FRACTAL

Rulebook

Contents

Credits 3
Welcome to Fractal 3
Components 3
Overview 3
Component details 4
Sector tiles 4
Faction mats 4
Empire boards 4
Shared boards 5
Reference cards 5
Units 5
Obstacle and anomaly cards 5
Artifact cards 6
Singularity cards 6
Action cards 6
Tactic cards 6
Government cards 6
Objective cards 6
Mastery cards 7
Technology cards 7
Living galaxy tokens 7
Living storm tokens 7
Other components 7
Setup 8
Map 8
Player components 8
Factions 8
Shared components 8
3-player compact setup example 9
Key concepts 10
Rule priority 10
Public and private information 10
Turn order 10
Colony tracks 10
Imperial track 10
Productive track 10
Scientific track 10
Military track 10
Unit abilities 11
Controlling a sector 11
Blockading a sector 11
Contested sector 11
Empty sector 11
Adjacency 11
Modifiers 11
Component limit 11
Exhausting components 11
Discarding cards 11
Removed and banished 11
Losing access 11
Expansion icons 11
Structure of the game 12
Structure of a cycle 12
Income phase 12
Gain credits 12
Exploitation areas 12
Unexhaust and other effects 12
Action phase 12
Basic actions 13
Depletion 13
Recruit 13
Redeployment 13
Advance 13
Transporting units 13
Events 14
Pin-down 14
Colonize 14
Colonization bonus 14
Research 15
Special actions 15
Government action 15
Action card 15
Living storms 16
Insight 16
Conflict phase 16
Battle resolution 16
Battle preparation 16
Choose and resolve tactic cards 16
Tactic cards 17
Damage types 17
Retreat 17
Elite tactic cards 17
Unit abilities 17
Example 1 18
Example 2 18
Victory conditions 18
Multiple players in a battle 18
Sieges 18
Raze 18
Invade 18
Multiple colonies in a sector 18
Medals 18
End of cycle phase 19
Prestige check 19
Utopian sector reward 19
Clean up 19
Depletion upkeep 19
Determine the first player 19
Advance the cycle marker 19
Transition 20
Scoring 20
Objective specialization 20
Objective symbols 20
Victory points 20
Reveal the next objective card 21
Game end 21
Events 21
Living galaxies 21
Effects 21
Exploitation areas 21
Obstacles and anomalies 21
Timing 22
Conditions 22
Rewards 22
Galactic atlas 23
Extended maps 23
Compact maps 23
Advanced modules 24
Wartime innovation 24
Elite training 24
Diplomacy 25
Dawn of the Galaxy 25
Symbol summary 26
Index 27
Player's hub 28

Welcome to Fractal

In Fractal, each player commands an emerging galactic empire competing for resources, prestige, and power.

A game consists of two Ages, each divided into two cycles, during which players take turns performing actions with their units, colonies, and technologies.

After each cycle, players resolve conflicts and collect income. After each Age, players evaluate their empires and score victory points. The player with the highest score at the end of the last Age wins the game.

Credits

We have so many people to thank that we dedicated them an entire section on our website.

Components

Overview

- 38 sector tiles
- 7 faction mats
- 4 empire boards
- 4 shared boards, containing:
  - 2 technology boards
  - 1 cycle board
  - 1 action board
- 4 reference cards
- 96 units, containing
  - 38 infantries
  - 32 lightships
  - 18 mechs
  - 8 warships
- 68 square cards, containing
  - 20 obstacles
  - 20 anomalies
  - 20 artifacts
  - 8 singularities
- 159 standard cards, containing
  - 54 actions
  - 68 tactics
  - 14 governments
  - 16 objectives
  - 7 faction masteries
- 54 mini cards, containing
  - 27 civil technologies
  - 27 military technologies
- 140 tokens, containing
  - 22 living galaxies
  - 6 living storms
  - 15 battle medals
  - 10 blockade medals
  - 32 science
  - 48 colonies
  - 12 faction
  - 1 first player/watcher
  - 12 victory points
  - 24 action markers
- 20 victory dice
- 9 plastic cubes
  - 1 cycle marker
  - 4 influence markers
  - 4 credit markers
- This rulebook

Component details

Sector tiles

Sectors ⬡ are hexagonal tiles representing areas of space for players to explore, exploit and colonize. At the beginning of each game, players set up a variable galaxy map (the board) by laying out these tiles on the table.

Ⓐ The sector type is referred to in other game components, such as action, objective, and technology cards.

Ⓑ The event type indicates whether this sector contains any obstacle, anomaly, living galaxy, or singularity at the beginning of the game. This area also features the sector's type and name.

Ⓒ The sector's colony area indicates the accepted colony types.

> Non-habitable sectors don't accept colonies. However, some components can alter that, hence the colony area.

Faction mats

Factions represent the unique civilizations of the game. Each one comes with a double-sided mat describing its lore and unique gameplay mechanics.

Ⓐ Faction-specific abilities.

Ⓑ Lore and story of the faction.

Ⓒ Faction-specific setup and components.

Ⓓ Complexity rating of the faction.

Empire boards

Each player keeps track of their empire's development using this board.

Ⓐ The empire's emblem determines the color of a player (e.g., colonies, units, tactics, etc.).

Ⓑ Whenever you lose or gain influence, move the marker left or right on the influence track. Influence is mostly used to boost government cards and make depleted actions available again.

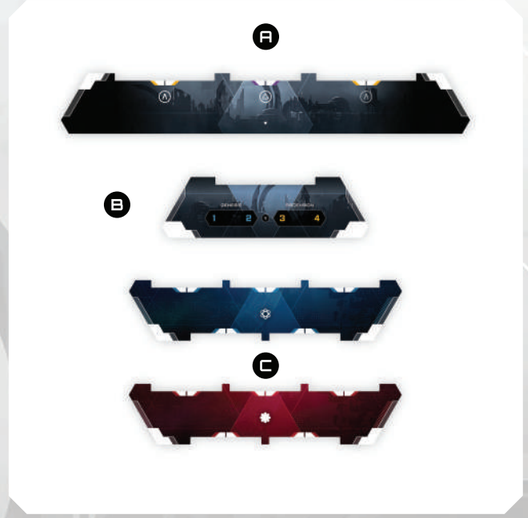
Ⓒ Whenever you lose or gain credits, move the marker up or down on the credit track. Credits are mostly used to pay for the cost of basic actions.

Ⓓ Whenever you perform an action, slide its respective marker on the action track. When you deplete an action, flip the marker as well.

Ⓔ When you gain victory points (VP) of a certain type, adjust the corresponding victory dice on the empire's VP track. VPs are used to determine the winner of the game.

Ⓕ All your colonies are stored on their respective tracks. Colonies are removed from your board during the game, thus improving your empire.

Shared boards



Shared boards are used by all the players.

Ⓐ The **action board** displays the action deck, pool, discard, and artifact deck.

Ⓑ The **cycle board** tracks the current cycle by moving the marker on it.

Ⓒ The civil and military **technology boards** display available technology cards of their respective type. Each board contains 5 slots.

Reference cards

References present a quick summary of the most important game concepts.

Units

Units are represented by miniatures. There are four types that are used to resolve tactics and various other effects. Each one also has special abilities described by *keywords* that may evolve during the game.

Infantries (8 per player + 6 black units*)
Ground units. Armies of soldiers and settlers that can *colonize* sectors and *invade* enemy colonies.

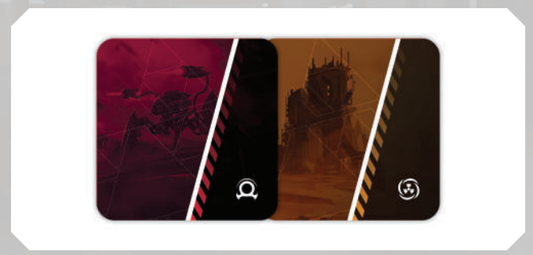
Mechs (4 per player + 2 black units*)
Ground units. Armies of giant robots that act as *vanguards* and *resist* damage.

Lightships (8 per player)
Space units. Small spaceships that can *transport* ground units

Warships (2 per player)
Space units. Mighty spaceships that can *transport* more ground units and *resist* damage.

** Black units are obtained via in-game effects.*

Obstacle and anomaly cards



Obstacles and anomalies are *events* that represent challenges the empires must face in order to spread across the galaxy. They are placed on sectors during setup and must be resolved for the sector to be controllable and colonizable.

Artifact cards

Artifacts represent ancient relics of the old Federation that players discover and claim while exploring the galaxy. They award powerful abilities, boosting one aspect of your empire, while others activate immediately and give you a one-time bonus.

Singularity cards

Singularities are *events* that represent phenomena that can alter the fate of an empire. Only one is used per game, which is placed on the Utopian sector during setup and gives strong advantages to the player controlling it.

Action cards

Actions represent a plethora of maneuvers and schemes pulled off by the empires in their pursuit of power. They stay on display, available to all the players, and grant them powerful effects.

Tactic cards

Tactics represent different offensive and defensive maneuvers performed by units during battle turns. Players start the game using non-elite tactics and swap them with their elite versions via in-game effects.

Two factions start with a unique tactic (and its elite version), *Frenzied Assault* for the Saura and *Swarm Attack* for the Borroka.

Government cards

Governments represent each faction's political ideologies. They consist of an action tied to the faction's influence, and a secondary effect.

Objective cards

Objectives represent conditions to fulfill to score VPs at the end of each Age. They are divided into two types, Age 1 and Age 2 , with only one of each being used per game.

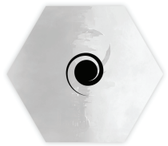
Mastery cards

Masteries represent the unique combat abilities of each faction. Players start the game using the normal side up and flip them to their elite side when their last military colony is removed from the empire board.

Technology cards

Technologies represent scientific developments that improve many different aspects of an empire. There are two types, civil and military technologies. They are distributed according to the scientific cost necessary for their development.

Living galaxy tokens



Living galaxies are *events* that represent various oddities in the galaxy. They are placed face-down on non-habitable sectors during setup and provide exploitation areas to the player controlling them, and other various effects.

Living storm tokens

Living storms are placed between sectors and prevent units from moving through.

Other components

Battle medals keep track of contested sectors, and the number of battles won.

Blockade medals keep track of sectors under blockade.

Science tokens are used for developing technologies. They can be flipped over to represent 3 science tokens.

Colony tokens represent your colonies on the empire board and colonized sectors.

Faction tokens mark various faction-specific in-game effects.

The first player token indicates who acts first. When flipped, it becomes the **watcher token** and indicates who passed first.

Victory tokens keep track of bonus VPs earned throughout the game.

Action markers keep track of played and depleted actions.

Victory dice keep track of VPs earned during the scoring.

Credit markers keep track of credits.

Influence markers keep track of influence.

The **cycle marker** keeps track of the current cycle.

Setup

Map

1. Choose a map (extended or compact) from the galaxy atlas section on page 23 of this rulebook.

2. Lay out the fixed components as indicated by the map image.

3. Randomly **lay out the map's variable components** among the blank sector spaces indicated by the map image.

4. Separately **shuffle the obstacles, anomalies, living galaxies, and singularities**, then place one face-down in each sector with a matching symbol.

Player components

5. Each player **chooses a color** and takes all its components – units, tactic cards, colony tokens, science tokens, and empire board.

6. Each player **places their 12 colony tokens** on their respective tracks, covering all spaces except the leftmost ones.

7. Each **player places their influence marker** on 1, **credit marker** on 0, and **victory dice** on 0 on their respective tracks.

8. Each player **places their action markers** on the respective action tracks, black side up.

9. Each player **gathers their non-elite tactics** and **sets aside their elite versions**.

10. Give the first player token to the last player that watched a space opera. Yes, The Fifth Element (1997) counts...

Factions

11. Shuffle all the available faction mats (consisting of the 7 base factions and any expansion factions) and **reveal a number of them** equal to the number of players plus two (e.g., 4 players > 6 factions).

12. Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player **chooses one faction** mat and attaches it to their empire board.

Each faction mat includes a complexity rating on the setup side marked with a dot system, with more dots for higher complexity.

13. Each player **takes the government cards** indicated by their faction mat, chooses one, and discards the other.

The *first listed government* is recommended for your first game.

14. Each player takes their faction's mastery card and places its normal side up.

15. Each player **places the units** indicated by their faction mat on their starting sector.

16. Each player **places the colony** indicated by their faction mat on their starting sector, immediately gaining 1 influence if the colony is imperial.

Shared components

17. Place all four shared boards around the map.

18. Separate the civil technology cards by their science cost (1-2, 3-5, and 7). Shuffle each of the 3 stacks separately.

Then **set up the civil technology board** by preparing the following number of slots based on player count:

2 players:	3 slots
3 players:	4 slots
4 players:	5 slots

On each slot, place one random face-down card from the 7 stacks, one from the 3-5 stack, and finally, a face-up card from the 1-2 stack.

19. Set up the military technology cards on their respective board, and follow the same instructions (18).

20. Take a random objective card of each Age. Place the Age 1 card face-up and the Age 2 card face-down above the cycle board.

21. Place the cycle marker on 1 on the cycle board.

22. Separately shuffle the action and artifact cards, placing each deck face-down on the corresponding slots of the action board.

23. Reveal the first four action cards face-up underneath the board to form the action pool.

24. Place all other markers, medals, and tokens within easy reach of all players. Return all unused components to the box.

The game is ready; players can start the first income phase.

Key concepts

Rule priority

Many game components (such as cards, faction mats, and expansions) describe rules and game effects that contradict or modify the rules in this rulebook. Whenever this happens, **the rules on the components take precedence.**

Therefore, when a component tells you to ignore restrictions, disregard any rules in this rulebook.

Public and private information

The content of cards in hand is private and may never be revealed to other players until the card is played. Players are free to discuss them, either telling the truth or bluffing.

All other information on empires is public, including everything on empire boards, units in empires' reserves, and the number of cards in each hand. Generally speaking, everything face-up is public, and everything face-down is private.

Turn order

The player holding the first player token goes first. The turn proceeds clockwise, so the previous and next players sit on the active player's right and left sides.

Colony tracks

Your empire board has four colony tracks. You unlock different abilities as you remove colony tokens from them.

At any time, to determine your empire's current capacity on any track, check the rightmost uncovered colony space. You may, in some instances, have one of your colony tokens returned to your empire board. When that happens, place it on the rightmost uncovered colony space of the corresponding track. The efficiency of that track is thereby reduced.

Imperial track

The **imperial track** represents your empire's political power and government capacity.

- **No colonies:** Execute 2 movement orders when you Advance.
- **First colony:** Gain 1 influence (colonization bonus). Execute 3 movement orders when you Advance.
- **Second colony:** Gain 2 influence (colonization bonus). Execute 4 movement orders when you Advance.
- **Third colony:** Gain 1 influence (colonization bonus). Execute 4 movement orders when you Advance. You may play 1 extra action card before you pass.

Productive track

The **productive track** represents your empire's capacity to generate energy and resources.

- **No colonies:** Gain 3 credits during the income phase.
- **First colony:** Gain 4 credits during the income phase.
- **Second colony:** Immediately gain 1 credit (colonization bonus). Gain 5 credits during the income phase.
- **Third colony:** Immediately Gain 1 credit (colonization bonus). Gain 6 credits during the income phase.

Scientific track

The **scientific track** represents your empire's technological development.

- **No colonies:** Gain 1 science when you Research. Move 1 sector per movement order when you Advance.
- **First colony:** Gain 2 science when you Research. Move 2 sectors per movement order when you Advance.
- **Second colony:** Gain 2 science on any technology slot (colonization bonus). Gain 3 science when you Research. Move 2 sectors per movement order when you Advance.
- **Third colony:** Draw 1 artifact (colonization bonus). Gain 5 science when you Research. Move 3 sectors per movement order when you Advance.

Military track

The **military track** represents your empire's military discipline, training, and infrastructure.

- **No colonies:** Recruit 2 infantries or 1 lightship when you Recruit.
- **First colony:** Recruit 2 infantries, 2 lightships, or 1 mech when you Recruit.
- **Second colony:** Replace a tactic of your choice with its elite version (colonization bonus). Recruit 3 infantries, 2 lightships, 1 mech, or 1 warship when you Recruit.
- **Third colony:** Unlock your mastery's elite side (colonization bonus). Recruit 3 infantries, 3 lightships, 2 mechs, or 1 warship when you Recruit.

An upgraded mastery doesn't further upgrade or downgrade. In other words, they are never flipped back.

Unit abilities

Each unit type has specific abilities described by *keywords*, which are mentioned throughout the rules.

Infantry	*Ground unit* *Colonize* *Invade*
Lightship	*Space unit* *Transport 2*
Mech	*Ground unit* *Vanguard* *Resist 1*
Warship	*Space unit* *Transport 3* *Resist 1*

In-game effects, such as faction abilities and artifacts, may alter or add keywords that apply to a unit, such as *Courage*, *Veteran*, and *Support*.

Controlling a sector

Several game effects require you to control a sector. If you have more pieces (units and colonies) than any other player in a sector with no obstacle or anomaly, you control it. In case of a tie, no one controls the sector.

Obstacles and anomalies must be resolved for their sector to be controlled.

Blockading a sector

A colonized sector containing at least four enemy units is blockaded and cannot be used for recruiting.

Use blockade medals to keep track of these sectors.

Contested sector

A sector with two or more players' units and colonies is contested.

Empty sector

A sector that doesn't contain any players' units or colonies is empty.

Adjacency

Two components are considered adjacent to one another if their sectors share an edge. Components in the same sector are considered adjacent. Living storms break adjacency between sectors.

Modifiers

Many game effects can reduce the cost of components or modify the conditions that must be met for certain actions to be completed. All modifiers are cumulative, but no modifier can reduce a cost below 0.

Component limit

All components and tracks of the game are limited, including science, faction, and colony tokens.

Exhausting components

Some game components can only be used once per round, cycle, or Age. To mark a card as exhausted, rotate it by 90°, returning it to its normal orientation when the effect becomes available again.

Discarding cards

Discarded cards are placed face-up on a discard pile. Each deck has its own discard pile, which players can inspect at any time. If you ever need to draw from a deck that is empty, immediately reshuffle its discard pile to create a new one.

Removed and banished

When a component is **removed**, it is returned to its respective discard pile, reserve, or board.

When a component is **banished**, it is returned to the game box and won't be used again during this game.

When you banish a sector, all components on it are **removed**, not banished.

Losing access

If a component that grants a benefit or penalty is lost in any way, then any effect it provides is also immediately lost.

Expansion icons

Some components have an icon in the upper right corner. This icon refers to various expansion sets.

Structure of the game

A game consists of two Ages, each divided into two cycles, during which players take turns performing various actions. A transition occurs at the end of each Age, during which objectives are scored.

- Cycle 1
- Cycle 2
  - Transition
- Cycle 3
- Cycle 4
  - Transition
  - End of the game

Structure of a cycle

Each cycle is divided into four phases:

1. Income phase: Players simultaneously earn income from their productive track and exploitation areas and trigger any applicable effects from components.

2. Action phase: Players take turns performing 2 different actions at a time until each player has passed, which happens once the player's limit of action cards is reached.

3. Conflict phase: Players resolve battles and sieges in each contested sector.

4. End of cycle phase: Players trigger any applicable effects from components, then prepare the next cycle by moving the cycle marker, refreshing cards on shared boards, and determining the new first player.

If the cycle ends the current Age, players perform a transition.

Income phase

Gain credits

Each player gains the number of credits indicated by the rightmost uncovered space on their productive track.

Exploitation areas

Each player gains the resources indicated by exploitation areas in any sector they control for which they have the required units.

Each exploitation area can only be activated once, regardless of how many units you have in the sector.

If you have one or more infantries in this sector, gain one influence during the income phase.

Unexhaust and other effects

Trigger any *During income phase* effect from components and unexhaust all exhausted components.

Action phase

The action phase starts with the player holding the first player token, then proceeds clockwise. During your turn, you must choose **2 actions** among the following:

- Recruit
- Advance
- Colonize
- Research
- Government action
- Action card

Except for playing action cards, each action can only be chosen **once per turn.**
Whenever you perform an action, slide its respective marker on the action track, sliding it back down at the end of your turn.

You cannot repeat an action during the same turn (except playing action cards) but are free to repeat the same combinations of actions on subsequent turns.

In order to choose an action, you must be able to carry out its effects (e.g., you cannot Advance if you don't have movable units on the board).

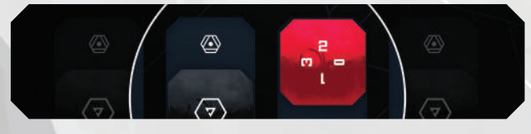
Basic actions

Each basic action (Recruit, Advance, Colonize and Research) costs **one credit**, as indicated by the top of their action tracks.

Depletion

You can perform a basic action without paying one credit by depleting it. To do this, slide the action marker up and flip it to its depletion side, with the number 2 on top (in-game effects may alter this, but never above 3 or below 0).

Depleted actions **cannot be performed.** Depletion is usually refreshed between cycles by spending the amount of influence indicated on top of the action token. Whenever an effect asks you to add (or remove) a from a basic action, flip the action marker to its depleted (or normal) side.



Recruit

To perform a Recruit action, follow these steps:

1. Spend one credit or deplete the action.
2. Select one available unit type from your military track and check the total number of visible icons of that type.
3. Deploy up to that many units from your reserve (minimum 1) on sectors **with your colonies**.

You can recruit even if enemy units are present in the sector, but not if it is blockaded. If you receive multiple units, you may freely distribute them among valid sectors.

Redeployment

If you can recruit more units than you have in your reserve, you may redeploy units from the board (e.g., units in a contested sectors, damaged units, pinned down units, blockaded units, or units that just moved).

Redeployment can only be done when you have insufficient units in your reserve.

You choose to Recruit lightships. Your military track indicates 2 units (1 + 1), so you take them from your reserve and place them in any sector with your colonies and no enemy blockade.

Later in the game, you have uncovered all the spaces on your military track. You can now recruit a large number of units, such as 3 lightship, or stronger units, such as 1 warship.

Advance

To perform an Advance action, follow these steps:

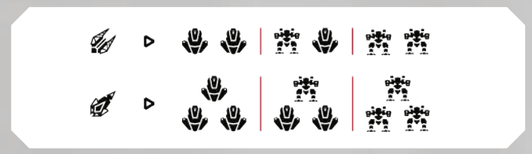
1. Spend one credit or deplete the action.
2. Check the number of available movement orders on the rightmost visible space of your imperial track.
3. Execute up to that many movement orders (minimum 1). For each, move a *space unit* up to the number of sectors indicated on the rightmost visible space of your scientific track (it moves through each sector along the way).

Perform one movement order at a time. Units you already moved during this turn cannot be moved again during the same turn (this also applies to already transported *ground units*).

Your imperial track indicates 4 movement orders (4), and your scientific track indicates 2 sectors (2). You can move up to 4 space units at a maximum distance of 2 sectors.

Transporting units

Ground units can't move on their own and must be transported by *space units* with the *transport X* keyword, where *X* indicates how many units they can transport. All units, both transporting and transported, must begin and end their movement in the same sector.



Events

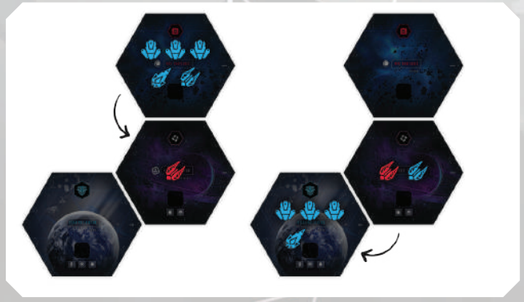
If you move a unit into or through a sector with a face-down obstacle, anomaly, living galaxy, or singularity, immediately reveal it. If it has an immediate effect, resolve it right away. Otherwise, leave it face-up in the sector.
You may choose to stop your movement after revealing an event.

Pin-down

In contested sectors, *space units* generate pin-down, blocking the movement of opposing *space units*.

To determine pin-down, choose an opponent in the sector with the most *space units*. This value becomes the number of your space units blocked from moving through or from that sector. Any of your space units above this number may continue their movement and transport *ground units* (which can't be pinned down).
If you have multiple *space units*, you decide which can move and which are pinned down. Lightships and warships generate pin-down by default, but other game modes may introduce additional sources.

The red player may only move up to 2 of their lightships (transporting their infantry), the third one being pinned down by the blue player's lightship.



The blue player Advances, leaving behind a lightship pinned down in a contested sector.

Colonize

To perform a Colonize action, follow these steps:
1. Spend one credit or deplete the action.
2. Choose a sector you control with an empty colony space and at least one of your units with the *colonize* keyword.
3. Check accepted colony types for this sector (imperial, productive, scientific, or military), then choose a corresponding colony token from your empire board.

You must always choose the leftmost colony of a given track.

Remember that obstacles and anomalies prevent sectors from being controlled.

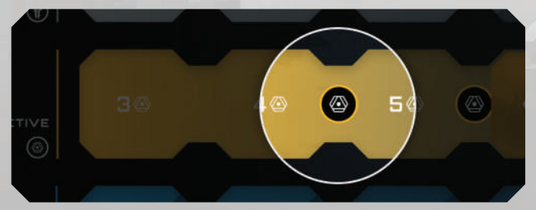
Imperial Productive Scientific Military

You choose to Colonize a sector that may hold a scientific or imperial colony. You then take a scientific colony from your colony track and place it on the sector.

Colonization bonus

Anytime you take a colony from a track, gain the one-time bonus indicated by the circle on its immediate left if any.

Returning a colony to its track does not affect this bonus. You can even gain it again if you remove the colony a second time.



When you remove the third productive colony from its track, you immediately gain one credit.

Research

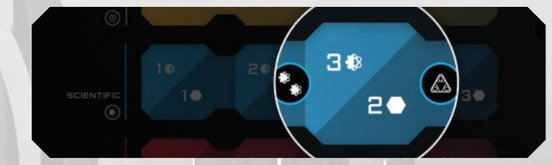
To perform a Research action, follow these steps:
1. Spend one credit or deplete the action.
2. Check the number of science tokens on the rightmost visible space of your scientific track.
3. Place them on one or more technologies without exceeding the cost of each card.
4. You can develop any face-up technology cards whose cost you reached. To do so, return the science tokens to your supply and place the cards in your play area.

You may develop multiple technologies with a single Research action.

When you develop a technology, the next card in the slot stays face-down until the next cycle. Other players' science tokens remain in that slot. However, if you take the last card of a technology slot, all science tokens of other players return to their supplies.

Some technologies have the symbol, indicating that other in-game components can increase their effects and that you can benefit from having multiple copies of that card.

When another effect allows you to gain science, immediately place the tokens on the technology boards. However, you can only develop the card by performing the Research action (when the science cost is reached).



Your scientific track indicates 3 . You place two science tokens on a civil technology costing 2 and the remaining token on a military technology costing 5. You can now develop the first technology.

Special actions

Special actions (Government action and Action card) cost **no credit** but can only be performed a certain number of times.

Government action

To perform a Government action, follow these steps:
1. Check the influence requirement of the action on your government card.
2. Check your current influence to determine how many times you can trigger the action.
3. Trigger its effect up to that number of times (minimum once).

The Government action can be performed **once per cycle**. After you trigger it, flip its action marker to its *adopted* side (red side).

You are required to have a certain amount of influence but not to spend it.

You are using the Txingur Collective Overmind government. The government action requires 3 influence, and you currently have 7 influence. You can trigger its effect twice.

Action card

To play an action card, follow these steps:
1. Choose a card from the action pool.
2. Either play it face-up to trigger its effect or face-down to gain 1 influence and perform 1 insight ( ).
3. Draw a new card to replenish the action pool.

When you play a card, place it near your empire board until the end of the cycle.

You can play **2 action cards per cycle**. After reaching this limit, slide the action marker up and flip it to its *pass* side (red side). Then, you **immediately pass**, performing no further actions during this cycle.

In-game effects, such as the imperial track, can increase the number of action cards you can play each cycle before passing.

If you are the first player to pass during this cycle, take the first player token and place it near your empire board on its watcher side .

The action phase ends when all the players have passed.

Remember that playing an action card is the only action you may repeat during a single turn.

Two specific effects are associated with action cards: moving living storm tokens (ϟ) or performing insight 👁.

Living storms

When you move a living storm (ϟ), choose any on the board and move its vertex to one of the three closest intersections, rotating it to any orientation afterward.

Living storms can't overlap and must be placed at intersections between three sectors, if possible. If not, they must be placed in a way that breaks as many adjacencies as possible.

Insight

When you perform insight 👁, trigger one of the following effects:

- Draw three cards from any deck and choose to return each of those cards to either the top or bottom of that deck in the order of your choice.
- Look at all face-down technologies in a single technology slot.
- Look at a single face-down component.

Face-down components are usually living galaxy tokens, anomalies, obstacles, objectives and singularities, but may also include components belonging to other players.

Players are free to exchange information acquired with insight. However, the player performing the insight is the only one allowed to check the target component.

Conflict phase

During this phase, players resolve conflicts in every contested sector. The conflict phase is resolved by following these steps:

1. The watcher (whoever has the watcher token ◈) recruits 1 infantry or lightship for free **or** performs a single movement order.
2. Place a battle medal in each contested sector.
3. Resolve battles in every sector with battle medals.
4. Resolve sieges in every sector with colonies of one player and units of another.
5. Claim medals.

Battles and sieges are resolved one at a time, in the order the watcher chooses.

Battle resolution

Each battle consists of several turns during which players choose and resolve tactic cards. A player wins a battle if they are the only one with units in the sector at the end of a battle turn.

Battle preparation

Each player gathers their valid tactic cards in their hand. A card is considered valid if you can trigger at least one of the listed effects on it with the units you currently have in the sector.

Choose and resolve tactic cards

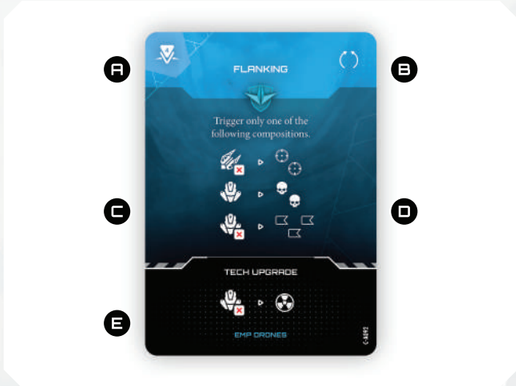
Each player simultaneously chooses and reveals a valid tactic from their hand.
Resolve the revealed tactics from the lowest to the highest initiative. Cards with the same initiative are resolved simultaneously. Units affected by a card of the same initiative as yours can still be used to resolve your own tactic.
To resolve a tactic, you must choose one of the main effects **and** any tech upgrades you have. Most tactics' main effects have multiple unit compositions, but you must choose the composition with the highest number of units. You can select the resolution order between the main effect and the tech upgrade.

If any of your units are removed before you resolve your tactic, and you can no longer trigger any of the compositions, discard your card without resolving it.

Repeat this process until a single player's units remain in the sector or until a player no longer has valid cards to play.

Tactics played in previous turns remain on the table for everyone to see and cannot be played again during this battle.

Tactic cards



(A) **Initiative:** Determines the order in which tactics are resolved, which goes from the lowest to the highest number.

(B) **Tactic icon:** Represents the tactic and helps identify the cards.

(C) **Units' composition:** Indicates which units you must have or remove ✕ in the sector to trigger the respective damage effect.

(D) **Damage effect:** Indicates which damage types you inflict on enemy units in the sector.

(E) **Tech upgrade:** Indicates one or more additional effects triggered if you have the required technology card and fulfill the conditions.

Damage types

Each icon represents a different kind of damage. The damage caused by tactic cards is resolved **in the following order**:

Massive damage
Remove a unit of your choice, ignoring the *Resist* keyword.

Direct damage
Deal 1 damage to a unit of your choice.

Indirect damage
The player taking the damage chooses one of their units to suffer 1 damage.

Retreat damage
The player taking the damage chooses one of their units to suffer 1 retreat.

Damage dealt during other phases follows the same rules.

Retreat

When one of your units is forced to retreat, move it to the adjacent sector with no battle medals and no enemy units or colonies, and nearest to any of your units or colonies.

If there is more than one sector the unit can move to, the **player dealing the damage chooses to which it goes**. If no sector is valid, the unit is removed instead.

Ground units can retreat without requiring transporting units.

Elite tactic cards

Some in-game effects allow you to replace your tactics with their elite version. These are more powerful than their normal counterpart. If an effect forces you to discard a tactic at random, and you discard an elite one, it is returned to your hand immediately.

Unit abilities

Resist X: Units with the *Resist X* keyword can sustain up to X damage (direct, indirect, and retreat) dealt to them before being removed or forced to retreat.

Resist does not apply to the *Retreat* tactic card.

To keep track of the first damage a unit with *Resist* takes, topple the miniature to its side. Toppled units return to normal at the end of the cycle.

Vanguard: Units with the *Vanguard* keyword can redirect the damage dealt to other units in their sector to themselves instead. This effect may only be used once per damage instance (each tactic card dealing damage counts as a single damage instance).

Courage X: Units with the *Courage X* keyword can sustain up to X instances of retreat damage before being forced to retreat.

Courage does not apply to the Retreat tactic card and does not stack with the *Resist* ability.

To keep track of the first retreat damage a unit with *Courage* takes, topple the miniature to its side. Toppled units return to normal at the end of the cycle.

Veteran: Units with the *Veteran* keyword count as two for sieges and tactic card compositions.

Support X: Units with the *Support X* keyword may instead be counted as X infantries or lightships for tactic card compositions. You may choose which type of unit the *Support* unit becomes every time a new tactic card is resolved.

Example 1

The blue player chooses the Ground Assault tactic which has a base initiative of 3. Since blue has developed the Phase Weapon military technology, they must trigger the tech upgrade of their tactic, which reduces the card's initiative by 1. Blue has 3 infantries in the sector and triggers the most powerful composition, inflicting 1 indirect damage and 3 retreat damages, with an upgraded initiative of 2.

Example 2

The blue player has 3 infantries, and the red player has 1 infantry in the sector. Both choose the Ground Assault tactic. Because both cards have the same initiative, they are resolved simultaneously. Red inflicts 2 retreat damage, and blue inflicts 1 indirect damage and 3 retreat damages. At the end of the battle turn, red has no more units in the sector, while blue still has one. Blue wins.

Victory conditions

If **only one player has surviving units** in the sector, they win.

If **no player has any more units, but there is a colony** in the sector, the owner wins.

If **no player has any more units and there is no colony** in the sector, the result is a draw.

If a player doesn't have any valid tactics to play, they must remove all their units from the sector. They are considered missing in action.

Multiple players in a battle

The battle can involve several players. They all reveal their tactics simultaneously, which are then resolved according to their initiative, with each player choosing their target. In a case of a tie, the player with the watcher or first player token must choose which player is the first target.

Sieges

After battle resolution, if two of your units remain in a sector containing an enemy colony, you may besiege it. There are two different kinds of sieges.

Raze

Remove the enemy colony, and gain 1 military VP. Any type of unit may perform Raze.

Invade

If one of the units has the *Invade* ability, you can replace the colony with one of the same type from your empire board instead. You still gain 1 military VP.

Multiple colonies in a sector

Each colony in a sector requires two separate units to be besieged. You may raze or invade a single colony if you don't have enough units.

Medals

Give each battle medal on the board to the player with units in its sector. If there are no units there, then give it to the player with colonies in the sector. If there are no colonies there or, in the rare case of a tie, remove the battle medal from the sector.

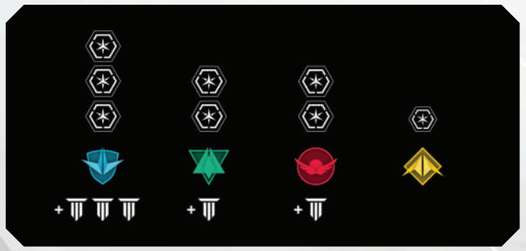
End of cycle phase

During this phase, the board is cleaned up and prepared for the next cycle. The end of cycle phase is resolved by following these steps:

1. Prestige check
2. Utopian sector reward
3. Cleanup
4. Depletion upkeep
5. Determine the first player
6. Advance cycle marker

Prestige check

Each player tallies up their total number of battle medals (including those from previous cycles) and **gains 1 influence per player with fewer medals than them**.



If blue, green, red, and yellow players have 3, 2, 2, and 1 battle medals, they gain, respectively, 3, 1, 1, and 0 influence.

Utopian sector reward

The player who controls the Utopian sector resolves the effect indicated by its singularity card.

Clean up

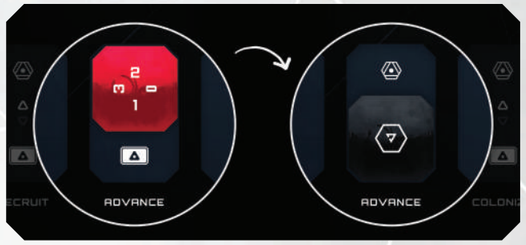
During this step, turn all the face-down cards on the technology boards over to their visible side. They can now be developed.
Discard all action cards played during this cycle, as well as all cards in the action pool. Replenish the action pool with four new cards from the deck.
Remove all invalid blockade medals and faction tokens from the board.

Depletion upkeep

Tally the total influence cost indicated at the top of your depleted action markers, and spend as much influence to flip them to their normal side. Then slide them down on their respective tracks.

If you don't have enough influence, choose which action markers to spend it on, then lose the rest.

Depleted actions will remain unavailable for the next cycle.



During this cycle, you depleted both the Advance and Colonize actions. You would need 4 influence to flip both action markers but only have 3. You choose to flip the Advance action marker. Your last influence is lost, and the Colonize action will remain depleted for the next cycle.

Determine the first player

The watcher selects another player to give the watcher token to, first player side up.

Advance the cycle marker

Advance the cycle marker, performing a transition if the current Age has ended. Finally, if the game didn't end, proceed with the next cycle's income phase.

Transition

During the transition, players score victory points when they meet the conditions on the objective cards.

Scoring

During Age 1, each condition on the objective card rewards 1 .
During Age 2, each condition on the objective cards rewards 2 .

Objective specialization

If you fulfill the condition of an objective twice, gain 1 extra .

You reach the Age 1 transition with 4 influence on your track. You then score 1 VP as a base reward plus 1 extra VP as an objective specialization, for a total of 2 VPs on that particular objective.

Objective symbols

Objective cards contain a variety of symbols described here.

Colonies
Have colonies on the board of the indicated type.

Units
Have a certain number of units on the board of the indicated type.

Technologies
Have developed technology cards of the indicated type (civil or military).

Sector types or Living galaxies
Control sectors of a certain type or containing living galaxies.

Sectors
Control 4 sectors of any type.

Science
Have a certain number of science tokens on the technology boards.

Influence
Have a certain amount of influence on the influence track.

Battle medals
Have a certain number of battle medals.

Artifacts
Have a certain number of artifact cards.

Obstacles
Have resolved a certain number of obstacle cards.

Victory points

Victory points are represented by victory dice on your VP track or by victory tokens earned during the game. When you earn through objectives or effects that specifically state a VP category, adjust the respective victory die accordingly. If an effect doesn't state which category of VP is gained, take instead.

The victory dice restrict the maximum number of VPs players can score in each category to 5.

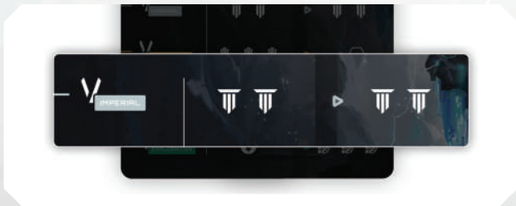
There are 5 different categories of VP in the game: Imperial, Military, Scientific, Productive, and Exploration. These are mostly used for expansions.

You finish the game with 3 Imperial, 1 Productive, 2 Scientific, 1 Military, and 4 Exploration VPs, for a final score of 11 VPs.

Reveal the next objective card

After performing the first transition, reveal the Age 2 objective card. First, follow the instructions written on the left side.

After that, tuck it under the right side of the Age 1 card midway through. From now on, each condition is determined by both cards. This increases the difficulty of the objectives, but conditions now reward 2 instead of 1 during the scoring.



Now that the second objective is in play, the imperial condition requires having 4 influence instead of 2, but rewards 2 VPs.

Game end

The game ends after the second transition.

The player with the most VPs after the last scoring wins. If two or more players have the same number of VPs, then break the tie as follows:

1. Most battle medals
2. Most remaining influence
3. Most remaining credits
4. Most remaining units and colonies on the board

If this does not break the tie, all tied players win the game.

Events

Living galaxies

Living galaxies provide exploitation areas to the player controlling them, and other various effects.

Effects

Block movement
When entering this sector, units **end their movement immediately**.
When leaving the sector, **units can only move to a distance of 1 sector.**

Hostile conditions
During battle preparation in this sector, discard two random tactics face-up.

Wormholes
Sectors with a living galaxy token containing this symbol are considered adjacent to any sector of the type indicated by the token ( ).
This applies to movement, and all effects requiring adjacency.

Radiation
Units in this sector lose all their abilities (except the ability *Ground unit*, *Space unit*, *Colonize*, and *Transport*).

Interference
Lightships don't generate pin-down in this sector. Warships are not affected.

Exploitation areas

During the income phase, each player gains the resources indicated by exploitation areas in any sector they control for which they have the required units. You can find the following symbols:

Units
Have a certain number of units in the sector of the indicated type.

Credit
Gain one credit.

Influence
Gain one influence.

Science
Place two science tokens on the technology boards.

Obstacles and anomalies

Timing

You can resolve revealed obstacles and anomalies on the board **at the end of any action** if you meet the card's requirements with the units you have in the sector.

Conditions

Anomalies offer a single option, while obstacles usually offer two, with different requirements and rewards. When resolving an obstacle, choose only one option.
Then, remove the anomaly or obstacle from the sector.

Influence
Spend a certain amount of influence.

Credit
Spend a certain amount of credits.

Units
Have a certain number of infantries, lightships, or mechs in this sector.

Remove units
Remove a certain number of your infantries or lightships from this sector.

Science
Remove a certain number of your science tokens from the technology boards.

Technologies
Have developed a certain number of technology cards of the indicated type (civil or military).

Remove technologies
Remove a certain number of your developed technology cards of the indicated type.

Mystery or Living galaxies
Control a certain number of mystery sectors or containing living galaxies.

Colonize
Perform a free Colonize action in this sector.

Rewards

Once the requirements have been met, place the card besides your empire board and earn the indicated reward.

Science
Gain science.

Influence
Gain influence.

Credit
Gain credit.

Artifacts
Draw two artifacts, keep one and discard the other.

Units
Place a certain number of infantries in this sector.

At the end of the action, the blue player decides to resolve the obstacle. They can remove 2 of their science tokens from the technology boards and gain 1 influence or remove 1 infantry from this sector. Blue then places the obstacle beside their empire board. The sector can now be controlled and colonized.

At the end of the action, the yellow player decides to resolve the anomaly. They have 1 lightship in this sector, and they also remove 1 of their infantries from this sector and 1 of their science from the technology boards. As a reward, yellow draws 2 artifacts and keeps one, then places the anomaly beside their empire board. The sector can now be controlled and colonized.

Galactic atlas

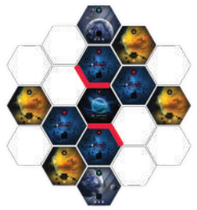
Extended maps

This is the standard way of playing. These layouts result in longer games, with a lesser emphasis on conflict.

2-player game

Fixed components
1x Utopian sector
2x Starting sectors
4x Non-habitable sectors
4x Productive sectors
2x Living Storms

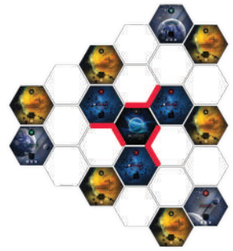
Variable components
2x Mystery sectors
2x Biodiverse sectors
4x Arid sectors



3-player game

Fixed components
1x Utopian sector
3x Starting sectors
3x Non-habitable sectors
6x Productive sectors
3x Living storms

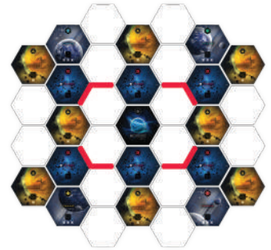
Variable components
3x Mystery sectors
3x Biodiverse sectors
6x Arid sectors



4-player game

Fixed components
1x Utopian sector
4x Starting sectors
6x Non-habitable sectors
8x Productive sectors
4x Living storms

Variable components
4x Mystery sectors
4x Biodiverse sectors
8x Arid sectors



Compact maps

These layouts result in shorter games with a greater emphasis on conflict.

2-player game

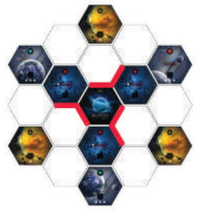
Fixed components
1x Utopian sector
2x Starting sectors
2x Non-habitable sectors
2x Productive sectors
2x Living storms

Variable components
2x Mystery sectors
2x Biodiverse sectors
2x Arid sectors

3-player game

Fixed components
1x Utopian sector
3x Starting sectors
3x Non-habitable sectors
3x Productive sectors
3x Living storms

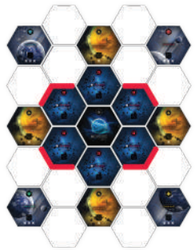
Variable components
3x Mystery sectors
3x Biodiverse sectors
3x Arid Sectors



4-player game

Fixed components
1x Utopian sector
4x Starting sectors
6x Non-habitable sectors
4x Productive sectors
4x Living storms

Variable components
4x Mystery sectors
4x Biodiverse sectors
4x Arid sectors



Wartime innovation

This module increases the flexibility of combat-oriented strategies by introducing additional rewards when you win battles.

Rules

When you collect a battle medal after winning a battle, you may return it to the supply to place a science token on two **different** technologies on the boards.
When you gain more than one medal during a single battle, all science tokens must be placed on different technologies.

Clarifications

- If you gain more than one medal during a single battle, you may choose which to keep and which to return.
- Even if you meet the scientific cost of a technology, you can't develop it unless you perform a Research action.

Elite training

This module increases the complexity of players' strategies by introducing a new way to upgrade your tactics.

Rules

At the start of the conflict phase, you may choose to spend two medals to **draw two random cards** from the elite tactics deck and choose one.

Clarifications

- You may trigger this rule **only once** per conflict phase.
- You must inform your opponents of which tactic card you choose to upgrade.
- All players must trigger this rule simultaneously.

Diplomacy

This module increases the diplomacy aspect of the game by allowing you to establish agreements with other empires.

Rules

During the income phase, if players have adjacent units and/or colonies, they may negotiate to exchange faction tokens and benefit from their respective effects.

During the action phase, if you enter a sector that contains colonies belonging to another player with whom you have an agreement, lose 2 influence and return that player's faction token.

At the end of the cycle, resolve agreements and return all faction tokens to their respective owners.

Types of agreements

Trade Agreement
At the end of the cycle, flip 1 depletion token.

Diplomatic Agreement
At the end of the cycle, gain 1 influence.

Cultural Agreement
When you receive this token, immediately place one of your colonies on it of the same type as the owner's starting colony. At the end of the cycle, return the colony to your empire board.

Clarification

- Only faction tokens can be part of the negotiation, and no other game resources can be exchanged as part of the agreement.
- Each player may only ever have one faction token from each opponent.

Dawn of the Galaxy

This module increases the complexity of the objectives by adding an extra objective card during the setup.

Setup

During the setup, reveal a second Age 1 objective card and tuck it under the right side of the first one to form a single row for each objective.

Rules

During the first transition, you must fulfill the conditions of both Age 1 objective cards at once to gain 1 .

When you reveal the Age 2 objective card, tuck it under the right side of the second Age 1 card.
During the second transition, you must fulfill the conditions of all three cards to gain 2 .

Clarification

- For this module, ignore the "Objective specialization" rule.

Symbol summary

- Action
- Anomaly
- Arid sector
- Artifact
- Biodiverse sector
- Bold effect
- Civil technology
- Battle medal
- Blockade medal
- Credit resource
- Depletion
- Direct damage
- Imperial colony
- Indirect damage
- Infantry Unit
- Influence
- Initiative value
- Insight
- Lightship unit
- Living galaxy
- Massive damage
- Mastery I
- Mastery II
- Mech Unit
- Military colony
- Military technology
- Movement order
- Mystery sector
- Non-Habitable sector
- Objective Age 1
- Objective Age 2
- Obstacle
- Productive colony
- Productive sector
- Retreat damage
- Science colony
- Science token
- Sector
- Singularity
- Living Storm
- Tactic
- Utopian sector
- Victory token
- Warship unit

Additional symbols

- Remove
- Spend
- Block 1 damage
- Block unlimited damages

Index

A

Abilities 11, 17
Action board 5
Action card 15
Action markers 7
Action phase 12
Action pool 15
Actions 6
Adjacency 11
Advance 13
Advanced modules 24
Age 12
Anomalies 5, 14, 21
Artifacts 6

B

Banish 11
Basic actions 13
Battle medals 7, 16, 18
Battle preparation 16
Battle resolution 16, 18
Battles 16
Black units 5
Blockade 11
Blockade medals 7
Board 4

C

Clean up 19
Colonies 7, 14
Colonization bonus 10, 14
Colonize 14
Colonize (ability) 11, 14
Colony tracks 10
Colony type 14
Conflict phase 12, 16
Contested sector 11
Control 11
Courage (ability) 17
Credits 7, 12, 13
Cycle 12
Cycle board 5
Cycle marker 7, 19

D

Damage 17
Depletion 13
Depletion upkeep 19

E

Empire boards 4
Empty sector 11
End of cycle phase 12, 19
Events 14, 21
Exhaust 11, 12
Exploitation areas 12, 21

F

Factions 4
Faction tokens 7
First player token 7, 15, 19

G

Galactic atlas 23
Government action 15
Governments 6
Ground unit (ability) 11, 13

I

Ignore restrictions 10
Imperial track 10, 13
Income phase 12
Influence 7, 15
Initiative 16
Insight 15, 16
Invade 18
Invade (ability) 11, 18

K

Keywords 17

L

Living galaxies 7, 14, 21
Living storms 7, 16
Losing access 11

M

Map 8
Masteries 7
Military track 10
Modifiers 11
Movement order 13
Multiple players in a battle 18

O

Objectives 6, 20, 21
Objective Specialization 20
Obstacles 5, 14, 21

P

Pass 15
Pin-down 14
Prestige check 19
Productive track 10

R

Raze 18
Recruit 13
Redeployment 13
Remove 11
Research 15
Resist X (ability) 11, 17
Retreat 17

S

Science tokens 7, 15
Scientific track 10, 13, 15
Scoring 20, 21
Sectors 4, 14
Shared boards 5
Sieges 16, 18
Singularities 6, 14, 19
Space unit (ability) 11, 13, 14
Special actions 15
Starting sectors 8
Support X (ability) 17

T

Tactics 6, 16, 17
Tactics (elite) 6, 17
Technologies 7, 15
Technology boards 5
Technology slots 5, 8, 15
Tech upgrade 16, 17
Transition 12, 20
Transport X (ability) 11, 13
Turn 10, 12

U

Unit abilities 11
Units 5
Units' composition 16, 17
Utopian sector 19

V

Vanguard (ability) 11, 17
Veteran (ability) 17
Victory conditions (Battle) 18
Victory conditions (game) 21
Victory dice 7, 20
Victory points 7, 20
Victory tokens 7, 20

W

Watcher 16
Watcher token 7, 15, 16, 19

The Federation once ruled a thousand stars across the cosmos. When it collapsed, it took with it most of the factions that made up this endless empire. Now, on their forgotten worlds, the survivors are stirring again, looking up at the stars and hoping to rekindle the flames of the past.

As you assume control of their fates, you will have to decide how to face the challenges of this awakening and define their legacy and yours.

Fractal is a fast-paced science-fiction game of exploration, conquest, and supremacy. Each player takes command of an emerging galactic empire that will explore the universe, uncover its secrets, compete to dominate planets, and fight over resources, prestige, and power.

The asymmetrical factions, modular board, objectives, and card-based combat all combine to create a deep, immersive, and highly replayable game with modern aesthetics.

Fractal is published by Bored Game Ink s.r.l.
21 rue du Neuf Bois 1490 Court-Saint-Etienne - BELGIQUE
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Player's hub

We've dedicated an entire section on our website to gather all resources and information about the game.