# First TCG Purchase Checklist

Free and printable · Updated November 21, 2026 ·

Ten minutes with this list can save you from the most common first-purchase mistakes in Pokémon, Magic: The Gathering, Disney Lorcana, the One Piece Card Game and similar games.

## 1. Decide why you're buying

- ☐ **To play:** start with a ready-to-play product (a starter deck, a two-player starter set, or a preconstructed deck). Random booster packs don't add up to a playable deck.
- ☐ **To collect a specific card:** buy that card as a single. Opening packs to chase one card usually costs more.
- ☐ **For the fun of opening:** set a budget first and treat packs as entertainment, not an investment.
- ☐ **As a gift:** a ready-to-play product plus sleeves is usually a safer pick than loose packs.

## 2. Pick the right product type

- ☐ Read the publisher's product page for exactly what's inside (deck size, number of packs, accessories).
- ☐ For two new players, look for a product with *two* decks so you can learn together (for example, Disney Lorcana's 2-Player Starter Set includes two 60-card decks, according to Ravensburger).
- ☐ For Magic's Commander format, a preconstructed Commander deck gives you a legal 100-card deck out of the box.
- ☐ Check the set or release date so you know whether you're buying current or older product.

## 3. Check the price before you pay

- ☐ Find the list price (MSRP) from the publisher or a distributor announcement.
- ☐ Compare at least two sellers, including your local game store and one online marketplace.
- ☐ Look up the current market price of sealed products and singles on a price-tracking marketplace.
- ☐ Be wary of new-release listings far above list price; prices often fall after the first weeks.
- ☐ Include shipping and tax when comparing.

## 4. Avoid fakes and resealed product

- ☐ Buy sealed product from authorized retailers or well-reviewed sellers.
- ☐ Check that shrink-wrap and seals look factory-made, and be cautious of prices that seem too good to be true.
- ☐ For expensive singles, compare photos against known-genuine copies and buy from sellers with clear return policies.

## 5. Protect what you buy

- ☐ Buy sleeves in the right size: standard-size sleeves fit Pokémon, Magic, Lorcana and One Piece cards; Japanese-size sleeves fit smaller cards such as Yu-Gi-Oh!.
- ☐ Get a deck box for any deck you carry around.
- ☐ Use a side-loading binder or toploaders for valuable cards; store everything away from sun, heat, and damp rooms.

## 6. Before you leave the store (or click buy)

- ☐ Does this product actually do what I want (play, collect, open, gift)?
- ☐ Is the price at or near list price, or justified by availability?
- ☐ Do I have sleeves and somewhere to keep the cards?

- ☐ Do I know the return policy?

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