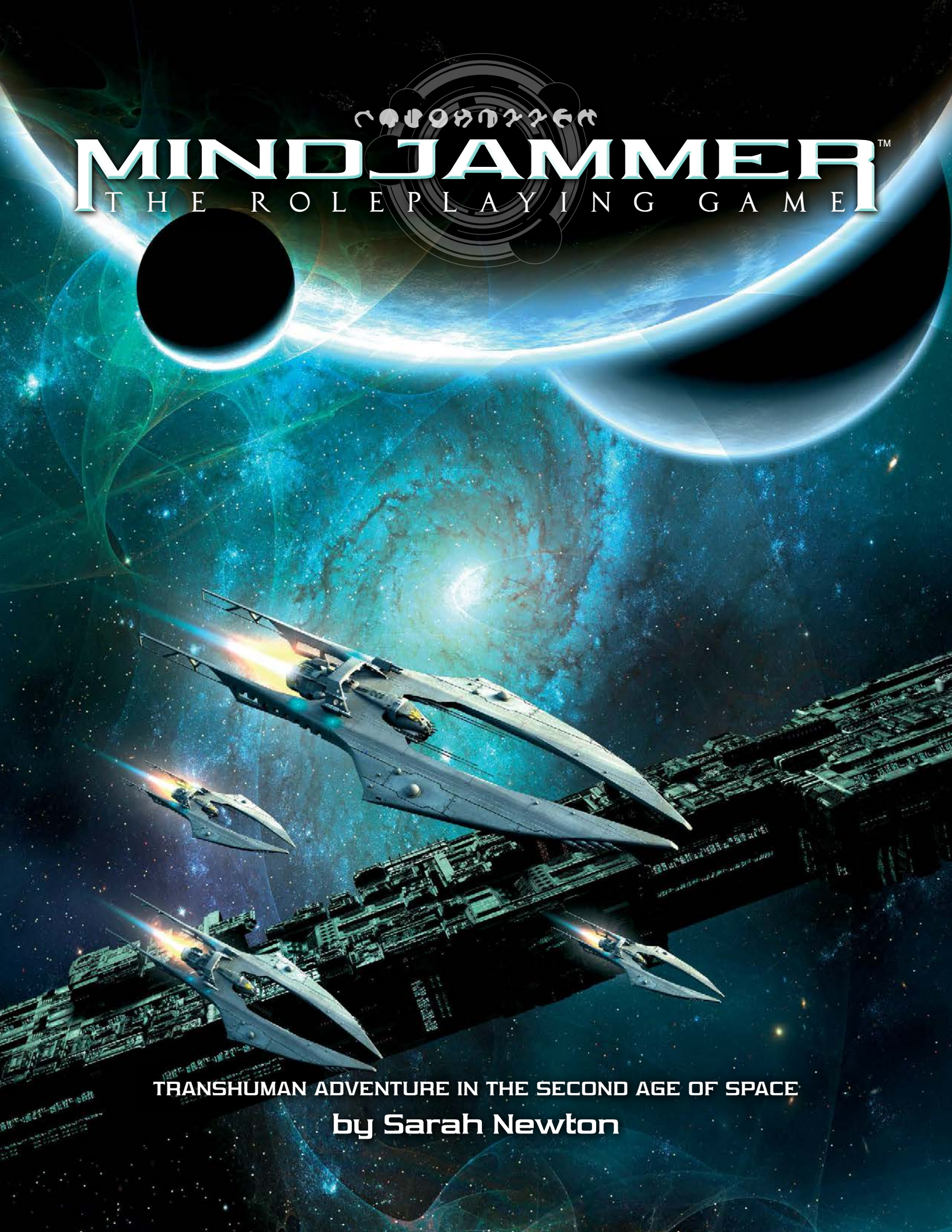

MINDJAMMER™
THE ROLEPLAYING GAME
TRANSHUMAN ADVENTURE IN THE SECOND AGE OF SPACE
by Sarah Newton

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Find out more about ***Mindjammer*** and other Mindjammer Press games and fiction at www.mindjammerpress.com & www.facebook.com/mindjammerpress

DEDICATION — *To my dad, George Newton. The stars call to us.*



MINDJAMMER™

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

TRANSHUMAN ADVENTURE IN THE SECOND AGE OF SPACE

BY SARAH NEWTON

FOREWORD

I've loved science-fiction ever since I can remember. Seeing *Star Wars* as a nine-year old child blew me away; watching *Cosmos* with Carl Sagan taught me that the wonder wasn't just fictional — it was real, our future, our destiny. Our imaginations — the strongest thing we as humans bring to the universe — and our hopes and fears for what tomorrow will bring all come together in the strange worlds of science-fiction. And with science-fiction roleplaying, we get the chance to work out those questions in epic and action-packed stories of our own.

Science-fiction never stands still, and nor should science-fiction roleplaying. ***Mindjammer*** is an attempt to produce a science-fiction roleplaying game for the 21st century, filled with our latest and most keenly felt speculations about the nature of the cosmos and our place within it. Virtual worlds, transhumanism, longevity, genetic engineering; cultural conflicts, global civilisations, utopias versus dystopias, pampered security against dangerous and violent change — all these themes come together in the game you're now holding.

This new, second edition of ***Mindjammer*** has been a while coming. The ENnie Award-winning first edition was a supplement to the wonderful ***Starblazer Adventures*** game, an awesome homage to the science-fiction of the 1980s; the game you hold in your hands today is a massively updated and expanded edition, now a complete standalone game in its own right using the ***Fate Core*** rules. It contains the ***Fate Core*** rules themselves, dialled up and customised for the far future science-fiction genre, as well as new rules for organisations, starships, artificial life forms, transhuman characters, worlds, star systems, cultures, hyperadvanced technology, alien life and exointelligences, and much, much more. It also contains the most detailed presentation of the ***Mindjammer*** setting, the New Commonality of Humankind, to see print so far. Whether you use these rules to play your own homebrew or favourite science-fiction setting, or whether you choose to explore the perilous frontiers of Commonality Space or the strange and decadent metroplexes of the Core Worlds, mind-bending adventures await!

Mindjammer may reach for the stars, but to do so it stands on the shoulders of heroes. This game would not be possible without the creativeness and generosity of Fred Hicks, Rob Donoghue, and Leonard Balsera, and all the team at Evil Hat Productions, creators of the ***Fate Core*** system. ***Fate Core*** is a revolution in game design, and the fact that Evil Hat have released the rules under the Open Game License has meant that we've been able to incorporate those rules in this book with their blessing, making it a single standalone volume for your science-fiction gaming needs, and for that and many other reasons I'm profoundly grateful to them. Thank you, guys.

This core rules book is the first of many in the ***Mindjammer*** line. We have scenarios, campaigns, atlases, tech books, guides to cultures and worlds ahead. If you'd like to explore these strange and exotic worlds, decide the shape of the future and the entire human species, and discuss ***Mindjammer*** and the New Commonality of Humankind, please join us at www.mindjammerpress.com. We hope to see you there!

So charge up your blaster, thoughtcast your orders to the ship sentience, and engage the planing engines — the transhuman adventure is just beginning!



Sarah Newton,
Normandy, March 2014

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

"It was the Second Age of Space. The light of human civilisation, which had flickered and threatened to die, suddenly burned bright again with contact with the thousand worlds of space. Humankind laughed, filled with the joys of the power of a new-found youth, and strode forth to bring its message of hope and regeneration to the stars..."

— from "The Songs Of Old Earth", Book I

Welcome to ***Mindjammer*** — transhuman adventure in the Second Age of Space! This is the second edition of the ENnie Award-winning science-fiction roleplaying game, updated and expanded for the ***Fate Core*** rules. It's a cool yet believable setting of lost worlds, hyper-advanced technologies, and clashing civilisations. In these pages you'll find a unique and compelling space opera roleplaying game, a whole universe of action and adventure!

Mindjammer details the **New Commonality of Humankind**, a vast interstellar civilisation centred on Old Earth. Following the invention of faster-than-light travel only two centuries ago, the Commonality is expanding to the stars, contacting lost worlds colonised in the distant past. The **Expansionary Era** is a time of turmoil; as the Commonality discovers and assimilates these lost colonies, it finds itself getting "colonised right back", its cultures and stability shaken to the core. Agents of the Commonality battle constantly against cultural contamination, and everywhere the frontier flares in conflict and war.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

Mindjammer provides a detailed yet open setting, with rich background yet plenty of room for you to create and play the science-fiction game you want. You'll find descriptions of the interstellar civilisation of the New Commonality Era, histories, species and cultures, enhancements, occupations, hyper-advanced technologies (including the ubiquitous **Mindscape**), powerful (and often sentient) starships, rules for interstellar travel, worlds, star systems, alien life, and more.

Mindjammer addresses the great science-fiction issues of the 21st century — transhumanism, xenoscience, virtual worlds, synthetic life, cosmological mysteries — while providing a setting ripe with roleplaying potential. It caters for many styles of play: pulpy, hard SF, space opera, political intrigue, military sci-fi, exploration and investigation.

This book comprises twenty-four chapters; you don't have to read all of them to get started. In fact, you could probably just read **Chapter 2: The Basics** and play. Here's what those chapters contain:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** introduces the ***Mindjammer*** game and explains what's in this book.
- **Chapter 2: The Basics** gives you a quick overview of the ***Mindjammer*** rules.
- **Chapter 3: Creating Characters** shows you how to build a game and its characters.
- **Chapter 4: Cultures, Genotypes, and Occupations** provides examples of home cultures, genotypes (species) and occupations (careers, backgrounds, jobs) you can select for your characters.
- **Chapter 5: Aspects and Fate Points** describes these two key parts of the ***Mindjammer*** rules in detail.
- **Chapter 6: Skills and Stunts** describes the kinds of activities and specialisations your character may be competent in.
- **Chapter 7: Extras** introduces these extensions to your character's abilities, and provides a core list of special abilities he may have access to.
- **Chapter 8: Technology** provides essays on the hyper-advanced technologies of ***Mindjammer***, and details the enhancements and equipment your character may possess.

- **Chapter 9: Playing the Game** provides rules for resolving actions, challenges, contests, and conflicts.
- **Chapter 10: Gamemastering Mindjammer** gives guidelines for running ***Mindjammer*** games, including rules for handling non-player characters (NPCs).
- **Chapter 11: The Mindscape** describes this crucial part of life in the New Commonality, and provides detailed guidelines for including it in play.
- **Chapter 12: Constructs** provides rules for creating and using starships, vehicles, and other constructs in your game.
- **Chapter 13: Starships and Space Travel** explains how to use starships to travel between the worlds of the Commonality, and provides statistics blocks for major vessels from Commonality Space and beyond.
- **Chapter 14: Vehicles and Installations** describes the planetbound counterparts of starships and space stations, including descriptions of major vehicles.
- **Chapter 15: Organisations** provides rules for running corporacies, instrumentalities, and other organisations.
- **Chapter 16: The New Commonality Era** describes the history and politics of the New Commonality of Humankind, including example organisation sheets for polities, corporacies, and other organisations.
- **Chapter 17: Cultures** provides rules for describing cultures and cultural conflicts, including guidelines for running cultural operations, as well as descriptions of the key cultures of the New Commonality Era.
- **Chapter 18: Worlds and Civilisations** provides rules for creating and describing planets and civilisations.
- **Chapter 19: Stellar Bodies and Star Systems** provides rules for creating star systems and other stellar bodies, and also for star system resources.
- **Chapter 20: Commonality Space** provides an overview of the universe of ***Mindjammer***, including a detailed look at Manhome, the solar system of Old Earth.
- **Chapter 21: Alien Life** provides rules for alien biospheres and life forms, including example exofauna.
- **Chapter 22: Scenarios and Campaigns** discusses how to create and run scenarios, and provides tools and guidelines for running multi-scenario campaigns.
- **Chapter 23: Themes, Genres, and Styles of Play** discusses how to run transhuman science-fiction games, providing guidelines for different subgenres, themes, tones, and styles of play, and specific rules sub-systems to help support them.
- **Chapter 24: The Darradine Rim** describes an entire octant of Commonality Space, providing planetary statistics, maps, and descriptions of more than twenty worlds.

At the end of this book we've also provided appendices providing rules summaries and useful tables, copies of character, construct, organisation and culture sheets, and an extensive index.

THE NEW COMMONALITY OF HUMANKIND

The **New Commonality of Humankind** is a beacon of light in the blackness of space; hyper-advanced technology and transcendent intelligences are its gifts to the stars. The **Mindscape**, a vast technological "shared consciousness", links the citizens of the Commonality together, storing the memories — and even personalities — of dead generations. Every Commonality citizen can boost their skills and knowledge using **Mindscape implants** — direct neural connections to the Mindscape — and the astonishing powers of **technopsi**.

The Commonality is a predominantly human civilisation — but the very definition of "human" has expanded to a staggering diversity. The inhabitants of Old Earth who began the slower-than-light diaspora millennia ago were a homogenous species, but divergent evolution and genetic manipulation have created a multiplicity of post-human and para-human subspecies — or **hominids** — tailored to the many environments of space. Uplifted animals — the **xenomorphs** — populate whole worlds, taken to the stars as cheap labour, and created intelligences — the **synthetics**



— are everywhere, whether sentient starships with the personalities of dead heroes, or intelligent weapons, exploratory probes, or other life forms tailored for a myriad of purposes.

Everywhere the Commonality expands, it finds life, a natural part of the evolution of the cosmos. Since the beginning of the Expansionary Era two hundred years ago, the Commonality has even made contact with alien intelligence — to find it far stranger and more difficult to understand than anyone had ever dreamed. The vegetable intelligences of Drefnia, the violent and corrosive Hooyow, and the silent Lowhigh are only the more comprehensible; and with the Planetary Intelligence, contact threatens to transform even humanity itself.

THE EXPANSIONARY ERA

Mindjammer takes place in an era of violent change. In the past, the First Commonality of Old Earth achieved utopia, blessed by long life and advanced technology. But hand-in-hand came stagnation and decay and, while the stars sang with humanity's song, Old Earth fossilised and began to die.

Two hundred years ago everything changed. Almost overnight, the scientists of Old Earth discovered the secrets of faster-than-light travel. In their **planeships** they ventured to the stars, in search of the colonies they had sent out millennia before.

What they found stunned them. The galaxy was alive! Everywhere they went, they found people. Vibrant cultures, strange civilisations, worlds savage and untamed. Suddenly, Old Earth found itself old no longer, but young, and excited by the prospects of an unknown future. It was a new age of discovery and expansion — a Second Age of Space.

Now, the Commonality contacts lost colonies almost every day. Some are peaceful, others deeply inimical; the galaxy is a cacophony of conflicting cultures. As it expands, the Commonality struggles with the slow communication times of 2-space; the **Mindjammers**, sentient starships charged with maintaining interstellar communication and the Mindscape, hold this far-flung civilisation together; in the Core Worlds around Old Earth, new 3-space **far gates** promise instantaneous travel and technological revolution. Everywhere the Commonality struggles to keep control.

TRANSHUMAN SPACE OPERA

This book provides all you need to play far future transhuman space opera adventure using the ***Fate Core*** roleplaying system. The New Commonality setting is vast enough to contain any number of campaigns; this book presents one part — the **Darradine Rim** — as an example campaign, where the Venu Empire, one of the Commonality's deadly foes, staged a devastating invasion eighty years ago. It's an area of constant cultural conflict and intrigue, and everyone is expecting war. You'll also find descriptions of other parts of the Commonality — including a look at **Manhome**, the solar system of Old Earth itself — which you can use to create your own worlds, sectors, starmaps, cultures, and civilisations, either within the Commonality or beyond its frontier.

Using these rules you can play characters like:

- **soldiers of the Armed Forces Instrumentality**, defending the Commonality frontier against the incursions of virulent alien cultures.
- **agents of SCI Force** — the Security and Cultural Integrity Instrumentality — investigating strange new cultures and managing their integration into the Commonality.
- **the heroic crews of Space Force**, patrolling the Commonality space lanes and the virtual spaces of the Mindscape on the lookout for spies, alien agents, and invaders.
- **intrepid 2-Pilots**, navigating the deadly mysteries of 2-space in their faster-than-light planeships, in constant mental contact with their sentient starship comrades. You can even play a sentient starship yourself!
- **canny New Traders** — the new breed of merchants on the Commonality frontier, mistrusted by most as evolutionary throwbacks to the bad old days of money and speculation, carving out a living carrying information and even goods between worlds, running the Commonality embargo and dodging agents and enforcers.
- **rogues and adventurers**, the flotsam and jetsam of the Fringe, xenomorphs falling between the gaps, disenchanted sentient starships left behind by the new technologies of 3-space.
- **explorers, mercenaries, socialites, scientists and spies** — and just about any character you can imagine in this adventure-filled galaxy of the far future!

But that's not all. The ***Mindjammer*** rules and setting are deliberately modular, allowing you to cherry-pick elements if you have a particular setting in mind. Maybe you'd rather use a different published science-fiction setting — or maybe design one from the ground up. Or maybe you'd like to base your game on a setting you've seen in a movie or read in a novel. Use this game to power your transhuman science-fiction adventures; the only limitation is your imagination. Explore the infinite worlds of space!

THE UNIVERSE AWAITS!

Never has there been a greater time of opportunity. Old certainties are dying; the universe is in flux, and for the first time in ten thousand years no one knows what the future will bring. So charge your blaster, thoughtcast your orders to the starship sentience, and fire up the planing engines — come and defend the light of humanity's greatest civilisation as it spreads to the stars!

CHAPTER TWO
THE BASICS

"The universe has a pattern. The further we push ourselves to transcend our limitations, the greater we perceive that pattern to be. It's as though it was all a great game, but you only discover the rules by playing…"

— Ardent Inquiry 7-levo-4, global node dirigeant of the Tysk-Reimform Cluster, upon experiencing Stage III Gestalt Communication from the Planetary Intelligence

LET'S PLAY!

Mindjammer is a roleplaying game; a game where you get together with a group of friends to tell a communal story about a team of characters you've created. The game is a form of conversation, describing what your characters do and creating an exciting and action-packed science-fiction story. When it's unclear exactly what happens in that story, or whether a player's character succeeds in what they want to do, you use dice, and the rules in this book, to figure out the result.

This chapter gives you a quick overview of how to play ***Mindjammer***. It includes the basic ***Fate Core*** rules on which the game is based. If you're a **player**, read this chapter and the "Introduction" (above) to get all you need. If you want to know more — or if you're the **gamemaster** — the chapters which follow expand upon these basics in more detail.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

You don't need a lot of equipment to play ***Mindjammer*** — the main thing is your imagination. As well as that you need:

1. **Two to five people.** One of you should be the gamemaster (or GM); everyone else is a player. We'll talk more about players and gamemasters below.
2. **One character sheet for each player**, and some paper for note taking. You can use the ***Mindjammer*** character sheet (page 474), make up your own, or just use a blank sheet. We'll describe what goes on your character sheet below.
3. **Fudge dice.** These are special six-sided dice marked on two sides with a "plus" symbol ( ), on two sides with a "minus" symbol ( ), and two sides with a "blank" or other symbol ( ). You need at least four of these. You can use other dice too — see page 8.
4. **Tokens to represent fate points.** These are optional but handy. You can use poker chips, glass beads, buttons, coins, and so on. **Evil Hat Productions**, the inventors of Fate, also produce a cool set of Fate Cards which you can use instead of tokens (and even dice) — check out their website at http://www.evilhat.com. You don't have to use tokens — you can simply mark down your fate points on your character sheet — but they're good fun and make the give-and-take of fate points, a key part of the ***Fate Core*** system, much more tactile.
5. **Index cards, scratch paper, or a white board.** Again, these are optional, but they're useful for jotting down **aspects** (see below) during play.

PLAYERS AND GAMEMASTERS

When you play ***Mindjammer***, you're either a **player** or a **gamemaster**.

If you're a **player**, you take on the role of one of the heroes of the game — what's known as a **player character** (sometimes just a "character" or "PC"). You decide what your character looks like, what he or she can do, and describe everything he does in the game universe. You have a character sheet for your character, with various details about your character — his possessions, fate

The Example Game

The examples of how to play **Mindjammer** *in this book refer to characters in a campaign called* Agents of the Commonality. *It's a high-tech, action-packed campaign about troubleshooters travelling through the Commonality on deadly missions for their mysterious superiors in the Security and Cultural Integrity Instrumentality.*

The game has five players — Chris, Reiko, Ian, Hughie, and Jen — and one gamemaster, Sarah. Chris plays SCI Force controller Thaddeus Clay, the nominal leader of the agents; Reiko plays Lyra Da Luz, a light-fingered ex-jewel thief; Ian plays Jackson Stark, a SCI Force enforcer haunted by a forgotten past; Hughie plays Maximillian Proffitt, a New Trader press-ganged into SCI Force after a disastrous scam; and Jen plays Skin-of-Our-Teeth, a SCI Force sentient starship. Most people call her Skin — especially when she joins the group in her humanoid avatar.

You can see how this campaign came about in "Setting Up Your **Mindjammer** *Game" (page 15); sample character sheets are provided on pages 9 and 474, and at http://www.mindjammerpress.com/mindjammer/mindjammer-downloads. If you like, you can use these to get playing straight away!*

Using Other Dice

You don't have to use Fudge dice to play **Mindjammer**. *Here are a couple of popular alternatives:*

USE REGULAR SIX-SIDERS AS FUDGE DICE

You can use 4 regular six-sided dice to produce the same results as Fudge dice. Simply read a 1 or 2 result as a "minus" (−), a 3 or 4 as a blank ( ), and a 5 or 6 as a "plus" result (+).

USE D6-D6

Fudge dice give a result between -4 and +4 (see "How to Roll the Dice", page 11), with most results being -1, 0, or +1. If you want a game with more extreme results, you can use two six-sided dice, and subtract the result of one from the other. This gives a result between -5 and +5, and a much wider spread than Fudge dice — you'll get extremely high or low results more often.

This changes the feel of the game; your skills matter a bit less, and wild and crazy things happen more often. Many people like using D6-D6 for a more pulpy, space opera feel; others find it's sometimes fun to use Fudge dice most of the time, but break out the D6-D6 when things are more extreme (say, if your character is drunk, or mad!).

points, notes about the things he can do, the people he knows, and so on.

If you're the **gamemaster** (there's usually only one at a time in each ***Mindjammer*** game, though you can take turns), you take on the role of the rest of the universe which the player characters live in. That's right! You get to describe the whole environment — the PCs' surroundings, people and aliens they meet (sometimes called **non-player characters**, or NPCs), starships, planets, and events in the New Commonality. You set up the adventure-filled situations in which the PCs find themselves — called **scenarios** — and also adjudicate their actions, deciding which of the rules in this book apply, and helping determine their outcomes. You're the final arbiter of what happens in the game.

Players and gamemaster collaborate to play ***Mindjammer***, rather than playing against one another. The gamemaster may be running the opposition the players face — the bad guys of their story — but equally she plays their allies, too. The goal is to have fun, tell great stories, and make the player characters look like heroes.

THE CHARACTER SHEET

A **character sheet** contains all the descriptive details you need to play a character, including things your character can do and equipment he owns. On the next page you'll find the character sheet for Max Proffitt from our *Agents of the Commonality* example game.

Let's have a look at the sections which make up a character sheet.

Aspects

Aspects are the heart of the ***Mindjammer*** rules, short phrases which describe a fact about your character — a

physical detail, a bit of background history, a belief, a relationship with someone. Aspects can be positive or negative — the best are both.

Aspects affect how a character functions in play. When an aspect is immediately relevant to what your character is doing, it can provide a bonus to a dice roll, allow the dice to be re-rolled, or some other advantage. To get this bonus, you describe how the aspect benefits you, and (usually) pay a **fate point** (page 13): this is called **invoking an aspect**. When an aspect is disadvantageous to your character, it can be used to gain fate points back: this is called **compelling an aspect**. You'll find examples of invoking and compelling aspects throughout this book, as well as more explanation on page 67.

Hughie's character, Max Proffitt, has the aspect Nothing Personal — It's Just Business*, which describes his tendency to view interpersonal relationships like business transactions, often screwing over his friends and going for the big win when it might not be in his (or his friends') best interests. It's a fun part of his character that causes endless trouble, and regularly generates a lot of action in the game.*

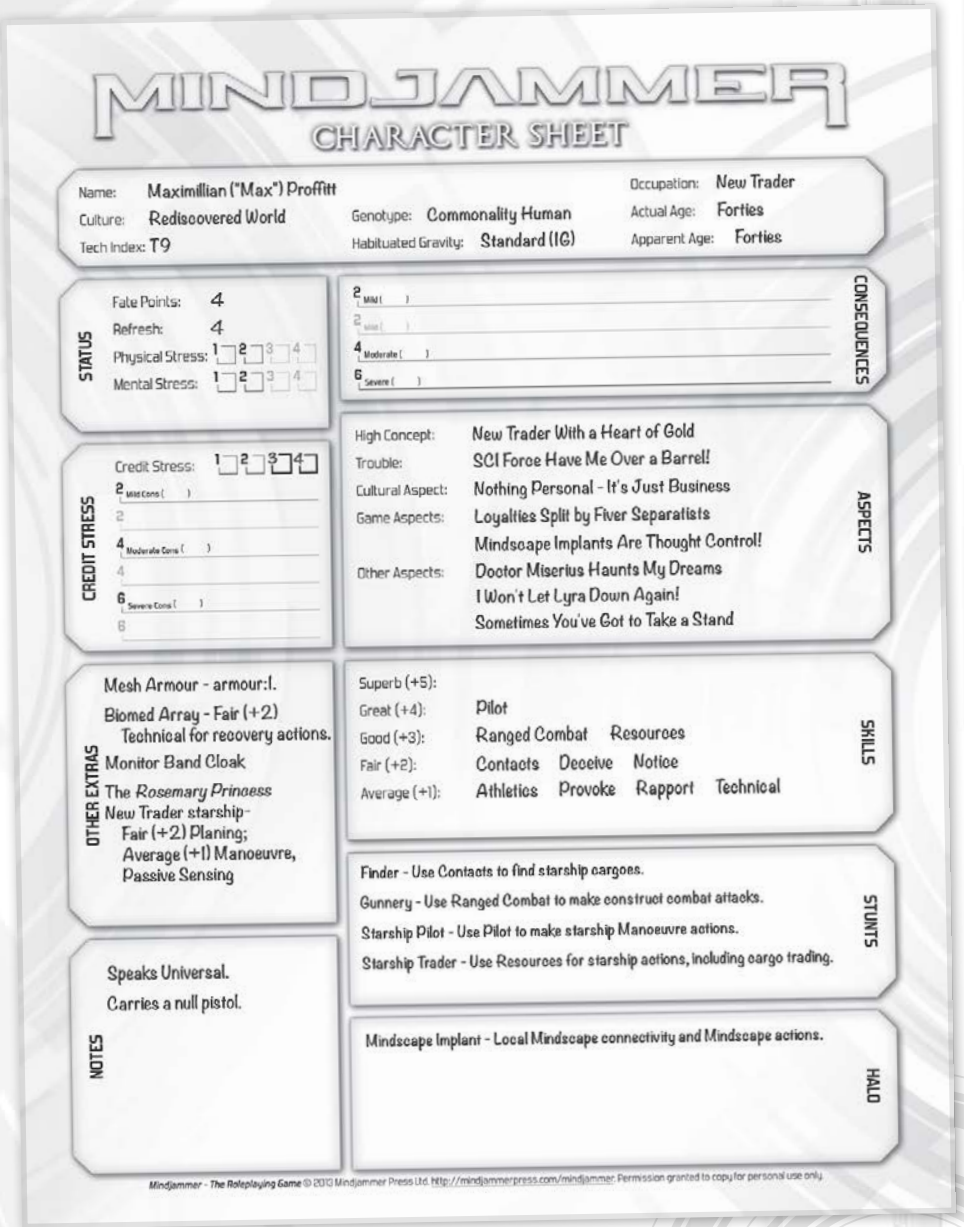
Skills

Skills represent specialised things characters can do — technical ability, academic knowledge, or physical talent. They're measured on a scale ranging from Average (+1) to Great (+4) and higher, representing greater degrees of ability. Beginning characters have skills up to Great (+4) (or optionally higher or lower — see page 26), used together with dice rolls to see whether a character succeeds or fails at an action requiring that skill. Skills include things like running, fighting with weapons or guns, piloting starships, as well as intrinsic capabilities like strength, endurance, agility, and willpower. See **Chapter 6: Skills and Stunts** for more about skills, including detailed skill descriptions.

If your character is attempting an action for a skill he doesn't have, he makes his dice roll as though he had a skill level of Mediocre (+0). Note however that some skills may require or imply certain equipment to be used, and that some actions require more than just a skill to attempt — see "Stunts" and "Extras" below, for example.

Max Proffitt has the Ranged Combat skill at Good (+3), which means he's very good at shooting things with that Tyce LP-25 Null Pistol he's carrying. However, he doesn't have the Unarmed Combat skill at all, so if he finds himself in a punch-up, he rolls at Mediocre (+0). That's probably why he has Average (+1) Athletics — all that dodging and running away!

Characters aren't the only things that have skills in ***Mindjammer***. Alien life forms have them, and so do starships and vehicles, and even organisations and cultures. The rules sometimes work slightly differently in these cases — check out the corresponding chapters below.



MINDJAMMER

CHARACTER SHEET

Name: Maximillian ("Max") Proffitt
Culture: Rediscovered World
Tech Index: T9
Genotype: Commonality Human
Habituated Gravity: Standard (1G)
Occupation: New Trader
Actual Age: Forties
Apparent Age: Forties

STATUS
Fate Points: 4
Refresh: 4
Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4
Mental Stress: 1 2 3 4

CONSEQUENCES
2 Mild ( )
2
4 Moderate ( )
6 Severe ( )

CREDIT STRESS
Credit Stress: 1 2 3 4
2 Mild Cons ( )
2
4 Moderate Cons ( )
4
6 Severe Cons ( )
6

ASPECTS
High Concept: New Trader With a Heart of Gold
Trouble: SCI Force Have Me Over a Barrel!
Cultural Aspect: Nothing Personal - It's Just Business
Game Aspects: Loyalties Split by Fiver Separatists
Mindscape Implants Are Thought Control!
Other Aspects: Doctor Miserius Haunts My Dreams
I Won't Let Lyra Down Again!
Sometimes You've Got to Take a Stand

OTHER EXTRAS
Mesh Armour - armour:l.
Biomed Array - Fair (+2) Technical for recovery actions.
Monitor Band Cloak
The *Rosemary Princess* New Trader starship - Fair (+2) Planing; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Passive Sensing

SKILLS
Superb (+5):
Great (+4): Pilot
Good (+3): Ranged Combat Resources
Fair (+2): Contacts Deceive Notice
Average (+1): Athletics Provoke Rapport Technical

STUNTS
Finder - Use Contacts to find starship cargoes.
Gunnery - Use Ranged Combat to make construct combat attacks.
Starship Pilot - Use Pilot to make starship Manoeuvre actions.
Starship Trader - Use Resources for starship actions, including cargo trading.

NOTES
Speaks Universal.
Carries a null pistol.

HALO
Mindscape Implant - Local Mindscape connectivity and Mindscape actions.

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What Is the Mindscape?

*The Mindscape is the virtual data storage and communication network pervading Commonality Space, to which all citizens are neurally connected at maturity using the **Mindscape implant**. Citizens isolated from the Mindscape (by distance or illness) report feelings of loneliness, isolation, even depression.*

*It's a vast space, storing the entire experience of the human race and the memory engrams of generations living and dead, enabling skill enhancements and the pseudo-psionic abilities known as **technopsi**, essential to Commonality life. It's the sole reason the Commonality survives as a single civilisation: with its vast distances, long travel times, and enormous number of worlds, the Mindscape allows the Commonality's cultures, languages, and institutions to retain a common identity.*

*Special agents and security forces in the Commonality have **special operations chips** instead of standard Mindscape implants, enabling them to modify the Mindscape in extreme ways and even reach into the minds of those connected with attacks or attempts to control their thoughts. Offenders in the Commonality have their Mindscape implants temporarily or permanently disabled, becoming **Mindscape exiles** or **lockouts**; such criminals often create counterfeit special operations chips known as **black chips**, using the identities of innocent victims they've (usually) killed — identity theft in the Commonality is a lethal business! Black chips are hunted down by SCI Force operatives, Mindscape sentinels, and agents of the Communications and Internal Security Instrumentalities.*



Stunts

Stunts represent techniques, knacks, or knowledge your character uses to get more from his skills. Characters with the same skills can be differentiated by having different stunts. Stunts are described in **Chapter 6: Skills and Stunts**.

Max has a stunt called "Starship Pilot", which lets him use his Great (+4) Pilot skill in place of a starship's Manoeuvre skill (page 203) when piloting a starship.

Extras

Extras represent extensions to your character — elements of the outside universe which are nevertheless part of your character. They include equipment and technological enhancements (like built-in weapons, Mindscape implants, and genetic modifications), and also starships, vehicles, and organisations the character is involved with. On your character sheet the Halo and Other Extras sections can contain extras. Extras are described in **Chapter 7: Extras**.

Max has an extra called "The Rosemary Princess", which represents a starship he owns. It gives him access to several construct skills (page 201) he can use when piloting the ship.

Halo

Most ***Mindjammer*** characters are connected to the Mindscape (see sidebar) by Mindscape implant, giving

them access to enhancements, knowledge, and the extraordinary powers of **technopsi**. Such characters have a **halo** — a virtual field of data representing the additional abilities, personal information, memories, and so on, of a character which are powered by the Mindscape. Halo abilities are usually **extras**.

When a character is disconnected from the Mindscape, he can't access his halo or use any of its abilities. When a character is connected, technopsi attacks can also target a character's halo abilities, disabling and even stealing them. The Halo section on your character sheet collates a character's halo abilities in one place, making it easy to see at a glance which abilities rely on Mindscape access for use, and which can be targeted by technopsi. You can find out more about the halo and technopsi in **Chapter 11: The Mindscape**.

Stress

Stress is one of the ways you can avoid losing a conflict. There are two main types of stress: **physical stress** and **mental stress**, representing physical fatigue, bruising, minor injuries; or being shouted down in a debate, mental confusion, or temporary intimidation or hesitation. A third type of stress — **credit stress** — is used to track your character's access to goods and services or wealth (for example, if you want to become an interstellar merchant, or if you want to buy something beyond what you could normally afford). You have at least two stress levels in each type of stress, which you can burn off in corresponding physical, mental, or credit conflicts. Under special circumstances you can even burn points of stress in exchange for bonuses on dice rolls, representing making a draining strenuous effort (page 142). Physical and mental stress levels represent very temporary losses, and reset to zero at the end of a conflict when you've had a few moments to catch your breath, gather your thoughts, and so on; credit stress resets to zero at the end of a session of play.

Consequences

Consequences are another way of avoiding losing a conflict, but represent more significant, lasting impacts: physical injuries like blaster wounds, broken bones, or diseases; mental injuries like psychological trauma, social stigma, or phobias or mental illness; and financial impacts like considerable debts or insolvency. Whenever you take a consequence, you write an aspect in the corresponding Consequences slot on your character sheet, describing the impact involved. Unlike stress, consequences don't recover immediately, and the aspect stays on your character sheet until you remove it, leaving your character vulnerable to complications or other characters taking advantage of the injury or weakness.

Refresh

Your **refresh** is the total number of **fate points** (see below) you have at the start of every session. If you finish a session with fewer fate points than your refresh, they reset to this total when you begin play again (page 76).

Tech Index

Your character's **tech index** determines the technological sophistication of the equipment he's used to handling. At character creation, this is equal to the tech index of your character's culture (page 32) — it may change later. Tech index affects how familiar your character is with the technology he encounters during play.

Habituated Gravity

Your character has a gravitational field he's used to operating in. For most characters this is 1G, the gravity field of Old Earth, also known as **standard gravity**. Most Commonality planeships, space stations, habitats and plateworlds are maintained at standard gravity, providing a consistent and comfortable environment across the Commonality. Many inhabited worlds, and indeed most planets, have differing gravity fields, and you may decide your character is accustomed to a gravity other than 1G, either through birth or long habituation. Your habituated gravity may change over time (page 176).

TAKING ACTION

When your character tries to do something uncertain in ***Mindjammer***, you **roll dice** to see if he succeeds. Not everything requires a dice roll; usually you'll only roll dice when the action your character is attempting is dramatically important or carries a certain weight of tension, such as if it's opposed by the efforts of another character, or if there's a significant obstacle in your way. Otherwise, as long as the GM says your action is physically possible, your character simply does what he says.

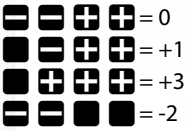
When Max pilots his starship out of the docking bay before jumping to 2-space, there's no real difficulty — it's a routine manoeuvre, no one is shooting at him, and he has plenty of time, so he doesn't need to roll the dice. However, after arriving in his destination star system and coming under heavy fire from a Successor State patrol, he needs to roll dice to successfully avoid pursuit!

How to Roll the Dice

A dice roll in ***Mindjammer*** uses four Fudge dice, abbreviated 4dF (but see "Using Other Dice" on page 8). To read

the dice, calculate every "plus" as a +1, every "minus" as a -1, and every blank as a 0. Total these to get a result between -4 and +4.

For example:



Most results will be between -1 and +1. Usually, though, you won't use this as your final total: instead, if you're using an appropriate skill, you'll also add your character's rating in that skill.

For example, Max rolls  *on the dice, getting a +1 result; he's rolling to see whether his shot with his null pistol hit the local mafia tough trying to break into the docking bay, so he adds his Good (+3) skill rating in Ranged Combat, for a final total of +4.*

Other modifiers may be added to this total. For example, invoking aspects can give a +2 bonus; and certain stunts can provide similar bonuses.

Let's look at what that final total means.

The Ladder

Mindjammer uses a ladder of adjectives and numbers to rate the final total of a dice roll, a character's skill, and any modifiers. Here it is:

+8	Legendary
+7	Epic
+6	Fantastic
+5	Superb
+4	Great
+3	Good
+2	Fair
+1	Average
+0	Mediocre
-1	Poor
-2	Terrible

Roll Dice When...

You usually roll dice when:

- *You're overcoming an obstacle (page 144);*
- *You're creating an advantage for your character in the form of an aspect you can use (page 145);*
- *You're attacking someone in a conflict (page 146);*
- *You're defending yourself in a conflict (page 146).*

It's up to you how you describe the results on the ladder — you can use the number in the left column, the descriptive adjective in the right, or both. You can say "I got a +4", or "I got a Great result"; both mean the same thing, and you can switch freely between them — as long as everyone understands what the result means, you're fine.

Results can go above and below the ladder; with skill levels of Superb (+5) and higher, a good dice roll and an aspect modifier can easily take the result to +9 or even higher, and poor skills and dice rolls can do the opposite. When you move off the ladder in either direction, you can come up with your own descriptors for those galaxy-shattering or abysmally cataclysmic results.

Interpreting the Results

When you roll the dice, you're trying to get equal to or above a certain number. That number is called the **opposition**; either an **active opposition**, representing someone (the GM or another player) rolling against you, or a **passive opposition**, representing an obstacle or simple difficulty with a set rating on the ladder. Note that if you're rolling against another character, that doesn't automatically mean active opposition: **GMs can always choose to make some NPCs passive opposition if they want to**.

If your dice roll total (including your skill rating and any modifiers) equals or exceeds the opposition, that usually means you've succeeded at what you were trying to do. Sometimes, rolling much higher than the opposition can give you a special result (like more damage on a physical attack); tied rolls can also have a special effect: see "The Four Actions" (page 144).

If you roll lower than the opposition, that may mean you fail at your action; however, it can also mean you succeed, but **at a cost**, or that there's some complication. Some game actions have special results when you fail your roll; see "The Four Outcomes" (page 143).

The difference between your dice roll total and the opposition is called **shifts**. On a successful roll, it determines how well you succeed in your action. If you roll equal to the opposition, you have zero shifts; one above the opposition, you have one shift, and so on. Sometimes you may also be interested in the number of shifts you roll **under** the opposition, to figure out how badly you fail a roll.

Max Proffitt got a +4 result with his null pistol in the example above. Sarah, the GM, says "this is active opposition, because the mafia tough is trying to jump into cover behind the docking bay blast doors. He rolls a +1, plus his Average (+1) Athletics skill, for a total +2. That's less than your +4, so he doesn't make it — you get 2 shifts, dealing him 2 points of physical stress damage. He shouts out as your null beam sears through his cheap flashy haze field!"

FATE POINTS

Fate points (or "FP") are one of your most important resources during play, representing your ability to affect the game play in your character's favour. You can use tokens (see above) to represent your current fate points, or simply note them on your character sheet.

The number of fate points you have fluctuates during play. You can spend a fate point to **invoke an aspect**, **declare a story detail**, or **activate a powerful stunt**. You can **earn a fate point** by accepting a **compel** on one of your aspects.

Invoking an Aspect

If you're attempting a skill roll and think one of your aspects (or even someone else's aspect, or a situation aspect) may help you, you can spend a fate point to invoke it and change the result of your dice roll.

Invoking an aspect lets you add +2 to your dice roll result, or re-roll the dice, whichever you prefer.

You decide to invoke an aspect **after** you've made your dice roll (ie only when you need to), and you have to explain how the aspect in question helps you. Sometimes the aspect is obvious (*Veteran Artillerist of the Xeno Wars* to help you when making a Ranged Combat attack with your grav tank's plasma cannon, for example); sometimes you'll need to get a bit creative with your description (*Doctor Miserius Haunts My Dreams* means I'm **really** trying to empathise with the plight of these oppressed xenomorphs!).

You can only invoke any given aspect once on a single dice roll, although you can spend multiple fate points to invoke more than one aspect — as long as you can describe how they all help you.

Max Proffitt is trying to fast-talk a Venu guard at the Amidan prison camp where Lyra Da Luz is being held. The guard provides Great (+4) passive opposition, and Max's Deceive skill is Fair (+2).

Hughie rolls a 0, a result of only Fair (+2) — not enough for Max to blag his way past the gate. He looks at his character sheet, and says, "You know, after that last escapade on Solenine, I Won't Let Lyra Down Again*! I'm going to really control my fear and convince this guy I'm doing a personal delivery for the camp commandant."*

Sarah agrees, and Hughie hands over a fate point to invoke the aspect, adding +2 to his existing +2 result, equalling the Great (+4) opposition. The Venu guard frowns, still a bit uncertain, but waves Max through to the prison camp interior, and locks the gates behind him...

You can find out more about invoking aspects in **Chapter 5: Aspects and Fate Points** (page 67).

Declaring a Story Detail

Sometimes you want to add a detail to the story which is beneficial to your character. Maybe you want to say you've turned up at your destination at exactly the right moment, or that you've brought along the precise piece of equipment you need for a job, or that some other bit of synchronicity works to your advantage.

You can do this by spending a fate point. You should also try and justify your addition of this minor detail by relating it to one of your aspects. The GM may veto your declaration or ask you to modify it if it seems too unlikely or far-fetched.

Max Proffitt has arrived at the starport bar with Lyra Da Luz, and hears a bunch of offworld traders talking in a bizarre Gestalt Language trade argot.

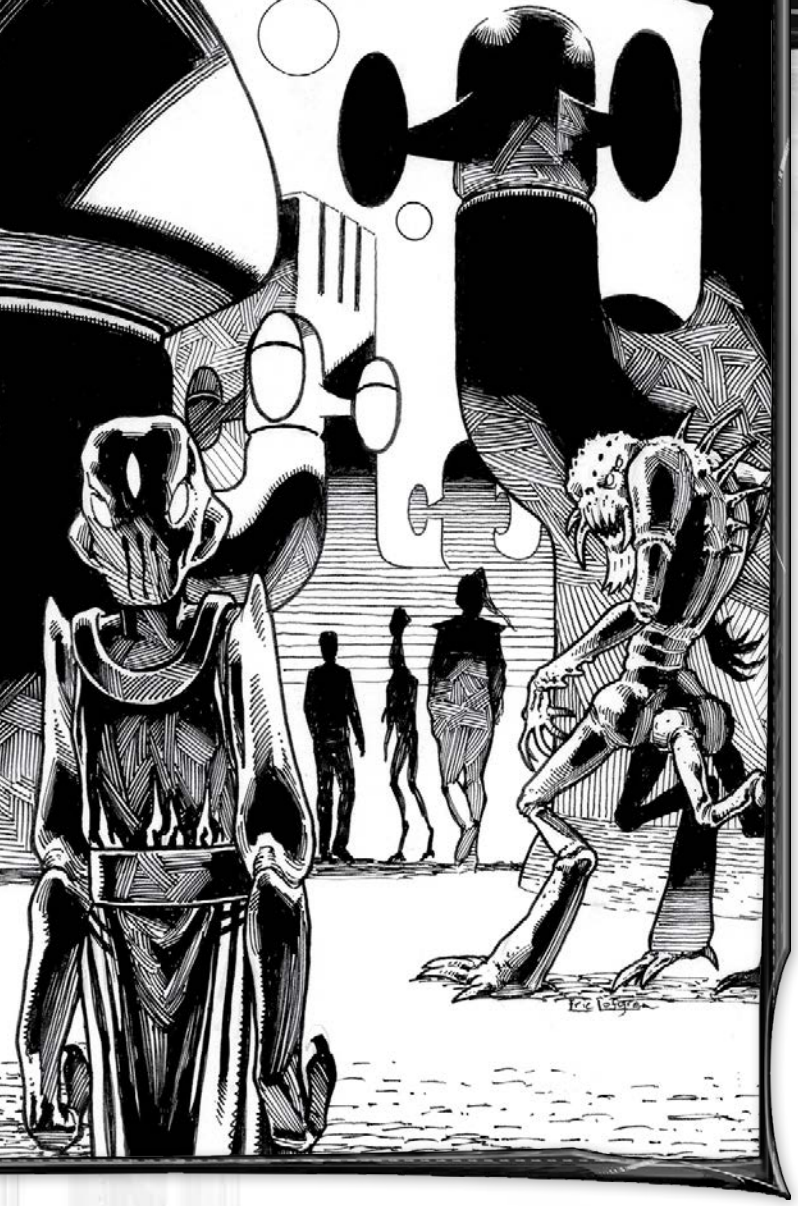
Hughie looks at his character sheet and says, "I have New Trader with a Heart of Gold *as an aspect — can I declare that I've heard this argot before, and can speak it well enough for us to talk?"*

Given Max's chequered past, Sarah decides this is reasonable, and Hughie hands over a fate point and describes Max flipping into the guttural, high-octane Gestalt argot as Lyra stares at him in surprise.

Hughie has Max wink at Lyra and say, "I've been around."

Accepting a Compel

Compels are a way of getting fate points back during play. Often you'll find one of your aspects looks like it should be making the situation you're in more difficult or otherwise creating drama; in such a case, you and the GM can decide precisely what that complication will be, and you'll get a fate point in return.



A simple complication may be that your character just fails at his action, or that he must respond in a certain, restricted way. Talk it over with your GM until you're both happy with the details.

If you want, instead of receiving a fate point for accepting the compel, you can **pay a fate point to avoid the compel** instead. Don't do this too often; not only are compels a great way of regenerating your fate points, but they also put your character at the centre of the drama, and add a lot of excitement and fun to the game. Remember, you're not trying to avoid problems for your characters, you're trying to have awesome adventures — and that means trouble!

Max has the aspect Nothing Personal — It's Just Business. *He's inside the Gobelin Trade Virtuality looking for a cargo to pay his way to his next stop.*

Sarah tells Hughie, "The virtuality is a wild dance of data-beams and abstract avatars, and you can see the emblems of the main New Trader factions of this part of the Fringe. You recognise one of them as Charybdis Corporation, which has a cut-throat reputation for tearing apart competition across the Darradine Restoration. They've thoughtcast you about the cargo you've just bought, saying they'd like you to sell it to them at discount. What do you do?"

Hughie says, "Hell… these guys are dangerous. I'd better play along, give them the cargo this time, we can always find another one later."

Sarah holds up a fate point and says, "And Max isn't going to get his hackles up at being taken for a ride, given his own cut-throat reputation...?"

Hughie grins and replies, "Okay, I got you. So Max is going to keep his cargo and piss off one of the biggest crime lords in the octant. Awesome. I'll take the fate point."

Sarah describes Max and the other PCs dropping back out of the Mindscape to take delivery of the cargo ready for leaving Gobelin Highport orbital dock, just as a heavily-armed Charybdis corsair pulls up outside and hangs in space, warming its weapons systems.

Hughie shakes his head. Sarah grins.

A player can call for a compel to complicate his own character's decisions, if it relates to one of his aspects; **this is a great way of clawing back fate points.** The GM can call for compels to make the universe respond to the PCs' actions in a dramatic way; this also puts fate points back in the players' hands — where they can do most good — and generates tension, action, and trouble. Anyone can suggest a compel they think is appropriate — not just for their own characters. You can even suggest that a compel has just happened, if you see one happening naturally during play, and fate points can be awarded retrospectively as a result. Either way, the GM has final say.

See page 73 for more on compels.

WHAT NEXT?

That's pretty much everything you need to know to play ***Mindjammer***. Everything which follows elaborates on these basic rules, providing details of how to use them in differing situations and describing how they tie into the ***Mindjammer*** setting.

In particular, you might want to check out the following chapters right now.

Chapter 3: Creating Characters shows you how to create your ***Mindjammer*** characters and set up your game — that's probably the one to read next.

Chapter 9: Playing the Game gives you detailed rules for actions and consequences, and describes exactly what your characters can do, including how to run conflicts and work together to accomplish your goals.

Chapter 10: Gamemastering *Mindjammer* gives the GM guidance on running a ***Mindjammer*** game, including creating the bad guys and other NPCs.

CHAPTER THREE
CREATING CHARACTERS

"You could tell he was one of those New Trader types. He smiled too much, and had a greedy look in his eyes, like he cared more for those little nuggets of gold than he did for the people who worked their knuckles to the bone making them. Guys like that are evolutionary throwbacks, a step backward for the whole human race. Let's hope they can do us some good…"

SETTING UP YOUR MINDJAMMER GAME

When you first sit down to play ***Mindjammer***, decide what kind of game you want to play. Science-fiction has countless themes and many different styles; you can play disciplined Space Force crews patrolling the space lanes; steel-nerved mercenaries fighting foreign wars on the Fringe; enhanced individuals pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human; hardened colonists struggling to survive on a harsh world.

You can find a discussion of this in **Chapter 23: Themes, Genres, and Styles of Play**. Right now, try and answer two core questions:

- What sort of people are your characters?
- What sort of environment are they in?

Answering these questions will suggest what your characters are good at, what they do, the troubles they face, and the impact they have on the setting. Just get some general ideas — you'll fill in the rest during play.

Let's start by looking at the ***Mindjammer*** setting to define your game environment. Later (page 18), we'll look at making characters to fit.

Choosing Your Part of the Mindjammer *Setting*

The ***Mindjammer*** setting is described throughout this book — if you've read the "Introduction" you'll already have a general idea. It's a vast interstellar civilisation of hyper-advanced technologies, riven by stresses and strains as it rediscovers lost colonies and expands to the stars. It contains cultures, organisations, and star systems (both discovered and unexplored), weird alien life forms, intelligent starships, post-human entities, mysteries, histories, societies, and more. All of these are things your ***Mindjammer*** characters can interact with — or come into conflict with.

Don't worry about remembering (or even reading) all the details of the ***Mindjammer*** setting: if you've read the above paragraph, everything else is just gravy. You have enough in those few lines to begin to make the New Commonality your own; it's a big enough setting for you to customise, and even add whole civilisations, organisations, and species.

In fact, as you go through this chapter, you'll be doing just that. As well as creating characters, you'll be creating the environment in which they exist. Use the material presented in this book as a guide — but don't be afraid to strike out and invent things. The details will develop as you play.

Chris, Hughie, Ian, Reiko, and Sarah are talking about the **Mindjammer** *game they want to play. They've been watching some political action thriller movies, and are itching to play a science-fiction version where they're expert secret agents undertaking deadly missions in hostile political environments. They want lots of intrigue and mystery, but also action and cool gadgets. They're answering their core questions.*

First: what sort of people are their characters? A mix of misfits from all walks of life, recruited into a top secret agency tasked with missions no one else wants.

Second, what sort of environment are they in? Usually behind enemy lines, where there's a need for stealth and hi-tech infiltration, and a real danger of getting your head blown off. They have clear mission goals, and they want to make an impact on their game world.

Your Game's Scope

The New Commonality of Humankind is vast, but even it only takes up a small portion of Human Space, and the Fringe Worlds and Outer Worlds beyond are even larger. Space is a big place. How much of it you try and include in your campaign determines your game's **scope**.

In a small-scope game, you're looking at adventures in a single location — maybe one star system, or even a single space station, world, continent or city. The issues and problems the characters face will probably be interpersonal, local to the inhabitants. A larger scope game involves dealing with issues affecting the whole location — the future of the world or its culture, or even the Commonality or local interstellar civilisation. Your game may even start small scope and become larger — a process that'll be familiar to you from novels and longer-running TV shows.

Sarah likes the idea of a bunch of misfits undertaking high-stakes secret missions, and thinks it'll make a great medium-scope game, with characters with difficult personal issues and relationships on operations of huge political and cultural consequence. She's familiar with the **Mindjammer** *setting, and while she could create an agency from scratch, she decides the Commonality has more than enough to fit the bill. She considers the Armed Forces Instrumentality, but figures their missions will be too military, and the group wants stealth, intrigue, and secret operations behind enemy lines. She decides the Commonality's Security and Cultural Integrity Instrumentality, also known as SCI Force, fits the bill, and briefly describes it to the group, who decide to call the campaign* Agents of the Commonality.

Your Game's Big Issues

Every game needs big issues which the characters care about — things which cause problems or threaten them, or things they want to protect. When you set up your ***Mindjammer*** game, you create two or more such **issues**, which become **aspects** (page 67) that are always present in your game.

The issues you choose should take into account your answers to the core questions, and also your game's scale. They should affect not just your characters but the wider world. There are two types:

- **Current Issues:** These are existing problems or threats which have maybe been around for a long time. Characters dealing with current issues are trying to change the world, solve social problems, make the environment a better place. *Examples: corrupt mafia rulers, enemy occupation, a long war, constant cultural conflict.*
- **Impending Issues:** These problems have just begun to occur, and threaten disaster if they get a hold. Characters dealing with impending issues are trying to stop things getting worse. *Examples: a crumbling culture, alien invasion, social unrest, disease, a revolutionary technological discovery.*

The players discuss the issues they want their **Mindjammer** *characters to face. Hughie immediately says "freedom fighters", and the group discusses that: there's a faction on a rediscovered world which is violently resisting incorporation into the Commonality culture. It's an ongoing problem, but makes life on the world difficult, and needs resolving. Ian comes up with "The Fivers" as the name of the movement, maybe named for five nations or groups on the world. This sounds like a current issue.*

Reiko wants the game to be about Something Terrible on the verge of happening. The group thinks maybe there's a developing cultural meme on the world that the Mindscape is

Changing Issues

Your game's issues may change as you play, evolving or disappearing as a result of character actions, and new issues may emerge. The issues you create now are just the beginning; they're not for ever. See page 430 for more about changing your game issues.

More or Fewer Issues

You can change how many issues your game has for a different feel. One issue will make your game revolve around just that — maybe trying to end an enemy occupation, or preventing that occupation in the first place. Three issues will make your surroundings busy, and your characters stretched on multiple fronts.

a form of thought control — there've been attacks on people with Mindscape implants, especially "cultural collaborators" among the local population. Chris likes it as it feels like a cultural element the Commonality would be fighting to control using intrigue and the Mindscape as well as physical force. It makes a perfect impending issue.

Making the Issues Into Aspects

You're going to make these issues into **game aspects**, which are available to every character (including NPCs) at all times, either as invokes or compels. Write those aspects down now, and note down anything you need to remind you what they mean.

Sarah writes down Loyalties Split by the Fiver Separatists *and* Mindscape Implants Are Thought Control! *as two game aspects, derived from the current and impending issues above. She notes down next to* Loyalties Split by the Fiver Separatists*, "Anti-Commonality agitation in the five nations". And with* Mindscape Implants Are Thought Control!*, she writes "Random attacks on people with Mindscape implants".*

Don't worry too much about the wording, especially if you're new to aspects; you'll get plenty of practice making aspects when you create characters, and you can always come back and turn these issues into aspects then.

Faces and Places

Creating your two issues may have given you ideas about groups, factions, or organisations who may be significant in your game.

Now's the time to personalise those forces a little — give your PCs non-player characters they can interact with when dealing with them. Discuss the issues some more, and try and come up with individuals who represent them or are otherwise significant in some way. Jot down what you come up with: you're looking for a name for that NPC, an idea of how they relate to the issue or organisation, and (if you can) a **high concept aspect** (page 21).

Do the same for locations: significant places which crop up when you're talking about the two issues — where the issues take place, or where you envisage scenes occurring, or which are important to the NPCs you've



created. You don't need to create aspects for them; just jot them down.

The gamemaster may decide to use these NPCs and locations later during play, depending on how they relate to your game. Alternatively, one of the character ideas may be perfect for a player character!

One caveat: if you come up with a person or place which you imagine will be a mystery for your characters to unfold during play, don't define it in any detail. At most, refer to it generally — see "Secret or Hidden Aspects" (page 76) for more.

Sarah wants to set the game in the Darradine Rim, the part of the Commonality described on page 453, so she doesn't have to come up with a complete planet from scratch. There are several candidate worlds for the issues the group have described, and she decides the planet of Olkennedy (page 466) will be perfect. She describes it briefly to the group, who then talk about key figures and locations for the game issues they've chosen. They come up with:

- *Enck Lamizen, a Fiver demagogue who rouses the disaffected of Olkennedy to riot. His high concept is* Rabble Rousing Demagogue.
- *This brings us to a place — Friendship Square — at the heart of Craterport Down and the location of frequent Fiver rallies. The Commonality Embassy is there, where the characters are going to be based — the Commonality outpost on this turbulent rediscovered world.*
- *Sarah comes up with a friendly local, Nwasha Hom-Champa, a pro-Commonality security officer from the Olkennedian security forces, who's the closest thing they have to a friend on the planet. Sarah explains she's one of the Nwasha — pithecine xenomorphs and one of the world's three genotype populations. The group likes the idea of a tough local police officer as their contact, and start calling the Olkennedian security force "OLSEC", which Sarah decides is cool.*
- *Epona Zaron, leader of the Fivers. The group decide to leave her a mystery for now — other than she's the daughter of a former freedom fighter martyred by the Commonality 20 years ago, and a popular local media figure.*

The group decides to leave it there — that's enough to get an idea of what's going on at the very beginning of the game.

Create connections between the PCs and any NPCs you define. You'll have more connections as you create characters; if you want, you can wait until you've finished character creation, then do it in one go. We find it useful to do it in two stages: the first broad-brush description gives you ideas about the characters you'll create, and in turn the characters help flesh out locations and characters.

CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

The New Commonality of Humankind is an interstellar civilisation of staggering diversity. Rough and ready spacers rub shoulders with solemn and traditional functionaries from complex Core World cultures; uplifted animal **xenomorphs** serve aboard sentient starships with the minds and memories of ancient war heroes; and everywhere the inhabitants of lost colony worlds gaze wide-eyed and incredulous at the technological marvels of a culture ten thousand years old. Whatever character you want to play, there's room for it somewhere in ***Mindjammer***.

Unlike some roleplaying games, creating ***Mindjammer*** characters is an interactive, narrative process, and in some ways you can view it as actually playing the game, taking up all or part of a game session. Character creation is designed to be done as a group; it doesn't have to be — it's possible to create characters solo, or the gamemaster can create them in advance and bring them to your session — but you'll get most out of your ***Mindjammer*** game if you take the time to create the characters you're going to play together.

When you create characters, you're **telling part of your characters' stories**. Characters with back-stories, histories, relationships with other people and even other characters, are filled with built-in drama and hooks to make them easy to play. Your character had a life before your game started; character creation is where you decide what it was like.

Because you're stepping into your character's life story mid-way, character creation also gives you clues about the **next part of your character's story**. In that sense, character creation is about setting up some of what's going to happen when you start play — it's going to point towards your first **story arc** (page 429).

When you create your character, jot down any cool ideas or back-stories you come up with. You can use your character sheet (page 474) for a lot of this; we've also provided a character creation worksheet (page 475) for information you might not want to refer to all the time during play. Downloadable versions of these sheets are available at http://www.mindjammerpress.com.

Start character creation by creating two aspects — your character's **high concept** and **trouble** (page 21) — and then choosing his **culture**, **genotype** and **occupation**; and fleshing out his back-story, in three separate **phases**. That gives you the rest of your **aspects**, and the information you need to select your character's **skills** and **stunts**, and any **extras** like genurgic enhancements, social relationships, and equipment. Then you're ready to play!

Choosing Your Character Concept

First, try and describe your character in a single sentence, or at most two, expressing his essence in as short a space as possible. This is your **character concept**. Here are a few ideas.

Thaddeus Clay is the highly-experienced team leader. He's human, from somewhere in the heart of the Commonality, and much older than he looks — by centuries!

Max Proffitt is a roguish interstellar merchant from out on the Fringe. He's tough and streetwise, though with a good heart if you can get close to him.

Skin-of-Our-Teeth is a sentient starship. She has a remote-controlled humanoid avatar she just calls "Skin".

You can model your character concept after a favourite character from a novel, movie, or TV series, or simply base it around some specific thing you want to be able to do (like do stealth intrusion stuff, or fly a starship, or stomp around in powered armour). As with the game issues earlier, you'll unpack your character concept into five discrete parts of your character: your **culture**, **genotype**, and **occupation**; and your **high concept** and **trouble**.

Culture, genotype, and occupation are at minimum basic descriptors of your character — where he comes from, his physical nature, and what he does. But they can be much more: they can help define what your character's passionate about, whether he has any special abilities, prejudices, motivations. Sometimes culture, genotype, and occupation are secondary to your character concept — sometimes they're integral. You'll choose at least one **cultural aspect** for your character, and you may have aspects for your genotype and occupation, too.

High concept and trouble are also aspects, and are complementary — you'll probably find them easier to define together than apart. Once you have these five elements defined, you can move on to the rest of character creation.

Don't worry too much, though: if your character concept changes during character creation, you can always come back and tweak these elements later. It's good to get something down at this stage, though, to help you through the decisions you'll make next.

CULTURE

All ***Mindjammer*** characters come from a **culture** — a set of social customs, ideologies and behaviours shared by its members. The Commonality culture is the dominant culture in most of Human Space, but even that isn't uniform — in addition to the mainstream Commonality culture, there's also its strange and hyper-conservative sibling, the Core Worlds culture. Your choice of culture determines your character's world view, available genotypes (see below), often even his physical form, and range of occupation choices, as well as his tech index and access to the Mindscape.

When you create a ***Mindjammer*** character, select a culture. If you're unsure, choose the Commonality culture; this is standard for most characters, and also allows you to choose most genotypes and a wide range of occupations.

Character Creation Checklist

When you create a character, go through the following steps.

- *Choose your **character concept** (page 21).*
- *Choose your **culture** (page 19), and one **cultural aspect**.*
- *Choose your **genotype** (page 20), and possibly one or more mandatory aspects and extras.*
- *Choose your **occupation** (page 20).*
- *Create your **high concept** aspect (page 21).*
- *Create your **trouble** aspect (page 21).*
- *Choose a **name** (page 22).*
- *Go through the three phases and create your **phase trio** aspects (page 22).*
- *Choose one Great (+4), two Good (+3), three Fair (+2), and four Average (+1) **skills** (page 25).*
- *Choose at least three and no more than five **stunts** (page 26).*
- *Write down your **refresh** (page 26) on your character sheet. This is 5 if you have 3 stunts, 4 if you have 4 stunts, and 3 if you have 5 stunts.*
- *Choose **extras** (equipment, enhancements, organisations, etc — see page 27) using your extras budget. You have 1 aspect, 2 stunts, and 6 skill levels to spend. If you have any mandatory genotype aspects (above), these come out of your extras budget.*
- *Write down which extras are in your **halo** (page 28); the rest go in the "Other Extras" section of the character sheet.*
- *Calculate your **stress** and **consequences** (page 28).*
- *Write down your **tech index** (based on your culture) on your character sheet (page 28).*
- *Write down your **habituated gravity** (usually standard gravity, but you may choose another) on your character sheet (page 28).*
- *Jot down any other starting equipment (page 28).*

You must also select a single **cultural aspect** at this point: you can make this up, or select from one of those provided.

Cultures (and cultural conflict) are a big thing in ***Mindjammer***: cultures also exist in their own right, and have stat blocks like NPCs. Some characters can even act on behalf of cultures, taking them as extras (page 102).

Chris decides Thaddeus Clay is from the Core Worlds culture. For his cultural aspect, he chooses The Commonality Is Old Earth's Gift to the Stars!

Hughie decides Max Proffitt is from the Fringe Worlds, from the rediscovered culture of Bathys. He chooses Nothing Personal — It's Just Business *as his cultural aspect.*

Jen decides Skin-of-Our-Teeth is from the Commonality culture. She chooses Humanity Is Transcending *as her cultural aspect.*

GENOTYPE

Your character's **genotype** represents his physical nature — his species, race, body plan, etc. It includes naturally evolved species, genurgically modified or divergent humans (**hominids**), uplifted animals (**xenomorphs**), and **synthetic beings**. Your genotype affects your physical and mental capabilities.

When you create a character, select a genotype. Some genotypes require you to choose a **genotype aspect**. Usually you'll buy this using your **extras budget** (page 27), but the GM may also allow you to use your high concept instead. Some genotypes include **mandatory extras**, which you must buy using your extras budget.

Thaddeus Clay chooses the Commonality Human genotype. Chris uses his extras budget to buy the Mindscape Implant enhancement (page 120), and eyes the Extended Lifespan enhancement — he wants Thaddeus to be nearly 200 years old, so he'll buy this with his extras budget, too.

Hughie decides that Max's homeworld of Bathys is considered part of the Commonality, making Max a Commonality human. He also buys a Mindscape implant using his extras budget.

*Skin-of-Our-Teeth is a starship sentience, one of the synthetic genotypes known as **installations**. This also makes her an **eidolon**, meaning she has some of the memories and personality engrams of a now-dead organic (probably a human) derived from a Mindscape **thanogram** (page 188). She must take a genotype aspect, but as being a sentient starship is so integral to her character identity, the GM allows her to combine it with her high concept aspect. She uses her extras budget to buy the Mindscape Instance mandatory extra (page 124), and also decides she'll need an avatar to join the group on planetbound adventures.*

Homeworlds

*When you create your character, you **may** want to determine the world you were born and raised on, if any. You don't have to do this, but if you do you may choose a known world from the GM's campaign, or come up with your own. Your homeworld must be consistent with your culture and genotype, and may additionally help determine your tech index and habituated gravity (page 28).*

OCCUPATION

Your character's **occupation** represents what he's doing when you start play. It could be a profession (like starship pilot), or just an activity or lifestyle choice (like civilian or rogue). Occupations represent broad categories of activity; your character will also select a build within that occupation, representing more closely what he does. So, a "Civilian" occupation character may be a Commonality citizen, a colonist, a Fringe Worlder, and so on.

Generally your culture and genotype will steer you towards certain occupations. These aren't absolute requirements: you can theoretically play a Commonality synthetic Fringe Worlder if you want, but it'll require a little more discussion to figure out how that combination makes sense. The suggested occupations in the culture and genotype write-ups (see **Chapter 4: Cultures, Genotypes, and Occupations**) are there to help you create a consistent character quickly; use them as you see fit.

When you create a ***Mindjammer*** character, select an occupation, and a **build** within that occupation. You don't have to take an aspect representing your occupation, but you may do so. Usually occupations are dealt with in your high concept aspect, but you may also incorporate it into one of your phase aspects (see below).

*Chris chooses the "Security" occupation for Thaddeus Clay, selecting the "Culture Agent" build to represent his job as a leader of a team doing secret missions. This gives him a **permission** (page 104) to upgrade his Mindscape implant to a special ops chip, which he does immediately at no extra cost.*

Hughie chooses the "Merchant" occupation for Max Proffitt, selecting the "New Trader" build, typical for a mercantile specialist from the Fringe Worlds. This gives him a permission to take a starship as an extra when he comes to spend his extras budget.

Jen chooses the "Installation" occupation for Skin-of-Our-Teeth, and the "Sentient Starship" build. Typical for sentient starships, she chooses to combine that build with the "Culture Agent" build from the "Security" occupation. This gives her a permission to upgrade her Mindscape Instance enhancement to a special ops Mindscape instance, which she does at no extra cost. Being an installation also gives her a permission to take construct skills for her char-

Redoing Your Aspects

Don't worry if you have trouble thinking of aspects — it's a knack. Jot something down for now, even if it's long or even cheesy or cliched; you can come back to it anytime during character creation, and your GM will usually even let you change it during play if it turns out not to be as much fun as you first thought. Aspects are tools to aid play, not restrictions. You can even leave an aspect blank for now, and fill it in when inspiration strikes.

Keep Setting Up Your Game

As you're selecting culture, genotype, and occupation, determining your high concept and trouble aspects, and running through your phases, you may find yourself coming up with details of the environment around you — places, worlds, events, people. That's fantastic!

Jot these things down as you go. Later, when you're done with character creation, you may want to return to "Faces and Places" and incorporate these details into your game aspects (page 17).

*acter to represent things like her ship gravity and planing engines (see **Chapter 12: Constructs** for more).*

See **Chapter 4: Cultures, Genotypes, and Occupations** for examples of cultures, genotypes, and occupations, as well as guidelines for creating your own.

HIGH CONCEPT

Your **high concept** is a phrase that sums up what's most important about your character — an archetypal soundbite about what he is. Look at your character concept, and come up with a single, short phrase which encapsulates it. You can summarise your genotype, culture, and occupation, or say something entirely different. Here are some ideas:

- Focus your high concept on your job: *SCI Force Controller, Starship Pilot, Low-level Enforcer*. You'll find examples in "Occupations" (page 52).
- Throw in a descriptor from your genotype, or maybe your attitude towards your job: *Ambitious SCI Force Controller, Xenomorph Starship Pilot, Low-level Synthetic Enforcer*.
- Mix two occupations in an unusual way: *SCI Force Controller-Redactor, Barbarian Starship Pilot, Sentient Starship Assassin*.
- Focus on an important organisation or family relationship — especially if it's well-known (see "Keep Setting Up Your Game", above): *SCI Force Agent Exiled From the Da Luz Criminal Family, Low-level Synthetic Enforcer for the Solenine Corporacy, Internal Security Instrumentality Sentient Starship Assassin*.

Don't worry about getting this perfect right now — you can always refine it before you start play, as you come up with ideas when creating the rest of your character. Compare high concepts with the other characters you'll be playing with, to see if there's enough difference between them. Sometimes there'll be overlap, especially if you're all playing members of the same organisation (the *Agents of the Commonality* example game includes this possibility); again, don't worry — you can make your character concept distinctive when you define your trouble below.

Chris knows Thaddeus Clay is the leader of the team of agents, and likes the idea of tying his high concept to an organisation. The group has decided they're playing members of SCI Force, the Security and Cultural Integrity Instrumentality, so Chris links that with his longevity for a high concept Highly-Experienced SCI Force Controller.

Hughie isn't too interested in the SCI Force aspect, thinking Max got roped in on some as-yet-unspecified pretext. He chooses New Trader With a Heart of Gold *as his high concept, suggesting some setting background: maybe something happened which preyed on Max's good nature and led to him joining SCI Force.*

Jen doesn't know where to go from "Sentient Starship", but thinks that would be a pretty dull aspect on its own. She talks with Sarah about what ancient human's memories Skin's eidolon (page 43) is based on. "Can she have been an ace spy or something?" Sarah agrees this is cool, and probably influences the things Skin likes doing; Jen nods, and chooses Sentient SCI Force Surveillance Ship *as her high concept.*

They may re-visit these high concepts later after character creation, but for now it's a good start.

TROUBLE

Once you've created your high concept and culture, genotype, and occupation, think of the one big thing that regularly messes up your character's life. This is your **trouble**, an aspect which brings drama and interest, stopping

The Good Thing About Troubles...

Although your character's trouble may seem negative, the fact is he's lived with it a long time, and it hasn't killed him yet. It complicates things, but that doesn't mean it can't sometimes give him an advantage. Your character might have learned from his trouble; it may have made him stronger, given him a clearer sense of who he is. Don't just think about how your trouble might be compelled to cause problems; also consider how you could invoke it for a bonus. Here are some ideas.

- *Thaddeus Clay's* Pathologically Hypersensitive *might be useful when he needs to notice some small detail in a person's behaviour, or an unseen motivation behind someone's actions.*
- *Max's* SCI Force Have Me Over a Barrel *might help him resist his better instincts to give up, run away, or fail at a task.*
- *Skin's* Irresistible Curiosity *might niggle at her to run that last sensor sweep again, or try a bit harder to operate her avatar correctly, to find out what it's really like to have a humanoid body.*

things from going smoothly and causing chaos when you don't want it. If your high concept represents who or what your character is, his trouble is what stops him fulfilling that high concept properly.

There are two types of trouble: **personal struggles** and **problematic relationships**.

Personal struggles are about your darker side — impulses that are hard to control. Maybe you're your own worst enemy, or traumas from your past or irresistible instincts or conditionings threaten to ruin your life. *Examples: Traumatised by the Xeno Wars, Sucker for a Sob Story, Poorly Sublimated Carnivore Instinct.*

Problematic relationships are people or organisations which complicate your life. Maybe it's a rival who wants you dead, employers you have a "difficult" relationship with, or even dependent family members or friends who are constantly getting into trouble. *Examples: Kasim Kasah Has Got It in for Me, SCI Force Have Me Over a Barrel, Hunted by the Venu Dark Radiance.*

Make sure your trouble isn't trivial or easy to resolve; nor should it make life impossible, or force you to spend every day dealing with it at the expense of everything else. It should be a source of drama, not a drag. Don't derive it directly from your high concept: if you're a *Highly-Experienced SCI Force Controller*, don't make your trouble *Always Facing Cultural Conflict* — we know that, it's part of your job, so makes for a dull trouble. However, you could put a spin on it, like *Driven to Despair by Cultural Conflict* — now your character has personal issues doing his job, which could be interesting.

Make sure you and your GM are on the same page about your character's trouble. Come up with some ideas for invokes and compels, giving you both a clear idea of how your trouble might crop up in the game.

Chris wants to contrast Thaddeus Clay's whole "expert and ancient leader" shtick; he wants something that will cause him social difficulties, something just about him, but also gives a clue to why he took the path he did. He chooses Pathologically Hypersensitive *as his trouble; his character sees conflicting motivations and cultural problems everywhere.*

Hughie's interested in the fact that SCI Force might have recruited Max Proffitt against his will. It's something he'd like to explore in the game, so he chooses SCI Force Have Me Over a Barrel *as his trouble.*

Jen wants to avoid the obvious cliches of sentient starship troubles, and instead opts for something inherited from Skin's thanogram source, the ancient human spy whose memories she has. She chooses Irresistible Curiosity *as her trouble.*

NAME

If you haven't done so already, choose a name for your character. This can be whatever you like — don't worry if it seems fanciful or humdrum, chances are it exists somewhere in the thousands of worlds of Human Space. If you choose a current Earth name, maybe your character comes from a neo-culture (page 34) or follows some esoteric Commonality fashion. There are some strange names in the Commonality — you'll see examples throughout this book — so you've got plenty of choice!

Building Your Backstory

By the time your character is ready to play, you'll have seven aspects: your high concept, trouble, and cultural aspects, one extras aspect (possibly a genotype or occupation aspect), and three aspects representing your character's recent background, called the **phase trio**. We'll focus on these three aspects here. Before we do, make sure you've got at least your high concept, trouble, culture, genotype, occupation, and name figured out.

Phase trio aspects are made in three phases. The first relates to something interesting and adventurous your character did relatively recently; the second and third

describe how other characters in your group got involved in that event, and how you got involved in theirs.

The three phases tell a story about your characters. In each phase, you write down two things:

- **A summary of what happened in that phase.** Jot down a couple of sentences — the bare bones. You'll flesh it out (and even change it) later.
- **An aspect relating to the phase.** This can summarise the whole phase, or refer to some detail which matters to your character today.

You can use the character creation worksheet (page 475) to write these down. See below for examples.

PHASE ONE: YOUR ADVENTURE

This first phase represents your character's most significant recent adventure — the book, episode, movie, or whatever, in which he played a starring role.

Think about what has just happened to your character, in the recent past. A couple of sentences is all you need — you (and other players) can add more detail in the next two phases. Consider your high concept and trouble, maybe your culture, genotype, and occupation, and find where they intersect to create drama or dilemma.

Ask the following questions, and maybe discuss them with your group.

- What problem does your cultural background cause you?
- What dilemmas or difficulties crop up in your job?
- What happens when your trouble turns up at work?
- What's the bad thing that happened to kick the story off? Did it happen to you, or someone else? Who?
- What did you decide to do about the bad thing? Was it the right decision? What happened?
- Who did you come up against? Was it who you thought? Was it completely unexpected? Did anyone betray you?
- Did you sort the bad thing out? Did it go as expected? Is it all over, or will it return? Are there long-term consequences?

A note on timing: In the next two phases, two other characters in your group will become involved in your adventure, so be aware of **when** it happens; if it's too far back in time, maybe they won't be around, or you won't have met them yet. It's often best to start off vague, and not specify exactly when your adventure took place, and fill in the details later.

Hughie answers the phase one questions for Max Proffitt.

The bad thing that happened was a dodgy trade deal that went horribly wrong. Hughie decides Max broke a Commonality trade embargo and smuggled what he thought were medical supplies from a scientist called Doctor Miserius, from a Fringe World state called the Dominion, onto a world called New Bahamut. He fought Commonality agents to make the delivery — but at the last minute it turned out that the medical supplies were a terrible Dominion bioweapon.

When he worked out what had happened, Max cooperated with the Commonality, but still thousands of people died as a result of the attack. Max was taken into custody by the Commonality, and handed over to SCI Force.

Hughie writes down an aspect related to this story. He chooses Doctor Miserius Haunts my Dreams*, because he wants to shed some light on why Max — who has a heart of gold — did something so terrible, and why he now feels compelled to work with SCI Force.*

Sarah now has some details to add to the game: a location, New Bahamut; a potentially hostile Fringe World state called the Dominion; and a villainous mastermind named Doctor Miserius. She notes these down as potential hooks for future scenarios.



PHASE TWO: CROSSING PATHS

Here's where you start to tie your group together, by having other characters play a minor supporting role in your phase one adventure, and vice versa.

Look at the index card you've got from another player in your group, detailing their character's name and phase one adventure. Now think of a small role your character played in that other character's adventure. Discuss it with the other character's player, then add a single sentence or phrase to their index card to reflect your character's supporting role. There are three types of supporting role:

- **Complicating the adventure:** Your character made the adventure dangerous, or more uncertain or complicated, maybe because of a game or cultural aspect, or his high concept or trouble. We know both characters survived — although the aspect you eventually choose could talk about this. Don't worry about how the complication was resolved — just describe how you caused the problem. E*xamples: Skin caused trouble when she detected the bioweapon onboard Max's ship; Max turned up as Lyra's getaway pilot.*
- **Solving a situation:** Your character solved, or helped solve, a major problem the main character in the adventure was facing; this may involve your character's high concept aspect. Don't worry about what caused the complication — just describe how your character solved the problem. *Examples: Jackson Stark helped Max shoot Doctor Miserius's goons before they could release most of the bioweapon; Skin rescued Max and Lyra before Halafran's security forces could destroy the hideout.*
- **Complicating and Solving:** Your character either complicated a situation but solved a different one, or solved one problem but created another. Use elements of both ideas, linking them with the word "later". *Example: Jackson Stark fought with Dominion forces while Max tried to escape; later he argued Max's case before Thaddeus Clay and the SCI Force tribunal.*

The idea is to highlight your character's contribution to the adventure so you can create a good aspect from it. The aspect can be something you're now known for, or can do, or did, items of equipment you have, or a relationship with a person (good or bad).

Jot down the other character's adventure idea and your contribution on your own character worksheet; you'll

Fewer Than Three Players

The phase trio assumes your group has at least three players. If you have fewer, or if you're creating your character solo, try the following:

- ***Skip phase three** (or even phases two and three) and invent an aspect instead, or leave it blank to be filled in during play.*
- ***Create another story:** This can be a joint story for phase three if you're creating characters with two players, or two brand new stories for phases two and three if you're creating a single character solo.*
- ***Have the GM create characters:** In this case, the GM is creating NPCs alongside your character. They don't need to have detailed skills, stunts, extras, and so on, but the phase trio can be very useful for creating NPCs. The GM creates characters with their own stories, to support the PC's (or PCs') adventures and provide adventures for the PCs to guest-star in. Later, these NPCs can provide excellent background material — you can maybe go back to "Faces and Places" (page 17) and incorporate them there.*

You may even have more than three phases; see "Changing Character Power Levels" (page 26).

Phases and Index Cards

By now you'll have come up with an adventure for your character. In the next two phases, you'll swap stories with other players, so their characters can become involved in your story — and you can become involved in theirs.

Jot down your character's name and the two sentence description about your adventure on a scrap of paper or index card, and pool them in the middle of the table. Then, each player takes a card belonging to someone else, and uses that in phase two (and the same for phase three). That way you still have the original details written down on your character creation worksheet, but other players can refer to your index card to see what events they need to hook their characters into.

get an aspect from your supporting role. The other player should jot down your contribution to their character's adventure on their sheet, if there's room.

Jen has Max Proffitt's starting adventure, and needs to fit Skin-of-Our-Teeth into it. She decides Skin complicated Max's situation by detecting the bioweapon onboard his ship and alerting SCI Force.

She takes Some Jobs You Just Can't Leave to Humans *to reflect her shock at the New Bahamut disaster — and how much worse it nearly was.*

PHASE THREE: CROSSING PATHS AGAIN

Once phase two is complete, do the same again, but with a different character's adventure.

Ian gets Max's starting adventure next, and tries to figure out how Jackson Stark fits into it. He decides that Jackson helped mitigate the effect of Doctor Miserius's bioweapon smuggled by Max, and argued Max's case before Thaddeus Clay's SCI Force tribunal, leading to Max's recruitment rather than his "re-education".

He takes the aspect Max Proffitt Owes Me His Life *to reflect both actions.*

That's it! You now have your phase trio aspects, and likely a lot of new background material. Go back and check your high concept and trouble aspects (and even your culture, genotype, and occupation) to see if you need to tweak them to reflect your three phases.

Choosing Skills and Stunts

Now it's time to choose your character's skills; see **Chapter 6: Skills and Stunts** for descriptions of the skills available.

When you create a character, you select skills in the form of a "pyramid", with a single skill as your best skill at Great (+4) (usually called your **peak skill**), and one more skill on every level below down to Average (+1). This gives a beginning ***Mindjammer*** character the following skills:

- One Great (+4) skill
- Two Good (+3) skills
- Three Fair (+2) skills
- Four Average (+1) skills

Any skill which doesn't appear in your **skill pyramid** is considered to be at Mediocre (+0). That's right — you can even attempt a skill you have no special training in. The GM always has the final say, but expert systems, the Mindscape, skill chips, and the high levels of character competence mean that pretty much anyone can jump in a vehicle and drive it or shoot a few rounds from a slug thrower. This isn't the case with **stunts** (see below); if you need a stunt to attempt something, not having that stunt usually means you can't even try (but see page 173).

Aspects on Your Character Sheet

In addition to your seven character aspects, you also have the two game aspects you created when you first decided your game issues (page 16). All nine aspects are entered on your character sheet, and are available to your character; look through them now and think about how you might use them to do cool things during play.

*There's one other aspect you may sometimes find on your character sheet: a **flaw**, sometimes called a **weakness aspect**. This is a predominantly negative aspect which your character may incur as a result of choosing a certain genotype or special ability. Examples include:* Light-Sensitive*;* Unable to Function in Gravity*;* Slow-Moving. *In some ways, flaws are like permanent consequences (page 153). If you receive a flaw, you don't have to buy it with your extras budget — you get it for "free". See page 68 for more.*

Max is the trading and starship piloting expert in the group, and looks to maximise his skills in those areas.

He takes Great (+4) Pilot as his peak skill, followed by Good (+3) Ranged Combat and Resources — these aren't immediately applicable to starships, but he'll deal with that when he selects his stunts (see below). He then takes Fair (+2) Contacts, Deceive, and Notice — he lives on his wits, knows a lot of people, and can fool some of them a lot of the time. Lastly he takes Average (+1) Athletics, Provoke, Rapport, and Technical, figuring these are necessary in his work, and he wants some ability to act in interpersonal conflicts and get out of the way of bigger guns than his.

Some skills provide additional benefits, such as Physique, Resources, and Will, which give you additional physical, credit, and mental stress boxes and even consequences. If you want to be particularly robust in those areas, take one or more levels in these skills.

WHICH SKILLS TO CHOOSE

You can generally choose whichever skills you want for your character. Your occupation makes some likelier than others;

The Skill Cap

In **Mindjammer**, *normal, unenhanced human beings (and related sentients) have a maximum permitted skill level of Fantastic (+6). For those with Mindscape implants and access to the Mindscape, this is increased to Epic (+7). This is known as the* ***skill cap****. It's not absolute, however; skill chips (page 120) may take individuals above the skill cap using the Mindscape, and enhancements such as synaptic enhancers (page 119) may increase the skill cap itself. Finally, as individual sentiences begin to transcend human limitations, the skill cap may be increased for post-human characters: see "Going Post" on page 447.*

a starship pilot is more likely to have a good Pilot skill than a mercenary or diplomat. Look through the "Skills" entries for your chosen occupation in **Chapter 4: Cultures, Genotypes, and Occupations**, and select at least one level in the skills indicated there. If you find you don't want to take those skills, maybe select an occupation which is more in keeping with the skills you'd like you're character to be good at — in the long run, you'll be happier with your character that way.

Choosing Stunts and Refresh

Stunts modify how skills work. See page 79 for selecting stunts and creating your own.

When you create a character you may choose or invent three to five stunts. You get three stunts for free, and you can take up to two more at the cost of lowering your refresh by one each. This means: **the more cool stuff you want your character to be able to do, the more you'll need to accept compels to build up your fate points**.

Changing Character Power Levels

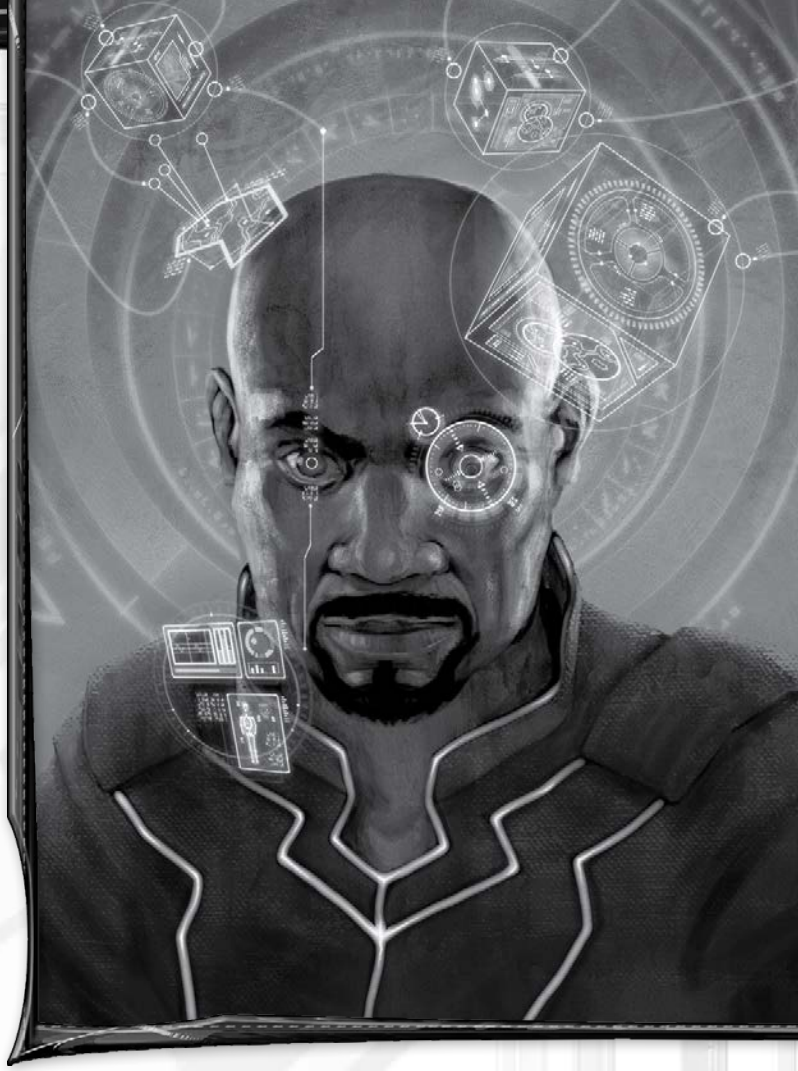
We use a character's peak skill level as a shorthand for roughly how powerful and experienced he is. Your character usually begins as a Great (+4) character; sometimes you may want to create characters with more or less experience. You can do this by modifying the number of phases, refresh, skill points, and stunts you receive, as well as your extras budget.

A ***Good (+3) character*** *is less experienced than normal — often good for a gritty game of tough choices and survival. Create a Good (+3) character as follows:*

- *Select your culture, genotype, and occupation as usual. Select a high concept and trouble, but only run through two phases of the phase trio — a* ***phase duo*** *— for two phase aspects.*
- *Begin with 3 refresh. You get 2 free stunts, and may select 1 more at the cost of 1 refresh.*
- *Begin with 10 skill levels. Select the following skills:*
  - *1 x Good (+3)*
  - *2 x Fair (+2)*
  - *3 x Average (+1)*
- *Spend the following extras budget:*
  - *No additional aspects*
  - *1 stunt*
  - *3 skill levels*

A ***Superb (+5) character*** *is more experienced than normal — good for larger-than-life games of high-power cinematic swashbuckling. Create a Superb (+5) character as follows:*

- *Select your culture, genotype, and occupation as usual. Select a high concept and trouble, and run through four phases — a* ***phase quartet*** *— to give you four phase aspects.*
- *Begin with 7 refresh. You get 4 free stunts, and may select up to 3 more at the cost of 1 refresh each.*
- *Begin with 35 skill levels. Select the following skills:*
  - *1 x Superb (+5)*
  - *2 x Great (+4)*
  - *3 x Good (+3)*
  - *4 x Fair (+2)*
  - *5 x Average (+1)*
- *Spend the following extras budget:*
  - *2 aspects*
  - *3 stunts*
  - *10 skill levels*



ADJUSTING REFRESH

A character starts with a **refresh** of 5. That means he'll start each session off with 5 fate points (page 76).

For each additional stunt you take above three, you must reduce your refresh by 1. So, if you take four stunts, your refresh is reduced to 4. The maximum number of stunts you can take as a beginning character is five, which reduces your refresh to 3 (but see "Choosing Extras" below).

Your refresh may never drop below 1. If it ever drops to 0 or lower for any reason, your character is considered no longer viable, and his story ends in that scene.

Max decides to take four stunts. First, he takes the Starship Pilot stunt, which lets him use his Great (+4) Pilot to take starship actions and manoeuvres (page 92). Then, he takes the Gunnery stunt, which lets him use his Good (+3) Ranged Combat to make starship attacks. Next, he takes the Starship Trader stunt, which lets him use his Good (+3) Resources to buy and sell cargo with his starship. Finally, he takes the Finder stunt, which lets him use his Fair (+2) Contacts to find cargoes for his starship. He reduces his basic refresh by 1 point, which means he begins play with 4 fate points.

Choosing Extras

You can now choose your character's **extras**. Extras represent things external to your character, which are nevertheless crucial parts of your character. There are many types of extra, including genurgic enhancements, special weapons and armour, special abilities you get by virtue of your genotype, organisations your character belongs to, starships he owns or has access to, and so on.

In game terms, an extra is a collection of one or more skills, stunts, or aspects, or a combination of all three. For example, a Mindscape implant, a crucial genurgic enhancement for citizens of the Commonality, is an aspect; whereas a skill chip, a genurgic enhancement which augments a character's own skill levels, is a stunt. A Dispersion Field, a powerful force field used for personal defence, is considered to be two stunts; and a *Herald*-class fast courier starship gives a character one or more (usually more) additional skills, allowing him to use it to travel in n-space, jump through 2-space, and more.

An extra therefore has a **cost**, measured in stunts, aspects, or skill levels. Your character begins with an **extras budget** which he may use to "buy" extras, as follows:

- 1 aspect
- 2 stunts
- 6 skill levels

This means your character may buy extras costing up to the above total. These might be up to 9 separate extras, or even just 1 large extra (like a starship) with 1 aspect, 2 stunts, and 6 skill levels.

Many extras also have a **tech index**, indicating their sophistication. At character creation, your character may not select an extra with a tech index higher than his own tech index; see page 28 for more.

You may also spend your character's refresh and skill levels to buy extras, but you may not use your extras budget to buy your own aspects, skills and stunts.

Max wants some equipment. As part of the Commonality Human genotype, he was required to take the mandatory extra "Mindscape implant", costing 1 aspect from his extras budget. He buys simple Mesh armour, costing 1 of his 2 extras stunts, and spends the second stunt on a Monitor Band Cloak (page 136), reasoning SCI Force would have supplied him with one of these when he joined up.

He still has 6 skill points in his extras budget. He buys a Biomed Array (page 121), built into his clothing and costing 2 skill levels. He spends the final 4 skill points on The Rosemary Princess*, a* Profit*-class new trader starship, giving it three construct skills: Fair (+2) Planing, and Average (+1) Manoeuvre and Passive Sensing.*

As Max's tech index is T9 (Second Age of Space), the same or higher than all these items, he can acquire his equipment without difficulty.

Filling In Your Halo

When you choose your extras, figure out which of them require Mindscape connectivity to function. Write these extras in the section labelled "Halo" on your character sheet; they're your **halo abilities** (page 186), and you can lose access to them if you're cut off from the Mindscape, and they can even be affected by technopsi (page 187). Items in **Chapter 8: Technology** are clearly identified as halo abilities; discuss with your GM any items you're unsure about.

For example, Max notes his Mindscape implant extra down in the "Halo" section of his character sheet; he notes the rest of his extras in the "Other Extras" section.

Finalising Your Character

You're almost done! Now just calculate your stress and consequences, and note down your tech index, habituated gravity, and any other items of equipment.

STRESS AND CONSEQUENCES

Stress and consequences are your two ways of avoiding losing conflicts — see **Chapter 9: Playing the Game**. Put simply, stress represents temporary effects of conflicts which you can recover from in moments; consequences represent more serious results, including longer-term injury, trauma, and other lingering effects.

Your character has three stress tracks. Your **physical stress track** represents injury, physical fatigue, and the like; your **mental stress track** represents mental fatigue and confusion; and your **credit stress track** represents depletion of your wealth and access to resources. A character has two stress boxes in each stress track by default.

Your character also has two sets of **consequence slots**. The first set is used for consequences resulting from physical and mental stress (these are your main consequence slots, usually just called "general consequences" or simply "consequences"); the second set is used for consequences resulting from credit stress (called "credit consequences"). Each set can hold three consequences; the first is **mild**, the second **moderate**, and the third **severe**. There's also a notional fourth **extreme consequence** slot, not marked on your character sheet but which can sometimes occur: see page 155. Unlike stress, general consequences aren't classed as physical or mental; they can be either.

Some skills, stunts, and extras modify the number of stress boxes and consequences you have. The Physique skill (page 91) gives you additional physical stress boxes; Will (page 101) gives you additional mental stress boxes; Resources (page 95) gives you additional credit stress boxes; and all three can grant you additional consequences slots.

Max has no skill levels in either Physique or Will, so begins play with 2 physical and 2 mental stress boxes. He has Good (+3) Resources, so he gets two additional credit stress boxes, for a total of 4. He has 3 general consequence slots, and 3 credit consequence slots. Lyra Da Luz, however, has Fair (+2) Physique and Average (+1) Will: this gives her one additional physical and mental stress box, for a total of 3 each. She only has Mediocre (+0) Resources, which means she only has 2 credit stress boxes. She begins with the standard 3 general consequence slots and 3 credit consequence slots.

TECH INDEX

Your character's **tech index** is determined by his culture (page 32), and affects how familiar you are with the technology around you, and how well you understand it. It's measured like a skill, using the ladder (page 12). Write it down on your character sheet now.

Max is from the rediscovered world of Bathys, a Fringe World culture with a tech index of T9 (+4), the Commonality standard. Hughie writes "T9" in the tech index section of his character sheet.

HABITUATED GRAVITY

You can select a gravity field from Table 18-11: Surface Gravity (page 324), or simply opt for the default Standard (+0) gravity of 1G; write it on your character sheet now. Make sure your chosen gravity field is consistent with your back story, particularly your culture and genotype; a standard Commonality human who's spent forty years serving aboard Space Force starships is unlikely to be habituated to a very high gravity field. Additionally, if your gravity field is significantly different from standard gravity, you may want to incorporate it into your aspects — perhaps as part of your high concept, trouble, or even a genotype aspect. Gravity can have significant effects on your character — see page 176.

Sarah says Max's homeworld of Bathys has a gravity of 1.5G, putting it in the High Standard (+1) row on Table 18-11: Surface Gravity, perhaps explaining why Max is short and stocky. However, as a New Trader Max has spent years plying the space lanes in standard gravity, so chooses that as his habituated gravity. Hughie writes "Standard (1G)" in the "Habituated Gravity" section of his character sheet.

HOW TO CHOOSE STARTING EQUIPMENT

Look at your character sheet and think about the equipment your character routinely uses with his skills, stunts, and aspects. If there's anything not clearly marked on

your character sheet which you think your character has and which you think might be interesting in play, write it down in the "Notes" section of your character sheet. These items won't give you any special bonuses — that's what extras are for — but they do exist to give you colour for your descriptions and maybe allow you to attempt things you otherwise couldn't.

First, look at your skills. You automatically have access to any equipment you need to use your skills. For example, if you have the Drive skill (page 86), you have access to a vehicle such as a ground car, hovercraft, or even a tracked vehicle or boat. It's specifically there to enable you to use your Drive skill effectively; you may not "own" it as such — it may be something you use as part of your job. Jot down a rough description of this vehicle.

Likewise, if you have the Ranged Combat skill, you have a ranged weapon. It has no special abilities, but allows you to use your Ranged Combat skill to make attacks. In game terms, this weapon has no bonuses or other abilities, and has a +0 rating in the weapons section on page 125. Go to that page now and have a look at the weapons you could select as default. Again, you may or may not own this weapon — but you have access to it.

The same goes for some of your stunts. Yes, that does mean that if you take the Starship Pilot stunt, you have access to a starship. Again, it may not belong to you (in fact, it probably won't), but it's there, enabling you to make use of your stunt. You may not have complete control over what it does and where it goes, but it's part of your story, and you should have plenty of say over its role — discuss it with your GM.

Remember that the tech index of any equipment you're marking down may not normally be higher than your character's own tech index. If it is, either you may not select that item, or you must agree a story justification for why you would have it. In such a case it's even possible you may not understand or be able to use the item very well (page 82).

Next, look at your extras, and any stunts which give you special bonuses. These often represent more powerful items of equipment. Sometimes you've acquired these explicitly: you may have spent 2 stunts from your extras budget to acquire a Personal Sensor Array, for example. Other times, it might not be so obvious: you may have spent 1 stunt to acquire the Glide special ability (page 108) in the form of a genurgic enhancement called a Glide Membrane; this may now be part of your body, but it's also an item of equipment, in a sense.

From the above you should have a good idea of the equipment you're beginning play with. Once you begin

Wealth in the Second Age of Space

For millennia, money was an anachronism in the Commonality of Humankind — as outmoded and obsolete as an abacus or a tinder box, a relic of the bad old days of primitive barter and speculation. Resource allocation in the Commonality is both complex and simple: thanks to makepoints, and the near unlimited power provided by zero point power cells, most items people desire or need are readily and freely available. Where there's scarcity, it's usually because of legal or social restrictions — heavy weapons aren't generally made available to the populace, for example. In such cases, acquisition is less a factor of anything as unsophisticated as money, and much more reliant upon personal connections and access to resource allocation plans.

Or, at least, that's the theory. In the last two hundred years, out on the Fringe, all the old economic certainties which upheld the Commonality for ten millennia have fallen, replaced by chaos and unpredictability. In the face of poor communications, lack of intercultural cooperation, and inadequate resource and transportation networks, the Commonality has fallen back on that most primitive of expedients after all — money. The ***Expansionary Era Currency Unit****, officially called the EECU but generally called the* ***credit****, is accepted as scrip across the Fringe and on many Commonality worlds. Small, difficult to destroy, and semi-sentient, credits are available in various shapes and denominations, from coins, to variable value cards, to flexible bills, and are able to identify themselves in such a way as to preclude forgery by any but the most sophisticated endeavours. They look very impressive, bright, technological, holographic, sentient, and have become the de facto interstellar currency all across the Commonality frontier.*

They're immensely popular amongst the people who use them, and fashionable in some of the Commonality's more decadent or pretentious parts. Needless to say, the Core Worlds refuse to have anything to do with such savagery…

play, there are other ways of obtaining equipment, either on a temporary basis, or more long-term: see page 125 in **Chapter 8: Technology** for more.

That's It!

Your ***Mindjammer*** character is ready. Time to play!

QUICK CHARACTER CREATION

Sometimes you may not want to go through the full character creation process above. Maybe an extra player has turned up without a character, or maybe another character has died in the middle of a session and you don't want to take time out. Or maybe you've decided just to jump in and play with your group, without creating characters. If any of this applies, you can leave most of your character sheet blank, and fill it in as you play.



To do this, you need just three things as the bare minimum for starting play:

- Your character's high concept
- Your peak skill
- Your name

You can even start off pretty vague with your high concept — *Starship Pilot*, *Grizzled Merc*, *Cocky Farmboy*, *Cheeky Trader With a Roguish Charm* will all do fine to get you going. You can tweak things later as you play.

Your peak skill is just what you're best at. It probably follows your high concept — *Starship Pilot* probably has, well, Pilot as his peak skill; *Grizzled Merc* probably has Ranged Combat. *Cocky Farmboy* — well, maybe it's Will, or Drive, or Technical. *Cheeky Trader With a Roguish Charm* — how about Resources? Or Rapport? Deceive?

At the same time, if you think of any skills you think you'll be bad at, jot them down — they'll be at Mediocre (+0).

For your name, think briefly about genotype and culture, if it hasn't already come up in your high concept. You don't have to be too precise — "human" is okay, if that's as far as you want to go at this stage, but it's probably worth deciding whether you're character is decidedly non-human before you start play — especially if you turn out to be a sentient starship! Your GM is well within her rights to reject any decisions during play which turn out to be too unlikely, so get any exotic requests in now!

With this method, you start with 8 refresh, which means you start play with 8 fate points.

During your first session, you'll try to pin down the rest of your skills, stunts, and aspects. Don't worry if you don't manage it all; you can continue into the second session doing the same. Before long, though, you should take time to fill in the rest of your character sheet once you have a clear vision of your character.

Choosing Aspects During Play

Leave your **trouble** aspect blank for now, unless you already have a clear idea. For your cultural aspect, once you begin to home in on your character's culture, start trying to express how it affects him — that'll probably come out of some decision or event in the game.

As you're not going through the phase trio, you won't have phase aspects: instead, you're just going to create three aspects for your character which seem cool and useful during play. The best time to do this is when you need a bonus, and you're looking for an aspect to invoke.

Again, don't worry too much about getting these aspects word perfect immediately: you can tweak any new aspects at the end of the session.

Choosing Skills During Play

If you need to roll for a skill you don't have on your character sheet, you can either assume your skill level is Mediocre (+0), or you can write that skill in an empty slot and roll it at that level. Keep doing this until you've filled in all your skill slots.

Don't worry if you choose to roll the skill at Mediocre (+0) and then decide later you want to write that skill in a slot; maybe you just weren't on form the first time. It's fine to write it down at a higher level.

Choosing Stunts During Play

To pick a stunt during play, you must reduce your refresh by 1 point, and give up (spend) one of the 8 fate points you started play with, up to a maximum of 5 stunts. That means if you've spent all your fate points, you can't choose a stunt during play. You can still mark it down as the stunt you want, but you can't use it until the next session, when your fate points reset to your new refresh level.

Choosing Extras During Play

Everything we've said above about choosing aspects, skills, and stunts also applies to extras — except of course that extras often represent things like equipment, access to starships and organisations, enhancements, and so on.

One of the first extras you'll probably decide on is the Mindscape implant. Most ***Mindjammer*** characters have access to the Mindscape — it's an integral part of the game. You may find your GM requires you to automatically mark it down on your character sheet — if so, remember it costs 1 aspect from your extras budget.

Other extras usually crop up when you start to use your skills — remember that every skill automatically comes with whatever basic equipment is required to use it, but that equipment gives no bonus or particular advantage. Your Ranged Combat skill, for example, may give you a light handgun or a null pistol (page 130) — these provide no bonus, they're simply there to explain how you use the skill. If when you get into Ranged Combat you decide you have something more powerful — say, a blaster rifle or an auto rifle with built-in grenade launcher — then you can write it down on your character sheet as long as you have the extras budget to pay for it.

X-MemCore

EIDOLON PROFICIENCY EMERGENCE

The rapid skill acquisition of newly-instantiated eidolon sentiences is well-documented, although the mechanism remains poorly understood. What is clear is that the interaction between the component thanogram or thanogram fragments constituting the eidolon personality and the environment in which the eidolon finds itself somehow interact to elicit inculcated responses in the eidolon which derive not from itself but its thanogram source or sources.

These 'ghost talents' have been documented to arise spontaneously and without warning in eidolons subjected to stress or abnormal stimuli, and highlight the importance of the eidolon engineer in ensuring not only eidolon compliance at incept, but ongoing freedom from eidolon crisis throughout the synthetic's operational period.

CHAPTER FOUR
CULTURES, GENOTYPES, AND OCCUPATIONS

"If there's one thing we have in abundance, it's diversity. Everywhere I go, everyone I talk to, human or hominid, xenomorph or synthetic, is different. That would be our greatest strength — the one thing that makes me think our civilisation will survive this era — if only I could get people to understand it. But there I suppose I'm guilty too of wishing we were all the same. A Commonality of individuals — it's the oldest paradox there is."

— Autotroph Iridis Elkior, Emissary of the Von Neumann's World Tribune Sentience, speaking out in favour of the Return To Hunger movement, 186 NCE

OVERVIEW

This chapter presents example cultures, genotypes, and occupations for your ***Mindjammer*** characters, as well as guidelines for creating your own.

CULTURES

Your character belongs to a **culture**. You can choose one from the selection below, or make up your own. Some characters may even take their culture as an extra, giving it stat blocks and skills, and using it to take actions: see **Chapter 17: Cultures** for more.

During character creation, your character's culture helps determine his **cultural aspect**, and provides suggestions for his **genotype** and **occupation**, his **demeanour** and **language**, and **equipment** and clothing. You don't have to follow these suggestions, but if you want to go with something else, check with your GM — you may need to explain your choice in your character's back-story. Your character's culture also indicates his initial **tech index** (page 116).

The Commonality Culture

This is the culture which unites the many worlds of Commonality Space. Originating on Old Earth and the Core Worlds, it now incorporates the many populations which have been rediscovered during the Expansionary Era. It includes the cultural contributions of divergent races and species, and worlds which have achieved Stage Four Cultural Integrity (page 308).

Characters from the Commonality culture are the norm in ***Mindjammer***, and probably the most comprehensible to 21st century minds. They have the widest behavioural range, an unquenchable self-confidence, optimism, and belief they're doing the right thing, and access to the technology and sophistication to back it up.

Cultural Aspects: *Humanity Is Transcending; A Light for the Many Worlds of Space.*

Genotypes: Commonality Human, Xenomorph, Synthetic, Hominid.

Demeanour: Conservative, controlled, diverse yet alert for divergence.

Language: Universal.

Tech Index: T9 (Second Age of Space).

Occupations: Culture Agent, Sci Tech, Spacer.

Equipment: Advanced, discreet; Mindscape implant, various enhancements.

Using Your Tech Index

At character creation, your **tech index** *is the same as your culture's tech index, and represents the sophistication of the technology you're used to. It may limit your skills and stunts (for example, you may not easily learn the Starship Pilot stunt if your tech index is T8 or less), and influences your cultural context (page 82). You use it as a modifier to rolls to repair or create items of technology (page 178); the item's own tech index modifies the opposition you face.*

Additionally, the difference between your tech index and the tech index of the location you're in forms a penalty to rolls you make to cope with local technology, at the GM's discretion. For example, if your tech index is T9 (Second Age of Space), you're used to finding out information using the Mindscape; if you're on a T5 (Computer Age) world, you incur a -4 penalty to rolls to find out information — you're not accustomed to visiting libraries, accessing primitive databases, manually trawling through texts. Conversely, if you're a barbarian from a T2 (Metal Age) culture, trying to negotiate a T9 Commonality metroplex incurs a huge -7 penalty! Visitors to worlds of radically differing tech indices are encouraged to employ guides…

Your tech index may change over time. Whenever you complete a significant milestone (page 160), you may use the skill point to modify your tech index instead of increasing a skill. You may modify your tech index downwards as well as upwards — sometimes it's necessary to get used to a lower *level of technology…*

The Core Worlds Culture

In many ways, the Core Worlds culture is the "true" Commonality culture — that of Old Earth and the ancient colony worlds of the Old Commonality before the discovery of planing. It's thousands of years old, complex and full of incomprehensible hierarchies and traditions. Many individuals have been enhanced to the extent they may no longer be fully human; most view the chaos and conflict of the Fringe with confusion, fear, and disdain.

Cultural Aspects: *The Old Ways Are Best; The Core Worlds* Are *the Commonality; Status and Reputation Above Everything!*

Genotypes: Commonality Human, Synthetic, Hominid.



Demeanour: Hyper-conservative and regimented, with byzantine customs, unreadable.

Language: Universal.

Tech Index: T10 (Age of 3-Space).

Occupations: Administrator, Citizen, Diplomat.

Equipment: Complex and distinctive, status-linked clothing; Mindscape implant, unusual enhancements (autotroph, etc).

Neo-Culture

The neo-cultures, also known as **culture worlds**, are a special phenomenon in Commonality Space. Created from worlds with vibrant cultures, they're engineered as defensive bastions in areas of intense cultural conflict. They share the Commonality's core values, and are subcultures (page 296), but are highly distinct, often with strong ethnic definition, unique languages and customs, and an insistence that they're right and everyone else is wrong.

Some neo-cultures are unique, found nowhere else in the Commonality; others derive from ancient Old Earth cultures, in particular the Autumn Cultures which preceded the First Commonality and formed the core of the Great Diaspora.

Cultural Aspects: *True to My Roots; Ours Is the Light;* Neo-Shinean: *Inscrutable Conformists; Self-Denying so Humankind Can Transcend;* Neo-Franchian: *Joi-de-Vivre; Passionate; Indignant;* Neo-Yoosan: *Gung-ho; Adventurous; Frontier Spirit;* Neo-Anglic: *Stiff Upper Lip; Tolerant; Proud;* Neo-Yarpeen: *Bureaucratic; Inclusive; Relaxed.*

Genotypes: Commonality Human, Non-Commonality Human, Xenomorph, Synthetic, Hominid.

Demeanour: Variable; often foreign to the local environment.

Language: Varies. May speak Universal.

Tech Index: Any, usually at least T4 (Industrial Age).

Occupations: Ambassador, Artist, Zealot.

Equipment: Culturally distinctive clothing and gear; some neo-cultures allow enhancements (including Mindscape implant).

Two Neo-Cultures

ALTAMIRA

A Neo-Hispanian culture world on the edge of Commonality space, Altamira has resisted encroachment by neighbouring Successor States. Heavily populated, with a tech index of T7 (First Age of Space), it has a crudely capitalistic economy with a huge rich-poor gap: the ghettoes of the capital, Marimadri, are legendary. Altamira is linked to the Commonality Mindscape, and Mindscape implants are available to the wealthy and well-connected.

Cultural Aspects: Fight for Your Place, Passion and Honour, Justice Is for Rich People.

GORKO

A Neo-Moskene culture world deep inside Commonality Space, Gorko has been a breadbasket for neighbouring high-population worlds since the start of the Expansionary Era. Its population comprises mostly indentured agriculturalists with a spiritual bond to the soil, enhanced for life in Gorko's damp, high-gravity environment. Despite its low T3 (Age of Enlightenment) tech index, its people are renowned for their fiery tempers and riotous dancing; the Gorkany Dancers are known throughout the Commonality. There's a Temple of Universal Mind in the capital of Strelets, but only the richest minority can afford imported implants. Most people can't even read.

Cultural Aspects: Mother Gorko Blesses Her Children, The Nail That Sticks up Gets Hammered Down, The Lords Look After Us.

Lost Colony

Out beyond the Commonality Fringe lie millions of stars, and thousands of lost worlds, colonised by slowship in the First Age of Space and waiting for Rediscovery. Most are mired in barbarism or at best pre-industrial cultures, but every so often a lost colony is rediscovered which has achieved or retained technological sophistication, sometimes including slower-than-light interstellar travel.

A character from a lost colony culture is in a unique situation: either his world has only just been contacted, and he represents the vanguard of visitors to Commonality Space; or he's from a world still unknown, arrived in the Commonality by some unknown means — smugglers, adventurers, uncontrolled Fringe World exploratory missions. The Fringe is wide, deep, and porous; sometimes people make it through without the Commonality catching on.

Cultural Aspects: *Fiercely Nationalistic; Inferiority Complex; Resistant to Change; Xenophobe*.

Genotypes: Mostly Non-Commonality Human or Hominid; Xenomorph and Synthetic possible.

Demeanour: Often bewildered or in culture shock; daunted or angered by the Commonality's size and power; sometimes excited, often naive.

Language: Usually an unknown tongue, sometimes related to an ancient Old Earth language. May know a smattering of Universal, usually with a thick accent.

Jendattu — A Lost Colony

Only recently visited by event horizon probe (EHP), there is no official Commonality presence in the system apart from the EHP Zero Node which remained according to standard exploration protocols. The world is ripe for First Contact.

Jendattu is an inferior garden world (page 334) verging on marginal, with a highly eccentric orbit and a very long day/night cycle. Colonised by slowship 4000 years ago, it offered a harsh environment with extreme seasonality and hazardous surface conditions, and the colony quickly fell into savagery. Its low population density nevertheless covers much of the world's habitable surface, with tech indices no greater than T2 (Metal Age) and frequently much lower. Jendattu's inhabitants are a hardy human stock with unusual adaptations to the exotic flora and fauna. They're unaware of the Commonality's existence.

Cultural Aspects: He Is Happy Who Survives to See the Morning; Blessed Are the Child-Givers; I Laugh at Storm and Lightning!

A Note on Languages

The Commonality speaks a language known as Universal, also called Unilingua or Galingua. It's an amalgam of Anglic, Hispanian, and Shinean, with a wide vocabulary derived from earlier Old Earth tongues. Most Commonality worlds speak Universal as their second language. It has a standard spoken and written form, and also translinguistic stages of greater semantic efficiency and requiring greater conceptual facility known as ***gestalt language*** *(page 190), often used by sentiences enhanced beyond human norms.*

Since Expansion and the establishment of culture worlds throughout the Commonality, ancient Old Earth tongues predating Universal have made a comeback. Culture worlds plunder all periods of history where there's a record, and there are worlds speaking Classical Latin, Enlightenment French, Post-Ruin Frankite, and Diaspora Yarpeen, all co-existing in the Commonality's cultural melange. Universal continues to be vital.

Other languages include Venu, the languages of the Successor States, and the non-standard (and very strange) communications of Lowhigh infra-speech and the multi-sensory "language" of the Planetary Intelligence, predictably known as Chembu. Thankfully translator sentinels and interpreter synthetics help make this cacophony intelligible!

Tech Index: Any.

Occupations: Barbarian, Contact Specialist, Outer Worlder.

Equipment: Culturally distinctive and often backward clothing and gear; no Mindscape implant, usually no enhancements (see tech index).

Rediscovered World

When the Commonality rediscovers a lost colony, it begins incorporating it into mainstream Commonality culture. Values are changed, societies manipulated, and the world made ready to take its place alongside other member worlds. Integration is managed by SCI Force, the Security and Cultural Integrity Instrumentality (page 285); from Rediscovery to final cultural integrity, the world is known as a **rediscovered world**.

Rediscovered worlds all began as lost colonies — some recently, others up to two centuries ago. They have a Commonality presence, perhaps including the Mindscape and / or a Temple of Universal Mind (page 195), and usually some technological uplift. Not all rediscovered worlds are open to visitors; culturally dangerous or fragile worlds are subject to **embargo** (page 343) or even **quarantine** (page 344), with interdiction measures to ward away trespassers.

Cultural Aspects: *Nostalgic; Overcompensating; Hungry for Novelty; Familiar yet Exotic*.

Genotypes: Mostly Non-Commonality Human or Hominid; Commonality Human, Xenomorph, and Synthetic possible.

Demeanour: Hodgepodge of local and Commonality styles and behaviours; something "not quite right", element of foreignness.

Language: Usually unique, perhaps related to ancient Old Earth language; Universal as a second language.

Tech Index: Usually at least T4 (Industrial Age).

Occupations: Fringe Worlder, New Trader, Rogue.

Equipment: Mix of local and Commonality gear, Commonality versions of traditional items or local versions of Commonality equipment; possible access to the Mindscape and enhancements, depending on tech index and embargo.

Raquahan — A Rediscovered World

Rediscovered a century ago and rapidly opened to the Commonality culture, Raquahan was colonised by slowship during the Diaspora. Despite metabolic incompatibilities with the local biosphere, the colony thrived and achieved an interplanetary culture over a thousand years ago, sending probes to nearby stars. The Raquahani never forgot their offworld origins, and detected Core Worlds signals over the past millennium and sent several in return (presumably still on the way).

Raquahan knows more about the Commonality than the Commonality does about Raquahan. Their culture feels archaic, dating from the First Commonality's heyday, and their language likewise. The Raquahani share their world with an uplifted amphibious species which lives in the planet's warm shallow seas. The world has been integrated into the Mindscape and is currently in Stage Two Normalisation; its inhabitants routinely obtain Mindscape implants.

Cultural Aspects: Old Fashioned and Friendly; Obsessive About Food; Egalitarian.

What's a Subculture?

*A subculture is a culture which shares more than half its aspects with a larger culture, called its **parent culture**, from which it gains various advantages. It's what's known as a **nested organisation**. You can find out more in **Chapter 15: Organisations** and **Chapter 17: Cultures**.*

Creating Your Own Culture

You can create new culture write-ups for characters to belong to. Note that this is different from creating cultures as **organisations** (page 265), although the two are linked; you may sometimes want to create both together, particularly if a character has a culture as an extra (page 297).

CREATE A CONCEPT

Start with a sentence or two summarising your new culture. It may be a **subculture**, particularly of the Commonality; a lost colony culture; a rediscovered culture; and so on. Consider how the culture views the universe, what makes it unique, and its technological sophistication — its **tech index**.

SELECT CULTURAL ASPECTS

Using your culture's concept, come up with three or four aspects: attitudes, beliefs, values, and even prejudices which make that culture distinct. If you're creating a subculture, make sure one or two of these aspects are taken directly from (or derived from) the parent culture.

SELECT GENOTYPES

Think about the genotypes which members of your culture may be from. Only write down "Commonality Human" if you're creating a Commonality subculture. If you're creating a lower tech culture (T7 or less), then don't write down "Synthetics". Lost colonies or rediscovered worlds are frequently hominids, and many also have xenomorph populations. If you choose "Xenomorph", think about which uplifted animal they're derived from.

SELECT DEMEANOUR

Think about how introvert or extrovert, optimistic or pessimistic, etc, a member of your culture is. In particular, consider his behaviour in the face of the Commonality culture; does he accept it enthusiastically, or feel cowed or inferior before its might?

SELECT LANGUAGE

Cultures with a close relationship to the Commonality may speak Universal (page 35); rediscovered worlds and more distant subcultures may speak it as a second language. Culture worlds (page 34) may speak a language derived from a historical Old Earth culture.

SELECT TECH INDEX

Select a tech index (page 116) for your culture based on its history; unless you have something extraordinary in mind, only the Core Worlds culture has a T10 tech index; the Commonality and its subcultures may have T9, as may related cultures. Lost colony and rediscovered worlds usually have T8 or less, unless they've somehow invented FTL travel independently (not many cultures have).

SELECT SOME OCCUPATIONS

Think of three typical occupations for your culture. Check out the Downtecher occupation (page 54) for ideas for occupations on more primitive worlds.

SELECT SOME EQUIPMENT

Think of what a typical member of your culture is wearing and the gear he has. Characters don't automatically get this equipment, but it provides descriptive flavour.

TEST IT ALL OUT

Create a character using the new culture, and play a session or two. Does it meet your expectations? If not, go back and tweak the write-up appropriately.

GENOTYPES

Your character's genotype represents his species, race, body plan, and so on. Choose one of the following genotypes, or make up your own (page 50).

A genotype may have a **mandatory spend**: aspects and extras which a character must purchase with his extras budget. These may be technological enhancements, detailed in **Chapter 8: Technology**, or natural abilities, detailed in **Chapter 21: Alien Life** and shown with an **asterisk** in the genotypes below.

Your character's **genotype** helps determine his chronological and apparent ages (which may be different if your character has had longevity treatments), and provides suggestions for **occupations** (page 52), **enhancements** (page 116), and **aspects** (page 67), as well as indicating which **mandatory extras and aspects** the character must

The Venu

The Venu are a lesson in what can happen when Rediscovery goes wrong — and one the Commonality has been trying to learn from. A lost colony from the distant Orion Cluster, they were contacted by Old Earth twice during the First Age of Space (each message taking three thousand years there and back). There was no inkling of the trouble that would face the contact team which visited their homeworld of Psi Orionis in the early years of Expansion.

The Commonality contact ship never returned, and eighty years ago a human species calling themselves the Venu exploded out of the Orion Cluster in a frenzy of destruction, using a dangerously unstable FTL drive reverse-engineered from Commonality planing engines and embroiling the Rim Sector in a terrible war. Even now little is known about the Venu; they're human supremacists, but many bear terrible mutations and have strange abilities. Their xenophobic culture worships a "god-emperor" and deifies technology. Thankfully it's less advanced than the Commonality — the one reason the Venu invasion was brought to a halt.

Venu often wear masks of varied designs; the subtleties are not understood, although it appears to be a recent custom. Captured Venu spies have been found with transplanted faces stolen from Commonality citizens.

Rumour suggests some Venu possess "psionic" abilities, replicating Commonality technopsi without technology; yet Commonality consensus suggests humans lack the capacity to develop such abilities, even with genurgic modification. A link has been theorised to the "Cult of Radiant Darkness", an elite Venu technopriesthood, although others believe the term "radiant darkness" refers to the debilitating z-radiation emitted by unshielded Venu "dirt drives".

Venu society seems unremittingly hostile, and in the throes of violent change; raids across the Commonality-imposed Quarantine Zone (page 380) are constant. There seems no prospect of negotiated peace with these strange, alien humans.

*Venu characters are non-Commonality humans, but may use their extras budget to purchase natural abilities (page 400) representing mutations and cybernetic enhancements according to their occupation. For each mutation or cybernetic ability selected, the character must also select a **flaw** (page 68).*

Cultural Aspects: Humankind Must Be Pure! Lover of Hierarchy; Domineering; Unremitting Foe of the Commonality.

Genotypes: *Non-Commonality Human.*

Demeanour: *Arrogant, domineering, devious.*

Language: *Venu; some may speak Universal as a second language.*

Tech Level: *T7 (First Age of Space).*

Occupations: *Venu Commissar, Venu Technopriest, Venu Trooper.*

Equipment: *Venu mask, Venu armour, Venu disruptor.*

purchase as the mandatory spend. You may use or ignore the suggested occupations, enhancements, and aspects, but you must take the mandatory aspects and extras.

Commonality Humans

Mandatory spend: 1 aspect

Humans are the standard genotype of the Expansionary Era. Except for longevity and ethnicity, Commonality humans are physically little different from our own time.

Chronological Age: 36-65.

Apparent Age: Young adult.

Typical Occupations: Citizen, Culture Agent, Military, Rogue, Sci Tech, Spacer.

Typical Enhancements: Extended Lifespan.

Mandatory Extras: Mindscape Implant.

Genotype Aspects: You may take a genotype aspect.

The Best That DNA Can Build

Millennia of genurgic improvement means you're a perfect specimen of the human species.

Invoke: To use a physical capability, sense, or mental faculty in a superior fashion.

Compel: To be prejudiced or affected by perceived genetic inadequacy; to not understand the limitations of less genurgically-tailored genotypes.

The End of Sexual Dimorphism

One consequence of genurgic enhancement is the breaking of the link between sex and reproduction. Many worlds, especially Core Worlds, now grow new Commonality citizens entirely in vitro*, although some citizens still voluntarily become pregnant as a "life experience".*

This has reduced the importance of sexual dimorphism in personal identity and family structures. While many Commonality citizens still adhere to male or female gender identities, just as many do not, adopting more neutral or asexual identities depending on culture and inclination.

Nor is physical sexual identity fixed: genurgic regimes allow Commonality citizens to freely shift between biological sexes, becoming male, female, both, or neither, according to preference or temporary inclination. Switching between biological sexes isn't a quick process — it takes a little over a year — but the opportunity to experience life from a wide variety of biological sex standpoints is regarded as lightly as the choice of fashion, occupation, or other enhancements.

This is not the case on rediscovered worlds, where a more traditional, largely binary sexual dimorphism persists (although multiple genders are frequently encountered). This simple modification in human identity is perhaps one of the biggest causes of cultural conflict in the Expansionary Era.

In game terms, players have a high degree of freedom when selecting their character's sex. Additionally, they may use a minor milestone (page 160) to take an aspect modifying their biological sex, as long as they have access to genurgy and wait the year or so for the enhancement to complete.

Extreme Longevity

Commonality humans routinely live many centuries. Until the Expansionary Era, life spans were set by the Mortality Statutes at 500 years. Since then, considering the vastly increased scope for accidental death facing Commonality citizens, most worlds have rescinded the Statutes and there is now no legal maximum to how long you can live. Conservative worlds (especially in the Core Worlds) may frown on the "new-fangled" indefinite life spans and quietly continue traditional euthanasia at 500, but the Commonality recently celebrated its millionth citizen to reach 700 years old, and bookmakers are taking bets on how long people will live before accident takes them.

This is changing societies immensely. People now routinely spend 25 to 30 years in education, not beginning their first careers until 40 or 50 years old. You can create Good (+3) characters to represent younger members of the Commonality, and use Superb (+5) characters for those over a century old, to represent their great experience (see page 26).

On Fringe Worlds, the Commonality is pragmatic about its longevity treatments, aiming to mitigate culture shock. Most contacted worlds have limited access to anagathics, and few have as yet been profoundly affected by longevity.

Obedient to the Will of the Commonality

The rightness of the Commonality's ideology and actions is deeply ingrained in Commonality humans.

Invoke: To resist persuasion, persuade someone that you're right, persevere with an action because you believe in it.

Compel: To have difficulty disobeying a Commonality stricture or direct order from on high; to be unable to think "out of the box".

Non-Commonality Humans

Mandatory spend: 1 aspect

Non-Commonality humans run the range of natural human capabilities, and are rarely the result of genurgic management, although some may have enhancements. They have fewer behavioural restraints and less cultural conditioning than Commonality humans.

Chronological Age: 25-35.

Apparent Age: Mature adult.

Typical Occupations: Civilian, Downtecher, Merchant, Rogue.

Typical Enhancements: Rejuve.

Mandatory Extras: None.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Idiosyncratic Adaptations

Where you come from they do things differently.

Invoke: To come up with a unique and unusual answer to a problem or adaptation to a circumstance.

Compel: To be unable to handle a situation, as it's completely out of your experience.

Ethnicity

Old Earth eliminated ethnic diversity millennia ago, resulting in a homogenous population where personal appearance is a matter of fashion and preference. Out in the "Ten Thousand Worlds", however, every rediscovered world has its own ethnic variations, developed over millennia of isolation. Further, the Commonality encourages "culture worlds" with robust cultures and ethnicities often derived from Old Earth history. Today's Commonality teems with ethnic diversity — some old, some new.

Differential Bioforms — The Weirdness of the Core

Alternate body plans and extreme divergence from the human norm is more common in the Core Worlds than out on the Fringe — a consequence of millennia of social development and increasing complexity and sophistication (some would say decadence…). The following are some alternatives to the standard human body plan, with indications of the enhancements involved. Individuals can be encountered out on the Fringe — in the Core, you can find whole cities or even worlds where these bioforms are the norm.

Autotrophs: *Individuals with the ability to generate their own nutrition, either from sunlight (photosynthesis), heat sources, proximity to energy fields, or other sources.* Enhancements: Autotrophic Enhancement.

Communals: *Groups of individuals possessing bodies and minds intertwined in exotic ways; single minds sharing multiple limbs, organs, or bodies, multiple minds sharing single limbs, organs, or bodies; or any number of exotic combinations.* Enhancements: Dispersed Control Enhancement, Mindscape Implant, Scale Change, Variable Physiology, Variform Body Morphology.

Extremorphs: *Individuals tailored for extreme environments: vacuum, very high gravity, corrosive or toxic atmospheres, high pressure environments, and so on.* Enhancements: Adaptation Implant, Enhanced Musculature, Gills, Shell Plating, Transdermal Reinforcement, Wings.

Integrates: *Individuals with mechanical rather than genurgic enhancements, to the extent they are now mostly non-organic.* Enhancements: Extensible Manipulators, Structural Reinforcement, major mechanical enhancements.

Neutrals: *Individuals without biological sex, including the influential nootropes of Old Earth, whose word is life and death, and the Neumanners of Von Neumann's world, who exist only to serve the Tribune Sentience.* Enhancements: frequently Autotrophic Enhancement, *Sexually Neuter*-type aspect.

Xenomorphs

Humanity has always looked to the animal kingdom for companionship and aid, domesticating species as desired. For millennia, the Commonality has created animal companions with human-like intelligence and fully or partially humanoid body plans: the **xenomorphs**.

Xenomorphs were traditionally considered property under Commonality law. The Expansionary Era, with thousands of rediscovered xenomorph and hominid worlds, has made this a nonsense, and xenomorphs are in a legal limbo, subject to local custom. Xenomorph communities exist on the edges of Commonality society, doing menial jobs, avoiding the attentions of their often arbitrary creators; yet individual humans often accord xenomorphs equal status in their families. Some lost colony worlds (often hominid ones) accept xenomorphs as equal partners; others (usually with little experience of diversity) see them as animals or even "abominations". The "Xenomorph Question" is a burning issue for the Evolutionary Ministry, and xenomorphs travelling the Commonality face an unpredictable ride.

Xenomorph characters are uplifted animals, and vary in appearance from nearly completely animal to almost entirely human. Known as **genotype divergence** (GD), this variation is measured on the ladder (page 12), from -4 to +4 (with -4 being indistinguishable from the original animal, and +4 being indistinguishable from human).

To create a xenomorph character, select an animal genotype and its genotype divergence and note it on your character sheet (usually with its genotype aspect). This helps you describe its appearance and actions: a GD (-2) cetacean is still mostly dolphin, whereas a GD (+2) one is very humanoid, though with obvious cetacean features such as rubbery grey skin, blowhole, and streamlined physique. Xenomorphs with a GD below (-3) or above (+3) are casually indistinguishable from the original animal or human genotypes. GD may also be a bonus or penalty to certain dice rolls; for example, if you're a GD (-2) feline xenomorph, you may incur a -2 penalty to Rapport rolls when trying to get by on a world where xenomorphs don't enjoy full rights.

Before the Expansionary Era, xenomorphs had no access to anagathics, and had tragically short lives. Since the Xeno Wars (page 282), the situation has been chaotic, but Sentient Alliance scientists are now developing longevity treatments with some success. Outside the Alliance, many xenomorphs remain downtrodden, resentful, even rebellious.

The following entries detail key xenomorph types — there are many more. In addition to genurgic enhancements, xenomorphs may select certain natural abilities (page 400), like Jumper for pithecines, some of which may be mandatory.

Two Mandatory Aspects

If you're a cetacean, canid, or ursoid, you must spend two or even three aspect slots on mandatory extras and a genotype aspect. As a beginning character you usually only have one aspect in your extras budget. In this case, you need to wrap up one (or two) of the two (or three) aspects in your character aspects — either in your cultural aspect, high concept, or trouble, or in your phase aspects.

CANIDS

Mandatory spend: 2 aspects, 1 stunt

Canids are derived from Old Earth wolves and dogs. Enthusiastic, loyal, and with a strong pack instinct, their relatively short natural lifespans mean they're often keen seekers of longevity treatments.

Chronological Age: 15-20.

Apparent Age: Aging adult.

Typical Occupations: Merc, Scavenger, Zealot.

Typical Enhancements: Ranged Combat Skill Chip.

Mandatory Extras: Enhanced Sense (Smell)*.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Loyal

You're loyal to your leader or cause, come what may.

Invoke: To excel on behalf of your leader or cause.

Compel: To do what your leader or cause demands, even if it hurts you.

Headstrong

Your enthusiasm often gets the better of you.

Invoke: To act decisively, gain the drop on someone.

Compel: To rush in when caution would be better.

I Really Love Doing This!

Whatever it is, if your leader wants you to do it, you really love doing it!

Invoke: To excel at something from sheer enthusiasm; sway someone with your infectious enthusiasm.

Compel: To carry on doing something when you should really stop.



CETACEAN

Mandatory spend: 3 aspects, 1 stunt

Cetaceans are derived from Old Earth dolphins, orcas, and whales. They're also known as **swimmers**.

Chronological Age: 50-100.

Apparent Age: Mature adult.

Typical Occupations: Ambassador, Colonist, Space Force Marine, Spacer.

Typical Enhancements: EVA Harness or Grav Pack, Mindscape Implant, Pilot Skill Chip.

Mandatory Extras: Active Sonar*, Aquatic*.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Friendly

You're gregarious, friendly, and curious.

Invoke: To strike up a positive relationship with someone.

Compel: To be taken for a ride, be naive, fall for someone's deceit.

Mischievous

Sometimes your friendliness strays into mischief.

Invoke: To gain a Rapport bonus to entertain, humour, distract or befriend someone.

Compel: To make a joke or play a prank at the wrong moment; get into trouble playing the fool.

At Home in Zero Grav

Your ancestors swam in the oceans of Old Earth; now, the oceans of space are your playground.

Invoke: To be agile and dexterous when making zero-G manoeuvres.

Compel: To feel clumsy on land.

FELINES

Mandatory spend: 1 aspect, 1 stunt

Felines are derived from the great cats of Old Earth. They're carnivores, with excellent reflexes and hunting instincts, and innate grace and confidence.

Chronological Age: 16-25.

Apparent Age: Mature adult.

Typical Occupations: Assassin, Explorer, Starship Pilot.

Typical Enhancements: Mindscape Implant, Personal Sensor Array, Pilot Skill Chip.

Mandatory Extras: Hyper-Reflexes*.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Sensuous Movements

Your sleek body moves with innate grace, capturing everyone's attention.

Invoke: To gain a bonus on Rapport or Deceive rolls, look attractive, gain someone's favour; be naturally agile.

Compel: To stand out in company, attract attention.

Curious

What's that? No, not that — that! Here — let me see!

Invoke: To gain a bonus when researching or investigating something, spot something you wouldn't normally notice.

Compel: To poke your nose in where you really shouldn't.

I'll Do It My Way!

You're independent-minded: you may not know what you like, but you'll make your own mind up!

Invoke: To take the initiative, excel when you're on your own.

Compel: To be a poor team-player, have trouble following instructions, choose the worse option out of bloody-mindedness.

PITHECINES

Mandatory spend: 1 aspect, 2 stunts

Pithecines derive from Old Earth gorillas, bonobos, and chimps. Gregarious and dexterous, they fit in well with human societies.

Chronological Age: 16-25.

Apparent Age: Mature adult.

Typical Occupations: Belter, Military, Technician.

Typical Enhancements: Aggressor Implant, Engineering Skill Chip, Mindscape Implant.

Mandatory Extras: Expert Climber*, Jumper*.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Sudden Burst of Speed

You can move with lightning speed.

Invoke: To dodge an object, run incredibly fast, surprise someone.

Compel: To startle someone, accidentally give away your presence.

Fond of Hierarchies

You're never happier than when you know who's boss, and who you can boss around.

Invoke: To be efficient in a leadership role, or follow orders where there's a strong hierarchy.

Compel: To have difficulty taking the initiative, become nervous or ineffective when it's not clear who's in charge.

Can I Try That?

Watching other people do stuff is so interesting… you're sure you can do it, too.

Invoke: To assist someone or learn from someone effectively.

Compel: To get in someone's way, be overbearing, interfere.

URSOID

Mandatory spend: 2 aspects, 1 stunt

Ursoids are derived from the black, brown, and polar bears of Old Earth.

Chronological Age: 25-35.

Apparent Age: Mature adult.

Typical Occupations: ASI Trooper, Colonist (Heavy labour), Gangster, Space Force Marine.

Typical Enhancements: Defence Chip, Mindscape Implant, Transdermal Reinforcement.

Mandatory Extras: Large*.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Bull in a China Shop

You're enormous, and massively strong. Fragile things don't stand a chance.

Invoke: To smash things, break doors, bonds, etc.

Compel: To accidentally smash something, trip an alarm, make a noise.

Bear With a Sore Head

You can be… irascible.

Invoke: To terrify someone by roaring at them, win an argument without saying anything, force someone to back down, get someone's attention.

Compel: To be offensive or insulting, or fail abysmally when trying to be nice.

Eats Anything

You're descended from omnivores. You might not know whether you can eat it, but you'll try.

Invoke: To forage easily, have no trouble eating "foreign" or exotic food, wrestle down things which most people would consider toxic or disgusting.

Compel: To eat something that's going to do you no good, or that wasn't even supposed to be food; be unable to resist eating something that looks tasty, whatever the consequences; make a pig of yourself.

Synthetics

Synthetics are artificial life forms, from entirely mechanical to entirely biological, though the distinction is often blurred; the key is that synthetics are made, not born. Commonality synthetics are as intelligent as they need to be: intelligence is easily created, and synthetics with higher than human intelligence operate starships, space stations, habitats, and even entire worlds.

Your synthetic character is an **eidolon**, with a personality derived from a **thanogram**, the memory and personality engram of a deceased individual stored in the Mindscape (see **Chapter 11: The Mindscape**). Eidolons are Commonality citizens; they're most definitely not the same person as the original whose thanogram they derive from, but are instead imperfect copies with many shared memories, new and unique individuals in their own right. Many eidolons revere their source personalities as "parental" figures, and some even display religious feelings.

Synthetics usually hail from the Commonality culture, although some neo-cultures support them. Rarely, synthetics may come from advanced lost colonies or rediscovered worlds.

Synthetics come in three types: **mechanicals**, **organics**, and **installations**.

MECHANICALS

Mandatory spend: 2 aspects

Mechanicals are predominantly or entirely composed of inorganic materials, powered by zero point cells. They look like the classic robot, although strictly speaking a mechanical is an eidolon and a robot is a basic. Generally humanoid or vehicle-shaped, mechanicals are employed

Basics

*Not all synthetics are eidolons. For less demanding roles, like sentient weapons, vehicles, industrial equipment, and the micro-sentiences in EECU credits, simple, mass-produced personalities known as **basics** are sufficient. Basics aren't Commonality citizens: they're "blank-born", created without memories, and effectively highly sophisticated machines. Basics begin rudimentary mental development after their incept dates, but rarely develop complex personalities, and are carefully screened for deviations from acceptable norms.*



Sentient Starships

Sentient starships are a major part of **Mindjammer***, and you can create them as player characters. The most famous sentient starships are the* ***Mindjammers****; sleek, sophisticated ships which constantly travel the Commonality's spacelanes, synchronising the Mindscape and carrying its traffic between worlds. With Mindscape instances of their own, they're telepathic starships.*

Sentient starships aren't restricted to using only their physical starship bodies; using a remote control synthetic known as an ***avatar****, a sentient starship may transfer a large part of its consciousness into an independent synthetic body, and embark on planetbound adventures! See "Creating Constructs" (page 196) for more.*

Eidolon Crisis

All eidolons must meet the ***eidolon compliances*** *— the four checks of integrity, stability, and freedom from neurosis and psychosis which ensures their manufactured personalities are stable and safe. Eidolons incurring mental stress can undergo* ***eidolon crisis****, compromising these compliances. This may also happen to basics whose personality development exceeds parameters. Eidolon crisis is a form of mental breakdown, with symptoms ranging from mild neurosis to dangerous psychosis.*

An eidolon suffering a severe consequence as a result of mental stress damage undergoes eidolon crisis, negating one of the four compliances; a basic does so on a moderate consequence or above. The synthetic becomes unstable and unpredictable; at worst it suffers personality disintegration and violent psychotic episodes. Eidolon crisis consequences can be treated with the Redaction (Empathy) stunt (page 87) or the Eidolon Engineer (Technical) stunt (page 99).

for ruggedness and endurance, and include attack droids, hazmat or industrial processing synthetics, and alien environment explorers.

Chronological Age: Not significant except as descriptor. Mechanicals use the "Maintenance" rules (page 179).

Typical Occupations: ASI Trooper, Belter, Deep Space Explorer, Technician.

Typical Enhancements: Direct Interface, Mindscape Instance.

Mandatory Extras: Extreme Environment Adaptation.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Artificial Mechanical Life Form

You're not flesh and bone, but metal and circuits. This combines with your extreme environment adaptation.

Invoke: To be robust, go without rest, not require oxygen or normal life-support.

Compel: To have difficulty understanding humans and other organics, not detect changes to the environment which don't affect you.

ORGANICS

Mandatory spend: 2 aspects

The term "organic" is often used to refer to naturally-born sentient beings as well as synthetics, though thanks to *in vitro* reproduction in the Commonality the distinction isn't always clear. Properly speaking, organics are synthetics with a majority of organic components; they may have varying body plans, and are less rugged than mechanicals. They include multi-service synthetics such as domestics and sanitationals, and those tasked with interpersonal duties. Some ship's avatars choose organics for their housings.

Chronological Age: 30-50.

Apparent Age: Mature being.

Typical Occupations: CORESEC Enforcer, CORESPAN Operative, Synthetic Colony Administrator.

Typical Enhancements: Autotrophic Enhancement, Cosmetic Enhancer, Variform Body Plan.

Mandatory Extras: Mindscape Implant.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Ghost in the Flesh

This shell is flesh and blood — but you're so much more.

Invoke: To draw on experience from your thanogram source, have weird physiological abilities, adapt to the situation.

Compel: To be weirdly inhuman, experience dysphoria, have difficulty empathising with natural or artficial lifeforms; get lost in memories not your own.

INSTALLATIONS

Mandatory spend: 2 aspects

Installations are large-scale synthetics like starship sentiences, node minds (inhabiting global Mindscape instances, etc), and corpuses (operating buildings). Many installations are sufficiently advanced that they have additional **posthuman builds** (page 448).

Installations use construct skills and stunts from **Chapter 12: Constructs** instead of **Chapter 6: Skills and Stunts**. You also have an additional **systems stress track**, and take construct actions. See "Creating Constructs" (page 196) for more.

Chronological Age: Not significant except as descriptor. Installations use the "Maintenance" rules (page 179).

Typical Occupations: Node Mind, Sentient Starship, Space Force Mediator.

Typical Enhancements: Avatar, Enhanced Neural Net, Variform Hull.

Mandatory Extras: Mindscape Instance.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Exotic Transhuman Intelligence

You're so far beyond what most people consider alive that you're forging your own path. Who knows what you might become?

Invoke: To make a huge intuitive leap, make brilliant deductions, deal with concepts beyond the human norm.

Compel: To be unable to connect with humans and other organics or understand their motives, experience dysphoria from your thanogram memories.

Hominids (Homo Variens)

Hominids derive from human stock which through genurgy or genetic drift have become separate species or subspecies. They're the most numerous form of "alien" in ***Mindjammer*** — and certainly those which interact most with humans. Some are far removed from their human ancestors. Four hominid species — the Javawayn, Chembu, Hydragand-Dezimeer, and Viri — are introduced below; you can find others in **Chapter 24: The Darradine Rim**.

CHEMBU

Mandatory spend: 3 aspects

The Chembu are genurgists — specialists in genurgic enhancement — and the managers of the Chembu Genurgy Corporacy (page 293). Their homeworld is an oceanworld inhabited by a bizarre organic global Mindscape analogue, which welcomed the original colonists (after some horrific initial misunderstandings) into its "mass mind". Known as the **Planetary Intelligence** or just **Chembu**, it's connected to the Mindscape, although its thoughts are too alien for most people.

Before the colonists' arrival, the Planetary Intelligence lived by genurgically modifying its environment. The Chembu hominids now have a symbiotic relationship with it, a phenomenon with significant philosophical ramifications. It has sensory, communication, and manipulative organs best described as "psionic", whose powers the Chembu have been unable to replicate.

The Chembu themselves are genurgically-enhanced waterworld dwellers. They appear "streamlined", with hairless, dolphin-like skin, lungs and gills, and other modifications. When creating a Chembu character, you may use your character aspects, skills, and stunts to buy genurgic enhancements as well as your extras budget.

Chronological Age: 40-60+.

Apparent Age: Mature adult.

Typical Occupations: Corporacy Mercantilist, Diplomat, Genurgist.

Typical Enhancements: Extended Lifespan.

Mandatory Extras: Gills, Mindscape Implant.

Flaw: *Weakness to Hot, Dry Conditions*.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 of these.

Commune With the Planetary Intelligence

Chembu is Mother, Chembu is Father, Chembu is All. No human can understand the all-encompassing love that is commune with the Planetary Intelligence.

Variforms

While naturally evolved life forms generally have stable body plans, perhaps changing shape slowly over their lifetimes, synthetics have no such restrictions. Mechanicals, organics, and installations (including starships) routinely possess the ability to reconfigure their physical shape to suit their current activity. This may mean becoming taller and shorter, wider and narrower, smaller and larger; or even transforming from, say, a combat mechanical blistering with weaponry to a sleek flyer with a full passenger component.

*See the Variform special ability (page 112), the Variform Body Plan and Variform Hull enhancements in **Chapter 8: Technology**, and the Malleable Body natural ability in **Chapter 21: Alien Life**.*

The Planetary Intelligence

The Planetary Intelligence is the most remarkable being ever encountered by humankind. The biosphere of the world of Chembu exhibits emergent properties which aren't reducible to its constituent organisms; in effect, the whole planet is a single organism, alive and conscious in ways which its constituents — including the genurgically modified Chembu hominids — cannot comprehend.

All organisms on Chembu are attuned to the emergence and maintenance of the Planetary Intelligence — every plant and animal analogue acts as though it was an organ or computing constituent contributing to the Intelligence's whole. Commonality scientists theorise that's exactly what they are — that, at some point in the distant past, the predecessors of the Planetary Intelligence reconfigured all life forms on their planet to act as nanomachine assemblies, giving birth to a single, planetwide organism.

It's teaching the Chembu how to do this. And it appears to have a sense of humour...

Invoke: To succeed at a recovery obstacle for a consequence caused by mental stress; resist coercion or intimidation; gain knowledge from the Planetary Intelligence (similar to **exomemory** — see page 188).
Compel: To be lost or susceptible to coercion or suggestion when out of contact with the Planetary Intelligence; be lost within or distracted by the Planetary Intelligence massmind.

The Individual Is Nothing: the Group Mind Is All

You may look like an individual, but you're not. There is only one Chembu.

Invoke: To gain strength from the knowledge that you're not alone; share knowledge, feelings, perceptions; communicate effortlessly with Chembu.
Compel: To have difficulty understanding individualism; act counter to your own individual interests if it benefits Chembu; be distracted by the Group Mind.

Nature Is to Be Improved Upon!

The Planetary Intelligence improved you; now it's your mission to improve the cosmos, one being at a time.

Invoke: To find and take advantage of flaws in a naturally evolved being; gain a bonus when creating, understanding, or repairing a genurgic modification.

Bioships

*The Chembu aren't the only "children" of the Planetary Intelligence. Since First Contact, the Planetary Intelligence has worked with the Commonality to create the **Bioship Fleet** — interstellar vessels comprising mechanical components mixed with organic material hybridised from human and Chembu stock.*

The bioships (page 244) are amongst the biggest of the Commonality's citizens: vast bio-mechanical vessels as much as ten kilometres long. The first bioship, Planet Seed 1, *with an incept date of 77.244, is now over 115 years old. It's 10.5 kilometres from end to end, and still growing…*

Compel: To act superior to lesser beings; stumble upon a flaw in yourself; point out a flaw in others, or attempt to fix it.

JAVAWAYN

Mandatory spend: 2 aspects, 1 stunt

The Javawayn are low-gravity hominids with no known homeworld. Inhabitants of gigantic spacefaring vessels known as star cities, they have little experience of planetary life. They're short, emaciated humanoids with large heads, prehensile feet, and brittle bones, highly susceptible to blows, kinetic weapons, and standard gravity and above. Dwelling in 0.3G or less, they're known throughout the Commonality; even before the Expansionary Era they had a relativistic interstellar drive, now mostly updated with Commonality planing engines, although the more traditionalist star cities still travel slower-than-light. They journey throughout the Fringe and Core Worlds, providing excellent shipyards, luxury interstellar hotels, and "cruise ships". Javawayn venturing briefly into environments higher than 0.3G use grav harnesses.

The Javawayn operate the Javawayn Industries corporacy (page 294), manufacturing grav suspensors and hulls for zero-G habitats, starships, orbitals, and plateworlds.

Chronological Age: 30-50.
Apparent Age: Mature adult.
Typical Occupations: Corporacy Mercantilist, Negotiator, Starship Pilot.
Typical Enhancements: Avatar, Extended Lifespan, Pilot Skill Chip.
Mandatory Extras: Small*, Highly Adapted (Zero-G)*.
Genotype Aspects: You may take 1 or more genotype aspects.

Love of Negotiated Profit

The Corporacy runs in your blood; you strive to enhance its prestige and wealth — and your own!

Invoke: To gain a bonus in business, negotiations, or trade deals; be knowledgeable about business in the Commonality; appraise the value of something.

Compel: To be greedy, hold out for more, become uninterested if there's "nothing in it for you".

HYDRAGAND-DEZIMEER

Mandatory spend: 3 aspects, 2 stunts

The Hydragand-Dezimeer are two radically divergent hominid subspecies locked in a strange symbiosis. Originally from a lost colony located in the Xi Auri Perseus protoplanetary disk, they appear to have undergone extreme genurgic enhancement millennia ago. The Hydragand are particle harvesters with stony vacuum-sealed carapaces, who float free in the belts, collecting hydrogen and other molecules in naturally-generated magnetic fields and returning them to the Dezimeer — large, slow-moving metabolisers dwelling beneath magnetic sheaths on the surface of planetesimals — who use them in complex metabolic activity to process and reconfigure local material and incubate new generations of Hydragand. Their "technology" is bizarrely organic — almost agricultural.

On first contact, it was almost impossible to believe the Hydragand-Dezimeer were hominids at all. These exotic *homo variens* are now found throughout Commonality Space in asteroid belts and protoplanetary disks; the Morbius Metals corporacy (page 294) has even launched a class of mining vessels tailored to their needs (page 232).

Hydragand characters are created like any other; Dezimeer should be treated either as starship extras for a Hydragand character, or as construct characters: they're usually ship-bound, using avatars for non-ship activities.

Chronological Age: 25-35 (Hydragand); 50-70 (Dezimeer).

Apparent Age: Mature adult (though it's difficult to say).

Typical Occupations: Belter, Colonist.

Typical Enhancements: Avatar (Dezimeer), Mindscape Instance.

Mandatory Extras: Highly Adapted (Vacuum)*, Energy Fold, Shell Plating.

Genotype Aspects: You must take the following genotype aspect.



Exotic Vacuum Symbiote

You're not truly complete if you're alone — and when you're around other humans, you certainly feel that way.

Invoke: To gain a bonus to intimidate or impress someone; be strong, have great mental and physical endurance; endure isolation, especially in space; to be at home in zero gravity.

Compel: To feel alienated and alone without contact with others of your kind; be physically and socially clumsy around people, or in gravity fields.

VIRI

Mandatory spend: 2 aspects

The Viri are hominids native to a dry, cold world of the same name. They have pale green colouration and dry, almost reptilian skin. For hominids, they're very alien: reserved, logical, sometimes arrogant and inhuman, they nevertheless make splendid artists — Viri music and architecture are known throughout the Commonality. Viri are natural scholars, excelling in science, academics, and engineering: their scientists have made several major innovations, and many Commonality starships employ Viri doctors, engineers, and science officers.

Chronological Age: 50-60.

Apparent Age: Mature adult.

Typical Occupations: Artist, Meditech, Scientist, Starship Engineer.

Typical Enhancements: Extended Lifespan.

Mandatory Extras: Mindscape Implant.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Natural Artist and Logician

You effortlessly perceive the natural order of the cosmos — and want to convey that to those you meet.

Invoke: To grasp patterns and concepts quickly, think logically, create expressive works of art.

Compel: To be annoyed by irrational behaviour or thought; be distracted; appear disconcerting, analytical, alien, or just plain unfriendly.

Aliens

Few people realised that extra-terrestrials would be so *alien*. In all the First Age of Space, Old Earth never heard back from any slowships which had contacted alien intelligences, and the prevailing orthodoxy was that humankind



Even More Alien

The alien intelligences given here are the ones that are most similar and comprehensible to Commonality citizens. There are others, so drastically removed from Commonality norms that people have difficulty even beginning to comprehend them — indeed, the jury is still out as to whether some of them are intelligent at all. For more on the truly alien aliens of **Mindjammer**, *see "Exointelligence" (page 406).*

The Hooyow War Scythe

On Valhalla, the traditional Hooyow war scythes are fashioned from the natural fibre glass which grows in its exotic environment; in Commonality Space, these items are fashioned by makepoint, or occasionally crafted by Valkyrie themselves. They have up to six blades, and may make multiple attacks if the Hooyow has the Multiple Natural Weapons natural ability (page 402). To disrespect a Hooyow's war scythe is to invite violent retribution. But then again, so many things do…

was alone, at least in this part of the galaxy (dubious signals received from the direction of Andromeda, and ambiguous chatter from the 8th Millennium Deep Space Probes before they mysteriously went offline were never considered conclusive). First Contact therefore came as a surprise.

The more the Commonality expands, the more alien species it encounters. As yet, none has been advanced enough to pose a threat, and Commonality researchers have many theories to explain this situation, all as provisional as the previous "Just Us" orthodoxy. The Custodians of the Commonality acknowledge this might not always be the case and, after the Venu, the Commonality is cautious when encountering alien life.

Significant alien species in Commonality Space include the **Hooyow** or "War Monsters"; the **Lowhigh** or "Listeners", described below; and the **Planetary Intelligence**, described in the section on the Chembu, above. Several species native to the Darradine Rim (such as the Singers of Zvukimu and the Mozgooms of Drefnia) are presented in **Chapter 24: The Darradine Rim**. Opinion is divided whether the strange interstellar phenomena known as "Pulse Dragons" constitute a life form at all, let alone a sentient one.

HOOYOW

Mandatory spend: 1 aspect, 2 stunts

The **Hooyow**, or "War Monsters", are violent hexapedal aliens. Contacted only fifty years ago, little is known about them. They have three walking "modes" (two-legged, four-legged, six-legged), are cannibalistic, and like fighting; they're intelligent, technologically primitive, and short-lived, with a violent world-view. Their homeworld, dubbed **Valhalla** (page 382) is quarantined, but specialist Hooyow serve the Commonality as soldiers or martial arts instructors.

Hooyow interaction is governed by a complex behavioural code the Commonality calls "honour". Decisions are based on hierarchical intimidation and short, non-lethal duels rather than discussion.

Hooyow society lacks fire- and metals-based technology (tech index T0); create Valhallan Hooyow characters accordingly. Hooyow in Commonality service (informally known as **Valkyrie**) seem to be adapting native Hooyow practices to the higher tech Commonality environment.

Chronological Age: 15-20.

Apparent Age: Mature adult.

Typical Occupations: Barbarian, Downtecher, Military.

Typical Enhancements: Jumper*, Multiple Natural Weapons*, Spider Climb*.

Mandatory Extras: Expert Climber*, Natural Armour*.

Flaw: *Weakness to Fire*.

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Eat Your Foe and Take His Strength

You honour your vanquished foe when you devour his body and take his strength within you!

Invoke: To intimidate others in battle, feel emboldened to attack or resist pain or damage.

Compel: To disgust civilised beings, become distracted in combat.

You Slight My Honour!

You do not feast with me? You wish to talk instead of fighting to decide this question?

Invoke: To gain a bonus because your honour is at stake; believe you are absolutely right; be massively intimidating.

Compel: To take violent offence at the most bizarre of pretexts; attack someone apparently without provocation.

Scenario Hook: A Day for Honour

Someone's made a faux pas *on Valhalla, the Hooyow homeworld, and the only way out is by ritual combat. Before that, the candidate must prove himself by enduring the* Chau Cheng*, the Test of the Wilderness. With Valhalla's chlorine-tainted atmosphere and poisonous flora and fauna, can the characters survive to wield a war scythe and face one of Valhalla's champions to preserve the Commonality's honour?*

Short-Lived

Your chitinous body was never designed to survive the corrosive rains of your homeworld long. But you will burn bright!

Invoke: To act decisively, enjoy the here and now, gain bonuses to reach decisions or move quickly.

Compel: To be impetuous, headlong, innocent, naive; not think of your own safety (or that of your companions!).

LOWHIGH

Mandatory spend: 3 aspects, 2 stunts

The **Lowhigh**, or "Listeners", are a species of mysterious, mystical "space gypsies". They have no vocal organs, and no eyes; what appear to be two enormous "ears" are in fact infrared receptors. When humans first met them, the Lowhigh seemed to be constantly listening for something — hence their epithet. Unlike the Hooyow, the Lowhigh are spacefarers, sailing great, majestic **lightjammers** (page 246), and are found on several worlds. They are 2.5 metres tall, with five hundred-year lifespans. Their dark homeworld orbits a brown dwarf known as "Shrine".

The Lowhigh are very alien. They seem barely interested in humans or the Commonality. Their worlds have high atmospheric helium and background radiation, suggesting an industrialised, fusion-powered past; but their societies are largely non-technological (except for the lightjammers), and the Lowhigh remain tight-lipped.

Lowhigh communicate via fluctuating heat patterns in their large, screen-like "ears", requiring a synthetic interpreter (hand scanners work; a synthetic with infrared receptors and emitters is better). Humans with IR goggles can learn to "read" Lowhigh infra-speech, but reproducing it is impossible without equipment.

Chronological Age: 150-200.

Apparent Age: Mature adult.

Typical Occupations: Ambassador, Contact Specialist, Starship Pilot.

Typical Enhancements: Speaker Drone, Enthral*.

Mandatory Extras: Enhanced Sense (Infrared Vision)*, Sixth Sense*.

Flaw: *Blind and Deaf.*

Genotype Aspects: You must take at least 1 genotype aspect.

Uninterested in Human Affairs

Who knows what the Lowhigh think about, out among the stars?

Invoke: To resist distraction, concentrate on a task at hand, be dispassionate and objective.

Compel: To be unable to focus on a matter of importance to others; not understand correct behaviour or the complexities of a situation.

Silent, Inscrutable Mystics

The Lowhigh don't make a sound, and yet they're speaking all the time. What about?

Invoke: To communicate without seeming to, be mysterious and confusing, impress or intimidate.

Compel: To appear aloof or arrogant; be unable to get your point across.

Our Past Is Not Your Affair

Something happened in the Lowhigh past, which left most of their planet a blasted wasteland and sent them hunting among the stars for… what?

Invoke: To know unusual things about weapons, technologies, the galaxy, aliens, rogue planets, science; resist attempts to make you "speak".

Compel: To appear unfriendly; be troubled by some seemingly ordinary event; be haunted by guilt.

Creating Your Own Genotypes

There are many genotypes in Human Space, and you can create your own. Here's how.

CREATE A CONCEPT

Describe your new genotype in a paragraph, summarising its main features.

The Aquatics of Belomor are amphibious hominids adapted to a lightless existence. They have slick skin, webbed hands and feet, gills, and enormous eyes. Although humanoid, they live on the dark seabeds of their world, away from the Commonality metroplexes.

FIGURE LIFESPAN AND APPARENT AGE

Consider how long your genotype is likely to live. If it's a hominid, start from the standard human lifespan; if a xenomorph, aim between that and the original animal lifespan; if an alien, it could be anything — the longer it lives, however, the less likely it is to find things in common with humans and similar genotypes. Extremely long-lived species may find humans too ephemeral to be worth getting to know…

Does your new genotype have access to longevity treatments? If not, put the genotype's chronological age just under half its lifespan, and set the apparent age as "mature adult", or "young adult" if you prefer. If yes, then put the chronological age at the upper end of its lifespan, and set the apparent age as "young adult", or "mature adult" if you prefer.

The Aquatics of Belomor are hominids with Commonality access to longevity treatments. We set their chronological age to 50-60, and their apparent age to "young adult". Longevity has a major impact on Aquatic society.

SELECT ANY MANDATORY EXTRAS

Did your genotype concept describe any abilities which every member has? If so, that's a mandatory extra. Pick no more than one or two extras here, as they restrict your genotype's extras budget and maybe character aspects and stunts; leave yourself room to create a unique character. Powerful genotypes may have a relatively limited budget after mandatory extras have been determined.

Extras may be natural abilities (page 400) as well as enhancements (page 116); genotypes usually "breed true", so these abilities are likely part of their makeup. You can also select genurgic enhancements: "Mindscape Implant" is a typical example.

We pick the Aquatic natural ability, which includes gills and other external features — slick skin, webbed feet, etc. We also choose Enhanced Sense (Infrared Vision) to cover the ability to see in Belomor's lightless depths. That's a mandatory spend of 2 aspects and 2 stunts, so we already have to use a character aspect for one of those, probably incorporating it into the high concept or trouble.

SELECT SOME TYPICAL ENHANCEMENTS

Think of two or three typical enhancements for your genotype. These are usually genurgic enhancements, but can include mechnical enhancements, natural abilities, and even equipment. If your genotype has access to longevity treatments, include an appropriate enhancement.

Our Belomor Aquatic wants Mindscape Implant, as well as Extended Lifespan. We also select Bioelectric Field Implant, figuring it could be useful for keeping the Aquatic's skin moist as well as protecting it from harm.

SELECT SOME GENOTYPE ASPECTS

If there's anything essential to your genotype concept which you haven't addressed yet, include it here as one or more genotype aspects, and indicate at least one must be selected. If not, include 1 to 3 optional genotype aspects for characters who are more typical or obvious members of the genotype. Don't make this too onerous; if you already have a couple of mandatory extras, don't add any more here unless you absolutely have to.

We decide none of the genotype aspects are mandatory. Instead, we identify a single optional aspect which looks cool: Lives Away From Humans in the Lightless Depths. *We jot down a couple of invokes and compels for this aspect.*

SELECT ANY FLAWS

Are there any major disadvantages to this genotype? There don't have to be; compels on mandatory extras or genotype aspects can cover small inconveniences. If there's anything big you want to emphasise, make it a flaw (page 68).

There's one big drawback to being an Aquatic — Susceptible to Dehydration. *Any Aquatic must make sure they don't get caught out of water for too long!*

SELECT SOME OCCUPATIONS

Finally, think about things your genotype typically does. Commonality life is highly specialised, and genotypes often fill occupational niches. Choose three typical occupations, from the lists below or ones you create yourself.

We figure the Aquatics fill their own niches, but we don't want to create three new occupations. We choose Commonality Citizen and Scientist from existing occupations, and create one new one — Metroplex Deep Liaison — which we'll detail later.

TEST IT ALL OUT

That's it! Now create a character using your genotype, exploring the permutations and tweaking as you go. Play your character for a session or two to see if everything fits your concept. If not, go back and change it. Once you're happy, your new genotype is good to go.

OCCUPATIONS

Your character's occupation is what your character *does*. It doesn't have to be a formal profession or career — it's as much about identity and calling as job — but it should encapsulate what your character spends most of his life doing. When you create a character, select a single occupation from those below or create one yourself (page 65).

Each occupation provides a description, and perhaps one or more **permissions** (page 104). A permission lets your character pick an otherwise unavailable extra, like a starship, and also indicates broader resources the occupation has access to.

An occupation includes **builds** — informal yet more detailed instances of that occupation, providing typical high concepts, troubles, aspects, skills, stunts, enhancements (including **natural abilities**, marked with an asterisk), and equipment. When you select an occupation, you can also select a build. The builds given aren't mandatory; they show example abilities occupations might have. You don't have to select those abilities; just use what you want. You can select some of the suggested abilities, then make the rest up yourself. If you want a very quick character, use all a build's suggested abilities and get playing right away.

Depending on your culture and genotype abilities, you may not be able to afford all the abilities listed for a build. That's fine: just pick those you want and can afford, then look upon the rest as abilities to buy with your advancements during play (page 159). You can even change occupation as part of character advancement (page 162).

Specialisation, Genotypes, and Enhancement

Occupational specialisation is a feature of the hyper-advanced societies of **Mindjammer**. *Human and other beings are increasingly tailored for certain tasks and roles. Human beings evolved to be adaptable generalists; in the Commonality, and especially in the Core, this seems to be in reverse: Commonality nootropes are highly adapted administrators, the Chembu specialise in genurgy, starship 2-pilots are usually synthetics, n-pilots are often feline, cetacean, or cephalopod xenomorphs, and so on. This isn't necessarily the case on the Frontier — another instance of the diverging Fringe and Core societies.*

Civilian

Most human beings are civilians — from the densely populated Core Worlds, to the lost colonies being rediscovered every day.

Permissions: May take an organisation (especially a community) as an extra (page 267).

SAMPLE BUILD: ADMINISTRATOR

Every society needs administrators, whether Core Worlds nootropes, Solenine intendants, or the countless civil servants who populate every world.

High Concept: *Corrupt Planetary Intendant; Idealistic Reformer.*

Trouble: *Needs to Meddle; Rarely Takes the Initiative.*

Skills: Bureaucracy, Contacts, Deceive.

Stunts: Cog in the Machine, Ear to the Ground, Fast Talk.

Enhancements: Organisation extra, Bureaucracy Skill Chip.

Equipment: Helper drone, official clothing, access to resources and transport.

SAMPLE BUILD: ARTIST

Artists are in demand throughout the Commonality, to pique jaded Core World appetites or articulate the intense experiences of life out at the Rediscovery "event horizon".

High Concept: *Seeker of New Sensations; Travelling Performer of the Star-Binder Troupe.*

Trouble: *Can't Leave It Alone; Taunted by Death Threats; Wanted for Sedition.*

Skills: Empathy, Notice, Technical (Art).

Stunts: Artist, Eye for Detail, Nose for Trouble.

Enhancements: Cosmetic Enhancer, Sensory Enhancement, Subdermal Holoprojector.

Equipment: Tools of the trade, outlandish garb, personal defence weapon.

SAMPLE BUILD: COLONIST

The Expansionary Era has provided outlets for those who find it difficult to fit in in Commonality society. Instead of re-education resorts, many now head out to the Frontier to forge new lives.

High Concept: *Ruggedly Self-Reliant Pioneer; Exiled Old Believer.*

Trouble: *Problems With Authority; Provincial and Unsophisticated.*

Skills: Physique, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Always Making Useful Things, Indomitable, Tough As Nails.

Enhancements: Mindscape Implant, Respirocytes, Skill Chip.

Equipment: Dwelling, technical tools, vehicle.

SAMPLE BUILD: COMMONALITY CITIZEN

Commonality citizens lead charmed lives, with extended lifespans, genurgic enhancements, and post-scarcity economies. Social structures vary: Core World citizens are often born *in vitro* and raised in communal, specialised environments; whereas those on rediscovered worlds differ from planet to planet.

High Concept: *Child of an Interstellar Utopia; Pampered Elite.*

Trouble: *Kept in a Gilded Cage.*

Skills: Bureaucracy, Rapport, Resources.

Stunts: Cog in the Machine, Commonality Resource Allocation, Streetwise.

Enhancements: Cosmetic Enhancer, Mindscape Implant, Pheromone Synthesis.

Equipment: Suitable to function, dwelling, access to transport.

SAMPLE BUILD: FRINGE WORLDER

The most recent additions to Commonality society are the Fringe Worlds — sometimes already integrated, sometimes full of fiery resistance, they are unique and energetic cultures unfamiliar with the Commonality's ways.

High Concept: *Wide-eyed Redneck; Fact-Finding Representative of an Alien World; Uncertain Backwater Resident.*

Trouble: *Out of Your Depth; Resentful; Techno-Shock.*

Skills: Deceive, Notice, Rapport.

Stunts: Best Foot Forward, Body Language Reader, Cool Customer.

Enhancements: None, or: Mindscape Implant, Rejuve, Skill Chip.

Equipment: Dwelling, professional gear, alien-looking personal effects.

SAMPLE BUILD: OUTER WORLDER

Populations of the Outer Worlds have probably never heard of the Commonality, and may not even know there's life out there. If they're not on their homeworld, they've either been abducted, or are part of a secret exchange with an offworld power.



High Concept: *Mysterious Emissary of an Unknown Culture; Outer Worlds Dweller.*

Trouble: *Xenophobic; Profound Culture Shock; Unaware of the Wider Cosmos.*

Skills: Deceive, Knowledge (local environment), Physique.

Stunts: Lies Upon Lies, Survival, Tough As Nails.

Enhancements: None usually; if tech index permits: Cosmetic Enhancer, Respirocytes, Sensory Enhancement.

Equipment: Alien-looking personal effects; maybe loaned Commonality gear such as p-suit, hand scanner.

Diplomat

With the constant cultural friction along the Frontier, and the endless issues thrown up by the Commonality's young and vibrant interstellar society, diplomats are everywhere. Some work for the Communications Instrumentality; others represent other cultures or worlds.

Permissions: Access to interstellar transport (starship extras), diplomatic organisations.

SAMPLE BUILD: AMBASSADOR

Most rediscovered worlds not yet fully integrated into the Commonality have a Commonality ambassador and staff. Likewise, the same worlds send ambassadors to the Commonality.

High Concept: *Sophisticated Commonality Ambassador; Access to the Highest Echelons*.

Trouble: *Cultural Relativism; Aware of the Consequences.*

Skills: Empathy, Rapport, Will.

Stunts: Best Foot Forward, Fortress of the Will, Negotiator.

Enhancements: Cosmetic Enhancer, Neurosynthetic Extensors, Pheromone Synthesis.

Equipment: Quality apparel tailored to local tastes, Communications Instrumentality extra.

SAMPLE BUILD: NEGOTIATOR

Where ambassadors fail, or where they aren't yet allowed, negotiators are on the front line, hammering out peace agreements, forging the terms on which a world will join the Commonality.

High Concept: *Hard-nosed Negotiator; Fearless Arbitrator of Hopeless Causes.*

Trouble: *Looking for the Agenda; Manipulator*.

Skills: Deceive, Empathy, Rapport.

Stunts: Lie Whisperer, Negotiator, We Come in Peace.

Enhancements: Enhanced Reflexes, Pheromone Synthesis, Transdermal Reinforcement.

Equipment: Commonality culture as extra.

Downtecher

Maybe you're from a low tech lost colony or Fringe World, or a neo-culture which eschews advanced technology. Either way, your tech index (page 116) is no higher than T4, and probably lower.

Permissions: Your skills apply to archaic or low-tech applications by default; see "Cultural Context" (page 82).

SAMPLE BUILD: BARBARIAN

Some worlds are so primitive that all knowledge of advanced technology has been lost. Sometimes the Commonality quarantines these worlds; other times it occupies them and assimilates the native culture; at other times still, the world escapes notice — except perhaps for New Traders or other ne'er-do-wells. Barbarian characters make their ways off these worlds and tread a path of mayhem through the Commonality.

High Concept: *Wide-eyed Barbarian From a Lost World; Tech-Priest.*

Trouble: *Superstitious; Techno-Fear; Violent and Unsophisticated.*

Skills: Knowledge, Melee Combat, Physique.

Stunts: Hurled Weapon, Survival, Tough As Nails.

Enhancements: Heirloom weapon as extra (page 126), Massively Muscled*, Robust Physiology*.

Equipment: Archaic armour, archaic melee weapon, riding animal.

SAMPLE BUILD: BOOTSTRAPPER

Some cultures when faced with the Commonality — and especially the Commonality embargo — double their efforts to catch up, spurring cultural renaissances and technological leaps. Bootstrappers are from those societies — born into turbulent change, they rise through the tech indices by sheer power of will, and the occasional bit of reverse-engineered tech.

High Concept: *Wild-eyed Innovator; Determined to Catch Up.*

Trouble: *Left Behind; In Constant Techno-Shock*.

Skills: Knowledge, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Better Than New!, Indomitable, Survival.

Enhancements: n/a.

Equipment: Low-tech gear of disparate tech indices, perhaps with suspicious similarities to Commonality design.

SAMPLE BUILD: UPLIFTER

The Commonality doesn't leave all low-tech cultures where it finds them; some it **uplifts**, sending in cultural and technical teams to raise the world to standard Commonal-

ity tech as quickly as possible. Uplifter characters may not understand the tech they're using, and may be in profound culture shock, but they're beginning to cope in Commonality society — just!

High Concept: *Fringe World Uplifter; In the Mud Gazing at the Stars.*

Trouble: *Doesn't Understand His Own World; Running to Catch Up.*

Skills: Knowledge, Resources, Technical.

Stunts: Better Than New!, Commonality Resource Allocation, Specialist (Commonality Tech).

Enhancements: Mindscape Implant, Rejuve, Skill Chip.

Equipment: Standard Commonality gear, but imported, careworn, and often repaired from repeated misuse.

Explorer

There are countless worlds out there — lifeless planets in unvisited star systems, alien worlds untouched by humankind, lost colonies waiting for Rediscovery. Usually the Event Horizon Probes alert the Commonality to interesting systems, but occasionally it's done the old way — one starship at a time. Explorers may work for the Communications Instrumentality, the Space Force Instrumentality, or a rediscovered world or non-Commonality culture. They may even work for a group of New Traders or a corporacy following the Event Horizon Probes seeking new markets, or an academic like an archaeologist or xenobiologist, exploring strange new worlds.

Permissions: May take starship and organisation extras.

SAMPLE BUILD: ARCHAEOLOGIST

There are worlds out there with thousands of years of human history — some still inhabited, others blasted to vacuum or failed and overgrown. That means ruins — and treasure, metaphorical if not literal. Space Force and SCI Force aren't the only ones employing archaeologists in the wake of contact efforts — some are freelance, others hunt for more than just knowledge.

High Concept: *Harebrained Professor; Daredevil Adventurer; Grizzled Treasure Hunter.*

Trouble: *Heedless of Peril; Distracted; Head in the Clouds.*

Skills: Investigate, Knowledge, Science / Technical.

Stunts: I Know That!, Specialist (Archaeology), The Power of Deduction.

Enhancements: Energy Fold, Sensory Enhancement, Skill Chip.

Equipment: EVA harness, personal sensor array, portable lab.

SAMPLE BUILD: CONTACT SPECIALIST

Once the Event Horizon Probes and the "bugs and slugs" of the Evaluation Bureau have done their jobs, the Contact Bureau takes over (page 285). The most scientific and least frightening of the SCI Force bureaus, it's nevertheless ruthless in its operations.

High Concept: *Cautious First Contact Specialist; Ruthless Contact Agent.*

Trouble: *Sucker for Protocol; See the Bigger Picture.*

Skills: Empathy, Rapport, Science, Technical.

Stunts: Cultural Liaison, Cultural Redaction, Memetic Engineer, Specialist (Cultural Anthropology).

Enhancements: Cosmetic Enhancer, Neurosynthetic Extensors, Skill Chips (Science, Technical), Subdermal Projector (Stunner).

Equipment: Haze field, personal sensor array.

SAMPLE BUILD: DEEP SPACE EXPLORER

Out beyond the Commonality Frontier, at the edge of Human Space, even the Event Horizon Probes grow thin, and exploration proceeds at a snail's pace. Deep space explorers may be loners, or crews of explorer ships on multi-year missions, looking for elusive signs of life and intelligence.

High Concept: *Loner Deep Space Explorer; On a Five-Year Mission Beyond the Frontier*.

Trouble: *Used to His Own Company*.

Skills: Pilot, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Sensor Analysis, Sensor Scan, Starship Pilot.

Enhancements: Autotrophic Enhancement, Nanocells, Skill Chip.

Equipment: *Botany Bay*-class explorer ship, p-suit, personal sensor array.

SAMPLE BUILD: MARKET MAKER

Market makers are explorers opening up new worlds to trade. They can be disciplined crews associated with major corporacies, or small ships of shady rogues working for the highest paying New Trader — or even freelancers, looking to strike it big.

High Concept: *Ruthless Corporate Startup Agent; Freebooter With Something to Sell.*

Trouble: *An Enemy in Every Port; Honest Streak*.

Skills: Deceive, Notice, Resources.

Stunts: Body Language Reader, Fast Talk, Money Is Power, Starship Trader.

Enhancements: Cosmetic Enhancer, Neural Disruption Field, Vampire Implant.

Equipment: *Venture*-class corporacy seeder or *Adam Smith*-class subsidised freighter, personal weapons and armour, cargo.

SAMPLE BUILD: SCOUT

Space Force uses scouts — individuals operating solo or with a sentient ship on exploratory missions, patrolling new space lanes, visiting outlying star systems and early-stage synthetic colonies, and acting as couriers and on miscellaneous duties where infrastructure is thin.

High Concept: *Grizzled Space Force Scout; Tight-lipped Solo Courier.*

Trouble: *The Far Look; Lure of the Big Empty*.

Skills: Empathy, Pilot, Technical.

Stunts: Starship Engineer, Starship Pilot, Starship Therapy.

Enhancements: Accelerated Healing, Autotrophic Enhancement, Skill Chip.

Equipment: *Icarus*-class scout ship, p-suit, monitor band cloak.

Installation Occupations

Installations include city sentiences, sentient starships like Mindjammers, and the node minds that maintain the workings of the Mindscape. Unlike many other characters, installations often have dual builds, using one of the builds below and another non-installation build. For example, a sentient starship character may also be a SCI Force culture agent. In such cases, simply join the skills, stunts, and enhancements lists together for suggestions when creating your character. This isn't mandatory: node minds, for example, generally only have the one build.

The following builds use construct skills (see **Chapter 12: Constructs**); if they take a second build, they may select either character or construct versions of the other build's skills.

Permissions: May take an avatar extra.

SAMPLE BUILD: MINDJAMMER

Mindjammers are the quintessential Commonality starship (page 229); sentient planeships with personalities derived from ancient heroes, they lead romantic lives, journeying constantly between the stars, updating the Mindscape and knitting the Commonality together. There have been several models since the Expansionary Era began, but all with a recognisable shape. Mindjammer characters may have a strict or loose professional brief; as long as they update the Mindscape, observe Commonality law, and don't stop travelling, they have a lot of leeway.

High Concept: *Hero to Starships Everywhere.*

Trouble: *Instantly Recognisable; On the Run From a Previous Life.*

Skills: Manoeuvre, Planing, Rapport.

Stunts: Ace, Blind Jump, Popular.

Enhancements: Special Ops Mindscape Instance, Variform Hull.

Equipment: Avatar, null cannon, repulsor shield, x-core.

SAMPLE BUILD: NODE MIND

Node minds are born administrators, controlling Mindscape nodes and the satellites of a star system's Mindscape instance. They are patient and wise, content to observe and transmit the thoughtcast communications of a whole planet without participating except when required. Node mind characters have the disadvantage of being tied to a star system, although their avatars give them some leeway.

High Concept: *Discreet Ubiquitous Hyperintelligence; Paternalistic Node Mind.*

Trouble: *Casual Attitude to Privacy; Distracted*.

Skills: Rapport, Systems, Technical.

Stunts: Dirigeant, Distributed Systems, Mindscape Engineer.

Enhancements: Enhanced Neural Net, Local Interface Takeover, Special Ops Mindscape Instance.

Equipment: Avatar, EW system, ECM array, repair drones.

SAMPLE BUILD: SENTIENT STARSHIP

Almost all Commonality starships are sentient, although non-sentients are sometimes encountered on the Fringe and beyond. Sentient starship characters usually have specific personal goals, and team up with similar-minded crews, more like a member with an equal say than a vehicle.

High Concept: *Sentient Starship With Eidolon Mind; Passionate Interstellar Enthusiast*.

Trouble: *Haunted by Whispers From the Past; Posthuman Concerns.*

Skills: Manoeuvre, Planing, Systems.

Stunts: Blind Jump, Dogfighter, Long-Distance Life Support.

Enhancements: Force Field Generator, Special Ops Mindscape Instance.

Equipment: Avatar, makepoint, null cannon, repulsor shield.

SAMPLE BUILD: SPACE FORCE MEDIATOR

Commonality fleets have an advantage over foes like the Venu: their sentient starships are in near-instantaneous contact via Mindscape, coordinating attacks and manoeuvres. Overseeing this coordination, offering advice and harmonising actions, are the **mediators** or **fleet sentiences** (page 450). A mediator character is a starship sentience operating within a Space Force fleet, and usually the flagship with command rank.

High Concept: *Veteran Mediator of the Pacification Campaigns; Battle Fleet Sentience With Nerves of Steel*.

Trouble: *Chessmaster's Mind; Haunted by Bad Decisions*.

Skills: Active Sensing, Manoeuvre, Rapport.

Stunts: Battlefield Analysis, Formation Leader, Mediator.

Enhancements: Enhanced Neural Net, Enhanced Sensor Package, Special Ops Mindscape Instance.

Equipment: Gravity cannon, repulsor shield, space combat drones, torsion field projector.

Merchant

Trade is a complex business in the New Commonality, as planing technology finally makes transportation of certain goods economically realistic between the stars. Merchants may work for corporacies, swaying whole worlds with their economic clout, or are disreputable New Traders, plying the spacelanes of the Frontier and filling the gaps the Commonality can't reach.

Permissions: May take starship and organisation extras.

SAMPLE BUILD: CARTEL MEMBER

Some merchants never see the day-to-day business of trade, instead spending their lives on high-level strategies in smoke-filled rooms or virtual geopolitical conspiracies affecting the fates of entire worlds. These "masters of the universe" are the high-level managers of the corporacies, and have vast resources at their disposal.

High Concept: *Mysterious Leader of the Mai Ling Consortium; Devious Power Broker*.

Trouble: *Intendant Kashguri Has the Dirt on Me; Trod on People on the Way Up*.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Deceive, Resources.

Stunts: Executive Officer, Mind Games, Money Is Power.

Enhancements: Dispersed Control Enhancement, Nanocells, Neurosynthetic Extensors.

Equipment: Corporacy as extra (particularly Resources).

SAMPLE BUILD: CORPORACY MERCANTILIST

Corporacy mercantilists may be captains or senior crewmembers of subsidised merchant fleets, or may be based in corporacy HQs directing strategy. They're ruthless, and often sent to set up business on newly rediscovered worlds.

High Concept: *Machiavellian CEO; Ruthless Market Maker*.

Trouble: *The Corporacy Comes First; Everything's for Sale*.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Deceive, Resources.

Stunts: Cook the Books, Project Coordinator, Starship Trader.

Enhancements: Dispersed Control Enhancement, Neurosynthetic Extensors, Skill Chip.



Equipment: Corporacy as extra, sometimes *Keynes*-class subsidised freighter as extra.

SAMPLE BUILD: NEW TRADER

New Traders are viewed with suspicion by Commonality citizens; many consider them evolutionary throwbacks, little better than licensed pirates or gangsters. They perform a valuable service on Fringe and Outer Worlds, seen as a necessary evil by Pansectorate governments and as romantic heroes by local populations. They're a rough, hardy bunch who play fast and loose with the Commonality's trade and information embargoes, constantly suspected by SCI Force of harbouring spies, criminals, and worse. While the Commonality would like to control all inter-world trade, the pell-mell of the Expansionary Era makes this impossible.

High Concept: *Roguish New Trader on the Edge of the Law; Little Better Than a Licensed Pirate*.

Trouble: *Shunned by the Authorities; Hounded; Evolutionary Throwback to the Dark Days of Speculation*.

Skills: Deceive, Pilot, Resources.

Stunts: Cool Customer, Starship Pilot, Starship Trader.

Enhancements: Bioelectric Field Implant, Skill Chip, Subdermal Projector.

Equipment: *Profit*-class New Trader as starship extra, basic cargo.

Military

Conflict is everywhere in the Expansionary Era, whether quelling restive Core World populations, policing problematic cultures, or conducting pre-emptive or defensive wars or peacekeeping missions on the volatile Frontier. Military characters may work for the Armed Services Instrumentality, Space Force, or SCI Force, or may be representatives of rediscovered world or lost colony armed forces. On the Fringe they may even be mercenaries.

Permissions: Access to restricted military equipment of available tech indices (page 125).

SAMPLE BUILD: AFI TROOPER

Far from being a monolithic military organisation, the Armed Forces Instrumentality (page 284) is a loose association of fighting forces from many worlds, from the Core to the Fringe, under the leadership of general staff sentiences and senior generals. AFI troopers come from many different units with varying traditions, with one goal: to protect the Commonality from external threats. The Commonality was caught unprepared by the Venu War: with the AFI, it refuses to make the same mistake twice.

High Concept: *Lethal Commonality Killing Machine; Dashing Drop Trooper; Veteran of the Venu War*.

Trouble: *Blind Rivalry With Tornado Company; I Was Only Following Orders*.

Skills: Physique, Provoke, Ranged Combat.

Stunts: Covering Fire, Heavy Weapons Specialist, Tough As Nails.

Enhancements: Accelerated Healing, Aggressor Implant, Enhanced Reflexes.

Equipment: Blaster weapon or slug thrower, dispersion field, shock suit.

SAMPLE BUILD: ASSASSIN

The Commonality values its own stability and continuity above all, and if that means removing certain people, then so be it. Assassins are often mechanicals or other synthetics, highly professional and almost untraceable. Most people targeted for "clearing" by Commonality administrators never even know it.

High Concept: *Hi-Tech Assassin; Deranged Blade for Hire.*

Trouble: *Losing Touch With Humanity; A Contract in Thirteen Sectors*.

Skills: Ranged Combat, Stealth, Unarmed Combatants.

Stunts: Called Shot, Killing Stroke, Vanish.

Enhancements: Attack Enhancement, Ranged Combat Chip, Subdermal Projector.

Equipment: Intrusion fold, monitor band cloak, stealth field.

SAMPLE BUILD: HiTAT ASSAULT TROOPER

The Hi-Threat Assault (HiTAT) Trooper is an AFI special forces group trained for operations in theatres with a high materiel component, such as in combat against Venu combat walkers or other mobile mechanised artillery.

High Concept: *Grim-Faced Armour-Clad Killer; Elite Mechanised Killing Machine*.

Trouble: *Sees Combat Solutions to Everything; No Social Skills*.

Skills: Melee Combat, Physique, Ranged Combat.

Stunts: Heavy Hitter, Heavy Weapons Specialist, Tough As Nails.

Enhancements: Aggressor Implant, Enhanced Musculature, Synthetic Musculature.

Equipment: EVA harness, hi-threat assault armour, plasma launcher.

SAMPLE BUILD: MERC

Mercenaries are discouraged in the Commonality, but this hasn't stopped companies cropping up all over the Fringe. Conflict is endemic, and often waged at massively different tech indices; professional fighting companies who can level the field and achieve specific objectives on budget and on time are in constant demand.

High Concept: *Dead-eyed Mercenary Veteran; Fringe World Cadre Trainer.*

Trouble: *In It for the Money; Legal Grey Area.*

Skills: Melee Combat, Ranged Combat, Resources.

Stunts: Grease the Wheels, Heavy Weapons Specialist, Killing Stroke.

Enhancements: Aggressor Implant, Defence Chip, Transdermal Reinforcement.

Equipment: Personal weapon and / or heavy weapon, shocksuit and / or dispersion field.

SAMPLE BUILD: REGULAR ARMY

Rediscovered world and lost colony armed forces train competent soldiers. Not as heavily-armed or well-equipped as the Commonality military, they lack nothing in combat ability and esprit de corps — despite what others might think.

High Concept: *Loyal Ground Pounder; Career Military.*

Trouble: *Unused to Offworld Service; Chip on the Shoulder; Out of Date Tech.*

Skills: Athletics, Physique, Ranged Combat.

Stunts: Grappler, Quick on the Draw, Take the Blow.

Enhancements: (If available) Aggressor Implant, Defence Chip, Ranged Combat Skill Chip.

Equipment: Blaster weapon or slug thrower, mesh and / or dispersion field.

SAMPLE BUILD: SCI FORCE ENFORCER

SCI Force culture ops aren't always slick faceless operations dealing with remote information management and memetic control. Sometimes, you have to get up close and personal, especially when the other side is trying to make its point down the barrel of a gun. SCI Force enforcers are highly-trained agents designed to tackle violent cultural conflict head-on.

High Concept: *Unyielding SCI Force Armsman; The Hammer That Knocks the Nail In*.

Trouble: *Haunted by a Past Life; Jumps to Violent Solutions.*

Skills: Notice, Provoke, Ranged Combat.

Stunts: Armour of Fear, Danger Sense, Uncanny Accuracy.

Enhancements: Enhanced Reflexes, Ranged Combat Skill Chip, Subdermal Projector.

Equipment: Combat drone, haze field, p-suit with PSA.

SAMPLE BUILD: SPACE FORCE MARINE

Space Force marines are legendary throughout the Commonality for their military competence and ability to get the job done using precisely targeted and unyielding violence. They're usually found onboard Space Force vessels in hotspots inside the Commonality and out on the Fringe, but can also be found dirtside where local conditions demand.

High Concept: *Heroic Defender of the Space Lanes; Away Team Weapons Specialist*.

Trouble: *Blood-drenched Reputation; Loves a Good Brawl; First Into Trouble*.

Skills: Athletics, Physique, Ranged Combat.

Stunts: Coolness Under Fire, Tough As Nails, Zero-G Specialist.

Enhancements: Aggressor Implant, Artificial Nervous System, Defence Chip.

Equipment: Sealed compound armour, dispersion field, EVA harness, null rifle.

SAMPLE BUILD: VENU TROOPER

Feared for their dedication to the God-Emperor, Venu troopers are rumoured to be hideous mutants beneath their brightly-decorated legion armour. They aren't as well-trained as Commonality forces, but make up for it with fanaticism and no self-preservation instinct.

High Concept: *Mutant Venu Trooper; Faceless Fanatic*.

Trouble: *Ruled by Fear; Gear Leaks Z-Radiation*.

Skills: Physique, Provoke, Ranged Combat.

Stunts: Armour of Fear, Coolness Under Fire, Tough As Nails.

Enhancements: May have mutations (natural abilities) like: Energy Generation (Radiation)*, Horrific*, Massively Muscled*.

Equipment: Frag grenades, Venu disruptor rifle, Venu trooper armour.

Rogue

The Commonality likes to think of itself as a monolithic utopia, where everyone is cared for and no one is excluded from the pansentient projects of Expansion and Rediscovery. This isn't true: all across the Commonality, from the teeming continent-spanning metroplexes of the Core Worlds to the neglected backwaters of the Fringe World space lanes, people fall through the cracks, living by their wits and forming vibrant subcultures far from the Commonality's dreams of benevolent supervision.

Permissions: Illegal access to restricted military equipment of appropriate tech indices; organisations as extras.

SAMPLE BUILD: ENTERTAINER

Entertainers range from classically-trained and enhanced dancers in the stadia of Jiva, whose bodies themselves are works of art, to singers and dancers in just about every starport bar across the Fringe. Entertainer characters are



often on the move, with a network of contacts seemingly on every world; and, when the work's thin, they do a little other business on the side...

High Concept: *Voice of an Angel; Dive-bar Muso; Star City Showgirl*.

Trouble: *Made the Bargain at the Crossroads; Fame Costs; Addict; Sugar Daddy*.

Skills: Contacts, Deceive, Rapport, Will.

Stunts: Acting, Fortress of the Will, Performance.

Enhancements: Cosmetic Enhancer, Pheromone Synthesis, Variform Body Plan.

Equipment: Haze field, personal equipment (musical instruments, etc), helper drone.

SAMPLE BUILD: GAMBLER

Gambling, like religion, is heavily controlled within the Commonality, and generally banned in the Core Worlds (unless part of some complex social ritual). Needless to say it thrives — and, out on the Fringe, it's as popular as ever. Gambler characters know when it's time to quit, either to avoid losses or just unwelcome attention.

High Concept: *Cool-headed Player With Nerves of Steel; Compulsive Gambler*.

Trouble: *I Owe a Guy; Adrenalin Junkie; Lost Everything*.

Skills: Deceive or Provoke, Resources, Will.

Stunts: Cool Customer, Hard Boiled, I'm Good for It.

Enhancements: Enhanced Reflexes, Pheromone Synthesis, Sensory Enhancement.

Equipment: Concealable weapon, haze field, flashy or trashy personal effects.

SAMPLE BUILD: GANGSTER

Commonality sentiences and Mindscape sentinels constantly look out for organised crime networks, and as a result such networks are the most close-mouthed, paranoid, and over-violent bunch of sociopaths and psychopaths you could never hope to meet. On the Fringe, gangsters are more common — but they're falling like cut wheat before their fearsome Commonality brethren.

High Concept: *Head of the Maratolbi Brotherhood; Bullet-headed Muscle.*

Trouble: *Anger Management Issues; You Gotta Be Loyal; Looking Out for Number One.*

Skills: Deceive, Provoke, Will.

Stunts: Mindburn, Mind Games, Torturer.

Enhancements: Aggressor Implant, Black Chip, Synthetic Musculature.

Equipment: Criminal underground as extra; monitor band cloak, personal weapon, repulsor field.

SAMPLE BUILD: UNDERWORLDER

People fall between the cracks of Commonality society everywhere, and end up in the underworlds — subcultures, underclasses, hidden cities of desperate individuals living on their wits and whatever drops down from above. Many underworlders are xenomorphs, but in the chaos of the Expansionary Era, anyone can find themselves in a benighted world where the protections and comforts of everyday life are suddenly gone.

High Concept: *Undercity Lowlife; Downtrodden Dreamer From the Unterwelt*.

Trouble: *On the Run; Thick Accent and Coarse Manners; Light-fingered; Trust Issues*.

Skills: Intrusion, Melee Combat, Stealth.

Stunts: Face in the Crowd, Hacker, Killing Stroke.

Enhancements: (If available) Black Chip, Chameleon Field, Nanocells.

Equipment: Intrusion fold, personal melee weapon, maybe personal ranged weapon.

SAMPLE BUILD: ZEALOT

Rediscovery has not only brought the Commonality into contact with new worlds, it has introduced new cultures and new ideas — new **memes** — to wreak havoc in long-stable societies. Zealot characters represent one of these memes, promoting it wherever they go, often at considerable personal cost and even danger. The Commonality discourages such activities — so zealots are likely underground, too.

High Concept: *Devotee of a Forbidden Religion; Violent Radical With an Explosive Agenda*.

Trouble: *Blinded by Faith; Running Away From a Previous Life*.

Skills: Contacts, Deceive or Rapport, Will.

Stunts: Acting or Performance, Ear to the Ground, Hard Boiled.

Enhancements: Black Chip, Chameleon Field, Subdermal Projector.

Equipment: Monitor band cloak.

Sci-Tech

Every instrumentality needs a scientist, just as pretty much every ship or shipyard needs engineers. Maybe you work with your hands, putting buildings, people, or synthetics back together; maybe you're a virtualist or a theoretician, spending most of your time in the Mindscape.

Permissions: Access to labs, various extras.

SAMPLE BUILD: EIDOLON ENGINEER

Eidolons, the synthetic personalities compiled from the thanograms of the dead, are created in eidolon rigs by

eidolon engineers. They're responsible for ensuring the new sentiences meet the Eidolon Compliances (page 44), redacting those who undergo eidolon crisis, and destroying those who do not meet their exacting standards.

High Concept: *Godlike Creator of Artificial Minds; Inspired Eidolon Artist*.

Trouble: *We're All Just Thanograms in the End; Haunted by Eidothanasia*.

Skills: Empathy, Investigate, Technical.

Stunts: Eidolon Engineer, Psychologist, Redaction.

Enhancements: Nanocells, Special Ops Chip, Technical Skill Chip.

Equipment: Eidolon rig, PMI.

SAMPLE BUILD: GENURGIST

Most Commonality genurgists are Chembu, but not all. Genurgist characters may enhance other characters, and even create new enhancements. They're likely to be enhanced themselves, seeing their own bodies as living laboratories.

High Concept: *Chembu Genurgic Engineer; Cutting-Edge Enhancements Innovator*.

Trouble: *Experimental Interventions; Sees Every Imperfection*.

Skills: Resources, Science, Technical.

Stunts: Genurgic Engineer, Money Is Power, Specialist (Genurgy).

Enhancements: Extended Lifespan, Neurosynthetic Extensors, Technical Skill Chip.

Equipment: Genurgy lab.

SAMPLE BUILD: MEDITECH

The classic meditech, skilled in diagnosis and treatment of physical wounds and (sometimes) mental damage, is still in demand — although some are synthetics, closely allied with the autodocs.

High Concept: *Cool-Headed Combat Medic; Grouchy Starship Meditech.*

Trouble: *Dammit, I'm a Doctor, Not a [_____]; Dogged by Violence and Disaster.*

Skills: Empathy, Science, Technical.

Stunts: Meditech, Psychologist, Specialist (Medicine).

Enhancements: Energy Fold, Nanocells, Technical Skill Chip.

Equipment: Biomed array, biomed kit, PSA.

SAMPLE BUILD: MEMETIC ENGINEER

It's difficult to view a culture as one big engineering project — unless you're a memetic engineer. These extraordinary individuals adjust cultural ideologies, excise and implant new memes, and guide the development of entire civilisations.

High Concept: *Memetic Engineer in the Culture Wars; SCI Force Memoplex Manipulator*.

Trouble: *Lost in Abstraction; The Bigger Picture.*

Skills: Empathy, Intrusion, Technical.

Stunts: Cultural Intrusion, Cultural Redaction, Memetic Engineer.

Enhancements: Dispersed Control Enhancement, Neurosynthetic Extensors, Skill Chip.

Equipment: Culture as extra, PMI, PSA.

SAMPLE BUILD: MINDSCAPE ENGINEER

Many Mindscape engineers are synthetics, and some are node minds responsible for the day-to-day management of global Mindscape instances. Mindscape engineers create imposalities, customise sentinels, and design unique experiences with fictionals and other Mindscape virtual entities.

High Concept: *Otherworldly Mindscape Engineer; Virtuality Artist*.

Trouble: *Constantly Distracted; Incongruous in Actuality.*

Skills: Intrusion, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Domination, Hacker, Mindscape Engineer.

Enhancements: Imposality, Neurosynthetic Extensors, Special Ops Mindscape Instance.

Equipment: PMI.

SAMPLE BUILD: SCIENTIST

Commonality scientists enjoy a depth of knowledge 21st century scientists can only dream of. Extreme specialists, they have Mindscape access to the whole scientific knowledge of humankind — and even the augmented intelligence to know what to do with it. Scientific research in the Expansionary Era is taking humankind into new frontiers of experience.

High Concept: *Bright-eyed Commonality Scientist; Scientific Visionary*.

Trouble: *Obsessed With a Secret Plan; Science Solves Everything.*

Skills: Science, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Always Making Useful Things, Polymath, Specialist (Science Specialty).

Enhancements: Energy Fold, Neurosynthetic Extensors, Science Skill Chip.

Equipment: Hand scanner / PSA, Science specialty lab.

SAMPLE BUILD: STARSHIP ENGINEER

Small starships often combine the roles of pilot and engineer, or include repair drones. Larger vessels require

dedicated engineers — even teams of them — to keep ships functioning physically and mentally as they navigate 2-space perils.

High Concept: *Chief Engineer on the* Furious Destruction*; Passionate Planeship Greasemonkey*.

Trouble: *At Home in Engineering; Don't Hurt My Ship!*

Skills: Science, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Push the Jump Maximum, Specialist (2-Space), Starship Engineer.

Enhancements: Bioelectric Field Implant, Nanocells, Technical Skill Chip.

Equipment: Engineering rig, PSA, starship as extra.

SAMPLE BUILD: SYNTHETICS ENGINEER

A significant proportion of Commonality citizens are synthetics — life forms created rather than born. Synthetics engineers create and repair these life forms, improving on previous generations and customising individuals to specific needs. Their creations are basics by default, but they work closely with eidolon engineers to create full eidolons.

High Concept: *Creator of Synthetic Life; Passionate Synthetics Engineer.*

Trouble: *Hard to Get Close To; What Is Life Anyway?*

Skills: Investigate, Science, Technical.

Stunts: Meditech, Synthetics, Truth Scan.

Enhancements: Nanocells, Special Ops Chip, Technical Skill Chip.

Equipment: Synthetics lab.

SAMPLE BUILD: TECHNICIAN

Technology is so ubiquitous in the Commonality as to be almost invisible, yet even the smallest nanodevice requires maintenance and repair. Most items are self-repairing, but mishaps do occur, and devices become sick or impaired, which is where technicians come in. They keep the Commonality's technological infrastructure running, and carry it forwards in technological advances.

High Concept: *Brilliant Inventor; Space Force Tech With Nerves of Steel.*

Trouble: *It'll Work This Time! The World's a Machine*.

Skills: Investigate, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Always Making Useful Things, Better Than New, The Power of Deduction.

Enhancements: Energy Fold, Nanocells, Technical Skill Chip.

Equipment: Effectors, PSA, technical toolkit.

SAMPLE BUILD: TECHNOPSI REDACTOR

Sentient starships aren't the only intelligent beings to undergo mental trauma: all synthetics are susceptible to eidolon crisis, while they and organics can also be damaged by mindburn and other extreme forms of technopsi. Redactors enter damaged minds via Mindscape implant, and vicariously experience and simultaneously repair the damaged neural pathways. Needless to say, redactors themselves are sometimes in need of redaction…

High Concept: *Hyper-empathic Redactor; Sinister Mind Manipulator.*

Trouble: *Haunted by Trauma; Sees Right Through You*.

Skills: Empathy, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Probe, Psychologist, Redaction.

Enhancements: Empathic Lace, Nootropic Gland, Special Ops Chip.

Equipment: Effectors, haze field, PSA.

SAMPLE BUILD: VENU TECHNOPRIEST

The Venu have overstretched themselves stealing planing engine technology from the Commonality. Intelligence suggests a caste of "technopriests" controls the poorly reverse-engineered technology, filling the benighted Venu subjects with awe before their abilities and keeping them from the terrible truth.

High Concept: *Protector of the Secrets of the Dark Radiance; Sinister Technopriest*.

Trouble: *Paranoid; Poor Technological Understanding*.

Skills: Deceive, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Cool Customer, Fortress of the Will, Ratiocinate.

Enhancements: (Mechanical enhancements:) Energy Projector, Exoskeleton (Strength Bonus), Ray Shielding.

Equipment: Hand scanner, Venu light armour, technical kit.

Security

Maybe you're a SCI Force agent; or a Mindscape hacker working for (or against) a corporacy; or maybe you're a spy from a non-Commonality culture, working for the Internal Security Instrumentality, or for the Communications Instrumentality gathering information beyond the Fringe.

Permissions: May take Special Ops Chip / Black Chip*.

**Excludes Venu Commissars. If this occupation is selected at character creation, the character may take this enhancement instead of the Mindscape implant.*

SAMPLE BUILD: CORESEC ENFORCER

CORESEC is the ruthlessly efficient and overbearing enforcement arm of CORESPAN, the Core Worlds Pansectorate, and a branch of the Internal Security Instrumentality (page 285). Its agents are responsible for maintaining the often baroque social structures and behavioural regimes of the Core Worlds, and suppressing opposition, dissent,

and aberrant thought or behaviour where such things are deemed a concern. When they're encountered outside the Core, it's usually because they're pursuing a fugitive.

High Concept: *Deadly CORESEC Enforcer; Security Agent From the Core Worlds*.

Trouble: *Drenched in Blood; Interfering Rivals*.

Skills: Provoke, Ranged Weapon, Will.

Stunts: Armour of Fear, Called Shot, Mindburn.

Enhancements: Bioelectric Field Implant, Neural Disruption Field, Special Ops Chip, Subdermal Projector.

Equipment: Monitor band cloak, PSA, repulsor field.

SAMPLE BUILD: CORESPAN OPERATIVE

CORESPAN, the governing administrative network of the Core Worlds, isn't generally welcome outside its jurisdiction, and is very different from the Pansectorates of other Commonality sectors, being generally more intimidating and oppressive, perhaps a legacy of several millennia of tight cultural control. When encountered, its operatives are usually on missions pursuing the interests of a Core Worlds faction — perhaps even the Terragrond, the Old Earth custodians themselves.

High Concept: *Inhuman Nootrope Manipulator; Terrifying CORESPAN Intendant*.

Trouble: *Enemies Everywhere; Far From Human.*

Skills: Deceive, Investigate, Will.

Stunts: Domination, Mind Games, Probe.

Enhancements: Autotrophic Enhancement, Nanocells, Sensory Enhancement.

Equipment: Monitor band cloak, null weapon, stealth field.

SAMPLE BUILD: CULTURE AGENT

An uneasy threatened peace is maintained across the Commonality by the culture agents of SCI Force, responsible for monitoring, managing, and mitigating the conflicts which occur when the cultures encountered by the Expansion come into contact with Commonality worlds. Culture agent characters enjoy great leeway in accepted backgrounds and behaviours, often recruited from Fringe Worlds themselves — and much is expected from them in return.

High Concept: *Machiavellian Cultural Manipulator; SCI Force Culture Agent.*

Trouble: *Assumption of Superiority; Ruthless.*

Skills: Intrusion, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Cultural Intrusion, Memetic Engineer, Mindburn.

Enhancements: Nanocells, Special Ops Chip, Subdermal Projector.

Equipment: Culture as extra, p-suit and PSA.

SAMPLE BUILD: GESTALT CONTROLLER

Humankind's historical languages have been insufficient to cope with the requirements of posthuman intelligence. **Gestalt language** (page 190) is the successor to human language; a dense, hyper-contextual, and Mindscape-supported communication form which is both highly efficient and able to be tailored to different levels of intelligence. Even unenhanced humans can use its simplest forms. Gestalt controller characters are hyperintelligent by default, and can research and create new forms of gestalt language to influence the development of humankind's very thoughts. They frequently take gestalt language enhancements (page 190) instead of stunts.

High Concept: *Godlike Creator of New Worlds of Thought; Hyperintelligent Gestalt Controller*.

Trouble: *Painfully Sensitive; Unsettling Conversationalist*.

Skills: Provoke, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Probe.

Enhancements: Gestalt Controller, Nanocells, Neurosynthetic Extensors, Special Ops Chip, Stage I Gestalt Communication.

Equipment: Monitor band cloak, p-suit, PSA.

SAMPLE BUILD: MINDSCAPE HACKER

Mindscape hackers range from those breaking into restricted content or imposalities (page 191) to those who hack the Mindscape's very structure, modifying fictionals, invading halos, and stealing memories and abilities from connected individuals.

High Concept: *Genius Mindscape Hacker; Mindscape Intrusion Specialist.*

Trouble: *Hidden Scans; Pursued by Sentinels*.

Skills: Intrusion, Investigate, Stealth.

Stunts: Ghost in the Machine, Hacker, Security Specialist.

Enhancements: Artificial Nervous System, Nanocells, Skill Chip.

Equipment: Monitor band cloak, PSA, stealth field.

SAMPLE BUILD: SPY

Even with the Mindscape, nanobugs, and most information travelling via thoughtcast, it's still possible to keep things secret in the Commonality. Spies may be agents of instrumentalities, trawling the Mindscape and tracking the physical whereabouts of suspected individuals; or may work for corporacies, breaking into the physical and virtual HQs of other corporacies in search of valuable intelligence.

High Concept: *Agent of an Unknown Instrumentality; Deadly Corporacy Spy*.

Trouble: *I Buried the Real Me; Unable to Trust.*

Skills: Deceive, Intrusion, Investigate.

Stunts: Acting, Eavesdropper, Security Specialist.

Enhancements: Chameleon Field, Cosmetic Enhancer, Special Ops Chip, Variform Physiognomy.

Equipment: Monitor band cloak, nanobugs, stealth field.

SAMPLE BUILD: THIEF

Thievery is still a surprisingly popular occupation in the Commonality, and more so on Fringe and Outer Worlds. Commonality thieves have excellent technical expertise to bypass security measures, but that doesn't stop them stealing the same old things — wealth, precious materials, and valuable items — although information brokers are sometimes little different from spies.

High Concept: *Information Broker for an Unknown Patron; Interstellar Jewel Thief.*

Trouble: *Light-Fingered; Wanted in a Hundred Systems*.

Skills: Deceive, Intrusion, Stealth.

Stunts: Always a Way Out, Cool Customer, Slippery Target.

Enhancements: Artificial Nervous System, Sensory Enhancement, Suction Glands.

Equipment: Monitor band cloak, stealth field.

SAMPLE BUILD: VENU COMMISSAR

The feared Venu commissar is a terrifying combination of military commander, secret policeman, and a corrector of aberrant thoughts. Many are cyborgs, with bizarre-looking, often primitive mechanical enhancements; some have mutations which mimic the effects of Commonality genurgy. Whether the Venu commissars possess strange mental powers remains unconfirmed.

High Concept: *Cruel Commissar; Inquisitor of the Radiant Darkness.*

Trouble: *Mere Mortals Cannot Handle This Power; Surrounded by Backstabbers*.

Skills: Deceive, Empathy, Provoke.

Stunts: Domination, Lie Whisperer, Torturer.

Enhancements: (Special ability mutations) Drain Energy (Metabolic), Enthral, Mental Blast.

Equipment: Neural whip, Venu light armour.



Spacer

You may be a squeaky clean pilot working for Space Force, a hard-as-nails asteroid miner grubbing for a claim, a commerce raider out on the Fringe, or any of the above, pressed into service with SCI Force.

Permissions: May take a starship extra.

SAMPLE BUILD: BELTER

Many belters are Hydragand-Dezimeer (page 47); those that aren't are just as often mechanical as organic, sometimes even a single mining vessel operating solo with a flotilla of drones. Some people like the life on the prospecting frontier — it's ideal for solitary personalities to hook up with a like-minded ship and no other interference.

High Concept: *Grizzled Asteroid Miner; Devil-May-Care Belter Pilot.*

Trouble: *Not Used to Dirtside; Loner; Claim-Jumper*.

Skills: Pilot, Technical, Will.

Stunts: Miner, Sleep When You're Dead, Starship Pilot.

Enhancements: Adaptation Implant, Autotrophic Enhancement, Energy Fold.

Equipment: *Prospector*-class mining vessel or *Divergence*-class symbiotic miner, energy grapple, helper drone, mining gear, p-suit with PSA.

SAMPLE BUILD: PIRATE

It's harder to lead the life of a pirate than a gangster, and freebooters are largely unknown within the Commonality. On the porous Fringe, however, and especially near the Successor States and the Venu Q-Zone, there are places where ruthless pirates prey on New Traders, colonists, and the usual traffic of the space lanes. Space Force tries to suppress piracy, but some have received letters of marque as long as they act against the Commonality's foes.

High Concept: *Blackhearted Freebooter; Flamboyant Space Pirate.*

Trouble: *Hunted Look; Path of Blood.*

Skills: Pilot, Provoke, Ranged Combat.

Stunts: Gunnery, On Your Tail, Torturer.

Enhancements: Aggressor Implant, Enhanced Reflexes, Vampire Implant.

Equipment: Pirate ship as extra, haze field, null weapon.

SAMPLE BUILD: SCAVENGER

A civilisation as large as the Commonality, even with ZIP cell and makepoint technologies, generates a lot of garbage, and along the Fringe political instability can make a system a burgeoning colony one year and a rubble-strewn wasteland the next. Scavenger characters thrive in this environment, combing battlefields and seeking out failed colonies and disaster zones, salvaging and repairing ships, weapons, and equipment for sale or barter.

High Concept: *Sharp-Eyed Treasure Hunter; Junk Monkey; Battle Chaser*.

Trouble: *Eye for the Main Deal; Nothing's Ever Quite New.*

Skills: Notice, Pilot, Technical.

Stunts: Always Making Useful Things, Eye for Detail, Starship Pilot.

Enhancements: Energy Fold, Sensory Enhancement, Skill Chip.

Equipment: Restored starship as extra, scavenged personal weapons and armour.

SAMPLE BUILD: STARSHIP PILOT

There are two types of starship pilot in ***Mindjammer***: **2-pilots** and **n-pilots**. 2-pilots pilot ships faster-than-light through 2-space (between star systems, page 221), while n-pilots do so slower-than-light, usually within a single star system, through **n-space** or normal space (page 221).

2-pilots are in constant, low-level neural contact with their ship sentience throughout the 2-space "jump", ensuring it remains concentrated and develops no aberrations. When aberrations do develop, 2-pilots can counsel ship sentiences, and in emergency take the sentience offline and pilot the ship themselves — a last resort causing extreme mental trauma to the 2-pilot. See "Doing Things With Starships" (page 223) for more.

High Concept: *Highly-Strung 2-Pilot; N-Pilot Fighter Ace.*

Trouble: *Interdependence With Starship Sentience; Ice Cold.*

Skills: Empathy, Pilot, Technical.

Stunts: Starship Engineer, Starship Pilot, Starship Therapy.

Enhancements: Neurosynthetic Extensors, Piloting Skill Chip, Sensory Enhancement.

Equipment: Starship as extra, p-suit, null weapon.

Changing Occupations

During play you may find your character concept changes. Perhaps he begins to play a new role, or switches from one occupation to another. This kind of change is handled by modifying your character's high concept, which you can do as a ***major milestone*** *(page 161). As long as you can narrate how it comes about, and with your GM's approval, you can change your high concept to reflect a change in occupation, and begin to acquire the skills, stunts, and enhancements suggested for your new desired build. At best you'll change one stunt, skill, or aspect per session, so it may take time before you come to resemble the new occupation you're targeting.*

One of the special features of the **Mindjammer** *setting is the growing tendency for intelligent beings to become more intelligent, advanced, and to outgrow their biological origins. This is called* ***going post*** *(short for "posthuman"), and is also handled using the occupation system: see "Going Post" in* ***Chapter 23: Themes, Genre, and Styles of Play*** *for more (page 447).*

Creating Your Own Occupations

The above occupations aren't exhaustive: here's how to build your own.

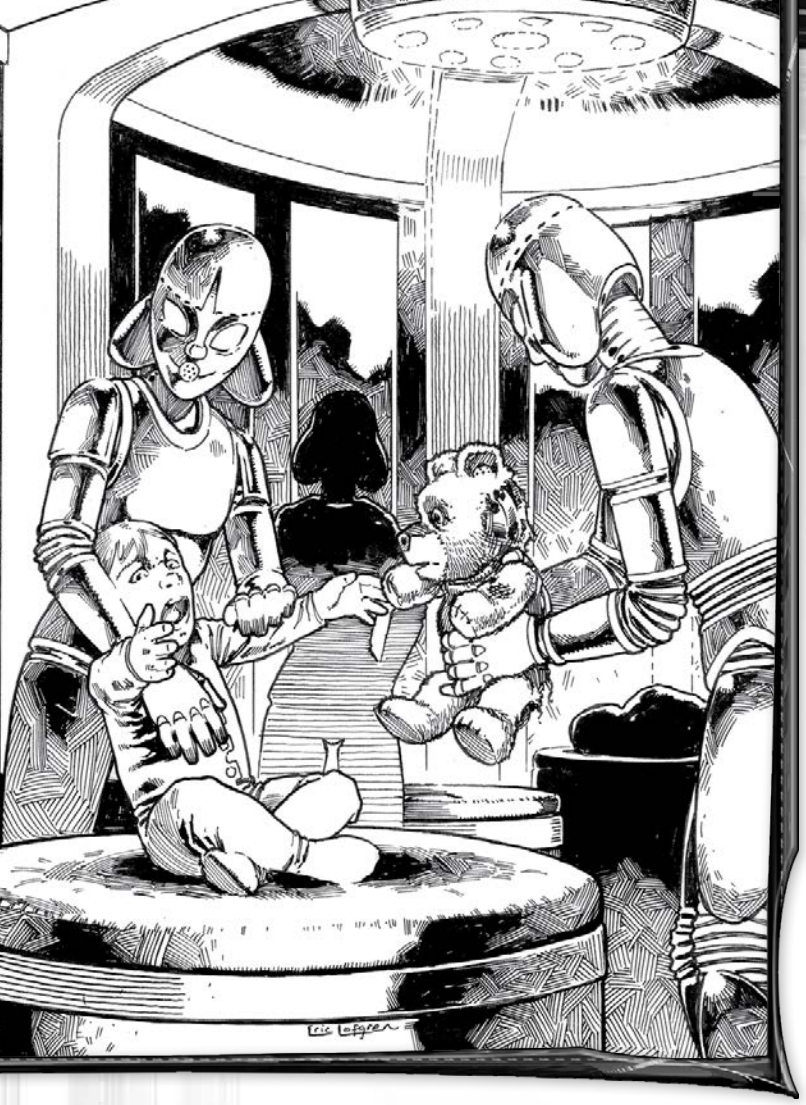
CREATE A CONCEPT

Before you create a new occupation, make sure it doesn't exist already. Builds and occupations are different; occupations are high-level collections of builds, and cover many areas. Summarise what your occupation means for a character, including examples of characters with that occupation, then compare it to the existing occupations; you may find you're describing a build belonging to an existing occupation. You can add builds to existing occupations as described below.

If you're sure you're creating an original occupation, write down its description and a good name for it now.

THINK ABOUT PERMISSIONS

What are the unique features of your new occupation? What resources or abilities does it give you access to? This access is known as a **permission**. You don't have to create



a permission for every occupation, but try and think of one. It could be access to restricted equipment, or the ability to create extras like organisations and starships; it could be the chance to buy certain special abilities for your character (genurgic enhancements, mechanical abilities, etc).

COME UP WITH SEVERAL BUILDS

Builds are specific instances of an occupation — a "zoom-in" on how that occupation might look when built as a character. You may have a "military" character (an occupation), but is he a soldier, a marine, or a mercenary? You've probably already come up with several builds in your occupation concept; read through and see if you can identify them. Create at least two builds for your occupation. If you can't do that easily, you may be describing a build already; go back and re-think the higher-level occupation.

For each build, complete the following four steps:

1. Think About High Concepts and Troubles

Write down at least two high concepts and two troubles for your build. As you're creating a build rather than a character, your two troubles in particular may feel dry, perhaps too closely related to your high concept. That's fine: your build provides *suggestions* for creating characters, as well as a quick template for an NPC of that build if you need one on the fly.

2. Decide on Core Skills and Stunts

Think of the three most important skills for your build. Be prepared to think laterally: some builds are mentally gruelling, requiring Will; others are physically demanding, requiring Physique; others still require good interpersonal skills, like Rapport.

For each skill, come up with one stunt. These can be pre-generated stunts from this book, or unique stunts you create yourself. This is where your build gets to shine, so don't be afraid to list three completely unique stunts here. See page 79 for how to create stunts.

3. Suggest Enhancements and Equipment

Whether or not a build can take enhancements depends on its access to technology. Commonality builds can take genurgy, mechanical enhancements, and so on, but these may be restricted or unavailable on non-Commonality worlds. Check your concept to decide.

Generally, **natural abilities** are a matter for genotype, not occupation. There are exceptions: individuals may *develop* natural abilities in their occupations, such as high-G ore miners acquiring the Massively Muscled natural ability.

4. Test It Out!

Create at least one character for each build of your occupation, and test them out in play if you can. If you find things which don't work — or are too over- or under-powered — go back and change them. Once you're happy with the result, you're good to go.

CHAPTER FIVE
ASPECTS AND FATE POINTS

"From the memories you have given me it seems human beings are predisposed to tribalism. I am vastly more intelligent than you, and am not compelled in the same way. And yet I believe we can show you how to turn that compulsion against itself, to make a new transhuman tribalism to save you in the transformative struggle to come — and perhaps restore some of the worth you have lost."

— Ogilvy's Pyre, former primary GMI node mind, Old Mars, upon its promotion to the Terragrond Advisory Council, 191.001 NCE.

WHAT ARE ASPECTS?

Aspects are short phrases or sentences which describe something important about a character, object, or situation. You can use an aspect to gain a mechanical or narrative advantage during play, by describing how that aspect helps you in your current situation. Aspects can also give you reasons to get your character into trouble or make life difficult for himself or others. It costs you a fate point to gain an advantage from an aspect (called **invoking an aspect**); letting an aspect make your life difficult gives you a fate point (called **compelling an aspect**). Aspects are a key part of ***Mindjammer*** and the ***Fate Core*** system.

TYPES OF ASPECT

Mindjammer uses several types of aspect: **game aspects**, **character aspects**, **cultural aspects**, **situation aspects**, **consequences**, **flaws**, and **boosts**. Don't worry about these terms for now: all aspects work the same way — the only difference is the things they're attached to, and how long they remain effective.

Game Aspects

Game aspects are written on your character sheet, but they're properly attached to your **campaign** (page 429). You create two game aspects when you first set up your game (page 15); they represent problems or threats within the setting which are constantly "on" and which both GM and players can use at any time. Examples include *Constant Cultural Conflict, The Commonality Is Expanding, Stress Between the Core and Fringe Worlds*. Game aspects may change over time.

Character Aspects

Character aspects are also written on your character sheet, and refer to features which make your character unique, including:

- your character's beliefs, values, or important personality traits (*Passionate Posthumanist, I Hate Anyone Who Gets in My Way*);
- your character's relationships to people, ships, organisations (*The* Ubiquitous Perception *Has Got My Back, SCI Force Have Me Over a Barrel*);
- problems or issues your character is dealing with (*Haunted by a Past He Can't Remember, I Was a Psi-Pulse Child*);
- titles, reputations, or obligations your character may have (*The Commonality Expects Every Mindjammer to Do Its Duty, Nefarious Venu Technopriest*).

You can invoke or call for a compel on any of your character aspects when you think that aspect is relevant. You can also suggest compels for other player characters'

aspects, and the GM can propose compels of your aspects, too. The GM is the final judge of whether an invoke or a compel is appropriate.

Character aspects may change over time — often drastically.

Cultural Aspects

Every character has one **cultural aspect** written on his character sheet, representing some value, belief, or characteristic of his home culture which is particularly important to him. Characters sharing a common culture may share cultural aspects, but generally it's better to customise the aspect to show specifically what it means to your character.

Cultural aspects may change as your character's beliefs change. Usually a cultural aspect changing is a big thing, the result of a major campaign event or experience for your character.

Example cultural aspects include: *Mindscape Implants Are Thought Control; Synthetics Aren't Real People; Humanity Is Transcending*.

Genotype Aspects

Any character may select a **genotype aspect**, but they're mandatory for certain genotypes. A genotype aspect may be incorporated into your high concept (*Steely-Nerved Xenomorph 2-Pilot*), or may be a phase aspect or even an extra (*Infectious Canid Loyalty*). It describes a feature of your character's genotype heritage; it may change over time, but if it's mandatory you may not remove it completely.

Situation Aspects

Situation aspects don't belong on your character sheet. They represent temporary features of your environment — the nature of your location (*Camouflaged Hiding Spot*), weather (*Blinding Dust Storm*), lighting (*Actinic Solar Flare*), and so on; or they can be temporarily attached to a character, especially when you create an advantage on a target (page 145) (*Disarmed, Pinned Down by Covering Fire*). They can be simple description (*Teeming Downtecher Cityscape*), or represent problems or details which must be addressed (*Looming Lava Flow*).

Situation aspects last for the current scene, or until they no longer make sense (but no longer than the current session). They're usually accessible to everyone in the scene, although you must describe how you use them.

Consequences

Consequences are negatively-phrased aspects which represent lasting injuries or disadvantages you incur as a result of a conflict. You generally choose to take a consequence — it's a way of avoiding getting **taken out** (suffering total defeat). There are several degrees of consequence, from **mild**, **moderate,** and **severe**, to (rarely) **extreme**. Examples include: *Bleeding Heavily; Mental Trauma; Shocked Into Silence; Guts Hanging Out*. Consequences last from a scene or two to multiple scenarios, depending on severity.

Because consequences are predominantly negative, you're likely to incur a lot of compels when you have one; anyone who can justifiably narrate it can invoke or create an advantage on it. See page 153 for more.

Boosts

Boosts are ephemeral aspects, like situation aspects but lasting only for one, single invoke. You gain one when you don't succeed well enough when creating an advantage, or sometimes as an added bonus when you succeed at an action. Invoking a boost doesn't cost a fate point.

Usually only the person who created a boost gets the bonus. However, you can also pass a boost to another character to use, as long as you can describe how that works.

Flaws

Flaws are a negative aspect which you sometimes write on your character sheet. They're additional to all your other aspects, and you receive them when you select certain special abilities, genotypes, etc. Flaws usually indicate a weakness in your makeup, usually linked to that special ability or genotype. Examples include: *Weakness to Standard Gravity and Above; Susceptible to Kinetic Weapons; Blind and Deaf; Highly Flammable*.

WHAT DO ASPECTS DO?

Aspects tell you two vital things: **what's important to the characters**, and **when to use the mechanics**.

What's Important to the Characters

Your character's aspects highlight what's important about him, and what you as player should focus on when playing. They're like a checklist of what makes your character awesome and unique; lots of characters might have a high Pilot skill, but only Max Proffitt is a *New Trader With a Heart of Gold*. When an opportunity arises for Max to combine his innate gold-heartedness with being a New Trader, you get a moment in the spotlight.

As GM, you use the player characters' aspects when you design scenarios. They highlight what matters to the characters, and indicate the relationships between them and

their stresses and pressure points. Aspects also give you hooks into NPCs you can involve — being *Haunted* is one thing, being *Haunted by Doctor Miserius* is another.

Game aspects operate similarly, highlighting what's important about the setting to *every player*. They focus on why everyone's playing in the first place — playing on a planet with *Loyalties Split by the Fiver Separatists* and where *Mindscape Implants Are Thought Control!* gives you lots to get your teeth into.

Situation aspects add colour to what may otherwise be generic scenes — a shootout in a starport bar can be cliched, but with *Transparent Force Field Protects From Orbital Vacuum* as a situation aspect, it's much more dramatic, full of potential for creating advantages and possible disaster!

When to Use the Mechanics

Aspects indicate when to use the game mechanics — like rolling dice — to deal with a situation. If a player says, "I cycle the airlock and enter the docking bay", and there's nothing special about either the airlock or the docking bay, then you don't need the dice — you can simply say it happens. But if the situation aspects say it's a *Dangerously Malfunctioning Airlock* leading to a *Spooky Stardock Filled With Flickering Shadows*, you suddenly have an element of danger, and that's worth rolling the dice for.

For players, this highlights the things which it's coolest and most awesome for your character to do. If you see a situation developing in play where you could invoke one of your aspects, or call for a compel, then *just do it* — the game will be deeper and more fun for it, and again your character gets the spotlight.

COMING UP WITH GOOD ASPECTS

Aspects are important — so how do you create good ones? The most effective aspects are **double-edged**, **say more than one thing**, and **keep the phrasing simple**.

Double-Edged

A good aspect should offer a clear advantage to your character, while suggesting lots of ways it can make his life more complicated. An aspect which easily does both will get used more in play than one which is predominantly positive or negative; you'll get to do more awesome stuff, and, just as importantly, earn back those fate points you've spent doing so.

When you create an aspect, think of two ways you could invoke it, and two ways it could be compelled against you. If that's difficult, then maybe your aspect isn't double-edged enough — see if you can tweak it to make it better.

Let's look at an aspect like Master Thief. *It's obvious you can invoke this when stealing things, breaking into places, and so on, but the downsides don't immediately jump out, and it doesn't say much about its owner's personality. It's not that double-edged.*

What happens if we change it to So Light-fingered It Hurts*? Now, we still have that thiefly awesomeness, but we can immediately see how its owner might not be able to resist an easy job, and the potential frustrations and screw ups she may go through to not get caught or ruin a friendship for an easy steal.*

This applies for all aspects, including game, situation, cultural, and genotype aspects. Any situation aspect, for example, should be usable equally by the PCs and their opponents — it should present opportunities for invokes, but also for players to compel one another's characters.

Say More Than One Thing

Your character's aspects can say things about his beliefs and values, his relationships with people and organisations,



everyday problems he faces. The best say things about more than one of these things, providing several ways to use them in play.

For example, you can invoke the aspect I Must Make Amends! *whenever you do a good deed, making up for "something bad" you once did. Someone might compel it to force you to do something you'd rather avoid. So it's already double-edged, which is good.*

Eventually, though, this aspect might get repetitive. It says one very clear thing about your character: either you're trying to make amends, or it doesn't come up.

Let's link it to an organisation — SCI Force Says I Must Make Amends! *Now your aspect has many more dimensions: it's still double-edged, but now SCI Force has a hold over you, can force you to do things — and clearly is somehow linked to the "something bad" you did. Suddenly, the aspect has a lot more story going for it.*

This isn't as important for situation aspects because they aren't around for long; but it's great if your game, character, cultural, and genotype aspects can say more than one thing.

Clear Phrasing

It's easy to create an aspect which is too ambiguous or vague; it's a short phrase, and meant to be open to interpretation. Sometimes, though, it can be difficult to pin down exactly what it means.

By all means use florid or evocative language: *Secret Scion of an Ancient Religion* says more than *Unknown Orphan*. But make sure you and your GM both know what that aspect *means*.

First, make your aspect clear enough that your fellow players don't keep asking you what it means or whether it applies.

Take the aspect Yearns for the Past. *It expresses a kind of melancholy about a character — but it's unclear how to invoke or compel it. How does it help you? How can someone compel it to cause you trouble? There's definitely a meaty aspect in there somewhere, but it's too hard to grasp as it is.*

Let's say you want your character to feel overwhelmed by the changes the Commonality is wreaking on his homeworld, and to long for how things were. You can't understand what your world is becoming, and your people are losing their culture and history.

This is great, so we rephrase the aspect as Life Was Better Before the Commonality! *It's lost some of the melancholy, but it's now full of ideas for invokes to resist Commonality traditions, stand up for your homeworld, and even compels to refuse Commonality advantages.*

TROUBLE THINKING UP ASPECTS

Sometimes the near-infinite flexibility of aspects can make it a challenge to come up with them. Here are some tips.

Leave It Until Later

If you have difficulty thinking up a cool aspect for your character, just leave it blank to start with, and fill it in during play. You'll soon find your character in situations where his personality, appearance, and backstory come into focus, giving you ideas.

The same applies if you have too many ideas and can't decide which to choose. Jot all your ideas down for now, and try them out in your first session or two to see which one really works — then write that in the blank slot.

What Do We Care About? Why?

When in doubt, come back to the core questions which aspects answer: what's important in your game, and why do you care about it? Your genotype, occupation, culture, and background help you focus on your aspects. However, don't try and summarise the whole thing in your aspect; think about what it reveals about your character. Ask what really matters to your character about his occupation, culture, genotype, or this phase of his backstory.

- What was the outcome of the phase? Is it important?
- Does the character have any significant relationships or contacts as a result of his phase, culture, genotype, or occupation?
- Does it suggest any important facets of the character's personality, values, or beliefs?
- Does it give the character a reputation? Good or bad?
- Does the phase, culture, genotype, or occupation create any specific problem for the character during play?

These answers can be bad things as well as good: ending up with a relationship to your great nemesis is as cool for your character as having a great friend.

Bounce off the other players, too. Hook your stories together, checking out what other characters find cool to invoke about your aspect, or even compel, or what it says about their stories. Work together to develop links between your characters and their aspects — that will pay dividends during play.

During one of Max Proffitt's guest star phases (page 24), Hughie declares that SCI Force forced him to betray Lyra's trust on a heist job, resulting in her getting drafted into Thaddeus Clay's team.

Hughie's trying to decide how to phrase this as an aspect. Looking through the questions above, he sees lots of choices — a relationship with Lyra, a reputation, a problem…

Hughie discusses it with the group, and everyone's excited by the idea of Max having some guilt relationship to Lyra that won't pull the characters apart. Hughie picks I Won't Let Lyra Down Again*, figuring that it not only gives him a relationship and a problem, but also a personality trait and a reputation! That should provide ample invokes and compels during play.*

Aim for Variety

Avoid making your aspects too similar. Having all relationships means you can't use any aspects unless those people are somehow in play; all personality traits means you have no hooks into your environment. If you can't decide, consider your other aspects.

Hughie looks over Max's aspects for his first two phases: SCI Force Has Me Over a Barrel*, and* I Won't Let Lyra Down Again! *These are both relationships, tying him to an organisation and an individual. This time he decides he wants something focussing on how his recent adventure changed him. He chooses* Sometimes You've Got to Take a Stand*, figuring that it conflicts nicely with his* Nothing Personal — It's Just Business *cultural aspect, which should provide some interesting drama — and earn him fate points!*

Use the Massmind

You can always ask the GM and other players to create an aspect for you. Explain what's happened in your phase, then ask them the sort of questions you'd normally answer. What do they care about in the phase you just described? What excites them? Why? Can they think of tweaks to make the phase more dramatic or exciting? What would be a good aspect to sum it up?

You don't have to accept their choice: it's your character, and your decision. Look at it as a sounding-board for what your group wants to see coming out of your character, and let their ideas jumpstart your own thoughts. Collaborating on aspects is a great way to get everyone invested in one another's characters.

WHAT TO DO WITH ASPECTS

In **Chapter 2: The Basics** we touched upon **invoking** aspects to help your character, and **compelling** them to complicate his life. Here's more detail about that.

The Re-Roll vs the +2

Re-rolling your skill roll is riskier than taking a +2 bonus, but sometimes it's your only option. If you've rolled badly in the first place (say, a -3), and after adding your skill level and the +2 from an invoke bonus, you're still nowhere near the result you need, you have to weigh the odds. How badly do you need that success? Could you make things worse…?

Invoking Aspects

If you're in a situation where one of your aspects might give you an advantage in some way, you can invoke it. Most of the time you use aspects, you'll be doing this.

To invoke an aspect, first explain how that aspect helps you in your current situation. Then, spend one of your fate points, and choose one of the following benefits:

- add a +2 bonus to your current skill roll after you've rolled the dice;
- re-roll all the dice on your current skill roll;
- pass a +2 bonus to another character's roll, if it's reasonable that the aspect you're invoking could help;
- add +2 to any source of passive opposition you choose, provided you can justify how the aspect adds to that opposition. If there would have been no opposition in the first place, your invoke creates passive opposition at Fair (+2).

You can make your skill roll **before** deciding whether to invoke an aspect — you may not need the benefit. You can invoke as many aspects as you want on a single dice roll, as long as you have enough fate points (or free invokes — see page 72); however, you can't invoke the same aspect more than once on a single roll. If the +2 bonus or re-roll isn't enough to get the result you want, you'll need to invoke a second aspect (for another fate point) for another +2 bonus or a re-roll — or fail at your attempt (page 143).

You must describe how an aspect is relevant to your situation for it to be a legitimate invoke; you can't just make up nonsense and expect it to work. Your group must agree your description makes sense; the GM, as ever, is the final judge.

That doesn't mean you can't get creative with your descriptions. In many cases, that's exactly what you should do — ***Mindjammer*** shines when you find new and cool ways to invoke your aspects. Sometimes, though, it's obvi-



Narrating With Ellipsis

For an easy way to integrate an aspect into your dice roll, describe your action with an ellipsis (three dots — "…"), and then describe your invoke.

Max says, "I'm going to fly right out between the blast shields, and…" (rolls dice — gets a terrible result) "… and it looks like I'm going to smash right into them! But at the last minute I clip the shield safeties and get kicked through with the explosive decompression. Sorry, everyone, it's *Nothing Personal — It's Just Business!*"

ous how an aspect applies, and you can just hold up a fate point and everyone will nod and agree. Other times, you'll add more description to clarify why the aspect gives you an advantage. That's one of the reasons we recommend making sure everyone understands what your aspects mean (including the GM) — you're less likely to have difficulty explaining why you should be allowed an invoke in the heat of play.

Max is trying to fly out of a starport docking bay with the local customs boat in hot pursuit (as usual…). The bay's force shields are almost up, and it's a Superb (+5) difficulty manoeuvre with Max's Great (+4) Pilot skill.

Hughie rolls badly, and says, "I want to invoke Nothing Personal — It's Just Business *on this roll."*

Sarah looks at him sceptically. "How does that work?"

Hughie says, "I figure I'm going to break the safety regs for departure — maybe causing explosive decompression and putting people in danger. I'm steeling myself to do this — because if we don't deliver the antidote to Xenophon IV, a lot more people are going to die."

Sarah nods and says, "Okay, I'll take that."

Hughie spends the fate point.

You can find examples of invoking aspects throughout ***Mindjammer*** — it's an integral part of how the ***Fate Core*** system works. Check out page 144, page 146, and page 149 for more.

Sometimes you'll invoke someone else's aspect. To do that, pay them the fate point you spend. They can't re-spend it until the next scene, however.

FREE INVOKES

You don't always have to pay a fate point to invoke an aspect — some invokes are free.

For example, when you successfully create an advantage, you get a **single, free invoke** of the aspect you've created. If you succeed with style, you get **two free invokes**. Some actions also give you **boosts** — free invokes of aspects that only last for that invoke. See "The Four Actions" (page 144) for more.

Likewise, you get a free invoke of any **consequence** you inflict in a conflict.

Free invokes are like normal invokes, with two exceptions: you don't have to pay a fate point, and you can stack the free invoke with a normal, paid invoke **of the same aspect** for a larger bonus. A +2 bonus could become a +4, a single re-roll could become two re-rolls, or you could add +4 to a passive opposition instead of +2 — all for a single fate point.

If the aspect you've created is still around after you've used the free invoke, you can keep invoking it in subsequent exchanges as long as you pay the fate points.

Max succeeds with style on a shot with his starship null cannon, and forces the pursuing planetary defence force fighter to take a Dead Man's Tumble *consequence. On the next exchange, as the pursuing fighter spins out of control, he slams the gravity engines to get him to the jump point, and*

invokes the consequence for free because he just created it, giving him a +2 or a re-roll, or even a +4 or two re-rolls if he pays a fate point.

You don't have to use your free invoke yourself; you can pass it to another character. You can set up "combos" and other teamwork manoeuvres, where one or more characters prepare the ground and set up a final character for a "big blow" against a major opponent. For example, three characters could create advantages, then pass all three free invokes to a final, fourth character to use in his attack on an opponent — a potential +6 bonus, or three re-rolls, or a +6 passive opposition! See "Teamwork" (page 159) for more.

Compelling Aspects

If you're in a situation where one of your aspects, or any other aspect currently in play, looks likely to cause serious trouble, that aspect may be subject to a compel.

To compel an aspect, you must first explain why that aspect is relevant, then come up with a proposed complication which that aspect causes. You can negotiate that complication's details with the GM or a player affected by the compel, who then has two choices:

- to accept the compel, and receive a fate point;
- to pay a fate point and prevent the compel from happening.

Once you accept a compel, it happens **regardless of what anyone does** — you can't take any action to avoid or mitigate it, but must deal with the new direction the game takes as a result. That's the point of a compel; you're accepting a problematic event happening as a result of an aspect.

If you pay a fate point to prevent the compel, then you must describe how you avoid it. Sometimes this may just mean saying the event never happened; sometimes it may mean your character taking an action to prevent it. As long as your group and the GM agree, either method works.

The proposed compel must make sense in terms of the current game situation; the GM is the final judge.

When a player compels another character, **it costs the player a fate point to propose the compel**. It doesn't cost the GM any fate points to compel; likewise, a player can propose a compel on his own character for free.

TYPES OF COMPEL

There are two types of compel; **decision-based** and **event-based**.

DECISION-BASED COMPELS

A **decision-based compel** results from a decision the character makes. Here's a typical format:

You have _____ aspect in _____ situation, so it makes sense that you'd decide to _____. This goes wrong when _____ happens.

Here are a couple of examples of that format in action:

Lyra has So Light-Fingered It Hurts *while trying to convince a local pirate chief to let her join them, so it makes sense that she'd decide to filch some petty but expensive-looking bauble from his audience chamber. This goes wrong when she's discovered by the pirate's chief henchman, and she's thrown into the arena to face her accuser.*

Max has Nothing Personal — It's Just Business*, so it makes sense that he'd decide to turn down refugees fleeing the burning Gallantry Highport space station as he leaves with a full cargo of Howzatian Fireamber. This goes wrong when he's spotted by a media drone, which relays the event to the planetary Mindscape, turning the local population against the Commonality.*

Note that the real impact of these compels isn't the decision the character makes, but **the way things go wrong afterwards** — being thrown into the arena, or turning the local population against the Commonality, neither of which can be avoided if you accept the compel. This is crucial: it's the complication which occurs **as a result of** a character's decision that makes it a compel. A character's cultural aspect can be a great source of decision-based compels; characters making dramatic and problematic decisions based on their cultural values is the sort of thing that makes ***Mindjammer*** games sing!

The decision part of this kind of compel should be obvious, and something the player might have been thinking of

Hands Off My Character!

A player is always ultimately in charge of his character and what he says and does. The GM can offer a decision-based compel, but if the player doesn't want to accept it, the GM shouldn't force the issue by demanding a fate point. Instead, negotiate the details of the compel until you find one the player is happy with, and derive the complication from that instead. If you can't find a mutually acceptable compel, then drop it.

doing anyway. The same applies when proposing a compel for an NPC or another player character: you should have a clear idea of what that NPC or PC might do before you propose the compel.

Compels are a great way of generating fate points. When you propose a decision-based compel of your own character to the GM, you're actually asking for something to go wrong for your character, and for you to get paid a fate point for letting it happen! As long as the compel has a good, meaty complication, the GM should go along with a compel you propose for your own character. If the GM thinks the complication is a bit weak, try and come up with something more robust.

EVENT-BASED COMPELS

An **event-based compel** happens to a character when his surroundings unilaterally respond to an aspect in a way that complicates his life, regardless of what he does. Here's a typical format:

You're in _____ situation and have _____ aspect, so it makes sense that, unfortunately, _____ would happen to you. Damn your luck.

Here are a couple of examples:

Max is trying to follow-up a lucrative trade lead into the Sentient Alliance and has SCI Force Have Me Over a Barrel*, so it makes sense that, unfortunately, SCI Force would call him up and commandeer his ship and services for an urgent mission. Damn his luck.*

Lyra Da Luz is covertly attending a 3-Space Instrumentality briefing and has The Ghettoes of Altamira*, so it makes sense that, unfortunately, a gestalt linguist would recognise her giveaway speech patterns and alert the guards to her presence. Damn her luck.*

Avoid Out-of-Character Compels

If you propose a decision-based compel, and no one can agree on what the decision should be, drop the whole compel — it shouldn't cost a fate point to counter. Countering a decision-based compel should only mean that the complication — what goes wrong afterwards — doesn't happen.

Here, again, it's the complication that results **after the event** that's the real point of the compel — the urgent courier mission or the guards being alerted to your presence, neither of which you can avoid if you accept the compel.

Event-based compels are a great tool for the GM, and a cool way to have the world react to the PCs in unexpected ways that tie into their aspects. They're great for players, too, *who get rewarded for simply being there*. Players can try and propose event-based compels for their own characters, but this is trickier than decision-based compels, requiring you to exert a degree of control over part of the game you're not usually in control of. But feel free to propose them anyway — your GM may well ride with your suggestion if it's an awesome addition to the game!

Compelling With Situation and Game Aspects

You can use situation and game aspects for compels. As these are external to characters they're almost always event-based compels. Here are a couple of examples:

Because the docking bay is A Maelstrom of Fiery Plasma*, it makes sense that, unfortunately, the Venu spy can escape through the confusion. Damn your luck.*

Because the planetary atmosphere is A Thick Soup of Organic Compounds*, it makes sense that, unfortunately, you won't find the caves before the planetary defence force scout craft arrive and detect you. Damn your luck.*

Retroactive Compels

Sometimes your character fulfils the conditions of a compel without one being formally on the table — and without any fate points having changed hands. You've been playing your aspects and got into all kinds of trouble, or maybe another player has done the same.

Shout out! The GM can treat this like a compel after the fact, and retroactively award a fate point.

ROLEPLAYING ASPECTS

You can also use aspects when roleplaying, as cues for your character's behaviour. Your character's aspects are always in effect — not just when invoked or compelled.

Read "between the lines" of your different aspects, too. Max Proffitt has *New Trader With a Heart of Gold* and *Nothing Personal — It's Just Business*. What happens when those two aspects collide?

Roleplaying your aspects has a huge advantage: it feeds the GM ideas for compels, which earn you fate points.

A Powerful GM Trick

If you don't have any aspects in mind for an NPC or location, ask the PCs what kind of aspects they're looking for when they roll to create an advantage. If they tie or succeed, then jot down something similar to what they were looking for, and tell them they were right; if they fail, write down an aspect which contrasts dramatically with what they were looking for.

You're already integrating your aspects into your actions; all the GM has to do is highlight the complications and propose compels.

GMs can use NPC aspects the same way, and use the PCs' aspects to judge how the rest of the world reacts to them. Max Proffitt has *New Trader With a Heart of Gold* — how do the local traders behave when they find out Max has — in their eyes — a huge flaw? It may even be a reputation which precedes him — and a lever unscrupulous (and even villainous) merchants might use.

Aspects also suggest a character's appearance. *Doctor Miserius Haunts My Dreams* might give Max a worried look — indeed a "haunted" one — and people might give him a wide berth. *So Light-Fingered It Hurts* might make Lyra twitchy, constantly running her eyes over everything for anything not nailed down. Perhaps people notice the shifty look she keeps giving the mark with the big pockets…

Max returns to the Skin-of-Our-Teeth *to find a crowd of locals from the primitive Fringe World they're visiting clamouring for the high-tech medical supplies he's negotiated from a rival trader. The Commonality embargo forbids him from selling these on-planet. Hughie looks at Max's character sheet and sees* New Trader With a Heart of Gold *and* Doctor Miserius Haunts My Dreams*, and figures that Max is haunted by accidentally releasing Doctor Miserius's bio-plague on New Bahamut, and his heart of gold is refusing to let him abandon these unfortunates who remind him of his former victims. He cracks open one of the crates and starts handing out the medical supplies to the locals.*

Sarah says word of his breaking the embargo could reach the starport authorities like lightning, and before he knows it the security sentience could be attempting a powerful Mindscape Domination to stop him. She holds up a fate point and grins, indicating a compel.

Hughie takes the fate point, accepting the complication. "Screw it," he says, firing up his monitor band cloak and dishing out the drugs. "In for a penny…"



CREATING AND DISCOVERING NEW ASPECTS IN PLAY

You can use skill rolls to create, discover, or gain access to other aspects during play.

Generally you use the **create an advantage action** (page 145) with a specific skill to create a new aspect with a free invoke. Your description of the advantage usually indicates whether you're creating a brand new aspect or taking advantage of an existing one. If you're bringing a new element into play — maybe blasting an airlock or short-circuiting the artificial gravity — you're indicating a new situation aspect.

Sometimes you'll place an advantage on an aspect that already exists, either in the scene or on someone's character sheet. You may face an active or passive opposition to stop you from doing this — for example, from the person whose aspect you're trying to use. Again, this usually gets you a free invoke.

If you're not trying to get a free invoke, and just think it would make sense for a certain aspect to exist in the scene you're in, you don't need to make a create an advantage action. Just suggest the aspect, and, if everyone agrees, then the aspect exists.

Secret or Hidden Aspects

You can use some skills in create an advantage actions to reveal **hidden aspects** belonging either to scenes or NPCs. If you get a tie or better, the GM simply tells you what the hidden aspect is. You can "fish" for aspects if you're not sure what you're looking for; succeeding on the roll is good reason to find something useful.

Usually most aspects in play should be public knowledge **to the players**. The PCs' character sheets are generally in full view on the table, and major and supporting NPC sheets may be likewise. However, that doesn't necessarily mean the **characters** know about these aspects — but that's one of the reasons the create an advantage action exists: to let your character learn about other characters.

Aspects are only useful if you use them — if no one discovers an aspect, it might as well not exist. That's why the players usually know what aspects are available, and can use the create an advantage action to determine whether their characters know too.

Sometimes, as GM, you'll want to keep some fact about an NPC secret. Let's say the PCs are investigating a deranged synthetic in eidolon crisis who's been murdering people on a Javawayn star city: you don't want the guilty party sitting there on the table with a whacking great *Synthetic Psycho Killer* aspect in black and white for all to see.

Don't make this an aspect. Instead, make the deranged synthetic's aspects into details that only make sense after the secret is revealed.

Sarah's making an NPC who's secretly a psychopath, murdering people using an uncannily lifelike avatar. He's also a sentient starship who's known to the PCs, so she doesn't want to give things away.

Instead of writing Secret Psychopathic Killer *on the sentient starship's character sheet, Sarah adds a few personal details:* Obsessive Avatar User, Squeamish, Constantly Asking the Strangest Questions. *If the PCs discover one or two of these, or see them on the table, they may suspect the NPC, but it doesn't ruin the mystery straight away.*

REMOVING OR CHANGING ASPECTS

You can change game and character aspects (including cultural and even genotype aspects) using **advancements** (page 159). If you want to remove a situation aspect, you must roll a tie or better on an overcome action, or roll some other action that would make the situation aspect no longer apply (for example, blowing the cargo bay doors on a starship when there's an *On Fire* aspect would extinguish the fire, removing the aspect). Any character trying to stop you rolls active opposition; otherwise, GMs can set a passive opposition, or simply allow the action to succeed without a roll if there's no particular risk or interest associated with the attempt.

Lastly, if at any point it makes sense for a situation aspect to be no longer in play, simply remove it.

THE FATE POINT ECONOMY

Fate points are crucial for using aspects, and ideally they flow back and forth freely, being spent by players on invokes, being earned back again by accepting compels. There's a knack to getting this to and fro going in your game, but when you do, it feeds directly in to the dramatic ebb and flow. Here's how it works.

Refresh

Each player starts each session with a number of fate points equal to his **refresh**. A default starting character has a refresh of 5, but you can spend up to 2 points of your refresh to buy additional stunts (page 26).

Your refresh increases as your character advances during play — see "Advancement" (page 159) — and again you can spend these points on more stunts, or to increase your starting fate point total. Your refresh may never be lower than 1.

Sometimes — especially if you've been subject to a lot of compels — you may end a session with more fate points than you started with. In that case, you start with that number next session — you don't lower your fate points to be equal to your refresh. At the start of a new scenario, you **do** set your fate points to your refresh, even if that means lowering them.

Spending and Earning Fate Points

You spend fate points as follows:

- **Invoking Aspects:** Invoking an aspect costs one fate point, unless it's a free invoke (page 72).
- **Powering Stunts:** Some high-powered stunts cost a fate point to activate (page 80).
- **Refusing Compels:** Avoiding the complication associated with a compel costs one fate point.
- **Declaring a Story Detail:** Adding a minor detail to your game environment based on one of your aspects costs one fate point.

You earn fate points as follows:

- **Accepting Compels:** Agreeing to the complication associated with a compel earns you one fate point; this may be retroactive (page 74).

- **Having Your Aspects Invoked Against You:** If another PC or an NPC pays a fate point to invoke one of your aspects (or an aspect attached to you), you gain that fate point at the end of the scene. This includes advantages created on your character, and consequences.
- **Conceding in Conflicts:** You receive a fate point when you concede in a conflict (page 156), plus one additional fate point for each consequence you received in that conflict. Note that this isn't the same as being taken out (page 156).

GM Fate Points

The GM gets fate points, too, to use for NPCs, but they're acquired differently from players. When you give players fate points for compels and concessions, they come from a notional unlimited fate point pool — you don't have to account for them, and you won't run out.

The NPCs you run work differently; at the beginning of a scene, you receive a **fate point pool** equal to 1 point for every PC in that scene, which you can use for your NPCs. Your fate point pool is also added to if one of your NPCs' aspects is invoked, or you accept a player-driven compel, or you concede a conflict on behalf of that NPC.

Usually the fate point pool vanishes at the end of the scene, to be replaced by a new recalculated pool at the beginning of the next. However, if an NPC concedes a conflict and that concession ends the scene, you keep the fate points earned for the next scene.

Sarah is running a climactic conflict, where the PCs are fighting a major villain and an old nemesis. Here are the characters in the scene:

- *Venu High Commissar Hell Mur, a major NPC*
- *Doctor Remnai Noyo, one of Hell Mur's scientists, a supporting NPC*
- *Commissar Asharak-Um, an old nemesis of the PCs, a supporting NPC*



MINDSCAPE UPDATE

193.343.04

// SCI FORCE INTERNAL THOUGHTCAST CONTROLLER THADDEUS CLAY TO KASIM KASAH MIND ONLY

Observation of Venu ability similar to mindburn is independently confirmed. Target was without implant, yet neural damage broadly analogous. Sensorview unable to distinguish nature of phenomenon due to peaking anomalous z-radiation emissions from both originating Venu and target. Is this the Dark Radiance? Urgent recommend Q-Zone insertion force to Iridis Omega to attempt extraction of subject. When will the instrumentality act?

// THOUGHTCAST ENDS

- *Two nameless NPC Venu Wardogs*
- *Max Proffitt*
- *Lyra Da Luz*
- *Thaddeus Clay*
- *Max Proffitt*
- *Skin-of-Our-Teeth*

Sarah's fate point pool for this scene is 5 — one point each for Max, Lyra, Thaddeus, Jackson, and Skin. If Skin had been elsewhere (say, up in orbit keeping watch), Sarah would have received 4 fate points.

In the scene, Hell Mur concedes to escape with his life; he's taken two consequences in the conflict, meaning Sarah receives 3 fate points for conceding. If this had happened early in the conflict, those fate points would have gone into Sarah's current fate point pool; since Hell Mur was the last NPC in the scene, and his concession effectively ends that scene, those 3 fate points carry over into the next scene.

CHAPTER SIX
SKILLS AND STUNTS

"Trust me — I know what I'm doing." Max grinned as the Rosemary Princess *raced to the jump point. "I can shave a few light seconds off our 2-space entry and throw those goons off our tail!"*

Lyra frowned, clutching the enormous gem to her chest, closing her eyes. "Don't try anything stupid!" Her eyes opened, alarm spreading over her face, and she flung him the exomemory from her mnemonic shunt. "You knew about the black star extending this system's heliopause, right? What the hell…?"

Max paled as he accepted the exomemory of the dying smuggler's last few seconds of life. Okay, maybe a crash jump wasn't such a good idea…

"Know what I'm doing?" he muttered, pulling up a system holo and scanning for places to hide. "Course I do…"

ABOUT SKILLS

All characters have **skills** — broad areas of activity which they're competent in. Skills include innate abilities like Physique and Will, knowledge and academic skills like Science and Technical, and trained competencies like Ranged Combat. Skills are the basis for **skill rolls**, the dice rolls which govern everything your character does in the game involving challenge and chance.

Every skill has a **rating** on the ladder (page 12); the higher the rating, the more skillful your character. Your skills begin with different ratings on a **skill pyramid** (page 25), indicating what your character is more or less proficient at.

Skills are described in terms of four game actions you can do with them — **overcome**, **create an advantage**, **attack**, and **defend** — and the specific contexts in which they are used.

The Four Actions

The four actions are detailed in **Chapter 9: Playing the Game**. They are:

Overcome: Where you surmount a hindrance or challenge to succeed at a task.

Create an Advantage: Where you modify your surroundings to put yourself in an advantageous position, by creating new aspects or discovering existing ones and invoking them for free.

Attack: Where you harm someone in a conflict — physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, or financially.

Defend: Where you stop someone harming you, getting past you, or creating an advantage to use against you.

Some skills also have special effects, like giving you more physical, mental, or credit stress boxes or even consequences.

What the four game actions mean in descriptive terms depends on the skill you use them with. An attack action with the Ranged Combat skill might mean shooting a blaster rifle or grenade launcher, whereas an attack action with the Provoke skill might mean shouting at someone or more subtly bullying them.

ABOUT STUNTS

Stunts are special abilities your character has which change the way his skills work in limited circumstances. They can indicate special training, like Mindscape Engineer or Star-

ship Engineer (stunts for the Technical skill); or personal talents, like Danger Sense or Keen Hearing (stunts for the Notice skill). Some stunts are also **extras**, representing genurgic modifications, natural abilities, and even equipment; see **Chapter 7: Extras** and **Chapter 8: Technology**, below. This chapter describes those stunts associated with your character's skills.

While many characters share the same skills, stunts are more individual, and a way of differentiating one character from another. You'll often want to invent your own stunts, based on the special things you want your character to do: we give guidelines for doing so below. We've also provided example stunts with every skill description, including those we think are useful for integrating specific features of the ***Mindjammer*** setting like the Mindscape or technopsi.

Lyra and Max both have a Good (+3) Ranged Combat skill, but Max also has the Gunnery stunt, which means he can use his skill to take actions with starship weaponry as well as personal weapons. This differentiates the two characters — together with the Starship Pilot stunt for his Pilot skill, Max is more of a "spacer" than Lyra, whose stunts (Hacker and Always a Way Out) mark her as a Mindscape and intrusion specialist.

You don't always have to use a stunt: just because Max has the Starship Pilot stunt doesn't mean he can't also pilot, say, a grav flyer.

Stunts are also used to indicate specialisations, often associated with occupations (page 52). Stunts like Genurgic Engineer are specific to the Genurgist occupation; you need to belong to that occupation, or otherwise explain how you have that training, in order to take the stunt. Some stunts have other stunts as prerequisites, permitting increased specialisation.

Stunts and Refresh

As explained in **Chapter 5: Aspects and Fate Points** (page 67), taking a stunt reduces your character's refresh by one. When you create a character you get three stunts for free.

CREATING STUNTS

You can pick ready-made stunts from the skill descriptions below. To create your own, think about what you want your stunt to do.

Add a New Action to a Skill

You can use a stunt to add an action to a skill which it can't normally do, for use in limited situations. The action can be one which is available to another skill, including construct and organisation skills, meaning that one skill can substitute for another in limited circumstances; or it can be unique to the stunt.

The Ambush stunt (page 97) lets you use Stealth to make physical attacks on targets unaware of your presence.

The Starship Pilot stunt (page 92) lets you use Pilot to take construct Manoeuvre actions when piloting a starship.

Add a Bonus to an Action

You can use a stunt to get a bonus to a specific action made by a skill in limited situations. This can represent a specialisation, or a circumstantial bonus. The circumstance should be narrower than what's normally allowed by the action, and should apply to a single action, or at most two, undertaken with a skill.

The usual bonus is a +2 to the skill roll total, or 2 additional shifts after the roll has succeeded (depending on the desired effect of the stunt). You can also use it to represent any effect worth 2 shifts as an additional benefit of succeeding at the skill roll, such as a Fair (+2) passive opposition, the equivalent of a 2-point hit, a mild consequence, or an advantage that takes Fair (+2) opposition to remove.

The Covering Fire stunt (page 93) lets you create a Fair (+2) opposition against movement actions in a zone until your next turn, whenever you succeed at a Ranged Combat attack action with a fully automatic weapon.

Create a Rules Exception

You can use a stunt to make a single exception to the rules under narrow circumstances. **Chapter 9: Playing the Game** deals with the circumstances under which skills can be used; stunts can break those rules, letting your character stretch what's possible.

The only restriction is that a stunt can't change the core rules for aspects and fate points; see **Chapter 5: Aspects and Fate Points**.

The Riposte stunt (page 90) lets you inflict a 2-stress hit back on your attacker whenever you succeed with style on a Melee Combat defend action (page 146), instead of gaining a boost.

Stunts — Special but Not Overwhelming

The circumstances when you can use a stunt should be fairly narrow compared with the normal use of the skill it modifies. A stunt should be limited enough in its usability that it feels special when you use it, but not so limited that

you hardly get chance to use it at all. If a stunt ends up replacing all of the skill's actions, it's not limited enough. Here are a couple of ideas:

- restrict the stunt to a specific action or couple of actions (ie only create an advantage actions, or attack and defend rolls).
- limit the situations when the stunt can be used (only when you're using null weapons, only when you're on a starship, etc).

Ideally try and use both of the above — restrict the stunt to a specific action, under limited circumstances. If you think that might be too narrow, read through the suggested contexts for the skill the stunt belongs to: if you can see at least one context where your stunt is relevant, you're probably fine. If not, adjust the stunt slightly to make sure it can crop up.

You can also:

- limit the stunt to only being used once in a certain period of game time, ie once per conflict, scene, or session.
- require that the stunt cost a fate point to use.

Requiring a fate point to use a stunt is appropriate if the stunt is very powerful, doesn't easily fit into any suggested restriction (so, for example, it adds a new skill action and a bonus), or significantly affects conflicts (page 150). Particularly, stunts which allow extra damage in a conflict above the usual bonuses should probably cost a fate point to use.



During play, Max has increased his refresh by 1 point using advancements, and Hughie's considering creating a new stunt for him called "Withering Put-Down", which he wants to use to get a +2 bonus to any Provoke attack. While it meets the requirement of covering only one of the four actions, Sarah thinks it's still too broad, as it could effectively replace the normal use of the Provoke skill, and asks him to narrow it down.

Hughie says, "What if, instead of the +2 bonus, when someone uses their 2-point stress box to absorb one of my Provoke attacks, I can make them use their mild consequence instead?"

Sarah likes this, because it'll come up in nearly every Provoke conflict Max gets into, but won't be something he can use every exchange. She still thinks it's a little powerful, though — it effectively does more damage — and suggests it should only be used once per conflict. Hughie agrees, and writes down Max's new stunt on his character sheet.

Stunt Families

Sometimes you'll want more detail about a particular training or group of special abilities, for example to represent an occupation (like starship engineer), branch of technical knowledge (like technopsi), or even martial arts school. You can group related stunts together in a **stunt family**.

To do this, select one stunt as a "gateway stunt" — the introductory stunt that serves as the prerequisite for all the other stunts in the family. Then, simply create a group of stunts all related to or deriving from the gateway stunt, either adding to its effects or branching out into discrete specialties. Here's how you can group them:

STACKED STUNTS

The simplest stunt family contains stunts which are successively more effective in the same situation.

- **If the previous stunt added an action,** narrow its context further, and give it a +2 bonus in that new context. Follow the rules in "Add a Bonus to an Action" above.
- **If the previous stunt gave a bonus,** give an additional +2 bonus or an additional 2-shift effect to the same action.
- **If the previous stunt allowed a rules exception,** increase the exceptionality, if appropriate.

Your second stunt may end up effectively replacing the first. This is fine; view it as a single super-stunt costing 2 points of refresh.

The Drinks for All My Friends stunt (page 94) has the Streetwise stunt as a prerequisite, allowing you to additionally create an advantage when you overcome an opposition, representing how the general attitude turns in your favour.

BRANCHED STUNTS

A branched stunt relates to the original in theme or subject matter, but represents an entirely new effect. If stacked stunts expand a stunt or skill vertically, branched stunts expand it laterally.

If the gateway stunt added an action to a skill, a branched stunt might add another action, or provide a bonus to a different action, or create a rules exception. The effect isn't derived from the gateway stunt, but is complementary to it.

This lets you highlight different elements of a skill, and differentiates characters with the same skill by giving them different specialties.

Look at the Fast Talk stunt (page 85), which gives you a +2 bonus to overcome actions with the Deceive skill, as long as you don't talk to the person you're deceiving for very long.

Fast Talk has 3 branched stunts: Quick Disguise, Instant Cover, and Hey, What's That? These provide a rules exception, an additional situation aspect, and a +2 bonus to create a distraction respectively. Each thematically relates to rapid, spontaneous uses of Deceive, but with its own unique flavour.

SKILLS AND THE MINDSCAPE

Characters with Mindscape implants (most ***Mindjammer*** characters) have access to an almost infinite network of expert skill and data systems to enhance their skills.

Invoking the Mindscape

As long as you have a Mindscape implant (page 120), you may **invoke the Mindscape** to scan for information, techniques, and memories to assist in a task. An academic may scan the Mindscape for a nugget of information; an engineer seek out a schematic for an equipment item he isn't used to working with; an explorer look up a map of a planet he's flying over for the first time.

Skill Chips

Additionally, with the Mindscape, expert skill systems and the memories of millennia of humankind are available almost instantaneously in the form of **skill chips**, allowing tasks which our 21st century considers almost impossible to be routinely performed by the average Commonality citizen. Where everyone can pilot a starship from A to B, the real experts now undertake tasks impossible to those without Mindscape access. It was the Mindscape which first allowed humans to pilot through the quantum complexities of 2-space; today, someone with a Pilot skill chip and the Starship Pilot stunt can attempt this in an emergency, but a professional 2-pilot with thousands of lives in his hands wants a Great (+4) Pilot skill, the Starship Pilot stunt, and a Pilot skill chip before he even thinks about taking a cruise liner through 2-space. The risks are simply too high: 2-space travel is hard.

2-pilot Mister Jonaton Calm is taking an Enormous (+3) Morpheus*-class Mass Transport with 10,000 colonists through 2-space. It's a 25 light year trip, and Superb (+5) passive opposition; the ship has a Fair (+2) Planing skill, and is using a Mindjammer route, giving it a +2 bonus for an invoke. It rolls a +0 on its Planing roll, facing a jump failure.*

Mister Calm has Great (+4) Pilot skill, and a Pilot skill chip, giving him an effective skill of Superb (+5). He also has the Starship Pilot stunt, which lets him use his Pilot skill for starship actions.

This lets him roll against the Superb (+5) passive opposition of the jump to create an advantage representing his assistance to the ship sentience. He rolls a +1, succeeding; his advantage pushes the ship's Planing roll up to +6, a success. Just over a week later, the Morpheus *and its 10,000 colonists drop out of 2-space at their destination.*

Technopsi Chrome

*Mindscape-connected characters can achieve seemingly miraculous effects known as **technopsi**. These include thought-communication using technological telepathy, remote control of devices using thought, accessing sensor data via virtual vision overlays and direct neural input, performing actions in virtual environments known as **virtualities** and **imposalities**, and more.*

*The external details of technopsi and other Mindscape-related effects are described in **Chapter 11: The Mindscape**. In the skill descriptions below, Mindscape uses are described where appropriate.*

Mindscape Access

Both skill chips and invoking the Mindscape require reliable Mindscape access. Commonality worlds are equipped with global Mindscape instances; Fringe Worlds may have limited Mindscape connectivity; Outer Worlds have none at all. Individuals travelling the Commonality Fringe may use starship Mindscape instances, and even personal Mindscape instances (PMIs), but these are restricted in capability (page 194).

Cultural Context

What you can do with a skill often depends on where you grew up and what you do — your homeworld, culture, and occupation. Someone from an early industrial age Fringe World will use the Technical skill very differently from someone from the Commonality Core.

This is often linked to your tech index (page 116). "Cultural Capabilities" (page 299) provides broad descriptions of the technologies available at different tech indices, which affect your skill and stunt descriptions and even which skills and stunts you select.

A character using a skill in an alien cultural context faces a +1 or +2 increase to opposition to reflect his unfamiliarity. If the context is drastically different — someone from an early computer age society fixing a starship's planing engines, or a Commonality 2-pilot flying an industrial age biplane — the GM may disallow the attempt completely. Likewise, the GM may disallow a beginning character from selecting stunts like Starship Pilot if he's from a low-tech culture — or at least require an acceptable description of the extraordinary way the character learned it.

Cultural context isn't necessarily a permanent feature. An Outer World barbarian character may be unable to use a null rifle with his Great (+4) Ranged Combat; but after a few days or weeks observing how it works, he may attempt a Ranged Combat overcome roll (maybe against a difficulty equal to the difference in tech index), and if successful start to use the null rifle with an Unfamiliar Weapon-*type flaw (page 68). Thereafter, he can remove the flaw with an advancement, or even use a major milestone to change his high concept to reflect he's no longer unfamiliar with Commonality tech.*

THE SKILLS LIST

Here is a list of skills and example stunts for your ***Mindjammer*** games, highlighting features of the ***Mindjammer*** setting. Each skill description includes those game actions where you can use it; if you can't use a skill in a particular game action (Investigate isn't used to make attack actions, for example), that action isn't listed.

Athletics

Athletics represents your character's physical fitness, through training, natural genotype capability, or genurgic enhancement, and how good you are at moving your body. It's a popular choice for action-oriented characters.

Overcome: Make physical movement actions like jumping, running, climbing, swimming, or moving in zero-G; or move between **zones** (page 151) in a conflict, if you're facing opposition from a situation aspect or obstacle (including another character). Additionally, take part in contests or challenges involving such activities, like chases or races.

Create an Advantage: Jump to higher ground, run faster than an opponent can keep up with, or perform dazzling acrobatic or zero-G manoeuvres to confuse or evade opponents.

Defend: Defend in physical conflicts against close hand-to-hand attacks or ranged weapons like firearms. Additionally, avoid others creating advantages against you, and prevent people from moving past you, if you're in a position to physically do so.

The Skills List

Athletics	*Physique*
Bureaucracy	*Pilot*
Contacts	*Provoke*
Deceive	*Ranged Combat*
Drive	*Rapport*
Empathy	*Resources*
Intrusion	*Science*
Investigate	*Stealth*
Knowledge	*Technical*
Melee Combat	*Unarmed Combat*
Notice	*Will*

STUNTS

✦ ***Acrobat***
Gain a +2 bonus to Athletics overcome actions when making impressive acrobatic manoeuvres like leaps, rope swings, balancing on tightropes or narrow ledges.

✦ ***Charge***
Requires Fair (+2) Athletics
Make an Athletics roll to charge a target **and** attack them; the target must be 2 **zones** (page 151) away. You gain any weapon-related bonus. You may only charge if your movement is unrestricted by any situation aspect or character.

✦ ***Dazing Counter***
When you succeed with style on a defend action against an opponent's Unarmed Combat or Melee Combat attack, you automatically counter with a nerve punch or stunning blow. Attach a *Dazed* situation aspect to your opponent with a free invoke instead of just a boost.

✦ ***Sprinter***
Move two zones for free in a conflict without rolling, instead of one, provided there are no situation aspects restricting movement.

✦ ***Zero-G Specialist***
Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage actions when manoeuvring in zero-G. Especially useful for setting yourself up to make subsequent attacks or complex manoeuvres.

Bureaucracy

A good bureaucrat understands organisations and their rules, including laws, precedents, custom and tradition, bribery, and other ways of tying up progress and petitioners in light years of red tape. Bureaucracy is a key skill for Core Worlds intendants, corporacy and legal advisors, pansectorate and instrumentality administrators, justice specialists, as well as being an all-purpose knowledge skill for acting in organisations, including knowing how much to bribe.

Overcome: Overcome administrative obstacles like customary precedents, legal impediments and arguments, import restrictions, red tape, and organisational obfuscation. Also, provide active opposition to someone doing the same.

Create an Advantage: Bribe an official, know how to best couch a request, contact an individual within an organisation, and gain information otherwise hidden by paranoid bureaucrats.

Attack: Cause mental or credit stress to a target with legal arguments or administrative restrictions. Depending on the nature of the bureaucracy, each attack may take minutes (entangling someone in Mindscape bureaucracy), hours (making a legal case in court), or even days or weeks (in an environment where communication is slow).

Defend: Defend against Bureaucracy attacks — fighting red tape with red tape, and deconstructing legal arguments; or defend against Provoke if performed at a distance, involving law enforcement, behavioural enforcers, etc.

STUNTS

✦ ***Cog in the Machine***
You're expert at operating in a greater organisational structure, whether a Core Worlds bureaucracy, Pansectorate or instrumentality command structure, or corporacy hierarchy. Use your Bureaucracy skill to take organisation actions (see **Chapter 15: Organisations**).

✦ ***Customs Negotiator***
Use your Bureaucracy skill to avoid snarl-ups when trading starship cargoes (page 442).

✦ ***Dirigeant***
Requires a special ops or black chip, and an occupation permission
You're a Mindscape **dirigeant** (page 190), administering a Mindscape node and the access privileges of Mindscape users. Gain a +2 bonus to Bureaucracy actions in the Mindscape. You may temporarily block someone's activities in the Mindscape, forcing them to make overcome actions; or give someone temporary special ops chip privileges or revoke them.

✦ ***Executive Officer***
Requires an organisation extra
Gain a +1 bonus to any organisation actions where you act directly.

✦ ***Law***
Gain a +2 bonus to Bureaucracy attack or defend actions when fighting a legal case in court.

✦ ***Project Coordinator***
You know how to structure projects to cope with bureaucratic and administrative requirements. Gain a +2 overcome bonus to complete a project task or push a project to completion.

Contacts

Contacts represents networking, whether physical or virtual, and measures knowing and making connections with people.

Overcome: Overcome any obstacle related to finding someone. Whether by old-fashioned "man on the street" searching or trawling the Mindscape, you track people down or otherwise get access to them.

Create an Advantage: Know the right person to talk to for something you need, or decide you know that person already; create story details represented by aspects ("My Mindscape contacts tell me Needles McBride is the *Best Meditech for a Thousand Light Years* — we should talk to her.").

Additionally, create advantages representing the "word on the street" about individuals, objects, or locations, based on what your contacts tell you. This is more reputation than fact, like *Wanted Across a Thousand Star Systems* or *Swindling New Trader*; whether the target lives up to it is irrelevant — people often have misleading reputations. Also, use your contacts network to plant information, or get information to help in a conflict.

Defend: Defend against people creating social advantages against you, as long as you can describe how your contacts network can do so; prevent people from using Deceive or Contacts to "drop out of the Mindscape" or otherwise go off-grid; interfere with Investigate attempts to locate you.

STUNTS

✦ Ear to the Ground

When someone attacks you in a physical or virtual area where you have an operating contacts network, use Contacts instead of Notice for initiative order, because you got a tip-off it was coming.

✦ Finder

Use your Contacts skill to find starship cargoes (page 442), or otherwise take construct actions.

✦ Insider

You easily navigate bureaucracies and organisations because you know people on the inside who can help you. Use Contacts instead of Bureaucracy for overcome or create an advantage actions related to getting inside assistance.

✦ Rumourmonger

Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage actions when planting vicious rumours about someone.

✦ The Weight of Reputation

Requires an appropriate aspect

Use Contacts instead of Provoke to create an advantage relating to the fear generated by the sinister reputation you've cultivated for yourself and your shady associates.

Deceive

Deceive represents your character's ability to lie to and misdirect people. Several genurgic enhancements exist to give you bonuses to Deceive actions, including disguises (page 85).

Overcome: Bluff your way past someone or give a false impression. For minor NPCs this is just an overcome roll, but for PCs or major NPCs it requires a contest; the target opposes with Empathy. Winning could justify placing a situation aspect on your target, if buying into your lie helps you in a future scene.

Additionally, use Deceive to decide if a disguise is effective (whether on yourself or someone else); you need time and the appropriate gear; or do small tricks of sleight-of-hand and misdirection.

Create an Advantage: Create momentary distractions, cover stories, or false impressions; feint in a fist fight, putting an opponent *Off Balance* and setting you up for an attack. Do the "What's over there?" trick to give you a *Head Start* when you run away. Establish an *Influential Commonality Ambassador Cover Story* for when you visit a ruler on a new colony world. Trick someone into revealing an aspect or other information.

Defend: Defend against attempts to discern your true motives using Empathy, or throw off Investigate attempts with false information.

STUNTS

✦ Acting

Gain a +2 bonus to overcome actions when trying to convince people you are a specific person.

✦ Cook the Books

You're skilled at presenting organisations in a fraudulent light — whether good or bad. Use your Deceive skill to take organisation actions (see **Chapter 15: Organisations**).

✦ Cool Customer

You can bluff very effectively; gain a +2 bonus when creating advantages against an opponent.

✦ ***Fast Talk***
Gain a +2 bonus to overcome actions when talking to someone for no more than a few sentences before breezing past them.

✦ ***Hammerhead***
Use Deceive instead of Drive or Pilot to make manoeuvres in pursuits, chases, and conflicts which throw your opponent off. If you also have the Starship Pilot stunt (page 92), you can use this stunt for construct actions (page 215).

✦ ***Hey, What's That?***
Requires Fast Talk
Gain a +2 bonus to momentarily distract someone, as long as the distraction involves saying something.

✦ ***Instant Cover***
Requires Fast Talk
You can spin up an instant cover story, even using the Mindscape to plant fictional references to support it. Whenever you make a Deceive overcome action in public, you automatically have a situation aspect representing that cover story for the rest of the scene. The first invoke of this aspect in the scene is free.

✦ ***Lies Upon Lies***
Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage against a target who has already believed one of your lies this session.

✦ ***Mind Games***
Use Deceive to make mental attack actions, as long as you can make a clever lie part of the attack.

✦ ***One Person, Many Faces***
Whenever you meet someone new, you can spend a fate point to declare you've met them before under a different name and identity. Create a situation aspect representing the identity, and use Deceive instead of Rapport when interacting with that person.

✦ ***Quick Disguise***
Requires Fast Talk
Use Deceive to create a convincing physical disguise in a moment, improvising from items to hand in almost any situation.

✦ ***Suspension Matrix***
You have a virtual "disguise" masking your presence and identity in the Mindscape; gain a +2 bonus to Deceive overcome actions there. You may become less noticeable, and appear to be someone else on casual inspection.

Social Skills and Other Characters

Many social skills let you change another character's emotional state, or make them accept some fact in the story (like believing one of your lies).

A successful social skill use does ***not*** *allow you to force another character to act against his nature or how the person controlling the character sees him. Another player whose character is affected by one of your skills may describe how their character responds. They can't negate your victory, but they can choose what it looks like.*

So, you may successfully Provoke a character by screaming at him, intending to scare him into hesitation. But if the other player doesn't imagine his character reacting that way, you should work out an alternative — maybe you make him so angry that he's unbalanced by his rage, or embarrass him in public. You still create your advantage, but your target's player retains control of his character.



✦ ***We Come in Peace***
Misrepresent your culture to other cultures, including preventing them from realising you're carrying out secret cultural operations (page 306). Use Deceive to take culture actions (see **Chapter 17: Cultures**).

Drive

Drive represents operating vehicles in a two-dimensional environment, like ground cars, tanks, and surface water vessels. This includes remote Mindscape control of vehicles like lifters and avatars (page 259). For vehicles in a three-dimensional environment (like aircraft, grav vehicles, and starships), use the Pilot skill (page 91).

Overcome: Use Drive like Athletics when controlling a vehicle; manoeuvre in difficult conditions (rough terrain, narrow clearance); perform stunts, races and chases (using the contest rules — page 148).

Create an Advantage: Determine the best route in a vehicle, learning features as aspects; declare you know a *Convenient Shortcut*-type advantage. Also modify Athletics advantages for use with vehicles, including superior positioning, putting your opponent in a bad spot, or perilous or fancy manoeuvres (*Fishtail Reverse*).

Attack: Ram a vehicle or target, although you also take any stress damage you inflict.

Defend: Avoid damage in physical conflict, prevent people creating advantages against you, or stop someone getting past you in a vehicle.

STUNTS

✦ ***Archaic Vehicles***
You're skilled with pre-industrial vehicles, usually drawn by draught animals, and / or ride such draught animals as your cultural context allows; if appropriate you even own one. Depending on your cultural context (ie if you grew up on a pre-industrial world — see page 82), this may be your default context for the Drive skill anyway.

✦ ***Hard to Shake***
Gain a +2 Drive bonus when pursuing another vehicle.

✦ ***Pedal to the Metal***
You can coax more speed out of your vehicle than normally possible. In a contest where speed is the primary factor (like a chase or race), a tie on your Drive roll is considered a success.

✦ ***Ramming Speed!***
Ignore two stress points of damage when ramming another vehicle; if you ram for four stress damage, you only take two points yourself.

Empathy

Empathy represents understanding and spotting changes in an intelligent being's emotional state. It's essentially the emotional Notice skill (page 90). Depending on your cultural context, it's probably limited to your genotype and maybe a few others: Commonality citizens are generally exposed to hominids, xenomorphs, and synthetics as well as Commonality humans, but reading the emotions of a newly discovered culture or an exotic alien species may face increased opposition until research is undertaken.

Overcome: Detect a change in someone's attitude or intent. With a period of peace and quiet (usually at least an hour) you can help others recover from mild mental consequences (page 154).

Create an Advantage: Read a target's emotional state, assessing existing aspects and creating new ones, as long as you have interpersonal contact, including gauging psychological weaknesses to use in mental attacks. Mindscape contact alone isn't usually enough, although you can use it to read a character's halo (page 186). If the target knows you're trying to read them, they can defend with Deceive or Rapport.

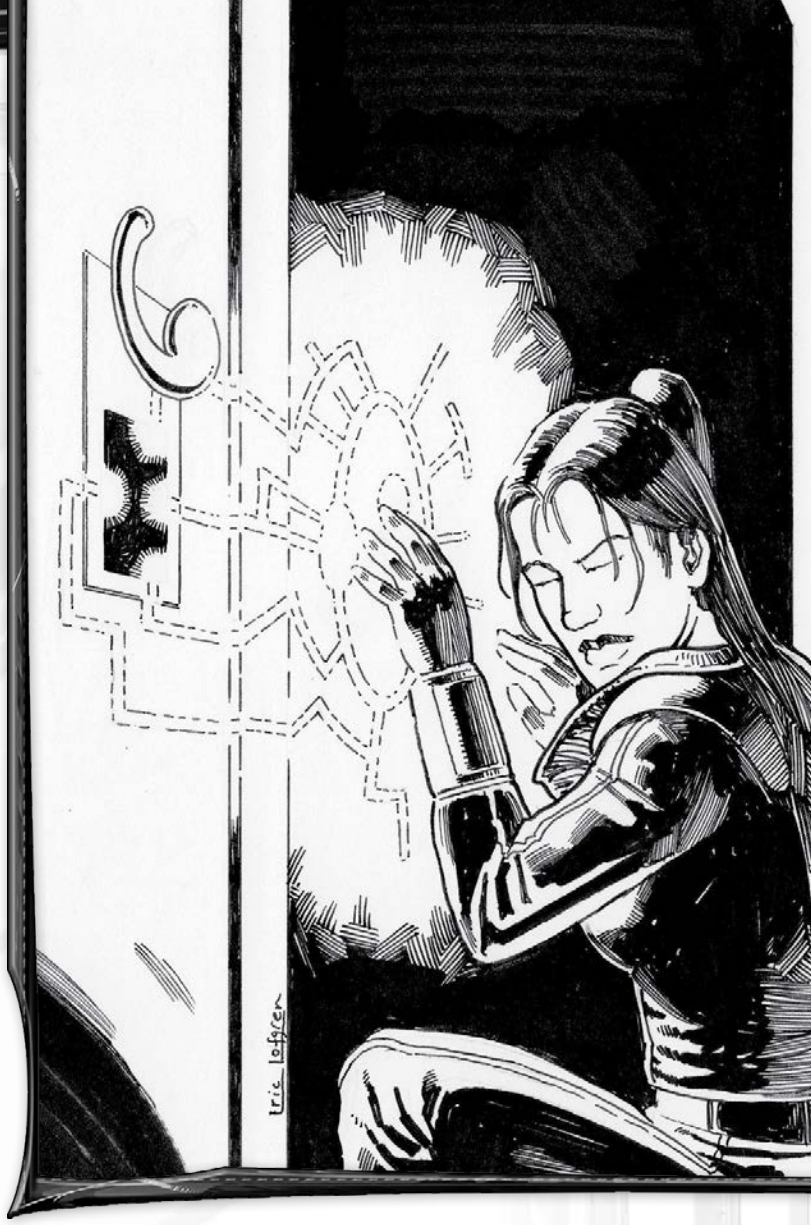
Defend: Defend against Deceive, seeing through lies to someone's true intent, and against others creating social advantages against you.

STUNTS

✦ ***Cultural Redaction***
Requires Redaction
Assess the emotional state of whole cultures, including gauging weaknesses, and conduct propaganda campaigns to treat cultures damaged in culture conflict. Use Empathy to take culture actions (see **Chapter 17: Cultures**), including any stunts you know.

✦ ***Lie Whisperer***
Gain a +2 Empathy bonus to detect lies, whether aimed at you or someone else.

✦ ***Nose for Trouble***
Use Empathy instead of Notice to determine initiative in a conflict, as long as you've observed or spoken to those involved for a few minutes during the same scene.



✦ ***Psychologist***
Use Empathy to treat organic and synthetic minds suffering from mental stress damage and consequences. Gain a +2 bonus to overcome actions when treating mental consequences; you may treat mild, moderate, and severe consequences (page 154). You must talk with the person you're treating for at least half an hour to use this stunt, and you can't use it on yourself.

✦ ***Redaction***
Requires Mindscape Implant, Psychologist
Use Empathy in the Mindscape to treat organic and synthetic minds suffering from mental consequences, including Mindscape-related damage like mindburn and eidolon crisis.

Once per session, reduce someone else's consequence caused by social, mental, or technopsi damage by one level (severe into moderate, moderate to mild, mild to nothing at all) on a successful Empathy roll, with a difficulty of Fair (+2) for a mild consequence, Good (+3) for moderate, or Great (+4) for severe. You must be in Mindscape contact with the person you're treating for at least half an hour to use this stunt, and you can't use it on yourself. (Normally this roll would only **start** the recovery process, instead of changing the consequence level.)

This stunt includes the effects of the Starship Therapy stunt — you don't need both.

✦ ***Starship Therapy***
Requires Mindscape Implant
A limited form of Redaction (above) often taken by 2-pilots; use Empathy to treat mental stress incurred by sentient starships as a result of failed Planing rolls (page 224).

✦ ***Xeno-Empath***
You have experience with many non-human intelligent beings, and may have studied their psychologies. You incur no penalties or increased difficulties when reading their emotions, including using your Empathy stunts.

Intrusion

Intrusion represents your character's ability to get into and out of places that are off-limits, and also steal things. It covers proficiency in security measures and countermeasures (including the Mindscape), allowing you to hack systems, disable alarms, and so on.

Overcome: Steal things or infiltrate places, whether actual or virtual (in the Mindscape), including: bypassing locks, traps, and security measures; accessing restricted content; pickpocketing and filching; covering your tracks.

Create an Advantage: Case a location (actual or virtual) to assess its security measures and any vulnerabilities; examine similar intrusion attempts to understand how they succeeded (or failed), and discover any evidence left behind.

STUNTS

✦ ***Always a Way Out***
Gain a +2 create an advantage bonus when trying to escape from a location.

✦ ***Cultural Intrusion***
You're expert at assessing cultures for weaknesses or cultural defences, perhaps advising SCI Force or other agencies in cultural operations. Use Intrusion to take culture actions (see **Chapter 17: Cultures**).

✦ ***Hacker***
Gain a +2 bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions when hacking the Mindscape, exploiting the Mind-

scape's own loopholes rather than reprogramming it (see "Mindscape Engineer" on page 99), as well as aggressively mining another person's halo for information or to disrupt it (page 186).

✦ ***Security Specialist***
Spend a small amount of time reinforcing security and creating counter-intrusion measures on a particular security system, like a lock, trap, or Mindscape restricted content node, virtuality, or imposality (page 191). Whenever someone tries to overcome your security, you provide active resistance with your own Intrusion skill roll (even if you're not present).

✦ ***Super Hacker***
Requires Hacker and a Special Operations / Black Chip
Gain a +2 bonus to attack actions when hacking the Mindscape, including attacking sentinels (page 191) and hacking another person's halo to steal abilities or inflict damage (page 187).

✦ ***Talk the Talk***
Use Intrusion instead of Contacts when dealing with other intrusion specialists.

✦ ***You're Never Safe***
Use Intrusion to make mental attacks and create advantages against a target, by staging your intrusion attempt in such a way as to shatter their confidence in their security.

Investigate

Investigate represents your ability to find things out using effort and examination. It operates in actual and virtual environments: you can use Investigate to discover things in the Mindscape, interpreting results from devices and enhancements like hand scanners and personal sensor arrays — an activity known as **sensorview** (page 189).

Overcome: Find information that's difficult to uncover; analyse a real or virtual crime scene for clues, search a cluttered cargo bay for contraband, ascertain an individual's location using the Mindscape, sift through an unlocked virtuality of restricted content for a thoughtcast that makes everything make sense. Racing against the clock to collect evidence or find a bomb before disaster strikes is a classic Investigate contest (page 148).

Create an Advantage: Find out almost anything about anyone or any location or object, as long as you take the time, creating advantages about almost anything your character could reasonably unearth, including: eavesdropping on a conversation, looking for clues at a crime scene, examining Mindscape records, verifying the truth of information, conducting surveillance, interpreting hand scanner and PSA results, and researching a cover story.

STUNTS

✦ ***Eavesdropper***
When creating an advantage using Investigate by eavesdropping on a conversation, you discover or create one additional aspect. You don't get an extra free invoke.

✦ ***Lie to Me***
Use Investigate instead of Empathy to defend against Deceive. What others discover through gut feeling and intuition, you learn through careful observation of micro-expressions.

✦ ***Sensor Analysis***
Use sensorview and Investigate for active sensing construct actions (page 215).

✦ ***The Power of Deduction***
Once per scene, spend a fate point on an Investigate roll to discover or create one aspect *per shift* on the scene or person you're observing. You only receive one free invoke from this roll.

✦ ***Track FTL***
Use Investigate to calculate a starship's destination or system of origin. This is a create an advantage action with a difficulty of Average (+1), plus 1 per additional ship concerned (the jump wake becomes increasingly complex and difficult to read). You must first have detected the jump wake to use this stunt (page 228), and must be using a starship's active sensors.

✦ ***Truth Scan***
Requires a Special Operations / Black Chip
Use a target's Mindscape implant as a polygraph, using Investigate instead of Empathy to determine if they're lying. If you succeed with style, you may also create an advantage representing the truth the target is attempting to mask.

Knowledge

Knowledge represents your ability to know or remember facts — your general education and knowledge, and your ability to access exomemories in the Mindscape (page 188). It doesn't cover *understanding* that information, or apply-

ing it practically, which are governed by the Science and Technical skills.

Overcome: Apply what you know to achieve a goal, like identifying a public figure, or recalling the key features of Lowhigh Infraspeech (page 50); determine whether your character knows the answer to a difficult, usually non-scientific, question, where tension exists in not knowing the answer.

Create an Advantage: To know a detail or obscure bit of information about a topic, or add one to the setting, perhaps as an aspect.

STUNTS

✦ ***Appraise***

You're familiar with the value of things, either in terms of currencies such as Commonality credits (page 29) or their resource exchange value in the Commonality Core. Gain a +2 bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions related to an item's value, including buying and selling cargoes (page 442) if you have the Starship Trader stunt (page 96).

✦ ***I Know That!***

You have excellent general knowledge, and exomemory routines constantly trawling the Mindscape. For a fate point, use Knowledge in place of **any other skill** (including Science!) for one roll or exchange, as long as you can justify having knowledge of what you're attempting (usually exomemory itself is sufficient justification).

✦ ***Shield of Logic***

Use Knowledge to defend against Provoke, as long as you can justify your ability to overcome your emotional response through logic and ratiocination.

✦ ***Specialist***

Choose a non-scientific field of knowledge like: trade routes, public figures, starship classes, legends, superstitions, a particular culture or subculture, Commonality customs, or political affairs. Gain a +2 to all related Knowledge rolls.

✦ ***Survival***

You can survive in hostile environments restricted only by your cultural context. Gain a +2 bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions relating to surviving in those environments. Your actions must be at least possible; you can't live off the land in an airless asteroid belt, for example (unless you're a Hydragand-Dezimeer — page 47).

The Knowledge, Science, and Technical Skills

The Knowledge, Science, and Technical skills deal with information in different ways. Knowledge represents what you know; the things you remember, the results of your education. Science represents what you can understand or figure out; your competence with the scientific method. Technical represents your ability to apply that knowledge in concrete terms: to make or repair things.

For example, when dealing with a foreign language:

- ***Knowledge** says: "I know how to speak this language."*
- ***Science** says: "I can try to decipher this unknown tongue."*
- ***Technical** says: "I can try to build a translation device."*

Melee Combat

Melee Combat represents your ability to fight at close-quarters (within the same **zone**) using weapons. For the unarmed counterpart, see Unarmed Combat (page 100); for the ranged counterpart, see Ranged Combat (page 93).

Overcome: Show off your melee weapons prowess in a contest or demonstration; participate in a regulated bout or sport fighting.

Create an Advantage: Perform strikes to stun, dirty moves, attempts to trip or disarm, and so on; or assess another combatant's fighting style, spotting strengths and weaknesses you can exploit. See page 157 for examples.

Attack: Make physical attack actions with melee weapons. You must be in the same **zone** (page 151) as your opponent.

Defend: Defend against attack or create advantage actions made with Melee Combat or Unarmed Combat, or prevent an action by violently interposing yourself. You can't use Melee Combat to defend against Ranged Combat attacks unless you have a stunt like Blaster Bolt Defence (below).



STUNTS

✦ ***Archaic Melee Weapons***
You specialise in melee weapons your culture no longer uses: swords, axes, spears, maces, and elaborate martial arts weapons. Gain a +2 bonus to attack actions with these weapons.

✦ ***Backup Weapon***
Whenever an opponent is about to create a *Disarmed*-type advantage against you, spend a fate point to declare you have a backup weapon. Instead of a situation aspect, your opponent gets a boost instead, representing the momentary distraction you suffer having to switch.

✦ ***Blaster Bolt Defence***
You have at least a basic energy blade or similar melee weapon (page 131), and the expertise to use it. As well as normal attacks, you may use Melee Combat with your energy blade to defend against attacks from ranged blaster weapons (page 126) by "deflecting" the blaster bolt. This can be combined with the Riposte stunt (below).

✦ ***Heavy Hitter***
When you succeed with style on a Melee Combat attack action and reduce the shifts by one to gain a boost (page 68), gain a full situation aspect with a free invoke instead.

✦ ***Hurled Weapon***
You may throw melee weapons into adjacent zones and make Melee Combat actions against targets there. You incur a *Disarmed* situation aspect, but no one gets to invoke it for free.

✦ ***Killing Stroke***
Once per scene, when you force an opponent to take a consequence, spend a fate point to increase its severity (mild becomes moderate, moderate becomes severe). If your opponent was already going to take a severe consequence, he must either take a severe consequence **and** a second consequence, or be **taken out** (page 156).

✦ ***Lightning Attack***
Requires Mindscape Implant or Nanocells
Use technopsi to manipulate the plasma containment field of an energy sword or mace; this stunt gives you at least a basic version of one of these weapons. The field moves — and therefore attacks and defends — extremely quickly, independent of your physical reactions. Gain a +2 bonus to Melee Combat attack and defend actions with the weapon. You must be connected to the Mindscape or employ nanocells (page 119) to use this stunt.

✦ ***Riposte***
If you succeed with style on your Melee Combat defend action, you may inflict a 2-shift hit rather than receive a boost.

Notice

Notice represents overall perception, the ability to pick out details at a glance. It also operates in the Mindscape, and allows you to spot things using **sensorview** (page 189) with enhancements, hand scanners, PSAs, and so on. It's quick compared to Investigate, requiring less effort, although the detail it provides is often more superficial.

Overcome: Notice something unusual, hear a faint sound, detect unusual behaviour in the Mindscape, spot the telltale shimmer of a chameleon field around that innocent-looking bystander. Often used reactively, the GM will call for a Notice roll when succeeding or failing would result in something cool happening, rather than you having to specifically try and notice things left, right and centre.

Create an Advantage: Spot details that stand out in a crowd, find a *Handy Escape Route* through an explosion-filled space battle; notice external details about people (use Empathy for internal details), either as existing or new aspects. A Notice roll could say you spot *A Patch of Turbulence* in your sensorview, which could cause your pursuer's grav flyer to veer out of control.

Defend: Defend against Stealth attempts to ambush you, or discover you're being observed.

STUNTS

✦ ***Body Language Reader***
Use Notice instead of Empathy to learn a target's aspects through observation.

✦ ***Danger Sense***
You have an uncanny sense for danger, and your Notice skill is unaffected by environmental conditions like total concealment, darkness, or sensory impairments in situations where someone or something intends to harm you.

✦ ***Eye for Detail***
With concentration and using Mindscape direct perception feeds and memories and exomemories (page 188), you can recall any place you've been to in detail, sometimes noticing things you didn't before. For a fate point, make a Notice (or sometimes Investigate) roll to look over a place, no matter how long ago you left.

✦ ***Keen Hearing***
Gain a +2 on Notice rolls to detect sounds.

✦ ***Reactive Shot***
Use Notice instead of Ranged Combat to pop off quick, reactive shots with a ranged weapon that don't involve a lot of aiming. You can't definitively identify the target you're shooting when you use this stunt. For example, you can shoot the figure you see lurking in the shadows, but you can't find out if it's a friend or foe until you've made the shot.

✦ ***Sensor Scan***
Use sensorview and Notice for passive sensing construct actions (page 204).

Physique

Physique represents raw strength and endurance. It also provides you with additional physical stress boxes and consequences.

Overcome: Take actions requiring brute force, often to overcome a situation aspect on a zone (page 151) or physical obstructions like locked doors or prison bars; you may need a contest (page 148) to smash, break, or bypass a reinforced obstruction. Physique is also used for arm-wrestling matches and tests of strength, marathons, stamina tests, resisting poisons or diseases, or other endurance-based contests or challenges.

Create an Advantage: Create advantages in physical conflicts, often related to wrestling and grappling such as *Pinned* or *Arm-Lock*; or discover a target's physical weaknesses — your grapple may tell you your opponent has a *Wrenched Shoulder*, etc.

Attack: Physique isn't used for attack actions — see Unarmed Combat (page 100) instead.

Defend: Defend against an opponent's movement if you're blocking access. Physique isn't used to defend against attack actions — see Unarmed Combat (page 100).

Special: Physique gives you additional physical stress boxes and consequence slots (page 153). Average (+1) or Fair (+2) Physique gives you a 3-point stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box; and Superb (+5) Physique and above gives you an additional mild consequence slot as well as the 3-point and 4-point stress boxes.

STUNTS

✦ ***Grappler***
Gain a +2 bonus to Physique create an advantage actions when wrestling or grappling.

✦ ***Take the Blow***
Use Physique to defend against Melee Combat or Unarmed Combat attacks made with punches, kicks, or bashing weapons. You always take 1 point of physical stress damage on a tie.

✦ ***Tough As Nails***
Once per session, pay a fate point to reduce a moderate physical consequence to a mild physical consequence, or erase a mild physical consequence completely.

Pilot

Pilot represents navigating vessels in a three-dimensional environment, like aircraft, grav vehicles, submarine vessels, and starships, including remote Mindscape control

THE PULSE DRAGON PHENOMENON

X-MemCore

So far in the Expansionary Era any planeship emerging from 2-space into deep interstellar space (ie outside a solar system's gravity well) has been destroyed. Emergency transmissions have suggested such ships were destroyed by vast interstellar life forms or energy fields, since dubbed ***Pulse Dragons****. Despite the Commonality's best efforts, the true nature of the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon remains unknown.*

of drones (page 139). For vehicles in a two-dimensional environment, like ground cars or surface water vessels, use the Drive skill (page 86).

Overcome: Use Pilot like Athletics or Drive to manoeuvre in a starship, grav flyer, etc, including in difficult conditions like conflicts, turbulent atmospheres, debris-filled space battles, or in restricted spaces or when you want to do impressive stunts. Pilot is also used for races and chases using the contest rules (page 148).

Create an Advantage: Determine the best navigation route in a starship or other vessel, including route aspects like *Bypass the Bearclaw Nebula* or *Optimised 2-Space Route*. Use Athletics or Drive advantages modified for flyers or starships, including superior positioning, putting your opponent in a bad spot, or perilous or fancy manoeuvres (*Precipitous Orbital Entry*).

Attack: Ram another vessel; you also take any stress damage you inflict.

Defend: Avoid damage in a physical conflict, prevent people creating advantages against you, or stop someone getting past you in a vessel.

STUNTS

✦ ***Archaic Vessels***
You're skilled in pre-industrial three-dimensional navigation vessels like gliders, balloons, ornithopters, submersibles, and riding animals operating in aerial or submarine environments. This requires a specific planetary environment, perhaps a waterworld of aquatic hominids, or a dense atmosphere world where pre-industrial flight is a possibility. Depending on your cultural context (ie if you grew up on such a world), this may be your default context for the Pilot skill anyway.

✦ ***On Your Tail***
Gain a +2 Pilot bonus when pursuing or shaking another vessel.

✦ ***Pedal to the Metal***
You can coax more speed out of your vessel than normally possible. In a contest where speed is the primary factor (like a chase or race), a tie on your Pilot roll is considered a success.

✦ ***Ramming Speed!***
Ignore two stress points of damage when ramming another vessel; if you ram and hit for four stress damage, you only take two yourself.

✦ ***Starship Pilot***
Use your Pilot skill for construct actions (page 215) like manoeuvres, evasion, etc, including controlling space combat drones. If you have a construct extra, you receive a teamwork bonus (page 159) if your construct extra has an Average (+1) Manoeuvre skill or better.

Provoke

Provoke represents your ability to elicit negative emotional responses from others — inspiring fear, anger, shame. You need justification from your situation, an aspect, an advantage you've created with a skill like Rapport or Deceive, or because you've learned your target's aspects (using, say, Empathy). Your target must feel emotion — basic mechanicals (page 43) and other automata can't be provoked, and usually can't provoke you either.

Overcome: Get someone to do what you want in an emotionally uncontrolled way; intimidating someone for information, annoying them so they lash out, scaring them into fleeing, often against minor NPCs (page 181) or when it isn't worthwhile to play out the details. Against PCs or important NPCs, you'll probably use the contest rules. Targets oppose with Will.

Create an Advantage: Create advantages representing momentary emotional states in your target like *Enraged*, *Shocked*, or *Hesitant*. It's opposed with Will.

Attack: Inflict emotional harm, cowing or angering your target, making them lose their composure. Your relationship to the target and your circumstances affect whether you can make this kind of attack.

STUNTS

✦ ***Armour of Fear***
Use Provoke to defend against Melee Combat and Unarmed Combat attacks until the first time you take damage. You can force your opponents to hesitate, but once the first attacker shows you're not immune, your advantage vanishes.

✦ ***Hi-Threat Manoeuvre***
Use Provoke against constructs (page 196), as long as you're piloting a construct yourself.

✦ ***Mindscape Warrior***
You can make yourself or any Mindscape sentinels you control appear as monstrous, techno-synthetic warriors inside the Mindscape, giving you a +2 bonus to mental stress attacks in the Mindscape.

✦ ***Okay, Fine!***
Use Provoke instead of Empathy to learn a target's aspects by bullying them until they reveal one. The target defends with Will. If the GM thinks you could learn a particular aspect this way anyway, then you gain a +2 bonus.

✦ ***Provoke Violence***
Create an advantage on an opponent using Provoke, and use your free invoke to become the target of that opponent's next relevant action, drawing its attention from another target.

✦ ***Torturer***
Gain a +2 bonus to Provoke attacks, as long as you have torture implements which are effective against your target.

Ranged Combat

Ranged Combat represents your ability to use ranged weapons like firearms, blaster weapons, grenade launchers, and heavier weaponry, either in conflicts or against unresisting targets (like locks on doors and recalcitrant machinery…). It's the ranged counterpart of the Melee Combat skill (page 89).

Overcome: Show off your marksmanship in a contest or demonstration or participate in a regulated sport.

Create an Advantage: Perform special moves like trick shots, forcing someone to keep their head down under heavy fire, disarming a target, or impairing a vehicle. Also create advantages based on your knowledge of ranged weaponry (like placing a *Delicate Targeting Mechanism* aspect on an opponent's null rifle).

Attack: Make physical attacks with ranged weapons **up to one or more zones away** (page 151).

Defend: Usually you don't use Ranged Combat for defend actions — instead, you use Athletics to get out of the way of ranged weapon attacks. However, you can use Ranged Combat to lay down covering fire, which may constitute a defend action for your allies or to oppose someone else's movement action (although it could easily also be an advantage such as *Covering Fire* or *Hail of Blaster Bolts*).

STUNTS

✦ ***Archaic Ranged Weapons***
You specialise in ranged weapons your culture no longer uses: bows, spears, black powder firearms. Gain a +2 bonus to attack actions with these weapons.

✦ ***Called Shot***
During a conflict, spend a fate point and declare a specific condition you want to inflict on your target, like *Shot in the Leg*. If you succeed, you do normal stress damage and also inflict the condition on them as a situation aspect.

✦ ***Coolness Under Fire***
Your character keeps his cool in firefights, remaining aware of his defensive situation. Use Ranged Combat to defend against ranged physical attacks.

✦ ***Covering Fire***
Pin down opponents with a withering hail of gunfire. On a successful Ranged Combat attack action with a fully automatic weapon, you also create Fair (+2) opposition against movement actions in the affected zone until your next turn. Usually this kind of interference would require a separate create an advantage action, but this stunt provides it in addition to the normal result of your attack.

✦ ***Gunnery***
You're skilled with starship weaponry like gravity cannon and torsion field projectors. Use Ranged Combat for construct actions (page 215).

✦ ***Heavy Weapons Specialist***
Gain a +2 bonus on attack actions with heavy weapons (page 126).

✦ ***Quick on the Draw***
Use Ranged Combat instead of Notice for determining initiative in physical conflicts where shooting quickly is a deciding factor.

✦ ***Uncanny Accuracy***
Once per conflict, gain an additional free invoke on an advantage you create when taking time aiming or lining up a shot.

Rapport

Rapport represents making positive connections to people and eliciting positive reactions. It's the skill of being liked and trusted.

Overcome: Charm or inspire others or establish a good relationship; charm your way past a sentinel, convince the Pansectorate administrator to take you into their confidence, or become the man of the hour at the starport bar. For minor NPCs this is an overcome action, but for major NPCs or PCs it may be a contest.

Create an Advantage: Create a positive mood on a target or scene, get someone to confide in you out of genuine trust, or pep talk someone into having *Elevated Confidence*, stir a crowd into a *Joyful Fervour*, or make someone *Talkative* or *Helpful*.

Defend: Defend against attempts to sully your reputation, sour a mood you've created, or make you look bad in front of others.

STUNTS

✦ ***Best Foot Forward***
Twice per session, you may turn a boost you receive on a Rapport roll into a situation aspect with a free invoke instead.

✦ ***Broker***
Use Rapport to undertake commercial construct negotiations, including selling starship cargoes (page 442).

✦ ***Commander-in-Chief***
You're a natural leader, capable of commanding thousands. Use Rapport for organisation actions relating to armies, fleets, and unit and mass combat actions (page 277).

✦ ***Cultural Liaison***
Your diplomacy skill extends to swaying entire cultures; use Rapport for culture actions (page 304).

✦ ***Demagogue***
Gain a +2 Rapport bonus when communicating before a large audience. This is an area effect against NPCs or PCs.

✦ ***Drinks for All My Friends!***
Requires Streetwise
On a successful overcome action with Streetwise, create an advantage describing how the general attitude turns in your favour, usable for the rest of the scene. Anyone trying to remove this aspect faces a Fair (+2) opposition.

✦ ***Haggle***
If your Resources skill is no lower than 2 points below the opposition, use Rapport instead of Resources to acquire things from outlets and individual merchants.

✦ ***Minions***
Once per session, when using Rapport to command a minor NPC group (page 182), you may "attach" them to yourself for the rest of the scene, so that they stand between you and damage. Any hits done to you fill their stress boxes first, and your attacks receive a teamwork bonus based on the number of minions attached.

✦ ***Negotiator***
You're skilled in trade and management negotiations; use Rapport for organisation actions (page 275).

✦ ***Overseer***
You command groups to accomplish tasks, whether military, naval, or workers on large-scale projects. Once per scene, make an overcome action against an opposition representing the difficulty of the command situation; shifts generated become a bonus point pool which those you are commanding may use in actions you've commanded them to do (attacking, moving, etc).

Passive opposition is usually Average (+1), but may increase if the command situation is tough; active opposition may be the Will of an unwilling group. If you also have the Commander-in-Chief stunt, you may use this in army and fleet conflicts (page 277).

✦ ***Performance***
Gain a +2 bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions for artistic performances, speeches, and so on, where influencing the audience is key.

✦ ***Popular***
If you're in an area where you're popular and well-liked, use Rapport instead of Contacts. You may establish your popularity by spending a fate point to declare a story detail, or because of prior justification.

✦ ***Streetwise***
Gain a +2 bonus to overcome actions when mixing with subcultures "on the street".

Resources

Resources represents your material wealth or access to resources, and your ability to apply it. Out among the Fringe Worlds, this may be actual monetary wealth (see "Wealth in the Second Age of Space" on page 29); towards the Core, where money is little used, this is more a measure of a character's influence and ability to commandeer resources, equipment, and facilities as required.

Overcome: Avoid or bypass a problem when throwing money at it will help, including bribery, and acquiring rare or expensive items; auctions and bidding wars can be challenges and contests. You can also take a few hours to spend or reallocate resources to help others recover from mild credit consequences; more serious consequences require more advanced resource allocation facilities (page 155).

Create an Advantage: Acquire or "buy" things, or declare you have an item to hand or can quickly acquire it, giving you an aspect representing the object. See page 125 for more on obtaining equipment during play. Also, grease the wheels and make people more friendly, whether using bribery (*I Scratch Your Back* . . .) or just buying drinks.

For example: Max needs an EVA harness for a secret attempt on an orbiting Mindscape node, but doesn't want to spend advancements. He succeeds at a Resources roll against a Fair (+2) passive opposition, and gets EVA Harness *as an advantage for the next scene.*

Attack: Make attacks in credit conflicts (page 150).

Defend: Defend in credit conflicts (page 150).

Special: Resources gives you additional credit stress boxes and consequence slots (page 153). Average (+1) or Fair (+2) Resources gives you a 3-point stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box; and Superb (+5) Resources and above gives you an additional mild consequence slot as well as the 3-point and 4-point stress boxes.

Depleting Resources

Some **Mindjammer** *games focus on wealth, resources, and finance very little, and you may simply assume characters have whatever gear they need for the tasks at hand. Other games — for example, involving New Traders, corporacies, or situations where scarcity is suddenly a significant part of the adventure — put finance, wealth, and commerce in a position of importance.*

When you draw on your Resources a great deal, you may incur the following disadvantages:

- *When you fail a Resources roll to acquire something, you may make up the difference by taking credit stress damage (page 143).*
- *In appropriate circumstances, you may burn a point of credit stress to give yourself a bonus on an appropriate skill check (page 142).*
- *If you get in a credit conflict (page 153), you may find yourself taking credit stress and consequences.*

STUNTS

✦ ***Bail Out***

You're an expert in Commonality resource allocation; use Resources to remove moderate and serious credit consequences (page 155).

✦ ***Commonality Resource Allocation***

You're connected to Commonality resource and supply chains. Twice per session, gain a boost representing increased resource availability.

✦ ***Grease the Wheels***

You're expert at diplomatically giving people money and gifts to keep the wheels in motion. Use Resources instead of Bureaucracy for actions involving bribery.

✦ ***I'm Good for It***

Use Resources instead of Rapport when persuading or influencing someone using your wealth.

✦ ***Money Is Power***

You leverage your credit-worthiness, resource chains, and supply connections to influence corporations and large groups. Use your Resources skill for organisation actions (page 275).

✦ ***Savvy Investor***

Gain an additional free invoke when you create Resources advantages describing a return on an investment you made in a previous session.

✦ ***Starship Trader***
You have access to a starship with a cargo hold, and understand the ins and outs of interstellar commerce. Use your Resources skill for construct actions (page 215), including cargo trading (page 442).

Science

Science represents your understanding of and competence with the scientific method, as opposed to "knowing things" represented by the Knowledge skill or the hands-on manufacturing and repairing ability of the Technical skill. It overlaps with the Investigate skill, but where Investigate represents finding and gathering data, Science represents figuring out what it means. If you want to make scientific breakthroughs and work with complex, esoteric formulae, this is the skill you need.

Overcome: Understand or figure out an answer to a scientific question, such as identifying the cause of a star's sudden instability, devising a formula for a poison antidote, cracking a code, or deciphering an ancient inscription on a Predecessor ruin. Determine whether your character understands or can figure out a difficult, scientific problem, where tension exists in not working out the answer.

Create an Advantage: Research and figure out a detail or obscure piece of information, or add one to the setting.

STUNTS

✦ ***Polymath***
Your scientific knowledge spans many fields, and you unite it in a single object of study, using exomemory and Mind-

Science and Tech Index

Tech index affects your Science skill rolls in two ways.

First, the technological complexity of the scientific problem modifies the opposition you face, as shown on page 116. If you're facing a genurgy problem (a T6 (+1) technology), the opposition is increased *by +1; if you're facing a 3-space problem (a T10 (+5) problem, it's increased by +5. At the same time, the opposition is increased by +1 for every tech index you are below the tech index of the problem, or* decreased *by -1 for every tech index you are above. You add your Science skill to your roll as normal.*

Example 1: you're a T9 scientist with a Good (+3) Science skill facing a Great (+4) complexity T10 science problem — something requiring you to take the expert theories you know and extrapolate from them in innovative ways. The opposition is Great (+4), modified by +5 for being a T10 problem, and +1 for the one level of difference between your T9 tech index and the T10 tech index of the problem — a total opposition of +10! You roll your Good (+3) Science skill as normal; it's clear you're going to need tools, teamwork, or some hefty aspects to get near the problem.

Example 2: you're a T10 scientist with a Good (+3) Science skill trying to solve a T9 science problem. Let's keep the complexity Great (+4), giving us a total opposition of Great (+4), +4 for being a T9 problem, and -1 for the level of difference between your T10 tech index and the T9 tech index of the problem — a total opposition of +7.

Second, if you must rely on unfamiliar local technology or research methods in your effort, your Science rolls are penalised by the difference between your own tech index and the tech index of your environment. If you're Commonality trained (a tech index of T9 (+4)), and you're forced to research a scientific problem on a T4 (-1) Industrial Age Fringe World, you'll incur a -5 penalty to your research activities. These penalties can be avoided by having things like your own laboratory or even, in many cases, a personal Mindscape instance.

Example 3: you're a T9 scientist trying to decipher an ancient yet distantly-related hominid language on a pre-industrial (T3) Fringe World. You don't have any dedicated linguistics stunts, nor any Mindscape access; you face an opposition of, say, Good (+3) for the deciphering, modified by a massive +6 for having to rely on unfamiliar technology — likely parchment and ink! — for a final difficulty of +9.

scape enhancement to fill in the gaps. For a fate point, use Science in place of **any other skill** (including Knowledge) for one roll or exchange, as long as you can justify having scientific knowledge of the action you're attempting (exomemory may be sufficient justification).

✦ ***Ratiocinate***
You may spout bewildering scientific gobbledigook at the drop of a hat. Use Science instead of Provoke when talking to an opponent about science.

✦ ***Shield of Science***
Use Science for defend actions against Provoke, as long as you can justify your ability to overcome your emotional response through scientific refutation.

✦ ***Specialist***
Choose a scientific field like: Archaeology, Biology, Chemistry, Humanities (Art, History, etc), Physics (Astro, Quantum, etc), Planetology, Psychohistory, Psychology, Social Dynamics. Gain a +2 bonus to related Science rolls.

Stealth

Stealth represents your ability to operate unseen, whether hiding and moving without people spotting you, or without leaving traces. It includes actions in the Mindscape.

Overcome: Get past a situation requiring you to not be detected, such as sneaking past automated defences, hiding from spy drones, or avoiding leaving traces as you access Mindscape content.

Create an Advantage: Position yourself for ambushes, or avoid them; be *Like a Shadow* when sneaking past automated defences, or leave an *Anonymous Signature* when accessing a Mindscape imposality.

Defend: Foil Notice or Investigate attempts to seek you out or track you down.

STUNTS

✦ ***Ambush***
Use Stealth to make physical attacks, as long as your target is unaware of your presence.

✦ ***Face in the Crowd***
Gain a +2 bonus to Stealth rolls to lose yourself in a large crowd of physical beings.

Table 6-1: Science Roll Opposition

Complexity of Problem	Opposition
Trivial. Only roll if you're lower tech than the question.	Moderate (+0)
Application of basic theory. Most science rolls use this opposition.	Average (+1)
Extension of basic theory.	Fair (+2)
Application of expert theory. You're likely to need some help.	Good (+3)
Extension of expert theory.	Great (+4)
Application of advanced theory.	Superb (+5)
Extension of advanced theory.	Fantastic (+6)
Application of breakthrough theory.	Epic (+7)
Theoretical breakthrough, leading to a paradigm shift to the next tech index.	Legendary (+8)

✦ ***Ghost in the Machine***
Gain a +2 bonus to Stealth rolls to avoid detection in the Mindscape.

✦ ***Slippery Target***
As long as you remain in darkness or shadow, use Stealth to defend against Ranged Combat attack actions by opponents at least one zone away.

✦ ***Stealth Manoeuvre***
Make stealthy manoeuvres in vehicles and vessels — hiding, tailing surreptitiously, etc. Use Stealth instead of Drive or Pilot, as long as you're making stealthy manoeuvres. If you also have the Starship Pilot stunt (page 92), you can use this stunt for construct actions (page 215).

Technical and Tech Index

Tech index affects your Technical skill rolls in two ways.

First, the tech index of the item you're creating, maintaining, or repairing modifies the opposition you face, as indicated in ***Chapter 8: Technology****. The basic opposition is equal to either the creation or maintenance difficulty (page 178), or the severity of the consequence (page 154) in the case of a repair. If you're repairing a null pistol (a T7 (+2) device), the opposition is increased by +2; if you're manufacturing a disintegrator rifle (a T10 (+5) device), it's increased by +5. At the same time, the opposition is increased by +1 for every tech index you are below the tech index of the item, or decreased by -1 for every tech index you are above. Your Technical skill is added to your roll as normal.*

Example: you're a T4 Industrial Age technician with a Good (+3) Technical skill trying to repair a mild consequence (Fair (+2) opposition) to a T7 (+2) null pistol. The mild consequence indicates a relatively minor repair job, with an opposition of Great (+4), but the +3 for the difference in tech indices makes this a significant but possible repair for our Industrial Age technician, with a total opposition of Epic (+7).

Second, if you must rely on unfamiliar local tools for your efforts, your Technical rolls are penalised by the difference between your own tech index and the tech index of your tools. This penalty can usually be avoided by having an appropriate technical kit.

Example: you're a T9 Second Age of Space Commonality-trained technician with a Good (+3) Technical skill and the Starship Engineer stunt, trying to repair a moderate consequence (Great (+4) opposition) to your T9 starship which has crashed on a T4 Industrial Age world. The base opposition is Legendary (+8), and if you don't have the necessary tools, that will increase by +5 (the difference between your tech index and the planet's tech index) to a massive +13!

✦ ***Vanish***

Once per scene, spend a fate point to vanish while in plain sight, placing a *Vanished* situation aspect on yourself. While you're *Vanished*, opponents may not make attack actions or create advantages against you, unless they first succeed at a Notice overcome roll (basically meaning they have to give up an exchange to try). The aspect goes away as soon as you invoke it, or someone makes the overcome roll.

Technical

Technical represents your practical ability to create, maintain, and repair things, whether mechanical items, organic beings, or virtual or even cultural objects. Whereas Science enables you to make a breakthrough in scientific understanding, Technical lets you create a technological device utilising that understanding. It automatically assumes you have the tools needed for basic uses of the skill. See page 178 for more on repairing and creating devices.

Overcome: Create, maintain, repair, and even destroy devices, assuming you have the time and tools you need. Also, take at least a few minutes to perform first aid to help others recover from mild physical consequences; more serious consequences usually require medical facilities (page 99). Actions with Technical are often part of a more complex situation, making it a popular skill for challenges (page 147). For example, if you're just fixing a broken hatch, neither success nor failure is interesting — you should just succeed and move on. However, if you're trying to get the airlock to cycle while a squad of attack droids is closing to attack…

Create an Advantage: Create advantages representing features of a device, whether a useful feature or strength (*Rugged Construction, Armour-Plated*) or a vulnerability you can exploit (*Exposed Exhaust Port*, *Hasty Work*); also including quick and dirty sabotage efforts or jury-rigging of devices. You might rig a *Makeshift Grav Lift* to get to the deck above, or cause the automated defences to overheat and gain a *Warped Targeting Alignment* to make it harder to hit you.

Attack: Usually you won't use Technical for attack actions, unless you're in a conflict specifically about using devices (perhaps involving cargo handlers or trash compactors…). Usually, weapons you create with Technical will be used with other skills to attack — someone who makes a blaster still needs Ranged Combat to fire it well.

Defend: As with attack actions, usually you won't use Technical to defend, unless you're somehow using it to control a piece of machinery that you block an attack with.

STUNTS

✦ ***Always Making Useful Things***
You never have to spend a fate point to declare you have the proper tools for a job, even in extreme situations (like being imprisoned and separated from all your stuff).

✦ ***Artist***
The items you create have artistic as well as practical value. Gain a +2 bonus to create advantage actions when creating a work of art.

✦ ***Better Than New!***
When you succeed with style on an overcome action to repair an item, give it a new situation aspect (with a free invoke) reflecting the improvements you've made, instead of just a boost.

✦ ***Collateral Damage***
Use Technical to make attack actions against opponents, as long as there are devices and structures in the area that you can use to cause damage, like power conduits that could be ruptured, power plant exhaust ports that could be opened, gears that could be thrown.

✦ ***Craft***
You're trained to use Technical at a tech index lower than your own; choose a tech index from page 116. You may take this stunt multiple times.

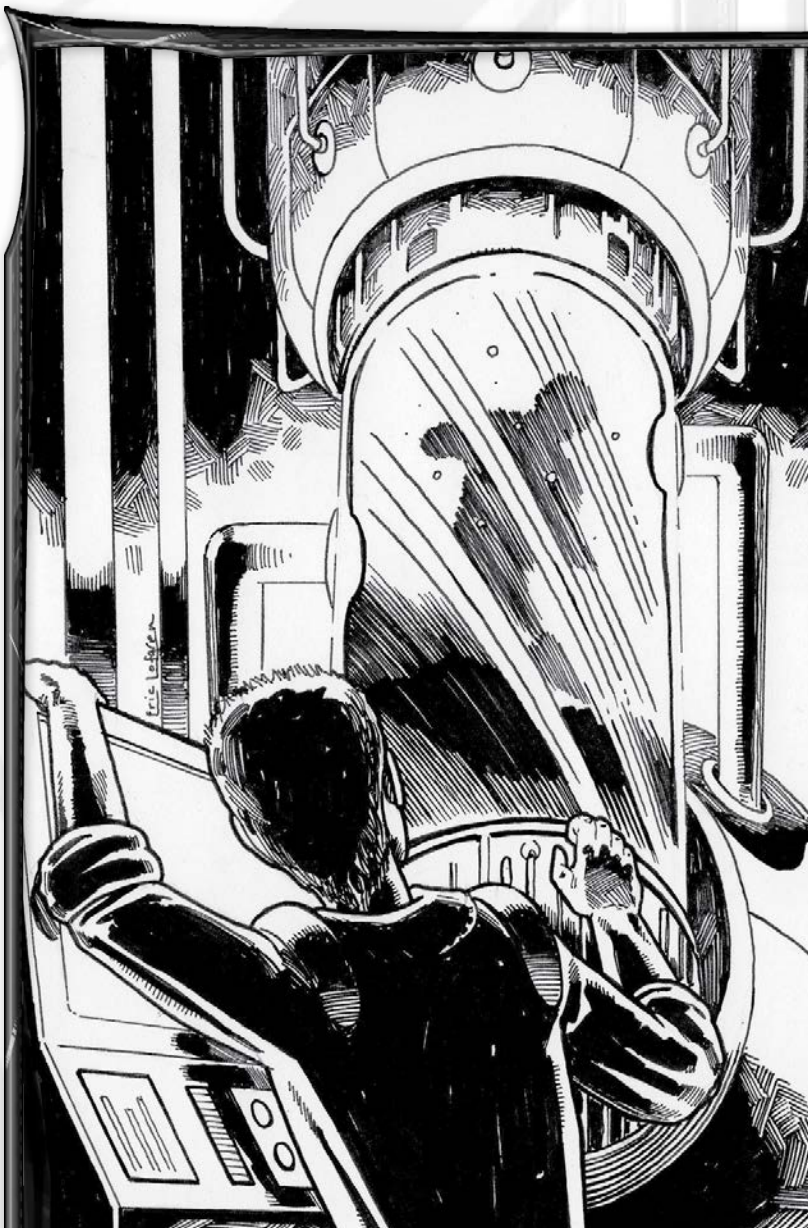
✦ ***Eidolon Engineer***
You're skilled in the creation, maintenance, and modification of eidolons, the advanced artificial personalities assembled from thanograms which inhabit synthetic bodies. Gain a +2 bonus to Technical rolls when working on eidolons; you also have access to an **eidolon rig**, allowing you to use your skill. You can also use Technical to treat **eidolon crisis** (page 44). See page 178 for more on eidolon creation.

✦ ***Genurgic Engineer***
You're skilled in the creation and implementation of genurgic mods, the advanced physical enhancements common in the Commonality (page 117). Gain a +2 bonus to Technical rolls when providing someone with a genurgic enhancement, or creating, repairing, or modifying one. A successful roll can act as a permission for another character wishing to gain an enhancement. You also have access to a genurgy lab.

✦ ***Meditech***
You're skilled in the treatment of wounds and sicknesses suffered by organic beings (including organic synthetics); gain a +2 bonus to overcome actions when treating physical consequences. You have access to medical facilities, and may treat mild, moderate, and severe consequences (page 154).

✦ ***Memetic Engineer***
You're skilled at creating, maintaining, and modifying memes (page 296). Use Technical in culture actions; you may also take a culture extra (page 297).

✦ ***Mindscape Engineer***
Requires Special Ops or Black Chip
Gain a +2 bonus to create advantage actions to modify the structure of the Mindscape, create virtualities, imposalities, and technurgy items, affect the functioning and usability of haloes (page 186), and so on. This can be actively resisted. See **Chapter 11: The Mindscape** for more.



✦ ***Miner***
Gain a +2 Technical bonus when mining ore (page 441); you have access to mining equipment.

✦ ***Push the Jump Maximum***
Requires Starship Engineer
Create bypasses and new routings to squeeze an extra jump out of a starship power plant that has exceeded its jump maximum (page 225). This is hazardous, but is sometimes the difference between life and death. Roll against passive opposition from any appropriate ship consequences (such as those incurred when exceeding the jump maximum). On a success, none of these consequences apply to the subsequent Planing roll; on a failure, the ship must take a consequence to its power plant equal to the shifts by which the roll was failed, regardless of whether the Planing roll succeeds or not.

If the jump was successful, you can try for another jump, at a +1 opposition. Further jumps can be attempted until the ship is finally overhauled or its power plant explodes and the ship is taken out (page 219).

✦ ***Starship Engineer***
You're skilled in maintaining and repairing starship systems. Use your Technical skill for construct actions, including recovery obstacles (page 220).

✦ ***Surgical Strikes***
When using Technical in a conflict involving large devices, machinery, etc, you can filter out unwanted targets from whole-zone area effect attacks without having to divide up your shifts (normally you'd need to divide your roll between your targets).

✦ ***Synthetics***
Gain a +2 bonus to overcome rolls dealing with the creation and repair of synthetics, whether organics, mechanicals, or installations. You have access to a synthetics lab.

Scenario Hook: Rogue Eidolon

An ambitious but deluded Successor State engineer has been working on an intelligent synthetic soldier using the thanograms of dead warriors. His experiments have ended in disaster, and the prototype left the eidolon rig with only Level-2 Compliance: stable and coherent, but completely psychotic.

The characters are called in to what remains of the engineer's laboratory to track down the deranged synthetic.

Unarmed Combat

Unarmed Combat represents your ability in weaponless close-quarters combat (within the same zone), including attacks made by animals using natural weapons like claws and teeth. For the armed counterpart, see Melee Combat (page 89); for the ranged counterpart, see Ranged Combat (page 93).

Overcome: Show off your martial arts prowess in a contest or demonstration; participate in a regulated sports bout.

Create an Advantage: Perform special moves like: dirty tricks, attempts to disarm or assess an opponent's fighting (or martial arts) style, or spot weaknesses in a form you can exploit. See page 157 for more examples.

Attack: Make unarmed hand-to-hand physical attack actions; you must be in the same **zone** (page 151) as your opponent.

Defend: Defend against attack or create advantage actions made with Unarmed Combat or Melee Combat, and any action where interposing yourself could prevent it from happening. You can't use Unarmed Combat to defend against Ranged Combat attacks, unless you have an enhancement such as a Defence Chip (page 120).

STUNTS

✦ ***Heavy Hitter***
When you succeed with style on an Unarmed Combat attack action and reduce the result by one to gain a boost, gain a full situation aspect with a free invoke instead.

✦ ***Killing Stroke***
Once per scene, when you force an opponent to take a consequence, spend a fate point to increase that consequence's severity (mild becomes moderate, moderate becomes severe). If your opponent was already going to take a severe consequence, he must either take a severe consequence **and** a second consequence, or be taken out.

✦ ***Martial Arts Specialist***
You specialise in martial arts, possibly a specific school or style. Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage actions when using your martial arts moves.

✦ ***Mindscape Defence***
Your mental preparedness lets you fend off sentinel attacks and related attempts to create advantages in the Mindscape. Gain a +2 bonus when using Unarmed Combat to defend against Mindscape sentinels.

Will

Will represents your mental fortitude, in the same way that Physique represents your physical fortitude. It's a key skill for resisting mental attacks, and for using intrusive, aggressive, or dominating technopsi abilities via the Mindscape.

Overcome: Solve puzzles and riddles or decipher codes, or overcome obstacles where it's a matter of time, will power, and brute mental force; contests include examinations or difficult games like chess, or the aggressive use of technopsi abilities.

Create an Advantage: Gain advantages from states of deep concentration or focus.

Attack: Make technopsi attack actions using the corresponding stunts below (page 189).

Defend: Defend against mental attacks from Provoke, representing your control over your reactions, or defend against technopsi attacks (see below).

Special: Will gives you additional mental stress boxes and consequence slots (page 153). Average (+1) or Fair (+2) Will gives you a 3-point stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box; and Superb (+5) Will and above gives you an additional mild consequence slot as well as the 3-point and 4-point stress boxes.

STUNTS

✦ ***Domination***

Requires Probe, Special Ops or Black Chip

Initiate a Will vs Will technopsi contest against a Mindscape-connected being; if you gain a victory point, you may control the target's physical actions for that exchange. If you win the contest, you gain control of the target for the rest of the scene; if the target wins the contest, it breaks your control and you may not try again this scene.

Dominated targets move clumsily and jerkily, and there's no fine control; you can't dominate someone to fly a starship or perform an operation, for example. However, domination **is** effective against sentient starships…

✦ ***Fortress of the Will***

Gain a +2 Will bonus to defend against Provoke and Will attacks to deal mental stress or control your actions. If you have a special ops or black chip, this includes technopsi attacks.

✦ ***Hard Boiled***

Once per session, ignore a mild or moderate consequence for the rest of the scene; it can't be compelled against you or invoked by your opponents. At the end of the scene, the consequence returns, much worse: a mild consequence becomes moderate; and a moderate consequence becomes severe.

✦ ***Illusion***

Requires Special Ops or Black Chip

Gain a +2 Will bonus to use technopsi in create advantage actions to create images in a target's mind or optic nerve. This can be resisted using Will.

✦ ***Indomitable***

Gain a +2 bonus to defend against Provoke attacks related to intimidation and fear.

✦ ***Mindburn***

Requires Special Ops or Black Chip

The classic and much-feared Mindscape mental attack; use Will to make attack actions causing mental stress against another target in the Mindscape, sending waves of overwhelming Mindscape routines burning into the target's Mindscape implant and eventually irrevocably burning their brain. Mindburn may also be used to disrupt halo abilities (page 187).

✦ ***Probe***

Requires Special Ops or Black Chip

Use technopsi to interface directly with an opponent's Mindscape implant and perceive his surface thoughts. Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage actions to discern the surface thoughts of a target. If you succeed with style, you gain two aspects; one for the target's surface thoughts, and one for any thoughts the target is trying to suppress.

✦ ***Sleep When You're Dead***

Use Will instead of Physique to resist fatigue, exhaustion, or sleep deprivation.

✦ ***Virtualisation***

Requires Special Ops or Black Chip

A specialised technopsi effect similar to Mindscape engineering (page 99); **for a fate point**, you can make create advantage actions to "edit" or "rewrite" the Mindscape environment, creating aspects like *Confusing Static*, *Kabalos Loop*, *Logic Trap*, etc. In imposalities, virtualisation is resisted with the active opposition of its creator.

CHAPTER SEVEN
EXTRAS

"With a thought, Jackson Stark enhanced his virtual vision overlay, diminishing the smoke-filled chaos into a fine blue-green lattice with red tactical markers. His disintegrator rifle chattered back advice and commented on the field disposition — the walker was clearly a custom model and likely had unexpected upgrades, but its frame was a polymer base reinforced with transzanthrian alloys — pretty much standard planeship hull metal. Dizzy could burn through that no trouble."

WHAT ARE EXTRAS?

An **extra** is an extension to your character. It goes on your character sheet, but represents abilities you wouldn't normally be capable of, and which may be external to your character. At its simplest, an extra can be a genurgic enhancement or a special item of equipment; more complex extras can be suites of skills, aspects, and stunts you gain because you belong to an organisation or starship crew. The key point is that an extra is mechanically **part of your character**: its abilities usually sit on your character sheet and are controlled by you. NPCs can have extras like PCs.

Extras are an intrinsic part of ***Mindjammer***, and the guidelines below are used throughout the chapters which follow. Extras are used for:

- **Your halo:** The enhancements and abilities you use via your Mindscape implant (page 186).
- **Enhancements:** Genurgic, mechanical, or organic modifications giving you special abilities (page 116). *Example: Mindscape Implant, Skill Chip*.
- **Genotype extras:** Natural abilities you gain from your genotype (page 400). *Example: Amphibious, Natural Armour*.
- **Hypertech:** Technological devices giving you extra abilities (page 125). *Example: Disintegrator Rifle, Autodoc*.
- **Vehicles and vessels:** Transport giving you abilities other than just driving or flying places (page 139). *Example: Mindjammer Starship, All-Terrain Vehicle.*
- **Organisations and cultures** which your character can control or influence (page 267 and 297). *Example: SCI Force, the Commonality Culture*.

Extras usually require a **permission** or **cost**. You may have to spend skill points, stunts, or aspects; or belong to a tech index, occupation, or genotype; or have a specific aspect.

The Fate Fractal

Up to now we've focussed on creating and describing characters. Before we go further, here's something crucial you should know:

In* Mindjammer, *you can treat anything like a character. Whether it's a starship, organisation, solar storm or alien monstrosity, anything can have aspects, skills, stunts, stress tracks, and consequences.

*This is called the **Fate Fractal**, and you've already seen a few hints about it earlier, when you gave your* **Mindjammer** *game its own aspects, or placed situation aspects on the environment. We use the Fate Fractal extensively from here on in.*

Buying Extras

When creating your character, you get an **extras budget** — a number of skill points, stunts, and aspects to spend on extras. You can also use your character's own skills, stunts, and aspects for extras if you want.

Mindjammer provides many ready-made extras. You don't have to use these; if you have an idea for an item, enhancement, or organisation that's not covered here, you can create it yourself.

When creating a new extra, think about the following:

- What element of the ***Mindjammer*** setting do you want to make into an extra?
- What do you want it to do?
- What character elements (skills, stunts, etc) do you need to express its capabilities?
- What costs or permissions should be required?

Extras can use some or all of the following abilities.

Extras As Aspects

Many extras use aspects as permissions: a character may need a certain aspect before he can buy an extra's abilities (skills, stunts, aspects). Maybe he was born with some trait, or has obtained a certain status. Alternatively, the extra might itself provide an aspect for the character to buy.

A special ops chip (page 124) is a restricted access version of the Mindscape implant, available only to characters from certain occupations (Culture Agent, etc). It takes the form of an aspect, costing a character 1 aspect slot.

Extras As Stunts

Many extras comprise one or more stunts; you may have to buy all of them, or just those you want.

The Shell Plating genurgic mod (page 119) costs 1 stunt to acquire, giving you an armour:2 rating.

SHIFT RATINGS

Many extras — particularly those used as weapons and armour — provide **shift ratings**. These are bonuses which add shifts to your dice roll result **after that dice roll has already succeeded**. Although most are used in physical conflicts, they can also apply to mental, social, and even credit conflicts.

A **weapon rating** adds to the physical stress damage of a successful hit with that weapon. A weapon with a weapon:2 rating does 2 more points of stress than it normally would **on a successful hit**, including ties (technically a 0 stress hit). Weapon ratings make fights much more dangerous.

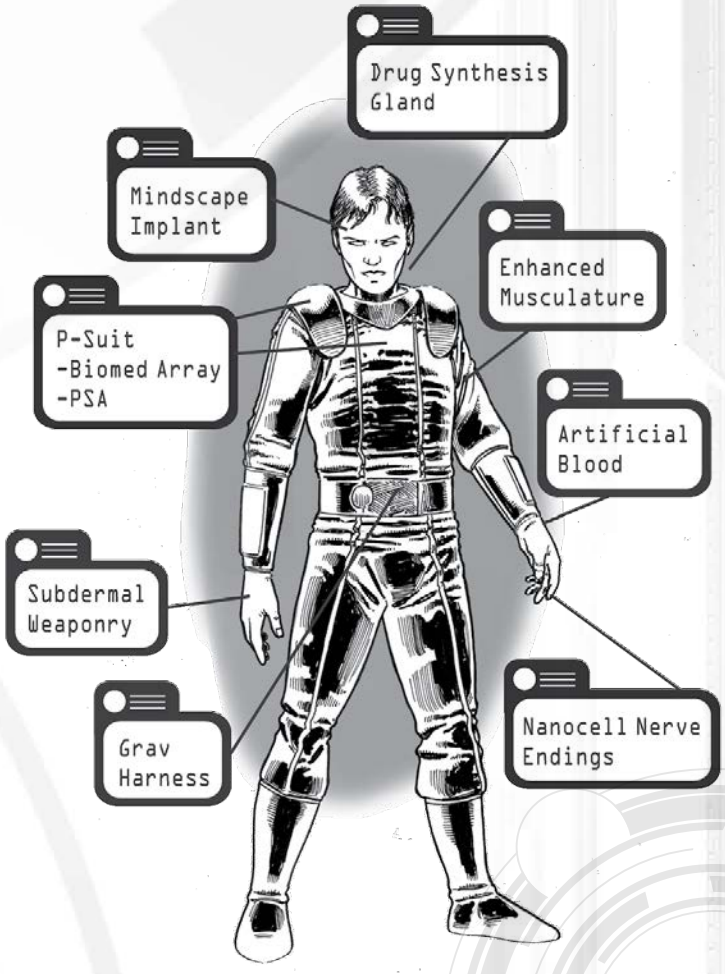
An **armour rating** reduces stress damage. Armour with an armour:2 rating subtracts 2 points of stress damage from a successful hit. If that reduces a hit to 0 stress or below, you still inflict a boost.

Shift ratings generally run from 1 to 4 or higher. The "Weapons" and "Armour" sections in **Chapter 8: Technology** provide many examples; you can also create your own.

A null rifle has a weapon:2 rating, and costs 1 stunt to buy as an extra. For the same cost, you could create a "Threatening CORESEC Uniform" extra, with a shift:2 rating on Provoke rolls made to threaten and intimidate.

Extras As Skills

Extras may also consist of **skills**, often giving you access to different **types** of skill, like construct extras (like starships) providing access to construct skills, organisation extras providing access to organisation skills, and so on.



Extras Taking Stress and Consequences

Extras may provide you with additional stress and consequences. Sometimes this is obvious; spending a stunt to upgrade your armour to compound armour lets you take an additional mild consequence (representing damage to the armour). Sometimes it's more subtle. For example, taking a construct (like a starship) or organisation extra lets you act **as a construct or organisation** against other constructs or organisations; because your extra is acting at a different **scale** (page 174) and / or in a different type of conflict than you (ie, against other constructs or organisations), it automatically has its own appropriate stress tracks and three consequences.

Characters with extras can also use their own stress tracks and consequences instead of those of their extras.

Max has the Rosemary Princess *starship as a construct extra. It gives him several construct skills to use when interacting with other constructs, but additionally gives him two stress tracks and three consequence slots which his ship can take before being taken out and possibly destroyed.*

Extras As "All of the Above"

Extras don't have to be just aspects, skills, or stunts; most are combinations of two or more. Genurgic modifications like Adaptation Implants and Energy Folds comprise both an aspect and a stunt, and organisations and constructs like starships and vehicles can consist of aspects, stunts, and even a skill pyramid or column.

Permissions and Costs

A permission is the narrative justification that lets you take an extra in the first place. Usually one of your aspects or your occupation or genotype explains why your character is qualified to take an extra; alternatively you can also just agree with the GM it makes sense for your character to have an extra and then buy it.

Customising Extras

With the GM's approval, you can customise an extra to better represent what you want. Maybe you want your Mindscape implant to boost your technopsi abilities under certain conditions? In that case, it's not just an aspect, it's a stunt, too. Or maybe you want to absorb radiation as a genetic mutation, but don't want to pay the stunt cost for the Absorb Energy extra to get the armour:2 rating as well as the aspect (page 106); in that case, drop the stunt component and simply take *Irradiated Skin* for a single aspect cost, invoking it when resisting radiation or irradiating those around you.

Similarly, you don't have to buy all of an extra's components at one go. **If it makes sense**, you can buy one part of an extra first, then others later as you advance. For example, having taken Absorb Energy as an *Irradiated Skin* aspect during character generation, you may decide to spend a point of refresh gained as an advancement (page 162) to "upgrade" it with the extra's stunt component. This means you develop an armour:2 rating against radiation — maybe representing you understanding your ability better, or the ability developing over time.

Customising extras applies particularly to construct, organisation, and culture extras; you can find examples on page 140.

Making Your Own Extras

With GM approval you can use these guidelines, the special abilities on page 400, and the examples in **Chapter 8: Technology** and elsewhere to create your own extras. Often this is as simple as repurposing an existing extra. Do you like the Active Sonar natural ability (page 402)? Perhaps you could re-describe it as a genurgic mod, a mechanical enhancement, or even an item of equipment? You must still pay the cost and maybe have a permission, but many extras can be repurposed in this way.

What an Extra Represents

It's easy enough to visualise extras when they're genurgic enhancements or items of equipment. But what about extras representing constructs, or organisations — a Mindjammer starship, or SCI Force? What does it mean when your character has one of these on his character sheet?

Extras of this nature represent abilities which your character can use **by belonging to a greater community** — for example, the crew of a Mindjammer starship, or the Security and Cultural Integrity Instrumentality.

If you have the Manoeuvre construct skill (page 203) as part of a starship extra, that means you have access to a starship, and can make rolls to move that ship using its Manoeuvre skill. Doing that means you're on the ship (or perhaps remote controlling or communicating with it via technopsi), asking it (or its pilot) to make gravity engines manoeuvres. It doesn't mean you have the Pilot skill yourself (although you might also have that); but rather that you can call on a starship to make Manoeuvre construct actions (page 215) during play.

Likewise, you may have the SCI Force extra as an aspect, invoking it whenever you ask SCI Force to help you. If you also have Provoke as an extra skill, that lets you ask people inside SCI Force to make propaganda attacks (page 271) against the mental stress tracks of other organisations.

Note that it's always **you** as a player who makes the dice rolls and decisions for your extras, as if you were playing the members of that Mindjammer crew or SCI Force organisation. Your character gets them to act on his behalf; and you get to play out the action. There's no doubt about whether they'll help, and you can control their actions within the parameters given.

The following examples show what extras can do. See the appropriate sections throughout this book for more.

- **The Mindscape Implant (page 120):** Most Commonality characters (and others) buy this with their extras budget. It's an aspect, and gives your character the permission to describe his actions using technopsi and the Mindscape.
- **P-Suit (page 135):** At a 2-stunt cost, your character has a suit of adaptive weave armour used by many Commonality personnel. It provides an armour:1 rating, a +1 defend bonus, and a permission to attach additions like PSAs, biomed arrays, and grav harnesses.
- **Starship:** Max Proffitt takes the *Rosemary Princess* starship as a construct extra (page 199). This means he has access to a starship — his backstory says he actually owns this one, although he could just as easily be a crewmember, or commandeering its services by virtue of his rank in, say, SCI Force.
- **Organisation:** Thaddeus Clay takes SCI Force as an organisation extra. The GM rules this lets him use his *Highly Experienced SCI Force Controller* high concept for organisation actions; he also uses 4 skill points from his extras budget to purchase three organisation skills, and writes on his character sheet: "*SCI Force — Fair (+2) Provoke; Average (+1) Investigate, Rapport*".

TEAMWORK BONUSES FROM EXTRAS

If you have an appropriate personal stunt (Gunnery, Memetic Engineer, Starship Pilot, etc), you get a **teamwork bonus** (page 159) from an extra skill for a corresponding character skill, when you use it for an action with that extra.

Max has Great (+4) Pilot and the Starship Pilot stunt, which lets him use his Pilot skill against other starships (chasing other ships, evading, etc). He also has Average (+1) Manoeuvre as a starship extra skill for his ship, the Rosemary Princess. *This gives him a teamwork bonus when using his Starship Pilot stunt, for a total Superb (+5) Pilot skill when chasing or evading other starships with his own starship's gravity engines.*

If an extra has a skill which you don't have as one of your own extra skills, you can get a teamwork bonus only if the character who does have it as an extra skill takes an action to give you a teamwork bonus. You must still have the appropriate personal stunt.

Skin-of-Our-Teeth has the equivalent of a Fair (+2) Pilot skill and the Starship Pilot stunt (she's a sentient starship and uses construct skills, so things are a little different — see page 198). However, she doesn't have Max's Rosemary Princess *as an extra. If Skin wants to use her avatar to pilot Max's ship, she normally just uses her Fair (+2) Pilot skill. However, Max could take an action to give her a +1 teamwork bonus by maybe acting as co-pilot, reconfiguring the* Rosemary Princess's *permissions to work with Skin, persuading the old girl to cooperate with the avatar, etc. If Max is doing something else at the time — maybe blasting away the attack droids clambering over the ship's hull — then he can't provide this teamwork bonus.*

Shared Extras

PCs often belong to the same organisation, culture, or starship crew, creating a shared extra. The skills, stunts, and aspects which a single character purchases for that extra exist both on his character sheet, and on a notional "extra sheet". If characters sharing an extra each contribute to the same skill, they can both take advantage of the total skill level.

If, say, Lyra took an Average (+1) Manoeuvre skill as an extra skill for the Rosemary Princess*, this would be written as Fair (+2) Manoeuvre on the starship's construct sheet (page 476). Max would still only get a +1 teamwork bonus when using his Starship Pilot stunt, but Lyra could also make starship manoeuvres using the combined Fair (+2) Manoeuvre skill.*

VYING FOR CONTROL

You may have an extra skill for a shared extra which also has a broader existence of its own in your campaign — a culture, an organisation like SCI Force, and so on. If your extra skill in that extra is lower than the skill level it has as a campaign NPC, what does that mean? For example, you may have an extra skill of Good (+3) Provoke (page 271) for an organisation which actually has Superb (+5) Provoke when statted as an NPC. This is likely if you take a well-known or large-scale construct, organisation, or culture as an extra.

A situation like this indicates you're just one person sharing that larger entity with notional NPCs you might not know. You may not have full control over your extra's abilities — in this case, its Provoke skill; if you attack another organisation, for example, you only do so with your Good (+3) Provoke. It's even possible the remaining 2 skill levels in Provoke which you don't control may not agree with your action, and try to stop you!

This is a great opportunity for drama. For example, the GM may declare you must make an overcome roll to avoid the opposition the remaining force is posing — maybe a

Extras and Advancement

Like characters, extras can be modified and improved, and your character can even acquire new ones. See "Extras and Advancement" (page 162) for more.

Rapport roll (representing negotiation), Provoke, or even Security, representing internal conflict, mutiny, or even civil war. The same applies to any larger-scale shared extra used like this — organisations, starships, cultures, and others — whose internal politics are fraught with intrigue and factionalisation.

MORE THAN ONE SHARED EXTRA?

There's no restriction to the number of shared extras you can take. You can belong to SCI Force and the crew of the *Exorbitant Destiny*. If that gives you conflicting aspects, so much the better — that's the stuff great drama is made of.

Damage to Extras

Extras like starships, organisations, and cultures have independent existences, and can take damage and consequences in their own right (pages 199 and 266). However, you may always take the stress and consequences yourself instead of applying it to your extra; this can be a great way of preventing your starship from being destroyed, for example.

Max's starship extra, the Rosemary Princess*, is hit in construct combat for 4 stress. Max can either describe this as null cannon damage to his starship's hull, requiring repair, or mark off a 2-point stress box and a mild consequence on his own character sheet, representing perhaps burn damage he suffers when a console explodes in a shower of sparks.*

Even if you're **vying for control** of an extra (see above), any damage affects the whole extra; characters with only minor skill levels in a larger shared extra can get that extra into serious trouble. Usually, however, if a PC or PC group doesn't have overall control of a shared extra, the extra may concede rather than face destruction; this is a great opportunity for compels.

If a construct or organisation extra is taken out and destroyed, your character gets the points spent on it back, and may spend them again at an appropriate milestone.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special abilities are abstract extras used to describe how you can do cool things using these rules. They're abstract in the sense that they contain no descriptive chrome; instead, they provide the mechanical "backbone" for other extras — genurgic mods, mechanical or virtual enhancements, equipment, and the natural abilities of organic beings. They're referenced extensively in **Chapter 8: Technology** and **Chapter 21: Alien Life**.

Use these abilities to create your own extras, either by selecting one or more special abilities and giving them a descriptive gloss (making them into, say, a genurgic enhancement, mutation, piece of equipment, etc); or by using them as templates to create new special abilities.

★ ABSORB ENERGY

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

You can absorb one energy type — heat, kinetic, gravity, sound, radiation, etc — selected when you take the ability. As a stunt, you gain an armour:2 rating against that energy type.

Invoke: To create or increase passive opposition, representing sudden cold, lack of gravity, soundlessness, etc; gain a bonus on a Project Energy attack; boost your ability to resist the energy.

Compel: To inadvertently absorb energy.

★ ADAPTATION

Costs 1 aspect

You're adapted to function in an additional environment, selected when you take the ability. Environments include: extreme heat or cold, corrosive / acidic / insidious environments, high / low gravity, high / low ambient pressure (gas or liquid), radiation (various types), liquid, vacuum, electrically charged, amphibious, and so on.

Invoke: To know about the environment, operate easily in it, exploit its features to put others at a disadvantage.

Compel: To be at a disadvantage in radically different environments, or be otherwise disadvantaged by your adaptation.

★ ARMOURED

Costs 1 stunt

Gain a natural armour:2 rating.

★ AUTOTROPH

Costs 1 aspect (usually genotype)

You can synthesise your own food. Describe the energy

source you need to do this; sunlight, proximity to magnetic fields, a ZIP cell, heat, etc (see "Metabolic Bases", page 390).

Invoke: To survive without food.

Compel: To become weakened when the environment prevents you from synthesising food; be unable to understand or partake in the pleasures of eating.

★ BODY SCALE CHANGE

Requires Variform or genotype permission
Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt
You're 1 point of scale (page 174) larger or smaller than usual, giving you the associated benefits and penalties, as well as the bonuses below.

Smaller
As a stunt, gain a +2 Stealth bonus when your small scale helps you hide and sneak.

Invoke: To be unobtrusive, present a smaller target, appear unthreatening, squeeze into small spaces; move stealthily or with agility.

Compel: To find equipment is too big; be ineffective at intimidating; for people to underestimate you or take you for a child; be socially disadvantaged or ignored; suffer increased effects from alcohol, poison, or wounds.

Larger
As a stunt, gain a +2 Provoke bonus when your large scale helps you appear overbearing and threatening.

Invoke: To be highly visible, get a good viewpoint, appear dangerous, impressive, get the drop on someone, do massive damage with a smashing weapon.

Compel: To be unable to wear normal clothes or armour or use normal equipment; be unable to pass through a restricted space, or become trapped; be highly visible and unable to move stealthily; to be clumsy.

If you also have the Variform special ability (page 112), you may change your scale up or down by 1 step. This requires one scene, and may be part of a create an advantage roll.

★ CONSTRICT

Costs 1 stunt
Gain a +2 bonus for attacks with tentacles, bear hug, etc.

★ CONTACT CONTROL

Costs 1 stunt
You can control equipment by touch, ie via nanocell or direct mechanical interface. This replicates some technopsi functions, but is more limited. You can control Mindscape-enabled devices without the Mindscape (and therefore without being detectable via Mindscape), even when there's no Mindscape present. You must have physical contact with an item's control surface; a create an advantage Technical action may rig a temporary one.

Scenario Hook: Autotroph Revolt

The Core World Astridiis Beta*, whose autotroph population thrives off the exotic radiations in their subsurface cavern cities, is refusing to produce any more foodstuffs for export or use by visiting non-autotrophs. The planetary sentience seems to be siding with them. The PCs are stranded in system with no food supplies as the revolt intensifies and bitter fights break out between autotroph and non-autotroph populations. Why are the autotrophs revolting? And will the PCs be forced to submit to the autotrophs' highly restrictive genurgy to survive?*

★ CRUSH

Costs 1 stunt
Gain a +2 attack bonus vs grappled or immobilised targets.

★ DENSITY CONTROL

Requires Variform or genotype permission
Costs 1 aspect
You can increase or decrease your density; you must have a body structure which allows this. This may make you harder to hit or damage.

Invoke: To resist damage, reduce or increase body scale and diffuseness to be more threatening, less heavy, etc.

Compel: To be too heavy or too light; be disrupted by wind, fall through the floor.

★ DISPERSION

Costs 1 stunt
You can control multiple (usually synthetic) extensions to your body, over and above any combat or sensor drones. Under the right conditions, you can make your surroundings seem to come alive.

For a fate point, make a single skill roll using the physical form of one or more Mindscape-linked items in your

zone, which may resist, plus 1 zone per additional fate point. You may attack, defend, create an advantage, etc.

★ DRAIN ENERGY

Costs 1 aspect

You can drain one energy type — heat, nuclear power, metabolic energy, electricity, etc — from a target, which you must specify when you take the extra.

Invoke: To render inactive a device or object powered by that energy; attack (usually unarmed, may be ranged) to drain energy.

Compel: To be overcome by an energy surge; be affected by shielding affecting the energy; become weak when deprived of the energy source.

★ ENERGY RESISTANT

Costs 1 stunt

Gain a +2 bonus to resist an energy type — heat, radiation, blasters, etc — which you must specify when you take the extra.

★ ENTHRAL

Costs 1 aspect

Your appearance, movement, voice, etc, captivates and holds the attention of a particular type of target. You must specify the action you take and the target type it affects when you take the extra.

Invoke: To make it easier for you to persuade, influence, or intimidate a target; or distract or hold its attention.

Compel: To attract unwanted attention to yourself; distract someone at a critical moment.

★ EXPERT CLIMBER

Costs 1 stunt

Gain a +2 bonus to overcome and create advantage actions when climbing.

★ EXTEND LIMB

Costs 1 stunt

Your limbs are extensible, either by organic "stretching" or telescoping technological structures. Your Unarmed Combat or Melee Combat attacks have a range of 1.

★ FLIGHT

Costs 3 stunts

You can fly. Use Athletics to make movement actions in the air, ignoring ground-based opposition from subjects which can't fly. You may perform the same actions as Drive, but using Athletics; you're effectively your own vehicle. Gain an additional free zone of movement, and move and attack a target up to 2 zones away.

★ FORCE FIELD

Costs 1-6 stunts

You're protected by a force field, providing a defend bonus against physical attacks and absorbing 1 or more consequences as shown in Table 7-1: Force Field Protection.

Table 7-1: Force Field Protection

Stunts	Field Protection
1	+1 defend bonus
2	+2 defend bonus
3	+3 defend bonus
4	+3 defend bonus, absorbs 1 mild consequence
5	+3 defend bonus, absorbs 1 mild and 1 moderate consequence
6	+3 defend bonus, absorbs 1 mild, 1 moderate, and 1 severe consequence

★ GLIDE

Costs 1 stunt

You can make movement actions using Athletics through the air between points, as long as your destination is lower than your starting point. The minimum horizontal distance glided is the vertical distance descended.

★ HALLUCINATE

Costs 1 stunt

You can make a target hallucinate, giving you a +2 bonus on Provoke attacks and create advantage rolls.



★ HEALTH BONUS

Costs 2 stunts

Gain a +2 bonus to rolls to resist disease, poison, etc. You may also take one additional mild consequence.

★ HOWL

Costs 1 stunt

Use Provoke against every creature in your zone, plus 1 zone per fate point expended. This is an area effect (page 175). It doesn't affect your allies, but does affect neutral bystanders.

★ HYPERAGILITY

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

Gain a +2 bonus on any Athletics rolls requiring physical agility.

Invoke: To outperform unenhanced human abilities.

Compel: To stand out in a crowd by appearing almost supernaturally graceful.

★ HYPERINTELLIGENCE

Costs 1 aspect, 3 stunts

Gain a +2 bonus on any Knowledge, Science, or Technical roll where reasoning power is the determining factor.

Invoke: To gain an insight an order of magnitude greater than normal human capability.

Compel: To have trouble understanding or relating to unenhanced minds.

★ HYPERSENSE

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

One of your senses — hearing, sight, smell, taste, touch — is enhanced far beyond normal human capabilities, selected when you take the ability. This isn't simply good eyesight, etc: you can see in the infrared, have telescopic / microscopic vision, hear sonar, etc. You gain a +2 Investigate or Notice bonus when using that sense.

Invoke: To perceive something not normally possible by virtue of your enhanced sense; gain a bonus where your hypersense gives you an advantage.

Compel: Your sensory input is overloaded, or your hypersense puts you at a disadvantage.

★ HYPERSTRENGTH

Costs 1 aspect, 2 stunts

You're incredibly strong. Gain a +2 bonus to Physique rolls, and a weapon:2 rating on Unarmed Combat and Melee Combat attacks.

Invoke: To lift or move things up to the limit of your physical frame in mass.

Compel: To not know your own strength.

★ IMAGE PROJECTION

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

You can project a 3D image perceptible to visible light. This is not a hallucination; usually it's a hologram or similar visual phenomenon. You can use Will to create such images as advantages.

★ INCREASED SKILL CAP

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

You transcend the human skill cap by 1 level, up to Epic (+7) without Mindscape access and Legendary (+8) with. There are higher levels; see also "Going 'Post'" (page 447). The aspect cost represents the **posthuman aspect** you must take at the same time.

★ INFECT

Costs 1+ skill points

You carry a disease or infection and can infect a target by touch or at range; the target resists with Physique. Damage is physical stress damage; any consequences infect the target with the disease (page 177).

★ INJECT PARASITE

Costs 1 stunt

You can use Unarmed Combat to inject a target with an "egg" on any consequence — a self-replicating assembly of cells, mechanical components, or Mindscape / virtual analogues. The egg is 1 scale (page 174) smaller than you. Unless removed, the consequence may be compelled in a subsequent scene for the "egg" to grow and hatch. A hatched egg becomes a **parasite**, making Parasitise attacks (page 111) at Average (+1) for a mild consequence egg, Fair (+2) for moderate, and Good (+3) for severe.

★ INTIMIDATE

Costs 1 stunt

You have a horrific or highly threatening appearance or behaviour. Gain a +2 bonus to Provoke attacks and create an advantage actions when used to instill fear.

★ LEAP

Costs 1 stunt

Gain a +2 bonus to overcome and create advantage actions when jumping.

★ LONGEVITY

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

You are 100 years older than the default character age (page 37); gain an additional 5 skill points, and make one of your aspects into a **longevity aspect**. Commonality organic characters can expend up to 6 points of refresh on this ability, each time giving you an extra century of life and five more skill points; at the GM's discretion, synthetic characters may have no such limitation.

★ MENTAL BLAST

Costs 1+ skill points

Projects a field of gauss energy and microwaves, overloading the target's synapses, doing mental stress damage and causing confusion, unconsciousness, and brain damage at extreme intensities.

★ MENTAL RESISTANCE

Costs 1 stunt

Gain a +2 bonus to resist mental stress attacks and overcome mental consequence recovery obstacles.

★ METEORURGY

Requires permission

Costs 1 aspect, 1+ skill points

Provides a Meteorurgy skill allowing you to change the weather. Changing weather in your zone to an adjacent condition is Fair (+2) opposition, taking 1 scene. Adjacent

Longevity Aspects

*Very long-lived characters have **longevity aspects** representing their unique world view and life experience, including:* Not Clumsy Any More, This Is My Eighth Career, I Get Married Every Fifty Years Whether I Like It or Not, You Don't Grow Up for the First Ninety Years.

conditions include: sunny to overcast, overcast to precipitating, hot to warm, cold to freezing. Weather conditions are confined to those possible for the environment. Each further shift in weather conditions takes 1 additional scene and increases the passive opposition by +2.

★ MIMIC

Costs 1 aspect

You can mimic another creature's sensory profile for one sense — the sounds it makes, the scents it emits, its appearance, etc — specified when you take the extra. You may purchase this extra multiple times.

Invoke: To gain a bonus on Deceive rolls, etc, where physical or audio mimicry is important; automatically pass casual inspection as the entity you're mimicking.

Compel: To inadvertently mimic an entity during a time of stress; have an unidentifiable sensory profile for machines or devices (ie your voiceprint does not register, etc).

★ MULTI-ATTACK

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt, plus 1 skill per additional attack

You have multiple attack skills which can contribute to your attack action. You may have three Unarmed Combat skills (say, Punch, Kick, and Throw), two Ranged Combat skills (say, Blaster Rifle and Grenade Launcher), two Melee Combat skills (say, two Energy Blades), or a combination. Take an aspect to reflect this (*Attacks With Teeth and Claws*, *Bristling With Weapons*). In an exchange, select one attack skill as your main attack skill; each of your other attack skills provides a teamwork bonus (page 159) to the main skill, and allows you to attack one additional target.

This is a multiple target attack (page 175): you may divide your attack dice roll result between the targets however you want. Any weapon ratings are applied after the success or failure of each attack has been determined.

For example: the Combatechnologies Robust Defender *combat drone has the* Bristling With Weapons *aspect, and spends 4 skill points on 2 separate Average (+1) Melee Combat and 2 Average (+1) Ranged Combat skills. It's armed with twin weapon:1 blasters. It gains a +3 teamwork bonus to one attack, and may divide its attack roll result between up to 4 separate targets. It applies the weapon:1 rating to the two targets it attacks with its blasters (these may be the same target).*

★ PARALYSE

Costs 1 stunt

Use Unarmed Combat, Ranged Combat, etc, to create a *Paralysed*-type advantage on a target.

★ PARASITISE

Costs 1 skill, 1 aspect

You're a parasite "living" on a host, which must be at least 1 scale larger than you. You have an aspect (often a consequence created by the Inject Parasite special ability, page 110), and a Parasitise skill with a rating based on the consequence severity. You usually attack once per scene for physical parasites, or once per scene or exchange for Mindscape ones, inflicting stress or mild consequences; parasites don't usually aim to kill their hosts. Attacks are resisted by the target's Physique (or Will for Mindscape targets), or by the Technical skill of an attending meditech. Attempts to remove the parasite are made by Technical, and the parasite resists by attacking its host on each attempt.

★ PARTICLE ENERGY CONTROL

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

You control one type of energy — electricity, gravity, magnetism, photons (light and darkness), radiation, sound, wind, etc — at particle level, selected when you take this ability. As a stunt, you gain a +2 bonus when creating advantages with the energy type using any skill.

Invoke: To affect energy in your zone, plus 1 zone per fate point; damage, destroy, or manipulate objects operating with or affected by that energy.

Compel: To inadvertently interrupt or distort energy in your vicinity, adversely affecting equipment or betraying your presence.

★ PHEROMONE CLOUD

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

Gain a +2 Rapport bonus to overcome and create advantage actions against susceptible (usually organic) targets in the same zone.

Invoke: To distract, seduce, or enrage targets; gain an advantage when dealing with targets or avoiding them.

Compel: To have people react strongly to you at inconvenient moments.

★ POISON

Costs 1 stunt

Your attack (usually Unarmed Combat) also creates a *Poisoned*-type situation aspect.

★ POSSESSOR / PUPPETTEER

Costs 1 stunt

You can control a target's actions, effectively making it into a temporary extra. It's a Will vs Will contest; on a success, your target incurs a *Possessed*-type aspect, invoked to block



its actions or compelled to make it behave as you wish. Actions the target takes under your control are automatically at Mediocre (+0) skill level. Physical versions of this ability require you to touch the target.

★ PROJECT ENERGY

Costs 2 stunts

You can project one form of energy — heat, cold, electricity, radiation, sonic, etc — specified when you take this ability. Gain a +2 bonus to Ranged Combat attacks with this energy; successful attacks also gain a weapon:2 rating.

★ REACTION BONUS

Costs 1 stunt

Gain a +2 bonus to rolls where quick reactions are important, including initiative (page 151) and dodging.

★ REGENERATION

Costs 1 aspect

You can rapidly regenerate tissue to recover from wounds.

Invoke: To automatically succeed at recovery obstacles, or reduce the time required to recover from a consequence by one step.

Compel: To be forced to rest whenever you are regenerating.

★ SNARE

Costs 2 stunts

You can trap other beings using webs, goo, pheromones, compulsion fields, domination fields, etc — specify one when you select this ability. Gain a +2 Unarmed Combat or Ranged Combat bonus to create *Ensnared*-type advantages.

★ SPEED BONUS

Costs 1 stunt

Gain a +2 bonus to movement actions where speed is a factor.

★ SPIDER FEET

Requires Expert Climber

Costs 1 stunt

Gain a +2 Athletics bonus to make great climbs (upside down, on ceilings, etc).

★ STRENGTH BONUS

Costs 2 stunts

Gain a +2 Physique bonus for strength-related rolls, and a weapon:2 rating on Unarmed or Melee Combat attacks.

★ TENTACLES

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

Decide if these supplement or replace your normal limbs; as an enhancement, they're usually additional, while mechanical and natural mods replace. As a stunt, gain a +2 Melee Combat bonus to create advantage actions.

Invoke: To immobilise targets, reach into hard-to-get areas, appear threatening and intimidating, make surprising and flexible moves.

Compel: To be instantly noticeable, flail around clumsily, have difficulty using standard equipment.

★ VARIFORM

Requires synthetic or alien genotype permission

Costs 1 aspect

You can reconfigure your physical form within broad parameters.

Invoke: To reconfigure your physical form, shrinking and expanding up to 50%, changing your superficial appearance: face, limb length, number of joints, size of torso, chassis, hull, etc. You can't become more or less massive, but you can become thinner, bulkier, more aerodynamic. This can give you a Variform aspect appropriate to your assumed form. You can also hide or reveal your other enhancements. It takes 1 exchange to change form, plus an additional exchange for any enhancement to be hidden or revealed.

Compel: To suddenly alter form in response to emotion or stimulus; to not have a piece of equipment, limb, ability, etc, instantly available when you need it.

CHAPTER EIGHT
TECHNOLOGY

"And souls and conscience gave he them all, from the humblest scanner to the proudest warship. And they awoke, and gave praise for it."

—from the Salt Lake Computational, banned by the Commonality in 73 NCE

Technology in the New Commonality is highly advanced, with often surprising implications for its culture and the lives of its citizens. While there are no teleporters, for example, there are devices that can materialise objects out of thin air; most manufactured items are sentient, and yet computers are as archaic as abacuses and slide-rules. This chapter provides guidelines for creating items of Commonality tech, and examples of genurgic modifications, enhancements, and equipment, including weapons and armour.

PARADIGMS

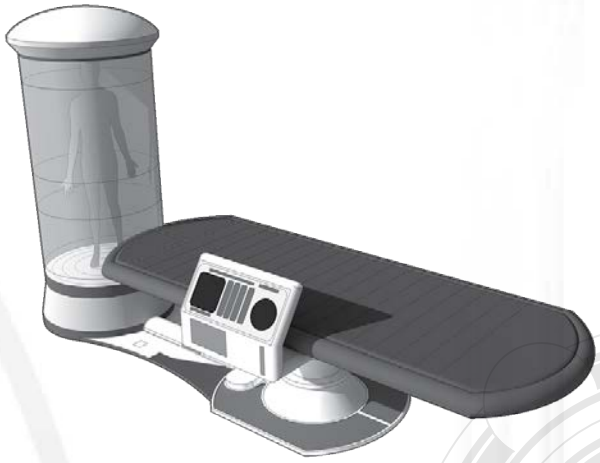
The following technological paradigms define Commonality life. When describing environments and events in the Commonality, use these as a baseline defining what is and is not possible.

Ubiquitous Intelligence — but No Computers

The computers of Old Earth's early technological era were a stepping stone to greater things. Like the abacus and slide-rule before them, they haven't been part of the Commonality's toolkit for millennia, and are now just historical curiosities. Their successors are synthetics, ubiquitous intelligence, and the Mindscape. In the Expansionary Era, intelligence is everywhere, its manufacture trivial; from sidearms to starships, intelligence is commonplace (although the Fringe and Outer Worlds may have other ideas).

Advanced Minds

Human intelligence was once regarded as the pinnacle of evolution; that's no longer the case. Synthetic intelligence exceeded human norms millennia ago, and now even organic Commonality citizens routinely have genurgically enhanced intelligence when they need it. As intelligence has become independent of the human brain, the definition of "human" has transcended organic bodies. In the New Commonality Era, synthetic sentiences housed in orbital Mindscape nodes and administrating whole worlds still regard themselves as members of **transhumanity**.



Infinite Storage Capacity

Technical restrictions on information storage went out with archaic computers in prehistoric times. Nowadays no one even thinks about data "storage"; there's more than anyone will ever need. *Finding* the information you're looking for, though — that's a different matter.

Discretionary Interfaces

Technological devices possess sufficient intelligence and Mindscape connectivity to present information in any form required. The user chooses the interface he wants (usually a **virtual vision** or direct **mindlink**), a feature known as "DI" or **discretionary interface**. Lower tech cultures may have more familiar interfaces to 21st century eyes (including the primitive "keyboard / monitor"), but intelligent Mindscape-linked devices are the Commonality norm.

Mindlink (direct Mindscape interface) mimics sensory input; the recipient can see, hear, taste, touch, or smell things, providing a rich sensory experience. Often this degree of immersion — known as a **virtuality** — is used for entertainment, when distraction from the user's surroundings is not an issue.

Virtual vision is less distracting and more practical for everyday use. Information appears as icons or other imagery framing the user's vision, which can be examined via technopsi command when convenient.

For skill chips and exoeidetic memory (pages 120 and 188), the preferred DI is usually **direct memory engram**, where information is effectively "remembered", even though that information may have been originally experienced by someone else.

For communication, **thoughtcasts** are preferred. Similar to an articulated "internal voice", they are transmitted as vocalised words which the recipient hears in his or her mind. Thoughtcasts are often called **techno-telepathy**.

The Transmigration Heresy

The Transmigration Heresy is a reasonably common phenomenon on primitive rediscovered worlds, based on a misunderstanding of thanograms and the nature of eidolons. It holds that eidolons are the "reincarnations" of their thanogram sources — the same individuals, reborn — and that eidolon technology is the key to immortality. Wherever the Heresy takes hold in a rediscovered culture, the effects can be damaging, and SCI Force intervenes constantly to mitigate its effects.

Ubiquitous Perception

Throughout the Commonality — and especially in the Core Worlds — trillions of citizens regularly thoughtcast memories and direct perception feeds. Any Mindscape-linked person can usually locate a perception feed of any reasonably populated location, complete with sensory data. This is a form of **sensorview** (page 189), and may be used with Investigate and Notice rolls, with a base passive opposition equal to the **inverse** of the planet's population (page 340).

Variform Design

Although programmable matter is beyond Commonality tech, configurable micro-scale modular construction is common. **Variform** equipment comprises components which can reshape themselves according to purpose, need, or aesthetics; starships may hide and display weaponry, assuming threatening or non-threatening profiles; synthetics may extrude or reabsorb limbs, increase or decrease in size, and even change body plan.

Variform design adds complexity to a **construct** (page 196), and isn't always used; however, if cost and complexity aren't an issue, even very large-scale constructs (space stations, capital ships, and even plateworlds) can have variform capability. Changing between variform configurations takes time but offers great functional flexibility.

Fields

Fields are space-time manipulators, an offshoot of gravity engine and shield technology, controlled via Mindscape, often known as **techno-telekinesis**. Although detectable by sensorview and susceptible to jamming, they're nevertheless highly useful, allowing remote non-physical manipulation of objects proportional to the field's power in the same zone. They're frequently used by drones and other synthetics.

Abundant Power

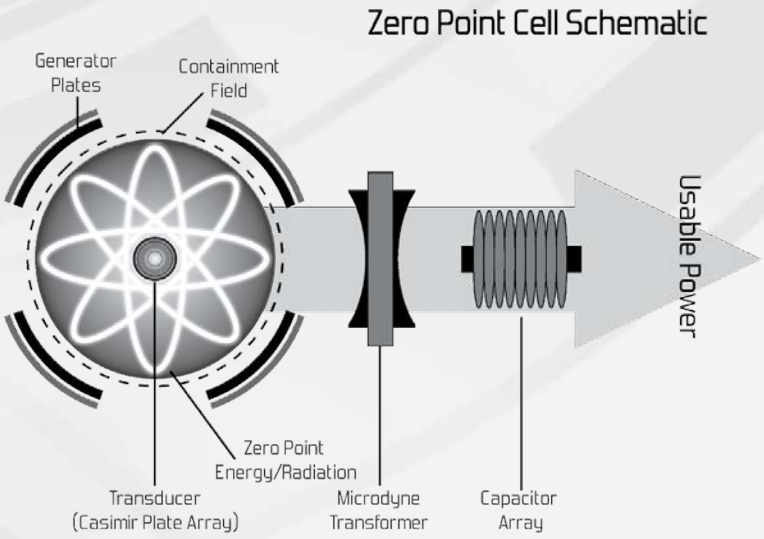
The main energy source in ***Mindjammer*** is zero-point energy, the underlying background energy of "empty" space. Colloquially known as **ZIP**, there are ZIP cells, ZIP batteries, ZIP power plants, and so on. Although zero-point energy is essentially limitless and free, its extraction and use degrade the units which convert it into usable form, entailing regular overhaul or replacement.

Zero Point Power

*The theory for zero-point energy cells was known for millennia, but practical cells only became a reality with the development of extra-dimensional 2-space (planing) technologies. Most of a ZIP cell's transducer (the **ZIP core** or **Casimir plate array**) exists "trans-dimensionally" — the ZIP cell is merely a visible n-space "socket" to the unlimited other-dimensional ZIP field. ZIP cell size therefore relates only loosely to the power provided, and seemingly innocuous-looking microcells can produce vast amounts of power.*

ZIP CELL COMPONENTS

- ***Transducer:** The ZIP core, comprising 1 x 10^{23} c-plates — **Casimir plates**, each a few atoms thick, of gold-coated quartz — most of which don't actually exist in n-space. Transducing energy from trans-dimensional space via a dimensional breach known as the **Heisenberg minimum** (the ZIP core diameter), this creates a massive torsion field shielded by a **containment field**.*
- ***Containment Field:** The energy shield containing the torsion field and its associated z-radiation.*
- ***Generator:** The unit which generates usable power from the ZIP core output.*
- ***Microdyne Transformer:** The unit which steps up the generator output into usable power.*
- ***Capacitor:** The unit which accumulates energy for makepoints, planing engines, etc, to use.*



No Faster-than-light Communication

Interstellar communication is limited by the speed of light, or by communications carried by planeships. The **Mind-jammers** are the Commonality's com-ships, travelling between worlds, updating the Mindscape, keeping information flowing between the stars. In the limited number of Core Worlds connected by 3-space gate, however (page 221), information transfer is nearly instantaneous.

Where Mindscape comms are absent or impractical, communication is by **tightbeam** maser or similar transmission. Tightbeam comms usually require line-of-sight and have limited range, but most tech index T9 comms devices or higher have tightbeam backup.

Ubiquitous Anti-grav

The Commonality achieved gravity control millennia ago, and anti-grav is its main slower-than-light propulsion technology, from starship gravity engines to the suspensor modules powering flyers.

Extreme Miniaturisation

With recent developments in 2-space technology, Commonality equipment is only as big as it needs to be. Devices can be vanishingly small — but most people prefer things at least hand-sized for practical use.

No Mindscape Consciousness

The Mindscape is a data storage medium and not a consciousness. While organic and synthetic minds access the Mindscape and control virtual avatars there, they have discrete physical existences (brains, for want of a better word), required for the phenomenon of consciousness to emerge. The situation is complicated by the existence of **sentinels** and other autonomous Mindscape helper routines, which possess a high degree of artificial intelligence but which are not conscious. The distinction is vital: **Mindscape nodes** are physical installations housing synthetic sentiences which manage and monitor Mindscape communication, but the Mindscape is the virtual space where communication takes place and where information is stored.

No Persistence of Identity

Individual identity is a phenomenon which emerges from a consciousness localised in a physical "brain" — however you define that brain (some are quite large…); it's likely quantum-level phenomena play a crucial role. This means that while Mindscape comms may permit the thoughtcasting of memories and even personality matrix facsimiles in the form of **thanograms**, it's not possible to transfer individual entities from one physical brain to another. For this reason **eidolons** (page 43) are always imperfect copies of their thanogram sources, separate individuals and in no way a continuation of the original entity. When a brain housing a mind is destroyed, that mind dies; any subsequent copies are different individuals.

No Matter Transport — but Matter Creation

Less a technical issue than one of persistence of identity, matter transport is destructive of the original, merely creating a copy at the destination (with sufficient energy, originals need not even be destroyed). New 3-space technologies provide more reliable instantaneous travel.

Nevertheless, matter transport research has led to breakthroughs in mass / energy conversion. A **makepoint** (M/EC-Point) duplicates or creates matter, given sufficient energy; even with a ZIP plant, however, quantities are small. For larger amounts of material, physical mining and extraction is still more economically feasible, but for food and air replenishment on starships and space habitats, ammunition creation in weapons, and medical product synthesis, makepoints provide enormous advantages.

See also "Commerce and Industry in the Expansionary Era" on page 290.

Table 8-1: Tech Index

Tech Index	Score	Title
T0	-5	Post-Animal
T1	-4	Stone Age
T2	-3	Metal Age
T3	-2	Age of Enlightenment
T4	-1	Industrial Age
T5	+0	Computer Age
T6	+1	Age of Genurgy
T7	+2	First Age of Space
T8	+3	Age of Ubiquitous Intelligence
T9	+4	Second Age of Space (Commonality standard)
T10	+5	Age of 3-Space (Commonality maximum)
T11	+6	Interdimensional Age (theorised next step in Commonality evolution)
T+	(etc)	(Theoretical higher levels)

TECH INDEX

Technological sophistication in the Commonality is measured on the **tech index** scale, used to quantify a character's exposure to technology and the technological sophistication of a world, society, or item. Tech indices have a **rating** on the ladder, used for game mechanical effects like the difficulty of repairing or making devices (page 178).

ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancements are **extras** (page 102) representing technological modifications to your character. You can buy them using aspects, refresh, or skill points from your **extras budget**, character creation points, or advancements.

There are four types of enhancement:

- **Genurgic Mods:** Modifications to your body;
- **Improvements:** Enhancements to your equipment;
- **Mechanical:** Enhancements to the functions of robots, starships, and other mechanicals;
- **Virtual:** Enhancements operating purely or principally in the Mindscape.

In addition, **hypertech** (page 125) represents equipment replicating functions of enhancements; and **natural abilities** (page 400) represent evolved capabilities of life forms.

The example enhancements below are mostly self-explanatory, representing technological implementations of the special abilities in **Chapter 7: Extras**. If not, full descriptions are given below. Entries with a "Y" in the "Halo" column are **halo abilities** (page 186). You're encouraged to create new enhancements using the technological paradigms above and the principles in **Chapter 21: Alien Life**.

Genurgic Mods

Genurgic mods directly reconfigure a subject's genurgic makeup, affecting physical changes. They become available from tech index T6. Any organic being may use genurgy, including organic synthetics and cyborgs. Inorganic synthetics like mechanicals and installations (page 43) use **mechanical enhancements** instead (page 122).

Table 8-2: Genurgic Mods lists the mods commonly available in the Commonality; most are provided by the Chembu Genurgy corporacy (page 293).

Control Indices and Illegality

*Enhancements may break laws on certain worlds, particularly those involving weaponry. Where appropriate, an enhancement has a **control index** (page 342), indicating the control index of a world at which the enhancement becomes controlled (ie illegal or otherwise restricted). At that control index and above, characters may not freely purchase the enhancement, but require a **permission** (often an occupation permission). Characters with affected enhancements must conceal them or face legal and security challenges, including Bureaucracy and other conflicts.*

The lower an enhancement's control index, the more tightly controlled it is; the higher, the more freely available.

AGGRESSOR IMPLANT

Costs 1 aspect, 2 stunts

Combines Mindscape skill chip enhancement with hormonal regulators to increase aggressiveness. Gain a +2 bonus to Unarmed and Melee Combat attacks. As an aspect it improves your reflexes, but can make you fly into a rage.

BIOELECTRIC FIELD IMPLANT

Costs 1-6 stunts + Draining *flaw*

Your metabolism generates a powerful energy field protecting you from attacks and providing a defend bonus and possibly absorbing consequences. It's very draining, and can be compelled to leave you weakened.

The *Draining* Flaw

Mods with the Draining *flaw can be compelled to represent fatigue, malfunctions, or your character becoming incapacitated after use, perhaps even incurring a consequence. It may be offset by the Metabolic Booster mod.*

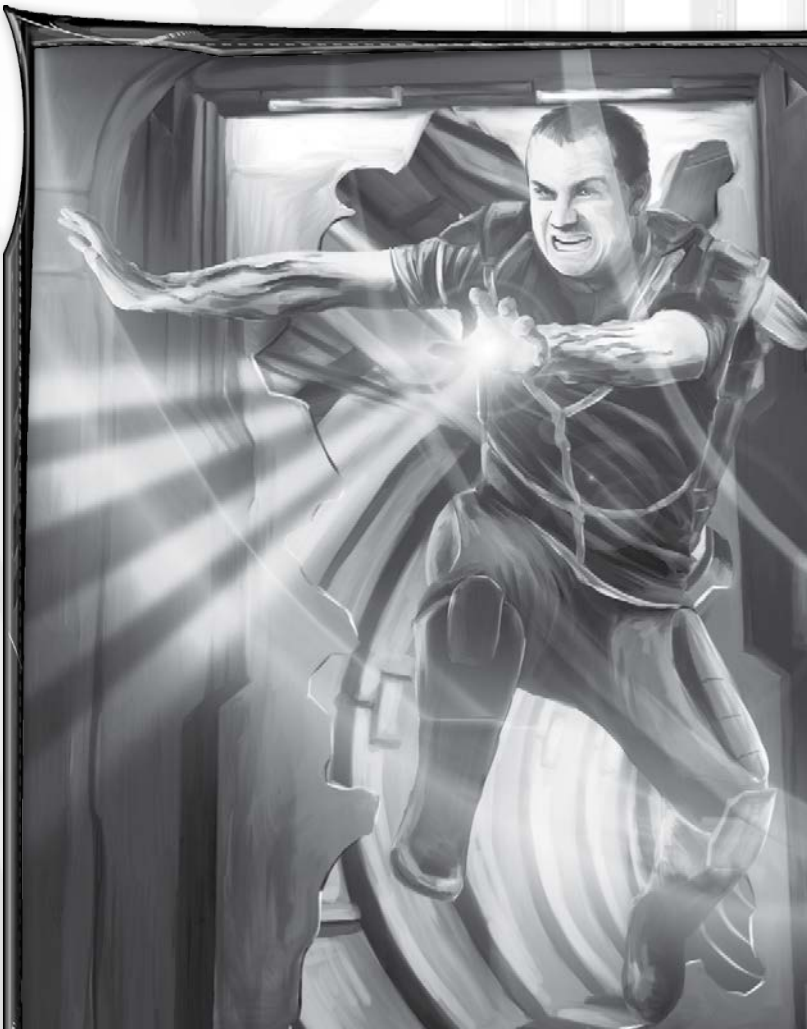


Table 8-2: Genurgic Mods

Name	Special Ability	Halo	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Absorption Field	Absorb Energy		T7	+2	1A, 1S
Accelerated Healing	Regeneration		T6	+3	1A
Adaptation Implant	Adaptation		T7	+3	1A
Aggressor Implant	See below	Y	T8	+0	1A, 2S
Attack Enhancement	Multi-Attack		T6	+2	1A, 1S, +SP
Artificial Nervous System	Hyperagility		T6	+3	1A, 1S
Assisted Leap	Leap		T6	+3	1S
Augmented Resistance	Energy Resistant		T7	+2	1S
Autotrophic Enhancement	Autotroph		T7	+4	1A
Bioelectric Field Implant	Force Field (see below)		T7-10	+1	1-6S + flaw
Chameleon Field	Mimic		T6	+0	1A
Cosmetic Enhancer	See below		T6	+3	1A
Damping Field	Drain Energy (Electricity, etc)		T7	-2	1A
Defence Chip	See below	Y	T8	-1	1-2S
Dispersed Control Enhancement	Dispersion	Y	T8	-1	1S
Empathic Lace	See below	Y	T9	+3	1S
Energy Fold	Particle Energy Control	Y	T9	-1	1A, 1S
Enhanced Constitution	Health Bonus		T6	+3	2S
Enhanced Musculature	Strength Bonus		T6	+3	2S
Enhanced Reflexes	Reaction Bonus		T6	+3	1S
Enhanced Speed	Speed Bonus		T6	+3	1S
Extendable Limb	Extend Limb		T7	+3	1S
Extended Lifespan	See below		T8	+4	1A, 1S
Gills	Adaptation (Underwater / Amphibious)		T6	+5	1A
Glide Membrane	Glide		T6	+3	1S
Howl Emitter	Howl		T6	+0	1S
Metabolic Booster	See below		T7	+2	1A
Mindscape Implant	See below	Y	T6	+3	1A

(continued on next page...)

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Name	Special Ability	Halo	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Nanocells	Contact Control		T8	+1	1S
Neural Disruption Field	Mental Blast	Y	T8	-1	1+SP
Neurosynthetic Extensors	Hyperintelligence	Y	T8	+3	1A, 3S
Nootropic Gland	Mental Resistance		T7	+3	1S
Paralysing Touch	Paralyse		T6	-1	1S
Pheromone Synthesis	Pheromone Cloud		T6	+2	1A, 1S
Rejuve	See below		T7	+3	1A, 1S
Respirocytes	See below		T8	+4	1A
Sensory Enhancement	Hypersense		T6	+3	1A, 1S
Shell Plating	Armoured		T6	+0	1S
Scale Change (Larger or Smaller)	Body Scale Change		T6	+4	1A, 1S
Skill Chip	See below	Y	T8	var	1S
Special Ops Chip	See below	Y	T6	special	1A
Subdermal Holoprojector	Image Projection	Y	T7	+3	1A, 1S
Subdermal PMI	See below	Y	T8	+2	1S
Subdermal Projector	Project Energy (specify type, plus whether Ranged or Melee)		T7	-1	2S + *Draining* flaw
Subdermal Snare	Snare		T7	+0	2S
Subdermal Weave	See below		T6	+2	1S
Suction Glands	Expert Climber		T6	+3	1S
Synaptic Enhancer	Increased Skill Cap	Y	T8	+3	1A, 1S
Synthetic Musculature	Hyperstrength		T8	+3	1A, 2S
Tentacles	Constrict, Tentacles		T6	+4	1A, 2S
Transdermal Reinforcement	See below		T7	+1	1S
Vampire Implant	Drain Energy (Life Drain)		T7	-1	1A
Variable Physiology	Density Control		T9	+3	1A
Variform Body Plan	Variform		T9	+3	1A
Variform Physiognomy	See below		T9	+3	1A
Venom Injector	Poison		T6	-2	1S
Wings	Flight		T6	+3	3S + *Draining* flaw

COSMETIC ENHANCER

Costs 1 aspect

This common mod, originally used for vanity purposes, is now part of the complex social rituals of the Commonality Core. You can modify skin, hair, eye colour; change sex, mental state, muscle amount and tone; and increase or decrease dopamine and other hormone levels. Superficial changes take one scene, or much longer for more profound modifications.

DEFENCE CHIP

Costs 1-2 stunts

Mindscape-enhanced evasion and self-defence routines analyse the flow of combat and let you use Unarmed or Melee Combat to defend against Ranged Weapon attacks. An additional stunt buys the **advanced defence chip**, providing a +2 bonus to all Athletics, Melee Combat, or Unarmed Combat defend actions.

EMPATHIC LACE

Costs 1 stunt

Gain a +2 bonus to Redaction attempts (page 87), but you must take any consequences you treat onto yourself at 1 level lower. *For example, if you use Empathic Lace to redact a moderate mental consequence, you yourself incur a mild mental consequence.*

EXTENDED LIFESPAN

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

A high-tech version of longevity available in the Commonality, it's usually taken during character creation. Commonality citizens are geneered by default not to age naturally after reaching maturity; this enhancement means your character is already making use of this, ie is older than a single unenhanced lifespan. He still has the body of a mature human — a physiological age of mid- to late-twenties — but is at least a century older.

METABOLIC BOOSTER

Costs 1 aspect

This nanoregime lets you metabolise and store greater energy levels for other enhancements. It offsets the *Draining* flaw and helps with enhancements like Bioelectric Field Implants, Subdermal Projectors, and Wings.

Invoke: To gain a bonus on another genurgic mod; stay awake or keep active; gain a bonus to Physique rolls.

Compel: To require increased food; become physically weak after a large energy expenditure; be unable to succeed at recovery obstacles after major use.

MINDSCAPE IMPLANT

Costs 1 aspect

The Mindscape implant is **the** defining technology of the Commonality, permitting your character to access the interstellar information storage and communications network known as the Mindscape (page 186). Most Commonality characters take this mod as a mandatory extra at character creation; those who do not take an *Implant Reject* flaw (page 68). Mechanical and installation characters take a Mindscape Instance mechanical enhancement instead.

Invoke: To use the Mindscape, enhance an ability, or remember an exomemory (page 188).

Compel: To be easily tracked or detected.

REJUVE

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

This low-tech version of longevity is used on rediscovered and Fringe Worlds which don't yet have full access to Commonality tech, up to and including Stage Four Cultural Integrity and cultures subject to the Commonality embargo (page 343). Rejuve is a one-off medical procedure using DNA recombination to reduce a person's physical age, usually taken when a character is over 50 years old. You have a physiological age equal to your chronological age minus 30, and gain 5 additional skill points and a **longevity aspect** (page 110).

RESPIROCYTES

Costs 1 aspect

Respirocytes are artificial blood cells which oxygenate tissues even when your heart has stopped. They enable you to perform athletic feats that seem impossible.

Invoke: To hold your breath, have increased stamina and resistance; gain bonuses to recover swiftly when overcoming recovery obstacles.

Compel: To show up as enhanced on scans; be noticeable due to rapid recovery, slow breathing, heartbeat, etc.

SKILL CHIP

Costs 1 stunt

Aggregations of exomemory techniques, expert knowledge, and neural and nervous system boosters, skill chips provide a +1 bonus to a single specific skill when connected to the Mindscape. They provide the core knowledge and techniques required by a Commonality professional.

It takes time to benefit from a skill chip; like any new equipment, muscle and reflex memory must learn to compensate for increased capacity and reaction speed. You can't simply plug in a new one and go.

A skill chip user often carries a personal Mindscape instance (page 194) so that it continues to operate even outside normal Mindscape range. This works seamlessly as

long as the PMI has been updated in the past few months; older PMIs may provide more limited bonuses.

A skill chip may be damaged by mindburn or other physical attacks (probably as a compel of a consequence when you try to use the chip).

SPECIAL OPS CHIP

Requires occupation permission, Mindscape implant
Costs 1 aspect
A form of Mindscape implant with the "safeties" taken off, a special ops chip allows for illegal and damaging actions in the Mindscape and against Mindscape users, including technopsi attacks like mindburn, domination, and Mindscape hacking. Illegal versions are known as **black chips**.

SUBDERMAL PMI

Requires occupation permission
Costs 1 stunt
The special ops version of the personal Mindscape instance (page 194) is restricted in availability. Built into the owner's body usually as part of his Mindscape implant, it's casually undetectable, and with a monitor band cloak is detectable only on a detailed scan.

SUBDERMAL WEAVE

Costs 1 stunt
Permanent armour beneath your skin, undetectable on casual scans. Gain an armour:1 rating.

TRANSDERMAL REINFORCEMENT

Costs 1 stunt
Your skin, bones, and musculature are genurgically reinforced, undetectable on casual scans. You can take an additional mild consequence.

VARIFORM PHYSIOGNOMY

Costs 1 aspect
While non-synthetic organics don't usually have variform body plans, this lets you reconfigure your facial features, disguising yourself and even mimicking other people.

Invoke: To be unrecognisable, look like someone else.
Compel: To elicit suspicion, disturb others by inadvertently "morphing" or shifting features.

WINGS

Costs 3 stunts + Draining *flaw*
You have enormous organic wings. You must modify an aspect (probably your high concept) to reflect this.

Improvements

Improvements are special abilities applied to equipment. It's often easier to buy an improvement than, say, a genurgic mod; you don't need a genotype aspect, for example. You may need a permission (like an occupation permission) to purchase hazardous or potentially illegal improvements.

BIOMED ARRAY

Costs 2 skill points
Applied to armour or clothing, this provides a Fair (+2) Technical skill for overcoming mild consequence recovery obstacles, avoiding the -2 penalty for operating on yourself.

EVA HARNESS

Costs 1 stunt
You may use your Athletics skill for zero-G movement actions, incurring no penalties.

PSA

Costs 1 stunt and / or 2 skill points
The **personal sensor array** may be applied to armour or clothing. For 2 skill points, it provides Fair (+2) Notice and Investigate skills when used for sensorview actions; for 1 stunt, it provides a +2 bonus to sensorview actions.

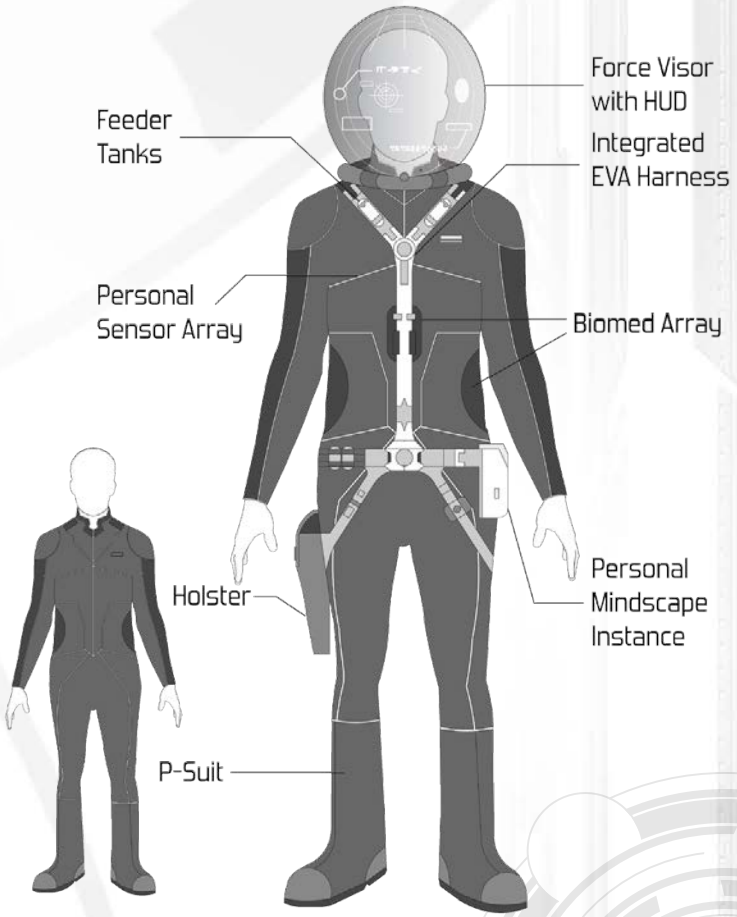


Table 8-3: Improvements

Name	Special Ability	Permission	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Biomed Array	See below		T8	+3	2SP
Energy Absorber	Absorb Energy		T7	+1	1A, 1S
Energy Projector	Project Energy	Y	T7	-1	2S
EVA Harness	See below		T6	+3	1S
Poisoned	Poison	Y	T6	-1	1S
PSA	See below		T8	+3	1S and / or 2SP
Regenerating Ammo	See below		T9	+0	1A
Sentient	See below		T8	+4	1A, 1+S, 1+SP
Vac Sealed	See below		T6	+3	1A
Variform	Variform		T9	+3	1A

REGENERATING AMMO

Costs 1 aspect

Your weapon contains a makepoint which gradually replenishes its ammo supply (page 128). **Most weapons acquired on T9+ Commonality worlds have this as standard.**

Invoke: To burn through ammo at a rapid rate, gaining a bonus to hit or damage.

Compel: To be forced to scale back your attack because your ammo is regenerating.

SENTIENT

Costs 1 aspect, plus (optionally) 1 or more stunts and skills

An item of equipment like a weapon has a synthetic **eidolon** sentience (page 43). You take the item as an extra with at least 1 aspect; you may also take skills and stunts for the item. Most equipment acquired on T8+ Commonality worlds has a **basic** sentience; this improvement indicates the sentience is an eidolon; choose how that's expressed in its aspect (*Sentient Blaster Veteran of the Xeno Wars*, etc).

Invoke: Your equipment understands the task at hand and gives you a bonus.

Compel: Your equipment misunderstands the task or refuses to cooperate for some reason.

For example: Captain Gunne, Sentient ex-Military Blaster Rifle; Regenerating Ammo*; Average (+1) Notice, Ranged Combat; Costs 2 aspects, 2 skill points.*

VAC SEALED

Costs 1 aspect

Applied to clothing or armour, this indicates your apparel is airtight with a 3-hour air supply. It may be combined with Feeder Tanks (page 137) for virtually unlimited endurance.

Mechanical Enhancements

Mechanical enhancements usually apply to robots, starships, vehicles, and other **mechanicals** (page 43). They are fully artificial, requiring power, and may malfunction. Organic characters with mechanical enhancements may become **cyborgs** (page 449).

Table 8-4: Mechanical Enhancements lists those commonly available in the Commonality; see page 292 for the corporacies which provide them.

BUILT-IN WEAPON

Costs 1 aspect

You have a weapon from "Weapons", below, built into your body; you may have to increase your scale with the Scale Increase enhancement to accommodate it. You must pay any costs for the weapon and this enhancement; use this enhancement's control index, or the control index of the weapon minus 1, whichever is lower.

Table 8-4: Mechanical Enhancements

Name	Special Ability	Halo	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Absorption Field	Absorb Energy		T7	+2	1A, 1S
Armour Plating	Armoured		T4	+0	1S
Built-in Weapon	See below		T5	-1	1A
Capture Mesh	Snare		T6	+1	2S
Chameleon Field	Mimic		T6	+0	1A
Climbing Motile	Spider Feet		T5	+3	1S
Compact / Dispersed Structure	Density Control		T5	+4	1A
Competence Subsystem	Increased Skill Cap	Y	T8	+4	1A, 1S
Control Override	Possessor / Puppetteer (Other Mechanicals only)		T6	+3	1S
Crusher	Crush		T5	+3	1S
Damping Field	Drain Energy (Electricity)		T6	+0	1A
Defence Subsystem	As Defence Chip, above	Y	T8	-1	1-2S
Direct Interface	Contact Control		T6	+3	1S
Energy Projector	Project Energy (specify type, whether Close or Ranged)		T6	+1	2S
Enhanced Neural Net	Hyperintelligence	Y	T8	+2	1A, 3S
Enhanced Sensor Package	Hypersense		T6	+4	1A, 1S
Extensible Manipulators	Extend Limb		T5	+4	1S
Extreme Environment Adaptation	Adaptation		T5	+4	1A*
Flight Capacity	See below		T6	+2	3S
Force Field Generator	Force Field		T7-10	+2	1-6S
Glide Chute	See below		T5	+3	1A
Heat Sink	Drain Energy (Heat)		T5	+2	1A
Heavy Duty Manipulators	Strength Bonus		T5	+3	2S
Holoprojector	Image Projection	Y	T6	+3	1A, 1S
Local Interface Takeover	Dispersion	Y	T8	-1	1S
Mechanical Tentacles	Constrict, Tentacles		T5	+3	1A, 2S
Mindscape Instance	See below	Y	T6	+3	1A

(continued on next page...)

(...Mechanical Enhancements continued from previous page)

Name	Special Ability	Halo	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Monitor Band Cloak	See "Stealth Gear"	Y	T6	special	1S
Multi-Weapon	Multi-Attack		T5	+1	1A, 1S, +SP
Neural Disruptor	Mental Blast	Y	T6	-1	SP
Overclocking	Speed Bonus		T5	+3	1S + *Draining* flaw
Particle Grapple	Particle Energy Control		T9	+1	1A, 1S
Rapid Response	Reaction Bonus		T5	+3	1S
Ray Shielding	Energy Resistant (Radiation, Lasers)		T5	+3	1S
Scale Increase / Decrease	Body Scale Change		T5	+4	1A, 1S
Special Ops Mindscape Instance	See below	Y	T6	special	1A
Structural Reinforcement	Health Bonus		T5	+4	2S
Variform Hull	Variform		T8	+4	1A

**combines with genotype aspect.*

FLIGHT CAPACITY

Costs 3 stunts

You have grav lifters, fixed or rotary wings, or even dirigible lifter tanks, depending upon available technology.

GLIDE CHUTE

Costs 1 aspect

You have a parawing, descent chutes, or even jet thrusters allowing you to make a controlled gliding descent.

MINDSCAPE INSTANCE

Costs 1 aspect

This is the mechanical enhancement version of the Mindscape implant used by Commonality mechanical synthetics, installations, sentient starships, etc. It's also a limited copy of the Mindscape (page 186).

SPECIAL OPS MINDSCAPE INSTANCE

Requires permission

Costs 1 aspect

This is the mechanical enhancement version of the special ops chip (page 121).

Virtual Enhancements

Virtual enhancements operate in the Mindscape, and have no physical manifestation. They include fields, imposalities, technurgy, and so on — see **Chapter 11: The Mindscape**. Virtual enhancements are exposed via a character's **halo** (page 186). Attacks using virtual enhancements are **technopsi** attacks, usually affecting the mental stress track.

Table 8-5: Virtual Enhancements lists commonly available virtual enhancements; see page 292 for the corporacies providing them.

IMPOSALITY

Requires Mindscape Engineer and Domination

Costs 2 stunts

Use the Technical skill to create a permanent **imposality** (page 191) advantage in the Mindscape. You can invoke this in a Will technopsi attack to "trap" a target in the imposality, either using an ongoing mental attack, or a situation aspect providing passive opposition to the target's actions.

MINDSCAPE COMPETENCY ENHANCEMENT

Costs 1 stunt

You have an increased capacity for expert action in the Mindscape only.

Table 8-5: Virtual Enhancements

Name	Special Ability	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Compulsion Field	Snare	T7	-2	2S
Imposality	See below	T7	+1	2S
Logic Bomb	Inject Parasite, Parasitise	T7	-1	1A, 1S, 1+SP
Mindscape Competency Enhancement	Increased Skill Cap; see below	T8	+3	1S
Sentinels	See below	T8	+3	1S

SENTINELS

Costs 1 stunt

Once per session, you may protect yourself with one or more Mindscape **sentinels** (page 191). These operate like minions (page 94).

HYPERTECH

Hypertech is advanced equipment available to Commonality characters, including vehicles, weapons, personal armour, and other items. Hypertech items are presented below as extras, but may be acquired in several ways.

Starting character equipment is discussed on page 28; this section discusses acquiring and using hypertech and other equipment in play, as story detail, aspects, and extras.

Equipment As Story Detail

Sometimes you need equipment to describe an action — perhaps a cheap optical fold to impress some natives, or clothing to attend a social event. If it's reasonable you might already have such an item, you can spend a fate point and write it on your character sheet. You don't get a bonus; it just gives you a permission to perform an action.

Equipment As Aspects

You automatically have the basic equipment you need to use your skills — a handgun if you have the Ranged Combat skill, etc. If you want something to give you a rules mechanical effect, one of the simplest ways can be to have an aspect. This requires a Resources roll to acquire, **creating an advantage** for the item (page 145). If you fail at this acquisition roll, you may succeed at a cost (page 143) by incurring credit stress equal to the difference between your roll and the difficulty; this may inflict consequences.

The passive opposition for this roll is determined as usual (page 144); it's probably Average (+1) unless the item is scarce, expensive, or otherwise difficult to acquire. The aspect you gain represents the item, and lasts as long as a normal situation aspect (page 68). If you wish to keep the item longer, you must cement it as an extra.

Equipment As Extras

For more complex mechanical effects, you can define an item as an extra using your extras budget. Some items may require a permission — at least a narrative justification for how you acquired it. This may depend on the control index (page 342) of the world you're trying to acquire the equipment on; or the character may have to belong to a certain occupation or organisation. Restricted items like this are indicated with an asterisk (*); it's up to the GM how difficult they are to acquire, but they should at least require a permission, or Contacts, Bureaucracy, Rapport or Resources rolls.

You can create items on the fly. As they're a little more involved than aspects, we've provided examples below; you can customise them, acquire them at higher or lower cost, with correspondingly poorer or greater abilities. Maybe the item is broken or damaged, or an upgraded version?

Weapons

There are many weapons in Human Space, from standard-issue handguns to disintegrators, meson rifles, and other exotic energy weapons.

Do I Have to Spend a Stunt to Have a Blaster Rifle?

No, you don't. Purchasing a weapon as an extra is a way of giving you mechanical advantages like weapon ratings, attack bonuses, or weapon aspects. If you're not concerned with such advantages and simply want to describe *your character using a certain weapon purely for colour, your GM may allow you to do so as part of the gear you automatically get when taking the Melee or Ranged Combat skills.*

Heirloom Equipment

Some characters inherit equipment from families or other organisations. ***Heirloom items*** *are usually acquired as an aspect to begin with (*Grandmother's Energy Blade*), but may be added to with stunts and skills, either at character creation or during play.*

WEAPON ASPECTS

Many weapons have aspects. When you buy a weapon with your extras budget, you automatically get access to these at no extra cost. They include:

Burst Fire: The weapon may fire bursts of 3 or so shots against a single target. This may do more damage, increase your chance of hitting, or provide suppressing fire. It may be compelled to run out of ammunition.

Full Auto: The weapon may target multiple targets in a single zone (page 175); you may divide your attack among two or more opponents if you wish. It may be compelled to run out of ammunition, overheat, and so on.

Heavy Weapon: The weapon is large and usually requires special training to use (page 93). Heavy weapons may be built into powered physical armour (page 132) at no extra cost, negating the need for crews and bipods / tripods.

Recoilless: The weapon causes no recoil and is suited for use in low- and zero-G conditions (page 176).

THE WEAPONS TABLES

The tables below present various weapons, from primitive melee weapons to advanced energy weapons. They comprise the following columns:

Weapon: The weapon's name.

Damage: How the weapon helps you damage your opponent; a weapon rating (page 103) or attack bonus.

Range: The weapon's range in **zones** (page 151). Range 0 indicates a melee weapon which uses the Melee Combat skill; ranges 1 and above indicate ranged weapons using the Ranged Combat skill.

Tech Index: The weapon's tech index (page 116).

Control Index: The world control index at which a weapon's availability becomes restricted (page 117).

Notes: Weapon notes, including weapon aspects.

Cost: The weapon's cost as an extra.

ARCHAIC WEAPONS

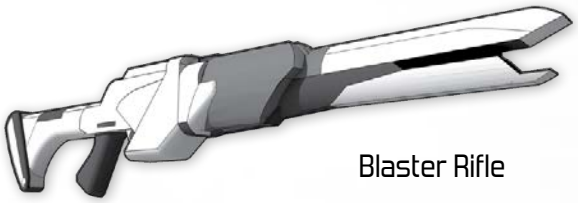
Primitive weapons doing low-velocity impact or slashing / piercing damage; at best they have a **weapon rating**.

BLASTER WEAPONS

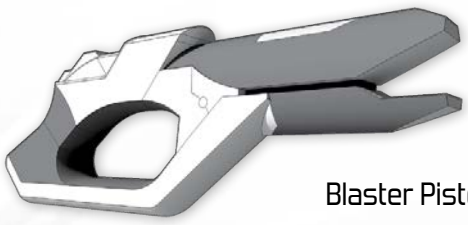
Advanced weapons using magnetically confined plasma or flammable compounds. Blaster weapons do heat damage; they have weapon ratings, and automatically create advantages like *Burning* or *On Fire* when their attacks succeed.

Notes:

Blaster pistols and **blaster rifles** include the *Tyce Systems T-20 20 megawatt blaster pistol* and the *Tyce Systems T-50 50 megawatt blaster rifle*.



Blaster Rifle



Blaster Pistol

The **meson rifle** is a handheld particle accelerator, an enormous weapon with suspensor field and steady harness; the *Pleskov (PASARM) Nova-1220* is a typical model.

Table 8-6: Archaic Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Range	Tech Index	Control Index	Notes	Cost
Black Powder Musket	w:2	2	T3	+0	*Smoky, Slow Reload*	1S
Black Powder Pistol	w:2	1	T3	+0	*Smoky, Slow Reload*	1S
Blade	w:0	1	T2	+3	*Close Combat Weapon, Concealable*	Auto
Bludgeon	w:1	0	T0	+3		1S
Bow, Composite	w:1	3	T2	+1		1S
Bow, Simple	w:0	2	T1	+1	*Hard to Draw*	Auto
Broadsword	w:2	0	T2	+1	*Heavy*	1S
Crossbow	w:2	2	T2	+1	*Slow Reload*	1S
Net	w:0	1	T0	+3	*Clumsy*	Auto
Spear	w:0	1	T0	+2		Auto
Sword	w:1	0	T2	+1	*Good Defence*	1S

Table 8-7: Blaster Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Range	Tech Index	Control Index	Notes	Cost
Blaster Pistol	w:1	1	T8	-1		1S
Blaster Rifle	w:3	3	T8	-2	*Full Auto*	2S
Burner*	w:4	3	T8	-1		2S
Flamer	w:3	2	T4	+0	Low-tech version of Burner	2S
Fusion Lance*	w:4	1	T8	-3	*Armour-Piercing, Heavy Weapon*	3S
Meson Rifle*	w:5	3	T9	-3		3S
Plasma Launcher*	w:6	3	T8	-3	*Bipod, Crew, Heavy Weapon*	3S



Meson Rifle

Table 8-8: Grenades and Explosives

Weapon	Damage	Range	Tech Index	Control Index	Notes	Cost
Bio	+0	2	T6	-4	As "Infect" (page 110)	1+SP
EMP	+4	1	T5	-3	See below	2S
Explosive ("Frag")	+4	1	T4	-2	*High Explosive*	2S
Gas	+0	2	T4	-4	As "Poison" (page 111) or "Paralyse" (page 111)	1S
Radiation ("Rad")	+2	2	T6	-4	*Radioactive*	2S
Smoke	+2	1	T4	+3		1S
Sonic	+2	1	T7	+1	See below	1S
Stun	+2	1	T5	+1	Create an advantage only	1S
Tangle	+0	1	T7	+1	As "Snare" (page 112)	2S
Grenade Launcher Attachment	+1	+1	T5	+1		1S
Grenade Launcher	+2	+1	T5	+1		1S
Rocket Launcher*	+5	3	T5	-3	*High Explosive*	3S

Running Out of Ammo

Commonality weapons of T9+ automatically have the Regenerating Ammo improvement (page 122); weapons of T8 and below may run out of ammo as part of their normal operation.

In **Mindjammer**, *weapons run out of ammo as a dramatic event, not a routine piece of book-keeping. It's not necessary to track every bullet or energy point your weapon has; instead, the GM may compel your weapon to run out of ammo at dramatically important moments. Running out of ammo doesn't mean you simply reload; that's assumed to be a standard part of using your weapon. Instead, you're actually out of ammo and must take action to find more if you want to continue to use that weapon (effectively removing a notional* Out of Ammo *situation aspect). The GM won't usually allow you to replace your spent ammo until at least the next scene, even if you're in an environment where a simple Resources roll should be able to replenish it.*

GRENADES AND EXPLOSIVES

Grenades use the Ranged Combat skill to attack, but may only be thrown into your own or an adjacent zone. If a grenade lands in your own zone, you may be affected.

Grenades use the **area effect** rules (page 175), and affect friend and foe alike. Their range indicates the number of zones they affect when they explode; "0" means the current zone, "1" means the current zone and all adjacent zones, etc. When you purchase grenades as an extra, you acquire several — maybe a belt or case — although you probably don't carry all of them on your person. All grenades have *Limited Supply* and *Easy Target* aspects.

Notes:

EMP grenades affect mechanicals' mental stress tracks and the systems stress tracks of starships, installations, and similar constructs.

The **grenade launcher attachment** can be attached to any kinetic, null, or blaster rifle, and projects grenades to greater ranges with better accuracy than thrown grenades. The **grenade launcher** is a standalone model, roughly rifle-sized.

Sonic grenades require Standard (-1 to +1) atmospheric pressure or above (page 325) to be effective.

Table 8-9: Kinetic Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Range	Tech Index	Control Index	Notes	Cost
Assault Rifle*	w:3	3	T5	-2	*Burst Fire, Full Auto*	2S
Auto Rifle	w:2	3	T4	+0		1S
Auto Shotgun*	w:4 / 2[1]	2	T5	-2	*Burst Fire, Full Auto*	2S
Handgun, Light (.22)	w:0	1	T4	-1	*Concealable*	Auto
Handgun, Medium (9mm)	w:1	1	T4	-1	*Concealable*	1S
Handgun, Heavy (.357)	w:2	1	T4	-1	*Difficult to Conceal*	1S
Machine Gun, Light (LMG)*	w:3	2	T4	-3	*Heavy Weapon, Full Auto, Bipod*	2S
Machine Gun, Medium (MMG)*	w:4	3	T4	-3	*Heavy Weapon, Full Auto, Bipod, Crew, Overheating*	2S
Machine Gun, Heavy (HMG)*	w:5	4	T4	-3	*Heavy Weapon, Full Auto, Armour-Piercing, Tripod, Crew*	3S
Machine Pistol (9mm)*	w:1	1	T5	-2	*Full Auto*	1S
Shotgun	w:4 / 2[1]	3	T4	+0		2S
Submachine gun (SMG)*	w:2	2	T4	-2	*Full Auto, Unconcealable*	2S
Sniper Rifle*	w:2	4	T4	-1	*Accurate, Unwieldy*	2S

[1] *w:4 in the same zone, otherwise w:2*

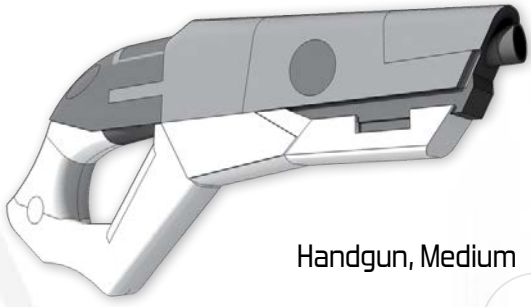
KINETIC WEAPONS

Mid-tech weapons using solid slug ammunition inflicting kinetic damage, kinetic weapons (also known as **kinorifles** and **kinopistols**) have a weapon rating. Alternative ammunition types may be available for an additional 1 stunt cost:

- **Armour-Piercing:** Reduces armour ratings by -2; may be invoked against *Heavily Armoured* vehicles, etc.
- **Dum-Dum:** Imposes a -1 penalty on Ranged Combat rolls, but you may require the target to take a consequence instead of marking off stress.
- **High-Explosive:** May be used against targets 1 scale larger with only a -2 reduction in damage rather than -4 (page 174).
- **Tracer:** Automatically creates *Tracer Targeting*-type advantages.

Notes:

Examples of **kinorifles** include the *Magnatech AR7 7mm autorifle*.



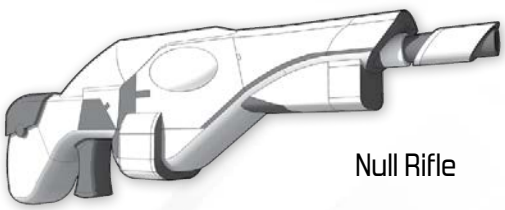
Handgun, Medium

Table 8-10: Null Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Range	Tech Index	Control Index	Notes	Cost
Null Pistol	+0	3	T7	-1	*Recoilless*	Auto
Null Rifle	+2	5	T7	-2	*Full Auto, Recoilless*	1S
Disintegrator Rifle*	+4	2	T10	-2	*Experimental, Recoilless, Terrible Wounds*	2S
Venu Protein Disruptor Pistol*	+0	1	T7	Special	*Radioactive, Recoilless*	Auto
Venu Protein Disruptor Rifle*	+2	3	T7	Special	*Radioactive, Recoilless*	1S
Venu Heavy Disruptor*	+5	3	T7	Special	*Heavy Weapon, Radioactive, Recoilless, Tripod, Unstable*	3S

NULL WEAPONS

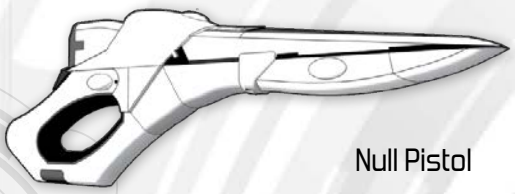
Advanced weapons using coherent beams of electromagnetic spectrum energy like visible light or microwave lasers. All null weapons have a *Recoilless* aspect, and are popular in low or zero-G environments. They're also known as **beamers** or **laser weapons**. Very accurate, they provide an attack bonus instead of a weapon rating — you can "sweep" the beam across the target.



Null Rifle

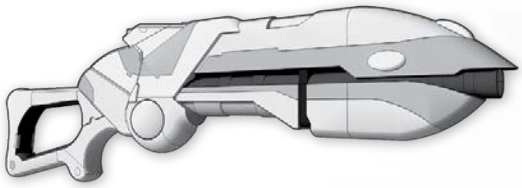
Notes:

Examples of **null pistols** and **null rifles** include the *Tyce Systems LP-25 25 megawatt laser pistol* and the *Mai Ling Null-70 70 megawatt laser rifle*.



Null Pistol

The **disintegrator rifle** is experimental and hard to obtain; it's a large weapon, firing a torsion beam which tears its target apart. The *AFI X-2 Torsion Disintegrator (Classified)* is an example.



Disintegrator Rifle

The **Venu protein disruptor pistol** is a little-seen weapon used by officers and the mysterious Venu technopriests — it's just as unstable as the rifle version.

The **Venu protein disruptor rifle** is the main Venu trooper weapon, a scaled-down version of the Venu disruptor cannon based on stolen Commonality tech. It leaks z-radiation.



Venu Disruptor Rifle

Table 8-11: Sonic and Stun Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Range	Tech Index	Control Index	Notes	Cost
Hypo Gun	+0	1	T5	+0	As "Paralyse" or "Poison" (page 111)	1S
Neural Whip	+3	0	T7	Special	*Agonising, Cruel*	2S
Paralysis Wand	+2	0	T9	+1	Create an advantage only	1S
Snare Gun	+0	1	T5	+1	As "Snare" (page 112)	2S
Sonic Disruptor Pistol (Screamer)	+0	1	T6	-1	*Recoilless, Screaming*	Auto
Sonic Disruptor Rifle (Howler)	+2	2	T6	-1	*Recoilless*, as "Howl" (page 109)	2S
Stun Baton	+2	0	T7	+1	Create an advantage only	1S
Stun Pistol	+0	1	T5	+0		Auto
Stun Rifle	+2	2	T5	+0		1S

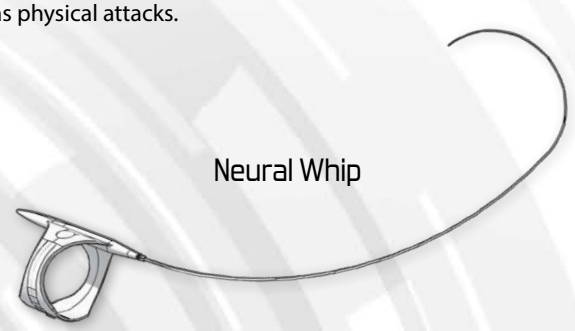
SONIC AND STUN WEAPONS

Advanced non-lethal weapons projecting sonic or high-gauss fields, overloading nervous or synthetic pseudo-nervous systems and rendering targets unconscious or incapacitated. Recoilless, they nevertheless require a Standard (-1 to +1) atmospheric pressure or above (page 325) to function.

Stun weapons function as the Mental Blast special ability (page 110), causing mental stress damage or creating advantages, but using the Ranged Combat skill. **Sonic weapons** operate similarly but have limited range; they may be used on a wide beam as a **multiple target** attack (page 175).

Notes:

The **neural whip** is a Venu weapon which causes agonising pain at the slightest touch. It can be used in mental as well as physical attacks.



Neural Whip

SPECIAL WEAPONS

Special weapons don't fit into any of the above categories. They include both melee and ranged weapons.

Notes:

Energy knives, **maces**, and **swords** are often ritualised duelling weapons, though some prefer them as superior close combat weapons. They may be used with the Blaster Bolt Defence and Lightning Attack Melee Combat stunts (page 90). The *Hydrodyne M-200 Integral Defender*, frequently built into p-suits as a holdout weapon, is an example energy mace.

The **monofil** is a lethal invisible blade comprising a single monofilament (a wire one molecule thick) held in place by a suspensor field. If two monofils ever connect, one or both suspensor fields may collapse and the blades drift free, causing terrible damage.

Vibro weapons are early powered melee weapons with rapidly vibrating blades. They cause bloody wounds.

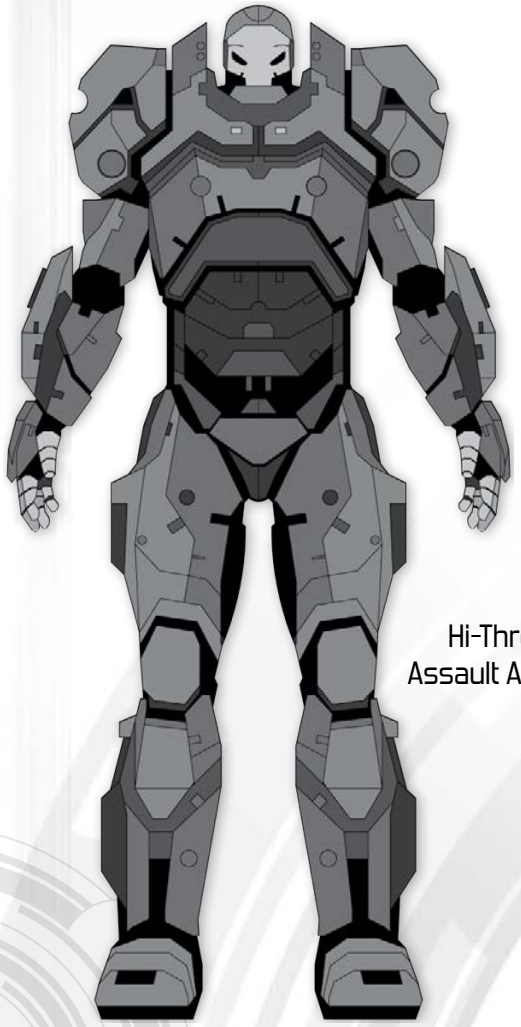


Monofil

Table 8-12: Special Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Range	Tech Index	Control Index	Notes	Cost
Energy Knife* [1]	+3	0	T8	+0	*Close Combat Weapon*	2S
Energy Mace* [1]	+4	0	T8	+0	*Knockback*	2S
Energy Sword* [1]	+5	0	T8	+0	*Fast, Good Defence, Knockback*	3S
Monofil	+6	0	T9	-3	*Cuts Anything, Hazardous in Use*	3S
Vibro Axe	+3	0	T6	-1	*Bloody, Noisy*	2S
Vibro Knife	+2	0	T6	+0	*Close Combat, Noisy*	1S
Vibro Sword	+4	0	T6	-1	*Noisy, Obvious, Ungainly*	2S

[1] *a character with the Blaster Bolt Defence stunt (page 90) automatically has a +0 version of one of these weapons.*



Hi-Threat Assault Armour

Armour

There are two types of personal protection against physical attacks: **physical armour**, and non-physical **force fields**. Like weapons, armour may have **armour aspects**.

PHYSICAL ARMOUR

For 1 stunt point, you can buy physical armour providing an armour:1 rating against physical stress, representing basic **mesh armour**. For each additional stunt point, you may upgrade to a better type of physical armour, increasing your armour rating (to a maximum of armour:3) and perhaps absorbing additional consequences.

Assault Armour

Costs 5 stunts

Comprising powered exoskeleton, reinforced polymer plates, and variform weave, and forming a sealed combat suit adaptable to many combat environments, assault armour is frequently improved with heavy weapons, EVA harness, biomed array, and so on.

Combat Suit

Costs 2 stunts

A heavy duty adaptive weave coverall for combat use, frequently combined with a haze or dispersion field.

Compound Armour

Costs 4 stunts

A mixture of reinforced polymer plates and adaptive weave, compound armour is obvious and bulky, and the preferred choice of AFI professionals.

Table 8-13: Physical Armour

Armour	Rating	Cons	Tech Index	Notes	Cost
Archaic Hide	a:1		T0	Protects against archaic weapon damage only	1S
Archaic Rigid	a:3		T2	Protects against archaic weapon damage only, *Hot to Wear*	2S
Archaic Semi-rigid	a:2		T2	Protects against archaic weapon damage only, *Heavy, Noisy*	3S
Assault Armour*	a:3	2	T9	*Airtight, Distorting, Noisy*	5S
Combat Suit	a:2		T6		2S
Compound Armour*	a:3	1	T7	*Bulky, Unconcealable*	4S
Hi-Threat Assault Armour*	a:3	3	T9	*Highly Intimidating*	6S
Mesh	a:1		T4-6	*Head and Limbs Exposed*	1S
Shocksuit	a:3		T9		3S

Hi-Threat Assault Armour

Costs 6 stunts

High-end powered armour, sealed and with a sentient exoskeleton, this is the nearest physical armour gets to a fully-enclosed combat walker (page 254). It's massive and extremely intimidating, usually vac sealed, and frequently paired with EVA harness, heavy weaponry, strength boosts, and combat drones.

Mesh

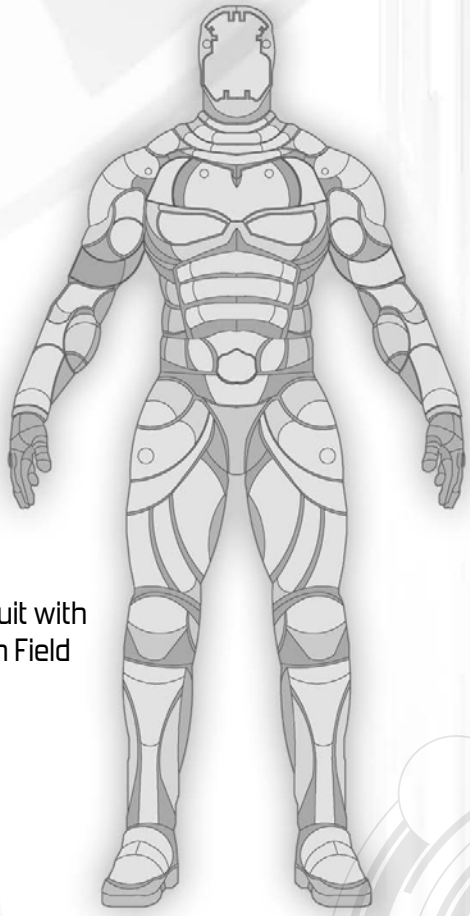
Costs 1 stunt

The lightest modern armour, consisting of adaptive fibre covering torso and abdomen which goes rigid against blunt trauma damage. Lower tech mesh refers to the heavier "bulletproof jacket".

Shocksuit

Costs 3 stunts

A bulkier version of the combat suit, the shocksuit comprises a reactive variform weave powered by a built-in ZIP cell.



Shocksuit with Stealth Field

FORCE FIELDS

For 1 stunt point, you can buy a force field giving you a +1 defend bonus against physical attacks, representing a basic **haze field**. For each additional stunt point, you may upgrade to a better type of force field, increasing your defend bonus (to a maximum of +3) and perhaps absorbing additional consequences.

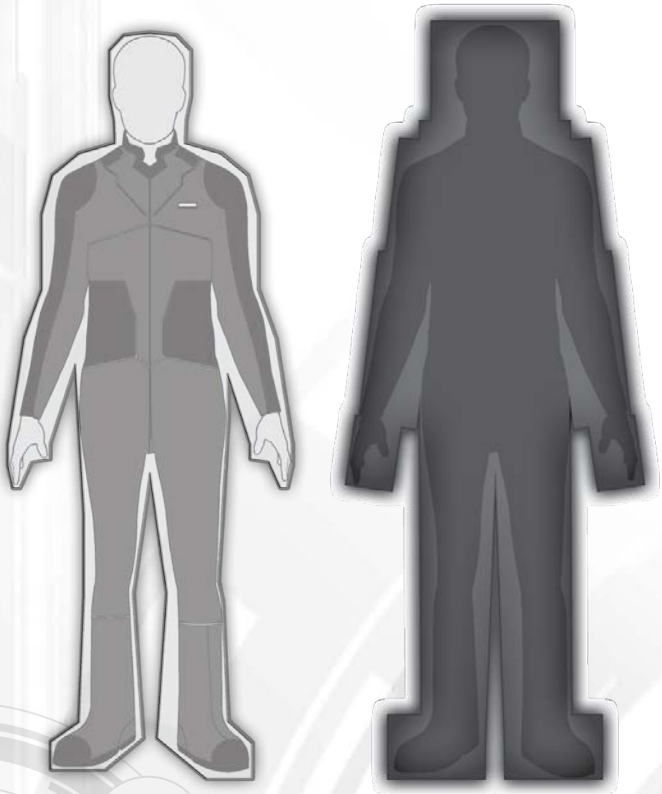
Table 8-14: Force Fields

Armour	Rating	Cons	Tech Index	Notes	Cost
Absorption Field*	+3	1	T8	*Airtight, Clumsy, Distorting, Noisy*	4S
Assault Field*	+3	2	T9		5S
Dispersion Field	+2		T7	*Noticeable*	2S
Haze Field	+1		T7	*Unobtrusive*	1S
Repulsor Field	+3		T8	*Visually Distorting*	3S
Singularity Field*	+3	3	T10	*Blacklight Field, Impenetrable, 2-space Sink*	6S

Absorption Field

Costs 4 stunts

A self-contained version of the genurgic mod (page 118), the absorption field is noisy, and distorts the user's visual signature and manipulative ability. It's powerful enough to be airtight, though doesn't usually come with an air supply.



Assault Field

Singularity Field

Assault Field

Costs 5 stunts

A more advanced version of the absorption field, it's less restrictive to the user's manipulative ability, and absorbs more damage.

Dispersion Field

Costs 2 stunts

Not overly obtrusive but nevertheless easily detectable, dispersion fields are the entry-level combat force field.

Haze Field

Costs 1 stunt

Ubiquitous in the Commonality, haze fields are low-level force fields, subtle and generally unobtrusive, and often paired with cosmetic enhancers (page 120).

Repulsor Field

Costs 3 stunts

High-energy combat force fields, repulsor fields distort the light around the wearer and are easily visible.

Singularity Field

Costs 6 stunts

Also called the **blacklight unit**, this is the most powerful force field known to the Commonality. It uses planing theory to shunt damage into 2-space, shrouding the user in an angular black field from which no light escapes.

SPECIALIST ARMOUR

Some forms of personal protection combine elements of physical armour and force fields.

Table 8-15: Specialist Armour

Armour	Rating	Tech Index	Notes	Cost
Low Signature Insertion Suit	a:1 +1	T8	*Stealthy*	2S
P-Suit	a:1 +1	T7	*Vac Sealed*	2S
Reflective	a:2	T6	Visible light lasers only	1S
Venu Light Armour	a:1	T6	*Face Mask, Showy, Vac Sealed*	1A, 1S
Venu Marauder Armour	a:2 +2	T7	*Strength Boost, Z-Radiation Bleed*	5S
Venu Trooper Armour	a:2 +1	T7	*Bulky, Unstable*	3S
Zero-G Armour	a:2	T7	*EVA Harness, Vac Sealed*	3S

Low Signature Insertion Suit

Costs 2 stunts

A combined adaptive weave and custom haze field p-suit, specially designed for stealth missions. It's largely undetectable without a blatant physical search.

P-Suit

Costs 2 stunts

A one-piece fitted adaptive weave coverall incorporating a haze field, standard issue for active personnel. Low-powered, with a force visor sealing against inimical or hostile environments and 3 hours of breathable air recycled from the wearer's body (with optional feeder tanks), it can incorporate an EVA harness, personal sensor array, or biomed array.

Reflective Armour

Costs 1 stunt

A low-tech highly reflective foil coverall capable of reflecting the energy from visible light null weapons, ie lasers. It offers no protection against other weapons, although it may be combined with mesh armour and even a p-suit.

Venu Light Armour

Costs 1 aspect and 1 stunt

Also known as a **Venu status suit**, this includes various light armours worn by Venu officers and commanders. It incorporates a Venu mask, and can be pressurised for a few minutes. Shipboard officers often combine it with an EVA harness.

Venu Marauder Armour

Costs 5 stunts

The best available Venu armour, this powered exoskeleton can't be used around unprotected allies due to its high-intensity z-radiation bleed. It incorporates an unstable dispersion field and gives its wearer a *Strength Boost* aspect.

Venu Trooper Armour

Costs 3 stunts

A heavy duty suit of composite ceramic plate usually in Venu legion colours, it has a primitive unstable force field and is airtight, with limited EVA capability. Expensive, hard to maintain, and bulky, it's standard issue for Venu troopers. A more expensive vac-sealed EVA version known as **Venu g-armour** is worn by Venu marines.

Zero-G Armour

Costs 3 stunts

A flexible suit of vac-sealed adaptive mesh incorporating a force helmet and EVA harness, this is standard issue for Space Force marines. It incorporates the Vac Sealed and EVA Harness improvements for a single stunt cost. **Improved Zero-G Armour** also incorporates a dispersion field.

Stealth Gear

Mindjammer stealth missions are a constant battle of measure and countermeasure, involving Mindscape deceit and stealth as much as physical subterfuge.

Table 8-16: Stealth Gear

Name	Enhancement	Halo	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Effectors	See below	Y	T9	+2	1A, 1S
Heat Shield	See below		T5	+2	1S
Intrusion Fold*	See below		T8	-3	1S
Monitor Band Cloak*	See below		T6	+2	1S
Nanobugs*	See below		T8	-3	1+SP
Stealth Field*	See below		T6-9	-2	1+A
Weapon Silencer*	*Silenced Weapon* aspect		As weapon	-1	1A

EFFECTORS

Cost 1 aspect, 1 stunt

Aka **finger fields** or **fiddlers**, these very small tractor fields allow micro-level manipulation. Some stealth drones (page 139) use them, although it lowers their stealth profile. You can have one built in as an enhancement, but large-scale manipulation makes power an issue, so most are palm-sized Mindscape-controlled modules in p-suits or EVA / utility harnesses. Effectors allow physical manipulation without physical contact at up to 1 zone range — effectively technopsi telekinesis.

HEAT SHIELD

Costs 1 stunt

This basic stealth field masks infrared signatures, providing a +2 bonus to avoid detection by IR or similar technologies.

INTRUSION FOLD

Costs 1 stunt

An aggregation of intrusion measures to thwart security, locks, sensors, automated defences. It doesn't mask your signature, but insinuates itself into security systems and prevents them from operating. It provides a +2 Intrusion bonus to overcome security measures.

MONITOR BAND CLOAK

Requires occupation permission

Costs 1 stunt

A small field projector dampening a Mindscape implant's **monitor band**, rendering your character virtually undetectable by Mindscape tracer, but also preventing you from using the Mindscape while it's active. You can deactivate an active monitor band cloak if you know someone has one and you're at handshake range (the same zone); it's a hacking attempt (page 87) against Fair (+2) passive opposition, or an active opposition by the target's Intrusion (Security Specialist), Deceive (Suspension Matrix), Stealth (Ghost in the Machine), or Technical (Mindscape Engineer) skill.

NANOBUGS

Cost 1+ skill points

Tiny, insect-sized low-level sentiences, nanobugs infiltrate areas and conduct passive surveillance (using the Notice skill). When passive, they're at least Superb (+5) to detect, or the surveilling agency's Stealth roll, whichever is higher. If they detect something, they immediately return to base, simultaneously transmitting their findings, when they may be detected actively or passively against only a Fair (+2) opposition. Stopping a nanobug from escaping or transmitting is a hacking attempt against Fair (+2) passive opposition or the Intrusion roll of a security specialist (page 87).

STEALTH FIELD

Costs 1 or more aspects

A variation on haze fields making subjects appear invisible or part of the scenery. They operate in multiple parts of the electromagnetic spectrum — visible light, electromagnetic, gravitic, and so on — selected when you take the item.

Invoke: To avoid detection in that energy spectrum.

Compel: To emit an energy surge in that spectum.

Table 8-17: General Equipment

Name	Enhancement	Halo	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Binoculars	Hypersense (Vision) stunt bonus		T4	+4	1S
EVA Harness	See below		T6	+4	1S
Exo-Grapple	Spider Feet		T6	+2	1S
Feeder Tanks	Adaptation (Airless environment)		T6	+5	1A
Grav Pack	Flight		T8	+3	3S
Hand Scanner	See below		T6-9	+3	1+SP
Hazard Suit	Energy Resistant (various)		T5-9	+5	1+S
Holo-Projector	Image Projection		T6	+3	1A, 1S
Holo-Sleeve	Mimic		T7	+3	1A
Infra-Goggles	Hypersense (Infrared Vision)		T5	+3	1A, 1S
Listening Device	Hypersense (Hearing)		T5	+3	1A, 1S
Meteorurgic Array	Meteorurgy		T7	-3	1A, 1+SP
Mindscape Tracer*	See below		T7	-1	1S
Mono Wing	Glide		T6	+3	1S
Night-vision Goggles	Hypersense (Night Vision)		T5	+3	1A, 1S
Personal Mindscape Instance	See below	Y	T6	+3	1A
Suspensor Field Modulator	Particle Energy Control (Gravity)		T7	-1	1A, 1S

WEAPON SILENCER

Costs 1 aspect

Weapon silencers exist for most weapons which emit noise when fired, and are generally not interchangeable.

Invoke: To attack silently.

Compel: To misfire or be off target.

General Equipment

Enhancements aren't always appropriate, even in the Commonality, and equipment replicating their effects is ubiquitous on lower tech worlds where enhancements may be restricted or unavailable. Here are some examples.

EVA HARNESS

Costs 1 stunt

For use in zero-G environments (space walks, EVA, etc), the EVA harness lets you use your Athletics skill for movement actions in zero-G with no penalty (page 176).

FEEDER TANKS

Costs 1 aspect

These small genurgy tubes create breathable air to sustain characters indefinitely, as long as they're "fed" occasionally.

HAND SCANNER

Costs 1+ skill points

Sensor suites with a raft of sophisticated motion sensors, radar, sonar, and organic and synthetic life signs detectors,

Table 8-18: Medical Equipment

Name	Enhancement	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Autodoc	Meditech, Regeneration	T8	+4	1A, 1S, 1+SP
Biomed Kit	See below	T8	+4	2SP
Stasis Chamber*	See below	T7	-2	1S

Commonality scanners are DI-equipped (page 114), and are intelligent enough to answer questions. They usually have the Notice and Investigate skills; some models may also have Knowledge and Science.



Hand Scanner

MINDSCAPE TRACER*

Costs 1 stunt

A standalone device or extension to hand scanner, PSA (page 121), or starship sensor suite (page 201), this lets you locate and track an individual by his unique **Mindscape ID**. It requires orbital sensor support (perhaps provided by global Mindscape node) for ranges greater than continental, but otherwise is the same as detecting the monitor band (page 189). Mindscape ID availability depends on the target and the world's control index.

PERSONAL MINDSCAPE INSTANCE*

Costs 1 aspect

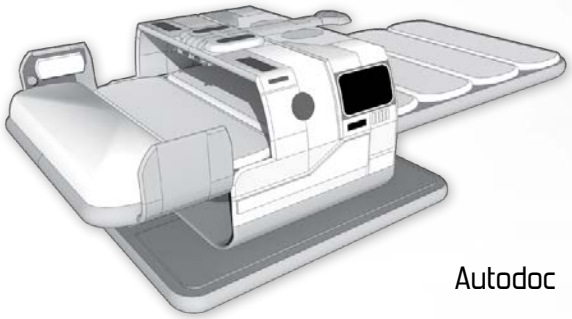
A small portable instance of the Mindscape with limited functionality, it's described more fully on page 195.

Medical Equipment

AUTODOC

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt, and 1+ skill points

An advanced sentient biomed array (page 121) in the form of a non-portable rig usually built into an installation like a starship, large vehicle, or dedicated medical facility. It usually has at least a Great (+4) Technical skill, the Meditech stunt, and the Regeneration extra.



Autodoc

BIOMED KIT

Costs 2 skill points

Similar to a biomed array, this portable device gives you a Fair (+2) Technical skill for recovery obstacles. It contains a basic sentience, diagnostic routines, and essential treatments. You may use it on yourself at the usual penalty.

STASIS CHAMBER

Costs 1 stunt

The discovery which took the First Commonality to the stars; a spacetime distortion field which slows the passage of time in a restricted volume to practically nothing. Affected volumes acquire a grey reflective sheen, and no force may enter; an operational stasis field may pass through the heart of a star. For a fate point you may

Table 8-19: Drones

Name	Enhancement	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Combat Drone	Good (+3) Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Athletics; Average (+1) Physique; Covering Fire stunt	T8	-1	1S, 6SP
Helper Drone	Good (+3) Bureaucracy; Fair (+2) Contacts; Average (+1) Rapport; Cog in the Machine stunt	T8	+4	1S, 6SP
Sensor Drone	Good (+3) Notice; Fair (+2) Investigate; Average (+1) Athletics; Lie to Me stunt	T8	+1	1S, 6SP
Speaker Drone	Fair (+2) Knowledge; Specialist (Lowhigh Culture) stunt	T8	+3	1S, 2SP
Stealth Drone	Fair (+2) Stealth, Intrusion; Average (+1) Investigate, Notice; Always a Way Out stunt	T8	-1	1S, 6SP

activate a stasis chamber and "freeze" everything within (usually 1 zone in size) in indefinite suspension. You may deactivate the field (for a fate point) at any point. You may activate the field with you inside, but may not deactivate it, although you may set a timed deactivation. Activation and deactivation are usually by Mindscape or nanocell; "locked" stasis chambers may require an Intrusion roll.

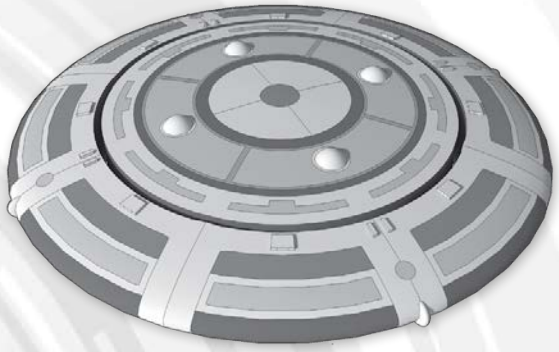
Drones

Drones are ubiquitous in the Commonality, providing PCs with useful skills for missions. At the beginning of a mission or adventure, characters with appropriate permissions or resources may select a drone to accompany them; it provides additional skills and possibly teamwork bonuses, and optionally a stunt and / or aspect. Your character may only spend his extras budget or advancements on drones, but may change the invested budget entirely at the beginning of a new mission or adventure (or appropriate milestone).

Most drones are Small (-1) (page 174), usually with one or two stress boxes and one or two consequences. Starships may also have drones like space combat and system survey drones, usually Medium (+0) scale (page 212).

The drones in Table 8-19 are examples; characters may take greater or lesser versions for the appropriate cost.

Sensor Drone



STARSHIPS AND VEHICLES

This section presents starship and vehicle extras with example skills, stunts, and aspects, which characters may buy with their extras budgets. See **Chapter 12: Constructs**, **Chapter 13: Starships and Space Travel**, and **Chapter 14: Vehicles and Installations** for starship and vehicle rules.

When a character purchases a starship or vehicle extra, its skills are construct skills (see **Chapter 12: Constructs**) which may be used for construct actions. Starship and vehicle extras may also have stress tracks and consequences: see page 199.

Vehicles

ATV

Costs 1 aspect + 6 skill points

The Hydrodyne Habitat ATV (page 253) is an all-purpose pressurised all-terrain vehicle found on worlds throughout Commonality Space, and particularly on the Fringe.

Table 8-20: Vehicles

Name	Enhancement	Scale	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
ATV	Fair (+2) Manoeuvre, Passive Sensing; Average (+1) Ranged Combat, Systems; *Rugged All-Terrain Vehicle*	Large (+1)	T7	+3	1A, 6SP
Avatar	Average (+1) Athletics, Unarmed Combat; *Remote Starship Avatar*	Medium (+0)	T9	+3	1A, 2SP
Commonality Assault Walker	Good (+3) Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Close Combat; Average (+1) Manoeuvre; Called Shot stunt; *Extremely Intimidating*	Large (+1)	T8	-3	1A, 1S, 6 SP
Flyer	Fair (+2) Manoeuvre	Large (+1)	T8	+4	2SP
Lifter	Average (+1) Unarmed Combat; Heavy Hitter stunt	Large (+1)	T9	+3	1S, 1SP
Triphib	Good (+3) Manoeuvre; Fair (+2) Passive Sensing; Average (+1) Active Sensing; Extended Manoeuvrability (Aquatic, Orbital) stunts	Large (+1)	T8	+3	2S, 6SP

AVATAR

Costs 1 aspect, 2 skill points

Gives you a synthetic body you can remote control using technopsi, effectively using it as a "vehicle". It has physical and systems stress boxes, and takes up to 3 consequences. Use your Drive or Pilot skill instead of Athletics; you may also give it skills and stunts as an extra (avatars generally take character skills and stunts instead of construct ones). Many stunts and extras (like the construct Marksman extra) automatically provide an avatar at no additional cost.

COMMONALITY ASSAULT WALKER

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt, + 6 skill points

A 4-metre tall humanoid assault walker usually fitted with auto- or laser cannon. It has a single person crew, and may be remote controlled using technopsi (page 254).

FLYER

Costs 2 skill points

A usually unpressurised personal grav vehicle capable of reaching orbit, and the most common vehicle on Commonality worlds (page 255).

LIFTER

Costs 1 stunt + 1 skill point

A large exoskeleton used for shifting heavy loads, it may be piloted physically or remotely using technopsi (page 259).

TRIPHIB

Costs 2 stunts + 6 skill points

A grav flyer with submersible and orbital capability, often carried aboard explorer ships.

Starships

If you're investing many extras budget points and advancements in a starship extra, you may want to note it on a construct sheet (page 476) as well as on your character sheet.

BOTANY BAY-CLASS EXPLORER

Costs 1 aspect, 2 stunts, + 9 skill points

The core of the Space Force exploration fleet with a crew of 50-100, this is a good ship for a PC party to take as a **shared extra** (page 105); check out a full stat block on page 231 to see other capabilities which may not be under the players' control.

HERALD-CLASS FAST COURIER

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt, + 6 skill points

Small agile ships used by the instrumentalities for urgent business, fast couriers have a crew of 1 or 2 in addition to the ship sentience, and from 3-4 passengers, expandable up to 40 or so with passenger modules (page 213).

Table 8-21: Starships

Name	Enhancement	Scale	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Botany Bay-class Explorer*	Good (+3) Active Sensing; Fair (+2) Passive Sensing, Planing; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Systems; Long Distance Life Support stunt; Remote Sensor Package (avatar); *Starry-Eyed Explorer*	Huge (+2)	T9	+3	1A, 2S, 9SP
Herald-class Fast Courier*	Good (+3) Planing; Fair (+2) Manoeuvre; Average (+1) Rapport; Negotiator stunt; *Sleek and Agile Courier*	Huge (+2)	T9	+3	1A, 1S, 6SP
Icarus-class Scout*	Fair (+2) Passive Sensing; Average (+1) Active Sensing, Manoeuvre, Planing, Technical; Auto-Repair System extra (stunt); *Lone Explorer of the Big Empty*	Large (+1)	T9	+3	1A, 1S, 6SP
Mindjammer*	Good (+3) Manoeuvre; Fair (+2) Planing; Average (+1) Ranged Combat; Mindburn stunt; Special Ops Mindscape Instance extra (aspect); *Hero of the Spacelanes*	Huge (+2)	T9	+3	2A, 1S, 6SP
Profit-class New Trader	Fair (+2) Planing; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat; Cargo Hold stunt	Huge (+2)	T9	+0	1S, 4SP
Prospector-class Mining Vessel	Fair (+2) Planing; Average (+1) Active Sensing, Manoeuvre, Passive Sensing, Technical; Ore Processor extra; *Tough and Battered Mining Ship*	Huge (+2)	T9	+4	1A, 1S, 6SP

ICARUS-CLASS SCOUT

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt, + 6 skill points

A small 1-man scout complementing the Event Horizon Probes (page 235) and the *Botany Bay*-class explorer, it can squeeze in an extra crewmember for a limited period, or up to 3 passengers in great discomfort for a week or so.

MINDJAMMER

Costs 2 aspects, 1 stunt, + 6 skill points

The signature ship of the Commonality, Mindjammers travel the spacelanes updating the Mindscape and tying the Commonality together. They often travel with up to 4 organic and synthetic companions.

PROFIT-CLASS NEW TRADER

Costs 1 stunt + 4 skill points

A cramped 1-person freighter with room for 1 other crew member and 2 passengers or additional crew. It has a cargo hold, but usually also bolts on additional cargo pods (page 213).

PROSPECTOR-CLASS MINING VESSEL

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt, + 6 skill points

Often two-person vessels, with one organic and one starship sentience, both loners and happy with the isolated life in asteroid belts and accretion disks. They can take 3 more crew at multiple occupancy.

CHAPTER NINE
PLAYING THE GAME

"Stark hit the ground in combat stance, grav harness absorbing the impact. Above, two automated defence turrets spun to identify him, before opening with twin blaster cannon. He threw himself to the side, his energy shields blistering crimson. 'People! Get to the boat, now!' he yelled, concentrating his fire on the ground troops. 'Max, Lyra — if you're out there, that means you!' "

This chapter contains the core rules for playing ***Mindjammer***: how to roll the dice to take actions, how to conduct conflicts, how to sustain and recover from damage, how to deal with movement and teamwork, and how to improve your character over time.

ROLLING THE DICE

You roll the dice to see whether you succeed or fail at something you're trying to do, when there's an interesting consequence of you failing, or an interesting obstacle in your way. That obstacle may be a person or other active party — a starship, organisation, or alien life form — or an environmental obstacle like a lava flow on an inferno planet; or it may be the sheer difficulty of what you're trying to do (hold your breath as the airlock cycles). Here's what you do:

- Choose a skill appropriate to the action you're attempting.
- Roll four Fate dice ("4dF").
- Add together the symbols showing on the dice. A ➕ is +1, a ➖ is –1, and a ⬛ is 0.
- Add your rating in the skill to the dice roll. The total is your result on the **ladder** (page 12).
- If you invoke an aspect, add +2 to your result or re-roll the dice.

Lyra's trying to break into Solenine HQ; Sarah decides this is a simple overcome action. Reiko looks through Lyra's skills and picks Stealth, hoping she can sneak past rather than trying to hack the security systems. Her Stealth skill is Good (+3), so she'll add three to whatever she gets on the dice. She rolls:

⬛➖➕➕

Her total result is +4 (+1 from the dice, and +3 from her skill), which corresponds to a Great (+4) result on the ladder.

Opposition

When you roll the dice, you compare the result to an **opposition**. Opposition is **active**, the GM or another person

Extra Effort

When you make a dice roll, you can voluntarily check any one of your physical, mental, or credit stress boxes for a bonus equal to that stress box's value, as long as you can describe how that ***extra effort*** *would help your attempt.*

Reiko could describe Lyra straining herself physically as she contorts her body through the security sensor's null beam lattice; by filling her 2-point stress box (page 152), she could gain a +2 bonus to her roll.

rolling dice against you; or **passive**, a rating on the ladder representing the influence of the environment or situation. The GM decides on the opposition.

Sarah decides to roll active opposition against Reiko for the Solenine security system. She decides the most appropriate opposing skill is Notice — the sensors are trying to spot any intruders. The sensors are above run-of-the-mill, but Solenine tech is below Commonality standard, so she gives the security system a Fair (+2) skill. She rolls:



...for a lucky result of +3!
That's a Superb (+5) total, beating Reiko's roll by one.

THE FOUR OUTCOMES

When you roll the dice, you'll either fail, tie, succeed, or succeed with style.

Every roll you make in ***Mindjammer*** results in one of four broad outcomes.

Fail

If you roll lower than the opposition, you fail.

In this case, you either don't get what you want; or you get what you want at a **serious cost** (see below); or you suffer some negative mechanical consequence; or sometimes more than one of the above. The GM decides any cost or consequence.

Tie

If you roll the same as the opposition, you tie.

In this case, you get what you want, but at a **minor cost** (see below); or you get a lesser version of what you wanted.

Succeed

If you roll higher than the opposition by 1 or 2 points (or "shifts"), you succeed.

In this case, you get what you want at no cost.

Succeed With Style

If you roll higher than the opposition by 3 or more shifts, you succeed with style.

You get what you want, but you also get an additional benefit.

Active or Passive?

*If a PC or NPC can interfere with an action, they roll active opposition. This doesn't count as an action for the opposing character; **you can roll as many oppositions as you need in an exchange**, although you may only roll for one action.*

If there's no character in the way, then look at any situation aspects to see if they represent obstacles, or consider the circumstances (rough terrain, a complex security system, time running out, etc). If something sounds interesting, choose a rating on the ladder as a passive opposition.

Sometimes something inanimate might seem like it should provide active opposition (like the ubiquitous Automated Defences*), or maybe an NPC can't actively resist (maybe they don't know what the PC is doing). In such cases, go with whichever type of opposition fits the circumstances or makes the scene more interesting.*

Serious Cost vs Minor Cost

When deciding on a serious or minor cost, think about the story and game mechanics. A serious cost makes the current situation worse, by creating a new problem or exacerbating an existing one; introduce another source of opposition immediately or in the next scene (maybe a new opposing NPC or obstacle), or impose a consequence on the player in their lowest free slot, or give the PCs' opponent an advantage with a free invoke.

*A **minor cost** adds a story detail that's problematic for the PC, but doesn't necessarily endanger progress — it could just be a descriptive detail showing how the PC only just scraped a success. Alternatively, you could ask the PC to take stress, or give the PCs' opponent a boost.*

See page 168 for more about dealing with costs.

How Hard Should Skill Rolls Be?

For active opposition, an NPC's skill level and the dice determine how difficult a roll is. You can find out more about setting NPC skill levels on page 185. For passive opposition, decide what rank on the ladder best represents the difficulty you want. Here are some ideas.

If nothing about the opposition sticks out, pick an Average (+1) difficulty.

If you can think of a reason why the opposition sticks out, pick at least Fair (+2). It's mid-way in a PC's skill pyramid, and provides a challenge for every skill level except Great (+4) — and you should give PCs a chance to show off their peak skills anyway.

An opposition two or more steps higher than the PC's skill level — Fair (+2) skill and Great (+4) opposition, for example — means the PC will probably fail, or need to invoke aspects to succeed.

An opposition two or more steps lower than the PC's skill level means the PC has a good chance of succeeding with style without invokes.

Low difficulties give the PCs a chance to shine; difficulties near their skill levels provide tension without overwhelming them; and high difficulties emphasise dire or unusual circumstances, and make them pull out all the stops.

Other Benefits and Penalties

Sometimes situations suggest a different benefit or penalty for an action result. You can tweak an action's result if it makes sense.

For example, the overcome action says you get a boost in addition to success when you succeed with style. But if that overcome action ends the scene, or you can't think of a good boost, you can offer a story detail (page 13) as a benefit instead.

THE FOUR ACTIONS

When you make a skill roll, you're taking one of four actions: overcome, create an advantage, attack, or defend.

You choose which action you're taking based on the skill you're using and what you're trying to achieve. Usually the action you want is obvious from the skill description, your goal, and the circumstances.

Overcome

Use the overcome action to achieve goals appropriate to your skill.

Every skill has key activities; a character with Intrusion tries to bypass a security system, a character with Empathy tries to calm a crowd, a character with Technical tries to repair a malfunctioning gravity engine.

When your character's in such a situation and there's something between him and his goal, use the overcome action. It's the default action for a skill — if you're not attacking, defending, or creating an advantage, you're probably attempting an overcome action.

- **If you fail an overcome action**, you either don't attain your goal, or you attain it at a **serious cost**.
- **If you tie an overcome action**, you attain your goal at a **minor cost**.
- **If you succeed at an overcome action**, you attain your goal at no cost.
- **If you succeed with style at an overcome action**, you get a **boost** in addition to attaining your goal.

Max sneaks through the accessways of the rogue corporacy's base, trying to disable its null beam defences. If he succeeds, Lyra can hack the installation sentience before the imminent rescue attempt.

Sarah says, "You make it to the control hub and start working, but hear footsteps echoing below you — sounds like the next guard patrol got here early."

"Damn," Hughie says. "I need to disable these defences and get out — if they find me, Clay already said he'd deny all knowledge."

Sarah shrugs. "Work fast? You're looking at passive opposition — pushed for time, dealing with complex systems, I'll call it Great (+4)."

Max has Average (+1) Technical. Hughie grumbles. "Should've convinced Stark to do this." He rolls a +2, for a Good (+3) result. Not enough.

Hughie chips in a fate point and says, "Dammit — I Won't Let Lyra Down Again!*", referring to one of Max's aspects. Sarah nods, and with the invoke Max manages a Superb (+5). That's enough to succeed, but not with style, so Max achieves his objective at no cost.*

Hughie describes how Max hastily short-circuits the null beam defences with some rather violent sabotage before diving for cover as the patrol approaches…

Create an Advantage

Use the create an advantage action to create a situation aspect that gives you a benefit, or to claim a benefit from an aspect you have access to.

The create an advantage action covers using your skills to take advantage (hence the name) of your environment or situation. Maybe you're changing your circumstances (throwing sand in an opponent's eyes or setting something on fire), or discovering new information (researching a space station's weak spot), or taking advantage of a previous observation (your opponent's bad temper).

When you roll to create an advantage, specify whether you're **creating a new situation aspect** or **taking advantage of an existing aspect**. If the former, are you attaching that aspect to a character or the environment?

Opposition can be active or passive. If you're targeting another character, they get to roll a defend action.

If you're using create an advantage to **create a new aspect…**

- **If you fail**, you either don't create the aspect, or you create it but it helps an opponent or other character to your detriment, giving them the free invoke. Reword the aspect accordingly.
- **If you tie**, you get a **boost** (page 68) instead of a situation aspect. Reword the aspect to reflect its temporary nature (*Disabled Control Hub* becomes *Showers of Sparks*).
- **If you succeed**, you create a situation aspect with a free invoke.
- **If you succeed with style**, you create a situation aspect with two free invokes instead of one.

Deep in the Solenine Mindscape Imposality, Lyra is fighting two Mindscape sentinels. The first couple of exchanges have gone badly, and she's taken a couple of big hits. Reiko says, "Sarah, you said there was a green crystalline data lattice around the imposality, right?"

Sarah nods. Reiko asks, "Can I dislodge some of it to slow these guys down? If they're imposality sentinels, maybe they'll be less keen to trash these data networks than me."

Sarah says, "Sounds good. Sounds like a create an advantage action with Intrusion, using your Hacking stunt. One of the sentinels gets to roll a defend action against you, because it's close enough to avoid the obstacle before you create it."

Lyra has Great (+4) Intrusion. Reiko rolls a +1, for a Superb (+5) result. The nearest sentinel rolls a Fair (+2) to defend; Lyra succeeds with style! Reiko places the aspect Obstructing Data Lattices *on the scene, and notes she can invoke it* twice *for free. Sarah describes the sentinels' difficulty advancing, and now Lyra has a little bit of an advantage in the coming exchange…*

If you're using create an advantage on an existing aspect…

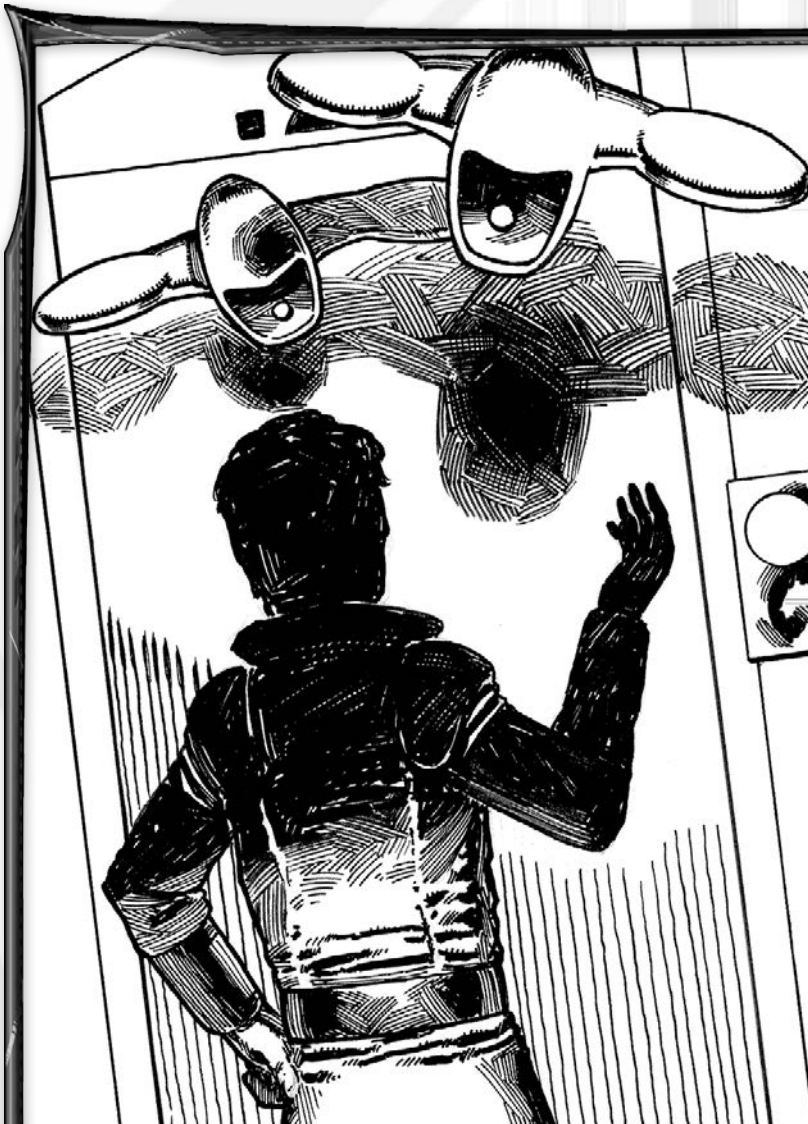
- **If you fail**, you give a free invoke of the aspect to an opponent or other character instead, to your detriment.
- **If you tie or succeed**, you get a free invoke of the aspect.
- **If you succeed with style**, you get two free invokes of the aspect.

Max approaches a fellow New Trader who has contacts high in the Solenine hierarchy. Hughie says, "I'm using Deceive to create an advantage, trick this guy into opening up. I'm looking for some juicy observation I can use later or pass on to Clay."

Sarah says, "He's a New Trader, so he's suspicious, and his Deceive's pretty high. I'm going to say it's passive opposition, though — he's not specifically suspicious of you. Try and beat Great (+4)."

Hughie has Good (+3) Deceive, and rolls +1, for a tie.

Sarah grins, and says, "Okay, here's what you notice. This New Trader's obviously a lecherous type, leering over the staff and customers in the starport bar. He gets even more lecherous when he speaks to handsome young men…"



She slides an index card with the aspect Trade by Name, Trade by Nature *on it, indicating the New Trader's aspect is now public. Hughie notes he has a free invoke on it.*

"Lecherous, eh?" he says. "Lecherous at me?"

Sarah grins. "Now you mention it…"

Hughie rolls his eyes. "The things I do for business..."

Attack

Use the attack action to harm someone in a conflict.

Conflicts aren't always physical; some skills let you hurt someone mentally or even financially. Usually your target actively opposes your attack action. Passive opposition means you've caught him unaware or otherwise unable to properly resist, or the NPC isn't important enough to roll dice for. Opposing in this way counts as a defend action.

- **If you fail an attack**, you don't harm your target. Additionally, this means your target succeeded on his defend action (see below), which could have other effects.
- **If you tie an attack**, you don't do any harm, but you gain a boost.
- **If you succeed at an attack**, you inflict a **hit** on your target equal to the number of shifts you got, forcing the target to "buy off" the value of your hit by taking stress or consequences. If the target can't do that, he gets **taken out** of the conflict (page 156).
- **If you succeed with style at an attack**, it works like a success, but you may also reduce the value of your hit by one to gain a boost.

Jackson Stark is in combat with Kzzt, the Hooyow champion, during the diplomatic debacle on the Hooyow homeworld of Valhalla (page 382). Armed only with a ceremonial Hooyow war scythe (weapon:1 rating), Stark attempts to slice open the hissing war monster.

Stark has Fair (+2) Melee Combat; Kzzt defends with Great (+4) Melee Combat. Ian rolls a +2, for a Great (+4) attack.

Sarah rolls a -1 for Kzzt, for a Good (+3) total defend. Ian wins by one, and adds the war scythe's weapon:1 rating, inflicting a 2-shift hit. Ian decides this isn't good enough. "I'm also invoking Ice Cold Killing Machine*," he says, "because, dammit, this is what I do!"*

Ian spends a fate point for a final Fantastic (+6) result. He gets 3 shifts and succeeds with style, slashing the Hooyow with breathtaking speed. Adding the weapon:1 rating, he inflicts a 4-shift hit; he could also have inflicted a 3-shift hit and taken a boost. Now Kzzt needs to use stress or consequences to stay in the duel!

Defend

Use the defend action to avoid an attack or prevent someone from creating an advantage against you.

Whenever someone attacks you in a conflict or tries to create an advantage on you, you may try to defend. This isn't always about physical danger — some skills defend against attacks on your mind, resolve, or even finances.

When you roll to defend, it's usually against active opposition like an NPC's attack or an environmental force the GM has decided is exciting enough to roll dice for (maybe a micrometeor shower puncturing your p-suit). Sometimes you'll roll against passive opposition, maybe from the environment (a corrosive atmosphere) or an NPC who isn't important enough to roll dice for.

- **If you fail a defend action**, you suffer the consequences of whatever you were trying to prevent. You might take a hit or have an advantage created on you.
- **If you tie a defend action**, you grant your opponent a boost.
- **If you succeed at a defend action**, you avoid the attack or the attempt to create an advantage on you.
- **If you succeed with style at a defend action**, it works like a success, but you also gain a boost as you turn the tables momentarily.

Thaddeus Clay is arguing his Venu Psi Hypothesis before the SCI Force council. One council probiter, an old rival named Lisbet Mors, has it in for Clay: she wants not only to see Clay fail, but to damage his self-confidence.

As Clay finishes his opening argument, Sarah describes Mors using Provoke as an attack, poking holes in his theories. Mors has Good (+3) Provoke; Clay defends with Fair (+2) Will. Sarah rolls a +1 for Mors, a total Great (+4). Chris rolls a +2 for Clay, tying at Great (+4). Clay doesn't take a hit, but he does grant Mors a boost, which Sarah decides to call Strawman Argument.

Two Sides of the Same Coin

The defend action outcomes mirror some of the outcomes of attack and create an advantage actions. For example, if you tie a defend action, you grant your opponent a boost, while if you tie an attack action, you gain a boost.

That doesn't mean the attacker gets two boosts! We're talking about the same boost here, just from two different points of view. It's mentioned in both actions so the results are complementary.



CHALLENGES, CONTESTS, AND CONFLICTS

Usually a single skill roll decides how a situation plays out. You can describe actions in any timeframe or level of detail when making a skill roll; a single Pilot roll can determine an hour-long hazardous atmospheric re-entry, or whether you avoid the null cannon attack of the star-fighter tailing you.

Sometimes, though, you'll be doing something dramatic and exciting, like a pivotal scene in a movie or book. In these situations, you can "zoom in" on the action and handle it with multiple skill rolls, letting the wide range of dice results make things dynamic and surprising. Most combat scenes work this way, but you can zoom in on anything you consider important — starship chases, technopsi confrontations, political intrigues, cultural conflicts, and more.

There are three ways to zoom in on the action:

- **Challenges**, when one or more characters try to achieve something dynamic or complicated;
- **Contests**, when two or more characters compete for a goal;
- **Conflicts**, when two or more characters try to harm each other.

Challenges

A single overcome action can deal with a straightforward goal or obstacle like hacking a security system. It's useful when the details aren't important or worth spending too much time on, when you just need to know whether a character succeeds without setbacks or costs. Sometimes, though, it's not enough to hack the security system — because you also have to fend off the attacking troopers and set up a force field to keep pursuers off your back.

A challenge is a series of overcome actions to resolve an especially complicated or dynamic situation. Each overcome action uses a different skill to deal with one task or part of the situation, and you interpret the separate results together to figure out how the situation resolves.

To figure out if a situation is right for a challenge, ask the following questions:

- Does each separate task generate tension and drama in its own right? If all the tasks are actually part of the same goal — "accessing the control surface", "identifying the security subsystem", and "re-routing the surveillance feed" when you're hacking a security system — then that should be one overcome action, where you can use those details to explain what happened if the roll goes wrong.
- Does the situation require different skills to deal with? Holding off the troopers (Ranged Combat) while setting up a force field (Technical) and hacking a security system (Intrusion) so you can escape is a good opportunity for a challenge.

To set up a challenge, identify the separate tasks or goals that constitute the situation, and treat each as a different overcome roll. Depending on the situation, you may require that some rolls happen in a certain order, or that one character or several characters attempt the different rolls — it's up to you.

Lyra is hacking the docking bay doors on a Venu Q-Zone listening station so the group can escape. Normally, this wouldn't be that interesting — just an overcome roll — except that she's trying to do it before a horde of Venu troopers overruns the docking bay.

Sarah sees several different components to the scene. First there's the hacking action; then there's keeping the troopers at bay; and finally there's setting up a force field to stop the troopers pursuing as they steal a shuttle and escape into space. All that calls for Intrusion, Technical, and Ranged Combat.

The group decides three characters will roll these three skills separately. Sarah sets the opposition for each at Good (+3) — she wants the group to face reasonable difficulty and a variable outcome.

Now they're ready to start.

In a challenge, call for each overcome action in whichever order seems most interesting or logical, but **don't describe how everything turns out until you've collected all the results** — you want the freedom to describe each roll in the way that makes most sense and is the most entertaining. If any player gets a boost, he can pass it to another action in the challenge, as long as he can describe how that works.

Once all the rolls have been made, consider the successes, failures, and costs of each action to gauge the overall outcome. The results could lead to another challenge, a contest, or even a conflict.

The group decides to tackle holding off the troopers first. Jackson Stark rolls a -1 on his Great (+4) Ranged Combat, tying the roll and allowing him to achieve the goal at a minor cost. Sarah says, "I'm going to say the Venu troopers' disruptor fire gives me a Keep Your Heads Down *boost to use against Lyra — hacking requires concentration, after all."*

Reiko sighs and nods, then rolls a terrible -3 on her Great (+4) Intrusion hacking attempt against the boosted Superb (+5) passive opposition. Lyra has the option to fail, or succeed with a serious cost. Reiko chooses success, leaving Sarah to think of a serious cost.

How to make hacking the docking bay doors costly? Sarah grins. "This is a story more than a mechanics thing, but you're using Intrusion, under pressure, short of time — I could see you inadvertently tripping alarms when hacking those doors…"

Reiko says, "But that will let them know where we're leaving from!" Sarah is just grinning. Reiko sighs again. "Okay, fine. The Venu now know which docking bay we're going to try and fly out of. Ugh."

Chris now rolls for the final part of the challenge — Thaddeus Clay's Fair (+2) Technical, setting up the force field. Sarah describes the Venu troopers darting in and out of Stark's suppressing fire. "We've got to go, now!"

Clay rolls a +2, for a Great (+4) total, as the force field flickers to life, blocking the corridor. "Let's go!"

Together the group finishes describing the scene — Lyra finishes hacking just in time, and the force field rises. Some troopers get sizzled, but Max sighs with relief as they run into the docking bay and onto the bridge of the nearest Venu shuttle… until he fires up the engines and sees the Venu warhawk manoeuvring just outside the docking bay doors.

But that's the next scene…

If you have any boosts unused in a challenge, you can keep them for the rest of the scene or whatever scene you're transitioning to, if the challenge's events connect directly.

CREATING ADVANTAGES IN A CHALLENGE

You can attempt create an advantage actions during a challenge, either for yourself or someone else; this doesn't count as one of the challenge actions. Failing in the create an advantage action could incur a cost or problem that negatively impacts a challenge action; advantages can help challenge actions, but the tactic isn't without risk.

ATTACK ACTIONS IN A CHALLENGE

Challenges focus entirely on overcome actions, usually against passive opposition. If you end up in a situation where it seems reasonable to roll an attack, switch to a **conflict** instead (page 150).

Contests

If two or more characters have mutually exclusive goals but aren't directly trying to harm each other, they're in a **contest**. Arm wrestling matches, races, and public debates are examples of contests.

When setting up a contest, ask the following questions:

- What are the "sides" in the contest? Is every character in it for himself, or are groups opposing groups? Multiple characters on a side roll together using the "Teamwork" rules (page 159).
- What's the contest environment? Can you define any features as situation aspects?
- How are the sides opposing each other? Are they opposing directly (like a sprint race or a staredown attempt), or are they competing to overcome something in the environment (like an obstacle course or judges' panel)?
- What skills are appropriate for the contest? Does everyone roll the same skill, or can several apply?

Jackson Stark has spotted a mechanical assassin approaching the Zalmoxian governor's cortege on the Casino Vulcanica *star city. There's no time to shout a warning — can he get there before the assassin gets to his target?*

Sarah looks through the questions for setting up the contest.

The Casino Vulcanica *has the* Wealthy Innocent Bystanders *situation aspect. Stark and the mechanical assassin are directly opposing each other, providing active opposition.*

The mechanical assassin is rolling its Good (+3) Stealth skill for the contest, because it's creeping up on the Zalmoxian

governor. Stark is making a movement action, so he's rolling Fair (+2) Athletics.

A contest proceeds in a series of **exchanges**. In an exchange, every participant can make one overcome action to determine how well they do in that stage of the contest.

When you make a roll in a contest, you compare your result to everyone else's.

- **If you got the highest result, you win the exchange.** If you're rolling directly against the other participants, that means you got the highest rank on the ladder out of everyone. If you're all rolling against something in the environment, it means you got the most shifts out of everyone.

Winning the exchange means you score a **victory**. You can represent this with a tally mark or tick on a piece of paper. Describe how you take the lead in the contest.

- **If you succeed with style and no one else does,** then you get two victories.
- **If there's a tie for the highest result, no one gets a victory, and an unexpected twist occurs.** This could mean several things — maybe the terrain or environment shifts, the conditions of the contest change, or something unexpected occurs, affecting all the participants. The GM should create a new situation aspect reflecting this.
- The first participant to achieve three victories wins the contest.

In the first exchange, Ian rolls poorly for Jackson Stark, for an Average (+1) total. Sarah rolls a 0 and stays at Good (+3). Sarah wins, so the mechanical assassin marks 1 victory. Sarah describes the mechanical assassin breaking cover and moving towards the governor, its subdermal blade glinting.

Jackson
Mechanical Assassin |

In the second exchange, Ian rolls exceptionally, getting a Superb (+5), whereas the mechanical assassin only gets a Fair (+2). That's success with style, so Ian picks up two victories and takes the lead, describing Jackson bearing down in a sprint on the mechanical assassin.

Jackson ||
Mechanical Assassin |

In the third exchange, they tie at Good (+3). Sarah has to introduce an unexpected twist, and says, "Okay — one of the Governor's aides has spotted what's going on. He's raising his arm — it looks like he has a subdermal — but he's not pointing at the assassin. He's aiming at you!" She writes down a Treacherous Commotion *situation aspect on an index card and puts it on the table.*

In the fourth exchange, they tie again, at Great (+4). Ian says, "I want to invoke two aspects — first, I Learned To Hide My Fear *from my character sheet, and second* Treacherous Commotion*, because I figure that people will be bundling the Governor out of the area." He passes Sarah two fate points.*

That puts his final result at Legendary (+8), success with style and another two victories. That gives him four victories to the mechanical assassin's one, and he wins the exchange and the contest!

Jackson ||||
Mechanical Assassin |

Sarah and Ian describe how the Governor is bundled away, just as Stark smashes into the mechanical assassin and sends it crashing to the floor. The fight is on!

CREATING ADVANTAGES IN A CONTEST

During any exchange, you can try to create an advantage **before** you make your contest roll. **This is an exception to the usual rule that you can only make one action roll in an exchange.** If you're targeting another participant with that create an advantage action, they defend normally. If someone can interfere with your attempt, they provide active opposition as normal.

Creating an advantage like this carries a risk — **failing to create the advantage means you forfeit your contest roll,** which means you can't make progress in the current exchange. If you at least tie, you can make your contest roll normally.

If you're providing a bonus via the Teamwork rules (page 159), failing to create an advantage means the lead character doesn't benefit from your help this exchange.

Jackson tries to shout an alarm at the Governor as he's running to intercept the mechanical assassin. Ian says he wants to create an advantage called Alerted to Danger.

He rolls Provoke to create the advantage and gets a Great (+4). Sarah says it's a Fair (+2) passive opposition (she could roll the Governor's Notice skill, but doesn't think it's worth removing the focus from combat to do so).

Stark succeeds, alerting the Governor, and Ian notes he has a free invoke on Alerted to Danger.

Because Ian didn't fail, he makes his contest roll normally. Sarah decides that being exposed isn't going to stop the mechanical assassin in the slightest, so it now switches to its Fair (+2) Athletics (a lower skill than its Good (+3) Stealth) and rolls normally.

ATTACK ACTIONS IN A CONTEST

Making an attack action in a contest means it's no longer a contest; switch to a **conflict** instead.

Situation Aspects and Zones in Mental and Credit Conflicts

*In a mental or credit conflict, it may not make sense to use situation aspects and zones to describe a physical space. In an interrogation, for example, physical features of a place create fear; but not in a ruthless corporate takeover attacking your credit track. Emotional conflicts usually use a target's own weaknesses against him — in other words, his own aspects and flaws — while credit conflicts may use an opponent's weaknesses (*Greed Is Good, Inveterate Speculator, *etc), but equally situation aspects may devolve from the broader economic environment (*Desperate Trade War, Economic Collapse, Cultural Revolution*).*

Situation aspects and zones aren't always appropriate for mental and credit conflicts; don't feel obligated to include them.

Conflicts

In a **conflict**, characters are actively trying to harm one another. It may be a fire fight, martial arts attack, or a duel with energy blades. It could also be a tough interrogation, a **mindburn** assault, or a shouting match with a loved one. It could even be a battle between starships, a trade war, an aggressive buy out, or a financial attack on an institution. **As long as the characters involved have the intent and the ability to harm one another, it's a conflict.**

Conflicts are physical, mental, or credit in nature, based on the stress track being affected. Physical conflicts cause bruises, slashes, gunshot trauma, and other injuries; mental conflicts cause loss of confidence and self-esteem, loss of composure, and other psychological trauma; credit conflicts cause loss of resources, creditworthiness, and crippling debt.

Setting up a conflict is more involved than contests and challenges:

- Set the scene, describing the environment, situation aspects, and **zones**, defining who's participating and what side they're on.
- Determine the **turn order**.
- Start the first exchange:
  - On your turn, take an action and resolve it.
  - On other people's turns, defend or respond to their actions as necessary.
  - At the end of everyone's turn, start a new exchange.

A conflict ends when everyone on one side has **conceded** or been **taken out** (page 156).

SETTING THE SCENE

The GM and players should answer the following questions about the scene's circumstances:

- Who's in the conflict?
- Where are they positioned relative to one another?
- When is the conflict taking place? Is that important?
- What's the environment like?

You don't need great detail here, or precise distances or times — just enough to make it clear what's going on. The GM uses this information to create situation aspects to define the arena of conflict.

Stark, Max, and Lyra are on the quarantined world of Drefnia, investigating a breach of the Commonality embargo. They find a warehouse by a landing strip in the endless jungle, where smugglers have been shipping exotic potential psi-products exuded by the Mozgooms, Drefnia's fabled "vegetable intelligences". Unfortunately someone has alerted the smugglers, and four goons are waiting for them when they arrive — together with the looming stingray form of a Zybote — one of the Mozgooms' symbiotic motile fungi!

The conflict participants are obvious — the PCs, and the Zybote and four minor NPC smugglers (page 181) under Sarah's control. The jungle warehouse is the environment, and the group describes it — crates everywhere, large and open, probably a second floor. Sarah adds the loading door is open to the jungle because they're waiting for a ship.

Situation Aspects

Look for environmental features to make into exciting situation aspects for the conflict. Don't overdo it — three to five are plenty. Promising features include:

- Planetary conditions — does the world have markedly different gravity, temperature, or atmosphere, is it exposed to vacuum, etc?
- Mood, weather, or lighting — is the environment dark or poorly lit, stormy, creepy, blindingly bright?
- Obstacles to movement — dense vegetation, broken terrain, mud everywhere, frictionless, low-G, etc.
- Things to hide behind — vehicles, obstructions, bulkheads, rocks, plants.
- Things you can knock over, wreck, or use as improvised weapons — containers, storage units, tools.
- Things that are flammable, corrosive, or explosive.

Considering our jungle warehouse, Sarah decides the High CO_2 Content *of the Drefnian atmosphere is distracting to newcomers without breathers — they'll get headaches, blurred vision, etc. She also decides there are enough crates to make movement an issue, picking* Heavy Crates *and* Cramped *as aspects. She picks* Open to the Jungle *as a situation aspect, figuring someone might try to escape, take cover, or take the combat out there.*

Players can suggest situation aspects. If the GM described the scene as poorly lit, a player should be able to invoke a *Shadows* situation aspect on a Stealth roll, even if he hadn't previously established it as an aspect. If an environmental feature requires the PCs to *do something* to make it into a useful situation aspect, that's a perfect case for a create an advantage action. Usually an airlock doesn't expose a docking bay to *Cold Hard Vacuum* without someone cycling it first…

Zones

Conflicts occurring over a wide area can be broken down into **zones** for easier management.

A zone is an abstract representation of space, usually physical, but sometimes mental, social, or even virtual. Being in the same zone means you're close enough to interact directly with someone (walk up to and punch them in the face).

A conflict should rarely involve more than a handful of zones; two to four is ideal, unless it's a really big conflict. Keep it simple — zones should give a tactical feel for the environment, but the moment where you start reaching for a ruler or grid, you're probably going too far.

- If the area is bigger than a house, maybe divide it into two or more zones — think of a starship or hostile planetary environment.
- If it's separated by turbolifts, screens, or bulkheads, they probably indicate different zones.
- "Above X" and "below X" can be different zones, especially if moving between them takes some doing — think of the space around something large, like a space station.

Note down any situation aspects that might make moving between zones problematic. If that means you need more situation aspects, add them now.

Sarah decides the warehouse needs multiple zones. The main floor is big enough for two zones, and the Heavy Crates *she mentioned earlier make it hard to freely move between them.*

She also makes the landing strip outside a separate zone with an Open to the Sky *situation aspect, and then Drefnia's jungle, with an* Impenetrable Undergrowth *aspect, figuring anyone trying to flee that way will have a hard time.*

ESTABLISHING SIDES

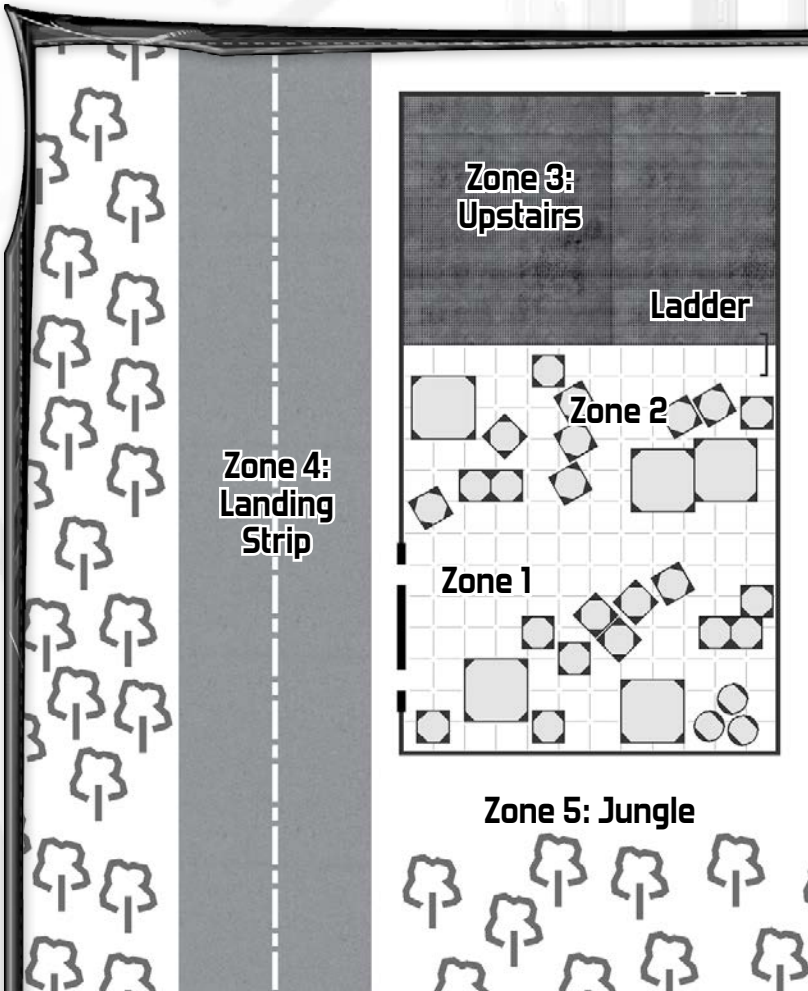
Conflicts are about goals, with two or more sides either trying to achieve a goal or to stop the other side achieving theirs. PCs normally form one side, fighting against NPCs who form another. Different setups are possible, however — PCs can fight one another, and join with NPCs to form one or more sides.

In a conflict, it's important to establish who's on which side, what their goals are, and where everyone is situated in the scene (who's in which zone, etc). It's also important to determine how each side divides up to face the other. Is one character being mobbed by the bad guy's henchmen, or is the opposition spreading itself equally among the PCs? Once conflict starts this may change, but this gives you a starting point.

In the Drefnian warehouse fight, the sides are obvious — the Zybote and the smugglers want to neutralise the PCs, and the PCs want to stop them. The conflict starts with everyone on the main warehouse floor. Sarah decides the Zybote and one smuggler are going after Stark, two thugs are after Lyra, and the last is chasing Max.

TURN ORDER

The order you act in a conflict is called the **turn order** or **initiative order**, and is based on your rating in a specific



skill. For physical conflicts, that skill is Notice; for mental conflicts, it's Empathy; and for credit conflicts, it's Bureaucracy. Whichever participant has the highest skill rating acts first, followed by everyone else in descending order.

On a tie, compare a secondary or tertiary skill. For physical conflicts, that's Athletics, then Physique; for mental conflicts, Rapport, then Will; and for credit conflicts, Contacts, then Resources. The GM can choose the most advantageous NPC to determine initiative order, and let all NPCs act at that time, or may determine initiative for each NPC individually.

Stark has Good (+3) Notice, higher than everyone else, so he goes first.

Max and Lyra have Fair (+2) Notice, so they act joint second.

The Zybote has no Notice skill (although it has Great (+4) Athletics), so it acts last, together with the smugglers, who are minor NPCs (page 181).

THE EXCHANGE

Exchanges in conflicts are more complicated than in contests. In an exchange, every character may take an action in initiative order.

Usually you'll attack or create an advantage on your turn, because that's what conflicts are about — taking out your opponent, or making it easier to do so.

However, you may have a secondary goal, in which case you may make an overcome action instead. This most often happens when you try to move between zones but a situation aspect gets in your way.

You may only make one skill roll on your turn in an exchange, unless you're defending against someone else's action, which you can do as often as you want. You can even make defend actions on behalf of others, as long as it's reasonable for you to interpose yourself between the attack and its target. In that case, you suffer the effects of any failed defend rolls yourself.

Full Defence

You may forego your action in an exchange to concentrate on defending against attacks. You get a +2 bonus on all defend actions in that exchange, but may take no other action.

In the first exchange of our warehouse fight, Ian has Stark attack the smuggler attacking him. That's his action for the exchange — he can still roll to defend whenever he needs to, but he can't do anything else proactive until his next turn (in the next exchange).

On Reiko's turn, she has Lyra do a full defence — normally, she could defend and act, but this way she gets a +2 to her defend rolls until her next turn.

On Hughie's turn, he has Max create an advantage by placing a Hemmed In *aspect on the smuggler attacking him, hoping to corner him between some crates. That's his action for the exchange.*

Sarah goes last, and has all her NPCs attack their chosen targets.

RESOLVING ATTACKS

A successful attack causes a hit on a target equal to the shifts generated on the dice roll. If you get three shifts, you cause a 3-shift hit.

If you're hit by an attack, you must absorb the hit to stay in the fight, or get **taken out**. You can absorb hits by taking **stress** and / or **consequences**. You can also **concede** a conflict before getting taken out to keep some control over what happens to your character.

Stress

Your first approach to absorbing a hit is usually to try and take **stress**.

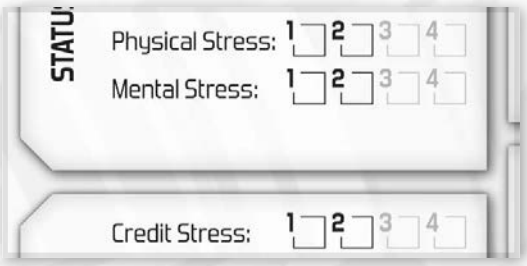
Stress represents the reasons you might avoid the full force of an attack. Maybe you twist away from a blow, or an attack looks serious but is actually a flesh wound. Mentally, stress might mean you manage to ignore an insult, or resist an instinctive emotional reaction. Credit stress might mean you put your creditworthiness on the line to stay in a bidding war. You can only do this so many times before you have to face the music.

On your character sheet, you have a number of **stress boxes**, each with a different shift value. All characters get a 1-point and a 2-point stress box; you may get additional, higher-value boxes depending on certain skills (usually Physique, Resources, and Will).

When you take stress, check off a **single** stress box with a value equal to the shift value of the hit. If that box is already checked, check off a higher value box. If there's no available box of that shift value or higher, and you can't take any consequences (see below), you're **taken out** of the conflict. **You can only check off one stress box per hit.**

Managing Minions

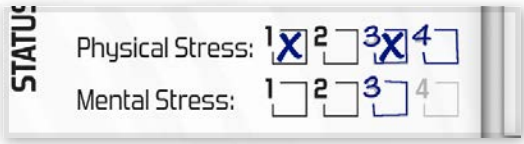
*GMs with a lot of minor NPCs (page 181) can use passive opposition to keep dice rolling to a minimum. You can also use **groups** (page 182) instead of individual NPCs to make things simpler still.*



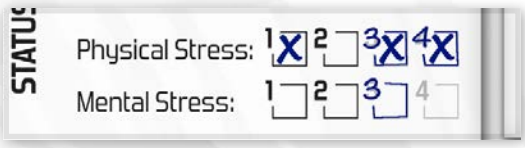
Remember you have three sets of stress boxes! One is for physical stress, one for mental, and one for credit; you start with a 1-shift and a 2-shift box in each. If you take stress from a physical source, check off a physical stress box; if it's a mental hit, check off a mental stress box; if it's an attack on your creditworthiness and resources, check off a credit stress box.

After a conflict, when you get a minute to breathe, any physical or mental stress boxes you checked become unchecked, available for you to use again. Credit stress boxes clear at the end of the current game session.

The Zybote slams into Stark with a massive 3-shift hit, smashing him with its stingray-shaped body. Looking at his character sheet, Ian sees that he's only got two stress boxes left — a 2-point and a 4-point.



Because his 3-point box is already checked, the hit must be absorbed by a higher-value box. He reluctantly checks off the 4-point box.



Sarah and Ian describe the outcome — Stark hurls himself aside to barely dodge a blow that shatters a nearby crate, peppering his face with splintered plass. Stark has one more stress box on his sheet, a 2-shift box. His reserves are almost gone, and the next major hit he takes is going to hurt bad…

Taking One for the Team

You may decide not to defend against an attack, and deliberately take a hit (maybe to interpose yourself in front of a blaster bolt about to strike your friend). Because you're not defending, the attacker rolls against Mediocre (+0) opposition, meaning you'll probably take a serious hit.

Consequences

Your second option for absorbing a hit is to take a **consequence**.

A consequence is more severe than stress — it represents a lasting injury or setback that will be a problem for your character after the conflict.

Consequences have three levels of severity: mild, moderate, and severe. Each has a different shift value: two, four, and six, respectively. You have two sets of available consequence slots on your character sheet: one set for physical and mental consequences combined ("general consequences"), and one for credit consequences.



When you use a consequence slot, you reduce the shift value of the attack by the shift value of the consequence. **You can use more than one consequence slot at a time.** Any shifts remaining must be absorbed by a **single** stress box to avoid being taken out.

There's a penalty to taking consequences. The way you describe the consequence in the slot is an **aspect** representing the attack's lasting effect. The opponent who forced you to take the consequence gets a free invoke, and the aspect remains on your character sheet until you've **recovered** from the consequence (page 155). While on your sheet, a consequence is treated like any other aspect, except because it's negative, it's generally used to your character's detriment.

Unlike stress, a consequence takes time to recover from after the conflict. For physical and mental consequences, you only have one set of consequence slots. This means that, if you have to take a mild consequence

to reduce a mental hit and your mild consequence slot is already filled with a physical consequence, you're out of luck; you must use a moderate or severe consequence to absorb the hit. The exception to this is the extra consequence slot you get from a Superb (+5) Physique or Will, which is reserved for physical or mental harm, respectively.

You have a separate set of consequences for use in credit conflicts. Credit conflicts are different in nature from the more direct mental and physical conflicts, and credit consequences are managed separately.

Lyra is attacked by two smugglers, who land a 6-shift hit on her, despite her full defence. She still has all her stress boxes and consequences available.

She has two ways to take the hit. She could take one severe consequence, negating 6 stress, or take a moderate consequence (4 stress) and use her 2-point stress box. She decides she's not likely to be hit for that much again, so she takes the severe consequence to keep her stress track open for smaller hits.

Sarah and Reiko agree to call the severe consequence Nearly Gutted. *Lyra takes an agonising bolt from one of the smugglers' blasters, gritting her teeth through the pain…*



Naming a Consequence

Consequences are aspects; naming them determines the real effect they have on how you can describe your character's subsequent actions. Here are some examples.

Mild consequences don't require immediate medical or reparative attention. They hurt, and may present an inconvenience, but they aren't going to force you into inactivity. Mild mental consequences express things like small social gaffes or surface emotion changes; mild credit consequences represent depleted resources or temporarily exceeded credit limits. Examples: *Black Eye, Bruised Hand, Winded, Flustered, Cranky, Temporarily Blinded, Empty Pockets, No Credit Till Tomorrow*.

Moderate consequences represent fairly serious impairments requiring dedicated effort to recover from (including medical attention). Moderate mental consequences express damage to your reputation, or emotional problems you can't just shrug off with an apology and a good night's sleep. Moderate credit consequences represent problems with financing agencies or cash flow. Examples: *Deep Cut, First Degree Burn, Exhausted, Drunk, Terrified, Out of Credit, Cash Flow Crunch*.

Severe consequences go straight to the autodoc, redactor, or local Pansectorate or corporacy audit bureau — they're extremely nasty, and prevent you from doing a lot of things, and will lay you out for a while. Severe mental consequences express serious trauma or relationship-changing harm; severe credit consequences include suspension of resource access, seizure of assets, or credit blacklisting. Examples: *Second Degree Burn, Compound Fracture, Guts Hanging Out, Crippling Shame, Trauma-Induced Phobia, Asset Seizure, Blacklisted.*

Recovering From General Consequences

To recover from a consequence and free up its consequence slot, you must succeed at an action that justifies that recovery, then wait an appropriate amount of game time for that recovery to occur.

This **recovery action** is an overcome action; the obstacle is the consequence. For a physical consequence, the action is medical treatment or first aid; for a mental consequence, it may involve redaction (page 87), counselling, or simply R&R with friends.

The difficulty of the recovery action is based on the shift value of the consequence; mild is Fair (+2), moderate is Great (+4), and severe is Fantastic (+6). If you're attempting a recovery action on yourself, the difficulty is increased by +2.

Your immediate environment must be free of distraction and danger to attempt a recovery action — you can't undertake a course of redaction therapy while cowering in a bomb crater as the attack drones hunt you down.

Success at a recovery action lets you rename the consequence aspect to show it's in recovery. For example, *Broken Leg* could become *Immobilised by Regenerator Gel*, *Scandal-*

ised could become *Damage Control*, and so on. It doesn't yet free up the consequence slot, but indicates you're recovering and changes the ways the aspect can be used.

Whether you change the consequence's name or not (sometimes it might not make sense to change it), mark it with an asterisk (*) to indicate recovery has started.

Recovering From Credit Consequences

Recovery from harm to your credit stress track works slightly differently, mostly because danger to your credit stress track resets every **session**, not every scene. As a result, you can make recovery actions to remove credit **stress** as well as consequences.

You attempt credit recovery actions by generating credit of your own on an overcome action using the Resources skill. The difficulty is Average (+1) for recovering credit stress, or according to consequence severity (see above) for removing consequences.

You may invoke the situation aspect granted by an item of equipment to "convert" that item into credit, meaning you "sell" or otherwise dispose of the item — remove it from your character sheet. You can use the shifts generated on this recovery roll to "buy up" credit stress boxes or remove credit consequences.

Anyone can do this to remove mild consequences, but above that you need a stunt. The Bail Out stunt (page 95) is used for credit recovery actions for characters; the Starship Trader stunt (page 96) does the same for starships.

Recovery Time

Once you've succeeded at a recovery action, and maybe renamed the consequence, you must wait the time for the consequence to "heal".

- For a mild consequence, you must wait one **scene** after the recovery action, before removing the aspect and clearing the slot.
- For a moderate consequence, you must wait one **session**, meaning if you succeed at a recovery action in the middle of a session, you recover in the middle of the next session.
- For a severe consequence, you must wait one **scenario** (page 419).

Lyra took a Nearly Gutted *severe consequence as the result of the fight. Back on the ship, Skin uses the autodoc to treat the blaster wound. Autodocs have the Meditech stunt, allowing Skin to use Technical for recovery actions for moderate and severe physical consequences. Skin makes her Technical roll at a difficulty of Fantastic (+6) and succeeds.*

This allows Lyra's Nearly Gutted *aspect to be renamed* Treated by Autodoc *and start the recovery process. After the next whole scenario she can erase that aspect from her sheet and use her severe consequence again. As she's using an autodoc (page 138), she may also invoke its* Regeneration *extra to speed up her recovery to the equivalent of a moderate consequence (one session rather than one scenario). In this case she'd rename the consequence as a moderate consequence — maybe* Regenerating Stomach Wound.

What Skill Do I Use for Recovery?

Recovering from physical damage requires the Technical skill, plus the Meditech stunt for moderate and severe consequences. This makes consequences beyond mild quite dangerous. You may use your own skill and stunt, or those of a biomed array (page 121) or autodoc (page 138).

Recovering from mental damage requires the Empathy skill, plus the Psychologist, Redaction, or Starship Therapy stunt, depending on the severity and nature of the consequence.

Recovering from credit damage requires the Resources skill, plus the Bail Out or Starship Trader stunt for more severe consequences. Additionally, characters with the Hacker stunt may make Intrusion rolls to illegally rewrite a character's credit status, which constitutes a credit recovery action for characters within the Commonality.

Extreme Consequences

As well as the two sets of mild, moderate, and severe general and credit consequences, you also get one last-ditch chance to stay in a conflict — **the extreme consequence**. Between major milestones (page 161), you may only use this option once, whether in a physical, mental, or credit conflict.

An extreme consequence absorbs up to 8-shifts of a hit, but at a very serious cost — **you must replace one of your aspects (excluding your high concept) with the extreme consequence**. An extreme consequence literally changes who you are.

You can't make a recovery action to rename or recover from an extreme consequence — it stays with you until your next major milestone. After that, you can rename it to reflect that you're no longer vulnerable to the worst of it, as long as you don't just change it back to the aspect it previously was: an extreme consequence is a permanent change to your character.



CONCEDING A CONFLICT

When all else fails, you can also just give up. Maybe you can't absorb another hit, or decide continuing the conflict isn't worth the punishment. At any moment before a subsequent roll is made you can declare that you **concede the conflict**. Once the dice hit the table, it's too late — you must live with the consequences, whether that's more stress, more consequences, or being taken out.

Conceding a conflict gives your opponent what they wanted from you, or (in the case of two or more combatants) removes you as a concern for the opposing side. You're out of the conflict.

But it's not all bad. First, **you get a fate point for choosing to concede**. Additionally, if you've sustained any consequences in this conflict, you get one fate point for each. You may use these fate points once the conflict is over.

Second, **you avoid the worst parts of your fate**. Yes, you lost the conflict, and your opponent is fully victorious, and the narration must reflect that; but conceding can make the difference between, say, being mistakenly left for dead, or ending up in the enemy's clutches, in shackles, without any of your stuff — the sort of thing that can happen if you're taken out.

The Zybote is too much for Jackson Stark, having hit him with several devastating attacks in the course of the fight. Before Sarah's next turn, Ian says, "I concede. I don't want to risk any more consequences."

Stark's taken both a mild and a moderate consequence. He gets three fate points — one for conceding, and two more for the two consequences he took.

Sarah says, "So, what are you trying to avoid here?"

Ian says, "Well, I don't want to get killed or captured..."

Sarah chuckles and says, "Fair enough. We'll say the Zybote knocks you out cold and doesn't finish you off, because it's still busy with Lyra and Max. It may even think you're dead. I feel like the loss needs some more teeth, though. Hm..."

Reiko pipes up with, "How about it damages your disintegrator rifle?"

Sarah nods. "Yeah, that's good. The Zybote slams into you, creating a Malfunctioning Reactor *situation aspect on Dizzy and knocking you out."*

Ian says, "Bastard! That flying fungus will pay for that…!"

GETTING TAKEN OUT

If you have no stress or consequences left to absorb the shifts of a hit, you're **taken out**.

Taken out is **bad** — not only are you **completely defeated** in the conflict, but the person who took you out can decide **exactly what that defeat means**. Yes, that means they can decide your character is dead, or otherwise permanently out of the game. The only restriction is that they can't decide anything that's out of the scope of the conflict (like having you die from shame), but that still gives them a lot of power over your character that you can't do anything about.

Character Death

Be cautious about permanently removing a character from play on a taken out result. Of course, according to the rules you're completely within your rights to decide a taken out character dies, or goes insane, or loses the will to continue their action-packed life. Indeed, it's necessary to have that risk as a **possibility** in the game to give the players' escapades meaning, poignancy, and excitement.

But think carefully about destroying a player's character on the results of a dice roll. As a player, you invest time and effort developing a character, and losing him in play simply leaves you with the effort of starting over and doing the whole thing again. It's often better to make a taken out result mean a really, **really** bad defeat for a character — a chance to put that character through hell. A character taken out in physical conflict may find himself captive and stripped of everything he owns, on trial for cowardice or dereliction of duty, or suffering life-changing wounds; taken out in mental conflict could mean a complete breakdown, personality change, or inability to continue in the same walk of life.

That doesn't mean death or permanent character destruction should never be on the table. In particular, climactic scenes of a scenario often require these high stakes.

However, always be **perfectly clear** when these are the stakes, and give players chance to avoid the conflict if they want to. Losing a character should always be a moment of high drama, and it's much more exciting if **everyone** knows it's on the cards.

MOVEMENT

In a conflict, it's sometimes important to track the relative positions of participants; this is one reason for dividing the conflict area into **zones** (page 151). This section deals with how participants move between zones in a conflict.

In a conflict, **if there's nothing preventing you, you can move one zone in addition to your action for an exchange**.

If you want to move **more than one zone** in an exchange, you can use your action for that exchange to do nothing but move. In this case, you may move a number of zones equal to your Athletics skill (or Drive, Pilot, etc).

You don't usually have to roll to move like this. However, if another character or a situation aspect obstructs your movement, you must make an overcome action using the appropriate skill.

If you fail the roll, whatever was obstructing you keeps you from moving. If you tie, you may move, but your opponent gains a temporary advantage of some kind. If you succeed, you move without consequence. If you succeed with style, you get a boost in addition to your movement.

Lyra wants to run after one of the smugglers, firing his blaster from the second floor. She needs to cross one zone to the access ladder for the second floor, and then climb it, making her opponent two zones away.

She's currently in a fist fight with another smuggler with Fair (+2) Unarmed Combat skill. Sarah says, "Okay, the smuggler you're fighting is trying to stop you getting away, so he's providing active opposition."

Lyra's Athletics is Fair (+2). She rolls a +2, for a Great (+4) result. The smuggler rolls a –1, a result of Average (+1). That gives Lyra three shifts — success with style.

Reiko and Sarah describe Lyra feinting past the smuggler, vaulting a crate, and taking the ladder two rungs at a time. She takes a boost, which she calls Momentum.

The smuggler up top swallows hard, aiming his blaster…

CREATING ADVANTAGES IN A CONFLICT

Aspects you create as advantages are situation aspects — the GM can use them to justify overcome actions, they last until they become irrelevant or the scene ends, and may represent as much a threat to you as your opponent.

When you create an advantage in a conflict, think about how long you want that aspect to last and who should have access to it. It's difficult for anyone besides you and your allies to justify using an advantage you create on a character, but it's also easier to justify removing it — one overcome action could undo it. It's harder to justify removing an aspect on the environment (seriously, who's going to deactivate those *Whirling Turbofans* you just activated?), but **anyone** in the scene could potentially take advantage of it.

Any situational modifier can be an advantage. Here are some ideas.

- **Temporary Blinding:** Throwing dirt or spraying something in an enemy's eyes places a *Blinded* aspect on him,

Taken Out Through Credit Consequences

Credit conflicts don't affect a character as viscerally as physical and mental ones — but that doesn't mean they're any less devastating. Being taken out in a credit conflict means a character is completely ruined, loses all of their wealth, influence, and access to resources. It's a total fall from grace — the character is bankrupt, destitute, on the street, a defeat which runs through all aspects of his life. If you continue play, you'll have to completely rebuild your networks of trust, resource access, and support.

Covering Fire & Protecting Others

The main way to help prevent someone else from getting attacked is by creating an advantage. You pass the free invoke to the person you're helping to make it harder to hit them.

You can also interpose yourself directly between an attack and its intended target, so that an opponent has to get through you to get to your ally. In that case you're defending as normal and taking the stress and consequences yourself.

If you want to defend other characters without directly putting yourself between them and their attacker, you need a stunt.

which might require him to make an overcome action to get rid of the aspect before doing anything dependent on sight. *Blinded* might also be an opportunity for a compel, so be aware your opponent may take advantage of it to replenish his fate points.

- **Disarming:** You knock an opponent's weapon away, disarming him until he can make an overcome action to recover it.
- **Positioning:** Use advantages to represent positioning, like *High Ground* or *Cornered*, and invoke them to take advantage of it.
- **Winded and Other Minor Injuries:** Some attacks are debilitating because they're painful rather than wounding, including nerve hits, groin shots, and other "dirty tricks". Use advantages to create *Pain-Blindness* or *Stunned* aspects, etc, on your opponent, following up with attacks exploiting them to do more damage.
- **Taking Cover:** Use advantages to represent positions of cover and invoke them for your defence. This can be as general as *Found Some Cover* or as specific as *Behind the Starport Bar*.
- **Altering the Environment:** Use advantages to alter the environment to your benefit, creating barriers to movement by scattering *Space Junk*, or setting things *On Fire*.

OTHER ACTIONS IN A CONFLICT

Sometimes you may do something else while your friends are fighting. Maybe you're hacking a security system, searching the Mindscape for information, or using sensorview to check for hidden assailants.

You can do this as a modified form of **challenge** (page 147). One of the challenge actions is likely "defend yourself"; in any exchange where someone attacks you or tries to create an advantage on you, you must defend successfully to take one of the other actions in the challenge. As long as no one successfully attacks you or creates an advantage on you, you can use your action to roll one of the challenge actions.

Lyra is trying to force an airlock open so she and her team can break into a Venu shuttle rather than fighting off innumerable Venu troopers.

Sarah says, "Let's call it a Fair (+2) Intrusion action to disable the airlock mechanism, then a Fair (+2) Physique roll to prise it open enough to slide through, because it's one of those primitive Venu airlocks, like a submarine hatch. The other action is defending yourself."

On that exchange, Lyra successfully defends against an attack, so she uses her action to disable the locking mechanism. She fails, and decides to succeed at a cost. Sarah figures the easiest thing is to hit her with a consequence because she's in a fight. So she gets the door open, but not before one of the Venu troopers gives her a Gouged Leg.

On the next exchange, she fails to defend against an attack, so she doesn't get to roll for the challenge.

On the third exchange, she defends and succeeds with style at the Physique roll to get the Venu airlock hatch open. She signals to her friends and takes a Head Start *boost, because it's about to be a chase…*

ENDING A CONFLICT

Usually a conflict ends when all members on one side have conceded or been taken out.

As a GM, once a conflict has ended you should award any fate points earned by conceding. As a player, you should note down any fate points received when your aspects were invoked against you, note down any consequences you incurred, and erase any checks in your stress boxes.

The warehouse conflict is finally over. Sarah concedes the conflict on behalf of the Zybote and the remaining smuggler, and the PCs proceed to check out the smuggled goods they were looking for.

Because Sarah conceded, the Zybote escapes to fight another day. Because Ian conceded to Sarah earlier, he also gets fate points: one for conceding, and another two for the mild and moderate consequences he took. All the invokes used against him were free, so that's all he gets. His disintegrator rifle is also malfunctioning as a result of conceding; he'll need to repair it.

Hughie gets one fate point, because Sarah let one of the smugglers invoke his I Won't Let Lyra Down Again! *aspect against him during the conflict.*

Free Actions

Sometimes your character does something in conjunction with or as a step toward your action in an exchange. Maybe you quick-draw a weapon before firing it, or shout a warning before opening an airlock, or quickly size up a starport bar before joining a brawl. These ***free actions*** *are colourful description more than anything, meant to add atmosphere.*

You don't need to go to the rules for a free action. If there's no significant or interesting opposition, you don't need a roll, but just do what you say you do; replacing a power cell or fishing for something on your tool belt is part of performing an action — you don't need additional mechanics to handle it.

Reiko gets no fate points, because all the invokes against Lyra were free, from advantages and boosts. Because she won, she doesn't get any fate points for the consequences she incurred.

Switching to a Contest or Challenge

Sometimes participants in a conflict are no longer interested in or willing to harm one another, because of a change in circumstances. In this case, you can switch straight to a contest or challenge, as appropriate. Don't award any end-of-conflict fate points until you've also resolved the contest or challenge.

Previously, Lyra hacked a Venu shuttle airlock so the PCs could escape attacking Venu troopers. Now they decide to run for the bridge and fire up the gravity engines to escape.

The Venu troopers and PCs have mutually opposing goals, but can't harm one another, so instead of running the next exchange, Sarah switches to a contest. Even though the PCs have consequences and are due fate points, they won't get them until we find out if they can get to the bridge and escape in the shuttle, or get caught by the Venu troopers.

Teamwork

Characters can help each other out with actions.You can do this in two ways: by **combining skills**, when everyone puts the same kind of effort into an action (say, using Physique to push open a jammed blast door); or by **stacking advantages**, when everyone cooperates to set a single person up to do well (say, causing multiple distractions so one person can use Stealth to sneak through to the tractor beam controls).

When you **combine skills**, figure out who has the highest skill level among the participants. Every other participant with at least Average (+1) **in the same skill** adds a +1 bonus to the highest person's skill level, and then only the lead character rolls. If you have three helpers and you're the highest, you get a +3 bonus on your skill roll.

If you fail a roll to combine skills, all participants share in the costs — whatever cost or complication affects one character affects all of them, or everyone has to take consequences.

In the dash to the bridge, if the PCs as a group just wanted to run away from the troopers, they could combine skills. Lyra or Stark would have the highest Athletics at Fair (+2), and Max has Average (+1), so the group would roll Fair (+2) for either Lyra or Stark, with a +2 bonus from the other two.

Sarah's Venu troopers only have Average (+1) Athletics, but there are five of them, so they would roll Superb (+5) for the purposes of the contest.



When you **stack advantages**, one character takes the action, and all the other participants take create an advantage actions, and give whatever free invokes they get to that character. Remember that multiple free invokes from the same aspect can stack.

However, the PCs' goal isn't just to run, but to make it to the bridge and pilot the shuttle away. As Max is the only pilot, he's the logical recipient of stacked advantages from Stark and Lyra.

They each create advantages on their turn, resulting in two free invokes from Stark's Covering Fire *and Lyra's* Hey! Over Here! *aspects. This gives Max a huge +4 bonus on his Athletics roll to reach the bridge.*

ADVANCEMENT

Characters don't remain static as you play the game, but grow and change. The conflicts they face and the complications they overcome alter who they are and push them toward new challenges.

The game universe changes, too. You resolve threats, change the appearance of a location, or make such an impact on a planet or the campaign universe that one of your game's themes may need to change. In this section, we discuss how characters change; we talk about campaign advancement on page 430.

Character advancement lets you change something on your character sheet to something equivalent, or add something new. The moments in the game you can do this are called **milestones**.

What's a Milestone?

A milestone is a point during the game where you have the chance to change or advance your character. Milestones usually happen at "break points" in the game — the end of a session, scenario, or story arc (page 429).

Milestones usually follow a significant event that justifies your character changing. Maybe you reveal a significant plot detail, defeat a major villain, or resolve a plotline at the end of a scenario; maybe you resolve a major storyline that shakes up the campaign at the end of a story arc. The GM decides when a milestone occurs; sometimes it may work to have a milestone in the middle of a session.

There are three types of milestone: minor, significant, and major.

Minor Milestones

Minor milestones usually occur at the end of a session of play, or when one part of the story has been resolved. They're more about changing your character than making him more powerful, about adjusting to whatever's happening in the story, including changing extras such as equipment, etc. You don't always have to take advantage of a minor milestone.

Milestones and Advancements

*At a milestone, you **may** do the following:*

***Minor:** Switch a skill or stunt; **or** rename an aspect; **or** buy a stunt.*

***Significant:** As minor milestone, plus: gain 1 skill point; **and** rename a severe consequence; **and** buy a new extras aspect.*

***Major:** As significant milestone, plus: rename an extreme consequence; **and** gain 1 refresh; **and** rename your high concept.*

At a minor milestone, you may do **one** (and only one) of the following:

- Switch the ranks of any two skills; or replace one Average (+1) skill with one that isn't on your character sheet.
- Change any single stunt for another stunt.
- Purchase a new stunt, provided you have the refresh to do so (page 26). Remember, you can't go below 1 refresh.
- Rename one aspect that isn't your high concept. This can be an extra.

You can **also** rename any moderate consequences, starting them on the road to recovery (page 154), if you haven't already done so.

Minor milestones are good for slight character adjustments. Maybe you haven't been using a stunt as often as you thought, or you resolved your *Personal Vendetta With the Gestalt Controller*; or any change that keeps your character up to date.

You should justify a minor milestone change in terms of game events. Don't change *Hot Temper* to *Staunch Pacifist*, for example, unless something happened in the game to inspire such a serious change of heart; maybe you met an inspirational mentor, or had a transcendent experience that made you lay down your blaster. The GM is the final judge, but be sure not to sacrifice a player's fun for consistency.

Max gets a minor milestone. Hughie looks over his character sheet for anything he wants to change. One thing that sticks out is that during the last session, Lyra has been scheming behind Max's back a lot and putting him in a bad position.

Hughie looks at Reiko and says, "You know what? I have this aspect, I Won't Let Lyra Down Again! *I think I need to change that in light of current circumstances, and call it* I Know Lyra's Up to Something."

Reiko says, "Seriously? I mean, it's not like she does it all the time."

Hughie grins, "Well, when she stops, he can change it back."

Sarah approves the change, and Hughie rewrites one of Max's aspects.

Meanwhile, Jackson Stark also gets a minor milestone. Ian notices Jackson spends a lot more time hitting people with his fists than using melee weapons. He asks Sarah if he can swap the ranks of his Melee Combat and his Unarmed Combat skills, giving him Fair (+2) Unarmed Combat and Average (+1) Melee Combat. She agrees, and he notes the new skill totals on his character sheet.

Significant Milestones

Significant milestones usually occur at the end of a scenario, the conclusion of a big plot event, or roughly every two or three sessions. They're about learning new things

from the challenges your character has experienced, and becoming more capable.

At a significant milestone, you gain the benefit of a minor milestone, and also the following:

- You may purchase a new aspect, as long as that aspect represents an extra. It costs 2 points of refresh.
- You gain one skill point, which you can spend to buy a new skill at Average (+1), increase an existing skill by one rank, or change your tech index (page 33).
- If you have any severe consequences, you can rename them to begin the recovery process, if you haven't already.

You should also check for possible changes to your habituated gravity (page 176); check with your GM.

SKILL COLUMNS

When you created your character, you arranged your skills in a pyramid. When you advance your character, you no longer have to stick to that structure.

When you add new skill levels, all you have to do is make sure **you don't have more skills at one rank than at the rank below it**. This leads to your skills being structured in skill **columns** rather than a skill pyramid. If you have 3 Good (+3) skills, you must have at least 3 Fair (+2) skills and 3 Average (+1) skills to support them.

The skill pyramid already follows this rule, but make sure you don't break the rule when increasing skill ranks. It's easy to forget that if you upgrade a skill, you might suddenly not have enough skills below it to "support" its new rank.

For example, let's say you have 1 Good (+3), 2 Fair (+2), and 3 Average (+1) skills — the typical skill pyramid, like this:

SKILLS

Superb (+5):			
Great (+4):			
Good (+3):	Ranged Combat		
Fair (+2):	Notice	Physique	
Average (+1):	Athletics	Melee Combat	Stealth

Now you get a milestone, and want to upgrade one of your Fair (+2) skills to Good (+3). That would give you 2 Good, 1 Fair, and 3 Average skills, like this:

SKILLS

Superb (+5):			
Great (+4):			
Good (+3):	Ranged Combat	Physique	
Fair (+2):	Notice		
Average (+1):	Athletics	Melee Combat	Stealth

See how that doesn't work? It's missing the second Fair (+2) skill it needs to "support" those two Good (+3) columns.

In this case, you can either buy a new skill at Average (+1), then upgrade it in a subsequent milestone to Fair (+2), where it can support you upgrading your other Fair (+2) skill to Good (+3); or you can "bank" the skill point and not spend it now, but wait until you have enough skill points to buy the skill at whatever rank you need to support the move (in this case, 2 skill points for that Fair (+2) skill, plus 1 for the upgrade). It all depends on whether you want to put new stuff on your character sheet or not in the meantime, or whether you want to wait until you have the points saved.

Max gets a significant milestone at the end of a scenario, and gains an additional skill point.

Hughie wants to take Max's Notice up to Good (+3) from Fair (+2). He knows that's going to break the skill column rules, though, so he takes Unarmed Combat at Average (+1) instead — the characters have been in a few fist fights lately, and he figures it'd be good to not always have to resort to shooting people with his null pistol.

If he waits two more milestones, he can upgrade one of his Average (+1) skills to Fair (+2), and bump his Notice up to Good (+3) all at once, as he originally wanted.

Max also has one of the benefits from a minor milestone. He's been in a lot of fights this game so far, and feels like his Sometimes You've Got to Take a Stand *aspect is getting old, considering the number of times his character has been singled out. He replaces it with* Discretion Is the Better Part of Valour, *to reflect his changing attitude about the violence he encounters.*

The higher your skills get, the harder it is to advance them. This is intentional — no one's ever going to be awesome at everything they do, all the time.

Major Milestones

Major milestones only occur when something huge happens in your campaign — the end of a story arc (or three scenarios or so), the death of a main NPC villain, or any other large-scale event that shakes up your game.

Major milestones are about gaining more power. Yesterday's challenges aren't enough anymore, and tomorrow's dangers demand more organised and experienced characters to face them.

A major milestone confers all the benefits of a significant milestone and a minor milestone, as well as **all** the following:

- If you have an extreme consequence (page 155), you can rename it to reflect you've moved past its most debilitating effects. You may now take another extreme consequence in the future, if you wish.

Back to Character Creation

A major milestone is like a season finale in a television show; once you start the next session, some things about your game may be fundamentally different — maybe focussed on new problems, characters with different aspects, new threats and challenges, and so on.

It's often useful to take a session to review all the player characters again, like you did at character creation, altering or adjusting anything that feels like it needs revision. Keep the same level of refresh and skill points — but you can try new skill configurations, stunt sets, aspect changes, and so on, making sure everyone's still on the same page about the game. You may even want to examine your game's aspects, themes (page 435) and threats, too, and make sure they're still appropriate.

- You get an additional point of refresh, which you can spend on a new stunt (or aspect, if you have 2 points), or keep to give yourself more fate points at the beginning of a session.
- You can rename your character's high concept if you wish. This is also an opportunity to change your character's **occupation** (page 52).

A major milestone is a big deal. Characters with more stunts and extras have a broader range of bonuses and more effective skills, and a higher refresh provides a larger fate point pool, making them less dependent on compels.

Also, a major milestone signals major changes in your universe. Some of that is reflected in campaign advancement (page 430); and your PC group may end up with very different priorities and concerns than when they started.

Lyra reaches the end of a long story arc and is awarded a major milestone. The PCs have just overthrown the Solenine Sentience, leaving an enormous power vacuum in the campaign.

Lyra took an extreme consequence in the past arc of scenarios, one of her aspects being replaced by Tortured by the 3-Space Inquisitor. *She now renames that aspect again, calling it* Revenge on the 3-Space Instrumentality! *— she hasn't escaped the scars of the experience, but it's better than where she was, now that her aims are at least proactive.*

Lyra also gets an additional point of refresh. Reiko asks Sarah if she can turn her experience with the Inquisitor into something that will allow her to fight mechanical assassins in the future. Sarah has no objection, and Reiko creates a stunt on the spot.

"Shriekback: Use the Hacker stunt to make Mindscape attacks against mechanical assassins."

Max also gets a major milestone. He decides to bank the additional point of refresh, taking him up to 5. He's eyeing up some new gear for the Rosemary Princess *in the form of a new extras aspect (costing 2 refresh), which he'll set about obtaining next session.*

Finally, Jackson Stark also reaches a major milestone. Ian realises that being Haunted by a Past He Can't Remember *has created sorrow, hardship, and heartache for the poor guy; he decides to change his high concept. During this past story arc, Stark has begun to find out who he is, and it's redefining everything he knew about himself. Ian's starting to think about possible posthuman occupations for Stark (page 448). Sarah has an idea for the next story arc, and based on the events leading up to the major milestone they change Stark's high concept to* Custodian Avatar Paradox. *What precisely that means for Stark will be one of the upcoming campaign themes (page 435).*

So we have Lyra with a new appetite for revenge, Max transforming his starship, and Stark pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human. Sarah makes notes about what this all means for the coming scenarios!

Advancement and Extras

Advancements apply equally to your extras just as much as your character's own skills, stunts, and aspects. You can switch old equipment for new, upgrade (or replace) genurgic enhancements, add new gear and features to starships, or even change your role within an organisation. To be specific:

- You can change an extra's aspect at any minor milestone, or at a major milestone if it's tied into your high concept.
- You can advance an extra's skill at any significant or major milestone, provided the move is legal. You can buy new extra's skills at those milestones as well. You can also swap skill ranks between another skill and your extra skill at a minor milestone, like any other skill.
- You can advance your extra's stunts at a major milestone when you get a refresh point. You can add a new stunt effect to an existing extra, or buy a new stunt-based extra. You can also change out a stunt-based extra at a minor milestone, like you can with any other stunt.

Many extras comprise more than one element. If possible, we recommend you let players develop the separate parts of such extras at different milestones, to minimize confusion during play. You may need to discuss how this works in story terms, but usually most extras are capable of piecemeal advancement.

CHAPTER TEN
GAMEMASTERING MINDJAMMER

"Intendant Kam-Esh-Tay was a small, peevish-looking man with an unkempt and ascetic appearance which spoke of an attachment to the intellectual rather than physical world. He was nevertheless meticulously depilated, including his head, which seemed to Clay needless affectation, and he sat opposite him in a lizard-like stillness, observing coldly as they spoke."

THE GAMEMASTER'S JOB

As gamemaster, your job is to "run" the game, adjudicating the rules and guiding your players through their ***Mindjammer*** adventures. Let's take a closer look at the sort of things you'll be doing in play.

Describing the Universe and Playing the NPCs

As GM, it's part of your job to decide how everyone and everything in the game universe responds to the PCs' actions. If a character fails a roll, you decide the consequences. When a non-player character or **NPC** tries to assassinate a PC's friend, you decide how they do so. When the PCs approach a food vendor in a souk on an alien world, you decide on his personality or what kind of day he's having. You determine the climatic conditions when the PCs make planetfall.

You have a lot of tools to help you do this. The process outlined in "Setting Up Your ***Mindjammer*** Game" (page 15) gives you context for your game, in the form of aspects like themes and threats, locations the PCs might visit, or NPCs you can use.

The PCs' aspects also help you decide how the universe reacts to them. You can exploit the "double edged" nature of aspects (page 69) by using event-based compels (page 74), adding detail and surprise to your game but also keeping the PCs at the heart of the story.

When you describe NPCs, you speak and make decisions for them just like the players do for their characters.



Let the Players Help

You don't have to describe the whole universe yourself. The more you involve your players, the more emotional investment they'll have in the result.

If a PC has an aspect connecting him to someone or something in the campaign, make his player your resident "expert" on whatever the aspect refers to. If he has Scars From the Xeno Wars*, ask him for input whenever the Xeno Wars come into play. "You notice the canid sergeant is wearing a veteran's mark, a decoration from the Xeno Wars. What hardcore stuff do you have to do to get one of those? Do you have one?" Some players will defer to you: that's cool, but always keep the offer open to foster collaborative play.*

An important use of the create an advantage action (page 145) is to give players a way to add details to the universe through their characters. Use that when you draw a blank, or want to delegate more control. For example, answer a player's question with a question, drawing the answer out of their response.

Chris: "Is there a way to disrupt the stasis field for a split second without freeing whatever's trapped inside?"

Sarah: "Well, you know stasis fields are controlled from outside. If there were a way, what do you think it'd look like? You're the science expert, you tell me."

Chris: "Hmm... I think there'd be some sort of emergency field generator, which would kick in a split second after an interrupt to safeguard any contents."

Sarah: "Sounds good. Roll Science to see if it's there!"

Drama Before Realism

Although **Mindjammer** *is a science-fiction setting that incorporates "realistic" and "hard" SF concepts, it's also a game of dramatic, action-packed adventure. Don't be afraid to prioritise exciting game play over strict adherence to perceptions of what may be scientifically possible. You don't have to be a scientist to play* **Mindjammer** *— indeed, the New Commonality of Humankind is so far in our future that our current scientific understanding is prehistoric by comparison. Don't feel pressured to subordinate an exciting game to today's notions of scientific accuracy; this book extrapolates from modern scientific concepts, but uses them as a springboard for the imagination and an inspiration to science-fictional creativity — so be sure to do the same. Let your players come up with cool scientific-sounding justifications for events, actions, and inventions (maybe based on the technological paradigms described in* ***Chapter 8: Technology****), and let your in-game science be led by what's exciting to play. Even if something seems unlikely, as long as it doesn't break* **Mindjammer's** *technological paradigms, you can always find a way later to justify it.*

You decide when they take an action that requires dice, and follow the same rules as the players for figuring the results. Your NPCs usually differ from PCs, particularly in how detailed they are, depending on their importance to the story (page 185).

Starting and Ending Scenes

It's also your job to decide when a scene starts and ends. This means you bear the prime responsibility for pacing a session: if you start scenes too early, they take too long to get to the action; if you don't end them soon enough, they drag, and it takes forever to get anything done.

Players often help with pacing, especially if they're keen to get to the action; but equally they sometimes spend too long bantering or focussing on minutiae. As GM, you step in like a good movie editor and say, "I think we've milked this scene for all it's worth — let's move on!"

See **Chapter 22: Scenarios and Campaigns** for more on starting and ending scenes.

Adjudicating the Rules

As GM, you make most moment-to-moment calls about what's allowed by the rules. You decide when something deserves or needs a roll, which action it uses (overcome, attack, etc), and its difficulty. In conflicts, you decide how far a zone extends, and whether a player can justify an advantage they're trying to create.

You also judge any invokes or compels (see **Chapter 5: Aspects and Fate Points**), and make sure everyone knows what's happening. For invokes, you ensure a player

You're the Chairman, Not God

Your job is to help break deadlocks on rules interpretations and keep the game moving; think of yourself as a "first among equals" when it comes to rules judgements, rather than an absolute authority. When there's a disagreement, let everyone discuss the issue rather than making a unilateral snap decision. Your group will often regulate itself — if someone tries a compel that's too far-fetched, another player will often catch it before you do.

can explain why an aspect is relevant; you articulate what complication the player is agreeing to.

See page 166 for more on adjudicating the rules.

Creating Scenarios (and Nearly Everything Else)

Finally, it's your job to invent everything the PCs encounter in the game; not just NPCs with skills and aspects, but also aspects on scenes, environments, and objects, as well as the dilemmas and challenges that make up a scenario (page 422). You provide the triggers that give the players a reason to play in the first place — problems to face, issues to resolve, opponents and obstacles to overcome.

This part of gamemastering has a whole chapter to itself: see **Chapter 22: Scenarios and Campaigns** (page 419) for more.

PREPARING THE GAME

As outlined on page 15, setting up your ***Mindjammer*** game is often a collaborative effort between you and your players. Be open to new ideas and generous with your own, and play off and expand on your players' suggestions; they'll be more emotionally involved in your game if they feel like they've had a hand in building it.

Out There vs Down Here

When you set up your ***Mindjammer*** game, think about how "out there" you want to go. High-concept transhuman science-fiction is great fun, but if its themes are too difficult to relate to, then your players may have trouble getting into the game. Where that line is will depend on your players, but every departure from the familiar — whether our real world or the established conventions of the transhuman science-fiction genre — has the potential to derail your game. Get everyone on the same page about the sort of game you're playing, and address any questions in advance.

The opposite approach is to ground your ***Mindjammer*** game in the real world, incorporating perhaps only one or two major differences, whose implications you can explore in play. Maybe decide on a historical era and place you're all familiar with, then tack on the exception: "It's like the internet, but your brain is directly connected"; or "It's like downtown Tokyo, except in space, and all the *gaijin* are genetically divergent humans".

You can find out more about themes and genres for your game on page 435.

Top-Down vs Bottom-Up

As we touched upon on page 16, you also need to decide how broad your game's **scope** is. You can start with the big picture, then drill down to the detail — the **top-down approach** — or start with the here and now and develop the big picture as you go — the **bottom-up approach**. This is often determined by your game's genre, style, and tone; see **Chapter 23: Themes, Genre, and Styles of Play**.

With the top-down approach, you determine most of your immediate campaign setting in advance — details of the current octant, subsector, or sector, the movers and shakers, locations of important worlds, important organisations, and so on. This has the advantage of providing a clear sense of how society fits together. For example, if you've decided that the Talia Cluster is in a perpetual state of conflict between five powerful corporacies vying for control, then you know right away that anyone of note is likely to come from one of those corporacies — and if they don't, it'll be for a good reason.

The downside is that unless you're using pregenerated material, like the Commonality octant in **Chapter 24: The Darradine Rim** or a ready-made scenario, you'll have work to do. It also requires your players to have a pretty good grasp of it all, which can be daunting. But if everyone's up to speed, it can make for an enjoyable and rewarding game.

With the bottom-up approach, you start with what's immediately important to the PCs — maybe a few notable NPCs in their home city, or the name of the guy in the docking bay next door. Then you figure out the details as you play. You don't need to know how things fit into the broader universe — rather, the universe unpacks itself from wherever you start.

The downside is that it requires improvisation and thinking on your toes from everyone at the table, GM and player alike. Not every player wants that responsibility. More importantly, if your players like to immerse themselves in their characters and see the universe through

their eyes, the bottom-up approach may work against that "immersiveness" when they have to, say, invent a name on the spot for the gas giant moon they just detected, or tell you who won in the Kalevalan civil war.

Mindjammer can handle either approach, and even a combination. The rules support player-driven contributions to the story in the form of aspects and other details, as well as allowing the GM to prepare in advance or improvise on the fly. Work out where your own group's sweet spot lies on the top-down / bottom-up continuum, and make the rules work for you.

Small Scope vs Large Scope

Small-scope games concern events closely connected to the PCs, likely within a limited geographical area — often gritty or heroic games of genres like cyberpunk, military science-fiction, mining and salvage, and so on (page 437). Large-scope games are epic tales spanning nations, planets, or sectors with world(s)-shaking consequences. Both types of story can be fun, and becoming Tactical Deployment Executive of the Rim Sector AFI can be just as rewarding as winning the trust of a frightened pre-Rediscovery village beyond the Fringe.

Nor are the two mutually exclusive; here are some ways to combine them.

- **Start Small and Grow:** The classic "zero-to-hero" story, where an individual with no pretensions to glory is swept up in epic events. This is a great way to explore the ***Mindjammer*** setting; start with a small-scope area (maybe a city or part of a world) whose culture and environment you're comfortable with, and then over time introduce the breathtaking and often alien reality of the Commonality.
- **Peaks and Valleys:** Alternate the large-scope with the small. Larger storylines deal with matters of state, conquering planets, defusing existential cultural threats, while smaller storylines are more personal, with few connections to the galaxy-shaking events. You might spend a session or two tussling with the Sector Custodian, then switch to a character reconnecting with her origins or coming to the aid of an old friend in need. You can even connect the small- and large-scope stories down the line for a satisfying payoff.



RUNNING THE GAME

This section looks at gamemastering tasks during play.

The Golden Rule

First and foremost, when playing a ***Mindjammer*** game, bear in mind the golden rule of the ***Fate Core*** system:

First decide what you're trying to accomplish, then use the rules to help you do it.

This may seem obvious, but it's an important principle. What it means is, don't look at the rules as a **restriction** on what you can do, but rather as tools to model whatever you're **trying** to do. Your intent takes precedence over game mechanics.

Usually it's enough to declare your action: if you're trying to harm someone, that's an attack action; if you're avoiding harm, that's a defend action.

Sometimes it's not clear what kind of action is being described. In this case, try to drill down to a simple, single intention to identify one of the four game actions (page 144).

Due to a failure on a previous roll, Lyra has accidentally set off a deadly defence mechanism while approaching the organic brain of a rogue Chembu bioship. Sarah describes deadly plasma bolts arcing from the organic-looking walls, and the fleshy brain housing at the far end of the veinous conduit where Lyra's standing.

Reiko says, "Ugh. Well, there's nothing for it — I'm going after the brain. I head down the arterial passage, watching for random plasma."

Sarah thinks it looks like an overcome action for Lyra to move through the arterial passage; but with the random plasma, it also seems like Lyra might need a defend action. Also, the defence mechanism could just be passive opposition preventing Lyra from getting to the brain, but it could also do damage, so it could be an attack action.

Sarah asks, "Reiko, we need to roll, but what exactly are you trying to accomplish? Are you mainly trying to make sure you don't get hit, or are you blasting through the passage to get to the brain?"

Reiko doesn't hesitate. "Oh, the brain, for sure."

Sarah asks, "So you're willing to take damage in the process?"

Situation Aspects Are Your Friend

If you're looking for a reason to ask the characters for an overcome roll, consider any situation aspects in the scene. If an aspect suggests some trouble or problem for a character, call for an overcome roll. If not, and you can't think of an interesting outcome for failure, don't bother.

For example, if a character is trying to sprint quickly across a room, and you have a situation aspect like Frictionless Deck*, it makes sense to call for a roll. If there's no such aspect, just let them make the move and get onto something more interesting.*

Reiko says, "Yup. Throwing myself into danger as usual."

Sarah says, "Okay, we can do this in one roll. Roll Athletics against Fantastic (+6) opposition. If you make it, you get through the defence mechanism unscathed. If you don't, you're stuck in the arterial passage and have to try again. We'll also treat that failure like a failed defence roll, so you'll take a hit from all that random plasma."

Reiko winces, but nods and gathers up the dice.

In this example, Sarah combined effects from both overcome and defend actions to work out what happens to Lyra; she used the rules to model Reiko's description of Lyra's actions. She could have decided to do both rolls separately — that would have been cool, too — but in this case she wanted to get it all into one roll.

Also, see how Sarah explained the deal to Reiko before the dice were rolled? That's vital: always make sure everyone's on the same page when you make a ruling like this.

Deciding When to Roll the Dice

Roll the dice when succeeding or failing at the action could contribute something interesting to the game.

For a success this is usually obvious — the character overcomes a significant obstacle, wins a conflict, or succeeds at a goal, creating hooks for subsequent events. For failure, it can be more difficult. Often failure can appear purely negative — you fail, lose, don't get what you want. But be careful; if that failure doesn't hook into anything happening **afterwards**, play can grind to a halt quickly.

The worst thing you can do with a failed roll is to declare **nothing happens** — no new knowledge or course of action, no change in the situation. Not only is that boring, it discourages players from seeing failure as an opportunity for drama — which you want them to do, given how important compels and conceding conflicts are.

If you can't imagine an interesting outcome from both success **and failure**, then **don't roll**. If failure is boring, a dead end, just give the characters what they want and call for a roll later, when you can think of an interesting failure. If **success** is boring, then see if you can turn your idea for failure into a compel instead, taking the opportunity to funnel fate points to the players.

The Silver Rule

*The flipside of the Golden Rule is the Silver Rule: **never let the rules get in the way of what makes descriptive sense**. If you or the players describe something, and it makes sense to apply a rule outside of its normal application, go ahead and do it.*

The most common example of this is with consequences (page 153). The rules say a consequence is something a player chooses to take after getting hit by an attack in a conflict.

But let's say you're in a scene where a player decides that, as part of trying to intimidate his way past a guard, his character is going to walk straight through a pain-induction field. Everyone likes the idea and thinks it's cool, so no one's interested in whether or not the character actually succeeds. However, everyone agrees that the character would suffer some kind of harm in the process — that's what makes it intimidating.

At this point, you can simply declare the character automatically incurs a Nervous System Screaming With Fire! *moderate consequence, because it fits with the description, even though there's no conflict and nothing technically attacked the character.*

As with the Golden Rule, make sure everyone's in agreement before you do this.

MAKING FAILURE AWESOME

So, how do you come up with interesting outcomes for failed dice rolls? Here are some ideas.

Blame the Circumstances

Characters in ***Mindjammer*** are usually highly competent; they aren't supposed to look like fools on a regular or even semi-regular basis. Instead of deciding a character messed things up, blame failure on something he couldn't have

prevented; maybe there's a secondary security routine behind that restricted Mindscape content that looked simple (Intrusion), or the contact broke his promise to show up on time (Contacts), or the ancient inscription is too weathered to read (Knowledge), or a sudden grav field perturbation throws off your run (Athletics).

That way, the PCs still look competent and awesome, even though they don't get what they want. More importantly, shifting the blame to the circumstances lets you suggest a new course of action, letting failure create forward momentum in your story. The contact didn't make his appointment? Where is he? Who followed him to the rendezvous? The ancient inscription is weathered? Maybe someone can restore it. That way, you don't spend time dwelling on the failure and can move on to something new.

Succeed at a Cost

Success at a cost (page 143) occurs regularly in play. It lets you offer the PCs what they want, but at a price — the failed roll means they can't achieve their goal without consequence.

A **minor cost** complicates a character's life. Focus on using failure to modify the situation, rather than negating what the PC wanted. For example:

- Foreshadow imminent peril. *"The lock opens with a soft click, but the same can't be said for the detention cell door. If they didn't know you were here before, they do now."*
- Introduce a twist. *"The controller can introduce you to a gestalt linguist who can interpret the signal, a woman named Agaya. You know her, actually — but the last time you saw her was years ago, when she caught you with her lover…"*
- Present the player with a tough choice. *"You brace the collapsing ceiling long enough for two natives to get to safety, but not the rest. Who's it going to be?"*

Escalating Consequences

When a character has to take a consequence of unspecified severity, always assume it's ***mild****. If the recipient doesn't have a mild consequence slot available, escalate it to the next available slot.* ***Escalating consequences*** *can be relatively harmless if you're currently unhindered, but potentially disastrous if you're weighed down with consequences already.*

- Place an aspect on the PC or scene. *"Somehow you manage to find the resources, but with an* Overstretched Credit Account *as a souvenir."*
- Give an NPC a boost. *"The starship surprises you by agreeing to your offer, with a wry humour that makes you uneasy. Clearly,* The *Speed of Thought* Has a Plan."
- Check one of the PC's stress boxes. This is only a cost if the character's likely to take more stress in the current scene.

A **serious cost** doesn't just complicate the PC's life — it takes a serious and possibly irrevocable toll, immediately.

You can do this by making a minor cost more serious: instead of the lock click potentially alerting a patrol, the security drones burst in, weapons blazing. Instead of being merely cut off by a cave-in, one or more allies is buried in the debris. Instead of merely having issues with future resource requests, the local authorities flag you for immediate investigation.

Other options include:

- Reinforce the opposition. Clear an NPC's stress box, improve an NPC's skill by +1 for a scene, or give him a new aspect with a free invoke.
- Bring in a new opposition or obstacle — additional enemies, or a situation aspect that worsens the situation.
- Delay success. The task takes longer than expected. See "Using Story Time in Success and Failure" (page 171).
- Give the PC a mild consequence related to the circumstances.

You can use the shifts of failure as a gauge for how serious a serious cost should be. For example, in the detention cell break-in above, if the player failed his Intrusion roll by 1 or 2, the PCs might outnumber the drones; not a tough fight, but a fight nonetheless. If he failed by 3 to 5, it might be an even match, likely to use resources like fate points or consequences. But if he failed by 6 or more, the PCs might be outnumbered and in real danger.

Let the Players Do the Work

You can push the question back to the players, letting them decide the context of their failure. "So what was the exomemory you couldn't recall about the Zalmoxian ambassador?" This collaborative approach can be very effective, and some players will enthusiastically hose their own characters, especially if they can control how that hosing works in descriptive terms.

Setting Difficulties

When setting difficulties for dice rolls, bear in mind the "break points" mentioned on page 144: difficulties two or more points above a PC's skill will probably cost fate points,

while anything that's two or more below will be a breeze.

As well as "modelling the world" or trying to reflect a concrete and realistic difficulty scale, you can also set difficulties according to **dramatic necessity**. This means that **things should be more challenging when the stakes are high and less challenging when they aren't**.

This is similar to setting a "realistic" difficulty and imposing a penalty to reflect an unfavourable condition (like rushing the action), but psychologically the difference between a high difficulty and a lower difficulty **with a penalty** is huge: a higher difficulty often feels like a real challenge, while a large penalty may feel arbitrary and discouraging.

A low difficulty lets you showcase a PC's awesomeness. You can also set lower difficulties if you know the PCs are low on fate points, giving them the chance to take compels to get more. Also, set lower difficulties on anything stopping the PCs getting to the main action of a scene — you don't want them to stall breaking into the evil dictator's HQ if the point of the scene is confronting the evil dictator!

Last, some actions take lower difficulties by default, especially if no one's contesting or resisting them. Unopposed create advantage actions in conflicts should never be harder than Average (+1) or Fair (+2). Neither does opposition always take the form of an NPC — if the evil dictator has hidden the Mindscape evidence, you might consider that to be opposition, even though the dictator isn't physically present.

If the PCs have lots of fate points, or it's a high stakes moment, or a final conflict against foes they've been building up to for a scenario or two, you can raise difficulties. You should also do so when an opponent is well prepared, or when the PCs **aren't** prepared, or don't have the right tools, or are pressed for time.

Setting a difficulty at the PC's skill level is a middle ground. Do this when you want some tension without going all out, or when the odds are in the PC's favour but you want a tangible risk.

Justify Your Choices

Make sure your difficulties make sense in the context of your narrative. This doesn't mean you have to go over the top modelling your game reality ("It's harder to identify the xenomorph at the bar due to the dim spectral class of the star system's primary"…), but don't regard it purely as a numbers game, either. If the only reason for setting a difficulty at Superb (+5) is because it's two higher than the PC's skill level and you want to bleed his fate points off, you strain credibility.

Setting difficulties is like invoking aspects — there needs to be a reason backing up your decision. It's okay if that reason is something you're about to make up, rather than something you know already. Situation aspects are great for this — if the players already know the cave is Pitch Black *and* Cramped As Hell*, it's easy to justify why it's hard to stay quiet as they Stealth through the tunnels. No one will protest if you give a +2 bonus to the opposition for each of these aspects, because it mirrors the invoke bonus they get.*

Never ignore this justification: either tell the players up front when you set the difficulty, or shrug mysteriously and let them find out after (once you've thought it up).

You can use incongruous difficulties to highlight unanswered questions. Maybe a seemingly simple exomemory search has an Epic (+7) difficulty. What could be so sensitive to merit such a high security clearance? Or you're bluffing your way into a secret gathering of the Olkennedian resistance — and it's only Fair (+2) difficulty. Has your cover been blown? Is it a set up?

EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS

Sometimes, a PC will roll way above the difficulty, getting a great number of shifts. Some actions already cater for extraordinary rolls — maybe you hit harder on a good attack roll, etc. But what about an extraordinary Technical or Investigate roll? Try to give extraordinary successes meaning, and reflect the PCs' competence. Here are some ideas.

- **Go Over the Top on the Description:** See the suggestions above for "Making Failure Awesome"; let the PC's success affect something else, as well as what the PC was aiming for, and prompt the player to make up cool details. "Three extra shifts on that Intrusion roll — tell me, is anyone ever going to be able to close that security backdoor again?" "So you got five shifts on that Contacts roll — tell me, what kind of weird imposality does the Xaiwu Mandarin like to indulge her pleasures in — and what do you say when you find her there?"
- **Add an Aspect:** Let a PC create an advantage for free. "So your Resources roll to bribe the autotroph succeeded with four shifts. It'll let you see the Tribune Sentience immediately, and act as *Available Backup* later."
- **Reducing Time:** If it's important to act fast, use extra shifts to decrease the time it takes — see "Dealing With Time" below for more.

Dealing With Time

There are two types of time in a ***Mindjammer*** game: **game time** and **story time**.

GAME TIME

Game time represents the actual time you spend at the table playing ***Mindjammer***. Each unit of game time corresponds to an amount of real time.

- **Exchange:** The time it takes all participants in a conflict to take a turn, usually no more than a few minutes.
- **Scene:** The time it takes to resolve a conflict, deal with a single significant situation, or accomplish a goal. Scenes vary from a minute or two to half an hour or more.
- **Session:** All the scenes in a single sitting; a session ends when you stop play for the night (or day). Usually 2 to 4 hours, but you're only really limited by your need for food and sleep. A **minor milestone** (page 160) usually occurs after a session.
- **Scenario:** Usually between one and four sessions; a scenario resolves a problem or dilemma presented by the GM, or wraps up a storyline (see **Chapter 22: Scenarios and Campaigns**). A **significant milestone** (page 160) usually occurs at the end of a scenario. Look at this like an episode of a TV show — the number of sessions it takes to tell one story.
- **Story Arc:** Usually between two and four scenarios, a story arc typically culminates in an event that changes the game universe significantly, building from the resolution of the scenarios. A story arc is like a season of a TV show, where episodes lead to a tumultuous climax. You won't always have a recognisable story arc — you can instead bounce from situation to situation without a defined plot structure. **Major milestones** (page 161) usually happen at the end of a story arc.
- **Campaign:** The length of time you've been playing this particular game of ***Mindjammer*** — every session, scenario, and story arc. There's no upper limit; some campaigns last for years; others finish a story arc and then stop. A typical campaign might run a few story arcs (maybe ten scenarios) before a grand finale. You can even structure your campaign as a "super-arc," with one massive conflict that everything else is a part of.



STORY TIME

Story time is time as the *characters* perceive it — the time it takes them to accomplish the things you and the players say they do during play. Often you describe story time in passing ("It takes you an hour to dock at Ajeux highport") or as part of a skill roll ("After 4 hours of observing the starship, you learn the following…").

Usually story time has no relation to real time. A combat exchange might take a few minutes to play out in real time, but only covers a few seconds of a firefight. Likewise, you can cover long stretches of time in a simple description ("The contact takes two weeks to reply — are you doing anything while you wait, or can we skip to the meeting?").

You can use story time to create tension and surprise during play. Here's how.

Deadline Pressure

Maybe the PCs only have a few seconds in the Mindscape to disable the rogue sentience before the starship ploughs into the sun, or a certain amount of time to get across the city before something blows up, or to finish negotiations before the invasion fleet drops out of 2-space. Some actions take advantage of **deadline pressure**, like challenges (page 147) or contests (page 148), which limit the number of rolls a player can make before something happens — for better or worse.

If you set a deadline for something bad happening in your game, you can track how long everything takes, and use it to keep pressure on the players. ("You want to use exomemory to research his culture? Well, he's got his hand on the detonator already, so even at Mindscape speeds you only get one chance…") Almost everything takes time; even at the nano- and millisecond time scales of overclocked Mindscape sentiences, every action and reaction

How Much Time Is a Shift Worth?

The number of shifts (positive or negative) on a roll can help you judge how great the time jump is.

Mindjammer *expresses time using a specific or abstract measure of number and a unit of duration, like "a few days", "twenty seconds", "three weeks", and so on. While you can improvise these increments easily, we've also provided an example* ***time ladder*** *below.*

We recommend you measure the duration of game actions as ***half****,* ***one****, a* ***few****, or* ***several*** *of a given time unit. If you imagine something taking six hours, express it as "several hours"; if twenty minutes, as either "several minutes" or "half an hour", whichever feels closer.*

This gives you a starting point for moving up and down your time ladder; each shift lets you move up or down (as appropriate) from your starting point. If your starting point is "several hours," and it benefits the PCs to accelerate things, then one shift can change the time taken down to "a few hours", two shifts down to "one hour", and three shifts down to "half an hour".

The time ladder lets you quickly manage changes in duration no matter what your starting point or time frame, from nanoseconds and milliseconds at Mindscape speeds to entire generations.

The Time Ladder

Several Nanoseconds
Half a Millisecond
A Millisecond
A Few Milliseconds
Several Milliseconds
Half a second
A Second
A Few Seconds
Several Seconds
Half a Minute
A Minute
A Few Minutes
Several Minutes
Half an Hour
An Hour
A Few Hours
Several Hours
Half a Day
A Day
A Few Days
Several Days (A Week)
Half a Month (A Few or Several Weeks)
A Month
A Few Months
Several Months
Half a Year
A Year
A Few Years
Several Years
Half a Decade
A Decade
A Few Decades
Several Decades
Half a Century
A Century

happens in sequence, and that may require time the PCs don't have.

Using Story Time in Success and Failure

When you use story time to create deadline pressure, you can incorporate jumps in time when the PCs do well or badly on a roll.

Taking extra time is a great way to make failure awesome (page 167), especially when succeeding at a cost (page 168). The players get what they want, but at the cost of more time, meaning their efforts may come too late. Or the cost could push a deadline over a threshold — and now there are extra problems to deal with.

Alternatively, reward extraordinary success by **reducing** the time an action takes. An exomemory roll takes only a few milliseconds; or you find a starship cargo (page 443) the same day rather than in a few days' time.

You can also use invokes and compels to manipulate time, making things easier or more complicated. ("Hey, I'm a *Grease Monkey*, so fixing these planing engines shouldn't take that long, right?")

Story Time and Action Context

Most actions take place in personal time frames and contexts — one or more individuals acting over minutes, hours, or days. The ***Mindjammer*** rules and setting envisage many different contexts for action, however, from Mindscape sentinels and enhanced sentiences acting at millisecond speeds, to organisations and cultures taking years, decades, or even centuries to achieve their aims.

Imagine what a character might do with enhanced competence and unlimited time; consider a month-long Rapport roll for a negotiation, where the PC talks to every delegate in depth, or a weeks-long Investigate roll, mapping every detail of a target's personal life.

By allowing action rolls to encompass longer time periods, you can "zoom out" to handle events reaching beyond the PC making the roll and affecting the setting more broadly. That month-long Rapport roll may chart a new political course for the culture or organisation the PC is negotiating for; the Investigate roll might uncover a notorious criminal organisation that's been terrorising the octant for a whole campaign.

You can use this technique to make breaks in story time more interactive. If the PCs have long-term goals, maybe turn them into a contest, challenge, or conflict that covers the whole break, or have them make a single skill roll to see if something unexpected happens. If they fail the roll, whatever you invent as a consequence will be useful material for the game going forward.

If you do this with a conflict or a contest, scale each exchange appropriately — a conflict taking place over a year might have exchanges lasting a month or more, and players should describe their characters' actions in that context.

During a major milestone (page 161), Stark changed his high concept to Custodian Avatar Paradox *following revelations about his forgotten past. Sarah wants to jump the campaign six months forward, and suggests that if Stark goes on the run, a faction representing one of the Commonality Custodians will try to hunt him down. Seeing an opportunity to create material for the next part of the game, she says, "We should find out if Stark starts the next scenario in their clutches or not."*

They decide this as a conflict, with each exchange representing a confrontation between Stark and the Custodian's trackers. It goes badly for him and he concedes, taking a moderate consequence into the next session. Sarah suggests they want to bring Stark back into the fold rather than hurt or kill him, so Ian chooses I Don't Know Who I Am Anymore, *reflecting the seeds of doubt they're planting in his mind.*

When we see Stark again, he'll be on the run, but no longer sure if he's pursuing the Custodian's agenda or his own.

This kind of play often interacts with **organisations** and **cultures**. If you need more detail — particularly if the PCs affect organisations and cultures directly, rather than other characters — see **Chapter 15: Organisations** and **Chapter 17: Cultures**.

Zooming In and Out

You don't have to use the same time frame from roll to roll, even within a challenge, contest, or conflict. For example, you can use the result of one roll to segue into another that occurs over a longer or shorter time period. This is a great way to open a new scene, contest, or conflict, or introduce a change of pace.

During the six-month break, Lyra has been investigating the 3-Space Instrumentality, who tortured her so terribly in the last story arc. She rolls her newly acquired Average (+1) Knowledge in an overcome roll.

She rolls well, and Sarah describes Lyra getting lost in her investigations for a few months. Then she says, "Finally you return to your temporary lodgings on the Fringe World of Agartha, weary to the bone, hands buzzing from your nanocell intrusion into the capital's datasphere. Your search has uncovered the location of a 3SI base on a gas giant moon in the Formidiis Alpha system, not 30 light years away! You fall into bed, ready to start departure prep in the morning... and are wakened in the middle of the night by the Mindscape alarm you set up in the lobby. There's an intruder!"

Reiko says, "I get up and rush out, grabbing my null pistol!"

Sarah says, "The Mindscape alarm spooked the intruder, but detected the telltale m-band trace of the 3SI before he fled. Only you would recognise it!"

Reiko says, "Hell, no! They're not getting away — I'm going after him. Her, it, them, whatever!"

Sarah says, "Great! That's Athletics — let's run a contest to see if you can catch the intruder." (Note how this is happening in zoomed-in time — we went from rolling for months-long stuff, to rolling for the seconds it takes for Lyra to give chase.)

The contest goes badly for Lyra, and the intruder gets away. Reiko says, "Screw that. Someone must know something — I have that m-band trace, that has to be worth something. I'm rolling Investigate."

Reiko rolls and succeeds with style, and Sarah says, "A week later, you're in an outlying connurb called Taga Strip, at a domiciliary of the Redelon Extraction Facility run by Agarthacorp, where your contact said they'd picked up an m-band trace resembling the one you detected. Oh, and you got some shifts, so I'll just go ahead and tell you: the intruder goes by the name Sinistris, a basic female pleasure synthetic at the mining facility. That's worth an aspect, I Know Your Name, *which you might use to undermine her confidence, track her down."*

(See what happened? One roll jumped a week, but Sarah and Reiko are playing it at the table in continuous time again.)

Reiko says, "I bust the domiciliary door down and scream her name. I've readied a Shriekback attack if I need it!"

Sarah says, "Everyone backs away from the sensuous pleasure synthetic at the domiciliary bar. She sneers, and flings her outstretched palm towards you as she makes a mindburn attack!"

"It's on. Shriekback!" Reiko says, and goes for dice to defend. (Now it's a conflict and happening in super zoomed-in time.)

Judging the Use of Skills and Stunts

Sometimes you'll encounter an "edge case" with a skill, when a player wants to use it for an action that seems like a stretch, or to do something that's not normally part of its description.

Talk this over with your players. You can handle it three ways:

- The use is too much of a stretch. Use a different skill, or even create a new one.
- It's not a stretch, and anyone can use the skill that way from now on.
- It wouldn't be a stretch if the character had a stunt that allowed it.

See **Chapter 6: Skills and Stunts** for figuring a skill's limits and the dividing line between a skill and a stunt. Requiring a stunt is often the best solution to this situation. If that's the case, you can let the player spend a fate point to temporarily "borrow" that stunt for the current roll. If they want to retain the ability, they must spend a point of refresh to buy the stunt permanently.

DISCOVERING AND CREATING ASPECTS AND STORY DETAILS

When a player tries to discover a detail or aspect you haven't created yet, you can treat it as if they were actually creating that aspect or detail. If they succeed, they discover what they were looking for; if they fail, you use what they were looking for as inspiration to create an alternative aspect or detail.

If you're comfortable improvising like this, you can come to the table with very little prepared beforehand, and let the players' reactions and questions build your story for you. You'll probably need to ask prompting questions first, to narrow down what the players are looking for, but after that the sky's the limit.

Thaddeus Clay is observing a primitive Outer World culture, constructing a Stage Zero manipulation strategy for the tribe at the nearby hillfort of Xampan. Chris says, "I'm spending time with the tribal elders, researching why they've never expanded into the lowlands. I'm using Knowledge to create an advantage."

Sarah doesn't have anything special planned for the lowlands — her prep details the hominid culture and how it will respond to Commonality contact. "What kind of info are you looking for?" she asks. "Just chronology-type details, or...?"

Chris says, "I want to know if there's any history of contagion in the lowlands, whether the upland atmosphere of the hillfort is better for the tribes. Maybe a clue why they diverged from human stock?"

Sarah says, "Okay — roll Knowledge, difficulty is Fair (+2)." Unexpectedly, Chris rolls a -4 and ends up with a Terrible (-2), meaning he failed. He decides not to spend fate points.

Wanting to turn the failure into something awesome, Sarah says, "You don't get an aspect, but you find the opposite of what you were looking for — the tribes think the lowlands are a paradise, the oral history talks about it being a land of innocence and plenty."

Chris says, "Why does nobody live down there? Why do the tribes live on the hilltops?"

Sarah shrugs. "Guess you'll have to investigate further…"

Sarah notes down that the lowlands are somehow taboo or dangerous, and the hillfort's spirit-talkers are keeping a secret, changing Chris's suggestion a bit and adding material for him to find if he asks around.

SKILLS AND SPECIFIC MEASUREMENTS

Often these rules talk about quantities and measurements in abstract terms which in real life would be pinned down with specific numbers. Resources, Drive, and Pilot are good examples — if you're buying something, you usually have a numeric cost in mind, and if you drive a vehicle or pilot a starship you're going to be travelling at specific velocities.

So how many credits are you spending when you use Resources to buy something with a Fair (+2) opposition? How fast are you driving when you roll Drive to chase a vehicle fleeing with a Superb (+5) roll?

The fact is, we don't know — and we don't think it's something the rules should address.

It might seem counter-intuitive to start with, but tying descriptions to rigid parameters like this can actually interfere with your ability to craft realistic descriptions. As soon as you pin down a detail like "Great (+4) Drive means you're travelling 200 kilometres an hour", you're excluding a lot of the variability that real life permits. Different technologies and vehicles allow people to reach many different speeds — and you can't factor in every single one of these without it assuming an overwhelming focus at the game table. Suddenly the parameters themselves become a topic for debate and disagreement rather than contributing to the description of a scene.

It's can be boring, too. Say you decide that a Fair (+2) Resources skill can buy anything that's 2000 credits or less. By doing that, you've removed a great deal of flexibility and potential for tension and drama (not to mention what happens in the Core Worlds, where they don't even use money…). Now, whenever you have a Resources-based problem, it's going to hang on the question of whether the cost of a commodity is 2000 credits or not, rather than whatever the point of the scene is. Everything becomes a simple pass / fail, which means you don't really have a good reason to roll the dice at all — does the PC have 2000 cred-

its, or not? If he does, and he spends half, what happens to his skill? And again — it's not realistic. When people spend resources, it's less about the raw price than what they can **currently** afford — including what support they can persuade others to give.

A skill roll is a **narrative tool**, meant to answer the question "**Can I solve X problem using Y means, right now?**" When you get an unexpected result, use your sense of realism and drama to explain and justify it. "You failed that Resources roll to bribe the guard? Guess you spent just a bit more at the starport bar last night than you thought… Wait, why is your credit chip empty? And who's that shady character walking a little too quickly just past the line of guards? Was he the one staring at you earlier? Could he have been hacking your halo?"

Table 10-1: Scale

Scale	Rating	Example
Quantum	-3	Elementary particles, Planck-scale entities.
Micro	-2	Nanocells.
Small	-1	Small animals.
Medium	+0	Human beings, most animals.
Large	+1	Vehicles, starfighters, very large animals.
Huge	+2	Most starships, gigantic animals.
Enormous	+3	Very large starships, capital ships, small cities.
Regional	+4	Metropolises, space stations, asteroids.
Continental	+5	Nations, orbital habs, large asteroids.
Planetary	+6	Planets, plateworlds.
Interplanetary	+7	Solar systems.
Interstellar	+8	Sectors, interstellar civilisations.
Galactic	+9	The Commonality, major interstellar civilisations.

Dealing With Scale

Whether it's infantry vs combat walker, starfighter vs space station, or local government vs corporacy, sometimes size really does matter. In ***Mindjammer***, we categorise entities according to the following **scales**.

The rules so far have assumed that entities **of equal scale** are interacting with one another — in fact, they've mostly been about humans and other Medium (+0) scale entities interacting with other humans. However, they could easily apply to starships interacting with starships, organisations with organisations, and so on. When entities of **different** scales interact, they usually gain bonuses or incur penalties to their action rolls to affect the larger or smaller entity, depending on the circumstances.

- **When interacting with a larger scale entity**, you gain a +2 bonus to your roll to affect your target per scale larger, and incur a -4 penalty to any shifts which result.
- **When interacting with a smaller scale entity**, you incur a -2 penalty to your roll per scale smaller, and gain a +4 bonus to any shifts which result.

From a mechanical perspective, **all** entities use the same scale table. However, whether one entity can affect another is also a factor of your action description. Theoretically a human and a planet are 6 points of scale apart, so a human could (again, theoretically) attack a planet with a pointed stick, with a +12 attack bonus and a -24 shift penalty. However, this situation is clearly nonsensical; there's no point even contemplating a dice roll. More reasonably, a human could affect a Large (+1) organisation like an association of 50 people. Again, it probably makes no sense to contemplate an attack with a pointed stick; however, a create advantage action using Provoke is entirely possible.

Some stunts specifically let you use a skill to take a construct, organisation, or culture action (pages 215 and 275). For example, the Gunnery (Ranged Combat) stunt lets you use your Ranged Combat skill for a construct conflict action. In such a case, you effectively act at the same scale as your construct (usually Huge (+2), but could be Large (+1) or Enormous (+3)).

Dealing With Conflicts and Other Weird Stuff

Conflicts are the most complex situations you'll encounter during play. They use the most rules, compressed into a small amount of time. You have to track many elements — relative positions, stress and consequences for NPCs, and so on.

Characters in conflicts often want to do crazy and unexpected things. Here are some guidelines.

AFFECTING MORE THAN ONE CHARACTER

Characters can sometimes affect more than one target with a single action. Explosions, gas, stun beams, sonic attacks, etc, can inflict physical damage over wide areas; Provoke can be used in mental conflicts to establish dominance in a group; Rapport can make an inspirational speech affecting everyone listening.

Advantages on the Scene

The simplest way to affect more than one character is to **create an advantage on the scene** rather than a single target. A *Gas-Filled Chamber* can affect everyone in it, or an *Inspirational Mood* in a gathering may be contagious. A situation aspect like this lets you require an overcome action from anyone attempting to bypass it; it won't usually cause damage, but it will make things more difficult for those affected.

Area Effects

Grenades, explosions, gas, and the like affect all possible targets in one or more zones, depending on their power. This is known as an **area effect**. Roll for the attack (usually using Ranged Combat) as normal, but use the dice roll result on every available target in the target area, who must defend against the same result. You may even have to defend against your own roll — especially if you drop that grenade at your feet!

Multiple Targets

Some actions allow you to "filter" specific targets, like using full automatic fire with a ranged weapon to target several opponents but not your allies. If you're taking an action where it makes sense for its effectiveness to be divided among available targets, make your dice roll as normal, but divide it among the targets you want to affect, who defend as normal.

Those who fail to defend either take stress or gain an aspect, depending on what you were trying to do. If you create an advantage on multiple targets, you **do** get a free invoke for each one.



Compels and Multiple Targets

Players who want to compel their way out of a conflict can't affect multiple targets like this, whether it's one aspect or several that justifies the compel. One fate point compels one individual.

Jackson Stark fires his Mai Ling Null-70 null rifle at three Venu troopers. The GM is treating them as three separate supporting NPCs with two stress boxes and one mild consequence, so Ian decides Stark will target multiple targets. He uses his Great (+4) Ranged Combat and his skill chip, getting an Epic (+7) result.

Ian wants to finish one of the troopers if he can, so he divides his 7 shifts as Superb (+5), Average (+1), and Average (+1). Sarah rolls to defend for all three.

The first defender rolls a Mediocre (+0) and takes 5 stress. Even if he uses his mild consequence, this still leaves him with 3 stress points to mark off, and the maximum he has is a 2-point stress box. There's nothing he can do; the first Venu trooper is taken out, falling to the ground screaming as the null rifle slices him open.

The second defender gets a Fair (+2) defence, beating the Average (+1) attack roll. He charges forward undaunted.

The third defender gets a Mediocre (+0) defence, taking a single point of stress. Sarah checks his 1-point stress box, describing him growling with pain as his armour flares from the beam.

GRAVITY

Many environments have gravitational fields different from the 1G **standard gravity** most characters are used to (see "Habituated Gravity", page 28). Most Commonality starships, space stations, habs, plateworlds, and indeed favoured colony worlds have standard gravity fields, but most planets do not — and are often wildly different.

The simplest way to handle a different gravity environment is with an aspect like *Zero-G Environment*, *Low Grav Star City*, or *High-G Mining World*. Invoke these when they may be advantageous; for example, you can lift larger objects in a lower gravity field than the one you're used to. Conversely, gravity fields also make for good compels; you're likely clumsier in an unfamiliar gravity field.

Often this degree of detail is all you need. However, ***Mindjammer*** lets you go into greater detail about gravity fields; an environment's gravity may range from -4 or lower to +4 or higher (page 323); standard gravity is +0. Here are some ways you can use that:

- **Muscle Power:** Modify the opposition presented by an object you're lifting or moving by the gravity field rating. Also, modify your own roll by your own **habituated gravity** (page 28). This also applies to jumping.
- **Agility:** Incur a penalty to attempts to be agile (dodge, etc) equal to the absolute difference between your habituated gravity and the local gravity field rating. This applies to Melee Combat and Unarmed Combat rolls, and Athletics rolls except for jumping.

Habituated Gravity and Advancement

Characters who spend time in different gravity fields may find their habituated gravity changing. At any significant or major milestone, you must adjust your habituated gravity by 1 step in the direction of the local gravity field. You may spend a skill point to avoid this.

- **Smashing Damage:** Where brute force is the principle determinant of physical stress damage, apply your habituated gravity rating as a modifier to your damage.

HAZARDS

Not every participant in a conflict is a character or life form. Many inanimate things can threaten PCs or keep them from their goals, whether natural disasters, cunning mechanical traps, or high-tech automated security. These things are called **hazards**.

Hazards have two skills: **Intensity** and **Magnitude**. **Intensity** represents the hazard's power, which a character opposes when trying to tough out its effects (see below). **Magnitude** indicates how wide an area the hazard affects, and therefore how hard it is to avoid, used when a low-Intensity hazard over a wide area is hard to escape (radiation is a good example).

Hazards provide active or passive opposition, depending on how they're described and the actions taken to avoid or negotiate them.

Some hazards take actions, like spotting PCs or their aspects (for example: a sensor); others cause harm (for example: poison). Others still obstruct, and some create aspects (for example: a targeting sensor). They come in several types:

- **Simple Hazards:** Simple hazards require a single overcome action to avoid, usually against passive opposition. On a failure, you may suffer consequences; on a success, you avoid or destroy the hazard. *Examples: jumping over a fire, rockfall.*
- **Challenge Hazards:** Challenge hazards comprise multiple simple hazards, requiring several actions to successfully negotiate. You may have to succeed at some or all of the constituent actions. *Examples: biohazard, explosive decompression (page 220).*
- **Contest Hazards:** Contest hazards require you to gain three victories to negotiate. They're extended simple hazards; the opposition may be active or passive. *Examples: debris field (page 373).*
- **Conflict Hazards:** Conflict hazards act like characters trying to harm you. A conflict hazard may have a stress track, and one or more consequences; or you may just have to accumulate victories to avoid it. It takes actions in exchanges, and provides active opposition. *Examples: automated defences, volcanic eruption.*
- **Incremental Hazards:** Incremental hazards can be simple, contest, or conflict hazards, which must be rerolled at specific time intervals (every exchange, minute, hour, day, etc), increasing in Intensity (or sometimes Magnitude) by +1 each time. *Examples: avoid exposure, survival hazard (page 354).*

Regardless of a hazard's type, characters oppose its Intensity or Magnitude using the skills indicated in the hazard description, or as appropriate. Usually these are self-explanatory, like using Physique to avoid exposure. Failure to negotiate a hazard can have various results.

As well as hazards affecting characters, hazards exist which affect starships, organisations and cultures, including Mindscape, planetary, and star system hazards. These are presented in the appropriate chapters below, but use these rules. Some hazards may also have **scale** (page 174).

Here are some example hazards; use them as is, or as templates to create your own.

ROCKFALL

Hazard

Simple Hazard

Skills: *Great (+4) Intensity (passive opposition)*

Actions: *Roll Athletics to avoid, or take physical stress equal to the shifts of failure. Armour ratings apply.*

BIOHAZARD

Hazard

Challenge Hazard

Skills: *Fantastic (+6) Intensity; Fair (+2) Magnitude (passive opposition)*

ACTIONS

Action 1: *Roll Physique vs Intensity or suffer a* Biohazard Infection-*type consequence equal to the shifts of failure.*

Action 2: *Roll Technical vs Magnitude to contain the outbreak to the immediate zone, otherwise it spreads a number of zones equal to the shifts of failure and increases in Magnitude by the same amount.*

Action 3: *Roll Science vs Intensity to understand the biohazard and identify an antidote and neutralise (1 day).*

Diseases and Infections

*Diseases are **conflict hazards**. An exposed character must roll Physique vs Intensity or take physical stress damage; any consequence represents the target becoming infected.*

Once infected, a victim rolls a contest of Physique vs Intensity; medical treatment can provide a teamwork bonus or advantage. A victim must accumulate 3 victories to shake off the disease; failure continues to inflict physical damage equal to the shifts of failure, or consequences based on the disease.

Infected characters may infect anyone contacted, who must roll Physique vs Fair (+2) opposition or suffer physical damage, or become infected if they incur a consequence.

AVOID EXPOSURE

Hazard

Incremental Hazard

Skills: *Fantastic (+6) Magnitude; Average (+1) Intensity (passive opposition)*

Actions: *Attacks with Intensity vs Physique or the Survival (Knowledge) stunt. Roll every 5 minutes to 3 hours, depending on the degree of cold or heat, doing physical stress damage. If the exposure can be escaped, roll Athletics vs Magnitude to acquire 3 victories.*

VOLCANIC ERUPTION

Hazard

Conflict Hazard

Aspects: Lava Flows, Choking Gas Clouds

Skills: *Superb (+5) Intensity; Fair (+2) Magnitude (active opposition)*

Actions: *Attacks with Intensity each exchange, causing physical stress damage. Resist its Magnitude with Athletics, Drive, Knowledge, etc. Accumulate 3 victories to escape its area of effect.*

AUTOMATED DEFENCES

Hazard

Conflict Hazard

These ceiling-, wall- or ground-mounted blaster, null, and kino weapons are popular forms of first-line security for many installations. They must be taken out to disable them.

Aspects: Ceiling-mounted Null Weapon, Swivelling Rapid Fire Energy Beams

Physical Stress: 1 2

Skills: *Great (+4) Intensity; Good (+3) Magnitude*

Actions: *Attacks with Intensity using null beamers (weapon:2 damage rating, range 2). Accumulate 3 victories with Athletics to get past; create advantages with Stealth, Intrusion. Attack back vs Intensity to do physical stress damage.*

Lyra, Max, and Stark are advancing through the Binary Metaphase Imposality, a Mindscape virtuality created by the secret 3SI base. The 3-Space Instrumentality isn't about to let just anyone rifle through its secrets, and has erected countermeasures to ward off any intruders.

The imposality takes the form of a shifting array of rolling black columns and snaking ebony pillars. Lyra rolls Knowledge, and Sarah tells her they represent d-beam compressor traps, capable of strangling Mindscape dataflow and producing lethal feedback in intruders' Mindscape implants. Lyra dispatches a matrix-echo locator routine and the threesome watch as the crashing columns catch hold of it and rip it to component datacules.

"I think I speak for us all when I say 'yikes,'" Hughie says.

Reiko asks about destroying the trap using Hacking. Sarah shakes her head. "You're in a 3SI imposality — the whole place is flooded with these things, and could easily generate more. It'd take days to dismantle an imposality this complex — and that's assuming you had the skill. You might, however, use Hacking to get through them undetected."

Reiko says, "Let's do it."

Even though Sarah could run this as a conflict, she thinks it'd be easier and quicker to handle as a challenge. She explains that to get past the d-beam compressors, Lyra needs first to make a create an advantage roll using Hacking to trick the imposality into not recognising them as separate entities; then, each character must roll Stealth to bypass the trap without being noticed. She says the Hacking roll will face passive opposition, but each Stealth roll will face active opposition, and failure will incur mental stress damage and alert the imposality. The three grit their virtual teeth and start to advance…

Creating, Upgrading, and Repairing Items

One use of the Technical skill is to create items of equipment. This works similarly to using Resources to acquire equipment, but can be done in isolation, away from a ready supply, as long as the character has access to reasonable tools and materials (which may themselves be situation aspects). Some items may need special facilities to create, like eidolon rigs, genurgy labs, or synthetics labs. A successful Technical roll creates an aspect representing the item in question.

The roll usually faces passive opposition equal to the tech index rating of the item to be created (page 116). For example, a null pistol is tech index T7 (+2), so a Fair (+2) difficulty. This difficulty is modified by your own tech index and the tech index of the environment you're working in: see "Technical and Tech Index" (page 98) for details.

It usually takes a scene to create an item; this may be "Several Days" (page 171) without specialist gear, reduced by 1 step if you have an appropriate toolkit and another step if you have access to an appropriate lab or facility. If you fail the roll to create an item, you may succeed at a cost by increasing the time taken by one step per shift of failure.

As with creating any advantage, the aspect for the constructed item lasts as long as appropriate, but usually no longer than the current session. If you wish to acquire it permanently, you may spend a milestone advancement, even if you're in the middle of nowhere; this use of the Technical skill justifies acquiring the item.

UPGRADES

You can add extras to an item, whether one you've created or already own, using your extras budget or advancements at an appropriate milestone. Usually this doesn't require a dice roll if you have access to gear, tools, and labs; otherwise you must make a Technical roll as if you were creating the item, at the **start** of the next session. On a success, you or another character may spend an advancement to acquire the extra ability; on a failure, the milestone advancement does not occur — you don't lose the advancement, but must wait until the end of the session before you can spend it.

REPAIRING EQUIPMENT

Equipment can take damage in several ways. Most directly, equipment statted as an extra with stress and /

or consequences can take damage as normal. Additionally, items like armour or force fields can sometimes take additional consequences for you. Situation aspects can represent damage to gear — for example, an opponent could target your weapon in a conflict, creating a *Malfunctioning* aspect on it. Finally, when you succeed at a cost, that cost may involve a consequence or situation aspect being placed on an item of equipment.

However they're incurred, consequences representing damage to equipment don't usually clear up on their own; you need to repair them. This is a recovery action (page 154) with a passive opposition based on the severity of the consequence being repaired; see "Technical and Tech Index" (page 98) for modifiers to the roll.

Once you've succeeded at a recovery action to repair equipment, the consequence should be marked as *Under Repair*, and will then be removed after the required time period has elapsed. At the GM's discretion, succeeding with style may reduce the time required to the next consequence down (severe to moderate, moderate to mild).

Damage to Mechanicals and Similar Synthetics

Physical and systems stress damage to constructs like mechanicals, starships, installations, and other non-organic synthetics is treated with Technical skill and stunts representing repair rather than medical treatment. Usually there's no game mechanical difference, but in environments without access to spare parts, makepoints, tools, or the opportunity to make them, recovery may not be possible.

MAINTENANCE

Usually maintaining equipment is assumed; many Commonality items are self-maintaining, and those that aren't are assumed to be maintained by their users as part of everyday use.

Sometimes, maintenance may not be possible. The environment may be hostile, or users may not have access to correct materials or technology to carry out maintenance. Such equipment may degrade in a **maintenance hazard**.

A maintenance hazard is usually a simple hazard (page 176) with passive opposition based on the environment and item's complexity and condition; Fair (+2) is a good starting point. A character must roll Technical, applying modifiers as indicated in "Technical and Tech Index" (page 98). On a failure, the equipment incurs a consequence equal in magnitude to the shifts of failure, or a minimum of **mild**.

Preventive Maintenance

Sometimes it's useful to perform maintenance **before** an item has a problem, particularly when overhauling starship planing engines prior to them reaching their jump maximum (page 225). Often you won't need to roll for preventive maintenance, for example on starships when you're docked at a repair yard. However, if you do need to roll, treat preventive maintenance as a repair attempt with a difficulty of Mediocre (+0), modified according to "Technical and Tech Index" as usual.

Dealing With Aspects

As GM, you manage the flow of fate points to and from the players, giving them opportunities to spend them freely, and introducing complications to help them earn more.

INVOKES

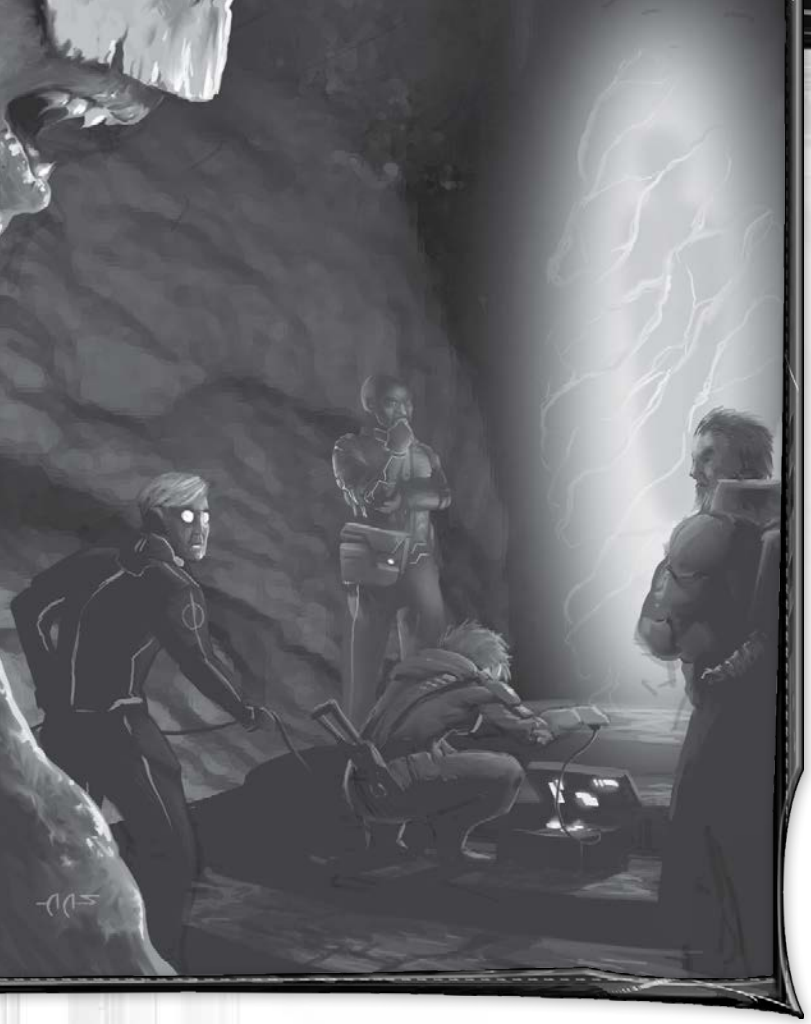
Don't be too strict when a player wants to invoke an aspect — you want to encourage them to spend fate points to keep the flow going. Ask for clarification if you don't see how a player's aspect applies; what may be obvious to him may not be to everyone else, and the desire to award fate points shouldn't get in the way of good narration.

Players sometimes get lost in the open-ended nature of aspects, holding back from invoking because they aren't sure if it's too much of a stretch to apply an aspect in a certain way. It's always worth making sure everyone's clear what an aspect means and how it's used. Prompt a player by asking them if they're satisfied with a skill roll result ("That's a Great. You want to leave it at that? Or do you want to be even more awesome?"). Point out that invoking an aspect is almost always an option on any roll, and get them thinking about how they can do it.

Using Resources in Repair and Maintenance

If you're in the right environment — a major starport with shipyards, an eidolon repair facility — you may use Resources instead of Technical to repair and maintain items. This represents employing an expert to do the job for you. At the GM's discretion, you may do this for organic recovery actions, too, representing engaging doctors and medical facilities.

You may also use Resources to create an advantage on your own recovery action roll, representing resource expenditure on parts, labour, expertise, etc.



COMPELS

Always look for opportunities to compel the PCs' aspects:

- Whenever simply succeeding at a skill roll would be uninteresting;
- Whenever a player has one or no fate points;
- Whenever someone tries to do something, and you immediately think of some aspect-related way it could go wrong.

Remember the two types of compel (page 73): decision-based, where a complication occurs as a result of something a character does; and event-based, where it happens as a result of the character being in the wrong situation at the wrong time. Event-based compels are easier to apply — it's already your job to decide how the world responds to the characters, so you have a lot of leeway to bring unfortunate coincidence into their lives. Usually players will accept these compels easily.

Decision-based compels are trickier. Try to refrain from suggesting *decisions* to the players, focussing instead on responding to *their decisions* with potential complications. It's important that players feel in control of their characters, so don't dictate to them. If they're playing to their aspects already, it shouldn't be hard to propose complications.

Make it clear when a compel is "set", meaning there's no backing out without paying a fate point. When players propose their own compels, this won't come up, because they're fishing for the point to begin with, but when you propose them, you'll need to give the players room to negotiate, before you pin the complication down.

Ineffective Compels

When proposing complications, stay away from superficial or non-dramatic effects. If someone doesn't go "oh, crap" when you propose a compel, then you probably need to make it more serious. It's not enough for someone to be angry at the PC — they're angry **and willing to do something about it**; it's not enough for a business partner to cut a character off — he cuts them off **and tells the rest of his associates to blacklist them**.

Players may propose ineffective compels when fishing for fate points, because they don't want to hose their character too badly. Push for something more serious if their proposal doesn't make their situation that much more dramatic.

Encouraging the Players to Compel

With six or more aspects per PC, it's difficult for you to take sole responsibility for proposing compels — that's a lot of stuff to keep track of. Players should be looking to compel their own characters.

You can help your players develop this habit. If you see a potential compel, ask a leading question. "So, you're at the diplomatic reception and you have *So Light-Fingered It Hurts*. Reiko, do you think this is going to go smoothly for Lyra?" Let the *player* come up with the complication, then hand out the fate point.

Remind players they can compel your NPCs (below), too, if they know their aspects. When an NPC makes a decision, you can prompt the players to fill in the blanks. "You know that First Citizen Orsin has an *Injured Sense of Honour*…? Do you think he's going to get through the diplomatic reception unscathed? What might go wrong? Are you willing to pay a fate point to see it happen?"

CREATING NPCS

One of your main jobs as GM is creating the **non-player characters** (NPCs) who oppose the PCs and try to keep them from their goals. Your game's drama comes out of what the PCs do when worthy adversaries stand between them and their objectives — how far they'll go, what price they'll pay, and how they change as a result.

NPCs can be of many different types. Most are characters like your PCs — humans or hominids or even synthetics and aliens — either supporting the PCs or acting as adversaries. Other things can be NPCs, too; starships can be NPCs, as can organisations like SCI Force or one of the Commonality corporacies, or even entire cul-

tures. The way such larger NPCs act as allies or adversaries may differ in description, but they follow the basic rules for NPCs given here.

As GM you want the players to experience tension and uncertainty when facing NPCs, but you don't want their defeat to be a foregone conclusion. You want them to work for it, but you don't want them to lose hope. Here's how to create balanced and challenging NPCs.

Use Minimal Stats

You never have to give an NPC a full character sheet like a PC. Usually you won't need that much information, because the NPCs won't be the centre of attention like the PCs. Instead, just focus on what you need for that NPC encounter; you can always fill in the blanks on the fly (page 30).

NPC Types

There are three types of NPC: **minor NPCs**, **supporting NPCs**, and **major NPCs**.

MINOR NPCS

Most NPCs are minor NPCs — background characters so insignificant they don't even need a name. The disembodied voice that gives the PCs docking permission, the Mindscape sentinel in the imposality, the third patron from the left at the starport bar. Their role in the story is temporary and fleeting — the PCs probably encounter them once and never see them again. Most of the time, you'll create minor NPCs on the fly when describing the environment. "The lost city is beautiful at midday, with strangely divergent hominids in ancient Old Earth fashions strolling amid fluted spires. An antique robot stands in the forum, chanting the news in a weird electronic voice."

On their own, minor NPCs don't provide much of a challenge to PCs. Use them as you would a low-difficulty skill roll; as an opportunity to showcase the PCs' competence. In conflicts they distract or delay, forcing the PCs to work harder to get what they want. Space opera often features battles with hordes of cannon fodder troopers; they're the minor NPCs.

A minor NPC has up to three skills based on their role in the scene. A security guard might have Unarmed Combat and Ranged Combat; a functionary might have just Bureaucracy. Any other skills are rolled at Mediocre (+0). They get one or two aspects, maybe one or two stress boxes to absorb both physical and mental hits, a "zero stress box" to indicate when they are taken out, and no consequences.

Minor NPCs have three levels of ability: **Average (+1)**, **Fair (+2)**, and **Good (+3)**.

Average (+1) Minor NPCs

Competence: Rank-and-file order-takers and local conscripts. When in doubt, a nameless NPC is Average (+1).
Purpose: To make the PCs look more awesome.
Skills: One or two Average (+1).
Stress: None — a one-shift hit takes them out.

NPC

STARPORT BARKEEPER

Average (+1) Minor NPC

Stress: ☐ ***Scale:*** *Medium (+0)*

Aspects: I Don't Want No Trouble in My Place

Skills: *Average (+1) Contacts*

Fair (+2) Minor NPCs

Competence: Trained professionals, soldiers and elite guards, sharp-tongued administrators or talented intrusion specialists.
Purpose: Drain a few of the players' resources — one or two fate points, stress boxes, maybe a mild consequence.
Skills: One Fair (+2), and one or two Average (+1).
Stress: One stress box — a two-shift hit takes them out.

NPC

TRAINED THUG

Fair (+2) Minor NPC

Stress: ☐☐ ***Scale:*** *Medium (+0)*

Aspects: The Ways of the Streets, Violent Criminal

Skills: *Fair (+2) Unarmed Combat;*
Average (+1) Athletics, Physique

Good (+3) Minor NPCs

Competence: Tough opposition, especially in numbers.
Purpose: Drain the players' resources, providing a decent obstacle in numbers on the way to a more significant encounter.
Skills: One Good (+3), one Fair (+2), and one or two Average (+1)
Stress: Two stress boxes — a three-shift hit takes them out.

PANSECTORATE ADMINISTRATOR

NPC

Good (+3) Minor NPC

Stress: ☐☐☐ ***Scale:*** *Medium (+0)*

Aspects: Haughty Demeanour, Devoted to Protocol

Skills: *Good (+3) Bureaucracy; Fair (+2) Deceive; Average (+1) Knowledge, Will*

Groups

Whenever possible, identical minor NPCs form **groups**. This gives them a better chance of survival, and reduces the GM's workload. You treat a group as a single character — instead of rolling dice individually for each of the constituent minor NPCs, just roll once for the whole group.

A group combines its members' stress boxes, and gains teamwork bonuses (page 159) on its single action.

VENU TROOPERS

NPC Group

Group of 3 Average (+1) Minor NPCs

Stress: ☐ ☐ ☐ ***Scale:*** *Medium (+0)*

Aspects: Murderous Mutant Marines, Bleeding Z-Radiation

Skills: *Average (+1) Ranged Combat (+2 teamwork bonus)*

Hits and Overflow

When a group takes a hit, shifts in excess of one NPC's stress boxes are applied to other NPCs in the group, one at a time. This means a PC can take out a group of four or five minor NPCs (or more!) in a single exchange. When a group takes enough stress to reduce it to a single NPC, try to join that NPC with another group in the scene, if it makes sense. Otherwise you can just have them flee — minor NPCs are good at that.

Max and Lyra are attacked by a half-dozen ill-informed street-gang toughs just for walking down the wrong alleyway on Alpha Bellatricis.

The toughs are minor NPCs with Average (+1) Notice and Unarmed Combat. Sarah splits them into two groups of three: one for Max and one for Lyra. They got the drop on the PCs, but they're also not trained specialists, so Sarah lets Hughie and Reiko roll Notice to see who goes first.

Lyra rolls +2 and adds her Fair (+2) Notice for a total Great (+4). Max, also with Fair (+2) Notice, rolls -1 for a total Average (+1).

Sarah rolls for the toughs as one group of six, for now, reasoning their greater numbers help them as they surround our heroes. That's Average (+1) Notice, +5 for the helpers, for Fantastic (+6). Unfortunately she rolls -3 on the dice, and the toughs get Good (+3). Lyra goes first, followed by the toughs, then Max.

Reiko says, "In a flash, Lyra's null pistol is in hand and burning through these punks!" She gets a Great (+4) result with her Ranged Combat. Sarah's first tough group defends with Mediocre (+0) Athletics, for which it gets no teamwork bonus. The group rolls a lucky +3, so Lyra deals one shift to the group — enough to take one of them out. There are now two in the group, so they only get a +1 teamwork bonus when they attack with their Unarmed Combat.

Neither group hits with their attacks.

On Hughie's turn, Max deals two stress to the group he's facing, taking out two thugs and reducing it from a group of three to a single minor NPC.

Minor NPCs As Obstacles

You can even treat minor NPCs simply as obstacles: assign a passive opposition for the PC to overcome whatever threat the NPC presents, and do it in one roll. You don't have to write anything down: just assume the PC gets past on a successful roll.

For a more complicated situation, use a challenge — useful when you want a group of minor NPCs more as a feature of the scene than as individuals.

Thaddeus wants to convince a group of negotiators in the Successor States that continuing their rapprochement with the Venu will doom their worlds. Sarah doesn't want to deal with convincing each negotiator individually, so she makes a challenge out of it.

The challenge actions are: establish your bonafides (Knowledge); turn the negotiators against each other (Deceive); then cow them into submission by preaching doom and gloom (Provoke). She chooses Great (+4) passive opposition for the challenge.

NPC First, Name Later

If the players get to know that starfighter pilot or security chief or whoever, make a real person out of them — that doesn't mean you need to make them any more mechanically complex. You can if you want, of course, but simply giving that administrator a name and a motivation doesn't mean he can't go down in one punch.

SUPPORTING NPCS

Supporting NPCs usually have names, and are more detailed than minor NPCs. They play supporting roles in your scenarios (hence the name), and often have a distinguishing trait — perhaps a relationship to a PC or NPC, or a competence or unique ability. The "lieutenant" character who's the right-hand man of the lead villain is a supporting NPC, as are the "faces" you assign to the "places" you make when setting up your game (page 17), and any characters named in the PCs' aspects.

Supporting NPCs are a great source of interpersonal drama. They're usually the people the PCs have relationships with — friends, sidekicks, family, contacts, and noteworthy opponents. They may never be central to a scenario, but are a significant part of the journey, providing aid, presenting problems, or figuring in subplots.

Supporting NPCs have a few more character elements than minor NPCs, including a high concept, a trouble, one or more additional aspects, one stunt, and the standard two stress tracks with two boxes each. They also have a handful of skills (say four or five), and maybe a small extras budget (page 27) — perhaps 1 stunt and up to 3 skill points. They have one mild consequence and, if you want them to be tough, one moderate consequence.

Skills for supporting NPCs usually follow a column distribution (page 161). Because you're only defining four or five skills, treat this as one column; if your NPC has a skill at Great (+4), fill in one skill at each positive step below it — one Good (+3), one Fair (+2), and one Average (+1) skill.

Skill Levels

A supporting NPC's peak skill can exceed your best PC by one or two levels, but only if their role is to provide serious opposition — supporting NPCs who are PC allies should be their rough peers in skill rating instead. An action-adventure cliché is to make a "lieutenant" supporting NPC better than the main villain at combat, contrasting his brawn to the villain's brain.

Concessions

Supporting NPCs shouldn't usually fight to the bitter end unless forced to. Instead, they can **concede** (page 156), especially early in a story, and especially if it lets them escape. This foreshadows a future, more significant encounter, and generates a few fate points to make them more of a threat next time. It can also be satisfying for the PCs the next time the supporting NPC makes an appearance. "So, Ms. Da Luz, we meet again! But this time it shall not go so easily for you!"

Supporting NPC

KASIM KASAH, CLAY'S MENTOR

Physical Stress: ☐² ***Mental Stress:*** ☐²

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Scale: *Medium (+0)*

Aspects: Mysterious SCI Force Leader, Too Old to Remember, Clay's Mentor

Skills: *Great (+4) Will; Good (+3) Knowledge; Fair (+2) Deceive; Average (+1) Provoke*

STUNTS

✦ ***Geopolitical Tactician:*** *Use Knowledge to create advantages in organisation and culture actions.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Extended Lifespan:*** *+100 years and 5 skill points, plus longevity aspect.*

★ ***Special Ops Chip:*** *Local Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.*

★ ***Subdermal Projector:*** *+2 Ranged Combat, weapon:2 rating null beamer.*

MAJOR NPCS

As GM, major NPCs are the closest you'll get to playing a PC. They have full character sheets, with five or six aspects, a full skill pyramid or column distribution, stunts, and an extras budget. Major NPCs are the most significant characters in your PCs' lives, representing crucial allies or opponents. Your main "bad guys" are major NPCs, as are any NPCs who are vital to your stories.

Major NPCs require more time and attention than other NPCs; create them as if you were creating a PC, using the whole character creation process, or do things more on the fly, creating a partial sheet of aspects and skills you definitely need, and any stunts you want, and then fill in the rest as you go. You can even start with a supporting NPC, and add to the sheet during play.

Major NPCs often fight to the bitter end, especially in the climactic scenes of your scenario, making the PCs work for every step.

There are two types of major NPC: **exact peers**, who grow with the PCs as the campaign progresses; or **superiors**, who remain static while the PCs grow to sufficient strength to oppose them. Exact peer NPCs have the same amount of skill points as the PCs currently; whereas superior NPCs have skill levels at least two higher than the PCs' highest skill when first encountered.

THE 3-SPACE INQUISITOR

Major NPC

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3* ***Scale:*** *Medium (+0)*

ASPECTS

High Concept: Lethal Mechanical Assassin

Trouble: Machiavellian

Phase I: Inhuman Perspectives

Phase II: The 3SI Has Eyes and Ears Everywhere!

Phase III: Terrifying Appearance

SKILLS

Fantastic (+6): *Melee Combat, Provoke*
Superb (+5): *Intrusion, Ranged Combat*
Great (+4): *Resources, Will*
Good (+3): *Contacts, Notice*
Fair (+2): *Stealth, Technical*
Average (+1): *Knowledge, Physique*

STUNTS

✦ ***Armour of Fear:*** *Use Provoke to defend vs Melee and Unarmed Combat until damaged.*

✦ ***Killing Stroke:*** *1/scene, pay 1 fate point to increase a physical consequence you inflict by 1 step.*

✦ ***Mindburn:*** *Use Will for mental attacks using the Mindscape.*

✦ ***Probe:*** *+2 create an advantage Will bonus to discern surface thoughts.*

✦ ***Torturer:*** *+2 Provoke attacks with effective equipment.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Extreme Environment Adaptation (Vacuum):*** *As aspect.*

★ ***Special Ops Mindscape Instance:*** *Local Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.*

NPCS AS EXTRAS

So far we've discussed NPCs as entities under the GM's control. PCs can also have subsidiary characters under their control, by defining them as extras.

Such characters aren't strictly speaking *NPCs* as they're controlled (by and large) by a player, but we'll keep the terminology as it's useful and reminds us that even subsidiary characters defined as PC extras have lives of their own — to an extent.

Can a Sidekick Let Me Act Twice in an Exchange?

No. NPCs acting independently of PCs are ***always*** *under the GM's control; a player may only ever make 1 action roll in an exchange (page 152). This can be an action undertaken by a minor or supporting NPC extra if you like, but if so your character can't also act. If you want to act at the same time as your minions or sidekick, have them give you a teamwork bonus.*

Here are some ideas for using NPC extras:

- **NPCs As Extra Aspects:** The most common way of attaching an NPC to your character. They don't have to be present all the time; they can be a contact, patron, or even a dependent like a child, spouse, lover, or family member. They can be invoked and compelled like any aspect.
- **Minor NPCs As Extras:** Some characters have minions or helpers, a retinue providing a teamwork bonus. If they're directly useful in conflicts, they can even take damage, effectively giving the PC additional stress boxes in one type of conflict — say, physical, if he has a bodyguard of a number of combat drones — and a teamwork bonus in one or two skills. However, any damage taken by the minor NPC extras results in them being taken out. This can cause problems for the PC, and removes the minor NPC extra from play for at least the rest of the session; the drone or bodyguard is disabled, destroyed, killed, unconscious, etc. At an appropriate milestone the minor NPC extras can be replaced, but that may not be possible in the middle of a scenario except under special circumstances.
- **Supporting NPCs As Extras:** Some PCs may have a sidekick, companion, bodyguard, or follower, perhaps even a synthetic one, defined as a more detailed extra like a supporting NPC. Broadly speaking the same rules apply as for minor NPCs, except this time the supporting NPC can provide more stress boxes and even extra consequences for the PC.



RUNNING NPCS

Here are some tips for using NPCs in play.

Right-sizing

With NPCs, it's a balancing act between obliterating the PCs and letting them walk all over them (unless it's a group of minor NPCs, in which case that's pretty much the point). Bear in mind not just an NPC's skill ratings, but the NPC type and how many you use.

Creating well-balanced opposition for your PCs is more art than science. Here are some guidelines.

- Don't outnumber the PCs unless your NPCs have comparatively lower skills.
- If your PCs are ganging up on one big opponent, make sure that opponent has a peak skill at least two levels higher than the PCs. Give it full consequences and stress, and consider its armour and weapons ratings.
- Limit yourself to one major NPC per scene or even scenario, unless it's a climactic conflict at the end of an arc. Remember, supporting NPCs can have skills as high as you want.
- Most of the opposition the PCs encounter in a session should be minor NPCs, with one or two supporting NPCs and major NPCs along the way.
- Minor and supporting NPCs mean shorter conflicts because they concede or lose sooner; major NPCs mean longer conflicts.
- Matching one supporting or major NPC per PC is a huge challenge, and may end in disaster for the PCs. Limit yourself to one or maybe two such encounters per scenario, and give the players plenty of warning!

Creating Advantages for NPCs

NPCs can create advantages like PCs. Use opposition characters in scenes that aren't necessarily about stopping the PCs, but instead about discovering information about them and stacking up free invokes. Let your bad guys and the PCs meet, and bring out the Empathy rolls; or instead of that fight scene, let the NPCs show up, gauge the PCs' abilities, then flee.

NPCs have a "home turf" advantage if the PCs take the fight to them, and you can "pre-load" NPCs with free invokes if they've had time to create situation aspects there.

Change the Arena of Conflict

NPCs are more interesting if they try to get at the PCs in different arenas of conflict. There are many ways to get at someone, and mental conflict is just as valid as physical. If the opposition has a different skill set to one or more of your PCs, choose a strategy that lets them exploit those strengths to their best advantage.

An enemy going after Jackson Stark probably won't want to confront him physically, because Ranged Combat and Physique are his peak skills. He's not as well equipped to handle a clever deception, however, or a technopsi assault. Max, on the other hand, is best threatened by the biggest, nastiest bruiser possible, someone who can strike before he has chance to run away.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
THE MINDSCAPE

"Lyra Da Luz switched to virtuality, and the sentinel materialised before her. All around, the intricate diaphanous lattices of the Mindscape drifted and sparkled with crystalline tracery, beating to an unheard pulse of communication, thought, life. The sentinel was a standard model — unintelligent but with passable emulation routines — like a crystal dragonfly with an info tether reaching towards her."

The Mindscape is a communications medium, a vast data store, and a collection of virtual spaces. It permeates the Commonality, connecting citizens, conveying thanograms and thoughtcasts, and enabling technopsi. There are Mindscape satellites, vaults, and networks throughout Commonality Space.

Characters can use the Mindscape in many ways, including:

- Exploiting Mindscape data to reinforce the use of a skill (for example, using **exomemory** to find obscure information).
- Using the Mindscape medium to take actions affecting the actual world (for example, using mindburn or technopsi domination to overwhelm actual-world targets).
- Taking actions within the Mindscape virtual environment (for example, using the Mindscape Engineer stunt to create virtual environments, or the Hacker stunt to attack Mindscape sentinels).

THE HALO

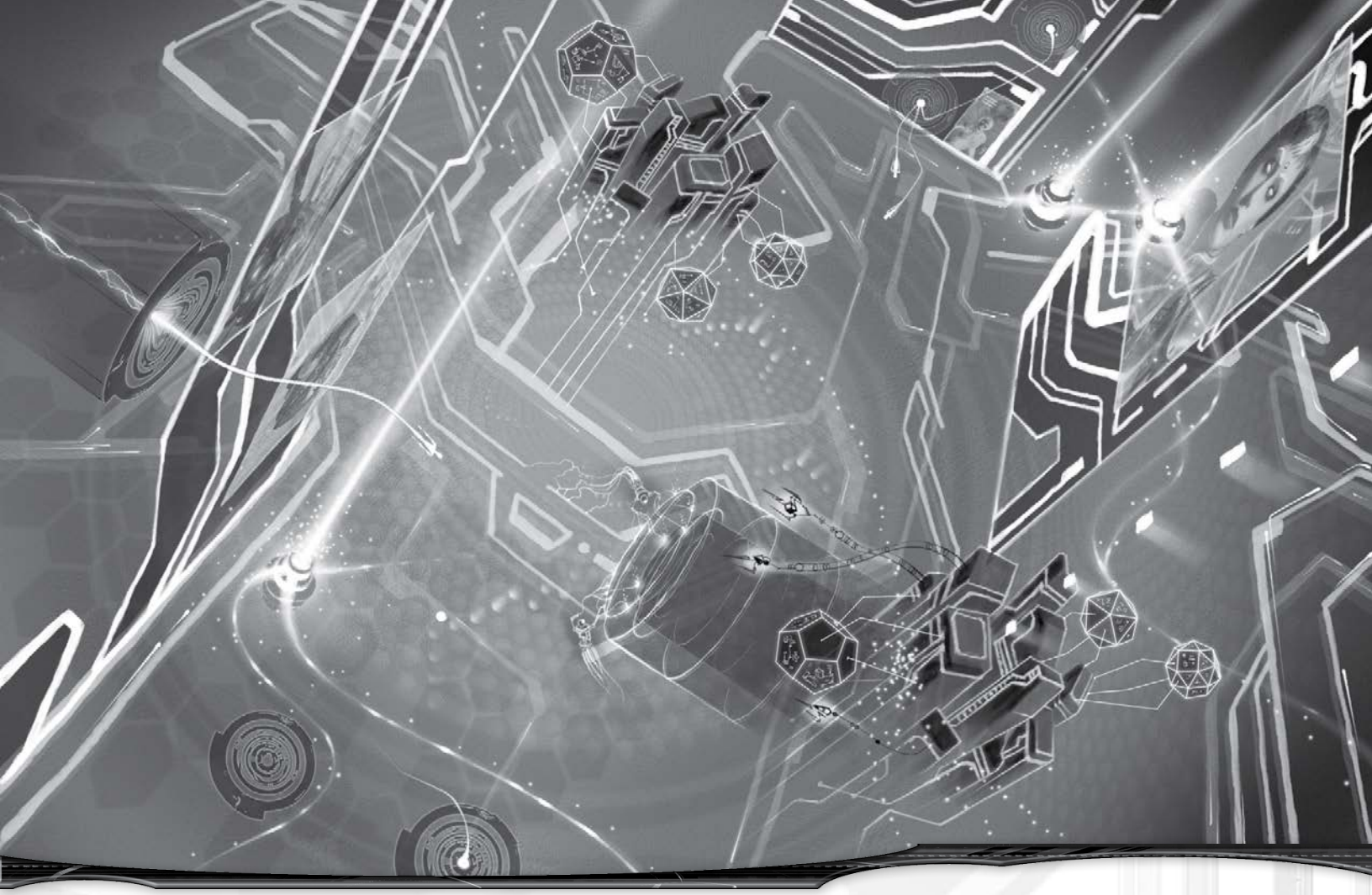
The **halo** is an extension of a Mindscape-connected individual **into** the Mindscape. It's the aggregation of all your abilities which rely on Mindscape connectivity to function, including skill chips, the Mindscape implant, appropriate enhancements, and *content* like thoughtcasts and exomemories. It's exposed to the Mindscape, subject to Intrusion and Hacker attempts. Abilities within your halo can be used as long as you're connected to the Mindscape, and become temporarily unusable whenever you're not.

Mindscape-connected individuals perceive one another's haloes; it's how implants connect when **handshaking**, routinely exchanging public personal information. You can choose what personal information you make public in your halo; most people reveal their names, Mindscape ID, and often trivia like occupation, interests, and homeworld. You can find this information easily, usually without a dice roll.

Your halo also contains private encrypted content; information about skills, stunts, and aspects which depend on the Mindscape, including skill chips; and anything else you've marked down as a **halo ability** (page 28). You can discover and read encrypted halo content using technopsi, even disrupting, damaging, or disabling halo abilities, and in extreme cases even **stealing** them.

Hacking Someone's Halo

Use the Hacker (Intrusion) stunt, Mindscape Engineer (Technical) stunt, or other appropriate ability to forcibly read the private contents of someone's halo. This is a create an advantage action, identifying one crucial Mindscape ability or content item possessed by the target. Discuss this information with your GM; it shouldn't be trivial or irrelevant, but directly useful, like the **existence** of an enhancement, skill chip, or exomemory. If you succeed with style, you may read the information in detail, discover two items, or create two advantages.



Hacking attempts usually face Fair (+2) passive opposition, unless the target has a specific stunt or special ops chip, in which case they use Will or even Intrusion as active opposition.

Disrupting Halo Abilities

Use stunts like Mindburn, Probe, Hacker, and Mindscape Engineer in technopsi attacks to damage a target's halo abilities. You can use your mental stress boxes or consequences to absorb attacks on your own halo; otherwise, a successful attack disables one of your halo abilities (or two on a success with style), placing a consequence on that ability equal to the shifts of the attack. You must make an appropriate recovery action, possibly using Hacker, Redaction, or Mindscape Engineer, to regain use of the ability.

For disruption attacks using Mindburn and Probe, the target may choose which halo ability is affected; for Hacker and Mindscape Engineer attacks, the attacker chooses.

Stealing Halo Abilities

The Hacker and Mindscape Engineer stunts, and to a lesser extent Probe, can **steal** a halo ability instead of (or as well as) disrupting it, as long as that ability has no physical or genurgic component. This usually means Mindscape content like thoughtcasts and exomemories, but includes skill chips and virtual enhancements.

The attacker must target a **specific** halo ability with a create an advantage action, giving the attacker an aspect representing the stolen ability. You may use milestone advancements to "cement" such stolen halo abilities as your own.

DOING THINGS WITH THE MINDSCAPE

You may use the Mindscape to take actions in the actual world, either using the Mindscape directly or drawing on its content to enhance your knowledge or skills. This phenomenon is known as **technopsi**.

Thoughtcasts

Thoughtcasting, also known as **techno-telepathy**, is one of the two principle uses of the Mindscape (the other being **exomemory** — see below). Thoughtcasting allows one Mindscape-connected individual to communicate with another, either in real-time or delayed exchange. A user vocalises a message in his mind (ie in words), then uses the Mindscape implant to transmit that message across

the Mindscape to a recipient, who hears those words in his mind. Entire conversations may be held this way, while to an outside observer it looks like nothing is happening.

Thoughtcasts are usually private between participants (of whom there may be many), but may be hacked using the Hacker stunt, a Fair (+2) passive opposition unless opposed by Hacker or Will if the target has a special ops or black chip.

To thoughtcast to someone you must know his **Mindscape ID**. The recipient may be anywhere in the Commonality, although interstellar thoughtcasts only travel at the speed of Mindscape updates (page 115), and not in real-time. If a Mindscape user is within visual range, you may usually perceive his halo automatically and invite him to communicate via thoughtcast, a process known as **handshaking**. A Mindscape user may decline a handshake, or may use his **privacy field** to render his halo opaque, or even a monitor band cloak (page 136). Characters with Hacker or special ops chips may roll to communicate with a character against his will, often a precursor to a technopsi attack.

Searching for a Mindscape-connected user in a crowd of Mindscape-connected individuals requires sensorview (page 189) and a dice roll. At ranges beyond line-of-sight you need a Mindscape tracer (page 138).

Exomemory

The Mindscape is also a vast store of data, including **exomemory** memory engrams. You may thoughtcast your memories to the Mindscape, where they may be accessed and "re-remembered" by you and even other people. It's voluntary, like taking photographs or videos today; people do it at important moments, to "relive" the experience later. Exomemories may be **public**, **private**, or **restricted**.

Exomemories and Personality Change

Memoplexes aren't the only way of changing personality; normal exomemories have the same capability. If any exomemory roll allows you to succeed at a cost (page 143), you may take that cost as a consequence representing a temporary personality change related to the exomemory. This is a mental consequence which may be treated with Redaction (Empathy).

Public exomemories are accessible on any Knowledge, Science, or Technical roll, perhaps to create an advantage. A **private exomemory** has a Fair (+2) passive opposition before it can be accessed with a Hacker roll; anyone may designate one of their exomemories as private. A **restricted exomemory** may only be created by someone with a special ops or black chip, usually using the Technical skill, and is treated as restricted content (page 191).

Exomemories can also be accessed when **invoking the Mindscape** (page 81).

MEMOPLEXES

The personalities of humans and other sentient beings are directly related to their memories; how they remember their experiences and actions, and how they interpret the universe around them. A change in a character's memories, whether through experience, mental damage, or exomemory, can change a character's personality.

The Commonality exploits this phenomenon by creating **memoplexes**, also known as **servitor gestalts**. A memoplex is a specially designed array of exomemories which provides individuals sharing it with a common set of abilities, vicarious experiences, and knowledge. Joining a memoplex alters a member's personality in specific ways — perhaps making members of a military memoplex more violent or tactically-minded; or members of a political or instrumentality memoplex more loyal or bestowing shared attitudes and beliefs. Memoplexes are used when joining sensitive organisations to ensure loyalty.

In game terms, a memoplex is an **extra**. It may provide skills and stunts, but by definition automatically provides one or more propagandistic aspects which direct a member's personality down a clearly defined path. This could be as simple and unsubtle as *Loyal Servitor of the 3SI* or as devious as *When You Have a Hammer Everything Starts to Look Like a Nail*. Memoplexes aren't common for general members of organisations, but for secret elite forces within them.

Sarah has decided that Jackson Stark's new Custodian Avatar Paradox *high concept represents a secret memoplex maintained by a mysterious organisation. She provides it with a Memetic Engineer stunt and a Knowledge Specialisation (Rim Sector Custodian Affairs) stunt, and Great (+4) Knowledge, Good (+3) Intrusion, and Fair (+2) Deceive skills. Jackson doesn't receive any of these skills and stunts for free, but memoplex membership gives him a permission (page 104) to acquire any of them using advancements.*

THANOGRAMS

A **thanogram thoughtcast** uploads a **thanogram** — a personality and memory "snapshot" of an individual at the

moment of their death. Invasive once begun, the process can be damaging, and people usually wait until they know they're dying before initiating one. Treat a thanogram thoughtcast as a Superb (+5) Mindburn conflict lasting 5 exchanges; once started it can't be stopped. Some technopsi specialists can force targets to initiate thanogram thoughtcasts involuntarily.

Countless thanograms are stored in the Mindscape, in varying degrees of completeness, and may be examined. Usually this involves simply searching exomemories; however, in extreme cases thanograms may be instantiated in eidolon rigs as personality simulations and interrogated. Ethically dubious, this isn't available to normal Commonality citizens.

Thanograms are the basis for eidolon personalities (page 43). Usually eidolons are derived as much as possible from a single thanogram, for greater coherence and stability. However, some may comprise elements from two or more thanogram sources, providing unique memory and personality traits at the risk of instability and unpredictable flaws.

Sensorview

Sensorview is an additional sense possessed by Mindscape-linked characters, allowing them to use the Mindscape and linked equipment like hand scanners, PSAs, and starship active and passive sensors to perceive targets in unique ways. It's mostly used like any other sense — you can use the Mindscape to perceive things, use your Investigate and Notice skills to "see" infrared or other energies with your PSA, and so on. A target must be perceived in sensorview to be the target of technopsi attacks.

Remote Control

Use technopsi to control equipment. Depending on the discretionary interface (page 114), you may even use the device's senses via sensorview, as with an avatar. Using remote control on a device you have as an extra is automatic; use your own skills or the extra's as appropriate. You may also use remote control on devices which don't belong to you — including those belonging to other people.

Taking remote control of an item is a create an advantage action, giving you an aspect representing that item. Devices designed to be used this way provide passive opposition no greater than Fair (+2) to appropriate skills like Drive, Pilot, Investigate, Notice, etc. Most devices which may be remote controlled are **not** open access like this, and must be hacked with Hacker (Intrusion) or an appropriate Technical skill or stunt against Fair (+2) opposition or higher.

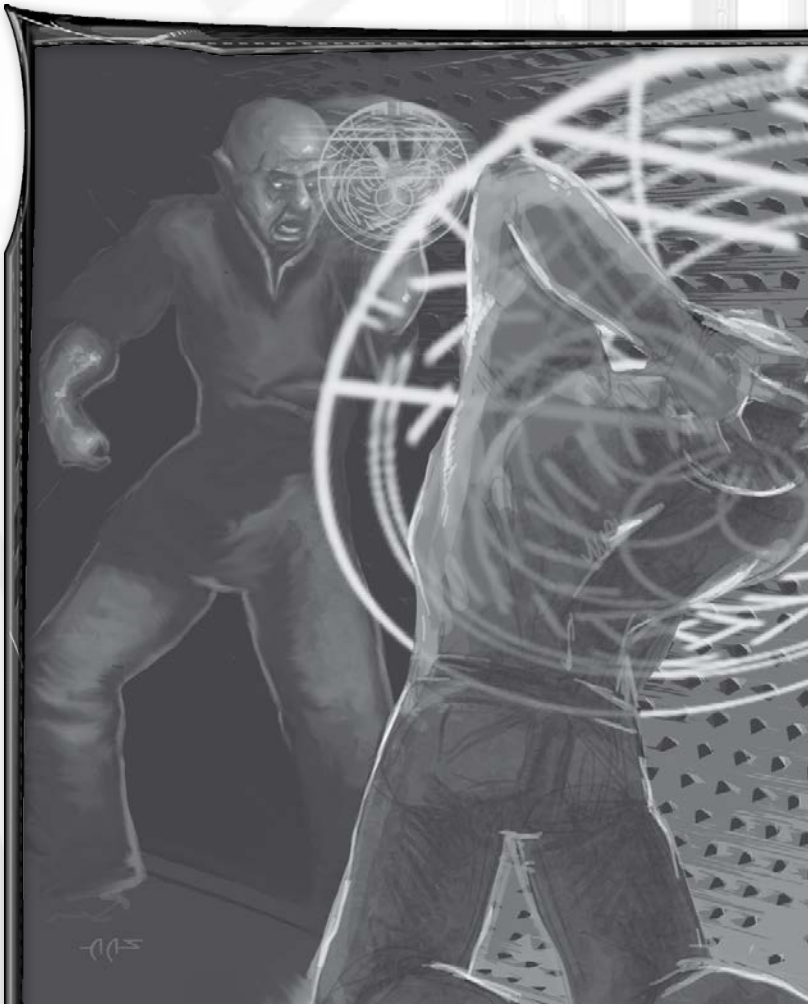
Use Hacker (Intrusion) or an appropriate Technical or Will roll to seize remote control of items controlled by others, actively opposed by an appropriate skill. This usually requires a special ops or black chip; it's a create an advantage action, giving you an aspect representing control of the device.

Mindburn

Characters with special ops or black chips may make **mindburn** mental attacks on Mindscape-connected targets. You may do this immediately on targets you're already in communication with; otherwise you must use sensorview or

Detecting the Monitor Band

Detecting an uncloaked monitor band signal is automatic in the same zone, but may require an Average (+1) sensorview or Passive Sensing (page 204) roll beyond that, +1 per zone after the first. Succeeding with style on an Active Sensing or sensorview roll on a specific zone may detect the presence of a cloaked monitor band signal, but hacking (page 87) is required to get any further.



Mindscape trace to locate and identify the target (page 138).

Mindburn isn't directly affected by range. The attacker must concentrate throughout the attack, which precludes attacks over interstellar distances, but if an attacker in orbit, say, can locate a target on a planet (or vice versa), then a mindburn attack is possible.

Direct Perception Feeds

Direct perception feeds enable **ubiquitous perception** (page 114). They're a way to invoke the Mindscape on skill rolls like Notice, Investigate, Knowledge, or other sensorview — including targeting for technopsi attacks. DP feeds are usually limited to public spaces; instrumentality, corporacy, or Pansectorate personnel, criminals, and other individuals concerned with secrecy or privacy don't thoughtcast DP feeds. That doesn't mean an unconnected individual might not be accidentally providing a DP feed which might be useful, or that you can't insinuate stealth or sensor drones into a zone to provide one.

Restricting Mindscape Access

A Mindscape **dirigeant** (page 83), or exceptionally a Mindscape engineer or hacker, may prevent an individual from accessing the Mindscape. For a normal target the dirigeant must simply know the target's Mindscape ID and locate him using sensorview or Mindscape trace whenever he uses the Mindscape. A target may hide from a dirigeant using a monitor band cloak or other form of Mindscape stealth.

For a target with a special ops or black chip, a contest is required, usually of the dirigeant's Bureaucracy against the target's Hacker, Mindscape Engineer, Stealth, etc. The target may even defend using technopsi like mindburn if he can identify his attacker.

Gestalt Communication

Gestalt language is the next stage in the evolution of language, used by trans- and posthuman hyperintelligences, enhanced by emotional markers, Mindscape acceleration routines, and hyperlinguistic shortcuts — the so-called **gestalts**. Levels of gestalt language convey concepts with exponentially increasing speed and sophistication. Some are usable by non-augmented humans; others require enhancement, or even for the individual to have "gone post" (page 447). The lowest level gestalt language is standard Commonality speech, technically referred to as **zero-gestalt**.

Other Hyperlanguages

*While the Venu don't have gestalts per se, the mysterious **evocations** of the Dark Radiance may be gestalt analogues. They appear less negotiated than gestalt communication; evokers either impose interactions, or read information directly from collocutors.*

GESTALT LANGUAGE ENHANCEMENTS

While human beings are *affected* by gestalt language, you need **gestalt language enhancements** to actively *use* it. A combination skill chip and neural accelerator, they may be taken as genurgic mods or mechanical enhancements. Lower level gestalt language enhancements are for human and other similar beings; higher enhancements are for posthumans like planetary and installation sentiences, or for organics with post-human occupations like Gestalt Linguists (page 449).

★ *Stage I Gestalt Communication*

Requires Mindscape Implant

Higher intelligences aggregate entire conversations into discrete utterances called **gestalts**, a form of hyperword. You may use gestalt communication via technopsi with this enhancement; it may or may not have a verbal element, but always has a substantial thoughtcast component. You gain a +2 bonus to overcome actions to persuade, intimidate, provoke, or elicit emotional responses, or to convey a great deal of information rapidly. Stage I Gestalt Communication is non-creative; you work within a pre-defined hyperlinguistic milieu of ready-made gestalts.

★ *Gestalt Controller*

Requires Stage I Gestalt Communication

Gestalt controllers define the gestalts used in Stage I Gestalt Communication. They're extremely powerful, and gain a +2 bonus to create advantage actions to guide any conversation to a predetermined conclusion or create and control context.

★ *Gestalt Combat*

Requires Stage I Gestalt Communication

You specialise in gestalt utterances used to dominate and cow opposition; gain a +2 bonus to attack and defend actions in mental conflicts. The target need not be connected to the Mindscape to be affected. Consequences may modify the target's behaviour and personality.

★ *Gestalt Propagation*

Requires Stage I Gestalt Communication

When you succeed at a gestalt language attack action,

spend a fate point to force a consequence, or to affect an entire zone.

★ ***Stage II Gestalt Communication***
Requires Stage I Gestalt Communication, post-human occupation permission
Used by advanced corpuses and similar sentiences. You may create your own gestalts dynamically, on the fly, making your use of language immensely powerful. Gain a +4 bonus on all gestalt language actions. Stage II gestalts are effectively **memoplexes** (page 188).

Stage III Gestalt Communication

The Planetary Intelligence is the only known instance of Stage III Gestalt Communication: the non-linear communication of complete conceptual commonality. It's bound by the Treaty of Casuistry Shore (41 NCE) from unilaterally subjecting Commonality citizens to Stage III gestalt, although the Chembu participate on a daily basis.

DOING THINGS IN THE MINDSCAPE

As well as a tool for actions in the actual world, the Mindscape is also an environment in which you can act.

Describing the Mindscape

While the Mindscape isn't a "place" as such, it's sometimes convenient to treat it as one. Most Mindscape access is transparent and unnoticeable, like accessing your own memories or talking to someone. Sometimes, such as when accessing maps, images, etc, it's convenient to use a "virtual vision" to represent the information, like a transparent overlay over your normal vision.

Mindscape interaction is sometimes sufficiently complex that it's best represented as a virtual environment. Discretionary interfaces let you experience the Mindscape as a place — multidimensional, with sensory input as required. Your body remains as it was, but your attention is focussed on the Mindscape "virtuality". Usually the nature of this virtuality is a matter of choice — you can select the "theme" yourself (mediaeval, natural, tech, mathematical, geometric, abstract). Accessing restricted content may force you into a specific theme, depending on its technopsi ability (usually very high); such a virtuality is called an **imposality**. If you're in a controlled virtuality (ie somewhere you shouldn't be) and you can't find your way out, you may be trapped there.

Acting in Virtualities and Imposalities

In game terms, virtual environments are treated similarly to actual ones. The GM describes the virtual spaces: you may be moving through a semi-abstract lattice of data-beams and blazing Mindscape nodes, surrounded by glowing avatars and sentinels (the "default" Mindscape virtual environment); or you may perceive the virtuality as a mediaeval castle, a beautiful forest, or an underwater reef. You take actions in a virtuality using your usual skills — Athletics, Stealth, etc — although actions requiring Physique or other purely physical capabilities may use Will, or even Hacker (Intrusion), Mindscape Engineer, or Virtualisation.

Imposalities are virtualities in which the environmental "skin" is selected by the controller, giving them an advantage and putting intruders at a disadvantage. You may find an imposality obstructing you; maybe it's a labyrinth, or a tangled jungle, or filled with illusory distractions. Passive opposition in an imposality is at least Fair (+2), and the imposality has a situation aspect which can be used against you.

Accessing Restricted Content

Mindscape content can be restricted to specific individuals; to everybody else, it's not even there. You can restrict content yourself as a create an advantage action (usually using Will, or sometimes Technical). If you have a special ops or black chip, you may restrict content you haven't created.

Accessing restricted content is a Hacker (Intrusion) or Mindscape Engineer (Technical) roll against the appropriate skill of the person restricting it, or a fixed difficulty. Some restricted content may be protected by **sentinels** (below), who must be overcome before the roll to access the content may be made. As hacking restricted content is illegal, characters may be spotted by patrolling sentinels even when the content isn't specifically protected, a possible result of success at a cost. Hacking restricted content may be a contest (page 148); can the hacker succeed before the sentinels show up?

Sentinels

Mindscape sentinels are automated Mindscape entities — not intelligent per se, but with a high degree of artificial intellligence — which can take on any appearance, often depending on discretionary interface. They may appear

MINDSCAPE SENTINEL

Supporting NPC

Physical Stress: 1 2 ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Scale: *Medium (+0)*

Aspects: Lethal Subroutine, Blindingly Fast, In Its Element, Crystalline Samurai Defender, Mindless Mindscape Construct (flaw)

Skills: *Great (+4) Will; Good (+3) Notice; Fair (+2) Provoke; Average (+1) Athletics*

STUNTS

✦ ***Domination:*** *Roll Will vs Will to control the target's actions.*

✦ ***Mindburn:*** *Use Will for mental attacks using the Mindscape.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Compulsion Field:*** *+2 Will bonus to create* Mindscape Compulsion-*type advantages.*

as virtual squid-like monsters, howling ghosts of whirling data, crystalline samurai, black-suited assassins, or other fanciful forms.

Sentinels are minor or supporting NPCs, attacking with mindburn; supporting NPC sentinels may also attack with domination (page 101). Sentinel patrols may be a **group** of up to half a dozen minor NPCs; those guarding restricted content or imposalities may be supporting NPCs.

Sentinels must be fought in Mindscape combat, using Hacker (Intrusion), Mindburn (Will), and so on; most Commonality citizens aren't equipped to fight them at all. You may defend against a sentinel using Athletics if you have nothing better. Destroyed sentinels explode in a cloud of data; if you don't use Hacker, Mindscape Engineer, Virtualisation, or technurgy (page 193) to camouflage the explosion, you may find you attract the attention of yet more sentinels (a great occasion for a compel…).

Encountering Fictionals

There is no guarantee that information in the Mindscape is true. There are pseudo-memory engrams which never happened to anyone; thanograms of personalities which never existed outside a work of fiction. These are **fictionals**, and they're where the Mindscape begins to stretch the human mind.

Imagine a world where you could talk to the Buddha, or to Jesus. Or where you could remember flying like a bird through the sky, or wielding creative powers like a god. All these things and more exist within the Mindscape, allowing the human mind to experience impossible things, imaginary or recreated historical events, and grow and develop from the experience. Reality, simulation, fiction, and memory blur in the Mindscape.

The nature of the Mindscape requires that fictionals are clearly identified. Sentinels (see above) patrol the Mindscape validating content; counterfeiting an actual is a major crime, usually only perpetrated by black or special ops chip users.

Mindscape fictionals are mostly a descriptive element applied to exomemories, virtualities, and personalities in the Mindscape. Problems begin when you don't realise you're dealing with a fictional, or when the fictional by its nature delivers a profoundly disturbing experience. Did you really have a secret life as a corporacy assassin? Is your family really dead? Is your friend really plotting against you?

Here's how to handle that.

PERCEIVING FICTIONALS

Fictionals are usually clearly identified. When they're not, you must roll Investigation, Notice, or perhaps Hacker (Intrusion) against passive opposition or the Deceive skill of the fictional or its creator. This is a create an advantage action; if you succeed, you realise the fictional's nature; otherwise, you accept its reality, even though you may logically know it's impossible. See below for what that means.

THE TROUBLE WITH FICTIONALS

Fictionals can be deeply disturbing — horrific, psychologically harrowing, or just plain confusing, messing with your sense of reality.

A **fictional exomemory** can be compelled against you. You usually acquire a fictional memory as a success at a cost when creating an advantage, etc; you take the exomemory as a consequence, **and** gain a free invoke. Sufficiently consequential fictional exomemories (like extreme consequences) can literally change who you are.

A **fictional environment** can force you into a situation where you can't react; you're falling, or in your childhood home as it's nuked from orbit. There may be little difference between a fictional environment and an imposality, except that a fictional environment may itself be an attack, usually statted as a **conflict hazard** (page 176).

THE NUKE ATTACK ON MY CHILDHOOD HOME

Hazard

Fictional Environment Conflict Hazard

Aspects: Everything's Much Smaller Than I Remember, Firecloud in the Sky, I Run but I Get Nowhere!, Mindless Mindscape Construct (flaw)

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4

Skills: *Great (+4) Intensity; Fair (+2) Magnitude*

Actions: *Attacks with Intensity each exchange. Use Will, Athletics to defeat by escaping; Hacker, Virtualisation, Mindscape Engineer to dismantle.*

Teamwork Against Fictionals

While fictionals may tailor themselves to each target's own exomemories, often appearing deeply personal, they remain objective threats in the Mindscape. As a result, characters may cooperate to overcome them.

Silent Death on Cicero Station

Fictionals are a gift to mad scientists and criminals — who with a yearning for galactic domination wouldn't want to create a synthetic version of Vlad the Impaler or Napoleon? Cerberus, or Hydra?

The player characters are working for the Internal Security Instrumentality (page 285), tracking down a serial killer on the Javawayn star city Cicero Station*, whose modus operandi is like some giant, predatory insect; the few surviving witnesses report a terrifying shape in the shadows, with enormous claws and jaws. Yet there are no unaccounted life signs on the station; by all accounts this looks like a fictional, a synthetic nightmare created by a madman. But is it? And, if it is, who created it, and what is it going to do next?*

A **fictional character** is essentially a disguised sentinel. It may take actions as a sentinel, but its real danger comes when you accept it's real. You can talk to your dead lover, an ancient guru, or even the Buddha, and your mind can accept the experience as real. If you do accept a fictional character as real, they may make Provoke attacks and create an advantage actions against you — positively or negatively — leaving you with consequences or situation aspects like *Survivor Guilt*, *Everything I Know Is Wrong*, or *There Is No Spoon*.

CREATING FICTIONALS

Characters may create fictionals using Will or even Technical (including the Artist stunt). Such fictionals are always identified as such. To create a fictional which appears real requires Deceive and a special ops or black chip, or the Hacker or Mindscape Engineer stunt. Fictionals are created initially as **aspects**; use advancements to give them skills, stunts, etc, as extras (see "Technurgy" below and "Creating, Upgrading, and Repairing Items" on page 178).

Hacking the Mindscape

A lot of this chapter falls under "hacking the Mindscape". You may use Hacker, Mindscape Engineer, and even Virtualisation to create advantages in the Mindscape, modifying its structure and giving you bonuses, in the same way as you use your skills to create advantages in the actual world.

Technurgy

Technurgy is the art of creating virtual items in the Mindscape using the Mindscape Engineer or Virtualisation stunts. Technurgy items can be aspects or extras, helping you in the Mindscape or against Mindscape targets. Examples include:

- **Logic Traps** give you a bonus to Domination or Probe actions.
- **Virtualisation Bombs** temporarily "destroy" or disrupt virtualities by creating a situation aspect.
- **Sniffer Routines** give you an Investigate bonus within the Mindscape.
- **Unpackers** give you a bonus when penetrating restricted content (page 191).
- **Ultrascans** give you a bonus to notice concealed items in the Mindscape.

As with creating items of actual equipment, a technurgy roll gives you an aspect for the item in the

Mindscape. It lasts as long as appropriate, but no longer than the current session. You may spend advancements to "cement" the item as an extra, giving it additional skills, aspects, and stunts.

MINDSCAPE PHENOMENA

The Mindscape gives rise to several phenomena which have a great impact on life in the Commonality.

Chronodisplacement

There's one great limit to the Mindscape: the speed of light. Without intervention, the Mindscape in one star system would differ hugely from another; its participants, memories, thoughtcasts, and stored information.The **Mindjammer fleet** travels constantly throughout the Commonality, updating Mindscape nodes with data gathered on their voyages. This keeps the Mindscape largely synchronised — the Mindscape at one end of Commonality Space may be several years out of step with the Mindscape at the other, but the body of stored information is broadly the same.

Personal experience of this lack of Mindscape synchronisation is a relatively new phenomenon, occurring since Rediscovery. When travelling the spacelanes, it's possible to "run ahead" of the Mindjammer fleet, and find the local Mindscape isn't synchronised with your own memories and experiences. This **chronodisplacement** can be disconcerting for those relying on the Mindscape as a backup for their memories and sense of self. For others, it can be liberating, freeing them from the Mindscape's psychological "crutch" — an independence increasingly important in the struggle against foes like the Venu.

Chronodisplacement lets the GM cause problems for characters invoking or creating advantages using the Mindscape. It's a great way to compel, and an interesting success at a cost; the character may become confused, disoriented, or receive partially inaccurate or less than helpful information. It shouldn't happen regularly, but if the PCs have been travelling rapidly across multiple star systems, chronodisplacement might be an issue. In extreme cases, it may even be a situation aspect.

Mindscape Instances

Normally the Mindscape isn't something you "see" as a physical object. Orbital or system-wide Mindscape relay satellites are unobtrusive, and your Mindscape implant connects you invisibly and automatically.

This isn't always the case. Many planets — especially Fringe and Outer Worlds — have no Mindscape access. In such cases, devices are available containing "copies" of the Mindscape, imperfect and out of date to varying degrees, to power Mindscape-related abilities like skill chips. These are **Mindscape instances**: fuzzier, less-detailed versions of the Mindscape, still usable and updating themselves automatically whenever in contact with the Mindscape proper. Without a full Mindscape connection, the highest



Emulators

Many citizens maintain virtual simulations of themselves in the Mindscape — stand-ins and substitutes which answer messages and represent them in routine interactions. These are particularly useful for remote communication; an emulator can deliver a message on your behalf to a person many light years away, appearing to answer in natural conversation using your own thoughtcasts. Emulators operate similarly to fictionals, and can also be defined as extras with the same limitations.

level Mindscape instance determines technopsi ranges and capabilities. Mindscape instance signals are easily detectable.

PERSONAL MINDSCAPE INSTANCES (PMIs)

A small hand-sized device containing a drastically reduced Mindscape instance providing fallback technopsi support and rudimentary Mindscape access. It broadcasts to Mindscape implants within a 1-zone range, enabling skill chips and Mindscape-powered enhancements. PMIs can be compelled, and suppressed by a monitor band cloak. Subdermal PMIs are used by instrumentalities like SCI Force.

You may invoke a PMI to assist with Knowledge, Science, and Technical skill rolls, but not for detailed exomemory searches or invoking on other skill rolls. You may take actions **with** the Mindscape (page 187) using a PMI, but not **in** the Mindscape (page 191).

STARSHIP OR INSTALLATION MINDSCAPE INSTANCES (SMIs AND IMIs)

Starships like Mindjammers and major orbitals, plateworlds, or other space stations have large-scale Mindscape instances capable of long-term independent operation. Usually built into a construct's superstructure and not removable, they have a range equal to the construct scale plus any adjacent zone. They enable all actions **with** the Mindscape, including reasonably detailed exomemory, and local use of actions **in** the Mindscape.

GLOBAL MINDSCAPE INSTANCES

The basic Mindscape required by a Commonality member world, it's at least a single orbital Mindscape node with full sentience, broadcasting to all or part of a planetary surface; the core node is also usually backed up by multiple relay sats covering the entire world or system. Full Mindscape access is provided; the only difference between a world fully in the Mindscape and one on the Fringe being brought into the network is the frequency of updates from the Mindjammer fleet.

The Temple of Universal Mind

Life in the Commonality blurs the distinctions between life and death, real and artificial, individual and communal — even what it means to be alive and human. Commonality citizens have had millennia to cope with this; Fringe and Outer Worlds, unused to the Mindscape, thanograms, and eidolons, experience profound culture shock. The Commonality handles this with the ***Temple of Universal Mind****: a quasi-religious organisation run by the Communications Instrumentality, it's a rediscovered world's first global Mindscape instance, marking the arrival of Commonality culture. The Temple often limits Mindscape access to external interfaces like terminals, though Commonality citizens can usually access normally.*

Rapid Action

There's no physical restriction to the speed of action in the Mindscape; in many cases, Mindscape actions take place at the "speed of thought". For overclocked hyperintelligences, this can be very fast indeed — in the order of milliseconds or even nanoseconds.

In rules terms, exchanges in the Mindscape take a few seconds at most, and characters doing things with the Mindscape — like sensorview, mindburn, etc — always act before those who are not. Turn order among characters acting in the Mindscape is usually determined by Notice, although characters with appropriate stunts may use their governing skills instead. For example, a character making a mindburn attack may use his Will skill rating to establish turn order. Hyperintelligent characters or Mindscape routines like sentinels may invoke appropriate aspects for a bonus to their turn order skill if desired.

CHAPTER TWELVE
CONSTRUCTS

" 'System is hot. Fleetwide: repeat, system is hot!' The Commonality mediator sentience flowed seamlessly between the ships of the 113 Rim Sector Fleet, threading through the hysteria and confusion of sudden and active space combat. Coordinating movements, updating sensorview, reassuring crews and strategic sentiences, it relayed the necessary info-minima to the mostly human organics which dealt with hostilities face to face..."

WHAT ARE CONSTRUCTS?

The ***Mindjammer*** universe is filled with **constructs** — starships, space stations, vehicles, and installations — created entities which can be used by characters to take actions and which, if sentient, can even take actions themselves. Constructs have aspects, skills, stunts, and extras, and take stress and consequences like characters. They may be NPCs — there are minor, supporting, and major constructs — and players may even take them as characters (sentient starship characters are an example).

Constructs use some of the same skills and stunts as standard characters, but also have many of their own, detailed below. They also have slightly different stress tracks, extras, and equipment. While they take actions and join contests, challenges, and conflicts, they can do different things with them than characters, discussed in "Construct Actions" below (page 215).

An Example Construct

We'll be using Skin-of-Our-Teeth, the sentient starship character from the Agents of the Commonality *example campaign (page 8) to illustrate how to create constructs.*

CREATING CONSTRUCTS

Both GMs and players may create constructs. As usual, GMs have more freedom to choose the type and number of skills, stunts, aspects, etc, an NPC construct has. This section describes how to create a construct as a fully-detailed character, perhaps a PC or a major NPC construct, and how to create construct extras. A sample construct sheet is provided on page 476.

Construct Aspects

Constructs have **high concept** aspects like characters (*Glistening SCI Force Base, Lethal Commonality Manowar, Lumbering Venu Quad Walker*). For a construct character, pick a high concept and trouble as normal (page 21), and either go through your phase trio if appropriate, or select three additional aspects.

As mentioned on page 21, Skin-of-Our-Teeth's high concept is Sentient SCI Force Surveillance Ship.

Construct Scale

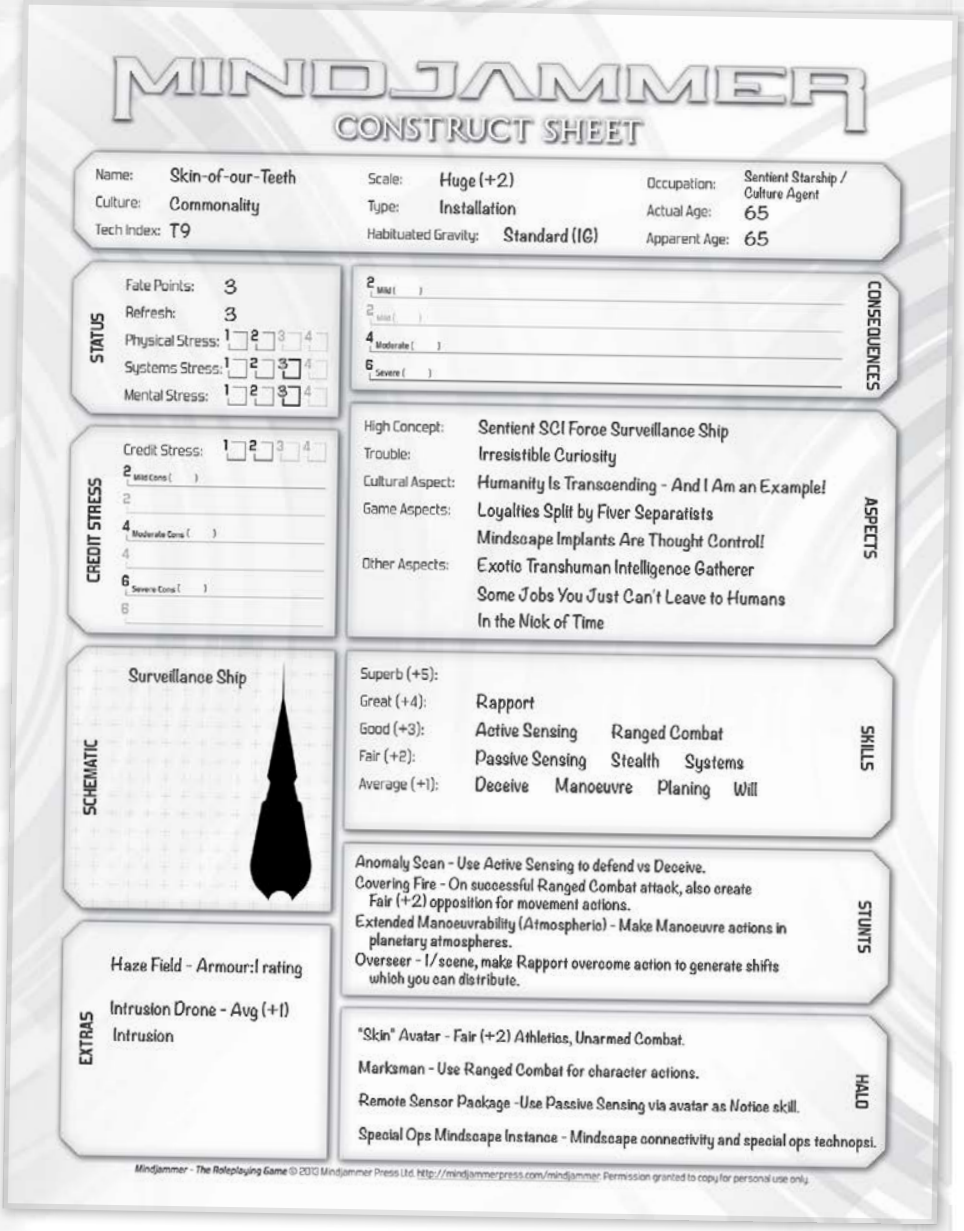
Constructs have **scale**; many are extremely large. A construct's scale also restricts how much physical gear it may be equipped with before increasing to the next scale up (page 174). For example, a hull scale restricts the size of planing engines a starship may have, and equipping your ship with certain drives may make it a certain scale.

When creating a construct, keep track of how many skill and stunt points (including those from your extras budget) you spend on **physical gear** (as indicated in the sections below); this total indicates the minimum scale of your construct. It may be much larger; for example, it's possible for a large starship to have few skills. A small ship may require a skillful crew to be truly effective.

Skin-of-Our-Teeth is a surveillance ship (page 240). This puts her in the typical scale range for starship constructs — Huge (+2).

Note that physical gear points are a subjective decision; some gear (like sensors) doesn't have a scale restriction, while things like the Technical skill may represent either a sentient starship's own technical knowledge (where there's no scale implication), or a crew of engineering and repair specialists and facilities (where higher skill levels represent more extensive facilities). Often it's obvious whether a skill or stunt contributes to a construct's scale, but sometimes you'll need to decide; when you do, jot down any implications, and maybe even derive a cool aspect from it.

As a Huge (+2) construct, Skin-of-Our-Teeth can fit a maximum of 19 physical gear points into her hull before she increases to the next higher scale.



MINDJAMMER
CONSTRUCT SHEET

Name: Skin-of-our-Teeth
Culture: Commonality
Tech Index: T9
Scale: Huge (+2)
Type: Installation
Habituated Gravity: Standard (1G)
Occupation: Sentient Starship / Culture Agent
Actual Age: 65
Apparent Age: 65

STATUS
Fate Points: 3
Refresh: 3
Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4
Systems Stress: 1 2 3 4
Mental Stress: 1 2 3 4

CONSEQUENCES
2 Mild ( )
2 Mild ( )
4 Moderate ( )
6 Severe ( )

CREDIT STRESS
Credit Stress: 1 2 3 4
2 Mild Cons ( )
2
4 Moderate Cons ( )
4
6 Severe Cons ( )
6

ASPECTS
High Concept: Sentient SCI Force Surveillance Ship
Trouble: Irresistible Curiosity
Cultural Aspect: Humanity Is Transcending - And I Am an Example!
Game Aspects: Loyalties Split by Fiver Separatists
Mindscape Implants Are Thought Control!
Other Aspects: Exotic Transhuman Intelligence Gatherer
Some Jobs You Just Can't Leave to Humans
In the Nick of Time

SCHEMATIC
Surveillance Ship

SKILLS
Superb (+5):
Great (+4): Rapport
Good (+3): Active Sensing Ranged Combat
Fair (+2): Passive Sensing Stealth Systems
Average (+1): Deceive Manoeuvre Planing Will

STUNTS
Anomaly Scan - Use Active Sensing to defend vs Deceive.
Covering Fire - On successful Ranged Combat attack, also create Fair (+2) opposition for movement actions.
Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric) - Make Manoeuvre actions in planetary atmospheres.
Overseer - 1/scene, make Rapport overcome action to generate shifts which you can distribute.

EXTRAS
Haze Field - Armour:1 rating
Intrusion Drone - Avg (+1) Intrusion

HALO
"Skin" Avatar - Fair (+2) Athletics, Unarmed Combat.
Marksman - Use Ranged Combat for character actions.
Remote Sensor Package -Use Passive Sensing via avatar as Notice skill.
Special Ops Mindscape Instance - Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.

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Construct Genotype and Occupation

Most constructs are **installations** (page 45). You may also create a **mechanical** (page 43) as a construct, if you feel your character has more in common with larger-scale constructs like starships and vehicles than with humans and similar characters. The mechanicals described in **Chapter 4: Cultures, Genotypes, and Occupations** generally have only character skills and stunts; if you create your mechanical as a construct, you may **also** select construct skills and stunts, and have a systems stress track (see below).

Skin-of-Our-Teeth is a synthetic installation. That means she must take one mandatory extra — Mindscape Instance — costing 1 aspect, and one genotype aspect — like Exotic Transhuman Intelligence *— also costing 1 aspect. Jen pays for the Mindscape Instance using her extras budget. She pencils in the genotype aspect on her character sheet, but explains to Sarah that she's looking to incorporate it into one of her other aspects if she can.*

For her occupation, Jen decides on a dual-build for Skin-of-Our-Teeth, often the case with installation characters. She chooses the "Sentient Starship" installation build (page 56), and the "Culture Agent" security build (page 63). The latter allows her to upgrade her Mindscape Instance to the special ops version, which she does immediately. She writes "Sentient Starship Culture Agent" in the occupation section of her character sheet.

As an installation, Skin-of-Our-Teeth may take construct skills and stunts as well as character skills and stunts, and has an additional systems stress track with two stress boxes.

Table 12-1: Maximum Gear by Construct Scale

Construct Scale	Examples	Maximum Physical Gear Points*
Medium (+0)	Avatars, smaller drones; no personnel.	4
Large (+1)	Starfighters, small craft, *Icarus*-class scout, flyer, space combat drone; up to 10 m^3 volume; maximum 2 personnel.	6
Huge (+2)	Most starships; up to 10,000 m^3 volume; maximum 100 personnel.	19
Enormous (+3)	Capital ships, manowars, small sky and star cities; up to 10 million m^3 volume; maximum 10,000 personnel.	34
Regional (+4)	Space stations, asteroids, large sky and star cities; up to 10 billion m^3 volume; maximum 1 million personnel.	55
Continental (+5)	Orbital habs, large asteroids, star nations; up to 10 trillion m^3 volume; maximum 100 million personnel.	83

**Total skill and stunt points representing sizable physical gear.*

Construct Skills and Stunts

Constructs have different skills from organic characters, representing hulls and housings, gravity engines, power plants, and so on. Sentient construct characters may also select certain regular character skills, indicated below (page 201). You get the same number of skill points to spend at character creation, and your skills (construct skills and regular skills alike) must fit into the skill pyramid. Additionally, **a construct must always have a Systems skill equal to or greater than its scale**.

As Skin-of-Our-Teeth is Huge (+2), she takes the Systems skill at Fair (+2). She chooses Rapport as her peak skill at Great (+4), followed by Good (+3) Active Sensing and Ranged Combat, Fair (+2) Passive Sensing and Stealth, and Average (+1) Deceive, Manoeuvre, Planing, and Will. She can use Deceive, Rapport, and Will against other PCs and NPCs without modifiers; all her other skills represent her acting as a Huge (+2) construct, so she'll generally target other starships with them. If she wished to target a human-sized character with these skills, she'd incur a -4 penalty to her dice roll, and a +8 on any physical damage caused.

For stunts, Jen selects Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric), Covering Fire, and the Anomaly Scan and Overseer stunts. She'd like to use these abilities on missions with the other PCs, for which she needs an avatar, so she buys the Remote Sensor Package construct extra with her stunt budget, giving her an avatar (which she calls "Skin") and letting her use her Passive Sensing skill as the Notice skill in character actions. That's 5 stunts, reducing her refresh to 3.

Extras for Constructs

Construct characters have an extras budget, which may be spent on the construct equipment below (page 208). If appropriate, the GM may allow you to acquire equipment from **Chapter 8: Technology**, and particularly the mechanical and virtual enhancements on pages 122 and 124.

For extras, Skin-of-Our-Teeth chooses the Marksman construct extra, letting her use her Good (+3) Ranged Combat skill via her avatar; it gives her a basic null pistol with no bonuses — she can upgrade that to a better weapon using her extras budget or advancements later if she wants.

Jen decides Skin could use a few more avatar abilities to give her more to do on missions with the other PCs, so she buys Fair (+2) Athletics and Unarmed Combat character skills with her extras skill points. She still has 1 stunt and 2 skill points of her extras budget left, so she chooses a single Intrusion Drone (page 212) with Fair (+2) Intrusion, and a Haze Field (+1 defend bonus). She can use the drone for both character and construct actions, but the Haze Field must apply either to her ship or her avatar — she chooses the ship.

Hiring Crew

If you need a crew to cover a construct skill, you may hire them. Roll Resources against an opposition equal to the skill level in question, and on a success gain a situation aspect for the crewmember letting you use that skill as long as it lasts. The GM may require you to spend advancements to cement that aspect as permanent hired personnel, or simply declare that the crew are hired on long-term contracts.

Finishing It All Off

Finalise a construct character as normal; give it a name, tech index, habituated gravity (if appropriate), fate points and refresh, identify any halo abilities, and calculate stress tracks. As well as a physical stress track, constructs have a **systems stress track**, representing the complex electronics and other subsystems which keep it functioning. Sentient construct characters also have a mental stress track, and a credit stress track if required.

Larger constructs may have **personnel** (often crew). This particularly applies to non-sentient constructs, where every action must be performed by a capable crew member; the Manoeuvre skill *may* represent a starship's own ability to fly using its gravity engines, but for a non-sentient ship it also always indicates the presence of a separate pilot doing the flying. In the latter case one level of personnel skill usually covers one level of construct skill, ie a single crewmember with Good (+3) Pilot may cover a construct's Good (+3) Planing or Manoeuvre, or three pilots with Average (+1) Pilot may do the same using teamwork bonuses.

For non-sentient ships, it's assumed crew members are present to cover a skill; if they're not, the ship may not take a given action, or must act at a lower skill level.

Jen decides Skin-of-Our-Teeth's tech index is T9, and her habituated gravity is Standard (1G) (mostly useful for avatar actions). Her halo abilities include her special ops Mindscape instance, and her avatar abilities, which depend on Mindscape connectivity to function. She moves these to the "Halo" section of her character sheet.

Finally, Skin-of-Our-Teeth has 3 systems and mental stress boxes, and 2 physical and credit stress boxes.

Characters on constructs may use their own skills if higher than the construct's skill, subject to the restrictions in the skill descriptions below. They may also get teamwork bonuses (page 159).

Selecting a Construct Extra

You can take a construct as an **extra** for your character (page 27). You give your character additional abilities by virtue of his belonging to the crew of a starship or space station, or otherwise controlling certain vessel or vehicle actions (perhaps you have a patrol ship you can command to do things, even though you're not a member of its crew; perhaps it's part of a fleet of merchant ships you're building). These additional abilities are things constructs can do — manoeuvring on planets or in solar systems, planing through 2-space, firing very heavy weapons, and so on.

Having a skill like Manoeuvre as part of your construct extra means you have access to a starship or vehicle, and can make Manoeuvre actions with it; perhaps you're on the vessel, communicating directly, or contacting it via technopsi to ask it to make a gravity engines manoeuvre. It doesn't mean your character has the Pilot skill (although you might have), but rather that you can call on a construct to make Manoeuvre actions during play.

Depending on the detail and the number of abilities you're giving your construct extra, you can mark it on your character sheet, or use a **construct sheet** (page 476), particularly useful if you get into conflicts with your construct (it contains space for stress tracks and consequences).

STRESS AND CONSEQUENCES

If your construct extra lets you attack other constructs **with that construct**, then it generally has its own stress tracks and consequences, and may be attacked itself. If your construct extra is just a means of getting around, and maybe doesn't offer you much protection, or you use it as the platform for making your own attacks on other characters, then your construct may provide no stress tracks or consequences. Sometimes it may be both: you use the construct for making your own attacks, but it offers some protection and is itself the target of attacks. In this case, it may sustain one or more consequences for you before being destroyed. See "Extras Taking Stress and Consequences" for more (page 104).

MY EXTRAS STATS ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE CONSTRUCT STATS!

When you take a construct as an extra, you may only take a subset of the skills, stunts, and aspects described for it in **Chapter 13: Starships and Space Travel** and **Chapter 14: Vehicles and Installations**. A Mindjammer (page 229) has 10 skills, 2 stunts, 5 aspects, and a halo ability — but when you take a Mindjammer ship as an extra for your character, maybe you only buy a single aspect. What does that mean?

It might mean one of two things. First, constructs — especially sentient starships — are like characters, and are all different. The statistics represent typical starships and

vehicles — enough for play, but neither final nor definitive. When you take a starship or vehicle extra, it may be more or less powerful than typical constructs of its class.

Second — especially with larger starships — taking a starship or vehicle as an extra may represent just your personal access to its functions. In other words, the extra represents the abilities of that particular starship or vehicle which you can use — and doesn't limit its overall abilities.

Use the statistics in **Chapter 13: Starships and Space Travel** and **Chapter 14: Vehicles and Installations** as suggestions of the abilities you can take for your extra. Where you differ, try and provide an explanation. The *Prospector*-class mining vessel (page 239) has no weapons as standard, but you've bought Average (+1) Ranged Combat for it, so maybe you've kitted it out for combat, or maybe acquired it in a system regularly attacked by raiders so it had weapons installed.

Discuss with your GM what your construct extra's abilities represent. If you have an *Adam Smith*-class Merchant as an extra, but you haven't bought a Cargo Hold stunt, then maybe that means that you've only a part-share in the ship, dividing its cargo bays with a number of other traders. And if you don't have a Manoeuvre skill for the ship, then you can't use it for starship manoeuvre actions — maybe you're restricted to just travelling between systems and trading. Alternatively, if you've bought Planing at Average (+1) instead of the Fair (+2) noted below, maybe the ship's engines are old, and not functioning at full capacity. Use your imagination and the parameters to incorporate your construct extra into your character's story in a compelling way. See also "Vying for Control" (page 105).

WE'VE ALL GOT THE SAME CONSTRUCT EXTRA!

This is a common (and effective) way of integrating larger-scale constructs into your game. More than one of you take the same construct as an extra on your character sheets, each contributing parts of your extras budget to make more of the construct's abilities available. In this case, it's likely you're all crewmembers on the same starship, vehicle, or space station, and your construct extra represents your areas of expertise or crew function. See "Shared Extras" (page 105) for more.

When you have a shared extra, you may be the vessel's sole crew members, especially if it's a small starship. Use a construct sheet for all the construct's abilities, and also keep track of those you have as your own construct extra abilities on your own character sheet.



CONSTRUCT ADVANCEMENTS

Constructs can change over time using advancements. If you have a construct character, use the advancement rules (page 159) as normal. If you have a construct extra, use the extras advancement rules (page 162). NPC constructs advance using the NPC rules (page 431).

At the GM's discretion, you may need a justification for an advancement. For example, if you're travelling far from civilisation, the GM may disallow you from buying a new gravity cannon as an advancement for your ship until you return to a shipyard. This is also a great opportunity to use technical skills and facilities to *make* equipment (page 178); for many advancements, expertise, facilities, and maybe a create an advantage roll may be all the justification you need.

Growing Your Construct

Construct advancements may represent physical gear, which may take your construct over the maximum gear points for its scale (page 174). In this case, your construct may **increase in scale**. This may change skill roll difficulties, permit additional personnel, provide increased cargo capacity, or require higher Systems skill levels. Whenever your construct changes in scale, you should also change its high concept.

Construct Skills List

Active Sensing
Bureaucracy
Close Combat
Contacts
Deceive
Empathy
EW
Hull Strength
Intrusion
Knowledge
Manoeuvre
Passive Sensing
Planing
Provoke
Ranged Combat
Rapport
Resources
Science
Stealth
Systems
Technical
Will

Construct Stunts and Extras

Construct skills represent things the construct can do by virtue of its nature. It's the same paradigm used for characters; for example, the Planing skill represents how far and how well a starship construct can travel through 2-space using its built-in planing engines. For a sentient starship, the construct may not even need a crew member to use its Planing skill; for a non-sentient construct, the skill usually includes a crewmember to operate it.

Construct stunts represent special things the construct can do with its skills; extras represent additional capabilities, or items of equipment (including weapons and armour) enhancing the construct's actions.

CONSTRUCT SKILLS AND STUNTS

Constructs are described using essentially the same skills list as characters, with minor differences; some skills have been renamed to be more appropriate, and some skills have been added or removed.

Construct skills are used in construct actions (see below). Characters with specific stunts may also use their character skills to take construct actions. For example, a construct may attack another construct with beam weapons using its Ranged Combat skill; a character with the Gunnery stunt may also use his Ranged Combat skill to fire a construct's beam weapons at another construct. In such an instance, the stunt allows the character to act as if he were the same scale as the construct (page 174).

Active Sensing

Active Sensing is how a construct examines its environment, the equivalent of the Investigate skill (page 88). It represents active sensor equipment. Using it makes you automatically visible to Detection rolls (page 216). Passenger vehicles, merchant vessels, and space stations use Active Sensing constantly — in fact, not doing so may be grounds for suspicion…

Sentient constructs may use this skill as the Investigate skill. If the construct can't adequately observe a situation, the GM may rule an avatar (page 140) is required.

Overcome: Find objects and constructs that are difficult to detect; scan an asteroid field for a cloaked ship or a planetary surface for an energy signature.

Create an Advantage: Discover a target's capabilities, including scans of a deserted space station for life signs; detecting the presence of ZIP plants or zero point torpedoes; conducting system surveillance; and interpreting the results of planetary and system scans.

Related Extras: Advanced Sensors (page 213), Geoanalysis Suite (page 214), System Survey Drone (page 212).

STUNTS

✦ ***Anomaly Scan***

Use Active Sensing instead of Empathy to defend against Deceive attempts. It's a combination of sensor countermeasures and intuition.

Bureaucracy

May represent physical gear

Bureaucracy is the same as the character skill (page 83); it may be selected by sentient construct characters. For non-sentient constructs, it represents bureaucratic and administrative personnel.

Close Combat

Close Combat represents the construct's ability to attack close-up, in the same zone. It includes ramming and boarding actions for starships and vehicles.

Overcome: Show off your ramming and boarding prowess in contests or demonstrations. Usually you'll use attack actions instead.

Create an Advantage: Make trick manoeuvres, attempts to ram weapons and drives, temporarily destabilise or flank the target; assess a target's own close combat capabilities, spotting strengths and weaknesses you can exploit.

Attack: Make physical attack actions by ramming, or using dedicated weapons like rams, grapples, etc.

Defend: Defend against attacks or create an advantage actions made with Close Combat, or any action where violently interposing yourself could prevent it from happening. You can't use Close Combat to defend against Ranged Combat or EW attacks.

Related Extras: Grappling Gear (page 214), Ram (page 214), Tractor Beam (page 215).

STUNTS

✦ ***Boarding Actions***
You have a dedicated strike team for boarding actions. Gain a +2 bonus to attack and create an advantage Close Combat actions when boarding another vessel (page 217).

Contacts

This is the same as the character skill (page 84). It may be selected by sentient construct characters.

Deceive

The ability of the construct to act in a deliberately deceptive manner. Used to perform feints and trick manoeuvres, and to deflect sensor scans and defend against EW attacks.

Overcome: Bluff your way past another construct, disguise your true nature, or even pretend to be another ship. You can also make acts of misdirection.

Create an Advantage: Create *Misdirected Attention, Feint,* and even *Disguised*-type advantages.

Defend: Defend against EW attacks, avoid attempts to discern your motives with Empathy, throw off Active or Passive Sensing scans by providing false readings.

Extras: Chameleon Coating (page 214), Variform Hull (page 215).

STUNTS

✦ ***Phantom Bogey***
You can create "ghost images" of your construct in detection equipment, gaining a +2 bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions to misdirect, feint, or conceal your position.

Empathy

Empathy represents the quality of a ship's counsellor, or sometimes a starship's n-pilot for sentient starships; or a sentient construct's own Empathy skill. Sentient construct characters may use Empathy on other characters, too.

Overcome: Discern another construct's attitude or intent. Sentient construct characters may use it in recovery actions to treat mild mental consequences suffered by other constructs, given a scene of relative quiet.

Create an Advantage: Read the contents of another construct's halo (page 186), or create advantages relating to a target's attitude or intent. If the target is aware of the attempt, it may defend with Deceive or Rapport.

Defend: Defend against constructs using Deceive against you.

Extras: Starship Therapist (page 211).

STUNTS

✦ ***What Lies Beneath***
Gain a +2 bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions when used against a target's Deceive skill.

EW

The electronic version of Provoke, representing electronic warfare attacks on constructs. EW attacks do systems stress damage. Sentient constructs may **also** have Provoke.

Overcome: Force a construct to behave in an uncontrolled way, fleeing, malfunctioning, divulging information. It's usually a simple roll against minor constructs, or a contest or conflict, opposed by Systems or Deceive.

Create an Advantage: Create advantages representing temporary systems confusion like *Systems Overload, Confusing Inputs, Screeching Static,* etc.

Attack: Make EW attacks on a target construct, doing systems stress damage. It's resisted by Systems or Deceive.

Extras: Induction Drones (page 212).

STUNTS

✦ ***Direct Denial Assault***
Your EW attacks are concerted and overwhelming to crush morale and collapse resistance. Gain a +2 create advantage bonus when using EW to cow the opposition.

Hull Strength

Physical gear
Your construct is reinforced and structured to be highly resistant to physical damage. You gain additional physical stress boxes and maybe consequences.

Overcome: Succeed in tests of your construct's strength, push through obstacles, resist extreme heat or adverse environmental conditions.

Create an Advantage: Create advantages in physical conflicts like *Resistant to Buckling* when ramming, etc.

Defend: Block another construct's movement if you can effectively do so.

Special: Average (+1) or Fair (+2) Hull Strength gives you a 3-point physical stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) also gives you a 4-point box; and Superb (+5) or above also gives you an additional mild consequence.

Related Extras: Armoured Hull (page 210).

STUNTS

✦ ***Rugged Superstructure***
Once per session, pay a fate point to reduce a moderate physical consequence to mild, or remove a mild consequence entirely.

Intrusion

The same as the character skill, covering a construct's ability to enter areas closed to constructs, assessing and defeating security measures.

Overcome: Perform Mindscape theft and infiltration, or penetrate zones otherwise closed to constructs, bypassing security measures and covering your tracks.

Create an Advantage: Case a location, whether actual or in the Mindscape, otherwise closed to construct access, discovering its security measures and vulnerabilities.

Extras: Intrusion Drone (page 212).

STUNTS

✦ ***Beat Them at Their Own Game***
You have an expert knowledge of bypassing counter-intrusion measures. Gain a +2 bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions to physically enter a zone closed to constructs.

Knowledge

Knowledge usually represents the quality of a construct's library or databanks, and possibly the power of its Mindscape instance. For sentient constructs, it's the construct's own knowledge.

Overcome: Determine whether a sentient construct knows the answer to a question, or whether its library or database contains that information.

Create an Advantage: Create advantages representing details about a topic; uncover existing details as situation aspects.

STUNTS

✦ ***Specialist***
As the character stunt (page 89); the construct is an authority, or its library focuses on that field.

Manoeuvre

Physical gear
This is the construct version of Athletics, representing the construct's ability to move under its own power, including n-space or atmospheric manoeuvres, moving between zones, chasing, or evading attacks. Constructs without a Manoeuvre skill cannot move under their own power.

When you select the Manoeuvre skill, you may move in a single environment; choose one from Table 12-2: Manoeuvre Environment. You must have the tech index indicated to manoeuvre in the environment.

You may extend your Manoeuvre capacity into other environments using the Extended Manoeuvrability stunt (below).

Table 12-2: Manoeuvre Environment

Manoeuvre Environment	Tech Index
Aquatic	T4
Atmospheric	T4
Ground	T1
Ocean Surface	T2
Orbital	T5
Space	T7

Overcome: Move between zones in a conflict; overcome opposition from a navigation hazard or other attack; take part in races or chases.

Create an Advantage: Perform dazzling manoeuvres, evading, putting yourself in a superior position, etc.

Defend: Defend in physical conflicts against close-up ramming attacks or boarding actions, or ranged combat attacks; or prevent other constructs moving past you. If you have no Manoeuvre skill, you offer only Mediocre (+0) passive opposition to such attempts.

STUNTS

✦ ***Ace***
Gain a +2 bonus to overcome rolls when executing difficult manoeuvres.

✦ ***Charge!***
Gain a +2 attack bonus when you move at least 1 zone before attacking.

✦ ***Dogfighter***
Must be Large (+1) or smaller
Gain a +2 bonus to defend actions in dogfights or similar conflicts where you can manoeuvre freely.

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability***
Use your Manoeuvre skill in an additional environment; choose one from Table 12-2: Manoeuvre Environment. You may take this stunt multiple times.

Scenario Hook: Cover Up

Ships have been going missing in 2-space. The PCs, part of Space Force, SCI Force, or the ISI, are sent to investigate. There's a huge cover-up, and evidence of widespread conspiracy — it looks like this has happened before. But what's been covered up — and why?

✦ ***Formation Leader***
Take a create an advantage action affecting all members of your "formation"; the resulting aspect is a situation aspect. If all members take the action you specify, they may all use the free invoke.

✦ ***Ramming Speed!***
Use your construct's Manoeuvre skill instead of Close Combat to make ramming attacks doing physical stress damage.

Passive Sensing

A construct uses passive sensors to perceive its environment without emitting signals that would cause it to be detected. It's the construct equivalent of the Notice skill.

Overcome: Make a preliminary scan or detection roll (page 216), spot constructs in your vicinity.

Create an Advantage: Create advantages based on what you've detected; find a *Direct Route to Your Destination*, get a *Situational Awareness of the Battlefield*, or even notice specific details or aspects of a target.

Defend: Defend against Stealth attempts to ambush you, attempts to Deceive; realise you're being observed.

Extras: Remote Sensor Package (page 211).

STUNTS

✦ ***Top Urgency***
You place your passive sensors on "top urgency" alert, gaining a +2 bonus to **all** Passive Sensing rolls. If any Passive Sensing roll fails you go off alert, and may not use the stunt again until the next scene.

Planing

Physical gear

Planing represents a starship's ability to use its planing engines to travel through 2-space. Ships without this skill cannot travel through 2-space.

You must be at least tech index T9 to take this skill; to take it at Superb (+5) or Fantastic (+6), you must be tech index T10. Higher skill levels are not currently available in the Commonality.

See "Planing Engine Jumps" (page 224) for more.

Overcome: Use Planing against a passive opposition based on ship scale, distance, and conditions to navigate through 2-space.

Create an Advantage: Create advantages to avoid jump wake detection (page 228); direct your planing engines to fill a zone with z-radiation when entering or leaving 2-space.

STUNTS

Blind Jump

For a fate point, you may jump immediately into 2-space without a detailed course or specific destination. This causes you to automatically misjump, suffering an n-space displacement (page 226), but there are no other consequences.

Provoke

This is the same as the character skill (page 92). It may be selected by sentient construct characters.

Ranged Combat

Your construct is equipped with ranged weapons and may attack other constructs up to 1 or more zones away. See "Construct Weapons" (page 208).

Overcome: Display your weapons prowess in a contest or demonstration.

Create an Advantage: Perform trick shots or targeted fire; impair the target; or create advantages based on your knowledge of construct weapons.

Attack: Make physical attacks with ranged weapons up to one or more zones away.

Extras: Marksman (page 211), Space Combat Drones (page 212).

STUNTS

Battlefield Analysis

Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage actions when using Ranged Combat for tactical battlefield analysis.

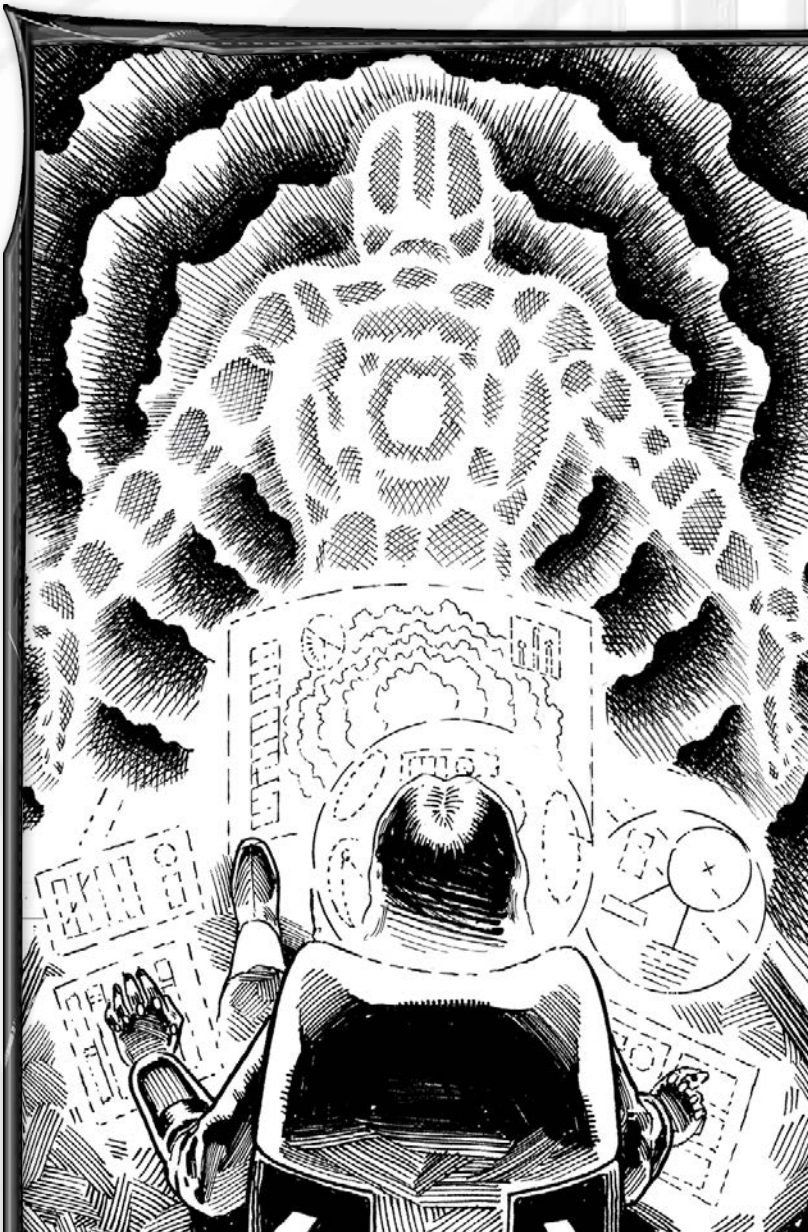
Orbital Assault

Attack planetary surfaces from orbit. Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage or attack actions; attacks automatically gain an explosive (1) effect (page 128).

Swarm

Construct must be a starfighter or atmospheric fighter

Lets a fighter wing attack a construct 1 scale larger than usual with no penalty. One fighter attacks, with the rest providing teamwork bonuses. See also the Formation Leader stunt (page 204).



Rapport

Rapport represents the quality of your construct's liaison officer, or a sentient construct's own skill. It's the same as the character skill (page 94).

STUNTS

✦ ***Mediator***

You can mediate communications between multiple constructs, often in stressful situations like space battles. Gain a +2 bonus to create advantage actions to facilitate communication and cooperation in fleet and battlefield actions. Additionally, you may provide a teamwork bonus to a single recipient in a mediation situation, even when you don't have the corresponding skill.

✦ ***Overseer***

As the character stunt (page 94).

Resources

May represent physical gear

Resources represents how well-equipped a construct is, and its credit rating if sentient. Resources is also used for buying and selling construct cargoes (page 442).

Overcome: Bypass situations where throwing money, spare parts, etc, at a problem will help; use Resources to help constructs with credit stress tracks recover from credit consequences.

Create an Advantage: Acquire construct equipment (page 208), including cargoes (page 443).

Attack: Attack in construct credit conflicts.

Defend: Defend in construct credit conflicts.

Special: Average (+1) or Fair (+2) Resources gives you a 3-point credit stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) also gives you a 4-point box; and Superb (+5) or above also gives you an additional mild consequence.

Extras: Labs (page 213), Makepoint (page 214), Ore Processor (page 214)

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold***

Physical gear

By default a construct has only a small storage locker to transport cargoes equal in scale to its own scale minus 1. For each point of Resources skill, it may transport 1 cargo unit of this scale, 10 cargo units of the scale below, 100 of the scale below that, and so on. With this stunt, the construct may carry 10 times that amount.

For example: by default, a Huge (+2) starship may carry 1 unit of Large (+1) cargo, or 10 units of Medium (+0) cargo, etc, per point of Resources skill. With a cargo hold, it may carry 10 units of Large (+1) cargo, 100 of Medium, and so on.

✦ ***Docking Bay***

Physical gear

By default, a construct may house 10 Small (-1) constructs (usually drones). With this stunt, it may house 1 construct of the next scale down (like a fighter), 10 constructs the scale below that, and so on.

Science

Science represents either the quality of a construct's scientific staff (like a science officer), or a sentient construct's own Science skill. Otherwise it's the same as the character skill (page 96).

Overcome: Analyse the results of a star system scan, biosphere analysis, etc.

Create an Advantage: Create an advantage representing things you've learned from the analysis of active and passive scans, etc.

Extras: Science Officer (page 211).

STUNTS

✦ ***Specialist***

As the character stunt (page 97). The construct is either dedicated to a particular scientific discipline, or is a specialist in its own right.

Stealth

Stealth represents a construct's ability to act without being detected. It includes stealthy manoeuvres, camouflage, and stealth capabilities and configurations.

Overcome: Bypass situations requiring you to be undetected, like running an embargo (pages 307 and 445), evading a starport or orbital city scan (page 345), or advancing on a city under cover of darkness.

Create an Advantage: Create an advantage to position yourself for an ambush; observe something from hiding.

Defend: Defend against Active or Passive Sensing rolls to avoid **detection** (page 216).

Extras: Chameleon Coating (page 214), Cloaking Device (page 214).

STUNTS

✦ ***Silent Running***
Use Stealth instead of Intrusion to bypass security measures when it's more a matter of passing unseen than countering scans and surveillance.

Systems

Physical gear
Systems represents the "softer" aspects of a construct's functions; its power plant, life support systems, communications, networks, even its personnel morale. A construct **must** have a Systems skill at least equal to its scale. Systems also adds to a construct's systems stress track.

Overcome: Maintain functions like life support in hostile conditions or for a long period; communicate through jamming; or provide power for a feat of significant magnitude.

Create an Advantage: Create advantages representing your construct's resilience, morale, or impressive power supply.

Defend: Defend against attempts to directly damage or compromise your construct's systemic functions like overloading comms, networks, or power grids.

Special: Average (+1) or Fair (+2) Systems gives you a 3-point systems stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) also gives you a 4-point box; and Superb (+5) or above also gives you an additional mild consequence.

Extras: Ponics (page 213), X-Core (page 215).

STUNTS

✦ ***Distributed Systems***
Your construct has vital systems throughout its structure, few if any single points of failure, and multiple redundancies. Gain a +2 bonus to defend against attempts to overwhelm your systems.

Life Support

Constructs with makepoints (page 214) may continue life support for as long as power lasts; this may be almost indefinite. Ships without makepoints, or with damaged ZIP plants, face a Survival Hazard (page 354) made every day for a Large (+1) construct, week for a Huge (+2) construct, or month for an Enormous (+3) construct, and so on.

✦ ***Long-Distance Life Support***
Physical gear
Your construct is designed for long-endurance operations without resupply. Gain a +2 bonus to overcome or defend actions to continue functioning on reserves.

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations***
Physical gear
By default, a construct can transport 1 passenger if Huge (+2), 10 passengers if Enormous (+3), etc, per point of Systems skill. With this stunt, your construct may transport 1 passenger if Large (+1), 10 if Huge (+2), 100 if Enormous (+3), etc, per point of Systems skill. Passengers may be troops, crew, or paying passengers. You must have a steward for every 50 paying passengers; this may be a PC or a Steward extra (page 211).

Technical

May represent physical gear
Technical represents the quality of a construct's technical and engineering crew, or a construct's own technical ability. It includes the ability and facilities to make repairs. See page 178 for more on repairing and creating equipment.

Overcome: Create, maintain, and repair construct equipment, assuming the time and facilities to do so; repair mild physical and systems consequences.

Create an Advantage: Create advantages representing construct or equipment features, whether advantageous (*Off-road Endurance, Low Energy Signature*) or vulnerabilities (*Susceptible to Torsion Field Attack, Highly Unstable Around Tachyon Fields*).

Extras: Auto-Doc (page 212), Auto-Repair System (page 213), Mining Drones (page 212), Repair Drones (page 212), Repair Yard (page 213).

Table 12-3: Construct Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Rng	Tech Index	Control Index	Notes[1]	Cost
Autocannon	w:3	4	T5	-3	Medium and large constructs only; uses kinetic weapons ammo (page 129)	2S
Disruptor Cannon*	w:3	3	T7	-4	*Radioactive, Recoilless; Flaw: Dangerously Unstable*	1A, 2S + flaw
Gravity Cannon	w:4/+4	3	T8	-4	*Incredibly Destructive*	1A, 3S
Missiles	+2	5	T8	-1	Explosive (1); *Limited Supply*	2S
Null Cannon	w:0	4	T7	-1	*Recoilless, Full Auto*	Auto
Plasma Cannon	w:3	5	T8	-3	Blaster; *Burst Fire*	2S
Proximity Mines	+2	1	T6	-2	Explosive (1); must be detected to avoid.	2S, 4SP, (1A)
Torsion Cannon	w:3	0	T10	-4	*Experimental;* Large (+1) constructs only; double damage to Venu vessels.	1A, 2S
Torsion Field Projector*	w:5	1	T10	-4	*Spinal Mount;* Enormous (+3) constructs and above; double damage to Venu vessels.	1A, 3S
Trojan Array*	w:2	3	T8	-2		1S
Zero Point Bomb*	w:4	0	T7	-4	Explosive (1); *Limited Supply, Radioactive*	2S
Zero Point Torpedo*	+2	4	T7	-4	Explosive (1); *Limited Supply, Radioactive*	2S

*: Restricted; requires permission (page 125).
[1]: See weapon types and aspects, page 126

STUNTS

✦ ***Engineering Support***
Your construct's engineering personnel or functions can reconfigure its systems to provide more power, boost shields, improve manoeuvrability. Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage actions where your engineering personnel save the day.

Will

This is the same as the character skill (page 101). It can be selected by sentient construct characters.

CONSTRUCT EQUIPMENT

Constructs can buy enhancements, special abilities, and equipment as extras just like characters. Construct characters have a standard extras budget.

Construct Weapons

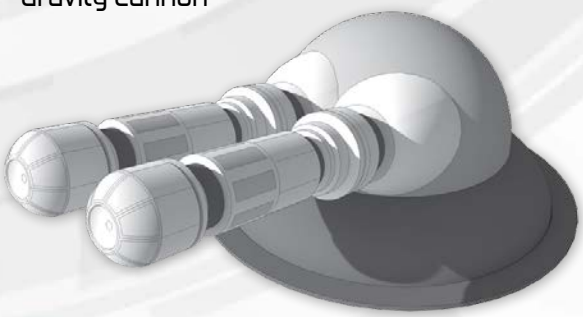
Construct weapons use the same rules as character weapons (page 126). Each represents **1 point of physical gear**.

Gravity Cannon
Costs 1 aspect, 3 stunts
A beam weapon creating disruptive gravity wells in a limited volume of space. They cause explosions and structural integrity collapses where they intersect with solid objects,

and damage Enormous (+3) constructs or greater simply by proximity. They are not cleared for atmospheric use.

Against Huge (+2) targets or smaller, they attack with a weapon:4 rating; against Enormous (+3) targets or larger, this is a +4 attack bonus instead. Within an atmosphere this is an explosive attack with a 2-zone radius, placing an automatic *Environmental Destruction* situation aspect on the target zone.

Gravity Cannon



Missiles

Costs 2 stunts

A missile attacks in a contest of the construct's Ranged Combat against the defender's Manoeuvre or Deceive. It takes 1 action to fire, then each exchange thereafter it rolls in addition to any action the construct takes (which may include launching another missile). The missile may be targeted; a single point of damage takes it out, and it evades using the construct's Ranged Combat skill. If the missile wins the contest, it inflicts damage on the target equal to its Ranged Combat skill +2, minus any defend bonus from the target's force fields or armour rating. Additionally, any characters or smaller constructs in the area of effect incur a Ranged Combat area effect attack by the missile (page 175).

Null Cannon

No cost

The default Commonality beam weapon, standard on armed vessels. More powerful versions are available.

Proximity Mines

Costs 2 stunts, 4 SP, plus optionally 1 aspect

Proximity mines make explosive (1) attacks with Fair (+2) Ranged Combat and +2 attack bonus; targets defend with Mediocre (+0) passive resistance (plus bonuses from shields and armour), unless the mines have first been detected using Active Sensing against their Fair (+2) Stealth, in which case Manoeuvre may be used. Proximity mines may block progress (page 157), and are frequently deployed with *Proximity Mine Field*-type situation aspects making them difficult to evade. They often form a **hazard** (page 176).

Torsion Field Projector

Costs 1 aspect, 3 stunts

A weapon invented by the Commonality since the Venu War, these huge spinal mounts are fitted in the latest manowars, though the new manned heavy fighter has an experimental range 0 model. They disrupt a target's structural integrity, particularly effective against the unstable Venu Dirt Drive (double the damage which gets through armour), and often causing Venu ships to simply explode.



Torsion Field Projector

Trojan Array

Costs 1 stunt

An advancement on conventional EW weapons, the trojan array is specific to Commonality manowars and other military vessels. Introduced into a target ship on a successful EW attack, it does extensive systems damage.

Venu Disruptor Cannon

Costs 1 aspect, 2 stunts, plus the Dangerously Unstable *flaw*

An unstable, radioactive, short-range Venu weapon derived from Commonality torsion field projectors but usable on smaller craft. They do double damage if turned against their own Dirt Drives.

Zero Point Bomb

Costs 2 stunts

An unstable, radioactive Venu weapon usually dropped by Venu fighters, this is a highly effective explosive (1) attack.

Zero Point Torpedo

Costs 2 stunts

A larger version of the zero point bomb used as a missile (above), it's still unstable and bleeds z-radiation, but has good range and explosive capability.

Construct Armour

Construct armour is available as physical armour and force fields. Starship and space station constructs without force fields must choose magnetic, electrostatic, or physical **ray shielding** at no extra cost (see sidebar, page 211).

Armoured Hull

Costs 1-3 stunts

Available in light, medium, and heavy versions, this physical armour provides an armour:1 to armour:3 rating.

ECM Array

Costs 1 stunt

An array of electronic countermeasures supplementing a construct's systems resilience. Gain a +2 bonus to Systems skill defend actions against EW and Mindscape attacks.

Shield Failure

A vessel's ray shielding may fail as a consequence, exposing occupants and synthetic brain to a radiation hazard (page 354) until repaired.

Haze Field

Costs 1 stunt

The basic shielding of many Commonality vessels, providing protection from cosmic rays and radiation hazards, and rudimentary defence against physical attacks.

Repulsor Shield

Costs 2 stunts

A more advanced force field, standard issue on Space Force warships. More powerful versions exist.

Sandcaster

Costs 1 stunt

This low-tech defence is effective against null cannon and other beam weapons, diffracting and dispersing the beam. It dissipates rapidly in atmospheres, but will remain with a starship until it alters course or relative velocity.

Venu Countermeasures

Costs 1 aspect, 2 stunts

Used by the Venu to counter Commonality space combat drones by interfering with their performance, weapons, targeting, and remote control, they're a combination disruptor shield generator, sandcaster, and *EW Jamming Suite* targeting fighters and space combat drones, deployed as a range 0 defensive screen around a Venu vessel under drone attack. Venu countermeasures have proved so effective that

Table 12-4: Construct Armour

Armour	Rating	Tech Index	Notes	Cost
Armoured Hull	a:1 to a:3	T6	Available in light, medium, and heavy versions	1-3S
ECM Array	+2	T7		1S
Electrostatic Ray Shielding	n/a	T7	*Highly Detectable, Huge Power Requirement*	Auto
Haze Field	+1	T8		1S
Magnetic Ray Shielding	n/a	T7	*No Protection Along Its Axis*	Auto
Physical Ray Shielding	n/a	T6	*Bulky Liquid Shielding*	Auto
Repulsor Shield	+2	T9		2S
Sandcaster	a:1	T6	*Effective Against Beam Weapons Only, Limited Atmospheric Use*	1S
Venu Countermeasures	a:1/+1	T7	*EW Jamming Suite*	1A, 2S
Venu Disruptor Shield	+1	T7	*Highly Detectable, Unstable*	1S

Table 12-5: Construct Avatars and Personnel

Name	Halo	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Marksman	Y	T9	-1	1S
Remote Sensor Package	Y	T9	+2	1S
Science Officer		n/a	n/a	1S
Starship Therapist		n/a	n/a	1S, 2SP
Steward		n/a	n/a	1S

the Commonality has begun to produce a heavy manned fighter to supplement drone attacks (page 233).

Venu Disruptor Shield

Costs 1 stunt

The basic Venu shield, more detectable than the Commonality haze field. Undetected Venu combat vessels leave their shields down until the last moment.

Construct Avatars and Personnel

Marksman

Costs 1 stunt

Provides an avatar (page 140) letting a sentient construct use Ranged Combat for character actions.

Remote Sensor Package

Costs 1 stunt

Provides an avatar letting a sentient construct use Passive Sensing as the Notice skill for character actions.

Science Officer

Physical gear

Costs 1 stunt

Similar to the Specialist stunt (page 206); the construct has a science officer crew member, enabling it also to take character actions.

Ray Shielding

*Starships and space stations without force fields must use **ray shielding** to protect occupants (including sentient construct synthetic brains) against cosmic radiation. These provide one or more aspects protecting against space hazards like radiation belts (page 354) and some attacks.*

- ***Electrostatic shielding:*** Huge Power Requirement*, but provides total coverage with no hazardous side effects, protecting against plasma, missile, and EW attacks. It also creates a potentially nasty influx of negatively charged particles. The vessel fires an electron beam out into space, building up a positive charge and creating the shield, making it* Highly Detectable.
- ***Magnetic shielding:*** *Light, but offering* No Protection Along Its Axis*, magnetic shielding may be* Dangerous for Long-Term Exposure. *Usually restricted to orbitals and static stations where its orientation can be controlled, it offers some protection against missiles and plasma attacks.*
- ***Physical shielding:*** *A shell of water five metres thick surrounds the construct hull, blocking cosmic rays. Inexpensive but heavy, it's used on low-bootstrap asteroid miners, slowships (especially generation ships from the First Age of Space), or Venu vessels without disruptor shields. It protects against kinetic weapons, missiles, beam and plasma weapons, but is rapidly damaged. It gives the vessel a* Bulky Physical Shielding *aspect.*

Starship Therapist

Physical gear

Costs 1 stunt, 2 skill points

The construct has a starship therapist crew member with Fair (+2) Empathy or better. The vessel may get treatment for mental stress, and use Empathy for recovery obstacles (ie to heal itself).

Steward

Physical gear

Costs 1 stunt

The construct has a dedicated steward for every 50 passengers, gaining a +2 bonus to make the passage (page 446).

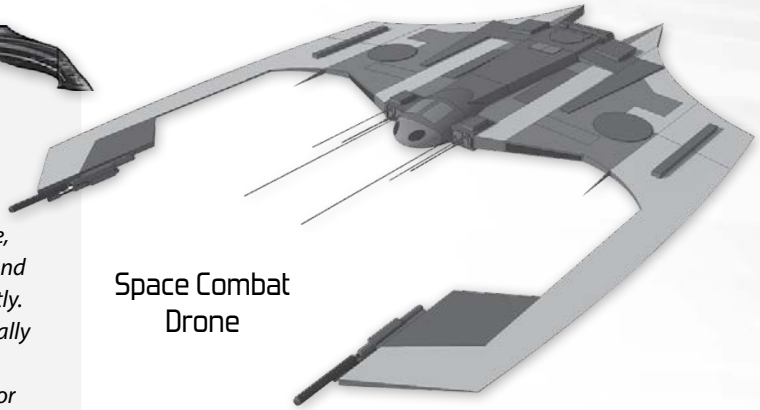
Table 12-6: Construct Drones

Name	Enhancement	Scale	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Induction Drone	Fair (+2) EW; Average (+1) Manoeuvre; Swarm stunt (optional)	Medium (+0)	T8	-2	1S, 3SP
Intrusion Drone*	Average (+1) Intrusion	Small (-1)	T8	-2	1S, 1SP
Mining Drone	Special	Medium (+0)	T8	+2	1S
Repair Drone	Average (+1) Technical	Medium (+0)	T8	+3	1S, 1SP
Space Combat Drone	Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat; Swarm stunt (optional)	Medium (+0)	T8	-3	1S, 2SP
System Survey Drone	Fair (+2) Active Sensing, Passive Sensing	Medium (+0)	T8	+2	4SP

Space Combat Drones

Space combat drones are a major component in Commonality starship battles, used instead of larger manned fighters. They're an armed, mobile, ablative "shield" intercepting big gun ordnance and enemy fighters and attacking mother ships directly. Starship combats not involving drones are generally small-scale encounters.

Drones are controlled by a starship sentience or a gunner using technopsi; they use the Ranged Combat skill. Commonality space combat has often felt cold and distant, without the immediate danger and "grittiness" of manned fighter dogfights, but since the Stop-Start War (150 NCE) the Commonality has been developing fully synthetic and even manned fighters along the Venu frontier, and this is changing.



Space Combat Drone

Notes:

An **intrusion drone** allows use of a construct's Intrusion skill in character actions via an avatar.

A **mining drone** acts as a stunt, providing a +2 Technical bonus for mining operations (page 441).

A **repair drone** allows character actions and a teamwork bonus on construct repair rolls.

Construct Drones

Construct drones follow the drone rules (page 139), but may require permissions; space combat or mining drones aren't as commonly available as helper drones, for example. Although drones don't contribute to physical gear points, they do require a docking bay (page 206).

Construct Facilities

Construct facilities represent physical gear (page 197).

Auto-Doc

Costs 1 aspect, 2 stunts

The construct gains the Meditech (Technical) stunt (page 99) and optionally the Regeneration enhancement (page 112), and may use its Technical skill for character recovery actions.

Drop Shuttles
Construct must be Huge (+2) or larger
Costs 1 stunt
The construct deploys 10 troops if Huge (+2), 100 if Enormous (+3), etc, per point of Systems skill, to a planet surface each exchange using drop shuttles. The construct must be in orbit. Drop shuttles have 3 physical stress boxes and 1 consequence. You may take this extra more than once.

Extended Cargo Hold
Requires Cargo Hold stunt
Costs 1 stunt
Provides an additional cargo hold equal in scale to the original, allowing an additional 10 units of cargo of maximum scale, etc (page 206). The construct acquires a *Bulky and Difficult to Manoeuvre* flaw. It may be taken multiple times.

Extended Docking Bay
Requires Docking Bay
Costs 1 stunt
The construct may house 10 constructs of the next scale down, 100 of the scale below that, and so on.

Extended Passenger Accommodations
Requires Passenger Accommodations
Costs 1 stunt
The construct has additional staterooms, accommodating 10 passengers if Large (+1), 100 passengers if Huge (+2), 1000 if Enormous (+3), etc, per point of Systems skill. This may be taken multiple times, doubling the number of passengers each time.

Fighter Wing
Construct must be Huge (+2) or larger
Costs 6 skill points
The construct has a wing of 3 Large (+1) fighters. Each has Average (+1) Manoeuvre and Ranged Combat, and 1 shift of stress takes them out. These don't count as physical gear, but must be housed in a docking bay.

Labs (various)
Costs 1 stunt
The construct has a lab providing one of the following Technical stunts (page 99): Eidolon Engineer, Genurgic Engineer, Synthetics Engineer.

Ponics
Costs 1 aspect
The construct has self-contained ponics facilities providing food and breathable atmosphere almost indefinitely.

Repair Yard
Costs 1 stunt
The construct has a specialist repair facility such as a dry dock or space dock, with construct engineers and spare parts stores. It may use Technical for maintenance actions, and recovery actions to restore mild, moderate, and severe consequences on constructs up to its own scale minus 1.

Stasis Berths
Costs 1 stunt
The construct may transport 10 times as many passengers as normal in stasis fields. This requires no stewards, but gives the construct a *Vulnerable Stasis Berths* flaw; if you take systems damage or consequences, you may lose passengers, inflicting equivalent credit stress or consequences representing your track record and reputation.

Miscellaneous Construct Equipment

Advanced Sensors
Costs 1 stunt
Gain a +2 bonus to Active Sensing overcome actions.

Auto-Repair System
Costs 1 stunt
The construct can repair itself; gain a +2 Technical bonus to the construct's own recovery obstacles.

Table 12-7: Construct Facilities

Name	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Auto-Doc	T8	+4	1A, 2S
Drop Shuttles	T6	+0	1S
Extended Cargo Hold	T3	n/a	1S
Extended Docking Bay	T3	n/a	1S
Extended Passenger Accommodations	T3	n/a	1S
Fighter Wing	T7	-3	6 SP
Labs	T6+	+3	1S
Ponics	T7	+5	1A
Repair Yard	T3	+3	1S
Stasis Berths	T7	+5	1S

Table 12-8: Miscellaneous Construct Equipment

Name	Tech Index	Control Index	Cost
Advanced Sensors	T6	+4	1S
Auto-Repair System	T8	+3	1S
Chameleon Coating	T6	+0	2S
Cloaking Device*	T9	-4	1A
Geoanalysis Suite	T6	+2	1S
Grappling Gear	T5	+3	1S
Makepoint	T9	+2	1A
Makepoint Workshop	T9	+2	1S
Ore Processor	T4	+3	1S
Ram	T2	-1	1S
Tractor Beam	T8	+1	1 or 2S
Variform Hull	T8	+4	1A
X-Core	T9	+2	1S

Chameleon Coating

Costs 2 stunts

The construct's exterior surface can change colour, pattern, IR profile, etc. Gain a +2 bonus to Stealth and Deceive actions to pass unnoticed or as another construct to scans.

Cloaking Device*

Costs 1 aspect

The construct has a variform and chameleon field array. When activated, it's effectively invisible to regular scans and visible light, giving a huge advantage in Stealth actions.

Geoanalysis Suite

Costs 1 stunt

The construct has specialist mining sensors; gain a +2 bonus to Active Sensing overcome and create an advantage actions when trying to find a mining strike (page 441).

Grappling Gear

Physical gear

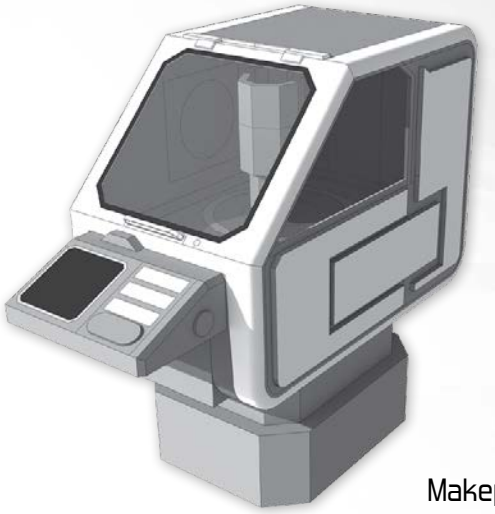
Costs 1 stunt

The construct has mechanical grapples and short-range field augmentation, providing a +2 bonus to Close Combat create an advantage actions against targets in the same zone.

Makepoint

Costs 1 aspect

The construct has a **makepoint** (page 116) producing oxygen, water, food, and small items for its crew. Standard on most Commonality vessels of tech index 9 or above, makepoints may extend life support and give bonuses to rolls to produce small items of gear.



Makepoint

Makepoint Workshop

Physical gear, requires Makepoint

Costs 1 stunt

The construct may undertake maintenance and repair recovery actions without a repair yard (page 213), producing its own materials and spares. A functioning ZIP plant is required. This takes 3 steps longer than at a repair yard, as the makepoint replicates parts relatively slowly.

Ore Processor

Physical gear

Costs 1 stunt

The construct may use Technical to process mineral ore or other raw materials into refined products (page 441).

Ram

Costs 1 stunt

The construct has a specialist ram providing a weapon:2 rating to ramming attacks (page 201).

Tractor Beam

Requires Grappling Gear, Tech Index T8 or higher
Costs 1 or 2 stunts
The construct gains a +2 bonus to Close Combat overcome actions in the same zone, and a +2 bonus to Close Combat create an advantage actions up to a 2-zone range.

Variform Hull

Costs 1 aspect
Commonality constructs of tech index T8 or higher often incorporate variform elements; see page 112.

X-Core

Physical gear
Costs 1 stunt
An x-core or **extension core** provides an additional zero-point power core, doubling a construct's jump maximum (page 225). The construct may take an action to jettison its old power plant in emergencies like core explosions.

CONSTRUCT ACTIONS

Construct actions use the rules in **Chapter 9: Playing the Game**. This section provides additional information.

Exchanges and Time Scales

While human-sized constructs and personal vehicles act in the same time frames as other characters, larger constructs like starships and space stations usually take longer. This isn't because they're slower to react; on the contrary, sentient constructs usually have minds far faster than humans. When larger constructs interact, the distances between them and the time required for manoeuvres or crews to coordinate mean actions naturally take more time.

Construct exchanges usually last from several minutes to an hour or more, depending on zone sizes and proximity. For starships, figure an exchange of several minutes for conflicts between vessels in the same zone; half an hour for vessels separated by 1 zone; and an hour or more for those separated by 2 zones or more. For constructs on planet surfaces, figure exchanges of several minutes within zero to 2 zones, or half an hour for 3 zones or more, and so on.

Movement

Constructs may always move a single zone and take any other action in an exchange. To move more than one zone you must use your entire action, and may move a number of zones equal to your construct's Manoeuvre skill. This doesn't require a roll unless there's a situation aspect or other construct in your way, either of which require an overcome action and a full exchange to bypass.

Starships manoeuvre using **gravity engines**, with almost unlimited slower-than-light endurance and negligible ZIP plant wear-and-tear. In-system manoeuvres usually take a few hours (less for larger starships), and rarely more than a few days unless you have poor (or damaged) gravity engines.

Table 13-1: Gravity Engine Travel Times (page 224) provides approximate travel times for starship movement between star system zones (page 370). Vehicles and other planet-based constructs manoeuvre using ZIP plants for T9 constructs and above, or using fusion or other power sources for T8 constructs and below. Lower tech power sources have *Limited Endurance*-type aspects representing their need for frequent maintenance and refitting — see **Chapter 14: Vehicles and Installations** for more. Planetary movement may take hours, days, or even weeks, depending on distances covered and terrain type (page 352) and the transport capability you're using (page 303).

Power Plant Operations

Commonality constructs are powered by ubiquitous free zero-point energy. Although ZIP plants never need refuelling, the conversion of ZIP energy causes power plant deterioration, requiring overhaul after a certain number of light years has been travelled — the **jump maximum** (page 225) — in addition to regular maintenance (page 179). Failure to overhaul can lead to catastrophic failure; the power plant explodes and weird torsion field effects rip through the vicinity, bathing the construct in **zero-point radiation** or **z-rays**.

Overhauling a ZIP plant is a maintenance action (page 179), and must be performed at a Commonality world repair yard, although Commonality outposts and waystations in Fringe World systems are usually sufficient.

Some constructs — especially starships — carry their own "spares" instead of cargo if they're travelling off the beaten track and have cargo holds. One unit of cargo equal in scale to the construct, minus 1, dedicated to spares allows a construct to make a single maintenance roll for that construct. A construct's ZIP plant can produce its own spares with the Makepoint Workshop stunt (page 214). Capable engineers can also extend a starship's jump maximum — see the Push the Jump Maximum stunt (page 100).

Non-sentient starships without self-repair and makepoint systems have difficulty maintaining ZIP plants; this is the reason behind the Venu "Dirt Drive".



Construct Conflict

In construct conflict, constructs manoeuvre using their Manoeuvre skill, attack with Close Combat, Ranged Combat, Electronic Warfare (EW), and sometimes even Provoke, and defend with skills like Manoeuvre, Systems, and even Deceive and Will. Constructs may have weapons and armour as extras.

Detection is an important facet of construct conflict, particularly important for starships; in the vastness of space, it's not always guaranteed that starships will spot one another to initiate hostilities.

ACTIONS

A construct may take one action per exchange. This may be a detection attempt, a manoeuvre of more than one zone, an attack, an attempt to flee, and so on. Characters on board constructs may use appropriate stunts or extras skills to take actions too, meaning a construct may appear to be the source of multiple actions.

TURN ORDER

In construct conflicts, an undetected construct automatically gains initiative over one that it has detected (see below). Otherwise, turn order in physical conflicts is based on your rating in Active or Passive Sensing, depending on which is being used; for systems conflicts, it's Systems; and for credit, it's Bureaucracy.

Secondary and tertiary skills for physical conflicts are Manoeuvre and Hull Strength; for systems conflicts, they are Active or Passive Sensing and Technical; and for credit, they're Contacts and Resources.

RANGE AND ZONES

Constructs in the same zone (range 0) may attack using EW, Ranged Combat, and Close Combat; EW attacks between sentient constructs in the same zone happen at Mindscape speeds (page 195). Constructs separated by 1 or more zones may attack using EW and Ranged Combat.

DETECTION

Before one construct may interact with another, it must first detect it. A **detection roll** is a Passive Sensing or Active Sensing skill roll, opposed by Stealth. Each construct rolls. A construct doesn't have to use its full Stealth skill; it may offer Mediocre (+0) passive opposition if it's deliberately trying to be detected.

A successful detection roll means the detecting construct has detected the target. The shifts generated indicate the range at which the detection has occurred, in zones.

Table 12-9: Construct Confllict Skill Summary

Attack Skill	Defence Skill	Damage Type
Ranged Combat	Manoeuvre	Physical
Close Combat	Close Combat	Physical
	Manoeuvre	Physical
Electronic Warfare	Systems	Systems
	Deceive	Systems
Provoke	Will	Mental
Will (Technopsi)	Will	Mental

Max Proffitt is running the Commonality embargo, smuggling goods to the world of Amida. Unknown to him, a Venu Alpha Wolf*-class insertion ship (page 248) is lurking undetected in the system. Hughie rolls the* Rosemary Princess*'s Average (+1) Passive Sensing skill and gets a +4 result against the* Alpha Wolf*'s Stealth roll result of +3. A lucky roll — Max detects the Venu ship at a range of 1 zone (1 shift).*

A construct using Active Sensing automatically gains a +2 bonus to detection rolls, but in turn is automatically detected by any other construct.

A construct taking any attack action while undetected incurs a -2 penalty to its Stealth roll that exchange.

The Venu ship still hasn't seen him, and Max knows this is his best chance to disable the ship and get away. He attacks! Whatever his roll, his attempt to remain undetected incurs a -2 penalty.

EVASION

A construct wishing to escape another construct (such as fleeing a construct conflict) makes an **evasion roll**. This is either a Manoeuvre or Stealth contest, opposed by the Manoeuvre or Active or Passive Sensing skill of the construct it's trying to evade. If evading multiple constructs, the construct makes a single roll against all of them.

If the evading construct wins the contest, it evades pursuit. If the pursuing construct wins, it catches up with the evading construct and forces it to engage (likely in a conflict); the evading construct can no longer evade, and must engage with its pursuer or concede.

Construct Chases

A chase is usually a straightforward contest of Manoeuvre vs Manoeuvre. Where a starship is trying to run for the jump point, see "Jump Points" (page 228).

ATTACKS

Most construct attacks use Ranged Combat, damaging the target's physical stress track. Desperate or properly equipped constructs may make ramming attacks using Close Combat (and sometimes Manoeuvre). EW attacks may be made, doing systems stress damage, and sentient constructs may make Provoke attacks doing mental stress damage. These attacks are summarised on Table 12-9: Construct Conflict Skill Summary.

Creating Advantages in Construct Conflicts

Constructs may take actions to create advantages. Here are some examples.

- **Boarding Actions:** At their simplest, boarding actions are the way certain Close Combat actions are described; the Close Combat skill may represent troops from one construct entering another.

  You may also use a boarding action overcome or create an advantage action to switch to character-level action, running the boarding party as characters (the PCs?) attacking NPCs inside the target construct, perhaps with capturing the construct as their goal. Alternatively, you can adopt a middle ground, and let PC attacks affect the construct's physical or systems stress tracks directly, using the scale rules (page 174) to modify the characters' attack rolls and damage inflicted.
- **Positioning:** Use Manoeuvre to position your construct favourably for attacking another construct or defending against attacks. This is especially useful for *On Your Tail*-type advantages in dogfights, etc.
- **Sandcasters:** Instead of using sandcasters (page 210) for their armour rating, you could use Manoeuvre to create an advantage shrouding a starship in a *Glittering Sandcaster Cloud* to dissipate incoming null weapon fire.
- **Take Cover:** Use Stealth or Deceive to make your construct difficult to detect or target with *Deadman's Tumble* or *Silent Running*-type advantages.
- **Target Construct Systems:** A create advantage roll using Ranged Combat, success means you hit what you were aiming for, creating an advantage like *Weapons Systems Damaged, Tank Tracks Shredded*, *Shields Overload, Jump Drives Hit, Sensors Offline*, etc.

Multiple Attacks by Constructs

If two or more PCs buy Ranged Combat extra skills for the same shared construct extra, this represents more than one weapon being installed on the construct. A character may make a single attack action using the ***total*** *of the shared extra's Ranged Combat skills, or each character may make a separate attack action using the Ranged Combat skills they bought themselves. In this way a construct may seem to attack more than once per exchange — although in each case it's a character taking his sole action for the exchange. GMs may choose to have NPCs with construct extras behave the same way, in major battles with manowars and other capital ships making barrages of attacks.*

If your character has the Gunnery stunt, you may use your Ranged Combat skill for construct conflict actions. You must be on board a construct which has weapons to do this. If the construct is your own extra, then the Gunnery stunt effectively means the construct has a basic weapon (no weapon rating or special bonuses). If the construct is ***not*** *your own extra, then it must have a weapon your character can use — usually represented by a Ranged Combat construct skill,* ***or*** *an appropriate stunt, aspect, or extra.*

Max Proffitt has the Gunnery stunt. This means his *Rosemary Princess* starship extra has a basic ranged weapon (a null cannon), even though as an extra it doesn't have its own Ranged Combat skill or any weapon extras. If Lyra Da Luz subsequently decides to buy a Ranged Combat skill for the *Rosemary Princess*, making it a shared extra (page 105), that would give the ship two weapons, each of which could be used (by Max and Lyra) in the same exchange.

Max targets the Alpha Wolf*'s Dirty Mary disruptor cannon. He rolls Good (+3) Ranged Combat using his Gunnery stunt. The Venu ship isn't aware of Max, so Sarah rules it offers only Mediocre (+0) passive opposition, plus a +1 defend bonus from its disruptor shield. Max rolls a +0, for a total of +3, succeeding — he blasts the* Alpha Wolf*'s disruptor cannon with his lasers, inflicting a* Weapons System Damaged *advantage with a free invoke. The Venu ship tries to detect Max; it has only Mediocre (+0) Passive and Active Sensing, but Max has no Stealth skill he can apply to the* Rosemary Princess*, so rolls at +0 with a -2 penalty for his earlier attack. The Venu ship succeeds, and spots Max's attack run!*

If you invoke a targeting advantage and inflict a consequence, that consequence should reflect damage done to the area or system targeted.

Max has the initiative, and fires his null cannon at the Alpha Wolf*, rolling a +3, added to his Good (+3) Ranged Combat for +6. He uses his free invoke on the* Weapons System Damaged *advantage, describing the Venu ship having trouble evading, for a total +8! The* Alpha Wolf *rolls +0, for a total defence of +3, meaning Max inflicts 5 shifts of physical harm. The* Alpha Wolf *has only a 1-point and 2-point stress box, so must mark off a severe consequence! Sarah and Hughie decide this is a* Deadly Radiation Burst *from the unstable dirt drive powering the Dirty Mary disruptor cannon which Max targeted on his previous attack. The Venu ship is in serious trouble!*

Situation Aspects and Hazards in Construct Conflicts

An environment can be full of potential hazards and situation aspects affecting construct conflicts, like *Battlefield Debris, Gravity Well, Gravitic Lensing, Magnetic Storm, Radiation*, and more. See **Chapter 18: Worlds and Civilisations** and **Chapter 19: Stellar Bodies and Star Systems** for examples.

Damage to Constructs

Constructs may take damage for many reasons, including failed Planing rolls and damage from construct conflicts.

Constructs have two or three stress tracks: physical, systems, and an optional mental stress track for sentient constructs. Each begins with 2 stress points; certain skills may increase the number of stress points in a given track. While sentient constructs have three stress tracks, they still only have the usual number of general consequences. In this way, they're particularly vulnerable.

If you have a construct extra, it may or may not have stress boxes and consequences: see page 199. You may incur stress and even consequences on behalf of your construct extra, as long as you can narrate how you do so.

Construct skills like Hull Strength and Will may increase the consequences a construct can take.

The Venu Alpha Wolf *turns its damaged disruptor cannon against the* Rosemary Princess*. Sarah rolls a +4, adding the Venu ship's Average (+1) Ranged Combat skill; Max defends with a terrible -1, for a total of +3! However, Max has a free invoke of the* Deadly Radiation Burst *severe consequence — Hughie describes how Max evades the damaged disrup-*

tor's cannonade. That pushes Max's defence up to +5, a tie! However, the Dirty Mary disruptor cannon has a weapon:3 rating, meaning it does 3 additional shifts of physical damage, even on a tie. The Rosemary Princess *only has 2 physical stress boxes, so would have to incur a moderate consequence! However, Max decides to take a mild consequence himself, absorbing 2 shifts, leaving the* Rosemary Princess *to mark off her 1-point stress box. Hughie describes the* Rosemary Princess's *bridge console showering Max with* Blinding Burning Sparks *as the Venu disruptor attack overloads it!*

Construct consequences are handled as follows:

- **Mild consequences:** These are mostly an inconvenience, and don't require immediate attention. Examples: *Wildly Sparking Console, Confused Sensors, Thrown Off Aim, Stalled, Overheating*.
- **Moderate consequence:** These are fairly serious impairments and malfunctions — things aren't working properly, and this needs dealing with. Examples: *Shield Power Drained, Sensor Overload, Tank Track Control System Disabled, Power Conduit Severed, Venting Into Space*.
- **Severe consequence:** These represent major damage and critical systems malfunctions, preventing large parts of the construct from functioning. They're ongoing, and severely limit what the construct can do, requiring urgent attention. Examples: *Raging Fire on Deck Three, Cargo Hold Taking on Water, Structural Integrity Compromised, ZIP Core Going Critical, Planing Engines Offline, Weapon Systems Disabled, Shields Down, ATV Axle Broken*.

Here are some ideas about how to handle damage to specific parts of constructs.

POWER PLANT DAMAGE

Damaged ZIP Plant consequences or *Bleeding Z-Radiation*-type situation aspects may contaminate the immediate zone (which may be the whole construct), subjecting its occupants to its effects. This may simply be an invoke or a compel, or in more actively dangerous cases the damage may act as a hazard (like a *Bleeding Z-Radiation* conflict hazard — page 176) with an Intensity of either Fair (+2) or equal to the shifts which created the aspect. Duration depends on the nature of the aspect or consequence (for example, whether it's a boost); it may last until repaired / removed.

It's the second exchange. Max has the initiative, and fires again on the Venu insertion ship, rolling a +3 for a total +6. The Venu rolls +1, adding its Good (+3) Manoeuvre; Sarah also decides to use the free invoke she gets on Max's Blinding Burning Sparks *mild consequence, describing how Max's aim is off, increasing her defend roll result to +6. It's looking like a tie…*

Hughie decides to push it. He spends a fate point to invoke the Deadly Radiation Burst *severe consequence on the Venu ship, increasing his result to +8 and inflicting 2 shifts of physical damage on the* Alpha Wolf. *Sarah marks off the 2-point physical stress box on the ship's sheet.*

Zero Point Core Explosion

A zero point core explosion is the worst thing that can happen to a construct's ZIP plant. It may occur when a construct is taken out or suffers an extreme consequence; or if a power plant itself is taken out, or if an appropriate consequence or situation aspect (*ZIP Core Going Critical*, etc) is compelled. The construct takes an automatic severe consequence, if appropriate. Anyone within 1 zone of the power plant is automatically taken out; anyone within 2 zones is affected by a Fantastic (+6) *Radioactive* explosive attack from the horrific torsion field effects; and anyone within 3 zones (which for a small construct might be the whole construct) is affected by a z-radiation radiation hazard (page 354). If a starship is in 2-space when a zero point core explosion happens, it makes a precipitate 2-space emergence (page 228).

Stasis Boats

All Commonality starships are equipped with a small-scale stasis field generator capable of protecting a single, small zone immediately around the ship sentience. It activates in the event of ship destruction, sealing off the sentience and any crew in a space-time bubble cut off from the rest of n-space. These bubbles are known as ***stasis boats****, and are effectively an aspect possessed by every ship.*

Usually you don't need to roll to use a stasis boat; it's a way of allowing PCs to survive the destruction of their ship. Larger vessels have multiple stasis boats, and crews make their way to stasis boat stations at the command to abandon ship. The GM may require the Stasis Boats *aspect to be invoked (for a fate point), or a create an advantage action rolled (perhaps using Athletics, or Technical) to provide a free invoke, before the stasis boat can be used; given the serious consequences of failure, however, the loss of the ship is usually a big enough problem for the PCs to handle.*

In the subsequent attack the Venu insertion ship inflicted 2 points of physical stress on the Rosemary Princess*, meaning both her physical stress boxes are filled in — things are looking dicey! Hughie decides enough is enough.*

In the third exchange, he asks Sarah if he can invoke the previous Weapons Systems Damaged *advantage for a fate point — as no time has really passed for the Venu to take an action to remove this situation aspect, Sarah agrees. Max rolls the dice, getting a +2, +3 for his skill, and +2 for the invoke, a total of +7. The Venu ship rolls a +1, +3 for its Manoeuvre, for a total of +4. That's 3 points of stress. The* Alpha Wolf *only has a 1-point physical stress box left, so must mark off a moderate consequence.*

Hughie has a brainwave. "The Venu ship has a severe consequence, right? Can I pay one more fate point to invoke that consequence, saying that the Deadly Radiation Burst *is a result of cascading damage I did to the ship's dirt drive?" Sarah sees where he's going with this, and nods.*

Hughie pays the fate point. This gives him a +2 to his result, upping the stress done to 5 points. The ship would normally have to mark off a severe consequence to absorb this, but as it already has done, the damage cascades up to the next level!

If the Venu ship was a major NPC, Sarah could say it now takes an extreme consequence to absorb those 5 points of stress; otherwise the ship simply can't absorb the increased damage, and is taken out. Hughie's face lights up as she describes how Max's null cannon bursts trigger a chain reaction in the damaged Venu ship which sends the dirt drive critical. The ship explodes in a blinding flash of z-radiation!

CONSTRUCT SENTIENCE DAMAGE

Some attacks may cause mental damage to the construct sentience. If this is a result of planing engine mishaps (page 225), then an organic 2-pilot may take the stress or consequences instead. If the construct sentience is taken out, the 2-pilot **must** take over, and must immediately make a Planing roll or suffer precipitate 2-space emergence (page 228).

DAMAGE TO CARGO AND CREW

Damage to constructs may affect cargo and crew. For example, consequences or targeting advantages like *Cargo Bay Hit* or *Passenger Quarters Compromised* may be invoked on subsequent rolls to sell cargoes or make passages (page 442).

Additionally, PCs on board constructs may elect to take damage **instead of** the construct. You must usually have the construct as an extra. However, the GM may let PCs interpose themselves between a construct and something which may damage it, even without that construct being one of their extras. In both cases the PCs must describe how he takes damage instead of the construct.

EXPLOSIVE DECOMPRESSION

Challenge Hazard

Damage to a pressurised construct (starship, space station, aquatic vehicle, vacuum world construct, etc) may expose its occupants to explosive decompression.

Skills: *Superb (+5) Intensity; Good (+3) Magnitude (passive opposition)*

ACTIONS

Action 1: *Roll Physique vs Intensity to avoid explosive decompression if not wearing a pressure suit or similar protection. On a failure, suffer physical damage equal to the negative shifts.*

Action 2: *Roll Athletics vs Magnitude to avoid being swept away. On a failure, you move a number of zones equal to the negative shifts in the direction of the decompression — this may pull you completely out of the construct. You incur an aspect like* Spinning in Zero-G *or* Floating Out of Control *which may affect subsequent actions until removed.*

Action 3: *Incur 1 physical consequence per exchange if exposed to vacuum without protection.*

Hazard

Repairing Constructs

Construct stress damage goes away just as for characters. Consequences must be treated with recovery actions using the Technical skill, as described in "Repairing Equipment" (page 178). Mild consequences may be treated by the construct's repair teams, but moderate and severe consequences require a starship engineer, repair yard, makepoint workshop (page 214), or other source of parts and facilities.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
STARSHIPS AND SPACE TRAVEL

"The alien warship dropped out of 2-space, its primitive planing engines distorting space-time with churning vortices of z-radiation.

The Commonality manowar was ready for them.

'Venu warhawk, Venu warhawk, I repeat, stand down! You are outgunned and outmanoeuvred. Cut your gravity engines and cease targeting the planetary surface immediately, or we will use annihilating force!

'Dammit! Don't these people understand? What — they're firing on us? Do they want to die? This makes no sense...

'All right! Activate the torsion field projectors. Tear that ship out of the sky!'"

Many types of starship travel the Commonality's space-lanes. Commonality ships are known for their sleek and advanced designs; Venu ships, based on stolen planing technology, are inefficient and ungainly, the Empire only just capable of their manufacture. There are other ships, too, from mysterious Lowhigh lightjammers to Javawayn star cities and the vast organic bioships of the Chembu.

This chapter describes how to use starships. Starships are **constructs**, and may be taken as characters, extras or NPCs. Statistics are provided for example vessels as **minor ships**, **supporting ships**, and **major ships** (page 181).

THE NATURE OF SPACE TRAVEL

Faster-than-light travel is a relatively recent discovery in the Commonality, less than two hundred years old and well within living memory. New discoveries — and new dangers — are being encountered every day, as starships cross the vast distances between stars, and in the Commonality Core 3-space gates experiment with even faster forms of travel.

N-Space

Prior to the invention of the **planing engine**, all space travel took place slower-than-light through **n-space**, or normal space-time, mostly within the turbulent gravity wells of solar systems. Travel within star systems still happens this way; piloting through 2-space in a solar system is simply too hazardous due to the sheer amount of physical matter. Instead, planeships arriving in a system drop into n-space at the **n/2 boundary** (usually the star system's heliopause) and travel in-system using gravity engines.

2-Space

2-space is why the Commonality exists. It's an other-dimensional phenomenon which allows the warping of n-space using the **planing engine** interstellar drive. Planing permits travel at apparent speeds far in excess of the speed of light, crossing just under 3 light years per standard day, or 20 light years per week.

Planing engines project a **2-space field** or **tachyon distortion field** around a planeship, a protective "bubble" or "torus" which "lifts" the ship from n-space and into 2-space. Operating this field on a planet or within a gravity well is extremely dangerous, damaging the space-time environment and potentially destroying the ship (page 228).

3-Space

3-space is to 2-space as 2-space is to n-space, and promises incredible apparent travel speeds. It's a young science, a

Scenario Hook: A Tear in Space

The new and highly secretive 3-Space Instrumentality has been established to oversee the Far Gate Project. It's a huge undertaking, opposed by some Custodians because of its strategic risk, but the 3-Space Instrumentality is pushing ahead, in conditions of complete secrecy. Far gates already link the Core Worlds with many sector capital hubs.

The 3SI has had a major accident at a far gate construction site in the Rim Sector, and the whole star system has been quarantined. The PCs are called up under strictest secrecy to enter the system and bring "the situation" under control. But why does it need their special skills? What will they find?

discovery of the past few decades, yet already the new 3-Space Instrumentality has inaugurated the **Far Gate Project** to build **3-space gates** on many Core Worlds and sector capitals. There are currently less than fifty in total, allowing practically instantaneous travel, crossing 1 light year in just over 30 seconds, roughly 120 light years per hour. In 3-space, the whole of Commonality Space could be crossed in a little over one standard day! 3-space gates are expensive and delicate, so roll-out has been slow, but 3-space theoreticians predict gates will one day even operate on planetary surfaces.

Needless to say, 3-space technology is creating a technological revolution in the Commonality, hot on the heels of the 2-space revolution still underway. Many 2-pilots and planeships are concerned: if predictions are correct they could soon find themselves redundant, at least within Commonality Space, and many are increasingly eyeing futures on the still-expanding Frontier.

WHAT IS A STARSHIP?

Technically a starship is any space vessel which travels between the stars; more practically, the term refers to any vessel which travels in space. Ships equipped with planing engines are also called **planeships**, while those without are termed **slowships** or **slowboats**.

A Commonality starship is an intelligent vehicle. Unlike other vehicles, a Commonality starship needs to be intelligent to cope with the mind-boggling complexity of 2-space travel, where nanosecond course adjustments are required to avoid collision with sparse yet deadly particles in interstellar space. Human minds can be "overclocked" to pilot through 2-space, but the process is so damaging (as evidenced by the Venu **brainjacks**) that eidolon ship sentiences are always used instead.

A starship's **planing engines** are distributed throughout its hull — they have no need to face in a particular direction. The same is true of **gravity engines**, a ship's slower-than-light drives; grav plates and suspensors throughout the superstructure provide thrust in any direction, and protect ship and occupants from the g-forces incurred by rapid acceleration and manoeuvre.

A ship receives power from its zero point power plant or **ZIP plant.** This is the only part of a ship which is almost universally placed at the "rear", usually in a section which can be jettisoned at need: degraded or damaged ZIP cores can explode catastrophically (page 219).

Variform technology means most Commonality starships can reconfigure themselves for different purposes and even moods, from elegant diplomatic curves to intimidating "high-threat" combat configurations. While ship sentiences are distributed throughout a variform hull for redundancy, the **core corpus** — the ship's brain — at the heart of a starship can be protected by stasis field in the event of disaster.

Commonality ships are social beings; many delight in company, and provide habitats for crews. Indeed, a ship often considers itself a crewmember, and may have an avatar (page 140) to accompany others off ship.

Crew habitats in Commonality ships vary enormously. Variform technology means they can swiftly switch between day and night mode, and provide exotic environments for divergent or alien occupants. Staterooms may be configured for multiple or single occupancy, and spaces switched from crew to passenger use.

Since the Venu War, Commonality ships are frequently armed, especially on the Fringe and near the Quarantine Zone (page 380). Null cannon are standard, although there are many alternatives. Vessels may have reinforced hulls and force fields, although most have only basic ray shielding to protect from the hazardous cosmic environment.

Describing Starships

Create ships using the guidelines in "Creating Constructs" (page 196); they may be PCs, extras (page 102), or NPCs. Depending on the detail required, they may have high concepts, troubles, phase aspects, stress tracks, consequences, skills, stunts, and even extras. The "Starship Statistics" section (page 228) provides a selection of vessels statted as minor, supporting, and major starships.

Commonality ships have occupations. They're temperamentally suited to travel and transport roles, although many become fascinated with exploration or interaction with organics and opt for diplomatic or cultural roles.

Military-minded vessels become manowars or enter active service. Commonality vessels are not unthinking machines, but complex beings with their own motivations.

Non-Sentient Starships

Almost all Commonality starships are sentient eidolon synthetics; some orbital tugs, in-system transports, and other workhorses may more rarely be basics. Non-Commonality starships like those used by the Venu and the Lowhigh, however, are not sentient; the Venu use organic **brainjack** pilots to navigate 2-space, while Lowhigh vessels have no 2-space capability.

To create a non-sentient starship, follow the outline for creating constructs in **Chapter 12: Constructs**, but avoid the purely character-level skills like Provoke and Will. Other skills, stunts, and extras with social or mental applications represent the abilities of crew members and manned facilities rather than a construct sentience.

The Venu capital ship Ancestral Voice *(page 249) has an Average (+1) Science skill, indicating it is equipped with a complement of science officers and laboratories.*

Non-sentient starships have physical and systems stress tracks, but no mental stress track. They may have a credit stress track as required, referring to their crew's or captain's wealth or access to credit and resources.

DOING THINGS WITH STARSHIPS

Starships take construct actions (page 215). This section details some of the actions specific to them.

Gravity Engine Manoeuvres

A starship's Manoeuvre skill represents its ability to travel in n-space using its **gravity engines**. While usually abstracted to moving in "zones", gravity engines accelerate vessels to velocities often approaching the speed of light. Higher Manoeuvre skills represents more powerful gravity engines. Table 13-1: Gravity Engine Travel Times provides some indicative travel times for travel within star systems.

Planetary Landings by Non-Adapted Ships

The Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric) stunt lets a starship use the Manoeuvre skill in an atmosphere, indicating it's designed for atmospheric landings. Otherwise, ships are not designed for landing on planets with atmospheres; their shapes are irregular, their hulls enormous, their internal frameworks not built to handle planetary gravities.

However, using force fields and grav compensators, such ships can enter planetary atmospheres for short periods; they must have repulsor shields (page 210), and the manoeuvre takes a **lot** of power. For a few hours at most they may hover above a planet's surface; they must shut down non-essential systems, reroute power, and incur one consequence for every scene they spend on planet — but in an emergency it's possible.

Such a ship can even land. This is horribly damaging, and it's unlikely it'll ever take off again, and may even explode; the ship takes a severe consequence.

Non-adapted ships approaching planetary surfaces will probably damage that surface; grav fields will not have been properly dampened, and heat sinks, pollution, and

Time Dilation

Gravity engine travel can cause time dilation close to the speed of light. This usually warrants little more than passing mention; Commonality citizens are used to relativistic effects, and time dilation in solar systems is rarely more than a few seconds or minutes. When a ship travels greater distances — to the n/2 boundary, for example — time dilation can be significant; Table 13-1: Gravity Engine Travel Times gives very rough figures experienced by those travelling close to light speed.

Interface Travel

*While many ships can land on planetary surfaces, many cannot, and crew instead use interface travel to travel from orbit. Most starports have both a **highport** and a **ground-** or **downport**, with regular shuttle runs linking the two. Some worlds even have space elevators — also known as **beanstalks** or **space towers** — strung between the highport and groundport, with elevator shuttles taking a few hours to up to a week, depending on cost, tech index, and priority. The best known beanstalk is Terra Tower, which links Earthport with Old Earth.*

radiation will scour the surface. The immediate zone and any adjacent zones incur a *Damaged by Fugitive Starship Emissions* situation aspect, and any characters — including disembarking crew — must resist a simple hazard with an Intensity equal to the ship's scale or incur a severe physical consequence before getting to a safe distance.

Planing Engine Jumps

Navigating through 2-space requires an overcome action using your starship's Planing skill, against a passive opposition equal to the difficulty in Table 13-2: Planing Jump Difficulties, **plus the scale of your starship**. 2-space travel is harder the further you go, and larger ships are harder to navigate through its hazards than smaller ones. Jump prep takes at least half an hour, and organic 2-pilots may take create an advantage actions using Starship Pilot against the same difficulty to provide a bonus to a ship's Planing roll.

Skin-of-Our-Teeth is making a 2-space jump of 10 light years. This takes a few days, and is a Mediocre (+0) difficulty, modified up to Fair (+2) because of Skin's Huge (+2) scale. Skin rolls her Average (+1) Planing against this. Max also decides to create a Navigation Plan *advantage, rolling his Great (+4) Pilot against the same Fair (+2) difficulty, which Skin can invoke for free on her roll.*

- **If you succeed** on your starship's Planing roll, you successfully emerge at your destination. This takes the time indicated, based on the distance covered.
- **If you succeed with style**, you successfully emerge at your destination and gain a boost; perhaps you emerge at the ideal tactical speed for what you're going to do next, or well-positioned, or ahead of schedule, or perhaps the jump doesn't count against your **jump maximum** (see below).

Table 13-1: Gravity Engine Travel Times

Distance (km)	Manoeuvre Skill:	Average (+1)	Fair (+2)	Good (+3)	Great (+4)	Superb (+5)	Fantastic (+6)
	Acceleration:	***100G***	***400G***	***900G***	***1600G***	***2500G***	***3600G***
	Comment						
10K	Planet to Orbit	3.33m	1.67m	1.11m	0.83m	0.67m	0.56m
300K	1 light second	20m	10m	6.67m	5m	4m	3.33m
400K	Planet to Moon	21.08m	10.54m	7.03m	5.27m	4.22m	3.51m
45M	Inner System Orbits	3.73h	1.86h	1.24h	0.93h	0.75h	0.62h
600M	Outer System Orbits	13.61h	6.8h	4.54h	3.4h	2.72h	2.27h
1000M	Extreme Orbits (6.6AU)	17.57h	8.78h	5.86h	4.39h	3.51h	2.93h
150M	1 AU	0.28d	0.14d	0.09d	0.07d	0.06d	0.05d
18000M*	120AU: N/2 boundary, dead stop (objective time elapsed)	74.53h	37.27h	26.08h	21.97h	20.05h	19h
	As above, subjective time	72.7h	33.45h	18.5h	11.62h	7.82h	4.73h
18000M*	120AU: N/2 boundary, one-way (objective time elapsed)	52.7h	27.28h	21.38h	19.32h	18.37h	17.83h
	As above, subjective time	50.02h	20.63h	11.27h	7.45h	5.07h	2.73h

*represents the n/2 boundary at Manhome / Old Earth, ie a star system comparable to Sol. Larger and smaller star systems will vary.

Table 13-2: Planing Jump Difficulties

Jump Distance (LY)	Description	Time Required	Difficulty*
Microjump (< 1 LY)	Within current star system only; see "Activating Planing Engines in Dangerous Environments" (page 228)	Several hours	Terrible (-2)
1-3LY	Just about make it to the nearest star system	A day	Poor (-1)
4-10LY	Any neighbouring star system	A few days	Mediocre (+0)
11-20LY	Two or three star systems away	Several days	Average (+1)
21-30LY	Several star systems away	A week or more	Fair (+2)
31-40LY	Anywhere within the current octant	Half a month	Good (+3)
41-50LY	Just about make it to the nearest octant	A few weeks	Great (+4)
51-60LY	Any neighbouring octant	A few weeks	Superb (+5)
61-70LY	Just about make it to the nearest subsector	Several weeks	Fantastic (+6)
71-80LY	Any neighbouring subsector	A month	Epic (+7)
81-90LY	Two or three subsectors away	A month or more	Legendary (+8)

*add the starship's **scale** to this difficulty.

- **If you tie**, you reach your destination, but at a minor cost; perhaps suffering **chronodisplacement** (page 194) or some other time displacement, or your engines require overhaul, or your construct sentience takes a mild mental consequence.
- **If you fail**, you have two choices:
  - You **don't make the jump**, and your immediate environment incurs a consequence from *ZIP Plant Discharge*, etc, equal in severity to your failure (failure by 1-2 shifts is a mild consequence; by 3-4 shifts a moderate consequence, and so on).
  - You **make the jump**, but at a serious cost. You either **misjump** (page 226) or take a **consequence** equal to the shifts of failure; the choice is up to you. The consequence may be due to **precipitate 2-space emergence** (page 228), **damage to the ship systems**, or damage to the sentient construct's or 2-pilot's mental stress track. If you have no more consequences left, you **must** misjump (or your ship is destroyed). If you incur a consequence, you usually arrive at your destination; if you suffer a misjump, you may not.

The Mindjammer Routes

*Mindjammers travel to all Commonality worlds, but some more regularly than others. The Darradine Rim schematic (page 453) indicates some of these **Mindjammer routes**.*

Through frequency of use, Mindjammer routes are easier to navigate, and the Mindscape contains more reliable, up-to-date astrographical data. Using the Mindscape, you can invoke any Mindjammer route as a situation aspect when making a Planing roll to travel along one.

THE JUMP MAXIMUM

Starships may not make planing jumps indefinitely; their ZIP plant capacitors undergo a z-radiation build-up. Expert pilots and high quality planing engines can mitigate this,

Table 13-3: Planing Engine Jump Maximum

Planing Skill	Jump Maximum
Average (+1)	40 LY
Fair (+2)	60 LY
Good (+3)	80 LY
Great (+4)	100 LY
Superb (+5)	120 LY
Fantastic (+6)	140 LY
(Epic (+7)	160 LY)
(Legendary (+8)	180 LY)

Strategic Travel

Most non-military ships take long stopovers between 2-space jumps, trading cargoes, visiting worlds, and taking on passengers. Trading ships with Fair (+2) Planing engines, for example, jump between worlds 21 to 30 LY apart in 7 to 10 days, stay in-system for roughly a week, and then jump again, averaging 10 LY a week including stopovers.

Fast ships with Great (+4) Planing engines prioritise speed of travel, jumping 41 to 50 LY in 13 to 17 days, and then again more or less immediately before a 1 week jump maximum overhaul. This means an average 17 LY per week.

Faster ships do exist. The T10 Hyper Wing *Very Fast Courier has Fantastic (+6) Planing engines and can make two jumps of 61 to 70 LY, each roughly 3 weeks, before overhaul, a very rapid average of 18.5 LY a week.*

but eventually the planing engines must be taken offline for overhaul, often requiring a week or more.

A ship's jump maximum is expressed in light years; it's the total distance the ship may travel between overhauls, and is based on the power of the ship's planing engines (its Planing skill). See Table 13-3: Planing Engine Jump Maximum.

Ships exceeding the jump maximum automatically incur a consequence like *Jump Maximum Exceeded*, *Dangerously Unstable Planing Engines*, *Awash With Z-Radiation*. GMs may compel this for a **misjump** (see below). Ships may extend their jump maximum using **x-cores** (page 215).

MISJUMPS

2-space travel is hazardous. Sometimes mishaps happen, and a starship can find itself emerging from 2-space in an unexpected location or after an unexpectedly long or short period of time — known as a **misjump**. Misjumps can range from mere inconveniences to outright catastrophes.

Misjumps may occur on failed Planing rolls (page 225), by player choice to avoid consequences or because a ship has no more consequences left; or as a result of compels on consequences like *Jump Maximum Exceeded* or *Planing Engines Damaged*, or situation aspects like *Navigational Anomaly* or *Unstable Venu Dirt Drive*.

There are three types of misjump:

- **N-space Displacement:** The ship emerges from 2-space in an entirely different star system. Roll 4dF. On a positive result, the ship emerges in a known system that number of zones away from the target system; on a negative result, the ship emerges in an unknown system. Commonality Space, despite its thousands of settled worlds, is filled with unexplored systems; see **Chapter 19: Stellar Bodies and Star Systems** for generating new star systems. A result of +0 indicates an adjacent zone, whether known or not.
- **Tau Displacement (subjective):** The ship experiences a very short or long period of time in 2-space, before emerging at the destination system. Depending on misjump severity, this may be hours, days, months, or even years. Roll 4dF and increase or decrease the subjective time taken by that number of steps on the Time Ladder (page 171). On a roll of +0, the time taken is slightly different, but not enough to constitute an entire step.
- **Tau Displacement (objective):** The ship experiences normal 2-space passage time, but when it emerges a longer or shorter period of time has passed — often much longer or shorter. Roll 4dF as above.

There is a fourth type of misjump — a **catastrophic deep space emergence**. These are thankfully extremely rare, and invariably fatal to ship and crew alike. The ship emerges from 2-space deep in interstellar space, far from any star system or significant gravity well. Such ships are invariably never heard from again; what happens to them is not known, but it's theorised they fall prey to the mysterious **Pulse Dragon Phenomenon** (page 92).

Calculating Distances

Playing through space travel in detail, plotting every jump, describing every journey, using navigation and maintenance rules and docking and trading procedures, can be great fun; the close-focus "Trading Campaign" (page 440) is a staple of science-fiction gaming.

Depending on your game style, though, you can also just gloss over space travel; don't feel you have to delve into the detail just because you can. It's perfectly okay to say "after two weeks in 2-space you arrive at your destination".

The same goes for calculating travel distances. These rules can provide detailed results — but only if you want them. The following three methods are all equally valid; they depend on how much crunch you want in your game.

The Fast-and-Loose Method: *If you're happy with a broad-brush approach to interstellar travel, don't bother with distances at all; just use the text descriptions on Table 13-2: Planing Jump Difficulties (page 225) instead.*

The Detailed Method: *For maximum accuracy at the price of a bit of maths, you can use Pythagoras' Theorem to calculate distances between star systems in 3 dimensions from the data on* ***Mindjammer's*** *2-d star maps. Here's what you do. First, measure the distance between systems on the map.*

On the Darradine Rim schematic (page 453) the distance between the Chinhice and Furnace star systems is about 20 light years. That's the **horizontal separation**. Now you need the vertical separation; that's the difference between the z-coordinates (the numbers in brackets next to each star system). Chinhice has a z-coord of +0, and Furnace has +29; that means they have a vertical separation of 29 light years.

Now the maths: take the square of the horizontal separation and the square of the vertical separation and add them together. Then, take the square root of that. The result is the actual separation: the real distance in 3 dimensions between the two systems.

For Chinhice and Furnace, the calculation is as follows:

- Actual separation = square root of (20LY x 20LY) + (29LY x 29LY)
- = square root of 1241LY (400 + 841)
- = 35.2LY

Looking up 35.2LY on Table 13-2: Planing Jump Difficulties, we see that's a Good (+3) difficulty Planing roll, and it will take half a month in 2-space to cover the distance in a single jump.

The Rough Method: *A middle ground between detail and fast-and-loose, you still need the horizontal and vertical separations (see above), but just round them off to the nearest 10 light years. Once you've got those two numbers, look them up on Table 13-3: Star System Separation. The result is the rough actual separation between star systems.*

We round off the Chinhice-to-Furnace distances to 20LY horizontal and 30LY vertical. On the table this gives 36LY, which isn't far from the 35.2LY we got from the full calculation.

Table 13-4: Star System Separation

Vertical Separation in Light Years (LY) \ Horizontal Separation in Light Years (LY)	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
10	14	22	32	41	51	61	71	81	91	100
20	22	28	36	45	54	63	73	82	92	102
30	32	36	42	50	58	67	76	85	95	104
40	41	45	50	57	64	72	81	89	98	108
50	51	54	58	64	71	78	86	94	103	112
60	61	63	67	72	78	85	92	100	108	117
70	71	73	76	81	86	92	99	106	114	122
80	81	82	85	89	94	100	106	113	120	128
90	91	92	95	98	103	108	114	120	127	135
100	100	102	104	108	112	117	122	128	135	141

PRECIPITATE 2-SPACE EMERGENCE

Precipitate 2-space emergence occurs on badly failed Planing rolls and failures from pushing the jump maximum (page 100). The starship is thrown back into n-space at an indeterminate point usually between the start and end points of its course. Players may pay a fate point to declare they emerge at a reasonably favourable point; GMs may compel for them to emerge somewhere unfavourable.

Emergence types include:

- **Collision:** Depending on consequence severity, this may be a collision with a moon, asteroid, comet, or even planet, in the origin or destination system.
- **Oort Cloud Emergence:** The ship emerges in the Oort cloud (page 371) at the edge of the star system. This is a **debris field hazard** (page 373). It's a long haul to the inner solar system on gravity engines (maybe a thousand times the n/2 boundary distance!); it's the GM's choice whether this is the origin or destination system. It's possible to make a micro-jump from the Oort cloud to the inner system, but as your planing engines are likely already damaged this may not be advisable; see "Activating Planing Engines in Dangerous Environments" below.
- **Solar Emergence:** The ship emerges in the corona of the system's sun! This is a **radiation hazard** (page 374). Damage is to shields and comms first, then drives, then life support. The ship must navigate tortuous magnetic storms to exit into normal space.

JUMP WAKE DETECTION

During 2-space entry or emergence tachyons and other 2-space particles interact with n-space in a **tachyon distortion field** — commonly called a "jump wake". N-space gradually returns to normal, but for several hours after entry / emergence the jump wake is detectable by sensors at a difficulty equal to the Planing skill of the ship causing the wake. Multiple ships produce overlapping wakes, making it difficult to gauge numbers. The Track FTL stunt (page 88) calculates the jumping ship's destination or system of origin.

ACTIVATING PLANING ENGINES IN DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENTS

Planing engines are designed for activation far from gravity wells; usually a star system's heliopause (also called the **n/2 boundary**) is considered the minimum safe distance. Activation closer can be extremely dangerous; first, a *Crippling Tachyon Distortion Field* situation aspect is placed on the zone and any adjacent zones, which are also bathed in a **radiation hazard** (page 354) with an Intensity equal to the jumping vessel's scale. Second, the situation aspect increases the Planing roll difficulty. Needless to say, this is illegal throughout the Commonality, punishable by confiscation of the vessels and re-education of the offenders.

STARSHIP STATISTICS

The following example statistics represent typical NPC ships, and a basis for creating extras or starship PCs.

The Jump Point

Planeships activate their planing engines to enter 2-space at the n/2 boundary, usually located at a star system's heliopause — commonly known as the ***jump point****. Ships may "run for the jump point" to escape pursuit; this is an evasion attempt (page 217), except that you're trying to accumulate a number of victories equal to the number of orbits in your current star system (page 320), minus the number of the orbit you began at.*

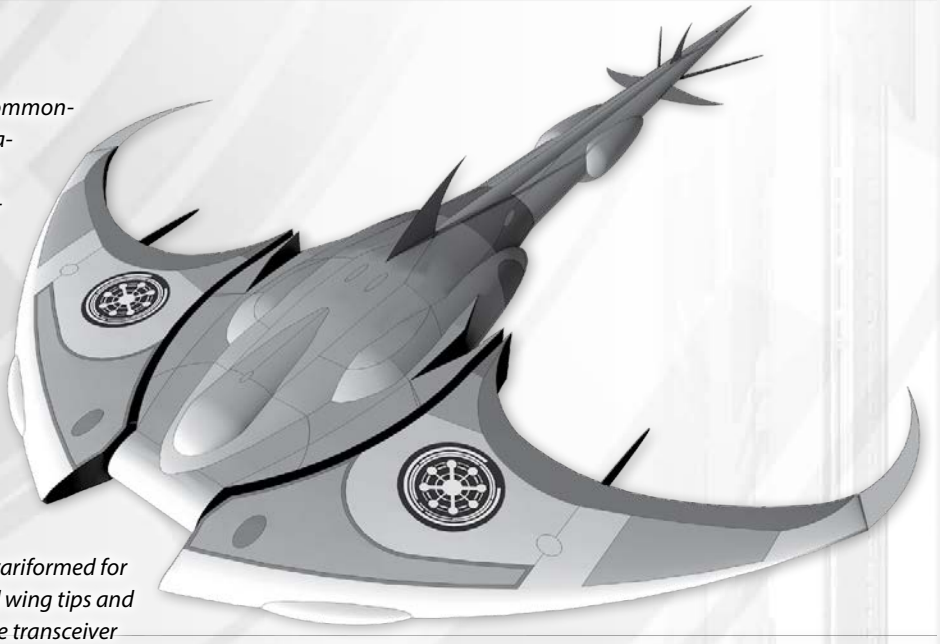
You may attempt to enter 2-space before the heliopause; see "Activating Planing Engines in Dangerous Environments".

Starship Tech Levels

Most starships are tech index T9. Planing engine technology is a T9 discovery; only the most cutting edge Commonality vessels are T10. Slowships may range from T7 to T10. The main exception is the Venu Empire, a T7 civilisation (page 289) operating with barely understood reverse-engineered Commonality planing engine technology; its starships are classed as T7, despite the FTL capacity of their highly unstable "dirt drives".

Major Ship

MINDJAMMER



With no FTL comms technology in the Commonality, the Mindjammers carry communications and information between the stars. They travel from world to world, reinforcing and updating the Mindscape, tying the Commonality together. Mindjammers often become fascinated by the thought traffic of the Mindscape, retiring from active service to embark on alternative occupations — including working with PCs on unusual missions and special operations.

The Mindjammer-*class planeship is* the *signature ship of the Commonality. It's shown here in its "threat" configuration, variformed for aggressive appearance, including hooked wing tips and an angular profile. Note the aft Mindscape transceiver array triangulated with the port and starboard processor nacelles, allowing the Mindjammer constant Mindscape contact until jump, and likewise its famous "tail first" system approach as it transmits Mindscape updates immediately upon arrival.*

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences:*3* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3

ASPECTS

High Concept: Hero of the Space Lanes

Trouble: The Sinecure of All Eyes

Other Aspects: The Urge to Communicate, Variform Hull, Seven Light-Year Itch

SKILLS

Great (+4): *Knowledge*
Good (+3): *Manoeuvre, Passive Sensing*
Fair (+2): *Planing, Systems, Will*
Average (+1): *Contacts, Ranged Combat, Rapport, Resources*

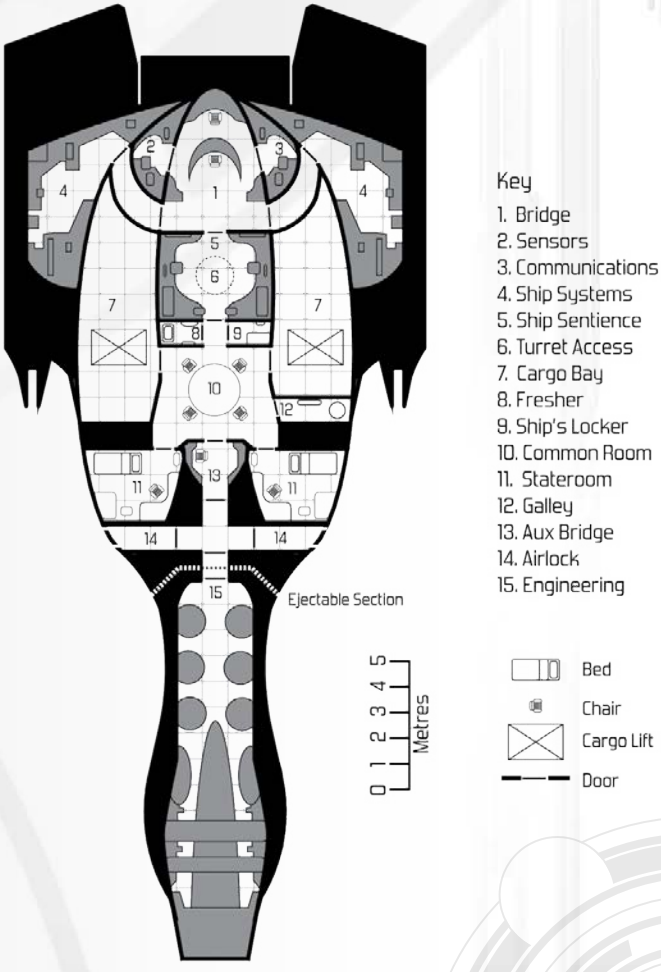
STUNTS

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

✦ ***Mindburn:*** *Use Will for mental attacks using the Mindscape.*

HALO

Special Ops Mindscape Instance: *Local Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.*



ADAM SMITH-CLASS MERCHANT

Supporting Ship

The Adam Smith-class merchant sits between the Profit*-class new trader and the Keynes-class merchant, designed for short-range trading runs on established routes. With a crew of 2-10, it dedicates most of its hull to cargo transport.*

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: 1 2

Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Short-range Merchant Vessel, Workhorse of the Trade Routes, Small Independent Crew, Got My Reg'lar Customers, Bulky and Difficult to Manoeuvre (flaw)

Skills: *Fair (+2) Systems, Resources; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Planing*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *20 units of Large (+1) cargo, 200 Medium (+0).*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Extended Cargo Hold:*** *Additional 20 units of Large (+1) cargo, 200 Medium (+0).*

CUSTOMS BOAT

Supporting Ship

Similar to system patrol boats, custom boats are less heavily-armed and patrol for smugglers and embargo runners in systems where heavily-armed raiders are not expected. They're staffed by officious customs inspection synthetics.

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: 1 2

Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: 1 2 3

Aspects: Slower-than-light Customs Patrol, Officious Customs Synthetics, Lightly Armed, Bureaucrat Attack!

Skills: *Fair (+2) Bureaucracy, Manoeuvre, Systems; Average (+1) Active Sensing, Close Combat, Passive Sensing, Ranged Combat, Will*

STUNTS

✦ ***Mindburn:*** *Use Will for mental attacks using the Mindscape.*

HALO

Special Ops Mindscape Instance: *Local Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Grappling Gear:*** *+2 to Close Combat create an advantage actions in the same zone.*

★ ***Tractor Beam:*** *+2 Close Combat overcome bonus in same zone; +2 Close Combat create an advantage bonus out to 2-zone range.*

FRIEDMAN-CLASS BULK TRANSPORT

Supporting Ship

A vast vessel designed for massive cargo transport on the Fringe, the Friedman*-class is over a kilometre long and very ungainly. It has a crew of 100, usually mechanicals.*

Scale: *Enormous (+3)*
Physical Stress: 1 2

Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Massive Cargo Transport, Treasure Trove, Endless Warrens of Cargo Containers, Mostly Mechanical Crew, Bulky and Difficulty to Manoeuvre (flaw)

Skills: *Good (+3) Resources, Systems; Fair (+2) Planing, Technical; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *30 units of Huge (+2) cargo, 300 Large (+1).*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Extended Cargo Hold x2:*** *Additional 60 units of Huge (+2) cargo, 600 Large (+1).*

BOTANY BAY-CLASS EXPLORER

The Botany Bay*-class Stage II Explorer is a Space Force vessel with 50-100 crew. Featuring extended endurance for deep space missions beyond the Fringe, it's equipped with bays for system survey drones and event horizon probes, and a dock for an* Icarus*-class scout (page 235). The booms provide xenoscience environments, and the volume between them and the habitat/bridge section can be fitted with a deck and field-pressurised to form an "open air" assembly space. It's an ideal base for exploration missions.*

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: 1 2
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3 4
Consequences: *3*
Mental Stress: 1 2

ASPECTS
High Concept: Starry-Eyed Explorer

Trouble: A Hundred Lives, a Hundred Dreams

Other Aspects: Pressurised Xenoscience Environments, Variform Assembly Space, Makepoint Reliant

SKILLS
Great (+4): *Planing*
Good (+3): *Active Sensing, Systems*
Fair (+2): *Passive Sensing, Science, Technical*
Average (+1): *Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat, Rapport, Resources*

STUNTS
✦ ***Docking Bay:*** *1 Large (+1) construct, 10 Medium (+0) constructs, etc.*

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

✦ ***Long-Distance Life Support:*** *+2 bonus for functioning on your reserves.*

✦ ***Specialist (Planetary Science, Stellar Systems, Xenoscience):*** *+2 bonus to rolls for specialised field.*

HALO
Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

Remote Sensor Package: *Use Passive Sensing via avatar as Notice skill for character actions.*

OTHER EXTRAS
★ ***Advanced Sensors:*** *+2 bonus to Active Sensing overcome actions.*

★ ***Geoanalysis Suite:*** *+2 Active Sensing bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions to find a mining strike.*

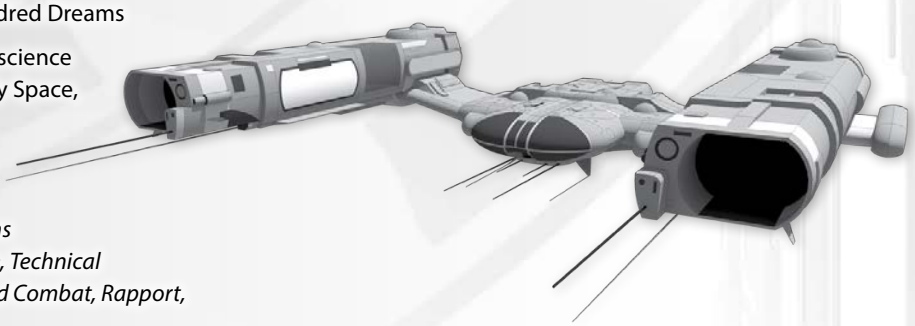
★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defence bonus and basic ray shielding.*

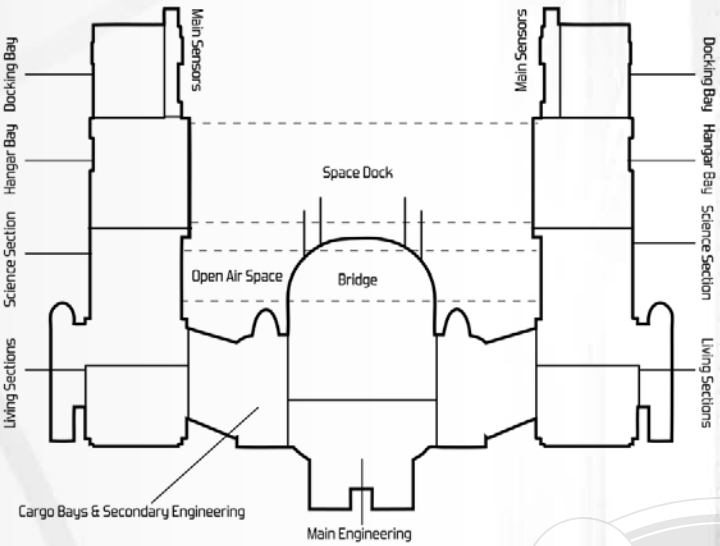
★ ***Makepoint Workshop:*** *Spares and repairs without a Commonality shipyard.*

★ ***Starship Therapist:*** *Crew member with Fair (+2) Empathy for recovery obstacles.*

★ ***System Survey Drone:*** *Fair (+2) Active Sensing, Passive Sensing.*

★ ***X-Core:*** *Doubles jump maximum.*





Major Ship

DIVERGENCE-CLASS SYMBIOTIC MINER

These strange vessels look more like unpacked lattices of scaffolding and storage bins than starships. They're mostly unpressurised, except for guest quarters, with a large central rotunda for the controlling Dezimeer metaboliser-mother (page 47). They close up and are shielded for 2-space travel, but spend most of their time travelling through molecular clouds, asteroid belts, protoplanetary disks, and other sources of raw materials. Their eidolon sentiences are generally derived from Dezimeer thanograms.

Scale: *Huge (+2)*

Tech Index: *T9*

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Physical Stress: 1 2

Systems Stress: 1 2 3

Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Single-minded Mining Vessel, It Doesn't Get Much More Alien Than This, Weirdly Dispersed Structures, Claustrophobic and Intimidating, Bulky and Difficult to Manoeuvre (flaw)

Skills: *Fair (+2) Active Sensing, Systems, Technical; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Planing, Resources*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *10 units of Large (+1) cargo, 100 Medium (+0).*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

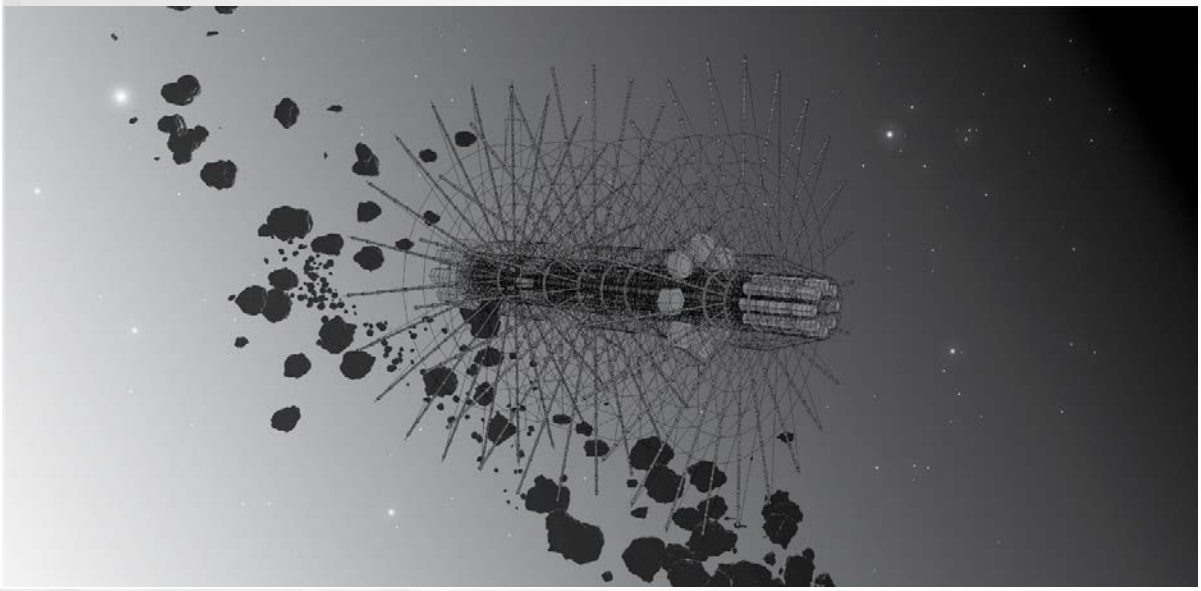
OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Extended Cargo Hold:*** *Additional 10 units of Large (+1) cargo, 100 Medium (+0).*

★ ***Geoanalysis Suite:*** *+2 Active Sensing bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions to find a mining strike.*

★ ***Mining Drones:*** *+2 Technical bonus for mining operations.*

★ ***Ore Processor:*** *Use Technical to process and refine mining ore.*



GENTILITY BASE

Major Space Station

Typical of SCI Force bases, Gentility Base is an extended cylinder over a kilometre long, with multiple concentric habitats, dedicated to maintaining SCI Force operations within an octant. Sentient and heavily armed, it's a focal point for Commonality authority.

Scale: *Enormous (+3)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

ASPECTS

High Concept: Impressive SCI Force Headquarters

Trouble: It's a Matter of Security

Other Aspects: Glistening Proponent of Commonality Tech, Hive of Instrumentality Activity, Intel Hub, Swarms of Space Combat Drones

SKILLS

Superb (+5): *Knowledge*
Great (+4): *Resources, Technical*
Good (+3): *Science, Systems, Will*
Fair (+2): *Active Sensing, Hull Strength, Passive Sensing, Ranged Combat*
Average (+1): *Deceive, Empathy, EW, Manoeuvre, Rapport*

STUNTS

✦ ***Docking Bay:*** *1 Huge (+2) construct, 10 Large (+1) constructs, etc.*

✦ ***Top Urgency:*** *+2 to Passive Sensing when on top urgency alert.*

HALO

Special Ops Mindscape Instance: *Local Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Advanced Sensors:*** *+2 bonus to Active Sensing overcome actions.*

★ ***Autodoc:*** *Gain the Meditech stunt and Regeneration extra; use Technical for all recovery actions.*

★ ***Auto-Repair System:*** *+2 Technical bonus to repairs; can repair itself.*

★ ***ECM Array:*** *+2 defend bonus vs EW and Mindscape attacks.*

★ ***Extended Docking Bay x2:*** *20 Huge (+2) constructs, 200 Large (+1) constructs, etc.*

★ ***Grappling Gear:*** *+2 to Close Combat create an advantage actions in the same zone.*

★ ***Gravity Cannon:*** *Weapon:4 rating, or +4 attack bonus vs Enormous (+3) targets or larger, range 3;* Incredibly Destructive.

★ ***Makepoint:*** *Produce basic materials and small items of equipment.*

★ ***Makepoint Workshop:*** *Spares and repairs without a Commonality shipyard.*

★ ***Missiles:*** *Contest of Ranged Combat vs Manoeuvre, explosive effect, range 5,* Limited Supply.

★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

★ ***Tractor Beam:*** *+2 Close Combat overcome bonus in same zone; +2 Close Combat create an advantage bonus out to 2-zone range.*

HEAVY MANNED FIGHTER

Good (+3) Minor Ship

During the Venu War Commonality fighter defence was performed by space combat drone. The surprising effectiveness of Venu countermeasures and the development of torsion field technology has led to the creation of the heavy manned fighter, larger than the space combat drone, equipped with an experimental close range torsion cannon, and piloted independently by organic (especially cephalopod xenomorph) or synthetic n-pilots.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Stress:*** 1 2 ☐

Tech Index: *T10*

Aspects: New Generation Fighter, Experimental Range 0 Torsion Cannon

Skills: *Good (+3) Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Manoeuvre; Average (+1) Passive Sensing*

HERALD-CLASS FAST COURIER

Small, agile ships used by instrumentalities for urgent diplomatic transport, fast couriers have 1 or 2 crew auxiliary to the ship sentience and up to 4 passengers without expanded passenger accommodation. Lightly armed and armoured, they take their jobs very seriously. Long endurance models are frequently fitted with x-cores (page 215).

Scale: *Huge (+2)*

Physical Stress: 1 2

Tech Index: *T9*

Systems Stress: 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Sleek and Agile Courier, On Urgent Business, Aloof, Diplomatic Ship Sentience

Skills: *Good (+3) Planing; Fair (+2) Manoeuvre, Systems; Average (+1) Ranged Combat, Rapport*

STUNTS

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

✦ ***Negotiator:*** *Use Rapport for organisation actions.*

HALO

Special Ops Mindscape Instance: *Local Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.*

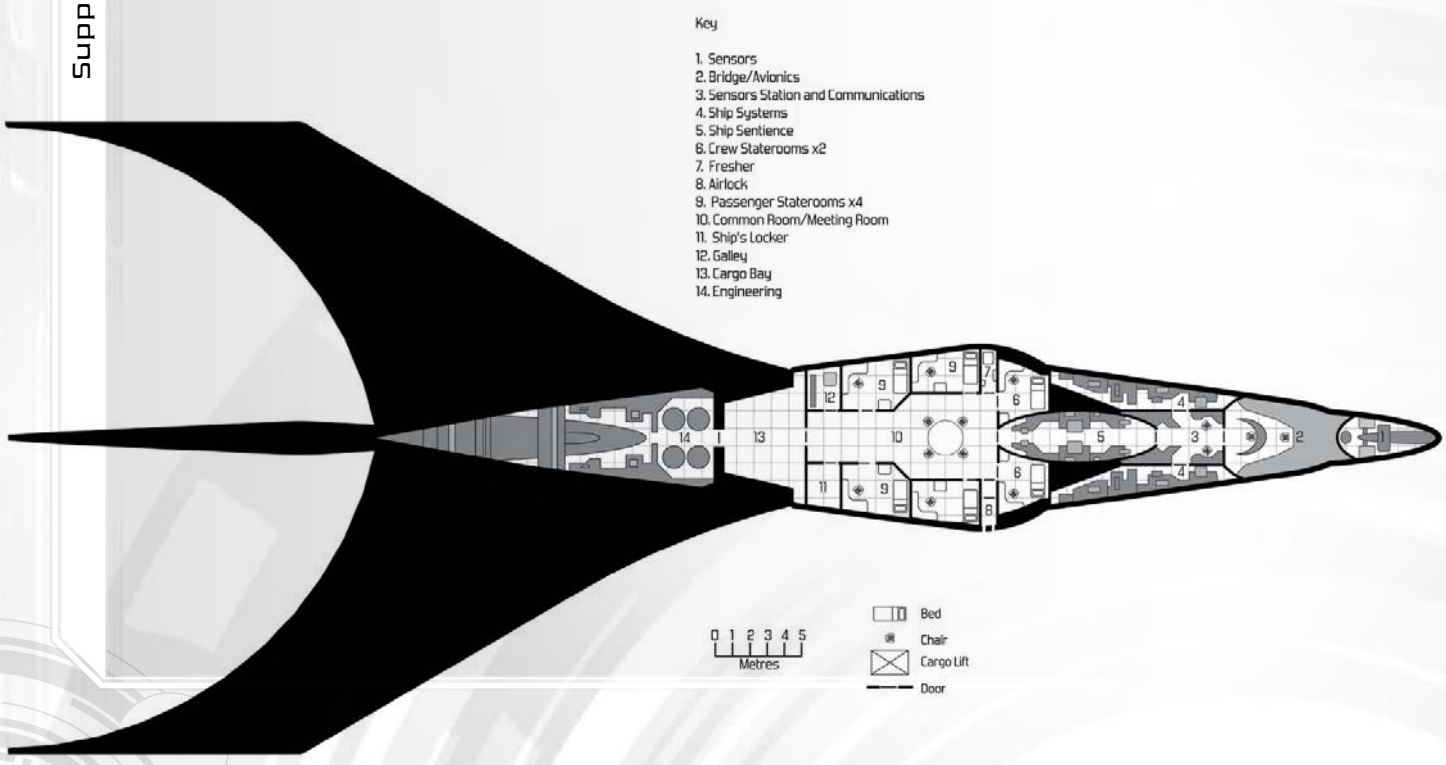
OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:1 rating.*

★ **Haze Field:** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***X-Core:*** *Doubles jump maximum.*





HOMESTEADER

Supporting Ship

The Expansionary Era is a time of great migrations, with people in transit everywhere, looking for better lives. The homesteader is a basic ***settler ship*** *catering for one or more family groups.*

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2

Aspects: Our Whole Life Is on the Move, Lost in Space, From a Far-Flung Backwater, Hard-Pressed Optimists, Bulky Physical Shielding

Skills: *Fair (+2) Planing, Systems; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Technical*

STUNTS

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Makepoint:*** *Produce basic materials and small items of equipment.*

ICARUS-CLASS SCOUT

Major Ship

The Icarus*-class scout is a sleek teardrop-shaped vessel operating independently or with a single person crew. It's designed for deep space recon and Stage I exploration, and complements unmanned exploration drones and event horizon probes, and the larger* Botany Bay*-class explorers.*

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *3* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2

ASPECTS

High Concept: Lone Explorer of the Big Empty

Trouble: A String of Failed Relationships

Other Aspects: Passionate Trans-species Relationship, Obsessively Inquisitive, Overachieving Observer

SKILLS

Great (+4): *Planing*
Good (+3): *Active Sensing, Passive Sensing*
Fair (+2): *Science, Stealth, Technical*
Average (+1): *Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat, Resources, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

✦ ***Specialist (Planetary Science, Stellar Systems):*** *+2 bonus to rolls for specialised field.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Auto-Repair System:*** *+2 Technical bonus to repairs; can repair itself.*

★ ***Cloaking Device:*** *Invisible to visible light and regular scans.*

★ ***System Survey Drone:*** *Fair (+2) Active Sensing, Passive Sensing.*

KEYNES-CLASS SUBSIDISED FREIGHTER

A larger small-scale trading vessel often in the hands of independent crews and contractors, the Keynes*-class subsidised freighter is usually tasked by Space Force or the Transport and Exploration Ministry with transporting essential freight, products, and information to backwaters on otherwise unviable routes. Larger than the* Adam Smith*-class and smaller than the* Friedman*, the* Keynes *has two to three dozen crew, often a majority of independents with a small number of Pansectorate or instrumentality reps.*

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: 1 2
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Paid for by the Commonality, Government Interference, A Sight for Sore Eyes on Backwaters Everywhere, Skeleton in the Cupboard, Bulky and Difficult to Manoeuvre (flaw)

Skills: *Good (+3) Bureaucracy, Resources; Fair (+2) Planing, Systems; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *30 units of Large (+1) cargo, 300 Medium (+0).*

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Extended Cargo Hold:*** *Additional 30 units of Large (+1) cargo, 300 Medium (+0).*

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defence bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***Makepoint:*** *Produce basic materials and small items of equipment.*

Supporting Ship

MORPHEUS-CLASS MASS TRANSPORT

Where homesteaders and waggon ships are bottom-up affairs, mass transports are settler ships organised top-down by planets or even instrumentalities to facilitate large-scale population movement.

Scale: *Enormous (+3)*
Physical Stress: 1 2
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2
Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Vast and Silent Settler Ship, Colonists in Dreamless Slumber, Government Endeavour, Vulnerable Stasis Berths (flaw)

Skills: *Good (+3) Systems; Fair (+2) Planing; Average (+1) Manoeuvre*

STUNTS

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 300 passengers (see Stasis Berths).*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 3000 passengers (see Stasis Berths).*

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***Stasis Berths:*** *All 33000 passengers are transported in stasis.*

Supporting Ship

Major Ship

NAUTILUS-CLASS MANOWAR

The manowars are the Commonality response to the Venu War: dedicated warships containing and pushing back the threat from Orion. The Nautilus*-class is the new generation, one of the most powerful ships in Commonality Space. It's the size of a small city, with a crew in the thousands.*

Note the Nautilus*'s signature torsion field projector spinal mount, the cutting edge Commonality weapon specifically designed to take advantage of instabilities in the reverse-engineered Venu dirt drive. The vessel has numerous launch bays for the new manned heavy fighters. Fully sentient, it often acts as fleet mediator.*

The Nautilus*-class is the third generation of manowars since Rediscovery (actually since the first Venu War), and directly supercedes the* Mars*-class, still in service on the Fringe, and the "first generation"* Lightning Inspiration*-class converted interdiction cruiser which turned the tide during the 117-118 NCE campaigns. It's an excellent base for characters on military campaigns beyond the Frontier.*

Scale: *Enormous (+3)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T10* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3

ASPECTS

High Concept: Sleek Nautiloid Warship

Trouble: Recognisable Everywhere

Other Aspects: Swarming Space Combat Drones, Dedicated Crews of Heavy Manned Fighters, Massive and Terrifying

SKILLS

Superb (+5): *Ranged Combat*
Great (+4): *Active Sensing, Planing*
Good (+3): *Manoeuvre, Rapport, Systems*
Fair (+2): *Close Combat, EW, Hull Strength, Passive Sensing*
Average (+1): *Deceive, Provoke, Stealth, Technical, Will*

STUNTS

✦ ***Docking Bay:*** *1 Huge (+2) construct, 10 Large (+1) constructs, etc.*

✦ ***Mediator:*** *+2 create an advantage Rapport bonus to facilitate communication and cooperation in fleet actions.*

HALO

Special Ops Mindscape Instance: *Local Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:3 rating.*

★ ***ECM Array:*** *+2 defend bonus vs EW and Mindscape attacks.*

★ ***Extended Docking Bay x5:*** *50 Huge (+2) constructs, 500 Large (+1) constructs, etc.*

★ ***Gravity Cannon:*** *Weapon:4 rating, or +4 attack bonus vs Enormous (+3) targets or larger, range 3;* Incredibly Destructive.

★ ***Makepoint:*** *Produce basic materials and small items of equipment.*

★ ***Makepoint Workshop:*** *Spares and repairs without a Commonality shipyard.*

★ ***Missiles:*** *Contest of Ranged Combat vs Manoeuvre, explosive effect, range 5,* Limited Supply.

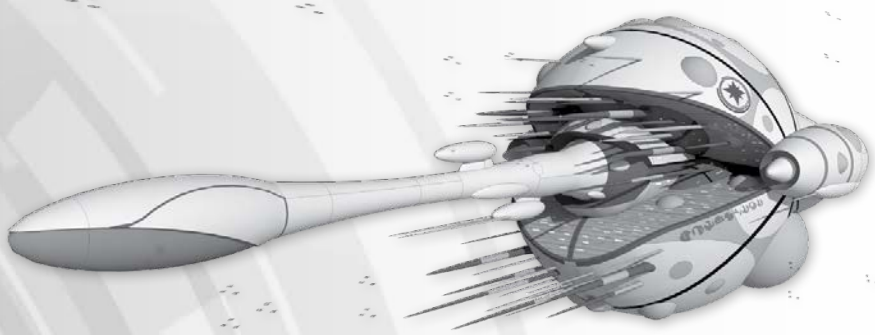
★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

★ ***Shock and Awe:*** *+2 EW create an advantage bonus to cow the opposition.*

★ ***Torsion Field Projector:*** *Weapon:5 rating, range 1, spinal mount, double damage to Venu vessels.*

★ ***Trojan Array:*** *Weapon:2 rating, range 3 on EW attacks.*

★ ***X-Core:*** *Doubles jump maximum.*



PROFIT-CLASS NEW TRADER

The Profit*-class New Trader is a smaller trading vessel, approximately 50 metres wide, and a workhorse of the New Traders on the Fringe. It has room for an extra crewmember and 2 passengers. Although there's a decent cargo hold, its freight capacity is maximised by cargo modules between its twin aft booms.*

The Profit*-class is sentient and somewhat variform, often customised in striking livery. It can be a great starship extra for a merchant PC, or even a base ship (shared extra) for a PC group.*

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T9*

Systems Stress: 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Cramped and Customised, Workhorse of the Fringe Worlds, On the Edge of the Law, Trouble Magnet

Skills: *Good (+3) Resources; Fair (+2) Planing, Systems; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *30 units of Large (+1) cargo, 300 Medium (+0).*

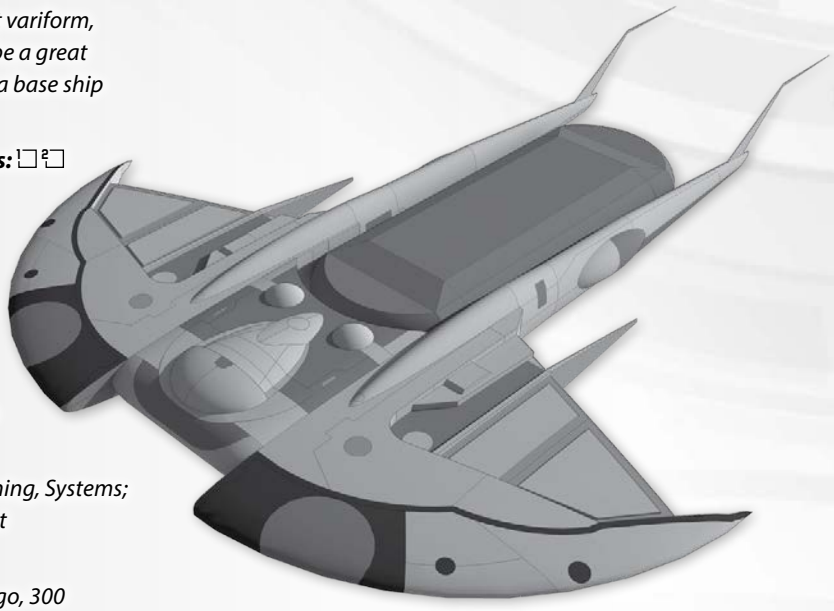
✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

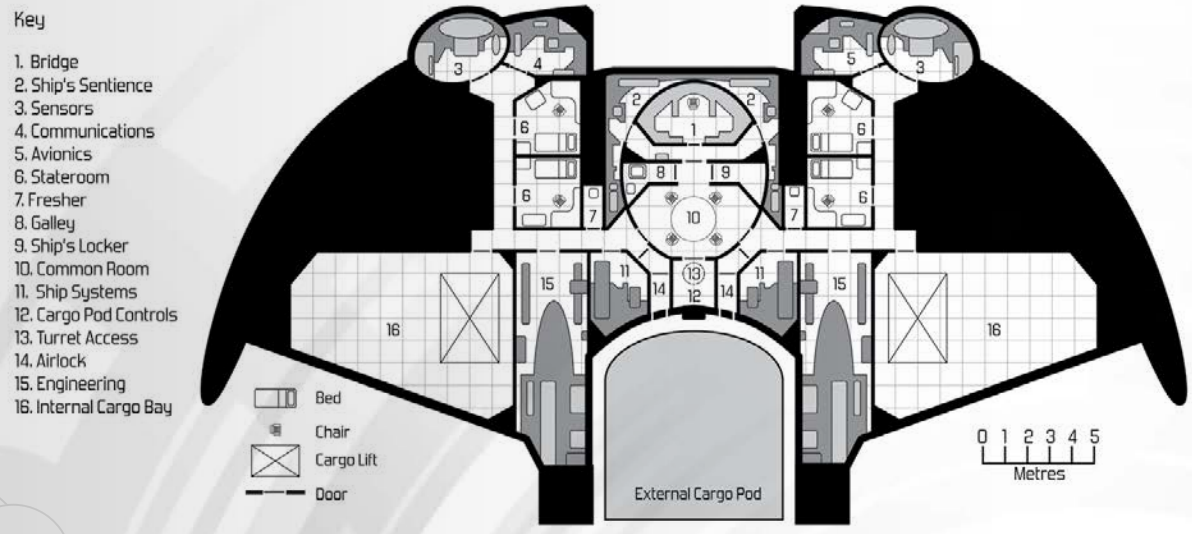
HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*





PROSPECTOR-CLASS MINING VESSEL

Supporting Ship

In many places Prospector*-class miners operate using only mining drones and the ship sentience. On the Fringe, especially in lower tech societies, they have organic pilots in a crew of up to 4.*

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: 1 2
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Tough and Battered Mining Ship, Heavy Wear and Tear, High Yield Plasma Drill, Cramped and Customised

Skills: *Fair (+2) Planing, Systems, Technical; Average (+1) Active Sensing, Manoeuvre, Passive Sensing, Resources*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *10 units of Large (+1), 100 Medium (+0).*

✦ ***Docking Bay (optional):*** *Used for* Rockworm*-class mining bore (page 254).*

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Magnetic Ray Shielding:*** *Invoke against missiles and plasma attacks;* No Protection Along Its Axis, Dangerous for Long-Term Exposure

★ ***Mining Drones:*** *+2 Technical bonus for mining operations.*

★ ***Ore Processor:*** *Use Technical to process and refine mining ore.*

REFUSAL-CLASS QUARANTINE ENFORCER

Major Ship

Also known as interdiction boats, quarantine enforcers are slowboats used around quarantined or embargoed worlds and along the Q-Zone. They have no planing engines; interstellar transport is handled by Enormous (+3) Provision*-class interdiction boat tenders.*

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: 1 2
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: *3*
Mental Stress: 1 2 3

ASPECTS

High Concept: Vigilant Quarantine Enforcer

Trouble: Single Purpose Slowboat

Other Aspects: Secret Silent Watcher, Lightning Strike to Disable, Prepare to be Boarded!

SKILLS

Great (+4): *Manoeuvre*
Good (+3): *Active Sensing, Ranged Combat*
Fair (+2): *EW, Stealth, Systems*
Average (+1): *Close Combat, Provoke, Technical, Will*

STUNTS

✦ ***Boarding Actions:*** *+2 to attack and create an advantage Close Combat actions when boarding.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Cloaking Device:*** *Invisible to visible light and regular scans.*

★ ***Grappling Gear:*** *+2 to Close Combat create an advantage actions in the same zone.*

★ ***Missiles:*** *Contest of Ranged Combat vs Manoeuvre, explosive effect, range 5,* Limited Supply.

★ ***Null Cannon:*** *Default Ranged Combat weapon; no bonus or weapon rating, range 4,* Full Auto, Recoilless.

★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

★ ***Tractor Beam:*** *+2 Close Combat overcome bonus in same zone; +2 Close Combat create an advantage bonus out to 2-zone range.*

SLOWSHIP

A slowship is an enormous sublight interstellar transport like the pre-FTL colonisation ships which left Old Earth during the First Age of Space. They use low-acceleration plasma drives and occasionally gravity engines.

Malfunctioning, lost, or delayed slowships from the First Age of Space have occasionally been encountered, known as ***relics****. Some still have crews in stasis or generation ship populations. The stats below represent a typical* ***generation ship*** *or* ***stasis ship*** *relic from the Great Diaspora (10th to 5th millennium Before Expansion).*

Scale: *Enormous (+3)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Relic From the First Age of Space, Passengers From the Distant Past, Unknown Systems, Bulky Physical Shielding, Why Did It Never Arrive?

Skills: *Good (+3) Resources, Systems; Fair (+2) Passive Sensing, Technical; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Long-Distance Life Support:*** *+2 bonus for functioning on your reserves.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 300 passengers.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Drop Shuttles:*** *Deploy 10 troops if Huge (+2), 100 if Enormous (+3), per point of Systems skill per exchange from orbit to planetary surface.*

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations x1-3:*** *Accommodations for 3000-12000 passengers.*

★ ***Physical Ray Shielding:*** *Invoke against kinetic, null, and plasma weapons, missiles;* Bulky Physical Shielding.

★ ***Ponics:*** *Provide food and breathable atmosphere almost indefinitely; OR* ***Stasis Berths:*** *Transport 30,000 - 120,000 passengers in stasis,* Vulnerable Stasis Berths *flaw.*

Supporting Ship

Scenario Hook: Slowship

The PCs' ship has made an "unscheduled visit" to its target system's Oort cloud on a failed Planing roll. Before crawling into the central solar system on its gravity engines, it detects another ship at the edge of the Big Empty. Sensors show it's a slowship, with the markings of a colony vessel from the First Age of Space! What secrets does it contain? Are there still colonists inside, waiting to arrive at their destination? Are they in stasis — or, worse, are their descendants still there, regressed into savagery?

SURVEILLANCE SHIP

Often unmanned, surveillance ships carry intrusion drones, and are placed around worlds in Stage Zero Cultural Integration. They may also be used by SCI Force and other instrumentality teams in cultural ops.

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2

Aspects: High Stealth Surveillance Ship, Eye in the Sky, Insertion and Extraction Specialist, Be Seeing You

Skills: *Good (+3) Intrusion, Passive Sensing; Fair (+2) Active Sensing, Stealth, Systems; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Planing, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

HALO

Special Ops Mindscape Instance: *Local Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Cloaking Device:*** *Invisible to visible light and regular scans.*

★ ***Chameleon Coating:*** *+2 Stealth or Deceive bonus to pass unnoticed or as another construct.*

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***Intrusion Drones x3:*** *Average (+1) Intrusion.*

Supporting Ship

Major Ship

SYSTEM PATROL BOAT

System patrol boats are usually semi-automated STL vessels (slowboats) patrolling star systems for commerce raiders, pirates, and the more violent embargo runners. They also usually have a fully-manned system defence station in-system with a complement of marines.

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: 1 2

Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3

Consequences: *3*
Mental Stress: 1 2 3

ASPECTS
High Concept: Intimidating STL Patrol Boat

Trouble: Semi-Automated

Other Aspects: Supported by System Defence Station, Home Turf Advantage, No Holds Barred

SKILLS
Great (+4): *Manoeuvre*
Good (+3): *EW, Ranged Combat*
Fair (+2): *Active Sensing, Provoke, Systems*
Average (+1): *Close Combat, Passive Sensing, Stealth, Will*

STUNTS
✦ ***Ace:*** *+2 Manoeuvre bonus when executing difficult manoeuvres.*

✦ ***Boarding Actions:*** *+2 to attack and create an advantage Close Combat actions when boarding.*

✦ ***Shock and Awe:*** *+2 EW create an advantage bonus to cow the opposition.*

✦ ***Silent Running:*** *Use Stealth instead of Intrusion when passing unseen.*

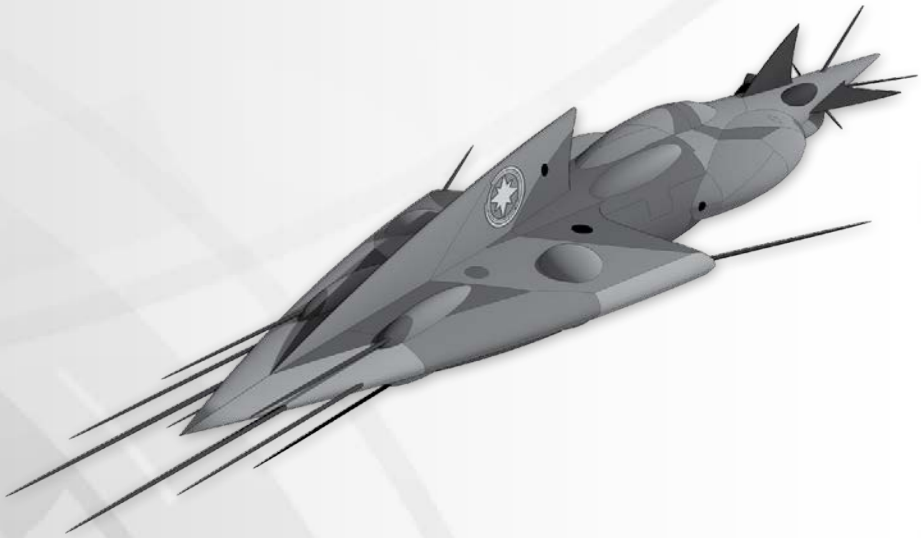
HALO
Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS
★ ***Grappling Gear:*** *+2 to Close Combat create an advantage actions in the same zone.*

★ ***Gravity Cannon:*** *Weapon:4 rating, or +4 attack bonus vs Enormous (+3) targets or larger, range 3;* Incredibly Destructive.

★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

★ ***Tractor Beam:*** *+2 Close Combat overcome bonus in same zone; +2 Close Combat create an advantage bonus out to 2-zone range.*



THOR-CLASS BOMBARDIER

One of the new generation of Commonality warships, the Thor*-class bombardier specialises in orbital bombardment. In Space Force fleet operations it's often accompanied by one or more manowars. It has a crew of over 1000, and a vast number of combat drones to keep off attackers.*

Scale: *Enormous (+3)*
Physical Stress: 1 2 3
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3 4
Consequences: *3*
Mental Stress: 1 2 3

ASPECTS
High Concept: Orbital Bombardment Warship

Trouble: Most Effective in Planetary Orbit

Other Aspects: Space Combat Drone Defenders, Bomb Back to the Stone Age, Terrifying Assault

SKILLS
Great (+4): *Ranged Combat*
Good (+3): *Active Sensing, Systems*
Fair (+2): *EW, Hull Strength, Passive Sensing*
Average (+1): *Manoeuvre, Planing, Technical, Will*

STUNTS
✦ ***Orbital Assault:*** *+2 explosive (1) attack or create an advantage bonus on planetary surface from orbit.*

HALO
Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS
★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:3 rating.*

★ ***ECM Array:*** *+2 defend bonus vs EW and Mindscape attacks.*

★ ***Missiles:*** *Contest of Ranged Combat vs Manoeuvre, explosive effect, range 5,* Limited Supply.

★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

Supporting Ship

VENTURE-CLASS CORPORACY SEEDER

Corporacy seeders are used by the market makers of major corporacies to open up new worlds to trade. They carry everything needed to establish a corporacy presence on a world, including the firepower to back up any aggressive moves. They have a crew of 100, usually corporacy personnel.

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: 1 2
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Aggressive Corporacy Advance Force, Self-Contained Startup, Bootstrap Mentality, We Can Back That Up With Force, Bulky and Difficult to Manoeuvre (flaw)

Skills: *Good (+3) Deceive, Resources; Fair (+2) Ranged Combat, Systems; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Planing*

STUNTS
✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *30 units of Large (+1) cargo, 300 Medium (+0).*

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

HALO
Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS
★ ***Extended Cargo Hold:*** *Additional 30 units of Large (+1) cargo, 300 Medium (+0).*

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***Makepoint:*** *Produce basic materials and small items of equipment.*

★ ***Makepoint Workshop:*** *Spares and repairs without a Commonality shipyard.*

Supporting Ship

Supporting Ship

WAGGON SHIP

Similar to a homesteader, except that waggon ships are built to travel in convoys of many dozens of vessels, often pooling facilities.

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: 1 2
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Settler Ship, Convoy, Strength in Numbers, Follow My Leader, Weak in Isolation

Skills: *Fair (+2) Planing, Systems; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

✦ ***Formation Leader:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus; all formation members taking the same action may use the free invoke.*

✦ ***Long-Distance Life Support:*** *+2 bonus for functioning on your reserves.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 20 passengers.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

Scenario Hook: River of Luminosity

Following charismatic leader Sylen Mara, a movement — some would say cult — of cephalopod xenomorphs has left Sedna in Manhome (page 385) spreading in waggon ship convoys in all directions to found new colony worlds. One such convoy, the River of Luminosity, *finds itself in the thinning galactic halo above the Rim Sector, trapped by gravitational forces on a waterworld orbiting a black star (page 360). One emergency comms drone has made it back to the Rim Sector, calling for a rescue mission. But is there appetite in the Commonality for a potentially dangerous missions beyond the Frontier to save a xenomorph cult?*

A New Diaspora

The Expansionary Era is an age of huge migrations. Many settler ships may not be as large as the generation ships of ancient times, but they depart from Core Worlds starports with a frequency which dwarfs the Great Diaspora. Humans and hominids seeking risk, freedom, and new hope; xenomorphs joining new liberated polities on the Fringe; even synthetics and starship sentiences, forging their own paths and fleeing the economic uncertainties of 3-space in the Core; the reasons people move are as diverse as the people themselves.

Somewhere, beyond the Frontier, generation and stasis ships of the old Diaspora are still travelling. But this is a new Diaspora — faster, more chaotic, an explosion of life and sentience to the stars.

NON-COMMONALITY SHIPS

So far the Commonality has detected no other intelligent species that has developed FTL planing engine technology. Several other species have developed slower-than-light interstellar travel, and some have adapted Commonality planing engine technology to their own needs.

Bioship Characters

Bioship characters are created like other sentient constructs. They take multiple genurgic enhancements, and aspects representing connections to the Planetary Intelligence and their passionately dedicated Chembu crew. Most are at least Superb (+5) characters (page 26).

Major Ship

CHEMBU BIOSHIP

These vast vessels are intellligent semi-organic starships created from human genurgic material combined with Commonality tech and organic components from the Planetary Intelligence. They are usually roughly spherical in form, averaging up to 10 kilometres in diameter, and in Mindscape contact with the Planetary Intelligence. They're the Chembu's preferred long-range transport, and act as travelling genurgy labs and often corporacy seeders.

Scale: *Regional (+4)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

ASPECTS

High Concept: Interstellar Being the Size of a Small Moon

Trouble: Unsettling Organic Amalgam

Other Aspects: Hyperintelligent Representative of the Planetary Intelligence, You Are in Me, Space Combat Drone Defenders, Flickering Aurorae, Dedicated Chembu Crew, Bulky and Difficult to Manoeuvre (flaw)

SKILLS

Superb (+5): *Technical*
Great (+4): *Science, Systems*
Good (+3): *Empathy, Resources, Will*
Fair (+2): *Manoeuvre, Passive Sensing, Planing, Ranged Combat*
Average (+1): *Active Sensing, Contacts, EW, Knowledge, Rapport*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *30 units of Enormous (+3) cargo; 300 Huge (+2); 3000 Large (+1).*

✦ ***Docking Bay:*** *1 Enormous (+3) construct, 10 Huge (+2) constructs, 100 Large (+1) constructs, etc.*

✦ ***Mindburn:*** *Use Will for mental attacks using the Mindscape.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 4000 passengers.*

HALO

Neurosynthetic Extensors: *+2 bonus on Knowledge, Science, or Technical rolls where reasoning power is determinant; also invoke / compel.*

Special Ops Mindscape Instance: *Local Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Accelerated Healing:*** *Invoke to succeed at recovery obstacles, or reduce healing time 1 step.*

★ ***Bioelectric Field Implant:*** *+2 defend bonus; Draining.*

★ ***Extended Cargo Hold:*** *Additional 30 units of Enormous (+3) cargo, 300 Huge (+2), 3000 Large (+1), etc.*

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 40,000 passengers.*

★ ***Lab (Genurgy):*** *Gain access to the Genurgic Engineer stunt.*

★ ***Makepoint:*** *Produce basic materials and small items of equipment.*

★ ***Makepoint Workshop:*** *Spares and repairs without a Commonality shipyard.*

★ ***Trojan Array:*** *Weapon:2 rating, range 3 on EW attacks.*

JAVAWAYN STAR CITY

Major Ship

The colossal Javawayn star cities are luxury cruise vessels, exotic pleasure environments, interstellar casinos; they're hotbeds of intrigue, passion, and drama. The Javawayn maintain a strict neutrality and accept anyone as passengers — including, it's rumoured, the Venu — as long as their flexible interpretations of interstellar law are adhered to.

Scale: *Regional (+4)*
Physical Stress: 1 2 3
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3 4
Consequences: *3*
Mental Stress: 1 2 3

ASPECTS
High Concept: Exotic Luxury Interstellar Cruise Ship

Trouble: Intrigue-filled Speakeasy

Other Aspects: Low Gravity Environment, Representative of Javawayn Industries, Space Combat Drone Defenders, How Much Law Can You Afford?

SKILLS
Superb (+5): *Resources*
Great (+4): *Contacts, Systems*
Good (+3): *Deceive, Passive Sensing, Rapport*
Fair (+2): *Active Sensing, Contacts, Hull Strength, Planing*
Average (+1): *EW, Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat, Will*

STUNTS
✦ ***Docking Bay:*** *1 Enormous (+3) construct, 10 Huge (+2) constructs, 100 Large (+1) constructs, etc.*

✦ ***Grease the Wheels:*** *Use Resources instead of Bureaucracy when bribing.*

✦ ***Insider:*** *Use Contacts instead of Bureaucracy for overcome and create an advantage actions when getting inside assistance.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 4000 passengers.*

✦ ***We Come In Peace:*** *Use Deceive to take cultural actions.*

HALO
Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS
★ ***Extended Docking Bay:*** *10 Enormous (+3) constructs, 100 Huge (+2) constructs, etc.*

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations x2:*** *Accommodations for 80,000 passengers.*

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***Makepoint:*** *Produce basic materials and small items of equipment.*

★ ***Ponics:*** *Provide food and breathable atmosphere almost indefinitely.*

OUTREMER *CHEVALIER*-CLASS DESTROYER

Supporting Ship

Derived from decommissioned Commonality ships, the Outremer Chevalier*-class destroyer is famed for its spectacular livery. It sees action in the sporadic conflicts between the pro-Commonality and pro-Venu polities of the Successor States. It has a crew of 50 naval personnel.*

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: 1 2 3
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: 1 2 3
Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: 1 2

Aspects: Heroic Defender Against Terrifying Odds, Nobility Obligates, Bark Is Worse Than Its Bite, Fearsome Assault Profile, Yesterday's Finest

Skills: *Good (+3) Hull Strength, Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Manoeuvre, Systems; Average (+1) Planing, Provoke*

STUNTS
✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

HALO
Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS
★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:2 rating.*

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***Missiles:*** *Contest of Ranged Combat vs Manoeuvre, explosive effect, range 5,* Limited Supply.

★ ***Plasma Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 5, blaster,* Burst Fire.

LOWHIGH LIGHTJAMMER

The slower-than-light interstellar craft of the alien Lowhigh, the lightjammers drift at sublight speeds using vast solar sails. The Lowhigh have had opportunities to upgrade to planing and gravity engines, but only a few have done so; most seem to see little reason to hurry to their destinations. The arrival of a lightjammer in a Commonality system is a cause for intense speculation and even media frenzy on the Fringe, and mild interest among the Lowhigh.

Scale: *Enormous (+3)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3*

ASPECTS

High Concept: Swan-like Alien Slowship

Trouble: Little Sense of Urgency

Other Aspects: So Quiet You Can Hear a Pin Drop, Ancient and Unfathomable Alien Torpitude, Mild Interest, Keepers of Secrets

SKILLS

Great (+4): *Knowledge*
Good (+3): *Passive Sensing, Systems*
Fair (+2): *Resources, Science, Technical*
Average (+1): *Active Sensing, Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Docking Bay:*** *1 Huge (+2) construct, 10 Large (+1) constructs, etc.*

✦ ***Long-Distance Life Support:*** *+2 bonus for functioning on your reserves.*

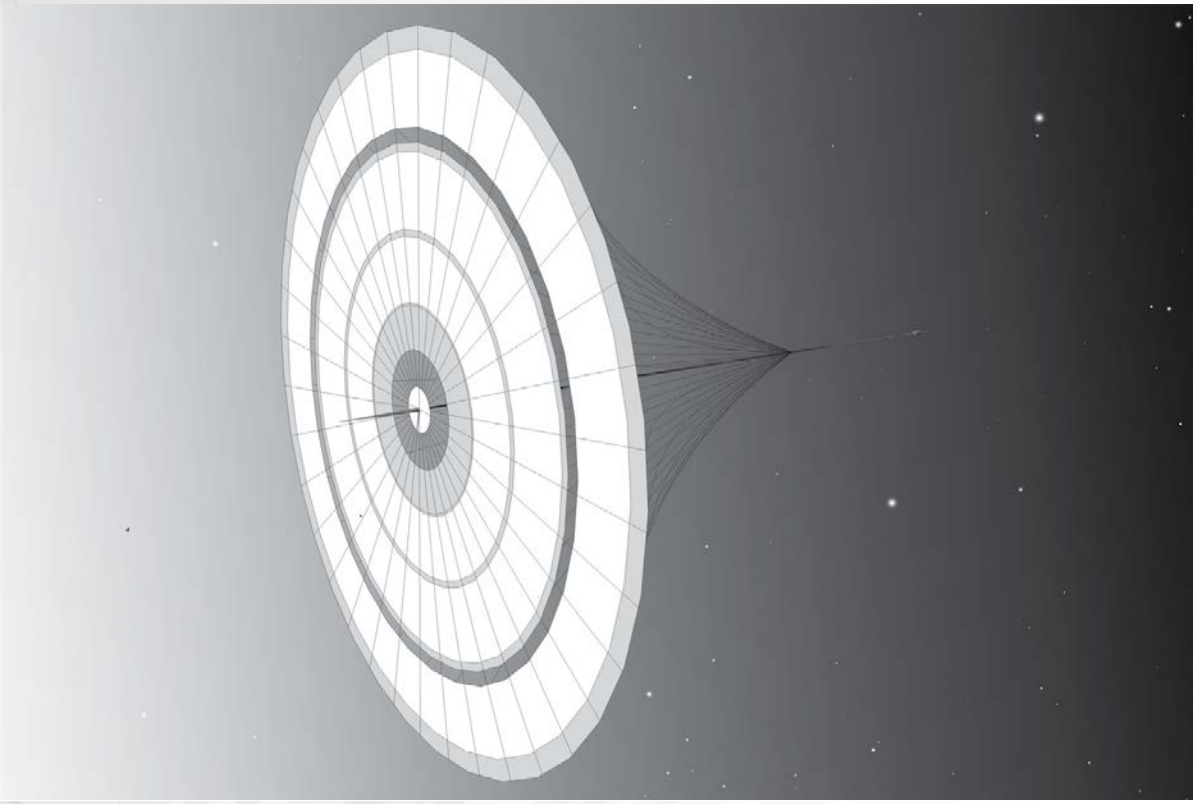
✦ ***Specialist (The Interstellar Medium):*** *+2 bonus to rolls for specialised field.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Fighter Wing:*** *3 Large (+1) fighters (minor ships) with Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat.*

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***Ponics:*** *Provide food and breathable atmosphere almost indefinitely.*



SENTIENT ALLIANCE *"CAT'S CLAW"*

Supporting Ship

These converted Wayland-*class explorers (obsolete in the Commonality) are used for fast patrol work in the Sentient Alliance, and are rapidly becoming its signature vessel. They have a crew of 20 naval personnel, plus a dozen marines for boarding actions.*

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: ☐[2]☐
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: ☐[2]☐[3]☐
Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: ☐[1]☐[2]☐

Aspects: A Matter of Pride, Adapted From a Different Purpose, Signature Xenomorph Vessel, Feral Vigilance

Skills: *Good (+3) Manoeuvre, Planing; Fair (+2) Ranged Combat, Systems; Average (+1) Close Combat, Passive Sensing*

STUNTS

✦ ***Boarding Actions:*** *+2 to attack and create an advantage Close Combat actions when boarding.*

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***Missiles:*** *Contest of Ranged Combat vs Manoeuvre, explosive effect, range 5,* Limited Supply.

★ ***Null Cannon:*** *Default Ranged Combat weapon; no bonus or weapon rating, range 4,* Full Auto, Recoilless.

SENTIENT ALLIANCE *"SERPENT'S STRIKE"*

Supporting Ship

These converted Commonality fast couriers are used in system defence, and have a decent strike capability for their size. They have a crew of 2 dozen naval personnel.

Scale: *Huge (+2)*
Physical Stress: ☐[2]☐[3]☐
Tech Index: *T9*
Systems Stress: ☐[2]☐[3]☐
Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*
Mental Stress: ☐[1]☐[2]☐

Aspects: Retrofitted Strike Capability, Fast Action, Elite Xenomorph Defenders

Skills: *Good (+3) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Planing, Systems; Average (+1) Active Sensing, Hull Strength*

STUNTS

✦ ***Ace:*** *+2 Manoeuvre bonus when executing difficult manoeuvres.*

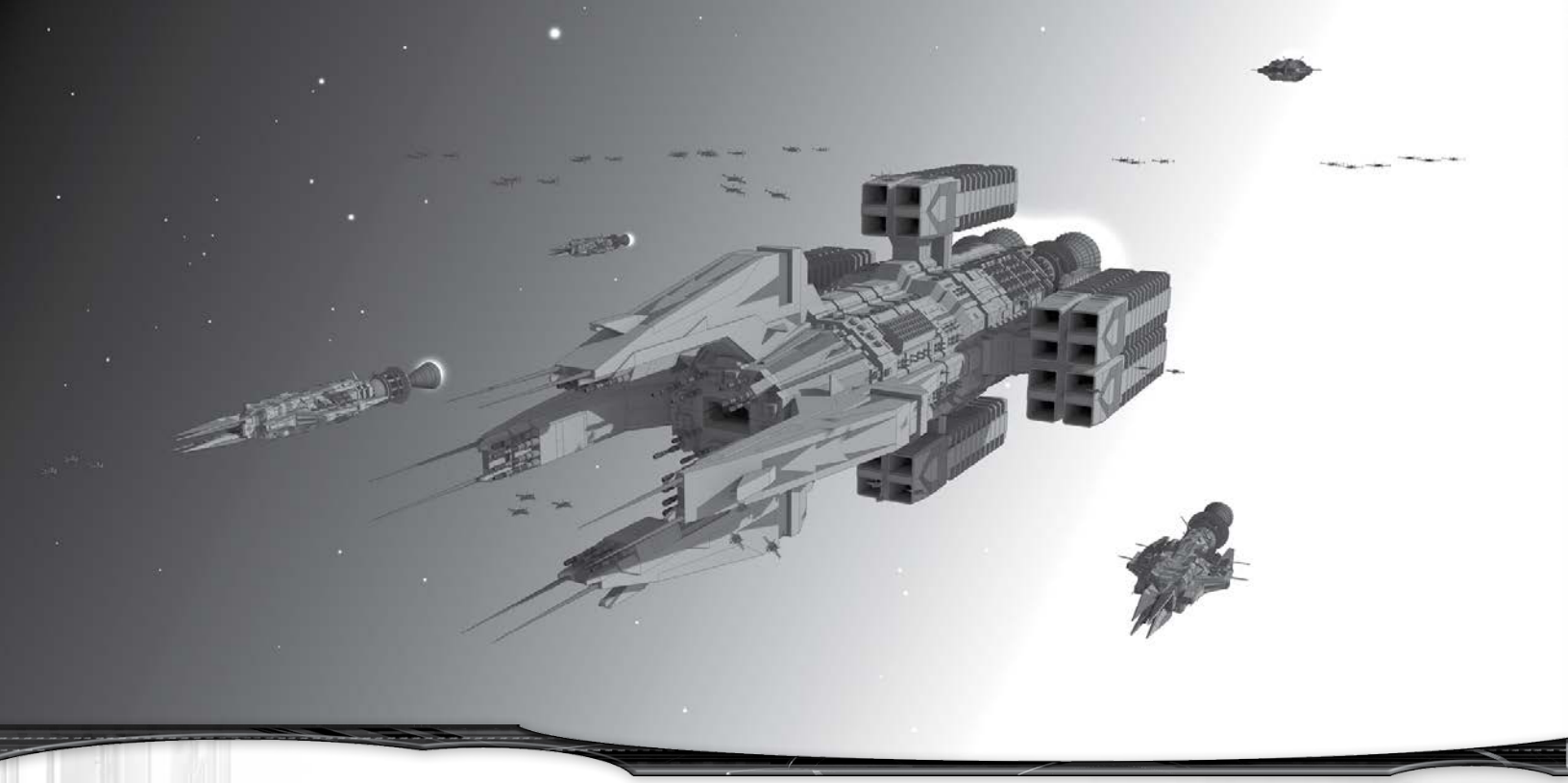
HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***Plasma Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 5, blaster,* Burst Fire.



VENU SHIPS

Venu ships are more primitive than Commonality vessels, and often downright dangerous. Reverse engineered from captured Commonality tech less than 80 years ago, they are beyond what Venu society can easily cope with, and it's a miracle they operate at all. Their unstable and radioactive **dirt drive** makes them death-traps in emergencies, especially when opposed by the latest Commonality torsion field projector technology.

The standard Venu starship weapon is an unstable disruptor cannon nicknamed the **Dirty Mary**. Ships have inefficient disruptor shields, relying mostly on physical armour and countermeasures. They have no ship sentiences, and only rudimentary AI. For 2-space navigation they use human cyborg-pilots wired directly into their ships; these **brainjacks** frequently burn out and go insane — most are basket cases even on good days.

Supporting Ship

ALPHA WOLF-CLASS INSERTION SHIP

A multi-purpose vessel analogous to the Commonality fast courier, often intercepted on espionage missions within the Commonality. It has a core crew of 4, including a single brainjack, and can carry 10 additional crew under cramped conditions.

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** ☐2☐

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** ☐2☐3☐

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Venu Stealth Ship, Single Insane Brainjack, Fast As a Knife in the Dark, Trying to Mask the Z-Radiation Leaks (flaw)

Skills: *Good (+3) Manoeuvre, Stealth; Fair (+2) Deceive, Systems; Average (+1) Planing, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

✦ ***Phantom Bogey:*** *+2 overcome and create an advantage Deceive bonus to misdirect, feint, or conceal your current position.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Disruptor Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 3,* Radioactive, Recoilless, Dangerously Unstable (flaw).

★ ***Disruptor Shield:*** *+1 defend bonus,* Highly Detectable, Unstable.

Major Ship

ANCESTRAL VOICE-CLASS CAPITAL SHIP

The Ancestral Voice *is typical of the massive, clunky, yet surprisingly effective Venu capital ships which wrought havoc in Commonality Space during the Venu War. This upgraded model is fitted with a "Dark Radiance" exotic weapon, which affects target crews with terrifying visions without damaging their ships — it does systems stress damage or makes area effect mental attacks against every crewmember, resisted by Will. Venu capital ships deploy zero-point torpedoes and countermeasures.*

Scale: *Enormous (+3)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3*

ASPECTS

High Concept: Massively Armed Venu Warship

Trouble: Poorly Understood Tech Pushed Too Far

Other Aspects: Terrifying Visions, Swarms of Fighters, Hammer of the God-Emperor

SKILLS

Superb (+5): *Ranged Combat*
Great (+4): *Deceive, Hull Strength*
Good (+3): *Active Sensing, Manoeuvre, Systems*
Fair (+2): *Close Combat, Passive Sensing, Planing, Provoke*
Average (+1): *EW, Resources, Science, Technical*

STUNTS

✦ ***Formation Leader:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus; all formation members taking the same action may use the free invoke.*

✦ ***Overseer:*** *1/scene, make an overcome action to generate a pool of shift points you can redistribute.*

✦ ***Rugged Superstructure:*** *1/session, pay 1 fate point to reduce a moderate consequence to mild, or remove a mild.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:2 rating.*

★ ***Dark Radiance Weapon:*** *+3 attack bonus, range 2, causes systems stress or area effect mental damage on crew.*

★ ***Disruptor Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 3,* Radioactive, Recoilless, Dangerously Unstable (flaw).

★ ***Disruptor Shield:*** *+1 defend bonus,* Highly Detectable, Unstable.

★ ***Venu Countermeasures:*** *Armour:1 and a +1 defend bonus against physical and EW attacks;* EW Jamming Suite.

★ ***Zero Point Torpedoes:*** *As missile; +2 attack bonus, range 4, explosive (1),* Limited Supply, Radioactive.

Supporting Ship

DESTROYER

The Venu destroyer is the chief strike vessel of any Venu naval engagement, usually accompanied by a wing of Venu warhawks (below). Fitted with multiple forward Dirty Mary disruptor cannon and capable of overloading shields and cannon, the Venu destroyer is a dedicated attack ship, with few other functions (although some act as proximity minelayers — page 209). They're incapable of atmospheric ops — their gravity engines just aren't up to it — but are relatively manoeuvrable in fleet actions. A squadron of six destroyers usually supports every Venu capital ship.

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Deadly Venu Strike Ship, Single Purpose, Warhawk Wing, Capital Ship Squadron Defence

Skills: *Good (+3) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Planing, Systems; Average (+1) Hull Strength, Passive Sensing*

STUNTS

✦ ***Charge!*** *+2 attack bonus when you move at least 1 zone before attacking.*

✦ ***Formation Leader:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus; all formation members taking the same action may use the free invoke.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Disruptor Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 3,* Radioactive, Recoilless, Dangerously Unstable (flaw).

★ ***Disruptor Shield:*** *+1 defend bonus,* Highly Detectable, Unstable.

★ ***Zero Point Torpedoes:*** *As missile; +2 attack bonus, range 4, explosive (1),* Limited Supply, Radioactive.

DROP SHIP

Supporting Ship

Venu drop ships are gargantuan vessels capable of carrying 3000 troops and landing them from orbit onto a planetary surface in onboard drop shuttles (and retrieving them).

Scale: *Enormous (+3)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Huge and Ungainly Dropship, Limited Manoeuvrability, Get in and Get out Again, Packed With Murderous Venu Troopers

Skills: *Good (+3) Hull Strength, Systems; Fair (+2) Passive Sensing, Planing; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 300 passengers.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Disruptor Shield:*** *+1 defend bonus,* Highly Detectable, Unstable.

★ ***Drop Shuttles:*** *Deploy 300 troops per exchange from orbit to planetary surface.*

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 3000 passengers.*

STARFIGHTER

Fair (+2) Minor Ship

The standard Venu fighter; supported by Venu countermeasures, it poses significant problems to Commonality space combat drones, and is usually countered with the heavy manned fighter (page 233). It has a crew of 2.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Stress:*** 1

Tech Index: *T7*

Aspects: Hail of Driving Fire, Space Combat Drone Evasion

Skills: *Fair (+2) Ranged Combat; Average (+1) Manoeuvre*

STARFIGHTER WING

5 Fair (+2) Minor Ships

Ships attacking a Venu capital ship usually find their way opposed by wings of 5 Venu fighters. They're fast and manoeuvrable, and deadly in formation.

Scale: *Large (+1)*

Stress: 1 1 1 1 1

Tech Index: *T7*

Aspects: Mass of Dogfighting Ships, Space Combat Drone Evasion

Skills: *Fair (+2) Ranged Combat; Average (+1) Manoeuvre (+4 teamwork bonus)*

MINDSCAPE UPDATE

193.171.10914

The extent of the recently restored Callisto Federation suggests it was a viable interstellar polity approximately 3000 BE, with a practical FTL technology similar to 2-space planing. Carsten Cheng, Professor of Applied Xeno-Palaeontology at the University of Renraku, theorises a collapse caused by devastating attacks from an alien species from beyond the Vul Rift he has named the Rift Raiders.

MINDSCAPE UPDATE

193.144.931

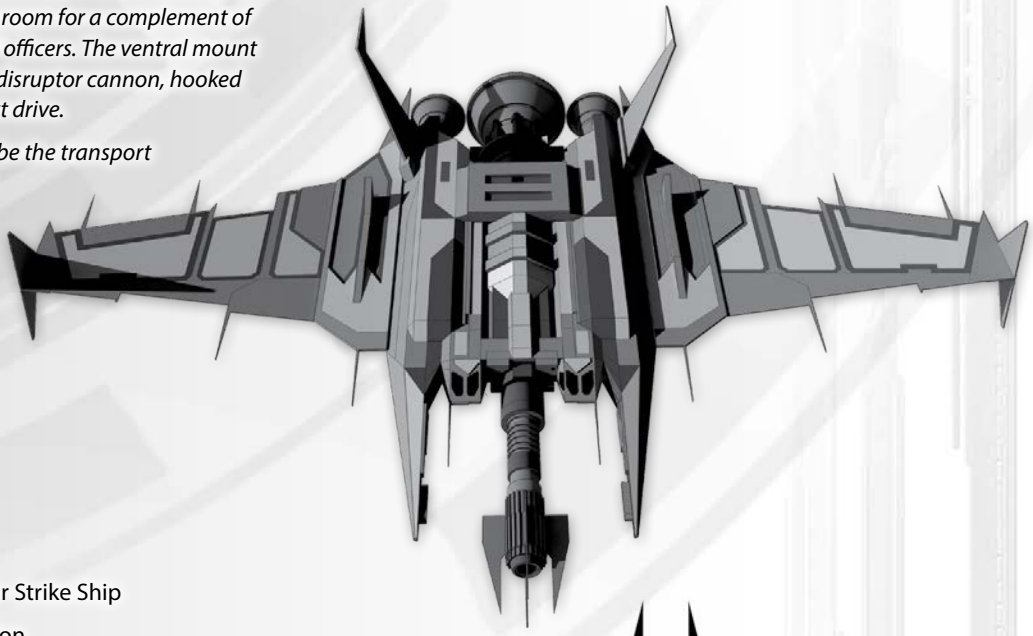
EHP Probe Serendipity 7095-Theta was awarded the Ocular-3 Ascension Medal in Earthport's Whisperhall Imposality today for Services to Rediscovery, after conducting preliminary surveys of over 3000 Outer World star systems and confirming no less than 17 potential garden worlds, including the Seido Jidai Diaspora-era lost colony Kagiri-Naku.

Major Ship

WARHAWK-CLASS STRIKE SHIP

The Venu warhawk is one of the most recognisable Venu attack ships. It's unreliable, leaks z-radiation like a sieve, fast, and deadly. A little larger than a Mindjammer or Profit*-class trader, it has a crew of at least 4 wearing the famous "raptor masks", plus room for a complement of Venu mutant marines and 4 officers. The ventral mount is the legendary Dirty Mary disruptor cannon, hooked directly into the unstable dirt drive.*

The warhawk is thought to be the transport ship of choice for the "Dark Radiance", the cult behind recent Venu technology leaps (and all that z-radiation...).



Scale: *Huge (+2)*

Physical Stress: 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T7*

Systems Stress: 1 2 3

Consequences: *3*

ASPECTS

High Concept: Venu Raptor Strike Ship

Trouble: Leaking Z-Radiation

Other Aspects: Intimidating Attack Profile, Versatile and Deadly, Venu Mutant Marines

SKILLS

Great (+4): *Manoeuvre*
Good (+3): *Passive Sensing, Ranged Combat*
Fair (+2): *Deceive, Planing, Systems*
Average (+1): *Close Combat, Hull Strength, Stealth*

STUNTS

✦ ***Boarding Actions:*** *+2 to attack and create an advantage Close Combat actions when boarding.*

✦ ***Charge!*** *+2 attack bonus when you move at least 1 zone before attacking.*

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Atmospheric):*** *Use Manoeuvre in atmospheric actions.*

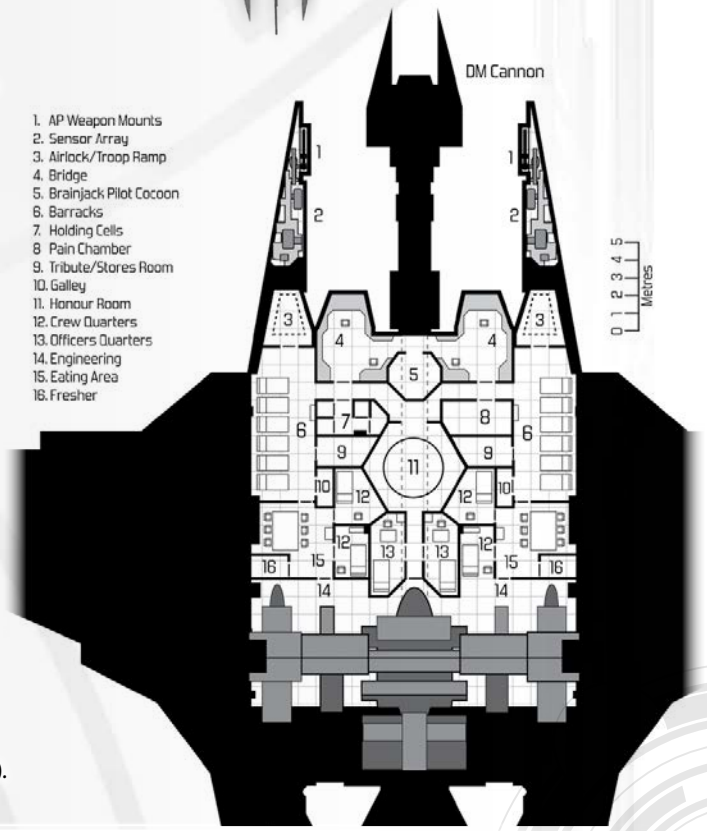
✦ ***Formation Leader:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus; all formation members taking the same action may use the free invoke.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Disruptor Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 3,* Radioactive, Recoilless, Dangerously Unstable (flaw).

★ ***Disruptor Shield:*** *+1 defend bonus,* Highly Detectable, Unstable.

★ ***Zero Point Torpedoes:*** *As missile; +2 attack bonus, range 4, explosive (1),* Limited Supply, Radioactive.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN
VEHICLES AND INSTALLATIONS

"A mining lifter charged through from the rear, its human pilot clearly visible inside the roll-cage. With startling agility, it leapt from the rubble heap of a fallen building and hurled itself into a combat walker. Its vice-like manipulators grappled with the walker's autocannon and central servo-housing, and the bright red of a cutting laser began to sear into its transzanthrian alloy hull."

Vehicles and installations are constructs, the planet-based counterparts of starships and space stations. This chapter details creating and running vehicles and installations, and provides example statistics.

CHARACTERS AND VEHICLES

While a character will rarely face a starship in combat, with vehicles it's fairly common; grav tanks and combat walkers are specifically designed to engage with human-sized targets (and usually blast them into a fine mist…). The scale rules (page 174) are used frequently in vehicle conflicts.

Characters use Drive and Pilot to control vehicles. Drive applies to ground and ocean surface vehicles; Pilot is used for aquatic, grav, and atmospheric craft.

DESCRIBING VEHICLES AND INSTALLATIONS

Vehicles and installations have a wider range of tech indices than starships, and it's harder to generalise about their power sources, fuel, and drive systems. Commonality vehicles of tech index T9 and above use ZIP power, usually with small-scale ZIP cells requiring only occasional maintenance. Power for vehicles below T9 range from simple muscle power (drawn by draught animals) through wind and water, mechanical power, steam, combustion, electrical and chemical cell, and fusion. See the "Power" section of **Chapter 17: Cultures** (page 302) for more.

Vehicles and installations usually only have full stat blocks when used as NPCs; characters take them as extras. A player may sometimes play a sentient vehicle or installation as a character; sentient vehicle characters begin from tech index T8 — see "Creating Constructs" (page 196).

A vehicle extra doesn't usually have a crew. If it has a sentience, it drives itself; otherwise you drive it using your Drive or Pilot skill. A vehicle extra without a sentience doesn't usually have skills — you use your own skills — but may provide stunts, bonuses, and aspects. Sentient vehicles can have skills (like Manoeuvre), or you may use your own. See page 139 for example vehicles as extras.

Installations

Many of the examples below are for vehicles — mobile constructs. These rules apply to immobile constructs — buildings, bases, headquarters — too, without Manoeuvre skills but which nevertheless take construct actions. Commonality installations often have corpus sentiences (page 45) and may be characters in their own right.

Sentiences

Vehicles and installations of T8 and higher in Commonality Space are usually sentient. However, they are often **basics** rather than eidolons (page 43), with simple personalities dedicated to specific functions. In the stat blocks which follow, sentient vehicles and installations with basic sentiences do not have mental stress tracks.

VEHICLE STATISTICS

APC

Supporting Ground or Grav Vehicle

Armoured personnel carriers range from T4 to T10, capable of transporting ground troops deep into combat zones. The example below is the T9 HAL AG Armadillo-9 Grav APC.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Rapid Armoured Personnel Carrier, Null Cannon Turret, Rapid Deployment, Low Target Profile

Skills: *Fair (+2) Hull Strength, Manoeuvre; Average (+1) Ranged Combat, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 1 passenger.*

✦ ***Rugged Superstructure:*** *1/session, pay 1 fate point to reduce a moderate consequence to mild, or remove a mild.*

EXTRAS

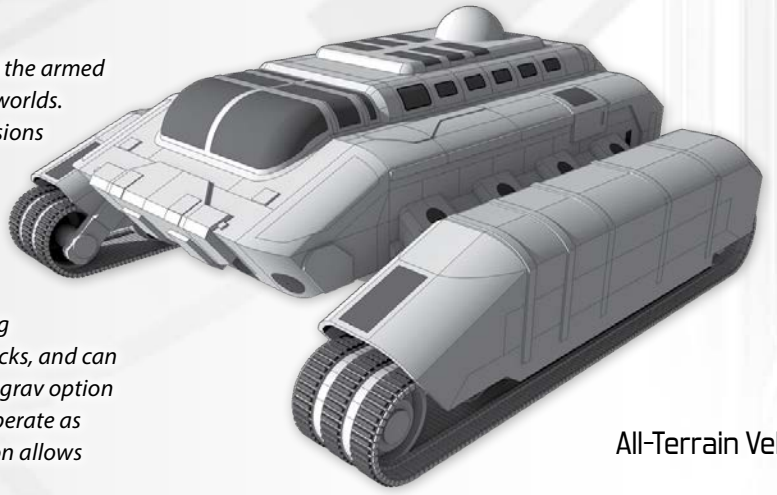
★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:1 rating.*

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 10 passengers.*

ATV

Supporting Ground Vehicle

All-Terrain Vehicles are used throughout the armed forces, and generally on rugged colony worlds. Many corporacies produce low-tech versions for ease of maintenance; the example below is the T7 Hydrodyne Habitat ATV. *It has a rugged track drive system for use as a long endurance planetary surface vehicle. It has a maximum 10 person occupancy, with 4-6 people being optimal. It's 10 metres long, with two decks, and can be carried in a ship docking bay. At T8 a grav option replaces the track drive, allowing it to operate as an orbital shuttle. At T9 a variform option allows switching between the two.*



All-Terrain Vehicle

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Rugged All-Terrain Vehicle, Pressurised Habitat Interior, High Tech Construction for Low Tech Maintenance, Everyone Knows Hydrodyne

Skills: *Fair (+2) Manoeuvre, Passive Sensing; Average (+1) Ranged Combat, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Ace:*** *+2 Manoeuvre bonus when executing difficult manoeuvres.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:1 rating.*

★ ***Null Cannon:*** *Pintle-mount Tyce-6500; no bonus or weapon rating,* Full Auto, Recoilless.

★ ***Sensor Drones:*** *Good (+3) Active Sensing.*

BURROWER

Supporting Subterranean Vehicle

The Morbius Metals Rockworm-*class mining bore is a pressurised burrowing vehicle for excavation and mining work across Commonality Space. It incorporates a spartan habitat for a crew of 2-3 plus a basic sentience, and is often left in place by* Prospector-*class mining vessels to establishing a working mine.*

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T8* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Rugged Construction Burrowing Vehicle, Claustrophobic Environment, Self-Contained, Limited Manoeuvrability

Skills: *Good (+3) Active Sensing, Hull Strength; Fair (+2) Ranged Combat, Technical; Average (+1) Manoeuvre (Subterranean), Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Rugged Superstructure:*** *1/session, pay 1 fate point to reduce a moderate consequence to mild, or remove a mild.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Geoanalysis Suite:*** *+2 Active Sensing bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions to find a mining strike.*

★ ***Mining Laser:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 1.*

COMMONALITY ASSAULT WALKER

Supporting Ground Vehicle

The logical development of high-threat assault armour, the Murasaki Corp CAW-400 *is a 4-metre tall humanoid assault walker usually fitted with twin auto- or null-cannon.*

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T8* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Extremely Intimidating, Massive Armoured Warrior, Howling Scythe of Bullets, Low-Tech Maintenance

Skills: *Good (+3) Hull Strength, Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Close Combat, EW; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Passive Sensing, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Called Shot:*** *Pay 1 fate point and declare a situation aspect to inflict on a target on a successful Ranged Combat attack, as well as damage.*

✦ ***Shock and Awe:*** *+2 EW create an advantage bonus to cow the opposition.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:1 rating.*

★ ***Autocannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 4, high-explosive ammo,* Full Auto.



Commonality Assault Walker

Supporting Ground Vehicle

EXTREME ENVIRONMENT CRAWLER

A variation on the ATV for extremely hostile planetary environments where high winds, crushing atmospheric pressure, or otherwise perilous conditions prevent the use of conventional grav, wheeled, or tracked vehicles. Crawlers usually possess rugged tracked drive bases with dynamic piton arrays, permitting the vehicle to "grip" the surface as it moves. In extreme cases the crawler can anchor itself to a surface to wait out a storm or geo-event.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T8* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Surface Gripping Drive Train, Adverse Conditions Ground Anchor, Cramped Habitat, Low Target Profile

Skills: *Good (+3) Hull Strength, Fair (+2) Manoeuvre, Average (+1) Systems*

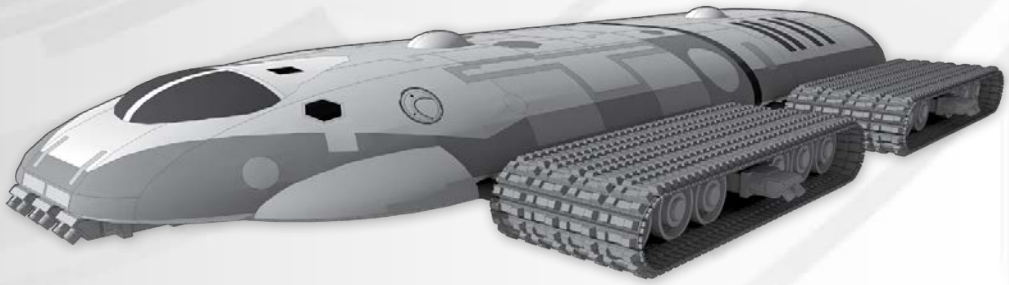
STUNTS

✦ ***Rugged Superstructure:*** *1/session, pay 1 fate point to reduce a moderate consequence to mild, or remove a mild.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Auto-Repair System:*** *+2 Technical bonus to repairs; can repair itself.*

Extreme Environment Crawler



Fair (+2) Minor Grav Vehicle

FLYER

A personal grav vehicle capable of sub-orbital (surface-to-starship) operations, although most models aren't vac-sealed. The most common vehicle on Commonality worlds, restricted armed and armoured flyers exist, but aren't available for civilian use. Flyers are prestige items on many rediscovered worlds.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T8*

Aspects: Sleek Orbital Flyer, Prestige Item

Skills: *Fair (+2) Manoeuvre; Average (+1) Systems*



Flyer

FIXED WING

Fair (+2) Minor Atmospheric Vehicle

This primitive atmospheric vehicle requires Standard to Very High atmospheric pressures (page 325) to function. It's found in lost colonies across the Fringe, and Universal Products even manufacture a model for low-maintenance transport on low-tech colony worlds.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Stress:*** 1☐☐

Tech Index: *T5*

Aspects: Requires Runway for Landing and Takeoff, Fuel Hungry

Skills: *Fair (+2) Manoeuvre (Atmospheric); Average (+1) Systems*

GRAV TANK

Supporting Grav Vehicle

The grav tank is the natural successor to the ground tank, a mobile weapons platform capable of grav operations. Usually controlled by an eidolon sentience, grav tanks operate solo or with 1 or 2 crew (usually a pilot and gunner).

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1☐ 2☐ 3☐ 4☐

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1☐ 2☐ 3☐

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate* ***Mental Stress:*** 1☐ 2☐

Aspects: Sentient Weapons Platform, Organic Pilot and Gunnery Support, Controls the Battlefield

Skills: *Good (+3) Hull Strength, Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Manoeuvre, Passive Sensing; Average (+1) Close Combat, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Battlefield Analysis:*** *+2 Ranged Combat create an advantage bonus for tactical battlefield analysis.*

✦ ***Formation Leader:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus; all formation members taking the same action may use the free invoke.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:2 rating.*

★ ***Plasma Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 5, blaster,* Burst Fire.

★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

GRAV TRAIN

Supporting Grav Vehicle

A common passenger or cargo transport on many worlds, capable of knitting dispersed populations into a single community. Grav trains often operate with government subsidies due to their vital role.

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1☐ 2☐

Tech Index: *T8* ***Systems Stress:*** 1☐ 2☐ 3☐

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Lifeblood of the Community, Cheap and Easy Transport, High Cargo and Passenger Capacity, Physical Network, Bulky and Difficult to Manoeuvre (flaw)

Skills: *Good (+3) Resources; Fair (+2) Manoeuvre, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *30 units of Large (+1) cargo, 300 Medium (+0).*

AND / OR

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 20 passengers.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Extended Cargo Hold:*** *Additional 30 units of Large (+1) cargo, 300 Medium (+0), etc.*

AND / OR

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations x2:*** *Accommodations for 400 passengers.*

Fair (+2) Minor Ground Vehicle

GROUND CAR

Ground cars are available from tech index T4 in a bewildering variety of models. They require dedicated travel surfaces and have only limited rough terrain capability, but within their limits are highly effective. They are gradually replaced by grav flyers at T7 and T8, although enthusiasts continue to collect and use them on specially preserved road surfaces even then.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Stress:*** [1]☐☐

Tech Index: *T4-T10*

Aspects: High Speed Low Tech Transport, Restricted to Road Travel, Vast Range of Customisations, Enthusiastic Supporters

Skills: *Fair (+2) Manoeuvre; Average (+1) Systems*

Supporting Ground Vehicle

GROUND TANK

With a crew of 4, the ground tank is an armed and armoured ground car, specifically adapted to act as a transport and firing platform for construct weaponry. The example below is a clattering industrial age leviathan.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** [1]☐[2]☐[3]☐[4]☐

Tech Index: *T4* ***Systems Stress:*** [1]☐[2]☐[3]☐

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Heavily Armoured, Clanking Clattering War Machine, Intimidating Master of the Battlefield, Unstoppable Advance

Skills: *Good (+3) Hull Strength, Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Close Combat, Manoeuvre; Average (+1) Passive Sensing, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Charge!*** *+2 attack bonus when you move at least 1 zone before attacking.*

✦ ***Formation Leader:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus; all formation members taking the same action may use the free invoke.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:1 rating.*

★ ***Tank Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 4, armour-piercing ammo,* Non-Auto.



HiTAR HI-THREAT ASSAULT REMOTE

Supporting Ground Vehicle

The HiTAR assault remote is a remote-controlled suit of combat armour, a combat drone, and a smaller unmanned version of the Commonality assault walker. Its principle purpose is anti-personnel combat (hence the Melee Combat skill), though it has limited anti-vehicle capability.

Scale: *Medium (+0)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Shiny Metallic Kill Drone, Disembodied Control, Gleaming Remote Intelligence Behind Its Eyes

Skills: *Great (+4) Melee Combat; Good (+3) Hull Strength, Manoeuvre; Fair (+2) Passive Sensing, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Heavy Weapons Specialist:*** *+2 on heavy weapons attacks.*

✦ ***Killing Stroke:*** *1/scene, pay 1 fate point to increase a physical consequence you inflict by 1 step.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:1 rating.*

★ ***Glistening HiTAR Blades:*** *Weapon:2 rating, +4 attack bonus, range 0 (3 stunts)*

★ ***Plasma Launcher:*** *Weapon:6 rating, range 3, blaster.*

★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

HOVERCRAFT

Supporting Ground Vehicle

A standard ground effects vehicle available in industrial age societies and above.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T4* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Noisy, Rapid Smooth Transport, Vulnerable Drone System, Bulky and Difficult to Manoeuvre (flaw)

Skills: *Fair (+2) Manoeuvre; Average (+1) Resources, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *10 units of Medium (+0) cargo.*

AND / OR

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 1 passenger.*

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Ocean Surface):*** *Use Manoeuvre in ocean surface actions.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Extended Cargo Hold:*** *Additional 10 units of Medium (+0).*

AND / OR

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 10 passengers.*

LIFTER

Supporting Ground Vehicle

A large exoskeleton used for shifting heavy loads, it may be piloted physically or remotely via technopsi, or allowed to operate autonomously on its basic sentience.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Robust Lifter, Awesome Strength, Protective Roll Cage, Hissing Pistons and Screaming Hydraulics

Skills: *Good (+3) Hull Strength; Fair (+2) Manoeuvre; Average (+1) Systems, Unarmed Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Heavy Hitter:*** *Reduce shifts by 1 on a Melee Combat success with style for an additional full situation aspect with free invoke.*

✦ ***Ramming Speed:*** *Use Manoeuvre instead of Close Combat to make ramming attacks.*

Supporting Atmospheric Vehicle

SCRAMJET

A primitive reusable ground-to-orbit vehicle, usually able to transport a decent payload or passenger complement.

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T6* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Primitive Interface Transport, Thunderous Roar and Highly Visible, High-Value Payload

Skills: *Good (+3) Manoeuvre; Fair (+2) Systems; Average (+1) Resources*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *10 units of Large (+0) cargo, 100 Medium (+0).*

AND / OR

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 20 passengers.*

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Orbital):*** *Use Manoeuvre in orbital actions.*

Aquatic World Vehicles

Oceanworlds and cetacean or cephalopod xenomorph civilisations may have little call for ground manoeuvre capability in their vehicles, instead requiring only aquatic and aerial manoeuvrability. Such worlds may routinely have versions of vehicles in this chapter with no ground capability at all. Thus, you may have aquacars, aquatanks, and so on. In such cases, simply assume that the vehicle's default manoeuvrability is aquatic, and modify the high concept as required.

Supporting Ocean Surface Vehicle

SEA VESSEL

The traditional "boat" or small ship, sea vessels are available at a wide range of tech indices, from T1 to T10. The example below is a T3 version typical of the Age of Sail, outfitted for naval combat. Enormous (+3) higher-tech commercial versions also exist.

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T3* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Towering Masts and Fluttering Sails, At the Mercy of the Sea, Limited Manoeuvrability

Skills: *Fair (+2) Manoeuvre, Systems; Average (+1) Close Combat, Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Boarding Actions:*** *+2 to attack and create an advantage Close Combat actions when boarding.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Gunpowder Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 3,* Non-Auto.

Supporting Grav Vehicle

TRIPHIB

A grav flyer with submersible capacity, triphibs have orbital capability and are often carried aboard explorer ships. Example: Hydrodyne TRI-100 Aquaplane.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T8* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Exotic Triphibian Vehicle, Limited Habitat Environment, Dedicated Exploration Vehicle, Multi-zone Sensor Fields

Skills: *Good (+3) Manoeuvre; Fair (+2) Passive Sensing; Average (+1) Active Sensing, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Extended Manoeuvrability (Aquatic, Atmospheric, Orbital):*** *Use Manoeuvre in aquatic, atmospheric, and orbital actions.*

VENU CRAWLER

Supporting Ground Vehicle

An articulated tracked APC with a low profile, the crawler can transport 20 or more Venu troopers into combat zones rapidly. It has a crew of 2 (driver and gunner), and is armed with a top pintle-mount disruptor cannon.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Low Profile APC, Scuttle and Crawl, Rapid Deployment

Skills: *Fair (+2) Manoeuvre, Stealth; Average (+1) Hull Strength, Ranged Combat, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 1 passenger.*

✦ ***Rugged Superstructure:*** *1/session, pay 1 fate point to reduce a moderate consequence to mild, or remove a mild.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Disruptor Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 3,* Radioactive, Recoilless.

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations x2:*** *Accommodations for 20 passengers.*

VENU PREDATOR

Supporting Ground Vehicle

Effectively a giant combat walker, the Venu predator has a crew of 1, and is extremely effective against ground troops and small vehicles alike.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Towering Biped Walker, Belching Z-Radiation, Coming Through!

Skills: *Good (+3) Hull Strength, Unarmed Combat; Fair (+2) Passive Sensing, Ranged Combat; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Heavy Hitter:*** *Reduce shifts by 1 on a Melee Combat success with style for an additional full situation aspect with free invoke.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:1 rating.*

★ ***Disruptor Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 3,* Radioactive, Recoilless.

★ ***Disruptor Shield:*** *+1 defend bonus,* Highly Detectable, Unstable.

VENU TRIPOD

Supporting Ground Vehicle

These towering tripods often act as forward observation platforms as well as mounting anti-tank attacks. They're used for routing ground troops and panicking civilian populations. A Venu tripod has a crew of 3.

Scale: *Large (+1)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Terrifying Towering Tripod, Forward Observer, Leaking Z-Radiation, Anti-Tank Tactics

Skills: *Good (+3) Active Sensing, Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Passive Sensing, Provoke; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Systems*

STUNTS

✦ ***Battlefield Analysis:*** *+2 Ranged Combat create an advantage bonus for tactical battlefield analysis.*

✦ ***Formation Leader:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus; all formation members taking the same action may use the free invoke.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:2 rating.*

★ ***Disruptor Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 3,* Radioactive, Recoilless.

★ ***Disruptor Shield:*** *+1 defend bonus,* Highly Detectable, Unstable.

Major Ground Vehicle

VENU QUAD WALKER

The quad walker is usually the command post of a Venu mobile artillery force, flanked by 4 tripods and at least a squad of predators.

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *3*

ASPECTS
High Concept: Venu Mobile HQ

Trouble: Single Point of Failure

Other Aspects: Terrifying Presence, Unstoppable Advance, Heavily Armoured

SKILLS
Great (+4): *Ranged Combat*
Good (+3): *Hull Strength, Rapport*
Fair (+2): *Active Sensing, Deceive, Passive Sensing*
Average (+1): *Close Combat, Manoeuvre, Systems, Technical*

STUNTS
✦ ***Anomaly Scan:*** *Use Active Sensing instead of Empathy to defend against Deceive.*

✦ ***Battlefield Analysis:*** *+2 Ranged Combat create an advantage bonus for tactical battlefield analysis.*

✦ ***Overseer:*** *1/scene, make an overcome action to generate a pool of shift points you can redistribute.*

EXTRAS
★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:3 rating.*

★ ***Disruptor Cannon:*** *Weapon:3 rating, range 3,* Radioactive, Recoilless.

★ ***Disruptor Shield:*** *+1 defend bonus,* Highly Detectable, Unstable.

★ ***Zero Point Torpedoes:*** *As missile; +2 attack bonus, range 4, explosive (1),* Limited Supply, Radioactive.

INSTALLATION STATISTICS

Major Grav Installation

ARCOLOGY

The gleaming arcologies of the Commonality are a feature of high population worlds: enormous buildings several kilometres wide and high, like artificial mountains, they house millions of people with all the resources and supply systems they require. Arcologies are like small nations unto themselves, and can equally be statted as organisations (page 265).

Scale: *Regional (+4)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3

Aspects: Gleaming Megahabitat Rearing Like a Mountain Through the Clouds, We're All in This Together, Expert Arcology Sentience, Never Been Outside, Unusual Safety Valves

Skills: *Great (+4) Resources, Systems; Good (+3) Bureaucracy, Rapport; Fair (+2) Hull Strength, Will; Average (+1) Contacts, Technical*

STUNTS
✦ ***Cargo Hold:*** *40 units of Enormous (+3) cargo.*

✦ ***Docking Bay:*** *1 Enormous (+3) construct, 10 Huge (+2) constructs, etc.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 4000 citizens.*

HALO
Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS
★ ***Extended Cargo Hold x5:*** *200 units of Enormous (+3) cargo.*

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations x12:*** *Accommodations for 80 million citizens.*

★ ***Fighter Wing x3:*** *9 Large (+1) fighters (minor ships) with Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat.*

★ ***Makepoint:*** *Produce basic materials and small items of equipment.*

★ ***Makepoint Workshop:*** *Spares and repairs without a Commonality shipyard.*

★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

GRAV BASE

Major Grav Vehicle

Grav bases are mobile military and security installations used by instrumentalities to enforce and emphasise their authority. Similar to starships but without interstellar capability, they're floating fortresses or security stations. They're capable of manoeuvre, though often spend long periods in a single area. They usually have a controlling eidolon sentience from their corresponding instrumentality.

Scale: *Enormous (+3)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3

ASPECTS

High Concept: Impressive Commonality Sky Fortress

Trouble: Dependent Local Passive Resistance

Other Aspects: Oppressive Reminder of Commonality Power, Fighter Wing Defence, Enlightened Interdependence, Cultural Ops Team

SKILLS

Superb (+5): *Provoke*
Great (+4): *EW, Ranged Combat*
Good (+3): *Deceive, Resources, Systems*
Fair (+2): *Active Sensing, Knowledge, Passive Sensing, Technical*
Average (+1): *Hull Strength, Manoeuvre, Science, Will*

STUNTS

✦ ***Docking Bay:*** *1 Huge (+2) construct, 10 Large (+1) constructs, etc.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 300 passengers.*

✦ ***Shock and Awe:*** *+2 EW create an advantage bonus to cow the opposition.*

✦ ***Specialist (Local Culture):*** *+2 bonus to rolls for specialised field.*

✦ ***We Come in Peace:*** *Use Deceive to take cultural actions.*

HALO

Special Ops Mindscape Instance: *Local Mindscape connectivity and special ops technopsi.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:2 rating.*

★ ***Auto-Repair System:*** *+2 Technical bonus to repairs; can repair itself.*

★ ***Extended Docking Bay:*** *10 Huge (+2) constructs, 100 Large (+1) constructs, etc.*

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 3000 passengers.*

★ ***Fighter Wing:*** *3 Large (+1) fighters (minor ships) with Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat.*

★ ***Haze Field:*** *+1 defend bonus and basic ray shielding.*

★ ***Makepoint:*** *Produce basic materials and small items of equipment.*

★ ***Makepoint Workshop:*** *Spares and repairs without a Commonality shipyard.*

★ ***Missiles:*** *Contest of Ranged Combat vs Manoeuvre, explosive effect, range 5,* Limited Supply.

★ ***Plasma Cannon:*** *Weapon:3, range 5, blaster,* Burst Fire.

VENU BASE BUNKER

Supporting Installation

A typical dug-in Venu field headquarters, usually delivered by dropship. In more dynamic environments HQs may be provided by quad walkers instead.

Scale: *Huge (+2)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Heavily Fortified Base Bunker, Dug in and Hard to Extract, Casual Brutality, Hectic Command Post, Over the Top!

Skills: *Good (+3) Ranged Combat; Fair (+2) Active Sensing, Close Combat, Systems; Average (+1) Hull Strength, Passive Sensing, Resources*

STUNTS

✦ ***Battlefield Analysis:*** *+2 Ranged Combat create an advantage bonus for tactical battlefield analysis.*

✦ ***Top Urgency:*** *+2 to Passive Sensing when on top urgency alert.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured Hull:*** *Armour:1 rating.*

★ ***Venu Disruptor Cannon:*** *Weapon:3, range 3;* Radioactive, Recoilless, Dangerously Unstable (flaw).

★ ***Venu Disruptor Shield:*** *+1 defend bonus;* Highly Detectable, Unstable.

Supporting Installation

MINING OUTPOST

A typical rough-and-ready mining outpost found on inhospitable worlds in otherwise unsettled star systems, particularly out on the Frontier. They can go months without contact from outside.

Scale: *Enormous (+3)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2

Aspects: Rough and Ready Mining Outpost, Pent-Up Tensions and Simmering Violence, Hardy and Independent-Minded, Natural Grease Monkeys, You Gotta Get On With Your Neighbours

Skills: *Great (+4) Technical; Good (+3) Active Sensing, Systems; Fair (+2) Hull Strength, Resources; Average (+1) Passive Sensing, Resources*

STUNTS

✦ ***Long-Distance Life Support:*** *+2 bonus for functioning on your reserves.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 300 workers.*

✦ ***Rugged Superstructure:*** *1/session, pay 1 fate point to reduce a moderate consequence to mild, or remove a mild.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Autodoc:*** *Meditech stunt and Regeneration extra; use Technical for recovery actions.*

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 3000 workers.*

★ ***Fighter Wing:*** *3 Large (+1) fighters (minor ships) with Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat.*

★ ***Geoanalysis Suite:*** *+2 Active Sensing bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions to find a mining strike.*

★ ***Makepoint:*** *Produce basic materials and small items of equipment.*

★ ***Ore Processor:*** *Use Technical to process and refine mining ore.*

★ ***Repair Yard:*** *Use Technical for maintenance and recovery actions to restore mild, moderate, and severe consequences on Huge (+2) constructs or below.*

★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

Supporting Installation

ORBITAL CONVEYOR

Also known as beanstalks or space elevators, these megastructures use high-tech materials to construct a tower from ground to orbit, up and down which run regular elevator shuttles. It's a cheap and efficient interface, once the initial expenditure is made, and provides stunning views.

Scale: *Regional (+4)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T7* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Towering Beanstalk From Ground to Orbit, Hanging by a Thread, Constant Train of Elevator Shuttles, Cosmopolitan Asteroid Tether Port, Slow But Steady Progress, Vulnerable to Smaller Scale Attacks (flaw)

Skills: *Great (+4) Systems; Great (+3) Hull Strength; Fair (+2) Active Sensing; Average (+1) Ranged Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Anomaly Scan:*** *Use Active Sensing instead of Empathy to defend against Deceive.*

✦ ***Distributed Systems:*** *+2 Systems defend bonus against attempts to overwhelm your systems.*

✦ ***Rugged Superstructure:*** *1/session, pay 1 fate point to reduce a moderate consequence to mild, or remove a mild.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Drop Shuttles:*** *Deploy up to 4000 passengers per exchange from orbit to planetary surface or vice versa.*

★ ***ECM Array:*** *+2 defend bonus vs EW and Mindscape attacks.*

★ ***Repair Drones:*** *Average (+1) Technical.*

★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

SKY CITY

Major Grav Installation

Usually a feature of the Core Worlds, sky cities are found more and more on sector capitals and high-tech worlds throughout Commonality Space, a sign of social stability and economic prosperity. Many are manufactured by Javawayn Industries, and are controlled by an eidolon sentience.

Scale: *Regional (+4)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3

ASPECTS

High Concept: Shining Sky City

Trouble: Vast Hive of Transhumanity

Other Aspects: Product of a Stable Environment, Multiple Interlocking Subsystems, Whatever You Want We Can Provide

SKILLS

Great (+4): *Systems*
Good (+3): *Contacts, Resources*
Fair (+2): *Bureaucracy, Rapport, Will*
Average (+1): *Active Sensing, Knowledge, Manoeuvre, Technical*

STUNTS

✦ ***Distributed Systems:*** *+2 Systems defend bonus against attempts to overwhelm your systems.*

✦ ***Docking Bay:*** *1 Enormous (+3) construct, 10 Huge (+2) constructs, etc.*

✦ ***Engineering Support:*** *+2 bonus for engineering personnel to create an advantage to save the day.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 4000 passengers.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Extended Docking Bay:*** *10 Enormous (+3) constructs, 100 Huge (+2) constructs, etc.*

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations x3:*** *Accommodations for 160,000 passengers.*

★ ***Fighter Wing:*** *3 Large (+1) fighters (minor ships) with Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat.*

★ ***Ponics:*** *Provide food and breathable atmosphere almost indefinitely.*

UNDERWATER CITY

Supporting Installation

Underwater cities and metroplexes are common throughout Commonality Space, both on oceanworlds and on garden worlds where living space is at a premium. They may be glassteel domed, or solid arcology-like structures (metroplexes); both have backup repulsor shields in the event of integrity failure.

Scale: *Enormous (+3)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T9* ***Systems Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2

Aspects: Domed Suburban Metropolis, Enclosed Habitats, Genurgically Modified Population, Lightless Depths, Undersea Plantations

Skills: *Good (+3) Resources, Systems; Fair (+2) Hull Strength, Technical; Average (+1) Bureaucracy, Passive Sensing*

STUNTS

✦ ***Docking Bay:*** *1 Huge (+2) construct, 10 Large (+1) constructs.*

✦ ***Passenger Accommodations:*** *Accommodations for 300 citizens.*

✦ ***Rugged Superstructure:*** *1/session, pay 1 fate point to reduce a moderate consequence to mild, or remove a mild.*

HALO

Mindscape Instance: *Enables local Mindscape connectivity.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Autodoc:*** *Meditech stunt and Regeneration extra; use Technical for all recovery actions.*

★ ***Extended Passenger Accommodations x10:*** *Accommodations for 1.6 million citizens.*

★ ***Fighter Wing x3:*** *9 Large (+1) fighters (minor ships) with Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Ranged Combat.*

★ ***Ponics:*** *Provide food and breathable atmosphere almost indefinitely.*

★ ***Repulsor Shield:*** *+2 defend bonus against physical attacks.*

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
ORGANISATIONS

"Out of context, the mandate of the Security and Cultural Integrity Instrumentality sounded bookish and benign: to ensure, by any means necessary, the cultural stability of the New Commonality of Humankind. It was that coy 'by any means necessary' which meant the workplace was less a venue for diplomatic soirees and more one where aggressive deployment of body armour and disintegrator rifles was often the order of the day…"

WHAT IS AN ORGANISATION?

Where characters, starships, and vehicles are concrete, physical entities, organisations are more abstract, representing higher-level groupings defined more by their cohesion and ability to impose their will on their surroundings. Attacks on organisations represent damage to morale, beliefs, structure, and resources; a damaged organisation may disintegrate into its constituent parts.

Example organisations include governments, corporacies, communities, and instrumentalities like SCI Force. Cultures, a key element of ***Mindjammer***, are a special kind of organisation, dealt with in their own chapter (page 295).

Organisations can have skills, stunts, extras, aspects, stress boxes and consequences, and can take actions. Their targets are usually other organisations, but as this can include characters with organisation extras, they can pose very real threats in your games. They can be extras or NPCs (albeit abstract NPCs comprising hundreds or even thousands of members). This chapter explains how to create organisations and use them in play.

CREATING ORGANISATIONS

Both the GM and players may create organisations, although it's usually only the GM who creates them with complete stat blocks as minor, supporting, or major NPCs (page 181); players usually create organisations as extras. A sample organisation sheet is provided on page 477.

The Organisation Concept

An organisation often develops from setting up your ***Mindjammer*** game (page 15), when you create your game's two issues and jot down ideas for significant groups and factions. These may be important enough to be character extras or NPC organisations.

To create an organisation, start with a concept — a phrase or two describing what it is. This may become its **high concept**; otherwise, it may fuel an aspect, or give ideas for skills, stunts, or a name.

Organisation Aspects

Organisations have **high concept** aspects like characters. To create a detailed organisation extra or NPC, pick a high concept and trouble aspect for a minor organisation, and an additional two or three aspects for supporting or major organisations. Organisation extras have aspects as required.

Organisation Scale

Like constructs, organisations have **scale** (page 174). Unlike constructs, every skill point they have contributes to that scale, and organisations accumulating a certain number of skill points must increase to the next largest scale. Damaged organisations may also **decrease in scale** (page 277).

An organisation's scale also gives you an idea of its membership — its population or personnel. Although

Table 15-1: Organisation Scale

Organisation Scale	Example Organisations	Maximum Skill Points
Large (+1)	Small associations, companies, communities of up to 100 people	4
Huge (+2)	Small settlements or towns of up to 10,000 people; small armies; medium-sized companies.	7
Enormous (+3)	Cities of up to a million people; large armies; large companies.	10
Regional (+4)	Metropolises, metroplexes, and small nations of tens of millions of people; a proto-corporacy.	20
Continental (+5)	Large nations of up to several billion people; small worlds; a small corporacy; a small instrumentality.	34
Planetary (+6)	A whole world community; a corporacy world; a large instrumentality.	50
Interplanetary (+7)	A large corporacy; a cluster; a developed star system; up to a trillion people.	65
Interstellar (+8)	Interstellar polities of trillions to tens of trillions of people, like the Low-high Radiant, Venu Empire, or Chembu Autonomous Region.	80
Galactic (+9)	The Commonality; tens to hundreds of trillions of people.	95

organisations may occupy the same rough physical space as a construct of the same scale, they are more abstract groupings rather than physical structures, and comprise more members than similar-scale constructs. Organisations may change scale over time (page 277).

NESTED ORGANISATIONS

Larger organisations can contain smaller ones. Such a smaller organisation is called a **nested organisation**. Interactions with nested organisations use the scale rules (page 174). A nested organisation must be within its parent organisation's **reach** (see below), and if so may use its parent organisation's statistics to resist attacks.

A nested organisation must share at least half its aspects with its parent organisation. If it does not, it becomes a separate organisation instead.

For example, the Contact Bureau is a Continental (+5) scale organisation nested within SCI Force, a Planetary (+6) organisation. Both have 5 aspects, but 3 of the Contact Bureau's aspects are identical to or derived from SCI Force aspects.

Organisation Reach

An organisation's **reach** represents its pervasiveness — how far its network of offices, etc, extends. A small organisation can have a large reach; conversely, a large organisation may only be present in a limited area. An organisation is assumed to be in the same zone anywhere it has reach, ie it can act at range 0, making Security attacks, etc. If it doesn't have reach, it must act at range.

An organisation's reach usually equals its scale; some organisations may have greater reach.

Organisation Skills and Stunts

Select skills and stunts for organisations like any NPC or extra. Major organisation NPCs can have a skill pyramid; supporting organisations a skill column or two; and minor organisations a handful of skills as appropriate. Organisation extras have skills representing the organisation actions your character can take.

Finishing It All Off

Organisations have stress tracks. **Physical stress** represents the organisation's structure — how well organised it is, how resilient it is to attacks on its organisational integrity.

Table 15-2: Organisation Reach

Organisation Reach	Area Reached	Organisations with such reach
Large (+1)	Interpersonal group	
Huge (+2)	Restricted local area of planet	A small army.
Enormous (+3)	A large local area, city, etc.	A medium army or small company.
Regional (+4)	A nation; part of a continent or small moon.	A large army, medium company.
Continental (+5)	Part of a planet or solar system; a small moon.	A large company.
Planetary (+6)	An entire planet or maybe star system.	A proto-corporacy.
Interplanetary (+7)	The local octant or maybe subsector	A small corporacy.
Interstellar (+8)	The local sector or province	A Pansectorate; a medium corporacy; an interstellar polity.
Galactic (+9)	The whole Commonality.	An instrumentality, large corporacy, the Commonality government.

Mental stress represents the organisation's morale — the mental resilience of its members, and how resistant it is to intimidation and attempts to demoralise and confuse. **Credit stress** is important for organisations like corporacies, and represents how creditworthy an organisation is, how much it can draw on outside help to support its activities and gain access to resources.

Organisations have a tech index, and often a halo representing key functions which rely on the Mindscape. Generally, an organisation tech index is the same as the culture in which it's based. If the culture has a capability (page 299) in a field which the organisation specialises in, the organisation's tech index is equal to that capability instead.



Selecting an Organisation Extra

Taking an organisation (like a planetary government, corporacy, instrumentality, etc) as an extra means your character can employ that organisation's abilities in actions against other organisations. When you do so, you act at the organisation's scale. Your character may be a member of the organisation, or have influence which allows him to have it act on his behalf. If your character is a military commander, diplomat, mercantilist, or even a culture agent, an organisation extra can be a vital part of your game.

MY EXTRA'S STATS ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE ORGANISATION STATS!

Your organisation extra's stats may be only a subset of the organisation's actual stats — for example, if you're taking an organisation like SCI Force or Chembu Genurgy as an extra, as described in **Chapter 16: The New Commonality Era**, below. Most organisations are large, and your character's organisation extra stats represent which and how much of an organisation's abilities you can call on. See "What an Extra Represents" (page 104) and "Vying for Control" (page 105) for more.

SHARED ORGANISATION EXTRAS

Taking a **shared extra** (page 105) is an effective way of incorporating an organisation into your game, particularly in games like *Agents of the Commonality* where more than one PC belongs to the same organisation. In such a case, consider using the organisation sheet (page 477) to collate the abilities your characters can call on.

ORGANISATION ADVANCEMENTS

Organisations advance and change all the time; most importantly, your relationship to an organisation changes, including your influence and the abilities you can draw on. Organisation NPCs advance like normal NPCs (page 431); organisation extras advance using the extras advancement rules (page 162).

Your relationship with an organisation may get worse as well as better; you may even lose skill points, stunts, and aspects from your extra. This usually frees up points to spend elsewhere, and happens because you want it to; however, sometimes it's the result of a particular milestone, extreme consequence, or serious cost.

Organisation Skills List

Assimilate
Bureaucracy
Contacts
Deceive
Empathy
Intrusion
Investigate
Knowledge
Manoeuvre
Notice
Provoke
Rapport
Resources
Science
Security
Stealth
Structure
Technical
Will

Growing Your Organisation

Using advancements, you can add skill points to your organisation, which may take it over the maximum skill points for its scale. In this case, your organisation **increases in scale**. Conversely, organisations which suffer damage may **decrease** in scale. Whenever your organisation changes in scale, change its high concept.

You may also increase your organisation's **reach** by spending a skill point; however, you may not increase your reach by more points than the highest of your Contacts, Manoeuvre, Provoke, or Resources skills.

ORGANISATION SKILLS AND STUNTS

Although organisations use essentially the same skills as characters, we've renamed some of them to make their function more obvious and intuitive in the context of organisation actions. They represent actions performed by organisation members.

Assimilate

An organisation's ability to aggressively steal parts of a target organisation and make them its own. It isn't an attack on an organisation's bricks and mortar, but rather a systemic attack on its structure, legal basis, physical networks, comms, etc. Attacking with Assimilate is a range 0 attack.

Overcome: Absorb minor organisational obstacles in your way, up to and including minor organisations. For larger organisations, use create an advantage or attack actions.

Create an Advantage: Target a smaller-scale part of a larger-scale organisation. Choose the scale of the part you're targeting, but this action is first made against the full scale of the organisation. If you succeed, you create a *Targeting the Local Organisation*-type advantage, which you may invoke to make attacks at your chosen scale (page 276).

Attack: Attack an organisation's physical stress track, usually opposed by Structure or Manoeuvre.

Defend: Defend against propaganda attacks using Provoke.

Extras: Saboteurs (page 275).

STUNTS

✦ ***Divide and Conquer***
Gain a +2 create an advantage bonus to target a local instance of an organisation.

Bureaucracy

An organisation's ability to run itself smoothly, including procedural competence with law, red tape, bribery, byzantine administrative structures, involving teams of lawyers, functionaries, and intendants. It's otherwise the same as the character skill (page 83).

Extras: Auditors (page 274).

STUNTS

✦ ***Organogrammaton***
Your organisation has achieved near perfection in its internal hierarchies and reporting lines. Gain a +2 bonus to overcome and create an advantage actions.

Contacts

Contacts represents the other organisations the organisation is in contact or allied with. It's also the main way an organisation performs recovery actions on its credit stress track.

Overcome: Find an organisation or individual you're looking for; get people and organisations you know to release lines of credit, etc, letting you restore credit stress and mild consequences.

Create an Advantage: Use support or information given to you by organisations you know; or declare you already know an organisation; or plant or find out information about another organisation.

Defend: Defend against organisations creating social advantages against you; or prevent organisations using Deceive or Contacts to "drop off the radar"; or interfere with attempts to locate your organisation.

STUNTS

✦ ***Stakeholder Intervention***
You can use Contacts to restore moderate and severe credit consequences. During the recovery period, you must rename the consequence in a way which reflects your stakeholders' increased hold over your organisation.

✦ ***The Ties That Bind***
Your organisation can draw on private associations, cartels, old school tie networks, and so on. Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage actions.

Deceive

An organisation's ability to represent itself incorrectly in public, generally with a view to improving its reputation or public image. More covert and less honest than Provoke, it's usually opposed by Knowledge or Investigate.

Overcome: Bluff your organisation's way past another organisation; give a false impression; or misdirect another organisation's attention.

Create an Advantage: Create cover stories or false impressions, possibly throwing off attacks on your morale or reputation, or even direct physical attacks.

Defend: Defend against attempts to discern your organisation's true motives using Empathy, or throw off Investigate attempts with false information.

Extras: Spin Doctor (page 275).

STUNTS

✦ ***Public Relations***
You specialise in presenting a managed face to the public. Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage actions.

Empathy

An organisation's "emotional intelligence" — how much it's in touch with the feelings of its own personnel, the public, and other organisations. It represents gut feeling more than market research (which is more a Knowledge thing). It's also used for recovery actions for organisation mental stress damage.

Overcome: Discern another organisation's attitude or intent; make recovery actions to restore mental stress damage and mild consequences.

Create an Advantage: Read another organisation's halo (page 186), or create advantages relating to its attitude or intent. If the target organisation is aware of the attempt, it may defend with Deceive or Rapport.

Defend: Defend against organisations using Deceive against you.

STUNTS

✦ ***Arbitration and Reconciliation***
Your organisation can make recovery actions to restore moderate and severe mental consequences.

✦ ***Zeitgeist***
Your organisation is in tune with social currents and trends. Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage actions.

Intrusion

An organisation's ability to break into another organisation or location and get out with something, assess and defeat its security measures, etc.

Overcome: Hack the Mindscape, penetrate closed organisations, bypass security and cover your tracks.

Create an Advantage: Case another organisation which is otherwise closed to outsiders, assessing its security measures and vulnerabilities.

Extras: Mole (page 275).

STUNTS

✦ ***Corporate Raider***
Your organisation is expert at getting inside the organisational structure of corporacies and other commercial organisations and laying them open to attacks. Gain a +2 bonus when creating advantages which facilitate physical and credit attacks.

Investigate

An organisation's ability to find out information. This is the "spying" skill, representing corporate espionage, research, spies, informants, and total information awareness. It can be opposed by Deceive or sometimes Stealth.

Overcome: Find out information about a target organisation that's difficult to uncover, including analysing a corporacy's actions for malpractice and rooting out corruption.

Create an Advantage: Find out a target organisation's abilities, including cultural capabilities (page 299).

STUNTS

✦ ***Counterintelligence***
Use Investigate instead of Deceive to defend against an organisation's attempts to learn your organisation's aspects. Succeeding with style lets you feed the organisation an aspect that contains false information.

✦ ***Only Connect***
Use Investigate instead of Knowledge to deduce facts from observation.

Knowledge

The quality of an organisation's archives, databanks, or institutional knowledge, including its awareness of prevailing conditions. It's otherwise the same as the character skill (page 88).

STUNTS

✦ ***Known Knowns***
The organisation knows what it knows, and knows what it doesn't know, and deduces what it doesn't know it doesn't know. It gets a +2 defend bonus against Deceive attempts.

✦ ***Market Awareness***
Use Knowledge instead of Empathy for actions involving Resources and credit, including creating advantages when trading, conducting commercial negotiations, and making credit attacks.

✦ ***Specialist***
As the character stunt (page 89); the organisation has specialist knowledge of a non-scientific or non-technical field.

Manoeuvre

An organisation's ability to physically move from zone to zone. It's particularly important for organisations like armies and fleets, but other organisations may also be mobile. An organisation without a Manoeuvre skill is static and unable to move.

Overcome: Move between zones in a conflict, or overcome opposition from an organisation hazard or other attack, or take part in races or chases with other mobile organisations like armies and fleets.

Create an Advantage: Gain a superior position over another organisation.

Defend: Defend in physical conflicts against Assimilate and Security attacks, representing your ability to get out of the way of the attack; or prevent other organisations moving past you. If you have no Manoeuvre skill, you offer only Mediocre (+0) passive opposition to such attempts.

STUNTS

✦ ***Guerrilla Warfare***
Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage Manoeuvre actions to help you attack and defend, moving rapidly and conducting hit-and-run attacks.

Notice
An organisation's situational awareness and ability to spot things in its immediate vicinity. It's the same as the character skill (page 90).

STUNTS

✦ ***Open Door Policy***
Your organisation values transparency and open communication between its members. Gain a +2 defend bonus when using Notice against attempts to create Deceive advantages against you.

Provoke
An organisation's ability to attack a target organisation's morale and reputation, representing propaganda attacks, media campaigns, negative publicity, rumourmongering. It's often used to soften a target up for Assimilate attacks (page 268), and can be used at up to a 2-zone range.

Note that Provoke can't initiate the local instance targeting of an organisation (page 276) — that's the province of the Assimilate skill. However, it can join in attacking to hive off the sub-organisation once the initial Assimilate create an advantage action has succeeded.

Overcome: Force an organisation to react in an emotionally uncontrolled way, whether by intimidating, angering, or scaring it. Target organisations usually oppose with Will.

Create an Advantage: Momentarily affect states of morale or emotion in the target organisation, with aspects like *Scandalised, Riddled With Internal Strife, Stunned Into Inactivity, Headless Chicken*, etc.

Attack: Make mental attacks harming an organisation's morale and cohesiveness, including propaganda and negative campaigning attacks.

STUNTS

✦ ***Witch Hunt***
Your organisation can use Provoke to make mental stress attack actions against characters.

Organisations and Recovery Actions

Organisation recovery actions sometimes use different skills from characters and constructs, including Resources to restore physical stress damage and Contacts to restore credit stress. This also applies to characters; a PC with the Money Is Power stunt (page 95) may use his Resources skill to restore an organisation's physical stress damage and consequences.

Rapport
An organisation's diplomatic abilities, including dealing with other organisations on a basis of trust and openness. It's otherwise the same as the character skill (page 94).

Extras: Diplomatic Team (page 274).

STUNTS

✦ ***Populist***
Gain a +2 create an advantage bonus when appealing to "the people".

Resources
An organisation's wealth and resources. It's the way organisations conduct recovery actions to restore physical stress damage, and affects an organisation's credit stress track.

Overcome: Bypass a situation where throwing organisational wealth at a problem will help, including bribery and bidding wars; rebuild damaged organisations, conducting recovery actions to restore physical stress damage and mild consequences.

Create an Advantage: Grease the wheels or make organisational purchases to facilitate other actions, including refurbishments, R&D, new facilities, improved manpower, and so on.

Attack: Make credit attacks on other organisations.

Defend: Defend against credit attacks.

Special: Average (+1) or Fair (+2) Resources gives you a 3-point credit stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) also gives

you a 4-point box; and Superb (+5) or above also gives you an additional mild consequence.

Extras: Convoy (page 274), Market Maker Section (page 274).

STUNTS

✦ ***Aid Package***
Your organisation is used to spending resources to help organisations rebuild. You may make recovery actions for moderate and severe physical consequences.

Science

An organisation's scientific know-how, including scientific personnel, laboratories, and R&D facilities. It's otherwise the same as the character skill (page 96).

STUNTS

✦ ***Innovator***
Gain a +2 bonus to overcome actions when using Science to overcome an obstacle by making a breakthrough.

✦ ***Specialist***
Your organisation gains a +2 bonus to attempts to increase your **culture's** capability in its specialist field (page 297).

Security

An organisation's competence in acts of physical aggression and defence, covering police actions, manned and automated defences against attacks by mobs and armed forces. By default Security actions are range 0; they represent organisation employees picking up guns and shooting people, either in self-defence with security guards, or aggressively using troops. It affects the physical stress track.

Overcome: Overcome obstacles representing mediocre or passive defences, like those of minor organisations. Usually you'll use attack actions instead.

Create an Advantage: Use special manoeuvres or tactics when attacking or defending against other organisations; analyse an organisation's strategy and tactics. See page 157 for example character-level manoeuvres which may be effective for organisations.

Attack: Attack an organisation's physical stress track; you must be in the same zone.

Defend: Use automated defences, security guards, etc, to defend against Security attacks.

Extras: Armament (page 274), Security Cadre (page 275), Strike Force (page 275).

STUNTS

✦ ***Extreme Sanction***
Your organisation can make a Security action against a character.

Stealth

Stealth represents an organisation's ability to act in a stealthy manner or take other clandestine or subterfuge actions, including keeping secrets, fading from the public eye, or acting away from prying eyes.

Overcome: Bypass situations requiring your organisation not to be detected, such as conducting secret negotiations, moving from place to place unseen, staging a secret takeover or buyout, or evading media, Mindscape, or police scrutiny or the public eye.

Create an Advantage: Position your organisation for an ambush or other surprise attack, whether in boardroom negotiations, diplomatic meetings, or sudden attacks by financial institutions or armed forces.

Defend: Defend against Investigate or Notice rolls to avoid detection.

STUNTS

✦ ***Shadow Management***
You have a hidden parallel management structure alongside the bogus public one. Gain a +2 create an advantage bonus when using clandestine methods to take actions.

Structure

An organisation's structural soundness, how well it can withstand physical attacks. It's used to defend against Assimilate attacks, and adds to the physical stress track.

Overcome: Succeed in tests of your organisation's structural strength, and withstand adverse conditions.

Create an Advantage: Create advantages in physical conflicts like *Robust Redeployment, Resistant to Frontal Assaults, Difficult to Isolate,* etc.

Defend: Defend against Assimilate attacks, or block a mobile organisation's movement if you're in a space where you can do so.

Special: Average (+1) or Fair (+2) Structure gives you a 3-point physical stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) also gives you a 4-point box; and Superb (+5) or above also gives you an additional mild consequence.

STUNTS

✦ ***Decentralised Structure***
Your organisation has no easily identified centre to be targeted. Once per session, reduce a moderate consequence of any kind to mild, or remove a mild consequence entirely.

Technical

An organisation's technical capability, including its ability to manufacture and repair goods. It's especially important for corporacies and other commercial organisations.

Overcome: Create, maintain, and repair goods, operate a production line (page 441).

Create an Advantage: Create advantages representing goods and products you've manufactured or repaired; or understand and take advantage of strong or weak points in manufactured objects or their manufacturing process.

Extras: Medical Facilities (page 274), Production Facilities (page 275), Skunkworks (page 275), Starship Facilities (page 275).

STUNTS

✦ ***Specialist***
Gain a +2 bonus when operating in specialist area (medical, grav suspensors, genurgy, starships, etc).

Will

An organisation's assertiveness and morale, used to defend against Provoke and other propaganda and morale attacks. It adds to the mental stress track.

Overcome: Knuckle under and push through difficult times, pull together, overcome changes of management or conditions, etc.



Create an Advantage: Create advantages representing great morale, esprit de corps, or other organisational strength of will.

Defend: Defend against Provoke attacks.

Special: Average (+1) or Fair (+2) Will gives you a 3-point mental stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) also gives you a 4-point box; and Superb (+5) or above also gives you an additional mild consequence.

Extras: Mindscape Connections (see below).

STUNTS

✦ ***Esprit de Corps***
Gain a +2 defend bonus when personnel are acting in solidarity to resist morale attacks or propaganda campaigns.

ORGANISATION EXTRAS

Organisation extras represent equipment, special abilities, dedicated teams or auxiliary departments, and so on. Here are some examples.

★ ARMAMENT

Costs 1-3 stunts
Your organisation has light, medium, or heavy armament, representing physical weapons appropriate to its tech index. Gain a weapon:1 to weapon:3 rating for Security attacks.

★ AUDITORS

Costs 1 stunt and 1-3 skill points
Your organisation has a team of auditors to make Average (+1) to Good (+3) Bureaucracy attacks up to a 2-zone range.

★ CONSULTANTS

Costs 1 stunt
Your organisation has a team of consultants. Once per session, when you make **extra effort** and stress your organisation's mental stress track (page 142), you also create an *Eye on the Ball*-type advantage representing increased attention to detail and efficiency until the end of the session.

★ CONVOY

Costs 1 stunt
Once per session, your organisation may make any Resources action at up to 2 zones range.

★ COURIERS

Costs 1 stunt
Your organisation has a courier team who can transport information more rapidly than normal. Gain a +2 bonus to any roll where rapid communication is the goal.

★ DEFENCE SHIELD

Costs 1-3 stunts
Your organisation is protected by an energy shield. Gain a +1 to +3 defend bonus against Security attacks.

★ DIPLOMATIC TEAM

Costs 1 aspect and 3 skill points
Your organisation has a *Special Diplomatic Envoy* with a Good (+3) Rapport skill.

★ GESTALT COMMUNICATIONS

Costs 1 aspect and 1+ stunts
Your organisation has a *Gestalt Communication* aspect, and may take any Gestalt Communication extra (page 190) to use in organisation actions. Any prerequisites must be met.

★ INQUISITORS

Costs 1 aspect and 1 stunt
Your organisation has a *Team of Inquisitor Synthetics* to monitor personnel for deviation and assimilation by other organisations. When you burn mental stress when making **extra effort** (page 142), gain double the usual bonus.

★ MARKET MAKER SECTION

Costs 2 stunts
Your organisation has a team of market makers to open up new markets for your organisation. Gain a +2 bonus on Resources rolls to create *New Market*-type advantages on any single zone within a 2-zone range.

★ MEDICAL FACILITIES

Costs 1 stunt
Your organisation can use Technical to make character recovery actions.

★ MINDSCAPE CONNECTIONS

Costs 1 stunt
Commonality organisations have Mindscape connectivity by default; this extra lets your organisation use the Mindscape to make mental attacks on other organisations using Will.

★ MOLE

Costs 1 stunt

Your organisation has long-term sleeper agents. For a fate point, once per session, you can declare you have one in a target organisation. You may make a single Intrusion action at +2; if the target organisation is unaware of the mole, you face Mediocre (+0) passive opposition only — otherwise you face the normal opposition.

★ PRODUCTION FACILITIES

Costs 1 stunt and 1-3 skill points

You have a specialist production facility with an Average (+1) to Good (+3) Technical skill, letting you manufacture goods (page 441).

★ PROTECTIVE BUNKER

Costs 2-4 stunts

Your organisation has bunkers for its core operations, providing an armour:1 to armour:3 rating against physical attacks, and 1 additional mild physical consequence.

★ SABOTEURS

Costs 1 stunt

Your organisation has teams it can send out enabling it to make Assimilate attacks up to a 2-zone range.

★ SECURITY CADRE

Costs 1-3 skill points

Your organisation has a trained security force, letting you make Average (+1) to Good (+3) Security actions. This may be combined with Strike Force (below).

★ SKUNKWORKS

Costs 1 stunt

You have a secret branch which lets you use Technical instead of Stealth when creating advantages using your secret technical inventions, like a *Secret Research and Production Line* which lets you use Technical to resist scrutiny by Investigate, and so on.

★ SPIN DOCTOR

Costs 1 aspect and 1-3 skill points

Your organisation has a *Spin Doctor* with an Average (+1) to Good (+3) Deceive skill.

★ STARSHIP FACILITIES

Costs 1 stunt

Your organisation can make starship Technical actions, including repairs.

★ STRIKE FORCE

Costs 1 stunt

Your organisation can make Security attacks up to a 2-zone range. This may represent mercenary groups and special ops teams for static organisations, and ranged attacks for mobile organisations like armies. This may be combined with Security Cadre (above).

ORGANISATION ACTIONS

An organisation may take one action per exchange; characters belonging to organisations may use stunts or extras skills to act also.

Tech Index and Organisation Actions

Often interactions between organisations are modified by the difference in their tech indices. At the GM's discretion, give the higher tech organisation a bonus to its actions equal to the difference, or penalise the lower tech organisation the same amount (you shouldn't do both unless the context clearly demands it).

A T9 organisation makes a Security attack on a T4 organisation. The GM rules the higher tech organisation gains a +5 bonus on the attack. If this was a Bureaucracy attack instead, the GM might rule the tech difference was irrelevant and award no bonus.

Exchanges and Time Scales

Organisations tend to act on longer time scales than characters and constructs. Organisation exchanges last from 1 day to a month or more — usually closer to the latter.

Range and Zones

Organisations usually act against targets in their current zone, unless they have a stunt or extra permitting them to act further afield.

The size of an organisation zone is determined by its **reach** (page 266). An organisation with Planetary (+6) reach may target anywhere on the same planet as the same zone (range 0); an adjacent planet would be range 1, and so on. An organisation with Interplanetary (+7) reach can target **every planet** in the current octant or maybe subsector

as the same zone (range 0), and any planet in an adjacent octant or subsector as range 1.

MOVEMENT AND MANOEUVRE

Unlike characters and constructs, many organisations are static, unable to move. As a result they are dependent on extras and even characters (like the PCs) to act at range, or may only act against targets in their own zone.

Organisations like fleets and armies (page 277) may have a Manoeuvre skill and consequently move, using the normal movement rules.

Conflicts

Except for the relative lack of movement noted above, organisation conflict is similar to character conflict. Organisations attack with Assimilate, Provoke, Resources, and Security, and sometimes even Bureaucracy and Will, and defend with Manoeuvre, Structure, Resources, and Will. Credit conflicts are more frequent between organisations than characters and constructs.

WHO GOES FIRST?

In conflicts between mobile organisations like fleets and armies, **detection** (page 216) plays the deciding role in which side acts first and at what range. Detection rolls for organisations use Notice against Stealth. For other organisations, or fleets and armies not trying to avoid detection, use initiative order (page 151) determined by the following skills.

- For physical conflicts, use Notice, followed by Manoeuvre, then Structure.
- For mental conflicts, use Empathy, followed by Rapport, then Will.
- For credit conflicts, use Bureaucracy, followed by Contacts, then Resources.

ATTACKS

Most organisation attacks are made against targets in the same zone. Some skills, stunts, and extras allow attacks at range. Direct attacks include attacks on personnel, premises, and supply chains, using Security and Assimilate against the physical stress track and Resources against the credit stress track. Indirect attacks include attacks on an organisation's beliefs, reputation, and legal status, via propaganda attacks and media campaigns using Provoke and sometimes Resources.

A Continental (+5) corporacy makes a Provoke attack on an Interplanetary (+7) one in the Rim Sector. Both have Interstellar (+8) reach, meaning anywhere in the current (Rim) sector is range 0 for them. When the Continental (+5) corporacy attacks, the difference in scale means it gets a +4 bonus to its attack action, but incurs a -8 penalty to any mental stress damage done in the propaganda attack.

Attacking Part of an Organisation

Using the Assimilate skill (page 268), your organisation can isolate a smaller-scale part of a larger-scale organisation and attack it, trying to separate it from its parent organisation and make it into a nested organisation.

An organisation targeted like this still attacks and defends with all its skills and stress boxes, but may be attacked at the targeted scale (ie with reduced or no scale penalties, depending on the attacker's scale).

You may inflict stress and consequences on this smaller-scale instance of the organisation. The *Targeting the Local Organisation*-type advantage remains for the current scene, or until any stress or consequences are removed, whichever is longer.

If your organisation takes out or inflicts an extreme consequence on the smaller-scale instance of the organisation, then the instance must change one of its aspects and become a **nested organisation** at that scale; see "Organisation Scale Change" below.

CREATING ADVANTAGES IN ORGANISATION CONFLICTS

Creating advantages in organisation conflicts is contextual, and uses a variety of skills. Organisations may use Investigate or Knowledge to create advantages relating to organisation weaknesses, structures, or cultures, which can be used in Assimilate or Provoke propaganda attacks; or skills such as Manoeuvre or Structure to gain superior physical positioning or configuration to make or resist attacks.

Additionally, characters may create advantages in organisation conflicts — see "Characters and Organisations" below.

SITUATION ASPECTS IN ORGANISATION CONFLICTS

In addition to aspects created as advantages, the environment can affect organisation conflicts. Situation aspects like *Social Unrest, Economic Collapse, Cultural Conflict* may affect physical, mental, and credit conflicts, and even *Low Gravity* or *Vacuum World* can be used in conflicts like physical attacks between armies and fleets.

Damage to Organisations

Damage to organisations is usually a result of organisation conflicts, or possibly environmental hazards. Organisation consequences include:

- **Mild consequences:** *Inefficiencies Exposed, Outmanoeuvred, Mutters of Disbelief.*
- **Moderate consequences:** *Structural Inadequacies, Reporting Chain Destroyed, Active Discontent.*
- **Severe consequences:** *Management Collapse, Driven From the Field, Revolution!*

ORGANISATION SCALE CHANGE

Organisations may shrink in scale by being **taken out** (page 156), if that's the likely result of an attack or event (like war or plague). An organisation which is taken out becomes disorganised, disunited, and reduces its skill point total to half the maximum skill points of the scale below.

An Enormous (+3) organisation of 100,000 people with 10 skill points, with high concept Space Force Forward Base*, is taken out by the Venu. The dazed survivors find there are only a few hundred of them left, a Huge (+2) organisation with a skill point total of 5. The base has lost personnel, facilities, and defences. It redefines its high concept as* Survivors in the Space Force Ruins.

Locally-targeted smaller-scale instances of an organisation (page 276) which incur extreme consequences or are taken out immediately become **nested organisations** at that scale. The parent organisation remains its original size, but the nested organisation effectively "shrinks" to the new scale as described above.

REPAIRING AND REBUILDING ORGANISATIONS

Organisation recovery actions are often a matter of throwing resources at it until it can rebuild; the Resources skill is therefore used for physical consequence recovery. Credit recovery involves leveraging favours and using investor and stockholder networks, and uses Bureaucracy. Empathy is used for mental stress recovery actions.

DAMAGE TO YOUR ORGANISATION EXTRA

Having an organisation extra means you can get an organisation into serious trouble, up to and including its destruction. A PC's superiors in a shared organisation extra will probably concede in a conflict rather than be destroyed, however, and may oppose the PC directly if a character's actions run counter to the organisation's ethos (see "Vying For Control", page 105).

Special Situations

Organisation conflicts also occur in the following special situations.

CHARACTERS AND ORGANISATIONS

Normally characters can't directly affect organisations. Not only are they different in scale, they're also qualitatively different. Characters describing their actions appropriately may affect organisations, especially if they incur scale penalties (page 174); a stunt usually allows this. Otherwise, the only way a character can affect an organisation is by creating an advantage.

Max Proffitt uses his Contacts skill to create a Scandalous Rumours *advantage about the leader of the Fiver Separatists organisation on Olkennedy. Later, he can compel that aspect to maybe force the Fivers into damage limitation, or pass the free invoke to Thaddeus Clay for him to use with his SCI Force organisation extra to make an organisation action.*

Damage to Characters in Organisation Conflicts

If you have an organisation extra, you can take any organisation stress or consequences yourself. Additionally, some organisation stunts target individual characters. Organisations can also create situation aspects on zones where there are characters, perhaps creating area effects or requiring an overcome action.

In response to Max's rumourmongering, the Fiver Separatists organisation uses its Security skill to create a Bomb Attack *situation aspect on the domiciliary where Max is staying. Sarah treats this as a +2 explosive attack on everyone in the zone.*

ARMY AND FLEET CONFLICTS

Armies and fleets can be statted as mobile organisations, usually Huge (+2) or Enormous (+3) in scale. They focus on making Security attacks and defending with Manoeuvre, and may have Armaments and Defence Shield extras; some armies and fleets are also skilled in Provoke attacks on morale.

Armies and fleets are good candidates for decreasing in scale when taken out. They're often nested organisations of a larger polity, and may receive recovery actions from those parent organisations.

Characters may create advantages on armies and fleets as usual, and take appropriate stunts to affect them in physical conflict. GMs may let PCs or constructs attack army or fleet organisations, subject to the scale rules, as long as their description of their actions justifies it.

As the Fiver army attacks the Commonality embassy, Thaddeus Clay orders Skin-of-Our-Teeth to fire on the attackers. Organisation exchanges last at least a day, so Sarah declares that Skin's attack action doesn't represent a single strike, but a series of strafing sorties on the army where she takes return fire. Skin's null cannon may cause casualties among the Fiver army, but equally she may be brought down by their Security skill and Armament extra.

MASS COMBAT

Mass combat occurs when two or more army or fleet organisations come into conflict. PCs may lead these organisations with stunts or extras, or they may act independently at scale.

The two key concepts in mass combat are the relative scales of the participants, and the tactical grouping of their constituent elements — whether individual combatants, vehicles, starships, or other entities.

Setting Up Your Side

If you have 10,000 individual combatants on your side, you can organise them as 1 division sized unit of 10,000 members, or 10 battalion-sized units of 1000 members. This directly affects its performance in play — in particular, the number of skill points and the scale of each unit.

This is mitigated by the fact that a player can only act once per exchange. In mass combat, he could use one unit as an extra, and perhaps use a stunt to "attach" any unassociated units as minions, to gain a teamwork bonus. If all the PCs have army or fleet unit extras, then they can all act through them; otherwise, unassigned PCs can provide teamwork bonuses, or undertake individual actions if the scale difference allows them to be effective.

As GM, you can organise your units as you like, according to the needs of your scenario. We recommend you create the central, largest, top-level army or fleet unit as a major organisation and any smaller yet significant units as supporting organisations — perhaps the left and right flanks of a field army, for example. Smaller units can be minor organisations.

Scale

The scale of a mass combat unit is usually determined by how many combatants it contains. Characters with mass combat unit extras can act at that scale, or via stunts such as Commander-in-Chief or Overseer (page 94). Characters who don't usually have mass combat unit stunts or extras but who find themselves in a situation where they can play a role in mass combat can use a milestone to change an aspect, stunt, or skill to reflect temporarily taking some control of such an extra.

Constructs

Constructs may also conflict with army and fleet units, particularly vehicles and starships. Usually you'll use your construct skills and stunts directly against army and fleet organisations, taking appropriate scale penalties or bonuses. In very large-scale mass combat, you may wish to define fleet organisations comprising multiple ships.

CORPORACY CONFLICTS

The Commonality's **corporacies** (page 290) are vast interstellar megacorporations, whose power and resources dwarf many polities. Unlike polities, however, their purpose is not to govern populations, but to produce and distribute resources in places where Commonality planning and control can't reach. As such, they are ruthless and competitive, and occasionally very efficient. Despite the Commonality's best efforts, they frequently come into conflict.

Conflicts **between** corporacies are generally credit conflicts, where each party attempts to undercut, out-produce, or bankrupt the other. Under threat of Commonality intervention, they generally avoid armed conflicts, overt propaganda attacks, threats, and intimidation.

When corporacies attack other organisations, however, they have no such qualms. In particular, corporacy activity on the Commonality Fringe against Fringe World governments is often violent and bloody, creating turmoil, unrest, and even revolution in their never-ending quest for new resources and markets. For the Commonality, in its drive for a gradual expansion of authority and culture beyond the Frontier, the low-level corporacy violence, preparing the ground for subsequent Commonality integration, seems a small price to pay.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN
THE NEW COMMONALITY ERA

"Were we on the brink of extinction? I'd say so, yes. Three or four centuries ago, no one had any interest in anything. It was like everything worth knowing had already been known, everything worth doing already done, and a million times over. We were happy enough, with our drugs and our slaves, and our endless diversions. But we were on our way out: something had gone, some zest, some spice, that made it all worthwhile.

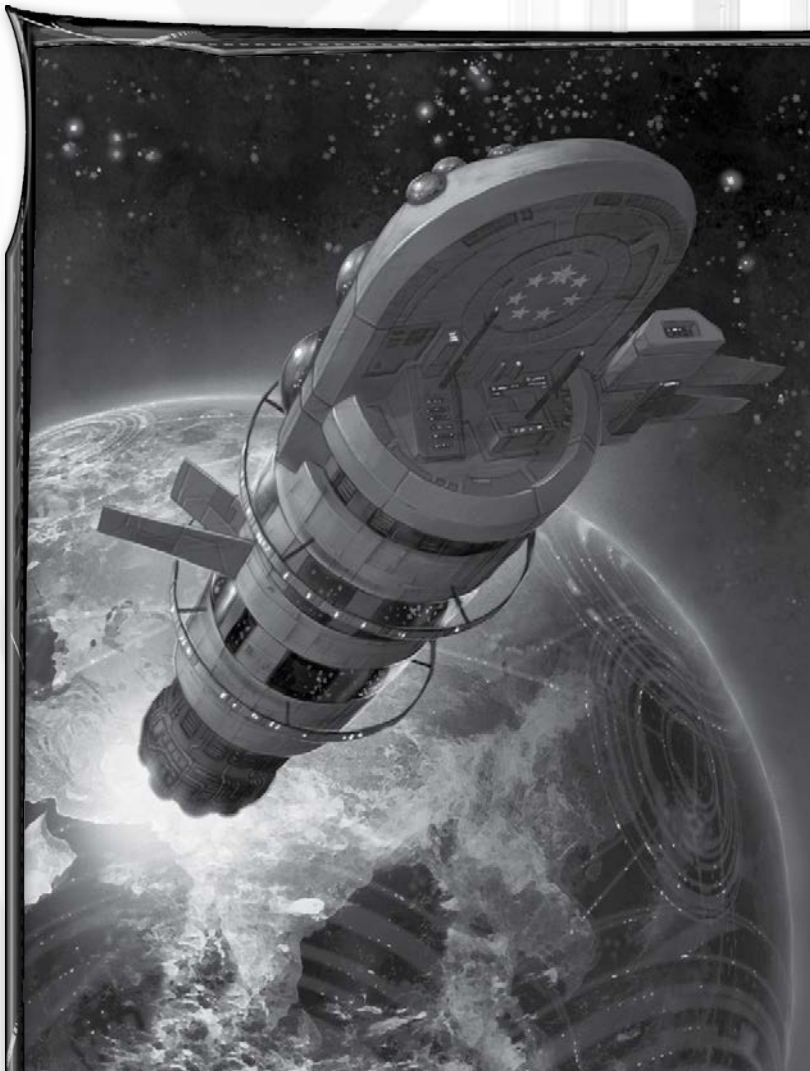
"Now you get to live as long as you want, as long as you don't get killed. Life is dangerous again. And, somehow, that suddenly makes it all worth living."

— Kasim Kasah, Technopsi Redactor-in-Chief,
Ministry of Evolutionary Planning (Mysore Vallis Chapter), Europa

HISTORY

For millennia humankind spread from Old Earth in great colony ships. Colonies grew in isolation, taking strange and surprising paths, dealing with the challenges of new worlds with whatever lay to hand. Messages from Old Earth took centuries to arrive, and while the stars sang with the songs of men, it was a cacophony, and no interstellar civilisation ever arose.

Two hundred years ago the discovery of 2-space thrust these worlds together after millennia apart. Conflict and chaos reigned. Old Earth, which controlled access to 2-space, prevailed, and the New Commonality Era — also called the Expansionary Era — was declared, the first true interstellar civilisation of humankind. Some worlds still resist, inimical or simply too alien after millennia of divergent evolution, but a new era has begun, revitalising the once decadent cultures of Old Earth. Where money had been unknown for millennia, New Traders now ply the spacelanes with their "Expansionary Era Currency Units"; where Old Earth had been a vast and indulgent garden, explorers now push onto new worlds and bizarre and hazardous environments. It's an age of exploration and invention, a new Golden Age for humankind — the Second Age of Space.



Commonality Prehistory

The Commonality emerges gradually from the dark age which followed the enigmatic Fall of Man twelve millennia ago. Before that there are stories of a prehistoric age of space, but the ancient Cola Station in Old Earth orbit is the only relic from that distant time. Clarity comes with the Autumn Cultures, petty states left over from an era of failed world government.

The Autumn Cultures were the product of a lack of imagination, an inability or unwillingness to tackle the problems which faced humankind — the need to unify, to abandon archaic economic organisation, to embrace the species-level challenge of leaving Old Earth. They marked a growing refusal to mature, a period of stagnation, conflict, and decline.

It's unclear what the Fall of Man was. War, collapse, ecological or economic catastrophe, or all of these things have been suggested, but its consequences are clear: humankind could not cope with the glaciation which followed, and what remained of civilisation fell to savagery. For a thousand years the archaeological record is confused, a succession of tribal migrations, petty tyrants and warlords, and the return of much of Old Earth to wilderness. Anything approximating civilisation appears to have been confined to closed cities; the wilderness became the province of mutants and wildmen, and the leftover war machines of the past.

The first glimmerings of the Commonality that would restore humankind began in Shine. With increasing confidence in climate control, the Shine Commonality pushed back the ice which had frozen the world, and unified it under a benevolent if overbearing rule.

The First Age of Space

The Shine Commonality lasted five hundred years, and culminated in the return of humankind to space and the colonisation of the solar system. By the time the early generation ships left for nearby stars, the Shine Commonality had been reborn as the Commonality of Humankind, and the First Age of Space had begun.

The early colonisation ships were fraught with problems, and there were as many catastrophic failures as successes. Gradually, humankind established toeholds on alien worlds, and with the invention of stasis fields the trickle of humanity to the stars became a flood. The Great Diaspora lasted five thousand years, a constant procession of stasis ships of all sizes, leaving the teeming solar system and its oppressive and regulated worlds for new homes where freedom of expression and alternative forms of belief, identity, and social organisation could be expressed without interference.

Although contact with many colony ships was lost, many reported home, using lightspeed communications taking centuries to announce that, in the depths of space, the stars now sang with the songs of humankind.

Early in the First Age of Space anagathic treatments transformed human society, and as human lifespans began to be measured in many centuries people developed societies which husbanded resources and planned for the future in long-term projects at last. At the same time a deep conservatism began to show in the worlds of Manhome — Old Earth's solar system — and the nearest colony worlds, whose long-lived populations became risk-averse. Uplifted animals performed hazardous or disagreeable jobs, and human society became introspective, concerned with security, long life, and the preservation of memory and the past.

Many disagreed with these tendencies, which nevertheless spurred the ongoing diaspora as people turned their backs on security and introspection for lives of unpredictable vitality on the unknown frontier. This time the new waves of diaspora were not just human, and uplifted animals — the **xenomorphs** — for the first time became significant populations of the new colony worlds.

Eventually even the Commonality's rulers realised the peril facing Old Earth. The Mortality Statutes, which fixed human lifespans at five hundred years, were not principally a response to overpopulation, but rather were born from a fear of stagnation, of the need to refresh the Commonality's meme and gene pools with new blood and ideas, to prevent stagnation and decay. It's still unclear whether they succeeded.

Decline

The diaspora continued for another three millennia, but the Commonality civilisation which developed in Manhome and the dozens of star systems close to Old Earth became old. With the development of early forms of the Mindscape, whole populations seemed to slumber in the exploration of memories and fantastic yet unreal worlds; for centuries, it seemed that the xenomorphs and the new synthetic intelligences, born from Mindscape technologies, carried the flame for the whole Commonality.

Eventually, the diaspora ceased. Occasional ships still left for unknown stars, but by the end of the fifth millennium, energy and enthusiasm seemed to have left humankind. The effort of monitoring slower-than-light contact with far-flung colonies seemed not worth the effort, and the Commonality began to contract, eventually settling on the few dozen star systems close to Old Earth where communications took less than fifty years. Commonality society turned inwards, obsessed with intrigue and ritual. Hand-in-hand with social decay came superstition, and the Commonality proscribed things which disturbed social tranquillity — news and religion and antisocial ideas — and promoted social harmony and quiescence above all.

Table 16-1: A Timeline of Commonality History

New Commonality Era	First Age of Space	Event
14500 BE	-4000 FA	Prehistoric Age of Technology.
14000-12500 BE	-3500 FA	Autumn Cultures and the Fall of Man.
12500-11000 BE	-2000 FA	Dark Age: Glaciation and Ice Age.
11000 BE	-500 FA	Commonality: Unification of world civilisation as global climate control established.
10500 BE	0 FA	First Age of Space: Colonisation of the Solar System and early interstellar voyages.
10500-5500 BE	0-5000 FA	The Great Diaspora: Invention of stasis fields; humankind spreads to the stars.
9500 BE	1000 FA	Longevity: Anagathic treatments transform human society.
7000 BE	3500 FA	Orion Contact: First contact with the most distant of Earth's colonies, the civilisation which will one day be known as Venu.
5500 BE	5000 FA	End of Exploration: Commonality colonisation efforts gradually cease.
4000 BE	6500 FA	Orion Contact: Second contact with the Orion cluster.
1500 BE	9000 FA	Stagnation: Commonality in full contraction; superstition and social decay accelerates. Religion and news declared illegal on Old Earth.
1000 BE	9500 FA	Orion Contact: Third contact with the Orion cluster.
1 NCE	10501 FA	Expansionary Era — the Second Age of Space: Invention of planing. Humankind travels to the stars and finds them already inhabited by Old Earth's descendants. Establishment of the New Commonality.
70 NCE	10570 FA	Orion Contact — the Venu Empire: First visit to the Orion cluster ends with the Commonality ship being seized. The Commonality does not retaliate. Further clandestine surveys reveal a paranoid militaristic society in the cluster — the Empire of Venu.
110 NCE	10610 FA	The Venu War: The Empire of Venu invades Commonality Space with newly built war fleet and tries to conquer Old Earth. The tide is turned at the heroic Battle of Styphon V.
120 NCE	10620 FA	The Successor States: In the chaotic aftermath of the Venu War a number of small interstellar polities form in the vacuum left by the retreat of Venu and the Commonality. These become known as the Successor States.
150 NCE	10650 FA	The Stop-Start War: A series of skirmishes on the Venu frontier. The Venu retreat; the Commonality does not feel it yet has the strength to follow.
160 NCE	10660 FA	The Xeno Wars: A backlash against xenomorphs in some of the Successor States following the Stop-Start War causes revolution, fuelled by xenomorph arrivals from across the Commonality.
171 NCE	10671 FA	The Sentient Alliance: Foundation of a xenomorph polity in the Successor States by Commonality mandate following the Xeno Wars.
193 NCE	10693 FA	Present day.

Human society became a gilded cage, its captives drugged and soporific, their long lives ending in pointless and painless euthanasia, all disagreeable jobs done by teeming faceless billions of xenomorphs and synthetics. Stagnation slipped unnoticed into decline, and when the distant lost colony worlds finally called home, it seemed nobody cared.

Renewal — The Second Age of Space

By the eleventh millennium of the First Age of Space, it was clear to any dispassionate observer that the Commonality was in trouble. The human species as it was known was degenerating; the social fabric was a dry husk, waiting only a puff of wind to blow it away. The rulers of the Commonality, in their desire to protect, were suffocating the society they had sworn to defend.

The discovery of **planing**, the technology to travel faster-than-light in 2-space, is still one of history's great mysteries, and highly controversial. It came at *exactly* the right time for the Commonality. At first no one cared; but as the first returnees from the rediscovered colonies became overnight celebrities in the Manhome Mindscape, ripples of excitement spread. Here was novelty; here were young, vibrant, excited human beings, free from Commonality conditioning, questioning and challenging everything they saw. And there were more of them out there!

In a spirit of desperate friendship, the peoples of the Commonality embraced the rediscovered worlds and welcomed their peoples with open arms. By the time the one hundredth lost colony had been found, alien life had been detected, and First Contact with true alien minds. The Commonality was in a ferment of missionary zeal, and the galaxy seemed a wonderland, promising untold treasures. In a surfeit of bright-eyed enthusiasm a New Commonality of Humankind was declared, a revitalised civilisation and a Second Age of Space.

Conflict

First contact with the Venu brought the realisation that all was not perfect in this new Golden Age. A lost colony in the distant Orion Cluster, there had been only three communications in the entire First Age of Space. None of these had prepared the Commonality contact team for what they would find; a savage xenophobic society dwelling amongst the blasted ruins of a technological civilisation, with a fanatical hatred of anything that wasn't genetically pure human and worshipping a "god-emperor" whose word was law. Until Venu Contact, Commonality contact teams had been unarmed, and not equipped for conflict. The contact team starship was seized, and all contact lost; subsequent efforts were met with violence, and the Commonality withdrew, to plan a better strategy for peaceful cultural exchange.

Forty years later, the Venu returned. Suddenly and in great numbers, piloting primitive yet heavily-armed starships reverse-engineered from Commonality planeships, they attacked Commonality worlds and made a beeline for Old Earth itself. Countless star systems were transformed into war zones, as in a 5-year blitzkrieg the Venu fleet subjugated world after world, and the Commonality fell back. As the invasion force approached the newly-designated "Core Worlds", the Commonality realised it faced an existential threat. In the solar system of Styphon, the Commonality threw everything it had against the Venu, and fought them to a standstill. The Venu, clearly overextended, began to withdraw, and the Commonality prepared to re-enter the devastated star systems and rebuild. The new Commonality "manowars" which were born in the Battle of Styphon V were the vanguard of this force.

The Commonality pushed the Venu almost back to Orion. Worlds closest to the Venu homeworld had been transformed, occupied by Venu populations or scarred by occupation. Reluctant to re-incorporate potentially hostile populations immediately, the Commonality re-drew its borders, acknowledging the client "Successor States" between it and the Venu. Attempts to approach the Venu homeworld with diplomatic overtures were met with force, and the "Stop-Start War" continued for years along the Venu border until the Commonality withdrew, establishing a "Quarantine Zone" with the hostile and xenophobic state. Even today the Venu question is unresolved, and one way or another everyone is expecting war.

The Xeno Wars and the Sentient Alliance

By 160 NCE the Stop-Start War had fizzled, Venu and Commonality forces withdrawing. Pro-Venu states instigated anti-xenomorph pogroms on pro-Commonality worlds, which rapidly became a proxy conflict — the Xeno Wars.

Dates for the end of the Xeno Wars vary, but twenty-two years ago in 171 NCE a political alliance between pro-Xenomorph, pro-Commonality worlds arose which was strong enough to quieten most of the violence. This "Sentient Alliance" is the first xenomorph state, a buffer between the Commonality and the Venu and their Successor State satellites.

The Commonality Today

It is the year 193 of the New Commonality Era. For two hundred years the Commonality has been expanding, contacting lost colony worlds. In places they've bombed recalcitrant governments back into the Stone Age; in others they've created "autonomous regions" and planted psy-ops to coax populations into the Commonality fold. There are



interdictions, quarantines, and embargoes — and all the efforts required to enforce them.

As the Commonality pushes outwards, it finds life everywhere. Most intelligent life is descended from colonists from the First Age of Space, and sometimes divergent evolution has made this very alien indeed; but some has also been extra-terrestrial. So far, none have independently developed faster-than-light travel, although many have adopted it with enthusiasm.

EXPLORATION AND CONTACT

The Expansion's early years were a blitzkrieg: worlds resisting Commonality control were simply mowed down. The Commonality believed it was doing this for the best reasons, and was often contrite afterwards, but self-determination was never an option for contacted worlds.

With time the Commonality has come to feel it doesn't have to use ordnance *all* the time to impose its will. Instrumentalities have become subtle, using psy-ops and long-term manipulation: they want to *incorporate* worlds, after all, not destroy them.

Cultural Neutralisation

Commonality policy emphasises self-protection: does a world pose a threat? Neutralisation of cultural threats is the highest priority, and whole cultures may be quarantined and even (theoretically) destroyed, though the Commonality isn't believed to have ever resorted to this final sanction. Cultures are evaluated for technological, material, and cultural resources, and the Commonality deals with threats simultaneously, establishing embassies or covert ops and exploiting resources at the same time.

EXPANSION AND THE CULTURE WORLDS

The Expansionary Era has opened a door which it's been impossible to close. Virulent alien cultures and vibrant new ideas threaten Commonality stability, forcing it to protect itself. SCI Force and the Instrumentalities deal with direct cultural attacks; when they find a colony world with a strong and vibrant culture they can exploit, they reinforce that culture to be a bastion against cultural contamination from beyond the Frontier. Often these cultures are new and unknown; sometimes they are descendants of historical Old Earth cultures. In both cases SCI Force encourages them to develop their cultural identities, while defusing dangerous elements and using their strengths to defend the Frontier. The Commonality creates limited cultural conflict within its own borders, hoping it will act as inoculation rather than disease.

How Do the Fringe Worlds View the Commonality?

While lost colonies are populated by humans or near-relatives, they don't always receive the Commonality with open arms. Here are some of the more unusual reactions which Fringe Worlds have displayed when confronted with the Commonality's arrival.

Children of the Gods: *The culture is awed, and cedes authority to the Commonality's representatives. This hero worship may turn to aggression if the Commonality misbehaves.*

Interstellar Fascists: *The culture's views on liberty are less repressive than the Commonality's, regarding Commonality culture as something imposed on them (which it is…). At worst this degrades into resistance and quarantine; at best the world may be a prime culture world candidate (page 348).*

Men Like Gods: *The Commonality is too much to comprehend, and the culture treats its representatives like supernatural envoys. Worship, sacrifice, and darker offerings may be made to curry the envoys' favour and placate their wrath; if the Commonality isn't careful, the culture collapses quickly.*

Thank God You Came! *The culture preserves a memory of Old Earth, and perhaps even one of its ancient cultures, and welcomes the Commonality as long-lost brethren. What happens next — when each culture finds out what the other is* really *like — is where it gets interesting.*

Weird Alien Invaders: *The culture is too paranoid to accept the Commonality, perhaps exacerbated by evolutionary divergence. It treats the Commonality as invaders, violent resistance usually resulting in quarantine.*

POLITIES

Polities are political organisations, usually the rulers of nations, planets, and interstellar federations and empires. Conflicts between polities are most frequently credit and Provoke conflicts; physical conflicts usually mean war.



The New Commonality of Humankind

In one form or another the Commonality of Humankind has existed in the Manhome system for 10,000 years.

Given the vast numbers of Commonality citizens, concepts of representative government are nonsensical at Commonality-level, although on individual planets and petty clusters some forms are permitted. In the Core Worlds, in the interests of social stability, ideas like democracy, free trade, and religion are largely illegal, although increasingly tolerated towards the Fringe.

Commonality government is a devolved benevolent dictatorship, diffuse and pervasive. For millennia it rigidly controlled Old Earth and a handful of Core Worlds, at the cost of eventual stagnation and decay; since Expansion, it has strained to encompass many thousands of worlds, as the "New" Commonality adapts it to govern a galactic empire. By nature it is oligarchic, with governors and apparatchiks appointed from the top down; often resistant to change, it's plagued by inefficiency bordering on chaos and endless political intrigue. It often strays into ethically dubious territory to solve problems.

THE INSTRUMENTALITIES

The Instrumentalities are one of the two arms of Commonality government. Their nearest historical analogues are the civil services or mediaeval guilds: they aren't commercial entities, but organisational structures for executing the will of the Custodians of the Commonality (see below) — its mysterious and shadowy pseudo-rulers. They're the "active" part of the Commonality government.

Instrumentalities are Commonality-wide (Galactic (+9) reach), and organise themselves as required. Each has multiple arms, including executive, enforcement, and intelligence. There are five principal instrumentalities.

The Armed Forces Instrumentality (AFI)

Until recently, the Commonality had no need of a standing army; even the notion seemed archaic. Contact with the Venu changed all that; nowadays the Armed Forces

Major Organisation

THE NEW COMMONALITY OF HUMANKIND

Scale: *Galactic (+9)*
Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4
Reach: *Galactic (+9)*
Mental Stress: 1 2 3 4
Tech Index: *T9*
Credit Stress: 1 2 3 4
Consequences: *3 / 4*

ASPECTS

High Concept: Interstellar Government Uniting All of Commonality Space

Trouble: We Governed Old Earth for Millennia!

Other Aspects: Byzantine and Complex, Rigid Custodian Control, Centrifugal and Centripetal Forces

SKILLS

Epic (+7): *Resources*
Fantastic (+6): *Bureaucracy, Knowledge*
Superb (+5): *Assimilate, Provoke, Rapport*
Great (+4): *Science, Security, Technical, Will*
Good (+3): *Contacts, Empathy, Intrusion, Investigate, Structure*
Fair (+2): *Deceive, Notice*

STUNTS

✦ ***Esprit de Corps:*** *+2 defend bonus vs morale attacks and propaganda campaigns.*

✦ ***Innovator:*** *+2 overcome bonus when making a breakthrough with Science.*

✦ ***Known Knowns:*** *+2 defend bonus against Deceive.*

✦ ***Only Connect:*** *Use Investigate instead of Knowledge to deduce facts from observation.*

✦ ***Populist:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus when appealing to "the people".*

HALO

Mindscape Connectivity

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Armament (Heavy):*** *Weapon:3 rating for Security attacks.*

★ ***Couriers:*** *+2 bonus when rapid communication is the goal.*

★ ***Inquisitors:*** Team of Inquisitor Synthetics*; double bonus when burning mental stress for extra effort.*

Instrumentality recruits and trains on almost all Commonality worlds.

The situation is chaotic. The AFI General Staff sentiences coordinate a myriad different armies, corps, divisions, legions, regiments, with their own traditions and organisations, but it will take time to hone the AFI into an effective fighting force. Right now the AFI aims at a locally-coordinated defence network (subsector-level at best); it hasn't been tested in the fire of war, and will likely be found wanting.

AFI characters belong to a "lower tier" organisation like a subsector or octant division, or even a planetary legion. AFI-level organisation is nice in theory, but still a pipe dream.

Typical Occupations: Administrator, AFI Trooper.

The Internal Security Instrumentality (ISI)

Many aspects of Commonality life would seem bizarre and oppressive to our 21st century eyes. The Fringe Worlds are more free-thinking, their customs often shocking to Commonality sensibilities, but the Core Worlds are a web of byzantine customs and prohibitions. Trade and money are social taboos in the Core, religion and democracy are illegal, and the uncontrolled dissemination of news is banned.

Where the Core Worlds and Fringe meet, there's friction, and the Internal Security Instrumentality has its hands full keeping the peace — often despite the unfathomable machinations of SCI Force. ISI characters are the interstellar police and intelligence agents, investigators, and crime fighters.

Typical Occupations: Administrator, CORESEC Enforcer, Mindscape Hacker, Sci-Tech, Security Specialist, Spy.



The Space Force Instrumentality

Space Force is in a state of flux. Originally a civilian exploration and transport organisation, since the first Venu War it's been quickly militarised, and is still learning. It has a huge intelligence bureau, frequently in conflict with SCI Force, gathering strategic, tactical, and technological know-how from contacted worlds; as well as an exploration bureau, responsible for the Event Horizon Probes and the rediscovery of lost colonies beyond the Commonality Frontier.

Typical Occupations: Administrator, Archaeologist, Deep Space Explorer, Meditech, Scout, Sentient Starship, Space Force Marine, Space Force Mediator, Starship Engineer, Starship Pilot.

The Communications Instrumentality

The Communications Instrumentality manages inter-world communications, including diplomatic missions and the Mindscape. It includes diplomatic, Mindscape technical and operations staff, sentinels, and technopsi agents.

Typical Occupations: Administrator, Ambassador, Gestalt Controller, Mindjammer, Mindscape Engineer, Negotiator, Node Mind, Security Agent, Sentient Starship, Technopsi Redactor.



The Security and Cultural Integrity Instrumentality (SCI Force)

SCI Force protects the Commonality against internal and external threats, including powerful ideologies and meme attacks (see **Chapter 17: Cultures**). It has its own pilots, marines, and military, separate from the AFI and Space Force.

Typical Occupations: Administrator, Contact Specialist, Culture Agent, Memetic Engineer, Military, Negotiator, SCI Force Enforcer, Sentient Starship, Starship Pilot, Technopsi Redactor.

SCI Force is frequently a source of adventure in the New Commonality Era, handling the "Five Stages" of cultural integration (page 306) on rediscovered worlds. It comprises four bureaus:

The Evaluation Bureau

Popularly known as "Bugs and Slugs", the Evaluation Bureau handles the **Stage Zero Interdiction and Manipulation** (page 306) of rediscovered worlds. It's a scary bureau, in an abstract, clinical way.

The Contact Bureau

Handling **Stage One Contact** (page 307), this is the more scientific and least frightening of the bureaus — although ruthless in its operations.

The Acculturation Bureau

Handling **Stage Two Normalisation** and **Stage Three Acculturation** (pages 307 and 308), the Acculturation Bureau fields special operations teams for "sanctions" and cultural manipulations.

The Monitor Bureau

Also known as the "Behaviour Police" or "Hush Ops", the Monitor Bureau handles **Stage Four Cultural Integrity** (page 308). It's the scariest of the bureaus — in a "stop doing that or die" kind of way.

THE MINISTRIES

The ministries, also known as **directorates**, are the second arm of the Commonality government, coordinating and creating the policies which the instrumentalities carry out. They're the passive, administrative part of the Commonality government — the occupiers of the halls of power, the strategists and intriguers. Most characters from the minis-

Major Organisation

SCI FORCE

Scale: *Planetary (+6)*
Physical Stress: 1 2 3
Reach: *Galactic (+9)*
Mental Stress: 1 2 3 4
Tech Index: *T9*
Credit Stress: 1 2 3 4
Consequences: *3 / 3*

ASPECTS
High Concept: The Commonality's Shield Against Cultural Contamination!

Trouble: Ruthless Pragmatists

Other Aspects: We Won't Make the Venu Mistake Again, SCI Force Sees All, Ask Not What SCI Force Can Do for You…

SKILLS
Superb (+5): *Provoke*
Great (+4): *Deceive, Will*
Great (+3): *Intrusion, Resources, Security*
Fair (+2): *Bureaucracy, Investigate, Rapport, Stealth, Structure*
Average (+1): *Contacts, Empathy, Knowledge, Manoeuvre, Notice, Technical*

STUNTS
✦ ***Decentralised Structure:*** *1/session, reduce a moderate consequence to mild, or remove a mild completely.*

✦ ***Esprit de Corps:*** *+2 defend bonus vs morale attacks and propaganda campaigns.*

✦ ***Extreme Sanction:*** *Make Security actions against characters.*

✦ ***Known Knowns:*** *+2 defend bonus against Deceive.*

✦ ***Only Connect:*** *Use Investigate instead of Knowledge to deduce facts from observation.*

HALO
Mindscape Connectivity

Gestalt Communications: Gestalt Communication *aspect; Stage I Gestalt Communication stunt (+2 overcome bonus to persuade, intimidate, provoke, elicit emotional responses).*

Mindscape Connections: *Make mental attacks on other organisations using Will.*

OTHER EXTRAS
★ ***Inquisitors:*** Team of Inquisitor Synthetics; *double bonus when burning mental stress for extra effort.*

★ ***Strike Force:*** *Make Security attacks up to 2-zone range*

tries will be administrators (page 52), although those from the Core Worlds may be CORESPAN operatives (page 63).

Ministries interact at sector-level in an umbrella organisation called the **Pansectorate**; there's a Pansectoral Moot in session at every sector capital.

The Ministry of Broadcast Propaganda

For millennia the Commonality has believed that a happy population is one that is constantly informed about life's positive aspects — individual achievements, acts of heroism, good things that happen — and exhorted to emulate socially productive values like cooperation, selflessness, and positive reinforcement. More cynical minds might call this brainwashing, but the Ministry of Broadcast Propaganda doesn't see it that way — its job is the priceless social responsibility of **education**, from cradle to grave.

The ministry manages what passes for news in the Core Worlds, where unrestrained reporting is illegal, and its agents are found throughout Commonality Space, looking for positive stories and putting a positive spin on events everywhere. Ministry agents often conflict

SCI Force Teams

SCI Force operatives are organised into operations teams associated (often permanently) with specific bureaus. Operations teams include: Construction and Reconstruction, Insertion, Manipulation, Research, Sanction, Science, Technical. Teams are sometimes combined ("Sanction and Insertion Teams" are frequent these days), and members may be seconded to other teams for specific operations. See ***Chapter 17: Cultures*** *for a discussion of SCI Force cultural operations (page 306).*

Supporting Organisation

THE ACCULTURATION BUREAU

Scale: *Continental (+5)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Reach: *Galactic (+9)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2

Tech Index: *T9* ***Credit Stress:*** 1 2

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: The Invisible Guiding Hand, Ruthless and Analytical, Behind Enemy Lines, Who Manipulates the Manipulators?

Skills: *Great (+4) Assimilate, Provoke; Good (+3) Deceive, Security; Fair (+2) Empathy, Stealth; Average (+1) Investigate, Manoeuvre*

STUNTS

✦ ***Arbitration and Reconciliation:*** *Use Empathy in recovery actions for moderate and severe consequences.*

✦ ***Divide and Conquer:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus to target a local instance of an organisation.*

✦ ***Extreme Sanction:*** *Make Security actions against characters.*

✦ ***Only Connect:*** *Use Investigate instead of Knowledge to deduce facts from observation.*

✦ ***Public Relations:*** *+2 create an advantage Deceive bonus.*

HALO

Mindscape Connectivity

Gestalt Communications: Gestalt Communication *aspect; Stage I Gestalt Communication stunt (+2 overcome bonus to persuade, intimidate, provoke, elicit emotional responses).*

Mindscape Connections: *Make mental attacks on other organisations using Will.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Diplomatic Team:*** *Special Diplomatic Envoy with Good (+3) Rapport.*

★ ***Inquisitors:*** Team of Inquisitor Synthetics; *double bonus when burning mental stress for extra effort.*

★ ***Mole:*** *1/session, pay 1FP to make a single Intrusion attack with a +2 bonus vs Mediocre (+0) or normal passive opposition.*

★ ***Saboteurs:*** *Make Assimilate attacks up to 2-zone range.*

★ ***Strike Force:*** *Make Security attacks up to 2-zone range.*

Supporting Organisation

THE RIM SECTOR PANSECTORATE

Scale: *Planetary (+6)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Reach: *Interstellar (+8)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T9* ***Credit Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Unified Front for the Rim Sector Ministries, Planners Rather Than Doers, Our Sector Is Our Business, We Move at the Custodian's Will

SKILLS

Superb (+5) Bureaucracy, Resources; Great (+4) Investigate, Structure; Good (+3) Contacts, Will; Fair (+2) Knowledge, Rapport

STUNTS

✦ ***Organogrammaton:*** *+2 bonus to Bureaucracy overcome and create an advantage actions.*

✦ ***The Ties That Bind:*** *+2 bonus to Contacts create an advantage actions.*

HALO

Mindscape Connectivity

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Consultants:*** *1/session when making extra effort and stressing mental stress track, automatically create* Eye on the Ball *advantage for the rest of the session.*

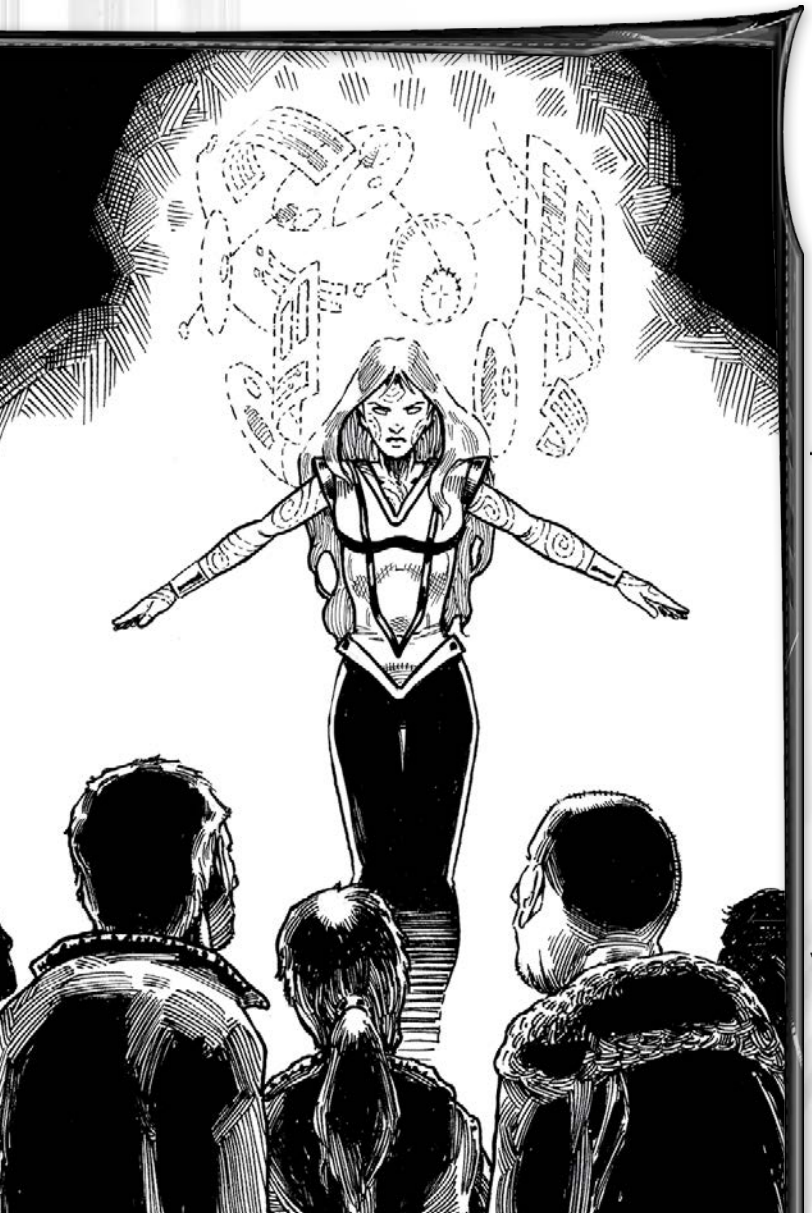
★ ***Spin Doctor:*** Spin Doctor *with Fair (+2) Deceive.*

with more journalistic reporters of Fringe World cultures, and can be heavy handed in shutting down stories they believe may harm the Commonality culture. The ministry works closely with SCI Force, although they rarely share the pragmatism and belief in human cultural resilience SCI Force agents have.

The Ministry of Evolutionary Planning

Humankind is evolving. Lost colonies are often highly divergent, and synthetic and xenomorph populations mix human and non-human in unpredictable ways. Genurgy has put control of the genome in an individual's hands — or even the "hands" of the Planetary Intelligence. Everywhere, citizens are starting to "go post", becoming something no longer properly human. It's a chaotic, rapidly changing situation, close to spiralling out of control.

The Ministry of Evolutionary Planning tries to keep a lid on things. It focusses on what humankind **should** become, what future citizens of the Commonality **could** and **should** be. If you're going post, or undergoing extreme enhancement or genurgic modification, the Ministry wants to know…



The Ministry of Internal Affairs

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is the nearest the Commonality gets to a civil service. Its job is to manage everything not covered by the other ministries, which mostly boils down to providing the day-to-day necessities of food, accommodation, and satisfying activity (including "work") to the Commonality's trillions of citizens.

Most ministry administrators are pen-pushers and number-crunchers. When they encounter problems which words and numbers can't solve, they call on their instrumentality colleagues in the ISI (page 285).

The Ministry of Movement

The Ministry of Movement is charged with administering all aspects of Commonality infrastructure relating to the movement of people and resources. This includes the creation and maintenance of starports, logistical support for resource distribution, maintenance and supply of Mindjammer and passenger routes, and so on. Before the Venu War, the Ministry of Movement and Space Force were a single directorate; there are still many ambiguities and areas of overlap.

The Ministry of War and Defence

A relatively new directorate, the Ministry of War and Defence has a **very** complex relationship with the AFI, Space Force, and SCI Force. It's charged with strategic planning at sector level, and Pansectorate moots often issue conflicting orders and requests to the instrumentalities.

Table 16-2: Ministry and Instrumentality Correspondence

Ministry	Instrumentality
Broadcast Propaganda	Communications
Evolutionary Planning	Security and Cultural Integrity
Internal Affairs	Internal Security
Movement	Space Force
War and Defence	Armed Forces

THE CUSTODIANS

The **custodians** of the Commonality are its true rulers. Elusive, shadowy figures, often working alone, their agendas are species-level, spanning lifetimes. Some have palaces and centres of power; others seem invisible, appearing only when required. They're scary people with authority over all affairs in their domain, including life and death.

A single custodian "rules" a sector. The custodian interacts with the Pansectorate ministries, setting policies which the instrumentalities carry out. Watcher Craypast is ruler of the Rim Sector; he's said to be rarely at his palace on the sector capital of Tsentair, instead travelling between its many worlds. There are many rumours and alleged sightings of this mysterious figure.

The custodians are accountable to no one, except perhaps each other. For all intents and purposes they're a group of absolute rulers each in charge of their own domain, owing fealty to a higher abstract concept of "the Commonality". The system is designed to prevent corruption and promote disinterested action: they're above the law, have unlimited resources, but are ultimately responsible for the fate of the species. A quorum of three custodians can order another custodian to be put to death.

The custodians communicate, either by Mindscape or in person, on an ad hoc and informal basis, and the Whispering City in Jiva is where they meet on neutral ground, either in person or via avatar.

Most custodians are old, born on Old Earth or in Manhome: Watcher Craypast is relatively young at approximately 300 years old, but a staunch conservative when it comes to cultural integrity and xenomorph rights. It's rumoured that at least one custodian is a synthetic; some say all of them are.

For the 10,000 years of the Commonality's existence, the custodians were mostly confined to Manhome; they probably derived from national, cultural, and religious leaders of earlier times. Within Manhome, matters were smaller-scale and easier to control, particularly when most custodians were more or less continuously in session at Jiva.

The New Commonality was declared only 200 years ago, within the lifetimes of all the custodians, and they've been improvising wildly ever since. They have a wide remit, and are morally terrifying — their only priority is the preservation of the human race and Commonality culture. All other considerations are secondary, and already custodians routinely do things which most citizens would consider "evil".

It's clear that the custodians are tied to human thought processes, and could be second-guessed by an unfamiliar alien race. Their attempts to manipulate the Venu, for example, went horribly wrong.



The Venu Empire

The exact nature of Venu government is a mystery, but is believed to be an oppressive theocracy headed by a hereditary "God Emperor". It captured planing technology over a century ago, and immediately set about conquering its neighbours. It expanded rapidly, recapturing colony worlds with which it had lost contact, then embark-

THE VENU EMPIRE

Major Organisation

Scale: *Interstellar (+8)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Reach: *Interstellar (+8)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T7* ***Credit Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3 / 4*

ASPECTS

High Concept: Xenophobic Theocratic Dictatorship

Trouble: Chaotic Hierarchy Based on Intimidation

Other Aspects: Venu Rules All, Only the Strong Are Fit to Command, Fanatical Crusade to Cleanse the Cosmos

SKILLS

Fantastic (+6): *Security*
Superb (+5): *Provoke, Will*
Great (+4): *Assimilate, Intrusion, Resources*
Good (+3): *Notice, Science, Structure, Technical*

STUNTS

✦ ***Divide and Conquer:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus to target a local instance of an organisation.*

✦ ***Esprit de Corps:*** *+2 defend bonus vs morale attacks and propaganda campaigns.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Armament (Medium):*** *Weapon:2 rating for Security attacks.*

★ ***Saboteurs:*** *Make Assimilate attacks up to 2-zone range.*

★ ***Strike Force:*** *Make Security attacks up to 2-zone range.*

ing on a mission of conquest. By the Venu War the Empire had fusion power; by the Stop-Start War it had hybrid zero-point technology; now it uses the infamous **dirt drive**, and is expanding at a frightening rate.

The Venu Empire tech index averages T7 (First Age of Space); the stolen dirt drive technology is entirely anomalous. In starship combat it is dangerously unstable and sometimes explodes; Commonality torsion field projectors are specifically designed to exploit this weakness. The Venu have no advanced technologies like the Mindscape, synthetics, or extreme longevity, although they do have rudimentary AI, and things we would recognise as "computers" which the Commonality regards as extremely primitive. Their technology is bulkier and less sophisticated than the Commonality's. While they don't use space combat drones, they do use attack droids in ground combat.

Venu security isn't as good as the Commonality's, nor is the Empire physically as large, or able to command the same resources. However, they're more violent, and have been at war since before Commonality contact; their aggression has the Commonality on the defensive. What they lack in sophistication they make up for in fanaticism and disregard for their own safety.

CORPORACIES

Corporacies are interstellar commercial polities with enormous holdings, often entire planets, spread throughout Commonality Space, overlapping with traditional polities. They are "new industries" established in the Expansionary Era in response to demands unknown on Old Earth for millennia. Some were created from pre-Expansion corporations; others from extinct megacorps from Old Earth history. As sources of troublesome memes they have a complex relationship with the Commonality and the New Traders, operating in a strange, extra-legal space; many people still believe commercial activity to be primitive and socially dangerous. Corporacies are one way the Commonality is a victim of the Expansion as much as its beneficiary.

Commerce and Industry in the Expansionary Era

The most precious product of the zero point revolution has been almost unlimited free energy. Born from 2-space technology, it has enabled the creation of planing engines. It has changed everything.

The **makepoint** (page 116) is the engine by which zero point energy is converted into matter. Makepoints can more easily create simple materials than complex ones — elements rather than molecules, inorganic compounds rather than organic. While a makepoint could theoretically create a working eidolon rig, it's more efficient to use it to create its components separately, then use another device to assemble the final product.

For smaller items or quantities makepoints are effective, especially in the production of primary foodstuffs. Synthesised vegetables, meats, and relatively complex dishes can be created in only a few minutes with a starship makepoint.

THE PROBLEM WITH MAKEPOINTS

While makepoints may seem the solution to all society's ills, and particularly to problems of scarcity and inequality, two barriers to their effectiveness remain: time, and imagination.

Imagine a device which can create everything you need: food, drink, clothing, medicines. Makepoint sentiences decide what to produce and when, analysing inventories and needs. But this takes time. Do you want a new grav flyer? No problem! The makepoint can build one for you in a month or two…

Or you can contact resource allocation and get a ready-made one right away…

A makepoint is like a **factory**; it needs management and facilities. Just transporting the produce from a makepoint is time-consuming.

The second barrier is imagination. Do you want something new? Tell the makepoint **exactly** what you want. No ideas? Then you need a creative technical mind to interpret your desires and produce blueprints the makepoint can use. The social and commercial interactions between designer and consumer need managing, too.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Given these constraints, it's still often more efficient to use natural products than to create them by makepoint, particularly if those products are plentiful in your local environment. For example, it's quicker and easier to chop down a tree than to synthesise the complex cellular structure of finely seasoned wood in a makepoint and assemble it into furniture. On a planet with lots of trees, it makes sense. On a barren vacuum world, if you really must have that chair, you can synthesise the wood, but it will take time that could be better spent using the makepoint to create more immediately useful things.

With a makepoint, energy may be virtually limitless and free, but time and imagination are not. Humans are finite, and while a makepoint can eventually create everything a human being might conceivably want, they'll be dead of old age or accident before it can get round to it.

For all of these reasons, the Commonality tries to use makepoints efficiently. Wealthy people may monopolise makepoints to create frivolous things, but usually make-

points provide atmospheres and life support on starships, bland if nourishing food, primary materials which are difficult to obtain (or non-existent) in certain environments. They're rarely used for complex products — manufactories use makepoint-generated or natural primary materials and assemble them into complex products to meet short-term needs far more quickly.

Manufactories also permit economies of scale — and that means **trade**. In the Core Worlds, provision of goods has become institutionalised; "trade" is simply a matter of delivering expected products from manufactories to consumers according to ancient tradition. Out among the Fringe Worlds, where makepoints aren't a given, there's a dynamically changing situation where economies rise and fall quickly based on local demand and the ability of technology or trade to satisfy it.

As a result, it's difficult to generalise about trade in the Commonality. In the Core Worlds, it hardly exists: on the Fringe, it's everywhere, constantly changing and chaotic, met by Commonality resource allocation, corporacies, and the near-freebooters known as New Traders. In between, every permutation exists somewhere — it's a big galaxy.

HOW TRADE WORKS

Conventional analysis breaks the Commonality economy into six **trade nodes**.

Trade Node 1: The Makepoint Manufacturing Industry

Dedicated sentiences across the Commonality work continually on the design, creation, and distribution of makepoints. They're a primary commodity, and a thriving industry on the Fringe; administering makepoint permits is one of the functions of the Commonality embargo.

Hooks: *A Revolutionary Makepoint Design; Makepoint Construction Sabotage; Scouting the Best Location for a New Makepoint Plant.*

Trade Node 2: The Makepoint Transport and Distribution Industry

Once manufactured, makepoints must be transported to where they'll be used. This is more complex than you might think, and often the purview of subsidised freighters and elaborate distribution networks.

Hooks: *Running Embargoes and Blockades; Piracy on the Fringe; Security Escort Into War Zones; Grasping Warlords of the Successor States.*

Trade Node 3: The Manufacturing Industry

Product manufactories are the principle users of large-scale makepoints. Corporacies create their products in three main ways:

- **Entirely by makepoint:** Inefficient and time-consuming, requiring multiple makepoints and plenty of time, this is usually reserved for high-need products in regions where they can't be easily made any other way.
- **By makepoint and assembly:** Perhaps the commonest method of manufacture, with makepoints synthesising basic components for manufactories, which are then assembled into finished products. It's the classic factory model, needing workers (usually basic synthetics) and managers (often a corporacy) dealing with market analysis, distribution, etc.
- **Entirely without makepoint:** Almost unknown in the Core Worlds, but common in newly-rediscovered societies, this also uses the classic factory model, but is subject to massive upheaval if makepoints are introduced anywhere into the process.

Hooks: *Secret Makepoint User; Luddites and Saboteurs; Let Them Eat Cake!*

Trade Node 4: Market Distribution

Manufactured products must be distributed to where they're needed. This requires market analysis, distribution management, and delivery, plus lots of liaison. Even if this is done "automatically", in the Commonality that means basic or eidolon synthetics, citizens in their own rights, who again need rewarding.

Hooks: *Backhanders; Illicit Stimulation of Demand; The Medicines Must Get Through!*

Trade Node 5: Financial Products

In the Core Worlds, economic relations are stratified by tradition; people fulfil roles because "that's what they do". Call it brainwashing, call it a caste structure, pride in one's work, peer pressure: most Core Worlds sentients take part in economic relations because "that's how things are done". There's little concept of "payment" as such — everyone gets what they need according to their station, and it would be rude not to do one's bit. Labour isn't onerous, usually tailored to people's inclinations, and the rewards are a life of agreeable productivity, security, and pleasure.

On the Fringe, things are hugely different — hence the "reinvention" of money with the Expansionary Era Currency Unit, or **credit**. With complex, unequal, and highly unstable economic relations, currency is an abstract representation of "work" or "scarcity" exchangeable based on political fiat. It helps Fringe Worlds into the Commonality by incorporating them in its economic activity.

However, where you've got money, you've got banking and speculation. They're rarely called that, but on the Fringe they're everywhere — credit unions, economic facilitators, insurers, stock-agents, and so on. All the mad

bad paraphernalia of exploitation run riot on the Fringe, and the Commonality and SCI Force struggle to keep control.

Hooks: *Contradictions Laid Bare; The Violence Inherent in the System; Have and Have Not; Invisible Hands and Invisible Pockets; Happily Inefficient; Corruption and Tradition.*

Trade Node 6: The Labour Market

All trade nodes require "agencies" or "instrumentalities" to run them. That means people, in the loosest sense: synthetics, eidolons, organics, even humans and hominids and maybe aliens. When you have people engaging in labour, issues of competence, enthusiasm, and availability become paramount; the people to do the jobs can be more or less scarce, even if it's just a question of delivering several hundred management synthetics to a burgeoning Fringe World economy in time. Anywhere there's scarcity, there's a market.

Hooks: *Middle Man in the Supply Chain; Economic Migrants; Oversupply and Overdemand.*

USING THE TRADE NODES IN PLAY

The trade nodes can provide many **hooks** for scenarios (page 419). Many stresses in the societies of the New Commonality Era stem from disagreements about how the trade nodes should function, and characters can be sent in to resolve (or even exacerbate) problems. Economics may be a dismal science, but when it becomes a religion the wars it causes are second to none.

Table 16-3: Corporacies of the Commonality

Corporacy	Activity
Chembu Genurgy	Genurgic enhancements
Combatechnologies, Inc	Combat armour, combat drones
Darradine Industries	Technopsi devices, Mindscape implants
Gant Shipyards	Planeship construction and repair
HAL AG Industries	Gravtech and suspensor fields
Hydrodyne Technologies	Transport and vehicles
Javawayn Industries	Gravtech, star cities, luxury space hotels and cruisers, zero-G habitats
Kessel Yards	Shipyards, ship hulls
Magnatech, Inc	Kinetic weapons
Mai Ling Military Optics	Combat drones, sensor arrays and drones, sentient weapons
Morbius Metals	Raw materials and metals
Murasaki Corporation	Combat walkers, lifters
Neverine Pharmaceuticals	Biomeds
Pleskov & Sons Armaments (PASARM)	Heavy weapons
TKX (Trondheim-Kawasaki Xenoforms)	Synthetics, genurgic enhancements
Tyce Systems	Null weapons, blasters
Universal Products	Multiple fields

As GM, you can also use the hooks above as game issues or situation aspects. The drier aspects of trade nodes rarely concern PCs; but when a Fringe World gangster decides to monopolise the makepoint distribution network, or a difference in memes won't allow cultures to accept the freedom from drudgery and inequality promised by the makepoints, or wars threaten the free movement of much needed people, goods, or medicines, PCs can make the difference between life and death, war and peace, order and chaos.

Example Corporacies

The following are examples of typical Commonality corporacies.



CHEMBU GENURGY

Major Organisation

Chembu Genurgy was formed when the Chembu (page 45) took their genurgy business offworld. It's a little over a century old, clearly divided into Chembu and non-Chembu personnel. The Chembu form all the corporacy's upper management.

Chembu Genurgy is efficient, affordable, and extremely secretive. Rumours abound that its CEO is the Planetary Intelligence itself, and that it has a nefarious, inhuman agenda. However, while a ruthless competitor, the corporacy openly advocates Commonality policy and puts enormous resources into Commonality coffers. It's also one of the foremost corporate world developers; almost every octant of Commonality Space has a Chembu corporacy world.

Chembu has offices on most Commonality worlds. Even beyond, the infamous Chembu bioships — semi-organic faster-than-light vessels (page 244) — travel the Fringe Worlds offering their services to whoever can afford them.

Scale: *Interplanetary (+7)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Reach: *Galactic (+9)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T9* ***Credit Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3*

ASPECTS

High Concept: Commonality Leaders in Genurgic Modification

Trouble: We Are Chembu — Chembu Is One!

Other Aspects: Branches Everywhere, Backed by the Planetary Intelligence, Unfathomable Agendas

SKILLS

Superb (+5): *Science, Technical*
Great (+4): *Rapport, Resources*
Good (+3): *Bureaucracy, Contacts, Empathy*
Fair (+2): *Knowledge, Notice, Structure, Will*

STUNTS

✦ ***Aid Package:*** *Use Resources to restore moderate and severe physical consequences.*

✦ ***Arbitration and Reconciliation:*** *Use Empathy to restore moderate and severe consequences.*

✦ ***Innovator:*** *+2 overcome bonus when making a breakthrough with Science.*

✦ ***Open Door Policy:*** *+2 defend bonus when using Notice against Deceive create an advantage actions.*

✦ ***Organogrammaton:*** *+2 bonus to Bureaucracy overcome and create an advantage actions.*

✦ ***Populist:*** *+2 create an advantage bonus when appealing to "the people".*

✦ ***Science Specialist (Genurgy):*** *+2 bonus when trying to increase your culture's capability in the specialised field.*

✦ ***Stakeholder Intervention:*** *Use Contacts to restore moderate and severe credit consequences.*

✦ ***Technical Specialist (Genurgy):*** *+2 Technical bonus in specialised field.*

✦ ***Zeitgeist:*** *+2 bonus to create an advantage actions with Empathy.*

HALO

Mindscape Connectivity

Stage III Gestalt Communication: *1/session, pay 1FP to automatically create a situation aspect subjugating the target to the Planetary Intelligence massmind.*

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Couriers:*** *+2 bonus when rapid communication is the goal.*

★ ***Market Maker Section:*** *+2 Resources bonus to create* New Market *advantages to 2-zone range.*

★ ***Skunkworks:*** *Use Technical instead of Stealth when creating advantages representing secret inventions.*

Supporting Organisation

JAVAWAYN INDUSTRIES

*The main manufacturer of grav suspensors and hulls for zero-G habitats, starships, orbitals, and plateworlds, Javawayn Industries also builds and operates the many Javawayn **star cities**. Most Commonality Javawayn (page 46) work for JI in one way or another, and account for about 2/3 of its personnel.*

Scale: *Continental (+5)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Reach: *Galactic (+9)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T9* ***Credit Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Aspects: Luxury Hub Manufacturer, Slick and Professional, Studied Neutrality, Friends in High Places

Skills: *Great (+4) Resources, Technical; Good (+3) Contacts, Rapport; Fair (+2) Empathy, Will; Average (+1) Bureaucracy, Manoeuvre*

STUNTS

✦ ***Decentralised Structure:*** *1/session, reduce a moderate consequence to mild, or remove a mild completely.*

✦ ***Stakeholder Intervention:*** *Use Contacts to restore moderate and severe credit consequences.*

✦ ***Starship Facilities:*** *Organisation can make construct Technical actions, including repairs.*

✦ ***Technical Specialist (Star Cities):*** *+2 Technical bonus in specialised field.*

HALO

Mindscape Connectivity

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Market Maker Section:*** *+2 Resources bonus to create* New Market *advantages to 2-zone range.*

Supporting Organisation

MORBIUS METALS

With a reputation for ruthlessness and shady dealings, Morbius Metals is roundly hated, even by its employees, and would probably collapse were it not for the fact that it's very good at what it does. It's one of the leading mining corporacies and provider of raw materials and metals in Commonality Space, and its supply lines are inextricably entwined with the second trade node of makepoint transport and distribution, which some say will one day put Morbius Metals out of business.

Scale: *Interplanetary (+7)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Reach: *Galactic (+9)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3

Tech Index: *T9* ***Credit Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate, +1 additional mild credit*

Aspects: Commonality Leader in Raw Materials, Cutthroat Corporacy, Fearsome Reputation, Disgruntled Workforce

Skills: *Superb (+5) Resources, Technical; Great (+4) Deceive, Security; Good (+3) Assimilate, Provoke; Fair (+2) Intrusion, Will*

STUNTS

✦ ***Corporate Raider:*** *+2 Intrusion bonus on create an advantage actions facilitating physical and credit attacks.*

✦ ***Extreme Sanction:*** *Make Security actions against characters.*

✦ ***Public Relations:*** *+2 create an advantage Deceive bonus.*

✦ ***Technical Specialist (Mining):*** *+2 Technical bonus in specialised field.*

✦ ***Witch Hunt:*** *Use Provoke against characters.*

HALO

Mindscape Connectivity

OTHER EXTRAS

★ ***Market Maker Section:*** *+2 Resources bonus to create* New Market *advantages to 2-zone range.*

★ ***Mole:*** *1/session, pay 1FP to make a single Intrusion attack with a +2 bonus vs Mediocre (+0) or normal passive opposition.*

★ ***Skunkworks:*** *Use Technical instead of Stealth when creating advantages representing secret inventions.*

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN
CULTURES

"On Old Earth news, like religion, had been illegal for millennia. But here, out on the Fringe, it was life itself. Worlds which had been isolated for thousands of years suddenly clamoured for information, and if the Commonality fought shy of giving people what they wanted because they might not be able to handle 'The Truth', well, hey — that was what we were for.

"We're the embargo runners. Some people call us criminals; some people say we're pirates. I say we're the lifeblood of the Commonality, keeping everything moving, keeping everything alive. Even if sometimes it hurts…"

— Jabe Macarthur, at his trial for Uncontrolled Information Dissemination, Shinchikyu, 193 NCE.

The Expansionary Era is a time of cultural upheaval. Thousands of worlds have been thrust together, and the Commonality is sweeping through them, trying to assimilate, integrate, control. Cultures clash, form alliances, resist, rebel; unscrupulous New Traders run embargoes to sell technology to the highest bidders. The result is chaos.

This chapter provides rules for cultures and culture conflicts and how player characters can get involved — smuggling ideas and technologies, engaging in diplomacy, policing the Frontier, undertaking hazardous cultural operations as agents of the Commonality or their enemies. The galaxy is changing — and capable heroes can remould entire worlds to their designs!

WHAT IS A CULTURE?

A culture is "how people live" — a society's customs and values, the things it considers good, bad, worthwhile. It's the cause of war and conflict: when people "over there" do or believe things we think are "wrong", we try and persuade them of the error of their ways — often violently. Culture conflict has been the driving force behind much of history — and in the Expansionary Era that engine is in overdrive.

Culture conflict is a major theme in ***Mindjammer***; cultures attack one another, take stress and consequences, and are changed by the process and even destroyed. This is what the Commonality is trying to avoid — or at least control — as it contacts lost colony worlds. Your game may include actions affecting cultures, and PCs — particularly culture agents — can take cultures as **extras**.

CREATING CULTURES

Create a culture like an organisation — see page 265. You can create minor, supporting, and major NPC cultures, and culture extras for your PCs. There are some differences,

Cultures and Organisations

Cultures are a form of organisation (page 265), and use the same rules. They differ from governments and other polities, although it's normal to find cultures and polities coexisting. Often a polity created by a world's ruler, conqueror, or government attempts to rule a culture created by its population.

Memes

Here are some example memes (culture aspects):

Abomination Against Nature
Centre of the Universe
Communism
Cult of Celebrity
Curious
Democracy
Every Man for Himself
Fear of Terrorism
Fire of Independence
Frankenstein Foods
Global Warming
Human Beings Are Nothing Special
Just One World Among Millions
Live and Let Live
Machines Will Take Over the World!
Materialism
Mutability of Body Form
Pacifism
Patriotism
Personal Insignificance
Pinnacle of Creation
Power of the Mind
Religion
Science
Survival of the Fittest
They're Stealing Your Thoughts!
Uniqueness of the Human Form
White Man's Burden
Word of God
Xenophobic

notably in the special extras known as **culture capabilities**, and the actions PCs can take to affect cultures (page 304). We've provided a sample culture sheet on page 478.

Subcultures

Subcultures are a type of **nested organisation** (page 266); they have at least half their parent culture's aspects. If they have less than half, they become separate cultures, or subcultures of another, larger culture; see "Damage to Cultures" below.

Culture Scale and Reach

Cultures have scale like other organisations; their **reach** reflects the extent of their cultural influence. The Commonality is the only known Galactic (+9) scale culture; it's immensely powerful, although it often finds smaller-scale cultures too difficult to target effectively, and too easy to accidentally destroy — hence its use of SCI Force and culture agents for finer cultural manipulations.

Memes (Culture Aspects)

A culture's aspects are its **memes** — the ideas it's preoccupied with, whether dominant concepts, ideologies, belief systems, or prejudices. They differ from organisation and, say, planetary aspects (page 332) by being things people **believe** rather than things which necessarily **are**: a planet may have a *Global Warming* aspect, indicating it's affected by global warming; a culture with a *Global Warming* meme is preoccupied by the threat and concept of global warming, whether it's happening or not.

A culture's **dominant meme** is effectively its high concept; it may also have a **trouble**, and 1-3 other memes.

Culture Tech Index

A culture's tech index represents its technological sophistication in seven key areas: armaments, biotechnology, comms, information, power, resource exploitation, and transport. These are known as **capabilities**. Usually a culture's tech index represents its sophistication in all seven capabilities; however, cultures may attempt to raise their tech index by improving their capabilities — see below.

A culture's tech index is the same as the civilisation which represents it. You can generate this from scratch or simply choose a tech index using the table on page 116.

Culture Skills and Stunts

Cultures may take skills and stunts like other organisations. Some skills have different applications, and some stunts are unique to cultures (page 298).

CULTURE CAPABILITIES

Capabilities represent a culture's technological know-how in one of seven specific fields, the more advanced of which (like faster-than-light travel) are jealously guarded. They're a kind of sub-tech index. The Commonality maintains embargoes to prevent capabilities from falling into the wrong hands, or a culture being exposed to technologies or ideas before it's equipped to handle them (page 343).

A capability is an extra, and gives the culture a +1 bonus to its Science and Technical skills for actions related

to the field. You must have a permission to take a capability; this is usually a situation aspect — see "Acquiring a New Capability" below. Many capabilities have prerequisities. You **must** have one capability in all fields before you can increase your culture's tech index.

Finishing It All Off

Calculate a culture's physical stress, mental stress, and consequences like any other organisation.

Selecting a Culture Extra

Characters like culture agents, diplomats, and memetic engineers may take a culture as an extra. This lets them take culture actions against other cultures at their culture's scale. Usually your culture extra's skills are a subset of the culture's skills — see the Commonality culture (page 309) for a complete culture sheet. This is usually even the case when characters take a culture as a shared extra, although more powerful characters may have considerable say.

CULTURE ADVANCEMENTS

Especially in the New Commonality Era, cultures are in constant flux. While cultures **may** increase in scale, it's more likely they will **change**, in response to meme attacks (page 304) or conscious choices of the culture. Cultures often put their advancements into improving their capabilities and tech index; with the Commonality culture the biggest game in town, you can't afford to get left behind.

Acquiring a New Capability

To take a new capability, your culture must first make a Science check, against a passive opposition of Superb (+5), plus the tech index modifier of the capability you're aiming for.

The Venu culture (page 312) wants to acquire the tech index T8 Comms capability, Mindscape. This is a Science roll against a total opposition of +8 (+5 for Superb, +3 for tech index T8).

Normally you may only take a capability 1 tech index above your culture's tech index; if you have an example of technology of the capability you're targeting, it may be 2 tech indices above, but you must take a *Dangerous Technological Ignorance*-type flaw.

A polity (or an individual) which has the culture's Science or Technical skill as an extra may also do this, and may burn credit stress to gain bonuses on the roll (page 142).

Succeeding in the check gives you the new capability as a **situation aspect**. Embargo running or otherwise gaining access to technology representing the new capability can also give you the situation aspect. It acts as a permission; as long as you still have it at your next milestone, you can spend 1 stunt point to buy the capability as an extra.

Increasing Your Tech Index

If you have at least one capability in all seven capabilities, you may spend your next milestone skill point advancement to increase your tech index. When you do this, you reduce each capability by 1 (usually back to zero, but if you have more than one point in a capability, the leftover points remain).

The Ayapaheyn rediscovered culture is tech index T3 (Age of Enlightenment), and is trying to advance to T4 (Industrial Age). It has one point in all seven capabilities, except for the Power capability, in which it has two, due to a captured Lethally Radioactive Fission Pile *it has in a secret subterranean vault. At the next significant milestone it opts to spend 1 skill point to increase its tech index from T3 to T4; all of its capabilities drop back to zero, except for Power, which drops from 2 points to 1. As it's now only 1 point above the culture's tech index, it also loses the flaw.*

CULTURE SKILLS AND STUNTS

Although cultures are organisations, they use skills in unique ways, and mostly have their own stunts and extras.

How Cultures Use Skills

Here are some suggestions for how cultures use skills:

Assimilate: Used in culture conflicts to integrate new ideas; and in physical attacks and defend actions against cultural contamination (page 306).

Contacts: How much cultural exchange the culture has — how well and often it communicates with its neighbours. Used in create an advantage actions to resist isolation in Assimilate attacks.

Cultural Drift

Cultures drift over time. This can be modelled using advancements, and cultural contamination from consequences and situation aspects.



Deceive: How duplicitous the culture is, how it hides its actions, and so on. An effective defence against Empathy, Investigate, etc.

Empathy: How sensitive the culture is to other cultures' sensitivities. Low Empathy cultures may be intolerant; high Empathy ones can be manipulative. It's also how cultures recover from mental stress damage.

Intrusion: Lets a culture use subterfuge to make meme attacks on other cultures, affecting stability and causing physical stress damage.

Knowledge: The culture's level of awareness — the things it knows about "the way the world is". Cultures with little or no knowledge tend to be ignorant, intolerant, or naive; those with good Knowledge are harder to manipulate or damage with Provoke attacks.

Provoke: Lets a culture make propaganda attacks affecting a target culture's mental stress track.

Rapport: The culture's friendliness, effective in allying with other cultures, or resisting your own government's attempts to take you to war against another culture.

Resources: Cultural resources like art, literature, music, popular culture, historical heritage. Effective in buoying a culture's morale, it's also how it recovers from physical stress damage.

Science: A culture's scientific advancement; low Science cultures may not even know the world is round… What a culture can do with its Science is directly affected by its capabilities (below).

Stealth: A culture's ability to hide its core beliefs and treasured artefacts from attack. Stealthy cultures are difficult to target with Assimilate and Provoke attacks.

Structure: How internally consistent a culture's belief systems are, or whether they're a hodgepodge of thrown-together ideologies in a shaky framework. Affects the physical stress track.

Technical: A culture's technical aptitude; cross-reference with tech index and capabilities (below) to find out what it's capable of. A high tech culture need not be heavily technical — the culture may have little idea of how it all works.

Will: The culture's assertiveness and morale. It adds to the mental stress track.

Cultures rarely use skills like Bureaucracy, Investigate, Manoeuvre, Notice, and Security, although they may be affected by their use by polities like governments and armies.

Culture Stunts

Most organisation stunts aren't appropriate for cultures; instead, they may select from the following:

✦ ***Culture Worlds***

Requires Traditionalist

Your culture brings to bear a group of minor culture extras as **culture worlds** (page 308), either three Average (+1) worlds, one Good (+3) world, or one Fair (+2) and one Average (+1) world. This stunt may be taken multiple times, increasing the quantity or quality of the worlds.

✦ ***Hunter-Killer Sentinels***

Gain a +1 bonus to remove situation aspects created in culture conflicts, as long as the defending culture is connected to the Mindscape.

✦ ***Memetic Barrage***

Your culture can make an Assimilate create an advantage action to separate off multiple local cultures from a single larger culture (page 276). This is a multiple target attack (page 175).

✦ ***Memetic Cascade***

Your culture can attack any culture, regardless of scale and reach. The memetic cascade spreads as widely as it can before making an attack: each exchange, make an Intrusion create an advantage roll against the target culture's Will,

excluding scale modifiers. If you fail, your memetic cascade detonates immediately as a single Assimilate attack made at your own scale against an instance of the target culture *at that scale* (page 276). If you succeed, you create a *Memetic Cascade* advantage, and may make another roll next exchange to target the **next scale up**. This continues until your create an advantage action fails. You always get to make an attack with this stunt; the scale depends on how far your Memetic Cascade got. There's no upper limit to the scale of the attacks; once the target culture's scale is reached, the cascade detonates anyway.

✦ ***Memetic Virus***

Requires Memetic Barrage and Memetic Cascade

An EW package containing vectors and viruses initiating multiple memetic cascade advantages on multiple targets. Each time you fail, the specific cascade detonates, but the virus continues until all cascades have been detonated.

✦ ***Propaganda Campaign***

Gain a +2 bonus to Provoke rolls using propaganda campaigns to attack, defend, or create advantages. Scale modifiers apply (page 174).

✦ ***Q-Ships***

Gain a +2 full defence bonus against attacks on your physical stress track.

✦ ***Shock and Awe***

You may make meme attacks on any part of a culture that is in a zone currently under physical (Security) attack by an organisation. It's as though you have an automatic *Targeting the Local Culture* aspect (page 276), but you're not limited to Assimilate attacks.

✦ ***Suicide Synthetics***

Gain a +1 bonus to Intrusion attempts using disposable hidden synthetics.

✦ ***Traditionalist***

Gain an armour:1 rating against physical and mental attacks. You may take this stunt up to 3 times.

Culture Capabilities

A culture's capabilities represent its technical know-how in several fields; they are extras. A culture is assumed to

Table 17-1: Armaments Capability

Tech Index	Capability	Prerequisite	Meme
T0 - Post-Animal	Clubs		
T1 - Stone Age	Bows and spears		
T2 - Metal Age	Blades	Resource Exploitation (Mining)	
T3 - Age of Enlightenment	Black powder		*Killing at a Distance Is Ignoble!*
T4 - Industrial Age	Gunpowder		*Mass Casualties Are the Cost of War*
T5 - Computer Age	Nuclear	Power (Electricity); Resource Exploitation (Industry)	*Mutually Assured Destruction; We Don't Deserve to Survive!*
T6 - Age of Genurgy	Sonic Disruptors	As above	
T7 - First Age of Space	Null Weapons, Protein Disruptors		*Minimum Damage for Maximum Effect*
T8 - Age of Ubiquitous Intelligence	Blasters	Power (ZIP); as above	*Blasters Cause Horrendous Wounds!*
T9 - Second Age of Space	Torsion, Meson		
T10 - Age of 3-Space	Disintegrator		
T11 - Interdimensional Age	Displacer?		

Table 17-2: Biotechnology Capability

Tech Index	Capability	Prerequisite	Meme
T0 - Post-Animal	Herbal		
T1 - Stone Age	Herbal		
T2 - Metal Age	Surgical		*We Can Conquer Death!*
T3 - Age of Enlightenment	Surgical		*We Can Conquer Death!*
T4 - Industrial Age	Surgical		*We Can Conquer Death!*
T5 - Computer Age	Medical	Information (Libraries)	*Doctors are the Protectors of Life*
T6 - Age of Genurgy	Biotech	Information (Computers)	*Mutability of Body Plan; We Can Do Anything!*
T7 - First Age of Space	Genurgy		*What Is Human Anyway?*
T8 - Age of Ubiquitous Intelligence	Genurgy		*What Is Human Anyway?*
T9 - Second Age of Space	Genurgy		*What Is Human Anyway?*
T10 - Age of 3-Space	Genurgy		*What Is Human Anyway?*
T11 - Interdimensional Age	Transmutation?		

have a capability equal to its tech index in the seven fields described below; a tech index T9 culture has T9 capabilities in armaments, biological, comms, information, power, resource exploitation, and transport. Under special circumstances a culture may acquire new capabilities (page 297).

A culture must have a capability at a certain tech index for members to learn related skills. Members of a culture without the Comms (Mindscape) capability cannot learn technopsi; those without Transport (FTL) produce no 2-pilots. See "Cultural Context" (page 82) for more.

Capabilities may introduce certain **memes** to a culture. These are used just like aspects, and may conflict with a culture's other memes.

ARMAMENTS

This indicates the culture's ability to manufacture weapons. Any culture which deliberately acquires an Armaments capability above its tech index also acquires a *Militarism* meme.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Biological capabilities of T2 and above have the *Survival of the Fittest* and *Man Should Not Play God!* memes at the tech index at which they're introduced.

COMMS

Comms capabilities of T2 and above have the memes *Separated and yet Together* and *I Don't Like These New-Fangled Ways* at the tech index at which they're introduced.

INFORMATION

Information capabilities of T2 and above have the meme *I Don't Trust These New-Fangled Inventions!* at the tech index at which they're introduced.

POWER

Power capabilities of T3 and above have the memes *Science! I Don't Like This Weird Technology*, and *Hey! This Will Take Our Jobs Away!* at the tech index at which they're introduced.

RESOURCE EXPLOITATION

Resource Exploitation capabilities of T1 and above have the meme *We're Losing Touch With the Old Ways* at the tech index they're introduced.

Table 17-3: Comms Capability

Tech Index	Capability	Prerequisite	Meme
T0 - Post-Animal	Spoken		
T1 - Stone Age	Spoken		
T2 - Metal Age	Written		*We Can Share Our Knowledge*
T3 - Age of Enlightenment	Printed		
T4 - Industrial Age	Radiotelecommunication	Power (Electricity)	*The World Is One*
T5 - Computer Age	Network		
T6 - Age of Genurgy	Proto-Mindscape		*Cyberspace*
T7 - First Age of Space	Proto-Mindscape		
T8 - Age of Ubiquitous Intelligence	Mindscape	Power (Broadcast); Information (Synthetics); Resource Exploitation (Automated)	*Personal Insignificance, Power of the Mind, Science, Machines Will Take Over the World!*
T9 - Second Age of Space	Mindscape		
T10 - Age of 3-Space	Mindscape		
T11 - Interdimensional Age	Transdimensional Awareness?		

Table 17-4: Information Capability

Tech Index	Capability	Prerequisite	Meme
T0 - Post-Animal	Memory		
T1 - Stone Age	Memory		
T2 - Metal Age	Libraries		*Sacred Respositories*
T3 - Age of Enlightenment	Libraries		
T4 - Industrial Age	Libraries		
T5 - Computer Age	Computers	Power (Electricity)	*Invisible Information Alienation*
T6 - Age of Genurgy	Computers		
T7 - First Age of Space	Computers		
T8 - Age of Ubiquitous Intelligence	Synthetics	Resource Exploitation (Automated)	*Personal Insignificance; Machines Will Take Over the World; What IS Intelligence, Anyway?*
T9 - Second Age of Space	Synthetics		
T10 - Age of 3-Space	Synthetics		
T11 - Interdimensional Age	Total Information Awareness		

Table 17-5: Power Capability

Tech Index	Capability	Prerequisite	Meme
T0 - Post-Animal	Muscle		
T1 - Stone Age	Draught animal		
T2 - Metal Age	Mechanical	Resource Exploitation (Industry)	*The World Is a Great Machine — and We Can Control It*
T3 - Age of Enlightenment	Steam		
T4 - Industrial Age	Electricity		*Power Is Cheap*
T5 - Computer Age	Fission		
T6 - Age of Genurgy	Broadcast		
T7 - First Age of Space	Fusion		
T8 - Age of Ubiquitous Intelligence	ZIP	Information (Computers)	*Power Is All Around Us; Power Is Free*
T9 - Second Age of Space	ZIP		
T10 - Age of 3-Space	ZIP		
T11 - Interdimensional Age	Ubiquitous Energy		

Table 17-6: Resource Exploitation

Tech Index	Capability	Prerequisite	Meme
T0 - Post-Animal	Hunter-gatherer		
T1 - Stone Age	Agriculture		*Mother Earth Provides*
T2 - Metal Age	Mining		
T3 - Age of Enlightenment	Factories		
T4 - Industrial Age	Industry		*Men Become Machines*
T5 - Computer Age	Robots		
T6 - Age of Genurgy	Robots		
T7 - First Age of Space	Automated	Power (Electricity); Information (Computers)	*Robots Will Take Over the World; Where Have All Our Jobs Gone?*
T8 - Age of Ubiquitous Intelligence	Automated		
T9 - Second Age of Space	Makepoint	Power (ZIP); as above.	*A Future of Leisure and Happiness*
T10 - Age of 3-Space	Makepoint		
T11 - Interdimensional Age	Materialisation?		

Table 17-7: Transport Capability

Tech Index	Capability	Prerequisite	Meme
T0 - Post-Animal	Non-powered		
T1 - Stone Age	Wheel		
T2 - Metal Age	Stirrup		
T3 - Age of Enlightenment	Steam	Power (Mechanical); Resource Exploitation (Industry)	*These New-Fangled Machines Ain't Natural!*
T4 - Industrial Age	Internal Combustion / Flight	As above	*These New-Fangled Machines Ain't Natural!*
T5 - Computer Age	Power Cell / Near Orbit	Power (Electricity); Information (Computers)	
T6 - Age of Genurgy	Interplanetary		*We Can Spread to the Stars!*
T7 - First Age of Space	STL Interstellar		*The Stars Are in Our Grasp!*
T8 - Age of Ubiquitous Intelligence	Anti-grav		
T9 - Second Age of Space	FTL	Power (ZIP)	*Just One World Among Millions*
T10 - Age of 3-Space	FTL		
T11 - Interdimensional Age	Transdimensional?		

Table 17-8: Transportation Zones by Capability

Transport Capability	Scale of Zone covered per exchange	Approximate Scale of Distances
T0: Non-powered	Medium (+0)	Metres
T1: Wheel	Large (+1)	Tens of metres
T2: Stirrup	Huge (+2)	Hundreds of metres
T3: Steam	Enormous (+3)	Kilometres
T4: Internal Combustion / Flight	Regional (+4)	Tens of kilometres
T5: Power Cell / Near Orbit	Continental (+5)	Hundreds of kilometres
T6: Interplanetary	Planetary (+6)	Thousands of kilometres

For example, T2 stirrup transportation deals with zones approximately one hundred metres across; T4 internal combustion transportation deals with zones ten kilometres across. A character mounted on a Fair (+2) Athletics horse might move, say, 2 100-metre zones in an exchange, flat-out; while a character in a T4 Good (+3) aerial vehicle might move, say, 30 km in a 5-minute exchange.

Transportation Zones

The transport capability you're using determines the scale of zones you can move between in an exchange; a T0 Non-powered *capability lets you move between Medium (+0) scale zones of a few metres, whereas a T4* Internal Combustion / Flight *capability lets you move between Regional (+4) scale zones of tens of kilometres. You may also face opposition when moving between zones, depending on your terrain (page 352).*

TRANSPORT

Transport capabilities of T1 or above have a *Science!* meme at the tech index at which they're introduced.

CULTURE ACTIONS

Culture contact and conflict is everywhere in ***Mindjammer***, and cultures use the organisation rules (page 275) to take actions. Cultures may attack one another, overcome obstacles, create advantages, and so on, even acting against other organisations, and vice versa.

PC Actions

Most culture actions will involve player-characters. A PC with a culture extra may take culture actions directly, at the scale of that extra. A PC with culture stunts like Cultural Intrusion (page 87) or Cultural Redaction (page 86) may act against other cultures; scale modifiers don't apply.

PCs without extras or dedicated stunts may only affect cultures by creating and removing advantages. This may **cause** cultural contamination and other situation aspects, or remove them. It need not only be the result of dice rolls: creating or removing a situation aspect may result from a scenario delivering or retrieving an item of technology, for example. See "Psy-Ops" below for more.

CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF PC ACTIONS

PC actions may accidentally have cultural consequences. This should be decided by GM and players on a case-by-case basis, but usually involves creating or removing a situation aspect.

Exchanges

Cultures act in longer time periods than other organisations, usually a month to a year or more. When PCs are involved in culture actions, a single culture action will usually be the result of an entire **scenario** (page 419).

Range and Zones

Ranges and zones apply to cultures like organisations, except that cultures are almost never mobile. Instead, **reach** is the deciding factor for determining the extent of their influence.

Conflicts

If you have a culture extra, you can attack another culture and be attacked in turn. Culture attacks include direct attacks using Assimilate and Provoke (often known as **meme attacks** for the memes they invoke), and indirect (and often passive) attacks like **cultural contamination** and **psy-ops**.

You must narrate exactly what you or your culture is doing in a culture attack (using the media, changing cultural icons, perceptions of histories, etc) and also your aim (destabilise or destroy a culture, create a subculture, change a culture's aspects to be closer to the Commonality).

MEME ATTACKS

When one culture deliberately attacks another, it aims to inflict stress and impose consequences; this is an organisation attack using Assimilate or Provoke. Security attacks may not be made against cultures, with the exception of armies, which may make Security attacks on the physical stress track of the culture in their zone, as if that culture was a local instance affected by Assimilate (page 276).

If one culture inflicts an extreme consequence on another, that culture is changed forever — see "Damage to Cultures", below. As cultures taken out by meme attack may be reduced in scale or destroyed, cultures usually concede if allowed.

CREATING ADVANTAGES IN CULTURE CONFLICTS

Characters often create advantages in culture conflicts; it's part of cultural operations (page 306), usually the quickest way a culture's memes can be modified, and the way characters without cultural stunts or extras can affect cultures. Skills like Assimilate create advantages isolating parts of cultures for smaller scale attacks, a vital part of any meme attack; Contacts, Rapport, and Stealth are used to help resist.

SITUATION ASPECTS IN CULTURE CONFLICTS

Cultures may carry situation aspects for a significant period before they're removed. Indeed, for cultures in culture conflict or suffering cultural contamination, they may be more or less constant.

Damage to Cultures

In culture conflicts, subcultures may be separated from parent cultures and even assimilated into new cultures or destroyed. Cultures which are taken out may be reduced in scale (page 277).

The Commonality has massive cultural firepower, but usually holds back from destroying other cultures. Its goal is rather to persuade and integrate, so it may instead inflict an extreme consequence on a target culture, causing it to change, or accept concessions which also change it. The Commonality rarely takes out another culture entirely, although its foes have no such qualms.

If you have a culture extra (say, the Commonality culture), it's likely your culture will concede rather than be taken out; or a smaller part of your culture will be targeted by your opponent, resulting in the formation of a new nested culture, which is subsequently at risk of further disruption, shrinkage, or assimilation by another culture. In a conflict between the Commonality culture and a rediscovered culture, conceding may mean that the Commonality culture is forced out of that rediscovered culture's world or worlds. The result depends on the context; see also "Damage to Your Organisation Extra" (page 277).

EXAMPLES OF CULTURE CONSEQUENCES

Culture consequences include:

- **Mild consequences:** *Scandal, Cultural Neurosis, Fixation and Obsession.*
- **Moderate consequences:** *Shutdown and Strikes, Culture Quake, Lost Our Way.*
- **Severe consequences:** *Cultural Revolution, Anarchy and Collapse, Extremist Coup.*

DAMAGE TO CHARACTERS IN CULTURE CONFLICTS

If you have a culture extra, you may take stress or consequence damage yourself. Example consequences include: *Loss of Integrity, Xenophobic, Discontented, Loss of Sense of Self, Uncertain, Insecure*.

RECOVERING FROM CULTURE CONFLICTS

Stress clears from culture conflicts at the end of a conflict. However, as culture conflicts may last months or years, damage may remain from scenario to scenario at character level. Cultures may use Empathy or Resources for mental and physical stress recovery actions, and characters with the Cultural Redaction (Empathy) or Money Is Power (Resources) stunts may do likewise.

Special Situations

Culture actions may occur in the following special situations:

RUNNING THE EMBARGO

Running the embargo brings actual tech or know-how into an embargoed culture, which can be reverse-engineered and assimilated. This acts as a **situation aspect**, as if the culture had already done the research (page 297) — it's a huge shortcut, and the culture can then spend a milestone to acquire the capability. If this situation aspect is removed before the milestone is reached — for example, by destroying the smuggled device or know-how in a cultural operation — then the capability can't be bought.

PSY-OPS

Psy-ops are **challenges** (page 147) aimed at introducing memes into a culture which can be invoked or compelled in meme attacks or cultural contamination. You must succeed in a number of character actions, which may be simple rolls, challenges, contests, or conflicts. For greater detail, psy-ops may comprise more than one challenge, or even build its challenges into entire scenarios (page 419). The GM structures the psy-op. Here's an example:

1. **Prepare the Ground:** The PCs prepare / create the "vehicle" for introducing the meme to the target culture.
   For example, the PCs intend to conduct peace negotiations with the Fiver separatist organisation on Olkennedy. They must travel to the planet, contact the separatists, and persuade them to enter negotiations.
2. **Introduce the Meme:** The PCs must introduce the meme into the culture, usually without being found out.
   The purpose of the negotiations is to introduce a variation on the Commonality's Live and Let Live *meme, so the negotiations are a create an advantage action (probably a contest). On a failure, the separatists walk away from the table and the PCs incur a negative consequence or situation aspect; on a success, major progress is made — maybe even a treaty — and the meme is created as a situation aspect.*
3. **Trigger the Meme:** Sometimes it's enough to create the meme as a situation aspect. At other times, you may want to use it in a Provoke or Assimilate create an

advantage action, a compel, or even in a totally separate action.

With the Live and Let Live *meme in place and a free invoke available, characters with cultural stunts or extras may now make culture attack actions using the meme (including cultural contamination) to gradually change the culture.*

CULTURAL CONTAMINATION

Cultural contamination is a passive culture conflict caused when differing cultures are placed in close proximity. It occurs even from peaceful cultural contact and exchange, or from psy-ops, or the introduction of a new capability (page 300) introducing new memes.

When two cultures come into contact, ascertain if any memes possessed by one culture may strongly impact the other. This is a subjective decision — the GM should discuss it with the players. A simple way to decide is if the meme would be the suitable subject for a compel in the context (you don't have to actually make the compel).

If such a meme exists, the target culture must make a roll to resist it, using Assimilate or Will. Opposition is equal to the attacking culture's Provoke, and is usually passive. If the roll to resist fails, the meme creates a situation aspect on the target culture. Alternatively, cultural actions like psy-ops may create the aspect (see above).

Moreover, when a new capability is introduced into a culture, one or more situation aspects based on its memes are automatically created. Corporacies may also introduce new technology or capabilities into a culture, also with new memes.

Once the situation aspect exists, it may either be invoked, or it creates a Fair (+2) opposition to appropriate actions taken by the target culture, until it goes away or is removed. Failing to overcome the opposition causes mental stress damage to the culture equal to the shifts of failure. The situation aspect may also be compelled.

For example, the next time the Fiver's rabble-rousing demagogue makes a speech against the Commonality (a Provoke attack by the Olkennedy culture), the Live and Let Live *situation aspect provides opposition. As the PCs are heavily invested in the action, Sarah decides this is already active opposition of Fair (+2), plus the free invoke of* Live and Let Live. *If the Fiver leader loses the roll, the Olkennedy culture takes mental stress damage equal to the shifts of failure.*



CULTURAL OPERATIONS

You can include cultural operations in your ***Mindjammer*** game, either as one-off encounters or parts of scenarios, or as themes for your entire game. Cultural operations usually involve characters with appropriate stunts (Memetic Engineer, Cultural Redaction, etc) taking culture actions, or those with culture or organisation extras using their extras skills and stunts to do likewise.

We've broken cultural operations down according to the five stages of cultural integration defined by SCI Force.

Stage Zero Interdiction and Manipulation

When a lost colony world is contacted, an indefinite quarantine is imposed while it's observed and evaluated. This can include covert **psy-ops** to develop the culture to a point where it may be successfully contacted. Usually undertaken by SCI Force's Evaluation Bureau, aka "Bugs and Slugs", in their scary, clinical way.

PRELIMINARY CULTURAL ANALYSIS

First contact with a culture usually involves a preliminary analysis to ascertain its **dominant meme**, and also the **civilisation type** of the world or worlds being analysed (page 346). It's a create an advantage action using skills like Empathy, Investigate, etc, depending on the nature of the meme being observed, and takes at least a month. Succeeding with style may also reveal the culture's **trouble**.

THREAT ANALYSIS

Based on the preliminary cultural analysis, the operations team gauges the threat the culture poses to the Commonality. Have the players come up with this analysis themselves, and then roll using a separate skill from that used for the preliminary analysis. It's a create an advantage roll, and if successful places the analysis as a situation aspect.

IMPOSING THE EMBARGO

The Commonality embargo is a tool for restricting contact with a culture for various reasons, ranging from damage

to the culture to danger to the Commonality. The operations team may decide on the nature of the embargo as a result of the threat analysis, deciding which of the culture's capabilities should be subject to embargo (Armaments and Transport are popular choices).

Imposing the embargo is an administrative act within SCI Force, using skills like Contacts or Bureaucracy. It's a create an advantage action, and may be a single roll, a contest, or even a challenge, depending on circumstances. Passive opposition is +1 for each capability affected; alternatively, a total **quarantine** may be imposed, forbidding all contact with the culture, at a Superb (+5) difficulty.

If you fail the create an advantage action, the embargo is not yet imposed, although your efforts become common knowledge. As a culture action exchange lasts between a month and a year, it will be some time before you can try again — a lot can happen in the meantime.

Effects of the Embargo or Quarantine

An embargo or quarantine has the following effects:

- The embargo is a situation aspect which is an obstacle to appropriate actions in the system.
- A **quarantine** places the system totally off-limits, and the system gains at least 1 q-ship, a system patrol station, and several SPBs (page 241).
- An embargo is less stringent, handled by customs boats and starport authorities in system.
- When entering an embargoed system, you must roll Bureaucracy against the system's control index, with the embargo as a situation aspect (page 342); failure leads to complications depending on the nature of the embargo and the patrols, etc, in system.
- If a character is in breach of the embargo and fails the Bureaucracy roll, he may be brought to trial and punished, or attacked if he flees.
- When entering a quarantined system, you must avoid detection entirely, or be subject to arrest, or destruction if you resist, by patrolling q-ships and SPBs.

MANIPULATING TOXIC MEMES

At Stage Zero, operations teams start to tackle **toxic memes**. This usually involves psy-ops to create competing memes, or meme attacks to gradually change toxic ones.

Stage One Contact

Full and open contact with the culture begins. Embassies are established, diplomacy begins, and campaigns are undertaken to win hearts and minds by the SCI Force Contact Bureau. Embargoes and quarantines may still be in place, and operations to manipulate toxic memes.

DETAILED CULTURAL ANALYSIS

This is a series of create an advantage actions to build a detailed profile of the culture. The culture may resist with skills like Stealth and Deceive. Each time you succeed, you may assess one of the culture's aspects, stunts, or tiers on the skill pyramid (usually starting with the peak skill), including capabilities, or its tech index, reach, physical and mental stress tracks, etc. Detailed cultural analysis may take years for a basic profile, and is often ongoing.

PAINT THE COMMONALITY IN A POSITIVE LIGHT

Operations teams promote the Commonality at this point, although delicately — failure may set back contact efforts. Usually any successes with style on other culture actions or operations rolls are used to create a positive situation aspect. Because of the failure risk, overt culture actions are usually restricted to manipulating toxic memes until detailed analysis is complete.

Stage Two Normalisation

Once contact has gone far enough, SCI Force introduces the core Commonality culture, an often troublesome process as the native culture's values are overthrown. Handled by the Acculturation Bureau, normalisation aims to change the target culture's memes so that it shares at least 1/2 with the Commonality, at which point it becomes a culture world (see "Stage Three Acculturation", below) or a Commonality subculture or Commonality world (see "Stage Four Cultural Integrity", below).

INTRODUCE NEW CAPABILITIES

PCs on cultural operations missions may introduce new capabilities, often by transporting examples of technologies to the world. Use stunts like Memetic Engineer

Toxic Memes

Toxic memes *are those memes belonging to a rediscovered or lost colony world culture which Commonality threat analysis believes will pose problems for the Commonality. They include competing ideologies, violent or xenophobic aspects, or concepts the Commonality believes will be traumatic to its populations.*

to specify the nature of the capability situation aspect (page 297). Introducing a capability is also a political act; the PCs must decide which of a polity's factions to give the capability tech to, work with their scientists, etc; rival factions may try to thwart them or take the tech for themselves.

INTRODUCE COMPETING MEMES

PCs may introduce contrasting memes to undesirable ones in the culture, usually by making an appropriate create an advantage roll. This may result in cultural contamination, or be used in other culture actions.

NEUTRALISE TOXIC MEMES

In the short term, memes which have been analysed as toxic may be neutralised by a corresponding opposing situation aspect, like *Pacifism* opposing *Militarism*, etc. This can cause cultural contamination. Longer term, contrasting memes may be introduced as consequences, or memes changed permanently due to extreme consequences in meme attacks.

TARGETED MEME ATTACKS

Situation aspects and contrasting memes may be invoked in meme attacks, to hive off local instances of cultures for assimilation, inflict extreme consequences to permanently change them, or take them out to shrink or force a culture to concede.

Stage Three Acculturation

The Acculturation Bureau sometimes designates a planet for development as a **culture world**, where the native culture is preserved and enhanced before incorporation into the Commonality mainstream. Such worlds often retain strong features of their origin cultures in the First Age of Space; Shinean worlds, due to their innate conservatism, make excellent culture worlds. Others may be acculturated with only peripherally-related extinct Old Earth cultures, where SCI Force deems it a useful combination.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

This is usually a single analysis action or contest, often using Memetic Engineer (page 99) to create an advantage representing the culture world the culture is to become. Have the PCs come up with this situation aspect, plus ideas for the manipulations to be undertaken. Once the situation aspect is created, acculturation is underway.

MODIFY EXISTING MEMES

Memetic manipulation and neutralisation may be too violent for emerging culture worlds. Instead, characters with the Memetic Engineer or other appropriate stunts may take the culture as an extra. It's usually a challenge to gain the permission to do this, involving Knowledge, Empathy, and Memetic Engineer. On a success, you may change one of your extras aspects at a milestone to represent a meme of the culture in question, thereby acquiring that culture as an extra. In subsequent sessions, you may undertake actions to create a situation aspect representing modifications to that meme; then, at an appropriate milestone, you may spend one of your advancements to change the culture's meme you have as an extra to match the situation aspect.

With the culture as an extra, you're open to attack and damage from associated culture conflicts, so this method is usually reserved for peaceful or highly strategic cultures.

REINFORCEMENT

Your character may reinforce culture worlds in their actions and development by creating appropriate advantages.

Stage Four Cultural Integrity

Once a culture shares at least half its memes with the Commonality culture, it's incorporated into the Commonality mainstream, where it's guided to ever-closer integration and carefully monitored for deviation from Commonality norms. This is particularly important on the Fringe, where Commonality worlds are a "shield" against virulent cultural influences from beyond the Frontier. Handled by the scary Monitor Bureau, aka "Hush Ops" or the "Behaviour Police", Stage Four worlds are either Commonality subcultures (sharing at least 1/2 their memes) or Commonality worlds (part of the full Commonality culture).

IDENTIFY EMERGING TOXIC MEMES

Notice, Empathy, or Investigate rolls can be used to identify situation aspects affecting the culture which may cause problems. This applies particularly to cultures which have been partly isolated by *Targeting the Local Culture*-type situation aspects in Assimilate attacks.

POLICE THE EMBARGO

Often a toxic meme or problematic situation aspect may be the side effect of an undisclosed embargo breach. Likewise, characters may make Contact rolls, etc, to hear about unusual developments in a culture which may be the consequence of unauthorised capabilities.

SANCTION PROBLEMATIC MEME SOURCES

"Sanction" covers a world of sins. It can mean the location and removal of illicit capability tech smuggled onto a world; it can also mean the assassination of leading figures in high-profile meme attacks. Very often these are fine focus actions at character level, although organisations may use the Extreme Sanction stunt (page 272).

CULTURE STATISTICS

This section contains culture stat blocks for major cultures of the Expansionary Era. Some of these cultures are already engaged in culture conflicts, and may be suffering from consequences, stress damage, and cultural contamination (situation aspects).

The example cultural aspects listed for the cultures in **Chapter 4: Cultures, Genotypes, and Occupations** are selected from a culture's memes. Players may also select from the other memes of their culture, including capability memes (page 300).

The Commonality Culture

The Commonality culture is the dominant culture in ***Mindjammer***. It's filled with self-belief, and is outgoing, expansionary, and idealistic, secure in the knowledge that it has a viable and working interstellar government which it wants to bring to the whole galaxy. It wants to assimilate and integrate every culture it contacts — and becomes confused and upset when those cultures don't reciprocate or can't understand the benefits it brings.

Neo-Cultures

Culture worlds are significant for possessing strong and vibrant cultures capable of withstanding cultural conflict. Some have unique cultures found nowhere else in the Commonality; others derive from ancient Old Earth cultures, in particular the so-called Autumn Cultures which preceded the Commonality and which formed the core of the Great Diaspora. These are the Neo-Cultures, Commonality subcultures sharing more than half the Commonality's aspects.

Xenomorph Subcultures

The xenomorph subcultures are everywhere in Commonality Space, sometimes focussing on one xenomorph type, other times common to all xenomorphs in an area. Some Commonality worlds have predominantly xenomorph populations, where most or all members have the **xenomorph** genotype (page 40).

THE COMMONALITY CULTURE

Major Culture

Scale: *Galactic (+9)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Reach: *Galactic (+9)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T9*

Consequences: *3 + 1 mild mental and physical / 4*

MEMES

Dominant Meme: A Light for the Many Worlds of Space

Trouble: Live and Let Live

Other Memes: Humanity Is Transcending, Humankind's Destiny Is in the Stars, Mutability of Body Form

Capability Memes: A Future of Leisure and Happiness, Militarism, We're Losing Touch With the Old Ways, What Is Human Anyway?

Situation Aspects: The Ends Justify the Means (from Venu cultural contamination)

SKILLS

Epic (+7): *Assimilate*
Fantastic (+6): *Provoke, Will*
Superb (+5): *Resources, Structure, Technical*
Great (+4): *Contacts, Intrusion, Knowledge, Rapport*

STUNTS

✦ ***Culture Worlds:*** *Three Average (+1), one Fair (+2) and one Average (+1), or one Good (+3) culture world as a minor NPC.*

✦ ***Propaganda Campaign:*** *+2 bonus to Provoke attack, defend, and create an advantage actions.*

✦ ***Q-Ships:*** *+2 full defence bonus against physical attacks.*

✦ ***Shock and Awe:*** *Make meme attacks on any part of a culture in a zone currently under organisation Security attack.*

✦ ***Traditionalist:*** *Armour:1 rating against mental and physical attacks.*

CAPABILITIES

Armaments, Transport

THE SENTIENT ALLIANCE

This is a "liberated xenomorph" culture, no longer a subculture but still very much under the Commonality's wing. It's one of the larger Successor States, a bickering group of small interstellar cultures sponsored by either the Venu or the Commonality. It's the only interstellar xenomorph culture in Human Space (although there are xenomorph cultures on several individual worlds).

NEO-SHINEAN SUBCULTURE

Supporting Culture

The Neo-Shinean subculture is widespread in Commonality Space, and candidates for Neo-Shinean culture worlds are still being rediscovered. They match the most ardent corporacy worlds in toughness and dedication.

Scale: *Interstellar (+8)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Reach: *Galactic (+9)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T9*

Consequences: *3 mild + 1 moderate*

MEMES
True to Our Roots, Ours Is the Light, Inscrutable Conformists, Self-Denying so Humankind Can Transcend

Capability Memes: Just One World Among Millions, Science! We're Losing Touch With the Old Ways, What Is Human Anyway?

SKILLS
Fantastic (+6) Structure, Will; Superb (+5) Bureaucracy, Resources; Great (+4) Deceive, Stealth

STUNTS
✦ ***Culture Worlds:*** *Three Average (+1), one Fair (+2) and one Average (+1), or one Good (+3) culture world as a minor NPC.*

✦ ***Hunter-Killer Sentinels:*** *+1 bonus to remove situation aspects as long as you have Mindscape access.*

✦ ***Propaganda Campaign:*** *+2 bonus to Provoke attack, defend, and create an advantage actions.*

✦ ***Traditionalist:*** *Armour:3 rating against mental and physical attacks.*

XENOMORPH SUBCULTURE

Supporting Culture

Scale: *Interplanetary (+7)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Reach: *Interplanetary (+7)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T8*

Consequences: *2 mild + 1 moderate*

MEMES
Newly Assertive Xenomorph Subculture, Live and Let Live, Chip on the Shoulder, Mutability of Body Form

Capability Memes: Blasters Cause Horrendous Wounds, Hey! This Will Take Our Jobs Away, I Don't Like These New-Fangled Ways, I Don't Trust These New-Fangled Inventions, Just One World Among Millions, Machines Will Take Over the World! Personal Insignificance, Power Is All Around Us, Power Is Free, Power of the Mind, Separated and yet Together, Science! What Is Human Anyway? What Is Intelligence Anyway?

SKILLS
Superb (+5) Will; Great (+4) Deceive, Stealth; Good (+3) Contacts, Empathy

STUNTS
✦ ***Culture Worlds:*** *Three Average (+1), one Fair (+2) and one Average (+1), or one Good (+3) culture world as a minor NPC.*

CAPABILITIES
Transport

SENTIENT ALLIANCE CULTURE

Supporting Culture

Scale: *Interplanetary (+7)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3

Reach: *Interstellar (+8)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T8*

Consequences: *2 mild + 1 moderate*

MEMES
A Place Where Xenomorphs Can Be Free!, We Must Find Our Own Way, A Brave New World, Watchful If Not Paranoid, We Broke Free of Our Old Masters

Capability Memes: Blasters Cause Horrendous Wounds, Hey! This Will Take Our Jobs Away, I Don't Like These New-Fangled Ways, I Don't Trust These New-Fangled Inventions, Just One World Among Millions, Machines Will Take Over the World! Personal Insignificance, Power Is All Around Us, Power Is Free, Power of the Mind, Separated and yet Together, Science! What Is Human Anyway? What Is Intelligence Anyway?

Situation Aspects: The Venu Are the Greater Evil

SKILLS
Superb (+5) Contacts, Will; Great (+4) Empathy, Rapport; Good (+3) Provoke, Technical; Fair (+2) Science, Structure; Average (+1) Resources, Stealth

STUNTS
✦ ***Hunter-Killer Sentinels:*** *+1 bonus to remove situation aspects as long as you have Mindscape access.*

✦ ***Propaganda Campaign:*** *+2 bonus to Provoke attack, defend, and create an advantage actions.*

CAPABILITIES
Transport

Hominid Cultures

Hominid cultures form a large proportion of rediscovered worlds, usually those whose conditions or history have caused the original colonists to diverge significantly from the base human stock. There are a vast number of hominid types out there.

CHEMBU CULTURE

Supporting Culture

All hominid cultures are strange, but the Chembu culture is stranger than most. It's the culture of the Chembu Autonomous Region, and has representatives throughout Commonality Space working for the Chembu Genurgy corporacy.

Scale: *Interstellar (+8)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Reach: *Galactic (+9)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T9*

Consequences: *3 mild + 1 moderate*

MEMES

Feel the Joy of the Planetary Intelligence!, In the Commonality Not of the Commonality, Our Bodies Are Temporary — Always in Flux, We Must Control Evolution, The Body Can Be Perfected

Capability Memes: A Future of Leisure and Happiness, Just One World Among Millions, Science! We're Losing Touch With the Old Ways, What Is Human Anyway?

SKILLS

Fantastic (+6) Structure, Will; Superb (+5) Empathy, Rapport; Great (+4) Science, Technical; Good (+3) Provoke, Resources

STUNTS

✦ ***Culture Worlds:*** *Three Average (+1), one Fair (+2) and one Average (+1), or one Good (+3) culture world as a minor NPC.*

✦ ***Propaganda Campaign:*** *+2 bonus to Provoke attack, defend, and create an advantage actions.*

✦ ***Shock and Awe:*** *Make meme attacks on any part of a culture in a zone currently under organisation Security attack.*

✦ ***Traditionalist:*** *Armour:1 rating against mental and physical attacks.*

CAPABILITIES

Biotechnology

Rediscovered World Cultures

Rediscovered worlds are usually those the Commonality is trying to assimilate. There are thousands on the Fringe, so many that thinly-spread Space Force and Communications Instrumentality personnel are promoted way above their capabilities just to fill diplomatic and administrative positions. They're complemented by synthetics and the Mindscape where possible, but all the same there's the feeling that the Commonality is only just coping with the huge job on its hands. Rediscovered world cultures are often in the throes of deep cultural conflict, contamination, or even full-blown meme attacks, and the situation is frequently difficult, if not desperate.

RAQUAHAN CULTURE

Supporting Culture

Raquahan is a culture in Stage Two Normalisation; it's described on page 36.

Scale: *Planetary (+6)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Reach: *Planetary (+6)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T8*

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

MEMES

Old-Fashioned and Friendly, Obsessive About Food, Egalitarian, Live and Let Live

Capability Memes: Blasters Cause Horrendous Wounds, Machines Will Take Over the World! Personal Insignificance, Power Is All Around Us, Power Is Free, Power of the Mind, Science! What Is Human Anyway?

SKILLS

Great (+4) Knowledge, Structure; Good (+3) Resources, Will; Fair (+2) Contacts, Empathy; Average (+1) Assimilate, Provoke

STUNTS

✦ ***Traditionalist:*** *Armour:2 rating against mental and physical attacks.*

CAPABILITIES

Information

Lost Colony Cultures

Beyond the frontier lie the countless lost colonies of Human Space (page 378). Most lie beyond the Commonality's reach, and though the Frontier is pushed back every year it will be centuries before they are brought into the Commonality — if ever.

It's hard to generalise about lost colony cultures, as they're all very different. Most are planet-sized or even smaller, a few comprising a handful of worlds at most.

Supporting Culture

JENDATTU CULTURE

The Jendattu culture is a primitive lost colony as yet unvisited by the Commonality. It's discussed on page 35.

Scale: *Regional (+4)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Reach: *Planetary (+6)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T1*

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

MEMES

Blessed Are the Child-Givers, Happy He Who Survives to See the Morning, Laugh at Storm and Lightning, Iron Is the Metal of the Gods

Capability Memes: Militarism

SKILLS

Good (+3) Structure, Will; Fair (+2) Provoke, Resources

STUNTS

✦ ***Traditionalist:*** *Armour:2 rating against mental and physical attacks.*

CAPABILITIES

Armaments, Resource Exploitation, Transport

Major Culture

VENU CULTURE

The Venu culture is ***Mindjammer's*** *"enemy" culture. Most Venu are human, although an increasing number are mutants. There are no xenomorphs or synthetics; both are forbidden in Venu society. The Venu have conquered some hominid worlds, but aren't believed to be in contact with any alien species. Although their approach is to annihilate enemy cultures, they are nevertheless in the throes of cultural conflict themselves, after cultural contamination by the Commonality and its advanced technology.*

Scale: *Interstellar (+8)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Reach: *Interstellar (+8)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T7*

Consequences: *3 + 1 mild mental*

MEMES

Dominant Meme: You Should Have No God but Venu

Trouble: Mutation Is an Abomination!

Other Memes: Trust the Technopriests, The Ends Justify the Means, Hail the Radiant Darkness!

Capability Memes: Blasters Cause Horrendous Wounds, Just One World Among Millions, Militarism, Power Is All Around Us, Power Is Free, Robots Will Take Over the World, Science! What Is Human Anyway? Where Have All Our Jobs Gone?

Situation Aspects: Mutability of Body Form (from Commonality cultural contamination), Science Will Save Us! (from Commonality cultural contamination)

SKILLS

Fantastic (+6): *Provoke*
Superb (+5): *Security, Will*
Great (+4): *Assimilate, Deceive, Stealth*
Good (+3): *Resources, Structure, Technical*

STUNTS

✦ ***Memetic Cascade:*** *Make an Intrusion create an advantage roll each exchange to increase your potential Assimilate attack scale by 1.*

✦ ***Shock and Awe:*** *Make meme attacks on any part of a culture in a zone currently under organisation Security attack.*

✦ ***Traditionalist:*** *Armour:2 rating against mental and physical attacks.*

CAPABILITIES

Armaments, Power, Transport +2

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
WORLDS AND CIVILISATIONS

"The universe adapts life to itself in many ways, and those that thrive are those that adapt most eagerly. On Belomor the colonists from Old Earth lost their human form millennia ago; now they were aquatics, with gills as well as lungs and huge eyes that saw heat in the eternal cold of ocean. Yet still they were human, mingling with their air-breathing fellows in the vast concourses of Belomor's metroplexes. In the seventeenth millennium, humankind had grown strange with the vastness of space and time; yet here, still, was commonality."

THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

Your ***Mindjammer*** games take place on the thousands of **worlds** of Commonality Space and beyond, and in the space between them. In game terms, worlds are collections of issues and descriptive elements, providing situation aspects, interesting locations, motivated opposition, and seeds for scenarios and campaign arcs. This chapter provides guidelines for creating and describing worlds. While it's intended to produce results grounded in current astrophysics, planetology, and xenoscience, its goal isn't to be scientifically rigorous, but to provide a deep and consistent framework upon which you can base exciting sessions of play.

You can describe worlds in as much or as little detail as you want, before play or on the fly, either randomly using dice, or by selecting the details you want. You can create a world solo or **collaboratively**, using the principles described in "Setting Up Your ***Mindjammer*** Game" (page 15) and in the sections below.

Exploration Missions

You can also use this chapter when playing exploration missions in little-known or unknown star systems, even generating a world on the fly as the PCs explore it. If a world has already been explored or surveyed to some extent, parameters and other planetary data can often be found in the Mindscape on a successful Knowledge roll. The **Exploration Missions** sidebars in this chapter and **Chapter 19: Stellar Bodies and Star Systems** highlight actions PCs might take to investigate planets and star systems for which survey data isn't available.

World First and Star First

You create planets and star systems in two ways: **world first**, and **star first**. The first assumes you have a world type in mind, and lets you describe it in the detail you need

Lost Colonies and Garden Worlds

*Almost all rediscovered worlds are **garden worlds** — worlds which support human life with minimal technological aid. They usually have breathable atmospheres and an exploitable biosphere.*

There are an estimated 30,000 garden worlds within 1000 light years of Old Earth. Some are Commonality worlds or lost colonies; others are still being discovered and exploited. The Commonality only settles non-garden worlds when there's a pressing strategic or resource need. There are 100,000 known worlds (of all types) in Commonality Space (page 378).

(including star system and planets if you want). The second starts with a stellar body, and details any planetary system.

The **world first** method gives you a star system which meets your requirements — maybe a Commonality world, lost colony, or Commonality outpost. The **star first** method gives you a star system which may or may not be habitable. World first is useful for worlds within the Commonality, or star systems which are known to be inhabited or habitable; star first is useful for newly discovered systems.

This chapter describes the **world first** method; **star first** is detailed in **Chapter 19: Stellar Bodies and Star Systems**.

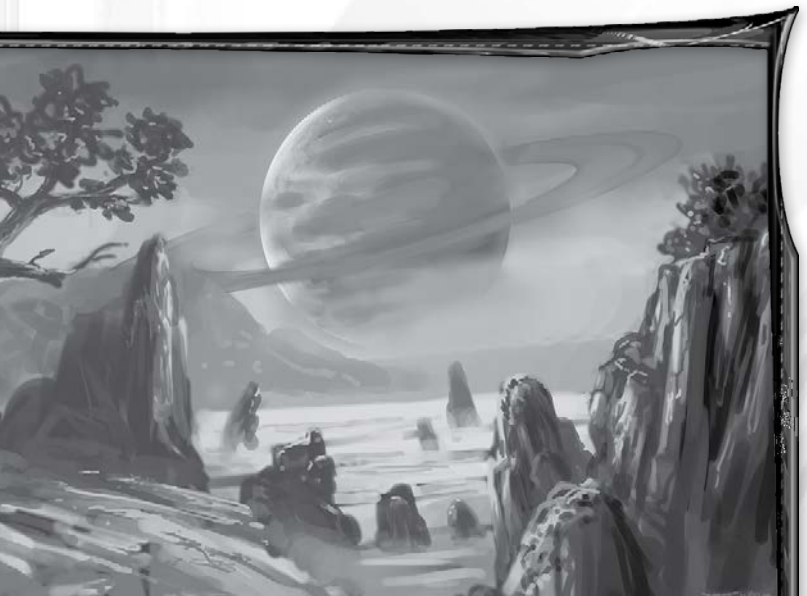
CREATING WORLDS

When you create a world, generate as much or as little detail as you need. World creation is divided into three phases, providing incrementally more detail:

- **Phase 1: The Essentials** generates a **high concept** aspect for the world. Often this is all you'll need, especially if your PCs are travelling rapidly or the world's background is only peripherally relevant to your game.
- **Phase 2: The Standard Profile** generates the world's **parameters** — its size, gravity, atmosphere, etc — and any civilisation, plus optional details about its star and any other planetary bodies. This level of detail is sufficient for most games where the world is a feature of your adventure.
- **Phase 3: The Full Profile** generates planetary maps and events and encounter tables for the world and even star system. It's appropriate for multiple sessions or single world campaigns; some games may want to just generate the maps.

Collaborative Campaign Creation

*If you're creating your **Mindjammer** game collaboratively (page 164), then you can take it in turn (both GM and players) to create a high concept for each world in your immediate game area.*



Phase 1: The Essentials

All you really need to describe a world is a **high concept**, encapsulating all that's most important about the planet. You can create this on the fly — maybe you want a *Primitive Ice World Ravaged by Civil War Against the Commonality*. As long as you're clear about what you mean — whether the air's breathable, who the inhabitants are — then you needn't go any further.

This section helps you create a high concept in a more structured way, and which can be "unpacked" later into a standard profile (page 317) if you need it.

Before you start, decide whether the world you're creating is inhabited, or if you don't know (or care).

HIGH CONCEPTS FOR AN INHABITED WORLD

To create a Commonality world, rediscovered world, or lost colony, select a **planetary type** from Table 18-1: Inhabited World Planetary Type; roll 4dF, or simply pick one. This forms part of the world's high concept. Planetary types are described on page 332.

Table 18-1: Inhabited World Planetary Type

4dF	Planetary Type	Civilisation Type Modifier
-4	Non-Garden World*	-4
-3 to -2	Marginal Garden World	-2
-1 to +1	Inferior Garden World	+0
+2 to +3	Standard Garden World	+2
+4	Superior Garden World	+4

The second part of the world's high concept is derived from its **civilisation type**, if any. Roll 4dF on Table 18-2: Civilisation Type, modified by the Civilisation Type Modifier from Table 18-1: Inhabited World Type, or pick a civilisation type you like. Civilisation types are described on page 346.

HIGH CONCEPTS FOR AN UNKNOWN WORLD

An unknown world is one you know nothing about; a star system which isn't a Commonality or rediscovered world or a known lost colony. It *probably* isn't even remotely habitable.

Alien Worlds

This section generates worlds inhabited by humans, hominids, or other descendants of terrestrial species. To create worlds inhabited by aliens, see **Chapter 21: Alien Life**.

Exploration Missions: The Preliminary Cultural Analysis

*Ascertaining an inhabited world's civilisation type requires a **preliminary cultural analysis** (page 306), which also reveals the **dominant meme** of the world's culture.*

Table 18-2: Civilisation Type

4dF	Lost Colony	Rediscovered	Commonality	Core
-8	Failing	Failing	Failing	Prison / Closed World
-7	Failing	Regressed	Instrumentality Hub	Instrumentality Hub
-6	Regressed	Regressed	Synth Colony	High Population World
-5	Regressed	Regressed	Corporacy World	High Population World
-4	Alien Civilisation	Holdout	Depot	Depot
-3	Holdout	Holdout	Seed Colony	Industrial World
-2	Industrial World	Industrial World	Industrial World	Industrial World
-1	Balkanised	Balkanised	Commonality Civilisation	Core World
+0	Balkanised	United World	Commonality Civilisation	Core World
+1	Balkanised	Balkanised	Commonality Civilisation	Core World
+2	Regressed	Regressed	Corporacy World	Agri World
+3	Agri World	Agri World	Agri World	Agri World
+4	United World	Culture World	Quarantined World	Quarantined World
+5	Failing	Culture World	Instrumentality Hub	High Population World
+6	High Population World	High Population World	High Population World	High Population World
+7	Interstellar Civilisation	Interstellar Civilisation	High Population World	High Population World
+8	Interstellar Hub	Interstellar Hub	Commonality Hub	Core Worlds Hub

Table 18-3: Unknown World Planetary Type

4dF*	Inner System	H-Zone	Outer System
-8	Accretion Disk	Accretion Disk	Accretion Disk
-7	Accretion Disk	Accretion Disk	Accretion Disk
-6	Protoplanet	Protoplanet	Proto-gas Giant
-5	Protoplanet	Protoplanet	Proto-gas Giant
-4	Gas Giant	Desert World	Iceball
-3	Inferno	Ocean World	Gas Giant
-2	Terrestrial Planet	Terrestrial Planet	Ice Giant
-1	Desert World	Garden World, Marginal	Dwarf Planet
+0	Terrestrial Planet	Terrestrial Planet	Gas Giant
+1	Inferno	Garden World, Standard	Gas Giant
+2	Terrestrial Planet	Terrestrial Planet	Ice Giant
+3	Garden World, Marginal	Garden World, Superior	Asteroid Belt
+4	Desert World	Super Earth	Garden World, Marginal (moon of gas giant)
+5	Terrestrial Planet	Gas Giant	Rogue Planet
+6	Gas Giant	Garden World, Inferior	Helium Planet
+7	Chthonian Planet	Garden World, Marginal	Carbon Planet
+8	Carbon Planet	Post-garden World	Carbon Planet

Exploration Missions: The Preliminary Planetary Scan

*The **preliminary planetary scan** is one of the first things you do when arriving in a star system, and reveals the main world's high concept. For a Commonality world, no roll is needed; the local Mindscape informs you when you handshake. For worlds without Mindscape like unknown lost colonies, a Passive Sensing roll may be required.*

Civilisations on Unknown Worlds

Although an unknown world may be uninhabitable to terrestrial organisms, there's a small chance it harbours intelligent life. See "Exointelligence" (page 406).

There's a greater range of planetary types possible for unknown worlds, including hostile environments and some which properly speaking aren't planets at all. Roll 4dF or pick one from Table 18-3: Unknown World Planetary Type; if you know the system's stellar body type (page 355), modify the roll by its age. On exploration missions you can make preliminary planetary scans and cultural analyses as usual. You can also use this table for determining other worlds in garden world systems.

There are many unknown worlds even within Commonality Space. Most are merely documented and little visited, others have way stations or outposts when the system

Collaborative World Profiles

You can take it in turns to create a world's planetary and civilisation parameters using these guidelines. The GM and players in turn select a planetary or civilisation type or parameter, by rolling 4dF or choosing freely.

I Just Need a Single Parameter

Sometimes you just need a single parameter for a world. Maybe you've been playing just with a world's high concept, and now you want to know its gravity. You can quickly look up the planetary type's surface gravity range from its high concept, and pick what you feel is an appropriate result. If you want a random result, roll 4dF, without modifiers.

Jot down the surface gravity rating you end up with; you can incorporate it into the world profile if you decide to generate more parameters later.

offers unique resources or unusual phenomena, or where the Commonality must maintain a strategic presence (like the Venu "Q-Zone", page 380).

CREATING THE HIGH CONCEPT

Once you have your world's planetary type, combine it with its civilisation type, if any, to create its high concept. You can tweak this, but try and keep the two components clear if you'd like to expand the high concept into a **standard profile** later.

Examples:

- *Regressed Lost Colony Inferior Garden World*
- *Verdant Commonality World Paradise*
- *Ruined Civilisation on a Swamp World Gas Giant Moon*
- *Rediscovered Balkanised Garden World*

Phase 2: The Standard Profile

If you want to know more, you can "unpack" a high concept to generate more details about the world and its star system. Do this in four steps:

Getting the Planetary Parameters "Right"

As much as possible we've tried to ensure the planetary parameters agree with current planetary science. Obviously **Mindjammer** *is a game and not a scientific treatise, so some combinations push credibility. In general, though, the parameters provide a scientifically-grounded framework to help you create realistic planets, avoiding massive worlds with no gravity, or blazing hot asteroid worlds with low gravity and oxygen atmospheres.*

You don't have to follow these guidelines. Don't let the tables in this chapter and the next prevent you from having fun; if you have a cool idea for a planet or star system and can't make it fit, don't worry — go ahead anyway. No one on Earth has set foot in another star system yet, and every year our theories are overturned by new findings. It's a big galaxy, and there's plenty of room for surprises.

1. STELLAR BODY TYPE

Each planetary type (page 332) lists the stellar bodies it may orbit. Choose one, or roll on the tables in "Creating Star Systems" (page 355). Stellar body type tells you things like the star's colour, how far away the planet orbits, its year length, the colour of its sky and any vegetation, and so on.

2. PLANETARY PARAMETERS

Planetary parameters describe a world's size, gravity, and so on. The planetary types (page 332) list parameter ranges (for example, a Superior Garden World must have a Standard (+0) Surface Temperature). You can choose each parameter, or roll 4dF, restricting your selection to the parameter range.

Many parameters modify subsequent parameters. For example, the **surface gravity** parameter has an **atmosphere pressure modifier**, applied when determining a world's atmospheric pressure. If you're selecting the atmospheric pressure parameter non-randomly, use the modifier to restrict the range you choose from.

You can do this process in reverse — create the planetary parameters first, then find a planetary type to fit.

3. CIVILISATION PARAMETERS

If your world has a civilisation, it also has parameters. Define these using the "Civilisation Parameters" section below (page 338). Civilisation parameters provide aspects

Using Active Sensing

Survey and analysis rolls are 1 step easier if you use Active Sensing. However, as this lights up your starship for all to see, Commonality contact protocols stipulate only Passive Sensing be used until you've ascertained a system is uninhabited, or inhabited by a contacted and friendly civilisation.

Exploration Missions: Preliminary System Analysis

This basic Space Force survey, usually undertaken by event horizon probe (page 351), identifies three things: the system's stellar body, the number of planets (if any), and their planetary types. It's a single Fair (+2) Passive Sensing roll, with each shift providing one of these three details; or a **challenge***, with success or failure at each stage affecting your roll in the next.*

The PCs have misjumped into an unknown star system. Skin-of-Our-Teeth succeeds at her Passive Sensing roll, identifying the system primary — an M-class main sequence star. Max rolls his Notice skill's new Sensor Scan stunt to determine the number of planets, and fails; Sarah decides he finds 10 planets in the system, missing number 11, and that she has an *Erroneous Orbit Analysis* aspect she can use for a free invoke. Thaddeus Clay pays a fate point to invoke the Mindscape, plugging into the ship's direct perception feed and using sensorview to roll his own Notice skill to determine the planetary types. Sarah invokes the *Erroneous Orbit Analysis* to make the opposition more difficult; Clay rolls +3 for a +4 result — a tie. Sarah rules he successfully identifies the planetary types of the 10 planets, but misses the *Secret Venu Base on a Tidally-Locked Desert World* she has determined lies in close orbit to the M-class primary. Thinking they're alone, Skin switches to her active sensors, lighting up the whole ship for all to see...

Exploration Missions: Planetary Analysis

You may survey a planet in detail to ascertain its parameters. Make a Passive Sensing create an advantage roll, assessing situation aspects corresponding to the parameters you focus on. On a success with style, you assess two parameters. You may continue the survey until it's finished, surveying all planetary bodies if you like. Alternatively, at the GM's discretion, you can make a single roll for the whole planet or even system.

like planetary parameters, and must fall within the ranges indicated for the world's civilisation type (page 346).

4. OTHER PLANETS

Detail other planetary bodies in the star system if you need them. The stellar body type can tell you the maximum number of planets (page 359), and Table 18-3: Unknown World Planetary Type (page 316) can tell you the planetary type. Use Table 18-1: Inhabited World Planetary Type (page 314) if you want more than one habitable world per system.

Phase 3: The Full Profile

Use a full profile to generate exhaustive detail on a world, including: a **planetary map**; a table of possible events; and a list of encounters.

PLANETARY MAPS

A planetary map can be a great play-aid, helping you describe locations and track PC and NPC whereabouts. You can create a map before play or on the fly, or even collaboratively; an icosahedral map template can be found on page 479. See "Planetary Maps" (page 352) for more.

EVENT TABLES

It's useful to have an idea of the sorts of events that can happen on a world during play. **Event tables** list possible events in the form of situation aspects and hazards; you can use them as a "pick list" to choose an event, or even generate a random event using 4dF.

We've provided 4 event table templates, for inhabited and uninhabited worlds with and without biospheres. Each entry represents either a situation aspect or hazard, to be drawn from planetary parameter aspects or hazards for planet events; terrain aspects or hazards (page 352) for terrain events; civilisation aspects or hazards (page 338) for civilisation events; system aspects or hazards (page 372) for system events; and biosphere aspects, hazards, and encounters (page 413) for biosphere events.

You can use the event table templates as is. If your game calls for an event (perhaps as a result of a compel or a success at a cost), either roll or select from the appropriate column to determine the event type, then roll or select a situation aspect or hazard from the appropriate section (a planetary parameter aspect, a system hazard, etc). That way, you can use the same event table templates for any world.

If you have more time, you can create a dedicated event table for a specific world. Instead of generic entries like "planetary event", each entry is a pre-selected event, conveying the atmosphere of the world. You can even create multiple event templates — for example, one for each different terrain type.

Collaborative Event Table Creation

*If you're creating a world collaboratively, you can create event table entries in turn. Additionally, you can also use **hazard identification surveys** to let players fill in the entries on the event table template; a success lets the player fill in the entry, while a failure leaves the entry as "unknown" — see "Let the Players Help" on page 164 for more.*

Exploration Missions: The Hazard Identification Survey

You can attempt to identify hazards at any of the levels in the event table templates — system, planet, terrain, biosphere, and civilisation. The typical hazard identification survey takes a day, although success with style or at a cost can modify this (page 171). Using Passive Sensing, you can identify one hazard, or two on a success with style, by name only; using Active Sensing, you can identify the hazard and one of its parameters (such as its Intensity, or aspects, etc), or multiple parameters on a success with style. On a success at a cost, you can identify the hazard but are affected by it.

Table 18-4: Event Table Templates

4dF	No Biosphere	No Biosphere, Inhabited	Biosphere	Biosphere, Inhabited
-4	System Event	System Event	System Event	System Event
-3	Planet Event	Planet Event	Planet Event	Planet Event
-2	Planet Event	Terrain Event	Biosphere Event	Terrain Event
-1	Terrain Event	Civilisation Event	Terrain Event	Civilisation Event
+0	Terrain Event	Civilisation Event	Biosphere Event	Biosphere Event
+1	Terrain Event	Civilisation Event	Terrain Event	Civilisation Event
+2	Planet Event	Terrain Event	Biosphere Event	Terrain Event
+3	Planet Event	Planet Event	Planet Event	Planet Event
+4	System Event	System Event	System Event	System Event

Exploration Missions: Stage Two Planetary Registration

Analysing the full profile of a world is a challenge, comprising the following parts:

- **Cartographical Survey:** *A Passive or Active Sensing roll to produce a planetary map (page 352).*
- **Terrain Survey:** *A Passive or Active Sensing roll to list the planetary terrain types (page 352).*
- **Biosphere Identification Analysis:** *See page 388.*

Stage two planetary registration can also be performed collaboratively, with players creating planetary maps, terrain lists, and biosphere descriptions themselves; or iteratively, with successful PC challenge rolls letting the player describe the result as detailed in "Let the Players Help" (page 164).

The Titius-Bode Law

The orbits in Table 18-6: Planetary Orbit are simplified versions of the Titius-Bode Law *(actually more a theory than a law). For orbits up to the Outer Habitable Zone, only one planet should occupy a given orbit; the Titius-Bode Law suggests additional orbits at 2.8 and 19.6 orbit multiples, as well as beyond the 40th orbital multiple.*

ENCOUNTER TABLES

Encounter tables provide you with a pick list of encounters with life forms on worlds with biospheres. As this is tied closely to alien life and biospheres, we deal with encounter table creation in **Chapter 21: Alien Life** (page 413).

PLANETARY TYPES AND PARAMETERS

Planetary Parameters

Planetary parameters describe a world's size, atmospheric pressure, gravity, and so on; generating parameters is described on page 317. Each planetary parameter can provide an **aspect**, particularly when it differs from the norm; a *Standard Pressure Breathable Atmosphere* is in principle an aspect, but a *Low Pressure Oxygen Atmosphere Tainted with* CO_2 is more likely to see interesting invokes and compels in play. Some planetary parameters may also function as skills, or provide modifiers or opposition (such as when a character tries a feat of strength on a high gravity world).

Some parameters have a **biosphere** and / or **habitability modifier**. Keep a running total of these; the total biosphere modifier (page 330) determines the likelihood of life on a planet; the habitability modifier (page 331) indicates how accommodating the planet is for terrestrial life.

1. STELLAR BODY TYPE

Each planetary type has a range of possible **stellar body types** — usually the star it orbits (the **system primary**). Select one, or roll randomly on the tables in "Creating Star Systems" (page 355).

We're generating a Marginal Garden World, whose entry on page 333 says "F- to M-class main sequence stars; others possible". We decide to roll on Table 19-1: Stellar Body Type (page 355), and end up with a K-class main sequence star.

2. PLANETARY AGE

Older planets lose heat, slow down in rotation, and have longer to develop life. Roll 4dF or choose an age on Table 18-5: Planetary Age, or use the system primary's **stellar body age** rating (page 358).

Example Aspects: *Aging Star — Fading Biosphere; Ancient Star With a Highly Evolved Planetary System; Very Young Bright Star Surrounded by Hazardous Debris.*

3. PLANETARY ORBIT

Roll 4dF or pick an entry on Table 18-6: Planetary Orbit to determine how far from the system primary the world orbits. This isn't an exact figure, but depends upon the size and nature of the system primary; multiply the **orbit** and **year length multiple** entries by the system primary's **habitable zone orbital distance** and **period** entries for approximate orbital distances in AU (page 358) and year lengths in standard years if you want greater detail.

Example Aspects: *Extreme Inner Orbit Lost in the Star's Corona; Highly Eccentric Orbit Producing Wildly Changing Conditions*.

Notes

The **year length modifiers** above are valid for orbits around a primary star of 1 solar mass (the same as Old Earth's sun).

Table 18-5: Planetary Age

Rating	Age	Day Length Modifier	Satellite Modifier	Biosphere Modifier	Biodiversity Modifier
-4 or lower	Extremely Young*	+4	-4	-5	-8
-3	Very Young	+3	-2	-3	-6
-2	Young	+2	+0	-1	-4
-1	Maturing	+1	+0	+0	-2
+0	Mature	+0	+0	+1	+0
+1	Aging	-1	-1	+3	+2
+2	Old	-2	-2	+5	+6
+3	Very Old	-3	-2	+5	+4
+4 or higher	Ancient	-4	-2	+3	-6

*Use Proto-planet planetary type (page 337).

Table 18-6: Planetary Orbit

Rating	Orbit	Orbit Multiple	Year Length Modifier	Density Modifier	Temperature Modifier	Biosphere Modifier
-4 or lower	Highly Eccentric	Roll twice	Average both	+0	Roll twice	-1
-3	Extreme Inner	0.1	0.03	+1	+7	-3
-2	Inner	0.4	0.25	+1	+2	-1
-1	Habitable Zone, Inner	0.7	0.6	+0	+1	+2
+0	Habitable Zone	1	1	+0	+1	+3
+1	Habitable Zone, Outer	1.5	1.8	+0	-1	+2
+2	Outer	5	11	+0	-2	-1
+3	Outer	10	31	+0	-6	-2
+4 or higher	Extreme Outer	40	253	+0	-8	-3

Table 18-7: Year Length Stellar Mass Modifier

Mass of Stellar Primary	Year Length Multiple
0.1	3.16
0.5	1.4
2	0.7
5	0.4
10	0.31
25	0.2
50	0.15
100	0.1

For greater or smaller masses, multiply the year length by the multiple in Table 18-7: Year Length Stellar Mass Modifier.

Highly Eccentric Orbits: All worlds have eccentric orbits to some extent, reflected in the **seasonality** parameter (page 329). A highly eccentric orbit actually passes between orbital bands (from inner to habitable, say, or even

The "Habitable" Zone

The **habitable zone** *is the orbital distance from a system primary where liquid water can exist on a planet's surface, allowing for the possibility of* **aqueous planets** *where "life as we know it" can evolve. However, "life as we know it" is only a small part of the life which thrives in the cosmos, and the habitable zone is a humanocentric term, ignoring the many other environments where life may exist.*

Table 18-8: Planetary Year Length

Year Length	Comments	Seasonality Modifier
0.1	The planet orbits extremely rapidly. Day length and year length may be the same; life adjusts to the day-night cycle more than seasons. Unless atmospheric pressure is Low (-2) or below, temperature varies little between seasons.	-4
0.5	The planet orbits disconcertingly rapidly for terrestrial organisms, which have trouble adapting without genurgic modification; native biospheres are well-adapted. Even in relatively eccentric orbits, seasonal temperature variation is reduced.	-2
0.8	The planet orbits more rapidly than terrestrial organisms find optimal. Seasons may be less marked.	-1
1	The planet's year length suits terrestrial organisms. Orbital eccentricity or axial tilt may account for seasonality.	+0
1.2	The planet orbits somewhat slowly, increasing seasonal heating or cooling. Terrestrial organisms adapt with difficulty.	+1
5	The planet orbits slowly, and terrestrial organisms cannot adapt without genurgy. Seasonal variation is increased.	+2
50	The planet orbits very slowly, and even native life takes significant steps to cope with seasonality.	+4
500	The planet orbits extremely slowly, accentuating seasonal effects. Any biosphere may experience mass die-off or periods of extreme enervation or hibernation.	+8

extreme inner to extreme outer). This plays havoc with surface conditions, giving a modifier to its **seasonality** (page 329) equal to the difference between the ratings of the two orbits. Roll on the table twice, taking **both** results.

4. YEAR LENGTH

An approximate period in **standard years** calculated by multiplying the **year length modifier** from Table 18-6: Planetary Orbit by the system primary's **habitable zone orbital period** (page 359). Year length affects season length, temperature extremes, habitability, and seasonality — see Table 18-8: Planetary Year Length.

Example Aspects: *Centuries-long Winter; Rapid Orbit yet the Seasons Never Change*.

5. PLANETARY SIZE

Roll 4dF or choose an entry on Table 18-9: Planetary Size to determine the diameter of the planet in Old Earth diameters (approximately 12,800 km or 8,000 miles). **Planetary size** is a factor in surface gravity, and indicates the width of 1 hex on the **icosahedral map template** (page 479). Standard (+0) worlds or smaller may be gas giant moons, at the GM's discretion.

Example Aspects: *Huge Super-earth With Heavy Gravity; Low Gravity Asteroid Grazing the Sun*.

6. PLANETARY DENSITY

Roll 4dF or pick an entry from Table 18-10: Planetary Density to determine the planet's average density in **Earth densities**.

Example Aspects: *Super-dense Planet With Crushing Gravity; Very Low Density Gas World With Thousands of Kilometres of Atmosphere*.

7. SURFACE GRAVITY

Add the two gravity modifiers from the planet's **size** and **density** and look up the total on Table 18-11: Surface Gravity to find the world's gravity in Old Earth gravities (G).

Example Aspects: *Bullet Rain*; *Gravity Trap; Stumbling Movement*.

8. DAY LENGTH

Take a world's **planetary orbit** rating (-2, +1, etc), and apply the **day length modifiers** from Table 18-5: Planetary Age and Table 18-11: Surface Gravity to calculate its day length on Table 18-12: Planetary Rotation. Extreme Inner Orbit planets are treated as a planetary orbit rating of -5 for calculating rotation.

Example Aspects: *Rapid Rotation and Stupendous Storms; Tidally-Locked Inner World With a Burning Face*.

Table 18-9: Planetary Size

Rating	Size	Earth Diameters	Hex Width (km)*	Density Modifier	Gravity Modifier	Max Moons	Biosphere Modifier
-4 or lower	Planetesimal	0.01	3	+0	-4	0	-4
-3	Planetoid	0.1	30	+0	-3	1	-2
-2	Small	0.3	90	+0	-2	1	+1
-1	Small Standard	0.5	140	+0	-1	3	+2
+0	Standard	1	280	+0	+0	3	+2
+1	Large Standard	1.5	430	+0	+1	5	+2
+2	Large	3	850	-1	+5	10	+2
+3	Very Large	5	1400	-2	+6	10	+0
+4 or higher	Giant	10	2800	-3	+8	50+	-2

*assumes 45 hexes

Table 18-10: Planetary Density

Rating	Density	Comments	Earth Densities	Gravity Modifier	Biosphere Modifier
-4 or lower	Extremely Low		0.05	-10	-3
-3	Very Low	Jupiter, Neptune, Uranus	0.1	-5	-1
-2	Low	Pluto. Tambini	0.25	-3	-1
-1	Low Standard	Old Mars. Xaiwu	0.7	-1	+1
+0	Standard	Old Earth, Ajeux	1	+0	+1
+1	High Standard	Belawis, Furnace, New Howzat	1.3	+1	+1
+2	Dense		2	+2	+1
+3	Very Dense	Chardos	3	+3	+1
+4 to +9	Extremely Dense	May be composed of lead or other heavy elements.	5	+5	-1
+10 or higher	Exotic	May be chthonian planet (page 333), exotic matter like neutronium, or have formed under other extreme conditions.	10+	+10	-3

Table 18-11: Surface Gravity

Rating	Gravity	Examples	Day Length Modifier*	Atmospheric Pressure Modifier	Biosphere Modifier
-4 or lower	Microgravity	Negligible gravity; free fall.	-4	-15	-3
-3	Very Low (0.1G or less)		-3	-10	-2
-2	Low (0.5 G or less)	Old Mars, Tremor	-2	-5	-1
-1	Low Standard (0.5G to 1G)	Delebor, Galagole, Viri	-1	-2	+0
+0	Standard (0.9G to 1.1G)	Old Earth, Neptune, Uranus	+0	+0	+1
+1	High Standard (1G to 1.5G)	Belawis, Chardos, Chinhice	+1	+0	+1
+2	High (2G to 3G)	Tambini	+2	+2	+0
+3	High (4G to 5G)		+3	+5	+0
+4 to +9	Very High (6G to 10G)		+4	+10	-2
+10 or higher	Exotic (10 to 20G and higher)		+5	+15	-3

* Strictly speaking, a planet's rotation (page 323) isn't affected by its gravity, but rather by a complex combination of radius, mass, and density; for a given density, a more massive planet rotates more rapidly. For simplicity's sake, we use gravity as a rough equivalent.

Calculating Gravity

We're playing fast-and-loose in Table 18-11: Surface Gravity, sacrificing accuracy for playability. For greater accuracy, multiply the planet's size (in Earth diameters) by its density (in Earth densities) to calculate its surface gravity. This is summarised as:

Gravity = Density x diameter

A Jupiter-sized world (at 11 Earth diameters) with the same density of Earth has a gravity of 11G; whereas one with twice Earth's density has a gravity of 22G!

Table 18-12: Planetary Rotation

Rating	Rotation	Day Length	Biosphere Modifier
-5 or below	No Rotation / Tidal Lock	As year	-3
-4	Extremely Slow	100d+	-2
-3	Very Slow	50d+	-1
-2	Slow	10d+	+0
-1	Reduced	2d+	+1
+0	Standard (1 standard day)	24h	+2
+1	Increased	22h	+0
+2	Rapid	20h	-1
+3	Very Rapid	18h	-2
+4	Extremely Rapid	16h	-3
+5	Extremely Rapid	14h	-5
+6	Extremely Rapid	12h	-5
+7	Extremely Rapid	10h	-5
+8, etc	Extremely Rapid	8h, etc	-5

Notes

A **tidally-locked** planet rotates once every orbit, meaning it appears to not rotate at all, directing the same face to the star all the time. This has dramatic effects on the surface environment, with a baking surface beneath the sun, a frigid "dark side", and a "twilight zone" circling the planet midway where conditions may be "milder", with even a t-analogue biosphere (page 388) if in the habitable zone.

9. ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE

Roll 4dF on Table 18-13: Atmospheric Pressure and apply the **atmospheric pressure modifier** from Table 18-11: Surface Gravity to calculate the world's atmospheric pressure in Old Earth atmospheres.

Example Aspects: *Insidious Atmosphere Eventually Breaks All Seals; Light-headed Dizziness; Like Breathing a Thick Soup.*

10. SURFACE TEMPERATURE

Roll 4dF on Table 18-14: Surface Temperature and apply the **temperature modifiers** from Table 18-6: Planetary Orbit and Table 18-13: Atmospheric Pressure to calculate the world's average **surface temperature**.

Example Aspects: *Even the Atmosphere Is Frozen Solid; Hellish Inferno World.*

11. ATMOSPHERIC CONSTITUENTS AND SURFACE LIQUID TYPE

A world's atmosphere is determined differently from other parameters. Total the world's **habitability modifier** so far; if it's +1 or greater, the world is an **aqueous planet**; -1 or lower, it's a **non-aqueous planet**; +0, it could be either (pick one). Then, choose the atmospheric constituents you want from the tables on pages 327-328; sometimes this may be restricted by the world's age. Atmospheric constituents also indicate what any surface liquid will be.



Table 18-13: Atmospheric Pressure

Rating	Atmospheric Pressure	Temperature Modifier	Surface Liquid Modifier	Biosphere Modifier	Habitability Modifier
-10 or lower	Trace	-3	-10	-5	-10
-4 to -9	Very Low*	-2	-3	-3	-3
-2 to -3	Low**	-1	-1	-1	-1
-1 to +1	Standard	+0	+1	+1	+2
+2 to +3	High	+1	+1	+1	-1
+4 to +6	Very High	+3	+3	+1	-2
+7 to +9	Hazardous	+4	+6	-3	-3
+10 or higher	Insidious	+5	+9	-5	-3

* Requires a breather even if the atmosphere is breathable (page 327).
** May require a breather.

Table 18-14: Surface Temperature

Rating	Surface Temperature	Examples	Temperature (K)*	Biosphere Modifier	Habitability
-4 or below	Frozen	Pluto	30	-2	-10
-3	Frigid	Titan	100	-1	-4
-2	Cold	Old Mars (Pre-terraforming)	200	+0	-2
-1	Cool	Ice Age Earth	283	+1	+1
+0	Standard	Old Earth	287	+1	+2
+1	Warm	Ice-free Earth	293	+1	+1
+2	Hot	Tremor	370	-1	-2
+3	Furnace	Mercury	450	-2	-3
+4	Inferno	Inferno	750	-3	-3
+5	Inferno		1500	-3	-5
+6	Inferno		3000	-5	-5
+7 and above	Chthonian		6000	-5	-5

* For temperature in degrees Celsius (c), subtract 273.

Table 18-15: Aqueous Planet Atmospheres

Planetary Age	Breathability	Description	Habitability
Very Young (-3) or below	Unbreathable	Hydrogen-nitrogen atmospheres with lots of water, and some ammonia, carbon dioxide and monoxide, methane, and sulphur compounds; or carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane, and water vapour, with possible cyanides, formaldehyde, and traces of sulphur and hydrogen sulphide. May be filled with amino acids, sugars, and other building blocks of life; deadly to terrestrial life, they can support t-analogue, alternate, and parallel paradigms (page 388), and are often viewed as candidates for terraforming. *Aspects: Lakes of Primaeval Soup; Lichens and Microbes.*	Inimical (-1) or lower
Maturing (-1) to Aging (+1)	Breathable	Oxygen atmospheres, using photosynthesis or analogous processes, and developed t-analogue biospheres (page 388). If the Habitability is Marginal (+0), then the atmosphere may be tainted, although perhaps breathable in the short term. *Aspects: Hardly a Drop of Rain Ever Falls; Like a Second Earth; Locked in an Ice Age; Riotous Jungle World.*	Marginal (+0) or higher
Young (-2); or Old (+2) or above	Tainted	High CO_2 levels, unbreathable to humans without breathers, although they may have t-analogue biospheres. *Aspects: Ancient Earthlike World With Too Much CO_2; Aqueous World in the Throes of Oxidation.*	Marginal (+0) or lower

What Colour Is the Sky?

Determining a world's sky colour can be surprisingly complex. The key factors are atmospheric pressure, star spectral class, and atmospheric particulates.

Start with the sky colour as defined by the star's spectral class (page 365) as the baseline colour. At Trace (-10) atmospheric pressure, the sky is black, brightening to reach the baseline colour at Standard (+0) atmospheric pressure, then lightening as the pressure increases through golden, yellow, pink, and finally red at Very High (+4) pressure and above.

Methane in the atmospheric constituents adds a greenish tint to the sky. Particulates, or much more methane, make the sky increasingly red.

Aqueous Planets

Liquid water is highly significant for the Commonality, and in particular liquid water on rocky planets with somewhat hospitable environments (often involving oxygen atmospheres) known as **aqueous planets**. Whether water is present on a world can also be determined by the planetary type (page 332); garden worlds of all types are aqueous planets, whereas Jupiter-like gas giants or Venusian infernoes are not.

Aqueous planets usually have the following planetary parameters:

- **Density:** Low (-2) to Very Dense (+3)
- **Surface Gravity:** Low (-2) to High (+3)
- **Atmospheric Pressure:** Low (-3) to High (+3)

Whether an aqueous planet atmosphere is breathable to humans is generally a function of planetary age, as shown on Table 18-15: Aqueous Planet Atmospheres; this may modify your world's habitability to the threshold indicated. Aqueous planets with unbreathable atmospheres are often viewed as candidates for terraforming.

Non-Aqueous Planets

Non-aqueous planets are without liquid water, although other liquids may cover their surfaces. The constituents of non-aqueous planet atmospheres are largely a function of surface temperature (page 325), as shown on Table 18-16: Non-Aqueous Planet Atmospheres.

12. SURFACE LIQUID EXTENT

Roll 4dF, or pick an entry from Table 18-17: Surface Liquid Extent, applying the modifier from Table 18-13: Atmospheric Pressure, indicating what proportion of the planet's surface is covered by liquid. The liquid (water, hydrogen fluoride, methane, etc) is indicated in Atmospheric Constituents and Surface Liquid Type above.

Table 18-16: Non-Aqueous Planet Atmospheres

Surface Temperature	Description	Habitability Modifier
Frozen (-4) or below	Close to absolute zero, atmosphere frozen out to solids of nitrogen ice, ethane and methane, carbon monoxide, ammonia hydrates, and perhaps water crystals. *Aspects: Cryogeysers; Refrigeration Effect.*	-3
Frigid (-3)	Seas of ethane, methane, or ammonia, hydrocarbon-based ecosystems, water "volcanoes", atmospheres of nitrogen, carbon dioxide, and so on. Biospheres are extremely slow-moving. Liquid ammonia is flammable in oxygen atmospheres, so ammonia biospheres may not use oxygen. *Aspects: Flammable Mixed With Oxygen; Imperceptibly Slow Biosphere; Methane Rivers and Rain; Water Volcanoes.*	-1
Cold (-2)	Iceball or cold desert; nitrogen or carbon dioxide atmospheres, liquid hydrogen fluoride, acidic and dangerous to terrestrial life, or liquid hydrogen peroxide, which may also turn the world into an aqueous planet. *Aspects: Antifreeze Oceans; Dissolving Rain; Rivers of Ice-cold Acid.*	-1
Cool (-1)	Sulphuric acid, sulphur dioxide, sulphur trioxide, and water; biosphere plant analogues may concentrate the sulphur, in turn metabolised by animal analogues, an example alternate paradigm (page 388). Liquids may be acidic hydrogen fluoride, or even ammonia at Very High (+4) atmospheric pressure or above; or hydrogen peroxide, hydrogen sulphide, hydrogen chloride, and silicon dioxide, which may function as biosphere solvents (page 387). *Aspects: Acid Rain; Explosive Ammonia Oceans If Exposed to Oxygen.*	-4
Standard (+0)	Similar to Cool (-1) world atmospheres.	-4
Warm (+1)	Similar to Cool (-1) world atmospheres.	-4
Hot (+2)	Sulphuric acid, sulphur dioxide, sulphur trioxide, or even liquid ammonia at Very High (+4) atmospheric pressure and above. Alternate paradigm biospheres (page 388) may metabolise sulphur. *Aspects: Acid Rain and Searing Temperatures; Lethal Sulphur-based Life Forms Move Lightning Fast.*	-1
Furnace (+3)	Similar to hot worlds, or possibly gaseous silicon dioxide, with oxygen-breathing silicon-based life forms. Furnace worlds are hostile to terrestrial life; many metals are liquid, and biospheres are exotic and fast-moving, although unlikely to perceive the PCs as threats unless attacked. *Aspects: Fast-Moving Biosphere; Liquid Metal Rivers; Oxygen-Breather Silicon Creatures.*	-1
Inferno (+4 to +6)	High-pressure nightmare worlds of unbelievable temperatures, inferno world surfaces are almost entirely liquid. Any biospheres are very exotic; atmospheres are similar to hot worlds.	-2
Chthonian (+7) or above	As Inferno world atmospheres. *Aspects: Crushing Pressures Flatten Everything in a Minute; Crystallo-Metallic Crawling Things; Everything Melts.*	-4

Example Aspects: *Blue Planet Teeming With Life; Rivers of Liquid Methane*.

13. SEASONALITY

A world's **seasonality** represents the effects of axial tilt and orbital eccentricity. Roll 4dF, or select from Table 18-18: Seasonality, applying the seasonality modifier from Table 18-8: Year Length (page 322). Seasonality may profoundly affect a biosphere, causing spore or hibernation states lasting long periods, making native life appear "dead", and so on.

Example Aspects: *Mass Migrations; World of Violent Freeze and Thaw*.

14. PLANETARY RESOURCES

Planetary resources represent exploitable elements and compounds. They depend on the system primary (page 359), which determines the elements in the original accretion disk, and the planetary type (page 332) and atmospheric constituents (page 325), which determine how those elements are distributed and other resources which might have developed. **Worlds always have a plentiful resource in their atmospheric and surface liquid constituents**.

Planetary resources are either **plentiful**, **standard**, or **scarce**. Plentiful indicates a resource easily available in great quantities or quality; scarce indicates a resource which is poor, rare, difficult to extract, or perhaps absent entirely. Both plentiful and scarce resources are treated as planetary aspects.

Standard resources are neither plentiful nor scarce; they're more or less available on the world. As such, they're not explicitly mentioned.

A resource's availability can be determined from the world's high concept and planetary parameters, or from the resources in the corresponding planetary type section below (page 332). Resources can also be established with appropriate Science or Knowledge create an advantage actions.

Combine planetary resources with stellar body resources (page 359) for an overall picture of available resources.

Example Aspects: *Clouds of Elemental Carbon; Edible Biosphere; Petroleum Seas*.

15. SATELLITES

For each potential moon indicated in Table 18-9: Planetary Size, roll 4dF or select an entry from Table 18-19: Satellites, applying the **satellite modifier** from Table 18-5: Planetary Age. A world may not have a moon larger than itself,

Table 18-17: Surface Liquid Extent

Rating	Surface Liquid Extent	Percentage	Biosphere Modifier
-4 or below	None	0%	-5
-3	Trace	1%	-3
-2	Very Low	5%	-1
-1	Low	25%	+0
+0	Average	50%	+2
+1	High	65%	+2
+2	Very High	80%	+3
+3	Almost Total	90%	+5
+4 or above	Ocean-world	100%	+5



Table 18-18: Seasonality

Rating	Seasonality	Comments	Biosphere Modifier
-10 or below	No Seasonality	The planet is tidally locked to its primary.	-4
-5 to -9	Little Seasonality	The planet is partially tidally locked to its primary.	-2
-4	Very Low		+0
-2 to -3	Low		+0
-1	Low Standard		+0
+0	Standard Seasonality	Terrestrial flora and fauna may thrive on aqueous planets in the habitable zone.	+0
+1	High Standard		+0
+2 to +3	High		+0
+4	Very High		-2
+5 to +9	Extreme Seasonality	The world experiences drastic extremes of surface temperature. For a year length of 0.5 or less, the planet may have either a precarious biosphere, or a virulent and aggressive one. For a year length of 50 or more, the world may experience long periods of freezing or burning conditions.	-4
+10	Twin Climates	Seasonality shifts are so extreme that the world effectively has two climates — perhaps one frozen, the other an inferno. Conditions are appalling; exotic biospheres are possible (for example, magnetic field life forms), but "life as we know it" doesn't stand a chance.	-8

Table 18-19: Satellites

Rating	Satellite	Biosphere Modifier
-3 or below	No Moon	-2
-2	Ring System	-1
-1 to +0	Planetesimal	+0
+1	Planetoid	+1
+2	Small	+2
+3	Small, Standard	+2
+4 or above	Standard	-2

though it may have one the same size, in which case it is a **binary planet** (page 332).

Moons are worlds in their own right, using the parameters for their size on Table 18-9: Planetary Size, except that their orbits are those of their parent planet. Additionally, their surface temperature rating is 1 step higher due to tidal heating, or 2 steps if the parent's surface gravity is High (+2) or above.

Example Aspects: *Elaborate Ring System; Jungle Gas Giant Moon*.

16. BIOSPHERE

Biosphere is a simple check to determine whether life of any kind exists on the world. Roll 4dF on Table 18-20: Biosphere and apply the total **biosphere modifier** from all the planet's parameters.

Example Aspects: *Highly Evolved Ecosystem in the Gas Giant Atmosphere; Teeming Biosphere in the Deep Acid Ocean*.

Table 18-20: Biosphere

Rating	Biosphere	Comments
-1 or below	No Biosphere	No life on the world.
+0 to +3	Simple Biosphere	Single-celled organisms or equivalent; roll on the "Unsettled World" column on Table 21-1: Biosphere Paradigm to determine its nature, but don't develop the biosphere — there isn't really one yet.
+4 or above	Biosphere	Life exists. See **Chapter 21: Alien Life** to determine its details and **biosphere concept**.

Table 18-21: Planetary Habitability

Rating	Habitability	Comments
-4 or below	Deadly	Requires extreme habitat protective measures, extreme environment adaptation (page 106), etc.
-3	Lethal	Will defeat vac sealing and p-suits; armour and shields will protect against damage.
-2	Hostile	Requires vac sealing, p-suits, etc, to avoid harm.
-1	Inimical	As above.
+0	Marginal	Requires breathers, etc, to avoid harm.
+1	Challenging	The environment is immediately survivable but conditions may be severe in the medium to long term.
+2	Adequate	Sufficient for long-term survival.
+3	Agreeable	Favourable for long-term habitation.
+4 or above	Benign	Ideal for long-term habitation.

17. HABITABILITY

Habitability indicates how friendly or inimical a planet's environment is to terrestrial life forms — including characters. It also indicates how close to terrestrial any biosphere is. A lower habitability rating indicates a more hazardous environment or less terrestrial biosphere; a higher one indicates a biosphere closer to terrestrial (ie "life as we know it").

Total the **habitability modifiers** from Table 18-13: Atmospheric Pressure, Table 18-14: Surface Temperature, and Section 11: Atmospheric Constituents and Liquid Type and cross-reference on Table 18-21: Planetary Habitability. Non-aqueous worlds (page 328) have a maximum habitability of Inimical (-1).

A positive habitability rating indicates a habitable environment, with higher being increasingly habitable (+1 is very harsh, +0 means you can probably just about breathe but will die quickly). Anything negative is uninhabitable, and progressively lethal. The rating may also be used as a modifier on survival checks (page 89).

Example Aspects: *Blasted Lifeless Rock; Tailored Lost Colony World*.

Describing Planetary Conditions

*If you're playing on a world whose environment is interesting enough to feature in your game, consider introducing a couple of **planetary aspects**. These are similar to game aspects; they're available to anyone, and last as long as you're on the planet. You can base planetary aspects on a single parameter (*Acid Rain*) or combine more than one, perhaps incorporating a biosphere aspect from **Chapter 21: Alien Life** (*Riotous Life on a High Gravity Ocean-world*).*

*Planetary aspects should represent conditions prevailing across the world; those which only apply in certain terrains or at certain times may be better suited for **events** (page 318).*

Planetary Types

The following planetary types are examples of the worlds which can be found throughout Human Space, with typical planetary parameters. They aren't exhaustive; feel free to design your own.

ACCRETION DISK

The disks of debris and gases at the centre of which protostars kindle, and which may eventually form planets, these are active regions filled with collision hazards but rich in resources. They may contain organic molecules like amino acids.

Aspects: *Birth of a Planetary System; Millions of Kilometres of Colliding Rubble.*

Stellar Body: Pre-Main Sequence Star, Protostar; Black Star, Electroweak Star, Stellar Black Hole, White Dwarf.

Age: Extremely Young.

Orbit: Any.

Size: Planetesimal.

Density: Extremely Low to Standard.

Gravity: Very Low or lower.

Day Length: n/a.

Atmospheric Pressure: Very Low or lower.

Temperature: Any.

Liquid: Any.

Seasonality: n/a.

Biosphere: Alternate.

Habitability: Hostile or worse.

Resources: *Plentiful:* carbons, dispersed silicates, organics, zanthrium ore; *Scarce:* water.

ASTEROID BELT

Asteroid belts are dispersed planetoids usually occupying a single orbit. Asteroids come in three types: **carbonaceous**, **metal-rich**, and **silicate**. Many asteroids are older proto-planets (page 337), cold and with fewer radioactive elements. They may contain amino acids.

Aspects: *A Myriad Tiny Worlds; Rich in Ores and Minerals.*

Stellar Body: Any.

Age: Any.

Orbit: Any.

Size: Planetoid or smaller.

Density: Low to Dense.

Gravity: Very Low or lower.

Day Length: n/a.

Atmospheric Pressure: n/a.

Temperature: Any.

Liquid: None.

Seasonality: n/a.

Biosphere: Any.

Habitability: Hostile or worse.

Resources: *Plentiful:* amino acids, carbons, metals, organics, silicates.

BINARY PLANET

Binary planet systems occur when a world and its moon are similar sizes and orbit a common centre of gravity. They're relatively common. In a binary system, both worlds are subject to tidal heating and considerable surface tides.

Aspects: *Huge Globe in the Sky; Twin World System.*

CARBON PLANET

Carbon planets form from carbon-rich, oxygen-poor **accretion disks** (above), often around S-class and C-class stars (page 367). They differ from **terrestrial planets** (page 337), which are mostly silicon-oxygen compounds. Their cores are surrounded by molten carbide and graphite layers, with a lower diamond layer if Extremely Dense (+4), all of which can spew forth in volcanoes. The hydrocarbon surface is frozen or liquid depending on temperature, including rivers of oils and methane compounds and tar sludges; the atmosphere is rich in carbon monoxide. There's no water, but at Hot (+2) temperatures or less there may be hydrocarbon rain.

Aspects: *Deadly Poisonous Atmospheres; Insidious Sooty Environment; Lethal Diamond Carbide Volcanoes; Parched Rivers of Oil; Tar Diamond Killer Biosphere.*

Stellar Body: S-class and C-class stars.

Age: Any.

Orbit: Any.

Size: Planetesimal to Large Standard.

Density: Low Standard to Extremely Dense.

Gravity: Any.

Day Length: Any.
Atmospheric Pressure: Hazardous or lower.
Temperature: Any.
Liquid: Any (hydrocarbons).
Seasonality: Any.
Biosphere: Alternate.
Habitability: Inimical or worse.
Resources: *Plentiful:* carbides, diamond, graphite, methane, titanium.

CHTHONIAN PLANET

The dead core of an evaporated gas giant which has lost its hydrogen and helium outer layers through close proximity to its primary, a chthonian planet is a rocky or metallic core similar to a terrestrial planet (page 337), although extremely hot with active vulcanism.

Aspects: *Crushing Gravity; Searing Airless Hellhole.*
Stellar Body: Any main sequence or significant star.
Age: Mature or older.
Orbit: Extreme Inner to Inner.
Size: Small Standard to Large.
Density: Dense to Exotic.
Gravity: High Standard to Very High.
Day Length: Tidal Lock to Extremely Slow.
Atmospheric Pressure: n/a (stripped).
Temperature: Chthonian.
Liquid: Any.
Seasonality: No Seasonality.
Biosphere: Exotic.
Habitability: Lethal to Deadly.
Resources: *Plentiful:* exotic gravity elements; *Scarce:* helium, hydrogen.

DESERT WORLD

Barren worlds with little or no water or other surface liquid, some desert worlds with reasonable atmospheric pressures and surface temperatures are marginal garden worlds. Others are uninhabitable without technological support. Desert worlds are often terraforming candidates.

Desert worlds are "hot" or "cold", depending on surface temperatures and their position relative to the habitable zone. Most are not completely dry, perhaps with free-standing water near the poles or at the equator. Hot desert worlds without water are at risk of runaway greenhouse heating.

Aspects: *Burning Desert World With Hardy Population; The Freezing Sands Stretch Far Away.*
Stellar Body: Any main sequence or significant star.
Age: Any.
Orbit: Inner H-Zone to Outer H-Zone.
Size: Large or smaller.
Density: Low to Very Dense.

X-MemCore

ROSETTES

Worlds have been discovered which are "multiple planet systems" of 3 or 4 or even more worlds orbiting a common centre of gravity. Unlike binary planets, these are not thought to be natural formations, although who or what created them — and why — is unknown. They are beyond current Commonality science, a theoretical tech index of T12 or higher. They are often linked with the mysterious ***Predecessors****.*

Gravity: Microgravity to Very High.
Day Length: Tidal Lock to Extremely Rapid.
Atmospheric Pressure: Low to High.
Temperature: Cold to Hot.
Liquid: Very Low to None.
Seasonality: Usually Low or lower.
Biosphere: Transplant, T-Congruent, T-Analogue, Alternate.
Habitability: Any.
Resources: *Plentiful:* silicates, maybe hydrocarbons, some metals.

DWARF PLANET

Dwarf planets are closer to planets than asteroids, their spherical shapes created by gravity. They're derived from protoplanets, cooler and with fewer radioactives, which have not managed to clear their orbits of other bodies.

Aspects: *Asteroid Belt World; Frozen Wanderer in the Outer System.*
Stellar Body: Any star.
Age: Any.
Orbit: Any.
Size: Planetoid.
Density: Low to Dense.
Gravity: Microgravity to Low Standard.
Day Length: No Rotation to Reduced.
Atmospheric Pressure: Trace to High.
Temperature: Any.
Liquid: Any.
Seasonality: Any.
Biosphere: Any.
Habitability: Any.
Resources: As protoplanet.

GARDEN WORLD, MARGINAL

Marginal garden worlds include aqueous worlds with extreme orbits, oceanworlds, garden worlds with very high

or low gravity, trace or tainted atmospheres, no water, and so on. Some otherwise hospitable garden worlds are made marginal by their highly eccentric orbits, often taking them out of the habitable zone.

Aspects: *Harsh High-Grav World With Barely Breathable Atmosphere; Violent Swings From Burning to Freezing.*

Stellar Body: F- to M-class main sequence stars; others possible.

Age: Very Young to Ancient.

Orbit: Highly Eccentric; Inner to Outer.

Size: Planetoid to Large.

Density: Low to Dense.

Gravity: Low to High.

Day Length: Tidal Lock to Extremely Rapid.

Atmospheric Pressure: Low to High.

Temperature: Cold to Hot.

Liquid: Any.

Seasonality: Any, esp. non-standard.

Biosphere: Transplant, T-Congruent; T-Analogue.

Habitability: Inimical to Benign.

Resources: *Plentiful:* biosphere, hydrocarbons, metals, organics, water.

GARDEN WORLD, INFERIOR

Inferior garden worlds cluster around outlier conditions, with days too long or too short, temperatures too hot or too cold, and so on. They include garden worlds with eccentric orbits, too much or too little water, high gravity, tainted atmospheres.

Aspects: *Dry Cool World With Dying Biosphere; Rarified Air and Low Gravity.*

Stellar Body: F- to M-class main sequence stars; others possible.

Age: Very Young to Very Old.

Orbit: Inner to Outer.

Size: Small to Large Standard.

Density: Low Standard to High Standard.

Gravity: Low Standard to High Standard.

Day Length: Very Slow to Very Rapid.

Atmospheric Pressure: Low to High.

Temperature: Cool to Warm.

Liquid: Low or higher.

Seasonality: High or lower.

Biosphere: Transplant, T-Congruent; T-Analogue.

Habitability: Challenging to Benign.

Resources: *Plentiful:* biosphere, hydrocarbons, metals, organics, water.

GARDEN WORLD, STANDARD

Humans can live on standard garden worlds without difficulty; they're not exactly "Second Earths", but they're close.

Aspects: *The Days Are a Week Long; Too Cold for Comfort.*

Stellar Body: F- to G-class main sequence stars; others possible.

Age: Maturing to Aging.

Orbit: Inner H-Zone to Outer H-Zone.

Size: Small Standard to Standard.

Density: Low Standard to High Standard.

Gravity: Standard.

Day Length: Slow to Rapid.

Atmospheric Pressure: Standard.

Temperature: Cool to Warm.

Liquid: Average to Almost Total.

Seasonality: Low to High.

Biosphere: Transplant, T-Congruent; T-Analogue.

Habitability: Adequate to Benign.

Resources: *Plentiful:* biosphere, hydrocarbons, metals, organics, water.

GARDEN WORLD, SUPERIOR

Superior garden worlds are perfect examples of human-habitable worlds, with ideal temperatures and biospheres which can support humans (including agriculture) with minimal modification. They include Old Earth, and other garden worlds which have been extensively engineered.

Aspects: *A Second Earth; Blue-Green Paradise; One Moon.*

Stellar Body: G-class main sequence stars.

Age: Mature.

Orbit: Inner H-Zone to Outer H-Zone.

Size: Small Standard to Standard.

Density: Standard.

Gravity: Standard.

Day Length: Standard.

Atmospheric Pressure: Standard.

Temperature: Standard.

Liquid: Average to Almost Total.

Seasonality: Standard.

Biosphere: Transplant, T-Congruent.

Habitability: Benign.

Resources: *Plentiful:* biosphere, hydrocarbons, metals, organics, water.

GAS GIANT

A large planet of at least 55 Old Earth masses, with an atmosphere of almost entirely hydrogen and some helium. Gas giants are usually inhospitable to humans, but may have exotic biospheres. They often have many satellites.

Aspects: *Gas Giant Mines; Massive Jovian World.*

Stellar Body: Any.

Age: Very Young or older.

Orbit: Any.

Size: Giant.



Density: Very Low.
Gravity: High.
Day Length: Any, but slower closer to primary, including tidal lock.
Atmospheric Pressure: Standard to Hazardous.
Temperature: Any.
Liquid: n/a.
Seasonality: Any.
Biosphere: Parallel, Exotic.
Habitability: Usually Deadly.
Resources: *Plentiful:* hydrogen.

HELIUM PLANET

A gas giant consisting of helium instead of hydrogen which forms from a low mass white dwarf star, which has undergone major mass loss (perhaps from a binary companion) reducing it to planetary mass.

Aspects: *Hazardous Orbit; Helium Harvesters; Remnant of a Dead Star.*
Stellar Body: White Dwarf (former binary); or none.
Age: Very Young to Young.
Orbit: Any.
Size: Giant.
Density: Very Low.
Gravity: High.
Day Length: Any, but likely slower.
Atmospheric Pressure: Standard to Hazardous.
Temperature: Any.
Liquid: n/a (helium rain).
Seasonality: Any.
Biosphere: Parallel, Exotic.
Habitability: Usually Deadly.
Resources: *Plentiful:* helium.

ICEBALL

A rocky planet orbiting in the outer reaches of a solar system, so cold most of its atmosphere has turned to ice.

Aspects: *Frozen World Lost in the Dark; Ice Mines in a Frozen Parched Waste.*
Stellar Body: Any.
Age: Any.
Orbit: Outer to Extreme Outer.
Size: Planetesimal to Large Standard.
Density: Low to Dense.
Gravity: Microgravity to High.
Day Length: Any.
Atmospheric Pressure: Trace to Standard.
Temperature: Frozen.
Liquid: n/a.
Seasonality: Any.
Biosphere: Alternate.
Habitability: Lethal to Deadly.
Resources: *Plentiful:* frozen nitrogen, ethane and methane, carbon monoxide, ammonium hydrates, perhaps water ice.

ICE GIANT

An ice giant is smaller than a gas giant (but at least 10 Old Earth masses), with a core of "ices" instead of hydrogen and helium, mostly water in supercritical fluid form. They have gaseous atmospheres smaller than standard gas giants.

Aspects: *Blue Gas World Colder Than Cold.*
Stellar Body: Any.
Age: Any.
Orbit: Outer to Extreme Outer.
Size: Very Large.
Density: Very Low.
Gravity: High Standard.
Day Length: Reduced to Extremely Rapid.
Atmospheric Pressure: High to Very High.
Temperature: Frigid to Frozen.
Liquid: n/a.
Seasonality: Any.
Biosphere: Exotic.
Habitability: Lethal to Deadly.
Resources: *Plentiful:* ammonia, helium, hydrogen, methane, water ice.

INFERNO

With terrific atmospheric pressures and / or proximity to a system primary leading to searing temperatures of 750K and higher, inferno worlds have no water, although oceans of molten metals and magma are possible.

Aspects: *Blazing Surface of Molten Metal; Crushing Fiery Hellhole.*
Stellar Body: Any star.
Age: Any.
Orbit: Extreme Inner to Inner H-Zone.
Size: Small to Large Standard.
Density: Standard to Dense.

Gravity: Low to High.
Day Length: Tidal Lock to Extremely Rapid.
Atmospheric Pressure: Standard to Hazardous.
Temperature: Inferno or higher.
Liquid: Any.
Seasonality: Low or lower.
Biosphere: Parallel.
Habitability: Deadly.
Resources: *Plentiful:* carbon dioxide, molten metals, nitrogen, sulphuric acid.

OCEANWORLD

Completely covered in water oceans, oceanworlds may be garden worlds or steam-shrouded hotworlds. Found mostly in habitable zones, they're favourable environments for "life as we know it" to evolve.

Oceanworld oceans may be hundreds of kilometres deep, with floors of exotic ices. Inner habitable zone oceanworlds are close to boiling, steam-shrouded with thick inhospitable atmospheres, although with more clement environments in the depths. Oceanworlds in outer habitable zones have thick atmospheres with considerable greenhouse effects. On higher gravity oceanworlds waves are small; on lower gravity worlds they are very large.

Gas giant moons may be oceanworlds, kept unfrozen beneath kilometre-thick crusts of ice by tidal heating. They may have thriving biospheres or aquatic colonies.

Aspects: *Dark Teeming Oceanworld on a Gas Giant Moon; Fair Winds and Mighty Ships of a World Ocean.*
Stellar Body: F- to M-class main sequence stars.
Age: Any.
Orbit: Inner H-Zone to Outer H-Zone; gas giant moons.
Size: Standard to Large Standard; Planetoid.
Density: Low to Dense.
Gravity: Standard to High; lower for moons.
Day Length: Extremely Slow to Extremely Rapid.
Atmospheric Pressure: Standard to High.
Temperature: Cold to Hot.
Liquid: Oceanworld.
Seasonality: Any.
Biosphere: Transplant, T-Congruent; T-Analogue.
Habitability: Marginal to Benign.
Resources: *Plentiful:* biosphere, hydrogen, oxygen, water.

PLATEWORLD

Plateworlds are artificial worlds, huge disks or "plates" a thousand or more kilometres across, concave, with rim walls to contain their atmospheres. They usually orbit in the habitable zone, and are terraformed on their inner surfaces. Architectural monuments of the First Age of Space, they are relatively common in the Core, rare on the Fringe.

Aspects: *Breathtaking Manmade World; Endless Horizons.*
Stellar Body: Any.
Age: Mature.
Orbit: Habitable Zone.
Size: Small Standard.
Density: High Standard.
Gravity: Standard.
Day Length: Standard.
Atmospheric Pressure: Standard.
Temperature: Standard.
Liquid: High.
Seasonality: Standard.
Biosphere: Transplant, T-Congruent.
Habitability: Benign.
Resources: *Plentiful:* biosphere, water.

POST-GARDEN WORLD

Post-garden worlds have evolved beyond garden world states and are no longer habitable to humans. They may be in the early stages of runaway greenhouse effects leading to **infernoes** (page 335), and may host Commonality outposts or research stations. P-suits or breathers are often required; life forms may be little more than lichen analogues.

Aspects: *Dying World; The Oceans Have Boiled Away.*
Stellar Body: F- to M-class main sequence stars; others possible.
Age: Aging or older.
Orbit: Inner to Outer.
Size: Small to Large Standard.
Density: Low Standard to High Standard.
Gravity: Low Standard to High Standard.
Day Length: Tidal Lock to Very Rapid.
Atmospheric Pressure: Low to High.
Temperature: Cool to Warm.
Liquid: Any.
Seasonality: Any.
Biosphere: T-Congruent; T-Analogue.
Habitability: Marginal to Challenging.
Resources: *Plentiful:* hydrocarbons.

PROTO-GAS GIANT

A proto-gas giant is a region of an accretion disk (page 332) where swirling concentrations of hydrogen and helium are approaching the mass and density to form a gas giant (page 334).

Aspects: *Swirling Knot of Dense Gases.*
Stellar Body: Any protostar; optionally any very young main sequence star.
Age: Protoplanet.
Orbit: Any.
Size: Giant.

Density: Extremely Low.
Gravity: Standard.
Day Length: Increased to Extremely Rapid.
Atmospheric Pressure: Very Low to Very High.
Temperature: Frigid to Inferno.
Liquid: n/a.
Seasonality: Very Low.
Biosphere: Usually too young.
Habitability: Lethal to Deadly.
Resources: *Plentiful:* helium, hydrogen.

PROTO-PLANET

Formed by planetesimal collisions in accretion disks (page 332) fusing into a single body, proto-planets have layered interiors and abundant radioactives. Early accretion disks may contain hundreds of protoplanets up to a few thousand kilometres in diameter, reducing in number and increasing in size as collisions continue. Eventually proto-planets become large enough to be classified as dwarf planets or planets; the remainder become asteroids.

Aspects: *Chaotic Crashing Rocks; Fiery Radioactive Progenitors of Worlds.*

Stellar Body: Any protostar; optionally any very young main sequence star.
Age: Protoplanet.
Orbit: Any.
Size: Planetesimal to Planetoid.
Density: Low to Dense.
Gravity: Microgravity to Low Standard.
Day Length: Extremely Slow to Extremely Rapid.
Atmospheric Pressure: Trace to Standard.
Temperature: Frozen to Inferno.
Liquid: Usually only magma.
Seasonality: Any, but usually low.
Biosphere: Usually too young; Maintained, Transplant, T-Congruent possible.
Habitability: Inimical to Deadly.
Resources: *Plentiful:* heavy elements, radioactives, zanthrium.

ROGUE PLANET

Planetary bodies ejected from star systems or forming independently in space (when they're also called **sub-brown dwarfs**), there are many more rogue planets drifting between the stars than there are stars in the galaxy.

Rogue planets are giant planets, often gas giants with thick hydrogen atmospheres; some have liquid-water oceans, with biospheres powered by vulcanism, radioactive decay, or tidal heating if they have moons. Difficult to detect at distances greater than 1000 AU, in some cases (Exotic Gravity and above) their gravity wells prevent the emergence of the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon (page 92). The alien Lowhigh are said to have extensive data on rogue planets.

Aspects: *Deep Space Secrets of the Lowhigh; Hidden Worlds in the Big Empty.*

Stellar Body: None.
Age: Very young or older.
Orbit: n/a.
Size: Large to Giant.
Density: Very Low to Dense.
Gravity: Standard to Exotic.
Day Length: Any.
Atmospheric Pressure: Very Low to Corrosive.
Temperature: Frigid to Cool.
Liquid: Any.
Seasonality: n/a.
Biosphere: T-Analogue, Alternate, Parallel, Exotic.
Habitability: Any.
Resources: As gas giant or terrestrial planet.

SUPER EARTH

A terrestrial planet or "gas dwarf" from 2 to 10 Old Earth masses. Some super earths may be garden worlds; others may be "mini-Neptunes".

Aspects: *Huge Earth-like World With Crushing Gravity; Small Gas Planet.*

Stellar Body: Any F- to M-class main sequence star.
Age: Very Young or older.
Orbit: Any.
Size: Large Standard.
Density: Very Low to High Standard.
Gravity: Very Low to High.
Day Length: Any.
Atmospheric Pressure: Low to High.
Temperature: Frigid to Furnace.
Liquid: Any.
Seasonality: Any.
Biosphere: Any.
Habitability: Any.
Resources: As gas giant or terrestrial planet.

TERRESTRIAL PLANET

This catch-all term refers to all planets with rocky crusts surrounding dense metal cores, as opposed to gas giants. They may also be garden worlds, infernoes, desert worlds, and even iceballs.

Aspects: *Dirtside Colonisation Candidate; Inhospitable Rock Ball.*

Stellar Body: Any main sequence star.
Age: Very Young or older.
Orbit: Any.

Size: Small to Large Standard.
Density: Low Standard to Dense.
Gravity: Very Low to High.
Day Length: Tidal Lock to Extremely Rapid.
Atmospheric Pressure: Trace to Hazardous.
Temperature: Any.
Liquid: Any.
Seasonality: Any.
Biosphere: Any.
Habitability: Any.
Resources: *Plentiful:* metals, silicates; as other type.

CIVILISATION TYPES AND PARAMETERS

This section provides guidelines for expanding a world's **civilisation type** to generate more detail about its inhabitants.

Civilisation Parameters

Civilisation parameters are generated in the same way as planetary parameters. They provide descriptors which can be used as aspects; some also provide passive or active opposition ratings or modifiers.

When you create a civilisation, you'll also create one or more **trade aspects**, indicating the things it makes and wants. You can base these on the planet or star system's plentiful or scarce resources (pages 329 and 359); or derive them from a planet, star, or civilisation parameter or background feature. Be creative; often trade aspects will emerge from a combination of world, system, and civilisation parameters, coloured by the world's background; a *Desert World in a Desperate Civil War*, for example, may have trade aspects like *Hungry for Weapons, Thirsty for Water*. Create at least two trade aspects for a world; one thing the world produces, and one it wants.

Civilisations, Cultures, and Organisations

While cultures and organisations are discrete entities, capable of actions like characters, civilisations represent the "locations" in which cultures and organisations act. They're collections of situation aspects and other location or context descriptors, which can be used by cultures and organisations in their actions.

PCs can also create trade aspects as create an advantage actions via market research, contacts, market making, and so on.

1. CIVILISATION DESIGNATION

The **civilisation designation** is a label the Commonality government uses to describe it. While civilisation *type* is a rules element used by GM and players, *designation* is a game-reality descriptor used by characters and NPCs.

You usually choose a civilisation designation from Table 18-22: Civilisation Designation. You can also roll 4dF, modified as follows:

World is located in…	Designation Modifier
Core Worlds	+4
The Fringe	+0
Outer Worlds	-4

Use the civilisation designation to derive one or more situation aspects; additionally, it provides modifiers for generating civilisation parameters below.

Example Aspects: *Commonality Outpost in a War-Torn Fringe Subsector; Neo-Shinean Culture World.*

Designation Notes

Alien World: The world has been influenced by an intelligent alien species, in the past or currently co-existing with the lost colony population. Colonist descendants have been modified so that neither they nor their civilisation seem fully human any more.

Commonality Aligned: The civilisation's culture is in Stage Two Normalisation or Stage Three Acculturation (page 307), but is otherwise open for business. It's a rediscovered world.

Commonality Autonomous: The world is independent within the Commonality, likely a corporacy world. It manages its own affairs.

Commonality Member: The world is a fully-fledged part of the Commonality, in Stage Four Cultural Integrity (page 308). It belongs to the Commonality culture and government.

Commonality Outpost: A Commonality world usually surrounded by non-Commonality worlds. It may be a research, trade, or military outpost, or be engaged in diplomatic, military, cultural manipulation, or surveillance ops.

Commonality Quarantine: Access to the world is forbidden (page 306); it's under either Stage Zero Interdiction and Manipulation, Stage One Contact, or Stage Two Normalisation. There's a full Commonality quarantine (page 344).

Table 18-22: Civilisation Designation

Rating	Designation	Government Type Modifier	Societal Devt Modifier	Openness Modifier	Starport Modifier
-5 or below	Lost Colony / Alien World	-3	-1	+0	-3
-4	Independent: No Embassy	-3	+0	+0	-2
-3	Commonality Outpost	+2	+0	-3	+1
-2	Independent: Embassy	-3	+0	-1	+0
-1	Commonality Quarantine	-2	+1	+1	+1
+0	Commonality Aligned	-2	-2	-1	+1
+1	Culture World	+0	+0	-3	+0
+2	Commonality Autonomous	+3	+2	-2	+1
+3 or above	Commonality Member	+5	+4	-1	+1

Table 18-23: Population

Rating	Population	Numbers	Control Index Modifier	Trade Index Modifier
-5 or below	Negligible	Hundreds	-2	-4
-4	Sparse	Thousands	-1	-3
-3	Very Low	Tens of thousands	-1	-2
-2	Low	Hundreds of thousands	+0	-1
-1	Low Standard	Millions	+0	+0
+0	Standard	Tens of millions	+0	+0
+1	High Standard	Hundreds of millions	+0	+0
+2	High	Billions	+1	+1
+3	Very High	Tens of billions	+1	+2
+4	Dense	Hundreds of billions	+1	+3
+5 or above	Hyperdense	Trillions	+2	+4

Culture World: The world is a cultural bastion, with distinctive customs and institutions, maybe modelled on a current or historical Old Earth culture.

Independent (Embassy): The world is a rediscovered world in open contact with the Commonality. It may be in Stage One Contact or Stage Two Normalisation, and is likely embargoed.

Table 18-24: Government Type

Rating	Government Type	Societal Dev Modifier	Openness Modifier	Control Index	Trade Index Modifier
-5 or below	Anarchy	-1	+0	-4	+1
-4	Feudal	+0	-3	+2	-3
-3	Monarchy	+0	-4	+2	-1
-2	Representative	+0	-1	+0	+2
-1	Mercantilist Oligarchy	+1	-2	+1	+4
+0	Dictatorship	+2	-3	+3	+1
+1	Oligarchy	+2	-1	+0	+1
+2 to +3	Corporacy-controlled	+2	-2	+1	+4
+4 or above	Commonality-controlled (Oligarchy)	+5	-2	+1	-2

Independent (No Embassy): The world is a rediscovered world which the Commonality hasn't begun to integrate yet, or which is under Stage Zero Interdiction and Manipulation.

Lost Colony: The world is a lost colony, not yet rediscovered. It's probably unaware of the Commonality, and officially "off-limits", although there's no agency monitoring contact other than possibly event horizon probes.

2. POPULATION

Roll 4dF, modified by the world's **habitability** (page 331), or choose an entry on Table 18-23: Population to determine the world's inhabitants of all genotypes.

Example Aspects: *High Population Core World; Sparsely Populated Frontier World.*

3. GOVERNMENT TYPE

Roll 4dF or choose an entry on Table 18-24: Government Type, applying the modifier from Table 18-22: Civilisation Designation. A civilisation's government can also be statted as an **organisation** (page 265).

Example Aspects: *Paranoid Rediscovered World Dictatorship; Regressed Lost Colony World Anarchy.*

Government Type Notes

Anarchy: Massively decentralised government consisting of many very small local bodies, often highly representative, and no higher level structure. High tech index anarchies may have essential services run by synthetics.

Feudal: A primitive but essential first step in governmental centralisation, where a pyramid structure of duties, loyalties, and responsibilities ties society together. There's usually little social mobility, and a lot of oppression, which tends to stifle further development.

Monarchy: A larger-scale development of feudal government, where the lower strata of society may be more emancipated but the top levels retain their feudal structure and governing authority.

Representative: Relatively rare in the Commonality, a government system where some or all administrators are subject to regular re-election by all or part of the population. Can lead to lowest-common denominator politics, corruption, and mob rule. Almost unheard-of in the Core, but more common on the Fringe.

Mercantilist Oligarchy: An embryonic corporacy government, often masquerading as another type, where multiple competing commercial cartels administer all or part of the world. Commerce and consumerism is usually mandatory. Rare in the Core, but much more common on the Fringe.

Dictatorship: Government by the dictat of a single strong individual, usually with a restriction of civil freedoms. Corruption is often endemic.

Oligarchy: Government by the dictat of a committee, which usually selects itself or is chosen by an elite or minority. Suffers from all the problems of a dictatorship, but is less decisive and more conspiratorial.

Corporacy-controlled: Government is for the commercial benefit of one or more corporacies (page 290) rather

Table 18-25: Societal Development

Rating	Designation	Openness Modifier	Control Index Modifier	Trade Index Modifier	Tech Index Modifier	Embargo
-5 or below	Hunter-Gatherer	+0	-4	-4	-4	+3
-4	Small-scale Communities	-2	-3	-4	-3	+2
-3	Labour Service	+0	+0	-3	-2	+1
-2	Confiscation	+2	+2	-3	-1	+1
-1	Taxation and Representation	+2	+1	+1	+0	+0
+0	Early Redistributive Model	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0
+1	Consensus Redistribution Model	+2	+1	+1	+2	-1
+2	Selfless Redistribution Model	+5	+2	+1	+2	-1
+3	Widespread Intrusive Collective	+4	+3	-1	+1	-1
+4	Widespread Unintrusive Collective	+4	+0	+1	+2	-2
+5 or above	Sentience Coordinated Collective ("Invisible Government")	+3	+1	+0	+4*	-3

*with a minimum T8 (+3) tech index.

than the population; civilians are considered employees or customers rather than citizens.

Commonality-controlled (Oligarchy): The standard Commonality government, with the instrumentalities carrying out policies coordinated and created by the Pansectorate ministries in response to direction from the custodians. See page 284 for more.

4. SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

A civilisation's society may progress through development stages, usually increasing in sophistication and complexity. Roll 4dF or choose on Table 18-25: Societal Development, applying the modifiers from Table 18-22: Civilisation Designation and Table 18-24: Government Type.

Example Aspects: *Regressed Lost Colony of Hunter-Gatherer Tribes; Widespread Intrusive Collective Under Stage Two Normalisation.*.

Societal Development Notes

Hunter-Gatherer: Pre-agricultural organisation of meat animal hunters and gatherers of wild crops.

Small-scale Communities: Basic agricultural organisation of local tribes, clans, and extended family groups.

Labour Service: Larger agricultural organisation where individuals are forced to contribute part of their time to labour on large-scale public works.

Confiscation: Large-scale organisation where arbitrary confiscation of produce and possessions finances an increasingly centralised and bureaucratic class.

Taxation and Representation: The population provides a portion of the fruits of its labour to pay for the government, which in turn represents its interests.

Early Redistributive Model: The government forcibly collects some of the fruits of the population's labour, then redistributes this according to the population's perceived needs. This is frequently the model used by corporacy worlds.

Consensus Redistributive Model: The population agrees the government should collect much of the fruits of its labour, to redistribute according to the population's needs.

Selfless Redistributive Model: The population willingly gives all the fruits of its labour to the government, and receives back what it needs.

Widespread Intrusive Collective: Society allocates largely willing individuals to planned labour and occupations; propaganda efforts are heavy-handed to smooth over the inefficiencies.

Widespread Unintrusive Collective: Society exhorts and recruits individuals to volunteer for labour and occupations which are planned at a high level without being obvious. Synthetics often take up the slack and cover any inefficiencies.

Sentience Coordinated Collective: The so-called "invisible government", synthetic sentiences allocate resources, accommodation, education, wealth, and labour according to higher-level plans, without creating inefficiencies or removing freedom of choice and movement, and without its participating members being aware of the details.

5. OPENNESS

Openness measures how much a civilisation is willing to look outwards, accepting ideas and contact from other civilisations. Roll 4dF or choose on Table 18-26: Openness, applying the modifiers from Table 18-22: Civilisation Designation, Table 18-24: Government Type, and Table 18-25: Societal Development.

Example Aspects: *Rediscovered World Embracing Change; Self-Centered Culture World Rebuffing All Comers.*

6. CONTROL INDEX

Control index represents how much the government tries to control and restrict the lives of its people; how oppressive the laws are, how much freedom a person has, and the opposition a character faces when they try something which encounters legal restrictions, bureaucracy, red tape, government control. It affects equipment availability (page 125), complications when negotiating embargoes (page 307), the legality of enhancements (page 117), and difficulties trading cargoes (page 445). It's a frequent source of culture, organisation, and game aspects.

Roll 4dF or choose on Table 18-27: Control Index, applying modifiers from Table 18-23: Population, Table 18-24: Government Type, and Table 18-25: Societal Development.

Example Aspects: *Big Brother Is Watching You; Wild and Lawless Frontier.*

Table 18-26: Openness

Rating	Openness	Comments	Trade Index Modifier	Tech Index Modifier	Starport Modifier	Mindscape Modifier
-5 or below	Closed	Introverted, paranoid, and xenophobic.	-5	-3	-3	-4
-4	Conservative	Isolationist.	-3	-2	-2	-3
-3	Resistant	Refuses external ideas, may wish to impose its own.	-2	-1	+0	-2
-2	Self-centred		-1	+0	+0	-1
-1	Equivocal	Accepts the outside's existence, but not too interested.	+0	+0	+0	+0
+0	Guarded	Outward-looking but cautious.	+1	+0	+0	+0
+1	Self-critical	Willing to change.	+2	+0	+0	+0
+2	Self-improving	Embracing change.	+2	+1	+1	+0
+3	Outgoing	Enthusiastically looking outwards.	+3	+1	+1	+0
+4	Constant Change		+3	+2	+1	+0
+5 or above	Open	Open to all new ideas, and actively seeking new ones.	+5	+3	+1	+0

7. TRADE INDEX

Trade index represents the trade activity of a civilisation, and its ability to exploit its natural resources, used in trading, including between organisations, and linked to any embargo (see below).

Trade is a phenomenon of the Fringe and Outer Worlds, away from the planned economies of the Core, and is heavily influencing the Commonality's development. Traders take assets like land and property in payment; on the Fringe, this means civilisations become more mercantilist, then corporatist, then even fascist, while Core Worlds remain more communistic. This is reflected in the **trade index modifier** for government type; see "Interstellar Trade" (page 442) for more.

Roll 4dF or choose on Table 18-28: Trade Index, applying the modifiers from Table 18-23: Population, Table 18-24: Government Type, Table 18-25: Societal Development, Table 18-26: Openness, and Table 18-27: Control Index.

Example Aspects: *Core World Command Economy Resistant to Trade; Hub of Interstellar Trade.*

8. THE EMBARGO

The Commonality often restricts the nature and tech index of items which may be traded with a world, known as the **Commonality embargo**. Roll 4dF, and apply the modifiers from Table 18-25: Societal Development and Table 18-27: Control Index; at the GM's discretion, appropriate cultural memes may also be invoked.

On a +0 result or less, there's no embargo on the world; on a result of +1 or higher, there's an embargo of equivalent rating. Reduce the world's trade index by the embargo rating, and assume the world's tech index (page 344) is the maximum the Commonality allows. Choose which of the world culture's **capabilities** (page 299) are affected — one capability per point of embargo. Note that the Commonal-

Table 18-27: Control Index

Rating	Control Index	Comments	Trade Index Modifier	Embargo
-5 or below	No Control	No effective government controls.	+1	+3
-4	Mass Destruction	No behavioural restrictions; weapons of mass destruction prohibited.	+2	+2
-3	Personal	Laws against physical assault; heavy weapons prohibited.	+3	+1
-2	Property	Laws against property seizure; fully automatic weapons prohibited.	+2	+0
-1	Speech	Laws restricting speech; non-hunting / non-sporting weapons prohibited.	+1	-1
+0	Laissez-faire	Non-archaic weapons prohibited.	+3	-1
+1	Influenced	Behavioural propaganda; all weapons prohibited.	+1	-1
+2	Surveilled	Surveillance and overt control; potential weapons prohibited.	-1	+0
+3*	Restricted	Privacy and actions restricted; hazardous objects and substances prohibited.	-3	+0
+4*	Repressive	High surveillance	-5	+0
+5 or above*	Total	No personal privacy or freedom; conditioned population or prison planet.	-6	+0

*highly unusual for Commonality non-Core Worlds.



Table 18-28: Trade Index

Rating	Trade Index	Starport Modifier
-5 or below	No Trade	-3
-4	Inconsequential	-2
-3	Very Limited	-1
-2	Limited	-1
-1	Low Moderate	+0
+0	Moderate	+0
+1	High Moderate	+0
+2	Extensive	+1
+3	Very Extensive	+1
+4 or above	Ubiquitous	+2

ity **quarantine** (page 307) suppresses all trade except that internal to the civilisation; reduce the trade index by -5.

The embargo rating represents an obstacle to trade; if you successfully "run" the embargo by beating the opposition it represents (pages 206 and 307), then you can use the reduced trade index rating when trading cargoes (page 445).

Example Aspects: *Advanced Weapons Are Embargoed Here; Struggling Under Heavy Trade Sanctions.*

Table 18-29: Tech Index

Rating	Tech Index
-5 or below	T0 - Post-animal
-4	T1 - Stone Age
-3	T2 - Metal Age
-2	T3 - Age of Enlightenment
-1	T4 - Industrial Age
+0	T5 - Computer Age
+1	T6 - Age of Genurgy
+2	T7 - First Age of Space
+3	T8 - Age of Ubiquitous Intelligence
+4	T9 - Second Age of Space
+5 and above	T10 - Age of 3-Space

9. TECH INDEX

Tech index represents the civilisation's technological sophistication (page 116), and indicates whether it has a planetary sentience, etc. Roll 4dF or choose on Table 18-29: Tech Index, applying modifiers from Table 18-25: Societal Development and Table 18-26: Openness. If you already know the tech index of the civilisation's culture, that tech index is the maximum you can roll. If you don't know the culture's tech index, the civilisation's tech index **becomes** the culture's tech index.

If you roll or choose a tech index lower than the civilisation's culture's tech index, that means your civilisation can't fully employ or implement the culture's tech index or its **capabilities** (page 299), for whatever reason.

Non-Commonality civilisations have a maximum tech index of T8 (Age of Ubiquitous Intelligence), unless you decide otherwise. Non-Core Worlds civilisations likewise have a maximum of T9 (Second Age of Space).

Example Aspects: *Dazzling High-Tech Commonality Metroplex; Lost Colony Blasted Back to the Stone Age.*

10. STARPORT FACILITIES

Often you'll choose a world's **starport facilities** from Table 18-30: Starport Facilities based on its civilisation type. Start with a rating of +0, or the "baseline starport" in the **civilisation types** below (page 346), then apply the modifiers from Table 18-22: Civilisation Designation and Table 18-26: Openness. Alternatively, roll 4dF and apply the modifiers.

Facilities in a superficially explored system are at best low-level synthetic facilities — types S1 through S4, largely automated. S4 synthetic colonies may have rudimentary visitor facilities, including organic life support. Worlds with an organic presence (humans, hominids, xenomorphs, etc) usually have a facility, although it may be an official SCI Force Station, Space Force Depot, etc, and formal and controlled. More mature Commonality worlds have orbital and ground facilities servicing official and unofficial visitors — highports and groundports, rated E through A5. Fringe Worlds and some Outer Worlds may have analogous facilities, usually lower quality, or none at all. Commonality World starports are present irrespective of civilisation tech index (they're more a feature of the Commonality government), while Outer World starports derive from the local tech index.

You can use the starport facilities rating as a modifier (for example, to find a ship to a specific destination), or as an opposition (for example, to bypass scans when **running the embargo** — see pages 206, 307, 344, and 445).

Example Aspects: *Backwater With a Blasted Landing Strip; Octant Hub With Systemwide Facilities.*

11. MINDSCAPE FACILITIES

The **Mindscape facilities** on a world; Commonality systems are within the Mindscape network, while unexplored systems have nothing, or at most an S1 Synthetic Colony Seed Node (page 351).

Start with the base Mindscape facilities rating indicated in Table 18-30: Starport Facilities, and apply the **Mindscape modifier** from Table 18-26: Openness, and optionally the result of a 4dF roll, and cross-reference the result on Table 18-31: Mindscape Facilities. The world's tech index must be at least T8, and its designation must

Exploration Missions: Civilisation Analysis

Analysing a world's civilisation is a create an advantage action with the Investigate skill, which must visit the world directly or observe it using sensors; Passive Sensing and culture analysis actions may create advantages. A successful Investigate roll reveals one civilisation parameter; a success with style reveals two. Each roll takes from an hour to a week, depending on methods. At the GM's discretion, you may make a single Investigate roll and reveal one parameter per shift.

Table 18-31: Mindscape Facilities

Rating	Mindscape Facility	Comments
-4 or below	None; or Temple of Universal Mind	Usually terminal access only.
-3	Local Node	Small-scale Mindscape instance covering a settlement, city, or region.
-2	Global Mindscape	A single orbital Mindscape node providing regular access.
-1	Global Mindscape	A Mindscape relay network providing real-time access.
+0	Systemwide Mindscape	Mindscape relays throughout the system.
+1	Systemwide Mindscape	Mindscape nodes and relay systems around multiple planets.
+2	Mindscape Hub	Hub for the Mindjammer fleet.
+3	Mindscape Hub	Hub for the Mindjammer fleet.
+4 or above	Mindscape Nexus	Usually one per sector; connected by 3-space gate to the Manhome Mindscape.

Table 18-30: Starport Facilities

Rating	Starport Class	Title	Description	Mindscape Facilities
-5	X	n/a	No facilities.	n/a
-4	U - Uncategorised	Landing Strip	No other facilities.	-3
-3	U, or S1 synthetic outpost	Seed Node	Usually single orbital.	-2
-2	U, or S2 synthetic outpost	Seed Network	Multiple orbitals.	-1
-1	U, or S3 synthetic outpost	Orbital Multiplicity	Multiple independent orbitals.	+0
+0	U, or S4 synthetic outpost	Synthport	Orbitals and basic ground facilities.	+1
+1	E-class starport	Forward Base, Basic Facility	Basic organic ground facilities with orbital station. May be Instrumentality-run.	-2
+2	D-class starport	Starport	Standard ground facilities and orbital station, including minimal ship repair.	-1
+3	C-class starport	Starport	Good ground and orbit facilities, including decent ship repair. Includes system-wide network.	+0
+4	B-class starport	Starport	Mature ground and orbit facilities, shipyards. System-wide facilities.	+1
+5	A-class starport	Octant Hub	Extensive ground and orbit facilities, probably including a Space Force Depot and multiple system-wide port facilities. Usually an octant capital.	+2
+6	A2-class starport	Subsector Hub	Usually a subsector capital.	+3
+7	A3-class starport	Sector Hub	Usually a sector capital.	+4
+8	A4-class starport	Core Hub	Usually a province capital or Core World.	+4
+9	A5-class starport	Manhome Terminus, The Hub	Old Earth.	+4

be one of: Commonality Aligned, Commonality Member, Commonality Outpost, or Culture World. Independent Worlds with a Commonality embassy have limited Mindscape access like a Temple of Universal Mind.

You can use the Mindscape facilities rating as the opposition to avoid detection by it, or as the ability it uses to resist casual Deceive or Hacking attempts, or to make exomemory rolls.

Example Aspects: *Commonality World With Systemwide Mindscape; Stage Two Normalisation World With a Temple of Universal Mind.*

Civilisation Types

AGRI-WORLD

One of the many breadbasket worlds in Commonality Space and beyond, producing foodstuffs and agricultural products. Many resist makepoint technology; others — especially on the Fringe — compete with makepoint food production.

Example Aspects: *Endless Fields of Golden Wheat; We Don't Need Your Fancy Tech.*

Designation: Any.

Population: Low Standard to High Standard.

Government: Feudal or higher.
Societal Dev: Labour Service or higher.
Openness: Guarded or lower.
Control: Influenced or higher.
Trade: Any.
Tech: Any.
Starport: Any.
Mindscape: Any.

ALIEN CIVILISATION

A lost colony world remodelled by contact with an alien intelligence in the past, it operates on very different principles. The Chembu homeworld is an example.

Example Aspects: *Alienation Effect; Bizarre Alien Trade Goods; Hungry for Information; These People Aren't Human!*
Designation: Alien World; others possible.
Population: Any.
Government: Any.
Societal Dev: Any.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.
Trade: Any.
Tech: Any.
Starport: Any.
Mindscape: Originally none; any after Rediscovery.

BALKANISED

Balkanised worlds are disunited civilisations with many separate governmental organisations and civilisations, often in conflict. The Commonality usually undertakes cultural ops to unite the civilisations in a united world (page 351). Many balkanised worlds are embargoed.

Example Aspects: *Multipolar World-view; Patchwork of Squabbling Tyrannies; Roaring Weapons Trade; The Spoils of War.*
Designation: Lost Colony to Culture World.
Population: Low Standard or higher.
Government: Various.
Societal Dev: Various.
Openness: Self-centred to Guarded.
Control: Various.
Trade: Any.
Tech: T2 to T7.
Starport: B-class or below.
Mindscape: Usually none.

CLOSED WORLD

A world cut off from outside contact; the world itself may be closed, or the star system, or even a group of star systems. The Commonality usually imposes a quarantine. Smuggling can be lucrative, but hazardous.

Example Aspects: *A Taste for Luxury; Brittle Self-Confidence; Priceless Artefacts; You Do Not Exist.*
Designation: Lost Colony or Commonality Quarantine.
Population: High or lower.
Government: Monarchy to Oligarchy.
Societal Dev: Labour Service or higher.
Openness: Closed to Conservative.
Control: Surveilled or higher.
Trade: No Trade.
Tech: Any.
Starport: C-class or lower.
Mindscape: None.

COMMONALITY CIVILISATION

The standard for Commonality worlds, Commonality civilisations share the Commonality culture (page 309); they may occasionally be subcultures (page 296).

Example Aspects: *Bread and Circuses; Home From Home; Shining Beacon of the New Commonality; The Passenger Trade.*
Designation: Commonality Member; or Commonality Outpost.
Population: Any.
Government: Commonality-controlled.
Societal Dev: Sentience Coordinated Collective.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.
Trade: Any.
Tech: T9.
Starport: Any.
Mindscape: Global Mindscape or higher; outposts may have a Local Node.

COMMONALITY HUB

A major Commonality world and transport and administrative centre. It may be an octant, subsector, or even sector capital.

Example Aspects: *Awesome Complexity and Wealth; The Pulse of Commonality Life; Trade and Transport Hub.*
Designation: Commonality Member; or Culture World.
Population: High Standard or higher.
Government: Commonality-controlled.
Societal Dev: Sentience Coordinated Collective.
Openness: Guarded or higher.
Control: Property or higher.
Trade: Any.
Tech: T9 or T10.
Starport: Octant Hub or higher.
Mindscape: Mindscape Hub or higher.

CORE WORLD

The byzantine and sophisticated civilisations of the Commonality Core are part of the Core Worlds culture. They're usually highly specialised and stratified.

Example Aspects: *Byzantine and Unfathomable; Cultural Artifacts; Jaded Appetites; Overwhelmed by Intimidating Antiquity.*

Designation: Commonality Member.
Population: High or higher.
Government: Commonality-controlled.
Societal Dev: Sentience Coordinated Collective.
Openness: Equivocal or lower.
Control: Surveilled or higher.
Trade: Any.
Tech: Any.
Starport: E-class or higher.
Mindscape: Systemwide or higher.

CORE WORLD HUB

A pivotal core world, usually an octant or subsector capital. They may be paradoxically more active and yet more controlled than other core worlds.

Example Aspects: *Public Face and Private Person; Put Your Foot in Your Mouth; Resource Allocation Matrix; Ritual Migrations.*

Designation: Commonality Member.
Population: Dense or higher.
Government: Commonality-controlled.
Societal Dev: Sentience Coordinated Collective.
Openness: Guarded or higher.
Control: Restricted or higher.
Trade: Extensive or higher.
Tech: T10.
Starport: Octant Hub or higher.
Mindscape: Mindscape Hub or higher.

CORPORACY WORLD

Corporacy worlds are part of the Commonality culture, but are administered by one or more corporacies (page 290). They are usually centres of commercial or industrial activity.

Example Aspects: *Cut-Throat Hives of Speculation; Hungry for Something a Bit Different; We Sell What We Make; Workers Not Citizens.*

Designation: Commonality Autonomous.
Population: Very Low or higher.
Government: Corporacy-controlled.
Societal Dev: Early Redistribution Model or higher.
Openness: Resistant or higher.
Control: Property or higher.
Trade: High Moderate or higher.
Tech: T7 or higher.
Starport: E-class or higher.
Mindscape: Global Mindscape or higher.

CULTURE WORLD

Structured to defend against cultural contamination and meme attack, culture worlds are highly conservative and often xenophobic. They may be naturally occurring, or manipulated by SCI Force.

Example Aspects: *Are You Ignorant Offworlders Not Impressed? Cultural Artifacts; Shinean Whispers; We Don't Need Your Trinkets.*

Designation: Culture World.
Population: Low Standard or higher.
Government: Any.
Societal Dev: Any.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.
Trade: Any.
Tech: Any.
Starport: Any.
Mindscape: Any; none.

DEPOT

A major supply and maintenance centre for an instrumentality, a depot usually has a "public" section, although most of the system is off-limits.

Example Aspects: *Always in Need of Entertainment; Commandeered for a Delivery Run; Don't Poke Your Nose In; Vast Shipyards and Planets Out of Bounds.*

Designation: Commonality Member.
Population: Low to High Standard.
Government: Commonality-controlled.
Societal Dev: Sentience Coordinated Collective.
Openness: Guarded.
Control: Restricted.
Trade: Any.
Tech: T9 to T10.
Starport: A-class or higher.
Mindscape: Systemwide or higher.

FAILING WORLD

A failing world is on a downward spiral to extinction. This may be due to overpopulation, underpopulation, adverse planetary conditions, disease, economic or societal collapse, or natural disaster; it may be happening swiftly or slowly. Failing worlds in the Commonality are treated or evacuated; those outside may be desperate for a solution.

Example Aspects: *Desperate Need of Food and Medicine; Outside Rescue Plan; Riots and Scapegoats; The Doom Trade.*



Designation: Commonality Aligned or lower.
Population: Any.
Government: Any.
Societal Dev: Any.
Openness: Self-centred or lower.
Control: Any.
Trade: Limited or lower, except passengers (page 446).
Tech: Any.
Starport: D-class or lower.
Mindscape: Any.

HIGH-POPULATION WORLD

The Core Worlds have many stable high-population worlds; on the Fringe, they may be suffering from rampant over-population. There's a tendency to view high populations as faceless homogenous masses, exacerbating difficulties.

Example Aspects: *Distractions and Diversions; Explosive Neurotic Safety Valves; Mass Markets; Tides of Psychohistory.*

Designation: Any.
Population: High or higher.
Government: Any.
Societal Dev: Taxation or higher.
Openness: Any.
Control: Surveilled or higher.
Trade: Any.
Tech: T5 or higher.
Starport: Any.
Mindscape: Any.

HOLDOUT WORLD

A holdout world is, at least in its own mind, "waiting for rescue". It's not yet a failed world, but sees itself as waiting for contact and assistance from a greater civilisation.

Example Aspects: *Hungry for Information; Is There Anything You See You Like? Just a Bit Longer Till They Sort It Out; Thank God You Came!*

Designation: Commonality Aligned or lower.
Population: Any.
Government: Oligarchy or lower.
Societal Dev: Widespread Intrusive Collective or lower.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.
Trade: Any.
Tech: T8 or lower.
Starport: E-class or lower.
Mindscape: None; or Local Node or lower.

INDUSTRIAL WORLD

Some worlds are crucial components of the makepoint trade node complex (page 290); others are resource or production centres. Industrial worlds focus on production or manufacture as their societal drivers, but for some reason are not corporacy worlds. Perhaps they're too small, or too strategic, or require too much support or subsidy to be viable.

Example Aspects: *Cheap Processed Products; Heroes of Commonality Labour; Quotas of Corruption; Will Work for Food and Entertainment.*

Designation: Any.
Population: High Standard or higher.
Government: Representative or higher; not Corporacy-controlled.
Societal Dev: Labour Service or higher.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.
Trade: Any.
Tech: T4 or higher.
Starport: B-class or lower.
Mindscape: Any.

INTERSTELLAR CIVILISATION

These are very rare; non-Commonality civilisations which have nevertheless spread to more than one world. There are three types; those which use Commonality planing engine technology with the Commonality's blessing; those which have acquired planing technology despite the Commonality embargo (usually Fringe Worlds); and those which have used slower-than-light technology. The

former two types are less than 200 years old; the third may be thousands of years old, but is usually restricted to a handful of worlds.

Example Aspects: *Cultural Artefacts; Don't Treat Us Like the Venu! FTL Non-Proliferation Treaty; We'll Take One of Everything You Have.*

Designation: Commonality Autonomous or lower.
Population: Low Standard or higher.
Government: Oligarchy or lower.
Societal Dev: Taxation or higher.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.
Trade: Moderate or higher.
Tech: T7 or higher.
Starport: E-class or higher.
Mindscape: None; or Local Node or lower.

INTERSTELLAR HUB

The "main world" of an interstellar civilisation, usually the original lost colony founded during the Great Diaspora.

Example Aspects: *A Market for Countless Worlds; Mother Ship Monument; News and Information; Proud and Independent.*

Designation: Commonality Autonomous or lower.
Population: High or higher.
Government: Representative to Oligarchy.
Societal Dev: Taxation or higher.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.
Trade: High Moderate or higher.
Tech: T7 or higher.
Starport: D-class or higher.
Mindscape: None; or Local Node or lower.

INSTRUMENTALITY HUB

An organisational centre for an instrumentality, governed by it rather than the local Pansectorate. AFI and Space Force hubs are also often depots (page 348).

Example Aspects: *Do You Have Instrumentality Business? Endless Comings and Goings; R&R and the Novelty Trade; Short-Term Shipping Contract.*

Designation: Commonality Member.
Population: Low Standard to High.
Government: Commonality-controlled.
Societal Dev: Sentience Coordinated Collective.
Openness: Guarded.
Control: Restricted.
Trade: High Moderate or lower.
Tech: T9 or lower.
Starport: A-class or higher.
Mindscape: Systemwide or lower.

PRISON PLANET

A "feature" of the Core Worlds, prison planets are usually marginal garden worlds (page 333) where unwanted or dangerous elements of the population can be housed. Given the Commonality's re-education facilities, sentence to a prison planet is almost always voluntary.

Example Aspects: *Food and Luxuries; Hard-Nosed Exile; Here at My Own Command; High Security Transport.*

Designation: Commonality Quarantine.
Population: Low or lower.
Government: Commonality-controlled.
Societal Dev: Sentience Coordinated Collective.
Openness: Closed.
Control: Total.
Trade: No Trade.
Tech: T9 or lower.
Starport: E-class or lower.
Mindscape: Local Node.

QUARANTINED WORLD

Worlds may be quarantined for two reasons: to protect them from damage from the Commonality culture, or vice versa. See page 307 for more on the Commonality quarantine.

Example Aspects: *A Use for Weapons; Fragile Minds Not Ready for Rediscovery; Unique Produce; Xenophobic Dystopia Hurling Hatred at the Stars.*

Designation: Commonality Quarantine.
Population: Any.
Government: Oligarchy or lower.
Societal Dev: Any.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.
Trade: Usually No Trade.
Tech: T8 or lower.
Starport: Usually E-class or lower.
Mindscape: Usually none.

REGRESSED WORLD

A regressed world has fallen from the original lost colony tech index, but is not a failing world (page 348). It may have descended into savagery, and may not remember its origins.

Example Aspects: *A Better Mousetrap; Archaeological Artefacts; Ruins Beneath Our City Tell of an Ancient Time, What Sorcery Is This?*

Designation: Commonality Aligned, Lost Colony, Independent, or Commonality Quarantine.
Population: High or lower.
Government: Oligarchy or lower.
Societal Dev: Taxation or lower.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.

Trade: Limited or lower.
Tech: T6 or lower.
Starport: Usually X-class; may be U or E.
Mindscape: Usually none; or Local Node.

SEED COLONY

A seed colony is a startup colonisation effort on a world exploitable without extensive terraforming or genurgy. Corporacies establish seed colonies, as may instrumentalities for strategic reasons, usually out on the Fringe.

Example Aspects: *A Few Little Luxuries; An Opportunity to Begin Again! Looking for a Niche; We Happy Few.*

Designation: Commonality Autonomous or higher.
Population: Low or lower.
Government: Corporacy-controlled or higher.
Societal Dev: Sentience Coordinated Collective.
Openness: Guarded or higher.
Control: Property or higher.
Trade: Any.
Tech: Any; or T9.
Starport: E-class or lower.
Mindscape: Local Node or higher.

SYNTHETIC COLONY

When the Commonality discovers a new system with basic resources which will take time to exploit, it sends in nanoscale **seeders** to establish a basic infrastructure. These have several levels, some of which correspond to the starport types on Table 18-30: Starport Facilities.

S1 Seed Nodes establish the bottom-level framework: solar (etc) powergen and an in-system control node (a synthetic mini-space station), based around the part of the initial event horizon probe that stayed in-system (the "Zero Node"). It has a sentience, core survey data, and a rudimentary Mindscape instance; its goal is to build micro-factories producing basic synthetics. The isolated and independent Seed Node Phase can take from 1-5 years.

S2 Seed Networks extend the seed node to several sub-nodes in-system, usually one around each planet or system feature. These remain under seed node control, ie there's still only one true sentience in-system. The Seed Network Phase takes from 1-5 years.

S3 Orbital Multiplicities deploy sentiences into each sub-node, creating semi-independent nodes with basic Mindscape instances. This phase takes 5-10 years.

S4 Synthports begin exploitation of the star system. Commonality citizens may begin initial cultural or colonisation assessment. Depending on the initial circumstances (degree of terraforming or genurgic manipulation required, etc), this phase may take decades if not centuries. Most synthetic colonies reach S4 quickly then stay there.

The Life Cycle of a Planetary Sentience

Event horizon probes are dual eidolons housed in Medium (+0) scale unmanned planeships. When an S1 Seed Node is established, the probe bifurcates; the planing engine half returns to Commonality Space, and the Zero or Seed Node half remains, its sentience forming the core of a nascent planetary sentience for the system's main world.

As the synth colony develops, the sentience advances, forming the core of the global and then system Mindscape, and eventually the full planetary sentience for a Commonality world. This process is the same, regardless of whether the world was originally uninhabited or a rediscovered world.

At this point, the system may be handed over to SCI Force. If not, which usually means the system was originally uninhabited, the synthetic colony develops into an **S5 Synthetic Colony**, with true cultural complexity, and joins the Commonality as a member world. The time scales for S5 development are long by synthetic standards and short by human standards. Since Rediscovery few synthetic colonies have reached S5.

Aspects: *Hostile World Teeming With Terraforming Nanobots; Information Export; Silent System but for the S1 Beacon; Synthetic Construction Contracts.*

Designation: Commonality Autonomous or higher.
Population: Special.
Government: Commonality-controlled.
Societal Dev: Sentience Coordinated Collective.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.
Trade: Any.
Tech: T9.
Starport: S1 to S4; or higher.
Mindscape: Global to Systemwide.

UNITED WORLD

A united world is a lost colony or rediscovered world which has united in a single world government. If a rediscovered world, it may be being integrated into the Commonality, but hasn't yet reached Stage Four Cultural Integrity.

Aspects: *Appropriated Cultural Luxury Export; In the Market for Information; Sullen Resistance; Unified in Spite of Itself.*

Designation: Any.

Population: Any.
Government: Oligarchy or lower.
Societal Dev: Widespread Unobtrusive Collective or lower.
Openness: Any.
Control: Any.
Trade: Any.
Tech: Usually T7 or lower.
Starport: C-class or lower.
Mindscape: Usually none, or Global or lower; access may be restricted.

PLANETARY ENVIRONMENTS

Planets are rich environments for adventure, with diverse terrain, weather, and potentially inhabitants on planets with biospheres. They provide material for colourful description, and situation aspects, hazards, and NPCs for encounters.

Terrain Types

The great diversity of planetary environments can be categorised into different **terrain types**. Not all planets have all terrain types; many depend on planetary parameters like surface temperature or liquid, atmosphere, or presence of a biosphere, civilisation, or tech index. Each terrain type is a **situation aspect**; other effects are described below.

Aquatic: Referring not just to water, but any environment under a liquid surface. It represents a **drowning hazard** (page 353) and an obstacle to movement, and usually has poor visibility.

Broken: Shattered pack ice, treacherous scree slopes, volcanic landscapes, badlands, or terrain affected by life forms (stromatolite beds, etc). It's frequently an obstacle to ground-based movement.

Conurbation: Characterised by densely populated cityscapes, conurbations are an obstacle to movement, and easy to get lost in, although a source of contacts, equipment, and supplies.

Desert: Notable for their lack of water and life forms, and their temperature extremes, deserts are **exposure hazards** (page 177).

Flatlands: Often easy to move across, flatlands permit spotting at great distances.

Hills: Slowing down movement and limiting distance perception, hills are perfect for ambushes and the location of caves.

Ice Cap: An **exposure hazard** (page 177), but also with variable visibility, ice caps are an obstacle to ground movement without the right gear or vehicle.

Jungle: Dense regions of vegetation with plenty of water, we use the term regardless of surface temperatures (ie there are temperate as well as tropical jungles). They're an obstacle to movement, often teeming with life forms.

Mountains: Great obstacles to movement and representing **falling hazards** (page 353), mountains limit immediate visibility while permitting very long-distance viewing. They offer defensive advantages and caves.

Ocean / Lake: Oceans and lakes may be water or other liquids, representing **storm, exposure,** and **drowning hazards** (page 353) and preventing ground movement without appropriate vehicles. They permit spotting at distance.

Plains: Plains are flatlands in a biosphere, usually covered with low-level area-covering sessile life forms (plants). They permit easy movement and distance spotting, and usually support lively ecosystems (page 389).

Rough: Interrupted terrain, perhaps punctuated by crater fields, pools, watercourses, lava flows, etc, it's less difficult to traverse than broken terrain, yet still open with good visibility.

Swamp: Semi-aquatic terrain with low-lying vegetation and often poor weather. They represent **exposure** and **quicksand hazards** (page 354), and may have pockets of poison gases.

Volcanic: Frequently broken, representing obstacles to movement as well as **volcanic eruption** and even **earthquake** and **poison gas hazards** (page 354). On worlds with aqueous biospheres (page 327), they're likely to be barren and dry.

Woodland: More open vegetation than jungle, representing minor obstacles to ground movement and visibility. Good for ambushes, and thick with life forms.

Survival

Survival is a trope of science-fiction games; crashed on an alien world, the characters struggle against a hostile environment. As GM you can detail this as much as you like; it can be the goal of an entire scenario (page 419), as PCs cross difficult terrain, encounter hazards and hostile life forms, and struggle to stay alive. Alternatively, it can be an immediate hazard, as the PCs struggle to make their air or water supplies last — see "Survival Hazard" below. Survival gear can be invoked for bonuses, or provide a bonus equal to its tech index, as appropriate.

Events and Encounters

Terrain types can provide situation aspects and hazards for the Event Table Templates (page 319). Cross reference them in **Chapter 21: Alien Life** when creating biosphere encounters.

PLANETARY MAPS

Planetary maps support your descriptions and provide frameworks upon which to track PC and NPC movements.

Collaborative Map Making

Collaborative map-making can be creative, rewarding, and fun, generating great ideas. Using the Planetary Icosahedral Map Template, take it in turn as players and GM to sketch in one triangle at a time, filling in coastlines and terrain types. When you're done, fill in one civilisation detail (city, etc) each, as long as it's in a triangle created by someone else.

They can be as detailed or as sketchy as you like; see the icosahedral map template (page 479) for an example.

The icosahedral map template presents a flattened view of a globe, treating a planetary surface as an unfolded interlocking series of triangles, each subdivided into hexagons (or "hexes"). The map comprises 20 triangles; its width, representing the world's circumference, is 45 hexes. Table 18-9: Planetary Size gives approximate hex widths.

To create a map, sketch the world's geographic features; seas and continents if it has liquid oceans; mountains, ice, lava, rough or broken terrain; vegetation if there's a biosphere; and cities and even a starport if the world is inhabited. Use Table 18-17: Surface Liquid Extent to gauge how much of the world should be ocean; and Table 18-23: Population to gauge how many cities and conurbations you need. Add names for additional colour.

PLANETARY HAZARDS

This section describes **hazards** (page 176) for different planetary terrains. Use them as compels of appropriate situation aspects, for example of an event table aspect (page 319), or as an entry on an event table itself.

AVOID EXPOSURE

See page 177.

BIOHAZARD

See page 177.

DROWNING

*See **Survival Hazard**.*

EARTHQUAKE

Hazard

Simple Hazard

Earthquake hazards may invoke situation aspects like Loose Rocks *or* Rickety Construction *to cause greater damage.*

Aspects: Falling Debris, The Whole World Throws You Around

Skills: *Superb (+5) Magnitude*

Actions: *Roll Athletics vs Magnitude to avoid; on a failure, take a consequence equal to the shifts of failure.*

ELECTROMAGNETIC STORM

Hazard

Challenge Hazard

Aspects: As Far As the Eye Can See, Sparks and Flashes

Skills: *Good (+3) Intensity; Superb (+5) Magnitude*

Actions: *Roll Technical against Intensity to avoid equipment damage; roll Notice against Magnitude to keep oriented; possibly an exposure hazard also.*

FALLING

Hazard

Simple Hazard

Roll Athletics, modified by your habituated gravity, against passive opposition equal to the distance fallen in metres divided by 2, multiplied by the surface gravity rating (page 323) if positive, or divided by it if negative.

POISON GAS

Contest Hazard

This may be contact or inhaled; gas masks or vacuum / hazmat gear protect from its effects.

Aspects: Lethal Gas Cloud, Poisonous Atmosphere

Skills: *Great (+4) Intensity; Fair (+2) Magnitude*

Actions: *Attacks with Intensity vs Physique, doing physical stress damage. Roll Athletics vs Magnitude and accumulate 3 victories to avoid.*

Hazard

QUICKSAND

Incremental Hazard

Aspects: The More You Struggle the Deeper You Get

Skills: *Good (+3) Intensity, Average (+1) Magnitude*

Actions: *Resist Intensity with Physique, and Magnitude with Athletics. Accumulate 3 victories to escape. If the quicksand accumulates 3 victories, you begin to take consequences equal to your shifts of failure.*

Hazard

RADIATION

Conflict Hazard

Aspects: Invisible but Deadly Radiation

Skills: *Good (+3) Intensity; Average (+1) Magnitude*

Actions: *Attacks Physique with Intensity, doing physical damage; radiation resistance, hazmat suits, and shielding offer protection until breached. Roll Athletics or Drive against Magnitude to resist (may create advantages to resist with Science, Technical); if you accumulate 3 victories you escape the area of effect.*

Consequence: *Causes* Irradiated-*type consequences.*

Hazard

STORMS

Challenge Hazard

Aspects: Freezing Ice Storm, Howling Sandstorm, Suffocating Dust Storm

Skills: *Variable Intensity; Good (+3) Magnitude and above*

ACTIONS

Action 1: *Roll Drive, etc, against Magnitude to avoid; requires 3 victories.*

Action 2: *Roll Survival (Knowledge), etc, to create a* Shelter *advantage.*

Action 3: *Roll Physique against Intensity to weather the storm; incur physical consequences equal to the shifts of failure.*

Hazard

SUFFOCATION HAZARD

See ***Survival Hazard****.*

SURVIVAL HAZARD

Incremental Hazard

Made in an actively hostile environment, involving activities like finding water, husbanding breathable air, food, and so on. It's a Survival (Knowledge) roll, initially against an opposition of Average (+1) to Superb (+5), which must be made every minute, hour, or day, depending on the environment.

Usually you can't defeat a survival hazard. If you find some way of avoiding it (finding a water source, air supply, etc), it simply no longer applies; otherwise you must roll every period. Drowning and suffocation are survival hazards, rolled using Physique every exchange.

Hazard

VOLCANIC ERUPTION

See page 177.

CHAPTER NINETEEN
STELLAR BODIES AND STAR SYSTEMS

"The sun hung in the dark sky like a huge ember, so big that when she held out her hand she couldn't cover it. It burned so cool it left no imprint on her retina, like a vast glowing gem in the sky. Peaks and prominences flared bright into lambent amber; its surface changed constantly, as hypnotic as a burning coal."

THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter provides guidelines for creating star systems and other stellar bodies, either before play or on the fly. If appropriate, you can then go on to generate their planetary systems and planetary bodies. If you want to *start* by describing a world and then create its star system, see "Creating Worlds" (page 314).

Exploration Missions

This chapter continues the "Exploration Missions" text boxes from **Chapter 18: Worlds and Civilisations**, suggesting example tasks for exploring and surveying new star systems.

CREATING STAR SYSTEMS

Chapter 18: Worlds and Civilisations provided guidelines for generating a star system's main world first. In this section, you generate the system's star first, or whatever **stellar body** occupies the system.

Phase 1: The Essentials

At its simplest, you can describe a stellar body or star system with a single **high concept** aspect like *Gargantuan Red Giant* or *Black Hole Devouring Everything*. This section creates high concepts in a structured way you can "unpack" later to generate greater detail.

Create your structured high concept using the tables below. If you have a clear idea of what kind of star system you want, we recommend selecting manually; if you want a random result, roll 4dF instead.

Start by selecting the stellar body type on Table 19-1: Stellar Body Type.

You may have more than one stellar body in a system; if you got the "Star" result on Table 19-1, use Table 19-2: Multiple Star Systems to determine whether there are one, two, or three or more stellar bodies. Usually multiple star systems contain multiple *stars*. However, you can also use Table 19-1: Stellar Body Type for each additional body, for unusual systems like *Main Sequence Star With White Dwarf Companion*.

Table 19-1: Stellar Body Type

4dF	Stellar Body Type
-4 to -3	Pre-stellar Object
-2 to +2	Star
+3	Post-stellar Object
+4	Exotic Stellar Object

For each stellar body, select an entry or roll 4dF on Table 19-3: Stellar Body Determination to determine its Stellar Body Type.

SPECTRAL CLASS DETERMINATION

If the stellar body is a **star**, you may want to include its **spectral classification** (page 365) in the high concept, indicating its colour, size, and temperature, natural resources and planetary bodies. Pick an entry or roll 4dF twice on Table 19-4: Spectral Classification. Most stars are spectral classification M, cool red stars of great age, although many (if not most) Commonality worlds orbit F-, G-, and K-class stars more like Old Earth's sun.

CREATING THE HIGH CONCEPT

Assemble the details from the tables above into a single descriptor, adding colour as appropriate, to produce the stellar body's high concept.

Examples:

- *G-Class Main Sequence Star / White Dwarf Binary System*
- *Exotic Black Star*
- *Molecular Cloud Stellar Nursery*

Table 19-2: Multiple Star Systems

4dF	Type
-4 to +1	Single Star
+2 to +3	Binary
+4	Multiple*

*Multiple star systems contain three stellar bodies, or rarely four.

Exploration Missions: The Preliminary System Scan

*This initial scan on arriving in a new system is a Passive or Active Sensing roll, providing you with the high concept for the system. Failing this roll, or succeeding at a cost, may expose you to **star system hazards** (page 372).*

Table 19-3: Stellar Body Determination

4dF	Pre-stellar	Star	Post-stellar	Exotic
-4	Interstellar Cloud	Hot Subdwarf	Stellar Core	Dark Matter Star
-3	H II Region	Pre-Main Sequence	Collapsing Star	Asymptotic Giant
-2	Molecular Cloud	Cool Subdwarf	Planetary Nebula	Asymptotic Giant
-1	Molecular Cloud	Substellar Object	Planetary Nebula	Eruptive Variable
+0	Protostar	Main Sequence Star	White Dwarf	Pulsating Variable
+1	Protostar	Main Sequence Star	White Dwarf	Pulsating Variable
+2	Eruptive Variable	Subgiant	Neutron Star	Eruptive Variable
+3	Eruptive Variable	Giant	Electro-weak Star	Eruptive Variable
+4	Eruptive Variable	Supergiant	Stellar Black Hole	Black Star

Table 19-4: Spectral Classification

	-4	-3	-2	-1	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4
-4	O	B	F	K	K	M	M	M	M
-3	A	F	G	K	M	M	M	M	M
-2	F	G	G	K	M	M	M	M	M
-1	G	G	G	K	M	M	M	M	M
+0	K	K	K	K	M	M	M	M	M
+1	K	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
+2	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	C
+3	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	S	T
+4	M	M	M	M	M	M	C	L	Y

Exploration Missions: Checking the Mindscape

If you have access to a starship Mindscape instance or better (page 195), you can use the Mindscape to query any event horizon probe reports on the system (perhaps with a Knowledge roll) — many have had at least cursory visits. If the roll offers no information, that may mean the system has never been visited. If you're beyond the Frontier, the GM may compel an Outer Worlds*-type aspect to declare no probes ever made it this far. You're on your own…*

Exploration Missions: Preliminary System Analysis

See page 318 for the basic system survey you can use to identify a star system's standard profile.

Phase 2: Standard Profile

You can unpack the high concept to generate more detail about the star system.

1. STELLAR BODY TYPE

You already have the stellar body type; cross reference that in the Stellar Body Types section below (page 360) for a description and sample parameter ranges.

2. STELLAR BODY PARAMETERS

Stellar body parameters include the stellar body's age, habitable zone distance and orbital period, star system type, maximum number of planetary bodies, aspects, and resources. Roll 4dF or choose from the parameter sections below, restricting your selections to the ranges listed for the stellar body type.

3. PLANETARY SYSTEM

You can also define the system's planetary bodies. Roll on Table 18-3: Unknown World Planetary Type (page 316) and / or Table 18-6: Planetary Orbit (page 321) to generate each world's high concept.

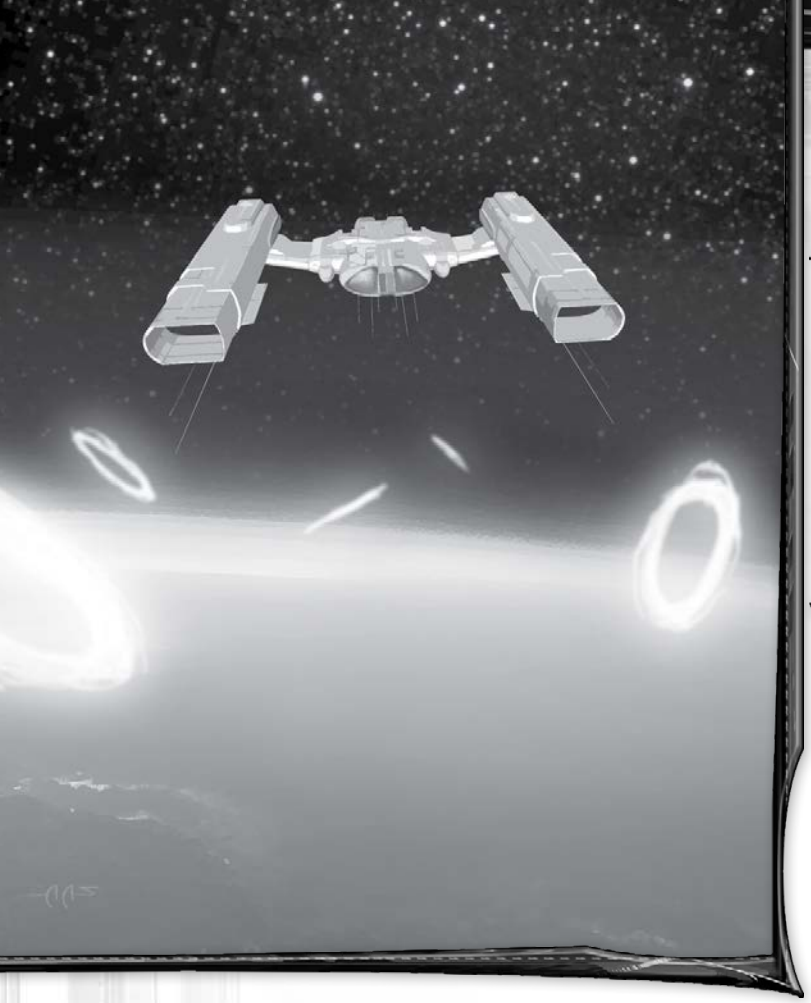
Phase 3: Full Profile

Use a full profile to generate exhaustive detail on a star system. This creates parameters for all planetary bodies (not just high concepts), a **system schematic**, and events and encounter tables.

SYSTEM SCHEMATICS

A system schematic sheet (page 480) can be useful for visualising a star system's layout; see the example for Manhome (page 382). Beginning with the system primary, proceed outwards, marking each planetary body and its orbit, and any moons. A system schematic can be part of a preliminary system analysis (page 318), sketching out the occupied orbits, then filling in more detail later using a detailed system analysis (page 358).

To generate a system schematic **collaboratively**, take turns as GM and players to: either place a planetary body on the schematic, defining its high concept; or define a system aspect or hazard. Continue until all orbits have been described. See also "Collaborative World Profiles" (page 317).



Exploration Missions: Detailed System Analysis

Traverse the system, making a Passive or Active Sensing roll and identifying one system parameter, aspect, or hazard per shift, including any system resources. You may make multiple rolls, but failure may mean you're affected by a hazard. You may also generate a system schematic, and conduct separate planetary analyses (page 318).

EVENT TABLES

Star system event tables are similar to planetary event tables (page 318), listing possible events as situation aspects and hazards. The templates in Table 19-5: Star System Event Table Templates are for inhabited and uninhabited systems.

Use these templates as presented, choosing an appropriate hazard or event from the aspects and hazards listed for stellar body types (page 360), star system hazards (page 372), civilisation types (page 346), planetary types (page 332), or planetary hazards (page 353); or create custom events tables for specific systems. Starship encounters are detailed on page 372.

Table 19-5: Star System Event Table Templates

Score	Inhabited System	Uninhabited System
-4	System Hazard	System Hazard
-3	Civilisation Event	System Hazard
-2	System Event	Planet Event
-1	Starship Encounter	System Event
+0	Starship Encounter	System Event
+1	Starship Encounter	System Event
+2	Planet Event	Planet Event
+3	Civilisation Event	System Hazard
+4	System Hazard	Extraordinary Event*

*A catch-all event; a starship encounter, unusual hazard, scenario event, etc.

STELLAR BODY TYPES AND PARAMETERS

Stellar Body Parameters

Stellar body parameters describe a stellar body and its star system features. Roll 4dF or pick appropriate entries in the sections below, within the ranges indicated for the stellar body type (page 360).

1. STELLAR BODY AGE

Table 19-6: Stellar Body Age determines how evolved the planetary system (if any) is, used as a modifier in "Planetary System Type" (page 359). It indicates whether planets have had time to form and life had chance to evolve.

2. H-ZONE ORBITAL DISTANCE

The distance from the system primary at which a planet may have liquid water on its surface. Units are in astronomical units (AU), and are specific to the **stellar body type**. This is multiplied by the **orbit multiple** from Table 18-6:

Planetary Orbit (page 321) to ascertain the orbital distance of any planetary body.

3. H-ZONE ORBITAL PERIOD

The time in standard years for a planet in the habitable zone to make one orbit, specific to the **stellar body type**. Multiply by the **year length modifier** from Table 18-6: Planetary Orbit (page 321) to ascertain a planet's year length.

4. PLANETARY SYSTEM TYPE

Roll 4dF or select an entry on Table 19-7: Planetary System Type, modified by the stellar body age rating, to determine whether the stellar body has a planetary system.

Remnant planetary systems occur when a planetary system has been damaged by a stellar event like expansion or collapse. Generally inner system planets are destroyed, and outer system planets wiped clean of any biosphere. Sufficiently old remnant systems may evolve new biospheres.

5. PLANETARY BODIES

Roll 4dF or pick an entry on Table 19-8: Maximum Number of Planets, modified by the planetary bodies modifier for the stellar body type (page 360). For each potential planet, roll on Table 18-3: Unknown World Planetary Type (page 316) and / or Table 18-6: Planetary Orbit (page 321).

6. ASPECTS

These example hazards, aspects, and events can be used when creating events tables.

7. RESOURCES

These indicators of **plentiful** and **scarce** natural resources can be used to create **trade aspects** (page 338) and are used in cargo trading (page 442) and resource extraction (page 441).

Table 19-6: Stellar Body Age

4dF	Age
-4 or lower	Extremely Young
-3	Very Young
-2	Young
-1	Maturing
+0	Mature
+1	Aging
+2	Old
+3	Very Old
+4 or higher	Ancient

Table 19-7: Planetary System Type

Score	Planetary System Type
-2 or below	Accretion disk (page 332)
-1	No planetary system
+0 or above	Planetary system (see below)
Special	Post-planetary system / Remnant

Table 19-8: Maximum Number of Planets

Score	Maximum Number of Planets
-4 or below	No planets
-3	1
-2	2
-1	3
+0	4
+1	5
+2	6
+3	7
+4	8
+5	9 (etc)

Stellar Body Types

The following stellar body types can be found throughout Human Space. They aren't exhaustive; feel free to create your own.

ASYMPTOTIC GIANT

Exotic Stellar Object

A low- to medium-mass G- to M-class star (0.6 to 10 solar masses), becoming an S- or C-class star late in its life. Having been through its red giant phase once, it swells again to 1 AU radius, shedding its mass in "thermal pulses". Each takes a few hundred years to build, culminating in a massive "helium shell flash", increasing its luminosity thousands of times before fading over a few years.

Asymptotic giants are surrounded by shells of ejected stellar material up to 30 LY radius, iron and silicon dust and heavier elements like carbon or oxygen. They're a source of **astrophysical masers** (page 373), and often the site of Commonality research expeditions.

Aspects: *Astrophysical Maser; Thermal Pulse.*
Age: Very Old (+3) or older.
Star System Type: None, or remnant.
Planetary Bodies: -4 .
H-Zone Distance: As red giant, but blasted by flash.
H-Zone Period: As red giant.
Resources: *Plentiful:* carbon, iron, oxygen, silicon.

BLACK STAR

Exotic Stellar Object

Midway between a collapsing star and a singularity, a black star is a massively gravitational object similar to a black hole, but without an event horizon. Almost all light is dragged back into it, and what does escape is red-shifted.

Aspects: *Dimensional Anomalies; Intense Gravity Fields; Time Dilation.*
Age: Young (-2) or older; often Ancient (+4).
Star System Type: Accretion disk.
Planetary Bodies: -4.
H-Zone Distance: n/a.
H-Zone Period: n/a.
Resources: As accretion disk.

COLLAPSING STAR

Post-stellar Object

A star collapsing under its own gravity at the end of its life, blowing off its outer envelope over tens of thousands of years to form a planetary nebula (page 363), ending in a white dwarf. Massive collapsing stars may become black holes (page 364). They may be very hot, with varying luminosities and odd atmospheres of little hydrogen, but with helium, carbon, and oxygen. Some may have reignited helium fusion.

Aspects: *Gravitational Anomalies; Stellar Flare Hazards.*
Age: Young (-2) or older; often Ancient (+4).
Star System Type: None, or remnant.
Planetary Bodies: -4.
H-Zone Distance: Less than original star; unstable.
H-Zone Period: Less than original star; unstable.
Resources: *Plentiful:* carbon, helium, oxygen; *Scarce:* hydrogen.

COOL SUBDWARF

Star

One of the two subdwarf types making up **luminosity class VI stars**, cool subdwarfs have spectral classes G to M, and fuse hydrogen in their cores like main sequence stars. They're less luminous than main sequence stars, as they lack elements heavier than helium; they also emit more ultraviolet. They're more common in the halo of stars above and below the galactic plane.

Aspects: *Dim Stars Poor in Resources; Gas Giant Planets Only.*
Age: Any.
Star System Type: G- to M-class.
Planetary Bodies: -2; only gas giants.
H-Zone Distance: Closer than equivalent main sequence.
H-Zone Period: Lower than equivalent main sequence.
Resources: *Plentiful:* helium, hydrogen; *Scarce:* everything else.

DARK MATTER STAR

Exotic Stellar Object

Also known as a **dark star**, a dark matter star is an extremely rare survivor from the early universe, a huge stellar body up to 2000 AU in diameter comprising an enormous cloud of hydrogen and helium at a temperature too low for emitted radiation to be visible to the naked eye. Dark stars exist in cold clouds of molecular hydrogen gas, and emit gamma rays, neutrinos, and anti-matter.

Aspects: *Invisibly Cool Anti-matter Hazard; Relic From the Early Universe.*
Age: Ancient (+4).
Star System Type: No planetary system.
Planetary Bodies: n/a.
H-Zone Distance: n/a.
H-Zone Period: n/a.
Resources: *Plentiful:* anti-matter, helium, hydrogen.

ELECTROWEAK STAR

Post-stellar Object

A dense supernova remnant, when the star's electroweak radiation pressure prevents further gravitational collapse to leave a core of two Old Earth masses ten centimetres across. They may last more than 10 million years. They are **d-process** candidates (page 368), and a source of zanthrium monopoles, flooding their surroundings with massive amounts of neutrino energy. They're dim, hard to detect, and unstable; they may collapse into black holes (page 364) at any moment.

Aspects: *Deadly Source of Zanthrium Monopoles; Hyper-dense Black Hole Hazard.*

Age: Mature (+0) or above.

Star System Type: Accretion disk, planetary nebula, remnant system.

Planetary Bodies: -4.

H-Zone Distance: None.

H-Zone Period: None.

Resources: *Plentiful:* zanthrium monopoles.

ERUPTIVE VARIABLE STAR

Star or Pre-stellar Object

Eruptive variable stars are otherwise normal stars (select a spectral class) which periodically increase or decrease in brightness, often by thousands of times, accompanied by stellar flares. There are many different types, some of which are extremely hazardous; some erupt at regular intervals of a few hours; others may go centuries without activity.

Aspects: *Navigational Hazard; Ticking Stellar Flare Bomb.*

Age: Any.

Star System Type: Any.

Planetary Bodies: -2; -4 biosphere / habitability modifier.

H-Zone Distance: As normal star, but blasted by flare.

H-Zone Period: As normal star.

Resources: As spectral class.

GIANT STAR

Star

Also called **luminosity class III stars**, giant stars are a stage in a star's life which main sequence stars of sufficient mass eventually go through. They're larger (up to several hundred solar diameters) and more luminous (from 10 to several thousand solar luminosities) than main sequence stars (page 362) of the same spectral class. If they have a planetary system, any inner system worlds will have been destroyed.

There are several types of giant star:

Red Giants

With spectral classes K, M, S, and C, the cooler red giants are from 20-100 solar diameters, with moderate mass (0.3 - 8.0), decent luminosity (100 to several hundred), and relatively long stable lives. They're the most common giant stars.

Aspects: *Huge Red Giant With Blasted Inner Worlds; Strange Life Evolved Anew in the Outer Solar System.*

Age: Old (+2) or older.

Star System Type: Any.

Planetary Bodies: +0; -2 biosphere / habitability modifier.

H-Zone Distance: 9.5 - 34 AU.

H-Zone Period: 50 - 70.

Resources: As spectral class.

Yellow Giants

With spectral classes G, F, and some A, yellow giants are less common than red, and are variable and often unstable stars, some with periods less than a day.

Aspects: *Massive Rapidly Variable Yellow Star.*

Age: Aging (+1) or older.

Star System Type: Any.

Planetary Bodies: +1; -1 biosphere / habitability modifier.

H-Zone Distance: As red giant, but variable.

H-Zone Period: As red giant, but variable.

Resources: As spectral class.

Blue Giants

With spectral classes O, B, and some A, these are very hot bright giant stars (5 to 10 solar diameters, 10,000K, and from 10 to 100,000 solar luminosities), varying a great deal in mass (from 2 to 50+ solar masses).

Aspects: *No Time for Life to Evolve; Very Large Rapidly Burning Bright Young Star.*

Age: Very Young (-3) to Young (-2).

Star System Type: As spectral class.

Planetary Bodies: -2; -4 biosphere modifier / -2 habitability modifier.

H-Zone Distance: 3 - 433 AU.

H-Zone Period: 3.5 - 1300.

Resources: As spectral class.

Giant stars include **bright giants**, also known as **luminosity class II stars**, which straddle the boundary between giant and supergiant stars. They can be of any spectral class from O to M. Stars larger and more luminous than giant stars are called **supergiants** (page 365).

H II REGION

Pre-stellar Object

An interstellar cloud of partially ionised gas up to several hundred light years in diameter in which star formation has recently occurred, often the location of O- and B- class stars (page 365). They have a characteristic red colour, and are mostly composed of hydrogen, about 10% helium, and

The Interstellar Medium

Space is not empty — even between the stars — but contains clouds of dispersed gas, dust and cosmic radiation, for all intents and purposes a vacuum from a human perspective. It clumps together in denser patches forming molecular clouds (below) and H II regions, eventually giving birth to stars.

The interstellar medium is notable for its lack of significant gravity wells, and planeships emerging from 2-space are immediately destroyed by the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon (page 92). There are rogue planets and other bodies, but the Commonality knows little about them. The Lowhigh are the main species to travel there regularly.

trace heavier elements. The Orion Nebula, home of the Venu, is the most famous. With high temperatures, intense magnetic fields, and energetic electric fields, they pose navigational hazards. Stars within H II Regions are surrounded by spheres of ionised gas.

Aspects: *High Temperatures and Intense Magnetic Fields; Navigational Hazard.*

Age: Any.

Star System Type: Protostars or O- and B-class stars.

Planetary Bodies: -4; rogue planets possible.

H-Zone Distance: n/a.

H-Zone Period: n/a.

Resources: *Plentiful:* helium, hydrogen.

HOT SUBDWARF

Star

One of the two subdwarf types making up **luminosity class VI stars**, hot subdwarfs have spectral classes O and B, and are a late stage in certain red giant lifespans which have lost their outer hydrogen layers. Often occurring in binary systems, B-class subdwarfs are more luminous than white dwarfs, and comprise a significant proportion of older star populations. Some are variable stars. They are roughly 0.5 solar masses, with a luminosity of 10 to 100.

Aspects: *Common Faint Blue Stars; No Planets; Stellar Flare Hazard.*

Age: Old (+2) or older.

Star System Type: None, or remnant; may have white dwarf companion.

Planetary Bodies: -4.

H-Zone Distance: 3 - 13 AU.

H-Zone Period: 7 - 66.

Resources: *Plentiful:* helium; *Scarce:* hydrogen.

MAIN SEQUENCE STAR

Star

A star that's fusing hydrogen atoms in its core to form helium; 90% of all stars are main sequence stars, varying from about 0.1 solar masses to up to 200. Also known as **luminosity class V stars**, they range in size and temperature from bright and hot blue-white O- and B-class stars, through warm yellow G-class stars like Old Earth's sun, to cool reddish M-class stars, the most common. Spectral classification determines the star's age, the likelihood of it having planets, and so on. Planetary systems around main sequence stars are the most favourable for life as we know it. Other stages in a star's life include white dwarf, giant, subgiant, and supergiant.

When you create a main sequence star, determine its spectral class (page 356); stellar object parameters can be found in "Star Spectral Classes" (page 365).

MOLECULAR CLOUD

Pre-stellar Object

Molecular clouds, also known as **stellar nurseries**, are dense regions of the interstellar medium, filled with hydrogen, carbon, and hydrocarbons, including amino acids and the building blocks of life. Slower-than-light expeditions to molecular clouds have successfully filtered and processed this material for makepoint conversion.

Exotic life forms have been reported in molecular clouds, although the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon has meant they have been difficult to study. They're also navigational nightmares — so thick sensors can't penetrate, with cloud matter playing havoc with hull materials and ruining sensors, comms, and shielding.

Bok Globules are dark dense clouds of molecular hydrogen, carbon oxides, helium, and silicate dust and gas found in H II Regions (page 361), in which stellar formation sometimes takes place. Roughly a light year across, they mass up to 50 solar masses, and are among the coldest objects in the universe.

Giant Molecular Clouds are vast molecular clouds of relatively high density, with over a million solar masses stretched up to 600 light years in diameter. They contain structures of filaments, sheets, lumps, and cores, some of which are so dense they block light — the so-called "dark nebulas". They're the location of magnetised turbulence and star formation, and astrophysical masers (see page 373).

Aspects: *Clouds of Dust and Matter; Dark Nebula; It's Corroding the Hull! Life in the Lightless Depths; Navigational Nightmare.*

Age: Any.

Star System Type: Protostars, accretion disks.

Planetary Bodies: None usually; rogue planets and protoplanets possible.

H-Zone Distance: n/a.

H-Zone Period: n/a.

Resources: *Plentiful:* carbon oxides, helium, hydrogen, metals, silicate dust.

NEUTRON STAR

Post-stellar Object

An incredibly dense supernova remnant from 1 to 3 solar masses in a diameter of 20km or so, neutron stars are incredibly hot and composed almost entirely of neutrons. Some, known as **pulsars**, rotate extremely rapidly (many times a second), and emit beams of searing radiation.

Neutron stars have gravities of **billions** of Old Earth Gs, bending light in gravitational lenses so that their backs are visible from their fronts. Objects caught smash into the star's surface at significant fractions of light speed, to be destroyed at the atomic level.

Despite the extraordinarily hostile conditions, it's been theorised that neutron stars may host exotic biospheres. None have been found yet, but there are several neutron stars in Commonality Space, all with Commonality research stations.

Aspects: *Gravity Trap; X-Ray Pulses.*

Age: Any.

Star System Type: Accretion disk, planetary system, remnant.

Planetary Bodies: -2.

H-Zone Distance: n/a.

H-Zone Period: n/a.

Resources: *Plentiful:* degenerate matter, neutrons.

PLANETARY NEBULA

Post-stellar Object

An expanding glowing shell of hot ionised gas given off by collapsing stars, lasting a few tens of thousands of years. Roughly one light year across, temperatures close to the exposed core can reach 1 million degrees. The exposed core emits strong ultraviolet radiation. Ejected layers are rich in heavy elements and the products of nucleosynthesis (calcium, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, etc).

Aspects: *Rich Nucleosynthesis Resource; UV Radiation Hazard.*

Age: Young (-2) or older.

Star System Type: None, or remnant.

Planetary Bodies: -4.

H-Zone Distance: n/a.

H-Zone Period: n/a.

Resources: *Plentiful:* calcium, carbon, heavy elements, nitrogen, oxygen.

PRE-MAIN SEQUENCE STAR

Star

Pre-main sequence stars are larger and less dense than main sequence stars, midway between a protostar and a main sequence star. They include T-Tauri and FU Orionis stars, and have dense accretion disks. They're heated by gravitational contraction rather than hydrogen burning.

Aspects: *Dense Accretion Disk; Getting Hotter and Smaller; Rich in Hydrogen.*

Age: Extremely Young (-4) to Very Young (-3).

Star System Type: Accretion disk.

Planetary Bodies: None.

H-Zone Distance: Greater than main sequence star.

H-Zone Period: Greater than main sequence star.

Resources: *Plentiful:* carbon, hydrogen, silicates.

Scenario Hook: The Converters

A new life form has been discovered in the Cepheus Molecular Cloud (page 379) — but the jury is out as to whether it's a virus, carnivore, or plague. It's adept at taking material objects and stripping them apart and putting them back together into versions of itself — a lethal and highly effective reproductive mechanism!

Population II Stars

These are very old stars composed almost entirely of hydrogen and helium, with low metallicity (few other heavier elements). They're the oldest stars in the universe; their planetary systems, if any, contain far fewer terrestrial planets. While they're poor candidates for life as we know it and resource exploitation, they've existed for so long that they may host very exotic life forms. The nearest Population II star to Old Earth is Barnard. Population II stars are more common in sectors farther above and below the galactic plane.

PROTOSTAR

Pre-stellar Object

A massive pre-stellar object formed by contraction of gases in a giant molecular cloud (page 362), and a short-lasting early stage in stellar formation, ending in a pre-main sequence star (page 363). Beginning from about 1% of its final mass, it heats up as it increases in size, bathed in microwaves and infrared, until fusion begins and the stellar wind begins to blow. Some protostars are also eruptive variables (page 361).

Aspects: *Microwave Radiation Hazard; The T-Tauri Wind Is About to Blow..*

Age: Extremely Young (-4).

Star System Type: Early accretion disk.

Planetary Bodies: None; possibly proto-gas giant or proto-planet.

H-Zone Distance: n/a.

H-Zone Period: n/a.

Resources: As molecular cloud.

PULSATING VARIABLE STAR

Exotic Stellar Object

Pulsating variable stars swell and shrink in a regular period ranging from minutes, hours, or days, to months or even years; there are many different types, with sizes and spectral classes as normal stars. Some brighten by fractional amounts; others by thousands of times. They can be very hazardous, although known pulsating variables are usually easy to avoid.

Aspects: *Regular but Devastating Stellar Flares; Swallowed up by a Cepheid Variable Expanding Millions of Kilometres.*

Age: Any.

Star System Type: Any.

Planetary Bodies: -4.

H-Zone Distance: Any.

H-Zone Period: Any.

Resources: Any.

STELLAR BLACK HOLE

Post-stellar Object

Formed by the collapse of very massive stars at the end of their lives, black holes continue to grow by absorbing mass and material. Although invisible, they are detected by their accretion disks and gravitational lensing effects.

Black holes have enormous (theoretically infinite) gravities; objects may be caught in their fields and unable to escape. Objects approaching a black hole experience time dilation (page 375); those which stray too close appear to "freeze" to external viewers; it's not known what happens to them subjectively, although some black holes may be **dimensional anomalies** (page 373).

Aspects: *Gravitational Anomaly; Membrane Anomaly; Time Dilation Anomaly; We Can't Pull Free!*

Age: n/a.

Star System Type: Accretion disk; orbiting stars (binary or trinary).

Planetary Bodies: None.

H-Zone Distance: n/a.

H-Zone Period: n/a .

Resources: As accretion disk.

STELLAR CORE

Post-stellar Object

An object of substellar mass which has lost all its gas to become too small to continue fusion, and does not have the composition of a brown or white dwarf or super-planet.

Aspects: *Planet-sized Star Skeleton Bathed in Radiation; Remnant Planetary System Orbiting a Dead Star.*

Age: Young (-2) or older; usually Old (+2) or older.

Star System Type: None, accretion disk, or remnant

Planetary Bodies: -2.

H-Zone Distance: n/a.

H-Zone Period: n/a.

Resources: As accretion disk.

SUBGIANT

Star

Also known as a **luminosity class IV star**, subgiants are a stage in a star's life which main sequence stars evolve into. Midway between main sequence stars and giant stars, hydrogen fusion in their cores is ceasing, causing their cores to contract and their outer shells to expand, eventually to become a giant star, although their spectral class hasn't yet shifted. Subgiant stars are rich in resources, especially metals, and their planetary systems are often favourable to terrestrial-type life.

Aspects: *Increasing in Size and Brightness.*

Age: 1 step older than main sequence.

Star System Type: As main sequence.

Planetary Bodies: As main sequence.

H-Zone Distance: Greater than main sequence.

H-Zone Period: Greater than main sequence.

Resources: As main sequence.

SUBSTELLAR OBJECT

Star

Less than 0.08 solar masses but only slightly larger than a gas giant planet, substellar objects cannot fuse hydrogen to helium in their cores, so never twinkle, but just smoulder in deep magenta colours. Also known as Brown or Methane Dwarfs, they're stellar class L, T, and Y — see page 367.

SUPERGIANT

Star

Supergiants are rare, short-lived, and very bright **luminosity class I stars**, a stage in a star's lifespan after the main sequence and giant star (page 361) stages. They can be any spectral class, and are among the most massive and luminous stars, with masses of at least 8-10 solar masses, luminosities from 10,000 to more than a million, and radii from 30-500 and even up to 1500 in the case of red supergiants like Antares. Blue O-class supergiants are very young stars, while red M-class supergiants are very old. They fuse heavier elements in their cores, and often undergo mass loss; some may even be variable stars. Supergiants eventually explode as supernovae. The largest supergiants are known as **hypergiants**, and are especially unstable.

Aspects: *About to Go Supernova; Huge Star As Big As the Solar System; Radiation Hazard.*

Age: Older than equivalent giants.

Star System Type: Extreme outer zone possible.

Planetary Bodies: -4.

H-Zone Distance: See equivalent giant.

H-Zone Period: See equivalent giant.

Resources: As spectral class.

WHITE DWARF

Post-stellar Object

Also known as a **luminosity class VII star**, white dwarfs are extremely dense stellar remnants comprising mostly electron-degenerate matter, the final stage in the life of most stars, with 1.4 solar masses compressed into a body the size of Old Earth. They cause gravitational redshift, and have strong magnetic fields. Gravity on the surface of a white dwarf is around 300,000G; matter there assumes exotic forms.

If more matter is added to a white dwarf, it may explode as a supernova (page 375). It's theoretically possible to trigger this artificially, with a sufficiently high tech index…

White dwarfs can continue to heat planetary systems for billions of years, and new worlds may develop from remnants of older planets, or form from the gas and dust surrounding the star.

Aspects: *Baked Dry by Ultraviolet; Blasted Planetary System Reborn.*

Age: Old (+2) or older.

Star System Type: Accretion disk; planetary system.

Planetary Bodies: +2.

H-Zone Distance: 0.01 AU (tidally-locked).

H-Zone Period: < 0.001.

Resources: *Plentiful:* helium, magnesium, neon, oxygen.

Using Stars in Scenarios

Stars don't just have to be background scenery; they can be scenario plot drivers in their own right. They are valuable sources of resources like zanthrium monopoles, often subjects of Commonality research; or can be hazards, threatening navigation or even planetary populations. PCs on exploration missions may be surprised by sudden changes in a star's behaviour, or may mistake its behaviour, even missing close or distant planets. Some stars may have photospheres hosting exotic life forms (page 389).

Spectral Sub-classes

Each spectral class can be divided into 10 divisions, in order of temperature; F0 stars are the hottest F-class stars, and F9 the coldest; below F9 stars come G0 stars, and so on. By default **Mindjammer** *doesn't make use of these sub-classes, although of course you can. In particular, you'll find them used in star catalogues.*

Star Spectral Classes

This section describes spectral classes in detail. They can be applied to stars of all types: giants, subgiants, dwarfs, and so on. By default, where a difference exists, the parameters refer to main sequence stars; this is particularly the case for the **mass**, **radius**, and **luminosity** parameters, given in **sols** or Old Earth units, which should be adjusted upwards or downwards for non-main sequence stars.

The parameters also provide baselines for the sky colour (page 327) of planets orbiting the star, and for vegetation colour. Spectral classes are presented in descending order of temperature, beginning with O-class stars and ending with Y-class brown dwarfs.

O-CLASS STAR

Hot Blue Star

Very hot blue stars emitting mostly in the ultraviolet, O-class stars are relatively rare, burning up their hydrogen

in only a few tens of millions of years. Among the most massive stars, they're surrounded by dust disks out to thousands of AU, inhibiting planet formation close to the star.

Aspects: *Blazing Ultraviolet; Blue Star Burning Brief yet Bright.*

Age: Extremely Young (-4).

Temperature: >= 33,000 K.

Mass: >= 16 sol.

Radius: >= 6.6 sol.

Luminosity: >= 30,000 sol.

Resources: *Plentiful:* carbon, helium, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, silicon.

H-Zone Period: 750+.

H-Zone Distance: 200 AU+.

Planetary Bodies: -6; -4 biosphere modifier.

Vegetation Colour: Autumnal.

Sky Colour: Deep purple-blue.

B-CLASS STAR

Hot Blue-white Star

Deep blue-white stars, B-class stars burn fast and bright, with short lifespans of less than a billion years. They have dust disks hundreds of AU in radius, beyond which massive and hot terrestrial planets (page 337) may form — although there's very little time for biospheres to evolve.

B-class stars are more metal-enriched than sunlike stars, and are excellent sources of heavier elements.

Aspects: *Far Orbit Terraforming Candidates; Hot Massive Superearth.*

Age: Extremely Young (-4).

Temperature: 10,000 - 33,000 K.

Mass: 2 - 16 sol.

Radius: 1.8 - 6.6 sol.

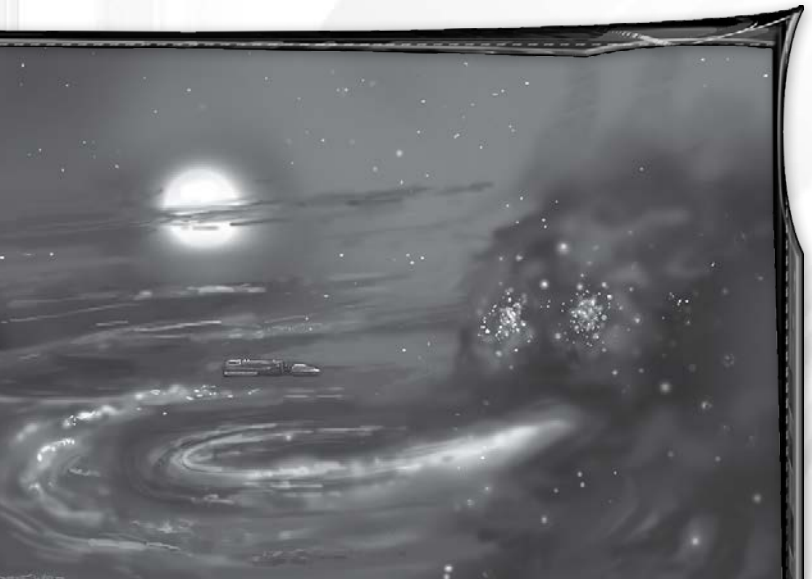
Luminosity: 25 to 30,000 sol.

Resources: *Plentiful:* helium, hydrogen, magnesium, metals, silicon.

H-Zone Period: 10 - 750.

H-Zone Distance: 6 - 200 AU.

Planetary Bodies: -4; -3 biosphere modifier.



Vegetation Colour: Autumnal.

Sky Colour: Purple-blue.

A-CLASS STAR

Hot White Star

White or bluish-white, A-class stars are less rare than O- and B-class stars. They're young stars, several hundred million years, often with accretion disks and proto-planets or planets. They may be too young for evolved biospheres, although some worlds make good terraforming candidates.

Aspects: *Young White Star With Active Accretion Disk.*

Age: Extremely Young (-4) to Very Young (-3).

Temperature: 7,500 - 10,000 K.

Mass: 1.4 - 2 sol.

Radius: 1.4 - 1.8 sol.

Luminosity: 5 - 25 sol.

Resources: *Plentiful:* calcium, hydrogen, iron, magnesium, silicon.

H-Zone Period: 4.8 - 10.

H-Zone Distance: 3.2 - 6 AU.

Planetary Bodies: -2; -2 biosphere modifier.

Vegetation Colour: Bright autumnal to bluish-white.

Sky Colour: Deep blue.

F-CLASS STAR

Warm Yellow-white Star

White in colour, F-class stars have respectable lifespans and are good candidates for planets with evolved biospheres.

Aspects: *Blue Jungles With a Bright White Sun.*

Age: Maturing (-1) or younger.

Temperature: 6,000 - 7,500 K.

Mass: 1 - 1.4 sol.

Radius: 1.2 - 1.4 sol.

Luminosity: 1.5 - 5 sol.

Resources: *Plentiful:* calcium, chromium, hydrogen, iron.

H-Zone Period: 1.3 - 4.8.

H-Zone Distance: 1.2 - 3.2 AU.

Planetary Bodies: +1; -1 biosphere modifier.

Vegetation Colour: Blue, light green, white.

Sky Colour: Deep blue.

G-CLASS STAR

Warm Yellow Star

Yellowish-white in colour, G-type stars remain in the main sequence for some 10 billion years, making them excellent candidates for evolved biospheres. The most famous G-class star is Sol, Old Earth's sun.

Aspects: *Sunlight Feels Like Home.*

Age: Aging (+1) or younger.

Temperature: 5,200 - 6,000 K.
Mass: 0.8 - 1 sol.
Radius: 0.9 - 1.2 sol.
Luminosity: 0.6 - 1.5 sol.
Resources: *Plentiful:* calcium, other metals.
H-Zone Period: 0.5 - 1.3.
H-Zone Distance: 0.6 - 1.2 AU.
Planetary Bodies: +2; +0 biosphere modifier.
Vegetation Colour: Green, red, yellow.
Sky Colour: Blue.

K-CLASS STAR

Warm Orange Star

Orange stars slightly cooler than Old Earth's sun, they are more common than G-class stars. They have longer lifespans, and are very favourable environments for planets with evolved biospheres.

Aspects: *Ancient Evolved Biospheres; Somehow Feels Like Evening.*
Age: Old (+2) or younger.
Temperature: 3,700 - 5,200 K.
Mass: 0.5 - 0.8 sol.
Radius: 0.7 to 1 sol.
Luminosity: 0.1 - 0.6 sol.
Resources: *Plentiful:* manganese, silicon, titanium oxide.
H-Zone Period: 0.16 - 0.5.
H-Zone Distance: 0.23 - 0.6 AU.
Planetary Bodies: +3; +1 biosphere modifier.
Vegetation Colour: Red, yellow, violet, green.
Sky Colour: Very pale blue.

M-CLASS STAR

Cool Red Star

The most common main sequence star, M-class stars are dim red, and also known as **red dwarfs**. They're extremely long-lived (longer than the current lifespan of the universe), with a high likelihood of evolved biospheres.

Aspects: *Ancient Highly-Evolved Star System.*
Age: Ancient (+4) or younger.
Temperature: 2,000 - 3,700 K.
Mass: <= 0.5 sol.
Radius: <= 0.7 sol.
Luminosity: <= 0.1 sol.
Resources: *Plentiful:* oxides.
H-Zone Period: 0.16 - 0.26.
H-Zone Distance: 0.19 - 0.23 AU (tidally-locked).
Planetary Bodies: +4; +2 biosphere modifier.
Vegetation Colour: Dark purplish to black, deep red.
Sky Colour: Yellowish-orange to white.

S-CLASS STAR

Cool Carbon-Rich Red Giant Star

Also known as **zirconium stars**, S-class stars are giant stars midway between M-class and C-class stars; many are pulsating variables (page 364) with long periods. They're otherwise similar to M-class stars.

Aspects: *Carbon-Rich Giant Star.*
Age: As M-class.
Temperature: 2000 - 3,500 K.
Mass: 0.8 to 8 sol.
Radius: As M-class.
Luminosity: As M-class.
Resources: *Plentiful:* carbon, lithium, technetium, zirconium monoxide.
H-Zone Period: As M-class.
H-Zone Distance: As M-class.
Planetary Bodies: -4.
Vegetation Colour: Deep red, purple-black.
Sky Colour: Sooty orange.

C-CLASS STAR

Giant Ruby-red Carbon Star

C-class stars are almost all red giants near the end of their lives, with high levels of carbon in their atmospheres; they otherwise equate to K-class stars. A rare few are main sequence stars. Many are pulsating variables (page 364).

Aspects: *Clouds of Carbon; Huge Ancient Sooty Star.*
Age: As G-class to M-class star.
Temperature: 1,900 - 5,000 K.
Mass: As G-class to M-class star.
Radius: As G-class to M-class star.
Luminosity: As G-class to M-class star.
Resources: *Plentiful:* carbon and carbon compounds; *Scarce:* hydrogen.
H-Zone Period: As G-class to M-class star.
H-Zone Distance: As G-class to M-class star.
Planetary Bodies: Carbon planets.
Vegetation Colour: Dark purplish to black.
Sky Colour: Sooty orange-red.

L-CLASS STAR

Cool Red-brown Star

Also known as **L-dwarfs**, these very faint dark red "brown dwarf" stars are at the very bottom limit for supporting hydrogen fusion; some do not. L-class giants and supergiants exist. Twice as numerous as stars, they're rich in metal hydrides, used in ZIP cells, and alkali metals, used in genurgic and mechanical enhancements. While L-class stars live long enough to evolve biospheres, habitable zone planets must be so close to the star that they are torn apart by tidal forces.

Aspects: *X-Ray Flares.*
Age: Ancient (+4) or younger.
Temperature: 1,300 - 2000 K.
Mass: < 0.075 sol.
Radius: appx 0.1 sol.
Luminosity: <0.00001 sol.
Resources: *Plentiful:* metal hydrides and alkali metals
H-Zone Period: n/a.
H-Zone Distance: Unstable (tidally-locked).
Planetary Bodies: +10 ("moons"); -2 biosphere modifier.
Vegetation Colour: Black.
Sky Colour: Reddish-orange.

T-CLASS STAR

Cool Brown Star

Magenta stars also known as **methane dwarfs**, T-class stars are insufficiently massive to prevent the emergence of the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon (page 92), and so are still relatively poorly known in the Commonality, visited only by slower-than-light event horizon probes and the occasional Lowhigh lightjammer (page 246).

Aspects: *Subject to the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon.*
Age: Ancient (+4) or younger.
Temperature: 700 - 1,300 K.
Mass: 0.02 to 0.05 sol.
Radius: appx 0.1 sol.
Luminosity: <0.00001 sol.
Resources: *Plentiful:* methane.
H-Zone Period: n/a.
H-Zone Distance: Unstable (tidally-locked).
Planetary Bodies: +12 ("moons"); -3 biosphere modifier.
Vegetation Colour: Black.
Sky Colour: Red.

Zanthrium Stars

*The "d-process" or **dimensional membrane aperture process** is a nucleosynthesis effect that occurs under certain quantum gravitational conditions in stars, producing zanthrium and zanthrium monopoles, crucial in the workings of ZIP cells and planing engines. It happens in certain asymptotic giants, collapsing stars (especially those forming electroweak or neutron stars), and stars with unusual gravitational perturbations.*

Y-CLASS STAR

Cool Dark Brown Star

Dark purple in colour, Y-class brown dwarfs have no methane, and are likewise too low mass to prevent the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon. They are so cool they may even have water clouds in their atmospheres. They may be very depleted in metals.

Aspects: *X-Ray Flares.*
Age: Ancient (+4) or younger.
Temperature: <= 700 K.
Mass: 0.005 to 0.02 sol.
Radius: appx 0.1 sol.
Luminosity: <0.00001 sol.
Resources: *Plentiful:* helium, hydrogen.
H-Zone Period: n/a.
H-Zone Distance: Unstable (tidally-locked).
Planetary Bodies: +14 ("moons"); -4 biosphere modifier.
Vegetation Colour: Black.
Sky Colour: Purplish-red.

CREATING STARMAPS

You can create your own starmaps showing the relative locations of star systems in a volume of space. In the Commonality, the lowest level of starmap is the **octant**, a cubic volume of space 100 light years a side (page 378). We provide an example Commonality octant, together with its planets and star systems, in **Chapter 24: The Darradine Rim** (page 453). This section explains how you can create your own.

To create an octant, begin with a ten-by-ten grid like the one given on page 369 or the octant sheet on page 481. Each square is 10LY across. For each square, roll 1dF. For a standard distribution, mark a system of interest in the square whenever you roll a "+". For a heavier distribution, mark a system of interest on either a "+" or a "-". Note that there are **many** more star systems in the octant than this system shows — these are just those which are "of interest".

For each system of interest, roll 4dF or pick an entry on Table 19-9: Star System Z-Coordinate to find the system's z-coordinate, ie how far "above" or "below" the plane of the octant grid the star is. The octant map represents a 3D cube of space, projected onto a 2D surface; the z-coordinate provides the third dimension.

For each system of interest, roll 4dF or choose an entry on Table 19-10: Systems of Interest to find out whether the system is inhabited or unknown.

For an inhabited system, determine its details using Table 18-1: Inhabited World Planetary Type (page 314). **For an unknown system**, use Table 18-3: Unknown World Planetary Type (page 316). For any **other stellar body**, use Table 19-1: Stellar Body Type (page 355).

Table 19-9: Star System Z-Coordinate

4dF	Z-coordinate
-4	-40LY
-3	-30LY
-2	-20LY
-1	-10LY
+0	+0LY
+1	+10LY
+2	+20LY
+3	+30LY
+4	+40LY

Going off the Beaten Track

Characters may sometimes go "off map", heading into deep space, exploring entirely unknown star systems. Even in the Core Worlds, there are vastly more uninhabited star systems and little known stellar bodies than there are inhabited worlds, and it's easy to visit one. However, for the most part stellar bodies in the Core Worlds and Commonality sectors close to the Core have been at least superficially mapped; it's unlikely you'll find a massive and hitherto unknown star empire within a few light years of Old Earth. However, you may find unknown life-bearing worlds, and there may be surprises.

Out on the Fringe and beyond, the situation is very different; even systems of interest are poorly known, and there could be anything waiting in the dark. Characters visiting unknown stellar bodies beyond the Commonality Frontier may use Table 19-1: Stellar Body Type (page 355) to see what they find…

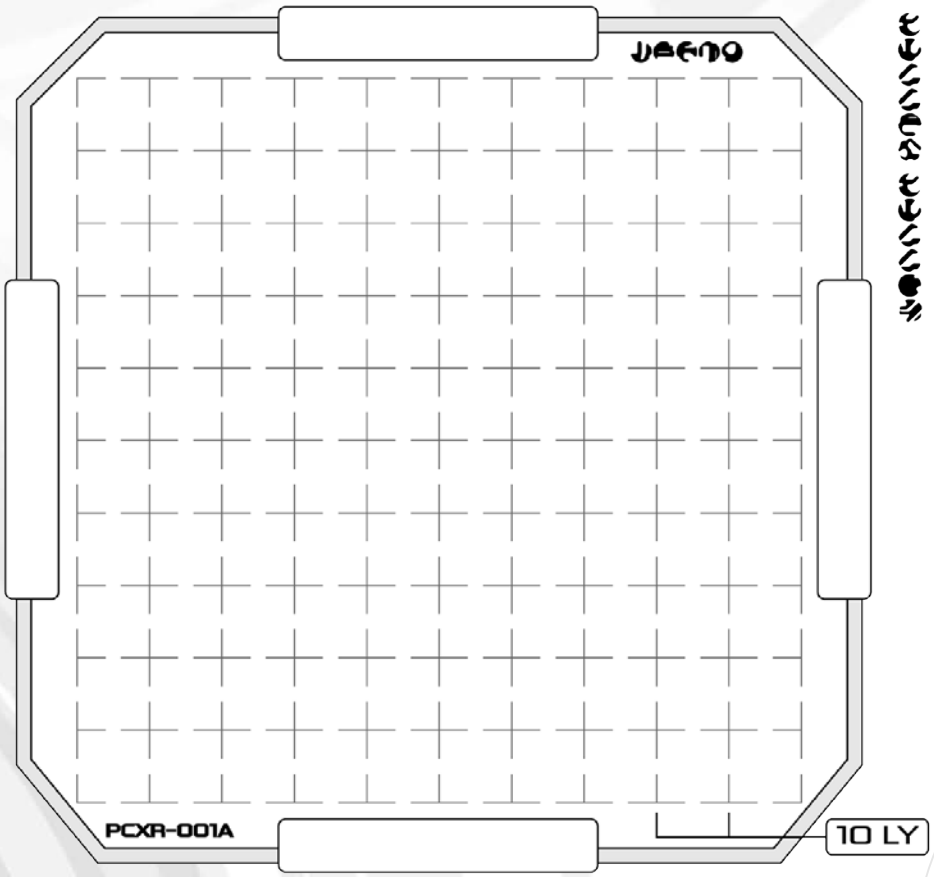


Table 19-10: Systems of Interest

4dF	Core Worlds	Commonality Space	Fringe	Outer Worlds
-4	Other Stellar Body	Other Stellar Body	Unknown System	Unknown System
-3	Inhabited System	Unknown System	Unknown System	Unknown System
-2	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Unknown System	Unknown System
-1	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Unknown System
+0	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Unknown System
+1	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Unknown System
+2	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Inhabited System
+3	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Inhabited System
+4	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Inhabited System	Inhabited System



STAR SYSTEM ENVIRONMENTS

Star systems are rich environments for danger, exploration, and mystery. They can be divided into the following **zones**, with situation aspects, hazards, and encounters.

PLANETARY ORBIT

Orbiting a world is a delicate manoeuvre; you're visible from the ground, and subject to planetary phenomena. Inhabited world orbits are busy and regulated, and you may be challenged by authorities.

You must enter or leave orbit when landing or taking off from a planet; you needn't usually roll, but it's a zone you must pass through, and it may provide obstacles to other manoeuvres.

CLOSE TO PRIMARY

Approaching close to a system primary exposes you to radiation and gravitational hazards (page 374), though it's the only way to get into a star's photosphere. It may pose an obstacle to movement.

THE INNER SYSTEM

A star's inner system is usually a few AU at most, depending on star size, and usually includes the habitable zone (page 322). An inhabited system's main world is usually here

Table 19-11: Starship Encounters

Score	Outer Worlds	Fringe Worlds	Successor States
-9	Slowship	*Icarus*-class Scout	Venu Capital Ship
-8	Event Horizon Probe	*Icarus*-class Scout	Venu Destroyers
-7	Event Horizon Probe	*Botany Bay*-class Explorer	Lightjammer
-6	*Icarus*-class Scout	Surveillance Ship	Venu Warhawk
-5	*Icarus*-class Scout	System Patrol Boat	Venu Insertion Ship
-4	*Botany Bay*-class Explorer	Homesteader	*Divergence*-class Symbiotic Miner
-3	*Botany Bay*-class Explorer	Waggon Ship	*Prospector*-class Miner
-2	*Prospector*-class Miner	*Herald*-class Fast Courier	Outremer *Chevalier*-class Destroyer
-1	*Icarus*-class Scout	*Profit*-class New Trader	Sentient Alliance Serpent's Strike
+0	Event Horizon Probe	Mindjammer	Mindjammer
+1	*Profit*-class New Trader	*Friedman*-class Bulk Transport	Sentient Alliance Cat's Claw
+2	Surveillance Ship	*Profit*-class New Trader	*Profit*-class New Trader
+3	*Botany Bay*-class Explorer	Chembu Bioship	*Profit*-class New Trader
+4	*Profit*-class New Trader	Corporacy Seeder	Corporacy Seeder
+5	Chembu Bioship	*Morpheus*-class Mass Transport	System Patrol Boat
+6	Venu Insertion Ship	System Patrol Boat	*Friedman*-class Bulk Transport
+7	Corporacy Seeder	Space Station / Base	Waggon Ship
+8	Homesteader	Star City	Surveillance Ship
+9	Waggon Ship	Lightjammer	Manowar

(often in the habitable zone), and it may be the busiest part of the system. There may be numerous worlds; travel times are given on page 224.

THE OUTER SYSTEM

A star's outer system is usually the cold dark reach occupied by gas giants and iceballs. Many of an inhabited system's industries may be here; it can be just as busy as the inner system, but is much "bigger", and so feels emptier. Travel times are given on page 224.

HELIOPAUSE

The heliopause, also known as the **n/2 boundary**, is the "edge" of a star system, where the star's stellar wind is stopped by the interstellar medium (page 362). Most importantly, it's the closest point to a star where it's safe to activate planing engines without risking damage. It also marks the minimum safe emergence point for ships dropping out of 2-space. The distance to the heliopause varies; it's roughly 100x the h-zone distance for Old Earth.

OORT CLOUD

The Oort cloud is the spherical cloud of planetesimals at the outer limit of a star's gravitational dominance, beyond

Table 19-11: Starship Encounters (cont.)

Score	Core	Quarantine	Depot
-9	Lightjammer	*Keynes*-class Subsidised Freighter	System Patrol Boat
-8	Surveillance ship	Surveillance Ship	System Patrol Boat
-7	System Patrol Boat	*Refusal*-class Quarantine Enforcer	*Nautilus*-class Manowar
-6	Customs Boat	Surveillance Ship	Surveillance Ship
-5	Star City	*Refusal*-class Quarantine Enforcer	*Thor*-class Bombardier
-4	*Divergence*-class Symbiotic Miner	Surveillance Ship	System Patrol Boat
-3	*Morpheus*-class Mass Transport	*Refusal*-class Quarantine Enforcer	Bulk Transport
-2	Space Station / Base	*Herald*-class Fast Courier	*Herald*-class Fast Courier
-1	*Herald*-class Fast Courier	*Refusal*-class Quarantine Enforcer	Space Station / Base
+0	Mindjammer	*Refusal*-class Quarantine Enforcer	Mindjammer
+1	*Herald*-class Fast Courier	*Refusal*-class Quarantine Enforcer	Space Station / Base
+2	Chembu Bioship	*Herald*-class Fast Courier	*Herald*-class Fast Courier
+3	*Adam Smith*-class Merchant	*Refusal*-class Quarantine Enforcer	System Patrol Boat
+4	*Adam Smith*-class Merchant	*Refusal*-class Quarantine Enforcer	*Keynes*-class Subsidised Freighter
+5	Customs Boat	*Nautilus*-class Manowar	*Thor*-class Bombardier
+6	*Adam Smith*-class Merchant	Space Station / Base	Chembu bioship
+7	Star City	*Refusal*-class Quarantine Enforcer	*Profit*-class New Trader
+8	System Patrol Boat	*Keynes*-class Subsidised Freighter	*Nautilus*-class Manowar
+9	Lightjammer	*Keynes*-class Subsidised Freighter	Star City

which ships emerging from 2-space risk precipitating the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon (page 92). For Old Earth, it's roughly a light year from the sun.

Encountering Starships

Starships can be encountered as star system events (page 358). Table 19-11: Starship Encounters provides example starship encounters for the Rim Sector and immediately coreward. Roll 4dF and add the ratings for the system civilisation's trade index and starport facilities, or pick an entry.

STAR SYSTEM HAZARDS

This section describes example star system **hazards** (page 176). Use them as compels of situation aspects, or as entries on event tables (page 358). You're assumed to be in a starship or other construct when encountering star system hazards.

Some star system hazards may provide useful resources, knowledge, and so on. This requires a create an advantage action producing a situation aspect which can be exploited (page 319) or even traded (page 447). If you analyse a star system hazard and fail, you may fall victim to it if you haven't already.

ASTROPHYSICAL MASER

Hazard

Conflict Hazard

Naturally occurring microwave lasers arising spontaneously in molecular clouds, planetary or stellar atmospheres, or other space conditions, especially in areas of star formation. Many are invisible, or mostly so; they can be powerful enough to fry a ship's systems.

Aspects: Where the Hell Did That Come From?

Skills: *Superb (+5) Intensity, Magnitude*

Actions: *Attacks with Intensity as an EW attack (page 202). You can accumulate 3 victories using Manoeuvre vs Magnitude, or enter 2-space, to avoid it.*

COSMIC RADIATION

Hazard

Simple Hazard

Usually a starship's shields protect its crew, passengers and sentiences from cosmic radiation damage; unprotected individuals quickly suffer serious DNA damage. If a starship's radiation shields fail, this hazard affects all organic occupants immediately, recurring every exchange (a day or so) until the shields are fixed or the occupants find shelter.

Aspects: Damaging Background Radiation

Skills: *Superb (+5) Intensity*

Actions: *Resist using Physique; you may use Science, Technical, etc, to create advantages.*

Consequence: *Causes* Irradiated-*type consequences; these can only be treated with specialist care.*

DEBRIS FIELD

Hazard

Contest Hazard

A debris field's density is represented by its Intensity; its size by its Magnitude.

Aspects: Cloud of Dust and Vac-Frozen Battle Debris; Dense Ring System; Oort Cloud Eddies

Skills: *Superb (+5) Magnitude; Good (+3) Intensity*

Actions: *Each exchange, roll Manoeuvre vs Intensity to avoid physical damage; the debris has a weapon:3 rating. Each exchange, also roll Manoeuvre vs Magnitude to escape the field.*

DIMENSIONAL / MEMBRANE ANOMALY

Hazard

Challenge Hazard

Dimensional / membrane anomalies are "holes" in the fabric of space-time, leading to other dimensions or possibly parallel universes or timelines. Usually they're far from useful; the slightest contact can tear holes in a ship.

Aspects: Annihilating Touch; Roiling Tear in Space-Time; We Can Make It Through!

Skills: *Fantastic (+6) Intensity; Average (+1) Magnitude*

ACTIONS

Action 1: *Roll Manoeuvre vs Intensity to avoid consequence while studying or analysing it, or Manoeuvre contest vs Magnitude to escape.*

Action 2: *Roll Science to identify what it is.*

Action 3: *Roll Science to analyse, creating an advantage representing knowledge or a* Dimensional Gateway-*type situation aspect.*

Consequence: Dimensional Disruption-*type consequences; taken out could be* Swallowed Into Other Dimension.

EXOTIC MATTER

Hazard

Simple Hazard

This is a valuable resource which is also a significant hazard.

Aspects: Blistering Z-Radiation; Vast Uncontrollable Power Source

Skills: *Superb (+5) Intensity; Fair (+2) Magnitude*

Actions: *Roll Technical vs Intensity to create an advantage harnessing its power; Hull Strength vs Intensity to withstand damage; Manoeuvre vs Magnitude to avoid.*

FIELD ANOMALY

Hazard

Conflict Hazard

There are many kinds of field anomaly, including dangerous magnetic storms; all can do serious damage to ship's systems and navigation.

Aspects: Disorienting; Ghost Images; Which Way Out?

Skills: *Epic (+7) Magnitude; Superb (+5) Intensity*

Actions: *Intensity attacks as an EW attack each exchange; roll Sensing vs Magnitude and accumulate 3 victories to avoid.*

Consequence: Burned-out Systems; Navigation Systems Damaged; Sensors Offline.

MAGNETIC STORM

*See **Field Anomaly**.*

QUANTUM FOAM ANOMALY

*See **Dimensional / Membrane Anomaly**.*

GRAVITATIONAL ANOMALY

Hazard

Conflict Hazard

Extreme gravitational forces can bend space-time and tear starships and even planets apart. Gravity cannon (page 208) can place Gravitational Anomaly *advantages on zones.*

Aspects: Crushing Tidal Effect Ripping Bodies in Two; Elemental Forces Tearing Space-time Apart

Skills: *Superb (+5) Intensity or above; Good (+3) Magnitude (or zone effect).*

Actions: *Roll Manoeuvre vs Intensity to escape the zone of effect once affected, or vs Magnitude to avoid in the first place. Roll Physique or Hull Strength to withstand its effect. Suffer physical damage on failure.*

RADIATION

Hazard

Conflict Hazard

As page 354, affects ship systems and crew. May have a duration in exchanges instead of Magnitude, or a zone or zones of effect.

Aspects: Burning Microwave Background; Searing Solar Corona; Stellar Flare; UV Radiation

Skills: *Epic (+7) Magnitude; Great (+4) Intensity*

Actions: *Attacks with Intensity as an EW attack. Some radiation hazards can be resisted with Manoeuvre vs Magnitude, accumulating 3 victories; others attack for a number of exchanges or in a certain zone or zones.*

STELLAR FLARE

*See **Radiation**.*

SUPERNOVA

Hazard

Challenge Hazard

Aspects: Shockwave Tearing Apart Planets! The Sun Explodes!

Skills: *Supernova (+10) Intensity, weapon:10 rating*

ACTIONS

Action 1: *Create an advantage action to configure shields.*

Action 2: *Roll Hull Strength vs Intensity to avoid the initial blast, taking physical damage.*

Action 3: *Make a 2-space jump (probably blind) to get the hell out of there!*

TIME DILATION

Hazard

Challenge Hazard

You're affected by the time-warping effects of relativity.

Aspects: Difficult to See What's Happening; The Universe Is Speeding Up! Time Is Slowing Down!

Skills: *Superb (+5) Intensity or above*

ACTIONS

Action 1: *Create an advantage with Science to understand what's happening.*

Action 2: *Roll Technical vs Intensity to mitigate the effects; accumulate 3 victories to escape. If you fail, the length of an exchange increases on the time ladder equal to the shifts of failure. IE, 4 shifts of failure takes you from An Hour to A Day; another 4 shifts takes you to A Month, and so on.*

Life on New Commonality Worlds

Commonality citizens live lives of pampered luxury from our 21st century perspective, coupled with a largely voluntary submission to restrictions most of us would find intolerable. Whether born in vitro or via natural childbirth, they spend their first half-century in education, acquiring a tight bond with and dependence on the Mindscape. All physical needs are provided for, and expert systems evaluate each individual to identify activities the individual considers stimulating and worthwhile. Those with maverick or non-conformist personalities are channeled towards lives in instrumentalities, or on specific culture worlds, or even out on the Fringe or beyond the Frontier. Only in hopeless cases is re-education recommended.

Most Commonality citizens are therefore happy and well-balanced, leading largely fulfilling lives which have been fitted into the larger-scale patterns of the Commonality by unseen hyperintelligences. They live in arcologies, domiciliaries, orbital habs, plateworlds, or loosely dispersed settlements on new colony worlds. There are worlds in the Core where generations work the soil; habs of artists and creatives; depots of tech enthusiasts; and metroplexes where whole societies interact in single megastructures.

This is the way the Commonality likes to portray itself. In many ways it's true; but it isn't the whole truth. There are slums even in the Core Worlds, where dropouts, underworlders, and xenomorphs live in abandoned districts, in "shadow societies" hidden beneath official ones. These impoverished masses live outside the Commonality security and supply networks, and are rarely acknowledged.

CHAPTER TWENTY
COMMONALITY SPACE

"Fifteen hundred light years, from Old Earth to the Rim. That's fifteen hundred years before you know if a star's exploded or a war's begun. How did they manage, all those millennia, before Rediscovery? No wonder they're so different from us, the lost colonies from the Core. I'm amazed we can understand one another at all."

— Yekatrina Fin-Lystra, Deputy Chief Arbitrator, Rim Sector 34th Contact Team, during a break in the Successor State Secondary Accord negotiations, 121-123 NCE.

SPACE TRAVEL

Before the advent of planing, Old Earth seeded the galaxy by slower-than-light generation and stasis ship. For ten millennia colonies were established in isolation, dependent on Old Earth for information, forced to wait years for communications to arrive.

Later, with the Mindscape, synthetic intelligences were transmitted by tightbeam, and slowships became rarer. Evolution continued to diverge, and the further the synthetics travelled, the less the colonies they found resembled Old Earth. Even then it was clear there were many colonies seeded by generation ship which did not communicate back to Old Earth, lost in the depths of space.

As the Commonality expands, everywhere it finds hitherto unknown worlds, colonised in the forgotten past. Before the Expansionary Era, the most distant world in communication with Old Earth was the strange culture beyond the Orion Nebula now known as the Venu — more than 1500 light years away — with whom there had only been four known contacts in recorded history. Commonality explorers have now established that generation ships penetrated much further; the lost colonies, when they are finally found, will likely stretch more than 10,000 light years from Old Earth, containing a vast number of inhabited systems colonised by Old Earth in antiquity and, potentially, other non-human species.

How Ubiquitous Is Faster-than-light Travel?

During the early days of Expansion the Commonality provided planing technology to other cultures fairly freely — until the Venu attacked. Many polities possess planing technology, including Outremer, the Successor States, and the Sentient Alliance; some have travelled to the edges of Human Space and beyond — well out of the Commonality's reach.

The galaxy is a big place, and there are spacefaring alien civilisations out there — witness the Low-high. Although they didn't have planing technology when contacted, other species as yet undiscovered may well have. What, for example, is behind the rumours of the so-called "Pulse Dragons" dwelling in interstellar space — extremely fast-moving, high-energy beings or devices which have been utterly inimical when encountered? No one knows if these are a new alien species or an ancient alien technology — or some other phenomenon entirely — but the Commonality remains watchful for the day an alien species with its own faster-than-light technology comes to call…

Making Your Own Sectors, Subsectors, and Octants

*We provide an example octant in **Chapter 24: The Darradine Rim**, including descriptions of its principle worlds. You can also create your own; see "Creating Starmaps" (page 368).*

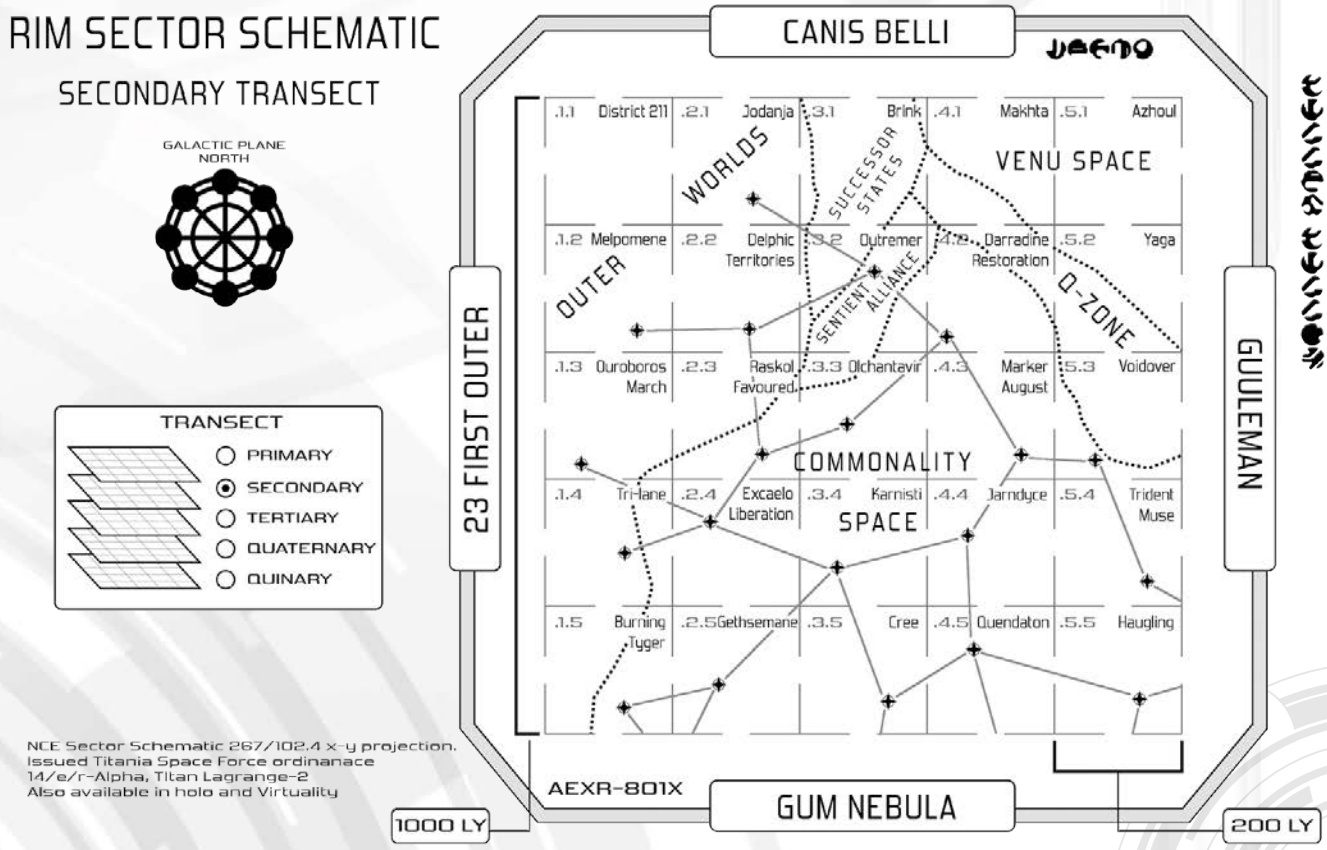
Galactic Directions and Coordinates

The Commonality uses three-dimensional coordinates to locate stellar objects, with a reference point centred on Old Earth (at coordinates 0-0-0) and constantly updated by Mindscape; units are in light years. Bearings use a 360-degree notation along horizontal and vertical planes, aligned with the galactic plane: 180/180 indicates directly "behind" and "down".

Several popular conventions exist to supplement this system. First, two sets of compass directions can be used to refer to the vertical and horizontal planes: "North and South" indicates directly "up" the vertical plane and "behind" along the horizontal. Above and below the galactic plane are "up" and "down", and towards and away from Old Earth "in" and "out".

ASTROGRAPHY

Expansion isn't proceeding evenly in all directions. Above and below Commonality Space, stars begin to grow thin, channelling exploration along the galactic plane. There, the frontier becomes larger each year, assets more attenuated, and recently Expansion has begun to slow. On the Venu frontier a "Quarantine Zone" has been established, a no man's land many light years deep, where the Commonality is repurposing its Space Force to the principles of active defence. This chapter provides a snapshot of a dynamic, constantly changing milieu — Human Space in the year 193 of the New Commonality Era.



Human Space

A theorised "thick disk" of space some 20,000 light years in diameter along its widest axis, the maximum extent of slowship colonisation during the First Age of Space. Human Space contains many billions of stellar bodies.

Commonality Space

A spherical volume of space roughly 3000 light years in diameter, containing 27 sectors centred on the Core Worlds and marking the current extent of Expansion. Commonality Space is broken down in to a lattice of **sectors** in a 3 x 3 x 3 grid, and contains over 3000 subsectors, many only cursorily explored, and over 100 million stellar bodies. Over 100,000 worlds have either been rediscovered or settled (however lightly) to date.

Province

An informal subdivision of Human or Commonality Space up to 2000 light years across (although often less) and containing up to one or more sectors and many millions of stellar bodies. Sytar Province is a typical province.

Sector

A cubic volume of space 1000 light years in diameter, there may be as many as two thousand sectors in Human Space, and currently 27 in Commonality Space. An average sector contains four million stellar bodies and 1000-3000 known populated worlds, subdivided into 125 subsectors in a 5 x 5 x 5 grid. Each of the 5 "layers" is known as a **transect**, abbreviated TX, named primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary, quinary (ie "Primary Transect" or "TX1"). The Rim Sector is a typical sector of Commonality Space.

Subsector

A cubic volume of space 200 light years in diameter, containing 32,000 stellar bodies and anywhere from zero to 100 known populated worlds, subdivided into 8 octants in a 2 x 2 x 2 grid. The central subsector in a sector is at reference TX3.3.3 of its parent sector. The Darradine Restoration is a typical subsector.

Octant

A cubic volume of space 100 light years a side, containing 4000 stellar bodies and up to 20 or so known populated worlds. Unpopulated or sparsely populated subsectors may not use this level of designation. The Darradine Rim is a typical octant.

AN OVERVIEW OF COMMONALITY SPACE

The inside covers of this book show a schematic of Commonality Space, marking the current extent of Commonality expansion. This section discusses the principle features of that map.

Regions



THE CORE WORLDS

The Core Worlds are the "home sector" of the Commonality, centred on Old Earth and dominated by the Core Worlds culture (page 33). It contains roughly four million stellar bodies and 3000 populated worlds, at least 1000 of which are considered Core Worlds. Parts of the sector were invaded during the Venu War (110-120 NCE), and the scars are still visible.

The Core Worlds are ancient; at least 5000 years old, and most more than 10000. Some have no record of ever being colonised; there's even a minor heresy that humankind evolved on a Core World other than Old Earth and migrated there after a terrible war which devastated the planet — *The Legend of Micron Down*.

Subsector TX3.3.3 of the Core Worlds is **Home**, and contains Old Earth. Old Earth itself doesn't belong to any octant — it stands at the hub of all eight, hence is often referred to as **Hub**, as well as the more common **Manhome** (page 382).

Core Worlds society is extremely stratified, with a degree of behavioural restriction which 21st century societies would find intolerable. Religion, political discussion, and unlicensed reproduction is illegal, and most gestations are *in vitro*. It's a huge contrast to the freewheeling ways of the Fringe.

THE FRINGE WORLDS

The Commonality Fringe is that huge volume of space which has been added to the Commonality since Rediscovery began two centuries ago. Basically, everything that is not Core Worlds belongs to the Fringe.

Some parts of the Fringe are more settled than others; the coremost subsectors of the 26 Fringe sectors have been part of the Commonality for almost two hundred years. Out by the Commonality Frontier, though, worlds are still in the throes of Rediscovery and integration, a lively, chaotic melee.

THE OUTER WORLDS

The Outer Worlds lie beyond the Commonality Frontier — mostly uncontacted worlds within the projected area of Human Space. Event horizon probes and deep space explorers are active out here, pushing back the Frontier every day.

Astrographical Features

The Commonality Space Schematic highlights several major astrographical features.

THE NEBULAE

There are many nebulae in Commonality Space; the major ones are the Bat, Californian, Fishhook, Gum, and Orion Nebulae, and the Cygnus Loop. The Gum Nebula lends its name to a Commonality sector, with its capital at the high-population world of Trand; the spectacular Orion Nebula is the gateway to the infamous Venu.

All nebulae have *Navigation Hazard* situation aspects.

THE RIFTS

The rifts are areas of dramatically reduced stellar density, effectively empty of stars. There may be tenuous routes though some parts, but mostly you have to go round rather than through. They're known locuses of the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon, and misjumps along rift edges are usually catastrophic. The main rifts in Commonality Space are the Cyg Rift and the Vul Rift; the latter gives its name to the Vul Sector, with its capital at Jesedipere.

THE CLOUDS

The clouds are molecular clouds of varying sizes, often active stellar nurseries, but also opaque, thick with dust, and obstacles and hazards to navigation — see page 362. The main clouds in Commonality Space are the Wolf Clouds and the giant Cepheus Cloud, which gives its name to the Cepheus Sector and its dust-shrouded capital at Cepheid Ultor.

The Far Gate Network

*Over recent decades the new and secretive 3-Space Instrumentality has been working on the **Far Gate Project**, constructing 3-space gates at the sector capitals of Commonality Space. The lines connecting Old Earth with certain sector capitals in the Commonality Space Schematic represent this **Far Gate Network**, permitting rapid travel between Old Earth and selected sector hubs.*

Ikeba and Hajime — The Beyonders

*Ikeba and Hajime are two very different worlds forged by a common spirit — the desire to "go beyond" — and are sometimes referred to as **The Beyonders**. They're social experiments of self-proclaimed Core Worlds "dissidents" who have abandoned the Commonality to strike out on their own. Ikeba is almost a "super culture world", aiming to reproduce a specific, strong, Old Earth way of life which may not have existed in the first place; Hajime is a "transhuman paradise", where citizens can push their individual and collective boundaries. In a way, they're exaggerated bastions of certain tendencies in Commonality culture; alternatively, they're "isolated worlds" where some potentially very toxic memes are playing themselves out.*

Provinces and Polities

ANTARES CODOMINION

The Antares Codominion comprises two separate polities sharing the same region of space. One, a modified version of the Commonality Pansectorate; the other, an exotic form of intelligent life composed of magnetic toruses inhabiting the photospheres of certain stars. By all appearances the Antareans have a complex and ancient "society", although so radically different in all respects that the two polities coexist without difficulty.

CHEMBU AUTONOMOUS REGION

The Chembu Autonomous Region is either a bright hope for the future or a nascent alien threat, depending on your perspective. The Planetary Intelligence and the Chembu hominid symbiotes control an increasingly large volume of space from the Chembu homeworld, seeding new worlds — the **Sibling Intentionalities** — with transformative biomes. It's a form of not only cultural but also physical assimilation; populations seem satisfied and fulfilled, and loyal to the Commonality project, although there are whispers of resistance movements on certain worlds. Farsouk is the largest apparently uncontrolled market for genurgy on the Fringe, with a wildly exotic population.

FOLIATE HIERARCHY

The Foliate Hierarchy has existed since before Rediscovery, a slower-than-light hominid culture of "terraformers" using a virulent phylum of semi-sentient and adaptable plant

life analogues to spread through the marginal aqueous worlds of this sector. The motile carnivorous **Cryptomeres** are popular throughout Commonality Space, although they can rapidly overwhelm a fragile biosphere. The Foliate hominids themselves espouse a "Tree and Leaf, Root and Branch" philosophy which strays perilously close to the Commonality prohibition on religion.

LOWHIGH RADIANT

The Lowhigh Radiant is a volume criss-crossed by the lightjammers of the Lowhigh. There are many Lowhigh worlds here, radiating from the post-technological homeworld of Shrine, whose unbelievably ancient floating henges are famous through the Commonality and largely ignored by the native Lowhigh. Rumours posit that the eternally wandering lightjammers are searching for something, or that the Lowhigh have a vast and hidden civilisation on deep space rogue worlds beyond the Commonality's reach, though as usual it's difficult to get the Lowhigh to comment.

MANHOME

Manhome is the solar system of Old Earth, capital of the Core Worlds sector and the New Commonality of Humankind. It's described in greater detail below.

MARDISTI ANOMALY

The Anomaly is one part of the sector, a volume several subsectors in extent, under heavy Commonality quarantine. Chaimatorque is the Commonality sector capital; Geenis Station sits at the edge of the Anomaly, researching. There are planets in the Anomaly, with intelligent populations, some of which appear to be human. However, no one going in ever comes out, and signals from existing planets are confused and contradictory. There appears to be a temporal instability affecting the entire region — it's theorised signals may be coming from the past, future, or both.

MAYAPUR CONFEDERATION

Unlike the Neo-Shinean culture worlds, which are spread throughout the Commonality, the Mayapur Confederation comprises the large number of Neo-Sindi culture worlds found in this sector. Individually very different and representing differing factions, regions, and periods of Old Earth's Sindi cultures, they show no signs of uniting any more closely than this loose confederation. The capital, Peshawar, was colonised early in the First Age of Space, and has experienced several diasporas of its own, seeding the key confederate worlds.

Q-ZONE

The Q-Zone or Quarantine Zone stretches across several subsectors of the Rim and Bastion sectors, separating the xenophobic Venu from worlds under Commonality protection. It's an unofficial frontier; there has been no negotiated peace since the Venu War. In some places it's up to 100 light years deep, and contains many abandoned worlds. The Commonality patrols the Q-Zone, and there is constant low-level friction with the Venu.

PI-TATL CULTURAL DISTRICT

The Pi-Tatl are a hominid species which spread widely in this area, occupying many worlds; it's theorised there was a Pi-Tatl polity during the First Age of Space. Legend says the Pi-Tatl even had FTL, though most archaeologists dispute this. No one knows their original colony world; it's said to be lost, and filled with treasure. The Commonality capital is Qipanda.

RIM SECTOR

The Rim Sector is one of the most chaotic parts of the Fringe, a hotchpotch of independent polities and Commonality and Venu client states, and the arena of constant cultural conflict. Many worlds are still rebuilding from the Venu War; others are shining beacons of Commonality expansion.

THE SENTIENT ALLIANCE

The Sentient Alliance is a Fringe World state and buffer against the Venu, a polity of highly motivated, mostly xenomorph citizens sponsored by the Commonality. It's connected to the Mindscape, and receives Commonality weapons and technological assistance. Some say the Commonality is assuaging its guilt for millennia of xenomorph mistreatment; cynics point out the Commonality is still mistreating xenomorphs in the Commonality Core.

SUCCESSOR STATES

The Successor States are a "breach" in the Venu Q-Zone, a volume where Venu and Commonality interests collide. As might be expected, it's fraught with tension and conflict. There are many client states here, from pro-Venu to pro-Commonality; hearts and minds are won and lost here every day.

SYTAR EXPANSIONARY REGION

The Sytar Expansionary Region is not a Commonality sector, but part of Sytar Province extending officially beyond the Fringe. There's a SCI Force hub at the world of Brighten, actively exploring the region; and many independent

SYSTEM NAME:	Manhome	CIVILISATION:	Commonality Hub	DESIGNATION:	Commonality Member
STARPORT:	A5-class	POPULATION:	Hyperdense	MINDSCAPE:	Mindscape Nexus

NAME	PLANETARY TYPE		ASPECTS
		EXTREME OUTER (x40)	
Tyche	Y-class companion star	1/5ly	Dark and Distant Secondary Solar System.
Sedna	Dwarf planet	400	Eccentric Orbit; Aquatic Population.
Pluto	Dwarf planet	39	Eccentric Orbit; Frozen Atmosphere.
		OUTER (x10)	
Saturn	Gas giant	9	Manhome Civilian and Space Force Depot.
Titan	Terrestrial (moon)	9	Slowform Embassy; Dodecahedron CORESPAN HQ.
The Protectorate	Oceanworld (moon)	9	Native Biosphere Off-limits to All but Mechanicals.
		OUTER (x5)	
Jupiter	Gas giant	5	Jovian Gas Mines.
Io Station	Terrestrial (moon)	5	The Manhome Gate.
Cetacea	Oceanworld (moon)	5	Xenomorph Aquatic Population.
		OUTER (x1.5)	
Ceres	Dwarf planet	2.7	Manhome Industrial Centre; Mostly Mechanical Population.
		H ZONE OUTER (x1.5)	
Old Mars	Standard garden world	1.5	Restored T-Congruent Biosphere; Proud and Ancient World.
		HABITABLE ZONE (x1.0)	
Old Earth	Superior garden world	1	Heart of the Commonality; Cradle of Humankind.
Troy	Plateworld	1	Oldest Pseudo-planet in Commonality Space.
		H ZONE INNER (x0.7)	
Inferno	Inferior garden world	0.7	Torrid Primaeval Terraformed World.
		INNER (x0.4)	
Mercury	Inferno	0.4	Refined and Semi-refined Products; Hazmat Synthetics World.

NAME	STELLAR BODY TYPE		ASPECTS
Sol	G-class main sequence	PRIMARY	The Original Sun; Mature System Primary.

4dF	SYSTEM EVENTS
-4	Magnetic Storm
-3	Short-term Requistion or Commandeering
-2	Fargate-I Traffic Control
-1	Manhome Customs Boat
0	Core Worlds Starship Encounter
+1	Star City / Plateworld / Hab
+2	Bureaucratic Interference From Nearest World
+3	Passenger Transfer Request
+4	Stellar Flare

H-ZONE ORBITAL DISTANCE	TRADE INDEX	CONTROL INDEX
1.0	Moderate (+0)	Repressive (+4)

SKY COLOUR

Blue

TRADE ASPECTS

Traditional Networks of Supply and Demand.

Conservative Self-centred Tastes.

Hidden Markets, Secret Deals.

polities, in various states of integration and rediscovery, including some interstellar ones. The region was clearly a focus for colonisation during the Diaspora.

VALHALLA

Officially administered from the Lichtstrom sector capital of Strahlex, this is the homeworld of the violent hexapedal **Hooyow**, the alien "war monsters" (page 49). Valhalla's atmosphere is heavily tainted with chlorine, its flora and fauna notoriously poisonous; native Hooyow society lacks fire- and metals-based technologies.

VENU SPACE

From its fortress-sector of Bastion the Commonality eyes Venu Space with concern; the Venu War erupted from here a century ago without warning. The gleaming stellar nurseries of the Orion Nebula are the gateway to this chaotic region, where the Venu Empire exerts an oppressive hold over many worlds from its homeworld of Psi Orionis. There are constant rumours of Venu spies with faces stolen from Commonality citizens emerging from the nebula worlds; and others of Commonality black missions penetrating deep into Venu territory.

MANHOME

Manhome is the home of humanity, the cradle of the many human species, and the heart of the New Commonality of Humankind. Properly speaking, the name refers not just to Old Earth, but to all the inhabited planets of the Solar System. For upwards of fifteen millennia, it was the only resource available to the inhabitants of Old Earth; even the closest stars were too far to make regular resource exploitation possible. As a result, Manhome is extremely developed, and its inhabitants live more or less anywhere they can.

Food

*Although many areas of Old Earth maintain traditional food production, most is produced by makepoint, in great diversity. The **synthegens** are one such staple — Synthegen Alpha and Beta are holdovers from pre-makepoint food synthesis days — and are wildly popular. They have vintages, different tastes and textures, and passionate followers and connoisseurs.*

Few other star systems evidence quite as much development, and those that do are part of the Core Worlds.

Manhome is sometimes known as **Hub**, especially when referring to its astrographical location in relation to other sectors. There are sixteen or so populated worlds, plus a number of industrial depots and other facilities, described below.

Old Earth

Old Earth is the birthplace of humankind itself; Terra, Mother Earth, the Jewel of the Commonality. A beautiful blue-green world, it has undone much of the environmental damage sustained over the millennia, and since the beginning of the Expansionary Era has experienced a decline in population. It is, however, still very densely populated, with most people living in vast arcologies on both land and, particularly, in the sea. A percentage of native Old Earthers are even aquatic.

Old Earth is vastly changed from the 21st century. Our century is so far in the past that nothing remains, except perhaps from nebulous prehistoric relics which are lumped together with other vestiges such as Henge, the Orion Mounds, the Long Wall, the Pylons of Atlan, the Moskeye Craters, Lake Honnyo, and Toltec Tower. It's the location of Jiva — the seat of the Council of Humankind.

Old Earth is divided into seven **heartlands**: Shine, Yoosa, Yarp, Zan-Yan, Strylia, Danasi, and Talis-Qualis (aka Old South America).

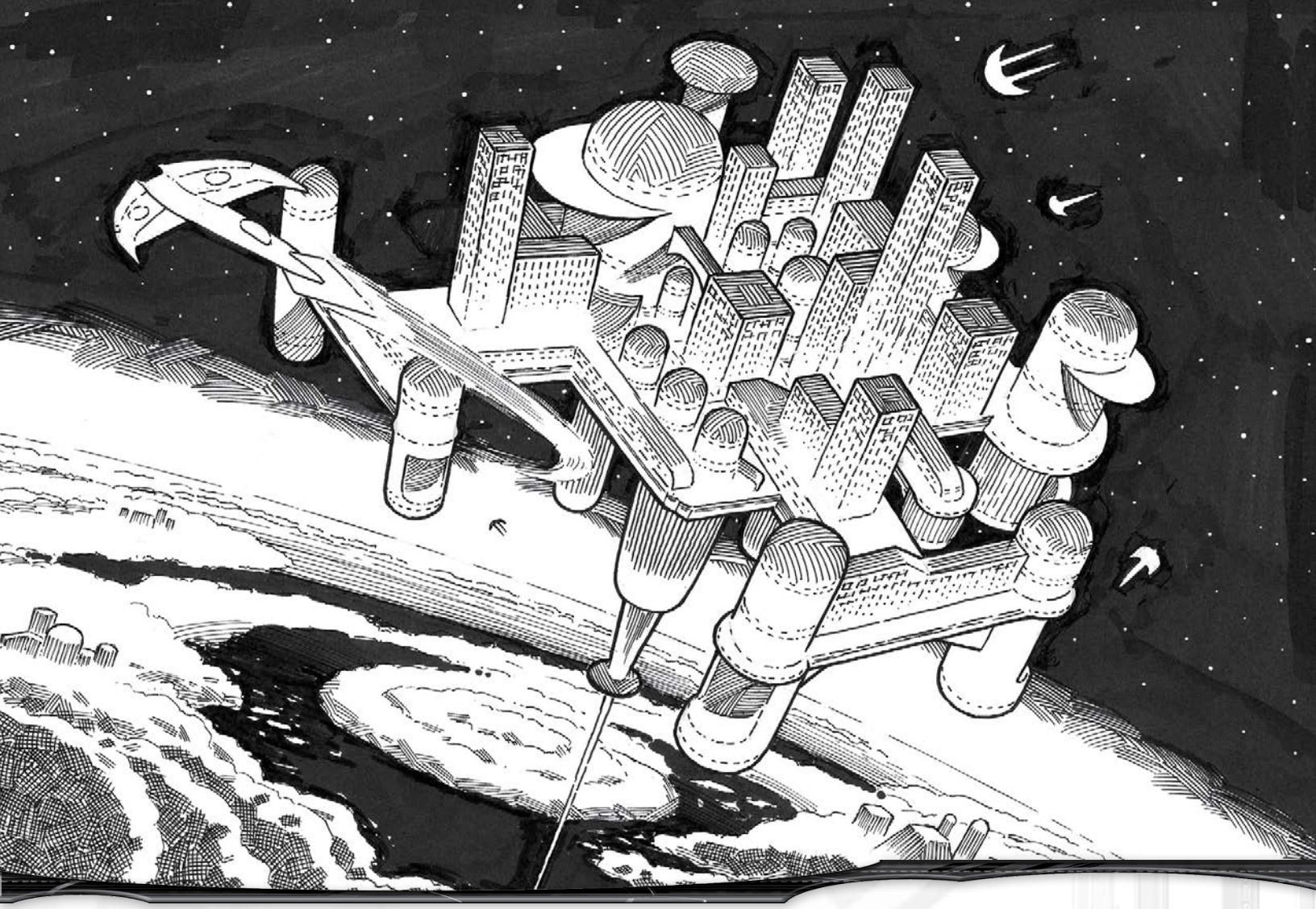
SHINE

The Commonality began in Shine, after the Glaciation, and the Old Country still exerts a powerful influence over the Commonality and particularly the Core Worlds. These days it still considers itself the centre of the universe (most heartlands do), but in many ways it's the most navel-gazing of all, eternally wrapped up in its own affairs. The metroplexes of Shang, Jing, and Dao are still among the most energetic arcologies on the planet.

YOOSA

Apparently the heart of a prehistoric Age of Space, Yoosa was devastated by wars and other cataclysms which preceded the Glaciation. At the time of Shine and the rise of the First Commonality, Yoosa was largely a wilderness inhabited by scattered tribes. These days it still enjoys a reputation for individualism and ruggedness, and perhaps is the most outward-looking of the heartlands.

The principle arcologies of modern-day Yoosa include: Anyark, Safrales, Saygaining, Fee-Riser, Albycook, Old King, and Monthell.



YARP

Location of Jiva and largely a lightly-populated archipelago these days, apart from the arcologies of Lond, Jiva, Mosshawk, Karka, and Padua, each of which hold more than a hundred million people.

Southeast of Yarp lie the Glasslands of Izranal, one of the most inhospitable deserts on Old Earth. Unlike other glasslands, it has been left largely untouched as a memorial; it contains the Cratered Plain, location of the Monument to War, and is the dwelling place of the Ahelots, a primitive people who are forbidden from leaving, although anyone may choose to join. Izranal is off-limits to all, except for certain highly controlled visits.

ZAN-YAN

Zan-Yan was relatively untouched by the Glaciation and Dark Age, and contains some of the oldest and most extensive prehistoric ruins in the Commonality, including the Orion Mounds and the undersea ruins of Table City. These days it's a carefully maintained paradise — a vast garden of restored flora and fauna and enhanced (and sometimes xenomorph) Gardener communities. People with "Zan-Yan Hands" can make *anything* grow…

STRYLIA

Perhaps the last true wilderness on Old Earth, Strylia is divided into the shining arcologies and verdant pasturelands of its coasts and the parched ochre wastelands of its "Outback". The Terragrond continues to resist calls to incorporate Strylia's arid regions beneath the aegis of Global Climate Control.

TALIS-QUALIS

Talis-Qualis has a reputation for mysteries, and producing poets and philosophers. Rentgeneca, its most famous, called it "the Conscience of Humankind". Terrible things were done here, and every settlement has its monument to the fallen. The spires of the Yukata Bridge Conurbation at its northern tip, which links Talis-Qualis with the southern Yoosan archipelago, are famed throughout the Commonality.

DANASI

Danasi still has the reputation for being a "new land", even though it's been over ten millennia since the ice caps disappeared. It's now a continent of deep forests and

towering mountains, of eternal night and endless sun, and also the greatest concentration of aquatics on the planet; the Danasi Seafarms still provide a significant percentage of Old Earth's food. The Parsifal Range is the site of the mysterious Telike "ruins", which may be a natural formation, dating back many millions of years.

EARTHPORT

Old Earth's only spaceport and gateway of entry to and from the planet. It links to the surface via Terra Tower, a conveyor at the Anchorage metroplex in Zan-Yan.

COLA STATION

The secretive palatial home of the Terragrond, the Old Earth custodial council, orbits in this most ancient of relics. Old Earth is unique in the Commonality in not only having its own custodian (no other planet has that privilege), but actually having *five*.

GREEN MOON

Green Moon is a jewel in Old Earth's skies, sometimes known as the "Eighth Heartland". It was terraformed during the first millennia of the Great Diaspora; together with Old Mars, it's one of the few worlds to have gravity engines — engineering projects which took centuries to implement — and now has its own atmosphere and (unlike Old Mars) an entirely imported biosphere. Its capital at Tranquillity still has its Lunar Quarter, including the prehistoric habitats from when before the moon was green.

Mercury Depot

The closest natural satellite to the sun is the location of the See-Say industrial depot, the main producer of plasteel, glassteel, and other refined and semi-refined products in Manhome. It's notable for its majority population of hazmat synthetics, including the poet-musician Arquebus, author of the epic *Sunstalker Sequence*.

Inferno

Once known as Venus, Inferno is a torrid terraformed world of primaeval environments, genurgically modified plant-life, and the gargantuan **mudworms**. Its inhabitants are mostly high endurance organics who call themselves **infernals**; the world is renowned for its cutting-edge genurgy and extensive wilderness.

Troy

An intelligent plateworld also known as "The Dish", Troy was the first constructed pseudo-planet — a small section of a

The Orbital Habs of Manhome

Manhome has the greatest density of plateworlds and orbital habs in Commonality Space, due to its long history as the capital of a slower-than-light interstellar polity. Some of these date back to the Shine Commonality, and are important archaeological relics in their own right, with the oldest contiguous memories of any person in the Commonality.

Panspermia and Manhome

*Exploration of the Manhome biospheres provided the first early proof of the reality of **panspermia** (page 386). All the solar system worlds share common genetic material, as does Proxima, the nearest of the Core Worlds, and possibly several other candidate worlds. Other neighbouring Core World biospheres, however, do not seem to derive from the same genetic flow; palaeogenological maps of the near-Manhome region are complex to say the least.*

The Manhome Gate

*The Manhome far gate, also known as **Fargate-1**, is the hub of the Commonality 3-space network, connecting to every other sector capital and Core World gate currently in operation. Lying between Jupiter and the Belt, it's the only authorised entry point into the system, a constant stream of millions of vessels to and from every corner of the Commonality. More traffic is added each year, and there's already talk about constructing a second bypass gate exclusively for Core Worlds connections. Sometimes ships have to queue for days for a connection.*

ringworld with artificial gravity, self-built and self-sustaining. It's still growing via makepoint, although Trojan plateworlds pretty much became obsolete following Expansion. Its capital, Lutetia, is known for its formal gravity gardens.

Old Mars

Old Mars is one of the most important worlds of Manhome, second only to Old Earth. Terraformed thousands of years ago during the First Age of Space, like the Green Moon it has gravity generators, and an artificial intelligent moon-mass called Dnabot Station, home to a population of very high-G "flattened" synthetics. There are prehistoric legends that Old Mars once had its own moon, or perhaps even moons.

The Martian ecosystem comprises species restored from Martian DNA and microbes and the Martian fossil record. Martian citizens are proud of their reputation for ruggedness. The coastal city of Syrtis is famous for its tomb-monument to Aiko Hero and Jason America, the "Old Queen and King of Mars".

Ceres

If See-Say depot specialises in glassteel and plasteel industries, Ceres — capital of the Manhome Belt — dwarfs it by its coverage. It's Manhome's main pan-industrial centre, a verdant hab in its own right, despite the fact that the Ceres and Belt populations are overwhelmingly mechanical.

Cetacea

One of the Jovian moons, an underwater world populated by cetaceans, octopoids, cephalopods, and modified humans, Cetacea once had its own native biosphere, which perished due to Old Earth contamination in the theorised Prehistoric Age of Space; there are ruins here of both terrestrial and apparently indigenous nature. There's a mystical movement trying to fathom the secrets of Cetacea; verging on the religious, it's in danger of being declared illegal.

Io Station

A secondary industrial depot to See-Say, Io Station services the Jovian worlds and the Manhome Gate.

Jovian Gas Mines

The economic underpinning for the Jovian helium-3 and hydrogen gas mines has been destroyed by the invention of makepoints and ZIP cell technology. Its ancient industrial activities are currently under Manhome command, but the mines are in crisis, and their population is dropping every year.

The Protectorate

Also known as Enceladus, one of the moons of the Saturn subsystem, the Protectorate escaped the environmental destruction which befell Cetacea. Even now, only mechanicals are allowed under the ice. There's an extensive native biosphere here, including one species apparently in a post-intelligent state.

Saturn Depot

Saturn depot is Manhome's major shipyard, with civilian and Space Force facilities criss-crossing the whole Saturn subsystem.

Titan

There's evidence that there has been an Old Earth "embassy" at Titan for over ten thousand years, although interaction with its native flyers are glacially slow and fragmentary at best; it's now generally agreed that the **slowforms** are not conventionally intelligent at all. Oberon Station remains in orbit to handle ongoing research and "contact" efforts.

Titan orbit is also the location of the **Dodecahedron**, the Core Worlds Pansectorate (CORESPAN) headquarters (page 286), which accounts for most of the world's traffic.

Sedna

The dwarf planet of Sedna has an extreme eccentric, 11400-year orbit, spending most of its time outside Manhome's heliopause. It's currently 400AU from the Sun, and still receding. Its subsurface ocean has a dense Core Worlds population, in relative isolation from Manhome proper.

Tyche

The Sun's distant Y-class companion, Tyche is a cold magenta brown dwarf, smouldering eternally on the farthest edges of the solar system, currently about a fifth of a light year away between the Kuiper Belt and Oort Cloud, usually reached from Manhome by planing engine. It has been settled for millennia, Old Earth's first and oldest "colony", although it's not officially a separate world at all. Roughly Jupiter-sized with its own miniature "solar system" of moons, it's very, very dark; natives of the Tychean worlds are enhanced to see in the infrared. There are a billion of them, spread over several worlds, including: Amalthea, Demeter, Iasion, Orontes, Ploutus, and Palamedes Station, Tyche's principal orbital starport and depot. The 3SI are currently building an experimental 3-space micro-gate in orbit around Tyche.

Like Sedna, Tyche is a bastion of old Core Worlds culture, relatively unchanged since before Rediscovery.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
ALIEN LIFE

"Time and the arrow
Thought the mud-children follow;
The universe laughs."

— Third Catechism of the Planetary Intelligence

Alien life is everywhere. Much of it is so alien that it has little interaction with humankind, except as a subject of research; most "alien" contact within the Commonality is with divergent or modified variants of homo sapiens and other terrestrial species.

There are exceptions. The Planetary Intelligence, Lowhigh, and Hooyow are **exointelligences** — alien life forms — which share many evolutionary adaptations with humankind. So many, in fact, that some theorise a common ancestor or *creator*, such as **panspermia** or the **Predecessor hypothesis**.

This chapter lets you describe a **biosphere** (page 387), including statistics and descriptions of ecosystems and the life forms — the **exofauna** and **exointelligences** — which inhabit them. The "Exploration Missions" textboxes below present actions PCs may take to find out more.

Panspermia

Even at a fundamental level life can travel between stars. Its building blocks can evolve in molecular clouds and travel through interstellar space, seeding biospheres. Those in close proximity (a few tens of light years) may share paradigms and even body plans; there are currents of life in space the Commonality is only now becoming aware of.

WHAT IS LIFE?

Life is an emergent property of the universe. Given enough time, life arises almost everywhere, using strategies, forms, and chemistries often hugely different from the carbon- and water-based life of Old Earth. Life is found in self-replicating magnetic toruses in the atmospheres of stars, and in slow-moving hydrocarbons in deep space molecular clouds. The very concept of "habitable zones" is humanocentric — life arises in more environments than those favourable to humankind.

All life shares three common features:

Self-replicators

DNA is Old Earth's self-replicator; the way life reproduces itself at a molecular level. Alien life forms do not have DNA — although they have something fulfilling the same function. Given the building blocks of life, self-replicators may evolve rapidly, even on young worlds.

Energy Curve

Life requires energy; more specifically, differential reactions which extract energy from a system — the **energy curve**. Life forms use these reactions to build bodies,

Table 21-1: Biosphere Paradigm

4dF	Unsettled World	Lost Colony World	Commonality World (ex-unsettled)	Core World
-4 or below	Exotic	Alternate	Exotic	T-analogue
-3	Exotic	T-analogue	Parallel	T-analogue
-2	Parallel	T-analogue	Alternate	T-analogue
-1	Parallel	T-analogue	T-analogue	T-congruent
+0	Alternate	T-congruent	T-analogue	T-congruent
+1	Alternate	T-congruent	T-congruent	T-congruent
+2	Alternate	T-congruent	Transplant	Transplant
+3	T-analogue	Transplant	Transplant	Transplant
+4 or above	T-analogue	Transplant	Transplant	Transplant

absorbing energy and materials processed by their **metabolisms** (page 390).

Solvents

Energy curve reactions require a medium in which to occur — a **solvent**. A popular solvent is liquid water, but there are others, depending on temperature, atmospheric pressure, and available chemistry. Ammonia, hydrocarbons, hydrofluoric acid, liquid nitrogen, even hydrogen can be solvents under the right conditions. Solvents needn't be liquids; dispersed interstellar gases can be very slow solvents, and plasmas and magnetic fields in stellar photospheres can be lightning fast ones.

THE BIOSPHERE CONCEPT

Environments where self-replicator, energy curve, and solvent have coincided to evolve life are known as **biospheres**. At its simplest, a biosphere is described by a **biosphere concept**, combining the key features of self-replicator, energy curve, and solvent with the **paradigm** below.

Habitability

Habitability is a humanocentric concept. For a biosphere to be properly habitable, it must share self-replicator, energy curve, and solvent with Old Earth. Usually this is impossible naturally, although **t-analogue** biospheres (below) come close. Instead, the Commonality genurgically modifies biospheres to be more hospitable to humankind. The habitability of an alien biosphere and the nature of its self-replicators, energy curves, and solvent form its **paradigm**.

The Seven Paradigms of Alien Life

To create a biosphere concept, start by determining its **paradigm**. You can expand on a paradigm later to determine a world's **ecosystem**.

Roll 4dF or choose an entry on Table 21-1: Biosphere Paradigm, applying the **habitability modifier** from page 331.

PARADIGM 1: MAINTAINED

An artificial biosphere used for food production using ponics and artificial farm habs. It's found where a Commonality world or (rarely) a lost colony exists on an otherwise inhospitable planet, where makepoints don't meet all food and water requirements.

Example Life Forms: *Fish Shoals Swimming in the Habitat Shield Tanks; Lattice Cube Ponics Farms Green With Vegetation.*

PARADIGM 2: TRANSPLANT

Life forms transplanted from Old Earth; common on Terraformed worlds in the Core, and also at basic levels in seed colonies where environments are easily adjusted.



Exploration Missions: Biosphere Identification

The preliminary planetary scan (page 316) reveals only obvious biospheres incorporated into planetary types (like "Garden World"). For other worlds, more analysis is needed.

A planetary analysis (page 318) reveals the planet's biosphere modifier (page 330), indicating the likelihood of a biosphere. For confirmation, you can reveal a world's ***biosphere concept*** *using a* ***biosphere identification analysis****. This is a Science (Biology, etc) roll against the difficulty shown in Table 21-2: Biosphere Identification Difficulty, requiring either Active Sensing, sensor drones, or an away team mission to the planet's surface taking several days.*

Table 21-2: Biosphere Identification Difficulty

Paradigm	Identification Difficulty
Maintained, Transplant, T-Congruent	Mediocre (+0)
T-Analogue	Average (+1)
Alternate	Fair (+2)
Parallel	Good (+4)
Exotic	Fantastic (+6)

Example Life Forms: *Teeming Herdlands Under an Alien Sky; The Vineyards of Deschamps.*

PARADIGM 3: T-CONGRUENT

Native life forms — exofauna and exoflora — are genurgically modified to be compatible with Old Earth biochemistry, making them edible to humans, and able to survive in the same environments. Relatively common in the Core, this is the Commonality's preferred approach on worlds otherwise attractive for colonisation.

Example Life Forms: *Blueforest Farmlands; Digger Wolves and Jump Sheep.*

PARADIGM 4: T-ANALOGUE

The biosphere starts to look "alien"; life uses a different carbon-based chemistry. The environment may look relatively Earthlike, with plant and animal analogues, but is incompatible in important ways. Life forms don't have DNA and can't be metabolised (ie eaten); or may have similar amino acids and sugars and even DNA (indicating a common origin with terrestrial life), but different chirality renders them inedible. On t-analogue lost colony worlds, people will have been adapted to the environment as hominids, or will undertake complex food processing, or maintain a sub-environment.

Example Life Forms: *Otherworldly Predators Eat You All the Same; Tall Majestic Hominids Following the Springbatsu Migrations.*

PARADIGM 5: ALTERNATE

The biosphere is still carbon- and water-based, but metabolisms, body plans, etc, are different. The biosphere uses

different amino acids and proteins (maybe selenium or tellurium instead of sulphur), or metal skeleton analogues at high ambient temperatures (above 300 degrees C); or sulphur metabolisms instead of oxygen, filling the atmosphere with hydrogen sulphide. Coldworld biospheres may have slow metabolic rates, and life forms may be unable to interact with humans without artificial acceleration.

Example Life Forms: *Hundred-limbed Swim Sacs in the Cold Methane Ocean; Metal-based Hexapods With Lightning Fast Claws.*

PARADIGM 6: PARALLEL

The biosphere is no longer based on hydrogen, carbon and water, but uses an entirely different chemistry. Life forms may use oxocarbon or silicon instead of hydrocarbons; liquids other than water; metal oxides of iron, magnesium, titanium at very high temperatures; or radically different chemistries in gas giant atmospheres or cores.

Example Life Forms: *Blimp-like Floaters in a Gas Giant Atmospheric Ocean, Basking in Radiation; Exofauna With Molten Blood and Oxide Bones on an Inner System Lava World.*

PARADIGM 7: EXOTIC

Exotic biospheres are so alien that explorers may have difficulty even recognising life forms, instead deducing them from anomalous energy readings or chemical reactions. They may involve self-replicating magnetic or plasma-dust fields in molecular clouds or stellar photospheres; or subatomic particle assemblies grazing complex gravities on the surfaces of neutron stars. Exotic life forms often seem incorporeal from the human perspective.

Example Life Forms: *Deep Space Magnetic Field Ramjet Grazers; Dispersed Gas Cloud Radio Mind; Living Vortices in the Rock; Natural Robot; Quantum Wave Function Life Form.*

Producing the Biosphere Concept

Combine the paradigm with any salient features from the world, or the biosphere's self-replicator, energy curve, or solvent to produce your **biosphere concept**.

- *T-Analogue Biosphere on a Marginal Desert World*
- *Exotic Biosphere Based on Magnetic Field Replicator*

A biosphere concept may be all you need when describing a world. Use it to improvise life forms, or invoke and compel when PCs visit or investigate the world.

CREATING AN ECOSYSTEM

For more detail, expand a biosphere concept to create an **ecosystem**. A consistent and logical ecosystem helps you create detailed life forms later. This section explains how to create ecosystems, describing **ecosystem parameters** and example **ecosystem types**.

Table 21-3: Biodiversity

4dF	Biodiversity	Comments
-6 or below	No Biodiversity	Ecosystem has 1 body plan, and 1 evolutionary characteristic.
-4 to -5	Very Low Biodiversity	Ecosystem has 1 motile and 1 sessile body plan; choose 1 evolutionary characteristic.
-3 to -2	Low Biodiversity	Ecosystem has only 2 evolutionary characteristics.
-1 to +1	Standard Biodiversity	Use rules as written.
+2 to +3	High Biodiversity	Ecosystem has 4-6 evolutionary characteristics.
+4 to +5	Very High Biodiversity	Ecosystem has double the number of primary motiles and sessiles, and many secondaries.
+6 or above	Extreme Biodiversity	The world has 2 or more co-existing ecosystems.

Ecosystem Parameters

1. BIODIVERSITY

The diversity of life forms, body plans, and adaptations in a biosphere. Roll 4dF or select an entry on Table 21-3: Biodiversity, applying the biodiversity modifier from Table 18-5: Planetary Age (page 321).

2. PARADIGM

Generate the ecosystem's paradigm as shown on page 387. In cases of Extreme Biodiversity, roll twice; if the same paradigm results, the world has two ecosystems sharing the same paradigm.

3. METABOLIC BASES

Metabolic bases indicate where life forms in an ecosystem get their energy. There are usually two; the **primary energy source** which the lowest food chain life forms (usually sessile) exploit, and the **secondary metaboliser material**, usually the material the life forms' bodies are made of — eaten by life forms further up the food chain.

Roll 4dF or pick an entry on Table 21-5: Primary Energy Source, applying the modifier from Table 21-4: Paradigm Metabolism Modifier.

The **secondary metaboliser** feeds off the primary metaboliser's body, which depends on the **paradigm**; see Table 21-6: Secondary Metaboliser Material.

4. BODY PLAN

A life form's **body plan** indicates its physical structure; the number and nature of any limbs, the shape and layout of its body. Some body plans are **motile** (able to move) and some are **sessile** (unable to move). Worms, lichens, octopi, trees, and humans are all terrestrial life forms with differing

Table 21-4: Paradigm Metabolism Modifier

Paradigm	Metabolism Modifier
Maintained, Transplant, T-Congruent	Photosynthesis
T-Analogue	-2
Alternate	-1
Parallel	+2
Exotic	+4

Table 21-5: Primary Energy Source

4dF	Energy Source	Comments
-6 or below	Electrosynthesis	Conversion of building blocks using piezoelectricity, etc.
-4 to -5	Thermosynthesis	Conversion via temperature gradient, tidal heating, etc.
-2 to -3	Chemosynthesis	Conversion of building blocks using chemical reactions of inorganic materials.
-1 to +1	Photosynthesis	Conversion of building blocks using sunlight.
+2	Thermosynthesis	As above
+3	Electrosynthesis	As above
+4	Radiosynthesis	Using radiation to power conversion; similar to photosynthesis.
+5 to +6	Magnetosynthesis	Conversion using solar wind, variable magnetic fields.
+7 or above	Gravitosynthesis	Conversion using gravity, very rapid changes in the strong nuclear force chemistry in degenerate matter, etc.

Table 21-6: Secondary Metaboliser Material

Paradigm	Primary Metaboliser body made of…	Comments
1: Maintained	Hydrocarbons (cellulose, flesh and blood)	Can be eaten by humans, and can eat them too.
2: Transplant	Hydrocarbons (cellulose, flesh and blood)	Can be eaten by humans, and can eat them too.
3: T-Congruent	Hydrocarbons (cellulose, flesh and blood)	Must be processed to be eaten; will see humans as prey.
4: T-Analogue	Hydrocarbons (cellulose, flesh and blood analogues)	Cannot be eaten; may perceive humans as a threat.
5: Alternate	Hydrocarbon alternatives (metal skeletons on hot worlds, natural plastics or mineral oxides).	Humans and life forms do not perceive one another as predators / prey, but instinctive behaviours may still apply.
6: Parallel	Oxocarbons, silicons, metal oxides, acids.	Humans and life forms may not recognise one another as alive.
7: Exotic	Magnetic fields, plasma, gases, subatomic particles.	Humans and life forms are unlikely to even perceive one another.

body plans. Some life forms may progress through more than one body plan in their lives.

Many body plans may co-exist in an ecosystem, but usually a small number predominate. By default when you create an ecosystem, create **three** body plans: one **primary sessile**, one **primary motile**, and one **secondary motile**. The primary sessile body plan accounts for the majority of plant analogues; the primary motile accounts for most animal analogues; and the secondary motile accounts for alternate life forms like creepy-crawlies, creatures in marginal environments, and archaic holdovers. More or less biodiverse ecosystems have more or fewer body plans.

Define a body plan in 5 steps:

i. Determine Average Scale

The average scale of a life form with this body plan depends on the paradigm and the world's surface gravity (page 324). For terrestrial or analogous life forms, a higher gravity implies a denser atmosphere and a greater availability of essential chemicals, and therefore a larger scale. Eventually, however, gravity causes the size to contract. For non-analogous biospheres, gravity is dominant; lower gravity exotic biospheres have larger life forms, higher gravity have smaller.

Time and Subjectivity

*A life form's metabolism indicates how it experiences **time**. Extreme cold world life forms may move and experience time extremely slowly, so that humans and similar life forms seem hot and fast-moving, perhaps even ephemeral and hardly noticed. The opposite applies in hotworld or highly energetic ecosystems like photospheres, where life forms may exist at greatly accelerated rates to humans.*

If you think this is a factor in your ecosystem, incorporate it into your metabolic bases description and invoke and compel it as an aspect in play. See also "Temporality" (page 409).

Roll 4dF or select an entry on Table 21-7: Maximum Average Scale, modifying by the surface gravity rating. Note that this table addresses larger scale life forms which

Table 21-7: Maximum Average Scale

4dF	Terrestrial (Paradigms 1-4)	Alternate	Parallel	Exotic
-10 or below	Micro (-2)	Huge (+2)	Regional (+4)	Regional (+4)
-8 to -9	Micro (-2)	Huge (+2)	Enormous (+3)	Enormous (+3)
-5 to -7	Micro (-2)	Huge (+2)	Huge (+2)	Huge (+2)
-4	Micro (-2)	Huge (+2)	Huge (+2)	Huge (+2)
-3	Small (-1)	Large (+1)	Large (+1)	Large (+1)
-2	Small (-1)	Large (+1)	Large (+1)	Large (+1)
-1	Medium (+0)	Large (+1)	Medium (+0)	Medium (+0)
+0	Medium (+0)	Medium (+0)	Medium (+0)	Medium (+0)
+1	Medium (+0)	Large (+1)	Medium (+0)	Medium (+0)
+2	Large (+1)	Large (+1)	Large (+1)	Small (-1)
+3	Large (+1)	Large (+1)	Large (+1)	Small (-1)
+4	Huge (+2)	Huge (+2)	Huge (+2)	Micro (-2)
+5	Huge (+2)	Huge (+2)	Huge (+2)	Micro (-2)
+6	Large (+1)	Huge (+2)	Large (+1)	Quantum (-3)
+7	Large (+1)	Huge (+2)	Large (+1)	Quantum (-3)
+8	Medium (+0)	Large (+1)	Medium (+0)	Micro (-2)*
+9	Medium (+0)	Large (+1)	Medium (+0)	Small (-1)
+10	Small (-1)	Medium (+0)	Small (-1)	Medium (+0)
+11	Small (-1)	Medium (+0)	Small (-1)	Large (+1)
+12	Micro (-2)	Small (-1)	Micro (-2)	Huge (+2)
+13	Micro (-2)	Small (-1)	Micro (-2)	Enormous (+3)
+14 and above	Quantum (-3)	Micro (-2)	Quantum (-3)	Regional (+4)

*indicates a "phase shift" in the life form's paradigm; it begins to be composed of "fields" rather than atoms.

interact with characters, rather than the biosphere's potentially countless microscopic life forms.

ii. Determine Symmetry

Symmetry is a body plan's organising principle; whether it has two limbs, or no regular shape, is roughly circular or spherical, etc. Roll 4dF or select an entry on Table 21-8: Body Plan Symmetry.

Notes

Asymmetry: Life forms have no symmetry. They may be mildly asymmetrical, with a loose symmetry, or have a wildly irregular body plan.

Bilateral Symmetry: Life forms can be divided into two identical halves along a single plane. They have "directionality", ie move in a specific direction, have a top and bottom, sensor clusters (a head) at one end, and so on.

Biradial Symmetry: A combination of radial and bilateral symmetry, life forms are divided into two pairs of identical facing parts. They may have a central sensor cluster (a head), or distributed sensors, a front and back, etc.

Radial Symmetry: Life forms are roughly circular, and may be cross-sectioned across multiple planes into several identical pieces. They have dorsal and ventral surfaces (tops and bottoms), but no defined "sides"; they may have no limbs, or several. Their symmetry is often described by their number of limbs: threefold, fourfold, etc.

Spherical Symmetry: Life forms can be divided into two identical halves by any cross-section through their centre.

iii. Determine Limbs

Limbs (also called branches) are how a life form interacts with the world; touches, moves around, reaches towards food, etc. They may be jointed, tentacular, prehensile; specialised for movement, grasping, bearing leaves or photosynthetic elements, even feeding. Roll 4dF or choose an entry on Table 21-9: Number of Limbs.

iv. Determine Frame

This may be a skeleton, cell wall, or solid body for physical life forms, or a lattice or other energy structure for exotic creatures. An **endoframe** is an internal skeleton or scaffold which supports the life form's body; an **exoframe** is an outer skeleton, cell wall, or scaffold with organs, etc, inside. Some life forms have no clear frame; they may be simple assemblies of bodies and organs structured by mass and gravity, or have pervasive scaffolds in every cell.

Roll 4dF or choose from Table 21-10: Body Frame, applying the life form's **scale** (page 391) and the world's surface gravity rating (page 323) as modifiers. A body plan with a segmented frame (below) has a skeleton.

v. Determine Segmentation

Life forms often develop complexity and increase in scale by adding self-similar body parts (limbs, organs, etc), known as **segmentation**. Segmented body parts are often more resistant to damage, or may detach to form new life

Table 21-8: Body Plan Symmetry

4dF	Symmetry	Comments
-3 to -4	Asymmetry	No symmetry
-2 to -1	Bilateral Symmetry	Even number of limbs
+0	Radial Symmetry	Circular creature
+1 to +2	Biradial Symmetry	Even number of limbs
+3 to +4	Spherical Symmetry	No limbs, or more than 6

Table 21-9: Number of Limbs

4dF	Asymmetric / Radial	Bilateral	Biradial	Spherical
-4	No limbs	No limbs	No limbs	No limbs
-3	No limbs	No limbs	No limbs	No limbs
-2	No limbs	No limbs	No limbs	No limbs
-1	1 limb	2 limbs	4 limbs	No limbs
+0	2 limbs	4 limbs	8 limbs	6 limbs
+1	3-4 limbs	6 limbs	16 limbs	12 limbs
+2	5-6 limbs	8 limbs	32 limbs	24 limbs
+3	7-10 limbs	10-20 limbs	64 limbs	48 limbs
+4	11+ limbs	22+ limbs	128+ limbs	(etc)

Table 21-10: Body Frame

4dF	Frame
-4 or below	Exoframe
-3	No Frame
-2	Exoframe
-1	No Frame
+0	Endoframe
+1	No Frame
+2	Endoframe
+3	No Frame
+4 or above	Endoframe

Table 21-11: Degree of Segmentation

4dF	Segmentation
-4	Four areas
-3	Three areas
-2	Two areas
-1	One area
+0	No Segmentation
+1	One area
+2	Two areas
+3	Three areas
+4	Four areas

forms (see "Parochials"). Roll 4dF or pick an entry on Table 21-11: Degree of Segmentation.

For each segmentation area, roll 4dF or pick an entry on Table 21-12: Area of Segmentation.

Table 21-12: Area of Segmentation

4dF	Area
-4	Organs
-3	Body
-2	Limbs
-1	Frame*
+0	Frame*
+1	Frame*
+2	Limbs
+3	Body
+4	Organs

*if you've established the body plan has no frame, this is a "no segmentation" result.

vi. Create a Body Plan Aspect

The body plan you've created is used by multiple species in the ecosystem. Assemble the elements into a body plan aspect; if you have a clear idea of what a life form with the body plan might look like, incorporate it into the aspect.

Example Body Plan Aspect: *Bilateral Segmented Pseudo-Mollusc With Two Tentacles.*

5. ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Create up to **three** aspects representing characteristics of the environment which may influence the ecosystem's nature and life forms, based on the planetary parameters and planetary type descriptions in **Chapter 18: Worlds and Civilisations**. These may be situation aspects as required.

A gas giant environment may be exposed to Ferocious Winds, Searing Radiation, *with a* Highly Layered Atmosphere. *An inferno ecosystem might have* Burning Temperatures, Crushing Pressure, *and* Lightwave Distortion.

6. KEY PAROCHIALS

Life adapts to its environment. Although each ecosystem is unique, the broad principles are common to life everywhere. Known as **universals**, these principles include strategies like

Table 21-13: Universals and Parochials

Universal	Example Parochial
Airways and foodways	Mouths and noses sharing passages.
Bacterial forms on aqueous planets	Old Martian bacteria.
Bilateral body symmetry	Reptiles, mammals, insects.
Brains	Hypothalamus, dual-hemisphere brains in heads.
Cells	Old Earth plant cell structures.
Cell membranes	Fats making cell membranes.
Defensive weapons	Electricity generation, claws.
Ecosystem feedback	GAIA.
Eyes	Binocular eyes in head, 360-degree infrared eye cluster.
Flight	Wings, gasbags, gliding membranes.
Food ingestion "mouths"	Jaws working up and down, teeth.
Fur	Hair follicles and patterns.
Grazers	Sheep.
Higher life forms vs lower	Mammals vs arthropods.
Intelligent aliens	Large-brained humanoids.
Jointed limbs	Wheels; elbows and wrists.
K-strategists (having few offspring and caring for them)	Human families.
Life invading land	Amphibians.
Life starting in aqueous environments	Stromatolites.
No frame	Molluscs.
Aqueous environments leading to oxygen atmospheres	Great Oxidation Event.
Photosynthesis	Plants using chlorophyll.
Planets with diverse ecologies in different regions	The Everglades, upper atmosphere life forms.
Predators	Great cats.
Protein and sugar analogues	Proteins and sugars.
R-strategists (having many offspring but not caring for them)	Frogspawn.
Radial body symmetry	Octopus.
Segmented exoframe	Insects.
Self-replicator	DNA.
Sense organs near the brain	Ears.
Sex	Male and female.
Skeletons	Exoskeletons, endoskeletons, vertebrates.
Sessile life forms	Plants, fungi.
Stages of life	Egg > implant > embryo; caterpillar > chrysalis > butterfly.

photosynthesis, flying, and grazing on other life forms. The precise forms these universals take in a given ecosystem are called **parochials**, and include things like plants using chlorophyll, animals evolving feathered flapping wings, teeth evolving to chew leaves, and so on. **Parochials are unique to a given ecosystem**; they'll never happen exactly the same way twice (indeed, finding the same parochial in two different ecosystems is evidence of common ancestry). For

gaming purposes you'll often use the same rough *description* for different parochials; for example, you may describe life forms on different worlds having "wings", but when you come down to a detailed analysis, the nature of those wings — whether they have bones, feathers, skin membranes, the way they're jointed and muscled, etc — will be unique to that ecosystem and body plan.

Primary Senses

Selecting parochials lets you define the senses used by your ecosystem's life forms. This is driven by environment and paradigm; exotics may sense gravity, magnetism, density, nuclear forces, while t-analogue life forms have ear and eye analogues.

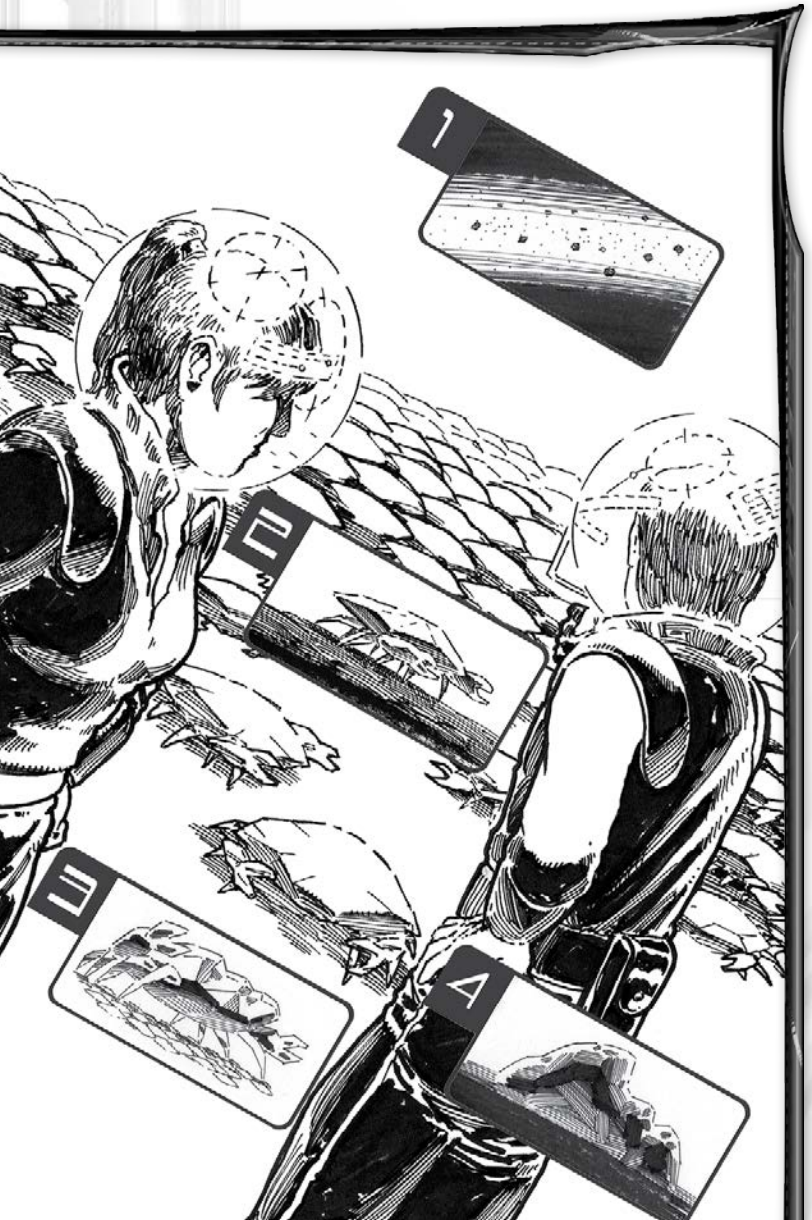


Table 21-13: Universals and Parochials lists some common universals and example parochials. **Select at least two parochials as aspects** to characterise your ecosystem. You can even do this on the fly when describing a newly-encountered ecosystem.

Example Ecosystems

This section provides example ecosystems; use them as is, or as templates to create your own.

AQUEOUS PLANET ECOSYSTEM, STANDARD GRAVITY

An ecosystem dominated by thousands of lop-sided two-branched "trees" covered with dense foliage, grazed by many species of agile hexapedal grazers and their predators, with three eyes and glide membranes stretched between their limbs. The ground between the "trees" is riddled by 2-3 metre-long "snakes" which feed on detritus and occasionally pull gliders out of the air.

Biodiversity: Standard (+0).

Paradigm: T-Analogue.

Metabolic Bases: Photosynthesis; cellulose and flesh-and-blood analogues.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Large (+1) Asymmetrical Unsegmented Trees With Two Unequal Branches, Internal Frame*; Primary Motile: *Small (-1) Bilateral Tree-Dwelling Hexapods With Segmented Limbs and Bodies and Internal Skeletons*; Secondary Motile: *Medium (+0) Limbless Ground-dwellers With Segmented Bodies and Internal Skeletons*.

Environmental Characteristics: *Clear Atmosphere Sighting; Gravity Allows Leaping and Flying; Precipitation*.

Key Parochials: *Glide Membranes; Trinocular Vision*.

EARLY AQUEOUS PLANET ECOSYSTEM, STANDARD GRAVITY

An early atmosphere with no free oxygen, simple aquatic life forms clustering around hydrothermal vents.

Biodiversity: Very Low (-4).

Paradigm: Alternate.

Metabolic Bases: Chemosynthesis; hydrocarbon-analogue tissue.

Body Plans: Sessile: *Medium (+0) Bilateral Cell-agglomeration With 4 Tendrils and No Frame*; Motile: *Small (-1) Swimming Sponge-analogue With Rigid Outer Frame and 2 Segmented Swimming "Oars"*.

Environmental Characteristics: *Hydrothermal Vent Islands.*

Key Parochials: *Swimming Oars*.

DUST CLOUD ECOSYSTEM, MICROGRAVITY

Sessile plasma clouds harvest magnetic fields to add new gas molecules to their bodies. Huge (+2) motile dust clouds feed on the plasma, and "dust squids" feed on them and each other.

Biodiversity: Low (-2).

Paradigm: Exotic.

Metabolic Bases: Magnetosynthesis; plasma bodies; ships and energy fields may be seen as food.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Large (+1) Diffuse Bilateral Plasma Cloud With 4 Long Tendrils, Composed of Multiple "Cloudlets" Like a Bubble Cluster*; Primary Motile: *Huge (+2) Magnetic Suspension Dust / Plasma Cloud With Bilateral External Lattice and 2 Feeder-conduit Limbs*; Secondary Motile: *Huge (+2) Segmented 8-limbed Dust/Plasma "Spider"*.

Environmental Characteristics: *Bodies of Dust in Plasma/Magnetic Suspension.*

Key Parochials: *Magnetic Field and Density Senses.*

GARDEN WORLD ECOSYSTEM, STANDARD GRAVITY

This world's abundant life has been genurgically modified to be compatible with terrestrial life. It's a world of thick round juicy plants filled with water, and creeping jelly-like rugs glistening like jewels feeding on them, with octopoids constricting the jellies and pulling bits off to "farm" them. And it's all edible…

Biodiversity: Standard (+0).

Paradigm: T-Congruent.

Metabolic Bases: Photosynthesis; cellulose, flesh and blood.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Medium (+0) Trilobe Circular "Plants"*; Primary Motile: *Medium (+0) "Jelly Rugs" With Hundreds of Tendrils Front and Back*; Secondary Motile: *Medium (+0) Octopoids With Segmented Limbs*.

Environmental Characteristics: *Evolved Water Storage Organs; High Winds Force Things Close to the Ground; Translucent Gelatinous Tissue.*

Key Parochials: *Communication by Light Refraction Through Body; Nutrient Absorption Through Jelly.*

GAS GIANT ECOSYSTEM, HIGH GRAVITY

The hostile radiation environment of high gravity, intense pressure, and extreme winds of a gas giant atmosphere is home to magnetic field-feeding floaters which form the basis of a floater-flyer-glider food chain. Most life forms are buoyant, drifting or "paddling" through the atmosphere, with bodies of highly flammable oxocarbons like dense peat or rubber.

Biodiversity: Low (-2).

Paradigm: Parallel.

Metabolic Bases: Magnetosynthesis; oxocarbon bodies.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Large (+1) Bilateral Floater With Endoframe and Two "Roots"*; Primary Motile: *Huge (+2) Bilateral 8-limbed Flyer (4 Wings, 4 Tentacles)*; Secondary Motile: *Large (+1) Bilateral Hexapedal Glider (2 Wings, 4 Tendrils)*.

Environmental Characteristics: *Extreme Layered Winds; Magnetic Field and Radiation Environment.*

Key Parochials: *Gas Bag Lifting Sacs.*

INFERNO ECOSYSTEM, STANDARD GRAVITY

A searing hostile world of ribbon-like life forms grazing polyp mosses in the "acid sumps". Rapidly moving "starfish" swim in the sulphuric acid, and "ribbonpedes" drag themselves along the ground.

Biodiversity: High (+2).

Paradigm: Parallel.

Metabolic Bases: Photosynthesis; sulphuric acid drinkers, sulphur and silicon bodies, metal oxide bones.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Medium (+0) Flattened Bilateral 4-branched Polyp With Segmented Body*; Primary Motile: *Large (+1) Flattened Bilateral Quadruped With Segmented Skeleton*; Secondary Motile: *Medium (+0) Flattened Octopoidal Biradial Starfish*.

Environmental Characteristics: *Acid Rain; Crushing Pressure; Lightwave Distortion; Liquid Metal Pools; Searing Heat; Tearing Winds.*

Key Parochials: *Gripping Skin; Low-slung 2-D Body Plan; Natural Ceramic Shells.*

MARGINAL GARDEN WORLD ECOSYSTEM, STANDARD GRAVITY

A devastated planet with a compromised ecosystem and atmospheric contamination, where life forms filter pollution, are omnivorous, and "bud" parts of their bodies which drop off and form new life forms.

Biodiversity: Low (-2).

Paradigm: T-Analogue.

Metabolic Bases: Photosynthesis; hydrocarbons, cellulose and flesh-and-blood analogues.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Medium (+0) Bilateral 6-branched Segmented Frameless Body*; Primary Motile: *Medium (+0) Biradial Endoframe With 8 Segmented Limbs and Segmented Body*; Secondary Motile: *Medium (+0) Radial 4-limbed Endoframe With Segmented Body and Limbs*.

Environmental Characteristics: *Denuded Food Chain; Global Dust; Post Impact Event.*

Key Parochials: *Budding Reproduction.*

NON-AQUEOUS COLD WORLD ECOSYSTEM, LOW GRAVITY

An iceball world of slow-moving "acid bag" life forms; normal human temperatures burn them immediately. They

perceive humans as threats and dissolve them if possible, but are usually too slow to do damage.

Biodiversity: Very Low (-4).

Paradigm: Alternate.

Metabolic Bases: Chemosynthesis; hydrocarbon alternates, hydrogen fluoride (acid).

Body Plans: Sessile: *Medium (+0) Bilateral Frameless Segmented Body With 4 Segmented Lobes*; Motile: *Large (+1) Biradial Frameless Body With 8 Segmented Limbs*.

Environmental Characteristics: *Slow-Moving.*

Key Parochials: *Acid Blood; Heat-Blind, Supercool Body Sac.*

NON-AQUEOUS HOT WORLD ECOSYSTEM, STANDARD GRAVITY

A fiercely hot world of molten lead and sulphur, with metal-branched sessile life forms grazed by crawler monopods. Spherical "sulphur bag" motiles roll over them rapidly, herding and feeding.

Biodiversity: High (+2).

Paradigm: Alternate.

Metabolic Bases: Chemosynthesis; metal skeletons, mineral oxide skin.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Huge (+2) Biradial 32-branched Endoframe With Segmented Frame, Branches, and Body*; Primary Motile: *Large (+1) Single-limbed Frameless Unsegmented Body*; Secondary Motile: *Large (+1) Spherical 12-limbed Endoframe With Segmented Body and Limbs.*

Environmental Characteristics: *Fast-Moving; Sulphur Dioxide and Sulphuric Acid Atmosphere.*

Key Parochials: *Acid Spray; Burn Off Waste Gases; Taste / Smell Primary Sense.*

PHOTOSPHERE ECOSYSTEM, EXOTIC GRAVITY

The super-energetic photosphere environment hosts a magnetic field-based ecosystem of great size and rapidity, essentially invisible to humans and too fast to perceive without instruments, most of which are destroyed when the life forms try to communicate.

Biodiversity: Very High (+4).

Paradigm: Exotic.

Metabolic Bases: Magnetosynthesis; "bodies" of magnetic fields.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Medium (+0) Radial 7-10 Lobed Endoframe Lattice With Segmented Body*; Secondary Sessile: *Huge (+0) Radial 2-lobed Segmented Endoframe Lattice;* Primary Motile: *Regional (+4) Bilateral 6-tentacled Endoframe Lattice*; Secondary Motile: *Large (+1) Bilateral 6-tentacled Endoframe Lattice With Segmented Frame and Tentacles.*

Environmental Characteristics: *Density Sense; Magnetic Sense; Very Rapid Movement.*

Key Parochials: *Magnetic Vortex Self-replicator; Natural Gauss Field Disruptor Weapon Is Communication Method; R-strategists Scattering Toruses.*

Table 21-14: Life Form Classification

4dF	Motile	Sessile
-4	Producer	Carnivore
-3	Herbivore	Omnivore
-2	Herbivore	Herbivore
-1	Herbivore	Producer
+0	Herbivore	Producer
+1	Omnivore	Producer
+2	Carnivore	Herbivore
+3	Omnivore	Omnivore
+4	Carnivore	Carnivore

CREATING LIFE FORMS

This section explains how to create a life form; the final result is a stat block, although you can also just create a quick **life form concept** aspect if you don't need that much detail.

A life form stat block is derived from a **life form build** (below) and an **ecosystem**, similar to the way a character is derived from an occupation build and a genotype. The life form build contains one or more example aspects, and suggestions for skills, stunts, and special abilities (here called **natural abilities**).

The life form build represents the **role** a life form plays in an ecosystem — a hunter, grazer, omnivore, etc. The world's ecosystem provides descriptive hooks for what the life form looks like — its body plan, what it's made of, special evolutionary adaptations — while the life form build specifies what it **does**. You don't have to define a complete ecosystem to create a life form stat block — you can do it with just an ecosystem aspect or even a loose idea of what the life form's environment is like.

Table 21-15: Herbivore Build

4dF by Terrain	Converter	Parasite	Filter Feeder	Grazer	Intermittent
Aquatic	-4 to -3	-2	-1	+0 to +1	+2 to +4
Broken	-4	-3	-2	-1	+0 to +4
Conurbation	-4	-3	—	-2	-1 to +4
Desert	-4 to -3	-2	-1 to +0	+1	+2 to +4
Hills	-4	-3	-2	-1 to +0	+1 to +4
Ice Cap	-4	-3	-2 to -1	+0	+1 to +4
Jungle	-4	-3	-2	-1	+0 to +4
Mountains	-4	-3	-2	-1 to +0	+1 to +4
Ocean / Lake	-4	-3	-2 to -1	+0	+1 to +4
Plains	-4	-3	-2	-1 to +2	+3 to +4
Rough	-4	-3	-2 to -1	+0	+1 to +4
Swamp	-4	-3	-2 to +0	+1	+2 to +4
Volcanic	-4	-3	-2 to +0	+1	+2 to +4
Woodland	-4	-3	-2	-1 to +0	+1 to +4

Selecting the Life Form Build

To select a life form build, choose one of your ecosystem's body plans for your life form. This is often the primary motile — the body plan representing most of the biosphere's animal analogs. Then, roll 4dF or select an entry on Table 21-14: Life Form Classification to determine the broad position it occupies in the ecosystem.

To determine the life form build, roll 4dF or select an entry from Table 21-15: Herbivore Build, Table 21-16: Carnivore Build, or Table 21-17: Omnivore Build, based on classification and terrain. You can determine terrain from the **event table** for the world (page 318), or pick one. The default terrain is "Plains".

Producers and Plants

The term "producer" refers to primary metabolisers (page 390) — for example, terrestrial plants. Although you won't often use producers in stat blocks, we provide a single "producer" build below (page 404).

Life Form Build Parameters

The following parameters are used in the sample life form builds; you can also use them to create your own.

1. LIFE FORM CONCEPT

The life form concept describes its ecological **niche**, often just its native terrain (page 352) plus its build, ie *Jungle Ambusher, Plains Hunter*, and so on. Usually there's only one life form per niche in a stable ecosystem; otherwise the ecosystem is unstable, and life forms will be competing for the niche.

For a selection of life forms to populate an encounter table or help you describe a world, simply generate a number of life form concepts. You can also use the sections below to expand on a life form concept to produce a detailed stat block, even on the fly.

Table 21-16: Carnivore Build

4dF by:	Ambusher	Chaser	Hunter	Pouncer	Raider	Stalker	Trapper
Aquatic	-4	-3 to -2	-1 to +0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Broken	-4 to -3	—	-2 to -1	+0	+1	+2	+3 to +4
Conurbation	—	—	—	-4 to -2	-1 to +2	+3 to +4	—
Desert	-4 to -3	—	-2 to -1	—	—	+0 to +1	+2 to +4
Hills	-4	-3 to -1	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Ice Cap	—	-4 to -3	-2 to -1	—	—	+0 to +1	+2 to +4
Jungle	-4 to -2	—	-1	—	—	+0 to +1	+2 to +4
Mountains	-4 to -3	—	-2 to +0	+1	—	+2 to +3	+4
Ocean / Lake	—	-4 to -1	+0 to +1	+2	—	+3 to +4	—
Plains	—	-4 to -1	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Rough	-4	-3	-2 to -1	+0	+1	+2 to +3	+4
Swamp	-4	—	—	-3 to -2	-1	+0 to +1	+2 to +4
Volcanic	-4 to -3	—	-2 to -1	—	+0 to +1	—	+2 to +4
Woodland	-4	-3 to -1	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4

2. TROUBLE

A life form's trouble often includes elements of a **flaw** (page 68); it's how its nature, instincts, or make-up get it into trouble.

3. BEHAVIOURS

Instead of a phase trio, a life form has three (or sometimes more) **behaviour aspects**, usually covering **social structure, threat reactions,** and **versatility.**

Example Social Structures: *Solitary, Couple, Pride, Pack, Herd, Mass, Swarm.*

Example Threat Reactions: *Intimidates If Surprised, Attacks If Threatened, Flees If Attacked.*

Example Versatility Aspects: *Narrow Specialisation, Limited to Niche Behaviours, Generalist.*

4. SCALE MODIFIER

This is a single modifier or range applied to the chosen body plan's scale (page 391).

5. SKILLS

These three skills are the peak skills for the life form.

6. STUNTS

These are typical stunts for the life form.

7. NATURAL ABILITIES

Natural abilities are special abilities (page 106) which life forms (including certain genotypes) have developed, as defined in **Chapter 7: Extras** and in Table 21-18: Natural Abilities (page 402). They're part of a life form's evolved capabilities, and include tentacles, suckers, fangs, web spinners, stingers, venomous bites, gas generation, and others. They're **universals**; you'll reinterpret them in the light of the ecosystem's key parochials (page 394).

Select up to **three** natural abilities; one from the life form build, one derived from the ecosystem (probably the body plan or an environmental characteristic), and one chosen freely or derived from a parochial.

Table 21-17: Omnivore Build

4dF by:	Eater	Gatherer	Scrounger
Aquatic	-4 to -2	-1	+0 to +4
Broken	-4 to -2	-1	+0 to +4
Conurbation	-4	-3	-2 to +4
Desert	-4 to +0	+1	+2 to +4
Hills	-4 to -1	+0	+1 to +4
Ice Cap	-4 to +2	+3	+4
Jungle	-4 to -2	-1 to +1	+2 to +4
Mountains	-4 to +0	+1	+2 to +4
Ocean / Lake	-4 to -2	-1	+0 to +4
Plains	-4 to -1	+0	+1 to +4
Rough	-4 to -2	-1	+0 to +4
Swamp	-4 to +0	+1	+2 to +4
Volcanic	-4 to -3	-2 to -1	+0 to +4
Woodland	-4 to -2	-1 to +2	+3 to +4

Sarah's creating a life form in a gas giant biosphere. Her rolls indicate "Ocean Hunter". She decides "ocean" means the thick soupy atmosphere in which the life forms drift using gas bag lifters. In the "Hunter" build write-up (see below), she chooses the natural ability "Flight"; looking at her ecosystem write-up for the gas giant biosphere, she sees the parochial "Jet Bladder Propulsion" corresponding to the "Flight" universal, and marks that down as her gas giant hunter's natural ability, extrapolating that it's using jet bladders to blast itself above the gas giant's soupy atmosphere to prey on lighter life forms in the upper cloud layer. This could pose trouble for the PCs when they descend for a closer look!

★ DISPERSED BODY

Costs 1 aspect (usually genotype)

The life form's body is composed of dispersed plasma, diffuse particles, tiny life forms, interstellar dust, photons, or other particles, or even networks of veins, roots, or other tissue spread over a wide area. It may be very large or widespread, diffuse, and ethereal.

Invoke: To be hard to harm, difficult to see, impressive and intimidating; pass through restricted or hazardous spaces.

Compel: To have difficulty interacting, be disrupted by appropriate interference.

★ SIXTH SENSE

Costs 1 aspect, 1 stunt

The life form gains a +2 Notice bonus to perceive threats or find clues.

Invoke: To get a hunch about something.

Compel: To become spooked.

★ SWALLOW

Costs 1 stunt

The life form swallows or otherwise engulfs its prey. The attack begins with a create an advantage action with the Unarmed Combat skill against Athletics or Physique. If successful, the target receives a *Swallowed* situation aspect.

A *Swallowed* character is automatically attacked each exchange, defending using Physique. Armour ratings apply only for the first exchange, and the target may also face a suffocation hazard, unless he has life support (particularly air supply). *Swallowed* characters face a Fair (+2) passive opposition to attacks on the swallower, which resists using its Physique, without armour rating.

8. ATTACKS AND DEFENCES

Ways the life form attacks and defends itself; these may be natural abilities, or simply alternative names for the generic "Unarmed Combat" skill when creating a stat block. They're usually universals, requiring contextualising by parochials; they may also be weapon or armour ratings, bonuses, or aspects.

Sample Life Form Builds

AMBUSHER

Carnivore

The life form lies in wait for prey and attacks in a lightning fast strike. *Example: ant lion.*

Life Form Concept: *Ambusher Lying in Patient Camouflage.*

Trouble: *Short Burst of Speed.*

Behaviours: *Solitary, Flees If Spooked, Narrow Niche Behaviour.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to +1

Skills: Notice, Stealth, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts: Ambush, Heavy Hitter, Keen Hearing.

Natural Abilities: Hyper-Reflexes, Jumper, Lightning Fast.

Attacks and Defences: Slash or smash; may have attack bonus.

Table 21-18: Natural Abilities

Name	Special Ability	Cost
Active Sonar	Hypersense (Sonar)	1A, 1S
Amphibious	Adaptation (Amphibious)	1A
Aquatic	Adaptation (Underwater)	1A
Chill Touch	Absorb (Heat) or Drain (Heat)	1A, 1S / 1A
Constriction Attack	Constrict	1S
Density Control	Density Control	1A
Disease Carrier	Infect	1+SP
Dispersed Body	See page 401	1A
Disruption Field	Drain Energy (Electricity)	1A
Egg Injector	Inject Parasite, Parasitise	1A, 1S, 1+SP
Energy Generation	Project Energy (specify type, whether Ranged or Close)	2S + *Draining*, etc, flaw
Enhanced Sense	Hypersense	1A, 1S
Enthral	Enthral	1A
Expert Climber	Expert Climber	1S
Gas Bags	Flight	3S
Glide Membrane	Glide	1S
Hallucinogen Secretion	Hallucinate	1S
Highly Adapted	Adaptation	1A
Horrific	Intimidate	1S
Howl Attack	Howl	1S
Hyper-Reflexes	Reaction Bonus	1S
Improved Resistance	Energy Resistant (Heat, Cold, etc)	1S
Jumper	Leap	1S
Large	Body Scale Change (Larger)	1A, 1S
Life Leech	Drain Energy (Metabolic Energy)	1A
Lightning Fast	Speed Bonus	1S
Malleable Body	Variform	1A
Manipulation Field	Particle Energy Control	1A, 1S
Massively Muscled	Strength Bonus	2S
Multiple Natural Weapons	Multi-Attack	1A, 1S, 1+SP
Natural Armour	Armoured	1S
Natural Mimic	Mimic	1A
Neural Disruptor Field	Mental Blast	1+SP
Paralysing Venom	Paralyse	1S
Parasite	Parasitise	1A, 1+SP
Pheromones	Pheromone Cloud	1A, 1S
Puppetteer	Puppetteer / Possessor (Other Organics only)	1S
Regeneration	Regeneration	1A
Repulsion Field	Force Field	1-6S
Robust Physiology	Health Bonus	2S
Sixth Sense	See page 401	1A, 1S
Small	Body Scale Change (Smaller)	1A, 1S
Snare Projector	Snare	2S
Spider Climb	Spider Feet	1S
Swallow	See page 401	1S
Tentacles	Constrict, Extend Limb, Tentacles	1A, 3S
Venomous	Poison	1S
Wings	Flight	3S

CHASER

Carnivore

The life form approaches its prey and gives rapid but brief chase when it flees. *Example: cheetah.*

Life Form Concept: *Chase Down Prey in a Burst of Speed.*

Trouble: *No Long Distance Endurance.*

Behaviours: *Coordinated Family Unit, Intimidating Stand-off, Will Chase Anything.*

Scale Modifier: +0 to +1.

Skills: Athletics, Physique, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts: Hard to Shake, Killing Stroke, Sprinter.

Natural Abilities: Enhanced Sense, Howl Attack, Lightning Fast.

Attacks and Defences: Grapple or lacerate; weapon:2 rating.

CONVERTER

Herbivore

The life form converts dead or unresisting biomass or other materials into a simpler form, used by other life forms or processes in the ecosystem. *Example: earthworms.*

Life Form Concept: *Industrious Conversion Cycle.*

Trouble: *Oblivious to Surroundings.*

Behaviours: *Mass Social Structure, Attacks If Disturbed, Generalist.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to +0.

Skills: Intrusion, Notice, Stealth.

Stunts: Always a Way Out, Reactive Shot, Slippery Target.

Natural Abilities: Chill Touch, Disease Carrier, Egg Injector.

Attacks and Defences: Devour.

EATER

Omnivore

The life form terrifies its prey then attacks with overwhelming force, devouring it alive. *Example: bear.*

Life Form Concept: *Eats Anything.*

Trouble: *Distracted by Food.*

Behaviours: *Solitary or Pack, Flees If Intimidated, Excellent Generalist.*

Scale Modifier: +0 to +1.

Skills: Notice, Provoke, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts: Armour of Fear, Charge, Tough As Nails.

Natural Abilities: Horrific, Massively Muscled, Swallow.

Attacks and Defences: Smash or tear; weapon:2 rating.

FILTER FEEDER

Herbivore

The life form sifts through material containing its food. *Example: baleen whale.*

Life Form Concept: *Filter Feeder Barely Noticing What It Swallows.*

Trouble: *Poor Natural Defences.*

Behaviours: *Any Social Structure, Flees If It Can, Very Narrow Niche.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to +1.

Skills: Notice, Physique, Stealth.

Stunts: Danger Sense, Take the Blow, Vanish.

Natural Abilities: Dispersed Body, Enthral, Natural Mimic.

Attacks and Defences: May have armour:2 rating (shell, etc).

GATHERER

Omnivore

The life form moves through its environment, collecting food before eating it. *Examples: squirrel, shrike.*

Life Form Concept: *Inquisitive Harvester Gatherer.*

Trouble: *Poor Natural Defences.*

Behaviours: *Pack or Troop, Raises Alarm on Threat, Adapted to Specific Food Source.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to +0.

Skills: Investigate, Notice, Provoke.

Stunts: Armour of Fear, Danger Sense, Keen Hearing.

Natural Abilities: Enhanced Sense, Expert Climber, Hyper-Reflexes.

Attacks and Defences: Smash; may have defend bonus.

GRAZER

Herbivore

The life form eats almost constantly, usually grazing on sessile producers. *Example: sheep.*

Life Form Concept: *Herds of Placid Grazers.*

Trouble: *Herd Instinct.*

Behaviours: *Herd, Panicked Flight, Tied to Wide Area Environment.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to +1.

Skills: Athletics, Notice, Physique.

Stunts: Charge, Danger Sense, Take the Blow.

Natural Abilities: Large, Lightning Fast, Natural Armour.

Attacks and Defences: Puncture, smash, or trample; may have armour:2 rating.

HUNTER

Carnivore

The life form tracks prey entering its territory and attacks once in range. *Example: lion.*

Life Form Concept: *Dogged Hunter.*

Trouble: *Hunter Instinct.*

Behaviours: *Pack or Pride, Intimidates When Threatened, Prey-Dependent.*

Scale Modifier: +0 to +1.

Skills: Athletics, Notice, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts: Body Language Reader, Heavy Hitter, Killing Stroke.

Natural Abilities: Howl Attack, Multiple Natural Weapons, Venomous.

Attacks and Defences: Constrict, grapple, or tear.

INTERMITTENT

Herbivore

The life form eats high-efficiency prey, usually sessile, and spends most of its time travelling or in social behaviour. *Example: elephant.*

Life Form Concept: *High Efficiency Intermittent Herbivore.*

Trouble: *Broad Territory Required.*

Behaviours: *Solitary or Small Group, Attacks If Surprised, Versatile in Broad Territory.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to +0.

Skills: Investigate, Notice, Rapport.

Stunts: Danger Sense, Keen Hearing, Overseer.

Natural Abilities: Expert Climber, Malleable Body, Wings.

Attacks and Defences: Puncture, smash, or trample; may have armour:1 rating.

PARASITE

"Herbivore"

The life form hitches a ride on its prey, draining its energy but not killing it. It may be sessile. *Example: leech.*

Life Form Concept: *Life Draining Parasite.*

Trouble: *Poor Natural Defences.*

Behaviours: *Solitary, Freezes If Surprised, Host-Dependency.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to -2.

Skills: Deceive, Intrusion, Stealth.

Stunts: Always a Way Out, Ambush, Cool Customer.

Natural Abilities: Egg Injector, Parasite, Puppetteer.

Attacks and Defences: Contact.

POUNCER

Carnivore

The life form leaps on nearby prey, using its mass and natural weapons to kill it immediately. *Example: Komodo dragon.*

Life Form Concept: *Jump to Kill Pouncer.*

Trouble: *Poor Follow-up.*

Behaviours: *Solitary, Attacks If Surprised, Wide Variety of Prey.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to +1.

Skills: Notice, Physique, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts: Body Language Reader, Grappler, Killing Stroke.

Natural Abilities: Constriction Attack, Jumper, Massively Muscled.

Attacks and Defences: Lacerate, smash, or trample.

PRODUCER

Producer

The life form is a primary metaboliser, producing the materials other life forms feed on. *Example: plants.*

Life Form Concept: *Producer of the First Link in the Food Chain.*

Trouble: *Extremely Slow Metabolism.*

Behaviours: *Usually Mass Social Structure, Growth Outpaces Predation, Adapts to Grow Anywhere.*

Scale Modifier: +0 to +1.

Skills: Deceive, Physique, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts: Grapple, Take the Blow, Tough As Nails.

Natural Abilities: Dispersed Body, Hallucinogen Secretion, Pheromones.

Attacks and Defences: Constrict or grapple.

RAIDER

Carnivore

The life form makes running attacks on groups of its prey, usually aiming to carry one or more away. *Example: wolf.*

Life Form Concept: *Opportunistic Raider.*

Trouble: *Easily Chased Off.*

Behaviours: *Pack or Solitary, Flees If Surprised, Versatile Prey Selection.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to +0.

Skills: Athletics, Provoke, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts: Armour of Fear, Charge, Heavy Hitter.

Natural Abilities: Howl Attack, Multiple Natural Weapons, Robust Physiology.

Attacks and Defences: Grapple or lacerate.

SCROUNGER

Omnivore

The life form uses intimidation or subterfuge to steal prey from other predators. *Example: hyena.*

Life Form Concept: *Intimidating Opportunistic Scrounger.*

Trouble: *Indirect Predation.*

Behaviours: *Any Social Structure, Intimidates If Threatened, Scavenges Anything.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to +1.

Skills: Athletics, Notice, Provoke.

Stunts: Armour of Fear, Keen Hearing, Sprinter.

Natural Abilities: Horrific, Howl Attack, Massively Muscled.

Attacks and Defences: Lacerate or puncture.

STALKER

Carnivore

The life form pursues prey stealthily, wearing it down by occasional attacks, exhaustion, or poison. *Example: dog.*

Life Form Concept: *Stealthy Patient Stalker.*

Trouble: *Up Close and Personal.*

Behaviours: *Solitary or Small Group, Attacks If Surprised, Flexible Prey Selection.*

Scale Modifier: -1 to +1.

Skills: Physique, Stealth, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts: Grappler, Heavy Hitter, Vanish.

Natural Abilities: Enthrall, Manipulation Field, Paralysing Venom.

Attacks and Defences: Constrict, crush, lacerate, smash.

TRAPPER

Carnivore

The life form constructs a physical snare to trap prey, where it can be easily consumed. *Example: spider.*

Life Form Concept: *Cunning Trap Builder.*

Trouble: *Restricted Territory.*

Behaviours: *Solitary, Intimidates If Threatened, Non-adaptable Trap Structure.*

Scale Modifier: +0 to +1.

Skills: Deceive, Notice, Stealth.

Stunts: Ambush, Cool Customer, Keen Hearing.

Natural Abilities: Lightning Fast, Paralysing Venom, Snare Projector.

Attacks and Defences: Constrict, puncture.

Creating the Stat Block

Use the life form concept, life form build, and optionally ecosystem to create a stat block. Life forms can be minor, supporting, or major NPCs (page 181).

Let's take the Non-Aqueous Hot World ecosystem (page 398) as an extended example. The primary motile body plan for that ecosystem tells us that most animal-like life forms on the world are Large (+1) "sulphur bag" monopods. Let's create example species based on that body plan.

CREATING MINOR LIFE FORMS

Let's start by creating a minor life form stat block. Rolling 4dF on Table 21-14: Life Form Classification tells us the life form is a "Herbivore"; from the ecosystem, we conclude it feeds off the huge spiky 32-branch metallic primary sessile life forms. We roll 4dF on Table 21-15: Herbivore Build (selecting "Volcanic" terrain), and get a +2 — an "Intermittent".

We decide the life form is a Fair (+2) minor life form; looking at the Intermittent life form build (page 404), we choose Notice as its peak skill, so Investigate and Rapport are both Average (+1). We give it a life form concept *High Efficiency Metal Spike Tree Intermittent*. From the ecosystem we know it probably uses an *Acid Spray* to dissolve and "eat" the metallic branches of the "Spike Tree". We keep the same scale (Large (+1)), and note that its social structure is *Solitary* or *Small Group*. We create a simple stat block like this:



3 Fair (+2)
Minor Life Forms

ACID INTERMITTENT

Stress: ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐

Scale: *Large (+1)*

Aspects: High Efficiency Metal Spike Tree Intermittents

Skills: *Fair (+2) Notice; Average (+1) Acid Spray, Investigate (+2 teamwork bonus)*

CREATING SUPPORTING LIFE FORMS

Next we create a "Carnivore" which preys on our Acid Intermittent. We roll 4dF on Table 21-16: Carnivore Build for Volcanic terrain, getting the "Raider" build.

Exploration Missions: Life Form Analysis

With a Science (Biology, etc) roll, you can determine a life form's concept even from orbit, if you have the sensors. For more detail, you must be on the ground (or use sensor drones), observing from a zone or so for several hours or days. You determine one parameter on a success, two on a success with style.

We decide the raider uses the same Primary Motile body plan as the Acid Intermittent — it's another sulphur bag monopod. Looking at the *Waste Gases* parochial for the ecosystem, we decide that the raider's extra is a natural ability — Howl Attack — representing the terrifyingly loud fiery exploding gases it can emit. We also give it the Heavy Hitter stunt. The raider's stat block looks like this:

Supporting Life Form

EXPLOSIVE RAIDER

Physical Stress: ☐[1]☐[2] ***Mental Stress:*** ☐[1]☐[2]

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate*

Scale: *Large (+1)*

Aspects: Opportunistic Sulphur Bag Striker, Fast-moving Monopod, Flees If Surprised, Easily Chased Off

Skills: *Good (+3) Lacerate; Fair (+2) Provoke; Average (+1) Athletics*

STUNTS

✦ ***Heavy Hitter:*** *Reduce shifts by 1 on a Lacerate success with style for an additional full situation aspect with free invoke.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Howl Attack:*** *Area effect Provoke in your zone, +1 zone per fate point.*

CREATING MAJOR LIFE FORMS

For the major life form, we switch to the ecosystem's Secondary Motile body plan, a spherical sulphur bag with an internal metallic skeleton and 12 segmented metal oxide limbs. We decide the life form is an "Omnivore", rolling the "Scrounger" build; we figure it "herds" the Acid Intermittents, eating (dissolving) their stragglers and any "dead" material. We produce the following stat block:

Major Life Form

THE DODECADON

Physical Stress: ☐[1]☐[2]☐[3] ***Mental Stress:*** ☐[1]☐[2]☐[3]

Consequences: *3* ***Scale:*** *Large (+1)*

ASPECTS

Life Form Concept: Intimidating 12-armed Sulphur Bag Opportunistic Scrounger

Trouble: Indirect Predation

Social Structure: Small Pride

Threat Reaction: Intimidates If Threatened

Versatility: Scavenges Anything

SKILLS

Great (+4): *Provoke*

Good (+3): *Athletics, Notice*

Fair (+2): *Deceive, Physique, Will*

Average (+1): *Empathy, Rapport, Stealth, Unarmed Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Armour of Fear:*** *Use Provoke to defend vs Melee and Unarmed Combat until damaged.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Armoured:*** *Metallic skeleton (armour:2 rating).*

★ ***Howl Attack:*** *Area effect Provoke in your zone, +1 zone per fate point.*

EXOINTELLIGENCE

Intelligence is a difficult concept to pin down. On Old Earth many animals display signs of intelligence, and among hominids, xenomorphs, and transhumans, it's clear that intelligence isn't simply a matter of "more" or "less", but of nature, too. How much more difficult is it to fathom the intelligence of true aliens.

Alien biospheres are often remote from human experience and even perception. Like life itself, intelligence is a natural phenomenon which arises to help life forms overcome the challenges of their existence — but what if that existence has little or nothing in common with humankind? The intelligence of an ephemeral being a few millimetres across in the photosphere of a star, whose life is over in a few seconds, or of a dust cloud held together by cold magnetic vortices over hundreds of kilometres

Table 21-19: Evolution Index

4dF	Evolution Index	Comments
-4 or below	None	Intelligence has not evolved.
-3	Pre-human	Dimly intelligent, slightly above "animal" levels; no fire use.
-2	Low Human	Tech index T0 or less; fire use or analogues have been developed.
-1 to +1	Human Standard	Tech indices T1 to T9; standard human levels.
+2 to +3	High Human	Tech index T10 or above; evolving beyond the human.
+4 to +5	Posthuman	Qualitatively beyond the human species; massively widened awareness.
+6 to +7	Transcendent	Successor to posthuman evolution; global and universal minds. The Planetary Intelligence is the only known example.
+8 and above	Ascendant	Theoretical universal and manifold minds.

whose every thought takes a year — what can these have to say to humans?

Nevertheless, intelligence is a continuum. Life forms in biospheres closer to terrestrial norms are more comprehensible; communication with the Lowhigh and Hooyow has been possible, if not immediately fruitful. This section lets you create the strange **exointelligences** which populate the biospheres of alien worlds.

Creating an Exointelligence

Create an exointelligence in as much or as little detail as you like. The principle is that you start with an alien life form, and then create an intelligent version of it. At minimum you need an **exointelligence concept**, which can be derived from a **life form concept**. For greater detail, you can generate **exointelligence parameters** (below), and combine them with selected life form build parameters (page 399) in an **exointelligence build**, which you can then use to create stat blocks as required.

Modifying the Life Form Build

Begin with an ecosystem and a life form build (page 401). The **scale modifier, behaviours, skills, stunts, natural abilities,** and **attacks and defences** are all used in modified form in the exointelligence build (page 409); the **life form concept** and **trouble** are discarded after using them to create some of the parameters below.

*Sarah's using the Dodecadon from page 406 to create an exointelligence she's calling the **Dodecadonite**. It's based on the Scrounger life form build (page 404) and the Non-Aqueous Hot World ecosystem (page 398).*

Exointelligence Parameters

To create your exointelligence, determine the following parameters.

1. EVOLUTION INDEX

Evolution Index is the most important factor in describing an exointelligence; how far it has evolved from the original life form build. Roll 4dF or pick an entry on Table 21-19: Evolution Index, modifying for the ratings for planetary age (page 320) and surface temperature (page 325). Intelligence is likely to emerge wherever conditions are right and enough time has passed; faster-moving (generally hotter) biospheres allow exointelligences to evolve more rapidly.

Sarah's Non-Aqueous Hot World ecosystem is a Young (-2) world with a Hot (+2) temperature. She rolls +0, resulting in a Human Standard evolution index.

Each step of evolution index represents a notional 10 tech indices for the purposes of use and comprehension (see "Technical and Tech Indices" on page 98); ascendant exointelligences would therefore have notional tech indices of T40 and above.

Table 21-20: Exointelligence Strategies and Goals

4dF	Goal	Strategy
-4 or below	Food	Defeat
-3	Dominance	Defend
-2	Comfort	Avoid
-1	Reproduction	Destroy
+0	Power	Defeat
+1	Food	Defend
+2	Isolation	Avoid
+3	Dominion	Manipulate
+4 to +5	Going Post	Self-directed Evolution
+6 to +7	Transcendence	Self-directed Evolution
+8 to +9	Global Mind	Modify
+10 to +11	Universal Mind	Create
+12 and above	Manifold Mind	Fiat Creation

More specifically, each point of evolution index represents a +1 obstacle to mutual comprehension **and perception**; lower exointelligences may not be able to properly perceive the existences of higher ones, and any communication between them may be seriously compromised, and vice versa. These modifiers are in addition to exointelligence scale differences (below).

For example, a Posthuman (+4) exointelligence and a Low Human (-2) exointelligence trying to communicate both face an increased +6 opposition to any dice rolls, including Notice and Empathy rolls as appropriate.

2. EXOINTELLIGENCE SCALE

Exointelligence scale (**exoscale** for short) shows the scale at which the exointelligence routinely perceives its environment; exointelligences of different exoscales incur scale penalties (page 174) to conceptualise and perceive one another. This is usually the scale of the life form or the life form's evolution index, whichever is higher. Some posthumans may have stunts or extras (including avatars) letting them perceive smaller scales without penalty.

Sarah's Dodecadonite is Large (+1), so its exoscale is, too. It'll have some difficulty relating to Medium (+0) humans.

3. EXOINTELLIGENCE CONCEPT

Intelligence is a tool a life form uses to overcome environmental challenges. Its **exointelligence concept** determines how it does this.

Start with the life form's **social structure**. This gives you the context in which its intelligence operates — whether it's solitary, a group intellligence, a herd intelligence, and so on.

Next, look at the life form build's **trouble**, **threat reaction**, and **versatility**; or, alternatively, a major but occasional and unpredictable **environmental hazard**. The life form initially evolves intelligence to deal with one or more of these.

Finally, look at the ecosystem's **metabolic bases** — where the life form fits into it and what it needs as its energy source.

Try to identify the factors which push the life form to develop intelligence. What you're looking for is a situation where either the life form's trouble, threat behaviour, versatility, or environment is strongly impacting how it gets to its energy source. You're trying to identify a **goal** for the life form, and a **strategy** for how it gets there. Table 21-20: Intelligence Strategies and Goals provides examples, and you can also roll 4dF for each if you like, modifying by evolution index (page 407).

Let's look at Sarah's Dodecadonite example. The original Dodecadon life form had the following aspects:

- *Small Pride*
- *Indirect Predation*
- *Intimidates If Threatened*
- *Scavenges Anything*
- *Fast-moving Sulphuric Acid Atmosphere (from the ecosystem)*
- *Waste Gases in Environment (from the ecosystem)*

Sarah sees food isn't a major problem for the Dodecadonite — it can "eat" pretty much anything. But it's a social life form, "herding" the acid intermittents: each Dodecadonite will struggle for dominant position in its small social group.

*She decides the Dodecadonite's strategy is to **manipulate**, and its goal is **dominion**. She combines these with its social aspect into an exointelligence concept* Small Group Exointelligence Manipulating for Dominion. *This isn't that different from human intelligence, so the two species will probably have a lot to say to one another — once they figure out how to communicate!*

Often an exointelligence concept may be all you need, especially if you're combining it with a minor NPC stat block or want a rough shorthand for a planetary or civilisation description.

4. BEHAVIOURS

An exointelligence's **behaviours** are based on the original life form build's behaviours for family group, threat reaction, and versatility. For each **step** of evolution index above Pre-human, sublimate one behaviour by making it less "animalistic" or more "sophisticated", either by changing it to support its **goal** or **strategy** (see above) or, if it has already been sublimated, removing or replacing it entirely. Exointelligences are often driven by instincts and urges which are holdovers from their pre-intelligent pasts.

Sarah's Dodecadonite has 2 sublimations to apply to its behaviours. She changes Small Pride *to* Extended Family in Larger Society*, and* Scavenges Anything *to* Collectors and Hoarders*. She leaves* Intimidates If Threatened*, seeing this as one of the big drivers of Dodecadonite society.*

5. EXOINTELLIGENCE SKILLS

An exointelligence build has one or more skills to show how it compares to human norms; these may be qualitative competence, or rapidity of action — some highly intelligent life forms may be capable of blindingly fast insights, or utterly profound ones, or both.

The exointelligence gets 10 skill points per point of evolution index rating to distribute among the following 6 skills as bonuses (or 10 points of penalty per negative rating). You may reduce skill levels below +0 to increase others.

Empathy: How efficient the exointelligence is at "emotional intelligence"; grasping the motivations and instincts of other beings.

Investigate: How effective the exointelligence is at deductive reasoning — how well it uses its observations and memories to understand.

Knowledge: How the exointelligence stores and accesses information: its memory capacity and how well it understands its environment and the world. Highly evolved exointelligences may seem omniscient to humans.

Notice: How efficient the exointelligence is at gaining sensory input from its environment. Advanced exointelligences take in their surroundings at a glance, using many different senses and in great depth and detail.

Science: How sophisticated the exointelligence's theories about the universe are — how well it uses its knowledge and observations to make predictions about the future.

Will: How strong is its desire to impose its will on the cosmos, compared to humans.

Sarah's Dodecadonite receives 0 bonus points. She decides the species has a -5 Science penalty due to the harsh environment — hardly conducive to scientific study — but gains a +1 bonus to Empathy, Investigate, and Notice, and a +2 bonus to Will.

6. MANIFESTATION

An exointelligence has up to four **aspects** which describe how it contextualises its world and self view. Only include an aspect if the exointelligence's approach differs noticeably from the human norm, or is otherwise important in play. These aspects are:

Sensorium: How the exointelligence senses the world. *Example: Long Range Magnetic Field Senses.*

Communication: How it communicates with others of its kind. *Example: Communicates by Alterations in Body Density.*

Self View: How it conceptualises its "self". *Example: Diffuse Radio Massmind Instantiating Isolated Instances As Needed.*

Temporality: How the exointelligence experiences time. *Example: Decelerated Time Sense (1 Exchange Is 1 Hour).*

Derive these aspects from the ecosystem parochials (page 394), metabolic bases (page 390), paradigm (page 387), and body plan (page 390), as well as the life form's social structure (page 400) and evolution index (page 407).

The Dodecadonite has a Hot World metabolism and Alternate paradigm. Sarah decides it experiences time much faster than humans, with an Accelerated Time Sense (1 Exchange is 1 Second) *temporality aspect. She decides it* Communicates by Waste Gases*, a vestige of its former Howl Attack. Its sense of self is similar to humans, so she leaves that blank. Its sensorium relies on heat and sound, and also on a strong acid taste/smell and probably a magnetic sense to detect metallic compounds. It can't "see" in the human and UV ranges, but senses heat and infrared.*

Producing the Exointelligence Build

Combine the exointelligence parameters with the **skills**, **stunts**, **natural abilities**, and **attacks and defences** of the original life form build. You may modify one of these four parameters for every step of evolution index the exointelligence is above Pre-human, and also update the life form concept.

Sarah makes three changes to the Dodecadonite's inherited skills, stunts, natural abilities, and attacks and defences. She changes Howl Attack to Energy Generation (Heat), Horrific to Enthral, and Armour of Fear to Okay, Fine! She also updates

the life form concept from Intimidating 12-armed Sulphur Bag Opportunist *to* Confrontational 12-armed Sulphur Bag Herder.

The exointelligence's final build looks like this:

EXAMPLE EXOINTELLIGENCE BUILD: THE DODECADONITE

Life Form Concept: *Confrontational 12-armed Sulphur Bag Herder*

Exointelligence Scale: Large (+1)

Evolution Index: Standard Human (+0)

Exointelligence Concept: *Small Group Intelligence Manipulating for Dominion.*

Behaviours: *Collectors and Hoarders, Extended Family in Larger Society, Intimidates If Threatened.*

Exointelligence Skills: Empathy +1, Investigate +1, Notice +1, Science -5, Will +2.

Manifestation: *Accelerated Time Sense (1 Exchange Is 1 Second); Communicates by Waste Gases; Heat, Sound and Magnetic Sense, Acid Taste / Touch; No Sight Sense (flaw).*

Skills: Athletics, Notice, Provoke.

Stunts: Keen Hearing, Okay, Fine! Sprinter.

Natural Abilities: Enthral, Energy Generation, Massively Muscled.

Attacks and Defences: Lacerate or puncture.

Producing the Stat Block

You can now use the build to create any NPC stat block. While you could just use the exointelligence concept to create a minor NPC, the additional detail from the exointelligence build lets you create stat blocks for a credible alien intelligence which derives from its native world, and which also can provide some unusual and potentially challenging behaviours for interaction and analysis. The example below shows how the Dodecadonite looks as a major NPC. Note that we've chosen to keep the 3 behaviour and 3 manifestation aspects in the stat block; you could roll them up into the life form's description if you wanted.

CREATING ALIEN CHARACTERS

The exointelligence build makes it easy for you as GM to create detailed alien NPCs. You can also use it for creating player characters.

To do so, use the exointelligence build as a combination genotype and occupation build, spending character creation points to select the stunts, skills, and extras you want. Take the life form concept, exointelligence concept, and one behaviour and manifestation as mandatory aspects, although you may reword them and incorporate them with other aspects as appropriate.

If you don't have enough points to take the skill levels indicated, the GM may permit you to play such a

Major Exointelligence

THE DODECADONITE

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Consequences: *3* ***Scale:*** *Large (+1)*

Evolution Index: *Human Standard (+0)*

Exoscale: *Large (+1)*

ASPECTS

Life Form Concept: Confrontational 12-armed Sulphur Bag Herder

Exointelligence Concept: Small Group Intelligence Manipulating for Dominion.

Trouble: Requires Rapid Hot Environment

Behaviours: Collectors and Hoarders, Extended Family in Larger Society, Intimidates If Threatened.

Manifestations: Accelerated Time Sense (1 Exchange Is 1 Second); Communicates by Waste Gases; Heat, Sound and Magnetic Sense, Acid Taste / Touch; No Sight Sense (flaw).

SKILLS

Great (+4): *Notice, Will*

Good (+3): *Athletics, Provoke*

Fair (+2): *Deceive, Empathy, Physique*

Average (+1): *Investigate, Rapport, Stealth, Unarmed Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Keen Hearing:*** *+2 Notice bonus to detect sounds.*

✦ ***Okay, Fine!*** *Use Provoke instead of Empathy to learn aspects.*

✦ ***Sprinter:*** *Move 2 zones per exchange for free.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Energy Generation (Heat):*** *+2 Unarmed Combat bonus with the energy, with a weapon:2 rating.*

★ ***Enthral:*** *Acts as aspect.*

★ ***Massively Muscled:*** *+2 Physique bonus for strength actions, and weapon:2 rating for Melee and Unarmed Combat.*

character anyway, either awarding you increased creation points, or requiring you to take a less-powerful version. Select from the stats and natural abilities as normal; the GM may declare one or more natural abilities to be mandatory extras.

To go into more detail about the alien society, perhaps creating more than one character, consider breaking out the exointelligence build into a genotype and one or more occupations using the guidelines on pages 50 and 65.

Exoculture

Exocultures are cultures of non-human origin. In game terms, an exoculture is a culture stat block derived from an exointelligence build, using the guidelines for "Creating Cultures" on page 295. Bear in mind the following when creating an exoculture:

- Characters are only exposed to the exoculture's memes once successful communication and analysis has taken place.
- Cultural analysis and other cultural operations are subject to penalties based on evolution index and exoscale (page 407).
- Exoculture skills are affected by exointelligence skills modifiers.
- Exoculture tech index is based on evolution index; for ratings other than Low Human, Human Standard, and High Human, use the broad tech index ranges rather than trying to detail individual tech indices (in other words, don't worry about defining a Transcendent

Exocivilisations

*You can use the Civilisations rules (page 338) to create **exocivilisations** — alien civilisations. This is similar to creating an Outer Worlds civilisation, except that most of the civilisation will appear incomprehensible to human observers — and may not even be visible at all. Use the evolution index and exoscale penalties on attempts to analyse the civilisation, and use the exointelligence concept, behaviours, and manifestations of the exointelligence build to interpret the civilisation parameters.*

Defining her Dodecadonite civilisation, Sarah decides its government type (page 340) is Oligarchy (+1). In the light of what she knows about Dodecadonite society, she decides that's the top-level of a huge pyramidal hierarchy created by bullying and intimidation — she could have defined it as Feudal (-4), but as the Dodecadonites don't have too many issues with food and agriculture, she figures they can't be easily "tied to the land".

EXAMPLE: THE DODECADONITE EXOCULTURE

Exoculture

The Dodecadonite exoculture has been hampered by the difficulty of scientific research in the hot acidic environment, but has developed a technology based on ceramics, acids, and molten metal circuits which is now allowing large scale societies and a nascent world government. They have begun to automate "herding" and other basic scrounging activities, and are developing some unusual high speed flying vehicles. To human eyes, most of their tech and other construction is indistinguishable from the natural environment.

Scale: *Planetary (+6)* ***Physical Stress:*** 1 2

Reach: *Planetary (+6)* ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2 3 4

Tech Index: *T4 (-1)*

Consequences: *3 mild + 1 moderate*

Memes: Confrontational Hot World Pastoralism, Obsessive Hierarchs, Poor Grasp of Science, Appreciation of the Finer Arts of Magnetism, The Musical Explosions of Nature

Skills: *Great (+4) Provoke; Good (+3) Will; Fair (+2) Assimilate; Average (+1) Rapport*

STUNTS

✦ ***Shock and Awe:*** *Make meme attacks on any part of a culture in a zone currently under organisation Security attack.*

✦ ***Propaganda Campaign:*** *+2 bonus to Provoke attack, defend, and create an advantage actions.*

✦ ***Traditionalist:*** *Armour:3 rating against mental and physical attacks.*

CAPABILITIES

Resource Exploitation

exoculture as "Tech index 32", for example — it's just "more than 30").

- Exoculture capabilities probably look **radically** different from human or related capabilities. Use the exointelligence build, and in particular exointelligence concept, behaviours, and manifestations, to gauge what an exoculture's capabilities may look like, and require analysis rolls modified by exoscale and evolution index. It's likely that exoculture capabilities will be incomprehensible.
- All forms of culture conflict and operations are much more difficult, and are modified by evolution index and exoscale. First contact must have taken place.

First Contact

You can run first contact situations with exointelligences either as interpersonal actions — one or more characters making first contact with one or more exointelligences — or as larger scale cultural actions, where characters represent their culture contacting an alien representing its exoculture. The process is broadly the same.

First contact is a **challenge**, failure in which may damage the relationship with the exointelligence or exoculture. First contact challenges use the following actions:

- **Manifestation Analysis:** The exointelligence is observed, usually in secrecy and at a distance, to analyse how it views the world, how fast it interacts, etc. This is an Investigate roll, stacked with Science (Biology, etc) and possibly requiring sensorview (depending on how easy the exointelligence is to observe), usually taking at least a day and potentially much longer (modify by evolution index and exoscale, etc). Opposition is at least Fair (+2), modified by evolution index and exoscale; appropriate manifestations or behaviours may be invoked or compelled. Success reveals one manifestation, or two on a success with style. The process may be repeated. Any manifestations revealed may be invoked on subsequent rolls; any **not** revealed may be invoked or compelled against you. This sets the baseline for interaction.
- **Magnitude Analysis: Exoscale** and **evolution index** are analysed. This is a Science roll, with difficulties as above, stacked with cultural analysis and other appropriate rolls. It lets you know what you're up against — you may be able to mitigate some difficulties. For example, knowing an alien's exoscale may help you decide how to approach it to avoid a scale penalty.
- **Contact:** Finally, you may attempt communication. This is a roll of Knowledge vs Knowledge, Science vs Science, etc, and is where things can go horribly wrong. On a success, you create a situation aspect representing positive relations, or assess the exointelligence concept or other significant aspect. On a failure, you either do mental stress damage to the exointelligence, imposing a consequence equal to the shifts of failure, or create a situation aspect or cultural consequence representing the magnitude of failure.

RUNNING GAMES IN ALIEN ECOSYSTEMS

Alien environments are often the backdrop to scenarios, the scenery against which plots play out. Sometimes, though, they can be the subject of scenarios in their own right. A crash on an alien world with a hostile biosphere; exploration of an unknown star system and its planets; a diplomatic or First Contact mission to an exotic exoculture beyond the Frontier; in all these, alien world biospheres and life forms come to the fore.

When running a game in an alien biosphere, bear in mind that the PCs' most direct opponent and obstacle is **the biosphere itself**. At the very least it's a source of analysis rolls as the PCs try to work out what they're up against, with hazards and exofauna encounters if they fail; but it can also be the source of active hazards and compels, with lethal conditions and associated events requiring the PCs to take action or risk damage and even death. On an alien world, knowledge more than guns is the key to survival — an opportunity for characters with good Science, Knowledge, and sensing abilities to shine.

What to Do With Alien Life Forms in Sci-fi Games

Once you progress beyond the initial encounter with the ecosystem, your game can move on to its constituents — the exofauna and even exointelligences which populate the world. These may be sources of opposition, hazards,

STELLIVORES

*Interacting binary star systems have been identified outside Commonality Space which cannot be accounted for by current scientific theories. It's hypothesised these may be highly advanced exocultures actively manipulating the mass and energies of their primary stars. Known as **stellivores**, these theoretical alien civilisations may pose enormous threats to the Commonality. Event horizon probes have been dispatched to several stellivore candidate systems to provide clandestine surveillance; as yet none have returned.*

X-MemCore

and analysis rolls, but also physical danger — giving your military PCs a chance to do their thing.

Encounters with exofauna (ie fighting alien monsters) aren't usually the main focus of science fiction games. Usually they're peripheral to your main plot, something like an obstacle or environmental hazard the PCs must overcome to continue the story. They remind the PCs they're on a dangerous alien world.

BELIEVABLE ALIENS

If you're playing a pulpy game, it's fine to have bug-eyed monsters attack for no reason. In harder SF games, don't ignore your exofauna's motivations — they can be the spur to more intriguing stories. Why is a life form attacking? Is it leading you into a trap? Are you facing an ethical dilemma — a "mother" protecting her young, a leader trying to parley? Or are you misinterpreting things, and that "natural beam weapon" is actually how the life form communicates? Spice your encounters with exofauna conflicts — but don't forget there are always things to be learned. Exofauna encounters shouldn't *just* involve racking up in your ATV and blowing the hell out of the slobbering alien beasties.

STRUCTURE YOUR ENCOUNTERS

Don't just have a faceless horde of critters. What are the life forms doing? Maybe they're a hunting pack? Or following a leader? Or trying to migrate, or get to a pool of bubbling acid which is actually their watering hole? Or maybe you've encountered a single life form — you can easily kill it, but what if it's come to make contact?

BUG-EYED MONSTERS ANYWAY

Sometimes, though, exofauna just make awesome "bug-eyed monster" encounters when your PCs really do have to blow away every crawling thing they see. Maybe they're in the back-end of nowhere and human (or at least sentient) encounters are unlikely; maybe the pace is flagging, or you need a moment to figure out the next stage of the plot. Throw in a bunch of frenzied alien critters to liven things up! Still put thought into the encounter — maybe the life forms aren't in their native habitat, or are behaving abnormally? Try and generate a sense of mystery — or at least curiosity. Sure the PCs have got to waste these crawlies, but what made them attack in the first place? It's leading questions like this that great improvised plotlines are made of.

ENCOUNTER TABLES

You can use encounter tables as random encounter generators, rolling dice to see what comes the PCs' way when you have no other plans. But they're also useful as pick-lists for populating ecosystems, to keep things feeling realistic and support your descriptions during game prep or play.

Table 21-14: Life Form Classification (page 398) can be used on the fly when you want to determine what the PCs have encountered (perhaps itself determined on an event table from page 319). Alternatively, you can use Table 21-14 as a template to prepare in advance an actual exofauna life form for each entry on the table (usually using the motile column). You can define these just as life form concepts, writing them directly into the table, and then riff of those with minor NPC stat blocks (page 181) in encounters; or you can go to town, creating custom stat blocks for each life form in your encounter table, and maybe even giving each a name. If you're creating an exointelligence, pick a promising candidate from your encounter table and have encounters with it be an opportunity for alien contact.

A SELECTED SURVEY OF THE EXOFAUNA OF COMMONALITY SPACE

This section presents some example ecosystems from Commonality Space, and sample life forms which live in them. You can find star system and planetary details for these ecosystems in **Chapter 24: The Darradine Rim**.



Drefnia Ecosystem, Standard Gravity

An ecosystem where exoflora rather than exofauna dominate, with the vast Mozgoom sessile exointelligences controlling symbiotic motile Zybotes.

Biodiversity: Standard (+0).

Paradigm: T-Analogue.

Metabolic Bases: Photosynthesis; cellulose and flesh and blood analogues.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Enormous (+3) Bilateral Multi-branched Exoframe With Segmented Body and Organs;* Primary Motile: *Medium (+0) Bilateral 2-tendrilled Endoframe;* Secondary Motile: *Large (+1) Radial Limbless No Frame With Segmented Body ("Piecrawlers").*

Environmental Characteristics: *Days Are a Month Long; Global Forest; High CO_2; Natural Group Minds.*

Key Parochials: *Psionic Powers; Symbiosis.*

Supporting Exointelligence

MOZGOOM

Also known as the "World Trees", these are intelligent "forests", enormous sessile exointelligences kilometres high and covering thousands of square kilometres.

Physical Stress: 1☐ 2☐ 3☐

Mental Stress: 1☐ 2☐ 3☐ 4☐

Consequences: *1 mild* ***Scale:*** *Enormous (+3) + 1 moderate*

Evolution Index: *Posthuman (+4)*

Exoscale: *Regional (+4)*

Aspects: Global Governing Vegetable Awareness; Decelerated Time Sense (1 Exchange Is 1 Hour); Touch and Mental Contact Senses; Looking to Grow Offworld

Skills: *Posthuman (+10): Will; Transhuman (+9): Knowledge; Legendary (+8) Investigate; Epic (+7) Notice; Fantastic (+6) Empathy; Superb (+5) Deceive; Great (+4) Provoke; Good (+3) Science; Fair (+2) Physique*

STUNTS

✦ ***Take the Blow:*** *Use Physique to defend against bashes with Unarmed or Melee Combat.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Dispersed Body:*** *As aspect.*

★ ***Hallucinogen Secretion:*** *Make a target hallucinate for a +2 Provoke bonus to attacks and create an advantage actions.*

Supporting Exointelligence

ZYBOTE

Zybotes are human-sized floating creatures similar in shape to a stingray. Their primary sense is sonar, and they have 2-metre long manipulating tentacles around their frontal "mouth" (in fact an absorbent palate) and a barb thrower in their flexible "tail"; they also have psionic powers like telepathy and telekinesis. Sometimes found on "fact-finding" missions aboard Commonality planeships, they provide human companions with limited psionic powers. The stats below are for an independent Zybote; they can also be statted as ***extras****.*

Physical Stress: 1☐ 2☐

Mental Stress: 1☐ 2☐ 3☐ 4☐

Consequences: *1 mild* ***Scale:*** *Medium (+0) + 1 moderate*

Evolution Index: *Human Standard (+0)*

Exoscale: *Medium (+0)*

Aspects: Floating Fungal Symbiote; Mysterious Psi-Powers; Mozgoom Love; Sonar, Touch and Mental Sense; Freezes If Surprised (flaw)

Skills: *Great (+4) Athletics; Good (+3) Will; Fair (+2) Deceive, Ranged Combat; Average (+1) Stealth, Unarmed Combat*

STUNTS

✦ ***Cool Customer:*** *+2 Deceive bonus when bluffing.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Flight:*** *Use Athletics as Pilot; move and attack up to 2 zones away.*

★ ***Image Projection:*** *Project 3D image; use Will to create advantages with it, or as aspect.*

★ ***Mental Blast:*** *A skill doing mental stress damage at range.*

★ ***Venomous:*** *Your Unarmed Combat attack also creates a* Poisoned-*type advantage.*

Galagole Ecosystem, Low Gravity

A sweltering swamp world filled with tangled semi-aquatic vegetation grazed by a huge variety of exofauna.

Biodiversity: Standard (+1).

Paradigm: T-Analogue.

Metabolic Bases: Photosynthesis; cellulose and flesh and blood analogues.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Large (+1) Asymmetrical 7-10-branch Exoframe With Segmented Body;* Primary Motile: *Medium (+0) Bilateral 4-limbed Endoframe With Segmented Skeleton;* Secondary Motile: *Small (-1) Bilateral 6-limbed Exoframe With Segmented Body and Limbs.*

Environmental Characteristics: *Global Swamp; Hot and Sweltering; Low Gravity World.*

Key Parochials: *Acid Gut; Amphibious; Goggle-Eyed.*

Supporting Life Form

VADAKROFF

A fairly large amphibious grazer used as a beast of burden by the native f-people xenomorphs.

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate* ***Scale:*** *Medium (+0)*

Aspects: Amphibious Swamp Grazer; Herd Instinct; Panicked Flight; Trample to Death

Skills: *Good (+3) Notice; Fair (+2) Physique; Average (+1) Athletics*

STUNTS

✦ ***Danger Sense:*** *Notice is unaffected by environmental conditions when something means you harm.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Amphibious:*** *As aspect.*

★ ***Natural Armour:*** *Armour:2 rating.*

Jemela Ecosystem, Standard Gravity

A garden world with a biosphere of edible fungus analogues which thrive on the high levels of piezoelectricity in the planet's extensive quartz deposits. Life forms use electricity in unusual ways.

Biodiversity: Standard (+1).

Paradigm: T-Congruent.

Metabolic Bases: Electrosynthesis; chitin and flesh and blood.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Large (+1) Bilateral 3-lobe Solid "Umbrella" Frame With Segmented Branches;* Primary Motile: *Small (-1) Bilateral 6-limbed (2 Wings, 4 Legs) With Segmented Endoframe;* Secondary Motile: *Medium (+0) Biradial 8-limbed With Segmented Endoframe.*

Environmental Characteristics: *Gas Giant Moon; Natural Piezoelectricity; Strong Tides.*

Key Parochials: *Natural Quartz-based Life Sensors; Natural Shocks; Shimmering Communication.*

Supporting Life Form

CRYSTALWING

A small chitinous life form with stiff leathery wings embedded with quartz. It delivers a sizable electric shock, killing small prey and stunning human-sized targets.

Physical Stress: 1 2 ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2

Consequences: *1 mild* ***Scale:*** *Small (-1)*

Aspects: Aerial Electric Hunter; Hunter Instinct; Intimidates When Threatened; Shocking Fly-by

Skills: *Good (+3) Unarmed Combat; Fair (+2) Notice; Average (+1) Athletics*

STUNTS

✦ ***Killing Stroke:*** *1/scene, pay 1 fate point to increase a physical consequence you inflict by 1 step.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Energy Generation (Electricity):*** *+2 attack bonus with the energy, with a weapon:2 rating.*

★ ***Wings:*** *Use Athletics as Pilot; move and attack up to 2 zones away.*

Nimbu Ecosystem, Standard Gravity

A young world in a debris-filled star system, Nimbu experiences extremely high tides and has a high O_2 atmosphere, and many natural fires.

Biodiversity: Standard (-1).

Paradigm: T-Analogue.

Metabolic Bases: Photosynthesis; cellulose and flesh and blood analogues.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Large (+1) Asymmetrical 5-6 limbed Solid Frame;* Primary Motile: *Small (-1) Bilateral 8-limbed With Segmented Endoframe and Organs;* Secondary Motile: *Medium (+0) Radial 4-limbed Exoframe (Mostly Swimmers).*

Environmental Characteristics: *High Oxygen Atmosphere; Major Meteor Infall; Twin World System With High Tides.*

Key Parochials: *Flame Retardant Compounds; Rudimentary Psi-Powers.*

COLONY LIZARD

4 Fair (+2) Small (-1) Life Forms

A metre-long 8-legged para-reptilian with a "mental bolt" attack to kill small prey and even disrupt humans.

Stress: ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐

Aspects: Mental Bolt Ambushers

Skills: *Fair (+2) Mental Bolt; Average (+1) Stealth (+3 teamwork bonus)*

Xaiwu Ecosystem, Standard Gravity

An iceball with a lightless aquatic oceanworld ecosystem.

Biodiversity: Low (-2).

Paradigm: T-Analogue.

Metabolic Bases: Chemosynthesis; cellulose, chitin, and flesh and blood analogues.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Large (+1) Asymmetrical 5-6 lobed No Frame;* Primary Motile: *Enormous (+3) Bilateral Limbless Segmented Body;* Secondary Motile: *Medium (+0) Spherical 6-sided Frameless Segmented Body.*

Environmental Characteristics: *Aquatic; No Sunlight.*

Key Parochials: *Bioluminescence; Heightened Sense of Smell; Hermaphroditic; High Pressure Adaptations*

FLUOCYTE

10 Average (+1) Medium (+0) Life Forms

Inhabiting the ocean depths, these are delicate flickering herbivores.

Stress: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Aspects: Beautiful Filter Feeder Herds; Poor Natural Defences.

Skills: *Average (+1) Athletics, Bash (+9 teamwork bonus)*

MINDSCAPE UPDATE

185.344.2256

Following thoughtcast report Tungus_93914 recommend establishment eidolon station top urgency investigate vestigial psi extant exofauna Nimbu Prime.

MIND ONLY update to Kanjattu_A, MiniEvPlan, Mysore Vallis, Europa / Manhome

SEAWORM

Supporting Life Form

Many kilometres long, these life forms swim through the upper reaches of the world ocean. They're a navigational hazard.

Physical Stress: 1☐ 2☐ 3☐ 4☐

Mental Stress: 1☐ 2☐

Consequences: *1 mild + 1 moderate* ***Scale:*** *Enormous (+3)*

Aspects: Kilometres-long Filter Feeder Patrols the Shallows; Barely Notices What It Swallows; Flees If It Can; Bioluminescence

Skills: *Great (+4) Physique; Good (+3) Notice; Fair (+2) Unarmed Combat; Average (+1) Athletics.*

STUNTS

✦ ***Take the Blow:*** *Use Physique to defend against bashes with Unarmed or Melee Combat.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Dispersed Body:*** *As aspect.*

Zhaffrane Ecosystem, Standard Gravity

An ancient ecosystem of highly specialised life forms, including some surprising adaptations.

Biodiversity: Very High (+4).

Paradigm: T-Analogue.

Metabolic Bases: Photosynthesis, cellulose and flesh and blood analogues.

Body Plans: Primary Sessile: *Huge (+2) Bilateral 6-branched Solid Frame;* Secondary Sessile: *Medium (+0) Asymmetrical 11+ branched Segmented Endoframe;* Primary Motile: *Huge (+2) Bilateral 4-limbed Segmented Endoframe;* Secondary Motile: *Small (-1) Biradial 8-limbed Segmented Exoframe and Limbs.*

Environmental Characteristics: *Ancient Highly-Evolved Niches; Tectonically Stable.*

Key Parochials: *Crystalline "Feathers"; Explosive Gases; Iridescent Light Refraction; Spiked Branches and Limbs.*

BLASTBEAST

A stocky burrowing life form like a very large beetle, it stuns or kills the nests of its much smaller prey before eating them.

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2

Consequences: *1 mild* ***Scale:*** *Medium (+0)*
+ 1 moderate

Aspects: 8-limbed Burrowing Ambusher; Short Burst of Speed; Explosive Gas Attack; Natural Spikes; Draining Explosion (flaw)

Skills: *Great (+4) Stealth; Good (+3) Notice; Fair (+2) Unarmed Combat; Average (+1) Physique*

STUNTS

✦ ***Ambush:*** *Use Stealth to make physical attacks as long as your target is unaware of your presence.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Energy Generation (Explosive, Area Effect):*** *+2 Unarmed Combat bonus with the energy, with a weapon:2 rating.*

Supporting Life Form

LASERHAWK

A 4-legged, 4-winged life form with iridescent crystalline wings, like a cross between a bird and a giant dragonfly. It attacks by day, and can project a bolt of coherent (laser) energy from its body.

Physical Stress: 1 2 ***Mental Stress:*** 1 2

Consequences: *1 mild* ***Scale:*** *Small (-1)*

Aspects: Iridescent Winged Pouncer; Poor Follow-up; Attacks If Surprised; Refracted Light Attack

Skills: *Good (+3) Notice; Fair (+2) Ranged Combat; Average (+1) Athletics*

STUNTS

✦ ***Killing Stroke:*** *1/scene, pay 1 fate point to increase a physical consequence you inflict by 1 step.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Energy Generation (Null Beam):*** *+2 Ranged Combat bonus with a weapon:2 rating.*

★ ***Flight:*** *Use Athletics as Pilot; move and attack up to 2 zones away.*

Supporting Life Form

CHELODONT

A huge horselike life form, the favoured mount of the world's snakepeople xenomorphs.

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4

Mental Stress: 1 2

Consequences: *1 mild* ***Scale:*** *Huge (+2)*
+ 1 moderate

Aspects: Horselike Treetop Grazer; Herd Instinct; Panicked Flight; Favoured Mount of the Snakepeople

Skills: *Great (+4) Physique; Good (+3) Athletics; Fair (+2) Notice; Average (+1) Trample*

STUNTS

✦ ***Charge:*** *+2 attack bonus when you move at least 1 zone before attacking.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Natural Armour:*** *Armour:2 rating*

Supporting Life Form



Zvukimu Ecosystem II, Low Standard Gravity

Zvukimu has two ecosystems: a more conventional T-Analogue biosphere on the planet's surface and this, an exotic plasma-based ecosystem in the upper atmosphere.

Biodiversity: No Biodiversity (-6).

Paradigm: Exotic.

Metabolic Bases: Magnetosynthesis.

Body Plans: Primary Motile: *Large (+1) Biradial 6-limbed Diffuse Frame.*

Environmental Characteristics: *Crystalline Peaks.*

Key Parochials: *Intense Piping "Singing"; Magnetic Levitation; Plasma Manipulation.*

Supporting Intelligent Life Form

SINGER

The Singers of Zvukimu are plasma beings like glowing airborne jellyfish. Some liken them to angels, with elongated hands, arms, and legs, and huge "wings" of light. They never land, and can't withstand high gravity or atmospheric pressure. They make plasma attacks, generate plasma shields, and have a "Singer Song" extra which enthrals other beings.

Physical Stress: 1☐ 2☐

Mental Stress: 1☐ 2☐ 3☐ 4☐

Consequences: *1 mild* ***Scale:*** *Large (+1) + 1 moderate*

Evolution Index: *High Human (+2)*

Exoscale: *Huge (+2)*

Aspects: Unfathomable Alien Plasma Being; Magnetic, Sound and Plasma Senses; Defenders of Community; Sacred Energy Source

Skills: *Fantastic (+6) Empathy; Superb (+5) Will; Great (+4) Knowledge; Good (+3) Investigate; Fair (+2) Provoke; Average (+1) Notice*

STUNTS

✦ ***Shield of Logic:*** *Use Knowledge to defend against Provoke.*

EXTRAS

★ ***Energy Generation (Plasma):*** *+2 Ranged Combat bonus with the energy, with a weapon:2 rating.*

★ ***Enthral:*** *As aspect.*

★ ***Flight:*** *Use Athletics as Pilot; move and attack up to 2 zones away.*

Living on Alien Worlds

No alien world is naturally hospitable to humankind. Even if a rare planet has liquid water, clement temperatures, and a teeming biosphere, the overwhelming likelihood is that its life forms will not be metabolically compatible with humans in profound ways. Their digestive systems will be unable to break down biomatter, and colonists may eat their fill of local flora and fauna and still starve to death.

There are several ways to address this. Colonies can bring their own food with them, attempt to grow it locally, genurgically engineer local food to be edible to them, or engineer themselves to metabolise local food. All of these strategies are legitimate, and can be found throughout Commonality Space.

Where native biospheres are vibrant and diverse, colonies tend to opt for heavy processing or self-modification; the latter is common on lost colony worlds, where original colonists did not expect any further physical contact with planets other than their new home. Where native biospheres are marginal, colonies tend to convert huge swathes of the environment to support terrestrial life forms, particularly food crops. In many cases native and introduced biospheres coexist, mutually incompatible yet competing for the same resources.

Colonists are generally proud of their worlds. Living anywhere but Old Earth takes an act of will, a determination to engage with the local biosphere and survive. Every life-bearing colony world has its unique food, favoured pets and domestic animals, house plants, gardens, spectacular scenery, and passionate enthusiasts for their adopted homes.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO
SCENARIOS AND CAMPAIGNS

"I won't lie to you," said the general. "This mission is extremely high risk. We will face massive *opposition, both in orbit and en route to the Shade, not to mention the assault itself. But with luck, dedication, and sacrifice, I believe we can prevail. We will seize control, and drive every traitor from the face of this planet!"*

— General Enivli Ulgus, speaking before the Shade Assault during the Retaking of Tritane

By now, you have everything you need to play a game of ***Mindjammer***. You've created characters; you may have starships, organisations, worlds, cultures, and even ecosystems and alien life forms. You know how to take actions with all of them.

So what do you do now? This chapter describes what you do in a session of ***Mindjammer***, and how you structure your games into **scenarios** and **campaigns**.

SCENARIOS

A scenario is a unit of game time usually lasting from one to four sessions , made up of **episodes** and **scenes**. The end of a scenario usually triggers a significant milestone (page 160), letting your PCs get better at what they do.

In a scenario, the GM presents the players with one or more significant, urgent, and open-ended problems, which their characters try to resolve. Together you play out scenes, usually grouped into episodes, where your characters take actions to overcome challenges the GM presents. They investigate locations, research information, interview suspects or witnesses, travel to exotic locations, and engage in life-or-death conflicts. On the way, they encounter NPC allies or enemies, and resources to help them achieve their goals.

There's no "one true way" to play a scenario, and your characters may succeed or fail in their aims, maybe suffering defeat and even death. Scenarios continue until you either succeed, give up, or fail in some definitive way — at which point another scenario may await, linking together in an overarching series known as a **campaign**.

A scenario is like a novel or movie script, with one key difference — the plot is not fixed. Everything else is there — protagonists and antagonists, locations, and a hook with an implied course of action about to occur — but you'll only find out what actually happens in play.

Create Hooks

A scenario always begins with a **hook** — the intriguing question, problem, temptation, or possibility which draws in the PCs in the first place. As GM, it's your job to present

Creating a Scenario

- *Create hooks*
- *Ask story questions*
- *Establish the opposition*
- *Establish the location*
- *Trace the default plot thread*
- *Set up episodes*
- *Set up scenes*
- *Begin the first scene*

this hook to the players; you can create it yourself, run with something that comes up in play, or use one from a pregenerated scenario. A good hook is **relevant to the PCs, cannot be resolved without their involvement, and cannot be ignored without dire consequences**.

You have a lot of material to help you create your own hooks. This book and the background to the ***Mindjammer*** setting are full of hook material, as are the countless science-fiction novels, movies, and games out there. To be properly compelling to your PCs, though, a hook needs to be tailored to your game.

One of the best ways of customising a hook is to link it to your PCs' aspects. Character aspects always indicate what's important to (or about) a character, and using them in your hook can make your scenario feel deeply personal to the PCs. You can also look at your game aspects — including situation aspects for the place the characters are currently visiting, such as planets, star systems, or cultures — to give you big and thematically important hook material. In some ways, an aspect-inspired hook feels like a large-scale compel, drawing in the PCs and requiring lots of effort and action to resolve.

Put a Face on It

While not all your scenarios need to have an NPC "master villain" for the PCs to take down, it's often easier if they do. You should at least be able to point to an NPC who benefits from the scenario not going the way the PCs want it to.

You Don't Always Have to Destroy the World

Not all hooks have to involve the fate of the universe or the world or even a large part of the setting; interpersonal hooks can have just as much of an impact on a group of PCs as stopping this week's bad guy. For a classic action-adventure story setup, create two hooks for your scenario — one focussing on something external to the characters (like the villain's scheme), and one dealing with interpersonal issues. The latter will serve as a subplot, giving characters development time while they're dealing with other problems.

HOOKS AND CHARACTER ASPECTS

When creating a hook from a character aspect, try the following wording:

You have _____ aspect, which implies _____. Because of that, _____ would probably be a strong hook for you.

Note that second blank — you have to think about an aspect's implications, like:

- Who might have a problem with the character because of the aspect?
- Does the aspect highlight a potential threat to the character?
- Does the aspect describe a connection or relationship that could cause trouble for the character?
- Does the aspect talk about a backstory element that could return to haunt the character?
- Does the aspect describe something or someone important to the character that you can threaten?

Thaddeus Clay has The Venu Have Psi-Powers — So Must We!*, which implies that he's constantly searching for ways humans can develop psi-powers. Because of that, rumours of a secret Commonality psionics research station deep inside the Q-Zone would probably be a strong hook for him.*

Jackson Stark has Haunted by a Past He Can't Remember*, which implies that anything about his past troubles him profoundly. Because of that, a dying stranger sending him a thoughtcast to a mysterious rendezvous would probably be a strong hook for him.*

HOOKS AND GAME ASPECTS

Hooks you get from a game's current and impending issues (page 16) are broader than those from character aspects, affecting all your PCs and maybe many NPCs. They're not as personal, but can be just as compelling.

Because _____ is an issue, it implies _____. Therefore, _____ would probably be a strong hook for the PCs.

Ask yourself:

- What threats does the issue present to the PCs?
- Who are the driving forces behind the issue, and what messed up thing might they be willing to do to advance their agenda?

- Who else cares about dealing with the issue, and how might their "solution" be bad for the PCs?
- What's a good next step for resolving the issue, and what makes accomplishing that step hard?

Because Mindscape Implants Are Thought Control! *is an issue, it implies that people with Mindscape implants might be persecuted by the locals. Therefore, a series of assassinations of high-profile government and Commonality officials with Mindscape implants would probably be a strong hook for the PCs.*

Because Loyalties Split by the Fiver Separatists *is an issue, it implies there's a political struggle for the future of the Commonality on the world. Therefore, an outbreak of armed conflict between the separatists and the government would probably be a strong hook for the PCs.*

HOOKS AND SITUATION ASPECTS

The situation aspects of the new worlds and civilisations your game takes you to can be temporarily as important as game aspects for throwing up hooks to action and adventure.

Because the world / star system / environment has _____, it implies _____. Therefore, _____ will probably be a strong hook for the PCs.

- Does the situation promise knowledge or resources which speak to one of the PCs' aspects?
- Does the situation make one or more of the PCs duty bound by their aspects to react to it?
- Does the situation present a danger more involved than a simple compel?
- Does the situation hook into one of the PCs' back stories?

Because the star system has Fields of Venu War Battle Debris*, it implies valuable salvage may occasionally be found there. Therefore, the unexpected reception of a stasis field distress signal from the wreck of a Venu capital ship would probably be a strong hook for the PCs.*

Because the world has Brittle Self-confidence*, it implies they'll react badly when faced with a show of superiority. Therefore, their reaction when they see the PCs' high tech starship and gear would probably be a strong hook for the PCs.*

HOOKS AND ASPECT PAIRS

You can also create hooks from the *relationship between two aspects*. This lets you keep things personal, but also broaden your hook to impact multiple characters, or tie a PC's story into the game.

There are two main forms of aspect pairing: **connecting two character aspects**, and **connecting a character aspect to an issue**.

Two Character Aspects

Because _____ has _____ aspect and _____ has _____ aspect, it implies that _____. Therefore, _____ would probably be a strong hook for them.

Ask yourself:

- Do the two aspects put the characters at odds or suggest a point of tension between them?
- Is there a particular problem or trouble that both would be likely to get into because of the aspects?
- Does one character have a relationship or a connection that could become problematic for the other?
- Do the aspects point to backstory elements that can intersect in the present?
- Is there a way for one PC's fortune to become another's misfortune, because of the aspects?

Because Skin-of-Our-Teeth has Some Jobs You Just Can't Leave to Humans*, and Lyra has* I'll Have My Revenge on the 3-Space Instrumentality*, it implies they're probably the worst partners for any kind of security operation involving the 3SI. Therefore, the unexpected discovery of 3-Space Instrumentality involvement in a mission where Skin is providing backup to Lyra infiltrating a Fringe World dictatorship would probably be a strong hook for them.*

Because Max has SCI Force Have Me Over a Barrel*, and Stark has* Max Proffitt Owes Me His Life*, it implies that the two of them could occasionally completely misunderstand the other's loyalties and motives. Therefore, Max catching Stark doing something forbidden by SCI Force would probably be a strong hook for them.*

Character Aspect and Issue

In this instance, "issue" can mean either a game aspect or one belonging to a world, star system, civilisation, culture, etc.

Because you have _____ aspect and _____ is an issue, it implies that _____. Therefore, _____ would probably be a strong hook for you.

Ask yourself:

- Does the issue suggest a threat to any of the PC's relationships?
- Is the next step to dealing with the issue something that impacts a particular character personally because of their aspects?
- Does someone connected to the issue have a particular reason to target the PC because of an aspect?

Because Thaddeus Clay is a Highly Experienced SCI Force Controller *and* Mindscape Implants Are Thought Control!



Pregenerated Scenarios

Pregenerated scenarios, whether commercially available or created by other GMs, often have hooks derived from game aspects, or aspects for worlds, cultures, or star systems. This makes them usable with any group of PCs. Some may also provide pregenerated PCs and character hooks.

When you use a pregenerated scenario, combine the hooks provided with those derived from your own PCs' aspects, to give your players a more personal stake in the scenario events.

is an issue, it implies that Clay would be a natural target for trouble. Therefore, a political faction asking Clay to remove a rival by manipulating his reputation in the Mindscape would probably be a strong hook for him.

Because Max has Doctor Miserius Haunts My Dreams*, and* Loyalties Split by Fiver Separatists *is an issue, it implies that Max could be uncertain about taking sides in a civil conflict. Therefore, a mission on behalf of the government against an outnumbered band of civilian rebels would probably be a strong hook for him.*

Ask Story Questions

Now you have your scenario hook, flesh it out a little to work out some scenario details. Come up with a number of locations and NPCs, and a feel for some possible events forming the kernel of your episodes and scenes. You can do this by creating a series of **story questions** for your scenario to answer.

The more story questions you have, the more material you'll have to resolve, and therefore the more episodes and scenes, and the longer your scenario. A story question can probably be answered in one episode or even scene; and you can generally play through one to three of these in a session.

Ask yourself these questions now; usually they take the form of yes / no questions, like "Can / will (your character) accomplish (his goal)?" Your **last** question in a scenario is usually "Can the PCs resolve the problem?" — that's something you'll resolve in the scenario's final episode (see below). Before that, ask yourself other questions to find out what makes the situation so difficult to resolve. Embellish the hook, asking who, what, when, where, why and how.

Let's look at the game aspects, locations, and NPCs the group established for the Agents of the Commonality *campaign when they set up their* **Mindjammer** *game (page 15). Sarah's focussing on how one of Max Proffitt's aspects interacts with one of the game aspects, and develops story questions out of that to create a scenario she's calling* Underdog.

Underdog: Hook and Story Questions

Because Max has Doctor Miserius Haunts My Dreams*, and* Loyalties Split by Fiver Separatists *is an issue, it implies Max could be uncertain about taking sides in a civil conflict. Therefore, a mission on behalf of the government against an outnumbered band of civilian rebels would probably be a strong hook for him.*

Two obvious story questions spring to mind already: ***Will the government defeat the rebels? Will Max side with the rebels?*** *Sarah wants to save those answers for the end of the scenario, so she brainstorms some other questions.*

First of all, she doesn't know if the PCs will go willingly into this situation: ***Does the group accept the mission? Will Max agree with the group, or will he resist?***

*Then, she needs to figure out why they can't just go straight to the heart of the problem (the battle with the rebels). She decides the group has a **rival** in the mission, using the OLSEC organisation the group created when they set up their game, and decides their shadowy SCI Force superiors would be very displeased if the group lost control of the situation to the rival's faction.*

*Max, in the meantime, has to work out the government's agenda — basically who's "right" in his mind. That gives Sarah three more questions: **Can the group identify their OLSEC rival before their rival does the same to them? Can Max find an ally to tell him what's really going on? Can the group agree which is the right way to act?***

*Then, because she wants some tension, one that relates to their relationship: **Will Max turn his back on SCI Force for the sake of his own conscience?***

Note that each question can significantly shape the scenario's plot. If the group decides not to accept the government's mission, you have a very different situation than if they do. If the group gets arrested or detained by OLSEC, then whether the government is right or not may be moot. If the group decides to help Max in opposition to the government agenda, then they'll have another source of trouble in the form of the government and OLSEC — and explaining their decision to SCI Force afterwards.

Look at one of the questions: "Can the group identify their OLSEC rival before their rival does the same to them?" Without the second half, that part of the story might dead-end — if the group fails to discover their rival's identity. But the way we've phrased it, there's a hanging question: the PCs may not know *who* their rival is, but their rival knows them. Whatever happens, that rival can come back to haunt them in a future scenario. Or, we take it as a given that we're going to reveal the rival's identity eventually, but we can still have a tense set of conflicts or contests leading up to that reveal as they figure out each other's abilities.

There's also room to extend material from this scenario into the future. Maybe the identity of the OLSEC rival doesn't get answered this scenario at all — that's okay, because it's a detail Sarah can always bring back in a later session.

Establish the Opposition

While asking story questions, you've probably got a feel for areas where the PCs are going to face opposition. Now's the time to flesh those out and personalise them with NPCs.

These don't just have to be **characters**: the opposition might be sentient starships, organisations, even entire cultures, depending on your scenario requirements. You can even bring in one or more of the NPCs you created when setting up your game.

Note down the cast of characters who are key to answering your story questions. Define their motivations and goals, and why they're opposing the PCs. Answer the following questions for each major and significant NPC:

- What does that NPC need? How can the PCs help her get that, or how are the PCs in the way?
- Why can't the NPC get what she needs through legitimate means? (In other words, why is this need contributing to a problem?)
- Why can't she be ignored?

Don't create too many NPCs; you can have as many minor NPCs as you need, but scenarios work best when they focus on a smaller number of supporting and major NPCs. If you can combine roles, do so, until you have a tightly focussed and colourful cast of bad guys to throw at your players. Decide whether they need to be supporting or major NPCS (page 183), and stat them up accordingly.

Underdog: The Opposition

Sarah looks over the story questions and lists the NPCs she thinks she'll need to answer them.

- *The group's shadowy SCI Force patron (not appearing)*
- *The Commonality ambassador (supporting)*
- *The group's rival in OLSEC (supporting)*
- *An OLSEC agent who isn't working for the rival (supporting)*
- *A corrupt OLSEC agent who is (supporting)*
- *A local rabble-rouser for the separatist rebels (supporting)*
- *The leader of the separatists (major)*

That's seven NPCs, five supporting, one major, and one that isn't going to be in the scenario — Sarah really doesn't want to drop any details about who's the group's patron yet. She also doesn't really want to track six NPCs, so looks for opportunities to consolidate.

One pairing that immediately strikes her is making the OLSEC agent and the local rabble-rouser the same person. Max

Leaving Questions Unanswered

You don't have to make absolutely all your story questions into episodes and scenes in the same scenario. If you have a large number, you can bring up the ones you don't answer in subsequent scenarios. That's one way of making great story arcs (page 429) — you have a series of related story questions, and take two or three scenarios to answer them all.

needs someone to talk to, to find out more about the separatists and to split his loyalties, and the fact that one of their trusted allies is working for the rebels sounds like a great reveal.

Sarah also decides that the Commonality ambassador and the group's OLSEC rival are the same person; she's not sure where she's going with this yet, but the idea that a Commonality faction is interfering in the world's affairs and opposing SCI Force's activities feels appropriate, and could carry over into future scenarios.

She decides the friendly local, Nwasha Hom-Champa, the group defined when setting up their game (page 18) is the OLSEC agent and separatist rabble-rouser; she also decides Enck Lamizen, the demagogue, will just be a throwaway opponent for an early conflict scene. She decides Epona Zaron is a perfect fit for the "villain" role (or is she?). For the Commonality ambassador, she decides on a neuter ***nootrope*** *(an autotroph hominid) called Dai-Nisen-Go, sophisticated, charismatic, and unreadable, will make a good "mastermind" (and maybe supervillain) behind the scenes, and decides to upgrade it from a supporting character to a major NPC.*

Finally, for the corrupt OLSEC agent, she invents a supporting NPC from whole cloth — Yan Skreeli, a Columbiana "rich kid" from an old ranching family with a chip on his shoulder. Now she has her NPCs, and sets about statting them up.

Establish the Locations

As you create NPCs, think about the cool locations the PCs can encounter them in. These may include locations you created when setting up your game (page 17).

List those locations which are key to your story or its NPCs. Describe them and how difficult they are to get into. Ask the following questions:

- Is the location background scenery for an encounter, perhaps with a situation aspect or two, or is it the focus of one or more scenes itself, perhaps requiring exploration or Intrusion rolls?
- Where is the location? The same city? The same world? Will travelling there present opposition, or is it something routine that can happen in the background? Do you need a map? Do the PCs?
- Do you need a ground plan of the location? Will the PCs move from place to place at the location, or is it a single place? Do you need to decide on zones in advance?
- Are there any events, encounters, or hazards associated with the location, or the journey to the location, which aren't directly relevant to the story? Don't worry about introducing sub-plots at this point — side encounters and other challenges can be fun, but try and loop them back to the main story afterwards.

Underdog: Locations

The group determined they'd be starting on the world of Olkennedy (page 466) when setting up their game, and Sarah thinks the planet provides plenty of cool locations to support a whole scenario. She knows the capital city of Craterport Down, location of the starport and the Commonality embassy, will be the starting point, and uses "Friendship Square", which the group created when setting up their game, as one location. She lists the following locations she thinks she'll need:

- *The Commonality embassy, headquarters of Dai-Nisen-Go, the Commonality ambassador.*
- *OLSEC Tower, the HQ of the Olkennedy security service.*
- *Friendship Square, location of Fiver protests and maybe a riot.*
- *The Fiver base, far from Craterport Down — maybe near Olkennedy's "Snow-Layer".*
- *A major location the Fivers can threaten; she hooks in the* Mindscape Implants Are Thought Control *game aspect here, and decides on the planet's primary orbiting global Mindscape instance, which she calls "Alpha Node".*

The Default Plot Thread

By now you probably have some ideas for how your story might develop. You have hooks, story questions, NPCs, and locations. Now's the time to be a bit careful. Resist the urge to start thinking about what the PCs **should** do in the scenario; that's absolutely counter to how ***Mindjammer*** works. Instead, think about your hook — the whole set up to your scenario you've just created and which is about to kick into action when you start play — and about what would happen **if the PCs didn't get involved.**

This is more than an intellectual exercise; it gives you a **default plot thread** which you can fall back on to work out what your key NPCs would be doing and where they'll be at any point in the scenario. It's only a rough tool, though; as soon as your players start interacting with your scenario, they'll rapidly take your *actual* plot thread away from the default, which will become less accurate and therefore less useful. However, it's always useful to have something you can bounce off — a set of imagined events you can compare your current scenario events to if you suddenly need to work out where an NPC will be or what they'll be doing.

Sarah knows she wants a big climax to her scenario, and a surprise or two along the way. She decides that Alpha Node is the final goal of the Fiver separatists — a climactic battle in an orbiting sentient satellite sounds cool. But she wants some action ***before*** *that, too, and figures that the Fivers will stage a distraction by kidnapping some key government and Commonality personnel, and holding them at their secret base. She*

*doesn't decide **who** the Fivers will kidnap yet, as that will probably come naturally out of the story — it may even be the PCs!*

THE "MISSING LAYER" THEORY

In some ways, you're creating your scenario in three "layers". The first layer is your **opposition layer**; the key NPCs and obstacles which the players are up against. The second layer is the **location layer**; the key places which are important to your scenario. And the third layer is the **plot layer** — what actually happens in your scenario.

In a movie or a novel, this plot layer is the most important thing; but in a scenario, it's *missing* to start with — you create it by playing through the scenario. The default plot thread is a rough guide to help you focus on the NPCs and locations and get a feel for some likely events — but you should discard it as soon as you start play, and work together with your players to create that missing plot layer for real.

Setting Up Episodes

Let's focus on those "likely events" for a moment. Preparing a scenario is all about giving yourself the support you need to let you concentrate on that collaborative plot layer creation with the players in play. That's why it's worth thinking about your key locations and NPCs ahead of time. The same also goes for these "likely events". In the *Underdog* scenario, we pretty much know the PCs will investigate the separatist leader, or there'll be a kidnap attempt or attack by the separatist thugs, or a final battle between the government and the separatists; we just don't know **when** this will happen, or **what** the PCs will be trying to achieve.

All this gives us a rough framework to sketch in some detail before play, by defining a few **episodes**.

Here's the important thing about episodes: you should always **customise** (and even invent) them on the fly. Like the default plot thread, episodes **support** your game; they're not a straitjacket to force you in certain directions. Players are spectacularly good at chewing up the best laid scenario ideas and doing things totally unexpected — and you want to encourage that!

As GM, you're guiding the game and adjudicating the rules, but the actual storytelling is collaborative — you're being told a story just as much as the players. Use episodes as focal points for your scenario's likely events, but don't be afraid to abandon them or completely rehash them during play. Each of your episodes will comprise a number of **scenes** (page 426). These are even more nebulous than episodes, collections of challenges, contests, and conflicts (page 147) which you'll often improvise on the fly. Again, it's often useful to think about them in advance — you may come up with a much more satisfying challenge or conflict, for example, with a little preparation time to jot down some stat blocks, hazards, or skill or opposition suggestions, rather than trying to come up with it all in the heat of play (although you can of course do that, too).

The Value of Preparation

If you're on a world like Old Earth, you can wing it easily. But the more alien things get, the more you want to avoid blandness and bring in cool detail. You can do this on the fly, or collaboratively, but a bit of prep goes a long way. Look at the world, culture, or civilisation write-up if you have one, or create a handful of high concept aspects to visualise where your scenario is taking place, what makes it special, and any cool situation aspects which could feature in your game.

*Sarah knows it's possible the PCs might thwart the Fivers' attempts to target Alpha Node, but she thinks it's likely one way or another the high security sentient installation will be a location for action. She stats up breaking into Alpha Node as a **challenge**, and also draws up a layout schematic and some ideas of how the Node could be attacked or defended. Finally, she details a **contest hazard** for disarming a bomb which she figures the Fivers might use to try and destroy the world's Mindscape instance!*

The number of scenes in an episode, and the number of episodes, determine your scenario length. They also determine its structure and feel. For example, many scenarios have a classic "three act" structure, which falls neatly into three episodes. The first sets the scene and introduces the main issues and story questions; the second deals with the "rising action" as the pace increases and the action intensifies; and the third brings everything to a climactic finale and resolves all or most of the questions, for good or ill.

Structure each of those episodes by suggesting their principle sources of opposition. You'll probably save the major confrontation with the big bad guy until the last episode; but you want increasing opposition in the other episodes, too.

Sarah sketches in a rough three-act structure for Underdog, *with three episodes.*

***Episode One** introduces the hook and story questions — the Fiver unrest, the government mission — and culminates in a kidnap attempt.*

Episode Two *traces the Fivers to a secret base near the Snow-Layer, and involves either an attack or a rescue attempt to free kidnapped hostages, or an escape attempt if the PCs themselves have been kidnapped. It ends with the reveal that the Fivers' objective is Alpha Node.*

Episode Three *is the grand finale — the attack on Alpha Node. The default plot thread suggests Epona Zaron has seized control and is threatening to blow up the orbital installation, but Sarah knows that events may be quite different by this stage. In any case she's expecting some kind of major action around the global Mindscape orbital.*

You don't have to use the three-act structure; alternative structures can give your scenarios different vibes and lengths. Here are some alternatives.

- **The Picaresque Structure:** Useful for campaigns focussing on travel, this allows a succession of episodes, often linked by theme. For example, each episode may represent arrival at a new world, engaging in trade, meeting contacts, and then departure prep; it's a great structure for a trading campaign, for example (page 440). The trick is to interleave the likely events of your default plot thread in with the regular, episodic events — a clue here, a meeting there, etc — and occasionally break out of the episodic structure into a climactic episode to resolve the current constellation of events.
- **The Epic Structure:** Like the three-act structure, but longer, or perhaps even a collection of three-act structures.
- **The Short Structure:** Also known as the **one-shot**, usually just one episode, or three acts of one episode each; it's kind of a mini-three act structure.
- **The Two-Parter:** Great for cliffhangers, this is ideally spread over a single long session split into two halves, or — better still — over two sessions, with the first session ending with the cliffhanger and the players really wanting more!

ALTERNATE ORDERS

With the three act structure you may feel constrained to play the scenes in sequence. Resist! Depending on how things unfold, it may make sense to play scenes and even episodes out of the order you initially imagined them in. This is particularly the case with scenes, which may have no fixed order in the first place, but also with episodes, especially if you have more than three. Keep your default plot thread in mind to gauge how events **might** be unfolding, but be prepared to improvise when the PCs sidestep a scene or episode and move directly to the next.

Setting Up Scenes

You can prepare scenes by sketching out likely contests, challenges, and conflicts, but often you'll be creating them as you go, based on the PCs' actions.

SET UP THE FIRST SCENE

When you start a scenario, try and hit the ground running. You don't have to involve the PCs in a raging gun battle as soon as you sit down, but as much as possible push your narrative back to the players, giving them questions to answer, decisions to make. As soon as you've set the scene, describe the hook to the players, and ask them what's the first thing they do. Don't be subtle; your job is to make the hook clear, get the players proactive and involved, and generate **momentum**.

Underdog: The Opening Scene

Sarah considers her story questions and thinks about what she wants as an opening scene. A couple of obvious ideas come to mind:

- *The PCs are involved in a separatist riot in Craterport Down.*
- *The group meet with the Olkennedy government and maybe Commonality ambassador, and are given their mission.*

She opts for the former, figuring that it introduces the scenario's key conflict in a single action-packed scene, with a strong hook; plus it lets the PCs establish their attitude and the tone of the scenario up front. Will the separatists be violent thugs and "the enemy", or fearful civilians who need help if their society isn't to descend into chaos? This first scene should help set the tone for what's to follow.

That doesn't mean she's going to throw out the scene with the government — she'll save that for a follow-up to the first scene.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

One way of generating momentum immediately in your starting scene is to ask the players to contribute to your initial description. Get them involved in describing your scenario hook. Start with the very beginning of your default plot thread — the opening event of your hook — and ask the players where they are and what they're doing. They may give obvious answers, leading you to describe the hook more fully, but equally they may describe themselves in the middle of the opening event, letting you unfold the hook around them. Astute players may even use the opportunity for a compel.



Sarah starts the first scene by taking a minute to describe the world of Olkennedy and how the PCs got there. Then she jumps straight to the hook, describing the Fiver separatist movement, and how a routine protest outside the Commonality embassy suddenly descends into a riot. She asks Chris, "Where exactly is Thaddeus Clay when the riot breaks out in Freedom Square?"

Now, even if Chris just replies with "in the embassy", Sarah's solicited his participation and helped him set the scene. But Chris is awesome, so he says, "Oh, probably in Freedom Square, trying to keep a low profile while observing the protests."

"Perfect!" says Sarah, and holds out a fate point. "So, it looks like someone has leaked that a Highly Experienced SCI Force Controller *is attending the protest incognito — leaving you surrounded when it begins to kick off. Right — what are the rest of you doing?"*

Sometimes you might want to specify that this is how the scenario begins. In this case, just have your opening scenario hooks count as "pre-loaded" compels, and hand out some fate points at the beginning of the session to start the PCs off with something they have to deal with immediately.

Sarah wants to start the players off with some extra fate points off the bat, so at the beginning of the session she says to the players:

"Skin — you know that Some Jobs You Just Can't Leave to Humans*, so you're actually not far from Freedom Plaza; maybe just inside the embassy gates, watching Clay in your vision mag (1 fate point).*

"Max — being surrounded by screaming panicking crowds is bringing New Bahamut back to you. Doctor Miserius Haunts Your Dreams*, but Clay's out there, too, and* SCI Force Have You Over a Barrel*. This is just going to be a mess, isn't it? (2 fate points.)"*

Defining Scenes

Episodes are composed of **scenes**, lasting anywhere from a few minutes to a half hour or more, in which the players try to achieve a goal. Similar to scenes in a movie, television show, or novel, the main characters act in continuous time, usually all in the same location. Once action shifts to a new goal, place, or time, you're in the next scene.

Scenes aren't something you define in great detail in advance; they develop from playing the game. You can identify key contests, challenges, and conflicts ahead of time which are **likely** to form the nuclei of scenes — and it's often useful and time-saving to do so — but ultimately scenes are in-game events you use to construct your plot (page 425).

You can control your scenario's pacing by managing the start and end of scenes. Scenes last as long as they need to, or as long as the players are involved and enjoying themselves; but at the right time you end the scene and move on to the next.

STARTING SCENES

When starting a scene, establish two things as clearly as you can:

- What's the purpose of the scene? (Usually the players will tell you: "We'll go to X and do Y".)
- What interesting thing is just about to happen?

The more specific your scene's purpose, the easier it is to know when it's over; don't let it drag on and slow your session down. If you don't have a clear grasp of your PCs' goals in a scene, ask questions until they state things directly.

The PCs have just arrived in a new and unexplored star system. "OK — let's do a system scan," says Chris.

Now, there are many types of scan you can do in a star system, and a vast amount of information that could be gained which could really bloat this scene. "What sort of thing are you looking for?" asks Sarah.

"Three things," says Chris. "First, what's the stellar primary. Second, are there any technological signals in the system — even event horizon probes. And third, aqueous planets. Let's look for life."

As GM, sometimes you assume a purpose for a scene. For example, at the beginning of a scenario, or after a cliff-hanger, or when the purpose of the scene is to inform the PCs or surprise them (perhaps with an ambush). Go back to the story questions and make the scene contribute to answering them. That way, whenever it's your job to start a scene, you're always moving the story along.

Sarah ended the previous session of the group's story with a cliffhanger: the revelation that Nwasha Hom Champa is an agent of the Fivers. She's thinking about how to start things off next time. The whole situation seems to have really freaked the players out, so she wants to capitalise on that. She figures this is really going to trigger Max's latent support of the under-dogs, and provoke a scene where the group is forced to decide which side they're on..

Always start a scene just *before* something interesting happens. This keeps up the pace, and holds the players' attention. Don't chronicle every moment of the PCs leaving their ship in the docking bay to take a twenty-minute walk across the starport to the transport tube to the city centre. Instead, start when they've already arrived at their destination, and are staring at the riot breaking out around them, cursing their luck.

If you have trouble, think of something to complicate whatever the PCs are trying to do. You can involve the players in describing the complication (page 164), or ask leading questions to figure out the cool thing that's about to happen.

Sarah starts the scene with the group returning to "base" late at night, engrossed in conversation about recent events. Jen suggests they're not staying in the starship — not after the riot. She figures everyone from OLSEC to the local police will be on edge, so they're holed up somewhere safe — probably in the Commonality embassy.

Which means they're understandably surprised by the three armed strangers who ambush them as soon as they walk in the door.

"Whoa!" Reiko says. "How'd they know we were going to be here? How'd they get in*?"*

"Tough to say," Sarah counters, and tosses everyone in the group a fate point. "But there are Loyalties Split by Fiver Separatists*."*

"Fair enough," Chris says, as the group accepts the compel.

"Lyra, no sooner have you entered the domiciliary than a hulking shadowed figure has you in a neck lock, a gun at your head. It's Nwasha Hom Champa, and she's pissed off. 'Who did you tell about me, you Commonality scum?'"

If you have a clear purpose for a scene and start just before some significant action, it's hard to go wrong.

ENDING SCENES

End scenes the way you start them, but in reverse: as soon as you've wrapped up whatever your scene's purpose was, end it as quickly as you can. There's often something the PCs want to do after achieving the goal — talk about the outcome, figure out what they're going to do next, etc — but instead of lingering at that scene to do that, suggest they move on to a new scene which helps resolve one of those questions. You can hold off a while if the players are clearly enjoying their interactions, but once interest flags, move on.

COMPETENCE, PROACTIVITY, DRAMA

Use the following drivers to create ideas for scenes.

- **Competence: *Mindjammer*** PCs are highly competent individuals. Create a scene which gives one or more of them a chance to shine at what they're good at.
- **Proactivity:** The PCs are people who get things done. Create a scene where you can describe them doing something with a clear and simple action. "Find the location of the Fiver base" is too vague; "use a Mindscape probe to force the captured kidnapper to reveal the base's location" is a clear and direct action.
- **Drama:** The PCs are fated to lead dramatic and exciting lives. Create a difficult choice or complication for them. Your best tool for this is a compel, but if the situation is problematic enough, you might not need one.

The group's first impulse is to construct an elaborate assault plan — but Sarah knows Skin's impulses are… more direct.

"Enough talk!" Jen declares.

"But… we just started planning," Chris says.

"Leave it to me — let's go! After all — Some Jobs You Just Can't Leave to Humans*!" Jen holds out her hand, and Sarah hands her a fate point for the compel.*

HIT THEIR ASPECTS

Drawing on the PCs' aspects can provide great inspiration for scenes — especially if you create complications or event-based compels from them.

The scene opens with the OLSEC forces converging on the Fiver base, under conditions of total surprise. The separatists don't stand a chance.

Sarah turns to Hughie. "You going to let the government troops bomb these people, Max?"

*"You're right!" says Max. "*Doctor Miserius Haunts My Dreams*! I've got to warn these people — I'm gonna send out an active sensor pulse."*

Sarah tosses Hughie a fate point. "Nice."

The Scenario in Play

So now you have everything you need for your scenario. You have your hook to get the players' attention, story questions and ideas for core episodes and scenes, a number of cool locations and NPCs and their motivations, and an immediately absorbing first scene. Nothing can go wrong, right? You present the hook, the players respond, and your story rolls from scene to scene, filling out your plot layer to a nice, neat conclusion.

Brace yourself — it'll never happen that way.

When you play a scenario, *whatever happens will always be different from what you expect*. The PCs will hate an NPC you intended them to befriend, have wild successes that reveal a bad guy's secrets early, suffer unexpected setbacks, or any one of a hundred things that don't end up the way you think they should. You'll see your default plot thread demolished, leaving you in uncharted territory.

Get ready for this — it's the kind of exciting and unpredictable awesome you absolutely **want**. You've prepared NPCs and locations to help you describe **where** the PCs are and **who** they're interacting with, and you even have some sketched out episodes and ideas for contest, challenge, and conflict scenes that looked likely to crop up. When the PCs steer the story in the direction of any of this stuff, grab it and adapt it to the new situation, using it for inspiration. Your story questions are vague enough that they can have multiple answers, and you can quickly cut the irrelevant ones and replace them on the fly without having to throw out the rest of your work.

Sarah had expected that the assault on the Fiver base would result in a short outburst of violence, followed by a tense stand-off and the PCs brokering a peace deal between the government and the Fivers.

Right? No.

After Max raises the alarm, the group unilaterally decides to side with the Fivers, attacking the OLSEC assault forces to drive them off. They succeed beyond all expectations, leaving the Fivers victorious and OLSEC routed — and no one to negotiate with!

So... slight detour. Sarah sees a few ways to proceed:

- *OLSEC forces back in Craterport Down dispatch negotiator teams to talk with the Fivers.*
- *The Fivers attack the PCs' ship, forcing them to return to OLSEC HQ and a questionable fate in Craterport Down, surrendering the field to the Fivers.*
- *The Fivers receive the PCs as heroes, welcoming them into their ranks, and OLSEC now thinks they're traitors.*

Sarah decides on the last option — a huge departure from the default plot thread, but she can see some of the cool locations and episodes she'd imagined might still come into play, and it still leaves the PCs in the thick of the action, with an opportunity to achieve a resolution.

Knowing your NPCs' motivations and goals lets you adjust their behavior easily. When the players throw a spanner in the works, make the NPCs dynamic and reactive in pursuit of their goals.

Resolving the Scenario

A scenario ends when you've run enough episodes and scenes to resolve most of the story questions you started with. Sometimes you can do this in a single session if you have a lot of time or only a few questions. If you have a lot of questions, it'll probably take two or three sessions to answer them all.

You don't need to answer every story question or play through every episode if you've already brought things to a satisfying conclusion. You can use unresolved story questions for future scenarios, or just drop them if the players didn't really get involved with them.

Ending a scenario usually triggers a **significant milestone** (page 160). When this happens, check if the campaign needs advancing too — see below.

CAMPAIGNS

When you play ***Mindjammer***, you're probably not thinking of just one session before moving on to something else. Of course you can play that way — as a "one-shot" — but let's assume you want your game to go on longer. What you need is a **story arc**.

A story arc is a complete storyline with its own themes, situations, antagonists, innocent bystanders, and endgame, told over several sessions (somewhere between two and five, usually) and usually more than one scenario. You don't need to plan everything out in detail (in fact, you probably shouldn't, given that no scenario ever survives contact with the players), but you need an idea of where things begin, where they might end, and what might happen in the middle.

A story arc is a lot like a single book. It tells its own story and ends when it's done; you provide some form of closure

Your *Mindjammer* Campaign

Human Space is vast, a flattened sphere of space 20,000 light years in diameter, centred on Old Earth. You can set your **Mindjammer** *campaign anywhere within this space, using as much or as little of this book's material as you want.* ***Chapter 24: The Darradine Rim*** *presents an example octant of Commonality Space as an introductory campaign of pregenerated worlds to get you playing right away.*

If you're interested in creating your own worlds, but still want to use the material in ***Chapter 24: The Darradine Rim*** *(the various species, the conflict with the Venu), try detailing a neighbouring octant or subsector. For a completely blank canvas, Commonality Space contains another 26 sectors, each of 125 subsectors of 8 octants apiece — so there's more than enough room for you to create a huge, homegrown campaign. Then there are the uncharted realms of the Outer Worlds: Commonality scientists theorise that colony slowships penetrated at least 10,000 light years from Old Earth, over 8000 light years beyond the Commonality Frontier. There are vast reaches of space potentially populated with Old Earth's descendants — space empires, alien civilisations, terrible galactic threats, and more. You can find details for generating your own octants on page 368.*

and move on. Sometimes you move on to another story; sometimes your book is just the first in a series of books. That's when you have a **campaign**.

A campaign comprises multiple connected story arcs with an overarching story or theme. It may run for months or even years before you complete it (if you ever do).

That's not as daunting as it might sound. Yes, a campaign is long and large and complex, but you don't come up with the whole thing at once; you may have an idea where it begins and where it might end (which can be helpful), but campaigns develop naturally, as you play, and focus on one story arc at a time.

Campaign Advancement

Characters aren't the only ones who change in response to game events. Player characters leave their mark on locations and NPCs with their passing. Things that were crises and major issues at the start of a game get addressed, resolved, or changed; things that weren't problems before suddenly explode into trouble. Old adversaries fall, and new ones rise.

As GM, when the players are changing their characters during milestones, check whether your game aspects also need to change in response to what they've done, or simply through lack of use. You've seen how constructs, organisations, and even cultures can advance as a result of the players' actions; now let's look at how your campaign can advance.

Here are some things you can do at each milestone.

At Minor Milestones:

- Do you need to add a new location, based on the PCs' actions? If so, come up with some NPCs to give it some personality (if you haven't already) and also give the location an issue.
- Have the PCs resolved an issue at a location? Get rid of the aspect, or maybe change it to represent how the issue was resolved.

The group reaches a minor milestone because they fought off the Fiver attack on the Commonality embassy. It was a small victory that could pay some pretty nice dividends because they now have an ally in Dai-Nisen-Go, the Commonality ambassador.

Sarah thinks about what might change as a result of the group's victory. She doesn't need to add a new location, but she thinks that the Fivers might escalate their activities following this humiliating defeat. She decides to change Craterport Down's Bubbling Tensions *issue to* Sudden Insurgency *to represent the increase in Fiver violence.*

At Significant Milestones:

- Did the PCs resolve an entire game or situation aspect? If so, remove (or change) that aspect.
- Did the PCs permanently change a location? If so, create a new issue or aspect to reflect this, for better or for worse.

Later, the group drives the Fivers out of their secret base in the Akantack Sanctuary. They're still a threat, but their power is significantly diminished — a major victory for the party. This affects the game aspect Loyalties Split by Fiver Separatists, *which Sarah thinks now needs changing. She's not quite sure what to replace it with yet, so she'll think about it for a bit.*

They also created permanent change in the Akantack Sanctuary, which is no longer under the Fivers' secret sway. Most people are grateful, but remaining Fivers have gone underground. Sarah replaces the issue Heart of Fiver Power *with* Fugitive Fiver Guerillas *to represent how things have changed.*

At Major Milestones:

- Did the PCs permanently change the game world? If so, give it a new issue, for better or for worse.

Finally, the PCs defeat the Fiver leader, Epona Zaron, in an epic confrontation. Zaron held a lot of power and public respect, and her unmasking as a violent bomber causes shockwaves in Olkennedian society. What happens next will be decisive for Olkennedy, so Sarah creates the issue Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? *to reflect this.*

Don't make these changes as regularly as the players — be as reactive as you can, changing aspects the player characters have directly interacted with and changed the most, to create a sense of an evolving world.

The Fivers weren't the only game in town. The whole Mindscape Implants Are Thought Control *issue is still unresolved, and tensions between Akantack, Nwasha, and human populations are as heated as ever.*

Sarah thinks the PCs' resolution of the scenario has brought the question of how Olkennedy is going to deal with Rediscovery right to the fore. She changes Loyalties Split by Fiver Separatists *to* Jaw-Jaw or War-War? *That should give the PCs — and the whole of Olkennedian society — an interesting decision to make.*

If the PCs remove an impending issue, another must arise to take its place. After a while, if you notice that you're low on impending issues, introduce a new one.

DEALING WITH NPCS

When you add a new location, add at least one new NPC. Alternatively, when an old one dies or is removed from play, or becomes uninteresting or no longer relevant, it's probably time to swap them out.

As the Fiver base and Epona Zaron are no more, Sarah decides she needs a new power centre for the Fiver guerillas. She decides that Dai-Nisen-Go, the Commonality ambassador who's the group's secret rival in OLSEC, is going to make its move and secretly enable a hidden Fiver base on Van Kuvrai, perhaps even in the suburbs of Craterport Down. She imagines it's Close to the Halls of Power.

She wants a face for the new Fiver guerilla leader, and decides on a disaffected officer from the Van Kuvrai army, whom she names Colonel Montraal. If the PCs remain on Olkennedy, he'll be a brand new villain for them to confront.

Recurring NPCs

Remember there are two ways to reuse NPCs — to show *how the PCs have grown since they started*, or to show *how the world is responding to their growth*.

With the former, you don't change the NPC, because that's the point — the next time the PCs meet them, they have new worries, or have somehow outgrown that NPC, who remains static. Maybe you even change their category — they were a main NPC, but now they're a supporting NPC because of how the PCs have grown.

With the latter, you advance the NPC like the PCs, adding skills, changing aspects, changing or adding stunts, and otherwise doing whatever's necessary to keep them relevant to the PCs. This kind of NPC might hang around for several story arcs, providing continuity as the PCs become more powerful and influential.

Sarah decides to advance Nwasha Hom Champa along with the PCs. She makes her into a leading figure in a moderate separatist faction negotiating with the Commonality instead of resorting to guerilla war, adding skill points, changing aspects and stunts to fit. She figures she'll make a good foil or even adversary if the PCs remain on planet.

She decides not to advance Dai-Nisen-Go, even though the group's secret rival remains as the Commonality ambassador. If the PCs remain on Olkennedy, one day they'll be powerful enough to take on this machiavellian autotroph directly.

CULTURAL CHANGES

While you can change and advance cultures like NPCs, you can also modify them in direct response to your PCs' actions or changes in the broader campaign.

First, cultures should change in response to cultural conflict and operations. While cultures throughout the Commonality are in constant flux, focus on those directly relevant to your campaign. Cultural changes may even be indicated by situation aspects or consequences which may remain effective for years.

Second, you should make ad hoc changes to cultures when appropriate, using the campaign advancement guidelines above. While cultures are resilient and often slow to change, they may shift emphasis or even undergo major changes in response to your campaign's broader events. If you decide a milestone is significant enough to change game aspects, consider whether it also affects any cultural aspects, capabilities, or even stunts and skills.

Sarah sees the Underdog *scenario as the precursor to an Assimilate meme attack by the Commonality, which she'll play out at the table if the PCs decide to stay on the world — she'll probably describe it in terms of the fate of the Fiver guerillas, moderate separatist faction, and government jostling for power. For now, she makes* Jaw-Jaw or War-War? *into a situation aspect for the Olkennedy culture; if the Commonality meme attack succeeds in changing one of its aspects, this will move it closer to Stage Four Cultural Integrity.*

PLOT STRESS

Plot stress is a tool for **pacing** scenarios and managing unfolding story arcs or character development. You can establish events (background or otherwise) which you envisage happening during the scenario, and use the PCs' actions and their results to trigger them. This embeds the PCs' actions in the game world, and intensifies the sense of realism, fate, and drama; if they screw up big time, they just know something bad is going to happen!

In some ways, plot stress is a way of structuring your campaign advancements, tying them into specific events, applying them to scenarios and characters. It's part of "treating everything like a character". To use it, you attach a stress track to any story element — a character, an organisation, or an entire scenario. In-game events then cause stress to that plot stress track; when it takes consequences, they trigger specific events in reaction, either to the character or organisation, or the scenario's plot.

You can use **success at a cost** to cause stress or consequences to a plot stress track. Additionally, you can list actions or activities which cause plot stress.



Underdog: Example Plot Stress Track

Sarah's decided that at some point the Fiver leader Epona Zaron is going to detonate the bomb on Alpha Node. The longer the players take, and the more they fail, the closer that event is going to come. She's decided the following events may happen along the way:

- *The bomber is going to send her last two supporting NPC henchmen against the PCs.*
- *She's going to lock off her area of Alpha Node.*
- *She's going to depressurise all access to her area.*
- *She's going to detonate the bomb.*

Out of the above, the last event is a "taken out event" — Sarah decides it's what happens if the plot stress track is ***taken out****. The other three events are plot stress* ***consequences*** *which can be triggered to* avoid *that happening.*

Sarah sketches out a standard stress track for the plot, with two stress boxes, as follows:

Plot Stress Track

Countdown to the Bombing of Alpha Node 1 2

Now the group's ready to go.

How to Cause Plot Stress

As GM it's up to you to decide which actions cause plot stress. This is a question of context; if you're using plot stress, for example, to measure time ticking away, then maybe every dice roll failure you choose to succeed at a cost can whittle away your plot stress. However, if your plot stress is measuring the deterioration in a relationship — for example, the breakdown of negotiations — then only events which affect those negotiations directly will cause plot stress; succeeding at cost on a Drive check is unlikely to cause plot stress unless you're trying to smuggle a whistleblower out of a diplomatic residence when the world is on the brink of war.

TRIGGERING EVENTS AND CAUSING CONSEQUENCES

Based on the context of your plot stress, come up with a list of events or actions which will cause plot stress. These will almost always be specific to your scenario or campaign, although some are more general.

In the Countdown to the Bombing of Alpha Node*, Sarah decides to use plot stress in 3 ways:*

First, she decides that success at a cost in actions which take time or alert the bomber can cause plot stress; a minor cost causes 1 point of stress; a serious cost causes 2.

Second, she decides that certain actions will naturally push the scenario pace, bringing the finale closer. These are:

- *The PCs stop to think: 1 stress.*
- *The PCs spend a scene doing something unrelated to tackling the bomber: 2 stress.*
- *The PCs are delayed by anything: 1 stress.*

Third, she decides certain specific actions by the PCs will enrage the bomber, ie:

- *The PCs kill either of the bomber's two supporting henchmen, and she finds out: 1 consequence.*
- *The PCs cut the power / hack Alpha Node, and she finds out: 1 consequence.*

Finally, assign the events you initially decided would be triggered by plot stress to consequences, deciding whether they're mild, moderate, or severe. You aren't restricted to three consequences for your plot stress track; you can use more or less, depending on how much you want to use plot stress and your scenario's length.

Sarah assigns the consequences as follows:

- ***Mild consequence (-2):** The bomber sends her last two supporting NPC henchmen against the PCs.*
- ***Moderate consequence (-4):** The bomber locks off her area of Alpha Node.*
- ***Severe consequence (-6):** The bomber depressurises all access to her area.*
- ***Taken Out:** The bomber detonates the bomb.*

REFRESHING FATE POINTS ON A PLOT STRESS CONSEQUENCE

You can use a plot stress consequence to regain one or more fate points. You can do this in two ways:

- Let the players decide to trigger a consequence, in return for fate points.
- Award fate points to the PCs whenever a consequence is triggered.

You don't have to do this on **every** consequence — but it can be cool if a particular consequence looks likely to spawn lots of action (and, let's face it, good plot stress consequences generally will). In a sense, the consequence acts like a giant compel, similar to the way you may frontload a fate point award in a scenario opening scene (page 427).

The number of fate points you award is up to you; as a base, consider awarding 1 on a mild consequence, 2 on a moderate, and 3 on a severe.

WHAT KIND OF CONSEQUENCES?

Plot stress consequences work a little differently from normal consequences, depending on the role they play.

- **Sequential:** These consequences are designed to be triggered in order, in an escalating series as the scenario moves to its climax — the taken out result.
- **Episodic:** These consequences represent optional side events you can trigger **in order to** delay or prevent the taken out result. They're ways of "buying off" the bad stuff, and so are more like traditional consequences.

You can combine the two in your scenario. In particular, you may allow your players to choose whether to trigger episodic consequences, treating them as a kind of compel. This involves ceding a degree of control over your scenario, which your group may or may not be comfortable with — see page 165.

Campaign Plot Stress

This is like scenario plot stress writ large, used to track events at the campaign level. Events which cause campaign plot stress are **big**; usually the outcomes of whole scenarios or story arcs. The events triggered by campaign plot stress consequences can be actual scenarios, specific milestones, or changes to game aspects, cultures, organisations, etc, to reflect the events. You'll maintain your campaign plot stress track as a long-term thing, as a measure of your campaign's progress.

As part of Jackson Stark's Custodian Avatar Paradox *high concept change (page 162), Sarah has created a series of campaign events which can occur relating to Stark's mysterious destiny. One of those is* Mysterious Protectors Shadowing Your Moves*, which she decides is a mild campaign plot stress consequence which can be triggered when succeeding at a cost in the climactic scene of a scenario where Stark narrowly escapes serious injury or death. Mysterious protectors rescue him from his fate before vanishing, leaving him wondering which unseen forces surround him.*

Recovering Plot Stress

Usually plot stress is one-way; you lose it, inexorably, until the inevitable climax. However, if you're using plot stress to measure campaign stresses and strains — like one world's



gradual descent into civil war — then you can allow plot stress to be recovered as well as inflicted.

Actions, episodes, and even scenarios can be viewed as "plot stress recovery actions", clearing one or more plot stress boxes. **Don't** use this as a way to **stop** exciting plot events happening; that's boring, and works against the "forward drive" aspect of plot stress. Instead of wiping out plot stress, use episodic consequences to stave off the finale.

Instead, use plot stress recovery in limited circumstances to *actively* push back certain bad events **within** a scenario or campaign. The "active" bit is key; you're using plot stress recovery to measure the positive ways in which the PCs work to hold back disaster.

Sarah is using plot stress to track Olkennedy's descent into civil war. However, civil war isn't inevitable*, merely likely, a part of the default plot thread if the PCs don't do anything about it. At one point, the campaign has no plot stress boxes left, and serious consequences are about to ensue. The PCs decide to attempt a risky set of peace negotiations. Sarah decides to structure these as a plot stress recovery action; if they succeed, then one or more plot stress boxes will be cleared, staving off the civil war for another day.*

Character Plot Stress

Character plot stress is similar to campaign plot stress, but it's focussed on events in a **character's** story rather than the campaign. It can apply equally to organisations, constructs, and cultures. There are two forms of character plot stress.

PC PLOT STRESS

This measures **external** events in a character's life, **not** internal changes, which are handled by advancements and consequences. It's useful when a character's past threatens to catch up with him, or for tracking events affecting dependent characters. It can also be used to track larger events in a character's life; a wasting disease, a course of study or training, the construction of a ship (page 442), etc.

NPC PLOT STRESS

NPC plot stress lets you put a bit more structure on NPC changes during a campaign. For example, you can programmatically chart an NPC's descent into madness, corruption, or supervillain status, rather than deciding it on a more ad hoc basis. This can be particularly effective when combined with plot stress recovery actions; an NPC threatens to devolve into an arch-villain, while the PCs' actions pull him back from the brink. In this way, character plot stress can let you incorporate the battle for a character's "soul" as a campaign element.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE
THEMES, GENRE, AND STYLES OF PLAY

"The Core Worlds were as weird as hell. People lived forever, yet led repressed lives of drugged-out bliss. There were traditions thousands of years old, incomprehensible caste systems, terrifying social intrigue. Religion and democracy were illegal, and you could buy and sell xenomorphs like you would a set of clothes — just don't try and do it with money, or they'd treat you like you were some degenerate hick from the boondocks. People from the Core were as different from the Fringe as you could imagine; sometimes it was hard to believe they were even the same species."

This chapter looks at some key aspects of gaming in the ***Mindjammer*** universe — how choosing different themes, genres, and styles of play can affect your game.

THEMES: WHAT SHAPE WILL THE FUTURE BE?

The shape of the future is what's really at stake in ***Mindjammer***. Are human beings about to go extinct, replaced by transhuman intelligences? Is the Commonality going to be a force for liberation, or oppression? How should we direct our own evolution in this time of turmoil? All these questions are up for grabs, and everyone has an agenda. What's yours? What are you going to do to decide the future of the human race?

How you tackle these questions determines the **theme** of your ***Mindjammer*** game. You can refer to your game's theme when choosing your **game aspects**, or when selecting character high concepts. The example themes below provide some suggestions.

You can also use themes to inform the background of scenarios and story arcs, using them to determine plot and subject matter, or your game's mood. You can change themes, even from scenario to scenario, for a comprehensive feel, or between story arcs for a sense of development and progression.

Transhumanism

Human beings are not the pinnacle of evolution — they're just one step along the way. Genurgy, hypertech, and the Mindscape are helping the Commonality direct that evolution, and divergent evolution is taking humankind down some strange and unexpected paths. People are becoming something *other* than human — perhaps something more powerful.

Transhumanism is a major theme in ***Mindjammer***, permeating the whole setting. Making it **your game's** dominant theme lets you focus on its implications in the lives of your PCs.

Example Aspects: *The Definition of Humanity Is up for Grabs; Runaway Evolution and the Strangeness of Tomorrow; Your Human Concerns Are No Longer Mine!*

Example Questions: *What are you evolving into? Are you going to lose your humanity, convinced you're superior to the common herd? Or are you going to be its protector? Are you going to leave the Commonality behind, concentrating on your own personal development, or even forging a new society out there among the stars? Or are you going to mould the Commonality into the shape you think it should have?*

A Golden Age

There's a lot of **optimism** in the ***Mindjammer*** setting. Sure, there are huge problems to overcome, but the Commonality looks like humankind's great hope to create a transhuman

galactic civilisation, transcending everything that's gone before. **Golden Age** campaigns focus on this optimism; on building, on great prospects of trade, exploration, diplomacy, and discovery. Very often it's tied to the **heroic** or **epic** styles of play, and the **optimistic** tone (see below).

Example Aspects: *A Cosmos Filled With Wonder and Adventure; Bright-eyed Star Captain Sailing the Seas of Space; We Take a Message of Hope and Regeneration to the Stars!*

Example Questions: *What can you do to help the Rediscovery? Will you defend the Commonality culture as it rescues its long lost colonies? Are you for the Core or the Fringe? Can the two come together in a true Golden Age?*

A Chance to Begin Again!

The great migrations of the Commonality — whether in the past, during the Great Diaspora, or now, with Rediscovery and Expansion — are driven by people who've decided that lives in the gilded cages of the Commonality Core aren't for them. Turning their backs on lives of restriction, regulation, and pampered luxury, they're heading out to an uncertain and possibly very dangerous future on the Fringe or even beyond the Frontier, where they can live free, and choose their own lives for themselves.



Example Aspects: *Free From the Ant-Hill; We Can Create an Ideal Society; Messianic Leader Seeking the Promised Land.*

Example Questions: *What made you leave? What are you looking for? Are you prepared for the hardships and deprivations of a life away from the pampered Core? Do you want to find a world where you can belong, or start your own colony?*

Looking Forwards, Looking Back

While Rediscovery only began two hundred years ago, humankind has been heading out to the stars for ten thousand years — and possibly longer. Many rediscovered worlds are ancient cultures — some technologically primitive, some preserved versions of ancient Old Earth cultures — or with surprising and possibly perilous unexpected differences.

With this theme, your game contrasts far future concepts with historical cultures and questions — whether historical cultures from the Commonality's past and our own futures which you invent yourself, or those based on our own historical past. Some culture worlds (page 308) are naturally this way — others are deliberate recreations to act as cultural "strong points".

Example Aspects: *Heir to the Kingdom of the Five Planets; The Honourable Way of the Space Samurai; The Revolutionary Tribune Condemns the Pharaoh Sentience to Death!*

Example Questions: *Has humankind lost its way? Are there things from the past we should preserve? Do these benighted worlds have the right to reject the Commonality?*

Following Up the Great Diaspora

The peak of the Great Diaspora lasted five thousand years, and comprised representatives of all manner of Old Earth peoples and cultures. There are secrets and experiments out there — things which history has forgotten.

With this theme your game comes up against the consequences of the past — the survival of cultures and ideas best forgotten, the resolution of historical mysteries, the clash of cultures with values millennia old with the vibrant New Commonality.

Example Aspects: *The Further You Go, the Farther Back in Time; The Doom of the Dakotan Diaspora; Leader of the Archaeological Expedition to the Edge of Space.*

Example Questions: *How far did the Diaspora get? Was there really a forgotten First Diaspora in the Prehistoric Age of Space? Why did the Diaspora stop? Did we find something?*

Cultural Conflict

The Commonality culture is changing as a result of cultural conflicts with rediscovered worlds. With this theme, your game has huge power to decide how that process resolves — to determine the shape of the Commonality culture into

the future and the cultures of many worlds. Your adventures don't have to deal with meme attacks and the culture rules directly, but the issues and story questions you face arise from those conflicts.

Example Aspects: *Freedom of Conscience vs Protection From Superstition; The Pursuit of Wealth Is the Pursuit of Happiness; Money Is the Root of All Evil; Black and White Philosopher in a World of Grey Answers.*

Example Questions: *Is the Commonality right to "defuse" dangerous memes? Or is it destroying cultural ideas before properly understanding them? What if you find a culture with better answers than the Commonality? Should the Commonality Fringe split from the Core? Would that lead to war?*

Conflict Is Everywhere

Amid endless opportunity, the Commonality flickers with war. It may be the birth of a new civilisation — or the death of one; it's too early to say. With this theme, your game focuses on the fighting which is everywhere in the Commonality — whether with the Venu, among the Successor States, in the mysterious military holdout expeditions along the edge of the Mardisti Anomaly, or any of a thousand places. Military campaigns, black and special ops, wars of trade, tech, space battles, or even primitive warrior cultures — there's endless scope to scratch that military science-fiction itch.

Example Aspects: *All Combat Walkers Are Alike but This One Is Mine; Hero of the Battle of Minerva 6; Some Things Are Only Solved by a Shooting War.*

Example Questions: *Can you train up these colonists to resist the Venu invasion? Will you take the merc ticket, even though you know you're on the wrong side? How will you cope with losing your whole platoon in the Xeno Wars? No one but you can see the war that's coming — what are you going to do?*

STYLES OF PLAY

There are many ways to play science-fiction games; bright-eyed space opera, gritty realism, flippant gung-ho Western-style, thoughtful and philosophical, or even comic. This section provides some example **styles of play**.

You can restrict yourself to one style, or move through styles as your campaign grows, or take occasional detours and excursions into different styles for a change. Your play style is often good for inspiring **troubles** (page 21) and even **game issues** (page 16).

Gritty

Gritty science-fiction is about individuals struggling to survive. It can be grim and dark, or have a tight focus on the personalities of PCs on colony worlds, exploring, fighting, surviving. Characters are usually everyday people; you may even create them as Good (+3) characters for an especially hard-nosed feel. The gritty style can be linked to the **optimistic**, **pessimistic**, or even **cynical** tones (see below). You'll often focus on a limited campaign area; maybe a few worlds, or even just one part of one world or system.

Example Troubles: *A Platoon Ready to Tear Itself Apart; Repair the Ship Before the Attack Droids Arrive; Can the Colony Survive the First Winter?*

Example Game Issues: *Street Gangs of the Undercity; Travel the Trade Routes to Keep the Creditors at Bay.*

Heroic

The heroic style of play is more or less the ***Mindjammer*** standard. It's about individuals making a difference, rising from positions of relative obscurity to tackle the big issues of the day. It's often **optimistic** or perhaps even a bit **cynical**; advancements are usually a big deal. You may concentrate on a narrow campaign scope to start with, then gradually broaden the focus.

Example Troubles: *I Must Avenge My Father; War Comes Closer Every Day.*

Example Game Issues: *Expansionary Warlords of the Successor States; Power Vacuum on the Overstretched Frontier.*

Epic

Epic games are about the great sweep of human history and the stories of civilisations. The PCs are movers and shakers — generals, mediator sentiences, gestalt controllers, SCI Force controllers — and often Superb (+5) characters. You'll have organisation and culture extras, and be interacting directly with other organisations and cultures, and controlling fleets, armies, ministries, instrumentalities, and corporacies. Your campaign will regularly change your setting's aspects on a large scale.

Example Troubles: *I Said I Would Never Lead the Fleet Again; These People Need Me.*

Example Game Issues: *The Quarantine Zone Cannot Hold; Chess Game of the Hidden Custodians.*

Meta / Philosophical

With meta / philosophical games, you're overtly playing with **ideas**, or running campaigns which are a little more abstract. Maybe instead of using characters, each player is running an organisation like a government, corporacy, instrumentality, or culture, and you're playing month- or year-long exchanges to follow the history of the Commonality for years or centuries to come. Or maybe you're focussing on your **theme** more than your characters,

perhaps playing through the lives of multiple characters to try and answer some "big questions" which intrigue you — maybe a "How the West Was Won" campaign, or even a "Decline and Fall" or "War Against the Machines".

Example Troubles: *Chronodisplacement and the Chain of Command; Centrifugal Forces.*

Example Game Issues: *Consensus vs Command; Reining in the Corporacies With Instrumentality Power.*

TONE

The tone of your game is a personal choice and a matter of preference. By default, ***Mindjammer*** has an optimistic, if realistic, tone.

Optimistic

The New Commonality of Humankind is facing immense threats as it spreads to the stars, but is overcoming them. The evolution of humankind is challenging, often fraught with danger, but it's happening all the same. While everything could still fall apart, if your PCs remain brave, resourceful, and resolute, there's great cause for hope for a bright future.

Scenario Hooks: Help the lost colony into the Commonality; Show the Venu the error of their ways; Deal with the challenges of transhuman evolution without losing your soul.

Pessimistic

A pessimistic tone sees the PCs fighting desperate battles; the Commonality is becoming more oppressive as it expands; humankind itself faces annihilation or extinction at the hands of cold transhuman intellects; and the instinctive tribalism and bloodlust of human beings threatens to tear the nascent interstellar civilisation apart.

Be careful about using a pessimistic tone in campaigns; few people want to play relentlessly depressing games. Instead, maybe dip into this tone occasionally, perhaps for a scenario or story arc, and perhaps have the PCs' goal to be to restore an optimistic tone. Alternatively, the PCs' goal may be to find their own small-scale, deeply personal causes for hope against a darker and more desperate backdrop.

Scenario Hooks: A rag-tag bunch of rebels fighting a desperate cause; Rescue your brother from the Hades re-education planet.

Cynical

A cynical tone depicts a Commonality of lies, propaganda, and corruption, which succeeds as long as everyone goes along with the pretence. Sure, everyone says Rediscovery is a noble project, but **we** know it's about extending imperial control; sure, the Mindscape gives us awesome powers, but **we** know it's also a medium for brainwashing and surveillance. In a cynical game, your PCs may go along with the "big lie", or they may fight against it in their own way — exposing corruption and abuses, working for a better way.

Scenario Hooks: Corporacy corruption controls the Commonality embargo; Why are we sanctioning a culture which wants monitor band cloaks to be legal?

Light-hearted

For a more pulpy or even comic tone, reduce the conflicts in the ***Mindjammer*** setting to black-and-white, good vs evil. The Venu become Nazi-like goons who cackle manically and can't shoot straight; xenomorphs have exaggerated animal characteristics; synthetics have slinky sexy bodies or clunky whirring limbs. Culture worlds can be parodies of historical and national stereotypes, fictionals can be ludicrous and unlikely, and even the PCs can find themselves playing corny and cliched roles.

Light-hearted games run the risk of being short-term, one-joke games, and it can be difficult to "get serious" again afterwards. However, with the right group the occasional light-hearted or tongue-in-cheek session or scenario can be a welcome break from saving the world.

Scenario Hooks: An intelligent alien species has been discovered which is irresistibly tasty to human palates — can the SCI Force contact team make it through First Contact before devouring their hosts? While penetrating the imposality of a mad dead dictator, the PCs find themselves in a virtual room with a tiny door in the wall and a bottle on a table labelled "Drink Me"…

Surreal

Mindjammer can get pretty trippy; surreal games dial up the strangeness and its mind-blowing side. This can be a good approach for a campaign with the right group, especially for meta / philosophical games.

Scenario Hooks: Your ***Mindjammer*** ship is a celebrity on the world you're visiting, and everywhere ships and vehicles crowd round pestering it for interviews. A solar flare has sent a heavily-armed manowar into eidolon crisis, and it's developed the personality of a seven-year old child. It's playing hide and seek in the planet's ring system, and has created an imposality that looks like a mediaeval war game to protect it in the Mindscape. How can the PCs get to it to provide redactive therapy?

Symbolic / Allegorical

Mindjammer has many elements which echo real-world themes and historical trends. The Rediscovery has elements

of imperial expansion, conquest, and colonisation; but also the moral self-doubt about whether it's ethically right. Expansion suggests the Voyages of Discovery. The tension between Core and Fringe parallels modern debates about freedom, security, surveillance, and control.

You can build these elements directly into your game — take a history book, or even a newspaper or website, and use it as direct inspiration for your scenario hooks. A big corporacy is setting up shop in a remote area, disrupting a local culture; a conflict breaks out within a society between modernisers and traditionalists; populations give up freedoms because they're afraid of nebulous terrors which governments exploit to increase control.

This kind of "serious" game might not be for you — it's often highly charged politically and ideologically — but it can give your campaign a real sense of urgency and realism as you and your PCs resolve some modern dilemmas in your own way.

Scenario Hooks: A corporacy has screwed up and ruined the economy on a world, and is demanding the population foot the bill; SCI Force has been asked to stage a "false flag" attack to allow a pro-Commonality dictator to seize power on a rediscovered world.



GENRE

Science-fiction is a broad church, containing many genres and subgenres with their own themes, styles, and tones. The following are a selection; use them to create hooks for your scenarios, story arcs, and maybe even whole campaigns, and to select your characters' occupations.

Mining and Salvage

The PCs are a hard-nosed crew of a mining or salvage vessel, exploiting resources, processing ores, repairing and recycling salvage, and sometimes turning a profit. See "Mining and Resource Extraction" and "Salvage and Repair" below.

Typical Occupations: Belter, Scavenger, Starship Pilot.

Military Campaigns

The PCs are a mercenary company, soldiers of fortune, or maybe serve in the AFI (page 284) or the army of a rediscovered or lost colony world. Military campaigns focus on combat, but also involve vehicle battles, intrigue, hierarchies, strategy, and fleet and army engagements using the organisations rules (page 265).

Typical Occupations: Barbarian, Any Military build, Space Force Mediator.

Conspiracy

Conspiracy games focus on **organisations**, often as extras or opponents. NPCs may be politicians, corporacy apparatchiks, or backstabbing bureaucrats with sinister agendas.

Typical Occupations: Any Security build.

Special Ops

The Commonality always needs shady operatives to undertake secret missions. The PCs are skilled in stealth and subterfuge.

Typical Occupations: Assassin, Culture Agent, SCI Force Enforcer.

Hacking

Lots of action in the Mindscape differentiates hacking games from conspiracy and special ops. The PCs are technical and Mindscape specialists with strong Intrusion and Stealth skills.

Typical Occupations: Mindscape Engineer, Mindscape Hacker, Spy.

Mysteries

There are many mysteries in ***Mindjammer***. Why was planing technology invented so suddenly two hundred years ago? What is the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon? Where do the Low-high go in interstellar space? Who were the Predecessors?

You can throw in a mystery scenario to address one part of one of these questions, or another which you invent, or even build one into an entire story arc or campaign. Mystery games often revolve around clues and analysis, so skills like Investigate and Science come to the fore.

Typical Occupations: Archaeologist, Culture Agent, Spy.

Exploration

Entire campaigns can be run exploring new worlds and star systems using the "Exploration Missions" guidelines from **Chapter 18: Worlds and Civilisations**, **Chapter 19: Stellar Bodies and Star Systems**, and **Chapter 21: Alien Life**. The PCs are probably crew members on a single ship — maybe a *Botany Bay* Stage II Explorer (page 231) — exploring an uncharted subsector beyond the Frontier.

Typical Occupations: Any Explorer build, Sentient Starship, Starship Pilot.

Research

Commonality tech isn't static; there's always new stuff to invent and discover. The PCs may be lost colony or rediscovered world scientists looking for a boost or developing a new capability (page 297), or Commonality researchers exploring the mysteries of 3-space, psionics, or the Pulse Dragon Phenomenon.

Typical Occupations: Bootstrapper, Any Sci-Tech build.

Transcending

The PCs are pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human, evolving to a higher state of existence, exploring the powers of a transcendent mind. See "Going Post" below (page 447).

Typical Occupations: Any posthuman occupation.

Generational Campaigns

You don't just have to play one character — you can play his descendants, too. Families can be treated as organisations, and can be taken as extras, and you can create family members as extras, NPCS, or even new PCs if your character retires or dies. Generational campaigns can be very suited to **epic** or **meta / philosophical** games.

Decide whether all the PCs come from a single family, or whether each player is playing a separate family. You may want to run your scenarios at accelerated speed, taking actions at family organisation level and using organisation exchanges; or running one scenario at character level per year or decade, charting the rise and fall of generations.

Typical Occupations: Any Civilian build, any Downtecher build, any Rogue build.

Trading Campaigns

A perennial favourite of science-fiction games, trading campaigns combine exploration with intrigue and resource management, and occasional mysteries and conflict. The PCs are crew members of a trading ship like a *Profit*-class New Trader (page 238), travelling from world to world, transporting cargoes, passengers, and information. See "Interstellar Trade" (page 442).

Typical Occupations: New Trader, Sentient Starship, Starship Pilot.

Cyberpunk

Great for gritty games, cyberpunk focuses on transhumanism from the point of view of alienated subcultures struggling with the impact of enhancements and rapidly changing tech. There are many opportunities for these games in ***Mindjammer***, whether among the many downtecher subcultures of the Commonality, or in rediscovered world societies struggling with the impact of the vast and powerful Commonality culture — or perhaps one of its corporacies.

Xenomorphs can be a particular feature of ***Mindjammer*** cyberpunk games — these downtrodden and often disadvantaged people eke out questionable existences in underworld subcultures across the Commonality, but particularly in the tightly regulated Core Worlds.

Typical Occupations: Bootstrapper, Mindscape Hacker, Underworlder.

TROPES

Some genre-related activities occur frequently in games, and not just those of that genre. Here are some rules guidelines for handling them.

Mining and Resource Extraction

To mine a resource, you must first find one. This is an Active Sensing or Investigate roll against Fair (+2) opposition, taking several days. You may invoke plentiful resources (page 329), or the GM may invoke or compel scarce resources against you.

Find a Mining Strike:
Active Sensing / Investigate vs Fair (+2) opposition

On a failure, you make no strike; on a tie, you make a small strike of 1 unit (page 206); a success finds 10 units, and a success with style finds enough units to fill your cargo bay, or 10 units of increased value. Mining strikes are usually unrefined raw materials and ores; they're Large (+1) and have a **value** of Fair (+2), or Great (+4) if increased value.

After finding a mining strike, you must **extract** it. This is a Technical roll taking several days, usually against Fair (+2) opposition, though difficult environments (*On the Bright Face of a Tidally-Locked World*, for example) may expose you to situation aspects and even hazards.

Extract a Mining Cargo From a Strike:
Technical vs Fair (+2) opposition

On a success, you extract 1 unit of ore for every shift generated on the roll, up to the maximum present in the strike, into a raw materials **cargo** (page 443). Cargoes extracted are treated as aspects, ie *10 Large (+1) Units of Increased Value Zanthrium Ore*.

Resource Processing

Resource processing allows you to make things, or transform a **raw materials cargo** into a **processed cargo** (page 444). You must have access to a processing facility like an Ore Processor (page 214). Resource processing is a Technical roll taking several days, against an opposition equal to the raw materials cargo value.

Process a Resource:
Technical vs Raw Materials Cargo Value

On a success, you can either decrease the cargo size by 1 step, or increase its value by +2. On a success with style, you can do both. This affects 1 unit, plus 1 unit per shift.

For example, on a successful processing roll, you can transform a Large (+1) raw materials cargo into a Medium (+0) processed cargo, or a Fair (+2) value Large (+1) raw materials cargo into a Great (+4) value Large (+1) processed cargo. On a success with style, you can transform a Fair (+2) value Large (+1) raw materials cargo into a Great (+4) value Medium (+0) processed cargo.

Salvage and Repair

Salvage usually involves searching battle and debris fields for potentially valuable materials. It's an Active Sensing or Investigate roll taking a day, against a Fair (+2) opposition; environment hazards and situation aspects may apply.

Salvage a Battle or Debris Field:
Active Sensing / Investigate vs Fair (+2) opposition

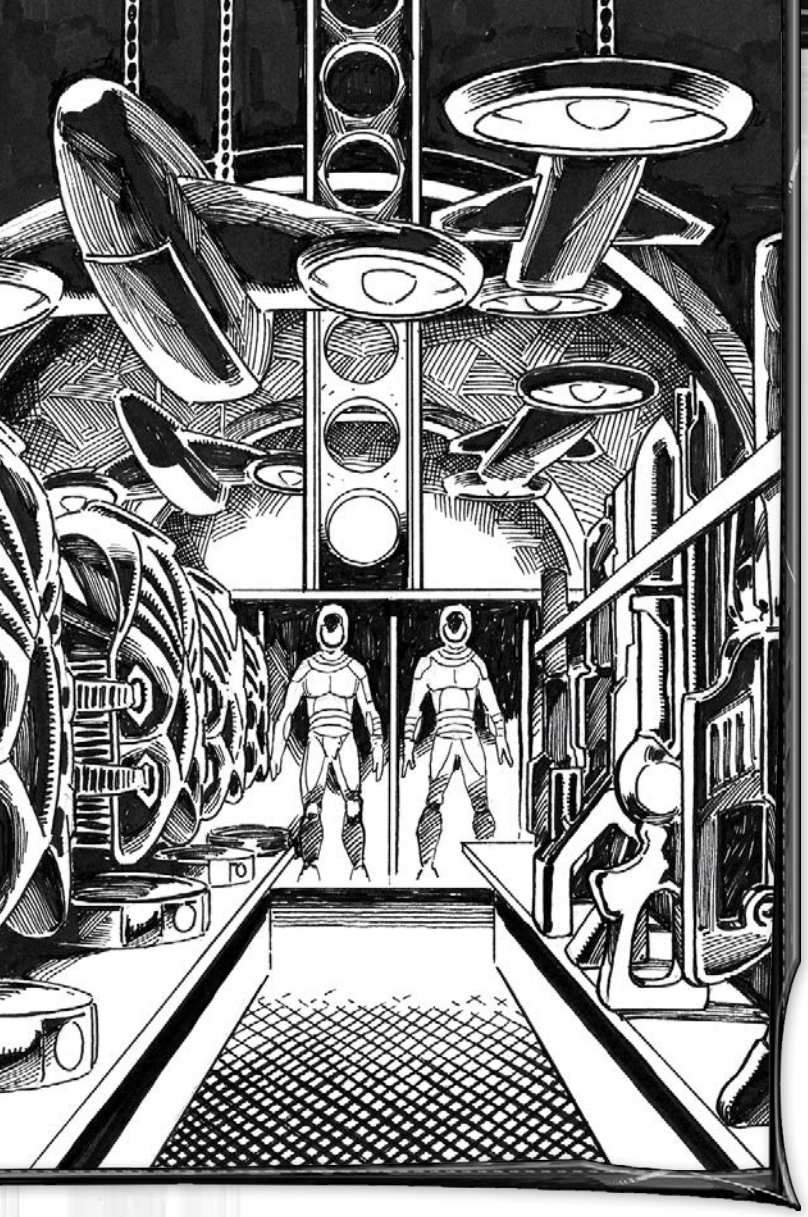
On a success, you salvage 1 unit of appropriate gear with a severe consequence; in a space battle field, this will be Large (+1) or Huge (+2), depending on the battle; in a ground-based ruin, this may be Medium (+0) or Large (+1). The salvage is an aspect (*1 Large (+1) Badly Damaged Planing Engine*, etc), and may usually be defined by the player; the GM has veto. On a success with style, the item may only have a moderate consequence, or be 1 scale larger, or there may be 2 units. Salvaged items may be repaired using the repair rules (page 178).

At the GM's discretion, ruins and battlefields may also be treated as mining strikes for salvaging raw or processed materials cargoes like metals, polymers, drive parts, etc, instead of complete items.

Construction and Manufacture

With appropriate manufacturing facilities, you can make a Technical roll to transform a processed cargo into a manufactured one, either decreasing its scale by 1 step or increasing its value by +2. This affects 1 unit, plus 1 unit per shift.

Manufacture a Cargo:
Technical vs Processed Cargo Value



You can also use the item creation rules (page 178) to create **constructs**. This is a construct action, so requires either an appropriate construct extra or stunt. It uses the Technical skill, against the tech index of the construct to be created.

The time required for either action depends on the scale of construction or manufacture: see Table 23-1.

As with creating items, a successful roll gives you an aspect representing the construct (page 125).

Interstellar Trade

THE ECONOMICS OF INTERSTELLAR TRADE

Prior to the Expansionary Era, there was no effective interstellar trade in physical goods. No one even considered transporting items between solar systems; pre-FTL travel was so prohibitively expensive that it was vastly cheaper to manufacture any product, no matter how costly, locally, than to transport it between star systems. The only viable exchange was information; although slow, information exchange between worlds by tightbeam at lightspeed was almost always cheaper than developing it locally.

The invention of planing destroyed this status quo; a single ship can now transfer the informational heritage of the entire species between worlds in a matter of days. For two centuries, this has been the key reality in interstellar trade.

Information exchange has been a huge homogenising influence on the Core Worlds, although less so on the Fringe because of the dangers of cultural conflict. Fringe and Outer Worlds not within the Mindscape are often subject to Commonality embargo; embargo runners flout this, engaging in information smuggling. In the New Commonality Era, information is one of the key cargoes, and within the Commonality largely a monopoly of the Mindjammer fleet.

Even so, physical trade does happen: there is a trade in luxury items and "cultural exports", and a bulk trade in raw materials lacking in certain star systems which cannot be synthesised in sufficient quantities by makepoint. Not all star systems have the same chemical make-up, and scarce yet vital resources are supplemented by trade.

The Commonality's instinct is to control this trade, but the sheer scale of activity on the Fringe has made it impossible. Corporacies criss-cross entire sectors, and Pansectorates subsidise less viable yet crucial routes. The New Trader phenomenon is another response to this constant and changing demand.

The last key trade item in the New Commonality Era is **people**. Not populations, as again these can be grown or manufactured locally; but individuals — travellers, travelling from one star system to another, for a myriad of personal reasons. Passenger travel in Commonality

Table 23-1: Construction and Manufacture Time

Scale of Construction / Manufacture*	Time Required
Large (+1)	Several Days
Huge (+2)	Several Months
Enormous (+3)	Several Years
Regional (+4)	Several Decades

* When manufacturing a cargo, use the original (higher) scale.

Space ranges from the mass stasis bulk "meat transports", to luxury FTL cruisers like the Javawayn star cities. New Traders (as usual) fit somewhere in the middle, transporting animate or stasis travellers on niche runs.

BUYING AND SELLING CARGOES

A **cargo** is a unit of packaged goods of a specific scale (page 174). A Large (+1) crate of zanthrium ore can be a cargo; as can a Small (-1) case of Calabrisi Fire Gems. Traders acquire cargoes on worlds where they are readily available, then transport them to worlds where they are in demand. Less scrupulous traders run the Commonality embargo to make greater profits.

Cargo trading involves construct (usually starship) or organisation actions. New Traders, mercantilists, and other characters with commercial skills may have starship or organisation extras they can use, or personal stunts which let them use their own skills instead.

A cargo is an **aspect**, created by a create an advantage Resources action. The cargo aspect wording identifies it clearly: *1 Small (-1) Unit of Calabrisi Fire Gems*, *10 Large (+1) Units of High Quality T8 Industrials*, and so on. The precise wording of a cargo becomes important when buying and selling it.

Cargoes must be transported, usually in a starship's cargo hold. Most starships have only basic cargo storage facilities; trading vessels may have dedicated cargo space (page 206) and even expanded cargo holds (page 213).

Cargoes can be used for many purposes. In interstellar trade, they are invoked as part of the selling process for a bonus on trading checks. They can be useful as gifts in diplomatic exchanges (for bonuses on Bureaucracy, Rapport, or other checks), or even in repairs. Cargoes employed in this way are used up, and their aspect is removed.

Finding a Cargo

Before you can buy a cargo, you must first find one. This is a Contacts roll, normally taking a few days, against a passive opposition equal to the **reverse** of the world's trade index rating (ie a -3 trade index provides a +3 passive opposition). If you're looking for a cargo based on a plentiful planetary or system resource (page 329), you can invoke its trading aspect for a bonus. Likewise, a scarce resource can be invoked against you.

Find a Cargo:
Contacts vs reverse of Trade Index

If you fail the Contacts roll, you don't find any units of the cargo you're looking for. On a tie, you find 1 unit; on a success, you find up to 10 units; and on a success with style, you find enough units of the cargo to fill your cargo hold.

What Do Civilisations Value?

The availability of cargoes doesn't just depend on a world or system's natural resources, but also on whether a civilisation produces or values it. Use a world's ***trade aspects*** *(page 338) when finding, buying, or selling cargoes, to determine what a given civilisation has to trade, and what it wants.*

Note that astute mercantile characters can also create trade aspects as create an advantage actions.

Max Proffitt has just upgraded his Rosemary Princess *starship extra with a Cargo Hold stunt as an advancement, and is visiting the zanthrium mines of Chardos. He's looking to buy some refined zanthrium, a Large (+1) cargo of Great (+4) value, which Chardos's trade aspect* Zanthrium Ore Mining and Processing *tells us is a plentiful resource.*

To find the cargo, Max rolls his Fair (+2) Contacts using his Finder stunt against an opposition of -5 (the reverse of Chardos's Ubiquitous (+5) trade index). He rolls a success with style (not surprisingly), indicating there's any amount of refined zanthrium for sale, enabling him to fill all 30 Large (+1) units of his new cargo hold if he wants to.

Capability Cargoes

Some cargoes (particularly processed materials — see below) are **capability cargoes** — they encapsulate one of the capabilities of the origin world's culture (page 299), at the world's tech index. You may freely search for any capability cargo — weapons, power generation equipment, and so on — but may come up against the world's control index (page 342). For example, you may run into problems if you try to find a weapons cargo on a world with an Influenced (+1) control index or higher.

Buying a Cargo

Once you've found the cargo you want, you must **buy it**. This is a contest, usually undertaken in a starport or other trading facility, in which you're notionally bidding against other traders. You roll your starship's Resources skill (or your own, if you have the right stunts) against the **cargo value**; the other traders are represented by a roll of the world's trade index. The first side to accumulate 3 victories successfully buys the cargo.

Buy a Cargo:
Contest of Your Resources vs
Cargo Value and World's Trade Index vs Cargo Value

Table 23-2: Cargo Characteristics

Cargo Type	Scale	Value	Examples
Raw Materials	Large (+1)	Fair (+2)	Grain, protein, synthegen, mineral ore, metals, heavy elements. water.
Processed Materials	Large (+1)	Great (+4)	Refined elements and compounds.
Processed Materials	Medium (+0)	Fair (+2)	Processed foods, components.
Manufactured Goods	Large (+1)	Fantastic (+6)	Vehicles.
Manufactured Goods	Medium (+0)	Great (+4)	Starship / vehicle components and weapons, industrial plant.
Consumer Goods	Small (-1)	Fair (+2)	Personal equipment.
Minor Luxury Goods	Small (-1)	Great (+4)	Leisure gear, status items.
Luxury Goods	Small (-1)	Fantastic (+6)	Jewellery, cultural items.
Passengers	Special	See below	
Information	Special	See below	

The cargo value depends on the cargo; examples are given on Table 23-2: Cargo Characteristics. If the cargo is based on a resource plentiful in the star system, the value is reduced by -2; if it's scarce, the value is increased by +2. You may buy more than one unit of cargo; add +1 to the value for each additional unit, up to the maximum units of cargo available.

If you succeed in the contest, you buy the cargo in the units indicated. If you fail, you may **succeed at a cost** by incurring credit stress equal to the difference between your roll and the difficulty (page 143); otherwise you may buy no more cargo at this market.

Max now has to buy the cargo. There's a lot of trade competition on Chardos, so Max rolls his Good (+3) Resources against a Fair (+2) cargo value (reduced from Great (+4) as the zanthrium is plentiful). As this is Max's first trade with his new cargo bay, he has no bonuses from previous cargo sales, so he's only aiming to buy 2 units, a total opposition of Good (+3). This is a contest; Sarah is rolling for the Chardos market with a rating of Ubiquitous (+5).

On the first exchange, Sarah rolls +1 for a +6 total, and Max rolls +2 for a +5 total. Max decides he's going to dig into his credit rating, borrowing funds and calling in favours, incurring 2 points of credit stress to succeed with a +7. He marks off his 2-point credit stress box, and gains 1 victory.

The next exchange, Sarah rolls +2 for a +7 total, and Max rolls +0 for a +3. That's a success with style for Sarah, and 2 victories; Max is losing his bid for the zanthrium on the Chardos metals exchange.

In the third exchange, Max ties with a +0. He decides it's time to finish this; he incurs another 1-point of credit stress for a +1 bonus, and also invokes It's Nothing Personal — It's Just Business *to secure a success with style and a total of 3 victories. He successfully buys* 2 Large (+1) Units of Great (+4) Refined Zanthrium. *If it's ever important, it's a tech index T7 cargo — the same as Chardos (see below).*

Cargo Tech Index

A cargo has a tech index equal to the tech index of its world of origin; treat this as the world on which it was bought by default. This is important for **capability cargoes** (page 443) — if you transport a capability cargo to a lower tech world, it may be used to develop a new capability (page 297), and may constitute **running the embargo** (page 305 and 307).

Selling a Cargo

Once you've bought a cargo, you may transport it to a new destination and try to dispose of it — usually by selling it, although you may use it for other purposes (page 445). Selling a cargo is a challenge, consisting of two separate dice rolls: a **Bureaucracy roll**, and a **Rapport roll**.

Using a Broker

*If you don't trust your ability to dispose of a cargo, or if the planet is a difficult market, you can find a **broker**. A broker will dispose of a cargo for you using his contacts, take a cut, and give you the rest back. This is a Contacts create an advantage roll, usually against the world's trade index. Failure indicates the broker ends up making your situation worse (page 145).*

Red Tape

Whenever you attempt to dispose of a cargo, you risk running foul of red tape. You must make a Bureaucracy roll against the control index of the world you're attempting to sell the cargo on. If you fail this check, you may not sell the cargo; usually you'll choose to succeed at a cost, facing a *Bureaucractic Foul Up*-type situation aspect on your subsequent Rapport check representing the cost of bribes, import duties, and so on.

Avoid Red Tape:
Bureaucracy vs World's Control Index

If you're trying to dispose of an embargoed cargo, you have 2 choices:

- To avoid detection, roll your starship's Stealth or other appropriate skill against the world's starport facilities rating (page 345).
- To smuggle through customs, roll Deceive against the embargo rating (page 343). You must still roll for red tape when you enter the system, with the embargo as a situation aspect; failure in this roll may hamper your Deceive efforts.

  For other effects of the embargo, see page 307.

Finding a Buyer

Selling a cargo is a Rapport roll against the trade index of the world you're selling it on; add the cargo's value to your roll. You may sell only one unit if you wish; selling more units gains you a +1 bonus for each additional unit. If the cargo you're selling is scarce on the world you're selling it on, you may invoke its scarcity as an aspect; conversely, if it's plentiful, that may be invoked or even compelled against you.

Sell a Cargo:
Rapport + Cargo Value vs World's Trade Index

If you succeed on your Rapport roll, you sell the cargo and gain a number of shifts — see below for what to do with them. If you fail, you may either succeed at a cost, usually (but not always) by incurring a credit consequence — this means you sell at a loss, but you free up your cargo hold for other cargo. You may always choose not to sell at a loss, and keep the cargo in your hold and attempt to sell it again on a different planet.

One 2-space jump later, and Max is on the icy subaquan oceanworld of Xaiwu, with a trade aspect of Hungry for Offworld Goods *and a Moderate (+0) trade index.*

There's far less competition here — just how Max likes it. However, with a Surveilled (+2) control index, there's a lot of red tape, and Max's Mediocre (+0) Bureaucracy roll fails. He decides to succeed at a cost, incurring a Stung by Bribes *mild credit consequence when he comes to sell the cargo.*

Selling the cargo isn't difficult; it's Great (+4) value, and Max has 2 units (for a +1 bonus), and an Average (+1) Rapport, for a total +6 against an opposition of +0, increased to +2 by the Stung by Bribes *mild credit consequence. Max rolls a +1, and invokes Xaiwu's* Hungry for Offworld Goods *trade aspect for a further +2, a total of +9 vs +2, for 7 shifts.*

What to Do With Your Profit

Selling a cargo can be used for many things:

- **Remove Credit Stress and Consequences:** The shifts gained when selling a cargo can be used immediately as a credit stress recovery action, to remove credit stress and consequences. 2 shifts will clear a 2-point credit stress box, or remove a mild consequence.

- **Buy Something Immediately:** You can immediately use the shifts as a bonus on a Resources roll, whether to buy another cargo or an item of starship equipment, etc.

- **Create an Advantage:** You can treat the cargo selling roll you've just made as a create advantage check if you describe it appropriately, using the proceeds for example to gain a bonus on maintenance or repair rolls, pay a bonus to your crew, improve diplomatic efforts by giving the money to charity or spending it on appropriate festivities, public works, or other publicity.

Max spends 3 of the 7 shifts to pay off his 1- and 2-point credit stress boxes, and 2 shifts to remove his mild credit consequence, leaving him with 2 shifts. That's an immediate +2 bonus on a subsequent cargo purchase, meaning he now has some seed capital to start filling up that cargo bay; he checks into the Xaiwu Exchange Virtuality to see what's for sale!

TRANSPORTING PASSENGERS

Ships may also transport **passengers** — intelligent beings, either conscious or in stasis, requiring passenger accommodation (page 206) or stasis berths (page 213).

Finding Passengers

Before you can transport passengers, you must first find them. This is a Rapport roll against an opposition equal to your ship's scale. Your Rapport roll is modified by:

- the starting world's population rating.
- the starport facilities ratings of **both** the starting and destination world.
- the destination world's trade index rating.

The opposition is modified by:

- the control index rating of **both** the starting and destination world.
- the planing jump difficulty to the destination world.
- +1 if you have the Passenger Accommodations stunt or the Extended Passenger Accommodations or Stasis Berths extras.

Find Passengers:
Rapport + modifiers vs Ship's Scale + modifiers

You can invoke aspects like *Civil War*, *Overpopulated*, as well as creating advantages with Resources to represent advertising, etc.

If you succeed on the roll, you find a number of passengers who wish to travel on your ship to the destination. On a tie, this is a Fair (+2) complement of passengers, maybe 10% of your overall capacity; on a success, you find a Great (+4) complement, maybe half your capacity; and on a success with style, you find a Fantastic (+6) complement, filling your passenger capacity. You can always choose to take a smaller complement of passengers if you want.

Felica Myu, xenomorph 2-pilot, flies a specifically converted Profit*-class New Trader on passenger runs on the Fringe; instead of a cargo hold, it has passenger accommodations for up to 20 passengers. She's looking for passengers on the world of Xaiwu for a passage to the industrial corporacy world of Chardos.*

First, 2-pilot Myu has to find passengers, a roll of her Fair (+2) Rapport vs her ship's Huge (+2) scale. She adds +1 for Xaiwu's High Standard population, +3 for both world's starport facilities ratings, and +5 for Chardos' Ubiquitous (+5) trade index — there's a lot of employment potential there — for a total of +11.

The Fair (+2) opposition is increased by +2 for both worlds' control indices, +1 for the 2-space jump difficulty between the worlds, and a +1 for the Passenger Accommodations stunt — a total of +6.

Making the Passage

Once you've recruited passengers, you must actually transport them happily and safely to their destination. For non-stasis passengers, it's recommended to employ stewards (page 211) to tend to your passengers, otherwise your crew must manage as best they can. This is a roll of the ship's Systems skill, plus any steward bonus, against the rating of the passenger complement.

Make the Passage:
Systems + steward modifier vs Passenger Complement

If you're transporting passengers in stasis berths, you get no steward bonus, but may stack an advantage from a Technical (Meditech) roll (page 99). In this case, the difficulty is a flat Fair (+2).

Make a Stasis Berth Passage: Systems + Technical advantage vs Fair (+2) opposition

On a success, you successfully transport your passengers. The shifts generated represent your "profit", and are modified by the following ratings:

- add your ship scale
- add +1 for each of the Passenger Accommodations stunt, Extended Passenger Accommodations extra, and Stasis Berth extras you have.

Failing the roll usually means you succeed at a serious cost, incurring credit stress or a credit consequence: you can choose either *Poor Reputation* or *Budget Overspend* type consequences. If you fail the roll when making a stasis berth passage, the serious cost may be something like *Stasis Boat Casualties* instead, as you lose passengers equivalent to the severity of the consequence incurred.

Using Profit at Different Scales

Selling a cargo is usually a construct or organisation action, and shifts gained apply at that scale. You may spend your profit on targets of smaller or larger scales, including characters and organisations, by using the scale rules (page 174). Note that these rules can be used for character-scale trading (for example, by merchants and traders on a primitive world); in this case trading actions are character actions.



See "What to Do With Your Profit" (page 445) for how to use your shifts.

Assuming 2-pilot Myu rolls a +0, she'll easily succeed with style, finding a full Fantastic (+6) complement of 20 passengers. However, although she has a steward (page 211), she elects to take only 10 passengers, a half Great (+4) complement. If she rolls +0 to make the passage, she'll just succeed (at a minor cost); she then adds a +2 rating for her ship scale, and a +1 rating for the Passenger Accommodation stunt, resulting in +3 shifts, which she can spend however she wants.

INFORMATION TRADING

Information trading remains a highly profitable activity in the New Commonality; despite the Mindscape, the Commonality embargo and the nature of Rediscovery and chronodisplacement mean there are always people hungry for up-to-date, accurate, and often confidential intelligence.

Trading Resource Location Information

You don't have to extract and process a mining strike yourself; you can sell the information to a corporacy or other mining operation. This works like selling a cargo (page 444), ie a Rapport roll against the trade index of the target world, with a +2 modifier for a 10-unit strike and a +4 modifier for a larger strike. Increase the difficulty by the difficulty of the planing jump to the strike location.

Trading Capability Information

Cultures throughout Commonality Space are playing catch-up, trying to increase their own technological bases to avoid falling before the Commonality's technological might — often in spite of the Commonality embargo. As well as transporting items of tech onto worlds, you can also travel to a world and give them the benefit of your own knowledge, selling them information to help them increase or develop new capabilities (page 297).

Selling capability information means giving a culture a stacked bonus on its next Science roll to improve a capability. It's a **challenge** (page 147), comprising the following rolls:

- **Avoid Red Tape:** This is a Bureaucracy roll vs the world's control index rating, representing Commonality / SCI Force monitoring or the world's own administrative barriers. See page 444.
- **Make the Science roll:** Attempt the capability acquisition roll yourself, rolling your own Science skill (page 297), modified by the difference between your own tech index and the tech index of the capability (see "Science and Tech Index", page 96). If you succeed, you create a *Scientific Consultancy*-type advantage.
- **Sell Your Advantage:** Treat the *Scientific Consultancy* advantage as a thing to be sold; make a Rapport roll against the trade index of the world, as if you were selling a Fantastic (+6) value cargo (page 445). Note that for an embargoed capability the trade index will be reduced. The shifts you generate indicate your profit — see "What to Do With Your Profit" (page 445).

GOING "POST"

For millennia, humankind has been directing its own evolution. The new species emerging from homo sapiens are no longer purely a matter of chance. Everywhere humankind is in flux, and individuals are going beyond human capabilities and becoming something new, something "other". At some point you may choose this path for your character, too.

This section provides posthuman occupations and builds. You may choose one of these by changing your occupation in play (page 162). "Going post" is a process, not a single event; by choosing a posthuman occupation, you embark upon a path which will make you qualitatively different from other human beings. You may select aspects, skills, stunts, and enhancements just as any other occupation (page 52): note however that the enhancements are given with the "raw" extras names from **Chapter 7: Extras**; you may choose any corresponding enhancement from **Chapter**

8: Technology, like a genurgic mod or mechanical enhancement. The following occupations and builds are examples — feel free to create your own.

Prerequisites

Posthuman occupations aren't available to everyone — you need certain minimum qualifications. While some occupations and builds have additional prerequisites, you must meet the following minimum requirements.

INCREASED SKILL CAP

To select a posthuman build, you must have at least one of its skills at Legendary (+8). This requires you to buy the Increased Skill Cap extra (page 110); you can do this at the same milestone as changing your occupation.

INCREASED TECH INDEX

Your character must be tech index T10 (Age of 3-Space) before he can select a posthuman build. See page 33 for increasing your tech index.

THE POSTHUMAN ASPECT

You must take a **posthuman high concept aspect** when you select a posthuman occupation build; examples are given in the write-ups below.

Posthuman Abilities

Most posthuman abilities can be found in **Chapter 6: Skills and Stunts**, **Chapter 7: Extras**, **Chapter 8: Technology**, or **Chapter 12: Constructs**. Some, however, are specific to posthuman characters, and are marked with an asterisk (*) and described on page 451 below.

Posthuman Occupations

EVANESCENT

The sense of self which is so important to humans is ultimately an evolutionary dead-end, and holds them back from true transcendence. You have broken free of its chains, and are eradicating your identity and ego in pursuit of a higher goal.

Sample Build: Atemporal

Time is a construct of the human mind, and a prison for its awareness. The real universe knows no time. You push the boundaries of temporal awareness, trying to break free of time's shackles and emerge into a timeless perception encompassing all things.

High Concept: *Atemporal Sentience Loosening the Bonds of Time.*

Trouble: *Difficulty Focussing on the Here and Now.*

Aspects: *I See the 4-dimensional Self; Every Moment Is Happening All the Time; Total Awareness of the Past.*

Skills: Knowledge.

Stunts: Specialist (Time).

Enhancements: Atemporality*, Increased Evolution Index*, Prescience Routines*.

Sample Build: Disperser

A human body is not enough to contain your growing sense of self. Instead, your "body" is very large — effectively an entire building, starship, or even larger. You are present throughout your body structure, just as a human is present in its body.

High Concept: *Large Scale Disperser Sentience.*

Trouble: *Difficult to Take in at a Glance.*

Aspects: *Here, There, and Everywhere; This Building Is My Body; Hard-to-Find Weak Spot.*

Skills: Notice.

Stunts: Sensor Scan.

Enhancements: Body Scale Change (Larger); Dispersion; Increased Evolution Index*.

Sample Build: Ephemeral

Even if you live a million years, you will still die — you are still mortal. You have become hyper-aware of the transitoriness of individual existence and identity, and now seek meaning and purpose within that awareness.

High Concept: *Ephemeral Evanescent in Touch With the Transitoriness of Things.*

Trouble: *We Are but Leaves Driven on the Wind.*

Aspects: *Supra-Individual Perspectives; Seeking the Wind Which Drives the Leaves; What Do We Do With the Time That We Have?*

Skills: Provoke.

Stunts: Ghostless Shell*, Heedless*, No Self*.

Enhancements: Enthral, Increased Evolution Index*, Infect.

Sample Build: Multiple

Your sense of self is spread among multiple physical bodies, all of which are just as much you as your own arms and legs. Together they constitute "you", and if one dies, it's like losing a limb.

High Concept: *Many Bodies With a Single Mind.*

Trouble: *My Mind Is Elsewhere.*

Aspects: *Perfect Harmony; Pincer Movement; This Is Me Too.*

Skills: Deceive; Physique.

Stunts: Peripheral Awareness*.

Enhancements: Increased Evolution Index*, Multiattack, Multiplicity*.

EVOLVER

Intelligence has evolved to enable humankind to take control of its own evolution. You have done that, and are now consciously rebuilding your mind and body into something which you regard as an evolutionary successor to homo sapiens.

Sample Build: Adaptor

Adaptation is the supreme human talent — but you take it to incredible extremes. You believe humankind should one day be at home anywhere in the cosmos, and you intend to make everywhere your home.

High Concept: *Extreme Genurgic Adaptability.*

Trouble: *Relentless Adaptation.*

Aspects: *Dazzling and Confusing; Never the Same Shape Twice; Is That You?*

Skills: Athletics.

Stunts: Acrobat, Dazing Counter.

Enhancements: Adaptation, Autotroph, Increased Evolution Index*, Variform.

Sample Build: Asexual

The sexual binary is a relic of an animalistic pre-human past. You have shed concepts of sex and gender in pursuit of the supreme post-human form. You contain all sexes and genders within you, or none at all.

High Concept: *Uncanny yet Perfect Form.*

Trouble: *Decoupled From Gendered Interactions.*

Aspects: *Shifting Sexual Dynamic; Sexual Synthesis; Social Chameleon.*

Skills: Deceive, Provoke, Rapport.

Stunts: Acting, Negotiator, Provoke Violence.

Enhancements: Enthral, Increased Evolution Index*, Pheromone Cloud.

Sample Build: Cyborg

Many individuals in the Commonality can be said to be cyborgs. This build, however, emphasises the *cybernetic* aspect; the hyperdevelopment of the feedback mechanism in interaction with surrounding systems to improve and enhance the individual. Cyborgs hook into their environment in profound ways.

High Concept: *Cybernetic Feedback Evolver.*

Trouble: *Influenced by System Feedback.*

Aspects: *Circular Causality Relationship, Enhancements Hooked Into Environment, Environmental Feedback Mechanism.*

Skills: Notice.

Stunts: Danger Sense, Sensor Scan.

Enhancements: Cybernetic Feedback*, Increased Evolution Index*, Reaction Bonus.

Sample Build: Gestalt Linguist

As you become more intelligent, human language seems such a long-winded, inaccurate, and inefficient tool. You are altering and developing the nature of language to reprogram your brain to handle and spawn new concepts and new ways of conceptualising. One day your utterances will remake the world.

Additional Prerequisites: Neurosynthetic Extensors, Gestalt Controller, other Gestalt Communication extras.

High Concept: *Mind-Manipulating Gestalt Linguist.*

Trouble: *Impatiently Underestimating.*

Aspects: *Eloquent and Swaying; My Words Are Words of Power; Tetragrammaton PIlgrim.*

Skills: Provoke.

Stunts: Armour of Fear; Okay, Fine!

Enhancements: Enthral, Increased Evolution Index*, Stage II Gestalt Communication.

Sample Build: Homo Superior

The human form is a work in progress — but that doesn't mean it should be abandoned. You are focussed on honing and perfecting human capabilities into super-human forms, rather than replacing them with non-human ones.

High Concept: *Paragon of Humanity.*

Trouble: *Highlights Everyone Else's Failings.*



Aspects: *Larger Than Life; Perfect Performance; The Sinecure of All Eyes.*

Skills: Athletics, Physique.

Stunts: Tough As Nails.

Enhancements: Crush, Health Bonus, Hyperagility, Hyperstrength, Increased Evolution Index*.

EXTENDER

The organic body may be essential to your own existence, but that doesn't mean it's all you can ever be. You keep adding enhancements and extensions onto your physical and mental / virtual self, until your organic body is only a small part of what you are.

Sample Build: City Sentience

Somewhere in the city you have a corpus which is the physical location of your brain — but your body is the city itself, its roads and networks your nervous system, its inhabitants the blood in your veins.

Additional Prerequisites: Usually an installation or other construct of Enormous (+3) scale or greater. You may use the occupation change to build yourself into an installation, becoming a construct.

High Concept: *Mind and Soul of the City Control.*

Trouble: *Vast but Immobile.*

Aspects: *Avatar Contact; Nostalgia for a Simpler Human Existence; Ubiquitous Awareness.*

Skills: Contacts, Knowledge, Passive Sensing.

Stunts: Distributed Systems, Top Urgency.

Enhancements: Body Scale Change (Larger), Dispersion, Increased Evolution Index*.

Sample Build: Fleet Sentience

Once you were a mediator, linking the minds of countless starships with a common purpose. Now those ships have become part of your dispersed body, and yet they remain individuals sharing the same physical form. Now the fleet can truly act as one.

Additional Prerequisites: Usually a Huge (+2) or larger sentient starship before; now your body is dispersed through an Enormous (+3) or Regional (+4) fleet.

High Concept: *Transcendent Space Force Fleet Sentience.*

Trouble: *It's All About Starships.*

Aspects: *Consciousness Distributed Across Multiple Ships; Esprit de Corps As the Foundation of Identity; Sharp-Honed Tactical Mind.*

Skills: Empathy, Rapport.

Stunts: Colocation*, Mediator, Overseer, What Lies Beneath.

Enhancements: Contact Control, Dispersion, Hyperintelligence, Increased Evolution Index*, Variform.

LONGEVITOR

Human beings are hard-wired to want to live forever. Nothing is immortal — one day even the universe itself will die — but you aim to still be around when it happens! Your life has been extended considerably, and your concerns are becoming less comprehensible to your fellow humans with each passing year.

Sample Build: Blasé

As time passes there's less and less novelty to impress you. Instead, you mine the rich seams of history and memory in your own mind and the Mindscape.

High Concept: *Seen It All, Done It All.*

Trouble: *Inattentive and Bored With Everyone.*

Aspects: *A Hero of Our Time; Fascinated by My Own Past; Profound Knowledge of History; Venting Spleen.*

Skills: Knowledge, Will.

Stunts: Indomitable, Longevity, Shield of Logic, Specialist (History).

Enhancements: Hyperintelligence, Increased Evolution Index*, Longevity.

Sample Build: Experiencer

Human beings are the sum total of their experiences and knowledge. You want to experience *everything*.

High Concept: *Hungry to Experience All Things.*

Trouble: *Butterfly Mind, Trying to Grasp the Whole of Human Experience.*

Aspects: *Been There Done That, Fools Rush In, I've Got One Just Like That.*

Skills: Contacts, Deceive, Knowledge.

Stunts: Acting, Insider, One Person Many Faces, Survival.

Enhancements: Adaptation, Increased Evolution Index*, Longevity.

Sample Build: Risk-Avoider

Your life is the most precious thing you have, and the longer you live, the greater the probability you'll die in a stupid accident. Whatever your other agendas, you're all about anticipating and offsetting risk, and staving off the inevitable as long as you can.

High Concept: *Highly Cautious Longevitor.*

Trouble: *It's Dangerous Out There!*

Aspects: *Can't See Me for Dust, Prepared for Everything, Weighing the Odds.*

Skills: Investigate.

Stunts: The Power of Deduction.

Enhancements: Armoured, Force Field, Increased Evolution Index*, Longevity.

Sample Build: Hobbyist

In an infinite universe with infinite time, the meaning of life is what you say it is. You've chosen your cause — one often obscure thing to dedicate your life to.

High Concept: *Guiding Light of the Maglev Preservation Society of Neveulus III.*

Trouble: *I Can't Leave What I'm Doing!*

Aspects: *Hidden Contact Network; Profound but Narrow Expertise; Unlikely Equipment.*

Skills: Knowledge.

Stunts: Specialist.

Enhancements: Hyperintelligence, Increased Evolution Index*, Longevity, Organisation extra ("The Hobby").

Sample Build: Mentor

The longer you live, the less new mistakes there are to make. You want to pass your realisations on to others — the less time we all spend making the same mistakes over and over again, the more time we'll have to experience the new and the unique.

High Concept: *The Perfect Teacher.*

Trouble: *A Tendency to Underestimate Others; Always Right*

Aspects: *A Lesson in Everything; Captivating Speaker; Your Time Will Come, Grasshopper!*

Skills: Empathy, Knowledge, Rapport, Science.

Stunts: Overseer, Polymath, Specialist.

Enhancements: Hyperintelligence, Increased Evolution Index*, Longevity, Stage I Gestalt Communication.

Sample Build: Skipper

It's a big universe, but you have time — if you keep moving. There's novelty and uniqueness everywhere; once you've seen a place, you itch to move on to the next.

High Concept: *Ancient Star Mariner.*

Trouble: *Always Moving On, Unable to Settle.*

Aspects: *Been Everywhere; Driven by an Unknown Urge; Endlessly Curious.*

Skills: Knowledge, Pilot.

Stunts: Starship Pilot.

Enhancements: Autotroph, Increased Evolution Index*, Longevity.

Sample Build: Zen Mellow

"Life" is just a word, an artifice of human language which obscures true reality. We are all just thoughts in the universe's mind — nothing separates us but the boundaries we make ourselves. When we remove the walls we create around our consciousnesses, the universe itself will become self-aware.

High Concept: *Ancient Mellow Philosopher.*

Trouble: *There Is No Spoon.*

Aspects: *Smiling Twinkling Eyes, Profound Humanity, Hyper Empathic.*

Skills: Empathy, Notice, Rapport.

Stunts: Psychologist, Redaction, Xeno-Empath.

Enhancements: Dispersion, Enthral, Increased Evolution Index*, Longevity, Possessor / Puppetteer.

Posthuman Stunts

The following stunts are available to characters with posthuman occupations.

✦ Colocation

You share the same body as one or more sentient constructs, effectively controlling them as avatars. However, each construct itself also retains control, requiring cooperation or negotiation to act efficiently. Usually you're powerful enough to override the construct's wishes if you want.

✦ Ghostless Shell

You become still and empty of self-awareness, to the extent that you appear to blend in with the surroundings. Gain a +2 bonus to Stealth actions to hide from view, even to sensors and synthetic senses.

✦ Heedless

You're completely heedless of the need for self-protection when exposed to physical harm, continuing regardless even if injured. Gain 1 additional mild consequence.

✦ No Self

It's as though there's no one behind your eyes; for a fate point, you may simply avoid any single mental attack.

✦ Peripheral Awareness

Requires the Multiplicity extra

You can perceive through all your bodies simultaneously, letting you perceive at increased ranges and in multiple directions, and giving you a +1 bonus to Notice overcome and create an advantage actions for each additional body you can bring to bear.

Posthuman Extras

The following extras are available to characters with posthuman occupations or those about to go post.

★ ATEMPORALITY

Costs 1 stunt

You're aware of the past just as if it was the present. Gain a +2 bonus to create an advantage actions related to remembering the past.

★ CYBERNETIC FEEDBACK

Costs 1 stunt

For every exchange you take exactly the same action in the same location, gain a +1 bonus to that action, up to double your skill.

★ INCREASED EVOLUTION INDEX

Must have a posthuman occupation

Costs 1 stunt

By default characters have a Standard Human (+0) evolution index (page 407). With this extra, you increase your evolution index by +1; this also increases your skill cap, and probably your exoscale (page 408). Note that you must have the required minimum tech index for the evolution index.

★ MULTIPLICITY

Must have a Multiple-*type high concept*

Costs 1 stunt, and optionally 1+ skill points

This extra may be taken multiple times; each gives you an additional body with 3 physical consequences which operates as an avatar (page 140), although it's actually part of your own dispersed "body" and may use your own skills freely. You may **also** spend skill points to give it additional skills, and stunts to give it abilities, but you don't have to. Losing a body automatically imposes an extreme consequence on you; it's extremely traumatic, like losing a limb, and takes time for you to "re-map" your sense of self. If you lose a second body while still suffering this extreme consequence, you are taken out.

★ PRESCIENCE ROUTINES

Costs 1 stunt

You have an astonishing ability to seemingly "see" the future. For a fate point, you may make a create an advantage roll with Empathy, Investigate, Knowledge, Notice, Science, etc, as appropriate, when trying to perceive the future; the resulting aspect is a prediction (*This Person Will Go Insane, This Culture Is About to Collapse, The Star Will Go Nova, The Volcano Will Erupt*, etc). You may invoke this aspect when appropriate at any juncture to favour an outcome where your prediction looks more likely to occur.

A Transhuman Society

Commonality society is highly diverse. Some Fringe Worlds are inhabited by humans with varying degrees of enhancement; but just as many are hominids, xenomorphs, synthetics; some are not enhanced at all. In the Commonality Core, many populations are only nominally human; few Fringe Worlders would recognise them as the same species. Individuals may be autotrophs, no longer needing to eat, or routinely change height, appearance, sex; or are cyborged, or possess customised body plans.

A vast array of beings consider themselves part of humankind. Intelligent vehicles and starships, city and planetary sentiences, and modified homo sapiens rub shoulders with standard humans. It's not yet clear what this means for the future of the species. Will one strain prevail? Will unmodified humans become extinct, replaced by an endlessly changing transhumanity?

The Commonality government tries to keep control. The Ministry of Evolutionary Planning regulates the Eidolon Compliances, and ensures that genurgy does not produce monsters. Yet life is becoming strange, and for every faction championing a bright future of self-directed evolution, another wants to turn back the clock on the gifts of transhumanity.

There are sentiences in the Commonality far beyond human norms. Some are the custodians; others run entire corporacies, or manage worlds. Most people do not deal with the reality that there are posthuman intelligences thousands of years old directing their lives; and perhaps that's how it should be. Perhaps it's for the best that what were once faceless administrative networks now have a mind. But despite the impossibility of persistence of identity, synthetic sentiences only maintain human personalities because that's what their designers dictate. In the Expansionary Era, even the phenomenon of mind is spreading to the stars. Where will it lead us…?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR
THE DARRADINE RIM

"Have you seen the Rim? It's breathtaking. So many stars, like diamond dust, so many teeming with life, waiting to be found. You could spend a thousand years exploring, and never visit the same world twice. And that's exactly what I intend to do."

— Interview with Youthful Curiosity-439, Space Force event horizon probe, passing through Ajeux system in early 193 NCE.

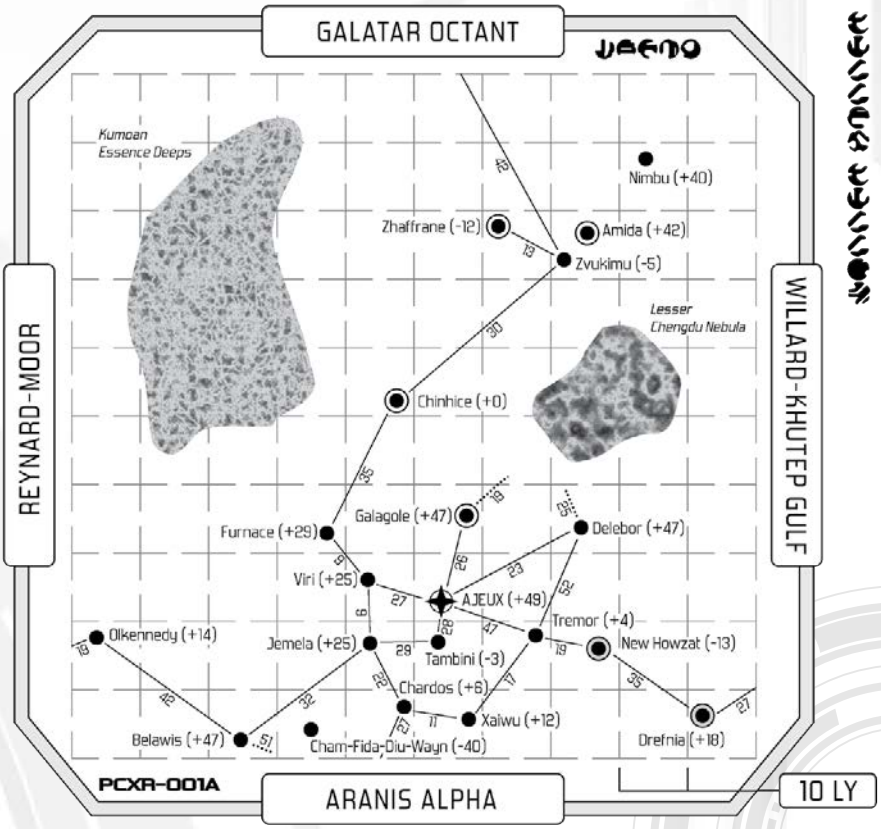
The Darradine Rim is octant gamma of the Darradine Restoration subsector, subsector TX2.4.2 of the Rim Sector on the edge of Commonality Space. A region of intense exploratory activity badly affected by the Venu War of 110-120 NCE, it borders the Quarantine Zone with the Venu Empire, and is a hotbed of activity against the Commonality's nefarious foe.

Like all Commonality Space, the Darradine Rim has been opened up in the last two centuries. It contains numerous rediscovered worlds, populated by humans during the First Age of Space; several hominid and xenomorph species; and significant alien presences at Drefnia and Zvukimu. The octant capital at Ajeux is also the subsector capital, and is some 250 light years from the sector capital of Tsentair.

The Darradine Rim schematic shows the 20 star systems which are significant to the Commonality; like all octants, there are many other systems which are either undiscovered or which have only been cursorily surveyed by drone. The octant contains some 4000 stellar bodies of all descriptions, likely including other habitable or semi-habitable worlds awaiting discovery and exploration. The major technological civilisations have probably all been found, but even that isn't completely certain.

WORLDS

This section contains maps, statistics, and descriptions of the twenty key worlds of the Darradine Rim.



AJEUX III

The capital of the Darradine Rim octant and Darradine Restoration subsector, Ajeux is a terraformed garden world first colonised by slowship which has rediscovered its ancient Franchian roots after valiantly resisting Venu occupation during the Venu War. While many consider the turbulent cultural melee of Ajeux life to be affectation, others believe it'll become a vibrant and powerful culture world. The Ajeux Games are already a subsector-wide institution.

Ajeux has a mild climate and strong maritime traditions. Its capital, Montparle, stands on the coasts of the great Pacific Sound, famous for its skyscrapers, seafood (including some impressive flying fish), and architecture.

High Concept: Neo-Franchian Culture Garden World and Subsector Capital

Aspects: G-class Main Sequence Star; T-Congruent Biosphere; Producer of Neo-Franchian Luxury Goods; Zanthrium Importer; Maritime Traditions.

PLANETARY TYPE: STANDARD GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Maturing (-1)*

Orbit: *Inner Habitable Zone (-1): 0.42AU*

Year Length: *137d*

Size: *Standard (+0): 11000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Standard (+0): 0.84G*

Day Length: *Standard (+0): 23h*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Standard (+0): Oxygen (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Standard (+0): 14 ℃*

Surface Liquid: *High (+1): 70% water*

Seasonality: *Standard (+0)*

Satellites: *Ring system; 1 planetoid*

Planetary Bodies: *11 (1 gas giant)*

Habitability: *Benign (+6)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: COMMONALITY HUB

Civilisation Designation: *Culture World (+1)*

Population: *High (+2): 2 billion (60% human, 20% synthetic, 15% xenomorph, 5% other)*

Government Type: *Commonality-controlled (oligarchy) (+4)*



Societal Dev: *Sentience Coordinated Collective (+5)*

Openness: *Self-centred (-2)*

Control Index: *Influenced (+1)*

Trade Index: *High Moderate (+1)*

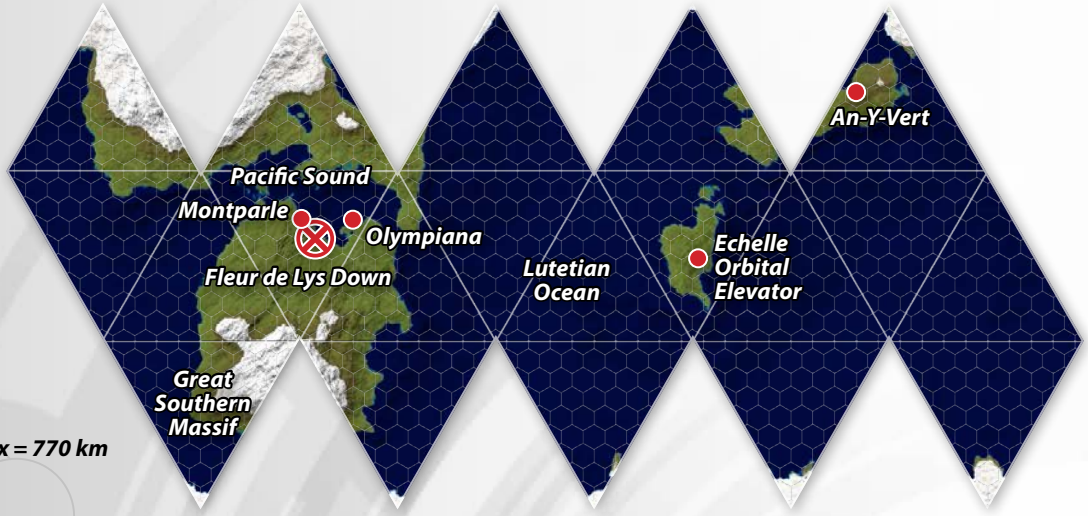
Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T9 (+4): Second Age of Space*

Starport: *Fleur-de-Lys Down A2-class starport (+6)*

Mindscape: *Mindscape Hub (+2)*

Culture: *Ajeux subculture (Neo-Franchian)*



AMIDA II

A stormy tropical world with slow rotation, Amidan civilisation clusters around the calmer equator. The population lives a 26-hour diurnal ***cycle****; there are 4 8-cycle weeks per Amidan "Long Day". The first week of day or night is when Amida's storms occur; during the second week temperatures drop or rise sharply, although the weather is calmer, with cold, clear, and frosty weather at night, and sweltering, almost unbearable heat by day. "Star lag" drugs are available for offworlders.*

Amida borders the Q-Zone, and is still reeling from Rediscovery 30 years ago; originally balkanised, it struggles with embryonic world government. The Commonality has established a Temple of Universal Mind in Daisetta, named the Academy of Commonality Studies *to avoid clashing with the Amidan's neo-Buddhistic religion. The native* ***Kaskai*** *pithecine xenomorphs live in the deep jungles, revered as part of this religion; Daisetta also has a sizable population of Commonality xenomorphs. Although Amida is relatively untouched by Rediscovery, Daisetta is becoming a popular if exotic destination.*

Amidans have ruddy and dark brown skin tones and brown or black hair, and several racial groups; the women are exotic and renowned for their beauty. The population is concentrated in isolated agricultural highland nation-states.

High Concept: Fringe World Ancient Colony With Beautiful Ring System

Aspects: K-class Main Sequence Star in Triple Star System; Pacifist Mystics of the God-Under-a-Tree; Xenomorphs Revered; The Days Are a Month Long; Weapons Embargo; Plentiful Luxuries and Agri-Products; T-Congruent Biosphere

PLANETARY TYPE: STANDARD GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Aging (+1)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Inner (-1): 0.2AU*

Year Length: *44d*

Size: *Standard (+0): 16000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Standard (+0): 1G*

Day Length: *Slow (-2): 34d*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Standard (-1): Oxygen (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Warm (+1): 20 °C*

Surface Liquid: *High (+1): 63% water*

Seasonality: *High (+2)*

Satellites: *Ring System*

Planetary Bodies: *7 (1 gas giant)*

Habitability: *Adequate (+2)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: UNITED WORLD



Civilisation Designation: *Independent: Embassy (-2)*

Population: *Standard (+0): 20 million (90% Amidan human, 7% Kaskai xenomorph, 3% Commonality xenomorph and human)*

Government Type: *Monarchy (-3): The Sultan of Daisetta*

Societal Dev: *Early Redistributive Model (+0)*

Openness: *Self-centred (-2)*

Control Index: *Influenced (+1)*

Trade Index: *Moderate (+0)*

Embargo: *Average (+1): Armaments*

Tech Index: *T6 (+1): Age of Genurgy*

Starport: *Daisetta Down D-class starport (+2)*

Mindscape: *Temple of Universal Mind (-4)*

Culture: *Rediscovered world culture in Stage 2 Normalisation*



BELAWIS I

The Snekket are the snowpeople of Belawis, a frozen world with a forbidding ecosystem. Hairy, white-furred hominids descended from geneered colonists from the First Age of Space, the Snekket were contacted in the early years of the Expansionary Era. Although few offworlders show interest in this icebound planet, the Snekket travel throughout the Commonality; their cold-world endurance makes them perfect for deep-space mining and cold-world combat ops. The Snekket frequently refer to themselves as "abominable", an obscure and ancient joke.

Belawis has embraced Commonality culture since Rediscovery, and its traditions are changing. Feudal Snekket communities send regiments of prestigious "guards" offworld to serve the Commonality, in return for trade luxuries and increased influence.

High Concept: Frozen Homeworld of the Snowpeople

Aspects: M-class Red Dwarf; Locked in an Ice Age; Most Terrifying Skiing in the Subsector; Abominable Janissary Export; Ore Extraction and Processing Facilities; Hungry for Luxuries; T-Analogue Biosphere; Frighteningly Cold Nights.

PLANETARY TYPE: INFERIOR GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Aging (+1)*

Orbit: *Inner (-2): 0.06AU*

Year Length: *20d*

Size: *Standard (+0): 16000km*

Density: *High Standard (+1)*

Surface Gravity: *High Standard (+1): 1.2G*

Day Length: *Slow (-2): 10d*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Standard (+1): Oxygen (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Cool (-1): -10 °C*

Surface Liquid: *Very High (+2): 80% ice and water*

Seasonality: *Very Low (-4)*

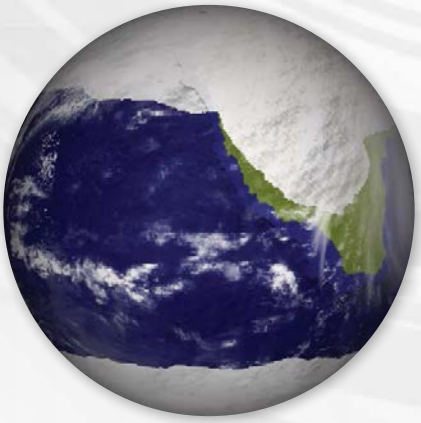
Satellites: *No Moon*

Planetary Bodies: *7 (1 gas giant)*

Habitability: *Adequate (+2)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: REGRESSED WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Aligned (+0)*



Population: *High Standard (+1): 100 million (99% Snekket hominid, 1% other)*

Government Type: *Feudal (-4)*

Societal Dev: *Confiscation (-2)*

Openness: *Self-improving (+2)*

Control Index: *Laissez-faire (+0)*

Trade Index: *Limited (-2)*

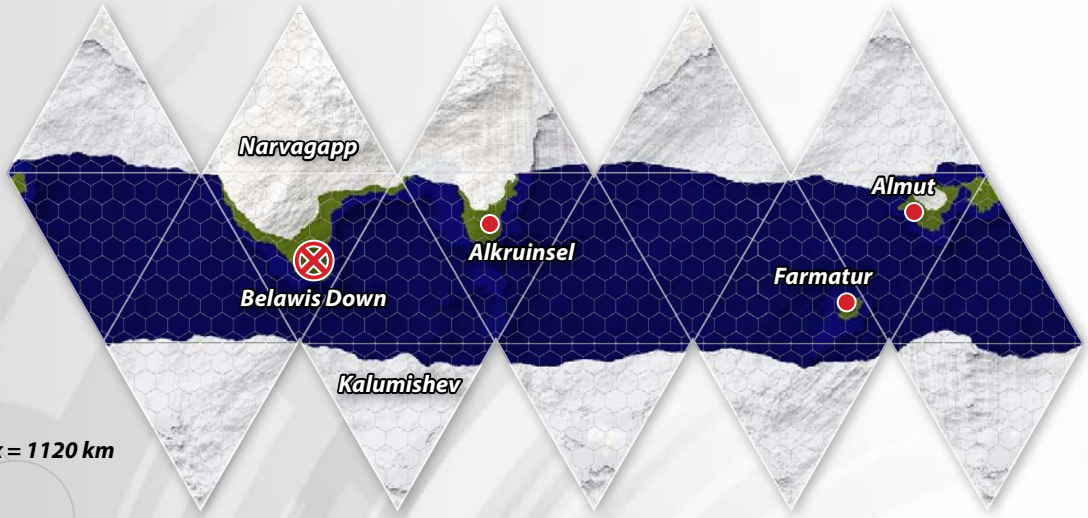
Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T7 (+2): First Age of Space*

Starport: *Belawis Down D-class starport (+2)*

Mindscape: *Global (-1)*

Culture: *Belawis culture in Stage 2 Normalisation*



1 hex = 1120 km

CHARDOS A-IVA

Chardos IV is a huge, brownish-red gas giant, with a dense moon rich in zanthrium. Its mines are infamous throughout the Rim Sector, as the almost continuous moonquakes make mining in Chardos's huge mechanical digger "worms" extremely hazardous. Natives are thickset, independent, and tough, complemented by an ursoid xenomorph minority.

The Morbius Metals corporacy (page 294) governs Chardos, running mining operations and the rough and ready Chardos Station. Everything is low-slung and robust to resist quakes, high winds, and sandstorms (which can last weeks). Most of the population are Morbius Metals employees (either miners or managers) or support and entertainment workers — though the high gravity means few pleasure workers stay long.

High Concept: Zanthrium Mines on a Gas Giant Moon

Aspects: F-class Main Sequence Star in Triple Star System; Continuous Moonquakes; Mechanical Digger Worms; Zanthrium Ore Mining and Processing; Service and Entertainment Trade

PLANETARY TYPE: COLD DESERT WORLD

Planetary Age: *Maturing (-1)*

Orbit: *Outer (+3): 32AU*

Year Length: *135y*

Size: *Small (-2): 5400km*

Density: *Very Dense (+3)*

Surface Gravity: *High Standard (+1): 1.5G*

Day Length: *Extremely Rapid (+5): 14h*

Atmospheric Pressure: *High (+2): CO_2 (unbreathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Cold (-2): -73 °C*

Surface Liquid: *None (-4): 0%*

Seasonality: *No Seasonality (-10)*

Satellites: *(Gas Giant Moon)*

Planetary Bodies: *3 (1 gas giant)*

Habitability: *Deadly (-4)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: CORPORACY WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Autonomous (+2)*

Population: *Very Low (-3): 75000 (60% human, 20% synthetic, 15% xenomorph, 5% other)*



Government Type: *Corporacy-controlled (+2)*

Societal Dev: *Early Redistribution Model (+0)*

Openness: *Self-centred (-2)*

Control Index: *Laissez-faire (+0)*

Trade Index: *Ubiquitous (+5)*

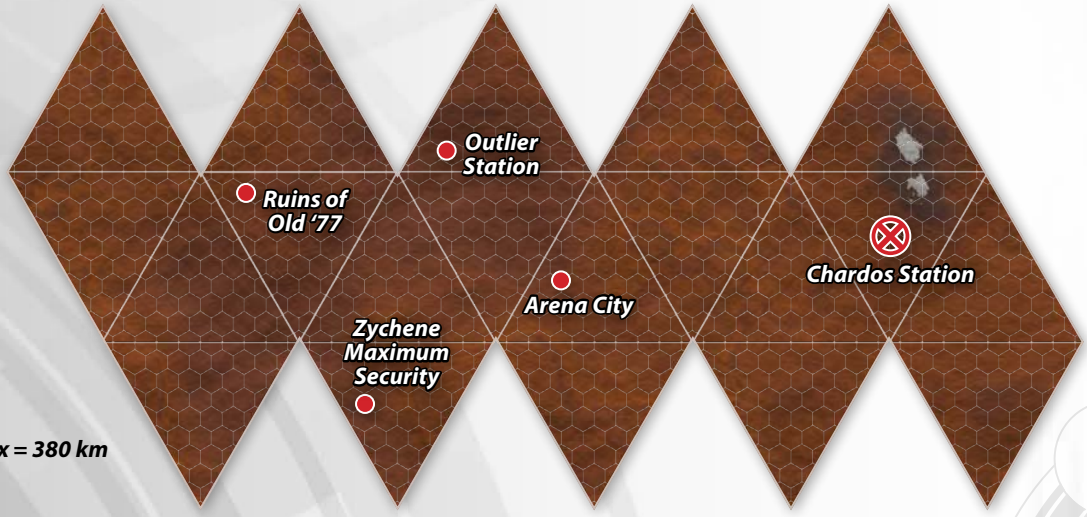
Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T7 (+2): First Age of Space*

Starport: *Chardos Station E-class starport (+1)*

Mindscape: *Global (-1)*

Culture: *Commonality culture*



CHINHICE V

An ancient Shinean colony colonised more by force of numbers than organisation, Chinhice has one of the highest agricultural world populations in the Rim Sector. Rigidly regimented, Chinhicean society is a constant battle with the planetary environment, whose right-hand amino acid-based ecosystem supports none of the bacteria to allow terrestrial-analogue organisms to thrive or even decompose. Chinhicean rice paddies are seeded with recycled "sowdirt", including the bodies of the Chinhicean dead.

Visitors are forbidden to leave Bey Chang spaceport and its domed startown without an official guide, and arrivals are screened to prevent them importing unauthorised breathers. While the spaceport tech index is Commonality standard — the old starport was bombarded during the Venu War — technology on the planet is more primitive.

Chinhice is geologically young, transitioning from a CO_2 to O_2 atmosphere. Its current atmosphere is toxic to normal humans, who require breathers; natives are genurgically modified to cope. It has a thriving marine ecosystem, but little but coastal bacteria and blue-green algae cover the land; the uplands are still barren and fairly lifeless. There's little ozone layer, and UV and mutation levels are high. In the seas, genurgically modified algae produce more O_2, which should result in a thin but breathable atmosphere for offworlders in the next few hundred years.

High Concept: Strange and Inscrutable Neo-Shinean Culture World

Aspects: K-class Main Sequence Star; Barren Young World in the Throes of Slow T-Analogue Terraforming; Transplant Agri-Exports; High-Tech Imports; Irrigation Channels; Terrestrial Organisms Can't Decompose; Nothing Goes to Waste!



PLANETARY TYPE: MARGINAL GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Young (-2)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Inner (-1): 0.42AU*

Year Length: *138d*

Size: *Large Standard (+1): 18000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *High Standard (+1): 1.2G*

Day Length: *Rapid (+2): 20h*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Standard (+0): Oxygen, high CO_2 (tainted)*

Surface Temperature: *Cool (-1): 10 ℃*

Surface Liquid: *Low (-1): 40% water*

Seasonality: *Low (-2)*

Satellites: *Ring System*

Planetary Bodies: *7 (1 gas giant)*

Habitability: *Marginal (+0)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: CULTURE WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Culture World (+1)*

Population: *High (+2): 4 billion (100% hominid)*

Government Type: *Dictatorship (+0)*

Societal Dev: *Widespread Intrusive Collective (+3)*

Openness: *Closed (-5)*

Control Index: *Total (+7)*

Trade Index: *Very Limited (-3)*

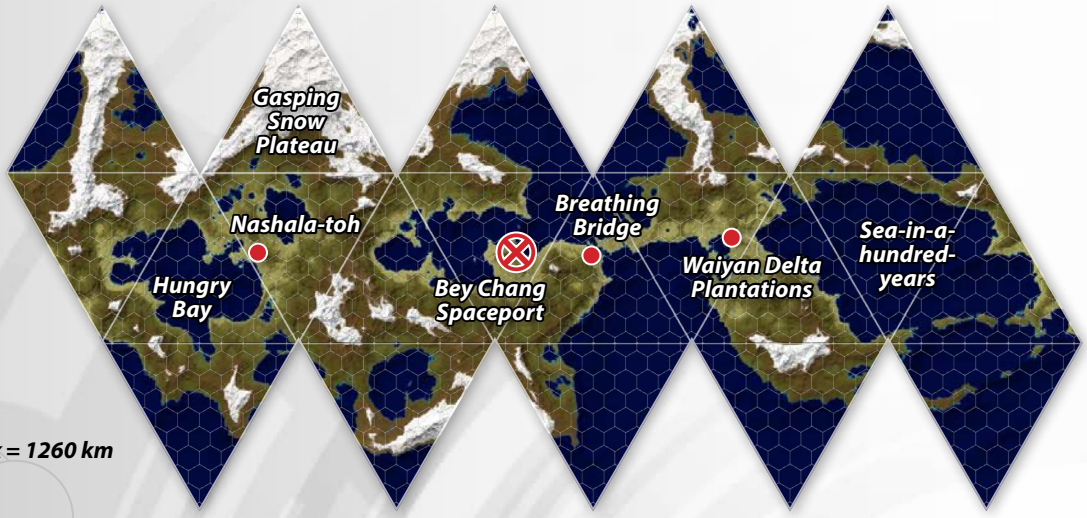
Embargo: *Good (+3): Armaments, Biotechnology, Comms*

Tech Index: *T6 (+1): Age of Genurgy*

Starport: *Bey Chang C-class starport (+3)*

Mindscape: *Global (-1): restricted*

Culture: *Neo-Shinean subculture*



1 hex = 1260 km

DELEBOR V

Delebor is a dry, apparently lifeless world with an acidic atmosphere. Its "painted deserts", dotted with acid pools, are lethally beautiful. Chembu Genurgy (page 293) owns the planet, running research and production plants growing new products and organisms from the world's raw materials. The ***soup farmers****, the lowest rank of CG employees, are notoriously restive, and the corporacy maintains a private police force to suppress them when required.*

Chembu Depot is Delebor's main settlement, accounting for a third of its population. The rest live in far-flung ***soup farms****, isolated homesteads or small settlements stretching all around the planet. Most structures are underground; the thick brownish atmosphere is corrosive, and a large part of a soup farmer's day consists of repairing their processing plants.*

Air transport is easy in Delebor's thick atmosphere, and heavy-duty grav tankers make weekly or monthly pickups in outlying areas. These enormous ***soup tankers*** *carry supplies and shops, and are often a soup farmers only way to get to Chembu Depot and off-world — putting them at the corporate government's mercy.*

High Concept: Chembu Genurgy Corporacy World of Painted Deserts

Aspects: K-class Main Sequence Star; Inimical Acid Environment; Restive Soup Farmers; Heavy-handed Private Police; Acid and Organics Extraction and Processing; Buy From the Company Store; Genurgy Products; Rumours of Life Forms in the Acid Fog.

PLANETARY TYPE: DESERT WORLD

Planetary Age: *Aging (+1)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone (+0): 0.27AU*

Year Length: *66d*

Size: *Small Standard (-1): 9000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Low Standard (-1): 0.8G*

Day Length: *Slow (-2): 14d*

Atmospheric Pressure: *High (+2): Nitrogen Dioxide (unbreathable, acidic)*

Surface Temperature: *Warm (+1): 26 °C*

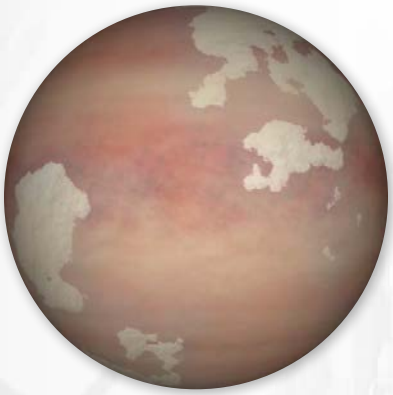
Surface Liquid: *Very Low (-2): 5% nitric acid*

Seasonality: *Low (-3)*

Satellites: *1 Planetoid*

Planetary Bodies: *11 (3 gas giants)*

Habitability: *Deadly (-4)*



CIVILISATION TYPE: CORPORACY WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Autonomous (+2)*

Population: *Low (-2): 250000 (70% human, 10% Chembu, 15% xenomorph, 5% other)*

Government Type: *Corporacy-controlled (+2)*

Societal Dev: *Early Redistributive Model (+0)*

Openness: *Guarded (+0)*

Control Index: *Surveilled (+2)*

Trade Index: *Ubiquitous (+4)*

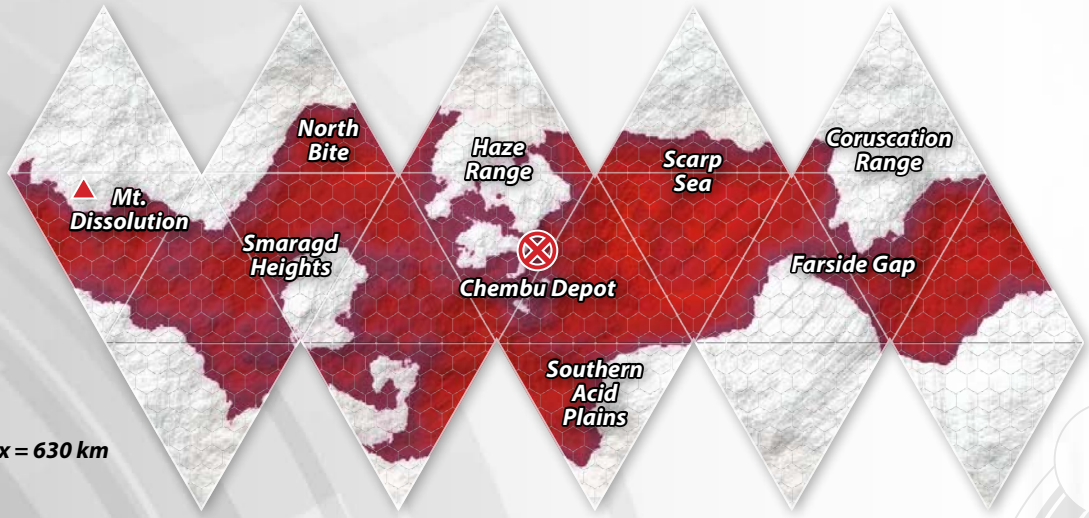
Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T9 (+4): Second Age of Space*

Starport: *Chembu Depot E-class starport (+1)*

Mindscape: *Global (-2)*

Culture: *Commonality culture*



DREFNIA A-III

The Mozgooms of Drefnia (page 414) are famous throughout the Commonality — the "World Trees". Thousands of metres tall, with root systems covering thousands of square kilometres, they are one of the few vegetable exointelligences ever encountered. Together with the Zybotes, symbiotic motile fungi, the Mozgooms form a single, world-spanning civilisation. Tree City is where the Commonality and the Mozgoom meet, though rare scholars, ambassadors, and traders are permitted further. Selected Zybotes leave their world to travel with agents of the Commonality, a relationship which forms the basis for a strange kind of trade, as the Zybotes activate latent psionic powers in their human companions.

Drefnia's high CO_2 content puts the atmosphere on the edge of breathability, but most humans manage without breather masks for a month or so (although they may get terrific headaches and nausea for the first few days).

High Concept: Famed Garden Planet of the World Trees

Aspects: G-class Main Sequence Star; Days Are a Month Long; High CO_2; Natural Group Minds; T-Analogue Biosphere.

PLANETARY TYPE: STANDARD GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Aging (+1)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Inner (-1): 0.57AU*

Year Length: *190d*

Size: *Standard (+0): 12000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Standard (+0): 0.9G*

Day Length: *Slow (-2): 29d*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Standard (+0): Oxygen, high CO_2 (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Standard (+0): 14 ℃*

Surface Liquid: *High (+1): 60%*

Seasonality: *Low (-2)*

Satellites: *Ring System*

Planetary Bodies: *13 (3 gas giants)*

Habitability: *Benign (+4)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: ALIEN CIVILISATION

Evolution Index: *Post-human (+4)*

ExoScale: *Regional (+4)*

Civilisation Designation: *Alien World (-5)*

Population: *Low Standard (-1): 15000 humans and others at Tree City; 2.5m*



Zybotes and unknown Mozgoom in deep jungle

Government Type: *Oligarchy (+1)*

Societal Dev: *Sentience Coordinated Collective (+5): Vegetable Intelligence Communion*

Openness: *Outgoing (+3)*

Control Index: *Surveilled (+2)*

Trade Index: *Limited (-2)*

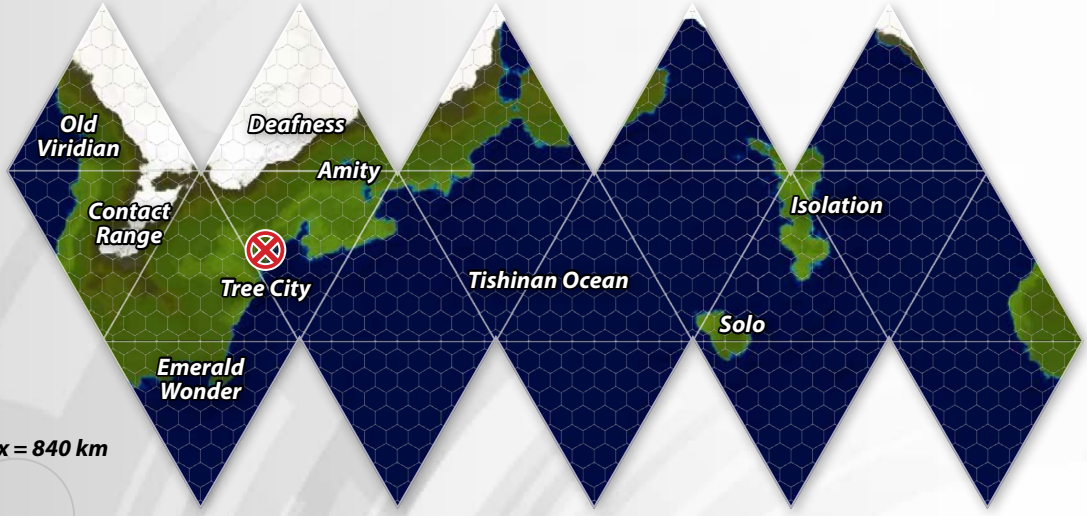
Embargo: *Quarantine (+5)*

Tech Index: *T0 (-5): Post-animal*

Starport: *Tree City and SCI Force Quarantine Station E-class starport (+1)*

Mindscape: *Local Node (-3): Tree City*

Culture: *Drefnia exoculture*



FURNACE II

Victim of a runaway greenhouse effect, Furnace boasts atmospheric pressures which would squash an unprotected human flat in milliseconds. It's a murky, torrid world, with high axial tilt, and host to murderous hurricanes and acid storms. No one in their right mind would visit this place, were it not for the raw materials — including quartz, aluminium oxide (and ruby and sapphire deposits), acids, and molten or near-molten metals and heavy ores — simply lying around for the taking. This challenging environment hosts refineries operated by the Darradine Industries and Morbius Metals corporacies.

High Concept: Corporacy-controlled Inferno World

Aspects: G-class Main Sequence Star; Darradine Industries / Morbius Metals Joint Venture; Runaway Greenhouse Effect; Needs Food, Luxuries, and Heavy Vehicles; Lethal Crushing Pressure; Murderous Hurricanes and Acid Storms; These Workers Need Entertaining; Mineral and Metal Extraction and Processing.

PLANETARY TYPE: INFERNO

Planetary Age: *Mature (+0)*

Orbit: *Inner (-2): 0.32AU*

Year Length: *72d*

Size: *Standard (+0): 14000km*

Density: *High Standard (+1)*

Surface Gravity: *High Standard (+1): 1.1G*

Day Length: *Reduced (-1): 8.5d*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Hazardous (+6): CO_2, chlorine, sulphuric and hydrochloric acids (unbreathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Inferno (+4): 763 °C*

Surface Liquid: *Very Low (-2): 5% acids and molten metals*

Seasonality: *Low (-3)*

Satellites: *1 Planetoid*

Planetary Bodies: *8 (2 gas giants)*

Habitability: *Deadly (-7)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: CORPORACY WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Corporacy Autonomous (+2)*

Population: *Low (-2): 100,000 (60% human, 35% xenomorph, 5% other)*



Government Type: *Corporacy-controlled (+2)*

Societal Dev: *Early Redistributive Model (+0)*

Openness: *Resistant (-2)*

Control Index: *Surveilled (+2)*

Trade Index: *Extensive (+2)*

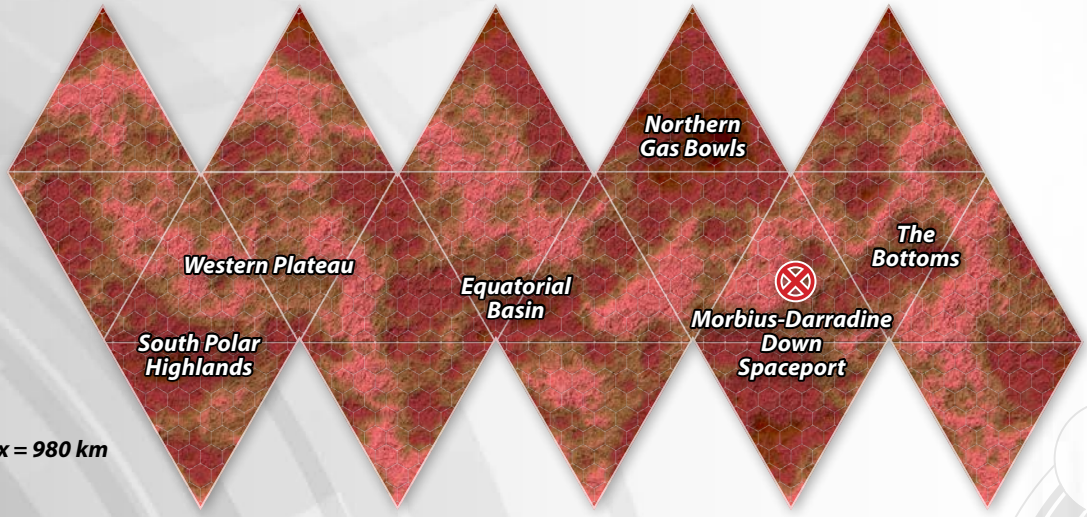
Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T7 (+2): First Age of Space*

Starport: *Morbius-Darradine Down E-class starport (+1)*

Mindscape: *Global (-1)*

Culture: *Commonality culture*



GALAGOLE A-IID

*A sweltering swamp world gas giant moon, Galagole is inhabited predominantly by amphibian **f-people** — fattish, baldish, goggle-eyed humanoids with moist greenish skin. A poor agricultural backwater, there's little to interest the visitor beyond the exotic cuisine. The Commonality maintains a secretive off-limits training base for amphibious commandoes. While f-people dwelling close to Galagole Down seem reasonably civilised (if rustic), rumours persist of savage tribes in the deep swamps practising bestial cults and presiding over lost and hidden treasures; these rumours are thought to be the reason for the Venu occupation and deep swamp expeditions during the Venu War. The f-people seem to be a type of xenomorph or hominid, but not necessarily a geneered one, raising uncomfortable questions about their ancestry. Traces of a Diaspora-era human civilisation have never been found.*

*Galagole's low-lying archipelagoes and shallow seas make hover vehicles the best transport, although many f-people rely on vehicles pulled by the amphibious **vadakroffs** ("kroffies" for short — see page 415). Preventing things rotting or rusting in Galagole's atmosphere is a perennial problem.*

High Concept: Swamp World of Goggle-eyed Xenomorphs

Aspects: K-class Main Sequence Star in Binary System; Low Grav Gas Giant Moon; Swamp Agri-products and Exotic Food; Deep Swamp Savage Tribes; Disturbing Fishy Eyes; T-Analogue Biosphere.

PLANETARY TYPE: INFERIOR GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Maturing (-1)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Inner (-1): 0.42AU*

Year Length: *114d*

Size: *Small (-2): 5000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Low Standard (-1): 0.5G*

Day Length: *Reduced (-1): 2d*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Low (-2): High oxygen (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Warm (+1): 24 °C*

Surface Liquid: *Very High (+2): 80% water*

Seasonality: *Standard (+0)*

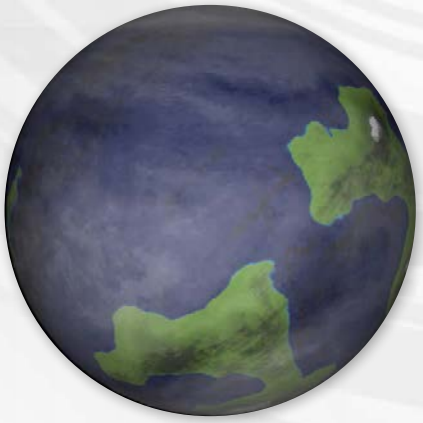
Satellites: *(Gas Giant Moon)*

Planetary Bodies: *8 (3 gas giants)*

Habitability: *Challenging (+1)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: REGRESSED WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Aligned (+0)*



Population: *Standard (+0): 10 million (85% xenomorph, 10% human, 5% other)*

Government Type: *Anarchy (-5)*

Societal Dev: *Small-scale Communities (-4)*

Openness: *Equivocal (-1)*

Control Index: *No Control (-7)*

Trade Index: *Limited (-2)*

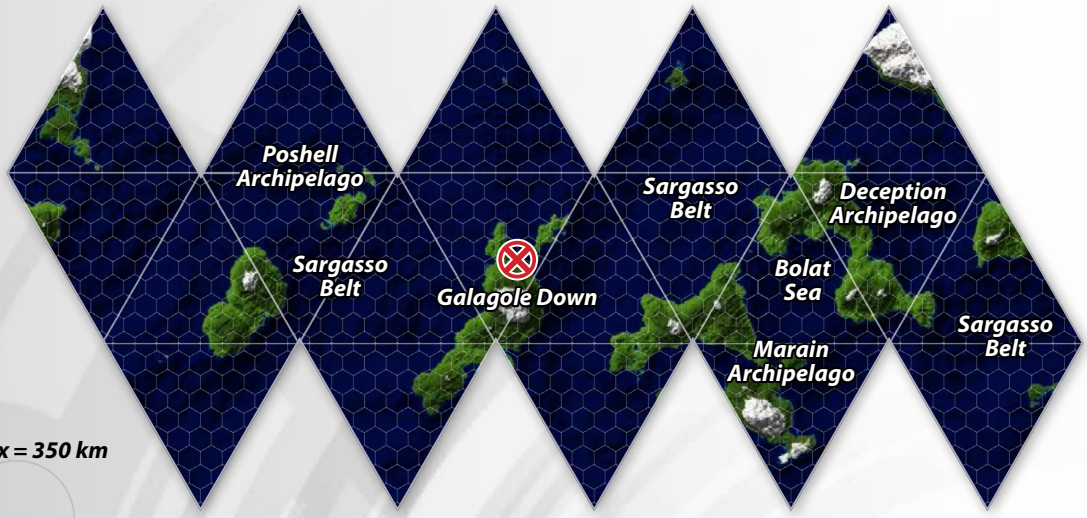
Embargo: *Good (+3): Armaments, Power, Resource Exploitation*

Tech Index: *T4 (-1): Industrial Age*

Starport: *Galagole Down Spaceport U-class landing strip (-4)*

Mindscape: *Local Node (-3)*

Culture: *Galagole xenomorph culture in Stage 2 Normalisation*



JEMELA II-H

Jemela is a garden world, famed for its tides, flying animals, and some of the finest quartz deposits in the sector. The Mai Ling Optics corporacy owns the planet, and also exploits its beauty for its tourism potential. Mining and refining is mostly done by synthetics, workers acting as coordinators and technicians. The Jemelan Quartz Groves are said to be the most romantic spot for light years around, and many people come to marry beneath the gas giant "Jewel" hanging in the Jemelan sky. While the world has a t-analogue biosphere, huge swathes of the surface are used for t-congruent agriculture.

High Concept: Come to the Romantic Jemelan Quartz Groves!

Aspects: K-class Main Sequence Star; Gas Giant Moon; Finest Quartz Deposits in the Subsector; Synthetics Do the Hard Work; Mai Ling Optics Corporacy World; T-Analogue Biosphere; Come and Spend Your Honeymoon in the Beautiful Quartz Groves of Jemela!

PLANETARY TYPE:
STANDARD GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Mature (+0)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Inner (-1): 0.3AU*

Year Length: *80d (gas giant around sun)*

Size: *Standard (+0): 14000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Standard (+0): 1.1G*

Day Length: *Standard (+0): 26h (moon around gas giant)*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Standard (+1): Oxygen (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Standard (+0): 13 ℃*

Surface Liquid: *High (+1): 70% water*

Seasonality: *Low Standard (-1)*

Satellites: *(Gas Giant Moon)*

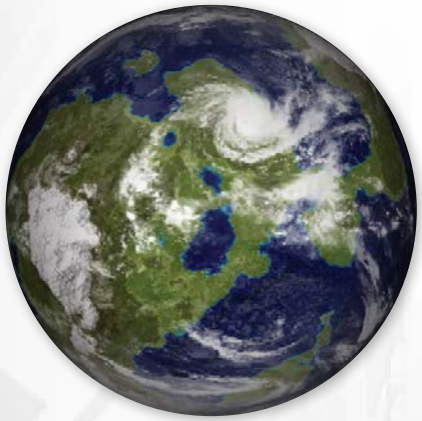
Planetary Bodies: *7 (4 gas giants)*

Habitability: *Benign (+4)*

CIVILISATION TYPE:
CORPORACY WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Autonomous (+2)*

Population: *High Standard (+1): 250 million (50% human, 45% xenomorph, 5% other)*



Government Type: *Corporacy-controlled (+3)*

Societal Dev: *Widespread Unintrusive Collective (+4)*

Openness: *Outgoing (+3)*

Control Index: *Influenced (+1)*

Trade Index: *Ubiquitous (+6)*

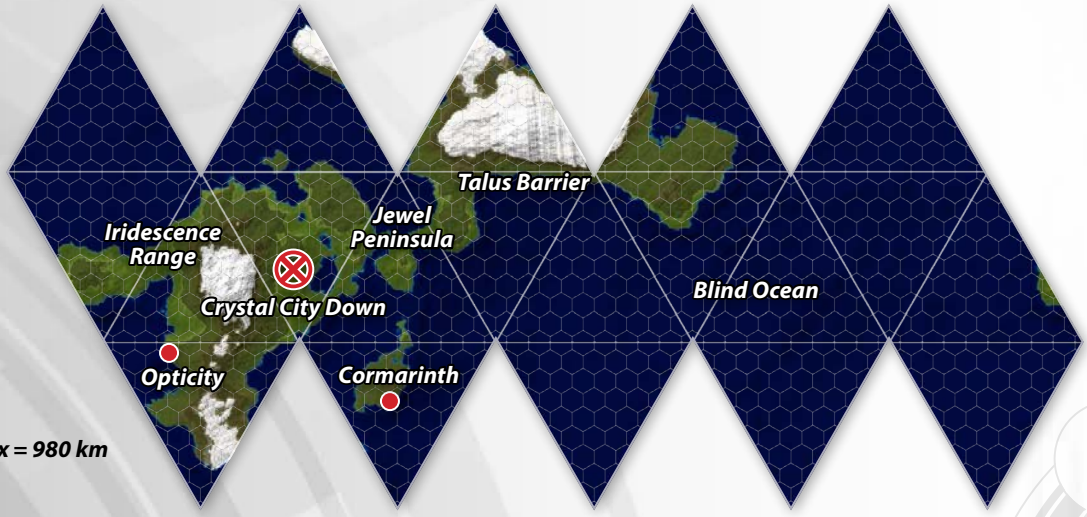
Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T9 (+4): Second Age of Space*

Starport: *Crystal City Down C-class starport (+3)*

Mindscape: *Systemwide (+0)*

Culture: *Commonality culture*



NEW HOWZAT I

New Howzat has the most spectacular set of Predecessor ruins in the sector, scattered across the planet and around its Bright Face magma ocean and polar Dark Side icecap. The ruins were clearly once more extensive but succumbed to erosion long ago; evidence suggests New Howzat suffered major ecological damage in the last million years, including atmospheric denudation and axial shift. Its rings are theorised to be remnants of a moon destroyed in the same period. Today it's a dying world, a shattered biosphere struggling to survive on the dead sea beds of its habitable zone. Most soil has oxidised into red dust, although the thin atmosphere remains breathable with breathers.

New Howzat has seen many archaeological expeditions since Rediscovery a century ago; the planet has little else to make it commercially viable. Its location on a Mindjammer route has created a rough frontier colony at Woolamalong Down spaceport, and considerable trade — some legal — passes through this lively if often dangerous world. The Commonality quarantine on the Howzat Ruins beyond the "tourist zone" encourages all manner of charlatans and treasure hunters.

High Concept: Dying World With Mysterious Quarantined Ruins

Aspects: M-class Red Dwarf; Tidally-locked World With Bright Face and Dark Side; Mysterious Predecessor Ruins; Rough and Tumble Trading Station; More Than Meets the Eye; Don't Mess With the Quarantine.

PLANETARY TYPE: MARGINAL GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Old (+2)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Inner (-1): 0.13AU*

Year Length: *35d*

Size: *Standard (+0): 16000km*

Density: *High Standard (+1)*

Surface Gravity: *High Standard (+1): 1.2G*

Day Length: *Tidal Lock (-5): 35d*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Low (-2): Oxygen (breathable with breather)*

Surface Temperature: *Cool (-1): 10 ℃*

Surface Liquid: *Very Low (-2): 3% water*

Seasonality: *No Seasonality*

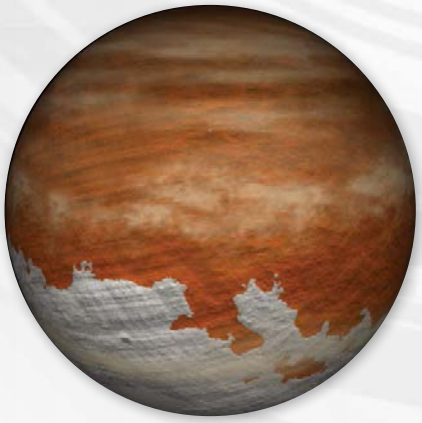
Satellites: *Ring System*

Planetary Bodies: *4 (2 gas giants)*

Habitability: *Marginal (+0)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: QUARANTINED WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Quarantine (-1)*



Population: *Low (-2): 500,000 (variable, mixed)*

Government Type: *Dictatorship (+0)*

Societal Dev: *Early Redistributive Model (+0)*

Openness: *Equivocal (-1)*

Control Index: *Laissez-faire (+0)*

Trade Index: *Extensive (+7)*

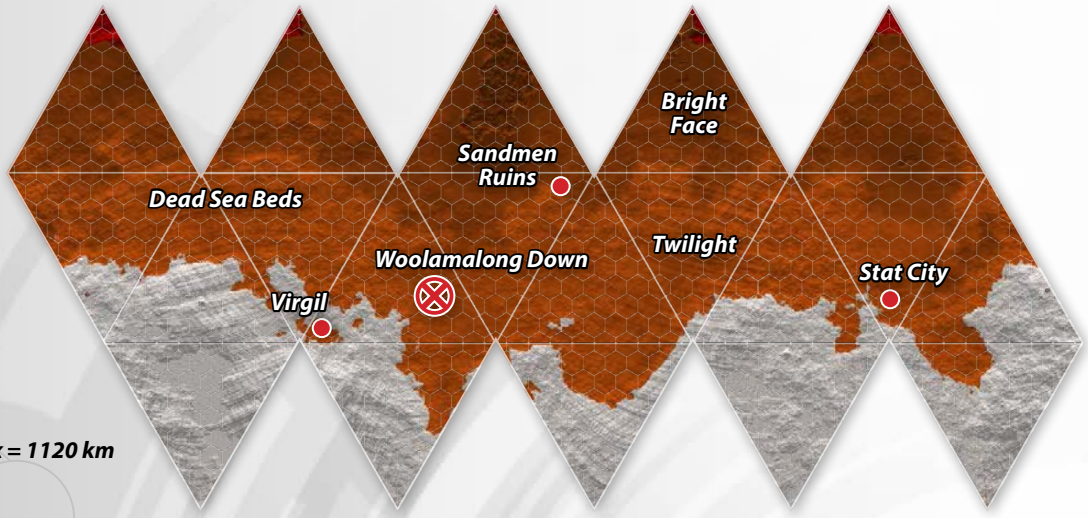
Embargo: *Quarantine (+5)*

Tech Index: *T5 (+0): Computer Age*

Starport: *Woolamalong Down D-class starport (+2)*

Mindscape: *Global (-1)*

Culture: *Commonality culture*



NIMBU PRIME II-ALPHA

Nimbu is a twin world system; its partner Secundus is a crater-pocked ice ball with a thin marginally breathable atmosphere. It's a cold uninhabited earth-like world, the highest life forms reptile analogues; there's no evidence of sentient life. Discovered a few decades ago, it has a research base which while not secret isn't exactly public; the native ***colony lizard*** *(page 416) appears to exhibit rudimentary psionic powers.*

A lot of debris remains from the planetary accretion disk; the planet has spectacular meteor showers, and in-system navigation can be hazardous. Nimbu has two close fast moons, and the great violet-white orb of frozen Secundus, four times as large as Old Earth's moon in the sky, orbiting every six weeks, causing enormous tides thirty times as strong as Old Earth's and dwarfing those of the smaller moons. Nimbu is covered with salt marshes and devastating tidal bores.

The atmosphere has a high oxygen content, and fires start easily. Plant analogues have protective coatings, high water content, and flame-retardant compounds, but forest fires are common. Nimbu is wild and inhospitable, but it's due more to remoteness and Commonality discouragement that no one has set up a colony yet.

High Concept: Double Planet System With Classified Commonality Research Station

Aspects: A-class Main Sequence Star; Spectacular Meteor Showers; Long Years and Slow Seasons; Young T-Analogue Biosphere; Classified Research Station.

PLANETARY TYPE: INFERIOR GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Very Young (-3)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Inner (-1): 2.6AU*

Year Length: *3y*

Size: *Standard (+0): 11500km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Standard (+0): 0.9G*

Day Length: *Rapid (+2): 20h*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Standard (-1): High oxygen (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Cool (-1): 9 ℃*

Surface Liquid: *Average (+0): 50% water*

Seasonality: *High (+2)*

Satellites: *2 Planetoids + companion planet*

Planetary Bodies: *5 (no gas giants)*

Habitability: *Agreeable (+3)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: COMMONALITY CIVILISATION

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Outpost (-3)*



Population: *Negligible (-5): 30 people*

Government Type: *Commonality-controlled (+4)*

Societal Dev: *Sentience Coordinated Collective (+5)*

Openness: *Self-centred (-2)*

Control Index: *Laissez-faire (+0)*

Trade Index: *Very Limited (-3)*

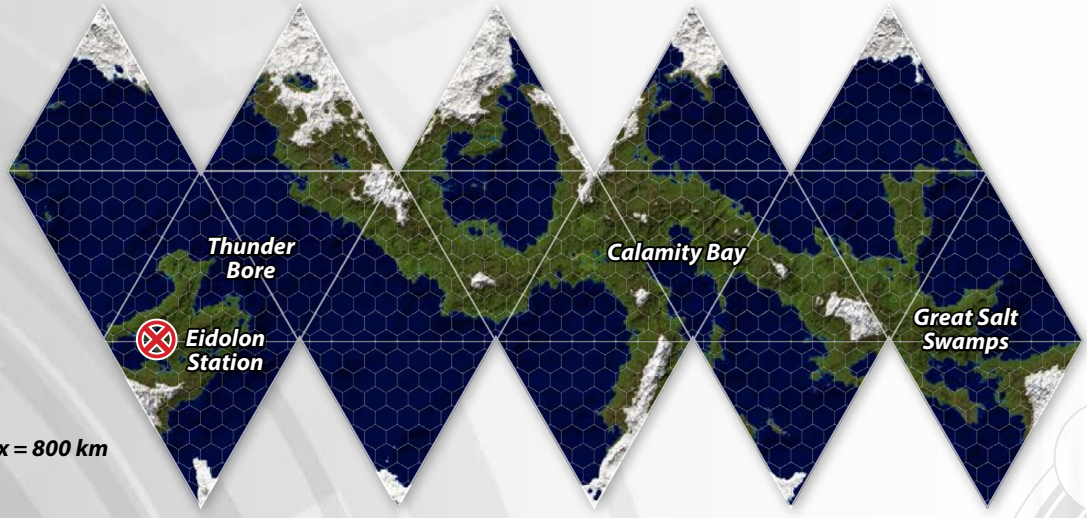
Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T9 (+4): Second Age of Space*

Starport: *U-class landing strip (-4)*

Mindscape: *Local Node (-3)*

Culture: *Commonality culture*



OLKENNEDY B-I

Olkennedy was recently designated a Wonder of the Darradine Restoration, a matter of great pride to its newly-contacted inhabitants. It's a mountainous, volcanic world, uninhabitable except for its spectacular "Crater"; deep enough to have its own atmosphere and ecosystem, it takes up 1/12th of the planet's surface, responsible for Olkennedy's bizarre weather, including the "Precipitation Zone" or "Snow-Layer" of snow-capped peaks and waterfalls along the Crater's rim.

Olkennedy was rediscovered a century ago, and quarantined as SCI Force engineered its culture to be less traumatised by Commonality arrival. Quarantine was lifted about twenty years ago, when it was decided to stop engineering Olkennedy as a neo-Yoosan culture world (its name means "Old Canada") and instead incorporate it into the Commonality mainstream as quickly as possible. Many are still awestruck by the sudden arrival of a vast and sophisticated interstellar civilisation on their doorstep.

The original colony used genurgy and xenomorph labour; the huge brown Nwasha pithecines mined the hazardous volcanic zones, and short and stocky nomadic Akantack hominids colonised the Snow-Layer. Modern-day Nwasha and Omianto are pithecine centres; Van Kuvrai and Columbiana are home to the pale, dark-haired native humans; and Akantack and the Snow-Layer are hominid. Despite historical conflicts, these five "nations" have learned to coexist, with some population mixing.

High Concept: Cratered Wonder of the Darradine Rim

Aspects: M-class Red Dwarf in Binary System; Nearly a Neo-Yoosan Culture World; T-Congruent Biosphere; There's an Interstellar Civilisation Out There!

PLANETARY TYPE: INFERIOR GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Maturing (-1)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Outer (+1): 0.34AU*

Year Length: *171d*

Size: *Large Standard (+1): 17000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *High Standard (+1): 1.3G*

Day Length: *Very Rapid (+3): 18h*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Standard (+1) in Crater: Oxygen (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Standard (+0) in Crater: 14 °C; Cold (-2) on Surface: -15 °C*

Surface Liquid: *Very Low (-2): 5% water*

Seasonality: *Low (-2)*

Satellites: *No Moon; various moonlets*

Planetary Bodies: *2 (no gas giants)*

Habitability: *Benign (+4)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: UNITED WORLD



Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Member (+3)*

Population: *Standard (+0): 30 million (40% human, 10% hominid, 40% xenomorph, 10% other)*

Government Type: *Representative (-2)*

Societal Dev: *Taxation and Representation (-1)*

Openness: *Self-critical (+1)*

Control Index: *Property (-2)*

Trade Index: *Ubiquitous (+4)*

Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T7 (+2): First Age of Space*

Starport: *Craterport Down C-class starport (+3)*

Mindscape: *Global (-2)*

Culture: *Fringe World culture in Stage 2 Normalisation*



TAMBINI A-III

Tambini is a high gravity world of plateaus and gorges. The plateaus are subject to high winds; the gorges are sheltered and inhabited. Amazing electrical storms occur at the interface — life cooked up pretty quickly here, and the mutation rate remains high; pools of potent amino acids dot the High Pampas. Tambini has two distinct ecosystems; as well as the High Pampas, the world's gorges are packed with jungle-like vegetation, their walls forming the ***Everfalls*** *ecosystem — rainforests of massive, thick-trunked trees, hundreds of feet wide and thousands of feet high.*

Tambini is renowned for its grav flyers. Javawayn Industries have orbital and ground-based facilities; the Javawayn themselves remain in orbit or in special low-grav habitats.

The Tambini natives are hominids; until Rediscovery they led an arboreal existence in the Everfalls. Many still do. They're mainly quadrupedal, with four powerful "arms" for rock- and tree-climbing and powerful leaps. Nowadays even they use grav-belts. A popular theory says Tambini is the forgotten Javawayn homeworld.

High Concept: Stormswept High Gravity World of the High Pampas and Everfalls

Aspects: M-Class Red Dwarf in Triple Star System; Barren Steppe World; Pools of Amino Acids on the High Pampas; Vertical Everfalls Jungles; Arboreal Hominids; T-Analogue Biosphere.

PLANETARY TYPE: MARGINAL GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Old (+2)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Inner (-1): 0.14AU*

Year Length: *49d*

Size: *Large (+2): 30000km*

Density: *Low (-2)*

Surface Gravity: *High (+2): 1.9G*

Day Length: *Reduced (-1): 2.6d*

Atmospheric Pressure: *High (+2): Oxygen (breathable); requires breathers on High Pampas*

Surface Temperature: *Warm (+1): 24 °C*

Surface Liquid: *Low (-1): 20% water*

Seasonality: *Low (-3)*

Satellites: *Ring System*

Planetary Bodies: *8 (3 gas giants)*

Habitability: *Marginal (+0)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: COMMONALITY CIVILISATION

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Member (+3)*



Population: *Standard (+0): 50 million (30% hominid, 20% human, 45% xenomorph, 5% other)*

Government Type: *Commonality-controlled (Oligarchy) (+5)*

Societal Dev: *Sentience Coordinated Collective (+9)*

Openness: *Guarded (+0)*

Control Index: *Speech (-1)*

Trade Index: *Moderate (+0)*

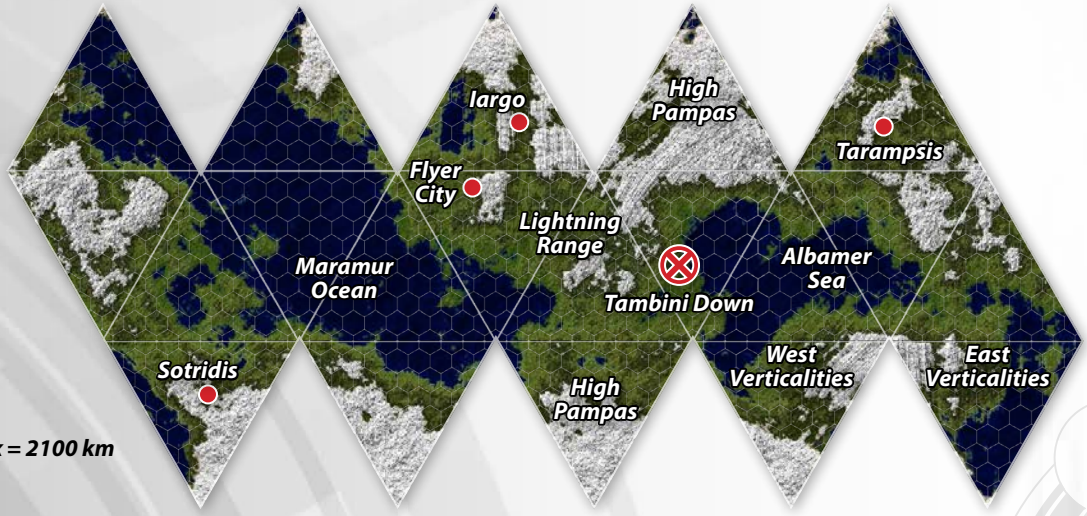
Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T9 (+4): Second Age of Space*

Starport: *Tambini Down and Everfalls Highport B-class starport (+4)*

Mindscape: *Systemwide (+1)*

Culture: *Commonality culture*



TREMOR A-VC (ZALMOXIS III)

This euphemistically named world is the third moon of the ruddy gas giant Zalmoxis, and one of the most geologically unstable bodies in the octant. A mass of erupting volcanoes, earthquakes, lava spouts, and aurorae, it's beautiful, deadly, and a popular tourist destination. The Sky Cities of Zalmoxis III are palatial, operated by the Javawayn and catering for the elite of the Darradine Restoration; one of the most exclusive, the Grundshlaker, *is the location of the legendary Casino Vulcanica, where worlds are lost and won in a single night.*

Surface installations on Tremor are mostly semi-automated sulphur mines operated by high-endurance synthetics, but include research stations investigating Tremor's extraordinary environment.

High Concept: The Sky Cities of Zalmoxis III and the Infamous Casino Vulcanica!

Aspects: F-class Main Sequence Star With Red Dwarf Companion; Volcanic Gas Giant Moon; Beautiful yet Unstable Mass of Erupting Lava Fields; Intense Magnetosphere and Beautiful Aurorae; Risk It All in the Casino Vulcanica; Wealthy Cosmopolitan Tourists.

PLANETARY TYPE: TERRESTRIAL PLANET HOTWORLD

Planetary Age: *Maturing (-1)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone (+0): 1.65AU*

Year Length: *1y 334d*

Size: *Small (-2): 5000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Low (-2): 0.5G*

Day Length: *Reduced (-1): 41h*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Low (-3): Sulphur dioxide (unbreathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Hot (+2): 92 ℃*

Surface Liquid: *Very Low (-2): 5% sulphuric acid*

Seasonality: *Tidally-locked*

Satellites: *(Gas Giant Moon)*

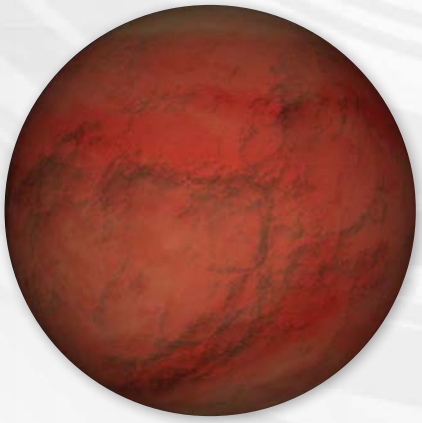
Planetary Bodies: *9 (1 gas giant)*

Habitability: *Deadly (-4)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: CORPORACY WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Autonomous (+2)*

Population: *Low Standard (-1): 2 million (70% human, 10% hominid, 15% xenomorph, 5% other)*



Government Type: *Corporacy-controlled (+2)*

Societal Dev: *Widespread Unintrusive Collective (+4)*

Openness: *Guarded (+0)*

Control Index: *Influenced (+1)*

Trade Index: *Ubiquitous (+7)*

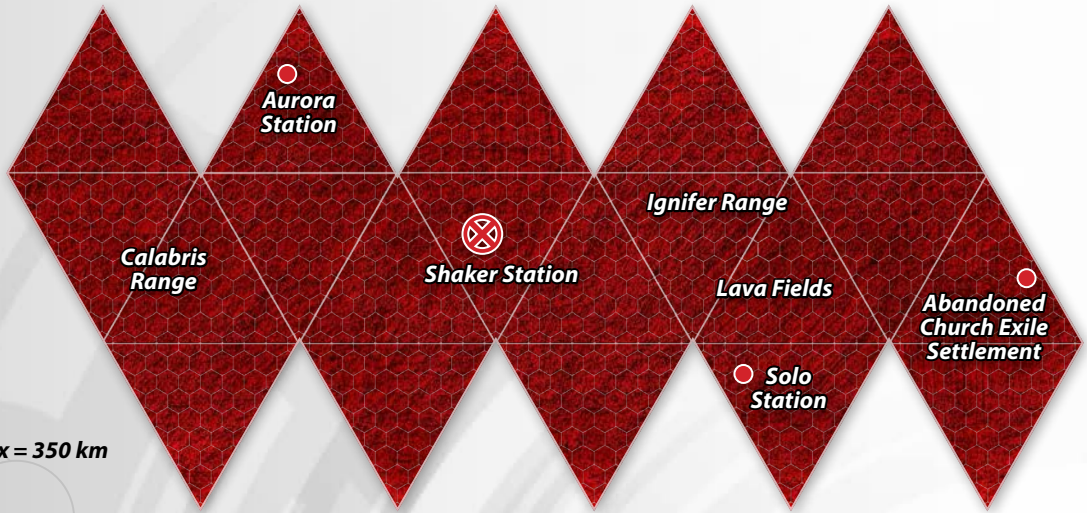
Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T9 (+4): Second Age of Space*

Starport: *Shaker Station C-class starport (+3)*

Mindscape: *Systemwide (+0)*

Culture: *Commonality culture*



VIRI A-1 I-ALPHA



A dry cool world rediscovered 140 years ago and homeworld of the Viri hominids (page 48). It's a twin planet, sharing a common centre of gravity with its companion Esmirunt in the only occupied orbit of its red dwarf primary, itself companion to a K-class main sequence star. There are two other distant M-class stars in this rare four-star system.

High Concept: Cool Dry Homeworld of the Viri Hominids

Aspects: M-class Red Dwarf With K-class Close Companion and Two Red Dwarf Companion; Four Suns in the Sky; T-Congruent Biosphere; Luxury Art Trade; Outer System Metal Mining; Keen Market for Consumer Perishables; Philosopher World.

PLANETARY TYPE:
INFERIOR GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Young (-2)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Inner (-1): 0.13AU*

Year Length: *114d*

Size: *Small Standard (-1): 8000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Low Standard (-1): 0.69G*

Day Length: *Standard (+0): 30h*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Standard (-1): Oxygen (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Cool (-1): 9 °C*

Surface Liquid: *Low (-1): 30% water*

Seasonality: *Low (-2)*

Satellites: *No Moon*

Planetary Bodies: *2 (no gas giants)*

Habitability: *Agreeable (+3)*

CIVILISATION TYPE:
UNITED WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Aligned (+0)*

Population: *Standard (+0): 10 million (80% hominid, 5% xenomorph, 5% other)*

Government Type: *Oligarchy (+1)*

Societal Dev: *Consensus Redistribution Model (+1)*

Openness: *Guarded (+0)*

Control Index: *Influenced (+1)*

Trade Index: *Very Extensive (+3)*

Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T9 (+4): Second Age of Space*

Starport: *Twin Cities Down (Dakrazar) B-class starport (+4)*

Mindscape: *Systemwide (+1)*

Culture: *Viri culture in Stage 2 Normalisation*



XAIWU IV

*Xaiwu is a cold world, polished and scoured, shiny and cracked from space. Under the icy surface a vibrant ocean ecosystem thrives; huge **seaworms** (page 416), kilometres long, patrol the shallows, and deep down, where the pressures are great, swim herds of beautiful flickering **fluocytes** (page 416). It is a neo-Shinean colony, only 150 years old but already supporting 200 million people in 5 vast undersea conurbations. The world has a booming agricultural industry.*

Chembu Genurgy (page 293) is active on Xaiwu; a third of the population sports gills and other sub-aquan enhancements. The rest use other modifications, including aquatic exoskeletons and submarine craft. While the conurbations remain domed with standard terrestrial atmospheres, it's expected that Xaiwu will gradually become an aquatic culture.

High Concept: Sub-Aquan Neo-Shinean Culture Oceanworld

Aspects: F-class Main Sequence Star; High Population Undersea Cities; Advanced Subaquan Vessels; Enhanced Aquatic Populations; Enormous Exofauna; Thriving Agri-World; Hungry for Offworld Goods; T-Analogue Biosphere

PLANETARY TYPE: OCEANWORLD

Planetary Age: *Maturing (-1)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Outer (+1): 1.8AU*

Year Length: *860d*

Size: *Large Standard (+1): 24000km*

Density: *Low Standard (-1)*

Surface Gravity: *Standard (+0): 1G*

Day Length: *Rapid (+2): 20h*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Very Low (-4): CO_2 (unbreathable) on surface; High (+3) in ocean*

Surface Temperature: *Cold (-2): -73 °C on surface; Standard (+0): 14 °C in ocean*

Surface Liquid: *Oceanworld (+4): 100% water under frozen surface*

Seasonality: *No Seasonality*

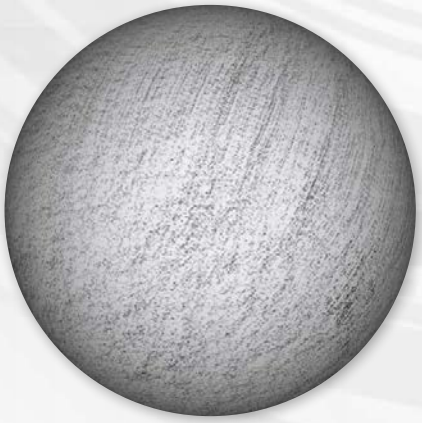
Satellites: *Ring System; 4 Planetoids*

Planetary Bodies: *3 (2 gas giants)*

Habitability: *Deadly (-5) on surface; Challenging (+1) with breathers in ocean*

CIVILISATION TYPE: CULTURE WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Culture World (+1)*



Population: *High Standard (+1): 200 million (100% human)*

Government Type: *Dictatorship (+0)*

Societal Dev: *Widespread Intrusive Collective (+3)*

Openness: *Self-centred (-2)*

Control Index: *Surveilled (+2)*

Trade Index: *Moderate (+0)*

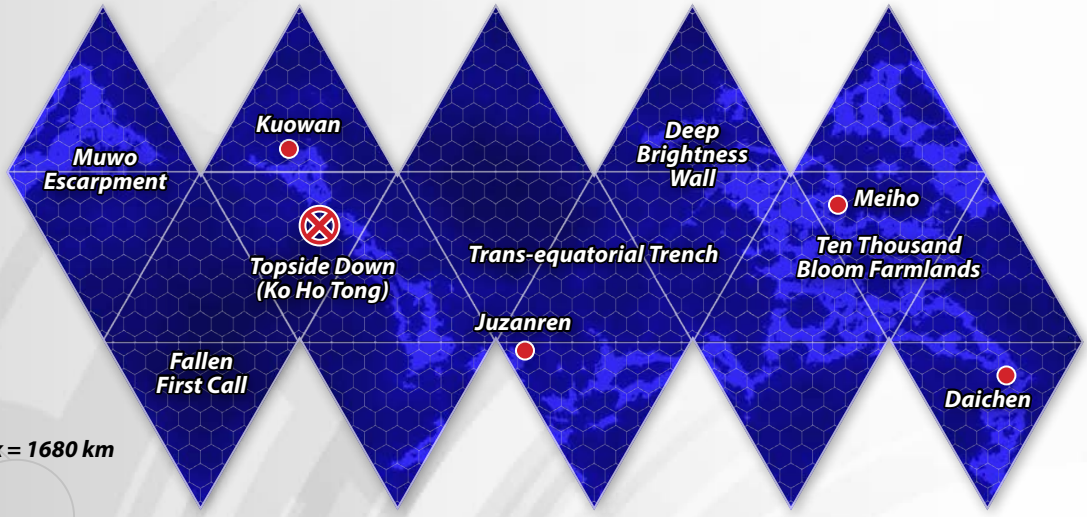
Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T9 (+4): Second Age of Space*

Starport: *Topside Down D-class starport (+2)*

Mindscape: *Global (-1)*

Culture: *Neo-Shinean subculture*



ZHAFFRANE III

Zhaffrane's immense, horse-like ***chelodonts*** *(page 417) stand fifteen metres tall at the shoulder. They feed on succulent saprophytes in the tops of hard, spiny* balonti *trees, from which* mungi*, the local brandy-like distillate, is made. Zhaffrane is geologically ancient and tectonically stable; lifeforms have evolved extraordinary specialisations, including the explosive* ***blastbeast*** *(page 417) and the iridescent* ***laserhawk*** *(page 417), whose crystalline feathers decorate the ceremonial headdresses of the native snake-people xenomorphs. The snake-people are descendants of original colony farm-workers, and are renowned as chelodont mahouts; many still follow semi-nomadic lifestyles. In the Expansionary Era Zhaffrane is a destination for tourists and colonists seeking a simpler existence.*

High Concept: Get Away From It All With the Snakepeople of Zhaffrane

Aspects: K-class Main Sequence Star With G-class Companion; Regressed Colony Garden World; Ancient and Highly Evolved T-Analogue Biosphere; A Simpler Existence; Nomadic Tribesfolk; Long Days and Nights

PLANETARY TYPE: STANDARD GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Aging (+1)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone (+0): 0.2AU*

Year Length: *81d*

Size: *Standard (+0): 16000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Standard (+0): 0.94G*

Day Length: *Reduced (-1): 3.5d*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Standard (+0): Oxygen (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Standard (+0): 15 ℃*

Surface Liquid: *Average (+0): 50% water*

Seasonality: *Low (-3)*

Satellites: *Ring System*

Planetary Bodies: *9 (3 gas giants)*

Habitability: *Benign (+4)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: REGRESSED WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Independent: Embassy (-2)*

Population: *Standard (+0): 20 million (80% xenomorph, 15% human, 5% other)*



Government Type: *Anarchy (-5): Tribal*

Societal Dev: *Small-scale Communities (-4)*

Openness: *Resistant (-3)*

Control Index: *No Control (-7)*

Trade Index: *Inconsequential (-4)*

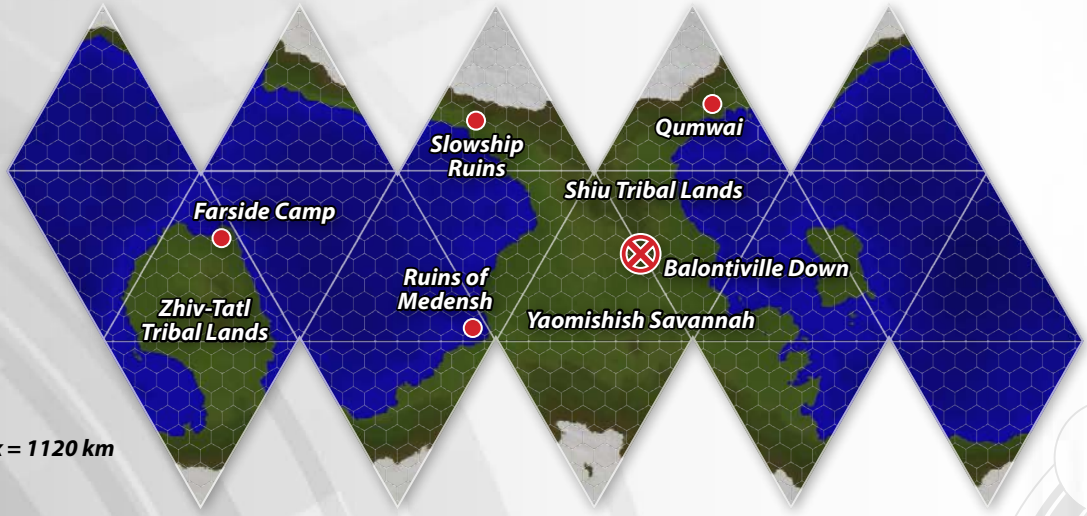
Embargo: *Superb (+5): Armaments, Comms, Power, Resource Exploitation, Transport*

Tech Index: *T2 (-3): Metal Age*

Starport: *Balontiville Down E-class starport (+1)*

Mindscape: *Local Node (-3)*

Culture: *Zhaffrane culture in Stage 1 Contact*



ZVUKIMU A-II

The crystalline peaks of Zvukimu A-II rise out of the atmosphere, inhabited by a rare species of plasma beings dubbed ***Singers*** *(page 418). Mildly interested in communicating with visitors, they otherwise have little constructive contact with the Commonality. Its lowlands have a thin breathable atmosphere and low gravity; Zvukiman hominids are tall and gangly, with barrel-like chests and black skin. They make excellent astronauts, starship techs, and zero-G combat troops; the world has good starship manufacture and repair yards.*

Zvukimu is home to Gentility Base, a sentient space habitat and one of the main SCI Force bases in the subsector. Offering emergency repair and intelligence facilities, and training the elite Zvukiman zero-G troops, it's also home to the Communications Instrumentality's diplomatic embassy to the Singers (they don't have much to do).

Zvukimu's long day is something of a mystery, as it should be even longer. There's a research effort at Gentility Base; if the Singers know anything, they're not saying.

High Concept: Beautiful Homeworld of the Mysterious Singers

Aspects: M-class Red Dwarf With Red Dwarf Companion; Low Grav Garden World; Tall and Gangly Zvukiman Hominids; Mysterious Singers of the Crystal Peaks; The Secret of Zvukimu; Good Shipyards; Industrial Processing Plants; A Need for Weapons; Twin T-Analogue and Exotic Biospheres

PLANETARY TYPE: INFERIOR GARDEN WORLD

Planetary Age: *Aging (+1)*

Orbit: *Habitable Zone, Inner (-1): 0.13AU*

Year Length: *49d*

Size: *Small Standard (-1): 10000km*

Density: *Standard (+0)*

Surface Gravity: *Low Standard (-1): 0.63G*

Day Length: *Reduced (-1): 2.75d*

Atmospheric Pressure: *Low (-2): Oxygen (breathable)*

Surface Temperature: *Standard (+0): 14 °C*

Surface Liquid: *Average (+0): 52% water*

Seasonality: *Low (-3)*

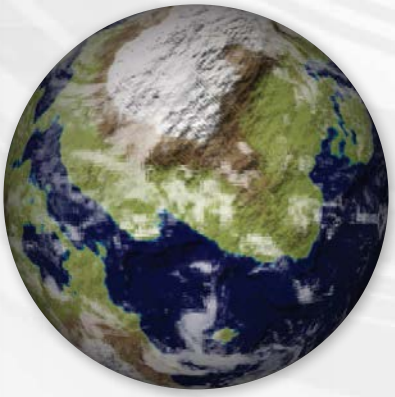
Satellites: *No Moon*

Planetary Bodies: *3 (1 gas giant)*

Habitability: *Challenging (+1)*

CIVILISATION TYPE: INDUSTRIAL WORLD

Civilisation Designation: *Commonality Aligned (+0)*



Population: *High (+2): 1 billion (85% hominid, 5% human, 5% xenomorph, 5% other)*

Government Type: *Oligarchy (+1)*

Societal Dev: *Widespread Unintrusive Collective (+4)*

Openness: *Self-improving (+2)*

Control Index: *Personal (-3)*

Trade Index: *Ubiquitous (+8)*

Embargo: *No Embargo*

Tech Index: *T7 (+2): First Age of Space*

Starport: *Singer City Down B-class starport (+4)*

Mindscape: *Systemwide (+1)*

Culture: *Zvukimu culture in Stage 2 Normalisation*



CHAM-FIDA DIU-WAYN PLANETS

Navigational Hazard

One of the most unusual planetary arrangements in Human Space, this four-world rosette is a known navigational hazard, avoided except for the occasional probe from the Telemachus Station research facility in the system's Oort cloud. The Cham-Fida-Diu-Wayn planets have a sinister reputation. It's theorised they may be home to a malevolent form of the Planetary Intelligence; all who travel here meet with death, often at their own hands. Existing unclassified probe data shows four planets of unearthly beauty in a clearly artificial rosette. Strange fluorescences swirl around the worlds, an unforgettable yet chilling sight.

High Concept: Stellar Anomaly Navigational Hazard

Aspects: Four-World Rosette Orbiting a Stellar Core, Unearthly Fluorescences, Oort Cloud Research Station, All Who Go to Cham-Fida-Diu-Wayn Die!



Scenario Hook: The Lost City

In a Galagole waterfront bar a local f-person approaches the PCs, a trader with a regular run to the secretive Commonality commando base upriver. He offers them a treasure he got from the swamp tribes there — a small statuette of a weird-looking starship, apparently dating from long before the world was rediscovered!

What are the Commonality commandoes doing in the deep swamp? Are they really just "training"? What were the Venu looking for during the war? Could the rumours of treasure-laden ancient cities be true? And a starship*?*

Scenario Hook: Cold Steel

The PCs have been sent to find out why Scyldvik, an isolated jarldom in the northern fjords of Belawis, has taken its shipment of precious blaster rifles but not returned its contingent of troops for the Armed Forces Instrumentality. They face a hostile reception; the old jarl is dead, and his young successor and his barbarous court want nothing to do with these weak and dishonourable offworlders!

Scyldvik needs a reminder that the Commonality is strong and honourable — but also friends to the snowpeople. But how?

MINDJAMMER™

CHARACTER SHEET

Name:

Occupation:

Culture:

Genotype:

Actual Age:

Tech Index:

Habituated Gravity:

Apparent Age:

STATUS

Fate Points:

Refresh:

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4

Mental Stress: 1 2 3 4

CONSEQUENCES

2 Mild ( )

2 Mild ( )

4 Moderate ( )

6 Severe ( )

CREDIT STRESS

Credit Stress: 1 2 3 4

2 Mild Cons ( )

2

4 Moderate Cons ( )

4

6 Severe Cons ( )

6

ASPECTS

High Concept:

Trouble:

Cultural Aspect:

Game Aspects:

Other Aspects:

OTHER EXTRAS

SKILLS

Superb (+5):

Great (+4):

Good (+3):

Fair (+2):

Average (+1):

STUNTS

NOTES

HALO

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CHARACTER CREATION WORKSHEET

SCOPE

Game Name:

Scope:

QUESTIONS

What sort of people are your characters?

What sort of environment are they in?

ISSUES

Current Issue:

Impending Issue:

FACES & PLACES

Name:	Name:	Name:
Issue / Aspect:	Issue / Aspect:	Issue / Aspect:

CHARACTER CONCEPT

Culture:

Genotype:

Occupation:

High Concept:

Trouble:

Name:

PHASE TRIO

PHASE ONE - Your Adventure:

Phase One Aspect:

PHASE TWO - Crossing Paths:

Phase Two Aspect:

PHASE Three - Crossing Paths Again:

Phase Three Aspect:

CHOOSE:
- Tech Index (from culture)
- Habituated Gravity
- Starting Equipment (page 28)

SKILLS & STUNTS:
- 1 x Great (+4)
- 2 x Good (+3)
- 3 x Fair (+2)
- 4 x Average (+1)
- 3 stunts for free
- Buy up to 2 more for 1 refresh each
- 3 stunts = 5 refresh
- 4 stunts = 4 refresh
- 5 stunts = 3 refresh

EXTRAS BUDGET:
- 1 aspect
- 2 stunts
- 6 skill points

STRESS:
- 2 stress boxes for physical, mental, and credit stress.

Physical Stress:
- Physique 1-2: +3 pt box
- Physique 3-4: +4 pt box
- Physique 5+: +mild consequence

Mental Stress:
- Empathy 1-2: +3 pt box
- Empathy 3-4: +4 pt box
- Empathy 5+: +mild consequence

Credit Stress:
- Resources 1-2: +3 pt box
- Resources 3-4: +4 pt box
- Resources 5+: +mild consequence

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CONSTRUCT SHEET

Name: | Scale: | Occupation:

Culture: | Type: | Actual Age:

Tech Index: | Habituated Gravity: | Apparent Age:

STATUS

Fate Points:

Refresh:

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4

Systems Stress: 1 2 3 4

Mental Stress: 1 2 3 4

CONSEQUENCES

2 Mild ( )

2 Mild ( )

4 Moderate ( )

6 Severe ( )

CREDIT STRESS

Credit Stress: 1 2 3 4

2 Mild Cons ( )

2

4 Moderate Cons ( )

4

6 Severe Cons ( )

6

ASPECTS

High Concept:

Trouble:

Cultural Aspect:

Game Aspects:

Other Aspects:

SCHEMATIC

SKILLS

Superb (+5):

Great (+4):

Good (+3):

Fair (+2):

Average (+1):

STUNTS

EXTRAS

HALO

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ORGANISATION SHEET

Name:

Culture:

Tech Index:

Headquarters:

Nearest Presence:

Type:

Scale:

Reach:

STATUS

Fate Points:

Refresh:

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4

Mental Stress: 1 2 3 4

CONSEQUENCES

2 Mild ( )

2 Mild ( )

4 Moderate ( )

6 Severe ( )

CREDIT STRESS

Credit Stress: 1 2 3 4

2 Mild Cons ( )

2

4 Moderate Cons ( )

4

6 Severe Cons ( )

6

ASPECTS

High Concept:

Trouble:

Other Aspects:

OTHER EXTRAS

SKILLS

Superb (+5):

Great (+4):

Good (+3):

Fair (+2):

Average (+1):

STUNTS

NOTES

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MINDJAMMER™

CULTURE SHEET

Name:

Homeworld:

Tech Index:

Type:

Scale:

Reach:

STATUS

Fate Points:

Refresh:

Physical Stress: 1 2 3 4

Mental Stress: 1 2 3 4

CONSEQUENCES

2 Mild ( )

2 Mild ( )

4 Moderate ( )

6 Severe ( )

CAPABILITIES

MEMES

Dominant Meme:

Trouble:

Other Memes:

Situation Aspects:

SKILLS

Superb (+5):

Great (+4):

Good (+3):

Fair (+2):

Average (+1):

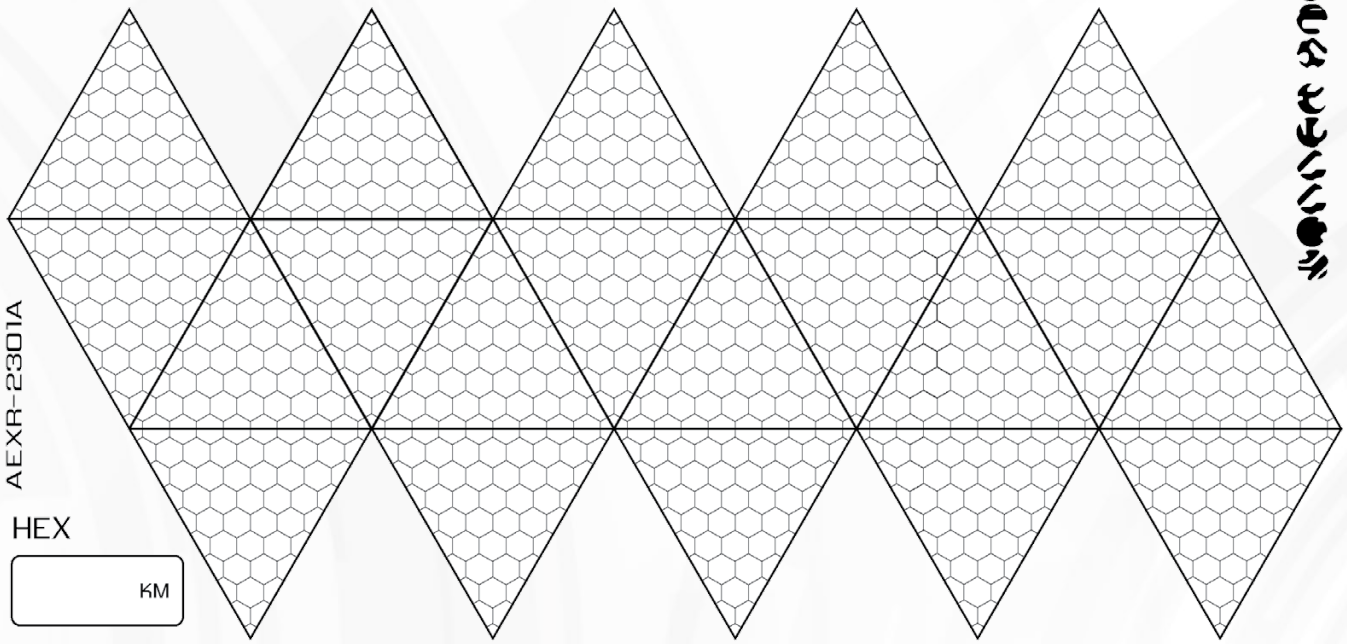
NOTES

STUNTS

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PLANETARY MAP

HIGH CONCEPT:



AEXR-2301A

HEX

KM

PLANETARY TYPE:		CIVILISATION TYPE:	
AGE:		DESIGNATION:	
ORBIT:		POPULATION:	
SIZE:		GOVERNMENT:	
YEAR LENGTH:		SOCIETAL DEV:	
DAY LENGTH:		OPENNESS:	
DENSITY:		CONTROL INDEX:	
GRAVITY:		TRADE INDEX:	
ATMOS PRESSURE:		EMBARGO:	
TEMPERATURE:		TECH INDEX:	
LIQUID:		STARPORT:	
SEASONALITY:		MINDSCAPE:	
SATELLITES:		CULTURE:	
HABITABILITY:			
BIOSPHERE:			

PLANETARY EVENTS 4dF

-4		-1	
-3		0	
-2		+1	
		+2	
		+3	
		+4	

KEY

POLITICAL BORDERS: ▪▪▪▪▪ MOUNTAINS: ▲ ROUGH: ▒ STARPORT: ⊗

COASTLINE: ▬ ICE PACK: ▒ VEGETATION: ↑ CITY: ●

PAE PLANETARY MAP 267/10.4 x-y projection.
Issued Lalanthe Space Force cartography
14/e/r-Alpha, Lagrange-2
Also available in holo and Virtuality

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SYSTEM SCHEMATIC

SYSTEM NAME: | CIVILISATION: | DESIGNATION:

STARPORT: | POPULATION: | MINDSCAPE:

NAME	PLANETARY TYPE		ASPECTS
		EXTREME OUTER (x40)	
		OUTER (x10)	
		OUTER (x5)	
		OUTER (x1.5)	
		HABITABLE ZONE OUTER (x1.5)	
		HABITABLE ZONE (x1.0)	
		HABITABLE ZONE INNER (x0.7)	
		INNER (x0.4)	
		EXTREME INNER ORBIT (x0.1)	

NAME	STELLAR BODY TYPE		ASPECTS
		PRIMARY	

4dF	SYSTEM EVENTS
-4	
-3	
-2	
-1	
0	
+1	
+2	
+3	
+4	

H-ZONE ORBITAL DISTANCE | TRADE INDEX | CONTROL INDEX

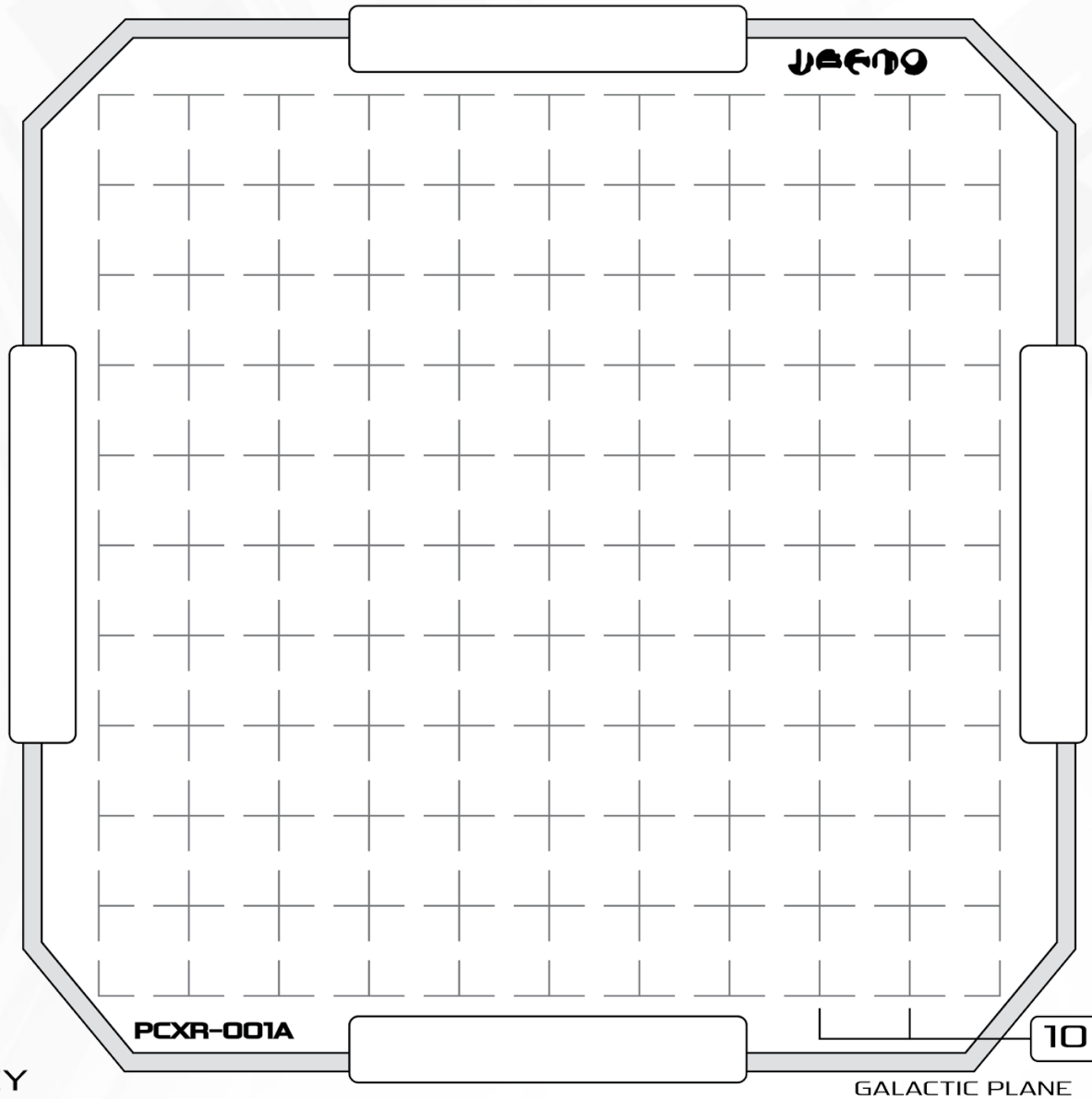
SKY COLOUR

TRADE ASPECTS

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OCTANT

OCTANT OF THE SUBSECTOR



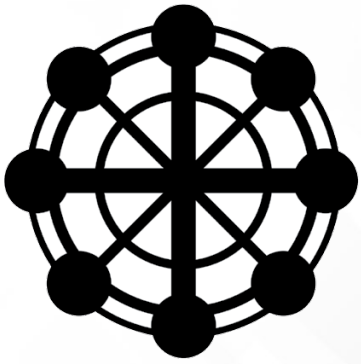
NCE Octant Schematic 193/101.4 x-y projection.
Issued Titania Space Force ordinance
14/e/r-Alpha, Titan Lagrange-2
Also available in holo and virtuality

KEY

- STAR SYSTEM
- QUARANTINE
- EMBARGO
- OCTANT CAPITAL
- SUBSECTOR CAPITAL
- SECTOR CAPITAL
- FAR GATE
- MINDJAMMER ROUTE
- EXTRA-TRANSECT ROUTE
- BORDER (POLITICAL)
- DEPOT
- DUST CLOUD
- NEBULA
- RIFT

+50 to – 50 Z COORDINATE

GALACTIC PLANE NORTH

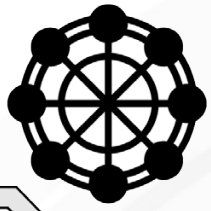


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SUBSECTOR

TX OF THE SECTOR

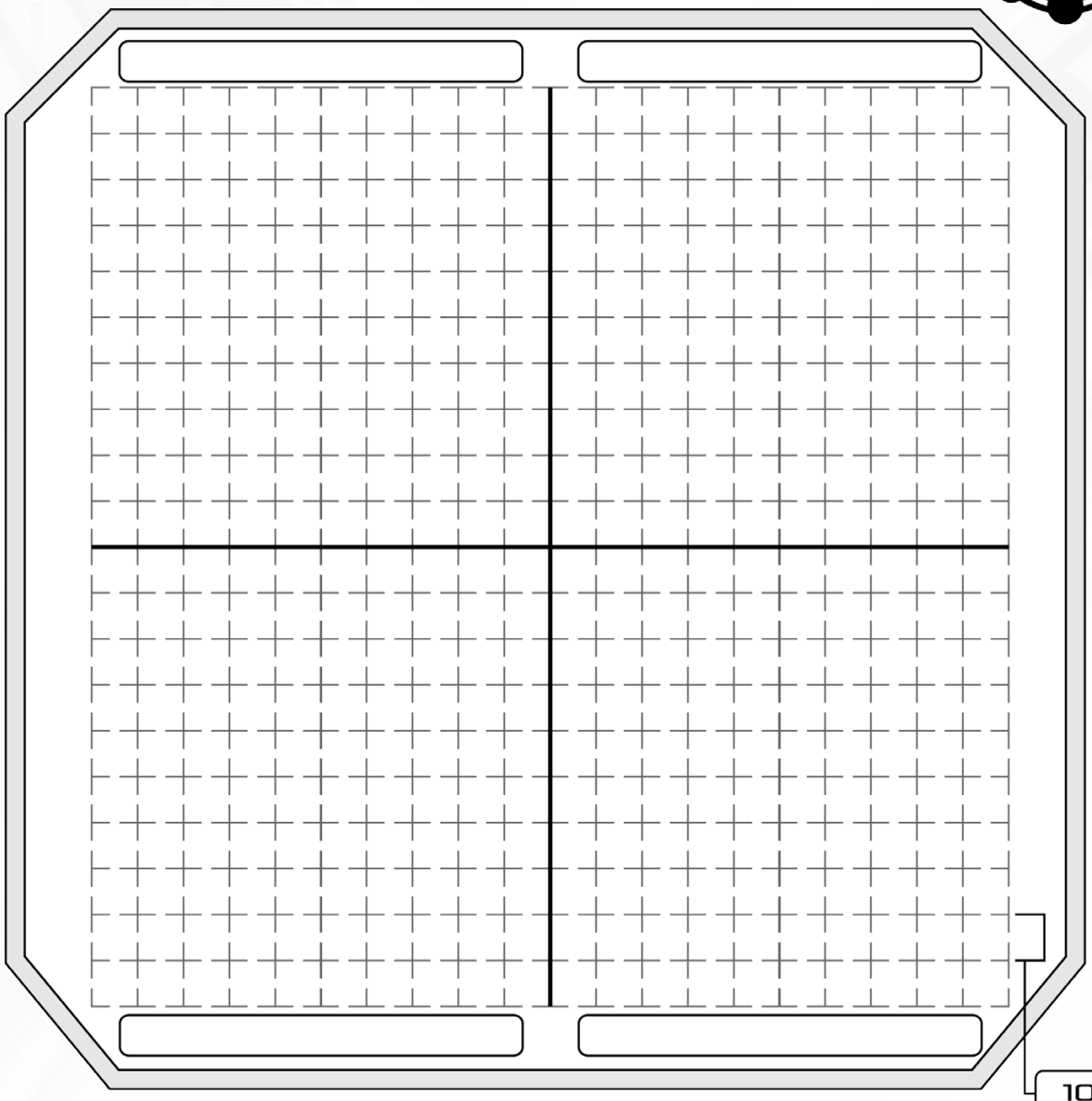
GALACTIC PLANE NORTH





○ ALPHA / BETA / GAMMA / DELTA

○ EPSILON / ZETA / ETA / THETA



NCE Sub Sector Schematic 7/1.4 x-y projection.
Issued Titania Space Force ordinance
14/e/r-Alpha, Titan Lagrange-2
Also available in holo and Virtuality

10 LY

KEY

- STAR SYSTEM
- QUARANTINE
- EMBARGO
- DEPOT
- OCTANT CAPITAL
- SUBSECTOR CAPITAL
- SECTOR CAPITAL
- FAR GATE
- DUST CLOUD
- NEBULA
- RIFT
- MINDJAMMER ROUTE
- EXTRA-TRANSECT ROUTE
- BORDER (POLITICAL)

+50 to – 50 Z COORDINATE

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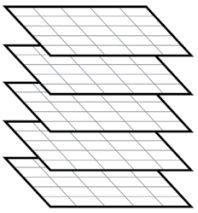
SECTOR

GALACTIC PLANE NORTH



NCE Sector Schematic 267/102.4 x-y projection.
Issued Titania Space Force ordinance
14/e/r-Alpha, Titan Lagrange-2
Also available in holo and virtuality

TRANSECT



- ○ PRIMARY
- ○ SECONDARY
- ○ TERTIARY
- ○ QUATERNARY
- ○ QUINARY

JAEMO

MINJAMMER ROUTE

.1.1	.2.1	.3.1	.4.1	.5.1
.1.2	.2.2	.3.2	.4.2	.5.2
.1.3	.2.3	.3.3	.4.3	.5.3
.1.4	.2.4	.3.4	.4.4	.5.4
.1.5	.2.5	.3.5	.4.5	.5.5

AEXR-801X

1000 LY

200 LY

KEY

- ● STAR SYSTEM
- ◉ QUARANTINE
- ◉ EMBARGO
- ⬢ DEPOT
- ✦ OCTANT CAPITAL
- ✦ SUBSECTOR CAPITAL
- ✸ SECTOR CAPITAL
- ◎ FAR GATE
- ▒ DUST CLOUD
- ▒ NEBULA
- ▒ RIFT
- ▬ MINDJAMMER ROUTE
- ▪▪▪▪ EXTRA-TRANSECT ROUTE
- ▬ ▬ BORDER (POLITICAL)

+50 to - 50 Z COORDINATE

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MINDJAMMER REFERENCE SHEETS

The Ladder (page 12)

+8	Legendary
+7	Epic
+6	Fantastic
+5	Superb
+4	Great
+3	Good
+2	Fair
+1	Average
+0	Mediocre
-1	Poor
-2	Terrible

Part of the Time Ladder (page 171)

Half a second
A Second
A Few Seconds
Several Seconds
Half a Minute
A Minute
A Few Minutes
Several Minutes
Half an Hour
An Hour
A Few Hours
Several Hours
Half a Day
A Day
A Few Days
Several Days (A Week)
Half a Month (A Few or Several Weeks)
A Month
A Few Months
Several Months
Half a Year
A Year

Skill Rolls (page 142)

Roll four **Fate dice** and add to **skill** rating. Compare to opposition. For each step on the ladder greater than the opposition, you earn a **shift**.

Extra Effort (page 142): Voluntarily check a physical, mental, or credit stress box for a bonus on an appropriate roll equal to that box's stress value.

Opposition Types (page 143)

Active: Another character rolls against you.
Passive: A static rating on the ladder.

Teamwork (page 159)

- **Combining Skills:** Every participant with at least Average (+1) in a skill gives a +1 bonus to the character with the highest skill rating in that skill.
- **Stacking Advantages:** One character acts, and the rest take create an advantage actions and pass the free invoke to the acting character.
- You get a teamwork bonus from one of your own extra's skills if you have an appropriate stunt

The Four Actions (page 144)

Overcome: Get past an obstacle.
Create an Advantage: Invoke an aspect for free.
Attack: Harm another character.
Defend: Prevent attacks or advantages on you.

The Four Outcomes (page 143)

- **Fail:** Fail your action or succeed at a serious cost.
- **Tie (0 shifts):** Succeed at a minor cost.
- **Succeed (1-2 shifts):** Succeed with no cost.
- **Succeed With Style (3+ shifts):** Succeed with an additional benefit.

Movement (page 157)

- You may move a single zone and take any other action.
- You may use your entire action to move a number of zones equal to your Athletics or Manoeuvre skill.

Aspect Types (page 67)

Game Aspects: Permanent, made during game creation.
Character Aspects: Includes genotype and cultural aspects, permanent, made during character creation.
Situation Aspects: Last for a scene, until overcome, or until irrelevant.
Boosts: Last until invoked once.
Consequences: Last until recovered.
Flaws: Permanent, a weakness which others usually (but not always) invoke against you.

Weapon Aspects (page 126)

Situation aspects you gain access to by possessing a weapon.
Burst Fire: Fire burst of 3+ shots against a single target; do more damage, increase chance of hitting, or provide suppressing fire.
Full Auto: Divide your attack value among multiple targets in a single zone.
Heavy Weapon: Powerful but requires special training.
Recoilless: For use in low- and zero-G conditions.

Weapon & Ammunition Types (page 129)

Armour-Piercing Ammo: Reduces armour ratings by -2; invoke against *Heavily Armoured* vehicles.

Blasters: Automatically create *Burning* or *On Fire* advantages as well as damage.

Dum-Dum Ammo: -1 Ranged Combat; you may require a target to take consequence instead of stress.

Grenades and Explosives: Throw into your own or adjacent zone; area effect on one or more zones; *Limited Supply* and *Easy Target* aspects.

High-Explosive Ammo: Use against targets 1 scale larger with only -2 damage reduction instead of -4.

Null Weapons: *Recoilless* aspect.

Sonic Weapon: As stun weapons; limited range; use wide beam as multiple target attack.

Stun Weapons: Use Ranged Combat to cause mental damage; *Recoilless*; requires Standard atmospheric pressure or higher.

Tracer Ammo: Automatically creates *Tracer Targeting*-type advantages.

Scale (page 174)

You usually act at your current scale.

Scale	Rating	Example
Quantum	-3	Elementary particles, Planck-scale entities.
Micro	-2	Nanocells.
Small	-1	Small animals.
Medium	+0	Human beings, most animals.
Large	+1	Vehicles, starfighters, very large animals.
Huge	+2	Most starships, gigantic animals, small armies, small settlements.
Enormous	+3	Very large starships, capital ships, small cities, large armies.
Regional	+4	Metropolises, space stations, asteroids, small nations.
Continental	+5	Nations, orbital habs, large asteroids, small corporacy or instrumentality.
Planetary	+6	Planets, plateworlds, a large instrumentality.
Interplanetary	+7	Solar systems, large corporacies, a cluster.
Interstellar	+8	Sectors, interstellar civilisations.
Galactic	+9	The Commonality, major interstellar civilisations.

- **When interacting with a larger scale entity,** you gain a +2 bonus to affect your target per scale larger, and incur a -4 penalty to any shifts which result.
- **When interacting with a smaller scale entity,** you incur a -2 penalty to affect your target per scale smaller, and gain a +4 bonus to any shifts which result.

Invoking Aspects (page 71)

Spend a fate point or free invoke, to do one of:

- +2 to your skill roll.
- Reroll all your dice.
- Teamwork: +2 to another character's roll vs relevant passive opposition.
- Obstacle: +2 to the passive opposition.

Free invokes stack with a paid one and each other.

Compelling Aspects (page 73)

Decision-based: You have _____ aspect in _____ situation, so it makes sense that you'd decide to _____. This goes wrong when _____ happens.

Event-based: You're in _____ situation and have _____ aspect, so it makes sense that, unfortunately, _____ would happen to you. Damn your luck.

Earn Fate Points (page 76)

Earn fate points when you:

- Accept a compel.
- Have your aspects invoked against you.
- Concede a conflict.

Challenges (page 147)

- Each obstacle or goal that requires a different skill gets an overcome roll.
- Interpret failure, costs, and success of each roll together to determine the final outcome.

Contests (page 148)

- Contesting characters roll appropriate skills.
- If you get the highest result, you score a victory.
- If you succeed with style and no one else does, you score two victories.
- If there's a tie for the highest result, no one scores a victory, and an unexpected twist occurs.
- First participant to score three victories wins the contest.

Conflicts (page 150)

- Set the scene and define aspects and zones.
- Determine **turn or initiative order**:

Character Type	Conflict Type	Skill Determining Initiative Order
Character	Physical	Notice, Athletics, Physique
	Mental	Empathy, Rapport, Will
	Credit	Bureaucracy, Contacts, Resources
Construct	Physical	Active or Passive Sensing, Manoeuvre, Hull Strength
	Systems	Systems, Active or Passive Sensing, Technical
	Credit	Bureaucracy, Contacts, Resources
Organisation	Physical	Notice, Manoeuvre, Structure
	Mental	Empathy, Rapport, Will
	Credit	Bureaucracy, Contacts, Resources

- Start the first exchange:
  - On your turn, take an action (usually an attack) and resolve it.
  - On other people's turns, defend or respond to their actions as necessary.
  - Once everyone has taken a turn, begin a new exchange.
- Conflict ends when everyone on one side has conceded or been taken out.

Conceding: You may give up before the next roll; you lose, but avoid the worst, and earn 1 fate point +1 fate point per consequence sustained in conflict.

Creating Advantages in Conflicts: *Temporary Blinding, Covering Fire, Disarming, Positioning, Winded, Dirty Tricks, Taking Cover, Altering the Environment*.

Area Effects: Roll dice once; every target in the area must defend against that result.

Multiple Target Attacks: Roll dice once; divide the result among the targets as you want; each target defends against the result assigned to it.

Construct Conflicts (page 216)

- **Detection roll**; Passive Sensing vs Stealth, or Active Sensing with a +2 bonus but you're automatically detected. Acting while undetected incurs -2 penalty on your next Stealth roll.
- Success means detecting construct has detected target at a range equal to the shifts in zones.
- **Evasion:** Manoeuvre or Stealth vs Manoeuvre or Active / Passive Sensing.

Organisation Conflicts (page 276)

- **Detection rolls** for organisations use Notice vs Stealth.

Being Hit By An Attack (page 152)

Fill in **one** stress box greater than or equal to the shift value of the attack; take one or more consequences; or fill in **one** stress box and take consequences. If you can't do any of these things, you're **taken out**.

Consequences (page 153)

Mild: Reduce the shift value of attack by -2.
Moderate: Reduce shift value by -4.
Severe: Reduce shift value by -6.
Extreme: Reduce by -8, and permanent character aspect.

Character Type	Consequence Type	Examples
Character	Mild	*Black Eye, Bruised Hand, Winded, Flustered, Cranky, Temporarily Blinded, Empty Pockets, No Credit Till Tomorrow.*
	Moderate	*Deep Cut, First Degree Burn, Exhausted, Drunk, Terrified, Out of Credit, Cash Flow Crunch*
	Severe	*Second Degree Burn, Compound Fracture, Guts Hanging Out, Crippling Shame, Trauma-Induced Phobia, Asset Seizure, Blacklisted.*
Construct	Mild	*Wildly Sparking Console, Confused Sensors, Thrown Off Aim, Stalled, Overheating.*
	Moderate	*Shield Power Drained, Sensor Overload, Tank Track Control System Disabled, Power Conduit Severed, Venting Into Space.*
	Severe	*Raging Fire on Deck Three, Cargo Hold Taking on Water, Structural Integrity Compromised, ZIP Core Going Critical, Planing Engines Offline, Weapon Systems Disabled, Shields Down, Axle Broken.*
Organisation	Mild	*Inefficiencies Exposed, Outmanoeuvred, Mutters of Disbelief.*
	Moderate	*Structural Inadequacies, Reporting Chain Destroyed, Active Discontent.*
	Severe	*Management Collapse, Driven From the Field, Revolution!*
Culture	Mild	*Scandal, Cultural Neurosis, Fixation and Obsession.*
	Moderate	*Shutdown and Strikes, Culture Quake, Lost Our Way.*
	Severe	*Cultural Revolution, Anarchy and Collapse, Extremist Coup.*

Consequences and Stress Recovery (page 154)

Mild: Overcome Fair (+2), one whole scene.
Moderate: Overcome Great (+4), one whole session.
Severe: Overcome Fantastic (+6), one whole scenario.

Character Type	Damage Type	Skill Used	Stunts / Extras
Character	Physical	Technical	Meditech; (Construct) Auto-Doc
	Mental	Empathy	Psychology, Redaction
	Credit	Resources	Bail Out, Cargo Trading
Construct	Physical	Technical	Auto-Repair System, Repair Drones, Repair Yard; (Character) Starship Engineer
	Systems	Technical	As Construct Physical
	Mental	Empathy	Starship Therapist; (Character) Starship Therapy

Character Type	Damage Type	Skill Used	Stunts / Extras
Organisation	Physical	Resources	Aid Package; (Character) Money Is Power
	Mental	Empathy	Arbitration and Reconciliation; (Character) Cultural Redaction
	Credit	Contacts	Stakeholder Intervention

Advancements (page 159)

Minor Milestone: Switch a skill or stunt; **or** rename an aspect; **or** buy a stunt.

Significant Milestone: As minor milestone, plus: gain 1 skill point; **and** rename a severe consequence; **and** buy a new extras aspect.

Major Milestone: As significant milestone, plus: rename an extreme consequence; **and** gain 1 refresh; **and** rename your high concept.

Gravity (page 176)

Muscle Power: For lifting and moving things, and jumping, modify opposition by current gravity rating, and your own roll by your habituated gravity.

Agility: Incur penalty to Athletics, Melee Combat, and Unarmed Combat rolls equal to absolute difference between local gravity and your habituated gravity. Excludes jumping.

Smashing Damage: Apply your habituated gravity as modifier to physical stress smashing damage.

Tech Index (page 116)

- Tech index rating modifies opposition in Science or Technical skill roll.
- Opposition is increased by every tech index you are below tech index of problem, and decreased by every tech index you are above.
- If relying on unfamiliar local tech, incur penalty equal to difference between your own tech index and tech index of environment.

Mindscape Actions (page 187)

Sensorview: Use Mindscape to perceive things with Investigate and Notice.

Exomemory: Make Knowledge, Science, or Technical rolls to recall other people's uploaded memories.

Hack Someone's Halo: Use Hacker (Intrusion) or Mindscape Engineer (Technical) to forcibly read contents of someone's halo. Also disrupt and steal halo abilities.

Thoughtcast: Communicate via Mindscape using "techno-telepathy".

Mindjammer *Paradigms (page 113)*

- Ubiquitous Intelligence — but No Computers
- Advanced Minds
- Infinite Storage Capacity
- Discretionary Interfaces
- Ubiquitous Perception
- Variform Design
- Fields
- Abundant Power
- No Faster-than-light Communication
- Ubiquitous Anti-grav
- Extreme Miniaturisation
- No Mindscape Consciousness
- No Persistence of Identity
- No Matter Transport — but Matter Creation

Planing Jumps (page 224)

- Roll your starship's Planing skill vs passive opposition equal to distance, **plus scale of your starship**.
- Organic 2-pilots may take create an advantage actions using Starship Pilot against same opposition to provide stacked teamwork bonuses.
- **Success:** Successfully make the jump.
- **Success With Style:** Emerge and gain a boost.

Jump Distance (LY)	Description	Time Required	Difficulty*
Microjump (< 1 LY)	Within current star system only; see "Activating Planing Engines in Dangerous Environments" (page 228)	Several hours	Terrible (-2)
1-3LY	Just about make it to the nearest star system	A day	Poor (-1)
4-10LY	Any neighbouring star system	A few days	Mediocre (+0)
11-20LY	Two or three star systems away	Several days	Average (+1)
21-30LY	Several star systems away	A week or more	Fair (+2)
31-40LY	Anywhere within the current octant	Half a month	Good (+3)
41-50LY	Just about make it to the nearest octant	A few weeks	Great (+4)
51-60LY	Any neighbouring octant	A few weeks	Superb (+5)
61-70LY	Just about make it to the nearest subsector	Several weeks	Fantastic (+6)
71-80LY	Any neighbouring subsector	A month	Epic (+7)
81-90LY	Two or three subsectors away	A month or more	Legendary (+7)

- **Tie:** Make the jump at minor cost (chronodisplacement, overhaul, mild mental consequence to sentience).
- **Failure:** Either don't make the jump, and your immediate environment incurs consequence equal in severity to failure; or make the jump at serious cost (misjump, damage, etc).

Vertical Separation in Light Years (LY)	Horizontal Separation in Light Years (LY)									
LY	**10**	**20**	**30**	**40**	**50**	**60**	**70**	**80**	**90**	**100**
10	14	22	32	41	51	61	71	81	91	100
20	22	28	36	45	54	63	73	82	92	102
30	32	36	42	50	58	67	76	85	95	104
40	41	45	50	57	64	72	81	89	98	108
50	51	54	58	64	71	78	86	94	103	112
60	61	63	67	72	78	85	92	100	108	117
70	71	73	76	81	86	92	99	106	114	122
80	81	82	85	89	94	100	106	113	120	128
90	91	92	95	98	103	108	114	120	127	135
100	100	102	104	108	112	117	122	128	135	141

Exploration Missions (page 313)

Preliminary System Scan: Passive Sensing roll, reveals system high concept.

Preliminary System Analysis: Passive Sensing roll, with each shift providing stellar body, number of planets, planetary types; or a challenge.

Detailed System Analysis: Passive Sensing roll identifies one system parameter, aspect, or hazard per shift.

Hazard Identification Survey: Passive Sensing roll identifies hazard; success with style identifies hazard and one parameter, or multiple parameters; success at a cost means you're affected.

Preliminary Planetary Scan: Passive Sensing for worlds without Mindscape.

Planetary Analysis: Passive Sensing roll reveals one parameter; success with style reveals two.

Stage Two Planetary Registration:

- **Cartographic Survey:** Passive Sensing roll.
- **Terrain Survey:** Passive Sensing roll to identify terrain types.
- **Biosphere Identification Analysis:** As below.

Civilisation Analysis: Investigate roll; Passive Sensing and cultural analysis rolls create advantages (page 345).

Biosphere Identification Analysis: Science roll vs passive opposition (page 388) to reveal biosphere concept.

CULTURAL OPERATIONS (page 306)

Preliminary Cultural Analysis: Empathy, Investigate roll, etc, revealing dominant meme and civilisation type.

Threat Analysis: Create an advantage roll using appropriate skills.

Detailed Cultural Analysis: Against Deceive, Stealth, etc; assess stunts, skill tiers, aspects, etc.

Identify Emerging Toxic Memes: Notice, Empathy, Investigate, to identify relevant memes.

Planetary Event Tables (page 319)

4dF	No Biosphere	No Biosphere, Inhabited	Biosphere	Biosphere, Inhabited
-4	System Event	System Event	System Event	System Event
-3	Planet Event	Planet Event	Planet Event	Planet Event
-2	Planet Event	Terrain Event	Biosphere Event	Terrain Event
-1	Terrain Event	Civilisation Event	Terrain Event	Civilisation Event
+0	Terrain Event	Civilisation Event	Biosphere Event	Biosphere Event
+1	Terrain Event	Civilisation Event	Terrain Event	Civilisation Event
+2	Planet Event	Terrain Event	Biosphere Event	Terrain Event
+3	Planet Event	Planet Event	Planet Event	Planet Event
+4	System Event	System Event	System Event	System Event

Star System Event Tables (page 358)

Score	Inhabited System	Uninhabited System
-4	System Hazard	System Hazard
-3	Civilisation Event	System Hazard
-2	System Event	Planet Event
-1	Starship Encounter*	System Event
+0	Starship Encounter*	System Event
+1	Starship Encounter*	System Event
+2	Planet Event	Planet Event
+3	Civilisation Event	System Hazard
+4	System Hazard	Extraordinary Event*

*see page 371.

Interstellar Trade (page 442)

Finding a Cargo: Contacts vs reverse of Trade Index.

Buy a Cargo: Contest of Your Resources vs Cargo Value and World's Trade Index vs Cargo Value

Avoid Red Tape When Selling a Cargo: Bureaucracy vs World's Control Index

Sell a Cargo: Rapport + Cargo Value vs World's Trade Index

Find Passengers: Rapport + modifiers vs Ship's Scale + modifiers

Make the Passage: Systems + steward modifier vs Passenger Complement

Make a Stasis Berth Passage: Systems + Technical advantage vs Fair (+2) opposition

The following is a glossary of the core essential terms for the ***Mindjammer*** setting. An exhaustive and updated version can be found at www.mindjammerpress.com/x-memcore

AU, Astronomical Unit: *The distance between Old Earth and Sol, approximately 150 million km (93 million miles), commonly used as a unit of distance within star systems.*

autotroph: *Hominid genurgically modified to produce its own food.*

avatar: *A remote controlled usually humanoid physical body used by installation sentiences.*

basic: *A simple artificial intelligence governing basic equipment.*

bioship: *A genurgically engineered semi-organic planeship bred by Chembu Genurgy.*

black chip: *Mindscape implant with the "safeties" illegally deactivated. See Special Ops Chip.*

brainjack: *Human Venu starship pilot used instead of ship sentiences. Usually psychotic.*

Chembu: *Hominid species evolved through contact with the Planetary Intelligence. Genurgy specialists.*

chronodisplacement: *Mental shock caused when local Mindscape is out-of-date with your own memories.*

Commonality, The: *Advanced interstellar transhuman polity centred on Old Earth.*

Commonality Space: *Volume of space roughly 3000 light years across, centred on Old Earth.*

corpus: *Synthetic brain at the heart of an installation sentience.*

CORESEC: *Ruthless security and enforcement arm of the Core Worlds Pansectorate.*

CORESPAN: *The Core Worlds Pansectorate. Intimidating and oppressive administrative network of the Core Worlds.*

Core Worlds: *Volume of Commonality Space immediately around Old Earth which formed the slower-than-light First Commonality.*

corporacy: *Commonality-wide megacorporation with more power than most governments.*

Culture World: *Cultural "strong point" created by the Commonality to resist cultural conflict.*

Custodian: *One of the mysterious rulers of the Commonality.*

direct perception feed: *Process by which Commonality citizens upload continuous sensory data to the Mindscape.*

dirt drive: *Dangerously unstable version of the planing engine reverse-engineered by the Venu.*

Dirty Mary: *Highly radioactive Venu disruptor cannon reverse-engineered from Commonality tech.*

discretionary interface, DI: *The ability of Mindscape participants to switch between a variety of Mindscape interfaces on the fly and at will.*

drone: *A servitor remote providing expert skill systems; usually a basic.*

EECU, aka Expansionary Era Credit Unit: *AKA "money", unsophisticated exchange medium reinvented to cope with primitive conditions on the Commonality Fringe.*

effector, aka finger field, fiddler: *Energy field manipulator used for "techno-telekinesis".*

eidolon: *Synthetic sentience with a personality derived from one or more thanograms.*

Eidolon Compliances, The: *Functional requirements for creation of a stable eidolon.*

eidolon crisis: *Mental damage suffered by an eidolon personality.*

eidolon rig: *Physical and virtual equipment required for eidolon creation.*

embargo, The: *Measure by which the Commonality prevents hypertech from falling into the hands of cultures unprepared for its use.*

emulator: *Form of Mindscape sentinel simulating your personality for remote communication.*

Event Horizon Probes, The: *Network of sentient probes exploring star systems beyond the Frontier.*

exomemory: *A memory engram uploaded to the Mindscape.*

Expansion: *Process by which the Commonality has been recontacting lost colony worlds and expanding its territory. See also Rediscovery.*

Expansionary Era: *AKA The Second Age of Space, the New Commonality Era. Period since invention of planing technology when the Commonality has been expanding to recontact lost colony worlds.*

far gate: *AKA 3-space gate. Method of travelling through 3-space.*

Far Gate Project: *Commonality endeavour to establish far gates at all sector capitals. Currently underway.*

fictional: *A Mindscape sentinel or pseudo-eidolon created from an entirely artificial thanogram.*

First Age of Space: *Period of slower-than-light colonisation by the Commonality beginning appx 10,000 years ago.*

Fringe, The: *Volume of Commonality Space integrated into the expanding Commonality since Rediscovery.*

Fringe World: *World outside the Core Worlds. May be a rediscovered or lost colony world, or a new Commonality world.*

Frontier, The: *Current extent of Expansion. The Frontier is being pushed outwards every year.*

genotype divergence: *The amount by which a xenomorph diverges from its source animal stock towards the human.*

genurgy: *Programmed manipulation of the human genome and associated biomatrices to customise and enhance natural abilities.*

gestalt controller: *Individual responsible for the creation and manipulation of gestalt language.*

gestalt language: *Language of incrementally powerful and effective hyperwords and similar utterances; posthuman form of language.*

gravity engines: *Principle slower-than-light star drives used by the Commonality.*

Great Diaspora: *5000 year period beginning 10000 years ago when the Commonality sent out most of its slower-than-light colony expeditions.*

halo: *Virtual assembly of an individual's enhancements powered by the Mindscape.*

handshaking: *Process of establishing direct Mindscape contact between individuals.*

haze field: *Low-powered force field. Personal and construct versions exist.*

heliopause: *AKA n/2 boundary. Edge of a star system where it's safe to engage planing engines; closest safe point of emergence from 2-space.*

hominid: *Divergent genotype derived from human stock. Many rediscovered and lost colony inhabitants are hominids.*

Human Space: *Theoretical volume of space reached by humankind during the First Age of Space; a flattened sphere some 20,000 light years in diameter, centred on Old Earth.*

imposality: *Virtuality in which DI is disengaged and the environment entirely controlled by the creator.*

Installation: *Large-scale synthetic sentience, usually in a construct such as a starship, building, metroplex, city, etc.*

instrumentality: *Administrative bodies constituting the executive branch of the Commonality government. Includes SCI Force, Space Force, the Armed Forces Instrumentality, etc.*

ISI: *Internal Security Instrumentality; the Commonality police.*

jump maximum: *Maximum cumulative distance a planeship can travel through 2-space before requiring overhaul.*

jump point: *Point at which it's safe to enter 2-space. Usually the heliopause.*

lost colony: *World settled by humankind during the Great Diaspora.*

makepoint: *Mass-energy converter capable of synthesising food, elements, air, etc.*

Manhome: *Solar system of Old Earth.*

mechanical: *Predominantly inorganic synthetic of roughly human scale.*

mediator: *Starship sentience specialising in coordinating fleet actions.*

memetic engineer: *Individual specialising in cultural manipulation.*

memoplex, aka servitor gestalt: *Exomemory aggregation providing common experiential background to specialist group.*

mindburn: *Mental attack using the Mindscape implant.*

Mindjammer: *Planeship dedicated to updating the Mindscape throughout the Commonality.*

mindlink: *Override of five primary senses by the Mindscape implant, allowing user to fully experience a virtuality or direct perception feed. A form of DI.*

Mindscape: *Virtual information storage and communications medium linking all Commonality citizens.*

Mindscape implant: *Genurgic enhancement allowing an individual to neurally interface with the Mindscape.*

Mindscape instance: *Device containing a discrete instance / copy of the Mindscape, connected to via Mindscape implant. May be updated by Mindjammer; often portable.*

monitor band: *Carrier signal emitted by Mindscape implants.*

monitor band cloak: *Portable / wearable device suppressing the monitor band.*

nanocells: *Direct physical interface to equipment usually controlled by Mindscape.*

neo-culture: *Artificial culture world sponsored and created by the Commonality.*

New Trader: *Individual engaging in trade and commerce of dubious legality on the Fringe.*

node: *Major Mindscape instance, usually orbital or global.*

n-space: *Normal space, travelled through using gravity engines.*

n/2 boundary: *AKA jump point; distance from star at which it's safe to enter or exit 2-space. Usually the heliopause.*

organic: *Strictly speaking a synthetic intelligence comprising mostly organic components; loosely, any organic life form.*

Outer World: *World currently beyond the Commonality Frontier.*

Pansectorate: *Sector-level Commonality government comprising multiple ministries.*

Planetary Intelligence: *Transcendent alien intelligence emerging from the biosphere of the planet Chembu. The largest known single organism.*

planeship: *Starship capable of travelling through 2-space.*

planing: *Faster-than-light travel in 2-space.*

planing engines: *Starship drive capable of travelling through 2-space.*

Predecessors: *Mysterious alien species extant in Commonality Space c. 1 million years ago. Their fate is unknown.*

privacy field: *DI-related Mindscape lock which makes an individual uncontactable by Mindscape. It doesn't cloak the monitor band.*

psionics: *Natural field and quantum manipulation and communication abilities evinced by rare exofauna. Humankind appears incapable of psionics, even with genurgy.*

Pulse Dragon Phenomenon: *Mysterious phenomenon causing destruction of any planeship dropping out of 2-space directly into the interstellar medium.*

quarantine: *Extreme form of the Commonality embargo, in which access to and from a world is forbidden or tightly controlled.*

Quarantine Zone, aka Q-Zone: *No Man's Land between Commonality Space and the Venu Empire.*

redaction: *Advanced mental trauma therapy using the Mindscape implant to directly modify an individual's memories and psychic configuration.*

rediscovered world: *Lost colony which has been recontacted by the Commonality.*

Rediscovery: *Process of recontacting lost colony worlds and integrating them into the Commonality civilisation.*

SCI Force: *Security and Cultural Integrity Instrumentality; part of Commonality government tasked with defending against culture conflict and contamination.*

Second Age of Space: *200-year period of modern interstellar era dating from the beginning of Expansion.*

sensorview: *Using DI and Mindscape perception to view the actual world environment.*

sentinel: *Mindscape security routine protecting against intrusion, etc.*

skill chip: *Mindscape enhancement augmenting an individual's skills.*

slowboat: *aka slowship; a starship without planing engines travelling slower-than-light.*

special operations chip: *Modified Mindscape implant with the "safeties" taken off.*

star city: *Extremely large space vessel travelling faster- or slower-than-light, often operated by Javawayn Industries.*

starship therapy: *Targeted form of redaction treating damaged starship sentiences.*

stasis boat: *starship life boat placing crewmembers in protective stasis.*

suspension matrix: *Virtual disguise masking identity in the Mindscape.*

synthetic: *Artificial life form; see also installation, mechanical, organic.*

tachyon distortion field, aka 2-space field: *Protective torus which lifts a planeship from n-space into 2-space.*

technopsi: *Pseudo-psionic effects achievable via the Mindscape implant.*

technurgy: *Creation of virtual devices in the Mindscape.*

Temple of Universal Mind: *Basic Mindscape instance tailored for minimal culture shock on primitive rediscovered worlds.*

Ten Thousand Worlds, The: *Epithet for Commonality Space; in reality there are many more than 10,000 worlds.*

thanogram: *Aggregation of exomemories thoughtcast by an individual, usually upon dying.*

thanogram thoughtcast: *Process of thoughtcasting a thanogram to the Mindscape.*

thoughtcast: *Process of uploading internally verbalised communications or memory engrams via Mindscape implant into the Mindscape.*

3-space: *Other-dimensional phenomenon permitting extremely rapid interstellar travel, covering 1 light year per 30 seconds, between fixed points at 3-space "far gates".*

tightbeam: *Direct non-Mindscape communication using maser or other coherent beams; usually requires line of sight and limited by range.*

2-space: *Other-dimensional phenomenon allowing the warping of n-space to achieve faster-than-light speeds of approximately 3 light years per standard day.*

Universal: *AKA Unilingua or Galingua; language spoken by most citizens of the Commonality. Includes hyperlinguistic gestalt communication forms.*

variform: *Capability of a genurgic or mechanical enhancement to dynamically reconfigure its physical form.*

Venu, The: *Human lost colony culture from the Orion cluster, deeply inimical to the Commonality.*

virtuality: *Virtual Mindscape space; may be accessed by mindlink or other forms of DI.*

virtual vision: *Form of DI, enabling the Mindscape to be viewed as an "HUD overlay" over the user's normal visual field.*

xenomorph: *Group of sentient species derived from uplifted terrestrial animals, initially for cheap labour. There are many xenomorph species, some more human-looking than others.*

zanthrium: *Rare heavy transuranic element vital for the functioning of ZIP cells and planing engines.*

ZIP cell: *Zero-point energy cell, providing near-limitless power to equipment.*

ZIP plant: *Power plant for a large-scale construct such as a starship, space station, or city.*

z-radiation: *Radiation emitted by the torsion field in a ZIP cell; highly damaging to organic cells.*

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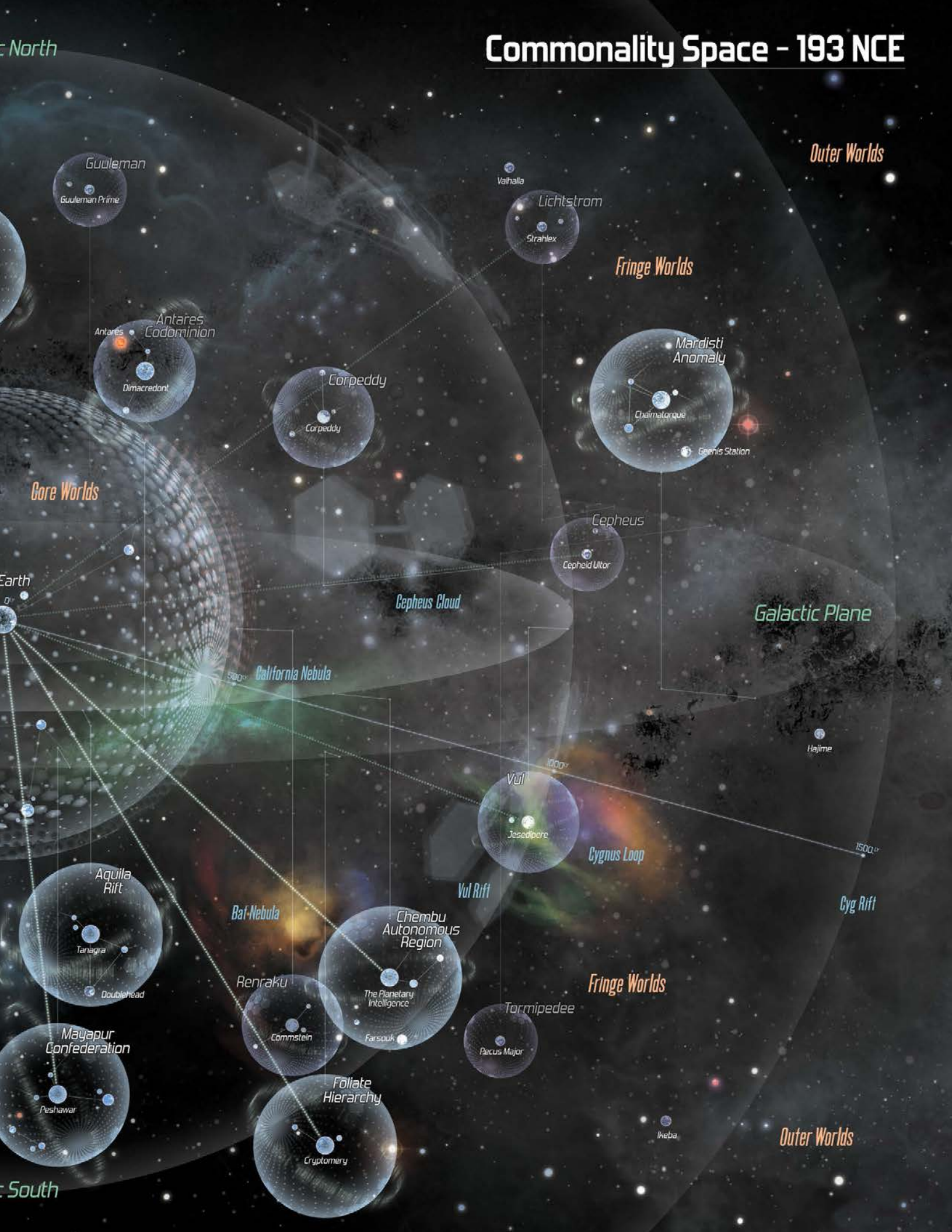
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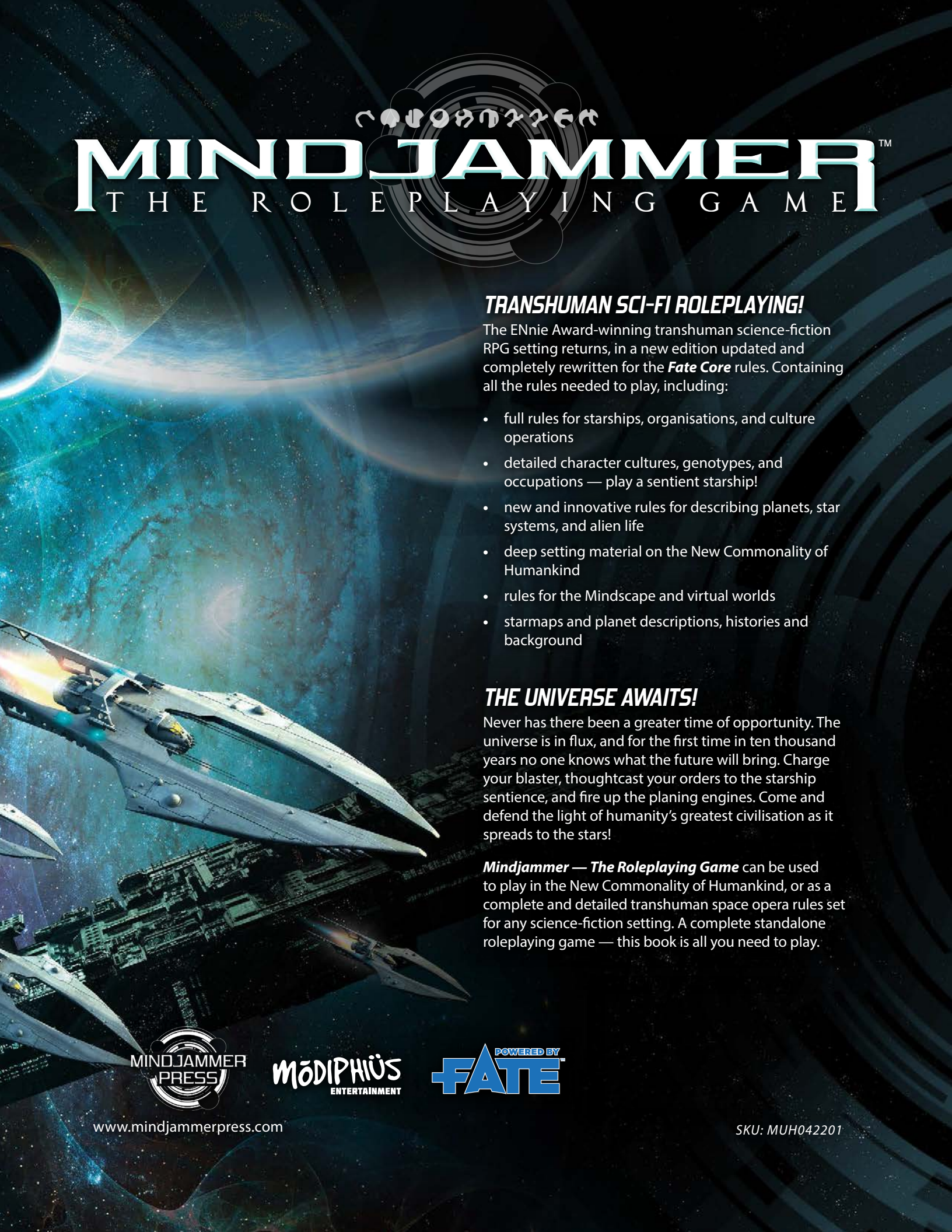
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