A themed screen has two jobs: make a player feel something, and help them do something. The illustration might promise a haunted forest, a celestial duel, or a cheerful card-collecting adventure. The interface still needs to show the title, explain the card, and leave enough room for buttons that can be tapped comfortably on a phone.

Those jobs can support each other, but only when the layout is planned rather than improvised. Put every control on top of the most dramatic part of the art and the screen becomes a collision. Shrink the art until nothing gets covered and the world can feel like a postage stamp. Good **UI space planning** solves this before the final polish, so theme clarity, readability, and interaction all have room to breathe.

Start With the Screen's Job, Not the Illustration

Before placing a character or painting a background, write down what the screen needs to accomplish. Is it introducing a new card, letting players compare options, or asking them to confirm a purchase? A screen designed to inspire a choice has different priorities from one designed to explain a complicated effect.

List the information and actions players need, then rank them. A useful first pass might include the card name, artwork, cost, effect, rarity, and a primary action. Decide which details should be understood immediately and which can be discovered on a tap or hold. If everything is treated as equally important, everything competes.

Make a priority order

1. **Primary action:** What should the player do next?
2. **Core identity:** What is this card, character, or screen about?
3. **Decision-making information:** What does the player need to know before acting?
4. **Supporting details:** What can sit quietly until the player wants it?

This order is a starting point, not a rigid rule. On a card detail screen, the artwork may be the main attraction, while on a deck-management screen, comparing card stats may take priority. The important thing is to choose deliberately. A quick wireframe—even plain boxes on a blank background—can expose space conflicts before anyone spends hours painting around them.

Place Characters With the Interface in Mind

Character placement is one of the easiest ways to create either harmony or visual friction. A character's face, gesture, and silhouette attract attention. Put a button over the face and the control may be readable, but the composition feels careless. Put a block of text over a busy weapon or patterned costume and the player has to work harder to read both.

Plan the character's pose and the interface together. If the character is looking or pointing toward a clear area, that gesture can guide the eye toward a title, stat panel, or action button. A strong silhouette can sit behind a restrained overlay; delicate facial details should usually be protected from competing labels and controls.

Use intentional negative space

Negative space is not wasted space. It gives the subject room to stand out and gives the interface a place to land. Ask the illustrator to reserve a calmer region for text, or to arrange the pose so the face and hands remain unobstructed when the layout is applied. This is more reliable than trying to rescue a crowded image with a dark rectangle at the last minute.

When the artwork is already complete, test possible crops rather than assuming the original frame will fit every device. A wider character illustration may need a tighter crop on a portrait phone. Keep the face and the most recognizable part of the silhouette within the safe area, and check that the crop doesn't turn a deliberate pose into an awkward one.

Let Backgrounds Build the World Without Taking Over

A background can tell players where a card belongs: a snow-covered fortress, an old library, or a market lit by paper lanterns. That world-building makes a collection feel coherent. But the background's job is not to prove how many details the artist can fit into one image. It should support the subject and leave the information readable.

Control the background's contrast and detail according to what sits in front of it. A highly detailed scene can work behind a character if its sharpest edges and brightest highlights stay away from the card title and effect text. Softer forms, reduced contrast, and restrained color in interface zones help preserve the setting without making the UI fight for attention.

Separate atmosphere from information

Use a few clear visual signals to establish the setting: a distinctive silhouette, a color family, a lighting direction, or one memorable environmental detail. Then simplify the area behind labels. This preserves theme clarity while preventing the familiar problem of attractive art becoming an unreadable surface.

For example, a forest card can keep its dark pines and glowing mushrooms while placing its rules text on a solid or gently textured panel. The panel does not need to look pasted on. Its border, material, and color can belong to the same world—perhaps carved wood or a softly illuminated parchment—while still providing enough contrast for the text.

Design for Phone Scale, Not Just a Large Preview

Mobile layout changes how composition works. A detail that looks elegant on a large monitor may disappear when the card is reduced to a thumbnail. Fine linework, narrow letterforms, tiny symbols, and subtle color differences are especially vulnerable. Check the visual at the size players will actually see it, not only in the working file.

Scale tests should happen early and repeatedly. View the screen at a typical phone size, then check a smaller device and a larger one. If the important information only works at the largest size, it is not ready. A phone-friendly composition uses recognizable shapes, clear value differences, and text that does not depend on delicate strokes to remain legible.

Give touch targets room

Buttons need more than visual presence; they need tappable space. A tiny icon can look neat in https://ptcgpocket.gg/small-screens-rich-worlds-the-visual-design-behind-mobile-games/ a mockup but become frustrating when a player tries to hit it with a thumb. Keep controls separated enough that accidental taps are unlikely, and avoid placing important actions tight against the screen edge or beneath decorative elements.

Count the interactions, too. How many taps does it take to inspect a card? Is a press-and-hold needed for extra information? Can a player return to the deck without hunting for a small close button? These are simple questions, but they reveal whether the visual design is supporting the actual use of the screen.

Build Information Hierarchy Into Card UI

Card interfaces often need to communicate several things in a small area: name, cost, type, effect, stats, faction, and rarity. The solution is not to make every label louder. Create a hierarchy through position, size, contrast, and consistent visual conventions. Players should be able to tell at a glance what the card is called, what matters in a match, and where to look for supporting detail.

Information Suggested treatment Common risk Card name Clear placement near the top, with strong contrast Text crosses a bright or detailed part of the artwork Cost or key stat Consistent position and a distinct, readable shape Symbol is too small or depends on color alone Effect text Calm panel, comfortable line spacing, concise wording Low contrast, cramped lines, or decorative type Rarity and flavor details Secondary emphasis, visible when players look for it Competes with the card's main decision-making information

Consistency matters as much as individual readability. If cost appears in the same place across a collection, players learn where to look. If every card uses a different arrangement, the theme may feel varied, but the interface makes players relearn the basics each time. Let artwork and accents carry variation; keep essential information predictable.

Use Layers and Contrast Instead of Covering the Art

When a button or text block clashes with an illustration, the first fix should not always be to make the control bigger or add a heavy opaque box. Consider shifting the element, simplifying the background beneath it, or using a restrained gradient. A subtle shadow or outline can also improve contrast, but it should be tested in context rather than added automatically.



Do a quick contrast check in grayscale. If the subject, text, and controls collapse into the same value, color alone may not save them—especially for players with color-vision differences or on a dim phone screen. Distinct shapes, spacing, and luminance differences make the hierarchy more robust.

Keep decoration in its lane

Frames, flourishes, glows, and particles can reinforce a theme, but they should not crowd labels or compete with actions. Motion deserves the same restraint. A brief effect can draw attention to a newly available action; constant

pulsing around every control makes it harder to know what matters. I pause mid-play to screenshot both good composition and bad text contrast, and over-animated screens show up in that folder more often than they should.

Test With Real Tasks, Not Just Opinions

Ask someone unfamiliar with the screen to complete a simple task: find a card's cost, read its effect, or choose the primary button. Watch where their eyes go and whether they need to lean closer. Avoid leading them with hints. If they miss a control, the answer is not always "make it brighter"; the button may be in the wrong place or buried beneath stronger visual elements.

For community feedback, a studio can share a prototype or a focused screenshot in a Discord community. Keep the question specific—such as "Can you identify the main action in two seconds?"—rather than asking whether the screen looks good. A deck builder can also be useful as a reference point when reviewing how card information, filters, and collection details are organized. Treat any reference as a prompt for testing, not a template to copy.

Keep Product Information as Clear as the Art

The same clarity standard applies to product and subscription details around a game. For example, if content mentions DotGG Premium but the scraped material does not show an explicit price, do not guess, infer, or present an unverified amount as fact. State plainly that the price was not shown in the available content, and direct readers to a current official source if one is available.

That small editorial choice reflects the same principle as good card UI: important information should be easy to find, and uncertainty should not be disguised as certainty. Companies such as DotGG, DotGG Premium, and QuestDuo may appear in discussions of game tools or services, but any description of their features, availability, or pricing should be checked against current source material. A polished visual cannot compensate for missing or misleading information.



A Practical Layout Checklist

- Define the screen's primary action and most important information before finishing the illustration.
- Reserve calm areas for text and controls; protect faces, hands, and key silhouettes.
- Use background detail to establish the world, not to compete with card information.
- Preview the composition at phone size and check that text and symbols remain readable.
- Give buttons comfortable touch space and make their purpose visually distinct.
- Keep essential card details consistent from one card to the next.
- Test with real tasks, and fix confusing placement rather than adding more decoration.
- Verify product claims and pricing; say when a price is not present in the source.

Make the Theme Work With the Interface

The strongest themed visuals do not treat UI as an obstacle to hide. They make room for it. Character placement directs attention, backgrounds create a sense of place, and information panels feel like part of the same world without sacrificing contrast. With thoughtful UI space planning, mobile layout becomes a design constraint that sharpens the composition rather than flattening it.

Start with the player's task, reserve space for the things they need to see and touch, and test the result at the scale of a real phone. When each element has a clear role, the art can stay expressive and the interface can stay readable. That balance—not simply adding more detail—is what makes a themed screen feel finished.