Fan Mod – Universal lands

for the TCG "Magic the Gathering" | Designer: Florian Sixt

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Quick Overview
This article introduces the concept of "Universal lands" as an unofficial game variant for the world-famous TCG "Magic: The Gathering." Designed as fan mod, it makes no claims to full compatibility with the official rules.









Motivation
Inspired by the resource management system from "Star Wars Unlimited," this mod offers a radical simplification of the mana system for MtG. The goal is to address one-sided games caused by mana screw. With the new mechanic, any card in your hand can alternatively be played as a "Universal land" to generate one colorless mana or even one mana of any color. This enables radical changes in both deckbuilding and gameplay, as standard lands are no longer a mandatory part of a deck. The focus of this fan mod is on faster game progression and the unrestricted use of all non-land cards, combined with greater flexibility in card selection. This change is expected to be particularly beneficial in fast-paced multiplayer games using fan mods.

Classification
The new, optional mechanic is presented below as an imaginary Rule 906. As a fundamental game variant, it would thus be placed directly after the existing multiplayer rules 901–905 in the 900s section of the Comprehensive Rules. *906.1d. is a variation that may require players to adapt some of the other rules.*

906. Universal lands

906.1. A universal land is a special type of card that is physically printed on the back of a player's card sleeves, is permanently visible there, or is imagined there by mutual agreement. Universal lands are not considered part of a deck in the traditional sense.

906.1a. All card sleeves in a MtG game must display the same universal land on the back. Since universal lands are not considered part of the deck, restrictions on the number of identical cards in a deck do not apply. Only the faces of the cards are relevant in this regard.

906.1b. By mutual agreement at the table, not all players have to use the same Universal lands for their decks. However, only one type of universal land may be used within a single deck.

906.1c. By mutual agreement at the table, players may even use different Universal lands within one deck. Since this means that the backs of the cards within a deck are no longer identical, it is recommended that a fellow player always cuts the deck after it has been shuffled.

906.1d. *As an alternative to rules sections 906.1a. to 1c. and as an adaptation of all following rules it may concern, one type of or a selection of different universal lands can be used by (e.g.) putting blank cards in sleeves depicting universal lands. Whenever a normal playing card is used for transformation into a universal land, this playing card is put into exile and the player chooses an available universal land and puts it onto the battlefield under their control.*

906.2. The primary purpose of universal lands is to minimize the risk of games with resource shortages ("mana screw"). As a secondary effect, some universal lands have additional abilities. This significantly alters the gameplay of MtG, while at the same time minimizing interference with the existing ruleset.

906.3. At any time a player could regularly play a land card from their hand, that player may instead put any card from their hand face down onto the battlefield as the universal land printed on the card's back.

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906.3a. A card played in this manner loses all of its front-side characteristics (name, mana cost, card type, text, etc.) for the remainder of the game or until the Universal lands leaves the battlefield.

906.3b. From the moment it is played, the card is treated as a non-basic land in every respect. Like all universal lands, it can generate colorless mana or mana of any color by tapping and – if applicable – paying additional mana costs.

906.4. When a universal land leaves the battlefield (e.g., through destruction, exile, or returning to your hand), it is placed in the appropriate zone (Graveyard, Exile, Hand).

906.4a. As soon as the card leaves the battlefield, the properties on its front side immediately take effect again. In the new zone, it is no longer a universal land card, but rather the original card again.

906.4b. Zone changes of universal lands never trigger any effects. Changes are treated as if the universal land ceased to exist in one zone and – if applicable – the card began to exist face-up in the appropriate zone.

906.4c. When returned to the hand, a card can be played again as a universal land on a later turn or cast from its front side for its regular mana cost.

906.5. The front sides of universal land cards may not be viewed by any player while they are in play. They are considered face-down permanent cards but retain the distinct status of being the universal land shown on the card's back.

906.6. If required by relevant mechanics, face-down cards that are not intended to represent universal lands are marked with counters to distinguish them from cards representing universal lands.

Universal Lands – Complete List

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Notes

The following is a list of all Universal Lands designed to date (July 2026). Feel free to copy them and stick them on cards however you like. Alternatively, just imagine that one of the Universal Lands is printed on the backs of your own card sleeves.

The Universal Lands shown here vary in terms of their power levels. This power level is determined by their flexibility in mana generation as well as any other abilities and passive stats they may have. Depending on the Universal Land, the extent to which it influences mana generation in Magic: The Gathering™ varies. In some cases, it makes sense to only slightly reduce the number of Basic Lands in a deck; other Universal Lands make Basic Lands completely obsolete in many decks or use them as a mix-in for specific card effects that target Basic Lands.

Mana generation primarily

Power level: 4 / 7



very strong mana srew reduction
very strong color srew reduction
no additional effects

Power level: 4 / 7



strong mana srew reduction
medium color srew reduction
hexproof, indestructible

Power level: 3 / 7



strong mana srew reduction
medium color srew reduction
indestructible

Power level: 3 / 7



medium mana srew reduction
weak color srew reduction
life points of all players halve

Color specific special effect

Power level: 5 / 7



strong mana srew reduction
strong color srew reduction
creatures gain flash

Power level: 4.5 / 7



strong mana srew reduction
strong color srew reduction
sorceries & enchantments gain flash

Power level: 4 / 7



strong mana srew reduction
strong color srew reduction
life points of all players halve