



STAR TREK FATE

Notes on a Roleplaying Adaptation

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INTRODUCTION

December, 2012. It's almost Christmas (or the end of the world, depending on who you talk to), and the *Fate Core* Kickstarter is in full swing. Reading the preview PDF is getting a lot of people excited. Concurrently, my wife started watching *Deep Space Nine*, rekindling my lifelong love for (nearly) all things *Trek*.

I'm excited to see what aspects and fate points will bring to the *Trek* universe. Maybe we can tackle some of the issues that make Gene Roddenberry's vision so difficult to compel at the gaming table.

A Few Assumptions

- ◆ **Experience with the setting.** I will not make any effort to explain the concepts of *Star Trek*. If you're reading this, I'll assume you already have a passion for the setting, and want to see how it might work with *Fate*.
- ◆ **Experience with the system.** If you don't know about *Fate*, this isn't the place to start.
- ◆ **Starfleet and the UFP.** If you want to play privateers, there are other settings that probably do it better. In my opinion, Starfleet and the Federation are cornerstones of the setting: they represent an ideology of progress and inclusion – a shared goal of working together to address problems from an enlightened perspective. Aliens and outcasts are vitally important – but if being on the fringes of society is what brings you to the table, well... that's why God made *Firefly*.
- ◆ **A storytelling bent.** This document represents an effort to use the *Fate* engine to tell stories in the *Star Trek* universe. Unless I'm way off the mark, *Fate* isn't particularly suited to hack-and-slash, min-max, rules-lawyering, or similarly pedantic playing styles.



SETTING

Time Frame and Tone

Star Trek is more than one thing. It can be campy, or self-serious; compelling, or bloated; blandly morose, or full of two-fisted, four-color action. Many of these traits are strongly embodied within individual ‘generations’ of the franchise.

Choosing the when and where of your *Star Trek* story says a lot about the tone that you’re after.

- ◆ ***The Original Series (and its related films)*** embraced a sense of wonder and exuberance at exploring the depths of space and the human spirit. Captain Kirk could punch and/or kiss a female supporting character without blinking an eye, and Dr. McCoy could make derisive comments about Vulcans while voicing self-righteous platitudes, all with a complete absence of irony. I also got the impression that there wasn’t a lot of paperwork associated with firing the photon torpedoes.
- ◆ ***The Next Generation*** was a procedural with a strong sense of responsibility and enlightened ethics. Picard was the strong father figure, Data the marionette *and* wunderkind (not Wesley) who served to remind us of our frailty and brilliance. When giving the order to “Fire,” you could see the weight of the galaxy on Picard’s (or Riker’s) face.
- ◆ ***Deep Space Nine*** made everything more conflicted. Sisko nursed a grudge against Picard and, by association, the rest of Starfleet. His best friend became a traitor, and his son a writer (gasp). *DS9* gave us the Cardassians (space Nazis), the Bajorans (space Jews), the Dominion War, Section 31, and a sense of epic, serialized narrative previously foreign to *Star Trek*.
- ◆ ***Enterprise*** presented the baby steps of a youthful, optimistic, pre-Federation Earth, as it attempted to come to grips with the politics of older space-faring races such as the Vulcans, Klingons, and Xindi.

Eschewing any personal opinions on its writing, acting, etc., I don't feel that *Voyager* added anything distinctive in the way of setting or tone.

Making a Setting

I'm betting you don't want to have your characters on anything named *Enterprise*, *DS9*, or *Voyager*. If you do, you'll end up either playing second fiddle to the established characters, or pussyfooting around them to have your own adventures in the margins.

You (the GM) or the group as a whole should come to some consensus about your setting. The setting will have a lot to do with the starship, installation, etc. to which the PCs are assigned. Here are some ideas to get you going.

- ◆ A **starship** on an ongoing mission of exploration at the edge of known space.
- ◆ A **patrol ship**, assigned to keep watch over a conflicted area of space (e.g., the Romulan or Klingon Neutral Zone).
- ◆ A small **escort vessel** attached to a starbase or planetary station.
- ◆ A **starbase** or planetary **station**.
- ◆ A cloaked **observatory** on a newly-discovered world inhabited by a low-tech civilization.
- ◆ A clandestine squad of **undercover operatives**, assigned to collect intelligence from a hostile government.



CHARACTERS

As mentioned in the introduction, Starfleet is taken as a given. You'll probably want your stories to revolve around the bridge of a starship, or the operations center of a starbase or outpost. Even if that's not that case – say, the troupe is a team of special operatives on covert assignment deep in Cardassian territory – the structure of Starfleet is still in play.

Aspects

When assembling the five aspects prescribed by *Fate Core*, consider using the following structure for inspiration. If it doesn't fit your concept, forget it.

- High Concept
- Trouble
- Childhood
- Academy
- Last Assignment

These aspects can and should be used for species distinctions, covered in-depth on p. XX.

Skills

The default skill list in *Fate Core* is an excellent starting point for any setting. The extensive selection in *Diaspora*, while intended for gritty, hard sci fi, was my other main inspiration. I've attempted to streamline these into something cinematic and accessible, while providing enough options that there shouldn't be much overlap in PC specialties.

Use the pyramid method outlined in *Fate Core*: one skill at +4, two at +3, three at +2, and four at +1.

Starfleet Training

Having gone through the rigors of the Academy, Starfleet officers possess an impressively broad base of abilities (especially those dealing with space travel). For instance, it's safe to assume that any crew member has EVA at +1, even if the character doesn't have the skill listed. GMs: don't make too big a deal of this, but be generous when players want their characters to be competent with stuff like Computers and Communications; let them roll at +1 instead of 0.

| Skill List | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Athletics | 15. Investigation |
| 2. Combat: Brawl & Melee | 16. Medical |
| 3. Combat: Energy & Projectile | 17. Navigation |
| 4. Command/Leadership | 18. Notice |
| 5. Communications | 19. Physique |
| 6. Computers & Sensors | 20. Pilot Planetary Vehicles |
| 7. Deceit | 21. Pilot Spacecraft |
| 8. Diplomacy/Rapport | 22. Profession <choice> |
| 9. Empathy | 23. Resources |
| 10. Engineering/Repair | 24. Sciences |
| 11. Espionage | 25. Stealth/Sneak |
| 12. EVA | 26. Survival |
| 13. History & Cultures | 27. Tactical |
| 14. Intimidation | 28. Will |

Skill Descriptions

Athletics: Overall physical agility and control. Often used for dodging.

Combat: Brawl & Melee: Martial arts and armed combat (blunt, blades, etc.).

Combat: Energy & Projectile: All firearms (phasers & energy weapons, as well as ancient slug throwers).

Command & Leadership: What it takes to wear the gold (or red) shirt. Motivating people, and working with the chain of command.

Communications: Subspace and standard comm. systems. Codes and ciphers, tweaking the Universal Translator, etc.

Computers & Sensors: Making the most out of data storage and transmission. Also, utilizing various sensor equipment and interpreting data. (Use this skill for advanced tricorder operations.)

Deceit: Effectively misleading others (and detecting when they're doing it to you).

Diplomacy/Rapport: Establishing positive relations with others, especially across a battlefield/viewscreen/negotiating table.

Empathy: Relating to others; sensing motives and moods. (A classic choice for certain racially-specific abilities.)

Engineering & Repair: Advanced knowledge of starship design and maintenance, including propulsion theory (at high levels).

Espionage: Covert intelligence on a galactic scale. Also burglary, etc.

EVA: Operations in low gravity.

History & Cultures: Catch-all for galactic history, archeology, anthropology, and cultural pluralism.

Intimidation: Leaning on an informant, etc.

Investigation: Getting to the bottom of things.

Medical: First aid at low levels; doctor status around +4. Includes alien physiology, but apply difficulty if treating an uncommon species.

Navigation: Land, sea, air and space travel. Does not imply the same rank in Piloting (apply difficulty if used as such).

Notice: Spot hidden; discern realities.

Physique: Bodily sturdiness. Used to calculate damage capacity (physical stress boxes; see *Fate Core*, p. XX).

Pilot Planetary Vehicles: Land, sea and air. (Use this skill if piloting a spacecraft within an atmosphere, or apply difficulty.)

Pilot Spacecraft: Fighters, shuttles, runabouts, freighters, frigates, starships, battle cruisers... you name it.

Profession <choice>: Define your own personal expertise, and what it's useful for (subject to group and/or GM consensus).

Resources: Material wealth; bartering strength (uncommon for Starfleet officers).

Sciences: All branches, including xenobiology, warp theory, astrometrics, etc. May define specialty, or leave broad.

Stealth & Sneak: Getting in and out quietly.

Survival: Doing without the comforts of a starship: hunting & gathering, first aid, plant lore, crafting shelter, etc.

Tactical: Tactics and weapons systems; primarily used in starship combat. Often includes on-board security operations.

Will: Strength of resolve. Used to calculate mental stress capacity (mental stress boxes; see *Fate Core*, p. XX).

Alien Species

As you know, many *Star Trek* aliens are just bumpy foreheads with a heavy-handed allegorical social structure. In this case, no mechanical changes are necessary – simply throw in some setting aspects such as Matriarchal Hierarchy, or Condone Slavery on Racial Grounds, or something of that nature.

However, some species (especially those suitable as PCs) are distinguished from the human 'norm' by certain special abilities or predilections. (Of course, there are exceptions to every racial stereotype even in *Star Trek*, so don't feel too bound to these.) Obvious examples:

- **Vulcans:** *Logical Nature* and *Telepathy (Mind Meld)*
- **Klingons:** *Warrior Spirit* and *Honor-Bound Society*
- **Bajorans:** *Spiritually Devout*
- **Romulans:** *Devious and Sinister*
- **Ferengi:** *Profit Motive*

... And, the list goes on. In the spirit of *FATE*, I believe there are two ways to handle species distinctions: **aspects** and **stunts**.

Aspects

As we know, character aspects exist to promote competence (invoke for +2 bonus or re-roll), provide opposition or conflict (compel to gain a fate point), and provide flags for roleplaying and narrative.

Speaking to GMs and players: if you feel that a species' distinct attribute(s) can be both (a) summarized effectively and (b) represented sufficiently within the system by using a simple aspect, then just use that. You can incorporate this into any of the five character aspects (high concept, trouble, childhood, academy, or last assignment)... although, perhaps the first three work best.

Alien Traits as Aspects (Example)

You're creating a **Vulcan** Starfleet officer – a woman who holds strongly to her people's tradition of logic. As a hat-tip to Commander Spock himself, you decide to call this aspect ***Logic Dictates***.

Which aspect slot does this fill? You decide that this is simply part of who she is, not her primary defining characteristic – so, you opt for this as her **childhood aspect**. The description of her childhood should now include some details on how she was nurtured in an environment that taught her this trait.

Note: I'd probably use the childhood aspect most often for species-specific aspects. If you define it as your high concept, the character might turn out to be a cartoonish caricature of that species. If you define it as the trouble, then it could be seen as demeaning. (Although, Belanna Torres' trouble aspect was probably ***At War With the Warrior Spirit***, which was fairly compelling – so, maybe ignore my advice.)

Stunts

Stunts can be used instead of, or in addition to, aspects for depicting species traits. To reiterate, from *Fate Core*: stunts enhance the abilities of specific skills in order to differentiate characters' abilities.

If you wish to represent a trait with a stunt, be sure you first select its parent skill during character creation. E.g., if you want your Vulcan's Mind Meld to be a stunt, you must first take the Empathy skill. Or, if you envision a Klingon's Warrior Spirit as a stunt, first take Combat: Brawl & Melee.

As with all stunts, the precise details are up to you, your GM, and your group as a whole.

Here's a list of stunts available to certain species. Consider these available and recommended if your character claims ancestry from that race. The cost of stunts still applies: take one for free; for each additional stunt, subtract one from your refresh of fate points. (Your GM may decide to make species-related stunts free – not subject to the above refresh cost.)



Alien Traits as Stunts (Examples)

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Klingon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Warrior Spirit (<i>Combat: Brawl & Melee</i>): Gain +2 to Combat: Brawl & Melee rolls when using traditional Klingon weapons (bat'leth, mek'leth, etc.). · Honor-Bound Society (<i>Intimidation, Investigation, or Notice</i>): +2 to skill roll when any opposing character is using Deceit. |
| Vulcan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Logic Dictates (<i>Intimidation, Investigation, or Notice, or Will</i>): +2 to skill roll when logical principles can be applied, or when an opponent is challenging your intellect. |
| Andorian | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Honor-Bound Society (<i>Intimidation, Investigation, or Notice</i>): +2 to skill roll when any opposing character is using Deceit. |
| Bajoran | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Spiritually Devout (<i>Will or Empathy</i>): +2 to skill roll when you call upon the Prophets or recall sacred truths. |
| Ferengi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Profit Motive (<i>Deceit or Resources</i>): +2 to all Deceit or Resources rolls when making a deal. |



These are just examples, and there's a good chance your vision is different from mine. Feel free to make up your own species-specific stunts, or let your players do it.

Starfleet Rank Structure

Starfleet adheres to U.S. naval rank structure (for convenience, I suppose).

| Flag Officers | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Admiral (various) | |
| Commodore | |
| Line Officers | Enlisted (Non-Commissioned) |
| Captain | Master Chief Petty Officer |
| Commander | Senior Chief Petty Officer |
| Lieutenant-Commander | Chief Petty Officer |
| Lieutenant | Petty Officer 1 st Class |
| Lieutenant Junior Grade | Petty Officer 2 nd Class |
| Ensign | Crewman |
| Ensign Junior Grade | |

Non-commissioned officers (crewmen) do not benefit from full Academy training or officers' responsibilities, but often form the backbone of the operations staff of a Starfleet ship or facility. Distinguishing between these ranks is rarely crucial (Senior Chief Petty Officer Miles O'Brien was the only non-commissioned main character in any *Star Trek* series).

Determining Rank

There are two ways to determine rank: roll, or don't roll.

- ◆ **Roll.** (*This option must be used after the players have selected their skill; see p. XX.*) Use the Command & Leadership skill, and do a simple contest. (Characters without this skill must roll at 0.) Then, rank each roll from highest to lowest, start with Captain or Commander, and going down. There's no strict relation between rolled result and actual rank, but if someone rolled higher than you, you can't outrank them.

Rank Roll Example

Four PCs are rolling the Command & Leadership skill to determine rank. (Andrea, Billy, Cynthia, and Damon.) Their skill ranks are: Andrea +2, Billy 0, Cynthia +4, and Damon +1. After rolling, their results are: Andrea 0, Billy +1, Cynthia +3, and Damon +2. As a result, Cynthia (end result +4) will be the Captain; Damon (+2) the Commander and First Officer; Billy (+1) decides to stick with Lieutenant, and Andrea settles for the lowly Ensign (0).

- ◆ **Don't roll.** (*This option can be used at any time during character creation.*) If somebody wants to be Captain, and nobody has a problem with it, let them. Alternately, if you think that a particular PC would be well-suited to a particular role or rank, feel free to suggest it.

With rank comes responsibilities, a realm of typical duties, and some common relationship roles. For instance:

- ◆ The Commanding and First Officers often make decisions very closely, as it is often the Commander's responsibility to communicate the Captain's wishes to the crew, and perhaps to challenge the Captain on questionable decisions.
- ◆ Lieutenants and Lieutenant-Commanders often serve as department heads: Chief Engineer, Chief Tactical/Security Officer, Chief of Operations, etc.
- ◆ Ensigns typically serve to support the other ranks. Occasionally, they will be assigned to the helm of a starship.

Non-Starfleet PCs

All this is not to say that every PC must be a ranking member of Starfleet. We have all kinds of precedents in the various *Trek* series for outsiders making themselves useful:

- ◆ **Wesley Crusher.** Ostensibly gifted son of a ranking officer; occasionally good at stuff; mostly an unwanted liability for the Captain.
- ◆ **Major Kira & Constable Odo.** Ranking members of a regional military, government, or other organization that is working closely with the Federation.
- ◆ **Half the crew of *Voyager*.** When you get trapped on the other side of the galaxy with a crew of wanted fugitives and an annoying Talaxian, sometimes the rules just don't prepare you!

To summarize, you could have:

- ◆ Consulting specialists assigned for certain missions.
- ◆ Adjunct officers from allied governments.
- ◆ Operatives from some nefarious organization that Starfleet barely tolerates (such as Section 31).
- ◆ Lonely privateers for whom you just can't help feeling sorry (see *Voyager's* Neelix).
- ◆ All manner of enemies from within Starfleet or without, thrown together by desperate circumstances (see *Voyager*).



AWAY MISSIONS

Overview

Player characters will pretty much divide their time between shipboard activities and away missions. Away missions can take place anywhere off-ship. For example:

- A planet's surface.
- Beneath a planet's surface.
- In orbit of a planet (on an orbital station, for example).
- A space station.
- Another starship.



Examples

Away missions will call for a variety of skills, as the PCs pursue a wide range of goals and face all manner of obstacles. Here's a smattering of situations in which skill rolls can be made (taken from the skill list in the previous chapter).

These examples are very broad, and are not meant to be solved by a single skill roll. Not every skill is represented here – take that as a challenge to come up with situations for using those skills.

Computers & Sensors

A crew member tries to make sense of an ancient piece of machinery that may tell them why a civilization became extinct.

Diplomacy

As the Federation's representative, the captain is ordered to oversee negotiations between two warring factions on a newly-discovered planet.

Engineering/Repair

The crew is ordered to assist a recently-founded colony; the chief engineer must help them repair the thermal shielding around their compound before the fire storms reach them.

Espionage

The crew is ordered to conduct long-term intelligence-gathering on a neutral space station near the Romulan Neutral Zone. They will pose as arms merchants in order to make contacts in the Tal Shiar (Romulan intelligence agency).

Investigation

The crew must discover who or what is responsible for a series of murders aboard a starbase.

Medical

The chief medical officer must discover what is causing the rapidly-growing tumors infecting a planet's population.

Pilot Planetary Vehicles

Stranded on a world with a pre-warp civilization, the crew is forced to use their primitive combustion-propelled vehicles to escape from a roving gang of thugs bent on stealing their advanced technology.

Resources

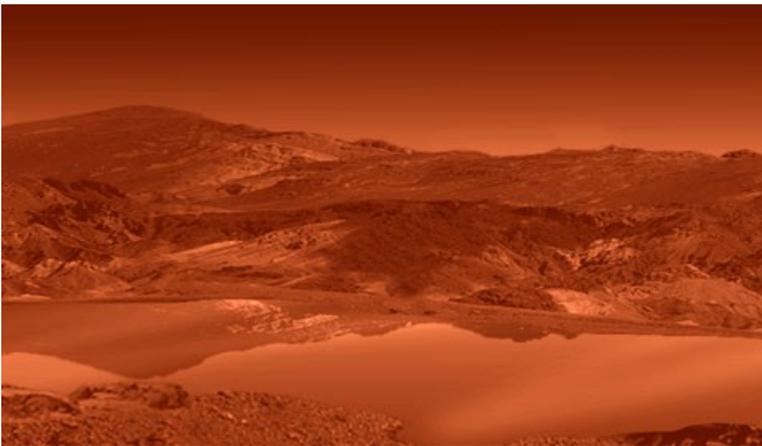
As a rule, members of Starfleet (and many Federation societies) do not deal with or carry currency or valuables for trade. What happens when a critical informant asks for a bribe?

Sciences

The crew must discover who or what is responsible for a series of murders aboard a starbase.

Survival

Cut off from their ship by atmospheric disturbances, the crew must find shelter and water in a vast desert.



STARSHIP OPERATIONS

Overview

Players will use skills to carry out assignments and orders using bridge stations (helm, sensors, tactical) or departmental locations (engineering, sickbay, stellar cartography). Usually these will be overcome or create advantage actions, but also occasionally attack and defend (as per the preceding combat guidelines).

Here are some examples of when these tasks may come into play. Each of the common departments is listed with typical day-to-day duties, as well as advanced tasks that will require skill rolls, aspect invocations and/or teamwork to accomplish. Note that each department has a specific skill which corresponds to it; unless otherwise noted, this skill is the one used for all departmentally-relevant actions.

Command/Leadership

Mundane:

Advanced:

Communications

Mundane:

- Open a communications channel to a nearby vessel or planet.
- Receive subspace transmissions (from Starfleet Command, for instance).

Advanced:

- Tweaking the universal translator to analyze a particularly difficult dialect.
- Scrambling a transmission to prevent it from being decoded by hostiles.
- Jamming the transmissions of a hostile ship, such that they cannot communicate with their cohorts.

These actions can certainly be used in combat to create advantages and scene aspects.

Computers & Sensors

Mundane:

- Working in tandem with helm/navigation to plot safe routes of travel.
- Tracking and studying spatial phenomena such as comets and nebulae.
- Locating an individual's life signs within a ship, or on a planet's surface.
- Researching Federation databases for historical or scientific data.

Advanced:

The above tasks can often be complicated by natural or artificial disturbances such as nebulous gases, dense asteroid belts, ion storms, atmospheric anomalies, etc.

Engineering/Damage Control (Engineering/Repair)

Mundane:

- Keeping a starship's systems running through daily maintenance and diagnostic procedures.

Advanced:

- Mitigating the effects of strenuous activities, such as constant use of high warp speeds, damage from combat, etc.

Medical (Sickbay)

Mundane:

- Maintaining a high level of crew health through regular diagnostics.

Advanced:

- Treating wounded during a battle.
- Finding a treatment for an alien viral infection.

Science Labs/Stellar Cartography (Sciences)

Mundane:

- Basic charting of star clusters and other cosmic phenomena.
- Cultivating biological organisms (hydroponics, etc.).

Advanced:

- Tracking a quasi-mystical energy nexus as it cuts a serpentine path through the galaxy.
- Learning about the historical evolution of a planet's biological lifeforms.

Flight (Shuttles & Auxiliary Craft) (Pilot: Spacecraft)

Mundane:

Advanced:



STARSHIP COMBAT

Please note that these are quick and loose suggestions – other games such as *Diaspora* contain far more intricate mini-games centered around things like ship-to-ship combat. That's not the focus of this adaptation. Here, we will put the player characters and their abilities front and center, eschewing a lot of bookkeeping in the process.

One more caveat: if your group uses the default setting of a Starfleet crew on-board a Starfleet vessel, **combat is usually a last resort**. Notably, this affects initiative: on a mission of exploration, the *Enterprise* will not fire first, even if she's outgunned (see every episode of *TNG*). Of course, if your story is set during the Dominion War, this doesn't apply as much. This is merely a reminder to the GM and players to be circumspect when dealing with violence, due to the peculiarities of working for the Federation.

Overview

PCs use their skills in starship combat, modified by their ship's aspects. E.g., Dax rolls her Good (+3) Tactical skill to fire phasers on an attacking ship, and she can invoke an aspect to get a bonus. Another: Tom Paris rolls his Great (+4) Pilot Spacecraft skill to avoid a Borg onslaught.

Obviously, the helm and/or tactical officer/s will be getting the spotlight in combat scenes. However, the other PCs can assist by creating advantages for helm and tactical to use. E.g., Captain Sisko rolls his Command/Leadership skill to create an advantage in the form of a free invocation on the *Defiant's* She Has Teeth aspect (which Dax can use on her next action).

Starships have very limited stats – a few aspects, and some consequence slots, determined by their overall size. This is discussed in the next section.

Defining Ships

See the following pages for examples of these elements.

Scale

Let's use three levels (small, medium, large). Smaller ships are more maneuverable, and have less firepower and hull/shield strength; larger ships are less maneuverable, but have greater firepower and hull/shield strength. This is how scale influences damage capacity. (See **Stress and Consequences** on the following page for actual damage capacity, which is fairly static.)

| Scale | Maneuvering | Dealing Damage |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Small (-2) (Maquis fighters, shuttlecraft, runabouts, Jem'Hadar fighters) | +2 against medium ships +4 against large ships. | -2 against medium ships -4 against large ships |
| Medium (0) (U.S.S. <i>Defiant</i> , Klingon Birds of Prey) | -2 against small ships +2 against large ships | +2 against small ships -2 against large ships |
| Large (+2) (<i>Galaxy-class</i> U.S.S. <i>Enterprise</i> , a Romulan <i>D'deridex-class</i> Warbird, a Jem'Hadar Battleship) | -4 against small ships -2 against medium ships | +4 against small ships +2 against medium ships |

Aspects

Give a ship two to three aspects, and you're good. Remember to make them double-sided (pros and cons). For example: the U.S.S. *Excelsior* from the films might have “By God, That's a Big Ship” and “The Great Experiment”, or others. (See p. XX for more examples.)

Stunts and Extras

Ships can have stunts, too: unique capabilities that set them apart from other ships. Use stunts when you want a specific system/weapon/etc. to have unique rules effects. (See examples on pp. XX-XX.)

Stress and Consequences (Damage)

Stress boxes represent shields. Ships normally have two boxes (1- and 2-point, respectively), but advanced systems or design limitations can add or subtract. As with character stress, boxes are unchecked between conflicts (or scenes, if that makes more sense).

Consequence slots represent hull damage capacity. The default spread is 1/1/1, just like characters... however, feel free to add a mild slot if it the ship is particularly sturdy, or has ablative armor (for instance). At most, a ship could have 2/2/1.

Remember: damage is also handled through scale and attack rolls (see previous page).

As per *Fate Core*, shifts of success on an attack roll must be absorbed by the defender using their available consequences. If this is impossible, the defender is taken out (destroyed or disabled).

You can totally combine stress boxes and consequences to absorb hits, until they're gone.



Example Starship: Jem'Hadar Fighter

| Scale | Aspects |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Small | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Light and Quick (polaron beam, torpedoes, minimal shields) · Energy Dissipator |



Stunts and Extras

· *Energy Dissipator*: on a successful hit, the target vessel's power systems are drained for one exchange (no weapons or propulsion). On a success with style, two exchanges.

| Stress | Consequences | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | Mild (2): | Moderate (4): | Severe (6): |

Example Starship: U.S.S. *Defiant*

| Scale | Aspects |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · She Has Teeth (pulse phasers, quantum torpedoes) · Nimble, But it Costs |

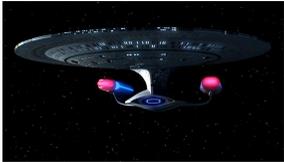


Stunts and Extras

· *Borrowed Cloaking Device*: If decloaking at the beginning of a conflict, the Defiant can act first in the first exchange.

| Stress | Consequences | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | Mild (2): | Moderate (4): | Severe (6): |

Example Starship: U.S.S. Enterprise (NCC-1701-D)

| Scale | Aspects |  | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Large | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Massive Flagship · Fearsome Reputation (Type X phaser banks, photon torpedoes) | | | |
| Stunts and Extras | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Saucer Separation</i>: If already in conflict, this takes two full actions/exchanges. This creates two independent vessels/targets, although the saucer lacks both warp drive and photon torpedoes. · <i>Rotating Shield Frequency</i>: Gain 1 stress box (3) when in conflict with the Borg. | | | | |
| Stress | | Consequences | | |
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | Mild (2): | Moderate (4): | Severe (6): | |

Example Starship: Krenim Weapon Ship

| Scale | Aspects |  | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Large | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Massive Temporal Warship · Phased Out of Normal Time (Impervious to Normal Weapons; Limited Defenses) · Slow (Warp 6) | | | |
| Stunts and Extras | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Temporal Core</i>: Ship is designed to remove Krenim enemies from time entirely. This is its only effective weapon. Ship and crew are protected from changes in the timeline, and are effectively immortal. | | | | |
| Stress | | Consequences | | |
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | Mild (2): | Mild (2): | Moderate (4): | Severe (6): |

Conflict Overview

Much like personal conflict...

- Set the scene (create scene aspects)
- Determine turn order (which ship acts first?)
- Exchange(s) (each crew performs their actions)
- End the conflict (when someone cedes or is taken out)

Set the scene

Many times, starship battles occur in open space – in which case, there's not much to say, aspect-wise. However, sometimes there are interesting features such as planetoids, nebulae, an asteroid belt, a quasi-mystical energy nexus... the sky is no longer the limit. Use these elements to define scene aspects, as discuss as a group how they might come into play.

Turn Order – Ships

For the PCs' ship, **take the highest of three relevant skills** from among the bridge officers: Command/Leadership, Tactical, and Pilot Spacecraft. (Note that these usually come from different characters.) Use the highest of these skills as the initiative level to determine turn order within the exchange. (Players can invoke aspects [such as the Captain's *Loyalty of the Crew*] to modify these values.)

For NPC-controlled vessels, you probably don't have all the NPCs' skills nailed down, which is fine. Just pick a level that makes sense, and think of it as a difficulty level (+2 is probably easy, +4 is evenly matched, etc.).

Turn Order Example

Captain Sisko has Great (+4) Command/Leadership, which is the highest relevant skill present on the *Defiant's* bridge. The attacking Jem'Hadar ship is controlled by a crew with +2 piloting/tactical abilities. Thus, the *Defiant* will act first.

Exchange(s) and Characters' Turn Order

Characters roll their individual skills during their ship's action. (I.e., if the *Defiant* is acting first, then her crew will roll her skills as part of that overarching action.)

To evoke a naval/military style, start with the commanding officer's orders ("Fire phasers," etc.), followed by the officer(s) responsible for carrying out the orders (helm and tactical, primarily), followed by anyone who can mitigate damage or otherwise indirectly affect the conflict (damage control, medical, etc.). Note that this effectively places the PCs in the roles of department heads, even if they don't officially occupy those positions in the fiction.

Resolving Attacks

Upon a successful attack roll (the tactical officer fires weapons), each shift of success over the defender's maneuver/defend roll incurs shifts of damage, which must be absorbed by the target's consequence slots. If this can't be done, the target is taken out. This can mean that the ship is disabled, destroyed, or otherwise unable to take any meaningful action.

Ending Conflict

Characters receive fate points for compelled aspects, just as if it were a person-to-person conflict.

Also, make sure you note the consequences of combat. Assign damage control teams to do what they can (a "Hull Breach on Deck 5" can be changed to "Effecting Hull Repairs on Deck 5" once damage control is present).

Starship Combat Example

Setup

One GM, four players. The GM will portray the Jem'Hadar attacker, while the players will take on the roles of Captain Sisko (command), Lieutenant Jadzia Dax (helm & weapons), Chief O'Brien (engineering and damage control), and Doctor Bashir (medical). Dax will make most of the combat rolls, using her Good (+3) Tactical skill, while the GM deems the Jem'Hadar's Tactical skill to be Fair (+2).

Turn Order

Since the *Defiant* is coming out of cloak to ambush the lone Jem'Hadar fighter, its stunt allows it to act first in the first exchange. (Normally you'd compare Tactical skills to determine order of action.) Sisko will give the orders, Dax will carry them out, and O'Brien and Bashir will mitigate the consequences (in that order). After

First Exchange

Sisko orders Dax to fire pulse phasers, and his player wants to create a free invocation on the aspect *She Has Teeth* for Dax to use. (Note that Sisko himself doesn't perform the attack – he's creating an advantage.) He attempts a Fair (+2) overcome action, using his Great (+4) Command/Leadership skill, and scores a +5 – three shifts of success above the target.

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STORIES

Episodes or Films?

Roleplaying games usually operate as one of three things:

- ◆ A convention **one-shot** of 3-5 hours.
- ◆ A **mini-campaign** of 2-4 sessions.
- ◆ A **long campaign** of 5, 10, or many more sessions.

Similarly, canonical *Star Trek* stories are framed as either:

- ◆ Episodic one-hour dramas.
- ◆ Epic film-length sagas.

Before you sit down with your group (or start to write your story notes), envision your goal. The way I see it, episodic dramas fit quite well within the first and third roleplaying formats (one-shots or long campaign play), while film-length epics are more suited to a mini-campaign (2-4 sessions).

- ◆ A **single session** is only enough time to confront and resolve one or, at the most, two major conflicts. There's room for exploring each character's personality and abilities, but not much time for growth and change.
- ◆ A handful of sessions (or, **mini-campaign**) is enough time to see the PCs change, and to see the machinations of their antagonist(s) fleshed out over a longer period.
- ◆ In a **long campaign**, PCs and antagonists may come and go. Most importantly, the group has the time to explore and resolve major themes or events of galactic import (such as the Xindi plot from *Enterprise*, or the Dominion invasion from *Deep Space Nine*). Consider a long campaign to be analogous to a season of television.

What About Missions?

Since Starfleet ostensibly follows a military operative structure, mission assignments from Command are a matter of daily life for a starship's officers and crew. As the GM, you can use these to structure your gaming sessions.

- ◆ **One-shot.** A mission for a single session of play should be fairly straightforward. The crew is assigned to address a single issue, with little nuance or grey area. This issue is meant to be resolved within a handful of scenes, and need not tie into any larger plot.
- ◆ **Mini-campaign.** A mission assignment can kick-start an epic story, but nothing goes as planned. The crew will find a situation very different from the one for which they were prepared. There's plenty of room for divided loyalties, long-lost friends or enemies, and layers of plot to unravel.
- ◆ **Long campaign.** Start small, but think about the big picture. Missions that seem simple might have long-reaching consequences. PCs are likely to change their aspects and skills, and may acquire permanent fallout from the conflicts they face. As the GM, never forget to look for the PCs' *flags* (Aspects): what do the players want to see for their characters, and how can you help them face it?

Mission Ideas

- ◆ **Keeping the Peace.** Starship is recalled from scouting mission to arbitrate (quell?) an uprising on XX, a Federation world.
 - What do the rebels want?
 - Why is the stance of the powers-that-be good, or at least easy to relate to?
 - Who is in play that is closely tied with one (or more) of the PCs? (One or two NPCs that can provide dubious motivations for both sides.)



MISCELLANEOUS IDEAS

The Bridge on the Table

After you've determined where the crew is assigned, sketch or print out a rough **schematic** of the bridge layout. A page size of 11" x 17" is probably sufficient.

Have the PCs create **table tents** for their characters (note cards folded in half with name, rank, and assigned position). Then, position these tents at their respective control stations (command chair, tactical, communications, sensors, helm, science, engineering, etc.). Keep in mind that there's plenty of wiggle room in regards to these (on the 1701-D, the tactical officer was also responsible for communications and internal sensors).

If you have a selection of note cards in various colors, you can **color code** by department (gold/blue/red). Or, it might be even more useful to use one color for PCs, and one for NPCs, to establish a consistent cast on the bridge.

Phasers

Starfleet's stock armament is a devastating piece of game-breaking fiction, if wielded in judiciously. Let's break it down into three functions: **stun**, **kill**, and **vaporize**.



Phasers come in three general models, differing by time period:

- **Type I** is a mini-phaser that, in TOS and the early films, detaches from the Type II. It can only **stun** and **kill**.
- **Type II** is the standard armament worn on the belts of security officers. This one can **stun**, **kill**, and **vaporize**.
- **Type III** is the phaser rifle. It can stun, kill, and vaporize, but can do so at much longer ranges, and has a much larger power cell.

Obviously, I don't recommend that you try to track how many shots each type of phaser can fire before it's out of juice. I also don't recommend that you get too particular with how many shifts of stress and consequence each beam type inflicts. Here's how I'd do it (these ideas presuppose a sentient enemy, rather than shooting at rocks).

Stun (Settings 1-3)

- **Firing:** On a successful stun roll (Combat: Energy & Projectile), the target...
 - Is knocked unconscious for an undetermined period, *and*
 - Absorbs stress/consequences equal to the success shifts of the attacker's roll.

When you succeed with style, your character can make an educated guess as to how long until she wakes up.

- **Defending:** If hit by a stun blast, the target can roll Physique or Will to shake off the effects of a stun blast, but it's a Great (+4) overcome action. Aspects such as cover, or species attributes can help with this. Stress and consequences still apply.

Kill (Settings 4-14)

If a Starfleet officer ever knowingly kills or vaporizes a sentient being, they are subject to full investigation by Starfleet Command (except during wartime engagement). I cannot stress how serious this is – any officer using a phaser to kill or vaporize without a really, really good reason is liable to be thrown in the brig.

- **Firing:** On a successful kill roll, the target...
 - Is either dead outright, or nearly dead (GMs' choice), *and*
 - Must absorb stress/consequences equal to the success shifts of the attacker's roll.

When you succeed with style, you (the player) can determine the dead/nearly dead outcome.

- **Defending:** If hit by a kill blast, the target can roll Physique or Will to reduce the effects to those of a stun blast, but it's a Great (+4) overcome action. Aspects such as cover or species attributes can be used to help with this. Stress and consequences still apply.

Vaporize (Settings 15-16)

- **Firing:** On a successful vaporize roll, the target...
 - Is vaporized.
- **Defending:** If hit by a vaporize blast (assuming any dodge attempt has failed), the target is well and truly vaporized.



SAMPLE CHARACTERS

Here you'll find several sample characters, both canon and non-, both human and alien.

STAR TREK FATE



| Name & Description (Gender, Species, Rank, Assigned Station) | Refresh |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Captain Jean-Luc Picard , Captain of the U.S.S. <i>Enterprise</i> , Federation flagship. Human male. Brings age and experience to bear. | 3 |

| Aspects | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| High Concept | Trouble | Childhood | Academy | Last Assignment |
| Experienced Diplomat | Traditionalist | Troubled Family Life | Risk Is Its Own Reward | The Picard Maneuver |

| Skills | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Great (+4) | Good (+3) | Fair (+2) | Average (+1) |
| 1. Diplomacy/Rapport | 1. Command/Leadership 2. Pilot Spacecraft | 1. Combat: Energy & Projectile 2. Tactical & Security Ops. 3. Will | 1. History & Cultures 2. Communications 3. XX 4. XX |

| Stunts |
|----------------------------|
| 1. (Diplomacy/Rapport): XX |

| Stress | | Consequences | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Physical | Mental | Mild (2 pts.) | Moderate (4 pts.) | Severe (6 pts.) |
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

STAR TREK FATE



| Name & Description (Gender, Species, Rank, Assigned Station) | Refresh |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Commander Spock , Vulcan male; Science Officer of the U.S.S. <i>Enterprise</i> . | 2 |

| Aspects | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| High Concept | Trouble | Childhood | Academy | Last Assignment |
| Logic Dictates | Involved With Lt. Uhura | Conflicted Half-Human | Career Scientist | Designed the Kobyashi Maru |

| Skills | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Great (+4) | Good (+3) | Fair (+2) | Average (+1) |
| 1. Sciences | 1. Computers 2. Empathy | 1. Investigation 2. Notice 3. Will | 1. Combat: Brawl & Melee 2. Command/Leadership 3. Contacts 4. Navigation |

| Stunts |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. (Investigation): <i>Logic Dictates</i> – d 2. (Empathy): <i>Mind Meld</i> – d |

| Stress | | Consequences | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Physical | Mental | Mild (2 pts.) | Moderate (4 pts.) | Severe (6 pts.) |
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |