

Adventures in Space!!

Pulp Science Fiction Gaming by Zak Arntson

Get Ready for Adventure!!

Adventures in Space!! is a game of thrilling space stories. It is best played with three to six players, one acting as Space Command and the rest as Players. Space Command acts to provide challenges and move the story along. Players not only face these challenges with a courageous heart, but often improvise and alter the course of the story!

To play all you need are a few six–sided dice and some pieces of paper (referred to here as *Playsheets*). Make sure one of your dice is different from the rest, as this one becomes your *Die of Science!* A dictionary or space–age comics might also help you to pick fitting Words of Science.

Let's Go!!

six–sided dice

Die of Science

pencils & paper

Courageous Heroes and Treacherous Villains!

Heroes and Villains are created in the same way. Only major characters in your Space Adventure deserve to be Hero or Villain.

Heroes are the quick–witted and strong–jawed forces for good, zipping across the cosmos to battle evil and promote peace. As Player, you act the part of a Hero by shouting brave dialogue, expositing on clever deductions and acting with courage, wit, and honor!

Villains pose a threat to all that is good. Evil human geniuses bent on interstellar domination or crafty alien overlords dedicated to crushing the Heroes at all costs: All Villains must be stopped by our dedicated Heroes! Space Command creates and controls the Villains, using them to wreak havoc with your Heroes and their loved ones until the final act. Every Villain gets his in the end!

Creating a Hero or Villain is simple. Using the Playsheet, record the following information:

Name – A properly dashing or dastardly name. Susan Stone, Captain Hammer, Manny Flash, Count Drakor of the Lizard–men, Sinistarr. These are all fine names for your Adventures in Space!!

Style – Decide on a Style that best fits your character. Some are provided to the right, but you can make one up if you wish. Space Command is allowed to limit the Styles allowed to better suit your adventures.

Each Actor should make one Hero. Space Command should create at least one Villain; more if your Galactic Empress needs a few Villainous cronies.

That's it! Now get ready for incredible Space Adventures!!

Hero Styles

All–Star Athlete

Daredevil Astro–Pilot

Renowned Scientist

Outspoken Space Soldier

Upright Citizen (Like You or Me)

Villain Styles

Charismatic Dastard

Brooding Overlord

Megalomaniacal Menace

Twisted Genius

Fallen Hero

Amazing Twists of Fate!

Whenever your Hero is in a pickle and you want to completely reroll the dice, an *Amazing Twist of Fate* can be spent. The newly–rolled results are only applied *if they are better than your original roll*. Amazing Twists of Fate can be spent multiple times, allowing as many rerolls as you have Twists.

At the beginning of each Adventure every Player receives three Amazing Twists of Fate. No one cannot be brouth below zero Amazing Twists. If you lose an Amazing Twist but have none to give up, nothing happens.

Words of Science!

Remember to do this step *for every Adventure!* While you may use the same Hero for different episodes, the Words of Science should be ever–changing!

Everyone should now have Playsheets ready. Pass your Playsheet to the person on your left. Now, write down the number 1 and next to that a single *Word of Science*. Again, pass the Playsheet to the left. Below the first entry, write the number 2 and a second Word of Science. Keep passing and writing down Words of Science until each Playsheet has exactly six Words. If you wind up with your own Playsheet, go ahead and write down a Word before passing it on. Remember to return all the Playsheets to their original owners!

If Space Command has more than one Playsheet, the first Villain should be passed to the left along with everyone's Hero. If there are any more Villains, wait until the first round of Playsheets have been filled in. Then divvy out your reaming Villains to the Players and continue writing words and passing Playsheets.

Words of Science can be any word fit for Adventures in Space!! Astronomical words, elements, chemicals, scientific adjectives. Anything spouted by a Hero thwarting space–aged evil is fair game as a Word of Science. During play, you will often want to use one of your Words. To do so, include your Die of Science along with the other dice in your roll. Look up this roll on your list of Words to see which Word of Science to use.

When all the Heroes and Villains have their Words of Science, the Adventure begins!!

A Few Words

anti–gravitation	base
cesium	deuterium
evolution	gyroscopic
hydrogen	implosion
isotope	levitate
neutron	protean
rotation	solar–flare
time–warp	vacuum

Adventure Awaits!

Space Command now begins the Adventure. This can be anything from the arrival of Lord Ka and his laser–eyed Ka–Grool minions, to a mysterious S.O.S. picked up from Ursa Major. In any case, Space Command now leads you through your own Adventure in Space!!

Changing the Plot

You may expect Space Command to dictate all events outside of the Heroes' intentions. Not so with Adventures in Space!! You can add a minor element, such as an interesting life–form or a minor character at any time.

At any point where you want to enact change in the plot's course or introduce a major story element speak up! You then announce the desired change and roll a regular die *and* your Die of Science! Check your roll with the chart below to see its result. Incorporate the result into your Adventure with your rolled Word of Science!

1 Scorching Suns! – Things should shift towards the opposite of your goals.

2–3 Whoops! – The plot remains unchanged.

4–5 Great Job! – Your wishes are enacted.

6 By the Moons of Jupiter!! – Move the plot in your direction *and* receive an *Amazing Twist of Fate!*

	Plot Change
1	Opposite of Intent
2–3	No Change
4–5	Successful Change
6	Success + Amazing Twist

Greg Nova sneaks through the chambers of Emperor Zool. Greg's Player wants her Hero to sneak past a laboratory, an ample source of weird science. The Player rolls a *Great Job!* and *mercury* for her Word of Science. "Great Scott! Emperor Zool must be using the *mercury* in this lab to build his gravity guns! I'd better take a closer look ..."

Up to Chance!

Any conflicts or chancy situations are resolved with determination, quick wit and a roll of the dice. Whenever Space Command feels success isn't guaranteed, a Hero rolls the dice. The number of dice rolled depends on the difficulty of the task. A task with a slight chance of failure would be three dice. An average task offers two. Difficult tasks allow only a single die!

Don't roll yet! You have a few chances to add some extra dice. Incorporate something from the list below to get an extra die to roll. These items are cumulative so if your Hero shows both Bravado and the proper Style, for example, you get two extra dice!

Style – Your Hero's Style matches the challenge.

Bravado – You approach the conflict with panache befitting a Hero's Hero, you get another die to roll.

Word of Science – Put your Die of Science into the roll and you get an extra regular die. You must use your rolled Word when roleplaying the result.

Once you have your dice, roll them and take the highest value (not including a Die of Science). This value indicates how magnificently you pass or dismally you fail.

1 Salt Mines of Mars!! – Your Hero not only fails, but somehow hinders the efforts of justice! The Actor loses an *Amazing Twist of Fate*.

2 Blast it! – An obvious and embarrassing failure

3 Almost there! – Failure by a hair.

4 Keen! – A success without accolades.

5 Wow! – Your Hero's bravado and skill impresses all.

6 Great Geysers of Ganymede!! – A triumphant success beyond measure and the Actor earns an *Amazing Twist of Fate!*

As the Actor, you should decide the outcome as dictated by your roll. A success lets you zap a squad of goons, leap across an icy chasm, or earn favor in the Galactic Forum. Failure leaves your Hero running from the enemy, hanging from the cliff by a finger, or disgraced and escorted from the symposium.

	Chance!
Small Challenge	Three Dice
Normal Task	Two Dice
It's Tough!	One Die
Your Style	Bonus Die
Word of Science	Bonus Die
Hero's Hero	Bonus Die

	Chance Roll
1	Terrible Failure – Amazing Twist
2	Bad Failure
3	Failure
4	Success
5	Solid Success
6	Heroic Success + Amazing Twist

In pursuit of Vorgox Hiveships, Commander Steel skims his ship across the event horizon of a black hole. Space Command deems it extremely difficult and gives the Player a single die. Commander Steel's Style is *Fearless Astropilot* and the Player wants to use a Word of Science. Adding two dice to the roll for a total of three, the Player rolls a *Wow!* and shouts, "If I can only angle my shot against the rim of this black hole, those Hiveships just might suffer a catastrophic *etheric* shockwave!" before disintegrating the reptilian menace.

Villainous Deeds

Playing the part of a Villain is a little different. As Space Command you should manipulate the Heroes towards dangerous physical situations and cunning mental puzzles. The stakes are raised even higher with a Villain in the scene!

First, to properly work the Villain into the story, roll a Word of Science. You should use this Word of Science before the end of the scene to enhance your Villain's banter.

Secondly, when a Player is rolling and a Villain is present the Player may suffer! For each of the situations below a Player a player loses a die. No matter how penalized, a Player always rolls at least one die. Rolls to change the plot are unaffected by a Villain.

Villain's Style – Your Villain's Style is appropriate to the challenge.

Words of Science – You use your Villain's Word of Science while thwarting a Hero's actions.

Oh! A Villain!

Hero loses a die when Villain uses Style or Word of Science

Janet Moon leaps past the Royal Guards to snatch the death ray from the Overlord's grasp. Janet's Style is *All-Star Athlete* so her Actor receives a bonus die. The Overlord shouts, "Hold back, my guards! My might alone can defeat this puny human!" Since the Overlord's Style is *Prideful Overlord* his blind confidence causes Janet's Player to lose that bonus die.

Ask the Professor

This last section is to answer any questions you might have while playing Adventures in Space!!

What? No combat rules?

Combat is simply another chancy element. Space Command should sum up the situation and decide whether dice should be rolled and if so, how many. While most Adventures involve combat, it shouldn't be a complex mechanic by itself. If the Hero is facing down a squad of goons, let the Player make a single roll and narrate the results. When the Villain shows up to challenge a Hero to a wrestling match, perhaps each roll is a minor outcome dictating who has the upper–hand. The point here is that the itemizing of rolls is *up to the people playing*.

As Space Command, I never roll dice?

Well, you do roll your Villain's Dice of Science but you don't compete with the Players. Your role is to provide a direction of play, come up with interesting challenges, menacing Villains and above all Adventures in Space!!

I'm a Player ... and I can change the plot?

That's right. Adventures emphasizes creative control shared by all Players. As a Player role is not only to play the part of a Hero, but to throw in surprises and add new dimensions to the Adventure. Changing the entire focus of the Adventure isn't recommended (unless the other Players are okay with that), but introducing new characters, gadgets and situations should add to the fun.

Here's a great Word of Science, but it's not on my list!

Words of Science are more like a catalyst to get your imagination running than a required list. If you come up with a great Word that fits in your situation, by all means use it! If you impress the other players, Space Command should let you use your new Word instead of the ones on your Playsheet.

We want a longer Words of Science list! What do we do?

Simply have everyone grab a higher–sided die for the Die of Science and extend the Words of Science setup to fill in as many Words as the die has faces. But please limit your dice to twenty–sides, or you'll spend all afternoon making Playsheets!

And So Our Adventure Concludes

Design Notes

I believe in simple games with simple systems. People are so creative and complex themselves, a game hardly *requires* vast supplements detailing every last item. *Adventures in Space!!* grew out of my love for campy science fiction, mostly through bad movies and comics. When designing the game, I had one reigning idea: Players should be spouting cheezy dialogue at the drop of a hat. *Every* scene should involve discovering the properties of a new element or utilizing some (scientifically ridiculous) law of physics to overcome adversity.

Revisions

August 2001:

- Added examples.
- Streamlined rolling with the Die of Science. Before, picking a Word of Science was a separate roll. Now you simply consult the Die of Science within your roll and incorporate that into the results.
- Added the suggestion for longer Words of Science lists.
- Changed Director & Actor terminology to Space Command & Player.

About Harlekin–Maus Games

Harlekin–Maus Games is my outfit for producing indie roleplaying games. I am a freelance game designer, which really means I occasionally get paid to write fan–fiction. It's a small world out there even for the "big" industry players, so we need all the support you can give. Please, check out www.indie-rpgs.com and support independent gaming.

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Contact

Harlekin–Maus Games: <http://zaknet.tripod.com/hmouse/index.html>
Zak Arntson: zak@mimir.net