MERCHANT OF VENUS™

CLASSIC GAME
RULES OF PLAY

BEGIN TRANSMISSION.

AUTHORIZATION: A1JDK-5632

MESSAGE: Cluster 5632 requesting removal of Rastur sanction protocols and immediate construction of galactic base. Rebuilding of war-torn sectors has begun. Whereabouts of friendly civilizations unknown. Need aid in establishing trade routes between isolated cultures. Repeat: Rastur invasion has been put down. Cluster is ready for trade.

END TRANSMISSION.

G'Ranoc finishes reading the communiqué and turns to the Trade Guild Overseer who stands staring out of the port side observation deck, hands behind his back. He is silent until the nearby telegate suddenly comes to life, allowing what appears to be a Dell cruiser to jump from the far reaches of space to the Galactic Trade Hub.

After a small sigh, the TGO turns and speaks.

"G'Ranoc, you are immediately promoted. Galactic Base 1013 has been recommissioned. Take control of her and start repairing the damage those blasted Rastur caused in Cluster 5632. We don't have many supplies so the merchants you take there will have to be self-sufficient. Humans are adaptable. You will need the Whynoms for quick construction and Eeepeeep to deal with technological problems. Finally, the Qossuth could be useful in case of a Rastur resurgence. Invite a merchant from each race and suggest they spur trade activity in Cluster 5632. Tell them there are credits to be made!"

GAME OVERVIEW

Merchant of Venus is a game of interstellar trade and exploration for two to four players. Each player represents a fledgling merchant eager to make a name for himself by exploring a galactic cluster recently opened for trade after a devastating alien attack.

It is up to each player to find the most profitable trade routes in order to deliver goods, transport passengers, and build spaceports and factories.

Let the best merchant win!

OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of the game is to be the first player to reach a total NET WORTH of 2000 credits (money).

TWO GAMES IN ONE BOX!

This edition of *Merchant of Venus* contains two distinct games. The first game, hereafter referred to as the STANDARD GAME, is a redeveloped and reimagined version of the original *Merchant of Venus*.

The second game, hereafter referred to as the CLASSIC GAME, is our implementation of Richard Hamblen's original game design.

This rulebook contains the rules for the classic game.

Unless otherwise noted, references to *Merchant of Venus* within this rulebook refer to the classic game.

COMPONENT OVERVIEW

For a complete component list, refer to page 3 of the standard game rulebook. The following entries describe the components of the *Merchant of Venus* classic game in detail.

MERCHANT SHIPS

These plastic ships represent the trade vessels each player controls on the game board.

GAME BOARD

This double-sided game board depicts an unexplored galactic cluster ripe for trade. One side is used for the standard game and the other for the classic game.

SHIP CLASS SHEETS

These sheets represent the class of a player's ship. Each player keeps his cargo and equipment on or beside his ship class sheet.

FIRST CONTACT CARDS

These cards represent the cultures of the galactic cluster.

FIRST PLAYER CARD

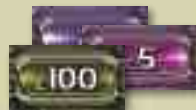This card indicates who is the first player.

BLUE DOT/ ASTEROID TOKENS

Players place these tokens on the board after resolving certain encounters.

CREDIT TOKENS

These tokens are the currency of *Merchant of Venus*.

DRIVE TOKENS

These tokens represent the latest in space travel technology allowing ships to move faster.

WHY CLASSIC RULES?

Since its release in 1988, Richard Hamblen's *Merchant of Venus* has become a board game classic. Its light-hearted humor, clever design, and elegant gameplay have made it a favorite among casual and competitive gamers alike and have earned it universal acclaim over the years.

In the two decades since its original release, demand for the game soared as the original version became uncommonly difficult to find. While this edition of *Merchant of Venus* features FFG's new re-imagined "standard game," we are proud to also include the rules and components required to play Richard Hamblen's original design.

DIFFERENCES FROM THE ORIGINAL RULES

For practical reasons there are a few minor differences between the classic rules described in this book and the original *Merchant of Venus*. The following entries describe these differences in detail.

- In the original rules, the cultures were numbered 1–10, with 1, 4, 7, and 9 split into "a" and "b" subcultures. Our updated rules simply number the cultures 1–14.

- In the original rules, goods from "a" subcultures could not be sold to "b" subcultures. Because of the new numbering system listed above, the corresponding culture's goods are now sold to the subsequent cultures in the numbering sequence.

- Factory goods in the original game were a completely separate good. In our classic game, factories instead produce a more profitable version of regular goods. In addition, some of the regular goods from the original game were named for their factory good counterpart as a stylistic choice. Lastly, factory goods can now fulfill demand tokens.

- The original release of *Merchant of Venus* did not include the navigation space in the Colony World that connects to the outer trade route. Due to its widespread popularity, this navigation space is included in our version of the game.

- In the original game, passengers (fares) had a small number of differences from this version, including the amount of credits received for dropping off a passenger. Our version also gives each passenger a unique title.

- Due to component restrictions, our classic game is limited to four players.

GOODS TOKENS

These tokens represent the commodities that are traded throughout the cluster.

CULTURE TOKENS

These tokens identify a culture within a system and its science.

MERCHANT SPACEPORT/ FACTORY TOKENS

These double-sided tokens represent player-built spaceports and factories.

PASSENGER TOKENS

Passenger tokens represent Very Important Aliens who need transportation from one location to another.

DEMAND TOKENS

These tokens represent a culture's demand for certain goods.

ENCOUNTER TOKENS

These tokens represent the various fortunes and follies that can befall a player during his travels throughout the cluster.

FACTORY DEED TOKENS

These tokens mark locations where players can build factories.

FACTORY GOODS TOKENS

These purple tokens represent special goods produced at a particular factory.

SPACEPORT DEED TOKENS

These tokens mark locations where a merchant spaceport can be built.

SHIELD TOKENS

These tokens represent shields that protect a player's ship from hazards.

DICE

There are four white SPEED DICE that players roll to move their ships around the board.

MERCHANT SHIP ASSEMBLY

Each merchant ship should be attached to its base as shown in the diagram to the right.

THE GALACTIC CLUSTER

The board depicts the large and diverse galactic cluster 5632 where players seek to make their mercantile fortunes. This section describes the various elements of the board in detail.

SPACES

The primary features of the board are the interconnected SPACES on which player's spaceships move through the galactic cluster. Each type of space is illustrated below (their individual effects are described later):

|			
Blue Space		Asteroid	
Yellow Space		Encounter	
Red Space		Navigation Space	
Red Hazard		Orbit Space	
Yellow Hazard		Surface City	
Blue Hazard		Neutral Spaceport	
		Galactic Base	

SYSTEMS AND ROUTES

The galactic cluster consists of 14 **SYSTEMS** each connected by one or more **TRADE ROUTES**.

A **SYSTEM** is defined as all spaces connected by a solid contiguous line (gray or green) and a **MARKET**.

1. System
2. System Name
3. Market

Trade routes are consecutive spaces connected by dashed lines. They constitute paths players use to travel from one system to another.

Trade Route
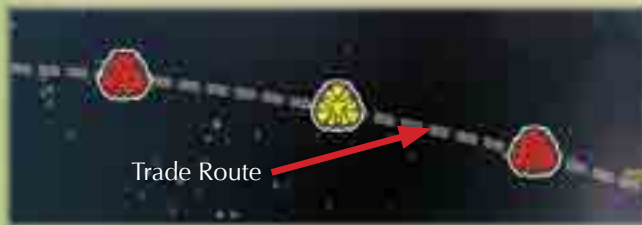
If a space is connected to both a solid and a dashed line, the space is considered part of the connected system.

THE ASTEROID SYSTEM

The Asteroid System is composed of a web rather than an elliptical path of spaces. These spaces, being connected by contiguous solid lines, are all considered part of the Asteroid System, including the two orbit spaces at either end of the system.

THE NEBULA HABITAT

The Nebula Habitat is an amorphous system whose orbit paths are constantly in flux. In addition, the primary elliptical portion of the system has long tendrils that wind through the cluster, making the system hard to navigate. A player can still establish a merchant spaceport in one of the Nebula Habitat's navigation spaces (see "Buying a Merchant Spaceport Deed" on page 14).

ANOMALIES

The Supernova and the Supergiant anomalies are **not** systems and the spaces surrounding them (being connected by dashed lines) are trade routes.

Supernova   Supergiant

MARKETS

Each system contains a **MARKET** composed of several different areas, indicated below:

1. Culture Token Area
2. Factory Goods Token Area
3. Goods Token Area
4. Factory Deed Token Area

GALACTIC BASE

Galactic Base is not a system but acts as a neutral spaceport where players can purchase unwanted relics and new ship classes (rules for both are discussed later). Galactic Base also acts as the starting space for players at the start of the game.
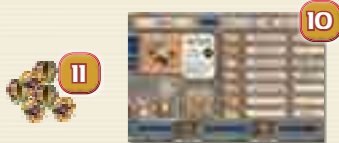
CLASSIC GAME SETUP DIAGRAM

EEEPEEEP PLAYER'S PLAY AREA

HUMAN PLAYER'S PLAY AREA

QOSSUTH PLAYER'S PLAY AREA

WHYNOM PLAYER'S PLAY AREA

1. Board
2. First Contact Card
3. Culture Supply Areas
4. Encounter Tokens
5. Blue Dot/Asteroid Tokens

6. Drive Tokens
7. Spaceport Deed Tokens
8. Shield Tokens
9. Demand and Passenger Tokens (in a cup)

10. Ship Class Sheet
11. Spaceport/Factory Tokens
12. Merchant Ships
13. Bank
14. First Player Card

SETUP

To prepare a classic game of *Merchant of Venus*, carefully follow the steps below.

1. **Remove Standard Game Components:** Return all of the following components to the game box: dashboard sheets, Challenge cards, Encounter cards, Reward cards, Pilot cards, Mission cards, market tokens, cargo hold indicator tokens, fame/infamy tokens, mission tokens, pirate tokens, production tokens, racial technology tokens, telegate tokens, the round marker, and the purple effect die. Then remove all passenger tokens marked with fame/infamy icons, including "Diva," "Ambassador," "Caterer," "Politician," and "Invader." These components are not used in the classic game (see "Removing Standard Game Components" on page 24 for a visual guide).

2. **Place Game Board:** Unfold the board and place it centrally on the table, ensuring the "Classic Game" side (see lower left corner) is faceup.

3. **Prepare Cluster:** Shuffle the First Contact cards. Then place one First Contact card facedown in each system on the board.

4. **Prepare Encounters:** Shuffle the encounter tokens facedown. Then randomly place one encounter token facedown on each encounter space on the board. Return unused encounter tokens to the game box.

5. **Prepare Culture Supply Areas:** Separate the culture tokens, goods tokens, factory deed tokens, and factory goods tokens. Then group the tokens by culture next to each culture's supply area to the left side of the board.

Culture Identifiers

Each culture is identified by a symbol and a number. For example, the graphic to the right represents the Zum culture.

6. **Prepare Token Stockpiles:** Sort the blue dot/asteroid tokens, drive tokens, shield tokens, and spaceport deed tokens by type and place them in stockpiles near the board.

7. **Prepare Bonus Cup:** Place the passenger tokens and demand tokens in an opaque container from which they can be drawn at random, such as a bag or a cup.

8. **Select Race:** *Merchant of Venus* offers four playable races: Humans, Eeepeeep, Whynoms, and Qossuth. Each player chooses one of these four races (if players cannot agree, choose randomly) and takes the ship class sheets, merchant spaceport/factory tokens, and plastic ship corresponding to the color of that race. Each player then places his ship class sheets in a stack with the scout class ship faceup.

9. **Prepare the Bank and Starting Funds:** Sort the credit tokens into piles by denomination and place them near the board. Give each player an amount of credits equal to the number of players multiplied by 20.

SHIP CLASS SHEET ANATOMY

1. Ship Class Name	7. Ship Cost
2. Speed Number	8. Trade-in Value
3. Navigation Die Box	9. Reference Area
4. Race Image	10. Hull Shield Space
5. Home Culture	11. Cargo Holds
6. Science Type	

10. **Determine First Player:** Randomly select a player. That player receives the First Player card and is hereafter called the **FIRST PLAYER**.

11. **Place Merchant Ships:** Each player places his merchant ship on the Galactic Base space on the board.

Players are now ready to begin their business venture!

PLAYING THE GAME

Merchant of Venus is played over a series of turns beginning with the first player and proceeding clockwise. Each turn, a player may explore the galactic cluster, buy and sell goods, and buy better ships. The game is played until a player has a net worth of at least c2000 at the end of his turn. That player is declared the winner.

PLAYER TURNS

After setup, the game proceeds to player turns starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise around the table. Players continue to take turns until a player has a net worth of at least c2000 at the end of his current turn.

A player's turn consists of three phases, performed in the following order:

1. Movement Phase

2. First Contact Phase

3. Transaction Phase

After a player completes his Transaction phase, his turn ends and the next player's turn begins.

MOVEMENT PHASE

A player's Movement phase consists of four steps, performed in the following order:

1. Declare Heading

2. Set Speed

3. Move

4. End Movement

A player may choose to skip his Movement phase to remain on his ship's current space and end his turn. If the player skips his Movement phase while on a surface city or spaceport, his turn proceeds directly to the Transaction phase (see "Transaction Phase" on page 11).

1. DECLARE HEADING

At the start of the Movement phase, the current player must declare his heading and point his ship towards the next space he wishes to travel to. If the player fails to declare a heading before rolling his speed dice (see "Set Speed" below), he must declare a heading and reroll his speed dice and accept the new result.

2. SET SPEED

After the current player declares his heading, he rolls a number of speed dice equal to his ship's SPEED NUMBER and totals the results. This sum is his MOVEMENT VALUE, representing the maximum number of MOVEMENT POINTS he can spend to move his ship during his Move step.

After rolling his speed dice, the current player may assign one of those dice to his ship's navigation in preparation for any navigation spaces or telegates he may face during his move step (see "Navigation" on page 9).

After a player rolls his speed dice, he is committed to moving his ship and must proceed to the Move step.

3. MOVE

After the current player sets his speed, he spends his movement value to move through the galactic cluster. Moving from one space to the next along a gray line (solid or dashed) costs the player one movement point, while moving along a solid green line costs him two movement points.

During this step, the current player can come across navigation spaces, hazards, telegates, and other surprises that can divert, interrupt, or even end his Movement phase. The finer points of moving through the galaxy are found in "Bumps Along the Way" on page 16.

4. END MOVEMENT

The current player ends his Movement phase by either LANDING his ship or spending his entire movement value.

A player may only land on a surface city, spaceport, or asteroid. If a player lands his ship on a surface city or a spaceport, his Movement phase ends and his turn proceeds to the First Contact phase (see "First Contact Phase" on page 10). If he lands his ship on an asteroid, his turn immediately ends.

If a player chooses not to land his ship, or if he is not stopped by other game effects, he **must** spend his entire movement value. After he spends his last movement point, his turn immediately ends, unless he wishes to trade with another player whose ship is on the same space (see "Player Trading" on page 21).

ADDITIONAL MOVEMENT RULES

Players should observe the following additional rules during the Movement phase:

- A player can never roll more than four speed dice during his turn.

- Ships can move past one another without movement penalty.

- Multiple ships can occupy the same space.

- After a ship departs from a space, it cannot immediately turn around and return to that space. That is, players cannot backtrack during a Move step.

NAVIGATION

In order to move through navigation spaces and telegates, a player must ASSIGN a die to his navigation. To do so, the player simply takes any one of his rolled speed dice and places it in the navigation die box of his ship class sheet. The value of this assigned die is his NAVIGATION VALUE for that turn.

A player can only assign a die to navigation during the Set Speed step of his Movement phase or immediately before exiting a navigation space or a telegate.

If a player is about to exit a navigation space or a telegate and he has not yet assigned a speed die to navigation, he must do so before exiting the space.

A speed die **always** contributes its result to the player's movement value, even while assigned to navigation. Players cannot change the value of a die when assigning it. After a player assigns a die to navigation, that die cannot be removed for the rest of the player's turn.

Under no circumstances can a player assign more than one die to the navigation die box on his ship class sheet.

OBSERVING A CULTURE

When a player enters any orbit space of a system containing an undiscovered culture, he may pause his Movement phase to secretly look at the First Contact card placed in that system. He then returns the First Contact card facedown to its previous place on the board and continues his Movement phase as normal.
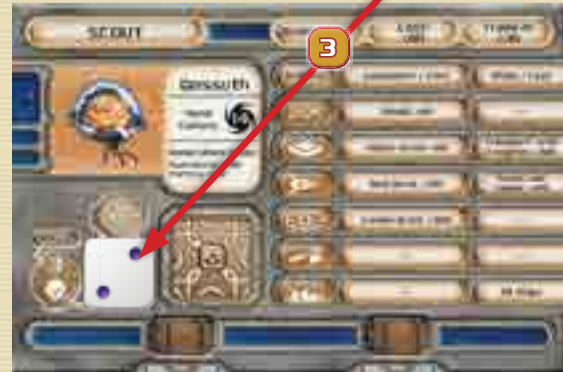
MOVEMENT EXAMPLE

The Qossuth player wishes to move to the Jungle World.

1. At the start of his Movement phase, he declares a heading and points his ship toward the space he wishes to travel to.

2. Next he rolls three speed dice with results of 6, 3, and 2. This gives him a movement value of 11—just enough to reach the Jungle World.

3. Before he exits the navigation space, he must assign a die to his navigation by placing the 2-result die on the navigation die box of his ship class sheet (see "Navigation Spaces" on page 16).

4. When the player's ship reaches the orbit space (space 9), he observes the culture by secretly looking at the First Contact card. He then returns the card facedown and continues his movement to the surface city of the Jungle World.
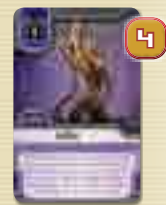
Reminder: Moving along a green line costs two movement points (such as between the orbit space and the surface city in this example).
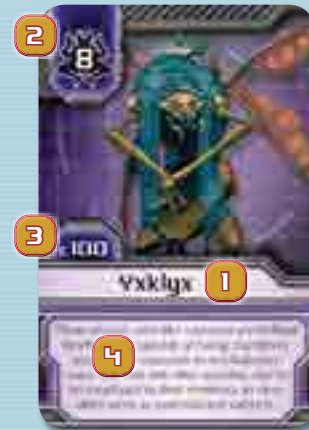
FIRST CONTACT PHASE

At the beginning of each *Merchant of Venus* game, every system is unexplored and each culture's location in the cluster is unknown. Undiscovered cultures are represented by a facedown First Contact card.

If the current player ends his Movement phase on a surface city or spaceport of a system containing a First Contact card, he performs the following steps:

1. He flips the First Contact card faceup, revealing which culture inhabits this system.

2. He takes the culture token of the revealed culture and places it on that system's culture token space. If there are any passenger or demand tokens in this culture's supply area, he places them near the system's culture token area.

3. He places the revealed culture's goods tokens and factory goods token in their respective spaces with their cost values faceup.

4. He places the revealed culture's factory deed token in the factory deed space of that system.

5. He places a spaceport deed token on each orbit space in that system.

FIRST CONTACT CARD ANATOMY

1. Name
2. Culture Identifier
3. IOU Value
4. Flavor Text

FIRST CONTACT EXAMPLE

1. The Whynom player is first to land on the surface city of the Trapped Rogue Planet. He flips its First Contact card faceup, revealing the Volois culture.

2. He then takes the Volois culture token from the Volois supply area and places it in the culture token area.

3. Next he takes all of the Volois goods tokens, placing them in the goods token space.

4. He then takes the factory deed token and places it in the factory deed token space.

5. He takes the factory goods token and places it in the factory goods token space.

6. Finally he places a spaceport deed token on each orbit space in the system and takes the First Contact card.

6. He takes the First Contact card and places it in his play area. The card gives the player first contact credits he can spend at the discovered culture's market (see "Using First Contact Credits" on page 14).

The culture is now open for trade with any player who lands in its system, including the player who just discovered it.

TRANSACTION PHASE

A player at a surface city or spaceport may trade with the system's culture during his Transaction phase. This includes buying goods, equipment, factories, factory goods, and spaceports from the culture, as well as selling goods to the culture and transporting passengers to and from the system.

A player may take the following actions during his Transaction phase:

- Buy
- Sell
- Pick Up a Passenger
- Drop Off a Passenger

There is no limit to the number of such actions a player may take during his Transaction phase, and he may take the actions any order.

Important Exception: If the current player lands on a system's surface city or neutral spaceport **during the Movement phase of the same turn**, he can perform only **one** buy action and **one** sell action in the subsequent Transaction phase. He may still pick up or drop off an unlimited number of passengers. This limitation does not apply to merchant spaceports or open spaceports (see "Spaceports" on page 18).

BUY ACTIONS

When trading with a culture, the current player may perform a buy action to purchase one of the following from that culture:

- Goods
- Factory Deed
- Factory Good
- Piece of Equipment or a Ship
- Spaceport Deed

Each purchase type is described in detail below.

Buying Goods

Each culture sells one type of good, represented by the goods tokens in its market.

To buy a good, a player pays an amount of credits to the bank equal to the good's cost (see "Goods Token Anatomy" to the right). He then takes the goods token from the culture's market, placing it in an eligible cargo hold below his ship class sheet (see "Capacity" on page 19).

After purchasing a goods token, it is placed in an available cargo hold.

If the player has no cargo hold space, he cannot buy goods unless he makes room in his ship (see "Making Room in a Ship" on page 21).

GOODS TOKEN ANATOMY

| FRONT | BACK |

1. Name
2. Culture selling this good
3. Cost
4. Resale value (see "Sell Actions" on page 14)
5. Cultures buying this good
6. Capacity requirement (see "Capacity" on page 19)

Grades (color) of Goods

The GRADE of a good is indicated by the color of its token. There are three grades of goods: basic, premium, and luxury. The higher a good's grade, the more expensive it is.

BASIC	PREMIUM	LUXURY
c10 - c40	c50 - c110	c120 - c200
(Copper)	(Silver)	(Gold)

Example: The Eeepeeep player lands on a surface city of the Jungle World where the Nillis reside. Because he just landed, he may only perform one buy action and one sell action. He does not have enough credits to make a purchase, so he decides to take his sell action first to raise some funds.

First he sells one Designer Genes token for c120, constituting his sell action for this Transaction phase.

Then he purchases one Bionic Perfume goods token for c80, constituting his buy action for this Transaction phase. He places the Bionic Perfume token in an empty cargo hold on his ship.

If the Eeepeeep player skips his next Movement phase, remaining on the surface city, he may perform any number of buy and sell actions with the Nillis during his next Transaction phase.

Buying a Factory Deed

Each culture sells one factory deed, represented by the factory deed token in its market. The cost of a factory deed is either c100 or c200 as listed on its token.

To buy a factory deed (and build its factory) a player pays an amount of credits to the bank equal to the factory's cost. He then takes the factory deed token from the culture's market, placing it near his credits in his play area.

Then the current player takes a factory token in his color from his supply and places it in the now vacant factory deed token area to indicate he has built a factory in this system. **The printed value of the factory deed token is included in the owning player's net worth even if it was purchased at a discount** (see "Home Culture Discounts" on page 21).

Buying Factory Goods

Each culture sells one type of factory good, represented by the factory goods token in its market. A culture's factory goods token is only available after the culture's factory deed has been purchased by a player. If a factory deed token is still present in a market, the factory goods token in that market cannot be purchased.

To buy a factory good, a player pays an amount of credits to the bank equal to the factory good's cost as shown on the face of the factory goods token. He then takes the factory goods token from the culture's market, placing it in an eligible cargo hold below his ship class sheet (see "Capacity" on page 19). The player who owns the factory in that system also receives a 50% commission from the bank (see "Commissions" on page 20).

If the current player has no available cargo holds, he cannot buy factory goods unless he makes room in his ship (see "Making Room in a Ship" on page 21).

BUILDING A FACTORY EXAMPLE

The Human player has landed on the Inhabited Moon. To build a factory, he spends a buy action, then takes the following steps:

1. The factory deed at this system costs c100, so he pays c100 to the bank.

2. He takes the factory deed token and places it in his play area.

3. He places one of his factory tokens on the factory deed token area.

Buying Equipment or a Ship

Each culture may offer equipment and/or ships for sale.

To determine the equipment and ships (if any) a culture sells, the player looks at the science icon on the culture token and references the chart on his current ship class sheet.

Science Icon

To buy a piece of equipment or a ship, the current player pays an amount of credits to the bank equal to the item's cost (as printed on the player's ship class sheet).

The following entries describe the various equipment and ship types in detail.

Shields

Shields protect a player's ship from various hazards found throughout the cluster.

After a player purchases a shield token, he places it on the hull shield space on his ship class sheet. Any additional shield tokens a player purchases must be placed in an eligible cargo hold (see "Capacity" on page 19).

Each shield token that a player owns reduces the amount of credits the player must pay when exiting a hazard space by c20 (see "Hazards" on page 17), as indicated by the "-c20" on the shield token.

Drives

Drives help ships move more swiftly around the cluster by allowing them to skip certain spaces on the board.

After a player purchases a drive, he places it in an eligible cargo hold below his ship class sheet (see "Capacity" on page 19). **Each drive token has a capacity requirement of one dot.**

After purchasing a drive token, it is placed in an available cargo hold.

There are three kinds of drives: yellow, red, and combo.

- The **YELLOW DRIVE** allows a player to skip over all yellow spaces on the board.

- The **RED DRIVE** allows a player to skip over all red spaces on the board.

- The **COMBO DRIVE** allows a player to skip over all red **and** yellow spaces on the board.

If a player does not wish to use his drive during his Move step, he must announce this during the Declare Heading step of his Movement phase.

Ships

All players begin the game with a scout class ship. However, certain cultures (and Galactic Base) allow a player to purchase other ship classes.

A player can have only one ship at a time. When the current player buys a new ship, he must trade in his old ship and apply its trade-in value to the purchase of the new ship (see "Bartering" on page 20).

When a player purchases a new ship class, he replaces his current ship class sheet with the ship class sheet of the ship he purchased, transferring all tokens to the new ship class sheet. If the new ship class does not have enough eligible cargo holds, the player must make room in his ship (see "Making Room in a Ship" on page 21).

DRIVE MOVEMENT EXAMPLE

When travelling from a space in the Colony World system to the surface city of the Jungle World system, the Qossuth player's red drive allows him to skip three red spaces along his path, costing him a total of 8 movement points instead of 11.

THE SCIENCE OF A CULTURE

A culture's science determines the equipment and ships that it sells (if any). There are five types of science:

Biotech: Biotech cultures sell shields. They do not sell or barter ship classes.

Industry: Industry cultures sell yellow drives. They sell the transport and freighter ship classes and barter all ship classes.

Technology: Technology cultures sell red drives. They sell the scout and clipper ship classes and barter all ship classes.

Metaphysics: Metaphysics cultures sell combo drives. They do not sell or barter ship classes.

Primitive: Primitive cultures do not sell equipment, nor do they sell or barter ship classes.

GALACTIC BASE

The Galactic Base is not a culture. However, it does sell and barter all ship classes.

Buying a Merchant Spaceport Deed

Systems can contain up to three merchant spaceports. This is represented by the merchant spaceport deed tokens that are placed on orbit spaces when the system's culture is discovered.

To buy a merchant spaceport deed (and build its merchant spaceport), the current player pays c200 to the bank as shown on the merchant spaceport deed token. He takes the merchant spaceport deed token from an orbit space of his choice within his current system, placing it near his credits in his play area.

Then the player takes one of his merchant spaceport tokens from his supply and places it in the now vacant orbit space to indicate he has built a merchant spaceport in this orbit space. **The printed value of the merchant spaceport deed token (c200) is included in the owning player's net worth even if it was purchased at a discount** (see "Home Culture Discounts" on page 21).

Using First Contact Credits

When resolving a buy action with a culture, the player who made first contact with that culture may return that culture's First Contact card to the game box in order to pay for items whose combined value is equal to or less than the IOU value on that culture's First Contact card. If the combined value is greater than the IOU value, the player must pay the balance in credits.

All items completely purchased with the IOU value of a First Contact card do not count as a buy action. However, an item purchased even partially with credits does count as a buy action.

The IOU value on a culture's First Contact card does **not** count toward a player's net worth.

> *Example 1: The Eeepeeep player has just made first contact with the Graw culture by landing on a surface city of the Giant Planet. The Graw First Contact card has an IOU value of c90. The player decides to buy three Glorious Junk goods at c30 each for a total of c90. Since this entire purchase is completely paid by the IOU value, it does not count as a buy action and he may still make another purchase.*

> *Example 2: The Qossuth player has just made first contact with the Shenna culture by landing on a surface city of the Giant Planet. The Shenna First Contact card has an IOU value of c90. The player decides to buy two Melf Pelt goods at c50 each for a total of c100. This total is c10 more than the IOU value, requiring the player to pay credits to complete the transaction. This purchase counts as one buy action.*

BUILDING A MERCHANT SPACEPORT EXAMPLE

The Whynom player has landed on the Trapped Rogue Planet. To build a factory, he spends a buy action, then takes the following steps:

1. He pays c200 to the bank.

2. He takes the merchant spaceport deed token of his choice and places it in his play area.

3. He places his merchant spaceport token on the orbit space.

SELL ACTIONS

For a player to sell goods, his ship must be on a surface city or spaceport of a culture that buys **that particular type of good**. The cultures to which a good can be sold are listed on each goods token (see "Goods Token Anatomy" on page 11).

Example: The Bionic Perfume, purchased at the Nillis culture (1), can be sold at the Volois (2), Graw (3), Niks (4), and Dell (5) cultures.

When a player sells a good, he receives its resale value (listed in the center white box on the back of the goods token) in credits from the bank. **Then he places the goods token immediately in the bonus cup** (see "The Bonus Cup" on page 19). Each sale of a goods token counts as one sell action.

COMPONENT LIMITATIONS

If players run out of credit tokens, blue dot/asteroid tokens, or merchant spaceport tokens, please use suitable substitutes (such as pennies, beads, etc.) to supplement those provided. **All other component types in the classic game are strictly limited to the amounts included in the box.**

SPENDING CREDITS

When a player spends, or is asked to pay, credits, he takes a sufficient amount of credit tokens from his play area and returns them to the bank (unless he is making payments to another player). Change may be made at the bank at any time (i.e. players may break large credit denominations into smaller ones).

Note: The credit values in the green and red boxes on the back of the goods token are ignored (see "Goods Token Anatomy" on page 11).

When a player sells a factory good, he follows the same process described above.

PICKING UP PASSENGERS

Picking up passengers and dropping them off at their destinations is another way for players to earn credits. Passenger tokens are not placed on the game board during setup; instead they come into the game via the bonus cup (see "The Bonus Cup" on page 19).

To pick up a passenger, the current player must be at a surface city or spaceport of a system containing at least one passenger token. During his Transaction phase, he can pick up any number of passengers at that culture by placing the passenger tokens in eligible cargo holds below his ship class sheet.

Passenger tokens have a capacity requirement of one dot (see "Capacity" on page 19).

DROPPING OFF PASSENGERS

To drop off a passenger, the current player must end his Move step at a surface city or spaceport of the system designated as the passenger's destination.

First the current player collects the passenger's fare in credits from the bank as specified on the passenger token. Then he places the passenger token in the bonus cup (see "The Bonus Cup" on page 19).

Note: The icon to the right represents Galactic Base. If it appears as the starting location or the destination of a passenger token, that passenger either starts on, or must be dropped off at, Galactic Base.
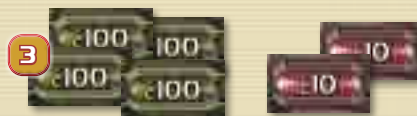
SELLING GOODS EXAMPLE

1. The Whynom player has decided to skip his Movement phase during his current turn in order to take unlimited buy and sell actions at the surface city.

2. The Whynom player sells his three Bionic Perfumes for the center resale value shown on the Bionic Perfume goods tokens.

3. He collects c140 for each token for a total of c420.

PASSENGER TOKEN ANATOMY

1. Passenger Title
2. Starting Location
3. Destination
4. Fare
5. Capacity Requirement
6. Passenger Icon

END OF TRANSACTION PHASE

After the current player has completed all the actions of his Transaction phase, his turn is over.

ENDING A TURN

A player's turn ends when any of the following occurs:

- He finishes his Transaction phase.

- He is unable to pay, or chooses not to pay, the cost of a hazard space (see "Hazards" on page 17).

- He collects a relic (see "Encounters" on page 18).

- He ends his Move step (or skips his Movement phase) on any space other than a spaceport, surface city, or asteroid.

When a player's turn is over, the player to his left begins his turn.

END OF THE GAME

If a player has a net worth of at least c2000 **at the end of his turn**, that player has won and the game immediately ends.

CALCULATING NET WORTH

Throughout the course of the game, each player must keep track of his net worth. A player's net worth is the sum of the full value of credit tokens, merchant spaceport deed tokens, and factory deed tokens in his play area, regardless of what the player originally paid to build the spaceport or factory.

Example: At the end of his turn, the Human player has c1,052 in credit tokens. He also has two merchant spaceport deeds worth c200 each, one factory deed worth c100, and another factory deed worth c200. In total, the Human player's net worth is c1,752.

A player's net worth is common knowledge and should be disclosed any time another player asks for it.

BUMPS ALONG THE WAY

While moving through the galaxy, players will run into many hazards, obstacles, and encounters. Some give the current player precious cargo; others send him hurtling to the opposite end of the galaxy. The following sections describe the various surprises that await players.

NAVIGATION SPACES

Navigation spaces mark the nebulous routes through the galaxy where careless pilots often find themselves taking a wrong turn.
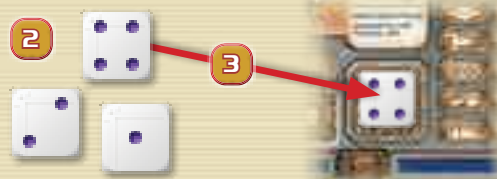
Navigation Space

A player's ship must exit a navigation space using the path that matches his navigation value (see "Navigation" on page 9).

A ship can **never** exit a navigation space in the direction from which it entered during **that turn**. Therefore, if a player has a die assigned to navigation that would force him to exit the navigation space in the direction from which he entered that turn, he must end his turn on the navigation space.

NAVIGATION EXAMPLE

1. The Qossuth player begins his turn on Galactic Base and declares a heading towards the Nebula Habitat system.

2. He rolls his speed dice resulting in a 4, 2, and 1.

3. During his Movement phase, he enters a navigation space. Before exiting the navigation space, he assigns the 4-result die to his navigation die box, then continues his move to the adjacent encounter space.

If the current player does not have a die currently assigned to navigation, he **must** assign one to navigation before exiting the navigation space.

Remember that after a speed die has been assigned, it cannot be changed during the current player's turn. Therefore, if the current player travels through multiple navigation spaces during his Movement phase, he must adhere to the same navigation result on each navigation space.

TELEGATES

Telegates are wormholes through space that can instantly transport a player around the galactic cluster. Telegates can be revealed when a player passes over an encounter space (see "Encounters" on page 18).

When a player **exits** a telegate space during his Move step, he immediately resolves the following:

1. He must assign a speed die to his navigation die box if he has not done so already.

2. He immediately moves his ship to the telegate with the number that matches his navigation value (the destination telegate is not resolved).

   If his navigation value matches the telegate number on his current space, or if there is no telegate with that number on the board, his ship remains on its current space and he continues his Move step (skipping the remaining step below).

3. After using the telegate, he declares a new heading and continues his Move step from the new telegate. **Being transported between telegates costs one movement point.**

BRANCHING PATHS

As the current player moves along the path of his declared heading, he may encounter a branch in his path, such as the one depicted to the right.

When the current player exits a branching space in the same Move step he entered it, he must declare which of the forward branches (he cannot reverse direction) is his new heading. Then he continues his Move step.

HAZARDS

When a player enters a hazard space, he pays an amount of credits to the bank equal to the value shown on the hazard space and continues his Move step as normal. If the player is unable (or unwilling) to pay the cost of the hazard space, his turn immediately ends on the hazard space.

The cost of a hazard space is reduced by c20 for each shield token the player has on his ship class sheet.

Drives allow a player to skip over hazard spaces that are the same color as the drive.

In addition to the hazard spaces printed on the board, new hazards can come into play during the game as a result of encounters (see "Encounters" on page 18).

TELEGATE EXAMPLES

Example 1: The Whynom player enters the telegate "2" space and chooses to assign a speed die showing a 2 result to his navigation die box. Since this navigation value matches the telegate number in his current space, his ship is unaffected by the telegate and he continues his Move step to the adjacent navigation space.

Example 2: The Whynom player enters the telegate "2" space and chooses to assign a speed die showing a 5 result to his navigation die box. Since this navigation value matches telegate "5" on the board, he must move his ship to that telegate for the cost of one movement point, declare a new heading, and continue his Move step.

SPACEPORTS

In *Merchant of Venus*, there are three types of spaceports: NEUTRAL SPACEPORTS, MERCHANT SPACEPORTS, and OPEN SPACEPORTS. Each of these are described in detail below.

Neutral Spaceports

Several systems contain spaceports printed on the board. These are called neutral spaceports. Galactic Base is also considered a neutral spaceport.

When a player is trading on a neutral spaceport in the same turn he landed on it, he is limited to **one** buy action and **one** sell action. If the player skips his Movement phase while on a neutral spaceport, he can take **unlimited** buy and sell actions.

Merchant Spaceports

Merchant spaceports are built on orbit spaces by the players in order to receive commissions on buy and sell actions conducted there.

After a merchant spaceport has been built in an orbit space, players can use the merchant spaceport to trade with the culture in that system. When trading on a merchant spaceport, a player may take **unlimited** buy and sell actions.

For each buy action and each sell action any player performs at a merchant spaceport (including transactions made with credits on First Contact cards), the owner of the spaceport receives a 10% commission from the bank (see "Commissions" on page 20).

Open Spaceports

Open spaceports can be revealed when a player enters an encounter space (see "Encounters" to the right).

An open spaceport allows a player to trade with the culture in that system. If the associated culture has not been discovered, a player may land on the open spaceport in order to make first contact with that culture. An open spaceport does not belong to any player. When trading on an open spaceport, a player may take **unlimited** buy and sell actions.
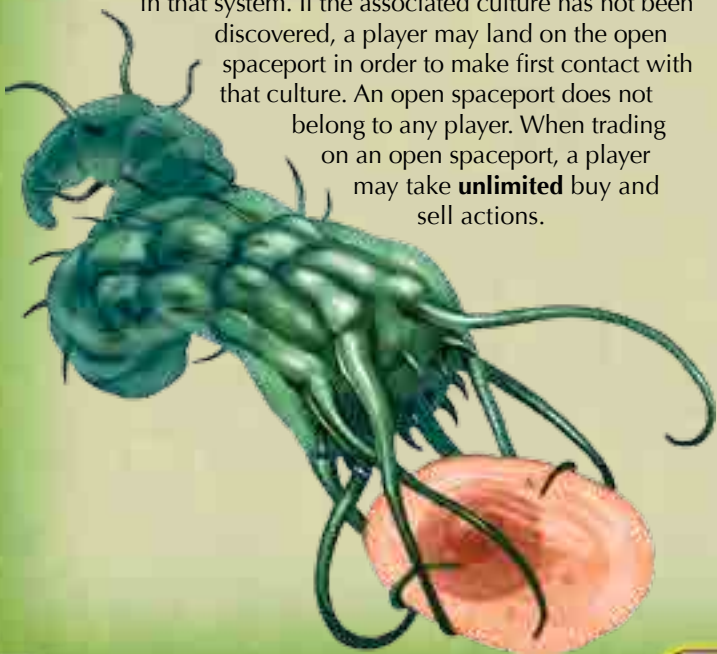
ENCOUNTERS

When a player enters a space with a facedown encounter token, he must pause his turn and flip the encounter token faceup. He then must resolve the encounter token before he continues his turn.

When a player enters a space with a faceup encounter token, he must resolve the encounter token before he continues his turn.

There are four types of encounter tokens: hazards, relics, open spaceports, and telegates.

Hazard: The current player pays an amount of credits to the bank equal to the value shown on the hazard token and continues his Move step as normal. If he is unable (or unwilling) to pay the cost of the hazard token, his turn immediately ends on the hazard space (see "Hazards" on page 17). The hazard remains on the encounter space until the end of the game.

Relic: The current player may collect the relic, placing the token in his play area. He then places an asteroid token on that encounter space and ends his turn. If the player chooses not to collect the relic, he continues his Move step as normal, and the relic token remains on the encounter space. There are several different kinds of relics, each with their own properties (see "Appendix: Relics" on page 22).

Open Spaceport: The open spaceport allows players to interact with the culture in that system (see "Open Spaceports" to the left). The token remains on the encounter space until the end of the game.

Telegate: The current player must resolve the telegate according to the rules on page 17. The telegate remains on the encounter space until the end of the game.

ASTEROIDS

Asteroids are chunks of rock so large that players can land their ships on them. When entering an asteroid space, the current player can choose to end his turn in that space even if he has unspent movement points.

Unclaimed relics are treated as asteroid spaces for the purposes of movement. After a player claims a relic, he replaces the relic token with an asteroid token.

OTHER RULES

The following entries describe other important *Merchant of Venus* rules.

CAPACITY

Freight capacity in *Merchant of Venus* is symbolized by the capacity icon with a number of capacity dots.

Capacity Icon (1 dot)   Capacity Icon (2 dots)

The capacity requirement of goods tokens, factory goods tokens, passenger tokens, and equipment are designated on each token by a capacity icon of one or two dots. For example, the Designer Genes factory goods token has a capacity requirement of two dots.

Each of a player's cargo holds has a capacity of up to two dots. Thus, a single cargo hold can hold either a) one token with a capacity requirement of two dots, or b) one or two tokens with a capacity requirement of one dot each.

THE BONUS CUP

During setup, passenger and demand tokens are placed in an opaque container known as the BONUS CUP. Throughout the game, tokens are placed into and drawn from this cup in order to generate goods, passenger, and demand tokens.

When a player sells a goods token or a factory goods token, drops off a passenger, or fulfills a demand token, he places the token into the bonus cup. **Whenever a token is placed into the bonus cup, the current player performs the following steps:**

1. Mix the contents of the bonus cup.

2. Draw one token at random from the cup.

3. Place the drawn token in the appropriate system:

   • If it is a passenger token, place it in the system containing its starting culture.

   • If it is a goods or factory goods token, place it in the system containing the culture that sells that good.

   • If it is a demand token, place it in the system containing the culture shown on the token.

If the corresponding culture has not been discovered, place the token on the culture's supply area to the left of the board.

CAPACITY EXAMPLE

The Eeepeeep player skips his Move step to remain on a surface city in the Water World system. Doing so gives him an unlimited number of actions during his Transaction phase.

The Water World system's market offers Finest Dust goods tokens and a yellow drive token. In addition, the "Scientist" passenger is available to be picked up in this system.

During his Transaction phase, the Eeepeeep player takes the following actions.

1. With a buy action, he purchases a Finest Dust goods token. This token has a capacity requirement of two dots, meaning it fills a single cargo hold. He pays c10 to the bank and places the Finest Dust goods token in one of his empty cargo holds.

2. With another buy action, he purchases a yellow drive token. He pays c80 to the bank and places the yellow drive, which has a capacity requirement of one dot, in an empty cargo hold.

3. Then, as a pick up passenger action, the Eeepeeep player takes the "Scientist" passenger on board his ship. The passenger has a capacity requirement of one dot, so he places the "Scientist" passenger token in the cargo hold already containing the yellow drive token. With two tokens, each of which has a capacity requirement of one dot, the Eeepeeep player's second cargo hold is now full.

If multiple tokens are placed in the cup at one time, the same number of tokens must immediately be drawn at random from the cup and placed in their appropriate systems on the board.

DEMAND

Demand tokens represent a culture's demand for certain goods. When a player draws a demand token from the bonus cup, he places it in the system of the culture shown on the token. If the culture has not been discovered yet, he places the token in the corresponding culture's supply area to the left of the board. When that culture is later revealed, the demand token is transferred to the discovered system's market along with the rest of the tokens from the culture's supply area.

When a player sells a goods token in a system that contains a demand token for that type of good, he receives an amount of credits from the bank equal to the good's normal resale value **plus** the bonus credits shown on the demand token. After the transaction, the goods token and the demand token are placed in the bonus cup (see "The Bonus Cup" on page 19).

High Demand

If there are multiple demand tokens for the same good at a culture's market, a player who sells such a goods token there receives bonus credits equal to the bonus value of **all the demand tokens combined**. Regardless of how many demand tokens contribute to the bonus, only one of those demand tokens is removed for each goods token sold of that type here.

Example: A player is trading with a culture who has two demand tokens showing Glorious Junk, each with bonus values of c40. The player sells his first Glorious Junk good for a total of c160 (c80 plus c40 for each demand token). The goods token and one demand token are placed in the bonus cup and two new tokens are drawn. The player then sells his second Glorious Junk good for c120 (c80 plus c40 for the remaining demand token). The goods token and remaining demand token are placed in the bonus cup and two new tokens are drawn once again. Finally, the player sells his last Glorious Junk good for c80, with no additional bonuses. The goods token is placed in the bonus cup and a new token is drawn. This example assumes that no additional Glorious Junk demand tokens were drawn from the bonus cup and placed at this culture.

COMMISSIONS

A player can earn a commission by owning either a merchant spaceport or a factory. Each type of commission is described below.

Merchant Spaceport Commissions

For each buy action and each sell action that any player performs at a merchant spaceport (including transactions made with credits on First Contact cards), the owner of the spaceport receives 10% of the **total transaction value** from the bank as a commission. He receives this commission after all buy actions and sell actions have been completed. A player receives this commission even if he performs buy and sell actions at his own merchant spaceport.

The total transaction value is determined by adding the amount of credits spent, the amount of credits received, and any bartering values, including equipment, relics, and ship trade-ins (see "Bartering" below). Fares received from dropping off passengers, trades between players, and commissions received from factories do not count towards the total transaction value.

Example: The Eeepeeep player is trading with the Qossuth culture via a merchant spaceport owned by the Human player. He sells one Pedigree Bolts for c300. He then buys two Psychotic Sculptures for a total of c320. The total transaction value is c620 so the Human player receives c62 from the bank after all the transactions have been completed.

Factory Commissions

When any player buys a factory goods token, the player who owns the factory in that system immediately receives 50% of the factory good's cost from the bank as a commission. A player receives this commission even if he buys a factory good produced by his own factory.

BARTERING

In addition to selling goods to a culture for credits, a player can BARTER relics, shields, drives, and ships for their trade-in value in order to make purchases from that culture. He can spend the trade-in value like credits, but he can spend the trade-in value only on the turn in which he barters the item. At the end of that turn, he loses any part of the trade-in value that remains unspent. Bartering one item counts as **one sell action**.

The trade-in value for a relic is half of the value shown on the relic token. When a player barters a relic, he places the relic token in the market of his current system. That relic immediately becomes available for purchase **at that system** for the full cost shown on the relic token.

The trade-in value for a shield or drive is half the printed cost shown on the ship class sheet. Equipment can be bartered to any culture.

The trade-in value for a ship is listed on its ship class sheet. A ship may only be bartered to a race that sells ships.

> **Example:** *The Human player is trading with the Wollows culture. He wishes to buy a Megalith Paperweight goods token for c160, but he only has c140 in credit tokens. He decides to barter one of his shields for half its cost (c30) and returns the shield token to the stockpile. He then pays the rest of the cost for the good (c130) to the bank and takes the goods token.*

PLAYER TRADING

When a player ends his Movement phase on a surface city, spaceport, or asteroid space, he may initiate a trade with any player whose ship is also on that space. They may exchange any amount of credits, goods, relics, passengers, equipment, or First Contact cards (IOUs) for whatever price they both agree to. **Ships, merchant spaceport deeds, and factory deeds cannot be traded.**

MAKING ROOM IN A SHIP

Occasionally, a player may need to OFFLOAD goods, passengers, or equipment to make room in his ship for more lucrative cargo.

At any time during a player's Transaction phase, if he is located on a surface city or spaceport, he may offload any number of goods, passengers, or equipment.

If a player offloads goods or passengers, he places the tokens into the bonus cup and immediately draws the same number of tokens from the cup at random (see "The Bonus Cup" on page 19). He then places the drawn tokens in their specified places on the board. **If a player offloads equipment, he returns the token to its stockpile.**

Offloading does not count as an action, and players do not receive credits for offloading tokens.

HOME CULTURE DISCOUNTS

Players receive a discount when buying deeds **in the system containing their race's home culture**. When purchasing a factory deed or merchant spaceport deed from his race's home culture, the cost is reduced by 20%.

> **Example:** *The Whynom player is at the system containing the Whynom culture where a merchant spaceport deed is available for purchase. During the his Transaction phase, he conducts a buy action to purchase the merchant spaceport. Normally, the spaceport deed would cost him c200; because he his at his home culture, the cost is reduced by 20%. The Whynom player's final price for the merchant spaceport is c160.*

OPTIONAL RULES

This section describes two optional rules that players can use with the *Merchant of Venus* classic rules.

VARIABLE GAME LENGTH

For a longer or shorter game, players can choose from the following win conditions:

	APPROXIMATE GAME LENGTH	NET WORTH
Apprentice	90 minutes	c1000
Journeyman	120 minutes	c2000
Master	150 minutes	c3000
Trade Baron	180 minutes	c4000

SMALL BANK

Players who wish to play a longer game can restrict the bank to a total of c12,000.

When the bank is reduced to zero credits, the game ends immediately and the player with the highest net worth wins. If there is a tie, the first tied player to the first player's right is the winner.

FAST PLAY VARIANT

Experienced players looking to engage with *Merchant of Venus* in a completely new way can explore the following variant.

Instead of placing the goods tokens beside the board in step 5 of setup, place all of the goods tokens in the bonus cup. Then draw 20 tokens at random from the cup and place each token on the corresponding culture's supply area to the left of the board.

During the game, when a new culture is discovered, draw four tokens at random from the bonus cup and place each of them in the system of the culture shown on the token. If the culture has not been discovered yet, place the token on the corresponding culture's supply area to the left of the board.

APPENDIX: RELICS

Autopilot

"It's a highly sophisticated network that keeps the ship moving forward at a consistent speed."

Before a player with this relic rolls his speed dice, he may set one die to a 4-result. Then, he rolls the rest of his speed dice.

Air Foil

*"Finally! I can maneuver through planetary atmospheres without the hull peeling off!"*

A player with this relic pays one movement point when moving along green lines instead of two. Additionally, he may move from one surface city to another surface city on the same planet as if they were connected by a gray line.
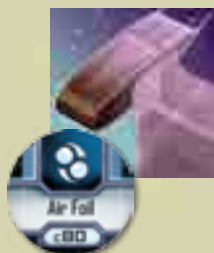
Spy Eye

"Covertly watching your rivals helps make negotiations go much more smoothly."

When a player with this relic enters or skips over a space on the board that is next to a facedown encounter token, he may secretly look at that encounter token, then place it back in the encounter space. He may also observe a culture from any space in its system instead of just from orbit spaces (see "Observing a Culture" on page 9).
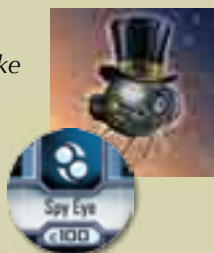
Switch Switch

"We're about to take a hard quantum superposition left turn, so hold on to your electrons."

A player with this relic may switch the speed die that he assigned to navigation with another of his rolled speed dice at any time during his turn. He may do this any number of times, but he cannot change the results of any dice he switches.
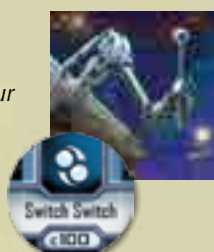
Gate Lock

"You know what makes piloting easier? The normal space-time continuum! Not being flung randomly across the galaxy, that helps a lot!"

When a player with this relic enters a telegate space, he may choose to treat that telegate as a blue space instead.
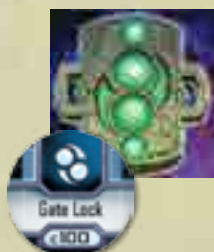
Mulligan Gear

"Just press 'record' and 'rewind' at the same time to send a message to yourself a few minutes in the past."

Immediately after a player with this relic rolls his speed dice, but before he assigns a die to navigation, he may reroll one die (including a die set to a 4-result by the autopilot relic). He must use the new result. He cannot activate the autopilot relic as part of his mulligan gear reroll.

Jump Start

"Technically, this will destroy us and our ship and then replace everything elsewhere with exact duplicates from an alternate dimension."

When a player with this relic starts the Declare Heading step of his Movement phase, he chooses a revealed telegate token, and then rolls his speed dice. If one of his speed dice matches the chosen telegate, he must assign that die to navigation and immediately warp to that telegate. If his speed dice do not match his chosen telegate, he must choose one die to assign to navigation and warp to the matching telegate if it is on the board. If his speed dice do not match a telegate on the board, the jump start fails and he proceeds with his Movement phase as normal, moving in the direction of his choice (without declaring a heading).
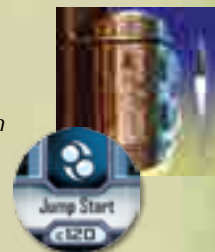
Yellow Drive

*"It's a small device that makes the ship go faster—stop me if this gets too complicated…"*

This yellow drive does not take up space in a cargo hold; it functions otherwise identically to a yellow drive.

Shield

"Shields come in all shapes and sizes, but I like the bright pink ones the best!"

This shield does not take up the hull shield space nor space in a cargo hold; it functions otherwise identically to a shield.
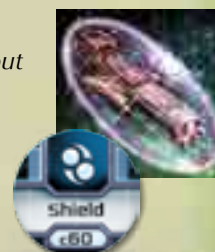
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INDEX

QUICK REFERENCE

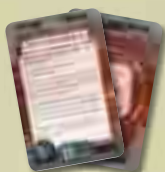## Removing Standard Game Components

When setting up a classic game, players will need to remove the components used only in the standard game. Below is a visual guide to the components which should be removed before starting play:
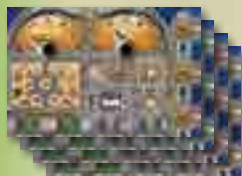
Dashboard Sheets

Challenge Cards

Encounter Cards

Mission Cards

Pilot Cards

Reward Cards

Market Tokens

Racial Technology Tokens

Cargo Hold Indicator Tokens

Fame Tokens

Mission Tokens

Pirate Tokens

Production Tokens

Round Marker

Telegate Tokens

Purple Effect Die

"Diva"   "Ambassador"   "Caterer"   "Politician"   "Invader"

Passenger Tokens

GAME BOARD LEGEND

	Blue Space		Asteroid
	Yellow Space		Encounter
	Red Space		Navigation Space
	Red Hazard		Orbit Space
	Yellow Hazard		Surface City
	Blue Hazard		Neutral Spaceport
			Galactic Base