-CARD COMPARISON



NEUTRAL

Can this position receive a difficult or positive card without forcing the meaning?

SYMMETRIC

Are A and B being judged by equivalent categories?

DISTINCT

Does each position ask a genuinely different question?

ACTIONABLE

Will the final layout help the querent compare or decide?

Geometry is secondary. The intellectual fairness of the positions is the real design.

DISCIPLINE, NOT UNIVERSAL LAW

Clarify the question, not your discomfort

Sometimes the best clarification is to restate the question or stop. An extra card may add ambiguity rather than remove it.

PLACE IT DELIBERATELY

Put the clarifier beside the exact card or position it addresses. State the new question aloud or in writing.

ONE-CARD RULE

For this course, draw once and stop. This is a training discipline, not a universal tarot law.



CHOSEN SIGNIFICATOR

Select a card to anchor the subject or desired quality. Keep it outside the randomized deck unless the method says otherwise.

DRAWN SIGNIFICATOR

A randomly drawn representative functions as part of the reading and carries uncertainty like any other card.

GOOD CLARIFIER QUESTION

"What aspect of this pause am I not seeing?"

STOP SIGNAL

"I dislike the answer, so I will keep drawing."



A DEFENSIBLE INTERPRETATION

Make the chain visible

A strong reading does not require certainty. It requires a traceable path from evidence to claim.

- | | | |
|-------|--------------|--|
| 01 | OBSERVATION | What is literally present in image, order, suit, number, and distribution? |
| <hr/> | | |
| 02 | POSITION | What job must the card perform here? |
| <hr/> | | |
| 03 | CONTEXT | What does the question and known situation make relevant? |
| <hr/> | | |
| 04 | RELATIONSHIP | How do neighboring cards modify, oppose, specify, or continue it? |
| <hr/> | | |
| 05 | ALTERNATIVE | What other interpretation fits the same evidence? |
| <hr/> | | |
| 06 | CONFIDENCE | How much depends on assumptions that have not been checked? |
| <hr/> | | |

HIGHER SUPPORT: several image details + clear position fit + direct answer to the question + fewer unsupported assumptions.

STEP 1 - QUESTION AND VISIBLE EVIDENCE

See the system before the conclusion

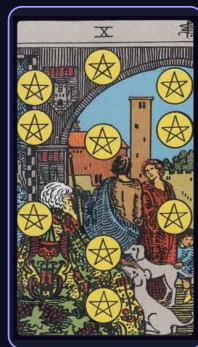
Question: What should I understand before accepting a demanding new role?



REALITY



ATTRACTION



BENEFIT



COST



NEXT INQUIRY

DISTRIBUTION

Two Wands, one Pentacle, two Majors. Action, workload, structure, and material continuity are visibly present.

IMAGE DETAILS

Emperor sits within structure; Ace is offered; Ten of Pentacles shows continuity; Ten of Wands carries a load; Temperance combines two vessels.

LIMITS

No card proves what the employer will do. "Negotiation" and "delegation" are practical hypotheses, not printed meanings.

The adapted positions are stated explicitly here; they are not the same spread as the symmetric comparison on page 14.



STEP 2 - MAIN HYPOTHESIS

Build the primary case

EMPEROR / REALITY

Possible claim: the role centers authority, structure, and responsibility. Open question: is the authority the candidate's, the manager's, or the institution's?

ACE OF WANDS / ATTRACTION

The opportunity may feel energizing because it offers initiative or a fresh direction. The Ace shows potential, not guaranteed success.

TEN OF PENTACLES / BENEFIT

The benefit may involve continuity, institutional stability, reputation, or long-term material support.

TEN OF WANDS / COST

The visible carried bundle strongly supports workload, accumulation, or responsibility that may become difficult to distribute.

TEMPERANCE / NEXT INQUIRY

The image supports calibration, combining, pacing, and proportion. In this work context, a reasonable inquiry is how workload, authority, and recovery would be balanced.

PRIMARY SYNTHESIS

The spread recommends clarifying how authority, workload, and sustainable pacing would operate before accepting.



STEP 3 - COUNTER-READ AND DECISION

Keep a credible alternative alive

Alternative hypothesis: the main risk may not be the employer's workload. The Emperor and Ten of Wands could describe the candidate's habit of controlling too much and carrying responsibility alone.

EVIDENCE FOR PRIMARY

Ten of Wands in Cost; Emperor in Reality; the question names a demanding role; Temperance supports calibration.

EVIDENCE FOR ALTERNATIVE

Emperor can describe self-control; the burden is carried by one figure; Temperance can ask for internal moderation rather than external negotiation.

WHAT WOULD HELP

Facts about reporting lines, workload, delegation, recovery time, and the candidate's previous work pattern.

CONFIDENCE

Moderate. The spread supports responsibility and burden strongly; it does not establish where the imbalance originates.

FINAL: ask concrete questions before deciding, and examine both the role's structure and your own pattern of carrying responsibility.



PATTERN IS NOT PROOF

Your reading remains a hypothesis

ANCHORING

Am I letting the first or most dramatic card control the whole reading?

GUIDEBOOK AUTHORITY

Am I suppressing visible evidence because a source sounds certain?

CONFIRMATION

Am I selecting only meanings that support what I already believe?

RETROSPECTIVE FIT

Am I rewriting a vague reading after events occur so it appears precise?

PERSONAL BIAS

Are sympathy, cultural assumptions, gender roles, or fear shaping the claim?

ETHICAL RECAP

A pattern does not confirm a third party's thoughts, fate, diagnosis, pregnancy, infidelity, crime, or crisis risk. Medical, legal, financial, and crisis questions require qualified help.

Absence is not nonexistence. Many Majors are not proof of destiny.

SIX INTERVALS ACROSS FIVE MINUTES

Read first. Check tradition second.

This drill does not reject tradition. It prevents the guidebook from replacing your observation.

00-01

Describe only what is visible.

01-02

Name mood, gesture, direction, and movement.

02-03

Add suit, number, rank, or Major theme.

03-04

Connect to position and question.

04-05

Write a primary and alternative reading.

05:00

Choose provisionally; then consult a source.



BETTER SUPPORTED MEANS

More specific image evidence, stronger position fit, a direct answer to the question, and fewer unchecked assumptions.

If five minutes is too short, use ten. The quality of the chain matters more than speed.



WEEKS 1 AND 2

Relationships and pattern scans

WEEK 1

DAYS 1-2

Pairs

Classify three pairs; give one alternative relation for each.

DAYS 3-4

Order

Reverse two pairs and write how the claim changes.

DAY 5

Position

Place one card in Advice, Obstacle, and Outcome; compare.

DAY 6

Feedback

Read for another person with consent; ask what fits and what does not.

DAY 7

Rest and review

Mark where you made unsupported leaps.

WEEK 2

DAYS 8-9

Scan order

1 suit, 2 elements, 3 numbers/ranks, 4 Majors, 5 direction/rhyme, 6 absence.

DAYS 10-11

Observation chain

Write observation, hypothesis, alternative, and check question.

DAY 12

Courts

Read three courts as people, roles, and social dynamics.

DAY 13

Repetition

Compare thematic repetition with possible coincidence.

DAY 14

Rest and revise

Rewrite one reading using more cautious language.

Review criteria: clarity of question, visible evidence, position fit, alternative, and useful synthesis.



WEEKS 3 AND 4

Stories, independence, feedback

WEEK 3

DAYS 15-16

Narrative beats

Use Setup - Pressure - Turn - Direction. Write two coherent stories.

DAY 17

Contradiction

Keep both card voices without cancelling either.

DAY 18

Spread design

Build a symmetric comparison; test every position with a difficult card.

DAY 19

Clarifier

Write the precise new question before drawing.

DAYS 20-21

Rest and revise

Turn one confident claim into graded confidence.

WEEK 4

DAYS 22-23

No guidebook first

Use the evidence drill, then compare with two sources.

DAY 24

Feedback reading

Read for another person; record their correction without defending the reading.

DAYS 25-26

Bias audit

Check anchoring, confirmation, projection, authority, and retrospective fit.

DAYS 27-28

Full reading

Complete one five-card analysis with a counter-read.

DAYS 29-30

Final assessment

Use the rubric on page 24 and revise your weakest section.

Do not score prediction. Review argument quality, usefulness, acknowledged uncertainty, and correspondence with later facts.



A COMPLETE INTERMEDIATE READING

Final assessment

Use five cards and a question with real but non-crisis stakes. Submit a two-page journal entry.

01	QUESTION / POSITIONS	Focused, neutral, and able to accept any card.
02	OBSERVATION	Specific image and distribution details separated from reaction.
03	RELATIONSHIPS	At least two named relationships supported by order or position.
04	PATTERN	A relevant pattern plus one warning against overclaiming.
05	ALTERNATIVE	A credible counter-read using the same evidence.
06	SYNTHESIS	Two clear sentences that answer the question without fatalism.
07	CONFIDENCE / NEXT STEP	Uncertainty is graded; action remains proportionate and reality-based.

SELF-SCORE: 0 absent / 1 partial / 2 clear. Passing target: 11 of 14 with no ethical boundary violation.



KEEP THE CHAIN VISIBLE

Quick reference

QUESTION / POSITIONS / OBSERVE / REACT / CONNECT / RELATE / PATTERN / ALTERNATIVE /
CONFIDENCE / SYNTHESIS / DIALOGUE / RECORD

JOURNAL TEMPLATE

Question / Positions / Cards / Literal observations / First reaction / Traditional range / Pair relationships /
Whole-spread patterns / Primary hypothesis / Alternative / Evidence for each / Confidence / Dialogue or
feedback / Grounded next step / Later review

GLOSSARY

Context modifier

a position, question, or card that changes which part
of a meaning is relevant

Visual rhyme

a repeated image feature linking cards

Counter-read

a plausible alternative interpretation built from the
same evidence

Residual uncertainty

what remains unresolved after choosing the
best-supported reading

Confidence

how strongly the available evidence supports a claim

Card piling

drawing repeatedly to escape ambiguity or obtain a
preferred answer

ATTRIBUTION AND STUDY

Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot, first published 1909; conceived by Arthur Edward Waite, illustrated by Pamela Colman Smith, published by William Rider & Son. Card reproductions come from the Nireye project asset set. Original 1909 designs are public domain in the United States; later editions may have separate rights. Further study: A. E. Waite, *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*; Rachel Pollack, *Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom*; Mary K. Greer, *Tarot for Your Self*; Joan Bunning, *Learning the Tarot*.

