

Manual Addendum

Motto

"I think the Rychart wear big hats!"

"BASIC LAW OF STAR TRADERS. STOP MAKING ALL THE FACTIONS LIKE YOU."

Useful links

Forum: <http://startradersrpg.proboards.com>

Manual: <http://www.corytrese.com/games/startraders/StarTradersRPG.htm>

Wiki: <http://www.tresebrothers.com/strpgwiki/>

[Interactive Starmap](#) (by Shallowthought)

[List of ships](#) (Google doc, by Shallowthought)

[List of ships](#) (Local copy with javascript, by Shallowthought)

[List of ships](#) (Excel file, by Fenikso)

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Background

Backstory

When your father first told you about the Vae Victus, his spacecraft, you laughed at him. A cruel thing, to laugh at a dying man, but you did not know what else to do.

It was an unbelievable thing, a crazy thing, for a destitute Spice farmer on a worthless refugee planet to say. Certainly then men in the Spice Hall would have laughed at him had he said it in the Urban Zone. Still, something in his ice blue eyes cut short the mirth and your laughter choked and died.

"I wanted to finish this myself," he said many times in the days before he passed.

It was not until several weeks after his death that you were able, finally, to locate the entrance to the vast cavern that held the sleeping Vae Victus.

At several points during the search, you nearly gave up -- but in spite of your father's reputation as a liar and thief, the man was telling the truth. The Victus is a Juror Class Starship and a very workable, if aged, space machine.

"I never wanted to involve you, my son, but fate has left me no choice. You must grant your dying father two requests. Deliver this message and use my old ship to make a better life for yourself and your mates. Don't end up a broken, crippled old man stuck as a Fringe Spice farmer..."

The auto-pilot has announced it is a five AU South to the destination your father had left with the messages.

You must land in the Urban Zone and visit the Palace.

“Spacer”

Your Captain is a "Spacer" and the men and women operating the Exchanges are "Gravs" or "Grounders" and there is a sharp and clear social and political division between these two classes. One of the most stark divisions is in regards to access to resources.

The "Exchange" that the Captain visits is a carefully regulated trade zone that is accessible to both Spacers (independent and reputable faction members as well) and (depending on local customs, rules, laws and traditions) any planet-side merchant with the necessary permits and contracts.

Shalun Law, which governs warfare, espionage, manufacturing, trade and criminal justice defines the rules of the Exchange and the role the Central Database plays in this system. All Trades in the Exchange are recorded and are public record to Spacer and Grav alike. Any who violate the laws of the Exchange can be banned for life or an edict of execution issued by the controlling Prince.

The Prince determines what is available in the Exchange, how much and when. Depending on Faction quotas, military requirements, local consumption very little or no goods may be deemed available to the Spacer Exchange.

The Captain who "ends a shortage" has successfully filled a high dollar order from the Prince. It is the Prince, not the local merchants, who cools the prices.

Visit an Exchange, for kicks, while the Prince is in hiding. You may find some odd things happening...

Water-Fuel

Technically a nano-modified, radioactively stabilized form of tritium oxide (T_2O), space crew and Captains alike refer to it simply as "Water-fuel".

Water-fuel is a stable, liquid form of tritium, suitable for easy handling and storage. The tritium is consumed in the ship's reactors and engines through various types of nuclear fusion reaction.

The heavy isotope also makes it highly suitable for use in solar sail applications. Solar sails are deployed by pumping water-fuel into kilometers-long microfilament structures, and retracted by pumping the water-fuel back out of the sails and into the tanks. In a deployed Solar sail, the massive, actively-energized tritium isotope interacts dynamically with the solar radiation, absorbing the energy and then re-radiating the energy in an amplified and directed form, giving greatly increased thrust.

For centuries, spacers from all quadrants have always strongly believed the tradition that drinking water fuel is the only sure way to protect themselves from radiation, space sickness, inertia madness, and other grim hazards of the void. While the medical and scientific grounds for this might be doubted, the firm belief in the tradition amongst spacers is unshakeable. There is no surer way to break the morale of a space crew, than to withdraw their daily rations of water-fuel.

Decades of drinking the slightly corrosive and slightly radioactive liquid is what gives old space hands their characteristic greying skin and reddish eyes, the look of the "space ghoul". The harsh, acid-smelling breath of the old space-dog is a badge of honor among those who ply the darkness between the stars.

While it is possible to collect tritiated water in raw form from certain astronomical objects, such as tritium-oxygen asteroids or gas giant rings, ship's Engineers will avoid putting such unrefined fuel into their engines unless there is no other choice. Spacers too prefer to fuel their bodies with the refined fuel, fearing that dangerous "void spirits" may be present in raw water-fuel.

Pirates

Pirates of certain faction are more like privateers. They should let you pass if you have Trade Permit by that particular faction. "Real" pirates are the Independent ones.

Pirates are on Blockade Missions. They're stopping ships and taking Cargo. If you destroy the ship of a Shalun Contract'd Captain, you have violated the Faction's Law.

And from Cory's research, this is at least a correct model if we consider the Privateer of the 17th century. The Blockade and Death Warrant are Letters of Marque in many respects.

The Captain's Reputation stays the same when fighting (but not destroying or enslaving) Pirates. Alliances, Rumors and other effects can change that, however.

Central Database

There is a banking system called the "Central Database" which protects and insures all Credits, so looting money from ships is not an option.

Centralized banking is a backbone of the reputation, Faction and commerce systems. Credits, Reputation or Rank – the 3 pillars of the Central Database. Central Database, and it's agents, play a major role in the Quadrant.

Contracts exist as a formal operation within the laws of Shalun.

When a Captain arrives (and is recorded by the Central Database, along with his Reputations) the Marque of Contract is registered with the Palace. If the Captain wanders off the the Spice District the Faction may move to have the Contract marked as Expired in the Records of the Quadrant.

However, it is possible (although dishonorable) for the Captain to both succeed at his Contract and deliver a success while simultaneously being Recorded as a dishonor to the Faction.

The Central Database – and by proxy – the Central Exchange already play a central roll in every single moment of the Star Traders game. Captains, as owners of ships are legally forbidden from borrowing money.

Only Gravs – those who own or are legally bound to surface land – can borrow from the Central Exchange.

Your character is a Captain and he made a choice – an irrevocable choice – to leave behind his Faction's world and register as a Captain with the Central Database as a Ship's Master.

Most Captains steer clear of conflict with the Central Database. Certainly some of the "Destroy" contracts we are taking come against independent captains who have taken action against the Central Database.

Flying the Ship

Water-Fuel and Luxury rations

Water-Fuel is consumed until the supplies are exhausted. The Luxury Rations are consumed until exhausted.

Having Luxury Rations on board increases Crew morale loss resistant ("at least we have some supplies in case things get tough.")

Once Water-Fuel is exhausted the Crew must collect ice and extract water-fuel from the reactor core cooling tanks. Both of these cause accidents, but as long as the Captain has Luxury Rations on hand, the Crew members won't get angry.

No Luxury Rations AND no Water-Fuel? The Crew is now on starvation rations and collecting ice from the ship's hull just to power the reactors and keep the interior air supply from freezing. The ship is in partial hibernation to save power and accidents are common, fatal and devastating to Crew morale.

Effects of various cargos in your hold

Artifacts

Carrying Artifacts increase chances of solar accidents for each artifact.

- Each Artifact that the Captain carries increases the number of accidents by +1%.
- Each accident will cause between 0 and 10 points of damage per effected area.
- Each artifact that the Captain carries increases the amount of damage done to each area by +1%. So of the Captain is about to suffer 30 points of Accident damage and is carrying 20 Artifacts the actual total will be 36 points of Accident damage.
- For each artifact that the Captain carries the severity of the accident is increased by +2%.
- An accident has a severity rating from 1-100 and is randomly generated based on distance from green sectors, rumors. Artifacts modify that total. At 1 the accident only affects Solar Sails. At 100 it effects solar sails, crew and engines (each taking 0-10 points of damage).

Electronics

Carrying Electronics is a double edge sword providing benefits and penalties.

- Each Electronics in the Cargo hold Increases Chances of Encounters by +1%.
- Each Electronics in the Cargo hold Increases the rating of the enemy ships by +2%. Enemy ship Rating is divided between Ship Cost, AI Intelligence and NPC Captain XP.
- Each Electronics in the Cargo Hold Increases the chance that the enemy ship will be a Military Officer on Patrol for Spies (up to +30% maximum).
- Each Electronics in the Cargo Hold Increases the chance of successful Surveillance by roughly 1% under ideal (non-rumor, non-conflict, orbital conditions.) This bonus could vary between 0.1% (Radiation Storm, Deep Space) and 2.68% (low security independent world).
- Each Electronics in the Cargo Hold increases the chance of a bonus +1 Record being created by 1%.

Weapons

Carrying Weapons is a double edge sword providing benefits and penalties.

- Each Weapon in the Cargo hold Increases chances of encounters by +1%.
- Each Weapon in the Cargo hold Increases the rating of the enemy ships by +2%. Enemy ship Rating is divided between Ship Cost, AI Intelligence and NPC Captain XP.

- Each Weapon in the Cargo Hold Increases the chance of successful Blockade by roughly 1% under ideal (non-rumor, non-conflict, orbital conditions). This bonus could vary between 0.1% (Navy Crack Down, Capital World) and 2.68% (Radiation Storm, Non-independent World).
- Each Weapon in the Cargo Hold increases the chance of a bonus +100 Credits being created by 1%.

Records

Carrying Records in the hold is useful.

- Each Record in the Hold provides a +1 explorer bonus up to 80% of the planet's total Danger or Richness, whichever is higher (AKA, optimal for player).
- Each Record in the hold provides a +0.5 Explorer Bonus for the Scout Officer.

Misc. Bonus System

You may elect to carry miscellaneous trade supplies to help your officers. These bonuses do not apply unless the officer is on board.

- Spice - 10% Hold Spice provides Political Officer +1 Negotiation Per Unit
- Spice - 10% Hold Spice provides Pilot Officer ?% Pilot Per Unit
- Metals - 10% Hold Metals provides Mechanical Officer +1 Repair Per Unit
- Crystals - 10% Hold Crystals provides Mechanical Officer +0.5 Repair Per Unit
- Vodka - 10% Hold Vodka provides First Mate +1 Crew Boss Per Unit

Universal Bonus

These bonuses apply even with a single unit on board.

- Luxury Rations - Slows rate of Morale decline by 2% per unit during Water-Fuel use (3% with First Mate).

Agility / Speed

- Fast / Quick ships take up a lot more fuel.
- Fast / Quick ships suffer more critical hits.
- Big slow and reliable, efficient and tough.

Hull Points

The purchasing location and how much Metals and Crystals are available determines the strength of the repair points.

Not all "Hull Points" are equal. If you repair the Hull where there is a metal shortage, it will be weaker than if you repair where there is not a metal shortage.

Solar Sails

- Solar sails always improve fuel consumption
- Solar sails provide hit points, soak damage that would hit the hull or crew.
- There are many thresholds (20 and 30 being two key ones) and various bonus points.

Upgrades

Advanced Bridge

- It gives the Captain a bonus (based on skill)

- It provides Tactics and Pilot Bonuses at Short / Boarded Ranges.
- At other ranges it provides a small (2-3%) Crew efficiency boost.

Signature

Signature is what causes you to run into bad guys.

If you take a bunch of illegal passengers, carry mystery packages, have a hull full of weapons and fly a giant ship you will be very obvious. If you attach huge missile racks, retrofit the ship to carry 3,000 tons of armor and add 2.5 kilometers of mycra-crystal solar sails and deployment booms ... the ship is beyond obvious.

That's the cumulative value computed from the following:

- Current Cargo Hold (excluding Water Tanks and upgrades for holding electronics and Weapons)
- Contract Cargo on Ship (passengers and packages)
- Hull Size
- Ship Speed

Signature Increasing Upgrades add a scaling factor to this.

Lower signature is critical to moving undetected, avoiding bounty hunters, surveillance, docking at hostile territories, etc.

Officers

Officers hire on for a % of your money based on your level, class and faction.

The Political Officer

Rumors:

- We heard about a talented Political Officer stranded on (name of planet).
- The Exchange is closed rumor

Found

- In the palace

Bonuses:

- Notification of trade bans
- Improved negotiation skills

Cargo to improve bonus

- Spice

The Mechanic

Rumors:

- We heard about a talented mechanic stranded on (name of planet).

Found

- In the palace

Bonuses:

- Repairs in-flight
- Repair Camp bonuses

Cargo to improve bonus

- Metal, Crystal

The Alien Hunter, aka Veteran Officer

Rumors:

- Alien attacks on a planet rumor

Found

- Wilderness area of a planet

Bonuses:

- Significantly improved salvage values for alien ships
- Intimidation Bonus
- Bonus to fighting aliens
- Resistance vs. Alien Rumors for Exploration / Harvesting / Deep Space
- Attracts the Alien
- Causes recruiting to be harder (on account of him being insane / dangerous)

Cargo to improve bonus

- Dunno – probably alien hearts

The Scout, aka the Smuggler Officer

Rumors:

- A group of very skilled scouts are operating on (name of wild zone)

Found

- Wilderness area of a planet

Bonuses:

- Bonus to Explore/Harvest activities

Cargo to improve bonus

- Records

The Pilot

Rumors:

- Booming Spice, overflowing the Exchange and Hall rumor

Found

- In the palace

Bonuses:

- Improved Pilot / Stealth benefits

Cargo to improve bonus

- Spice

The Military Officer

Rumors:

- The Mercenaries are congregating rumor
- Possibly found with military surplus rumors (I can't remember)

Found

- In the Military base

Bonuses:

- Bonuses with all ship to ship combat, especially boarding

Cargo to improve bonus

- Weapons

The Spy

Rumors:

- A Major Accident shutting down the Star Dock Rumor

Found

- In the palace

Bonuses:

- Advises when no Good Rumors left (only Flavor Texts)
- Makes "Buy Rumor" is always free

Cargo to improve bonus

Electronics?

The First Mate

Rumors:

- Major star port expansion rumor

Found

- In the palace

Bonuses:

- Bonuses to crew morale
- Has a turd for a lip

Cargo to improve bonus

- Vudka

Space operations

Skills

Stealth

- Ability to avoid encounters (so therefore reduce the need to even do combat)
- Ability to avoid weapons fire, especially enemy torpedo fire at long range
- Stealth is one of the primary drivers for the success of Surveillance.
- Important for Torpedo range combat

Pilot

- Provides ability to change ranges during combat. If two ships have same engines, but you have higher pilot skill, you should be able to change ranges more easily - or stop your opponent from advancing or retreating from you.
- Higher pilot reduces fuel consumption during travel
- Important for landings
- Should be at least ½ of your Hull

Tactics

- Improves your chances of successful attacks
- Helps motivate your crew when they WANT to do something

Intimidation

- Helps motivate your crew when they DON'T want to do something
- Should be at least ½ of your Hull
- Intimidation is one of the primary drivers for the success of Blockade.
- Influences (together with Charisma) how many Crew is Captain able to keep track of during Exploration attempts.

Stealth vs Pilot

- The ratio of Stealth to Pilot in combat avoidance at Long and Medium range HEAVILY favors Stealth.
- At Close/Boarded it is even between Stealth and Pilot, with a heavy favoring of Pilot for Aggressive Actions (Ram, Board.)
- They're not stacking in combat, but they are both used evenly.
- Stealth is used more often in deep space and at long range.
- Pilot is used in Landing (Urban Zone, Wilderness) and Short/Boarding Range
- Depending on the direction you are moving at Medium range will determine which skill will be used.

Surveillance / Blockade

Surveillance / Blockade use Tactics but that is not the primary driver for the success value.

- Stealth and Crew / Speed for Surveillance
- Intimidation and Crew / Agile for Blockade

To be able to get XP:

- For Surveillance, you have to perform it during Spy Battle and have Death Warrant with the opposing faction.
- For Blockade, you have to perform it during Solar War and have Rank with the opposing faction.

Exploring

What Skills?

- Explorer (when a Captain explores a planet)
- Tactics (for Wilderness Landings)
- Stealth (avoiding Aliens and Monsters)

Factors

- HIGH Morale (10 is preferred)
- Party size scales find (take 30 Crew, find only 15*3 items maximum)
- Danger vs. Explorer ratio
- How many times planet recently explored
- Record and "Scout" Officer bonuses
- Don't send more men than the Captain can keep track of (Charisma, Intimidation.)
- Stash Records so the Captain has a map.
- Double Stash Records if you have a Scout Officer.

Notes

- Planets can be exhausted, even for good, during game play.
- Exploration difficulty increases as the game goes by.
- Rumors and crew composition can greatly affect the outcome.
- Often the optimum strategy is not sending the entire Crew.
- Consider exploring with 1 Crew per Explorer skill.
- Consider Exploration on planets with richness rumors
- Review the rumor specifically – do not confused "Scout teams" are an officer rumor, and do not increase the results (they decrease it, actually).

Exploring system description (aka casino simulation)

- If you think about it like a card game ... the dealer (planet) gets a hand ... Crew are your Chips.
- The dealer plays a hand. You roll some dice. If you beat the dealer, you get a return on your Crew risked. The Dealer might get to draw some more cards, depending on the ratings.
- The dealer can be drawing from one of four distinctly different decks.
- The captain cannot tell from the cards which deck is in effect -- but some of the rumors ensure a particular deck is in play.
- Imagine that some of the decks are full of great dealer cards. Others are full of special-super-bonus-results cards.
- The dealer can (and will) switch decks while you are playing.
- Walking up to a table and being like "100 Crew, all in, first rolling hand" is a crazy move.
- That's like going up to a blackjack table and betting a huge stack of chips on the first hand. Maybe the deck is full of aces, maybe it is full of 2s.
- The Captain should start with an exploratory party. Send 10 guys. Did you find something? Try again? Suddenly feel like the zone has turned against you?
- It did. The dealer just switched out decks. Now you're playing against the house's best odds and the place is crawling with Aliens.
- Time to head back to the Bridge and plot the next move. Switch tables ... hit the bar, maybe Cruise for girls (officers.)

Combat

Types of Combat

There are three major types of combat captain:

- **Torpedo:** Fight from Long Range, desires high Solar ship + Stealth / Pilot
- **Barrage Gunner:** Fights from Medium / Close Range, desires high Engine ship + Pilot / Tactics
- **Hand-to-Hand:** Fights from Close / Boarded range, desires high Crew + Warrior / Tactics

All combat-oriented captains should have Warrior skill and carry Weapons.

To be very good at close range combat use:

Warrior, Strength, Tactics, Intimidate, Engines, Pilot (in that order mostly)

- A huge emphasis is put on **Warrior** if ...
You are attacking (pressing Board)
- A huge emphasis is put on **Strength** if ...
You are in a protracted battle on board ship (pressing Board 3 or more times)
- A huge emphasis is put on **Tactics** if ...
You are trying to breach a larger Crew ship OR attempting to escape boarding w/ Crew & Hull intact
- A huge emphasis is put on **Pilot** if ...
The try to Ram you while you are closing to Board

Targeting

- **Engines** – targets the enemy's engines / sails.
- **Decks** – targets the enemy's crew / guns.

The "Decks" attack shoots into the Crew and Gun Decks. The damage quotation that is NOT shown to you (estimate it in your head) is the damage to the MORALE of the enemy ship.

Target Engines never damages ship Morale, Target Decks almost always does.

Boarding

- Boarding Operations are more difficult than long range combat.
- Boarding is, by design, an advanced type of combat. It offers a number of significant mathematical advantages over all other types of combat.
- Boarding a) has a lower chance of destroying the target b) gives the Captain an advantage against better ships (by taking the fight to the NPC) and c) gives the Captain a fighting chance against the Alien / Narvidian / Hulk.
- Stealth is not important when it comes to Duel or damage avoidance.
- Warrior, Strength, Morale, Weapons, Intimidation, Tactics and Upgrades are important.
- Warrior is VERY important if you intend to fight for extended (mashing the Board button many times in a row).
- Ships with a high ratio of Crew to Engines will NOT do well in Boarding combat because so many Crew are busy running the Engines – not fighting.
- Weapons benefit the crew on the Engines ONLY if the enemy ship wins Boarding action and gets hostile Crew on Board.

Cory likes to give each Crew Member 2 weapons (that is Crew x 2 – Engines = Weapons in Hold).

A few things to think about:

- Morale of my ship?
- Shoot at the enemy ship before boarding
- Armored Bulkheads is good for keeping your losses down (a LOT) but won't help you offensively.
- The more Crew you have over Engines + Solar the more Soldiers the Captain has.

Upgrades

- Leviathan is a great upgrade for SUSTAINED boarding.
- Plasma Cutters only effect first board (so you want to Board-Gun-Retreat-Board-Gun)
- Shuttles is best of close, board, retreat, fire, close, board ... cycling instead of jamming Board.
- The types indicate where in the Phase / Turn cycle the bonus applies.

Tracking of the Crew

After Boarding is completed, the game is tracking "Crew Points" in various Locations. In a battle between Good Ship and Bad Ship, the Crew of Good Ship could be:

- A: On Good Ship
- B: In transit to Bad Ship
- C: Fighting inside Bad Ship
- D: Fighting inside Critical Area of Bad Ship
- E: Fighting with Captain inside Bad Ship
- F: Fighting with Captain on bridge of Bad Ship

Sometimes you will fight at Boarding Range but repel Boarders. Therefore, the Crew points are stuck in "B" and are very vulnerable to destruction in the next turn.

If, upon loosing a Boarding Action AND your ship did not take a hit, immediately Gun. More than likely the enemy still has Crew in shuttles or allocated to "outside the ship"

Enslave

You must have the Captain + Officer + 5 Crew to enslave.

Rearm

- Base compatibility is 50% of the remaining unused HKT.
- If the flags of the Faction ships match, +10%
- If either of the ships are independent, -10%
- If both the ships are Syndicate +10%
- If both the ships are Clan +10%
- If the sector is green +5%
- If the sector is red -5%
- If morale is not 10, -10%

Taking over the Ship

Any time you take over a Ship, Crew Morale will drop if the previous Ship had a higher value in terms of Crew situation (less work OR more score on ship). The Crew gets jumpy when you change ships.

Social

Rank

Rank provides:

- Exchange bonus
- Stardock discounts
- Stardock military discounts
- Protection against reputation and rank loss
- Increase payment for contracts
- Increase reputation bonus for conflicts

One of the clearest and most useful bonuses is the cost of Torpedos. By Rank 16 they're almost free – the Faction knows you're a good Captain and probably shoot the torp at the bad guys.

Death Warrant

You can take Bounty Hunter contracts without a Death Warrant, however the Reputation and XP bonus will be less. The Death Warrant can soften the loss of reputation, but hostile Factions will not appreciate your attacks, Warrant or not.

The Death Warrant also greatly increases the bonuses for exploiting certain types of Rumors and Conflicts.

Pardons

Price for pardon is $(Rep \times Rep \times 120)$.

Rumors

- A prince or spice hall has a "maximum number of rumors"
- When those are exhausted, the buy button and the next button will disable
- The buy button will cost 100 if you do not have a spy
- The buy button will always return a rumor if one is in range of the Prince / Hall
- Based on Rating of Security, Prince and Hall the Zone has a range
- If there are no more rumors in range, then Buy and Next both select a random "Tip" (AKA, story / useless text)
- If you have a Spy officer, you will get a warning when the range list is empty
- Otherwise, you can pay for stupid "pass the spice plate" text

Wanted!

The Wanted flags mean any neutral faction or independent will be gunning for you. Purchasing a new ship clears the Warrants, but not the reputation. Dealing with the Reputation is another issue altogether.

Independents

Your Crew (for most character classes) dislikes working against Independents because many of them are themselves Independents. Most "Recruit" operations take members of a Faction population into deep space, probably never to return to Faction life as it was before.

The game assigns a certain percentage (based on Security Rating) of those recruited as "Independent Crew" instead of "Faction Crew" and that percentage determines if they like or dislike the missions.

Factions

Factions differ in the areas they control, the % mixture of missions, the % of conflict types, the ships they sell in the military base, the ratings of the star port, the total ratings of the economies, the ratings of the spice halls, the ratings of the princes.

The higher ratings will generate more rumor hits, at longer range. more Crew will be available. Higher morale recovery rates. Better ship upgrades, more of the military and rare ship upgrade types. More of the rare ship types for sale.

Also, each Faction has a unique mix of captains, AI techniques and "most common" ship hulls.

Urban Zone

Over time the inventory in an Urban Zone changes, this effects ships, upgrades, trade goods and so forth. As time passes, so go the opportunities. Sometimes the Captain has to decide between two opportunities -- for example, a Contract or an Upgrade installation.

Starports

- The starport, level, rank, reputation, turn, conflict and rumors affect the ships and quality of the ships.
- Ships have a few hidden values that determine the minimum score a planet must achieve to have it for sale.
- Therefore, when a Faction is at war, look to buy warships. If they are under a Trade War, expect to see lower quality merchant ships for sale.
- In particular, go to the Elite Map's "rich planets" and shop there. Often the quality of the starport and economy make a huge difference.

Exchanges

The expenditure of time is linked to the following facts:

- Higher rating exchanges take less time
- Higher security exchanges take longer
- Selling into a shortage / surplus is faster
- Have more Negotiation than Prince is faster
- There is a hard minimum time for each Exchange to block the grind exploit
- The benefit of \$ vs. Negotiation is 10x more in favor of Negotiation
- Independent worlds are 10x faster than Faction worlds
- Higher rating exchanges take less time
- Higher security exchanges take longer
- Selling into a shortage / surplus is faster
- Have more Negotiation than Prince is faster

Aliens

Destroying alien ship causes an increased chance of alien encounters over the next 26 turns. You will also get double XP for any alien-encounter escape 'tokens' that are turned in during the next 52 turns.

Alien Types

Alien Terror

These have no captain and only attempt to close to board. They cannot be defeated in captain duel, kill 200% normal Crew, are immune to weapons and any artifacts on board increase attack power by 100% per artifact.

Alien Horror

These have 2 captains (one male, one female) and only attempt to close to board and fire at zero range. They can be defeated in captain duel, kill 100% normal Crew, any artifacts on board increase attack power by 20% per artifact.

Alien Devour

These have 1 captain (weak) and only attempt to close to board and ram at zero range. They can be defeated in captain duel, kill 10% normal Crew, any artifacts on board increase automatically converts 7-17 Crew to Aliens per Boarding Action.

Alien Flayer

These have 1 captains (nearly invincible) and only attempt to close to board and shoot guns at zero range. They can be defeated in captain duel, kill 300% normal Crew, are 50% immune to weapons, fear artifacts (-10% alien efficiency / artifact in the hold)

Unpredictable Alien

This type of Alien acts like a smuggler but then randomly selects any other AI and changes every 2-3 turns. These are very hard to predict. If they select terror, horror or devour they will stick at that level. Best to escape early.

Core Rules

Difficulty

It just scales a lot of factors to make the game more or less difficult and do not make any fundamental changes affecting game rules. You can safely discuss game strategies without mentioning the game difficulty settings unless your strategy depends on exploiting one of the following impacted values:

- All Dice Tests
- Enemy Level
- **Resource Availability**
- **Combat Stat Visibility**
- **Character Death**
- Space Movement
- Exploring
- Harvesting
- Landing
- Ship and Upgrade Availability

For example, if your strategy depends on being invulnerable to death then it would not work above Normal. Another example would be if your strategy depends on non-exhaustible resources then it will not work on the higher difficulty settings.

The ones in bold are the only mechanical differences based on difficulty.

Game Level

ST RPG uses two types of Level. **Game Level** and **Character Level**.

- Enemy Captains are scaled vs. Character Level
- Approximately Everything Else vs. Game Level

Raw Game Level = Turn / [200 + (5 x Difficulty)] ... round down, Impossible = 0, Basic = 7

Raw Game-Level is used to scale almost everything. The area of the game, the alien threat and other factors increase game level.

Success and XP System

There are several levels of success in ST RPG:

- There is the lack of success, that is no reward, no penalty.
- There is the lack of success, with a major failure (no reward, some penalty).
- There is a critical lack of success. That yields negative feedback and no reward.
- There is minor success. This yields a minimal reward.
- There is average success. This yields nominal reward and minimal XP.
- There is above average success. This yields above average rewards and average XP.
- There is critical success. This yields superior rewards and above average XP.

Levels and XP costs

Character Level = [(Quickness + Wisdom + Charisma + Negotiate + 2x Stealth + Intimidate + Pilot + Explorer + Warrior + Tactics – 50) / 6) + 1]

Skill cost = 3 + Level / 7

Attribute cost = 6 + Level / 5

Because Level is skill / attribute based (not total XP) the "Level" can be different based on how the XP is spent, in what order and in what concentrations. Therefore, depending on the character's build, Level 50 can be reached with a range of at least +/- 500XP based on the strategies.