1ˢᵗ Operation - Opening of the Key -4 Piles

First things first. Decide on a Significator card using what method feels appropriate to you.

Shuffle the cards – cut the deck in half, placing the top half to the left and leaving a little space in between. The Pile on the Right is the "Fire" pile and the pile on the Left is the "Air" Pile.

Cut the "Fire" pile (on the right) in half placing the top half to the left of the "Fire" pile – thus it will be in between the "Air" Pile and "Fire Pile. The new Pile is the "Water" pile.

Cut the "Air" Pile in half placing the top half to the Left of it. This is the "Earth" Pile.

READ LEFT TO RIGHT YOU SHOULD HAVE 4 PILES NOW – EARTH -AIR-WATER-FIRE.

Or

PENTACLES -SWORDS -CUPS-WANDS

These 4 piles represent many things to many people. Decide what they represent to you.

But, as an example, here's some of what they can represent to me:

Fire:
Actions, The Past, work, ideas, enterprise, spiritual plane business

Water:
Emotions, Desires, hopes, wishes, mental plane business

Air:
Problems, thoughts, conflict, Astral Plane business

Earth:
Manifestation, the future, money, assets, things, Physical Plane business

Flip the packs over and consider the top cards as they relate to the pile they're in.

Starting with the Fire Pile - without changing the order of the cards – look through the pile to see if the Significator is there. The pile containing the Significator is the pile you are going to read.

Once you've located pile containing the Significator, set the other piles aside – you won't need them for this operation.

The pile that the Significator appears in represents the aspect of the question being asked that this operation will address.

Take the Pile containing the Signigicator and WITHOUT DISTURBING THE ORDER OF THE CARDS spread the cards out in a circle, with the Significator placed at the top of the circle.
COUNTING:

Starting with the Significator – count the cards around the circle using the number values below (there are a few different counting methods, this is the one that works for me, but explore others if you like, use what feels right to you):

CARD COUNTING VALUES:

ACES – **5 OR 11** (I always use 11 but you don't have to)
PAGES – **7**
KNIGHTS, QUEENS, KINGS – **4**

MAJORS:
0, 12, 20 – **3**
1, 2, 3, 10, 16, 19, 21 – **9**
4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18 – **12**

I like to start the counting in the direction the Significator is facing. I rarely change direction when counting. Some prefer to always start counter-clockwise. Others like to go clockwise. And some like to change direction when they land on a court card facing the opposite direction. Do what feels right to you.

So, let's say your significator is a queen. First, make note of the cards to the left and right of it to see what influences surround it. You would then count 4 with the Significator being count 1 of the count. The card that you land on is a "LANDING CARD".

So let's say that first landing card is a Page, starting with that Page, you would count 7 with the Page being the first card in the count. Counting continues until you land on a card you've already landing on. **That final landing card is the most significant card of the counting.** Pay attention to the cards that flank each of the landing cards to see how they are influenced. It is recommended that you use Elemental Dignities. Make a story from the meaning of the landing cards as you go along.

Next, is the **PAIRING.**

Pair off the cards. Starting with the two cards that flank the Significator, and then those outside them and so on.

When the pairing end in even pairs with no single card left over, it indicates that the answer to the querant's questions depends largely on forces surrounding him. **When there is a single card left over – it represents a force, a quality, a person, or condition affecting the solution to the querent's question and is the most important card of the pairing.**

You will use these methods of counting and pairing throughout the Opening of the Key, with the exception being the 36 Decanates where the pairing is a little different.