

Player's Guide



Dave Bezio's
X-plorers
The Game of Galactic Troubleshooters!

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**Brave Halfling
Publishing**

Forward - Dave Bezio

X-pplorers is a “what if?” game. In this case, what if the fathers of the role playing hobby had focused on science fiction, rather than fantasy, when they wrote that first set of official rules back in 1974? What if that first game was about humans expanding and exploring their universe, instead of delving into deep dungeons to kill monsters to earn treasure?

These are the questions X-pplorers attempts to answer. X-pplorers takes the original fantasy role playing game as a starting point, and morphs it into something suitable for science fiction. Like the games of yore, these rules attempt to give you a very basic, but strong, core to use in the development of your own game. The framework is here, but the finished artwork you paint is up to you.

By today’s standards, this game may be considered “out-dated”. It doesn’t take into account modern technology, super computers, cyber-punk or the advances in modern cinema and special effects. It’s an attempt to envision a unique universe of science fiction through the eyes of someone living in 1974. I hope you enjoy the tone and feel of X-pplorers, and have many fun adventures developing your universe.

Forward - John Adams

We at Brave Halfling Publishing are honored and excited to have the opportunity to publish Dave Bezio’s X-pplorers RPG! While we have gently edited and arranged Dave’s original text, we have only done so to promote greater clarity and broader appeal. From the beginning, our only goal has been to make this edition of X-P as easy-to-use and as helpful to gamers as possible. Please be assured - absolutely no mechanics have been altered. We hope you enjoy this BHP version of Dave’s great game as much as we do!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	p. 4
Chapter One: Character Creation	p. 7
Chapter Two: Equipment	p. 15
Chapter Three: Playing the Game	p. 22
OGL	p. 27

Introduction

The slobbering tentacled creature was making its way quickly toward us on its chitin covered legs. A green acid-like substance was dripping from its mandibles as they clicked quickly back and forth. I drew my laser pistol from its holster.

“Wait Max!” yelled Dr. Rebecca, “What if it isn’t hostile? We should try to make contact first.”

I looked back at the slime-covered creature, and thought about our dead comrades. Perhaps it was all a misunderstanding? If it was, I would never know. I pulled the trigger and the energy bolt struck the creature with a blinding flash!

The United Corporate Nations

In the year 2,222 AD, Earth, Venus, and Mars are united under one government, the United Corporate Nations (UCN). The UCN is a political engine composed of representatives of thousands of powerful corporations. Earth itself is mostly a sprawling city of high tech skyscrapers, and the corporate offices of the most powerful organizations. The employees of these corporations (the denizens of Earth) live in various levels of comfort, based upon their income and relative status.

Venus and Mars are highly terraformed, and have been colonized for a couple hundred years. They aren’t nearly as densely populated as Earth, but do boast populations in the billions, and are also the home of many rapidly developing corporations.

Far beyond our solar system lie the Reaches, a densely packed cluster of stars, many with habitable worlds very similar to Earth. Faster than light ships, with matter screens, can make the long journey into space at incredible speeds. Systems of the Reaches are still being explored by survey teams from the UCN. The UCN is looking for both habitable planets and those ripe for resource exploitation. Of course there are laws and strict (time consuming) procedures covering this exploration.

Some colonies in the Reaches are directly under the control of a single corporation, while some are under the collective control of the UCN. Others are independent, legally claimed and funded by other sources. Systems of government in the colonies vary from UCN appointed corporate executives to self appointed emperors or elected governors. Despite the presence of the UCNP (the UCN Police), the Reaches are a breeding ground for corruption.

A Role Playing Game

X-plorers is a science fiction role playing game. A role playing game (RPG) is make-believe with rules. It is a social activity where players pretend to be heroic characters adventuring in a universe of the far future. Role playing is pretending to be a different persona and acting as that character would. The game rules and mechanics define the capabilities of each character and help to determine the outcome of his or her actions.

This RPG requires a group of people to play. Four or five is optimal, but it can be played with many more and as few as two. One person takes on the role of Referee, while the others each take on the role of a Player Character (PC), or simply, characters.

The Referee has the greatest responsibility when playing the game. He or she develops and creates the galaxy and story in which the PCs adventure. He also takes the role of all the denizens of that galaxy that aren't player characters, such as aliens, creatures, and other non-player characters (NPCs). Finally, the Referee runs the game, Refereeing disputes, interpreting rules, and making sure everyone stays involved in the action.

The players use these rules to create the heroic persona or character they will role play. During the game the players will be faced with situations, challenges, and problems as presented by the Referee. It is their responsibility to stay in character, and solve these dilemmas as they feel their characters would. Sometimes this involves using ones imagination and wit, while other times it involves the luck that hinges on the toss of a couple of dice.

Together the Referee and the players create grand stories and epic adventures in the galaxy of X-pplorers that will be long remembered. See "How the Game Plays" in the appendix for an example of role-playing in practice.

What's Needed to Play?

A role playing game is usually played around a table. Most of the action takes place verbally and in the players' imaginations as they create the story together. However, there are a few components that are necessary to play, and a few that are just helpful in making the experience more fun.

X-pplorers Rulebook: This book contains all the rules you need to create characters and play the game.

Players: X-pplorers requires at least two people to play, while a group of four to six usually works best. One takes the role of Referee, while the rest take the roles of player characters. Character sheets for recording characters can be found at the back of the rulebook, or you can simply use a sheet of paper, or even an index card.

Dice: The Referee and each player should have at least one 20-sided die and three six-sided dice.

Miniature Figures: Most hobby stores sell metal or plastic miniature figures for war gaming and role playing. They also sell battle mats or graph paper with one inch grids. X-pplorers combat is traditionally played without miniatures, where all the action takes place in your imagination. However, many people find it helps them to visualize the combat better when they have a physical representation of the scene of the battle. The choice to use them or not is yours.

A Mission: The Referee should have a mission ready to play. Most Referees write their own missions. Pre-made missions can be found in *Galactic Troubleshooters*, the X-pplorers magazine.

Other Stuff: Needless to say, you will need other stuff. Scratch paper for notes, graph paper for maps, and pencils to write with are a necessity. Having some type of tokens, counters, or gaming stones will be extremely helpful if using miniatures. Snacks and soda will keep players happy too!

How Dice are Used in X-Plorers

X-plorers uses standard six-sided dice that can be found in any game or department store, and a 20-sided die that can be found in most game stores.

When referring to dice an abbreviation is always used. The first number of the abbreviation is the number of dice to be rolled, followed by the letter “d” (which stands for die or dice), followed by a 6 or 20 (which stands for the six-sided or 20-sided die being used for the roll). For example, 2d6 means you should roll two six-sided dice and add the result.

Sometimes a roll of 1d3 will be called for. This is simply made by rolling 1d6 with a number 1 to 2 = 1, 3 to 4 = 2, and 5 to 6 = 3.

Finally, sometimes there may be an additional positive or negative modifier listed after the dice. This is simply added or subtracted from the die roll total. For example, 1d6+2 means to roll one six-sided die and add 2 to the total for a result of 3 to 8.

How to Use This Book

This rule book is for the players. It details everything players need to create their characters and play the game. It also shows the players how to improve their PCs with the experience they gain from completing missions.

Most Important!

While this work is referred to as the “rule book” there is only one absolute rule: Anything in this book should be thought of as changeable! You read that right: this book should simply be thought of as guidelines for you to create the type of game you desire.

The Referee is the final authority on rules, and after weighing the consequences, if he thinks something should be changed, then so be it. The main purpose of the game is to have fun. If changing, adding, or ignoring certain rules adds to that fun, then, by all means, do it!

Remember, X-plorers is a “retro” style game. It doesn’t include rules and modifiers for every single possible situation. It is purposely designed like this to allow you to customize and create your own style of play and house rules, like in the “good old days.”

CHARACTER CREATION

The first step in playing the game is to create a player character. This is a simple matter of rolling some dice to randomly determine your character's physical and mental weaknesses and strengths, picking a character class, and using your game money (credits) to buy some equipment. Once completed, you are ready for your first mission.

The Role of Your Character The PCs can choose to take any role in the game they like, but the default idea is that they form an X-ploers team. X-ploers are also known as galactic troubleshooters. These special operatives are hired to solve problems of all types, both big and small. X-ploers have a very good reputation for being loyal to whoever is currently employing them. They can work discreetly, and can be trusted with sensitive information.

An X-ploers team can take missions from one of several possible organizations. They can work for the government of Earth, Mars, or Venus. They might work directly for the UCN itself. Perhaps they work for the private interests of one of the major corporations, or even a smaller corporation. The PCs may be more idealistic, working for one of the colonies of the Reaches, or perhaps for a single individual's interest. Finally, they may simply be mercenaries or smugglers taking on any job they can find.

Character Creation Summary Follow these simple steps to create your character (a character sheet to record all this information can be found at the back of the X-ploers rule book).

Step 1: Attribute Scores

Roll 3d6 and total the result once for each of the four attribute scores (Agility, Intelligence, Physique, and Presence). Note bonuses or penalties for high or low scores.

Step 2: Character Class

Choose a character class from chapter two (Scientist, Soldier, Scout, or Technician). Note your class skills.

Step 3: Hit Points, Basic Hit Bonus, Saving Throws

Your character starts at 1st level. Roll 1d6 for your hit points and add your Physique bonus (if any). Note your basic hit bonus (BHB) and calculate your melee and ranged bonus by adding your Physique bonus and Agility modifiers to the BHB respectively. Note your saving throw (ST). All this information can be found on the Character Advancement Table on page 7.

Step 4: Equipment

Roll 3d6 x 100 to determine your starting credits, and equip your character from the equipment lists in chapter three. Determine your armor class (AC) and note the damage your weapons cause.

Step 5: Personality

Name your character and create their background story. Add any details you like, such as height, weight, age, and a physical description.

Attribute Scores

Attributes define the character both physically and mentally. They represent the innate natural talent and traits the character possesses. There are four Attributes: Agility, Intelligence, Physique, and Presence.

Roll 3d6 for each attribute in the order listed above. Once those rolls have been calculated, it is often obvious which type of character best fits the stats, but a player always has the option to play any character class desired. You may swap two of the scores to help create the type of character you want.

Agility (AGI) is a measure of a character's dexterity, hand eye coordination, balance, quickness, reaction speed, and ability to manipulate their body while maintaining control. You will use agility when trying to perform acrobatic movements, catch or grab items, or get out of something's way.

- Use your agility bonus for agility-based saving throws and skills.
- You use your agility bonus to modify your "to-hit" number with ranged weapons.
- The agility bonus is used to modify a character's armor class (AC).

Intelligence (INT) is a measure of a character's IQ, knowledge, education, common sense, perception of his surroundings, and ability to learn. You will use intelligence to comprehend complex ideas, notice obscure or out of place things, or to recall something you may have learned in your past.

- Use your intelligence bonus for intelligence-based saving throws and skills.

Physique (PHY) is a measure of physical power and the ability to use that power. It is also the characters constitution, health, stamina, and overall physical fitness. You will use Physique when trying to move or lift heavy objects, trying to break or force things, fighting off the effects of disease or poison, facing adverse physical conditions, or when performing extended actions that take a lot of endurance.

- Use your Physique bonus for Physique-based saving throws and skills.
- You use your Physique bonus to modify your "to hit" and damage with melee weapons. (This also modifies unarmed attacks. Punches do 1d3 points of damage.)
- Your Physique bonus is added to the d6 you roll for hit points every level.

Presence (PRE) is a measure of a character's charisma, leadership, personality, inner strength, willpower, bravery in the face of terrifying things, and to an extent, his swagger and good looks. Presence is the characters outer and inner soul, if you will. It is important when trying to negotiate with someone or impress them (intentionally or otherwise). It is also important to actions such as persuasion, gaining information, and trying to get oneself out of a sticky situation.

- You use your Presence bonus for Presence-based saving throws.

Attribute Modifiers

Each attribute has the potential to modify what you can do. Particularly high or low attribute scores grant your character a modifier (i.e., a bonus for above-average scores or a penalty for lower ones). The table below lists the modifiers for high or low attribute scores:

Attribute Modifiers

Attribute Score	Description	Modifier
3-4	Poor	-2
5-8	Below Average	-1
9-12	Average	0
13-16	Above Average	+1
17-18	Great	+2

Choosing a Character Class

Chapter two lists the four character classes, Scientist, Soldier, Scout, and Technician. After you have rolled your attributes, you should decide which class you want to play. Characters with high Intelligence make better Scientists and Technicians, while those with a higher Physique make better Soldiers, and those with a higher Agility make excellent Scouts.

Character Advancement

The Character Advancement Table below applies to all characters and contains the following information:

Level: Refers to the level of experience of the character. All characters start at 1st level.

XP: This is the number of Experience Points (XP) needed to advance to this level. Starting characters have zero XP.

HD: You roll six-sided hit dice (HD) to determine your hit points, which measure the damage your character can sustain before dying. You roll 1d6 at first level (adding your Physique bonus) to determine your hit points (HP). Every subsequent level you roll another 1d6 + Physique bonus and add it to your previous hit points for your new hit point total. You can never gain less than 1 HP per level, despite a negative Physique modifier. Note: Referees may allow characters to take the maximum HP (6 + Physique bonus) at 1st level.

BHB: This is the "Base Hit Bonus" added to any attack roll; note that the Soldier occupation has a different advancement scheme (See Combat).

ST: This is the base Saving Throw number. You must roll this number or greater on a d20 to succeed at saving throws (See Playing the Game).

Character Advancement

Level	XP	HD	BHB	Soldier BTB	ST
1	0	1	+0	+1	15+
2	2,500	2	+0	+1	14+
3	5,000	3	+0	+2	13+
4	10,000	4	+1	+2	12+
5	20,000	5	+1	+3	11+
6	40,000	6	+2	+4	10+
7	80,000	7	+2	+4	9+
8	160,000	8	+3	+5	8+
9	320,000	9	+4	+6	7+
10	640,000	10	+5	+6	6+

Character Retirement

Each Referee has his or her own style, and a preference for a given range of character levels for their games. The Referee has the final say on how and when retirement works for the campaign. Some ignore retirement altogether and simply extrapolate the tables to include levels beyond those shown.

Reading the Character Classes

After you have determined your basic attributes you need to decide on your character's class. There are four classes: Scientist, Soldier, Scout, and Technician. This determines your characters niche and skills during the game. You can further diversify your character by learning the skills of other classes through multi-classing (if the Referee allows this). The rules for multi-classing follow the individual class descriptions.

Each character class has a description below, as well as a table of four skills in which the class is proficient. The table shows how each skill progresses by the level of the character (or level of the skill in the case of multi-classing). For the most part, the number shown on the table is the number needed to be rolled (or greater) on a d20 in order to successfully use the skill. This is called a Skill Check (SC). Two of the Soldier skills (weapon specialization and martial arts) work a little differently and are explained in their description. Note: a roll of a 1 always fails and a roll of 20 always succeeds, despite any modifiers to the skill check. If the skill description is followed by an attribute in parenthesis, then this attribute's bonus is added to the d20 roll when attempting to use this skill.

Scientist

Scientists are an essential part of any X-plorers group. Not only are they a fountain of knowledge on the environment, but they are also experts on dealing with alien life forms. Scientists can use computers to retrieve data and analyze things. They are also trained in medicine and first aid and are able to heal their companions when they get hurt.

Scientist Skills

Level	Computers	Medicine	Science	Sociology
1	13+	15+	13+	16+
2	12+	14+	12+	15+
3	11+	13+	11+	14+
4	10+	12+	10+	13+
5	9+	11+	9+	12+
6	8+	10+	8+	11+
7	7+	9+	7+	10+
8	6+	8+	6+	9+
9	5+	7+	5+	8+
10	5+	6+	5+	7+

Computers (INT): Computers are complicated machines used to compile and interpret data. Scientists are experts at putting data into computers and receiving information based on that data. Since most advanced computers take up a large space, the Scientist will usually have to return to his office or spaceship to use the computer for scientific purposes (unless he has a portable computer). Many corporations and governments use computers to store information, and proficient Scientists can figure out how to retrieve this data.

Medicine (INT): Scientists can perform field medicine on an individual immediately after he was hurt (right after a fight or accident). Using medicine "hypos" (hypodermic injections) and bandages, he can heal 1d6 points of damage. Note: use of the medicine skill cannot heal more damage than was just sustained, or more hit points than the character had to start. In a hospital or sick bay, the Scientist can automatically (no roll necessary) heal 1d6+3 points of damage a day (instead of the usual 1d6 gained by natural healing).

Science (INT): Science covers all scientific studies (i.e., astronomy, biology, geology, chemistry, etc.). This can be used to analyze things in the field or make scientific deductions.

Sociology (INT): Sociology is the study of society. This includes intelligent alien life forms as well as animal life. The Scientist can use this skill to figure out the reason for the confusing behaviors of animals or aliens.

Soldier

Soldiers are an essential part of any X-plorers group. They are trained in all weapon use and repair. They know how to blow stuff up, kill the enemy, and are deadly with or without an actual weapon in their hands. Soldiers are also adept in surviving in a hostile environment, and can lead their companions through the rough wilderness of alien worlds.

Soldier Skills

Level	Demolitions	Martial Arts	Survival	Specialist
1	15+	1d3+1	13+	
2	14+		12+	1 to hit
3	13+	1d3x2	11+	
4	12+		10+	+1 damage
5	11+	1d3+1x2	9+	
6	10+		8+	+1 attack
7	9+	1d6x2	7+	
8	8+		6+	+2 damage
9	7+	1d6+1x2	5+	
10	6+		5+	+2 attack

Demolition (INT): The Soldier knows how to use plastic explosives and other explosive devices and timers. With this skill he can successfully set charges big or small. If successful the explosion will have the desired effect (such as blowing a lock off of a door or blowing up a skimmer when the door is opened). The Referee will determine the result of a failed test. On a roll of 1, the explosive may immediately blow up causing damage to the Soldier. Plastic explosives cause 4d6 points of damage to anything within a blast radius of one meter of the explosion per 50 grams used. The Soldier can use a wick or timer to detonate the explosive.

Martial Arts (PHY): The number listed is the amount of damage the Soldier inflicts with unarmed attacks (note: you add your Physique bonus to this). At 3rd level, the Soldier gets two attacks per round with fists and feet. In addition, if the Soldier ever rolls a 20 while fighting unarmed, he knocks out his opponent for 1d6 rounds.

Survival (INT): Survival is the Soldiers ability to find food and shelter in hostile environments and on alien worlds. The Referee may determine that the characters take damage (1 point per day) if they are out in the elements without food and shelter.

Weapon Specialist (AGL): At 2nd Level, the Soldier can choose a single weapon as his favorite. With this weapon he receives the bonuses listed. Note: the numbers are not cumulative, they are the total (for example, at 10th level you get +2 attacks, not +3 attacks). These bonuses are added to any other bonuses (for level or attributes) the Soldier may already have when using this weapon.

Scout

The Scout is an essential part of any X-plorers group. Scouts are trained at being self-sufficient, sneaky, getting into places others cannot, and then remaining undetected. Experts at infiltration, they can override advanced security systems to let the rest of the group into guarded locations. Even though they are not “thieves” in the proper sense of the word, Scouts can steal when need be.

Scout Skills

Level	Pilot	Security	Slight of Hand	Stealth
1	14+	15+	14+	13+
2	13+	14+	13+	12+
3	12+	13+	12+	11+
4	11+	12+	11+	10+
5	10+	11+	10+	9+
6	9+	10+	9+	8+
7	8+	9+	8+	7+
8	7+	8+	7+	6+
9	6+	7+	6+	5+
10	5+	6+	5+	5+

Pilot (AGI): A Scout must often be prepared to get away quickly. Being trained to drive whatever vehicle is available is a useful skill. The Scout’s pilot skill is identical to that of the Technician class.

Security (INT): Security is a measure of the Scout’s quick thinking when he goes into infiltration mode. This is his ability to notice minute, or hidden details such as security cameras, guards, trip wires, or other alarm systems. It is also his ability to bypass all technology levels of security devices, such as locks (traditional and electronic) or sophisticated computer programs.

Sleight of Hand (AGI): Sleight of hand is the Scout’s ability to palm items in plain sight without anyone noticing, or even to pick pockets. If the roll fails, and the result is a 1 or 2, then someone has observed the failed pilferage and may raise an alarm or attempt to blackmail the character.

Stealth (AGI): Stealth represents the Scout’s physical ability when he goes into infiltration mode. This is his ability to move without a sound and to hide in shadows and places here others wouldn’t be able to. Stealth is also the Scout’s chance to climb sheer or extremely difficult surfaces (those that a normal person couldn’t climb without the aid of a rope or ladder). If the roll fails, the Scout falls from halfway up the surface, suffering 1d6 points of damage for every five meters he falls. It’s also his ability to sneak up on someone in a non-combat situation (one roll) and knock him unconscious (with a successful “to hit” roll). The Referee may determine that this can’t be used on creatures or aliens because of their different physiologies.

Technician

The Technician (Tech) is an essential part of any X-plorers team. They are trained in the workings and repair of all machines and equipment. They are expert pilots of ground, air, and space vehicles. While Scientists know how to use computers, Techs also know how to change the workings and programs of these computers. Finally, Techs can repair and reprogram robots.

Technician Skills

Level	Computers	Mechanics	Pilot	Robotics
1	15+	13+	14+	15+
2	14+	12+	13+	14+
3	13+	11+	12+	13+
4	12+	10+	11+	12+
5	11+	9+	10+	11+
6	10+	8+	9+	10+
7	9+	7+	8+	9+
8	8+	6+	7+	8+
9	7+	5+	6+	7+
10	6+	5+	5+	6+

Computers (INT): This is the same as the Scientist Skill, except that the Tech can also repair the computer, install new programs, and modify existing ones.

Mechanics (INT): This is the Tech's chance to repair, understand, and operate any type of mechanical device.

Pilot (AGI): Techs are professional drivers and operators of vehicles. This is their chance to know how to operate an unfamiliar vehicle (note: "unfamiliar" usually means "alien," as one skimmer or plane is very much like another). This also is his chance to perform evasive or extreme maneuvers (such as turning tight corners at high speeds). The Referee must determine the result of failures in these circumstances. Most of the time the Tech will simply have to slow down, other times there may be a crash that causes damage to the vehicles occupants, or property or people around the vehicle.

Robotics (INT): This is the Tech's ability to repair and operate robots. It also is his ability to change programming, or retrieve information from the robot's brain. Note: all robots have a factory installed first directive that makes them unable to harm human beings. While possible to reverse this, it is considered one of the universe's most sacred laws, and punishment for breaking it is always extreme.

EQUIPMENT

Each Character starts with 3d6 x 100 credits to purchase equipment from the following tables. Most of this equipment is personal and survival gear. Some additional equipment may be given or loaned to the characters by their employer for a certain mission. Needless to say the following lists can't possibly be comprehensive, and there will be parts of the galaxy where these items are not available. Each Referee will tell you what is available and what additional items can be purchased from a list of his own creation.

Some worlds may have different laws regarding the ownership of certain items (weapons being the most obvious). The Referee may (or may not) inform you of any local laws and the penalty for breaking them.

The Credit

The credit (cr) is the standard monetary unit in the game. The credit comes in two different forms. First is the credit chip, a small square flat piece of metal that contains an alloy that is worth one credit in value. This is the most common form of exchange between worlds. The second is in the form of a plastic card (like today's credit cards) that records all transactions and acquires funds electronically from the characters banking corporation.

Equipment Weight

Rather than keep track of every single pound a character can carry, X-plorers uses an abstract method of a characters carrying capacity. It is assumed that characters will not always be carrying around all their gear, so you should be sure to inform your Referee where you are storing items and what you are carrying on your person.

In addition to clothes and any small personal items (like a pen or nail clippers), a character can wear his weapons belt (including a weapon and ammunition), a survival pack, and one kit without being "weighed down" (although they would look silly carrying all of this in a city). If the character carries more than this, he is assumed to be weighed down (see the Movement section in Chapter 4). The Referee should inform the player if he thinks their character is attempting to carry more than he can, taking his Physique attribute into account.

Adventure Gear

Survival Pack (50cr): This is the standard wilderness survival pack in the form of a comfortable, compact satchel. It contains one liter of fresh water and seven packs of a powder chemical that can purify additional liters of water. It contains seven packs of concentrated food paste (each pack has enough calories for one day. Separate food packets can be purchased for 1cr each. The pack also contains 10 meters of plastic rope, a lighter, and a thin, all-weather blanket. The pack can contain four additional items from the following list (or any other item your Referee approves):

- Compass (10cr)
- Gas mask (30cr)
- Flare gun/flare (15cr)
- Flashlight (5cr)
- Pocket knife (5cr)
- Small foldable grappling hook (10cr)
- Communicator (with other players) (20cr)
- Binoculars (100cr)
- Camera (100cr)
- Night vision goggles (200cr)
- Plastic explosives, 100 grams (100cr, Soldiers only)
- Two micro-timers (for plastic explosives)

Waterworld Kit (1,000cr): This kit comes in a compact backpack. The water kit contains one self-inflatable, four-man raft; four inflatable life preservers; four one-hour air tanks; four ultra-light, heated wet-suits with flippers and built-in communicators; and four underwater goggles. This kit also includes four nicely folded beach towels.

Base Camp Kit (1,000cr): This compact backpack kit contains a large two-room tent made of an ultra-light special material that begins to harden when a sealed pack is opened. Once constructed (takes one man about two hours) the tent is very durable in all weathers and environmental conditions. The pack includes four inflatable mattresses, two “tables” and a small generator which operates small lights in the tents ceiling or any other equipment the characters have.

Medical Kit (500cr): This compact backpack kit comes with everything a Scientist needs to perform his medical skill. It has bandages, drugs, medicines, and medical analyzers.

Mechanics Kit (500cr): This compact backpack kit contains everything a Tech needs to perform all his repair and alteration skills. It contains basic and electronic tools and diagnostic equipment.

Sensor / Survey Kit (1,000cr): This heavy backpack contains micro-fusion powered equipment needed to map and explore a world. It also contains sensors that can be used to detect motion and proximity of life forms. Sensors can also detect the electromagnetic emissions of technological devices. Finally there is a Toxi-counter used to detect radiation or poisons in the air and analyze atmospheres.

Scientific Kit (500cr): This compact backpack kit contains all the analyzers and chemicals necessary for the Scientist to perform his science skills.

Environmental Suit (1,500cr): The E-suit (pictured in the character class illustrations) is a lightweight suit that provides protection from both hostile environments and the vacuum of space. It provides 48 hours of life support, including oxygen, heat, cooling, nourishment, protection from harsh weather, and waste control. The suit is also equipped with a communicator in the helmet. The suit does not provide any AC bonus, but all defenses (except combat armor) can be worn under and/or over it.

Whenever the suit is damaged (such as when a character is “hit” in combat) it must be “patched” with a large shiny sticker the next round, or the inhabitant starts to take 1d6 points of damage per round in space, or 1d3 points of damage in other hostile environments.

PCs must keep track of the number of patches they have (the suit comes with 12). Additional patches cost 1cr each and additional power cells for another 48 hours of life support can be purchased for 50cr each.

Defenses

X-pplorers live a dangerous life! Defensive screens, suits, and armor provide protection from attacks. Each defense has an AC rating listed on the Armor Class Table. The higher your armor class is, the harder you are to hit in battle (see combat).

No Defense: X-pplorers wear durable clothing while in the field, but it offers no protection (Free, AC 10).

Force Screen: The force screen is generated by a wrist watch-sized device run on micro-fusion power. The force screen can be worn with any other type of suit and adds +1 to that AC, but you cannot wear more than one force screen (150cr, AC 11 or +1).

Mesh Suit: This thin suit can be designed to look like regular clothing and doesn’t weigh any more or cause a movement penalty. It contains a special material charged with electrons that deflects regular and laser weapons (300cr, AC 12).

Reflec Armor: This lightweight armor is a combination of a mesh suit and shiny plastic plates that are even more protective. This armor will cause a movement penalty (weighted down) to anyone with a Physique attribute of 8 or less (600cr, AC 14).

Combat Armor: This durable thick reflec armor completely covers the body and is usually only worn in large scale skirmishes. Walking down the street of a city in combat armor will most likely attract the attention of the local law enforcement. Combat armor is heavy and causes a movement penalty (weighted down) to anyone with a Physique attribute of 12 or less (1,200cr, AC 16).

Armor Class

Defense	Armor Class	Cost
None	10	
Force Screen	11 or +1	150
Mesh Suit	12	300
Reflec Armor	14	600
Combat Armor	16	1,200

Weapons

The most common weapon of an X-plores team is the handy laser pistol. Soldiers usually collect a compliment of weapons and carry something a bit heavier, like a laser rifle and some grenades (it's his job to blow things up, after all). However, not all worlds the characters visit will be as technologically advanced, so the weapon charts contain a number of more archaic weapons.

Melee Weapons: Melee weapons are those that are used in close hand-to-hand fighting. On more civilized worlds you won't find the average citizen carrying around a melee weapon (much less an archaic one, like a sword), but X-plores always seem to find trouble and are more likely to find themselves in a melee combat than those average citizens mentioned above.

Sonic Weapons: Sonic weapons are merely handles with an activation switch. When the switch is activated, a "blade" of concentrated sound extends to the appropriate length (dagger: 20cm, mace: 50cm, sword: one meter). This is the standard melee weapon of the future. Sonic weapons require an EU clip, and expend 1 EU per attack (successful or not).

Ranged Weapons: Ranged weapons are anything that is shot (or thrown) from a distance. Ranged weapons can be extremely deadly, especially explosives, and high tech weapons such as laser guns, so most people who enter into ranged combat must be ready to finish it.

Ammunition: Ranged weapons require ammunition that is purchased separately. You must track how much ammunition you use, and replenish your supply when you run out. The Ranged Weapons Table tells you what type of ammunition the weapon uses (where applicable), and how many rounds are expended per shot. Note, that Laser weapons have multiple settings and expend one energy unit (EU) per 1d6 of damage.

Range: Each weapon has a range, listed in meters, in which they are effective without penalty. The weapon can shoot (or be thrown) twice this range, but accrues a -2 penalty "to hit".

Grenades: Grenades go off and explode in the set time (one to 10 seconds) no matter if they "hit" or not. Grenades have two special rules:

Bounce: If the character "hits" with a grenade, it lands where they want it to and everyone within the blast area is affected. If the attack "misses", the grenade bounces somewhere, 2d6 meters in a random direction (roll 1d6 with 1 to 2 being behind the target, 3 to 4 being in front of the target, 5 to the left, and 6 to the right).

Blast Area: A smoke grenade fills an area approximately 6 x 6 meters with smoke. A fragmentation grenade throws shrapnel in the same area. Smoke grenades don't cause damage, but everyone within the blast area of a fragmentation grenade takes 5d6 points of damage. If someone in the blast area makes an agility saving throw they manage to leap out of the way, and only take 2d6 points of damage.

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Cost
Axe	1d6+1	15
Club	1d6	
Dagger / Knife	1d6-1	10
Fists	1d3	
Halberd / Pole Arm	1d6+1	40
Mace / Warhammer	1d6	50
Spear	1d6	20
Staff	1d6	10
Sonic Dagger	1d6+1	50
Sonic Mace	1d6+2	100
Sonic Sword	1d6+3	150
20 Energy Unit (EU) Clip		20

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Ammo	Range	Cost
Bow	1d6	Arrow		50
Arrows (20)				2
Crossbow	1d6+1	Bolt	40	75
Bolt (30)				5
Sling	1d6	Stone	20	10
Stones (20)				1
Automatic Pistol	2d6	Bullet	30	200
Automatic Rifle	2d6	Bullet	100	300
Bullet Clip (20)				5
Laser Pistol	1-3d6	20 EU	50	600
Heavy Laser Rifle	1-5d6	100 EU	100	800
20 EU Clip				50
100 EU Clip				250
Frag. Grenade	5d5		15	20
Smoke Grenade			15	20

Vehicles There are numerous makes and models of ground and air vehicles. The following are some very generic templates of common types of vehicles characters may purchase or acquire. Cars generally fit four to six passengers in comfort, eight if everyone is skinny. Cycles are generally for one or two passengers, and the explorer is designed for a team of four to six members.

Ground Car (5,000cr): This is your typical four-wheeled car for worlds with paved roads. Some are manually driven and some drive via pre-programmed remote road checkpoints. Styles and propulsion engines vary greatly.

Skimmer Car (8,000cr): These cars hover a meter off solid ground to provide a more cushioned ride, especially over bumpy terrain. Still, they are commonly used on paved worlds as well, simply because they are the current technology.

Ground Cycle (2,000cr): Ground cycles are two- or three-wheeled vehicles, faster than cars, designed for one or two unprotected passengers.

Skimmer Cycle (2,500cr): The same as ground cycles, but even faster, and like the skimmer car, these hover one meter above the ground, making them ideal for most types of terrain.

Explorer (25,000cr): The Explorer is a favorite of exploration missions on untamed planets. It is an “easily” disassembled all-terrain track vehicle. The enclosed and armored hull is airtight, and it can travel over water, swamp mud, rocks, and rough terrain fairly well (although sometimes slowly). Needless to say, it can’t travel through all terrain (such as mountains or dense woodlands).

Air-Car Skimmer (50,000cr): Looking much like a skimmer car, the air-car skimmer can also travel up to one kilometer high in the atmosphere, at very high speeds. It can also hover, and can land without a runway.

Spaceships Like vehicles, there are numerous makes and models of spaceships. Spaceships are covered and detailed extensively (including price) in Chapter Four: Space.

Robots There are three basic types of robots: non-intelligent, factory machines (drones); programmable, semi-intelligent bots limited to performing one or two basic jobs with little or no diversity; and artificial intelligent (AI) bots. The latter are the variety X-plorers are most likely to purchase.

AI Robots AI robots are those that can not only be programmed to do certain jobs, but they also learn, adapt, and self-expand their programming based on experience.

AI robots develop “personalities” based on the individuals with whom they interact. Although some may begin to seem like “real” people, one must not forget that they are in fact, still machines just acting according to sophisticated programming. A fresh new AI robot brain behaves much like an obedient eight-year old—it is eager to please and learn in the process.

AI Robot Types Like vehicles, robots come in many makes and models. Most robots are humanoid in shape although some are constructed in other ways for certain jobs (the Spider-bots of Mars come to mind).

There are three basic levels of quality of AI robots available: Standard, Good,

and Advanced. The descriptions below indicate the type and their cost, as well as the number of programs they initially come with, their AC, skill/save throw number for all tasks they attempt to perform, and their hit points. Robots heal hit points via the Technicians robotics skill at a rate of 1d6 per successful skill check, per hour of repair time. A robot that is reduced to zero HP is destroyed beyond repair.

- **Standard AI Robot (5,000cr):** AC 10, HP 10, ST 14+, MV 4, four initial programs
- **Good AI Robot (10,000cr):** AC 12, HP 20, ST 12+, MV 4, six initial programs
- **Advanced AI Robot (20,000cr):** AC 14, HP 30, ST 10+, MV 4, eight initial programs

Programs Available Choose from the following list of programs to fill a new AI robot's program slots. Further programs can be added at a cost of 1,000cr each. They require a robotics skill throw to install.

As a rule of thumb, if a PC needs a kit to perform a certain skill, the robot needs an identical "built in" kit at the same cost.

- **Computers:** Same as the Scientist skill of the same name. This also allows a robot to navigate a spaceship.
- **Data:** A chance to know random information and history about a planet, its ecosystems, and societies.
- **Etiquette:** The chance to know the proper customs for certain cultures and alien races.
- **Mechanics:** Same as the Technician skill of the same name. This also allows a robot to perform engineering functions on a spaceship.
- **Medicine:** Same as the Scientist skill of the same name.
- **Pilot:** Same as the Technician Skill.
- **Robotics:** Same as the Technician skill.
- **Science:** Same as the Scientist skill.
- **Security:** Same as the Scout skill.
- **Translation:** The ability to translate any given language, including the ability to interpret and translate unknown languages.

Upgrades Available You may also purchase upgrades for your AI robots to improve their functions and abilities. You may only purchase an upgrade once for each AI robot. Upgrades cost 1,000cr each.

- **Armor Plating:** +2 AC
- **Damage Resisters:** +10 hp
- **Advanced Processor:** +2 ST die roll

First Directive

The laws governing AI robot construction and programming are very strict about the First Directive of every robot. The First Directive is simply this: A robot must always aid a human, and can never harm a human. The First Directive is hardwired into every robot. Needless to say, criminal minds have been breaking this programming law...usually with detrimental effects on the robot's brain.

PLAYING THE GAME

Once you've got a character, the Referee will describe where the character is and what he sees. The game might start in your space craft, in a vast and teeming alien city, in a star port tavern, or in the wilds of an unexplored world—that's up to the Referee. From that point on, you describe what your character does. Going to the laboratory, shooting your lasers at the alien creature, talking to the people you meet; all of these sorts of things are your decisions. The Referee then tells you what happens as a result: you find the malfunctioning robot in the laboratory, your lasers miss the creature and it attacks your character, etc. The epic story of your character's rise to greatness (or death, in the effort to reach greatness) is yours to create. The rules below are guidelines for how to handle certain events, such as combat, movement, healing, dying, how experience points are awarded, and other important parts of the game.

Saving Throws and Skill Checks

Other than "to hit" rolls in combat, saving throws (ST) and skill checks (SC) will be the most common rules you will use in the game. Saving and skill checks are very simple to make, and work fundamentally the same way. To make a saving throw or skill check you simply roll a d20, add the appropriate attribute bonus to the roll, and try to equal or beat the number listed on your class' Skill Table (for skill checks) or the Character Advancement Table (for saving throws). Your saving throw is successful if your roll is equal to, or better than, the "to hit" number.

Skill Checks

Skill checks are especially easy as they already have a predetermined attribute bonus and you are attempting to perform a specific skill. The Referee may choose to further modify the roll if he or she thinks the task is particularly easy or hard by applying a bonus or penalty modifier to the throw (this should be no greater than -4 to +4). It is important to understand that just having a skill means that a class is exceptionally proficient in that area, but doesn't always mean they are the only characters that can attempt feats that would fall under that skill area. For example, the Scout and Technician have the pilot skill for different reasons. This doesn't mean that no one else in the game knows how to fly or drive anything unless they multi-class in this skill. For example, most characters are assumed to be able to operate a skimmer and other common vehicles (much like most people can drive a street car in our world). What having a class skill does mean is that when it comes time to make a difficult maneuver, operate a complicated vehicle (like a spaceship), or jump into a completely alien vessel and start flying it, a class with the pilot skill is more proficient when performing these procedures. A roll will only be called for when trying to do something exceptional.

To give another example, one can assume that everyone in the future has some basic computer skills. A simple intelligence saving throw would be good enough to pull some basic information from an unsecured computer. But when it comes time to pull restricted or encoded information from a secure computer, then the PC is going to need to have a computer skill.

Saving Throws

Saving throws are a catch-all for everything else you might try that the Referee thinks is important enough to roll for. The Referee can call for saving throws for both actions (the character trying to do something), or reactions (the character needs to avoid something), and the Referee will usually assign an attribute to the throw, in which case you can add any attribute bonus to the throw.

Examples of actions would be a Physique saving throw to jump over a gaping fissure, or an Intelligence saving throw to figure out an alien pictograph, or a Presence saving throw to convince a petty criminal to tell you where to find his boss.

Examples of reactions could be a Physique saving throw to survive some poison you just ingested, or an Agility saving throw to avoid falling into a pit trap, or at least to try to grab the edge before you plummet into its depths.

Know When to Roll'em

A Referee should be careful to only call for a saving or skill throw when it is important. Calling for one every time a PC tries to do some mundane task will not only slow the game, but it will become dull for everyone. Saving and skill checks should be called for when the outcome is going to have game or story effects or is suitably challenging.

Secret Referee Rolls

Occasionally, the Referee will roll in secret for the PC. There are times when even a failed roll would give the player knowledge he wouldn't otherwise have. For example, if the Referee asks the player to make an intelligence saving throw to notice something, and the player fails, the character doesn't see anything out of the ordinary. But the player now knows that there is something out of the ordinary that his character didn't notice. It's sometimes better for the Referee to make the roll in secret, and only mention it on a successful result.

Gaining Experience

Characters are awarded experience points (XP) for attending game sessions, successfully encountering alien creatures and NPCs, and successfully completing missions.

All characters receive 100 XP for each game session the player controlling the character attends. If a player has to miss the session, and the Referee runs that character as an NPC, he doesn't receive the XP. Alien creatures, spaceships, and NPCs have a set experience point value (see Space and Creating Creatures). This award is given when a hostile creature is successfully defeated, either by killing it, trickery, or negotiation. Running away from a fight never earns a character XP, even though it might be the smartest thing to do.

Each mission successfully completed has an XP award (split up between the characters involved in the mission). If the mission is a failure, characters do not receive the award. Mission rewards are usually between 1,000 and 10,000 XP, based on its length and complexity. A mission may grant "bonus" XP for completing certain mission objectives, learning and using certain information, or just good role playing.

Finally, experience points are calculated at the end of a game session. When a character has enough XP to advance to the next level, he may do so immediately, before the next game session.

Time

Sometimes the Referee will rule that “an hour passes,” or even, “a month passes,” in the life of your X-plorer. Time isn’t important unless the Referee determines it is. If the PCs are waiting for a space shuttle that will arrive the next day, and nothing of importance is going to happen until it arrives, then the Referee should just skip forward in time to the shuttle’s arrival. The Referee should simply control time as needed to advance the mission.

The only instance that time becomes very important is during combat, or other intense action sequences. When these action sequences take place you will need to know how long a task takes and who gets to do things first. When this happens, the game time breaks down into “rounds”. Rounds are three-second periods of time during which individual characters can usually perform a single action and move.

Movement

A character can move four meters per round plus his agility bonus in meters when normally encumbered. If “weighted down” (see Equipment Weight in Chapter Three) he can only move two meters per round, and doesn’t get to add his Agility bonus.

When moving cross country on foot, an X-plorers team can cover about 15 kilometers a day (with regular breaks and exploration). If weighted down, or traveling through difficult terrain (jungle or swamps, for instance), only eight kilometers can be covered. Most of the time, characters will opt to take a vehicle for long trips cross country.

Combat

When the party of X-plorers comes into contact with enemies or creatures a combat may take place. The order of events is as follows:

1. Determine initiative (who acts first)
2. Party with initiative acts first (moving and attacking) and results take effect
3. Party that lost Initiative acts and their results take effect
4. The round is complete; roll a new initiative and start a new round if the battle has not been resolved

Determine Initiative

At the beginning of each new combat round, each side rolls initiative on 1d6. The high roll wins. The winning side acts first, by moving, attacking, or performing other actions. The other side calculates damage and casualties and then gets its turn.

When it’s time for the PCs to act, initiative order is determined by comparing Agility attributes with the highest going first. The players can sit around the table in initiative order to make it easier to remember who goes next. Alternatively, the players can choose their own order each turn.

The Referee’s side usually goes in order of the hit dice (highest first) if he is controlling several adversaries. However, the Referee can also choose to change this default order (e.g., which adversaries are closer or quicker, etc.).

Initiative rolls may result in a tie. When this happens, both sides are considered to be acting simultaneously. The Referee may handle this situation in any way

he chooses, with one caveat: the damage inflicted by combatants during simultaneous initiative is inflicted even if one of the combatants dies during the round. It is possible for two combatants to kill each other during a simultaneous initiative round.

Individual Initiative [Optional]

It is more time consuming, but if the Referee chooses, he can have each individual involved in the combat roll their own initiative, and act in that order (from highest to lowest). Individual initiative is determined by rolling 1d6 and adding the character Basic Hit Bonus (BHB) or an adversary's "to hit" bonus (THB).

Surprise

Sometimes one side of the fight may be unaware of the other when combat starts and be surprised. This can be the result of an ambush, or sneaking up on an opponent. The Referee simply determines that one side is surprised. In this case, those who surprise their opponents automatically win initiative the first round of combat. After that, roll normally.

The Attack Roll

To attack with a weapon, the player rolls a d20 and adds any bonuses to the result. These "to-hit" bonuses include the character's BHB, the agility bonus for ranged weapons, the strength bonus for attacks with hand held weapons, and any other bonus identified as a "to-hit" bonus.

The attack roll is then compared to the target's armor class to see if the attack hits. If the attack roll is equal to or higher than the defender's Armor Class, the attack hits.

If the attacker has multiple attacks (in the case of Soldiers and some creatures) all attacks are rolled and resolved one after the next on their turn.

Melee Attack

A melee attack is an attack with hand-held weapons such as a sonic sword, spear, or dagger. A character's strength bonus is added to the "to hit" roll and weapon damage. Two combatants within two meters of each other are considered to be "in combat."

Ranged Attack

Ranged attacks are attacks from a distance (of greater than two meters) with weapons such as a bow, pistol, grenade, or laser rifle. When the character is using ranged weapons, their agility bonus is added to the "to hit" roll. When using ranged weapons to attack into a melee (i.e., into a group of targets), it is not possible to choose which opponent (or friend) will receive the attack. Roll randomly to determine who is hit with the attack.

20's and 1's [Optional]

A "natural" roll of 20 is an automatic hit and inflicts double damage, while a natural roll of 1 is an automatic miss and may result in dropping a weapon or tripping or some other "fumble". A fumble causes the attacker to lose their entire next turn in combat. Soldiers or creatures with multiple attacks lose them all.

Modifiers: The Rule of 2 [Optional]

The AC of a character and the “to hit” roll generally take into account the variables that take place in a battle. Combatants aren’t assumed to be standing still while shooting or slugging it out with each other. Rather, they are assumed to be weaving and dodging, looking for openings and taking cover.

Still, there will be times when the characters attempt to do something for which they think they should get some kind of bonus. For instance, they may take cover behind some heavy machinery, plan an ambush, or try to use two weapons at the same time. In these instances, the Referee may simply determine the action is already covered in the basic combat rules, or he may apply the optional “Rule of 2” to the situation.

The rule of two is simply that a +2 or -2 bonus or penalty is added to the die roll. For example, hiding behind heavy cover grants a +2 bonus to the defenders AC. Using a second weapon may incur a -2 penalty to each shot, and an additional -2 penalty may be applied to the shot using the character’s off hand.

Referees choosing to use the Rule of 2 should not get bogged down in determining every little possible bonus or penalty. Use the Rule of 2 only when something exceptional is taking place.

Negotiation and Diplomacy

X-plorers will usually attempt to make contact with the opponent before engaging in full scale combat, unless such is impossible. Some combats can be averted with a few well-chosen words. If the X-plorers are outmatched, they might elect to bluff their way through in an attempt to avoid combat (or delay it until favorable conditions arise). If the situation calls for it, the character attempting to negotiate or bluff should make a Presence saving throw.

Damage and Death

When a PC (or adversary) is hit, the amount of damage is deducted from hit points. Hit points are an abstract measure of the characters endurance and luck. All damage is considered to be superficial, until the HP total is reduced to zero. When hit points reach zero, NPCs, and enemies die.

Fortunately, characters are made of sterner stuff! When a PC loses all hit points (down to zero), he or she will take a “critical hit.” When suffering a critical hit, immediately roll 1d6 + Physique modifier and refer to the Critical Hit Table. All further damage the character takes, while at zero hit points, results in another roll on the Critical Hit Table, but with an added -1 modifier to the roll.

Healing

In addition to using the medicine skill means of restoring hit points, a character will recover 1d6 hit points per day of uninterrupted rest. One week of rest will return a character to full hit points regardless of how many hit points the character lost.

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