



COSMIC ENCOUNTER

RULES OF PLAY





WELCOME TO THE COSMOS

Uncountable eons ago, at the dawn of a forgotten age, a race evolved at the heart of a spiral galaxy. Later, they would come to be known as the Precursors. They were the first intelligent life in the universe, and they were alone.

Their technology was nothing short of miraculous, and it allowed them to explore the universe as they sought out other sentient beings. However, their search was in vain.

Feeling the weight of their solitude, eventually the Precursors sent out probes to thousands of inhabitable planets. Each probe contained the seeds of life, with the hope that sentience would eventually follow.

After that, no one knows what happened to them. Perhaps they fell victim to some unknown threat, or perhaps they simply evolved beyond this universe. In any event, by the time the probes' "children" began to master space travel, the Precursors were gone.

They left behind a mighty legacy, however. At the edge of each solar system where they planted one of their 'seeds,' the Precursors left a cache of technology and a hyperspace gate. Through this gift, their children could find and communicate with each other.

And so they began to do so. Although the younger races did not completely understand the Precursor's technology, they were able to use it easily enough. Of course, without the guiding hand of the elder race, the younger races soon fell to squabbling among themselves. Eventually this gave rise to the current age – the Cosmic Age.

COSMIC ENCOUNTER® is a game for three to five players (the more players the better), playable in one to two hours. In COSMIC ENCOUNTER®, players take on the role of various alien races in a struggle for cosmic supremacy. The players must use force, cunning, and diplomacy to ensure their victory. *The winner(s) will be the first player(s) to have five colonies on any planets outside his or her home system.*

GAME OVERVIEW

In COSMIC ENCOUNTER®, each player is the leader of an alien race. The object of the game is to establish colonies in other players' planetary systems. Players take turns trying to establish colonies. The winner(s) are the first player(s) to have five colonies on any planets outside his or her home system. A player does not need to have colonies in all of the systems, just colonies on five planets outside his or her home system. These colonies may all be in one system or scattered over multiple systems.

WHAT IS A COLONY?

A **colony** is defined as one or more ships of the same color on a planet. If a player has one ship on a planet, he or she has a colony there. If a player has two or more ships on the same planet, it still only counts as one colony, composed of multiple ships. A player may only have one colony on any given planet. However, a planet may have more than one colony, provided each colony is controlled by a different player. A colony that a player owns in her or her home system is referred to as a **home colony**, while a colony that a player owns in any other player's home system is called a **foreign colony**. Establishing foreign colonies is the key to winning the game.

DURING A PLAYER'S TURN

On a player's turn, he or she becomes the **offense**. The offense encounters another player (the **defense**, determined by drawing from the destiny deck) on a planet by moving a group of his or her ships through the hyperspace gate to that planet. The offense and defense invite **allies** to their side and then, after alliances are declared, play an encounter card facedown. The



encounter cards are revealed, and the combination of ships, encounter cards, and other effects determines the outcome of the encounter. The offense and its allies may establish a colony on the planet, they may lose their ships to the *warp*, or some other outcome may result. Although both players can see how many ships each side has in the encounter, neither side knows which card the other side will play or what other effects may be brought to bear on the outcome.

If a player loses the first encounter, that player's turn ends and play passes to the left. If a player wins the first encounter, that player has the option to have a second encounter. Regardless of the second encounter's outcome, the player's turn then ends and play passes to the left.

ALIEN POWERS AND RULES CONFLICTS

Each player has an alien power that allows him or her to break certain game rules. In any case where game rules conflict with an alien power, the power takes precedence.

COMPONENTS

- This Rulebook
- 1 Warp
- 5 Player Colony Markers
- 1 Hyperspace Gate
- 25 Player Planets (5 per player)
- 100 Plastic Ships (20 per player)
- 50 Alien Sheets
- 20 Destiny Cards
- 72 Cosmic Cards
- 50 Flare Cards
- 20 Tech Cards
- 42 Cosmic Tokens
- 7 Grudge Tokens
- 1 Genesis Planet
- 1 Lunar Cannon Token
- 1 Prometheus Token
- 1 Alternate Filch Flare

COMPONENT OVERVIEW

The following sections briefly describe and identify the components of *COSMIC ENCOUNTER*®.

THE WARP

This board is the center of the playing area. Defeated ships go here while waiting to be freed.



The Warp

PLAYER COLONY MARKERS

These markers are placed on the track around the warp to record the players' progress towards winning the game.



Player Colony Markers

HYPERSPACE GATE

The hyperspace gate is used during encounters to clearly show where and how an encounter is taking place.



Hyperspace Gate

PLAYER PLANETS

Each player receives five player planets in that player's color. These five planets make up the player's *home system*.



Player Planets

PLASTIC SHIPS

Each player receives 20 plastic ships in that player's color. The ships are designed to stack on top of each other in order to save space while playing.





ALIEN SHEETS

Each of these sheets illustrates a different alien being and describes its unique power.



- Name:** This is the alien's name.
- Power:** This text explains the alien's special power. The word **use** in bold italics indicates when a power may be canceled with a "Cosmic Zap."
- History:** This is the alien's history. It has no effect on gameplay.
- Short Power Description:** An abbreviated explanation of the alien's power for the other players to read.
- Skill Level:** The recommended skill level of the players when using this alien. Green is beginner, yellow is intermediate, and red is expert.
- Player Prerequisite:** This text explains which role (offense, defense, main player, ally, etc.) the player must be filling to use the alien's power.
- Optional/Mandatory:** This text states whether using the alien's power is optional or mandatory.
- Timing Strip:** The orange part of this strip shows in which phase(s) the alien's power is **used**.

DESTINY CARDS

These cards are used to determine a player's opponent during his or her encounters. See "Destiny" on page 7 for further details.



COSMIC CARDS

Cosmic cards come in three varieties:

ENCOUNTER CARDS

These consist of attacks, negotiations, and the morph card, and are used to resolve encounters. See "Reveal" on page 9 for further details.



REINFORCEMENT CARDS

These can be used to turn the tide of an encounter. See "Reinforcement Cards" on page 13 for a complete description.





ARTIFACT CARDS

These have a variety of effects. See “Artifact Cards” on page 13 for a complete description.



FLARE CARDS

Flare cards are mixed into the cosmic deck at the start of the game. Like artifacts, flare cards have various effects. Unlike artifacts, flares are returned to a player’s hand after being played. In addition, each flare card is keyed to a specific alien and has a different effect when played by that alien. See “Flare Cards” on page 13 for a complete description.



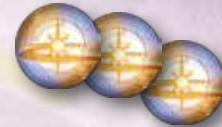
TECH CARDS

Tech cards represent significant technologies that can be researched by a player when using the optional Technology variant of the game. Tech cards are described in more detail on page 14.



COSMIC TOKENS

These tokens are used by certain aliens (such as the Warrior or the Tick-Tock) to keep track of certain alien-specific statistics over the course of the game.



GRUDGE TOKENS

These tokens are used by the Grudge to keep track of players being affected by the Grudge’s power, and their use is explained on the Grudge’s sheet.



OTHER TOKENS

These tokens are used with the Tech cards when playing the optional Technology variant of the game. The use of each is explained on the corresponding Tech card.



ALTERNATE FILCH FLARE

This is the classic version of the Filch flare card and has been included for players that prefer it in its original, somewhat controversial, form. Players should only use one version of the Filch flare, returning the other to the box.





SETUP

To prepare a game of COSMIC ENCOUNTER®, carefully follow these steps.

- Set Up Warp and Planets:** Place the warp in the center of the play area. Each player then chooses a player color and takes the five player planets of that color, arranging the planets however he or she likes. Each player places their player colony marker next to the warp by the space marked “0.”
- Place Ships:** Each player takes the 20 ships of his or her color and places four of them on each of his or her planets in a stack.
- Prepare Destiny Deck:** Look through the destiny deck and remove any cards that refer to player colors not being used. Shuffle the deck.
- Choose Aliens:** Shuffle the flare cards and deal two to each player. The player takes the alien sheets corresponding to the two flares and looks at them in secret, choosing one of the two aliens to play during this game. The chosen alien is placed facedown in front of the player, while the other alien sheet is returned to the box.

Note: The aliens are rated by recommended player skill level, shown by the alert lamps in the upper corners of the alien sheet and the flare cards. If playing with beginners, the green alert aliens are most suitable. If playing with moderately

experienced players, the yellow alert aliens can add desired variety. As for the red alert aliens, they cause significant changes to the game, and unusual strategies are called for against them. Red alert aliens are best used when playing with expert players.

- Prepare Flares:** The flares dealt to each player are then taken and added to the cosmic deck. If there are fewer than five players, extra flares are randomly added to bring the total in the deck to 10 flares. Shuffle the deck.

Note: Players just learning COSMIC ENCOUNTER® may wish to play without flares for their first few games, until they have a stronger grasp of the basic flow of the game.

Note: There are two different versions of the Filch flare card included – the new version and the classic version. Players may use either Filch flare, although they should use only one version during a game.

- Deal Hands:** Each player is then dealt a hand of eight cards from the cosmic deck, and the remainder of the deck is placed near the center of the playing area. Players may look at their cards, but may not show them to other players.
- Select First Player:** Draw from the destiny deck until a player color is drawn. That player becomes the first player. Shuffle the drawn card back into the destiny deck and the game is ready to begin.





THE TURN

Starting with the first player and continuing to the left, each player takes his or her turn in order. A player's turn consists of one or two encounters. The first encounter is guaranteed, but the player may only have a second encounter if he or she wins the first encounter (or successfully makes a deal during the encounter). Each encounter is comprised of seven phases, which are described in the following sections.

STARTING THE TURN

The player whose turn it is (the **offense**) first checks his or her hand to make sure it contains at least one encounter card. If it does not, the player reveals any cards remaining in hand, discards them, then draws a new hand of eight cards. This is the only time during the offense's turn that he or she may get a new hand of cards in this fashion. Should the offense run out of encounter cards later on, his or her turn ends (see "Drawing New Cards" on page 13).

PHASES OF AN ENCOUNTER

1. **Regroup**
2. **Destiny**
3. **Launch**
4. **Alliance**
5. **Planning**
6. **Reveal**
7. **Resolution**

1. REGROUP

Throughout the game, ships will go to the warp when encounters are lost. At the start of an encounter, one of the offense's ships is retrieved from the warp and placed in one of his or her colonies (home or otherwise). If a player has no colonies, the retrieved ship is placed directly in the hyperspace gate.

2. DESTINY

The offense then draws the top card of the destiny deck. The destiny deck contains colors, wilds, and specials. If there is only one card left in the deck, do not draw it. Instead shuffle the final card and the destiny discard pile together to form a new destiny deck and draw from the new deck.



Destiny Card Back

IF A COLOR IS DRAWN

If the drawn card shows a player color, it indicates the planet system where the offense must have an encounter. For example, if the red player draws a green destiny card, the red player must have an encounter in the green system. The green player is the defense for this encounter.



Sample Color
Destiny Card

If a player draws his or her own color, the player may either draw again (until the player draws a card that doesn't show his or her own color) or the player may attempt to drive a foreign colony off of one of his or her home planets. In this case, the player whose colony is being driven off becomes the defense (see "Driving Out Foreign Colonies" on page 12).

When drawing his or her own color, if a player has a home planet with no ships on it at all (enemy or otherwise), then he or she may aim the hyperspace gate at that planet to automatically re-establish a colony there with up to four ships from other colonies. Doing so counts as a successful encounter.



Note: Some of the destiny cards showing a player color are marked with a hazard warning. This has no effect on game play and will be used in a future expansion.

IF A WILD IS DRAWN

If the drawn card is a wild, the offense may have an encounter with any player of his or her choice. For this encounter, the chosen player is the defense. The encounter must take place in the chosen player's home system.



Sample Wild
Destiny Card

IF A SPECIAL IS DRAWN

If the drawn card is a special, it will explain the conditions of the encounter. The player indicated by the destiny card is the defense for the encounter, and the card indicates where the encounter must take place. For purposes of game effects (such as the Shadow's execute ability), specials are treated as though the card showed the player color of the player designated as the defense.



Sample Special
Destiny Card



CAN MACRON ATTACK CLONE'S COLONY IN ZOMBIE'S SYSTEM?

No, not normally. Drawing a special, a wild, or another player's color only allows the offense to attack another player in that player's home system. Drawing the offense's own color only allows the offense to attack another player's colony in the offense's home system. Barring special abilities, there is no way for the offense to attack another player's colony when it is located in a third player's home system.

DEFENDING WITH NOTHING?

Even though a player may no longer have a colony on one of his or her home planets, that player must still defend it. This can result in some unusual encounters.

For example, assume Filch and Parasite each have two ships on one of Macron's planets. Macron has no ships on the planet – those ships have already been sent to the warp by the other two in a dastardly attack. So, when Clone has an encounter with Macron in Macron's home system, Clone can aim the hyperspace gate at that planet and face zero defending ships. Although Filch and Parasite are present on the planet, it is still Macron's planet, and Macron is the defense. Of course, since Macron has nothing to lose in the encounter, it's quite possible for Clone to gain an easy colony. However, Filch and Parasite aren't defending the planet, so their colonies are safe as well (see the "Bystanders" sidebar below for further details).

3. LAUNCH

The offense takes the hyperspace gate and points it at one planet in the system indicated by the drawn destiny card.

The offense then takes one to four ships from any of his or her colonies, stacks them, and places them on the wide end of the hyperspace gate. The offense may take ships from his or her home colonies or foreign colonies. Ships may all be taken from the same colony or from different colonies. A player should be careful not to remove all of the ships from a colony, however, as he or she will lose the colony by doing so (see "Stripping a Planet of Ships" on page 13).

The defense may not add or subtract ships from the targeted planet. Note that, in a home system, the defense may not have any ships on the targeted planet, in which case he or she defends the planet with zero ships.

"MAIN PLAYERS"

The offense and defense are also known as the *main players*.

BYSTANDERS

Colonies on the defense's planet which are not part of that home system (that is, they are not the color of the home system) do not count towards the defensive total and are not affected by the outcome. They are simply bystanders. When a player is attempting to drive a foreign colony from his or her home system, only one player's colony can be chosen to be the defense in the encounter. All others are ignored.



4. ALLIANCE

Next, the offense and defense ask for allies to help them. This happens as described below.

First, the offense announces which players he or she wishes to have as allies. The offense may not invite the defense as an ally. These players should not respond to the offense's invitation yet.

Next, the defense invites allies. He or she may invite any players (except the offense) to be allies, even those already invited by the offense.

Once allies are invited, players other than the offense and defense choose sides. Starting with the player to the left of the offense and continuing clockwise, each player accepts or declines invitations to ally. A player may only ally with either the offense or the defense – not both. A player may choose to ally with neither side.

If a player allies with the offense, the allying player places one to four of his or her ships (taken from any colonies) on the hyperspace gate. A player allied with the offense is referred to as an *offensive ally*.

If a player allies with the defense, the allying player places one to four of his or her ships (taken from any colonies) next to, but not on, the targeted planet. A player allied with the defense is referred to as a *defensive ally*.

Only after a player has allied with a side (or declined all invitations) and committed ships does the next player accept or decline an invitation.

5. PLANNING

The offense and the defense now each select an encounter card from their hand (an attack, negotiate, or morph) and place it facedown in front of themselves. If the defense has no encounter cards in hand, he or she may reveal any remaining cards in hand, discard them, and then draw a new eight-card hand before selecting a card during this phase. If the offense has no encounter cards in hand, his or her turn ends immediately, as described under "Drawing New Cards" on page 13.

WHEN DO I DRAW NEW CARDS?

Note that players do not get to draw a new card at the end of an encounter, the end of the turn, or even when they run out of cards. A player only draws a new hand of eight cards when he or she next needs to use an encounter card and has none. This is either at the start of the player's turn or when the player is the defense during the Planning Phase. This is explained in further detail on page 13. Just remember that typically a player must use all encounter cards in his or her hand before he or she gets new ones. Players should look for the best situation to use a card. The key to *COSMIC ENCOUNTER*® is to find ways to make the best use of each card in a player's hand. Players will find that cards that seem weak in one situation will be useful in another.

6. REVEAL

The offense and defense turn their cards faceup simultaneously and a winner is determined.

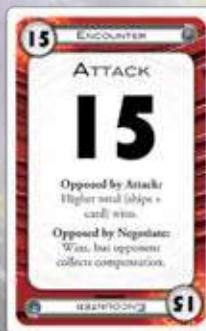
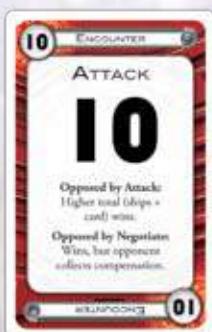
IF BOTH PLAYERS REVEAL ATTACK CARDS

Each main player adds the number on the card he or she revealed to the number of ships on his or her side. If you are the offense, you add your card value to the number of your ships on the hyperspace gate plus any allied ships on the hyperspace gate. If you are the defense, you add your card value to the number of your ships on the planet involved in the encounter plus the number of allied ships next to the planet. The player with the higher total wins, with ties going to the defense.





Example: The Zombie (green) is the offense and has drawn a destiny card instructing him to attack the Clone (red). He places four ships in the hyperspace gate and points it at one of the Clone's planets that contains two defending Clone ships. The Zombie asks both the Oracle (yellow) and the Sorcerer (blue) to be offensive allies. The Clone asks only the Oracle to be a defensive ally. The Oracle (to the left of the Zombie) has two offers. She chooses to ally with the Clone and places two ships next to Clone's planet, but not on it (bringing the total to four). The Sorcerer allies with the Zombie, adding two ships to the hyperspace gate (bringing the total to six). Both the Zombie and Clone play encounter cards facedown, then reveal them. The Zombie plays an attack card with a value of 10. Added to the ships on his side, he has a total attack value of 16. The Clone is defending with four total ships but plays a card with an attack value of 15, bringing his total to 19. The Clone wins, keeping the Zombie off his planet.



IF ONE PLAYER REVEALS AN ATTACK CARD AND THE OTHER REVEALS A NEGOTIATE CARD

The player who played the negotiate card loses the encounter automatically. However, the losing player will get to claim compensation by taking cards from the belligerent opponent's hand. See "Compensation" on page 11.

IF BOTH PLAYERS REVEAL NEGOTIATE CARDS

An attempt is made to reach a deal. Attacks have been put aside in favor of diplomacy. All allies on both sides return their ships to any of their colonies. They get nothing. The main players have one minute to make a deal. At this point, they can negotiate a mutually agreeable deal or play hardball and try to negotiate a sweet deal their opponent can't refuse. The negotiating players should be careful, however, since failing to make a deal sends three of their ships to the warp each.

In a deal, a player may trade cards and/or allow his or her opponent to establish one colony on any one planet where the player already has a colony. In this way each main player may gain a new colony and/or new cards. Any of a player's ships that are not in the warp can be used to establish this colony. Cards must come from the players' hands, not from the deck. Any ships remaining in the hyperspace gate after the deal return to any of the offense's colonies. Allies are never included in a deal. If no agreement is reached within one minute, the deal fails. The players cannot agree to do nothing as a deal – either a card or a base must change hands for a deal to be successful.

Example: The Anti-Matter and the Clone are the main players in an encounter. Both play negotiate cards facedown. When they are revealed, the players now have one minute to reach a deal. The Clone wants a colony (she is behind in colonies) and agrees to give the Anti-Matter her three lowest cards in return for a colony (the Anti-Matter likes low cards due to his alien power). The Anti-Matter agrees to this and the deal is done. The Clone gains a colony and places two ships on it. The Anti-Matter gets three attack cards with values of 4, 6, and 8.

IF EITHER PLAYER REVEALS THE MORPH CARD

The morph card becomes an exact duplicate of the opponent's encounter card when revealed. For instance, if the player's opponent reveals a negotiate, the morph card becomes a negotiate. If the player's opponent reveals an attack 20, the morph





card becomes an attack 20. Resolve the encounter normally as though both sides played the duplicated card. Once the encounter is resolved, the morph card returns to normal.

Note: There is only one morph card in the game, so it is impossible for two players to use one simultaneously. Were it possible, both players would lose the encounter, sending all ships involved to the warp.

RESOLUTION

Once the outcome of the encounter has been determined, it is time to resolve the encounter's effects.

IF THE OFFENSE WON

- All the ships on the hyperspace gate (the offense's ships plus any allies' ships) are placed on the planet, thus establishing (or possibly reinforcing) a colony for the offense and each offensive ally. Each player establishing a colony advances his or her player colony marker by one space around the warp.
- The defense's ships on the planet plus any defensive allies' ships defending the planet go to the warp.
- Other ships on the planet do not go to the warp. They were bystanders and not involved in the encounter.
- If this was the offense's first encounter for the turn, he or she may have a second encounter.

IF THE DEFENSE WON

- The ships forming the already established colonies on the defending planet stay there.
- All the ships on the hyperspace gate (the offense's plus any allies' ships) go to the warp.
- Defensive allies return their allying ships to any of their colonies (even if they are different from where they came from). Defensive allies do not get to land on the planet they just helped defend.
- Defensive allies also get a special bonus called **defender rewards**: For each ship a defensive ally contributed to the defense, that player must draw a card from the deck or take one of his or her ships from the warp. Move ships from the warp to any of the player's colonies of his or her choice. The player may combine the options, for example, drawing two cards and moving two ships from the warp (provided that the player had committed four ships to the successful defense that turn).
- If this was the offense's first encounter, he or she may not have a second encounter, and play passes to the left.

IF A DEAL WAS MADE

The terms of the deal are carried out as agreed upon. If this was the offense's first encounter, he or she may have a second encounter.

IF A DEAL FAILED

The main players each lose three of their ships of their choice to the warp. If this was the offense's first encounter, there is no second encounter, and play passes to the left.

COMPENSATION

When one player plays a negotiate and his opponent plays an attack card, the player who played the negotiate card gets to collect compensation. That player must randomly take one card for each ship he or she lost to the warp (not counting any allies' ships – they go to the warp without compensation) from his or her opponent's hand. If the player's opponent doesn't have enough cards to provide full compensation, the player takes the opponent's entire hand of cards.

AFTER RESOLVING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the effects of the encounter are resolved, discard the revealed encounter cards to the discard pile. If the offense won the encounter (or successfully made a deal) and this was his or her first encounter, the offense may have a second encounter. Otherwise, play passes to the left.

COMPENSATION VS. REWARDS

Compensation is the term for cards a player gets to steal from his or her opponent after losing an encounter by playing a negotiate vs. the opponent's attack card.

Rewards, on the other hand, are ships retrieved from the warp or cards a player gets to draw from the deck as a reward for sending ships to help the defense successfully win an encounter.

The two terms are often confused, so be careful not to get them mixed up.



SHARED WINS

It is possible, through alliances and successful negotiations, to have more than one player gain five colonies at the same time. In this case, the players share a win.

LOSING ALIEN POWERS

When three or more of a player's home colonies are eliminated, the player loses his or her alien power and turns his or her alien sheet facedown. The loss of the power occurs immediately, and a player cannot use it "one last time." If a player draws his or her own color from the destiny deck (or a special card designating him or her as the defense), the player may attempt to re-establish a colony in his or her home system. If the player regains his or her power by having a colony on at least three home planets, turn that player's alien sheet faceup once more.

ZAPPING POWERS

Occasionally, a game effect (such as the "Cosmic Zap" artifact) is said to **zap** a power. This can only happen when the power is **used** as described on its alien sheet. The effect of that power's **use** is then canceled and that power may not be used again until the end of the current encounter.



Some parts of some alien powers (such as Warrior's ability to add tokens to its alien sheet and Zombie's ability to free ships as part of a deal) do not require the power to be **used** in order to occur, and therefore cannot be zapped.

TIMING CONFLICTS

The timing strip along the bottom of each alien sheet and all non-encounter cards generally states when the component's game effect may be used. However, if there is still a timing conflict (when two players invoke contradictory special effects simultaneously) between powers, artifacts, and other game items and effects, resolution takes place in the following order:

1. The offense.
2. The defense.
3. Players who are not the main players, starting with the player to the left of the offense and proceeding clockwise.

DRIVING OUT FOREIGN COLONIES

If a player draws his or her own color from the destiny deck (or a special card that designates him or her as the defense), the player may try to eliminate a foreign colony in his or her home system. This type of encounter is similar to those described above, except the offense points the hyperspace gate at another player's colony in his or her own planet system. The offense chooses which player's colony is the target. That player becomes the defense for that encounter. Remember that all ships of one color on any planet make up only one colony. All other colonies on the planet are bystanders.

Note: If there is a planet in a player's home system with no ships on it, aiming the hyperspace gate at that planet allows the player to automatically re-establish a colony on that planet with up to four ships from any of his or her colonies. Doing so counts as a successful encounter.

HOME PLANETS WITHOUT COLONIES

As stated earlier, if a player has no colony on a home planet that he or she is defending, the player defends the planet normally except that his or her ship count is zero.



STRIPPING A PLANET OF SHIPS

As soon as a player removes the last of his or her ships from *any* planet, that player no longer has a colony on that planet. Any ships involved in the encounter cannot return to that planet. Ships retrieved from the warp cannot return to that planet. That player has no colony there. If a player has no ships left on one of his or her home planets, he or she must still defend it (with zero ships). *If a situation arises where a player must relocate ships but he or she has no colonies anywhere on the board, those ships go to the warp.*

DRAWING NEW CARDS

If the offense has no encounter cards (attacks, negotiates, or morphs) at the start of his or her turn, the offense must play (if possible) or discard any non-encounter cards, draw eight new cards, and continue his or her turn.

If the offense runs out of encounter cards later during his or her turn and needs to play one, the offense's turn ends immediately. (This might happen for several reasons, including paying compensation after an encounter, an alien power, or a card effect.) If this happens, the offense returns any of his or her ships on the hyperspace gate to his or her colonies. Allies also return their ships to any of their colonies.

If the defense has no encounter cards when he or she is required to play a card in an encounter (normally during the Planning Phase), the defense must play (if possible) or discard any non-encounter cards, draw eight new cards, and play one of them in the encounter. If the defense doesn't draw any encounter cards in the new hand, this process is repeated as many times as necessary.

CARD TYPES

Sometimes game effects, such as the "Plague" artifact, refer to card types. The different card types are: attack, negotiate, morph, reinforcement, flare, and artifact.

ARTIFACT CARDS

Artifacts are devices created by the Precursors and left behind for possible use by their children. These powerful items allow players to further alter the outcome of encounters and the game. Artifact cards are clearly marked. They cannot be played as encounter cards but may be played at other times. All artifact cards are discarded after they have been played. Each artifact card tells you when and how it may be played.

REINFORCEMENT CARDS

Reinforcements allow players to tip the scales of an encounter after encounter cards have been revealed. Reinforcements cannot be played as encounter cards. Instead, during the Reveal Phase, after encounter cards are revealed, the offense, defense, and any allies may play reinforcement cards on either side of the encounter (this does not necessarily have to be their own side). The reinforcement card adds to that side's total for the encounter. Players may continue playing reinforcements in response to other reinforcements until all players pass. Once all players have passed on the opportunity to play further reinforcements, the encounter is resolved with the new totals.

FLARE CARDS

Flares are powerful and unique devices built by each alien to radically change the outcome of encounters. Flares cannot be played as encounter cards, but may be played at other times. Flare cards are returned to the player's hand after being played instead of being discarded. *A flare cannot be used more than once per encounter, and a player may use no more than one flare per encounter.*

Normally, when a player plays a flare, the wild flare effect on the card is used. However, if a player plays his or her alien's own flare (such as the Zombie playing the Zombie flare), the super flare effect on the card *must* be used. A player cannot normally use the wild flare effect on his or her own flare. The exception to this is when a player loses his or her power or has it zapped (see page 12). Without an alien power, a player no longer has access to the super flare effect of his or her alien. The player may only use the wild flare effect on his or her flare until he or she regains access to the alien power.



VARIANTS

This section contains several rule variants that players may enjoy using.

FOUR PLANETS

In order to play a shorter game (recommended when playing with fewer players), players may wish to use this variant. During setup, each player only receives four player planets instead of five. In addition, only 16 ships are used for each player, with four ships being placed on each planet as normal. Finally, the players only need to have four foreign colonies to win instead of five, and only need two home colonies to maintain use of their alien power instead of three.

ALIEN INTERACTIONS

There are many ways for the different alien powers to interact, and sometimes players will need to carefully examine the powers involved to determine this interaction. As an example, imagine an encounter between the Oracle and the Sorcerer.

Looking at their alien sheets, it can be seen that although both powers occur in the same phase, the Oracle's power to foresee takes place before the Oracle selects a card, while the Sorcerer's power of magic takes place after both players have selected a card. So, the Oracle's power is used first, forcing the Sorcerer to play his encounter card faceup. The Oracle then looks at that card and selects her encounter card, playing it facedown. Now that both encounter cards have been selected, the Sorcerer's power may be used. If the Sorcerer wishes, he may switch encounter cards with the Oracle before revealing the Oracle's card. Of course, the Oracle knew that before he played his card, so does the Sorcerer choose the card in front of him or not?

So, if an alien interaction seems like it doesn't work, take a moment to carefully work through the powers involved, and in almost all cases, the interaction should become clear.

Note: If using this variant with the "Technology variant," remove all cards with a research number of 8 or more from the tech deck before play. These cards are not used with the "Four Planets" variant.

HIDDEN POWERS

In this variant, players leave their alien sheets facedown after selecting them at the start of the game. While a player's alien sheet remains facedown, its power cannot be used. A player may turn his or her alien sheet faceup at any time in order to use it. Once turned faceup, the player's alien sheet remains faceup for the rest of the game.

ROTATING POWERS

In this variant, the offense draws a new alien sheet at the start of his or her turn. The offense may then choose to keep either the old or new alien sheet, discarding the other. If the hidden powers variant is being used, new powers enter play facedown.

FREEWHEELING FLARES

In this variant, players may use as many flares as they wish during each encounter, although each flare may still only be used once per encounter. This variant is recommended only for more experienced players who are comfortable with the additional complexity this introduces to the game.

TECHNOLOGY

Tech cards represent revolutionary technologies that players can research during the game. Each tech card has an effect and a research number on it, which represents how long it takes to develop the technology.

SETUP

If players decide to play with this variant, shuffle the technology deck and deal two tech cards to each player after completing the normal game setup. Each player then looks at his or her two tech cards, selects one, and discards the other, faceup, next to the technology deck. The selected tech card is placed facedown in front of the player, and is not considered part of his or her hand.



Note: If using this variant with the “Four Planets” variant, remove all cards with a research number of 8 or more from the tech deck before play. These cards are not used with the “Four Planets” variant.

USING TECHNOLOGY

At the start of any player’s Regroup Phase, before the offense retrieves a ship from the warp, each player may research their tech card, complete their tech card, or do nothing.

RESEARCHING A TECH CARD

To research a tech card, the player takes one of his or her ships from any of the player’s colonies and moves it on top of his or her tech card. The ship is now researching that tech card. Once a ship is researching a tech card, it cannot be removed from that tech card until the tech card is completed.

COMPLETING A TECH CARD

To complete a tech card, the player turns the tech card faceup. If there are a number of ships researching the tech equal to or greater than the tech card’s research number, the tech is completed. The player returns the researching ships to any of his or her colonies. The completed tech card remains in play and may now be used. If the number of ships on the tech card is lower than its research number, the tech card is abandoned.

The player returns the researching ships to any of his or her colonies, as before, but the tech card is discarded, faceup, next to the technology deck instead of being used.

Note that technology cards may have many different effects. Some of them are discarded after being used, while others remain in play for the rest of the game once completed.

GETTING NEW TECH CARDS

If a player is eligible to have a second encounter during his or her turn, he or she may give up the opportunity to have a second encounter and instead obtain a new tech card. The player draws a number of tech cards equal to his or her current foreign colonies plus one, selects one, and discards the others. The selected tech card is placed facedown in front of the player and must be researched before it can be completed, just as before. There is no limit to the number of tech cards a player can have facedown in front of him or her, but a player may only research or complete one tech card during each Regroup Phase. If the tech deck runs out, shuffle the tech discard pile to make a new tech deck.

Note: The Machine may give up its second or later encounter to obtain a new tech card, but doing so ends its turn, regardless of its alien power.

LOSING RESEARCHING SHIPS

Ships researching a tech card are considered to be in that player’s home system, but may not participate in any encounters. Players may not aim the hyperspace gate at a tech card, but ships can be lost from a tech card in other ways (such as the Shadow’s power).



REFERENCE

A PLAYER'S TURN

The offense (the active player) has one encounter with another player. If the offense wins that encounter or successfully makes a deal, the offense may have a second encounter with another player. Afterwards, play passes to the left.

PHASES OF AN ENCOUNTER

- Regroup:** The offense retrieves one ship from the warp.
- Destiny:** The offense draws a destiny card to determine the defense and target system.
- Launch:** The offense aims the hyperspace gate at one of the defense's colonies in the target system and places up to four ships in the gate.
- Alliance:** The offense invites allies, then the defense invites allies. Starting to the left of the offense and continuing clockwise, allies join sides and send up to four ships each to help their side.
- Planning:** The offense and the defense each select an encounter card and play them facedown.
- Reveal:** The offense and the defense turn their encounter cards faceup and add up their totals.
- Resolution:** Players determine the winner of the encounter and resolve any effects from the encounter.

TIMING CONFLICTS

When timing conflicts occur, resolve effects in the following order:

- The offense.
- The defense.
- Players who are not the main players, starting with the player to the left of the offense and proceeding clockwise.

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