

# STAR TREK®: THE ROLE PLAYING GAME

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by Errol Farstad

"Space...the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise. Its five year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before..." These are the first words you heard on most episodes of the popular STAR TREK® TV-series; they are also the first words you read inside basic books of STAR TREK®: The Role Playing Game\*.

Game versions of movies and TV-shows often lose the special "flavor" that made the original great — and I had no reason to think that STAR TREK: The Role Playing Game (FASA, \$25.00 for boxed set, complete) would be an exception to the rule. I also felt that \$25.00 was too much to pay for a single-box role playing game! But this time I was pleasantly surprised.

## Packaging

Rating: 8

While the colors do not jump out, the excellent likenesses of Kirk\* and Spock\* gazing calmly outward, the Enterprise\* suspended in the background, and the familiar logo emblazoned across the top combine to make the box quite eye-catching. It is just as well the composition of the artwork was done in this manner, for a certain amount of dignity must be preserved to maintain the essence of this game. (I would hate to have the Enterprise ready to fire photon torpedos into my derriere!)

I understand that the game is (or has been) revised. The set I purchased contains the basic rule book; the Adventure Book; a sturdy (thick paper) 22"x32" hex grid of "the final frontier"; colorful, durable cardboard counters representing various aspects of the game and its people; a very detailed map of a Constitution Class\* starship; and "monitor boards" for the bridge crew signifying particular stations.

## Rules and Explanations

Rating: 7

The rules are generally well-written and clear, though there seems to be a problem understanding a few of the die rolls (see "Miscellaneous", below). The only dice needed for this game are two ten-siders, a blessing indeed for those of us who have tired of keeping track of multiple dice with multiple sides.

At gamemaster option, you can role-play your favorite character from the series, or you can create your own with a simple character generation system. Each character

has seven attributes, and can choose from six Federation\* races (each with its own set of modifiers): Human, Vulcan\*, Andorian\*, Catian\*, Edoan\*, and Tellarite\*. Over 50 skills, from Administration to Zoology, are available to round out your character's specialties. Each is explained simply and with as much detail as a layman would need. Other character-related detail includes equipment, weapons, medical aid and combat. The sample character sheet provided in the basic book can be photocopied for personal use.

There are two types of combat in STAR TREK: The Role Playing Game; personal and starship combat. In personal combat, dexterity and skill determine the number of actions each combatant may perform (including parrying, firing a weapon, flying tackle, etc.), with a certain number of action points allotted to each action. Starship combat is just as easy to master, and relies on the players working together as a team (which explains why the rapport of the Enterprise crew is legendary).

## Degree of Difficulty

Rating: 1-2

I've mentioned earlier how easy it is for players to learn this game. Game masters, however, should read the rules thoroughly before starting. While no experience is necessary to play, the game master should be able to locate pertinent data quickly to avoid slowing down the game.

## Miscellaneous

Rating: 8

**1. Application of Modifiers.** There seems to be a problem with the die rolls for Vulcan mind techniques and Medical aid. Near as I can figure out, the modifiers are applied *after* the roll is made for these, while modifiers for combat are applied *before* the roll. Although it's not a major flaw, it could make a big difference if you get the two confused.

**Example:** suppose a character has a 50% chance of success and it is determined that a modifier of -10 applies to the action in question. The player rolls 59 on 2d10.

a) If the action being attempted is a Vulcan mind technique, the -10 modifier is applied to the player's die roll, for an adjusted result of 59-10 = 49, which indicates success.

b) Now suppose the same situation occurs in combat. This time, the modifier is applied to the base chance before the die roll is made, so the chance of success is

50-10 = 40%, and the player's roll of 59 is a failure.

**2. Organization.** While the game does seem to be well-organized, I felt that it needed a good, detailed cross-reference index of all sections and tables so that GMs wouldn't have to slow down the action while searching for applicable details.

**3. Background Information.** Plenty of useful background is given, including a general history of the UFP\*, GM suggestions, a few ideas for adventures, racial histories (including Romulan\* and Klingon\*), and a list that's too long to enumerate of other information on the known universe.

**4. Artwork.** The artwork is quite good, and the items illustrated are easily identifiable. The only bad point is the rather unsuitable photograph of a plastic model of a Klingon D-7 Battlecruiser\* in the Adventure Book. Perhaps the creators were rushed for time and were unable to procure a decent action shot of the Klingon ship from the series, but then again, maybe not. Now, if you will all excuse me, I have to answer a distress call. It seems that the Klingons have been invaded by a horde of Warrior-Tribbles\*, led by Cyrano Jones\* and Harry Mudd\*, and my ship has been dispatched to stop them before it becomes a galactic incident. 'Til next ish, fellow gamers, don't let your molecules get scrambled!

(NEXT: More STAR TREK action with the Klingons! Also: a hard look at PC sheets available for general fantasy role playing games, and PARANOIA, a new RPG.)



### Final Rating STAR TREK®: The Role Playing Game

Each category is rated on a scale of 1-10, where 10 is the highest possible, except Degree of Difficulty, which is rated from 1 (beginner) to 4 (expert).

Category	Rating
Packaging	8
Rules & Explanations	7
Degree of Difficulty	1-2
Miscellaneous	8
Overall	8

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