

Introduction to Traveller is a guide to the world of Traveller, written especially with the beginner in mind. Book 0 details the ins and outs of playing and refereeing Traveller with tips on how to make the most of science fiction role-playing.

*Book 0
An Introduction To*

TRAVELLER

*Science-Fiction AdventureTM
in the Far Future*

Game Designers' Workshop

Book 0

An Introduction To

TRAVELLER™

*Science-Fiction Adventure
in the Far Future*

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This booklet is an introduction to the concepts of role-playing with specific attention to **Traveller**. It is included in **Deluxe Traveller**, or it may be purchased separately.

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Introduction To Traveller
TRAVELLER, Book 0

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Introduction to Role-Playing Games

Let's pretend! Let's pretend that I'm a powerful warrior and you're a clever thief who's an OK guy regardless and Gloria is a beautiful princess who's been captured by an evil magician and held in his castle and we've got to rescue her and as we're fighting our way in through the guards Gloria decides to get herself out of the mess she's in and lures the guard into her cell by pretending she's sick and hits him over the head with a chair and runs out of the cell and down the hall just in time to meet us as we fight our way in and we all run towards the main gate but just before we get there the magician discovers she's missing and conjures a horrible demon to stop us . . .

Boiled down to basics, role-playing games are nothing more than extensions of the oldest game known to man — let's pretend. The rules books you see are just codifications and regulations to help determine what a person could really do if he were a powerful warrior or if she were a beautiful princess, and how long it takes the magician to conjure up the demon, and so on.

Many of these role-playing games (sometimes abbreviated RPGs) are set against mythical or fantastic backgrounds, and are generally referred to as fantasy role-playing games (abbreviated FRPs or FRPGs), but others are set against a background from science-fiction, the old west, or Errol Flynn swashbuckler movies.

Most games require an umpire of some sort (also called the referee, the judge, the dungeon master, ref, ghod, or some other title depending upon circumstances), whose job is to administer the imaginary world in which the players pretend to be gunslingers or swordsmen or whatever and to adjudicate the inevitable conflicts between the players and their environment. In many games the umpire is also the architect of the imaginary world the players explore, creating every aspect of it in as much detail as the players require. In other cases, the background is already there, either provided by the designers of the game or by the novel, story, or movie that the world is inspired from. In the latter, the umpire usually makes a few minor changes to put a stamp of individuality upon a game and make it something unlike any other.

A player usually creates an alter-ego called a character which he or she will manipulate during the play of the game. Various attributes of this character are given numerical values, usually by rolling dice. Most commonly, games call for a player to determine the character's strength (a measure of the ability to perform actions like lifting heavy weights, swinging swords, kicking in doors, and the like) dexterity (usually a measure of the ability to perform complicated actions such as lockpicking, moving silently, and so on), charisma (a measure of the ability to influence others, either by means of looks or persuasive personality), and intelligence (a term usually used to measure the ability to memorize, puzzle-out, and generally perform intellectual feats). The attributes required by any specific game vary, depending on the setting. A western setting will require accuracy with fire-arms to be determined, a fantasy mythos will need to determine the character's ability to work magic. Social status, extra-sensory perception, endurance, magic resistance, and many others occur in various games. All in all, these quantifications help the player and umpire get a feel for the character, and an idea of what can or cannot be accomplished in game terms.

Playing an RPG is somewhat like performing in improvisational theater, but is usually structured differently. A referee and a group of players will gather together in a comfortable setting (a living room, a table in a college cafeteria, or a public meeting room of some sort) and play the game of their choice. A single session is often referred to as an "adventure" and usually lasts until all players agree to end it, normally at some convenient place in the action. Characters and the background are usually consistent from one adventure to the next (although this is not always true). In general, the players tell the umpire what they want their individual characters to try to do, and the umpire decides if they succeed and what happens to them as a result of their actions. The players react to this and tell the umpire what their characters will try to do next, and so on. A typical session can be found in Appendix I, on page 38.

A referee will usually find it necessary to commit great amounts of information to paper (no mind could possibly hold all the information necessary for any but the most rudimentary mythos). This commonly takes the form of maps of the region the players are currently moving around in, and notes on such characteristics of the region as the referee may consider important (like a cave containing a large dragon or the nature of the military forces of the region, and so on). For most cases, the referee can keep track of the players' actions on paper, but sometimes, a group will make use of miniature figures, realistically posed and painted to represent the players (one figure per character) and the various people they encounter while carrying out their operations. Playing with miniatures requires several times as much work as the normal paper-and-pencil version of a game, but many consider added visual effect worth the effort.

A referee must keep track of all things that various characters do, determine if and how these actions change the background, decide if and how these changes will affect the characters, note the passage of game time (from a character's point of view, months may pass in a single evening's adventure), and adjudicate conflicts between the characters run by the players (called player-characters) and the characters run by the referee (called non-player characters or NPCs). The referee, while doing all this, must also keep the players' interest up. In most RPGs, it is the

referee that makes the difference between a dull, boring session and a vibrant, exciting one.

Why do people play role-playing games? For vicarious thrills. For a chance to kill a dragon, to be the finest swordsman in all France, to hunt down desperadoes and win the hand of the new school marm, to pilot a spaceship between the stars . . . to experience thrills that the average person cannot find in the normal world (at least not without extreme personal risk). For many, the RPG holds an almost hypnotic attraction, and ego-involvement with characters is tremendous, but for most, the games are simply good fun, and one of the least expensive thrills available.

How can a total neophyte get started? The best way to learn how to play is to play. Find a group and join in the fun. After you've read this book, go to the place where you got it and ask if they know of a group locally. Failing that, try a local hobby shop or book store that carries games. Such shops usually know of groups that play the games they sell, if they do not act as meeting place for gamers. Try putting up notices in the local university student union, the library, or the supermarket bulletin board. Some of these places may already have notices of regular meetings of role-players. Most groups welcome newcomers, and even if they don't play the particular game you're interested in, they will usually know of someone who does.

Introduction To Traveller

Traveller is a science-fiction role-playing game set in the distant future, when humanity has made the leap to the stars and interstellar travel is as common as international travel is today. This means that **Traveller** is set against a background drawn from adventure-oriented science fiction literature, and the scope and breadth of the game are limited only by the imagination and skill of the players and their referee. Players are no longer limited to wandering inside a single underground labyrinth, to exploring a single continent, or even a single world. In **Traveller** there is an entire universe to be explored. Almost any situation which occurs in any SF novel, movie, or short story can be recreated in **Traveller** with a little work on the part of the referee.

In **Traveller**, mankind has conquered the stars, and travels from one stellar system to another as easily as present day Terrans can travel from one continent to another. The tremendous distances involved, however, dictate that interstellar voyages can take weeks, months, and sometimes even years. A situation similar to earth in the eighteenth century is created, where communication is limited to the speed of travel, and the stage is set for adventure in a grand fashion, with all the trappings of the classic space opera: giant, star-spanning empires (good, evil, or both), huge starfleets, wily interstellar merchants (or pirates, depending upon your point of view), complex diplomatic maneuvers, larger than life heroes, heroines, and villains — the mind boggles.

Since **Traveller** is similar in its basic approach to role-playing, players and referees experienced in playing other RPGs should have little trouble adjusting to **Traveller**. There are, however, a number of features which make it unique among role-playing games:

The Character Generation System: Unlike most other RPGs, **Traveller** does not simply dump inexperienced 18-year-olds into the world and let them fend for themselves. In **Traveller** it is possible for a character to gain experience for up to 28 years in one of six "prior services" (army, navy, marines, scouts, merchants, and "other"). In practical terms, this means a band of adventurers will not consist completely of striplings. Some may be inexperienced, but there will also be a good many characters of all levels of experience. A character has a past and can be more than just a series of numbers on a sheet of paper. A character picks up skills (like computer programming or navigation) during prior service, more the longer the time served, but there are a number of trade-offs to be made. The longer one stays in a service, the more skills acquired, but also the older the character becomes, losing dexterity and endurance points and becoming weaker.

Animals and Animal Encounters: The various lifeforms which players are likely to encounter on their voyages through the cosmos are described not in terms of physical characteristics (lionoid, bear-like, pseudowolf, etc) but in terms of their size, behavior, and the ecological niche which they fill on their particular world, leaving physical descriptions (if they are necessary) to the referee or to the imaginations of the players.

Flexibility: The basic three books of **Traveller** are flexible enough to allow almost any science-fiction mythos to be recreated without significantly disturbing the balance of play. The basic rules deal only with the major aspects of the way the universe works, allowing the referee to fashion details to suit individual preferences. The technological levels of the various cultures players will contact in the course of play can be set at any level desired from the primeval past (tech level 0) through present day Earth (about tech level 7.5) to the barely conceivable wonders of the distant future.

The ever-increasing amount of expanded rules and supplementary material allows a **Traveller** referee complete control over his or her campaign. Referees can adjust the complexities of their universes to their own and their players' abilities, gradually moving upward in complexity as more expertise with the various systems is gained. Playing **Traveller** can be a challenge to all ages, intellects, and levels of role-playing experience.

Referees who do not have the time or the inclination to oversee an entire universe on the same level of detail can use the basic rules for quick, simple adjudication of most aspects of the universe, while using the expanded rules and supplements to help fill out the rest. This allows the meager time available to the referee to be put to best use, adding excitement in those areas where player interest is greatest.

Economics: A detailed but simple system allows the intricacies of interplanetary and interstellar trade to be represented, without dominating the referee's attention. Trade and commerce can be accomplished with a few rolls of the dice, and the system is simple enough to allow players to handle most of it if the referee desires. With minimal exertion, players can attempt to establish mighty trading corporations, spanning hundreds of star systems (a la Poul Anderson's Nicholas van Rijn novels), or simply ply the space-lanes with a single decrepit free trader, desperately trying to keep one step ahead of their creditors while dreaming of the deal to end all deals.

The Combat System(s): Naturally, not everyone (or everything) the players meet will be friendly, and it will occasionally be necessary for some characters to resort to violence. **Traveller's** combat rules allow for fights ranging from simple bare-knuckles fisticuffs to gigantic engagements between starfleets, and everything in between (including combat with animals). Every personal weapon from broken bottles to mind-boggling energy weapons is taken into account. Armaments for spacecraft are equally diversified, ranging from simple lasers to planet busting meson beams. Alternate systems (*Snapshot*, *Azhanti High Lightning*, *High Guard*, *Mercenary*) permit a particular referee to select a level of complexity best suited to an individual situation.

Psionics: **Traveller** includes a section on psionic abilities for those who feel that no game is complete without a sixth sense or two. ESP, clairvoyance, telekinesis, and other abilities are defined, regulated, and smoothly integrated into the other rules.

Starship Construction: Using the rules outlined in Book 2, players can design and build spacecraft ranging in size from one-passenger fighter craft to 5000 ton displacement starships, both military and civilian. Book 5, *High Guard*, allows for the design, construction, and use of all types of warships from fighters to million ton displacement planet-smashers. A near infinite variety of interplanetary and

interstellar vessels are potentially available for player and non-player character use.

Expansion: The universe of **Traveller** is constantly growing. New adventures, books, and supplements are added at regular intervals. The fun never stops in a **Traveller** universe!

Getting To Know The Territory

The total amount of **Traveller** material available is staggering, and growing all the time. To the beginner, it might seem overwhelming to contemplate even reading all the books, supplements, and adventures available, let alone ever using all of them in a game. The best place to start is with Books 1, 2, and 3, called the basic rules. There are two sets containing the **Traveller** basic rules. The **Basic Traveller** set is suitable if you have experience with role-playing games. The **Deluxe Traveller** set contains the basic rules, plus this booklet, two six-sided dice, a map of the Spinward Marches, and a specially designed introductory adventure.

Both sets contain Books 1, 2, 3, and two six-sided dice which (along with pencils and paper) are all a person really needs to play **Traveller**. However, most **Traveller** players and referees will find the other books, supplements, and adventures of the **Traveller** line essential.

The basic **Traveller** rules codify the way the universe works. Since we cannot cover everything in detail, we chose to concentrate on certain specific areas, and leave the details up to the individual referee to devise.

Book 1 covers the creation of characters, the determination of their skills, a brief overview of selected weapons available to characters, and a simple system for resolution of such combats as may occur from time to time.

Book 2 covers the design, purchase, and operation of starships and other space-faring vessels the characters may wish to buy, steal, or ride in, rules for combats between such vessels, and rules for the conduct of trade and commerce.

Book 3 deals with the worlds a character will encounter as he or she travels through the universe. The size and characteristics of the planet (What kind of atmosphere does it have? How much of its surface is water? Is it inhabited?), the nature of any human habitation (Population? Technical advancement? Type of government?), and the nature of the animal life (What kinds of animals will be found, and how often? What kinds are dangerous? What kinds are valuable?) are determined by a unique and innovative system.

A few other systems are outlined in the three basic books (such as psionic powers) but in general the basic rules establish a framework for the individual referee to flesh out as he or she sees fit. By adding a few house rules and carefully modifying the basic rules it is possible for a referee to recreate any science-fiction background desired. The referee can duplicate conditions of a favorite novel, short story, or movie, or can create a universe unique unto itself.

The other books take a smaller segment of the universe and examine it in more detail than the basic rules could do. Book 4, *Mercenary*, is a detailed treatment of armies, soldiers of fortune, and the military life. Book 5, *High Guard*, provides rules dealing with the construction of space navies and large space ships.

For the referee who does not have enough time or imagination to create a complete universe, we have created one which can be used with a minimum of effort, but which can be fleshed out and added to with only a little additional labor, perfect for the the beginner and the overworked referee.

For the newcomer, the best way to learn how to play **Traveller** (or any other RPG) is to join a group and play it. It is not necessary for players to know every detail of the rules (indeed, it is better if they do not), but it is advantageous for players to have a rough idea of how the game mechanics work in order to fully appreciate what the referee is doing.

Players should be familiar with the character generation system, so they can create their own characters unsupervised by the referee (this saves the ref a great deal of time). Additionally, a player will want to know what each of the skills (explained on pages 16 through 23) means in game terms, in order to know what his individual character is and is not capable of. Players will also find it advantageous to know the characteristics of the various weapons and how the individual combat system works, even if they intend to fight only when necessary. Other than these, a player need not be familiar with any of the rules mechanics in order to enjoy playing **Traveller**.

For the prospective referee, it is a good idea to have a little experience as a player. It will help you to more fully understand their point of view.

In addition, however, it is necessary that the referee understand the rules. Even if they will be modified later, the referee should understand what the original rules are designed to accomplish before making any changes. The best way to do this is to read the rules and practice the systems until they are fully understood.

The neophyte may be intimidated by the mountain of **Traveller** material available. It is best to break it into small, easily understood sections, studying one and practicing it until the system is fully understood before proceeding to another. Start off with the basic rules, Books 1, 2, and 3, and skim through them lightly, stopping to study in depth any section which seems interesting, but don't try for complete comprehension at this stage. When finished with this leisurely examination of the rules, return to Book 1, and read closely the section on character generation (pages 8-29). Then get a pair of dice, pencil, and paper and roll up a few characters. (Be sure to save the results. They might come in handy later.) As you do this, take it slowly and build up your confidence. If you run into any difficulties, and you probably will the first few times through, stop and re-read pages 26 and 27, the sample of the character generation procedure. It is not necessary to figure out the reasons behind the die rolls as the example does, but the character you generate will be more fully developed if this is done. When you feel confident with the character generation system, file the characters away and move on to some other section of the rules.

Proceed to the section on trade and commerce (Book 2, pages 46-48). After reading this section, start off with a stake of one million credits and engage in a little speculation. Assuming you are centrally located on a rich world (see page 46) and have free, instantaneous transport to one world of each of the other five types, buy and sell cargoes until you have the system down pat.

Now go to the section on starship economics, (pages 7-9) and study it carefully. Take a free trader (described on page 19), crew it with some of the characters you generated earlier, and pretend you are the ship's captain. As above, assume you are located in a cluster of six worlds (one of each type), five of them located one jump away from a central world. Buy and sell as before, but introduce all the operating expenses such as fuel, crew salaries, broker's fees, and so on.

When you have the system well in hand, go to one of the other systems that interests you and repeat the procedure; study combat out of Book 1, and have a group of characters attempt to hijack the free trader you were using above; go to starship combat in Book 2 and attack your free trader with another ship; go to ship construction and build a new ship for the crew of the free trader . . . when you have finished all this and feel confident with the rules, go on to Book 3, study the world creation rules, and fill out the worlds you have been trading with, giving them governments to charge tariffs and navies to attack pirates.

At this point, it is possible to begin refereeing **Traveller** games, but some referees may wish to make use of some or all of the other **Traveller** material available. Approach this material in the same way: read it a couple of times and practice until you have it down.

When you have become familiar with the basic rules, you can begin modifying them if desired (see Modifications, page 34).

First Steps

For the beginning player, life should not be too difficult if you are playing with experienced people. The referee or the other players will probably be happy to teach you the ropes. Take care, however! Some unscrupulous players are not above using newcomers as cannon fodder the first few times they play (it's viewed as a kind of initiation).

For those who are playing in a group where everyone (even the referee) is new to **Traveller**, take it slow and easy. Don't pressure the referee or other players. A little patience at the start can pay handsome dividends in player and referee enjoyment later on.

Ideally, players participating in a **Traveller** campaign should have a general goal in mind from the start. This goal can be to establish a mercantile shipping line, to take over a world (or number of worlds), to become rich enough to buy an extremely large starship, and so on. Play is more rewarding when you have some idea what each individual adventure is trying to accomplish.

Referees should (ideally) have had some experience as players before trying to run a universe on their own; it will help them to maintain the proper perspective, namely that the purpose of the whole thing is to have fun.

To a certain extent, **Traveller** is a contest between the referee and the players, as the referee represents all the nasty things that the universe can throw at people. As such, it is very easy for a referee to come to view the players as "the enemy", whose every move is to be thwarted, and take every opportunity to make things tough on the players, throwing problem after problem their way and piling disaster on top of disaster. This makes the players sullen and suspicious, and spoils the entertainment value of **Traveller**. A referee's fun in **Traveller** is different from a player's fun. While players plot and scheme on the basis of (often) incomplete data, the referee sees all and knows all. Observing the reactions of different people to the same problem, or watching an intricate plan unfold (and often turn out quite differently than what the players had in mind); these things and more are the rewards of **Traveller** for a referee.

It is best to start out small as a referee, especially if you are also new to **Traveller**. Don't try to run something of breathtaking scope the first time out; the record-keeping alone will overwhelm you and your players will rapidly lose interest.

There are several approaches to the first few games; which one you choose depends on the experience you and your players have had.

An experienced player who is refereeing other experienced players for the first time will have few problems. Playing experience will have shown where the pitfalls are, and the referee will probably have some idea of what will keep the others interested. Begin with a subsector or two, either one you have created or one of the pregenerated ones available from GDW. Generate other information as you feel it will be needed according to the preferences of your players. If they want a military oriented game, it will not be necessary to work out the economics of the region in great detail, but social and political conditions will need to be generated in fair detail. Likewise, if the players plan on establishing a mercantile empire, running

merchant vessels from world to world, it will be necessary to develop the economics of the subsector, but detailed maps of the surface of each world are probably not needed. Much of this information can be conceptualized and outlined without being worked out in detail until necessary. You might want to sketch the rough surface features of a world when the sector is created and file the information away. Then if your merchant prince wants a map of a world preparatory to staging a commando landing on it, the conceptual work will have already been done and the details can be filled in quickly. Create in detail only what is important. The further it is from the expected course of the action, the less detail is needed.

If both players and referee are neophytes, neither will really know what they are doing, and everyone will be inclined to show much more patience. The referee should try to determine the players' interests as above, and create information in accord with these.

It is best to play a few scenarios before proceeding to a campaign. A scenario is like a science fiction novel in that the players are given some specific goal and the adventure occurs as they try to attain it. A scenario is generally a one-time affair, ending when the goal is achieved, and the characters discarded. Create a scenario as you would a story, with something to be achieved and difficulties strewn in the path of that goal. Scenarios can be as complex as the referee feels necessary, ranging from the simplest plot devices to complex adventures worthy of a great adventure writer. If the referee doesn't quite know how to start, or everyone is anxious to start playing, buy one of GDW's adventures. These contain all the necessary information to begin, including pre-generated characters, maps, and other data. A short adventure designed especially for beginners is included in **Deluxe Traveller**. A number of adventures are available, and the list is constantly expanding. Make use of these prepackaged adventures to give you confidence in running **Traveller** and to serve as guides for the creation of your own scenarios.

In devising your own scenarios, you may find it necessary to create from scratch such items as a plan of a large office building, a terrain map of an area of countryside, or something similar. If you are a wargamer, you may already have a ready-made source of such items available to you. Maps from many games can be adapted for use in a scenario, especially games on a tactical level. It will probably be necessary to re-designate some or all of the terrain features on such a map. In addition, it may be possible for you to draw inspiration from real life. If, for instance, your players want to rob a bank and want a diagram of the building from which to make their plans, simply tell them that the bank looks exactly like some local bank or similar building with which they are all familiar. Discourage them from "casing the place" in person, however. The real-life security guards might become suspicious, and real-life problems could occur. Likewise, if you need a plan for an office building, park, or other building complex, use some suitable local institution, calling upon the players' memories or diagramming it yourself. If you do not have knowledge of the full details of a building, make up whatever is needed (it may be necessary to change some details anyway, especially if players are more familiar with the building than the characters can be allowed to be).

After you have been through a few scenarios, your players will find themselves becoming attached to certain characters and expressing a desire to let them continue from one scenario to another. A campaign need be nothing more than a

series of scenarios, set against a common background and using common characters. After you have played a few scenarios, determine what your players want to accomplish. Some groups will want to become pirates, some soldiers of fortune, some merchants, some confidence men, some will want to carve out their own empires, others will want to explore unknown regions of space. Adjust the sub-sector you create to fit your players' desires. If, for instance they show an interest in exploration, don't start them out in the middle of civilized space, but put them instead on the fringe of known territory. Give your players obstacles to overcome in seeking their ultimate aims, but don't make these obstacles too difficult or the players will become frustrated. Conversely, don't make things too easy or they will become bored.

If you don't have the time to create your own universe, but would still like to run something more than scenarios, Game Designers' Workshop has created a universe which can be used as is or slightly modified. All of our adventures are set against this background, with all important factors (history, society, government, major cultures, economics and so on) developed, but with enough room for a referee to add his or her own individualizing touches.

The main thing for referees to avoid in starting out is taking on more than they are able to handle. It is an easy thing for a referee to be pushed into a campaign by anxious players before he or she is properly prepared for it. Trying to go too far too soon leads to a referee that feels overworked and players that feel bored, a sure formula for an abandoned game.

Referee

In *Traveller* (indeed, in any role-playing game) the referee often misunderstands his or her purpose. The purpose of a referee is to present obstacles for players to overcome as they go about seeking their goals, not to constantly make trouble for them. This is a very subtle distinction, and many beginners have trouble with it.

Other than the right attitude, what characteristics must a good referee have?

First of all, imagination. Without an imaginative referee, the game is merely rolling dice and reading tables. Fortunately, imagination is the one thing that SF readers in general and *Traveller* players in particular have no lack of.

Second, the ability to improvise. Oftentimes, situations arise where the referee will be called upon to make up something on the spot, such as the cargo of a randomly encountered starship or the personality of a patron. The necessity to improvise can be minimized with proper planning and organization, but it cannot be eliminated entirely.

Third, a sense of proportion is required. Rewards should be proportionate to the risk the player characters take, neither too much nor too little. A common way beginners maintain player interest is to hand out ludicrously large rewards for successful completion of the most insignificant actions. The players rapidly accumulate too great amounts of money, and come to see it as their sole purpose in the "lives" of their characters. In addition, they will rapidly overwhelm *Traveller's* carefully balanced economic system. Players will cease to find life a challenge, and become bored. If the referee tries to get tough later, players will demand to know why they are not paid as much now as they were once paid for similar activities and will become dissatisfied. Either way, the game is a loser. Arrange things so that your players have to constantly scramble for eating money for the first few months of their characters' "lives". You and they will both enjoy the game more.

Lastly, it is important for the referee to be organized. The reasons for this should be readily apparent. Nothing slows a game down more than a referee who must rummage through a briefcase filled with hundreds of random sized sheets of paper while searching for the details of a particular world or installation. The exact nature of the system is not important, you may use whatever means of keeping track of your universe you feel like (manila folders, index card files, ring notebooks, home computers and so on) so long as you can rapidly retrieve information from it. We will have some specific suggestions below as to how to go about giving this information to the players.

Once the referee has settled on the background for his or her universe, accumulated a group of players, and created characters, then what? The referee still has a few duties to perform before the first adventure. The players will, in all likelihood, have been dumped into the middle of a situation about which they know nothing. This, however, is not totally realistic. If the adventure were "real life", the people involved would know what they had done with their lives up until that time, they would know where they were and how they got there, and might have a halting

familiarity with the geography of the region, however obtained. Therefore, it is necessary for the referee to divide the information about his or her universe into four parts: 1) information which player-characters would logically know by virtue of what they are, 2) information which player-characters can find out with little or no cost, 3) information which player-characters can find out only at great cost, and 4) information which the player-characters would be unable to find out by their own efforts.

Type 1 could be such things as how to behave in polite society, or some simple data about a planet (that contained in its UPP) if the character has navigation skill. Type 2 could be information obtained from a library, from asking around at bars, hotel lobbies, and so on, or obtained by direct observation of some event or condition. Type 3 could be information that requires the theft of one or more documents (payment in time) or the bribery of some official (payment in money). Type 4 should be information about the true nature of reality, perhaps the fact that the information contained in the library is false with regard to the planet mentioned above, or other information for the referee's eyes only.

Players can generally be trusted to keep track of their own characters' finances and possessions, which will save the referee a great deal of time and trouble. Occasional surprise audits, however, will keep them honest.

Before going into the actual conduct of an adventure, there are a few topics that should be covered.

The beginning referee should keep the group small, even when he or she has had experience playing. There should be no more than three or four people in the first group you run. As you gain experience in refereeing, you will be able to expand this number, but try not to allow it to get too large for you to handle. The maximum number of players a referee can handle at one time will have to be determined from experience. A referee with more players than she or he can handle will either have to run two or more groups of adventurers (perhaps on different nights) or persuade some not to come any longer. Referees who choose the former will need a lot of free time to devote to **Traveller**; referees who choose the latter must be a little hard-hearted. Some referees may have to keep a list of prospective players waiting for some regular to drop out or move out of town.

Sometimes, players will not be able to make a session. In this case, the best thing is for one of the other players to play two roles, being as fair as possible to each and keeping as much as possible in character with the established personalities of both. If none of the players is willing or able to carry this out, the referee should temporarily operate the character as if it were a non-player character, taking care to duplicate the missing player's style of play as closely as possible.

Much has been made of the rolling of dice in role-playing games, much more than is necessary. The rolling of a die or dice is a convenient way to represent unknown variables or to assist the referee in making decisions. Feel free to modify the results if you do not like the way they turned out. Change a death result to a severely wounded result if you feel a character has behaved heroically and deserves a second chance, or kill off one that done something incredibly dumb but lucked out on the die roll. Be fair in doing this, however, and try not to be too heavy-handed. Most players feel better if their character is done in by the die roll than if killed by fiat.

A useful trick to maintain player tension is to roll dice when nothing is happening, and smile knowingly to yourself or make a small note on a piece of scratch paper. This can cause even the calmest of players to have an attack of nerves.

The use of non-player characters is one of the most important things for a referee to learn to do properly. Non-player characters are the population of your universe other than the characters controlled by your players. Through non-player characters you can give the players rumors, hints, and threats, help them out of tight spots, lure them into tight spots, get them back on the track, lure them away from their objective, and generally help or hinder the characters as much as is necessary. Non-player characters provide a major link between player characters and the referee and offer the referee a chance to get in on the fun. Proper use of NPCs can add spice to any adventuring session.

The referee plays the non-player character whenever one of the player characters has contact with one of them. Exactly how this is done depends to a great degree upon the acting talents of the referee. A really good referee (these are few and far between) is capable of acting the part to perfection, carrying out an actual conversation with the player complete with accents, body language, gestures, subtle variations in tone and pitch of voice, and so on. Performances like these are really the most entertaining aspect of role-playing games, and are fun even if you can only watch. Less theatrically inclined referees, or those who cannot think as fast (of which the author, sadly, is one) are rarely able to give such a performance, and more often must describe what the non-player character is saying and doing rather than perform it.

There are four sorts of non-player character: spear carriers, informants, patrons, and trouble-makers. Spear carriers (called extras in the movies) serve to provide atmosphere, needed skills the players might not have, or cannon fodder (in case a referee wants to show what great danger the players are in by killing someone but does not want to do in one of the players). Informants serve to give the players information, and are ideal for those situations in which the referee needs to give false data, but does not feel like lying to the players outright. Informants may be experts the players consult (such as a university professor or scholar) may be passengers or crew of a starship which the players are on, or may be people that the players casually meet in the course of seeking rumors or employment. A patron is a NPC who has a job offer for one or more of the players. The patron provides some of the information the players will need to carry out the job (rarely will all information be provided; the players must find some things out for themselves), and will offer a reward of some sort. Supplement 6, *76 Patrons* contains an assortment of patrons for use on short notice. Trouble-makers are specifically intended to cause problems for the characters. Trouble-makers include police, customs, tax, and immigration officials, other government red-tapers, thugs, ruffians, hi-jackers, thieves, con-men, and characters who strut around in opera capes and samurai helmets talking like James Earl Jones. The presence of trouble-makers may or may not be immediately obvious to the players.

Many NPCs must have as detailed a character development as player characters do, and should be given a great deal of careful attention if they are intended to stay around for a while. NPCs are often needed on the spur of the moment; use the characters you generated while learning to use the system, or refer to Supplement 1, *1001 Characters*.

Sessions should be conducted in some relatively quiet, comfortable place where there is room for the referee to lay out his or her materials out of the direct vision of the players, but close enough for conversation. If the quarters are too close, it may be necessary for the referee to use a screen of some sort (a passable screen can be made by taping sheets of cardboard together, accordian-style) to prevent the players from reading the referee's information sheets.

During the first adventuring session of a campaign, or at the beginning of a scenario, take a moment out to determine a little background data. Why are the characters where they are, and why are they together? Working out this background data will help the players get into their roles much better. A close examination of the characters themselves can often help with this. Are several of the characters former navy personnel? Obviously they met in the service and became friends, deciding to seek their fortunes after they were all discharged on the same planet. Perhaps the characters are distantly related, or have mutual friends, or are old schoolchums. A little imagination can come up with a reason why these people want to try some group effort, and will give the players some clues to later behavior.

When the background is sketched in, give the players such information as they would logically have. Where are the characters, and how did they get there? Are they actively looking for work, or were they sought out? Is there a patron involved? What are the characters in the players' group supposed to do? What will be their payment if they are successful? What do they need to find out to carry out the task? What equipment is available? And so on.

Give the players a few minutes to talk the job offer over and then ask them for their actions. One player should be chosen to speak for the group as a whole. If the group wants to split up and do different things, try to talk them out of it unless a) one of the splinters will be carrying out an action which will require little or no continuing action on the part of the referee, such as research in a library, b) the groups will rejoin quickly, or c) you have one assistant referee available for each separate group of players. Beginners will find keeping track of two or more lines of action while running back and forth from one room to another grueling and the players who are not with the referee at the moment will become mightily bored.

When the players' initial actions are made clear to you (don't be afraid to ask questions) figure out what will happen to them as a result of those actions. If, for example, the group wishes to adjourn to a library search for information they want, the referee should consider where they are and how long the trip will take. If they are hundreds of kilometers from a settlement, it may take some time just to get to the library. If they are in a hotel lobby and there is a computer terminal ten meters away which hooks into a planet-wide information grid, only a few seconds will pass. How long it takes the group to find out what they are after depends on what the data is (they could not, for instance, find out the specifications of the latest security procedures at the local prison from a library) and how the players go about searching for it. It is easier to find something out if you know a little about what you seek, and know what to look for. The referee must decide how much information the group can find out, and how long it will take them. The referee reveals the information the players have discovered, and tells how much time was used up, and any other relevant details (or irrelevant details intended to throw the players off track) that the player characters may have noticed, like the fact that someone is following them when they leave the library.

Many times, it will be useful to think of a situation in present day terms, scaled down a little. For starport, think of airport or seaport. For world, think instead of country. The use of analogies will help you to resolve most situations easily. For instance, a group of players in a free trader want to board a battle cruiser in order to kidnap an important official of a local planetary government, who happens to be aboard touring the ship. It may be helpful to think of this situation in the following terms: nine people in a tramp steamer sail up to the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz while it is in Le Havre, board it, overpower the marine contingent aboard, and kidnap the president of France, who happens to be aboard touring the ship. What do you think their chances of success are?

The passage of game time is of great importance. Player characters' actions must be measured against those of the rest of the universe. One of the most important parts of being a good referee is keeping proper track of the passage of game time. One of the greatest tools available to a referee is the ability to make players waste game time on items unrelated to the task at hand, especially if the group is working against a specific deadline. The ratio of real time to game time is left up to the referee. Obviously, it must be a flexible ratio, depending on circumstances.

Referees should watch out, however, for situations which take almost no game time, but take a great deal of real time. For instance if a character wants to know certain details of a door he is about to go through, he might ask "How big is it?" On being told, he might ask "Is it shut or open? Can I see anything through it or is the area beyond it dark?" All of this information could be gained in a few seconds of observation if the player were actually present; it is the artificial nature of the game that makes it take so long. Referees should not count this against the passage of game time.

In addition, the passage of time may cost the characters money. Characters must eat and must have lodging. Characters who suffer aging effects may require medical care. Starships must be maintained at regular intervals, or they will deteriorate. Simply by causing the players to become side-tracked while investigating some minor puzzle, a referee can cause their schedule to become upset and their intricately planned schemes to fail.

The actions of forces in the universe other than the players should not be neglected, and must be almost constantly on the referee's mind. A group of characters might run afoul of the law while completing a job, or might anger some local criminal organization. If the referee decides that something of this nature has happened, he or she must decide what action (if any) the offended party (or parties) will take, how long that action will require to put into motion, and what effect the action will have on the players. Sometimes it will be necessary for a referee to keep track of several such "plots" at once, while running a group of player characters who are often blissfully unaware of the happenings around them.

As the session continues, the players will often engage in discussions of various lengths. The referee should try to keep these discussions on track (don't let them stray to outside events, such as a replay of last night's football game, or a blow-by-blow of a similar situation in another game), but otherwise should let them run their course. As the discussion takes place, the referee should consider what is really happening to the characters and how long it takes in game terms. If the characters begin a loud argument in the middle of a restaurant, say, the owner will interrupt them and ask them to leave. If the players are having the argument in the privacy of

their own spaceship, however, the referee need only figure out how much game time the discussion takes and let it run its course. Many times, these interludes will allow the referee time to "catch up" with the action, and plan out what will happen to the characters next. Keep half an ear tuned in to what they are saying, and offer such advice as may be needed, but otherwise, enjoy the short break from the frantic activity of refereeing.

As the adventure progresses, the referee will often have an urge to "help out" the players by providing them with information that they otherwise would not or could not logically know. This is poor form, and the referee should resist this urge whenever it arises. The function of a referee is to guide, not choreograph. The only time a piece of advice "direct from god" is indicated is when a group of beginners has gotten themselves into such a hopeless situation that the referee is certain they will not be able to extricate themselves from and he or she does not wish to force the full consequences of their actions upon the players. As the referee gains experience in indirectly giving information to the players (through non-player characters, rumors, library data, and other sources) the urge to hand out "divine revelations" will lessen.

Direct intervention of the referee in a situation is also poor form. Beginners should not get into the habit of stepping into their universes to put right some anomaly unless there is no alternative. Many referees use this course of action instead of thinking of some more subtle means of correcting a situation. The hand of a good referee, like that of a good puppeteer, should be invisible.

Don't be afraid to kill off characters who have gotten themselves into tight spots, especially if they have done so as a result of foolhardy play. In the so-called real world, even the most clever, heroic individuals are sometimes struck down in their prime by bad luck. Conversely, it is a good idea to be compassionate now and again. It is very easy for a player to become heavily ego-involved with a character, and resent what appears to be arbitrary cruelty by the referee. Sometimes a particular character will deserve a miraculous escape from a tight spot. This is perfectly acceptable, as this sort of thing happens in the "real world" also.

An adventuring session should end when the players' goal is reached if a scenario is being conducted, or when some convenient stopping place is reached if a campaign is being undertaken. In any case, the session should be ended before the players or the referee are exhausted (the author has found that four to six hours is his limit). It may not be possible to resolve a particular scenario in one session, and certainly will not be possible to exhaust the possibilities of any competently designed universe in such a time. When a stopping point is reached (usually some temporary lull in the action, when the players are guaranteed safe for the next few minutes of game time) the referee should make written notes of the situation, paying particular attention to the condition of the characters and noting any special aspects of the situation (if they are on a vacuum world with their air supply running out, and so on). The session can then be picked up where it stopped during the next session, even if considerable real time passes.

When the players have accomplished their goal, the scenario is over, but if the session is part of a campaign, the referee's work is not yet ended. The referee must determine whether the players will receive the reward they were promised (this

should usually be the case, but having a patron skip out without paying is a useful plot device). Additionally, the referee should decide if the actions of the players (either in the process of completing the job or some activity they have done unrelated to it) have caused them to gain friends or enemies. If this happens, the referee should figure out who these NPCs are, how happy or angry they are with the players, and what action, if any, they will take, either on the players' behalf or against them. Friends in high places can be very beneficial, and enemies anywhere add excitement and thrills to any campaign. If your players should happen to run afoul of the law, pursue them with any interplanetary or interstellar agencies the crime makes appropriate. There's nothing like being chased by some interstellar version of Interpol or the KGB to add spice to a character's otherwise dull, drab, wretched existence.

Obnoxious or obstreperous behavior should not be tolerated by the referee. A word or two of warning may be adequate, but a continually disruptive player should be ejected from the group. The referee owes this to himself and to the other players.

By the same token, a referee has a duty to the players to remain calm and collected. Losing one's temper is no fun for anybody involved.

As time passes, the referee will gain experience, and the players and referee will become accustomed to each others' styles and desires. Adventuring sessions will become smoother and the pleasure received from an evening's adventure will increase for all involved.

Players

Before we go into how players can more fully enjoy *Traveller*, it is necessary to take a closer look at role-playing from a player's viewpoint. Role-playing is very similar to acting in that each player acts out a part which may or may not be in tune with his or her own approach to life.

Many players "get by" in RPGs by simply being themselves, regardless of the characteristics of the persona they are playing. This is a perfectly valid approach (after all, part of the fun is seeing who you would react in exotic circumstances), but many are not aware of the extra challenges that playing a role can offer. As psychoanalysts discovered years ago, pretending to be something you're not is one of the best ways to truly understand what you are.

A character should be more than six basic characteristics and a list of skills. A character should be complex and multi-faceted, as complex and multi-faceted as any hero or heroine from literature. A character of this sort can take a little more work, but the satisfaction of playing such a character can be great.

Where most players fail is in the area of consistency. A cautious character is not likely to offer to be the first out the airlock onto the surface of an unexplored world. A rashly heroic character should not balk at three-to-one odds in a bar fight, and so on.

To properly play a character, it must be determined exactly what that character is like. This is best done during the process of generation, but can be done afterwards.

The first step is to look at the six basic characteristics: strength, dexterity, endurance, intelligence, education, and social level. By careful examination and consideration, the character can be given a rough personality.

A character with high strength, high endurance, and low intelligence is the muscle-bound oaf of stage and screen. High strength and lower endurance suggest a smaller, wiry person whose power comes from skillful application of leverage rather than sheer muscle. A high education coupled with low intelligence and high social status brings to mind the overeducated noble with a string of degrees, but who has forgotten anything he might have learned. High intelligence and low education call up the image of the self-educated individual, likely to be driven to succeed, and highly motivated towards whatever goal he sets himself. Almost any combination of traits can be justified in this way, and a hint of personality obtained.

As the character is generated, watch the details of the system for clues. Does the character barely make his survival roll each time? This indicates that he is rash and prone to risk-taking, or might indicate a wound received as a result of some dangerous venture. Does the character consistently miss out on the promotions? He has probably made enemies in high places (an examination of the basic traits might help to explain this too). Does the character serve several terms and then miss a re-enlistment roll? This could represent dismissal for incompetence, real or imagined. The character might feel resentment towards the service for what she would see as an impersonal bureaucracy cutting her career short, and might seek

revenge or vindication. The creation of Jamison in Book 1 (pages 26 to 27) is a sample of this technique in character generation.

If the character is handed to you fully generated, it is still possible to determine a good many character traits from a close examination of the universal personality profile and list of skills. If necessary, make up a few interesting character traits (matching them with the personality profile and skills, of course) to give your character a unique aspect, and make it different from the others. "Customizing" a character in this fashion will pay off later in terms of a richer gaming experience.

After the character has been generated and adventuring begins, the player must stay in character as much as possible. A small degree of deviation is permissible (after all, inconsistency can be a character trait too), but by and large the player should stick to the personality determined above, even if problems result for the character. How many characters in literature have been the cause of their own downfall because of some personality flaw?

Some referees may include non-human intelligent beings as options for their players. Playing aliens well is more difficult than playing human characters. Non-humans (if they are to be truly alien, and not just someone in an alien suit) should think as well as a human, but not like a human, to paraphrase John Campbell. The beginner would do well to avoid aliens for the first few sessions.

As mentioned above, players of *Traveller* need not be intimately familiar with every aspect of the rules in order to play. Most players, however, will want to have a general acquaintance with the systems involved in order to better appreciate what is happening to their characters. Also, many players eventually intend to referee their own versions of *Traveller*, and will want to study the rules in order to be able to do this. Follow the instructions in *Getting to Know the Territory*.

For the beginning player who is fortunate enough to be able to join an already-existing group, things will be much easier. The referee and players will probably have worked out their problems before you start adventuring, and the systems should be running smoothly. Bear in mind, however, that the rules the group uses may be modified from the basic rules. Try to find out, preferably before the first session begins, what variations on the basic rules are in use, and abide by them in play. This will avoid time-wasting questions later on.

Some referees will allow players to generate their own characters unsupervised, some will not. If you are allowed to do so, follow whatever house rules relate to character generation, and work out the personality of your character as outlined above. If you are handed a pregenerated character (as some do to save time) examine the characteristics carefully and work out the character's personality as best you can.

You may find yourself in the middle of a scenario or campaign already in progress. Do the best you can to fit your goals in with the rest of the group; you are, after all, a newcomer. After you have a few adventures together, they will be more inclined to listen to your opinions, and your ideas will be welcomed.

For the newcomer who is starting out with other newcomers (referee and players alike) things will be a little slow at the start, but there is much the players can do to help out.

Patience is the most important thing in these situations. The referee is likely to be halting and uncertain at first, and pressure from the players will not help the situation at all. Reassure the referee that it is acceptable with you if things proceed slowly for the first few adventures, and refrain from excessive questioning of minor points during this trial period. Things will work more smoothly if nobody tries to rush into things.

When everyone feels comfortable with the rules systems and with the universe being used, players should begin taking an active part in their adventures. Don't simply sit around and wait for the referee to come up with a job offer or some other entertaining tidbit. Seek out your own fortune as circumstances permit. Buy, sell, or smuggle (if your group has access to a starship). Perpetrate a stock swindle or start a confidence game (if your group has the needed skills). Look all around you for opportunities.

It may be a little difficult to decide upon a course of action at first, especially if all the players are unfamiliar with the referee's universe. A workable temporary pursuit in practically all universes is to try to accumulate a fortune. This course of action gives you and the other players some breathing space while you learn about the universe, and has the additional advantage of gaining you working capital for whatever scheme you eventually decide to embark upon.

Be inventive in your activities. After all, the referee has to be as entertained by your actions as you are by his universe. Constant repetition of the same series of actions (buy here, go to the next world, sell, buy some more, etc.) will lead to boredom, both for the referee and for the players. If the referee's universe is inspired from some work or works of science fiction literature (a movie or series of novels) look to that source for ideas and possible courses of action. Try to improvise a different plan than that in the literature, in order to maintain excitement.

It is best if you have selected one member of your group to act as a leader or spokesman (sometimes referred to as a "caller"). This system makes things easier on the referee, who only has to deal with one person instead of several, and takes up much less time than otherwise. Players selected as leaders represent the party as a whole, and should keep the interests of all players in mind, not just those of themselves and one or two selected players.

As much as possible, extensive debate over the proper course of action should be carried out someplace other than the adventuring session. Any real time the players spend talking things over will be counted by the referee as game time spent talking over plans, and will quite often result in the loss of some opportunity. Of course, one or two minute discussions of events that occur in mid-session are often unavoidable, but long-term planning sessions should be undertaken at some other time.

Try to avoid actions that require splitting up the group unless it is absolutely unavoidable to do so. This will only complicate the proceedings for the referee (who must then run two separate groups at the same time, not letting either one get bored) and slow things down considerably.

Do not argue with the referee over items of referee judgement, or constantly bicker over hair-splitting rules interpretations. Nobody likes a rules lawyer, especially not referees. If you feel you have a legitimate complaint (one which is not due to incomplete understanding of the rules on your part, and which is not

due to a modified "house rule" the referee is using) bring the matter up to the referee quietly and in a reasonable manner. Make your point logically, and abide by whatever decision the referee makes. After all, that is what referees are for.

Obnoxious, obstreperous or rude behavior is not conducive to the enjoyment of play. Loud, disruptive players merely irritate everyone concerned. Do not engage in such behavior yourself, and discourage it in others.

By following the above suggestions, even the neophyte **Traveller** player can have enjoyable sessions almost from the first.

Campaigns

Eventually, practically every referee of *Traveller* scenarios, either by player demand or on his own, will want to run something bigger, something more suited to his or her own personality. The rewards are great, in terms of referee and player satisfaction, but there are risks involved. An improperly done or poorly planned campaign can backfire on a referee.

In planning a campaign, there are a number of considerations. The beginning referee should (as always) start out small. It may be fun to sketch out a galaxy-spanning empire of several hundred thousand worlds, but you will never be able to organize the necessary information on an empire that large, much less create it in any reasonable length of time. Start out small, and work your way up.

A single subsector is the best location for a first campaign, but it is necessary to do a little advance planning, especially if it is planned to expand out of it. Before any planning can be done, however, it is necessary to examine the prospective players, and determine what they are likely to want to do. Here is where the experience gained during the scenarios can be useful. If the players you will be running in your campaign have shown a desire to be explorers, boldly going where no man has gone before, place the setting for the campaign in a little-explored region of space, with vast regions to be explored, mapped, and studied. If, on the other hand, your players have shown a tendency to become involved in confidence schemes, stock swindles, or other such scams, locate them in a relatively settled region, where there are large numbers of suckers, and a fairly well organized police force to make things interesting. If your players want to be political wheelers and dealers, the political system of the campaign must be suitably adjusted to allow them a reasonable chance of success. Merchants may want a stable region in which they can slowly assemble a mercantile empire or may want a slightly more fluid situation where a fast tongue and a fast gun hand are both necessities to continued good health. Spies will need something to spy on, rebels will want something to rebel against. How old is human settlement in the subsector? How advanced is the region generally? If located on the borders of two star-spanning states, what is the history of the relations of those two states (peace, war, constant tension)? What is the state of the economy? Is there unrestricted trade, or is trade controlled by a few large mega-corporations? If there is a star-spanning civilization, what is it like? (Note: The basic rules set certain features of this star-spanning culture, such as social class. These may be changed if desired; see Modifications, page 34).

Once the referee has decided the general features of the campaign, it is a good idea to jot down a one or two sentence summary of conditions for later reference, such as "The subsector is located on the fringe of the Moladon Federation, a loose organization of 300+ worlds governed by a federation council. Half the worlds in the subsector are in the federation, the rest are petty one or two world nations. The federation is currently in a period of stasis, between expansions, but plans to eventually absorb all worlds on its borders. The last war was over a century ago, but minor skirmishes are constantly taking place, especially between the larger outer

states. Tech levels within the federation are between 5 and 12; outside they are between 1 and 9. Federation naval power is just strong enough to suppress piracy within the borders, and there is a great deal of local planetary autonomy."

Having finished the above summary, the referee can now proceed on to the creation of the subsector. Generate a starmap according to the rules in book 3 and examine it in light of the summary you have put together. It is probable that you will have to make some adjustments to make the map fit your preconceived conditions (moving a world or jump route, or raising or lowering a tech level). Add or delete naval and scout bases as you see fit, and compare the map with your summary. Determine (roughly, of course) what is off the starmap in all directions. (In the summary given above, the federation would be off one or two of the map edges.) When you are satisfied that the map is in agreement with the summary, go on to the generation of the planets.

Like the generation of characters, the generation of planets should be more than a matter of tossing dice and noting the results. The numbers of the planetary characteristics should be expanded into something more, unless the referee feels that the players will do little more than flit from world to world, never venturing outside the environs of the starport.

Roll the eight planetary characteristics for all worlds in a subsector, and write out what each of the numbers means in a single line on one sheet of paper. Then, proceeding down the list planet by planet, expand on the brief descriptions thus generated, explaining away contradictions or eliminating them by changing numbers in the planetary profiles.

Does the planet have an A type starport, a high tech level and a very low population (1000 or less)? The starport could be automated to a great degree, and/or the starport staff the only inhabitants of the planet. The starport might be a government facility, maintained to keep a vital trade route open, a military installation for defense of the district, or service a manufacturing or mining facility of a large interstellar corporation. Alternately, the planet could house an isolated research station, university, or other institution desiring seclusion. The government type in each case should be changed to fit. If the tech level is very low, but the world has a good starport, the first thing that comes to mind is the primitive culture being forcibly lifted to civilization by a superior people, with all the conflicts that calls to mind, such as native resistance movements (as in the American west in the 19th century), or "cargo" cults (as in Melanesia of this century). If a planet is small (say between 6000 and 10,000 kilometers) yet has a standard or thicker atmosphere, one explanation could be that the planet is denser than usual, possibly due to the presence of large amounts of heavy metals, making the place a valuable source of minerals. The atmosphere might also be temporarily thickened by extracting oxygen from the ices of a solar system's outer reaches and towing it in great frozen lumps to a planet by spaceship. (The planet would always be losing atmosphere into space, but this would be a slow process. The atmosphere would only have to be replenished every few million years.) Any contradiction which cannot be explained away can be eliminated by changing the characteristics, but almost every combination can be explained with a little effort.

When the planets have all been generated, work out a small summary of each for your own use, containing all the information on the planet and a sentence or

two for the players' consumption. At this point, working from the subsector summary given in the above example, determine what worlds are in the federation, what worlds are independent, and what worlds control or are controlled by others. It might be necessary to make a few more changes in the characteristics at this point to reflect these conditions. In addition, work out any mega-corporations which may be doing business in the subsector. Other information on individual planets should be worked out as the referee feels it is necessary. Such things as maps of surface features, plans of installations, details of planetary and interplanetary navies, local governments, social mores (if different from the interstellar norm), trade policies and restrictions, availability and price of goods from higher tech level worlds, and animal encounter tables may be needed depending upon the plans of the players. Resist the temptation, however great, to work up every aspect of your campaign to incredible levels of detail. Create details only to the extent required, and make rough notes on the rest. If it is someday needed, you will have your notes to guide you, and the job will flow faster; in the meantime, there will not be the need to keep mountains of paper on file.

Sooner or later, the temptation to expand will come to most referees. Sometimes a really good referee will attract large numbers of players who go in different directions, or the original players will split up and go their separate ways. Occasionally, a referee finds the original subsector too restrictive and feels the need for more room. Whatever the cause for the expansion, a campaign with a well-laid foundation will be very easy to expand.

Simply refer to your background notes (and you should have had many more thoughts on them during adventuring) and create as many of the surrounding subsectors as you feel necessary in the same way you did the first one. This time, however, the job will take longer and be more complex. The larger an area of space you cover, the more background data you must work up for the campaign to be consistent with itself. For each subsector added, the amount of information you must keep track of more than doubles. In addition, if you have more players, and groups of them going their separate ways, you will need to create more of the universe in greater detail than before, in keeping with the anticipated direction of player movements. All of this means a great increase in work-load on the referee, merely to create the detail needed, and will probably overwhelm the referee's filing system if it was not planned with an expansion in mind.

Ideally, the expansion should be worked on while the original subsector is being run. (Always keep as far ahead of the players as you can.) This way, the creation of background, history, governmental structure, and so on can proceed at a more leisurely pace, since the players are probably satisfied (for the moment) with the current subsector.

Do not be afraid to abandon a campaign, however. Sometimes the original conception of a campaign was too restrictive, or the referee and players have exhausted the possibilities of a particular campaign, or (as usually happens) the referee comes up with a better idea for a campaign. Usually the players will accept the dropping of one campaign, especially if a better one is promised, but some may be attached to their characters. If this is the case, it may be possible to allow them to transfer their characters to the new campaign with minimum effort. It will

probably be necessary to establish new background histories for these characters, in order to make them fit in with the new campaign. It may be necessary to divest the player of some or all of his or her possessions and skills in order to keep the character in balance with the others. Take extra care that the other players do not feel cheated at having to start over when one of their number is allowed to keep an experienced character. Remind them that it is always possible for them to create a character which is as well off or even better off.

Many referees will want to create a campaign drawn entirely or in part from science fiction literature. This process may require more work, because it almost always means modifying the **Traveller** rules to a greater or lesser degree.

The first step is to read all of the literature involved. This may seem an obvious step, but many try to devise campaigns based only on some foggy memory of a book or short story they may have read years ago, or based on some notion they may have of what the universe of a particular novel is like, without ever having read that novel. If a series of novels is involved, obtain and read them; if a movie is to be recreated as the background of the campaign, try to obtain the script or the novelization of that movie. If a book or books of background information on the movie has been published, get copies of these also. Study the universe of the literature carefully, looking for the following:

- The key facet(s) of the universe under study. Is there an ongoing struggle between the forces of good and evil? Is the entire galaxy explored and settled, or does civilization represent only a small patch of space, surrounded by the unknown? Is the life of the average citizen peaceful and dull, or is it a day-by-day struggle for survival?

- Clues to the government and social structure of the mythos. Is there a firm interstellar government? Are all worlds under the same system of government? Are the social structure and culture basically the same from world to world, or are there radical differences?

- What are the economics of the regions under study? Many authors either do not consider economics or give it only the scantiest of attentions, so it will probably be possible to use the economic rules unmodified.

- What weapons are in use, and how do they differ from the ones mentioned in **Traveller**? It should be possible to adapt or devise any reasonable weapon. The basic principles of the weapon's operation should be thought out carefully, and the weapon integrated into the combat systems as smoothly as possible. This applies to starship armament as well as personal armament.

- What is the general level of technology? Are all worlds at the same level of technological development? What features of the technology of the mythos under study differ radically from those given in **Traveller** (the system of interstellar travel, for example) and how can this system or systems be simulated in **Traveller** terms?

- What are the major features of the universe under study that make it unique? How can these be represented in game terms?

During the study of the literature, a list of personal and place names should be put together. Study this list and determine the manner in which people and places are named, so that your place names and the names of your non-player characters can match.

It is sometimes fun to take the characters of the protagonists of the movie or

novel and replay the plot, but since the players are probably SF fans also, the odds are good that they too have seen the movie or read the book and already know what happens. It is hard to maintain suspense under these conditions without the referee devising divergences from the plot (recreations of this sort, especially of some small scene from a science fiction movie, are also suitable for scenarios). Drawing the background from the literature but using secondary characters which diverge from the main plot or even characters which do not appear in the literature are two possibilities with much greater potential.

A referee may wish to incorporate one or more non-human intelligences into his or her universe, both as player or non-player characters. Creating a rational, realistic race of truly alien beings is a very difficult task, and the beginning referee is urged to make use of one or more of the published alien races available from GDW. In addition, the referee should consult the series of articles in the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* entitled Contact!.

A referee may want to make use of the published **Traveller** material as a background for a campaign. This approach will not require as much work as starting a universe from scratch, but does require a little creative input.

If you choose to set your campaign in a region which has been mapped by GDW, (such as in Supplement 3, *The Spinward Marches*), it will not be necessary for you to generate the maps or any of the planetary characteristics of the worlds in that region, but you may have to expand upon some worlds as the campaign progresses. Don't worry that we will later publish information which will render yours obsolete. We will cover some selected worlds in detail in adventures set in the region, but by no means will we cover any significant percentage of the worlds. Even if we do publish information contrary to that which you have laboriously generated, don't feel obligated to abandon your material in favor of ours unless you feel it will improve your campaign, and your players will not object to their universe changing on them. In this same general vein, referees should feel free to adapt any of the information contained in the supplements and adventures if they feel it does not match in with their particular campaign. Referees should remember, however, that if they modify anything they should not expect other GDW materials to match them (and should be prepared to modify these too, for consistency's sake).

If you choose to set your campaign in some region of space which GDW has not fully detailed, a little more labor is needed (you will have to generate starmaps and planetary characteristics, as well as other information), but the wider background of the society, the economy, and government will have already been established for you. Plenty of space has been allowed on the map of the Imperium for small empires, federations, or other organizations, allied either with the Imperium or with one of the other major powers, or without alliance.

When you have completed your campaign, but before you begin play, prepare an orientation package for your players. This should contain copies of all the summaries you wrote up for your own use earlier (the worlds, subsectors, etc.) and a list of any special "house rules" you will be using. If you have modified any of the basic rules, include explanations of these also. Give copies of this to your

players to read before adventuring begins, and you will save a lot of time for adventuring which would otherwise have been wasted in answering questions about your universe.

A properly planned and run campaign can provide years (real time) of entertainment for both the referee and the players.

Modifications

In the process of playing scenarios, or while preparing to adapt a specific science fiction literary mythos to *Traveller*, many referees will wish to change the rules to a greater or lesser degree, either to expand some aspect which is not adequately covered in *Traveller*, or to modify some section which does not fit in with the referee's universe.

Referees should feel free to modify any rule to whatever extent they see fit, providing they bear in mind that:

- The rules are interlinked to a great extent. If you change one section, you must also be willing to change all other sections which are then rendered inconsistent. Naturally, radical departures from the rules will have greater and more far-reaching effects than minor changes. Referees who modify the rules without regard to the repercussions are doing themselves and their players a grave disservice.

- The balance of play should not be destroyed. A common change many newer players make (particularly those with backgrounds in fantasy role-playing) is to increase the occurrence of psionic talents, and permit training on a much higher level than the basic rules. This may seem like fun at first, but when any character can kill with a single burst of mental energy, where is the challenge? Psionic talents are best used sparingly.

- All changes should be rational, logical, and scientifically sound (after all, *Traveller* is a *science* fiction role-playing game). A typical example is a suggestion we receive about three times a year for some form of anti-matter small arm (usually a pistol or rifle, but once a hand grenade). These suggestions always seriously underestimate the amount of energy necessary to maintain a magnetic bottle around the anti-matter for any length of time, and almost always have a maximum range considerably less than the burst radius of the projectile.

- The speed of communication should never be allowed to exceed the speed of travel. This is a basic tenet of *Traveller*, and its violation will irrevocably alter the balance of the rules.

- Do not expect other *Traveller* materials to match your universe if you engage in large-scale modifications.

The most common change will probably be in the available weapons. Any additions to the weapons should be especially well thought out and rationally based. Science fiction literature contains many more weapons than could be described in the basic rules. Many of these have only the flimsiest of scientific justifications, if they are justified at all. In television and the movies, weapons are often created for the visual effect they have and are not usually very well thought out. In addition, all ramifications of the weapon must be considered. For example, any major change in lethality of hand-carried weapons is likely to have profound effects on military tactics, at least eventually (the military is sometimes a little slow to catch on).

A few questions to ask might be: is this weapon really required by my universe? What is the principle of its operation? (If the weapon is taken from literature, the principle of operation may be described or well-established.) Is the principle of op-

eration a reasonable one? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this particular weapon, and why would it be used in place of more conventional weapon systems?

Adaptations to the jump and maneuver drive systems and to our concept of jump space should be made only with care and consideration. The effects of modifications to these areas are wide-reaching and touch almost every rule in one form or another. In designing our interstellar drive system, we tried to come up with one which fitted in with the other aspects of our proposed mythos and which was reasonably close to the literature we drew it from. It was assumed, however, that some referees would not be satisfied, whatever system we devised. It was further assumed that any referee who felt strongly enough about the matter would change what displeased him.

We do not recommend major revisions of the trade and commerce section without considerable thought. Minor deviations from the trade and speculation table, to the actual value table, or reclassification of certain world types are acceptable; indeed, in most cases, some deviation from the letter of these rules is desirable, but the spirit (i.e. the general system) should be preserved.

Referees are cautioned against making psionic powers too common. Players will often urge that psionics become more widespread, but this is often only because they want to have every possible advantage without drawbacks. Powerful psionic abilities would soon dominate all aspects of play and most of the excitement of *Traveller* (the advanced technologies) will lapse into disuse, or at least be relegated to a secondary role.

The cautions which apply to major revisions apply to a lesser extent to expansions of existing rules. Many referees find certain rules do not go into enough detail to suit them. Examine the manner in which Book 4, *Mercenary*, expands upon the army and marines, or Book 5, *High Guard*, expands upon the navy for general guidelines on technique. You need not (and probably should not) duplicate the systems in these two books exactly, but they will prove a source of inspiration for your own efforts.

Miniatures In Traveller

If role-playing games can be said to be a form of improvisational theater, using miniatures in role-playing games can be said to be a form of improvisational puppet theater. Miniatures are smaller models of people, animals or objects, often used to add color and visual impact to various games. Gaming miniatures are manufactured by a number of companies in many scales (scale refers either to the ratio of size of the thing modeled to the size of the original, or to the actual size of the miniature; for example, a 1/72nd scale figure is one 72nd as large as the person it represents, and a 25mm figure is 25 millimeters in height). The scale we recommend for use with **Traveller** is 15mm or about 1/120.

The miniatures are painted in a realistic fashion, and very often used in conjunction with realistic appearing scale terrain (buildings, trees, and so on) for small scale battles. Many referees find this pictorial representation of conditions easier to control, and players often find it easier to visualize what is going on. Instead of asking where the players are going, the referee simply allows each player to move his or her representative miniature (within certain limits) to whatever position is desired.

For ground combat, the simplest way of using miniatures with **Traveller** is to follow the suggestions in the combat rule (Book 1, page 33), moving the figures over a simple gridiron pattern. This method, however, is not as visually appealing as others. An intermediate method is to use the miniature figures in place of counters in such games as *Snapshot* and *Azhanti High Lightning*, moving the figures over the square grid maps provided or over maps of starships, building interiors, or outdoor terrain drawn by the referee. Due to the trouble and expense involved in constructing and painting scale model spaceships and buildings, this method is the best means of using miniatures for adventures inside such structures. The rules from either *Snapshot* or *Azhanti High Lightning* can be used unmodified.

For outdoor adventures, extremely realistic terrain can be constructed using model railroad materials such as scale model structures, balsa wood, lichen, and scenic materials such as model trees, grass, and other foliage (consult your hobby shop for availability and prices). This method can be time consuming and expensive, but can produce stunning visual effects when done properly. This method also requires the referee to devise rules for movement, as part of the price paid for the realistic appearance of the battleground is the loss of the scale grid. A set of miniatures rules specially designed for use with **Traveller** is in progress at the time this book is written, and should be available in the near future. The full details of terrain construction, figure painting, and the other steps necessary cannot be dealt with in detail here.

For combat between spaceships, as outlined in book 2, pages 26 to 37, things are much simpler. The only requirements are model spaceships and a playing surface that can be marked upon to indicate planetary templates, ship courses, and so on (such as a large sheet of paper, plexiglass, or masonite). A sheet of plywood, sanded smooth and painted flat black, can be marked on with chalk and wiped clean for

re-use hundreds of times. A number of smaller sheets of bristol board or similar material, covered with clear contact paper, could be marked on with a grease pencil and sheets transferred from one side of the battle to another as it progresses, in the same fashion as *Mayday* mapsheets.

Martian Metals, PO Box 778, Cedar Park, TX 78613 manufactures an ever-expanding line of 15mm miniature figures approved for use with **Traveller**; the line will eventually be expanded to include starships and a wide variety of ground vehicles. Consult your local hobby shop for information on these and other manufacturers of figures and modeling supplies.

Appendix I: Session

The following is a typical Traveller adventure session, built around one of the patron encounters given in *76 Patrons*. It is intended to illustrate the general nature of adventures and to serve as a kind of guide to beginners (both player and referee) on how such things should go. I have indicated thoughts in italics and stage directions in parentheses.

Scene 1, Interior, night

TOM (the referee) and his friends DICK; HARRY, and GLORIA (the players) are gathered in Tom's living room, seated in comfortable chairs. Tom has set up a card table, upon which he has his notes, maps, Traveller books, dice, and other paraphernalia. Dick, Harry (a newcomer), and Gloria have scratch pads and various sheets of paper with their characters' UPPs and their individual and collective possessions noted upon them. During the last session, the group finished a job, were paid, spent the money, and are now seeking further employment on the planet Palnu.

Dick:

So we're on Palnu looking for a job. Any offers?

Tom:

Thinks: *This is a good chance to try out one of those pre-rolled encounters. I was too busy to get much together for this week.*

Yeah, there is. Just a minute.

(He refers to *76 Patrons* for a few moments.)

Well. . .not exactly a job offer. This one's kind of interesting. (He reads from *76 Patrons*, page 10.) "While resting in a hotel between jobs, the players are approached by a young lady in flowing robes who identifies herself as the daughter of a local noble. Her brother, she says, has been kidnapped by a local criminal organization. He was once a member of that organization, but his conscience got the better of him and he contacted the Imperials, offering to turn crown's evidence. He is now being held in a mountain villa, where they plan to torture him to determine how much he revealed. The Imperial authorities think he is dead and will not help.

She offers Cr30,000 for the rescue of her brother and the safe transport of both of them off planet. She produces a map of the villa, scrawled on a napkin.

At this point, two uniformed police and a third man in civilian clothes approach, taking the girl prisoner. The civilian identifies himself as a doctor at a local mental hospital, says the girl is a patient and apologizes for any

Tom (continued):

inconvenience her wild tales may have caused the party. The girl struggles and screams that they are going to kill her."

Hmmm. Option number 1 looks good.

The doctor will quiet the girl with a hypo and the three of them carry her to a cab and drive off. What are you doing?

Dick:

A little on the melodramatic side, eh Tom?

(He looks at the others.)

Should we believe her? *No telling what he has up his sleeve here.*

Harry:

No, I think she really is crazy. *I wonder how much money she really has?*

(To Tom:) Did she act crazy?

Tom:

I should be ambiguous here. It was kind of hard to tell. She acted very nervous. The cab is pulling away. *There. That's twice I emphasized the taxi. I wonder if they'll pick up on that.*

Dick:

OK, we'll look for something else then. *Trying to get us to shoot at the cops, eh Tom? Well, it won't work, me boyo.*

Gloria:

Cab? I hate to bring this up to you geniuses, but how many cops do you know that use taxi-cabs?

Dick:

Oh no! I missed that one! (To Tom:) I run out of the hotel and try to see where the cab has gone.

Tom:

They spent a while talking. . .maybe two chances in six that he can still see it. 5, 6, yes. (He rolls a die; a 3 results.) It's out of sight.

Dick:

Did I see what company the cab was from? When I saw them get in, I mean. *Maybe we can track it that way. . . dispatcher or something.*

Tom:

Let me see, what's a good name for a cab company? Yellow? Checker? No, not SF enough. . . Astral? Too corny. Triple-Star. Triple-Star Cab Company.

Gloria:

Who'd she give the napkin to? I hope it wasn't Harry. If it's Harry, he's probably dropped it and we won't even know where they've got her brother.

Tom:

1, 2: Dick, 3, 4: Gloria, 5, 6: Harry. (He rolls a die; a 5 results.) Harry. Does he still have it? Call it a 50% chance . . . 4, 5, 6, yes. (He rolls a die; a 4 results.) Harry has it crumpled in his fist.

Dick:

Give it to me, Harry!

Tom:

He's still outside. He can't, you're still outside.

Gloria:

Give it to me, Harry.

Harry:

OK, Gloria's got it.

Gloria:

I put in my pocket after flattening it out and folding it carefully.

Dick:

I go back inside and tell them the cab's out of sight. We better get out of sight ourselves, the better to plan our next move. Let's go to a bar and figure out what to do next.

Harry:

We ought to try to find out more. Library maybe. Newspaper file ought to have articles on the family, especially if there was an accident a while back. How about we go to the library? We can try to find out a little more about what's going on. Maps. Maybe get some maps of this place.

Dick:

Good idea. OK. Let's go. Why didn't I think of that? I must be slipping.

Tom:

Here comes hint number two. Are you taking a cab?

Gloria:

We can ask the driver. If the cabs are radio dispatched, he might have heard the other driver call in his destination. Yeah. If the cabs are radio-dispatched we can ask if the driver knows the other cab's destination.

Dick:

OK, we'll take a Triple-Star cab and go to the nearest library. Better make sure we get the right company.

Tom:

There's a Triple-Star cab waiting outside for a fare, but there's also a library terminal in the hotel lobby!

Dick:

We better get out of sight, anyway. Some of the organization's thugs could be watching.

Gloria:

Tom, I'm looking around us. Do I see anybody watching us? They've already seen me look at the napkin and put it away! . . . Damn!

Tom:

Odd yes, even no. (He rolls a die; a 5 results.) Yes, there is. One, maybe? Big ugly lookin' dude? There is one rather large ugly looking fellow who is staring right at you, but he looks away quickly when you look at him.

Dick:

Let's haul it, folks! We all go outside and grab a cab as quickly as we can. Is the ugly guy following us?

Tom:

Of course! (He rolls a die and ignores the result.) He starts moving toward the door when you do.

Dick:

We all get into the cab as fast as we can, throw the driver twenty credits, and tell him to drive away as fast as he can.

Tom:

Is there a cab handy? Yes, I said there was a minute ago. Can they get into it and away before the thug gets out

Tom (continued):

and sees them? Wait a minute there — he doesn't need to! The cabs are radio-dispatched, and he can find out where they go as easy as they can find out where the mob took the girl! You all get into the cab, and the driver winks at you and drives off. He's really burning rubber, like you asked. The thug walks out the door in a rush, sees you leave, and stands there watching.

Gloria:

Is he trying to catch another cab?

Tom:

No. *That should do it. Gloria will get it, I bet.*

Gloria:

Damn!

Dick:

What?

Gloria:

He can follow us by asking the dispatcher too!

Harry:

Bribe? Why don't we bribe the driver to give a false destination to his dispatcher?

Gloria:

Say, that's not bad! Why didn't I think of that? I must be slipping.

And so we leave Tom, Dick, Harry, and Gloria to complete the session in their own way. Not all adventuring sessions will go this smoothly, or course. There was no argument over the course of action, for instance. Also, I have greatly simplified what was running through everyone's thoughts. To completely detail everything that a referee must consider, even for so simple a scene as this, would take much more space than is available here.

Appendix II: Glossary

Unless otherwise noted, definitions are given as the term is used in *Traveller*. Other RPGs may use the same terms with or without a different definition.

Adventure: Often used specifically to identify a single unit of *Traveller* play, such as an evening's session. Also, sometimes used as a verb, to adventure, meaning to play.

Campaign: In its simplest form, a series of inter-related scenarios set against a common, consistent background, usually using the same set of characters.

Character: A persona existing in a fictional plane. Characters may be manipulated by players, in which case they are labeled player characters, or by the referee, in which case they are called non-player characters.

Dexterity: A basic characteristic which numerically quantifies a character's physical coordination.

Die Roll, Die Throw: Both of these terms refer to a random number generated with the use of one or more dice, which must be rolled to achieve a stated effect. See Saving throw.

DM: Die Modifier. A number added to or subtracted from the die roll to obtain a modified result. Sometimes called a Die Mod. In some other games, DM refers to dungeon master, another term for referee.

Education: A basic characteristic which numerically quantifies the highest level of formal schooling a character may have attained in prior service.

Encounter: Used as a noun, this word refers to the meeting of one or more characters and one or more persons, things, or events. Encounters may or may not result in significant interaction with player characters. An encounter with a clerk in a store is not likely to be of great importance, and it may not even be mentioned to the players. An encounter with a band of cut-throats late at night or a pack of wild animals could permanently affect the characters, and is dealt with in detail. A large part of a referee's job is the administration of encounters.

Endurance: A basic characteristic which numerically quantifies a character's physical stamina and ability to continue activities over long periods of time.

GM: Game master. A generic term for referee (see Referee).

Intelligence: A basic characteristic which numerically quantifies a character's intelligence quotient. Note that it is possible for a character to be very highly educated, but have a low intelligence, and vice versa. A bit of thought will result in numerous examples from real life.

Jump: A trip from one point in space to another using jump drives, at greater than the speed of light. A jump is made by leaving the universe of the game and travelling through a different plane of existence (called jump space in *Traveller*, but often referred to as hyper-space or tau-space in science fiction literature).

Non-Starship: A spaceship without a jump drive, and thus incapable of interstellar travel on its own.

NPC: Abbreviation for non-player character (see Character).

Patron: A non-player character (see Character) used by the referee as an employ-

Appendix III: Overview of Traveller Material

er for player characters. Patrons are usually used to motivate players to move in a direction more fully in tune with the wishes of the referee, or to provide income or diversion for player characters.

Referee: An individual who creates and administers a hypothetical universe, and adjudicates conflicts between the players and other inhabitants or forces within that universe.

Saving Throw: That modified result of a dice roll required to prevent a stated effect. If only a number is stated, that number must be rolled exactly. If a plus follows a number (for example, 6+) it indicates that the number or higher must be the modified result for the stated effect or event not to occur. Similarly, a minus indicates that the number or less must be the modified result. (Also see Die Throw).

Scenario: Like a science-fiction story or novel in that the players are given a specific goal, and encounter problems in the process of achieving that goal. A scenario is usually a one-time affair, with the characters and setting being discarded when the goal is attained.

Skill: An ability to perform a set action, such as navigating a starship, operating a rifle, or programming a computer. Skills are attained in levels (navigator-1, computer-2, etc); the higher the level of a skill, the more expertise a character has in that area. For definitions of individual skills, see Book 1, pages 16 through 25.

Social Standing: A basic characteristic which numerically quantifies a character's social class and level of society from which the character (and the character's family) originated.

Starport: A facility for the service of interstellar and interplanetary vessels of all sorts, and for embarkation and disembarkation of passengers and cargo. Starports are more thoroughly dealt with in Book 3.

Travellers' Aid Society: A private interstellar organization which maintains hostels and facilities at various starports throughout our Traveller universe, fully explained in Book 1, page 24. This organization may or may not be desired by referees designing their own universes.

Throw: A toss of the die or dice. (See Die Throw, Saving Throw.)

World: Any inhabited body. A world could be a planet like Earth, a satellite of a planet, an airless planet with domed or underground cities, a hollowed out planetoid, an artificial construct such as a space station or L-5 type colony, or a more complex artifact such as a ringworld or rosette.

Universe: The totality of existence for the player characters, the mythos, the informational background created by a referee. In Traveller, universe refers to the game "reality" in which the characters controlled by the players interact with the various characters and forces controlled by the referee.

The wide range of Traveller materials has been carefully designed to deal with all aspects of Traveller play, and to provide materials for all tastes at the lowest possible cost. To this end, several specific types of materials have been produced, each with its own appeal and merits.

Traveller materials include all of the following different items:

1. **Basic Set.** The basis for Traveller is the Basic Set, Books 1, 2, and 3, plus two six-sided dice, all in a handy box. The rules booklets cover the basic rules essential to playing Traveller and are all that are really required to begin playing. Each booklet is 48 pages long.

2. **Books.** Books are compendiums of rules, and range from 48 to 56 pages in length. For example, Book 4 (*Mercenary*) is aimed at players interested in military operations, and (in keeping with the individual orientation in Traveller) concentrates on small scale military operations. Book 5 (*High Guard*) provides rules dealing with space navies and large space ships.

3. **Supplements.** At the other end of the spectrum from books are supplements, which tend to be compilations of data derived from Traveller rules. For example, Supplement 1 (*1001 Characters*) is simply a list of pregenerated characters; Supplement 2 (*Animal Encounters*) is a set of encounter tables.

Often the contents of a supplement could be produced by a referee from the materials and rules already available, but supplements are priced low in the hopes that they will prove cost-effective. Given enough time, a referee could roll up a list of 1001 characters like that given in the supplement. If you value the hours such a task would take you more than the price of a supplement, *1001 Characters* is for you. If you have plenty of time, you can pass up the supplement.

4. **Adventures.** Playing Traveller situations is a primary focus for Traveller players, and adventures are intended to allow players to begin immediately. Each includes a brief introduction, a cohesive central theme, and a wide variety of materials intended to direct the players and the referee through one or more Traveller situations. Adventures are 48 page (or longer) booklets, with plans and drawings, background data, and other important information.

For example, Adventure 1 (*The Kinunir*) is a 48 page booklet dealing with a single theme; *Kinunir* class battle cruisers. Within a subsector already mapped out, four distinct situations are represented, with rumors to muddy the path, and detailed deck plans and other information to make the referee's job the easiest possible. After all the scenarios have been played, the deck plans are usable later in other situations.

5. **Double Adventures.** While adventures are intended as large, multi-session events, there is also a need for shorter situations: what we produce as double adventures. Perhaps you remember the old Ace double novels — two paperback science-fiction novels printed back to back. That's the format we have adopted for double adventures. Each is about 20 pages, with a complete situation, pre-generated characters (if necessary), background, maps or deck plans, additional data, and

everything else needed for an evening of **Traveller** fun. The other side can be used for another evening of **Traveller** later in the week.

6. Games. Many aspects of **Traveller** call for boardgame resolution. After all, many **Traveller** players have boardgame backgrounds, and often **Traveller** players find themselves in groups of two — ideal for boardgames, but sometimes not practical for refereed adventure situations. Games are the **Traveller** response to this need.

The contents of a game depend on the requirements of the game. Generally, a game includes a map, a set of die-cut counters, and a rules book. *Mayday* is a prime example of a **Traveller** game. It deals with a starship to starship combat using a variant of the starship miniatures rules in **Traveller** Book 2. The several hex grid maps, die-cut starship counters, and detailed rules make the game fun to play for an evening, and ideal for resolution of starship combat in **Traveller**. By the way, *Mayday* won the Charles Roberts Award in 1979 for Best Science-Fiction Game of the Year. The Charlie is adventure gaming's equivalent of the Oscar.

7. The Journal. Many, many aspects of **Traveller** simply cannot be put into a book, supplement, adventure, or game. To cover this material and make it available to **Traveller** players, the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* has been created. Filled with both feature articles and continuing departments, the *Journal* appears quarterly and presents the latest in thinking on how to run **Traveller** games, and how to simulate various aspects of the future when playing **Traveller**. Departments include the Ship's Locker, with descriptions of equipment which might be purchased and used; Amber Zone, with scenarios for players; and Ref's Notes, which cover how to play specific aspects of the future. Other features include variants of science fiction boardgames, reviews of games just published, and editorials on current trends. And finally, the *Journal* contains all the latest information on new **Traveller** material as soon as it is published.

Back issues of the *Journal* are available for as long as supplies hold out. *Journal* number 1 sold out within a month of publication; on subsequent issues we printed more, but demand is high. For those who did not get the first four issues, we print an anthology of the best articles from those issues, entitled *The Best of the Journal*. Subscriptions are available. You can also write and inquire about the availability of back issues.

8. Deluxe Traveller. **Deluxe Traveller** contains Books 1, 2, 3, and 0, two six-sided dice, a map of the Spinward Marches, and a special introductory adventure booklet, *The Imperial Fringe*.

Appendix IV: Die Rolling Percentages

The tables below are useful in determining the odds when dice-rolls are made.

Dice Roll	1D, 2D, 3D, AND 4D ROLLS			
	One Die	Two Dice	Three Dice	Four Dice
1+	100%	—	—	—
2+	83%	100%	—	—
3+	67%	97%	100%	—
4+	50%	92%	99%	100.0%
5+	33%	83%	98%	99.9%
6+	17%	72%	95%	99.6%
7+	—	58%	91%	98.8%
8+	—	42%	84%	97.3%
9+	—	28%	74%	94.6%
10+	—	17%	63%	90.3%
11+	—	8%	50%	84.1%
12+	—	3%	37%	76.1%
13+	—	—	26%	66.4%
14+	—	—	16%	55.6%
15+	—	—	9%	44.4%
16+	—	—	5%	33.6%
17+	—	—	2%	23.9%
18+	—	—	1%	15.9%
19+	—	—	—	9.7%
20+	—	—	—	5.4%
21+	—	—	—	2.7%
22+	—	—	—	1.2%
23+	—	—	—	0.4%
24+	—	—	—	0.1%

This table gives the percent chance of rolling the stated number or higher using one, two, three, or four dice.

Second Die Roll	BASE SIX DICE ROLL					
	First Die Roll					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	100.0%	83.3%	66.7%	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%
2	97.2%	80.6%	63.9%	47.2%	30.6%	13.9%
3	94.4%	77.8%	61.1%	44.4%	27.8%	11.1%
4	91.7%	75.0%	58.3%	41.7%	25.0%	8.3%
5	88.9%	72.2%	55.6%	38.9%	22.2%	5.6%
6	86.1%	69.4%	52.8%	36.1%	19.4%	2.8%

This table gives the percent chance of rolling a given number or higher when using the base six system used on the trade and commerce table in Book 2, or the patron and random person encounter tables in Book 3.

Appendix V: Directory

All references to the **Traveller** basic rules are according to the revised version. For those using the old version, the following directory is provided:

<i>Section:</i>	<i>Old Version, Pages:</i>	<i>New Version, Pages:</i>
Book 1		
Introduction	1 - 3	5 - 7
Character Generation	4 - 25	8 - 29
Personal Combat	26 - 44	30 - 48
Book 2		
Travelling	1 - 4	4 - 6
Starship Economics	5 - 8	7 - 11
Starship Construction	9 - 21	12 - 25
Starship Combat	22 - 37	26 - 41
Experience	40 - 41	42 - 43
Drugs	38 - 39	44 - 45
Trade and Commerce	42 - 44	46 - 48
Book 3		
Worlds	1 - 12	4 - 16
Equipment	13 - 18	17 - 23
Encounters	19 - 23	24 - 27
Animal Encounters	24 - 32	28 - 37
Psionics	33 - 43	38 - 47
Final Notes	48	48