

VLAADA CHVÁTIL

SPACE

ALERT

The game contains two books – the Space Alert Rulebook, and the handbook **How to be a Space Explorer. Start with this handbook.** It is designed to teach you how to play, while presenting the atmosphere of the game. We have introduced numerous groups to Space Alert, and this handbook is based on that experience.

Rules in this handbook are presented in the yellow boxes.

Examples and notes in this handbook are presented in the cyan boxes.

This will be handy if only one of you has read the rules and is teaching them to the rest. Text outside the yellow boxes is from the Space Exploration 101 class taught at the Galactic Military Academy.

Because the game is easiest to learn by playing it, this handbook is set up so that you can start playing immediately. Players are introduced to rules and game concepts gradually, and at each level of your training, you have a chance to play with the new game mechanics. Games are short and intense – about 25 minutes. As rules are added, the game becomes more difficult. It is up to your group to decide when to try the next level. This handbook is designed to guide you.

At the end of this handbook you will find a section for players who know the game well and are introducing it to new players. It will help you explain the rules to the new players so that you can begin playing within 20 minutes.

Number of Players

This handbook describes the four or five player game. We recommend playing your first games with four or five players. Rules for two or three are given at the end of the handbook, but it is easier to learn the game with four or five.

Important Note

This game contains two CDs. These are not just bonuses to provide atmosphere. They play a major role in the game. We recommend using a CD player with speakers. You can also download these tracks in mp3 format from www.czechgames.com.

If you don't have speakers, you can use headphones. In this case, the player wearing the headphones must take responsibility for passing the information on to the group.

If you have no way to play the game's soundtrack, designate one player to be the timekeeper. The game contains scene cards which the timekeeper can read at the appropriate times. The timekeeper does not get to play, but it is a good role for someone who knows the game well and is helping new players learn it.

HOW TO BE A SPACE EXPLORER

IN SEVEN LESSONS

A transcript of the Space Exploration 101 course taught at the Galactic Military Academy.

INTRODUCTION

Friends and family, we are gathered here to remember the extraordinary courage and heroism the departed showed in service to their nation... Eh? Oh, sorry. Wrong group. Um... here we are!

My brave cadets, welcome to the accelerated learning course on Space Exploration. I admire the extraordinary courage and heroism you show in deciding to serve your nation. And I have no doubt you will be successful.

You have volunteered to serve in the crew of a Sitting Duck class exploration ship. This course will be brief and intensive... but not just because the government is cutting our budget. No. We want to get you out into space as quickly as possible to replace... that is... Well, it's not a hard job. Why waste time in training?

Your mission will be to explore certain regions of the Galaxy, take note of enemy actions, and look for dangerous sectors. Your ship will be equipped with the newest hyperspace engines, automatic scanners, and a powerful computer which will guide your actions. It is not a difficult routine: the ship automatically performs the hyperspace jump to the programmed sector, the scanners map the region, and when they are done the ship automatically jumps back home. The entire operation only takes 10 minutes, during which

you don't have to do anything at all. And, as I'm sure I don't need to tell you, it is the best-paying 10 minutes of doing nothing that you will ever find. Now I see some of you smiling, so I have no doubt that you remember our recruiting pamphlet.

Actually, we could send you out without any training at all, but government regulations require a brief course first. And sometimes – not very often, you understand – but sometimes you encounter some hostile behavior that might, in only the most extreme cases, lead to some damage to your ship. And that's why we send you along, really. Your job is to repel these feeble attacks and keep the ship functional for the 10 minutes it needs to take a picture of the sector. The computer automatically evaluates the position and intentions of the enemy and the ship is equipped with powerful shields, several laser cannons, self-guided rockets, squads of battlebots, and other defense systems, so it won't be a problem to deal with any... um... problem that may arise. And I am pleased to tell you that those of you who do encounter the enemy will receive a handsome bonus if you return. "When you return," I mean. I certainly have no doubt that... Anyway. Sorry. It's a bit stuffy in here.

We'll take a short break, now, because I am due to speak at a... ceremony for the previous crew.

LESSON 1 – YOUR SHIP AND YOUR CREW

I'm glad to see you all present again. I'll admit, that I was a bit disappointed that the security guards had to remind some of you that you had already signed the contract, and I hope that the next time we take a break there will be no more attempts to leave the campus.

We'll begin with a little entrance exam – a short flight that will introduce you to space exploration and test your skills and ability to work as a team.

While we're on the subject of teams, who will be your captain and who will be communications officer?

Choose a player to be the captain. You'll need someone with good organizational and communications skills, as well as sufficient authority to say, "Enough talking. Let's do it."

Next choose a communications officer. The communications officer is responsible for keeping track of the information coming from the ship's computer and making sure that the players don't miss any of it. This person needs to be able to pay attention to several things at once and hear incoming news even when everyone is in the heat of discussing the solution of another problem.

My teaching assistant will now hand out colored jump suits. Yes, you will each wear a different color to make it easier for you to recognize each other during the flight.

Each player chooses a colored figure. Take the Action Board numbered 1-7 in your color and place it in front of you. For now, you can leave the 8-12 Action Board in the box.



If you'll turn your attention to the blackboard, you will see a diagram of a Sitting Duck. Could I get your communications officer to come sit in the front row please? Yes, right there will be fine. You see, your job is all about paying attention. Now, this is the interface for the ship's computer.

The picture below gives the ideal seating arrangement for a five-player game.



Place the Spaceship Board on the table so that everyone is looking at it from the side or right side up, and no one sees the ship upside down, if possible. Above the upper edge of the board should be about 30 cm of room for the "computer screen" where the ship's computer will project important information.

The communications officer should sit nearby. If you have a CD player with speakers, the communications officer should also be nearest the speakers.

Below the Spaceship Board, place the Mission Steps Board with the less complicated side up (the one with two rows).

THE SPACESHIP BOARD

As you can see, your ship is divided into three zones – port, center, and starboard. What's that? No one ever taught you the difference between starboard and port? Well, don't worry. To help you recognize which zone of the ship you are in, they are illuminated by different colored lights – the port zone is red, the central zone is white, and the starboard zone is blue. To avoid any confusion between left and right, we'll refer to these as the red, white, and blue zones.

The ship has two decks – upper and lower. Each zone has a gravolift connecting the upper and lower stations, and the stations are connected by doors on both decks.

Thus the six stations of the ship can be denoted as follows: upper red, lower red, upper white, lower white, upper blue, and lower blue.



SHIP BOARD SYSTEMS

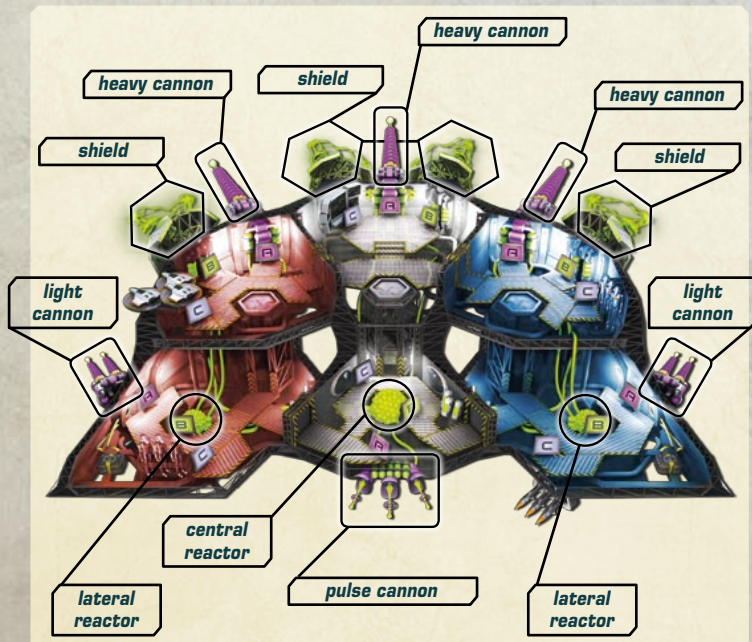
Each station has 3 systems labeled **A**, **B** and **C**. No, miss, that is not a simplified drawing. The ship looks just like that and the systems really are activated by pressing colored buttons labeled with a single big letter. You'll be grateful for this simplification, when the time comes.

Weapons systems are labeled **A**. The upper deck has three heavy laser cannons, one in each zone. The lateral stations of the lower deck have light laser cannons. They are weaker, but they have their own power source, so they don't use power from the reactor. The lower central station has an all-purpose pulse cannon.

Energy systems are labeled **B**. The upper deck has energy shields, one for each part of the ship. The lower deck has reactors. Each zone of the ship has its own reactor and all systems (heavy cannons and shields) take their energy from the reactor in their own zone. The lateral reactors take energy from the central reactor, which consumes fuel capsules.

What? You think it sounds too complicated? We're just getting started!

Very well. We'll cover the systems labeled **C** in a later lecture so you won't need to know how to use them on your test run.



INITIAL STATE OF THE SHIP

When you emerge from hyperspace, your ship will always look like this:

You will all be on the bridge. Reactors and shields will be partially charged. The central reactor will have three fuel capsules in reserve.



Players place their figures in the upper white station (also known as "the bridge").

The green blocks represent energy in reactors and shields. Put 1 block on each shield, 2 blocks on the two lateral reactors, and 3 blocks on the central

reactor. The central reactor also gets 3 green cylinders representing fuel capsules.

Light laser cannons have their own unlimited energy source. Give each one a yellow block on its power pack.

Put the remaining green and red blocks elsewhere on the table to make a bank.

You will have a lot of other pieces left over: tokens, blocks, and figures. These can be returned to the box. They will not be used in your first game.

The numbers in the green squares indicate the maximum capacities of the shields and reactors, but you don't have to worry about that right now. What's that? Why aren't they filled to full capacity? Look, young man, most likely you won't run into any trouble. No sense in wasting power. If an enemy does show up, your power should last until you have time to take the gravolift and feed the reactor more fuel.


AROUND THE SHIP

I'm sure it will come as no surprise when I mention that every sector of space has its own metric and topology. Ah. I see it is a surprise. No matter. Luckily, you have the ship's computer which can measure everything and project the information graphically into three threat trajectories. All you need to know is whether danger threatens your ship's red zone, white zone, or blue zone.

In a normal game, trajectories and threats are chosen randomly. In this test run, however, you will deal with a prepared scenario.



Take the Trajectory Boards labeled **T4**, **T2**, and **T6** and place them on the "computer screen" above your ship as shown in the illustration. Leave the remaining Trajectory Boards in the box.

From the purple threat cards labeled , take the six ones with the codes **E1-01** to **E1-06** in the lower left corner. Put them in order so that when the stack is turned face down, the card labeled **E1-01** is on top and the one labeled **E1-06** is on the bottom. Place this stack in front of the communications officer. For now you can leave the remaining cards (purple and green) in the box.

Separate the yellow polygonal tokens into pairs labeled **1**, **2**, **3** and **4**. You can leave the rest of the tokens in the box for now.

ACTION CARDS

Before we begin, I'd like to warn you that our test run is a fairly accurate simulation of the way things are on a real ship, where the situation is nowhere near as clear as what you see here in the classroom. You won't have access to all the information or all the options. Try to imagine the sweat stinging your eyes as you traverse the twisted remains of a gravolift shaft while everything is blowing up around you, with someone screeching into your headphones about how bad things are on the other side of the ship. And when you finally get to the lower deck, you find out that there's not enough energy in the reactor, something has ripped the hull of the ship, and the computer has just sighted an incoming space monster bigger than...

Oh. Sorry. Don't let me scare you. I was, um, exaggerating. A bit. My point is just that things can be somewhat chaotic.

Action cards simulate the chaos on board the ship. Take the action cards with the gray backs and shuffle them well. Deal 10 to each player as follows: 5 cards face down on the 1-3 part of their Action Boards and 5 cards face down on the 4-7 part. Do not look at your cards yet.



Place the rest of the cards in a face-down stack some place where everyone can reach them. For now, you can leave the six gold-backed cards in the box.

SOUNDTRACK

Welcome to our simulator. While you are looking around, I'll put the test scenario into the computer.

If you have a CD player, play "First Test Run", track 1 on the tutorial CD.

If you don't have a CD player, the person acting as timekeeper should use Scenario Card S1-1, "First Test Run".

The setup for your first game should look like this:



LESSON 2 – ACTION ROUND

The Action Round of the game is played in real time, with a time limit given by the soundtrack. During this round you use your action cards to plan what you will do during the flight.

All right, everyone meet on the bridge and I'll start the simulation. Eh? I haven't told you what you're supposed to do yet? Are you sure? All right, but don't look at me like that. You have no idea how stressful this job is, training crew after crew, when you know that they'll just, um... Well enough about my job. Let me tell you about yours.

PLANNING ACTIONS

As soon as I push the start button, the simulation will begin. Your first test run will take 7 minutes. Experience shows that during these 7 minutes, you'll have time to do 7 things. To make synchronization easier, the mission is divided into two phases. The first phase is actions 1-3, and the second phase is actions 4-7.

At the beginning of the soundtrack, the computer announces the start of the mission and each player takes the five action cards from the section of his or her action board labeled 1-3. These cards will allow you to plan what you will do on the first three turns.




Each card has two halves: movement and action. The card always represents one or the other. If the movement half is on top, the card is a move and the action represented on the lower half is ignored. If the action half is on top, the card represents the activation of that system in the station where the player's figure is located, and the move on the lower half of the card is ignored.










An action card used as a move toward red zone.



The same card used as action .



The movement half can be either a move to the left (toward port), a move to the right (toward starboard), or a use of the gravolift. To help you keep it straight, movement to the left is a red arrow and movement to the right is a blue arrow. These correspond to the colors on the ship. Moreover, the arrows are illustrated on the game board.

With a gravolift move, direction is not specified: if you are on the upper deck, it moves you to the lower. If you are on the lower deck, it moves you to the upper.

The action half of the card might depict the activation of system , or  or the battlebot action denoted . In the test run, you can only use actions  or . The actions  and  will have no effect. Use those cards for moves or don't use them at all.

To plan your actions, place up to 3 cards face up on your Action Board in the spaces labeled **1**, **2**, and **3**. If you want to move to an adjacent station, orient the card so that the movement half is on top. If you want to use the action half of the card, make sure that half is on top. Thus on each turn, you will either make 1 move or stay in place and perform 1 action in that station. If you want to do nothing for a turn, do not place a card on that numbered space.



The player has decided to move to the left on turn 1 (into the upper red station). On turn 2, he waits. On turn 3, he activates the  system in his location (the portside heavy laser cannon). The action  and gravolift move on the bottom halves of the cards are ignored.

The entire Action Round is played out in real time. You can place your cards on your Action Boards as fast as you want. Talking things over is allowed. In fact, it will be necessary to discuss who will go where and do what and to pay attention to what the other players are doing. If you change your mind, you can pick up your action and replace it with another. You can have only one card per space. Unused cards are kept in your hand. You cannot show your cards to other players, but you can tell them what they are.

When you are satisfied with your actions for the first three turns, you can begin planning the second phase. Take the action cards from the 4-7 section and use them, along with the remaining cards from the first phase, to plan your final four actions. **Once you pick up your second phase cards, you are not allowed to change any cards on turns 1-3.** The actions on turns 4-7 can be changed until the Action Round ends.

The Action Round lasts 7 minutes during which players work together to plan their actions for 7 turns.

Now you might be a bit surprised. You have set up a beautiful game board with brightly colored figures, tokens, and blocks, and all you get to do is place cards on 7 spaces?

That's right. In the Action Round, all you do is plan what your figure will do for 7 turns.

You are free to use the game board and pieces in your planning, however. You can move your figure around according to your plan, move the energy blocks around, etc. In the Action Round, the game board acts as an aid to help you work things out with the other players. At the end of the round, however, all that matters is the cards you have placed on your Action Boards.

THE COMPUTER

Everyone, and especially the communications officer, should pay attention to the ship's computer. Its announcements are vitally important.

As soon as you start the soundtrack, you will hear:

Alert. Enemy activity detected. Please begin first phase.

As soon as you hear this announcement, you can take your first 5 action cards and plan your first 3 actions.

The communications officer has an additional and very important task: to deal with the threat cards.

The computer will make announcements like the following:

Time T plus 3. Threat. Zone red. Repeat: Time T plus 3. Threat. Zone red.

At this time the communications officer must do the following:

- Draw the top card from the threat deck.
- Place it face up next to the trajectory corresponding to the ship's color code. (For example, "Zone red" denotes the red zone's Trajectory Board, the one on the left.)
- Take one of the numbered tokens corresponding to the time, and place it on the card. (For example, take a 3 token if the threat is at time T+3.)

In the above case, the result should look like this:



The communications officer should also inform the captain so that someone can be assigned to deal with the threat.

Other possible announcements are:

Incoming data. Repeat: Incoming data.

This means that every player can draw one new action card from the deck. The communications officer should make sure that all players know they have this opportunity.

Data transfer. Repeat. Data transfer in five, four, three, two, one, <beep>. Data transfer complete.

A data transfer allows every player to pass one card to any other player. That player does not have to give you a card back, and it is possible for multiple players to give cards to one player, but you are only allowed to give away one card.

A data transfer is not mandatory. The cards must be given away before the computer beeps and must be transferred from hand to hand. You can't just toss the card at your teammate or lay it near his or her Action Board. Once you hear the data transfer announcement, there is not really any time to discuss it. If you need a certain card, make sure everyone knows what you need and have a plan for who will give it to you in case there is a data transfer announced.

First phase ends in one minute.

First phase ends in twenty seconds.

First phase ends in five, four, three, two, one. First phase has ended. Please begin second phase.

These announcements let you know that you are running out of time to complete the first phase. You need to place cards on spaces 1-3, pick up your second phase cards, and begin planning turns 4-7. As stated above, you are allowed to do this earlier, if you wish. Once the computer ends the first phase, however, everyone must move on to the second phase. You can no longer change the cards in spaces 1-3, and if one of those spaces is empty it must stay empty.

Operation ends in one minute.

Operation ends in twenty seconds.

Operation ends in five, four, three, two, one. Mission complete. Jumping to hyperspace.

At this final announcement, the Action Round is over. No one may do anything with any action cards. It is time to begin the Resolution Round.

If you think you have everything perfectly planned and have nothing left to do, you can stop the soundtrack after the first Operation ends warning.

LESSON 3 – RESOLUTION ROUND

The second part of the game is seeing how the flight actually progresses according to your planned actions. This part does not have a time limit. You do not make any choices here. You just use the game board and pieces to simulate what happens on the ship. Imagine you are watching a video record of your action.

Now I'm sure you are all eager to try it out for yourselves, but first you need to know exactly how the test run will work. Otherwise you'll just run around the ship blindly pushing buttons until you've used up all your energy. Hm. I suppose you'll be doing that whether you pay attention to my lecture or not.

Oh, well, I went to a lot of work preparing these lecture notes, so I'm going to read them anyway.

Before playing the Action Round, you need to know how the Resolution Round works.

In reality, of course, everything happens at once, but I have divided the process into a number of individual steps because it is easier to explain it that way.

And because it's just a board game.

Now on the blackboard you will see a schematic diagram of the events during a flight, beginning with your emergence from hyperspace and ending with your jump back.

The Mission Steps Board is used to keep track of the steps of the Resolution Round. Place the blue marker on the first space of the board, which represents the instant your ship emerges from hyperspace.



Mission Steps Board

Before starting the Resolution Round, return the ship to its initial state, with the blocks and figures where they were at the beginning of the Action Round. Choose a player to run the Resolution Round. (People usually choose the captain, but it can be anyone who knows the rules.) This player, the tactical officer, moves the marker ahead one space at a time and the players resolve the events specified by that space.



THREAT APPEARS

You can be attacked immediately after emerging from hyperspace. Now, don't worry. As I said, in nearly every case there is absolutely no danger.

No, wait. You know what? I'm sick of this. They aren't paying me enough to lie to you. As soon as you pop out of hyperspace: Wham! They can jump all over you. Deal with it.

This space means "a threat appears". If the computer announced a threat at the time corresponding to the number in this space, your communications officer drew the threat card and placed a corresponding number token on it. Now, in the Resolution Round, take the other token with that number and place it on the first square of the appropriate Trajectory Board, the square farthest away from the ship. This indicates that the card belongs to this trajectory.

If no threat was announced for this time (and thus no card has this number) nothing happens.

Example: The first threat announcement was "Time T+2. Threat. Zone White." The communications officer drew the top threat card from the deck, placed it near the central trajectory, and gave it a number 2 token. In the Resolution Round, when resolving the step "Threat Appears 1" nothing happens because no threats appeared at Time T+1. When resolving the step "Threat Appears 2", take the second number 2 token and place it on the first square of the central trajectory.



PLAYER ACTIONS

The next step is your team's first actions. Even if no threats appear, you can begin moving about the ship, charging shields, etc.



This space indicates that everyone performs their planned action corresponding to this number. The captain goes first and players take turns going around the table clockwise, to the left. Sometimes order can be very important!

Moves

If your action card was played with a move on top, move your figure to the adjacent station in the indicated direction.

If you played a red arrow, move your figure through the door into the adjacent station on the left. You stay on the same deck. This move can either take you from the blue zone to the white zone, or from the white zone to the red zone. If you are already in the red zone, your figure does not move.

Similarly, a blue arrow will move your figure to the right, toward the blue side of the ship, into the adjacent station on the same deck.

If you played a gravolift move, you change decks while staying in the same colored zone. If your figure is on the lower deck, it moves to the upper deck. If on the upper deck, it moves to the lower.

Action **A** - Weapons Systems

And now we get to the fun part of the mission: guns.

If you played a card with action **A** on top, it means you activate the weapon in the station where your figure is. At this time, weapon activation is noted, but it is not resolved until later.

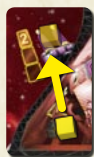
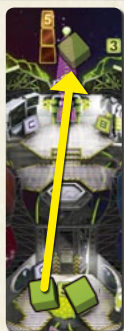
On the upper deck, action **A** activates a heavy laser cannon. It uses energy from the reactor in its zone (as indicated by the green power cables). Take 1 green block from that reactor and place it on the cannon. If the reactor has no energy at that time, you are out of luck. The button just makes a feeble click and the weapon does not fire.

The cannon can only use energy from its own reactor. It cannot take it from a different reactor or the shields.

The pulse cannon in the lower white station works the same way. It draws its energy from the central reactor, so when you press its button, move a green block from the central reactor onto the cannon. (If there is no green block, the cannon does not fire.)

In the lower lateral stations, action **A** activates a light laser cannon. It has its own source of energy (a yellow block on its power pack). This is never used up, so it is possible to fire each light laser cannon once each turn. To indicate that the light cannon is activated, move its yellow block from its power pack to the cannon.

If multiple players try to activate the same weapon on the same turn, it only fires once. The additional actions **A** have no effect.

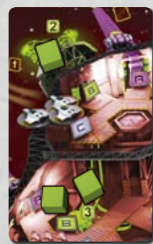


Action **B** - Energy

The B terminals allow you to work with the ship's energy. Now please pay careful attention because understanding energy is the key to understanding all the ship's systems.

On the upper deck, action **B** transfers energy into the shield belonging to the zone where the player's figure is. A shield draws energy from the reactor in its own zone (as indicated by the green power cables).

The green number indicates the shield's capacity. When you perform action **B**, the shield is filled to maximum capacity. Move enough green blocks from the reactor in the same zone to the shield, so that the shield has this many blocks. If there are not enough green blocks in the reactor, just move all there are. In this case, the shield will remain below maximum capacity.



Example: The player plays action **B** in the upper red station. To fill the shield to capacity (2), he moves one block from the reactor to the shield. On the next turn, he again plays action **B**. Because the shield is full, this action has no effect. Later, all the energy is used up repelling enemy attacks. If he plays action **B** on the following turn, he moves the remaining block from the reactor to the shield. (He would have to move 2 blocks if there were at least that many left in the reactor.) Another action **B** played in that station will have no effect unless someone transfers energy into the red zone reactor.

On the lower deck, action **B** means working with the reactors. The lateral reactors (in the red and blue zones) draw their energy from the central reactor (in the white zone). This works just like transferring energy into shields. Green blocks are moved from the central reactor to bring the lateral reactor up to maximum capacity. If there are not enough blocks, the lateral reactor takes all there are.

You never get to choose how much energy to take. You just push the big **B** button and the system automatically transfers as much energy as possible.

In the lower central station, action **B** means fueling the central reactor. Return 1 fuel capsule (green cylinder) to the bank and take enough green blocks from the bank to fill the reactor to maximum capacity. If you play action **B** when the reactor is already full, you still have to return the fuel capsule to the bank even though you don't get any more energy. Once the last fuel capsule is spent, action **B** has no effect in this station.



Example: Yellow plays action **B**. He puts one fuel capsule into the bank and takes 3 green blocks to bring the central reactor up to 5. Red and Blue do nothing this turn.

On the next turn, Red and Yellow play action **B** and Blue plays action **A**. In this case, order is important. Red is the captain and goes first, then Blue, then Yellow. Red draws 3 blocks from the central reactor to fill up the

starboard reactor to maximum capacity. Blue takes one of these blocks and moves it to the cannon to indicate that it is activated. Finally Yellow burns another capsule and fills the central reactor back up to 5.

If Blue had been the captain and played first (followed by Yellow and Red) it would work like this: First, Blue would try to activate the cannon. This would fail because there are no blocks in the starboard reactor. Next Yellow would give a fuel capsule to the bank but would not gain any blocks because the reactor is already full. Finally Red would move 3 blocks from the central reactor to the starboard reactor – too late to do any good on this turn.

Please note that you only have 3 fuel capsules, so on a difficult mission, it will be necessary to conserve energy and only re-fuel the central reactor when it is almost empty. Even so, it is better to waste a little bit of fuel than to be without energy at a critical moment. More than once it has happened that... No, go ahead. Finish your snack. I know you young people need your energy. No. Don't apologize. I know that my years of experience mean nothing to you. You'll find out soon enough when a Giant Destroyer is bearing down on your ship and you are frantically clicking the fire button when the reactor is empty... Oh dear. I seem to have frightened some of you. Don't worry, miss. There won't be any Giant Destroyers, of course. I just got a bit carried away... Hmmm...



COMPUTE DAMAGE

It was a great advance in warfare when the complicated, archaic "point-and-click" weapons system was replaced by simply "click"; nevertheless, you have to know quite a bit to use these weapons effectively. Will one shot be enough to deal with the enemy? Should you fire once more to be sure, or should you save energy?

You need to know both the strength of your guns and their range, and you need to know how to read the information the computer is sending you.

In this step of the Resolution Round, you resolve all of your ship's cannon fire. The cannons which will fire are marked by a yellow or green block (representing the energy they will consume). The characteristics of the weapons are given right on the Spaceship Board.

Weapons

First you determine if the weapons can hit anything.

Heavy and light laser cannons work the same – they can only hit a threat coming at their zone of the ship. The laser cannons in the red zone can only hit things coming in on the red zone's trajectory. They cannot shoot at things coming in on the white or blue zone's trajectories. If there is no number token on the corresponding Trajectory Board, a laser cannon does not hit anything (but it still uses the energy). If there are one or more tokens there, it hits the nearest one (the one which is the fewest squares from the ship). If two tokens are on the same square, the laser cannon hits the one with the lower number.



There are three squares next to every laser cannon. This indicates that they have a range of 3. If you look at the Trajectory Boards, you will see that they are divided into three regions. These are the three distances. The nearest 5 squares are at distance 1. The next 5 are at distance 2. The remaining squares are at distance 3. This is the maximum possible distance, so any threat the computer picks up is already in range of the laser cannons.

(Please note that the X, Y, and Z don't have anything to do with distance.)

The number associated with the laser cannon is its strength. Your light cannons have strength 2, and your heavy cannons have strength 4 or 5.

The pulse cannon works differently. It only has strength 1, but it hits every threat within its range on all 3 trajectories. The pulse cannon has a range of 2, so it won't hit threats that are very far away.

Threats

The computer has an extensive database of interstellar threats and is capable of displaying very accurate information.



In this step, the relevant attributes of the threat card are its hit points (the number in the red splat-mark) and its shield points (the number in the green shield).

The hit points tell how much damage has to be dealt to the threat in order to destroy it. The shield points tell how much damage it can absorb in a turn before taking damage.

The text beneath the illustration is also important. Some threats are immune to certain types of attacks.

Computing Damage

We must now confront the unfortunate fact that most of our enemies also have shields, which seem to be always fully charged. Oftentimes it is necessary to coordinate fire in order to have an impact.

To compute damage, first find everything that is shooting at that threat this turn. Add up the strengths of all these attacks. From this sum, subtract the enemy's shield points. The amount that is left is the amount of damage done to the threat.

Damage is denoted by red blocks that you place on the threat card. (A big red block represents 5 little ones.)

These damage blocks remain from one turn to the next. If the number of accumulated red blocks meets or exceeds the threat's hit points, it is destroyed. Remove the token from the Trajectory Board and give the threat card to the captain as a trophy.

Note: All targets are determined before computing damage. This means that if 2 threats are coming in on the red zone's trajectory, both laser cannons in the red zone will shoot at the one in front. Even if the damage from one cannon is sufficient to destroy the nearer threat, the other cannon will not shoot at the farther one. The laser cannons cannot hit the farther threat until the turn after the nearer one is destroyed.

As you have probably figured out by now, the reason damage is computed after all players have performed their actions is because of the way shields work. All attacks hit the foe at the same time and the protection of the shields is subtracted only once. This means it is advantageous to coordinate fire, especially against foes with strong shields.



Example 1: The Fighter is coming in on the red zone's trajectory. The red zone's heavy laser cannon will do 2 damage to it. ($4 - 2 = 2$.) The heavy laser can destroy it by firing in 2 turns. This uses 2 blocks of energy, 1 each turn. The light laser cannon by itself would use no energy, but it would do no damage. ($2 - 2 = 0$.)

However, if one player fires the heavy cannon and another player fires the light cannon on the same turn, the fighter will take 4 damage ($4 + 2 - 2 = 4$) and be destroyed at the cost of only 1 block of energy.

Example 2: If the Fighter comes in on the white zone's trajectory, the central laser cannon can hit it. This does 3 damage ($5 - 2 = 3$). To destroy it in one turn, another player would have to fire the pulse cannon. That

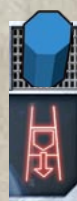
has strength 1, so a minimal shield can stop it, but it is helpful when used in conjunction with other weapons. When it is added to the central heavy laser, the fighter will take 4 points of damage. ($5 + 1 - 2 = 4$.) This will cost 2 blocks of energy. You could achieve the same effect for the same cost by firing the heavy laser cannon twice, but this would take two turns. Furthermore, the pulse cannon is firing on all trajectories, so its damage is added to attacks on other threats as well.

Keep in mind, however, that in order to use the pulse cannon to destroy the fighter, it has to be within range. The pulse cannon only has a range of 2.

Consuming Energy

After computing damage, take the blocks off the weapons. Green blocks (on the heavy laser cannons and the pulse cannon) are returned to the bank. Yellow blocks (on the light laser cannons) are returned to that cannon's power pack.

The illustration on the Mission Steps Board reminds you to remove the blocks.



THREAT MOVEMENT AND ACTIONS

Ah, I see a flicker of hope in your eyes. Hearing about the destruction of your enemies awakens within you the heart of the warrior, does it? Wonderful!

Now don't forget that the enemy does fight back. Hm. And the flame of hope flickers out.

In this step you resolve the movement and actions of the threats. You begin with the lowest-numbered threat (the one which appeared first) and proceed in order to the highest-numbered one.

The threat moves first, and then performs any indicated action. Once its movement and action are resolved, move on to the next threat.

You only consider threats with tokens on a trajectory. Those threats that do not yet have tokens on a trajectory (because they will not appear until a later turn) and those which you destroyed or survived (see below) take no actions.

Movement

We have countless data points collected from the black boxes of... Um... Well, we have collected a lot of data on the enemy's patterns of behavior, so the ship's computer is able to give reliable estimates of an attacker's speed and probable behavior.



Advance the threat's token along the Trajectory Board by a number of squares equal to the threat's speed – the number given in the white arrow. If the token lands on or passes through a square labeled, X, Y, or Z, it executes the corresponding action described on its card.

Some threats do not have an X or Y action. In this case, nothing happens when these threats pass through an X or Y square. All threats have a Z action, which they execute when their token reaches the last square on the trajectory.

Note that the longer trajectories have multiple Y squares. These give you more time to deal with the threat, but they also allow threats to take more actions. The shortest trajectories do not have any Y square.

Particularly speedy threats may pass through multiple action squares in one turn. In this case, they execute all those actions in order.

Typical Actions

Now I'm not going to lie to you. The enemy's most common action is to attack your ship. You should try to destroy them before they have a chance to act. If you can't, at least try to have your shields up.

The most common action is an attack of a specified strength. Unless otherwise specified, the threat attacks the zone it is flying toward. (A threat in the left trajectory will attack the red zone, for example.)

Shields may absorb some or all of the attack. **Each block of energy in the shield prevents one point of damage.** This uses the energy up. Return the block to the bank.

If the energy in the shield cannot absorb all of the damage of the attack (or if there is no energy in the shield at all) the remaining damage is done to that zone of the ship. Damage is represented by red blocks placed on the damaged zone. (Place them on the boundary between the lower and upper decks. Damage applies to the entire zone. No distinction is made between lower and upper.)



Example: The Fighter appears on the blue zone's trajectory at time T+2. When threats move during turn 1, it does nothing because it is not on the board yet. Its token is placed on the trajectory at the beginning of turn 2. Players get a chance to shoot at it. If it survives, it will move 3 squares toward the ship during the Threat Actions step. Because it does not reach the X square, it performs no actions. Players will have one more chance to destroy it before it acts during turn 3.

Suppose that the players do not shoot it and choose instead to power up the blue zone's shield. (This will put it at its maximum of 2 blocks.)

In the turn 3 Threat Actions step, the fighter crosses the X square. This causes it to execute the action Attack 1. The shield has enough energy to repel this attack. You remove 1 green block from the shield and nothing else happens to the ship.

In the turn 4 Threat Actions step, the fighter crosses the Y square and executes the Y action: Attack 2. One point of damage is absorbed by the shield (the shield loses its remaining green block) and one point of damage is done to the blue zone (a red block is placed in the blue zone). Now the shield is empty. During turn 5, the fighter will reach another Y square and attack again. With no shield, this attack does 2 damage to the ship. If the players still cannot destroy it, the fighter will reach the Z square on the next turn and do 3 more damage. If the players manage to re-charge the shield, 2 of this damage will be absorbed and the ship will take only 1 more point.

Some attacks are made against all zones of the ship. This is treated as three separate attacks, one on each zone.

Some threats have non-standard actions. These are described on the card. If you have a question about the card, you can look it up in the appendix in the Rulebook.

Surviving a Threat

The good news is that the enemy can't keep attacking forever. They eventually fly past your ship and look for another target. Well, except for kamikazes, of course, but I don't see any point in discussing them. It would just scare you. What's that? Why bring them up, then? Good question, miss. I don't know why I even mentioned them...

When a threat reaches (or passes over) the last square in the trajectory, it executes its final action (labeled Z). After this, it no longer attacks and it cannot be shot at. Your crew is said to have "survived" this threat (unless it destroys your ship, of course).

Remove its token from the trajectory. Give the card not to the captain, but to the communications officer. The captain keeps trophies of destroyed threats and the communications officer keeps those that you survived.



JUMP TO HYPERSPACE

And then your mission is complete and your ship jumps back into hyperspace. If it can. Well, you see, your ship is so big because we can't build a hyperspace engine any smaller. That's why you need to keep all the zones of the ship intact. If one zone is destroyed, you can't get back. The good news is that the computer automatically calculates when the ship will be destroyed and uses a small burst from the engine to send back the black box just before the fatal impact. Once the black box is retrieved, we can analyze it to determine how your mission failed... Hm. I see you aren't impressed.

Well, the other good news is that when a zone of the ship is destroyed, the other zones are hermetically sealed, which prevents the remaining crew members from experiencing immediate decompression, allowing them to survive for, um, perhaps another hour or two. Hmmm.

Each zone of the ship can take up to 6 points of damage. If any zone takes 7 or more points of damage, it is destroyed and you lose the game, regardless of which zone your figure is in at the time.

SUMMARY OF THE MISSION STEPS

Now consider the Mission Steps Board as a whole. Each row is one phase of the mission. (Phases are important to the Action Round. On your test flight, phases are not so important to the Resolution Round.) Note that each turn is divided into several steps in which threats appear, you move, and then the threats move.

Tip: You need to be aware of which threats are in play on which turns. If you are on turn 4, then the T+4 threat has just come into play (and is at the beginning of its trajectory). Threats with higher numbers are not in play yet (so you can't shoot at the T+6 threat). Threats with lower numbers have already moved toward your ship. They may still be in play, they may have been destroyed, or they may have already reached the end of their trajectories. To help you keep things straight, you can use the numbered tokens to help you plan in the Action Round. And of course, you can use the blocks and figures to represent the state you think the ship will be in at a given time.

For beginners, remember this simple rule: You can't shoot at a threat with a higher number on a lower-numbered turn.

And that is it, cadets. Well, I suppose I should draw your attention to the fact that after you have performed your last actions, you have to suffer through two more of the enemy's moves before you jump into hyperspace. You see, you want to get into a stable position before the jump: with your spine curled, knees tucked to your chest, hands either tucked inside or clasped at the back of your neck. You know, the standard position so that your body takes up as little space as possible. You don't want to have any extremities stretched by the irregularities of the hyperspace field... as this picture illustrates.

See, miss? That's why you shouldn't eat during class.

LESSON 4 – YOUR FIRST TEST RUN

So now, if you were paying attention in class, or if you managed to obtain a legible copy of someone else's notes, you should be ready for your first test run. Double check your equipment, and as soon as that young lady gets back from the restroom we can begin.

ACTION ROUND

Be sure you have the board set up as shown on page 4.

Start the soundtrack and play the Action Round as described in Lesson

2. (If you don't have a CD player, the player taking the role of timekeeper should start the stopwatch and read from the script at the indicated times.) The communications officer needs to set up threats announced by the computer. Before the soundtrack ends, you all need to have your action cards in place.

**You can start playing now.
There is no need to read ahead.**

RESOLUTION ROUND

Well? How did you like it, cadets? Oh. You look a bit shell shocked. Well, come with me into the lecture room and we'll take a look at the video of your performance.

Take your seats and we'll have a look at what you did, step-by-step.

If you moved any pieces during the Action Round, return everything to its initial state. You can also look at the Scenario Card and check that the communications officer set up the threat cards correctly.

Put the mission step marker on the first space of the Mission Steps Board and play out the steps as described in Lesson 3. It can happen that someone mixed up red and blue, or played a card wrong way up. That is not good. In a standard game, that can cause serious trouble. Because this is your first time playing, you are allowed to correct these mistakes in the test run.

If you understood the rules and the sequence of events, things should go like this:

***** Spoiler Warning: Skip over the following text if you have not yet tried your first flight. *****

Even before your first action, a Pulse Ball appeared. If you managed to destroy it, you probably shot it twice with the blue zone's heavy laser cannon or (if you were well synchronized) you shot it with both of the blue zone's cannons in the same turn. That takes at least three turns, however (move to the right, shoot, shoot; or move to the right, wait for another player to move to the right and move down, and shoot simultaneously). On turn 2, the Pulse Ball reaches the X square and attacks all three zones of the ship with strength 1. This uses up 1 energy block in each shield. That's okay. Sometimes it is not possible to destroy the threat before it takes its first action. That's why you have shields. On the other hand, if you didn't destroy the Pulse Ball at all, you would be in trouble. Actions Y, Y, and Z would cause a lot of damage.

Before your second action, a Destroyer appeared on the central trajectory. It can be destroyed by two shots from the central heavy laser cannon (each shot does 5-2=3 damage). If you fired the central cannon on turn 1, that did nothing because the Destroyer was not in play yet. It is best to shoot it on turns 2 and 3. That destroys it before it even executes its first attack.

Another way to deal with the Destroyer is to charge the central shield on turn 3. The trajectory only has X and Z actions, which do 3 damage – exactly as much as the central shield can absorb, if it hasn't been depleted by the Pulse Ball.

If you don't defend against the Destroyer, you are in trouble. The Pulse Ball wears down your central shield at the end of turn 2 and the Destroyer card tells you that its attacks against an unshielded zone of the ship do double damage. The X and Z attacks could do 6 damage if there is no central shield.

The final threat is the Stealth Fighter which appeared at time T+3. If you paid attention to the card's text, you saw that there is no point in shooting at it until it executes its X action. Until then, nothing can hit it. Most groups are not able to destroy the Stealth Fighter in their first test run before it makes at least one attack. If you did, good for you. The only way is to fire simultaneously from both of the red zone's cannons on turn 5. The sequence is as follows: It appears on turn 3, you get an action, and it moves. Because it does not cross the X square, it cannot be hit by your actions on turn 3 or turn 4. On turn 4, it crosses the X square, so it can be hit on turn 5. A combined attack from both of the red zone's cannons will destroy it. ($4 + 2 - 2 = 4$.) If it is not destroyed by player actions on turn 5, it makes its move past the Y square and attacks.

The Stealth Fighter can also be defended against by using shields. That requires precise timing of energy transfers. The central reactor must be re-charged and the energy sent to the portside reactor at the right time.

EVALUATION

Well, my dear cadets, such was your performance. I have to say it's not the worst test run I've ever seen.

The instructor says this to every class regardless of whether they handled it perfectly (so their success won't go to their heads) or whether their ship blew up (to keep them from getting discouraged). How did your crew do?

If your ship was destroyed and you failed to destroy most of the enemies, don't worry. That happens to most crews in their first flight. That's what the test run is for. Try the second test run in Lesson 4a now that you have a better idea of how the game works.

If your ship only took moderate damage and you destroyed at least two enemies, then you can try the second test run in Lesson 4a or go straight to Lesson 5. Be warned, Lesson 5 is much more difficult.

If your first flight was without any damage, except for maybe a scratch or two, you can skip Lesson 4a. It's clear you know what is going on and you don't need a second test run.

LESSON 4A – YOUR SECOND TEST RUN

What? One test wasn't enough? You certainly are a hard-working class. Of course we have another test run prepared. It might make class go over into lunch hour, but anything for you, cadets. After all, we're all in the same boat! Ha ha! ... Oh, don't look so sad, cadet. You can skip lunch just this once, can't you?

If you handled the threat cards properly in your first test run, your threat deck should be left with three cards (with codes **E1-04**, **E1-05** and **E1-06**) which are to be used in your second test run.

Set up the game boards the same way, except with different Trajectory Boards this time: use board **T3** for the red zone, board **T5** for the white zone, and board **T1** for the blue zone.



Use soundtrack 2, "Second Test Run", on the tutorial CD. (Or, if you don't have a CD player, find the S1-2 Scenario Card.)

Play through the second test run according to the same rules as for your first test run.

RESOLUTION ROUND

Mmmm. Mmmmm. Oh, you're back! Excuse me. While you were in the simulator, I stepped over to the faculty cafeteria and picked up a little snack. I'll just finish up while we're watching the video of your performance.

Return the ship to the initial state. Check to be sure the communications officer set up the threat cards correctly. (In this test run, they should have numbers 1, 2, and 4. No threat was announced for time T+3.) Place the mission step marker on the first space of the Mission Steps Board. You can begin the Resolution Round.

***** Spoiler Warning: Skip over the following text if you have not yet tried your first flight. *****

An Energy Cloud appeared on the white trajectory at time T+1. There are two ways to destroy it. Three shots from the central heavy laser cannon will do two damage per shot (and you can start shooting on the first turn). A more elegant solution is to combine one shot of the heavy laser cannon with a shot from the pulse cannon. The pulse cannon will reduce the Energy Cloud's shield points to 0, as specified by the card. However, this does not work until the third turn: on turns 1 and 2, the Energy Cloud is still beyond the range of the pulse cannon.

Either way, you cannot destroy the Energy Cloud until the third turn, which means that at the end of turn 2, it drains all your shields. We hope you didn't waste energy powering them up beforehand. We certainly hope you managed to destroy the Energy cloud: its Y and Z actions are to attack the other two zones of your ship (in this case, the red zone and the blue zone).

Now let's look at what happened on the red side. A Gunship appeared at time T+2. Gunships are slower than Fighters, but they are tougher and more dangerous. If you tried to destroy it with just the heavy laser cannon, you only did 2 damage per shot, and the second shot exhausted your red zone reactor. If no one re-filled the reactor, the Gunship could do 7 damage to your red zone. (Shields were drained in turn 2 by the Energy Cloud.)

A better solution would be to coordinate fire on the Gunship. The heavy and light cannon together do $6 - 2 = 4$ damage. It would be enough to fire at the Gunship on turn 2 with the heavy cannon and on turn 3 with both. (You can't fire with both cannons earlier than turn 3. Someone has to move down and to the left, which takes 2 turns.)

Did you come up with something more elegant? Turn 3 is your first chance to destroy the Energy Cloud with the help of the pulse cannon. If you wait until turn 3, you can fire the central cannon, both red zone cannons, and the pulse cannon to destroy the Energy Cloud and the Gunship on one turn. If you actually did that, we are impressed.

All that is left is the Cryoshield Fighter which comes in rapidly on a short trajectory, so you don't have much time to deal with it. It appears at time T+4. Its cryoshield means that the first time it gets hit, it ignores the

damage, so concentrating fire on turn 4 is pointless. You can shoot at it with either blue zone laser cannon or even with the pulse cannon. (On its short trajectory, it is already within range when it appears.) One shot is all it takes to knock down its cryoshield and you will be able to damage it normally on the next turn. A coordinated shot from the light and heavy laser cannons or from the heavy laser cannon and the pulse cannon will destroy it in one turn. If you can do this on turn 5, the Cryoshield Fighter will not have a chance to damage your ship. If you were too slow, and if you did not transfer power back to your shields, it would damage the blue zone on turns 5 and 6.

EVALUATION

Mmmmm. That was excellent! Oh, is the video over? Yes, of course, your test run was good, too... wasn't it?

While the instructor is digesting his lunch, let's look at how you did.

If you managed to destroy most of the threats, or if you destroyed one and soaked up some of the damage with your shields, then your ship did not get damaged too badly and you are ready to go on.

If the threats got by your defenses yet again, the next step is up to you. You can try either of the test runs again. (Don't forget to set up the correct trajectories, threat cards, and soundtrack). If you think you have figured out where you went wrong and you are sure you can handle the test runs without any trouble, you can go on to the next lesson.

LESSON 5 – SIMULATED MISSION

Today we will be sending you on your first mission... What's with all the long faces? Oh! You don't feel like you are fully prepared. That's a relief. I was afraid you'd somehow gotten hold of a video from one of the black boxes.

Perhaps this will reassure you: we won't be sending you on a real mission. We'll just be using a larger and more realistic simulator. Obviously, we won't be shooting you out into space until you are well trained. Not when there is an expensive spaceship at stake. Eh? Oh, right. And your lives. Yes. That goes without saying.

Before you board the simulator, let's talk about a few details that have not yet been covered in class.

LENGTH OF THE FLIGHT

Now, I think I mentioned this in an earlier lecture, but I'll remind you that a real mission lasts 10 minutes. Yes. It should always take 10 minutes. Although, some of them have been much shorter, believe me.

Because you are now experienced cadets, let's assume that in 10 minutes you can perform about 12 actions.

Place the Mission Steps Board so that the more complicated side is up. As you can see, a flight is now divided into 3 phases, with a total of 12 turns. You will need to use your Third Phase Action Board for the third phase of the flight (turns 8-12). Place it next to or below your First and Second Phase Action Board (turns 1-7).

When dealing action cards, give each player 5 cards for the first phase, 5 for the second, and 5 for the third. There should be one pile of 5 cards on each phase of the Action Board.



The third phase works just like the others. As soon as you are satisfied with your second phase actions, you may pick up your last pile of cards

and begin planning actions 8-12. Once you pick up the third pile you can no longer change any of the actions placed on the Action Board for the first two phases.

FACE DOWN ACTION CARDS

Now the big simulator, as you can see, looks a lot more like a real ship. It's bigger, for one thing, with real walls, floors, and ceilings. This makes communication more difficult. Your crewmates in another station cannot see you. And they cannot hear you scream. Um, "speak". That's why your helmets have built in ear phones and microphones.

Unlike the test run, in a real mission **players play their action cards face down**. You are allowed to tell other players which cards you are playing and to use the game pieces to illustrate your actions, but no one can see which cards you planned; they know only what you tell them.

You can look at your planned actions at any time, but you can only change them if you have not yet started the next phase. Note that the back of the action card indicates whether it is a movement or an action, so at least the other players will be able to see in which turns you are moving, performing actions or waiting.

During a Player Actions step of the Resolution Round, all players simultaneously reveal their actions for that turn. Then they perform their actions in order, starting with the captain.

Do not turn your card upside down when revealing your action. You need to flip it over from left to right, not from bottom to top. This may take a while to get used to if you are in the habit of doing it the other way. You might have better luck remembering if you use your other hand.



THREATS AND TRAJECTORIES





Now unlike the test run, this will not be a prepared scenario. The simulator will generate the threats and trajectories randomly. We designed it this way to prevent cadets from getting too much information from the class ahead of them... Although that has not turned out to be a problem... Hmm...

I suppose I should warn you that the threats encountered in the simulated mission can be much more dangerous than those little guys you defended against in the test runs.

For the simulated mission, take the 7 Trajectory Boards, shuffle them, and place 3 at random in the appropriate locations next to the Spaceship Board.

You will not use the green threat cards on this mission. Set them aside in the box.



Separate the purple cards according to the symbol in the upper left corner. There are 4 categories of threat:

-  – common threat. (You have already encountered these.)
-  – serious threat.
-  – advanced common threat.
-  – advanced serious threat.


You will not be dealing with advanced threats on this mission, so return the cards with yellow symbols to the box. You will be left with the white-symboled common and serious threat cards. Shuffle each of these decks and put them in front of the communications officer. Note that even from the back you can tell if the card is a common threat or a serious threat.



Threats with Variable Parameters

Some threats change their parameters when they execute an X or Y action. They might increase their speed, or raise or lower shields. If a parameter can change, it is marked with a  or  symbol.

To help keep track, there are black and white blocks. When a threat's shields or speed increases, place a white block next to the corresponding number. If the parameter decreases, use a black block. A black block can also be used to denote that the Cryoshield Fighter (which you may know from Lesson 4a) or Cryoshield Frigate has been hit already.




A  symbol associated with a threat's hit points indicates that the threat can heal or repair itself. It has an X or Y action which will tell you to remove a certain number of red blocks from it. (If it is undamaged when it performs this action, nothing happens.)

SOUNDTRACKS

There are three simulated missions (titled "Simulation 1", "Simulation 2", and "Simulation 3") on tracks 3, 4, and 5 of the tutorial CD. Choose any one of these. (If you don't have a CD player, appoint a timekeeper and find one of the Scenario Cards S1-3, S1-4 or S1-5 for him or her to read.)

There are a few announcements in the simulated missions that were not heard in the test runs.

Time T+3. Serious Threat. Zone White. Repeat. Time T+3. Serious Threat. Zone white.

Sometimes the computer announces a "serious threat" instead of a "threat". When it is just a "threat", the communications officer draws the threat card from the deck labeled . For a serious threat, the card is drawn from the deck labeled . In this case, the communications officer would draw the top card from the  deck, place it near the central trajectory ("zone white") and give it the (3) token.

Unconfirmed report. Time T+5. Threat. Zone Blue. Repeat. Unconfirmed report. Time +5. Threat. Zone Blue.

Unconfirmed reports allow the same soundtrack to be used in either a four- or five-player game. **If you have fewer than 5 players, ignore the unconfirmed reports.** In a five-player game, you have to deal with the threats announced by the unconfirmed reports.

Communication System Down
... Communications restored.

This announcement means that your team's headphones have stopped working. The soundtrack begins to emit static. Until communication is restored, **players are not allowed to talk or plan together in any way.** You are allowed to place action cards and to move figures and blocks around the Spaceship Board. This is a good time to pause and think. **Also it is a good time to read the threat cards carefully.**



Second phase ends in one minute.

Second phase ends in twenty seconds.


Second phase ends in five, four, three, two, one. Second phase has ended. Begin third phase.

As with the first phase, the second phase has a series of announcements warning you that it is about to end. Once the soundtrack announces the end, you can no longer change any of your second phase actions. It is time to pick up your last pile of cards and plan your third phase actions.

NEW SYSTEMS

Now we will cover a couple new shipboard systems which should be of interest to you: rockets and the computer. These are labeled with the letter . Yes. Good observation. There are other systems that are also labeled . We will cover those in a later lecture. That's right, this still is not the full simulation. But I'm sure there will be enough going on to keep you busy.


Rockets

Your ship is equipped with three self-guided rockets. They are located in the lower deck of the blue zone and are labeled with the letter . When you launch a rocket it automatically targets the nearest enemy ship and hits it. Rockets are programmed to identify and target machines, so they ignore interstellar organisms and mineral formations.

Actually, there is a bit of an art to figuring out what a rocket is going to hit. In fact (I probably shouldn't be telling you this) sometimes it's a good idea to launch a rocket just in case. Sometimes this ends up saving the entire ship, and you can claim that you knew what you were doing all along.

During setup, place three rocket figures on the Spaceship Board.



Rockets do not use up energy. When you play action  in the lower blue station, it launches 1 rocket. Place a rocket figure on the first square of the rocket track.


The rocket does not hit a target on the turn in which it is launched. When computing damage, ignore a rocket on the first square of the rocket track.




The rocket moves at the end of the Threat Actions step, as indicated by the rocket in the illustration on the left:



After resolving the movement and actions of the threats, move the rocket from the first square of the rocket track to the second square.

The rocket impacts on the next Compute Damage step. **The rocket targets the nearest threat, on any trajectory, that is within range and targetable by rockets.** A rocket has a range of 2, so it can only hit a threat in the two nearest regions of the trajectories. Many threats cannot be targeted by rockets. This is written on the card, accompanied by the symbol . The rocket ignores these threats. From the others, choose the one closest to the ship (fewest squares away from the Z square). In case of ties, the rocket targets the threat with the lower number. If the rocket has no legal target within range, it disappears without having any effect.

A rocket does 3 damage, which is treated just like any other attack: add it into the total damage to that threat, subtract the threat's shield points, and give the threat that many blocks of damage. After computing damage, return the rocket to the bank. You only get 3 rockets per mission. Once they are gone, action  does nothing in that station.

You can only launch one rocket per turn. It is possible to launch another rocket on the following turn. The first rocket will be on the second square by then (it moved when the threats moved) and the new rocket can go on the first square. In the next step (Compute Damage) the first rocket will be returned to the bank, leaving a square for the new rocket to move into during the Threat Actions step.

Tip: When combining a rocket with cannon fire, note that the rocket must be launched the turn before the cannon is activated. If you shoot the laser cannon on turn 4, you need to launch the rocket on turn 3.

Computer Maintenance


Of course, you are already acquainted with the shipboard computer. On the actual ship, the computer terminal is located on the bridge. I'm sure I don't need to tell you that the computer is your most loyal ally, and without its accurate reports and clear diagrams, you would be completely lost in space.

But there is one thing: It needs a bit of, um, maintenance. Oh, nothing complicated! You just need to, you know, push a button from time to time. Otherwise it thinks you don't need it and it turns on the screensaver, which, because of the way the ship is wired, um, turns off the lights for a while. That can slow you down a bit.

Oh, yes, we've considered disabling the screensaver, but we can't do that because it contains an advertisement for our sponsor, Corporation Incorporated. So just, from time to time, give the computer a little push, okay?

Computer maintenance has to be done once each phase in one of the first two turns. Checking to see if the computer was maintained is a special step that happens once each phase. (If you don't like the screensaver explanation, you can pretend you are running a diagnostic or changing memory chips or some other computer maintenance procedure. Just don't forget to push the button.)



During setup, place 3 gray blocks next to the computer on the Spaceship Board. When anyone performs action  in the upper white station, move a gray block to the Computer Maintenance Check step of the Mission Steps Board. It goes in the same row as the step currently being dealt with. That is, it applies to the same phase of the mission. If this action is taken more than once in the same phase, don't move any more gray blocks – just one per phase.

From the location of this step, it should be clear that the computer has to be maintained on one of the first two turns of the phase. When the step marker gets here, check to see if it has a gray block on it yet. **If this space has no gray block, it means the crew neglected to maintain the computer. All players' actions for the next turn are delayed. (See below.)**

DELAYS

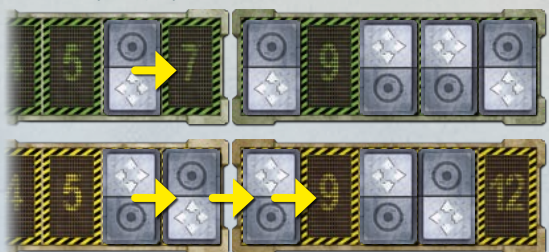
Sometimes when you think you've planned for everything, things just don't work out. Someone is just a bit too slow, and everything falls apart. You have to expect these little setbacks.

When a card or a rule says a certain turn's action is delayed, the following happens: if there is an action card planned for that turn, take it and move it ahead one turn. If there is a card there, move it ahead one turn as well, and so on until you move an action card into a turn that had no action or until you have moved all your remaining actions ahead. (In the latter case, your last action card is moved off your Action Board and does not happen.)

If your crew neglects computer maintenance, everyone is delayed. The action you planned for the following turn will be one turn late (as will all subsequent actions if you had planned one for every turn).

Example: No one executed a computer maintenance action in turn 4 or 5. This means everyone's turn 6 action is delayed. They must shift their action cards. Green only has to move one card. Yellow has to move 3. Blue has to move all his action cards, and the action he planned for turn 12 will not happen at all. Red had no action planned for turn 6, so Red does not have to move any cards.

Thanks to the delay, no player will take an action on turn 6.



Tripping

In the chaos of a mission, anything can happen. And the slightest slip or stumble can cost you precious seconds. Heh, heh. I once saw a rather comical video in which a space explorer was running to go through a door and instead slammed his head into the wall. Needless to say, he didn't get the shields up in time. Hmmm... you're not laughing. Yes, well, the investigation committee didn't think it was funny either.

With the cards face down, it is easy to make mistakes. You play a red arrow when you meant to play a blue one, or you place the card upside down so that instead of firing the laser cannon, you use the gravolift. If you were stuck with that mistake, the rest of your actions would make no sense because you would be in a completely different place than you had planned. So there is a rule about tripping.

If you turn up a card and discover that you mixed up your arrows or that you mixed up the action half with the movement half, you can say, "Oops! I tripped." You can correct your mistake and perform the action you originally intended this turn, but your next action is delayed. Your next action (and probably several subsequent actions) happens one turn later than you intended.

Do not abuse this rule. You cannot use it to get an extra red arrow by playing a blue arrow and claiming you tripped. During the Resolution Round, you have to play according to what you thought you planned in the Action Round. Don't try to figure out if things will work out better by saying you tripped or by keeping the action you laid down on your Action Board. The rule is not there to allow you to correct mistakes in planning. The rule is only there to prevent a mis-played card from ruining the game.

Gravolifts and Ladders

And sometimes you'll be running for the gravolift and you'll find out that it's already occupied. That's right. There is only room for one passenger. And surely you didn't think it was possible for someone to go up while someone else was going down! Sometimes it's faster just to use the service ladder.

Each gravolift can only be used by one player per turn. If multiple players try to use the same gravolift on the same turn, it can only the first player can use it (the captain, or the player closest to the captain's left – rank has its privileges). All the other players have to use the ladder. When you use the ladder, your figure changes decks, but your next turn's action is delayed. (See Delays above.)

DAMAGE TO YOUR SHIP








And then, of course, there is always the possibility that hostile cannon fire will put your gravolift out of order. This surprises you? You think a real ship will just count up hits and then declare "Game Over"? A spaceship is full of complicated, delicate electronics. After a hit or two, systems cease to perform optimally.

From now on, the red blocks will only be used to indicate damage to threats. To keep track of damage to your ship, you use the 18 octagonal damage tiles. During setup, separate these tiles according to their colors (red, white, and blue). Shuffle each stack and place them above the Spaceship Board, each pile next to the end of the corresponding Trajectory Board.



Whenever a zone of the ship takes one or more points of damage, turn up that many damage tiles from the corresponding stack. These depict various parts of the ship. Place them on the Spaceship Board so that they cover up

the part depicted.

-   A hit on a heavy or light laser cannon reduces its effectiveness, lowering its strength by 1. (The number on the damage tile covers up the original value.)
-  A hit on the pulse cannon reduces its range by 1.
-   A hit on a reactor or shield reduces its capacity. (The number on the damage tile covers up the original value.) If it currently has more energy than its new capacity, return the excess to the bank.
-  A hit on a gravolift knocks it out of order. If you planned to use a damaged gravolift, you have to use the service ladder instead. Your figure changes decks, but your next action is delayed.
-  Structural damage does not harm any of your systems, but it still counts as damage.

Just as in the test run, a zone of your ship can only withstand 6 points of damage. (You have 6 damage tiles for each zone of the ship). If you have to draw a damage tile and none are left, that zone of the ship breaks apart and you lose the game.

Tip: Note that damage tiles are not revealed until the Resolution Round. This means that once your ship gets hit, you can't be sure what will happen. If your plan includes taking a hit, you need to consider the possibility that your systems will be damaged. Maybe you should fire an extra shot instead of risking the possibility that a crippled cannon fails to destroy the foe as planned.

READY FOR ACTION

Be sure your ship is set up properly.



Here is a summary of the new game elements:

- A mission has 3 phases and 12 turns.
- Action cards are played face down.
- There are two types of threats: common threats and serious threats.

- Ignore unconfirmed reports if you have fewer than 5 players.
- When communications are down, you cannot talk to each other.
- Rockets strike the nearest legal target (if one is in range) on the turn after they are fired.
- You need to maintain the computer on one of the first two turns of each phase. Otherwise everyone is delayed.
- If you mis-play a card, you can say, "Oops! I tripped."
- If multiple players try to use the same gravolift at the same time, only the first one can use it. The others have their next action delayed.
- Instead of using red blocks, you denote damage to your ship with damage tiles which might reduce the effectiveness of certain systems.

Tip: During the Action Round, don't just move your figures around. Make use of the energy blocks and even the numbered tiles to show where the enemy will be. This will help you in planning and synchronizing your actions.

You can try the simulated mission now.

RESOLUTION ROUND

Your ship might be destroyed in your first simulated mission. This is normal. That's why you play through a simulation before doing an actual mission. You'll do better next time.

If you completed the simulated mission successfully, you can count up your score.

Scoring

Of course we have a scoring system for evaluating your performance. We score your performance in an actual mission as well, but be aware that no one cares how many points you scored if your ship is destroyed.

You only count up score if your ship was not destroyed during the mission.

Each threat has two point values. You get the higher number of points if you destroyed the threat. You get the lower number if you survived the threat (i.e., if it arrived at the Z square and completed its attack). For enemies that are still on the trajectories when your ship goes into hyperspace, you get no points (but at least they don't get to do their Z actions).

You lose points for damage to your ship and also for risking mission failure. (If three zones have 2 damage each, that is much less risky than having 6 damage to one zone.)

Count up the score as follows:

- The captain counts up the higher point values of all the trophies destroyed.
- The communications officer counts up the lower point values of all the threats survived.
- Add those points together.
- Subtract the total damage done to all zones of the ship.
- Subtract again the damage done to the most damaged zone of the ship.

EVALUATION

Ladies and gentlemen, the simulator is now fully at your disposal. I'll see you at the next lecture.

You can play as many simulations as you want. There are only 3 soundtracks, but the trajectories and threats are determined randomly, so every game will be different.

If you don't complete the first one, the second and third will surely be better. Even if you barely escape into hyperspace (and perhaps end up with a negative score) you should consider it a success. And any score above 10 is very good.

But maybe you are interested in the other game pieces. The green cards are still in the box, along with some more tiles and classy robot figures.

LESSON 6 – ADVANCED SIMULATION

In today's lecture we will cover the remaining topics needed to prepare you for an actual mission.

INTERNAL THREATS

Unfortunately, many of the enemy aliens have developed matter transmission technology, and sometimes an alien strike team or an atomic bomb will show up right on your deck. They also have various ways to infiltrate the shipboard systems. And then of course, there are all those natural equipment malfunctions caused by the topological instability of the Universe.

Now, I don't want you to get the impression that your ship is an unstable, unreliable place that can, at any time, turn into an alien cocktail party. It's just that sometimes it seems that way. Keep in mind that you might jump into one of the sleepest sectors of the Galaxy, where nothing interesting has happened for millennia. Science fiction writers would have you believe that alien beings living in such a place would treat you as gods. And maybe they're right. What they don't mention is that most of the inhabitants of the Galaxy detest gods and like nothing better than blowing them up. So you need to expect hostile behavior from anything that boards your ship.

To help the chief of security keep things straight, the computer displays information about internal threats on the lower screen.

Nominate a chief of security who will be responsible for dealing with internal threats. The communications officer can handle this job if you prefer, but it's nice to spread the titles around.

During setup, you will need to leave some space at the bottom of the Spaceship Board for the computer's "lower screen". Draw a fourth Trajectory Board at random and put it along the bottom edge with the Z end on the right. This is the trajectory for internal threats.

Separate the green cards the same way as you do the purple: according to the symbol in the upper left corner. Set the cards with yellow symbols aside. You will be left with two decks of white-symboled green cards: common and serious internal threats. Place them in front of the chief of security.

Take all the oval tokens and place them in a pile near the Spaceship Board. These will indicate the positions of internal threats during the Resolution Round. You can also use them to help you plan during the Action Round.

During the Action Round, you might get announcements like these:

Time T+4. Internal Threat. Repeat. Time T+4. Internal Threat.

Time T+6. Serious Internal Threat. Repeat. Time T+6. Serious Internal Threat.

These announcements tell the chief of security to turn up the top threat card from the corresponding green deck (⊗ for common threats and ⊕ for serious threats). Internal threat cards should be placed near the internal threat Trajectory Board and given a token with the announced number.

Note that the communications officer is still responsible for making sure that all messages from the computer are processed. This includes making sure that the chief of security heard the announcement and assigned the correct number to the internal threat.

BATTLEBOTS

You may have noticed that two stations of your ship have a squad of battlebots in storage. These fearsome robotic warriors are equipped for battle and other specialized tasks.

If there is a need for deadly force on the deck of the ship, you should call on the battlebots. Don't try to fight off the enemy yourselves. The robots are much better equipped than you are. What's that? Has a battlebot squad ever turned on the crew? What a silly question! Hmmm... Let's move on.

During setup, lay one battlebot squad figure in the lower red station and one in the upper blue station (on the battlebot illustration). These figures should be lying down to indicate that the battlebots have not been activated.

When you execute action **C** in one of these two stations, the battlebots in that station are activated. Stand the figure up and place it next to yours. For the rest of the mission, they will follow you around the ship. Once one player has activated the squad, no one else can activate a squad at that station. There are only 2 squads on board the ship. Each player can only have one squad, and it is not possible to transfer your squad to another player.

When the battlebots are following you, you can perform your standard actions as though they were not there. In addition, however, you can perform battlebot actions **Ⓜ**. This causes the battlebots to fight an internal enemy. (See below.) Don't get these actions confused: **you pick up a squad of battlebots by executing action C in the station where they are sleeping**, not by using action **Ⓜ**. Action **Ⓜ** is only used to give orders to the squad that you have already picked up.

INTERNAL THREAT CARDS

There are two basic types of internal threat cards. Malfunctions represent a problem in a specific shipboard system, possibly caused by sabotage. Intruders represent enemies or monsters invading the ship.

Malfunctions and intruders have much in common, as you can see from the picture:

where it
appears



how to get
rid of it



Just like external threats, internal threats have a speed and X, Y, and Z actions. During the Threat Actions steps of the Resolution Round, the internal threats move along a Trajectory Board the same way the external threats do, and execute their actions when they land on or pass through X, Y and Z squares.

Internal threats also have hit points as well as point values for defeating them or surviving them.

Unlike an external threat, the soundtrack does not specify where an internal threat attacks. The card itself tells you that. In the lower left corner of the illustration frame is a schematic diagram of the ship indicating where the internal threat appears.

The symbol in the lower right corner of the illustration frame tells you how to get rid of the internal threat. If it is a malfunction, the symbol indicates which system you need to repair (**B** or **C**). If it is an intruder, the symbol indicates that you need a battlebot squad **Ⓜ**.

Malfunctions

Sometimes one of your ship's systems will begin to act funny. Instead of helping you, it becomes a threat to the ship. The ship schematic in the lower left corner of the illustration frame tells you which station is affected. The letter in the lower right corner tells you which system of that station.





Example: This malfunction affects a system in the upper red station. The **B** indicates that it is the shield that is malfunctioning.

A malfunction begins as soon as the token is placed on the Trajectory Board (at the beginning of the turn corresponding to the number on the token, before player and threat actions.)



When the threat appears, also cover the letter of the malfunctioning system on the Spaceship Board with an oval token with the same letter and inverted colors. From this moment, it is not possible to use the malfunctioning system in that station.

Performing that action in that station now means that the player is fixing the malfunction. Each attempt to fix the malfunction does 1 point of damage to the threat. (Use red blocks to count damage, just as you do with external threats.) If multiple players are in the station, they can all work on the problem, dealing multiple points of "damage" to the internal threat by performing that action, even on the same turn.

Example: To repair the Hacked Shields, players must do action  three times in the upper red station. One player can do this by playing action  in 3 consecutive turns, or other players can come help fix it faster. The faster you fix it, the less damage the malfunction can do to your ship. Each turn, it advances along its trajectory and may execute X, Y, and Z actions.



Some threats have multiple targets. In this case, mark all affected systems with corresponding oval tokens. To fix the malfunction, you can perform the actions in any of these locations.

When the card has as many red blocks as it has hit points, the malfunction is repaired. The captain takes the card as a trophy, the threat's tokens are removed, and the system is usable again – even on that turn.


If you fail to repair the malfunction and its token gets all the way to Z, the system will be unusable for the rest of the mission. Performing that action in that station will have no effect. In this case the communications officer keeps the threat card.


Intruders

All internal threats that are not tied to a specific shipboard system are called intruders. When an intruder's numbered token is placed on the internal threat Trajectory Board, find the token with the corresponding illustration and place it in the intruder's starting location, as indicated by the ship schematic in the lower left corner of the card's illustration frame.



Most intruders move about the ship. They may do this as an X or Y action during the Threat Actions step. When an intruder executes a movement action, move the token to the new station. Intruders do not use the gravolift to change decks (they can jump, scurry, or ooze through the gravolift shaft) so you do not have to worry about whether someone has already used the gravolift this turn or whether the it is out of order.



To damage an intruder, you need to be in the station where it is and perform the battlebot action .

You can only perform this action if you are leading an activated battlebot squad. If you are not being followed by a battlebot squad, action  has no effect.




If there are multiple intruders in the station, the battlebot squad targets the intruder with the lowest number.


Each time a battlebot squad damages an intruder, place a red block on the intruder's card. When the number of red blocks equals the intruder's hit points, the intruder is destroyed and the captain takes the intruder card.

If the intruder is not destroyed before its token reaches the end of the Trajectory Board, it performs its Z action and leaves the ship. Remove its token from the Spaceship Board and give the card to the communications officer.

Some intruders just get shot without returning fire. In the lower right corner of the illustration frame, they are labeled with the standard battlebot action symbol . Other intruders shoot back. These are labeled .



If you execute action  against an intruder who shoots back, you do one damage to the intruder, **but the intruder disables your battlebot squad.** Lay the squad's figure on the board. The disabled squad still follows you around wherever you go, but action  has no effect until it is re-activated. **To re-activate a disabled battlebot squad, you need to go to one of the battlebot activation stations and perform action .**

You can do this either in the station where you first activated them or in the other station (upper blue or lower red). This works even if the other battlebot squad has not been activated yet. (You are already leading the disabled squad, and only one squad is allowed per player, so it is clear that your action  is to repair that squad, not to pick up an additional one.)

It is good to repair a disabled battlebot squad even if you don't need it anymore. Disabled squads are not prepared for the hyperspace jump, and they can take additional damage during it, lowering your total score.

Tip: It can be very difficult to destroy enemies who shoot back if they have 2 hit points. You need to go re-activate your squad and come back to fight the intruder again, which is not easy because the intruder can move, too. It might be easier to coordinate with the player leading the other squad of battlebots.

Threat Actions


A threat may damage your ship as an X, Y, or Z action. **Damage from internal threats is not reduced by shields.** Unless otherwise specified, damage is done to the zone where the internal threat is located, regardless of whether it is on the upper or lower deck.



Some threats can knock out crew members. **If you are knocked out by a threat, you get no more actions on that mission.** Your remaining action cards have no effect. Remove your figure from the Spaceship Board. If are leading a battlebot squad, this squad is removed, too (and counts as disabled when scoring).


Some threats can delay players. Follow the rules for being delayed as described above.

INTERCEPTORS

Battlebots are useful even when nothing is prowling the corridors of your ship. They can pilot the interceptors accessible from the upper red station. You and your battlebot squad can leave the ship and function as the last line of defense against external threats.

If you are leading an activated battlebot team, you can use action  in the upper red station to take off in the interceptors. Remove your figure and the battlebot squad figure from the ship and place them on the space denoting active interceptors. The interceptors will attack this turn during the Compute Damage step.

If you play action  on the next turn, you keep attacking with the interceptors. You can stay in space for as long as you keep playing the battlebot action . When you are attacking with the interceptors, you are not in the ship. This means that you are not at any station and neither threat abilities that knock out players on the ship or delay their actions nor delay because of failed computer maintenance do not apply to you.

This is the only action you can perform in space. To return to the ship, play no action. If you play any action other than , that action is delayed – a "no action" is inserted for that turn and you return to the ship. When you return to the ship, you and your battlebot squad return to the upper red station.

Interceptors Attack

Interceptors attack threats on all trajectories, but they only have a range of 1. If there is only one threat within range, the interceptors do 3 damage to it. If there is more than one threat, the interceptors attack all threats within range on all trajectories and do 1 damage to each of them, regardless of how many there are.

Of course, the damage done by the interceptors is added to all the other damage done on that turn.

And that's what battlebots can do. As you see, they are quite versatile. What, miss? You say all they can do is fight? That is not true. You should see what happens after the flight when they are activated by the maintenance personnel. Each battlebot has a built-in mop on its left arm, and their dirt-finding algorithms are quite sophisticated.

READY FOR ACTION

And now we are ready to go. Um... a colleague of mine asked me to remind you that this is still only a simulation. The intruders running around your ship are just instructors from the Academy in costumes. A temperamental young lady from the previous class forgot herself in the heat of the action and... well my colleague is still limping.

Check to be sure you have set up your ship correctly.



For the advanced simulation, use track 6, 7, or 8 from the CD (S1-6, S1-7 or S1-8 Scenario Cards). These tracks are titled "Advanced Simulation". (For your first game, we recommend "Advanced Simulation 1".)

You can try the advanced simulation now.

EVALUATION

Well, how did it go? I hope it went well, because the advanced simulation is the final step before we send you off into action. That means the next lecture will be your last. Um, I don't mean, of course, that... I'm just trying to say the course is at an end.

The advanced simulation is scored the same way as the basic simulation. **When counting score, you also subtract 2 points for every player knocked out of the mission and 1 point for every battlebot team that was still disabled at the end of the mission.**

Note: If your ship returns, all players win, including those knocked out. Sometimes, it might be a part of the strategy to take one for the team.

You can play as many advanced simulations as you like. The advanced simulations are not more difficult than the basic simulations. For every additional internal threat, there is one less external threat. The purpose of the advanced simulations is to acquaint you with the internal threat game mechanisms so that they will not take you by surprise in an actual mission.

Advanced simulations are the last games before your first actual mission. You should not try an actual mission until you have won at least one advanced simulation game. Remember, there is a very expensive ship at stake!

Of course, it's really just a game, and the cute little figures are just plastic, so feel free to try your first mission whenever you want.

On the other hand, if you really want to get into the role of a space explorer, you'll need to be well trained to survive the next lesson.

LESSON 7 – YOUR FIRST MISSION

Well, cadets, today is the day you stop being a class and become a crew. Your glorious career in the Space Exploration Service begins with your first mission.

HEROIC ACTIONS

You are a solid crew, and I am confident that your first mission will be completed without difficulty. Maybe things did not always work out in the simulations, but now, when it counts, you will perform better than you ever thought possible.

The gold heroic action cards are only used in actual missions. Shuffle the six gold cards and deal them out randomly to each player. Set the remaining one or two cards aside, without looking at them.

The heroic action card replaces one of the normal action cards for the first phase. In other words, the 1-3 part of each player's Action Board should have 4 action cards and 1 heroic action card.



Your heroic action can be played like any other action card in any phase of the game, but you are the only player allowed to use it. **Heroic action cards cannot be given away in a data transfer.**

Just like a regular action card, a heroic action card has two orientations and you can use it as either a move or an action.

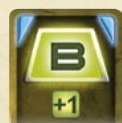


The movement half of the heroic action card allows you to go immediately to the station depicted. (For example, the card shown here allows you to move to the lower red station.) The card allows you to move there from any station, no matter how far away, regardless of any damaged gravolifts. You simply get there. If you are leading a battlebot squad, they come with you.

The action half of the heroic action card has improved versions of actions **A**, **B**, or **III**.






When you fire a cannon with this action, it has +1 strength. For example, if you use it to fire the central heavy laser cannon, it would have strength 6 (or strength 5 if it was damaged). If you fire the pulse cannon with this action, it does 2 points of damage to all threats within its range.





When you transfer energy with this action, if you transferred at least 1 block, you also add 1 extra energy block from the bank. This can allow a shield or reactor to exceed its maximum capacity. This action allows you to fill the central shield to 4 blocks, fill a lateral reactor to 5 blocks, or refuel the central reactor to 6 blocks. On the other hand, if the action is used ineffectively (attempting to transfer energy to a reactor or shield at maximum capacity, attempting to take energy from an empty reactor, or attempting to refuel the central reactor when you are out of fuel capsules) you do not get the extra block; you get nothing.

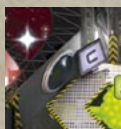
If you use this action to repair a malfunction (internal threat) that can be repaired with action **B**, it counts as two simultaneous repairs.





This action can be used in two ways. When you use it to attack an intruder who can return fire (as indicated by the symbol ) your battlebot squad is not disabled. This makes it easier to destroy intruders with 2 hit points who shoot back. On one turn, you use action  to do 1 damage. Your battlebots are not disabled, so on the next turn you can use action  to do the second point of damage. (This does disable your battlebots.)

You can also use this action when you and your battlebot squad are out in space in the interceptors. Action  makes your interceptor strength 1 greater. If there is only 1 enemy within distance 1, interceptors do 4 damage to it. If there are multiple enemies in range, interceptors do 2 damage to each of them.

In either case, of course, you have to be leading an activated battlebot squad to use action .





VISUAL CONFIRMATION

Oh, that's right. We still haven't covered what action  does when used on the lower white deck. Actually, there is no system  at that station, just two panoramic windows which allow you look out.

I wasn't going to cover that in class because I really don't think you want to be spending your time on that on your first flight. I've grown quite fond of you, and I think that if you have extra time you should spend it on precautionary measures – firing an extra shot, launching an extra rocket, or raising shields “just in case” – rather than, um, looking out the window.

The Space Exploration Service, however, is very keen on visual confirmation.





Action  in the lower white station represents visual confirmation, verifying the data collected by the computer. This action increases your score if you successfully complete the mission, but it does not have any other effect. It is best to focus on dealing with the threats and only look out the window if you really have nothing else to do.

At the beginning of the mission, put three gray blocks on the porthole – one block for each phase of the mission. Visual confirmation can be performed by one or more players executing action  in the lower white station. You gain more points for having more players perform visual confirmation on the same turn. If one or more players performs visual confirmation, take a gray block and put it on the numbered square of the Mission Steps Board that corresponds to the phase and the number of players that performed visual confirmation on that turn.



The number indicates how many points the visual confirmation is worth: one player can score 1 point, two can score 2 points, three can score 3 points, four can score 5 points and five players can score 7 points.

Only the highest-scoring visual confirmation counts in each phase. If you perform another visual confirmation in the same phase, you move the block to the higher-scoring square only if more players were involved; otherwise your score for that phase remains the same.

Example: In the first two turns, Red took the gravolift to the lower deck and re-fueled the central reactor. On turn 3, Red has nothing else to do, so she performs action . When they get to this step of the Resolution Round, Red takes a gray block and places it on the first square in the first row. In the second phase of the mission, the players have so much to do that no one has time to look out the window. The second scoring row gets no gray block. In the third phase, the players eliminate all the threats in time, and four players agree to meet at the porthole so they can perform action  on turn 11. Because of a misunderstanding, one of the players actually performs action  on turn 10. This player places a gray block on the first scoring square of the third row. On turn 11, the other three perform action  as planned, so they move that gray block from the first scoring square to the third.



The players would score $1 + 3 = 4$ points for performing visual confirmation on the first and third phases. Unfortunately, they get no score at all. They mis-timed their cannon fire and a Man-of-War survived to blow their ship to pieces.

YOUR FIRST MISSION

Well, I hate long good-byes. You were a good class, and I've grown rather attached to you, even though I promised myself that this time I would keep my distance. Well... take care of yourselves! You're in the Space Exploration Service now. So if we don't see each other again... Yes, I know. Your new barracks is right next door. But if by chance we don't see each other again, well, good luck.

And, miss? You look really good in that jumpsuit... Hmm...

Set up the game boards for your first actual mission. The rules are the same as for the simulations, except that you have heroic actions and you can perform visual confirmation. The soundtracks are more challenging than the simulation, and there is a lot more at stake if you are role-playing.

For an actual mission, you can use any of the eight soundtracks from the second CD. If you have random selection on your CD player, you can use that to choose a soundtrack. Otherwise, you can take the eight Scenario Cards labeled S2-1 to S2-8 and choose one at random. Play the corresponding soundtrack without reading the chosen card.

Good luck!

If something goes wrong on your first flight and your ship blows up, don't take it personally. Your characters' sacrifice is a demonstration of their extraordinary courage and heroism. You can take the role of a new crew that has just completed training (under a slightly more nervous instructor with a few more gray hairs) ready to undertake their first mission for the Space Exploration Service.

Regardless of how your first mission goes, we recommend writing it down in the ship's log (see below).

A CAREER IN SPACE EXPLORATION

And thus begins your adventurous and dangerous career as a space exploration team.

You know all the rules, but every mission will be different. The numerous combinations of sound tracks, threat cards, and trajectories guarantees that each mission presents a unique problem. Your increasing mission scores will be proof that you are becoming professionals.

DIFFICULTY LEVELS

If you can handle the standard missions with little trouble, you can increase the difficulty level by using the advanced threats, the yellow-symboled cards which, until now, have remained in the box. The advanced threats follow the same rules as the white-symboled threats.

Before playing, choose the difficulty level of the normal and serious threats.

You could, for example, use yellow-symboled cards for serious threats, but white-symboled cards for normal threats. Or the other way around. And if you want a real challenge, you can use the yellow-symboled cards for all threats. This decision applies to both internal and external threats. If you use advanced serious external threats, you should also use advanced serious internal threats.

You can also leave the difficulty level up to chance by mixing up the yellow-symboled and white-symboled threats into the same deck. (That's why they look the same from the back.) This can be interesting even when you have mastered missions with advanced threats: you'll meet the old, familiar enemies but in combinations that you have never seen before.

Note that the difficulty level is automatically included in your score: advanced threats are worth more points.

SHIP'S LOG

You might be disappointed that after one of your best missions, you simply put the game back in the box and your heroic teamwork goes unrecorded. Or maybe you would like some record of how your heroic team fought in vain against the Behemoth while the Executioner liquidated crew mates one by one.

That's why the game comes with a ship's log in which you can record your successes and failures. You don't use the ship's log in the simulations, of course, but your actual missions are worth writing down. Don't be reluctant to write on it. It's just a piece of paper. If you fill it up, you can just download another from www.czechgames.com and print it out.

For the guide how to fill in the ship's log, see page 6 in Rulebook.

OTHER SOUNDTRACKS

The mission CD has 8 soundtracks. You can play them in order or choose them randomly. The randomly dealt trajectories and cards ensure each game will be unique, even with the same soundtrack.

If you get the feeling that you know these soundtracks too well, or if you

are looking for something more difficult or more interesting, take a look at www.czechgames.com. New soundtracks will be available for download.

EXPLORATION CAMPAIGN

A game should take you about 25 minutes. If you are in the mood for something more challenging, something epic, you could try an Exploration Campaign. It should only take about 90 minutes – or even less time if things go wrong.

An Exploration Campaign consists of up to three consecutive missions. Damage to your ship is cumulative throughout the campaign, but you can make a few repairs. You get to choose a difficulty level before each mission, and you can even decide to quit the campaign and score the points for only one or two missions. If your ship is destroyed on any mission, you lose the campaign.

The campaign makes the game more intense, which you will see for yourselves when you have to decide whether to risk taking the final mission in a heavily damaged ship in hopes of getting a top score.

For the Exploration Campaign rules, see page 7 in Rulebook.

WITH FEWER THAN 4 PLAYERS

The Sitting Duck class of exploration ships is designed for a crew of 4 or 5. If you only have 2 or 3 players, you will need to bring along androids. Although these robots look like people, they are much more obedient. To the point of stupidity.

ANDROIDS

An android is a crew member without a player. All the players control it together. It has its own figure and its own Action Board which is placed within reach of everyone.

In a two-player game, you need two androids. In a three-player game, you need only one. You will be playing with a crew of four and ignoring the unconfirmed reports.

You can give the androids names. Record their names in brackets in the crew log – for example, [Marvin] or [ICU2].

Androids always play after players. If you have two, choose which one will go first.

Obviously, in a two-player game, someone will have to take the role of two officers. You can't trust an android to be captain, communications officer, or chief of security.

CONTROLLING ANDROIDS

Androids can do anything a player can do. They can even lead a battlebot squad.

Players control the androids by playing their own cards on the androids' Action Boards. You can play a card for any turn that you could play on your own board. If you are in the second phase, for example, you can play your cards on the 4-7 spaces of your board and on the 4-7 spaces of the androids' boards, but not on the 1-3 spaces.

When you play an action for an android, you play it face up. Be sure that is the action you want. Once a card is played on an android's board, no one can change it. You can't take it back or move it, and androids never trip.

During the Action Round, everyone can play actions for any android. In the Resolution Round, it goes better if you assign a specific person to move the figure and resolve the actions of a specific android.

NUMBER OF CARDS

Androids do not have action cards of their own, but the players get extra cards:

- In a three-player game, players get 6 cards each phase (instead of 5).
- In a two-player game, players get 9 cards in the first phase and 6 in the other phases.

This applies to simulations and test runs, as well. (In a two-player test run, for example, you would each get 9 cards for the first phase and 6 for the second.)

ANDROIDS AND HEROIC ACTIONS

In a full mission, players have access to heroic action cards, and just as in the standard game, your heroic action is one of the cards you get in the first phase. (So for example in a two-player game, you get 8 action cards and 1 heroic action card in the first phase.)

Androids also get a heroic action card in an actual mission. It is revealed when the computer announces the beginning of the first phase. (When you turn up the android's heroic action card, be sure to set it beside the Action Board. A card placed on the Action Board cannot be taken back.)

This is the only card the android is dealt. All other actions have to come from the hands of the players.

Any player may plan this action for the android. You cannot play your own heroic action on an android's Action Board and you cannot take an android's heroic action card and give it to a player or another android. A heroic action card is not transferrable; it can only be played by the human or android to whom it is dealt.

APPENDIX – HOW TO TRAIN YOUR REPLACEMENTS

Would you like to show a group of new players how to play Space Alert? Did you like the way the game was presented in this handbook? You can take on the role of an instructor at the Academy and lead your friends through the training process. This will be simpler, faster, and more fun than making them read the text.

If you know the game well enough, you will not need to read through the handbook. All you need are these lecture notes. You can take on the role

of the nervous, frazzled instructor from the handbook, or you can choose a more direct approach. Either way, we recommend treating your friends as a space exploration crew. Atmosphere is an important part of this game.

How you teach your friends is up to you, but these notes are based on our experience explaining the game to scores of playing groups, and it seemed like a shame to not share them with you.

Introduction

- Theme of the game. Sitting Duck class exploration ship. Exploration missions. Jumping through hyperspace there and back.
- Crew's goal is to keep the ship in one piece for 10 minutes.

Lesson 1 - Ship and Crew

- Let the crew choose colors, captain, and communications officer. Explain how to deal out cards.
- While they are discussing roles and dealing cards, set up the ship for the first test run, as shown on page #. (You don't have to bother explaining details such as choosing trajectories and cards.) Set the Fighter card to one side.
- Describe the ship: three zones, six stations, weapons, shields, and reactors. You don't need to go into detail.

Lesson 2 - Action Round

- There are 7 turns for 7 actions.
- Using the remainder of the action card deck, explain how to plan movements and actions.
- Introduce the concept of phases. (Pick up five cards. Plan actions 1-3. Pick up the next five cards for actions 4-7, at which point actions 1-3 cannot be changed.)
- **Announcements.**
 - » How the communications officer handles threat announcements. (In the test run, there will be no serious, unconfirmed or internal threats.)
 - » Incoming data, data transfer, end of phase, end of operation.

Lesson 3 - Resolution Round

- Show them the Mission Steps Board.
- "Threat Appears" step.
- **Player actions. (Don't forget to explain the order.)**
 - » Explain movement. (But for now you can leave out the rule about what happens when two players try to take the gravolift.)
 - » Action A. (Blocks are moved to indicate cannon fire, but the damage is not computed yet.)
 - » Action B. (How to transfer energy to shields and reactors. How to re-fuel the main reactor.)
- **Computing damage.**
 - » Range and strength of weapons. Emphasize the limited range of the pulse cannon.
 - » Using the Fighter as an example, explain how the threat's shield points work.
 - » Emphasize that players need to read the text on the threat cards.
- **Threat actions.**
 - » Speed and actions. Use the Fighter on the blue trajectory as an example.
 - » Attacks and their effect on the ship's shields. (Again using the fighter: each of its attacks is different.)
 - » Mention that threats can take other actions besides an attack.
 - » The Z action and the disappearance of the threat.
 - » **Tip:** Crew needs to be aware of where the threat will be on each turn.
- **Jump to hyperspace.**
 - » Point out the two enemy actions at the end.
 - » Seven damage to any zone is a loss.

Lesson 4 - First Test Run

- Players can use the game pieces to show what they are planning, but all that matters is which cards are played on the Action Boards.
- Start the soundtrack (or start reading the Scenario Card) and watch the action.
 - » Pay attention to the communications officer. Pause the soundtrack if the communications officer misses something.
 - » Watch to be sure that everyone understood the rules.
- Take charge of the Resolution Round, explaining what is going on.
 - » Let the players perform their own actions (movements, cannon fire, energy transfers).
 - » Handle damage computation and threat actions yourself, explaining to the players what you are doing.
- Help the crew decide whether to try a simulation or a second test run.

Lesson 4a - Second Test Run










- If the crew is making major mistakes that they are not aware of (e.g., not communicating) help them out a bit. In some cases, you may need to encourage them to let someone else take the role of captain. But if you think they can work out their problem on their own, let them.
- Start the soundtrack.
- In the Resolution Round, you can let the crew to handle damage computation and enemy actions.

Lesson 5 - Simulation

- Longer mission: Action Board for turns 8-12, more complicated Mission Steps Board, end of second phase game mechanics are same as end of first phase.
- Action cards are face down. How to read the back of the card.
- **Serious threats.** (They have their own deck and their own announcement.)
 - » Tell them that some threats can change their parameters or heal. You don't have to mention black and white blocks yet.
- Explain unconfirmed reports and whether they apply to the crew.
- **Rockets:** How to launch them, when they move, and how they target and do damage. (Emphasize range.)
 - » Some threats cannot be targeted by rockets. Give an example.
- **Computer Maintenance:**
 - » Explain why maintenance is important (savesaver).
 - » Must be maintained in the first 2 turns of each phase.
 - » Using blocks to indicate maintenance.
 - » Delayed actions. Give several different examples.
- **Other things that can cause delays:**
 - » Gravolift conflicts. (Emphasize that order is important.)
 - » Damaged gravolifts. This ties in with...
- **Damage to the Ship:**
 - » Explain the concept. Note that no one knows what gets damaged until the Resolution Round.
 - » Explain each damage tile.
- Show them the random setup. Let them shuffle the cards and choose the trajectories.
- Start the soundtrack.

- Let the tactical officer run the Resolution Round.
 - » Keep an eye out for mis-played cards.
 - » If necessary, explain the "Oops! I tripped" rule.
 - » Be sure they are handling the enemy movements and actions correctly.
- If they won, show them how to count up score.
- Ask if they've had enough Space Alert for one day. If not, help them decide what to try next.

Lesson 6 - Advanced Simulation

- Internal threats and their Trajectory Board.
- Show them some **internal threat** cards.
 - » Similarities: internal threats have hit points, speed, and actions.
 - » Differences: the card specifies the threat's initial location and how it can be dealt with.
- **Malfunctions**, denoted by  and 
 - » Place token on the affected system when the threat appears. System becomes unusable.
 - » How to fix the malfunction. (One or more players can fix it in one or more turns.)
 - » Speed and actions of malfunctions. Damage is permanent if malfunction is not repaired.
- **Intruders**, denoted by  and 
 - » Placing the intruder's token on the ship when the intruder appears.
 - » Moving the token when the intruder executes movement actions.
 - » How to destroy intruders: battlebots.
- Pick up **battlebots** with action 
 - » Battlebots attack with action .
 - » Battlebots always follow the player who picked them up. No one can have 2 squads.
 - » Some enemies shoot back. Explain disabled battlebots and how to re-activate them.
- Explain the challenge of intruders with 2 hit points, and emphasize the importance of reading the text.
- Battlebots can be used to take **interceptors** out into space.
 - » Interceptors take off using action  continue to attack with action  and return by taking no action. Any action besides  is delayed so that interceptors can return first.
 - » Range and strength of interceptors (3 vs. one or 1 vs. all).
- Let them run their own game. Just watch to be sure they are doing it right.

Lesson 7 - First Mission

- Warn them that the first mission will be tougher than simulations.
- **Heroic actions:**
 - » Show the cards and explain them.
 - » Let players deal the cards out themselves.
- **Visual confirmation:**
 - » If your crew does not care about score yet, you can leave this out of the first mission.
- Let them run the game themselves. Just watch to be sure they are doing it right.

What next?

- Tell them about choosing difficulty levels, playing campaigns, and playing with androids... or just show them where to find these things in the handbook. Sit back and pour yourself a drink. Your work is done.