

Glossary of Terms

Arcana: comes from the Latin “arcane” meaning *secret* or *mystery*; refers to the two card groups that make up the tarot decks

Divination: comes from the Latin “divinare” which means *to foresee* or *to be inspired by the divine*; a way of applying the meanings of the cards to a specific question or to the exploration of a specific aspect of life; the process of discovery through perception, interpretation and insight

Major Arcana: the twenty two trump cards in a tarot deck; in readings, these cards deal primarily with the inner spiritual life of the seeker (i.e. the soul’s journey)

Minor Arcana: the fifty-six suited cards in a tarot deck; in readings, these cards deal primarily with the affairs of the physical/material plane; the four suits (wands, swords, cups & pentacles) correspond to the traditional “suits” in a deck of playing cards (clubs, spades, hearts & diamonds, respectively). The cards of the Minor Arcana are numbered two through ten, in addition to Aces, Pages, Knights (jacks), Queens and Kings.

Upright: the orientation of the card when it presents as right-side-up in a spread; typically the truest, meaning of the card

Reversal: the orientation of the card when it presents as upside-down in a spread; usually alters the card’s meaning to the inverse OR to a building or declining energy, depending on where the card appears in the spread

Spread: the method by which the cards are physically arranged; each position in the spread holds a different meaning with regard to the question posed; cards are then interpreted by taking into account a) the meaning of the card, b) the orientation of the card (upright or reversed), and c) the position of that card within the spread; all three factors influence the overall interpretation of the card