



## [SYNSOULS] ECG CORE RULES V2.65[pre]


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### >> [OBJECTIVE]

In [SYNSOULS], the objective of the game is to CRASH all three of your opponent's MEASURES! To do this, you'll have to deal 15 damage (Called STRAIN) to each of these Zones. You'll need to plan out your card placements to make the most of their unique abilities and synergies!

## >> [CARD TYPES]

First, let's take a look at the different types of cards in [SYNSOULS]. Cards have most or all of the following elements:

- **NAME:** The name of the card. Only three cards with the same name may be in your Deck
- **COST:** This is how many NOTES (Sometimes stylized as ) it costs to load the card. For every spent NOTE, your **AVAILABLE NOTES** counter goes down by 1. If your **AVAILABLE NOTES** counter is at 0, you may not spend any more NOTES
- **RATING:** This tells you how much damage the card can deal, as well as how much it can take
- **ABILITY:** Cards often have abilities that can boost and combo with each-other.
- **GENRE:** This is the group that the card belongs to. This is often the card's species, or team. Some cards have more than one Genre
- **FREQUENCY:** This is the 'element' that the card belongs to. Your Deck must consist of cards of the same Frequency. There are Six Frequencies within [SYNSOULS]:
  - Vyrafaeth cards have a **YELLOW** border
  - Cavali'Ya cards have a **RED** border
  - LuKaineth cards have a **BLUE** border
  - Kubrakan cards have a **GREEN** border
  - Casaadi cards have a **PURPLE** border
  - Amari cards have a **GRAY** border
- **CARD ID:** This tells you what CATALOG the card belongs to
- **ARTIST:** This is the artist who illustrated the card
- **FLAVOR TEXT:** This text has no impact on gameplay, and instead gives some insight into the card's story and lore



## > CONDUCTOR

This is the player's most important card. Cards within your deck must match the FREQUENCY of your Conductor.

Conductors each have an ENCORE ability, which you can activate at the end of your turn. We'll look at Encore abilities in a bit!

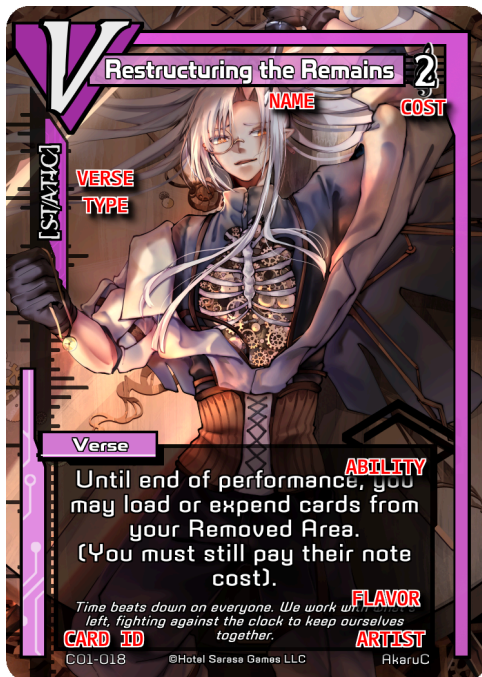
## > RECORD

Records make up the majority of your deck. You can think of them as your 'fighters'! In addition to their RATING, which determines how much strain they can take and dish out, Records may also grant various different abilities while in the Ensemble.

During your turn, you can EXHAUST (shown by turning the card sideways) Records under your control in order to Cue attacks and deal strain to your opponent's Records and Measure Zones.

Additionally, during your opponent's turn, you may choose a non-exhausted Record under your control to Block an opponent's Attack!





## > VERSE

Verses do not have ratings and instead offer immediate, one-time effects. Verses do not stay in the Ensemble and are **EXPENDED** after use. Verses come in two different types:

**STATIC Verse** - Static Verses may only be expended during your turn.

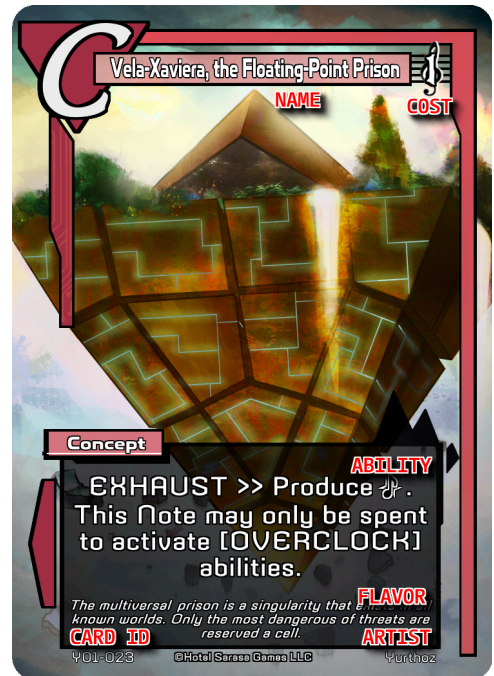
**DYNAMIC Verse** - Dynamic Verses may be expended during either player's turn.

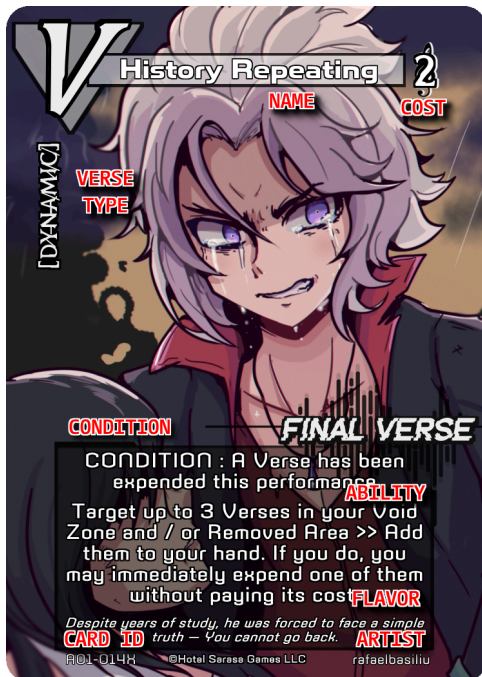
## > CONCEPT

Concepts, like Verses, do not have ratings. However, unlike Verses, Concepts **DO** stay on the field!

Certain Concepts may target Records directly, while others may benefit specific Measures or the entire field.

During your turn, you may load a Concept into one of your Measures, or one of your opponent's Measures! Concepts played by you remain in your control, regardless of where they are loaded. However, you may only Exhaust Concepts that are in your own Zones!





## > FINAL VERSE

Final Verses are powerful, one-time effects that can change the tune of battle!

Unlike normal Verses, a Final Verse is not part of your deck and is instead found on the back of your Conductor! While the Final Verse's Conditions are satisfied, you may pay its cost to activate the Final Verse's ability!

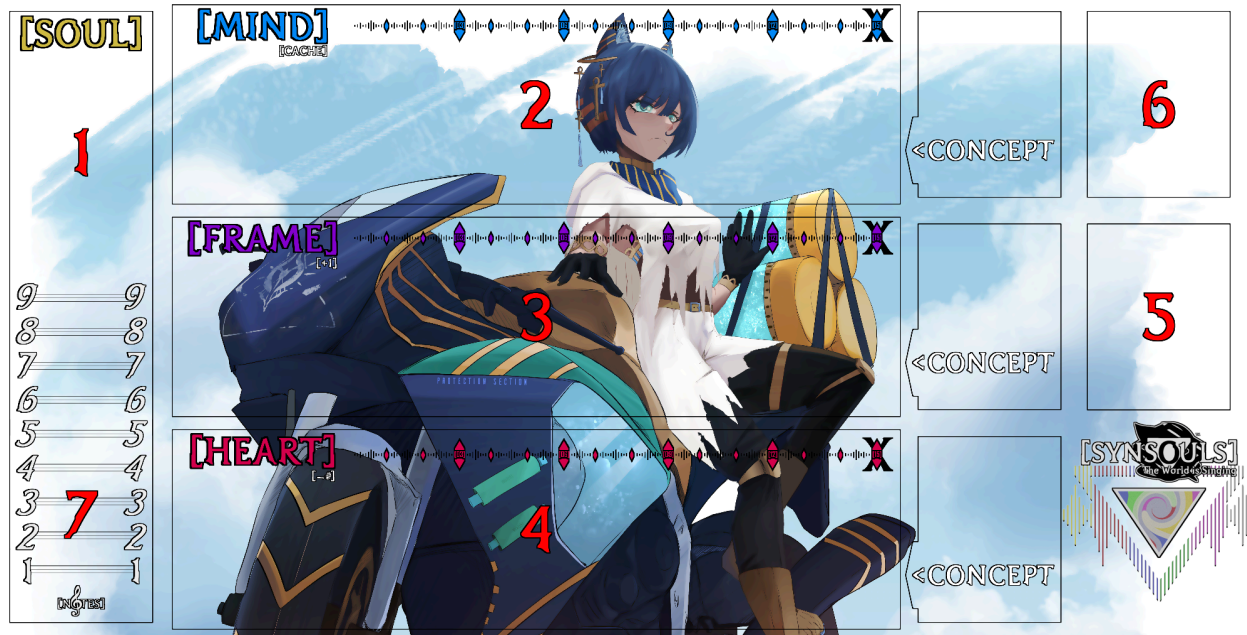
It's important to note that when it comes to card text, Final Verses and Verses are two separate types of cards.

Final Verses may only be used once per game, so don't waste it!

## >> [THE ENSEMBLE]

Next, let's take a look at the playing field! In [SYNSOULS], the field is called the ENSEMBLE.

It's important to remember that while each player has their own zones, the Ensemble refers to the *entire* playing field.



### [1] - The SOUL Zone

The SOUL Zone is where your Conductor goes!

### [2 / 3 / 4] - The MIND, FRAME, and HEART Measures

The MIND, FRAME, and HEART Measures are the 'Measure' Zones. These Zones are where you'll play your Records! Be careful though! If one of these Zones accumulates 15 Strain, they CRASH!

Each of these Measures has a special effect:

- The first Record loaded into the MIND Measure per turn gains [CACHE], meaning they don't suffer from the BUFFERING State (Explained in the MAIN Beat section below)
- Records placed in the FRAME Measure gain [+1] to their Rating!
- Records placed into the HEART Measure cost 1 less NOTE to load!

When a Measure CRASHES, all cards currently in that zone are removed from play and placed to the side of the Ensemble. What's more, you can no longer play cards in that Measure! If all three of your Measures crash, it's Game Over!

At the start of the game, each Measure can have a total of two Records in them at a time. This is the Measure's **CAPACITY**. However, each time one of your Measures Crashes, this number goes up by 1! *EX: If your MIND Measure Crashes, you can have up to 3 Records in your FRAME and HEART Measure!*

## [5] - The DECK Zone

The DECK Zone is where you place your deck. Your deck must consist of 30 - 40 cards including Records, Verses, and Concepts. We'll take a look at deck-building tips a bit later, but for now, remember that you can have up to 3 cards with the same name in your deck at once!

## [6] - The VOID Zone

The VOID Zone is your discard pile. When a Record or Concept is Silenced or Voided, or when you expend a Verse, it is placed into the VOID Zone unless otherwise noted.

## [7] - The NOTE Zone

The NOTE Zone is where you'll keep track of your Notes via the **MAX NOTES** (Left side) and **AVAILABLE NOTES** (Right side) counters. These counters may not go above 9 at any point, and the **MAX NOTES** counter may not go below 1.

## >> [SETUP]

First, each player should set their MAX NOTES counter to 1. (For a faster game, you could instead set it to 2 or 3!)

Players should determine who will go first via a coin flip or die roll. The winner will choose who plays first. Once this has been decided, each player shuffles their Decks. Players then place their Conductor into their SOUL Zone. Finally, players should each draw 5 cards from their deck.

At this point, players can choose to redraw their hand if desired. When this happens, they should place their current hand to the side, and draw 5 new cards from the deck. Then, take the cards placed to the side and shuffle them back into your deck.

## >> [PERFORMANCE BREAKDOWN]

A Player's turn is called a 'Performance'. A performance can be broken down into the following Beats:

- RESET Beat
- DRAW Beat
- MAIN Beat / ATTACK Beat
- CLOSING Beat
- ENCORE Beat

A ROUND is a full set of Performances. Once both players have completed a performance, the Round is concluded.

### > RESET Beat

During the Reset Beat, take all exhausted (sideways) cards under your control and RESET them by turning them upright (unless an effect prevents you from doing so). This includes your Records, Concepts, and your Conductor. Then, set your AVAILABLE NOTES Counter to the same value as your MAX NOTES counter (Even if your AVAILABLE NOTES counter was higher than it).

### > DRAW Beat

During the DRAW Beat, draw a card from your deck. If you are unable to draw a card during the Draw Beat due to lack of cards, you must CRASH one of your own Measures!

## > MAIN Beat

During the Main Beat, you can do the following actions in whatever order you'd like, as many times as you'd like!

- You may spend available NOTES in order to load Records into your Measures. You are not limited to the number of Records you may load in a single turn, so long as you are able to meet the required costs and don't exceed the Measure's current Capacity.
- You may spend available NOTES in order to load a Concept into one of your own or one of your opponent's Measures. These do not count towards the number of Records you have in a Measure. If there is already a Concept in that Zone, the new Concept goes on top of it, and negates the previous one. *Take a look at [OVERWRITE] further on for more information.*
- You may spend available NOTES in order to expend a Static or Dynamic Verse from your hand. You may also spend available NOTES to expend your FINAL VERSE, so long as all other requirements are met.
- You may activate a non-ENCORE ability of a Conductor, Record or Concept under your control, as long as the activation requirements can be met.
- You may choose to proceed to the CLOSING Beat.
- You may exhaust a Record under your control in order to Cue an attack. When this happens, the ATTACK Beat begins!

On the first turn that a Record is loaded into the Ensemble, they are considered 'Buffering' and may not be Exhausted for attack cues or abilities unless otherwise noted. *Non-Exhaust abilities of Records may be used immediately unless otherwise noted.* Concepts are not affected by the Buffering State, so you can exhaust them right away!

If a Record's Rating would drop to (or below) zero at any point during the MAIN Beat, it is **SILENCED** and sent to the Void Zone unless otherwise noted. Note that SILENCE means a card is sent to the Void Zone due to its Rating dropping to 0 or by an opponent's effect, while **VOID** means a card is sent to the Void Zone by your own effect or ruling.

Also, keep in mind that your opponent can expend Dynamic Verses or activate effects of their active Records and Concepts during your Main and Attack Beats, so be sure to keep an eye on their AVAILABLE NOTES counter!

## > ATTACK Beat

At any time during the Main Beat, you may 'CUE' an Attack with one of your active Records to enter the Attack Beat. When this happens, exhaust that Record and declare your target! You may choose to target an exhausted Record, or one of your opponent's Measures. After the target is chosen, the opponent has a few options available to them:

- **BLOCK** with an unexhausted Record of their own (Note that records being targeted for attack are not considered Blocking themselves)
- **EXPEND** a Dynamic Verse
- Activate a non-ENCORE ability of a Conductor, Record or Concept they control, as long as they can meet the activation requirements

If you choose to target one of your opponent's Measures, and the attack is not blocked, the Attacking Record's Rating is dealt as Strain to the targeted Measure.

If you choose to target an exhausted Record, OR if the opponent blocks with a Record, both the Attacking Record and the opposing Record deal **STRAIN** to each-other equal to their current Rating. This Strain is then counted against and subtracted from the Records' Ratings until the Strain is removed. *IE: If a Record with a Rating of 5 takes 3 Strain, its Rating is now considered 2 until the Strain is removed* If this Strain would drop a Rating to (or below) zero, that Record is Silenced and sent to the Void Zone after the Attack Beat is finished.

After the Attack Beat has resolved, the MAIN Beat resumes! You may enter the ATTACK Beat as many times as you'd like during the MAIN Beat.

## > CLOSING Beat

Once you are satisfied with your MAIN Beat, you may move onto the CLOSING Beat. When this happens, remove all Strain from both players' active Records, and resolve any additional effects unless otherwise stated. This does NOT remove Strain from the Measure Zones! Also, if you have over 7 cards in your hand, you must discard until you have 7 cards remaining.

## > ENCORE Beat

After you finish the CLOSING Beat, you can do one of three things:

- Increase your MAX NOTES counter by 1
- Draw a card from your Deck
- Activate the [ENCORE] ability of your Conductor

Opponents may not activate abilities or expend verses during this Beat, so there's no need to worry about interference!

After the ENCORE Beat has resolved, your opponent begins their performance! Conductors often have varying encore effects that can really change the flow of the game, so be sure to keep them in mind!

## >> [OVERTURE]

The initial round of turns is called the 'Overture'. During the Overture, neither player may exhaust Records under their control. In other words, you can't attack or activate certain abilities while Overture is in effect! Only Records are affected, so other card types like Concepts may still be exhausted during Overture.

After the initial round has finished, the Player going SECOND may choose to EXTEND the Overture for a second round. Overture may not be extended past the second round.

## >> [CARD CONDITIONALS]

There are a few different ways that abilities are triggered. Below, we'll take a look at these conditionals, and how they should be interpreted:

**Active Conditionals** are abilities requiring specific input, such as 'Pay X, Do Y'.  
*IE: If a card says Exhaust >> Target Record gains [+1] until end of performance', it should be read as You may Exhaust this card. If you do, then a target Record gains [+1] to its Rating until the end of the current performance'.*

**Passive Conditionals** involve abilities such as 'While X, do Y'.  
*IE: If a card says While you control two or more active Concepts >> This card gains [CACHE]', it should be read as This card gains [CACHE] as long as there are two or more active Concepts under your control'.*

**Trigger Conditionals** activate under specific circumstances such as 'If X, Do Y'.  
*IE: If a card says When this card is Silenced >> Draw a card', it should be read as When this card is sent to the Void Zone via its rating dropping to 0, you must draw a card if able'.*

## >> [OVERWRITE]

If a Concept is loaded into a Zone already occupied by another Concept, it is placed on top of the previous Concept. The previous Concept is considered 'Overwritten' while in this state, and loses all effects and abilities.

While a Concept is Overwritten, it is no longer considered active. If a Concept would be affected by an ability, Overwritten Cards underneath it are unaffected unless otherwise stated.

If an Overwritten Concept would be re-revealed for any reason, it is no longer considered Overwritten and regains its abilities. This activates any LOAD abilities of that concept, as well!

Remember that Concepts remain in the control of the player who first loaded them, even after they are overwritten.

## >> [DISRUPTION CHAINS]

Every time a card is Loaded, Expended, or Activated outside of the ENCORE Beat, or when an attack is Cued or Blocked, either player may respond by expending a Verse / Final Verse or by activating an active card's Ability. This is called a 'Disruption'. Just like normal, the performing player may use Static OR Dynamic Verses while the opponent may only use Dynamic Verses.

When a Disruption happens, either player may then choose to play an additional Verse or ability, forming a 'Disruption Chain'. During Disruption, all effects and calculations relating to cards in the chain are temporarily suspended. Any automatic abilities that are triggered during this time also add to a Disruption chain.

The player who is currently performing has priority during Disruption Chains. If two or more cards trigger at the same time, the performing player's cards trigger first, in the order of their choosing.

A Disruption Chain continues until no more abilities are activated. At this point, the effects and calculations of cards in the chain are carried out in order, starting with the card activated most recently in the chain and working backwards.

If a card or effect would be made illegal during the course of a Disruption Chain, its effect is **Canceled** and skipped.

Attack cues themselves are also considered a part of the Disruption Chain. This means that if the effects of a Disruption Chain would cause the attacking Record, or a Record being targeted for attack to be made illegal (such as by being removed from the Ensemble), then the attack cue is canceled upon reaching that step of calculations. When an attack is canceled in this manner, all involved Records still active after the chain has resolved are reset. This does not negate any other effects calculated by the Disruption Chain.

## >> [MISC]

Below are some additional rules and information that should be kept in mind during play:

- Cards within the Hand, Deck, Void Zone and Removed Zone are not part of the Ensemble, and are not considered 'Active'. Abilities may not be used or triggered from these Zones unless otherwise noted. *In these cases, the card is considered Active until the effect has resolved.*
- If an active card becomes inactive such as by being returned to the hand, any changes to it due to Strain, effects, or abilities are removed.
- Active and Trigger Conditionals are dependent on time of activation and are not continuous. *IE: If a card says 'EXHAUST >> Draw a card for every Verse expended this turn', you may only draw cards for Verses that had been expended at the time the ability was triggered.*
- Active Cards remain under the control of the player who loaded them, unless otherwise noted. Words such as 'You, "Your' and 'The Opponent' should always be read from the perspective of the card's current controller.
- Records may only be loaded into your own Measures. If a Record you control would enter an opponent's Measure for any reason, it is Voided unless otherwise noted.
- If a Record would be forced into a Measure that already has the maximum number of Records, the controller of that Measure must Void another Record in order to make room.
- When Cueing an attack, you may choose to target ANY exhausted Record, even one under your control.

- Card effects and abilities must be performed in the order that they are written on the card. If part of an effect cannot be performed, that effect is skipped in its entirety.
- Unless otherwise stated, cards revealed via effect should be returned to their original position after the effect has resolved.
- Card effects and abilities are 'per **INSTANCE**' unless otherwise noted. For example, if you control two instances of a Record that says 'Once per turn, a target Record gains [+1]', each of those Records may activate that ability once per turn.
- Genres are read as a whole, and not in parts. For example, 'Huldra' and 'Tinted Huldra' are two separate Genres.
- Effects such as 'A Record gains [-1] to its Rating' does not count as that Record taking Strain.
- Cards that target a specific [KEYWORD] refer to cards which have that specific [KEYWORD] ability, not a card that mentions said [KEYWORD]. IE: A card that says 'Target a Record with [OVERCLOCK]' should be read as 'Target a Record that has an [OVERCLOCK] ability'.
- Once a Disruption Chain has ended and is being resolved, it cannot be influenced by additional disruptions. IE: If a 4-step Disruption is being resolved, you cannot influence the outcome by playing a new Verse while step 2 is being calculated.
- If a Card's text would contradict any rules written in this book, the card text takes precedence.

## >> [DECK-BUILDING TIPS]

Your deck must consist of 30 to 40 cards, and can have up to 3 copies of a card with the same name. Additionally, your deck must be made up solely of the FREQUENCY of your Conductor. Beyond that, there are plenty of ways to build up your deck! While it may seem overwhelming at first, we've got some tips to help get you started!

Once you have an idea, it can be tricky to figure out how to balance it. How many Records should you have? How many Verses? What about Concepts?

While the only way to say for sure what balance works best is to test it out, here are some loose guidelines that we find helpful:

- Around 18 - 25 Records
- Around 9 Verses
- Around 3 - 6 Concepts

Additionally, while it can be tempting to have a bunch of different Records and Verses in your deck, it is often better to have a more curated deck list. Using the above guidelines as an example, you COULD use 9 different kinds of Verses. However, it may be better to use 3 different kinds of Verses, and have 3 copies of each. This will better your chances of drawing that Verse when you really need it!

The most important rule is to experiment! There is no one way to set up a deck. Even if your deck ends up doing terribly against one opponent, it doesn't mean it won't dominate another!

## >> [TERMS]

**Ability** : Unique effects of cards that activate under specific conditions.

**Active** : Cards are considered 'Active' while in the Ensemble unless otherwise noted.

**Available Notes** : Refers to the current amount of Notes a player has.

**Block** : The act of blocking an opponent's attack with a Record.

**Buffer** : When a Record is first Loaded, it is considered 'Buffering' and cannot be Exhausted for attacks or abilities until end of turn. *Concepts are not affected by the Buffer State.*

**Cancel** : When a verse or ability is canceled, its effect is ignored and skipped. Canceled Verses are then sent to the Void Zone, and do not count as having been expended.

**Capacity** : Refers to the maximum number of Records that may be active in a Measure at one time.

**Cost** : Refers to how many NOTES must be paid to load, expend, or activate a card.

**Crash** : When a Measure has been dealt 15 Strain, it CRASHES and can no longer be interacted with.

**Cue** : The act of exhausting a Record in order to enter the Attack Beat.

**Deck** : The deck consists of 30 to 40 cards and is made up of Records, Verses, and Concepts.

**Disruption** : Whenever a card or ability is played in response to another card or ability, a Disruption Chain is started.

**Dynamic** : Verses and Final Verses with the DYNAMIC tag may be expended during either players' performance.

**Encore** : During the ENCORE Beat, players may draw a card from their deck, increase their MAX NOTES counter, or activate an ENCORE ability.

**Ensemble** : Refers to the playing field. While the Ensemble refers to the entire field, both players have their own Zones within the Ensemble.

**Exhaust** : When a card is Exhausted, they are turned sideways and are unable to perform additional actions that would require them to Exhaust themselves.

**Expend** : The act of loading and playing a Verse card. After an Active Verse has been resolved, it is considered 'Expended' and placed into the Void Zone.

*Expended Verses are not considered Active.*

**Final Verse** : A Special Verse found on the back of your Conductor. It may only be used once per game. Verses and Final Verses are considered separate types of cards.

**Frequency** : Refers to a card's Color. There are six different Frequencies.

**Genre** : Conductors and Records each have a Genre that categorizes them, such as Affiliation or Species. Some cards may have more than one Genre.

**Hand** : The Player's Hand. If a player has over 7 cards during their Closing Beat, they must discard until they have 7 cards unless otherwise noted.

**Instance** : Each copy of an active card is considered its own 'instance'.

**Load** : When a Record or Concept is first placed into the Ensemble, it is considered 'Loaded'.

**Max Notes** : Refers to the maximum number of Notes that a player can currently have.

**Measure Zones** : Refers to the MIND, FRAME, and HEART Measures. Each player has their own Measures.

**Name** : The name of a given card.

**Notes** : The currency used to pay loading and activation costs of cards.

**Note Zone** : refers to the area where your AVAILABLE NOTES and MAX NOTES counters are.

**Occupied Measure / Zone** : Refers to the Measure or Zone that a card is currently in.

**Overture**: During Overture, certain restrictions are in place such as players being unable to cue attacks.

**Overwrite** : When a Concept is placed atop of an existing card, the cards underneath are considered 'Overwritten' and lose all abilities.

**Performance** : Refers to the active player's current turn.

**Rating** : Refers to the number on the top-left of a Record. This is effectively the Record's ATTACK and DEFENSE.

**Removed from Play / Removed Zone** : Cards that have been removed from the general area of play. When a card is 'removed from play', it is placed to the side of the Ensemble. *Each player has their own Removed Zone.*

**Reset** : When a card is Reset, it loses Exhaustion and is turned upright. *This does not negate the Buffering State.*

**Round** : A set of turns. When both players have taken a turn, the round is concluded.

**Silence** : The act of sending a card to the Void Zone via its rating dropping to 0, or by an opponent's effect or ability.

**Soul Zone** : A Player's Conductor is placed here during the initial Setup. Each Player has their own Soul Zone.

**Static** : Verses and Final Verses with the STATIC tag may only be expended during your own Performance.

**Strain** : Strain is counted against a Record or Measure. Strain is removed from Records during the End Beat, unless otherwise noted.

**Void** : The act of sending your own card to the Void Zone, via effect or ruling.

**Void Zone** : The Discard Pile. Whenever a card is Silenced, Voided or Expended, place the card(s) here unless otherwise noted. *Cards in the Void Zone are not considered 'Active'.*

## >> [KEYWORD ABILITIES]

Below, we'll take a look at the abilities you'll come across while playing [SYNSOULS]. Most archetypes only focus on one or two of these at once, so don't worry about memorizing them all right away!

### - CACHE

Records with [CACHE] are not affected by the 'Buffer' state, and can be exhausted immediately. Note that [CACHE] has no effect during the Overture!

### - DISCORD

When a Record with [DISCORD] blocks, the attacking Record is dealt twice the normal amount of Strain. Remember, Records that are targeted for attack are not considered Blocking!

### - ECHO

When a Record with [ECHO] is cued for Attack, the following effect is activated: *'If a Record would be dealt Strain by this attack, any Excess Strain is dealt to that Record's Occupied Measure.'*

For example, if an attacking Record deals 5 Strain to an Opposing Record with a Rating of 3, the Opposing Record's Occupied Measure takes 2 Strain after the ATTACK Beat.

### - ENCRYPT

Cards with [ENCRYPT] cannot be targeted by your opponent's Verses or abilities, and are unaffected by [ECHO] and [INDEX]. Additionally, Concepts with [ENCRYPT] cannot be overwritten by the opponent! *Final Verses may still affect cards with [ENCRYPT].*

### - ENTROPY

Cards with [ENTROPY] gain the listed effects while the total number of Records in your Removed Zone matches or exceeds the specified number.

### - FORMAT

Records with [FORMAT] have their Ratings returned to their printed values, have all counters and conditions removed, and have all printed abilities ignored. *[FORMAT] does not remove STRAIN. [FORMAT] is continuous and cancels out any additional buffs the Record would gain while having [FORMAT].*

### - HARMONIZE

Cards with [HARMONIZE] gain additional effects while the Occupied Measure has the maximum number of Records according to its current capacity.

## - INDEX

When a Record with [INDEX] is cued for Attack, the following effect is activated: *'You may target a non-Exhausted Record for this attack. When a Record is targeted via [INDEX], it becomes exhausted unless the attack is blocked.'*

## - OVERCLOCK

When a card with [OVERCLOCK] is loaded, you may pay the additional cost specified on the card. If you do, the card gains the effects listed under [OVERCLOCK] in addition to its other abilities.

## - PULSE

Records with [PULSE] may be loaded during your opponent's performance. (You must still pay the Records' cost.) *Records loaded this way may Block immediately.*

## - SINGULARITY

Only one instance of a Record with [SINGULARITY] may be active in the same Measure. If a second instance of a Record with [SINGULARITY] would enter that Measure, the first instance is Voided.

## - SOLO

Records with [SOLO] gain additional effects while they are the only Record in their Occupied Measure.

## - SUSTAIN

Records you control with [SUSTAIN] do not take Strain while Attacking.

## - TRACE

During your Main Beat, Records with [TRACE] may be played from the Void Zone by paying their cost. If a Record played via [TRACE] (Referred to as a 'Traced' Record) would return to the Void Zone from the Ensemble, it is removed from play instead. When a Record with the [TRACE] keyword is removed from play (Regardless of if it has been traced), its controller must deal Strain equal to that Record's printed cost to one of their Measures.

If you run into a [KEYWORD] ability not found in this manual, check our website for the most up-to-date manual!