

House Rules

General house rules

These house rules apply across the board to all my *Classic Traveller* campaigns, except where specifically noted in the particular campaign sections.

❖ Task resolution

One of the things lacking in *Classic Traveller* is a uniform task resolution system. This is one of the things added quickly in subsequent editions of the game. Here's a quick and simple task resolution system that borrows concepts from *MegaTraveller* (mostly to smooth the way for a transition to that game, if wanted).

Special Tasks

There might be some special, predefined tasks for use during the game. Right now, there's at least one: the *Determination* task.

- ❖ A *Determination* task is typically of average difficulty (but might be harder with sufficient distractions), and you can apply both your Endurance and your Intelligence DMs to the task.

Basic throw: 8 +

As with combat, to succeed at any general task, a character must make a basic throw of eight or more on two dice. Of course, the roll should get adjusted based on a variety of factors.

Opposing efforts

There's two ways to handle opposing efforts. In some cases, it'll be appropriate to match two task rolls against one another, highest total wins (after DMs). In other cases, a "defender" can subtract skill/stat DMs from the "attacker's" roll.

Difficulty of tasks

Tasks vary in difficulty: the basic throw applies only to a task of "average" difficulty: one in which a person who knows at least a little about what they're doing can succeed about half the time under pressure.

Tasks of other difficulties provide DMs for the throw, as in the nearby table.

Stat/Skill DMs

In general, when you want to attempt a general task of some sort, any relevant skill your character has can apply to the task. If I agree, your character's skill level can get applied as a positive DM to a general task throw. If a character has no skill relevant to the task at hand, then you might be able to use a characteristic instead. You can apply one fifth (round down) of an appropriate characteristic value as a positive task DM. (In some cases, you might be able to apply both a skill DM *and* a characteristic DM.)

If it seems likely that a particular skill is rather required for the task, and you don't have the skill (like trying to pilot a nose-diving fighter jet), then you have to make a plain roll of 8+ at one or more levels of increased difficulty (which might make the roll impossible).

You can also get assistance to receive a "one-time" zero level in a skill. See "Learning by doing" on page 3.

Task difficulty table

Difficulty	DM
Very Easy	+ 4
Simple	+ 3
Average	+ 0
Challenging	-3
Difficult	-5
Formidable	-7

❖ *Character creation*

The rules as read provide a decent engine for creating characters, but the random aspect of the system creates a number of dangers: in the first case, it's easy to create a parties of characters with wildly mismatched skills (this may or may not be a bad thing); in the second case, it's easy to have a decent character shaping up only to watch him or her die during the creation process; finally, the random nature of the system makes it hard to create the precise character a player might want.

Fate Points

Every character starts with five fate points. The player can use these points both during character creation, and during play itself. Here's what you can do with a fate point.

During character creation. During character creation you can use a fate point to

- ✦ Choose your character's service. However, you may only choose a service for which you would have at least a +1DM on the enlistment roll. (This may also be a service for which you've already been denied enlistment.)
- ✦ Choose to reroll any die roll (in this case, you can wait until the roll is made, pay the point, roll again, and then choose which result you want to keep).

This expense applies to the twelve dice you roll for your characteristics as well.

During play. During play you can use a fate point to

- ✦ Choose to reroll any die roll (roll again and choose the result you want).
- ✦ Make a task easier by one level of difficulty.
- ✦ Avoid death. In situations where a character should by rights be dead, you can spend a fate point to avoid death, as long as you can make up some halfway reasonable story about which the character should survive.

Rolling characteristics

While you still roll six pairs of dice to generate your characteristics, you may now roll a set of twelve dice, and match them up to the six characteristics as you like, although each characteristic must get two dice.

Non-lethal creation

During character creation, failing a survival check does not end in a character's death (unless you want it to). Instead, the character washes out of the current service with only two terms of service and no chance for promotion or skill acquisition. The character still gets to muster out. You can decide the circumstances of the discharge—it need not be dishonorable.

Zero level skills

In the rules as read, player characters automatically get a level of zero in all weapon skills. This prevents them from having to suffer unskilled penalties during combat. This house rule makes this policy slightly more flexible.

- ✦ Each player can choose, as part of a background, five zero level skills for their character which they should justify to me. You now *do not* receive a zero level in any combat skills, unless you pick them in your five.

You may *not* select Jack Of All Trades as a zero-level skill.

Complete skill list

Here's a list of all the skills in the game. Those skills in italics are available only from the expanded character creation rules (Books 4 through 7).

Basic Skills

Administration
Bribery
Broker
Carousing
Communications
Computer
Demolitions
Electronics
Engineering
Equestrian
Forgery
Forward Observer
Gambling
Gravitics
Hunting
Instruction
Interrogation
Jack Of All Trades
Leader
Legal
Liaison
Mechanical
Medical
Naval Architect
Navigation
Pilot
Prospecting
Space [Type]
Steward
Streetwise
Survey
Survival
Tactics
Trader
Vacc Suit

Combat and Weapon Skills

Battle Dress
Brawling
Blade Combat [Type]
Combat Engineering
FA Gunnery
Fleet Tactics
Gun Combat [Type]
Gunnery
Heavy Weapons
Recon
Recruiting
Ship Tactics
Zero-G Combat

Transport Skills

Air/Raft
ATV
Ship's Boat
Vehicle [Type:Subtype]

❖ *Character advancement*

In the original *Classic Traveller* game, the assumption was that characters would not change substantially during play, thus character advancement was a very slow process, and rather sketchy. Here's some rules to make character advancement a little nicer.

Learning by doing

If you use a skill during a session to particularly good effect, then you should remember this; at the end of the session you can receive an experience tick for that skill. I typically will hand out only one tick for each session, even if you make good use of more than one skill. You can choose which skill should receive the tick, but I have to agree.

If you don't have a skill, you can be tutored by someone into an immediate zero level for that skill. This requires a determination task on your part, and a tutor to show you "how to use that vacuum suit". Once the immediate situation passes, you lose the zero level; however, if you used the skill successfully, then you can gain an experience tick for the skill. This does not apply to the Jack Of All Trades skill.

Learning through practice or study

You can elect to be practicing a skill desiring to improve it. You have to back this up during roleplaying, and it takes at least a few hours of game time dedicated to practice during each game week. At the end of a game week, you can have one experience tick to assign to a skill that you're practicing, if you pass a Determination task.

You can elect to be studying a skill desiring to improve it. As with practice you have to back this up during roleplaying. If you have an instructor to guide you, then you can take one tick per week. If you don't, then you can take one tick per game month for a studied skill. If you pass a Determination task.

You may not apply practice or study to the Jack Of All Trades skill.

Making your skill improvement check

At the end of an adventure (not game session), you can elect to make one (and only one) improvement check. An improvement check is of Formidable difficulty, and you can use your DM for one appropriate characteristic on the roll (which is most appropriate depends on the skill you're trying to improve); you also get to add the experience ticks you've accumulated for a skill as a positive DM to the check.

- ✦ If you make your check, then you lose all your ticks for that skill, but the skill increases in level by one.

You also get to add one tick to your Education characteristic.

- ✦ If you fail your check, then you lose half your ticks (round in your favour, so if you started with three you end up with two ticks) for that skill, and you get no increase.

Improving characteristics

- ✦ Your Education improves naturally over time as your skill levels increase.

- ✦ Your Intelligence is innate and doesn't improve.

- ✦ Your Social Standing can improve through roleplaying.

- ✦ Your physical characteristics can all improve by +1 by undergoing a conditioning regimen.

The bonus takes effect after a month of this regimen, and you must account for the regimen during roleplay. This regimen essentially uses a lot of the time you'd otherwise devote to practice or study, so it's a bit difficult to do both at once (although some physical skills can be practiced in conjunction with a physical regimen).

If you skip the regimen for more than a month, you lose the benefit to your physical characteristics.

The Traveller Adventure

Initial players in *The Traveller Adventure* campaign are recently hired hands on the *March Harrier* subsidized merchant. All of the rules in “General house rules” on page 1 apply to this campaign. Additionally, here's more guidelines for this campaign.

❖ Character creation

All initial characters use the basic character creation system. You may choose any service from Book 1, *except* for the Other service. Use the basic careers from Supplement 4 in place of the Other service from Book 1.

Pregenerated characters

Instead of randomly generating a character, you may pay a fate point and choose one of these pregenerated characters:

✦ Captain of March Harrier

Retired Merchant Captain 5A7B9B Age 44
6 Terms Cr 13,000
Admin 2, Bribery 2, Computer 3, Navigation 3,
Pilot 1, Vacc Suit 2, Auto Rifle 1, Auto Pistol 0

Add four zero level skills

✦ Pilot of March Harrier

ex-Scout 9B7955 Age 31
3 Terms Cr 10,000
Air/Raft 1, Jack Of All Trades 1, Pilot 2, Vacc
Suit 1, Laser Carbine 1

Add five zero level skills

✦ Engineer of March Harrier

Retired Naval Non-Comm 876785 Age 51
8 Terms Cr 12,000
Electronic 2, Engineering 3, Mechanical 2, Ship's
Boat 1, Vacc Suit 1, Auto Pistol 0

Add four zero level skills

Notice that these characters can also be assumed to have an advantage with background knowledge about the *Harrier*, her operation, and her trade route.

Generated characters

The *March Harrier* has recently employed the rest of the player characters for these positions: Medic, Gunner, Steward, Deckhand. If you decide to generate a new character, then you should do so with an eye to one of these positions.

Notice that all the characters, except the Deckhand, are required to operate the *Harrier*, and so if the roles aren't assumed by the PCs, then NPCs will occupy those roles. If no-one plays the Deckhand, then the Harrier can do without the Deckhand.

With that in mind, these services are particularly useful: Navy, Merchant, Scout, Belter, Doctor.

With some creative background, these services could fit in well with the party: Pirate, Rogue, Noble.

Services not recommended for play at all: Sailor, Diplomat, Flyer, Barbarian, Bureaucrat, Scientist, Hunter.

Starting financial situation

The *Harrier's* current operating fund has Cr112,816 in it. The monthly salaries, docking fees, and maintenance fees for her annual maintenance have all been paid.

Immediate fees to pay will be fuel costs, life support fees, and payment into the maintenance pool.

This campaign is based on the operation of a merchant vessel, and therefore, you as a group will have to take careful notice of the ship's finances.

The lease on the ship is currently held by the three pregenerated characters; therefore, at least one or two of these characters should be played by you, to direct the overall plans of the ship.