

# Space Traders

## A game for piecepack by Jorge Arroyo

Version 0.5, Jun 2006. (c) 2006 Jorge Arroyo.

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Written using NeoOffice/J 1.2

2-4 players, 1 piecepack set, 60 minutes.

### - **Introduction**

This is a game about setting up trading routes for your own inter-stellar faction. Each planet (represented by 2 tiles) has 2 products from a total of 4 (the 4 suits). The market price for each product for each planet, is the number on the tile. Players move workers groups (coins) from planet to planet and set up operations. When a player has an operation on two products with a different price, they score the difference between the two.

The game focuses on the exploration of the planets and ends when players have explored all the planets.

This game is a work in progress. Feedback will be greatly appreciated at the above email address or in the piecepack mailing list and wiki pages. I'm specially interesting in what you think about games with 3 or 4 players and games using the variant rules.

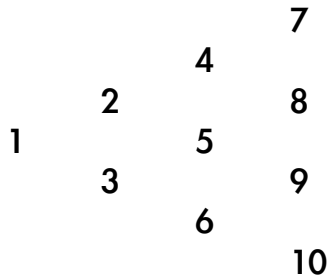
### - **Setup**

First each player chooses a suit and takes the coins and the pawn. The coins are the working groups and the pawn is the leader of the faction.

Then the tiles are grouped by suit. Remove the blank tiles, then shuffle each pile by itself and set it on the table suit down. Mix the four piles so that the players don't know which pile is of which suit (but don't mix the piles with each other). You should end up with 4 piles each of an unknown suit.

Take 2 tiles from different piles and set them aside. Try to use different piles each time. Repeat until there are no piles left. You'll have 10 pairs of tiles. Set the tiles on the table in a suitable configuration with all tiles suit down.

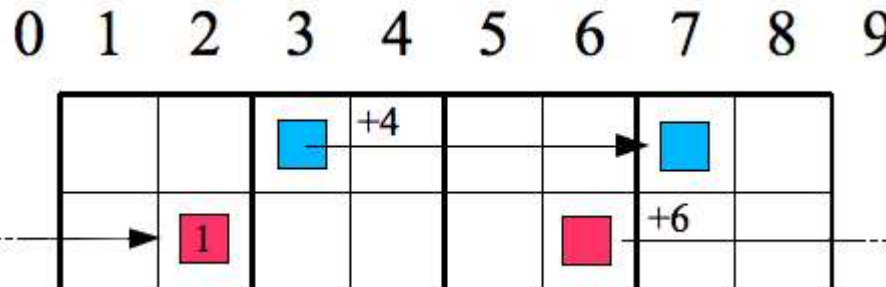
For example:



In this case the planets are connected diagonally (1 to 2 and 3, 2 to 1, 4 and 5, etc...).

There are many other possible layouts you can make. At the end of this document there are some examples you can print and use as a guide. The important thing is to agree and be clear on what the paths are between planets.

The next step is setting the four blank tiles suit down on the table below the board in a horizontal line. This will be the scoring track. Each player puts their die outside the left end of the track showing the blank face. This means 0 points. The track has 10 spaces (0-9) counting the outside of the tiles to the left and right. When scoring, move the die the number of spaces to score. If the die would have to be placed further to the right than the space right outside the track, then it goes back to the beginning and the face is turned to the next number. Here's an example:



Blue has 3 points and scores 4 this turn, so the die is moved 4 spaces to the 7<sup>th</sup> position. Red has 6 points and scores 6, so the die is moved past the 9<sup>th</sup> space and enters again at the beginning of the track until it reaches the 2<sup>nd</sup> space. The die is turned to the 1 face to show it's 12 points.

You can also print out the scoring track provided at the end of this file.

And last, the home planet is chosen (with the standard layout, it'd be the 1<sup>st</sup> planet from the diagram above) and both tiles are turned around. The tiles are the two products that this planet can buy/sell and the price it buys/sells at.

## - **Play**

Each player uses one Turn Sheet to write down the actions for the turn. Each turn is made up of 5 actions points, but some actions take more than 1 point. Once all the players are done, the actions are played simultaneously. The actual order of play doesn't matter because positions are only important at the end of the turn, when scoring points. The actions are:

Action	Points
HT Hire Worker Team:	2
MT Move Worker Team:	1
HL Hire Leader	3
ML Move Leader	2
PP Peek at Empty Planets	1
EO Establish Operation on Planet	2

### - Hire Worker Team:

This action lets you place a Worker Team (coin) on the Home Planet or on a planet where you have the leader.

### - Move Worker Team:

Moves one Worker Team (coin) from one planet to another planet adjacent to it (this depends on the layout used). If the player has an Operation established on the planet, the Team can join it without cost. If the player doesn't have an operation on the planet, or wants to create a new operation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> product of the same planet, another action is required. In this case the coin is placed just outside the planet tiles.

### - Hire Leader:

Lets you place your leader on the Home Planet. The leader cannot Establish Operations alone. It can only be added to already established Operations. A leader counts as 3 Worker Teams when deciding who has control of a product from a planet.

– Move Leader:

Moves the leader from one planet to another planet adjacent to it (the same way a Worker Team moves). Leaders are more expensive to move because they travel in luxury ships.

– Peek at an Empty Planet:

This action lets you take a look at the tiles on an unexplored planet where you have a Worker Team but no Operation. Afterwards, the tiles are placed suit down again.

– Establish an Operation on a Planet:

This is the way to score points in the game. If the planet is an unexplored (suit down) planet then turn the tiles up and place them side by side. Then place your coin on one of the two tiles. If the planet has already been explored by another player, just set the coin on one of the tiles.

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Note that all the actions must specify a planet where the action takes place and a destination if necessary.

At the end of the turn, trading takes place. Each player chooses how the Teams link themselves to buy, send and sell products. Each team can only be linked to one other team, and each product from each planet can only be linked once. Only the player with more Worker Teams and Leaders on the tile can use that product. If there's a draw, no player may use that tile. Remember, Leaders count as 3 Teams when deciding who controls a tile.

For each pair of tiles linked with the same product, the player scores the difference in price from the more expensive to the least expensive.

Example: If the Red player has a Working Team on a planet, on the Red 5 tile, and another team on another planet, on a Red 2 tile, the player scores  $5-2 = 3$  points.

Play continues until all the planets have been explored. The turn when the last planet is uncovered is the last turn and the game ends when scoring has taken place for the last time.

## - **Winning**

The player with more points wins the game.

## - **Variants**

### Expensive Travelling:

This variant makes it possible to earn more points each turn, but also makes the travelling of the goods cost money. So you have to take distance into account also.

The number of Working Teams (Not leaders) on the linked planets determine the number of goods that can travel in one turn (lowest number on one of the planets). For each good, score as before (number on destination planet minus number on origin planet) Also, at the end, subtract 1 point for each step the goods have to travel (but do this only once no matter how many goods travel).

Example: You have 2 teams on Planet 4 and 3 teams on planet 3 (using the layout shown at the beginning). On planet 4 you control a Red 2 tile. On planet 3 you control a red 5 tile.

Your 3 teams on planet 3 could theoretically receive 3 goods each turn, but as you only have 2 teams on planet 4, that's what you can actually send.

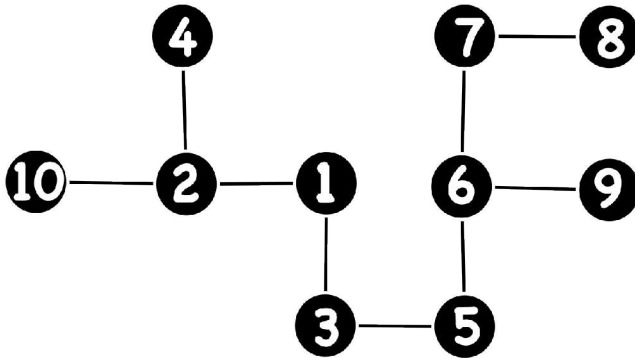
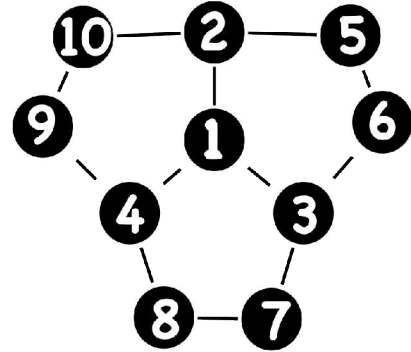
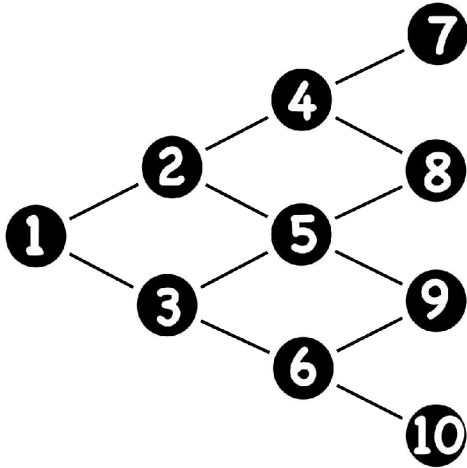
So, you take  $5-2=3$  x2 teams = 6. Now. It takes 3 steps to get from planet 4 to planet 3. That's a profit of 3 points. Note that the third team from planet 3 could actually still receive goods if you control a red product from another planet.

### Free market:

To change things a bit more, you can also play that it does not matter who has more Workers or Leaders in a planet so no player controls the tiles (though Leaders would this time count when deciding the number of goods to be sent). Every player can send or receive goods from and to any planet he's got workers or leaders in. For this last variation a limit is set on the number of goods a tile can send in one turn. Each tile on each planet can send a maximum of 5 goods per turn. Players with more Workers/Leaders buy first.

- **Play Aids**

These are some example layouts. You can print them and use them to remember the connections and the numbers for each planet.



This is a printable scoring track, if the one made of tiles is not comfortable (it's used the same way, with the dice indicating the 10s):

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
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**Space Trading Routes – Turn Sheet**

Action Points: (If an action takes more than one AP, cross the following Action space)

- |    |                               |   |  |
|----|-------------------------------|---|--|
| HW | Hire Working Group:           | 2 | Only on Home (H) or Leader (L) Planets   |
| MW | Move Working Group:           | 1 | Origin-Destination (in numbers)          |
| HL | Hire Leader                   | 3 | Only on Home Planet (H)                  |
| ML | Move Leader                   | 2 | Origin-Destination (in numbers)          |
| PP | Peek at Empty Planets         | 1 | Any Face down Planets with a WC in orbit |
| EO | Establish Operation on Planet | 2 | Any Planet with a WC in orbit            |

<i>Turn</i>	<i>Action 1</i>	<i>Action 2</i>	<i>Action 3</i>	<i>Action 4</i>	<i>Action 5</i>
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2					
3					
4					
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<i>Turn</i>	<i>Action 1</i>	<i>Action 2</i>	<i>Action 3</i>	<i>Action 4</i>	<i>Action 5</i>
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