



STAR REALMS[®]

Deckbuilding Game



Rulebook

Contents and Box Layout

2 Challenge Cards



1 Nemesis Beast
1 Pirates of the Dark Star

4 Player Decks - 48 Cards, Each deck includes:



2 Score Cards



8 Scout



2 Viper

16 Explorer Cards



13 Gambit Cards



1 Bold Raid
2 Energy Shield
2 Frontier Fleet
1 Political Maneuver
2 Rise to Power
1 Salvage Operation
1 Smuggling Run
1 Surprise Assault
1 Unlikely Alliance
1 Wild Gambit

83 Trade Deck Cards



Machine Cult

1 Battle Mech
2 Battle Station
1 Brain World
1 Junkyard
1 Machine Base
1 Mech World
3 Missile Bot
1 Missile Mech
2 Patrol Mech
1 Stealth Needle
3 Supply Bot
3 Trade Bot



Star Empire

1 Battlecruiser
2 Corvette
1 Dreadnaught
1 Fleet HQ
3 Imperial Fighter
3 Imperial Frigate
2 Recycling Station
1 Royal Redoubt
3 Survey Ship
1 War World



Trade Federation

2 Barter World
1 Central Office
1 Command Ship
3 Cutter
1 Defense Center
2 Embassy Yacht
3 Federation Shuttle
1 Flagship
2 Freighter
1 Port of Call
1 Trade Escort
2 Trading Post



Blob

1 Battle Blob
2 Battle Pod
1 Blob Carrier
2 Blob Destroyer
3 Blob Fighter
3 Blob Wheel
1 Blob World
1 Mothership
2 Ram
1 The Hive
3 Trade Pod

Unaligned: 3 Merc Cruiser

Game Board



This Rulebook



Foam Block



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Overview

In Star Realms, you start with a Personal Deck of cards representing your space armada. Each turn, you play all the cards in your hand to gain Trade, Combat, Authority and other effects.

Trade (☀️) is used to buy powerful Ships and Bases from the Trade Row and put them into your Discard Pile.

Combat (🔴) is used to attack opponents and their Bases.

Authority (🏆) is your score. Each player begins the game with 50 Authority.

At the end of your turn, draw a new hand of five cards. When you run out of cards, shuffle your Discard Pile (including all the new cards you've bought) to form a new Personal Deck.

The first player to reduce their opponent's Authority to zero wins!

Setup

Set the oversized cards aside. You will only use them when playing a solo or cooperative challenge (see page 8).

Each player begins the game with a Personal Deck (containing 8 Scout cards and 2 Viper cards) and a starting score of 50 Authority.

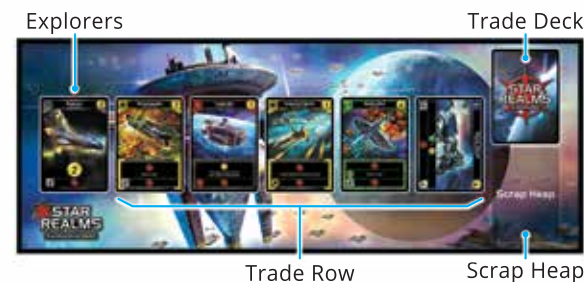
To set up the game, place the Explorer cards in their own pile face-up on the table. Shuffle the Trade Deck (all the standard size cards with 🔴, ☀️, 🌌, or 🌿 faction icons in the upper left hand corner, plus the 3 Merc Cruiser cards) and place it face-down on the table. Leave a space next to the Trade Deck for the Scrap Heap (a place to put any cards that are removed from the game during play). Lay out the top five cards from the Trade Deck face-up on the table. This is the Trade Row.

Each player shuffles their Personal Deck and places it face down in front of them. Leave room next to each deck for a Discard Pile.

If you haven't played before, set aside the silver-bordered Gambit cards. Otherwise, see the Gambits section on page 5 for additional instructions.

Randomly determine which player will play first. In a standard two-player game, that player draws three cards (players always draw from their own Personal Deck) and the player going second draws five cards.

Second Player

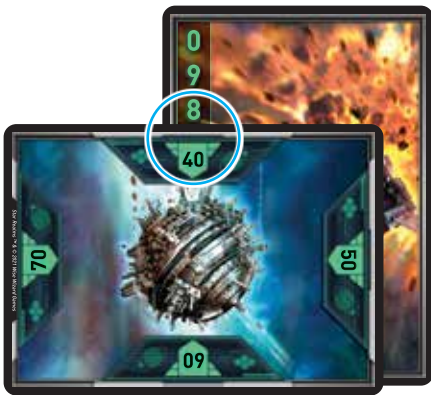


First Player



Keeping Score

Players may track their Authority using the included scorecards, a pencil and paper, or another means. To use the scorecards, align the appropriate side of the “tens digit” card just underneath the appropriate digit on the “ones digit” card. For example, you may record a score of 48 Authority by lining up the numbers 40 and 8 as follows:



Play

Players alternate taking turns. Each turn has three phases:

1. Main Phase
2. Discard Phase
3. Draw Phase

Main Phase

During your Main Phase you may perform any of the following actions, as many times as you like, in any order you wish:

- Play cards from your hand.
- Use the Primary Abilities of your in-play Bases.
- Use the Ally/Scrap abilities of your in-play Ships and Bases.
- Use Trade to acquire new cards from the Trade Row.
- Use Combat to attack an opponent and/or their Bases.

Playing Cards

There is no cost to play a card from your hand, simply place it “in-play” (face-up on the table in front of you).

There are two main types of cards in Star Realms: Ships and Bases.

Ships



When a ship is played, its Primary Ability happens immediately. If the Ship has an Ally and/or Scrap Ability, you may choose to use one or both of these abilities at any time during your Main Phase (provided you meet the requirements to use those abilities).

Ships that you play remain face-up in front of you until your Discard Phase, at which time you place them in your Discard Pile.

Bases



Unlike Ships, Bases are not discarded at the end of the turn. Instead, they remain in play until they are destroyed or scrapped. Also unlike Ships, you may choose when during your Main Phase to use your bases' Primary Abilities.

Each Base has a Defense number that represents the amount of Combat that it must be attacked with **in a single turn** to destroy it. (Any damage dealt to a Base without destroying it is removed at the end of the turn.) Once destroyed, a Base is placed in its owner's Discard Pile.

Bases with the Outpost designation protect you and your other Bases. If you have an Outpost in play, you may not be attacked and your non-Outpost Bases may not be attacked or targeted by an opponent until all of your Outposts are destroyed.

Using Abilities

With the exception of a Ship's Primary Ability (which happens immediately as the Ship is played), players may use the various abilities of their in-play Ships and Bases at any time during their Main Phase. Each ability may be used just once each turn.

Resolving Abilities

When an ability grants Combat or Trade, that resource goes into a resource pool, which can be used at any point during the Main Phase. When an ability grants additional Authority, immediately add it to your Authority score.

Some abilities provide multiple effects (for example; *Trade Escort* provides both 4  and 4 ). Other abilities allow you to choose from multiple effects (for example; *Trading Post* provides either 1  or 1 .

If an ability requires multiple players to make decisions, start with the player whose turn it is and proceed clockwise around the table.

If you cannot resolve part of an ability, just do as much as you can in the order written. For example, if your opponent has no cards in hand and you use the ability “ *Target opponent discards a card,*” you gain 2 combat and ignore the discard part.

Ally Abilities

An Ally Ability is indicated by a faction icon (, , , or ) that is aligned to the left edge of the text box.

On your turn, an Ally Ability is triggered (and is available to be used) as soon as you have another card of that faction in-play. The order in which you play your cards doesn't matter, as soon as you have two or more cards of the same faction in play, trigger all relevant Ally abilities.

Once an Ally Ability has been triggered, it may be used at any time during your Main Phase. You don't have to use it if you don't want to.



Scrap Abilities

Some Ships and Bases have a Scrap Ability, indicated by a trash can icon () that is aligned to the left edge of the text box. Any time during the Main Phase you may use a card's Scrap Ability by removing it from the game and placing it in the Scrap Heap. Cards in the Scrap Heap do not return to your deck, so consider carefully if using a card's Scrap Ability is worth losing that card for good.

Note: You may use a card's Scrap Ability in addition to its Primary and/or Ally Abilities.

Scrapping Cards

Some card abilities allow you to scrap other cards from your hand, your Discard Pile, or the Trade Row. Whenever a card is scrapped, place it in the Scrap Heap. If a card is scrapped for any reason other than its Scrap Ability, you do not gain the effects of that Scrap Ability. If an Explorer would be placed in the Scrap Heap for any reason, instead place it face-up in the Explorer pile.

The Trade Row should always have five cards in it, so when a card is scrapped from the Trade Row, immediately replace it with the next card from the Trade Deck.

Acquiring (Buying) Cards

Some card abilities give you Trade (). When you gain Trade, it goes into a Trade Pool, which you may add to and use over the course of your Main Phase.

Continues on next page...

Trade is used to acquire cards from the Trade Row or the Explorer Pile. A card's cost is found in the Trade symbol in its upper right hand corner. To acquire a card, subtract Trade from your Trade Pool equal to the card's cost and place the card into your Discard Pile. Acquiring a card doesn't count as playing it, so it doesn't go into play and you don't use its abilities. Any remaining Trade is saved and can be used to acquire additional cards during your Main Phase.

The Trade Row should always have five cards in it, so when a card is acquired from the Trade Row, immediately replace it with the next card from the Trade Deck.

Attacking

Some card abilities give you Combat (). When you gain Combat, it goes into your Combat Pool, which you may add to and use over the course of your Main Phase. You may use Combat to attack an opponent or their Bases. You may make any number of attacks during your Main Phase.

To attack a Base, subtract Combat from your Combat Pool equal to the Base's Defense. That Base is destroyed and goes to your opponent's Discard Pile.

Sometimes a card's ability instructs you to "destroy target base." In this case you destroy the Base without using Combat.

To attack an opponent, subtract any amount of Combat from your Combat Pool and lower their Authority by that amount.

If an opponent has an Outpost in play, they can't be attacked and their non-Outpost Bases can't be attacked or targeted by you until all of their Outposts are destroyed.

Discard Phase

Whenever you discard or acquire a card, place that card face-up in your Discard Pile. Any player may look through your Discard Pile at any time.

During your Discard Phase, you:

- Lose any Trade remaining in your Trade Pool.
- Lose any Combat remaining in your Combat Pool.
- Put any Ships you have in play into your Discard Pile.
- Put any cards left in your hand into your Discard Pile.



Draw Phase

During your Draw Phase, you:

- Draw five cards, then your turn ends.

Note: If you ever need to draw a card and your Personal Deck is empty, first shuffle your Discard Pile and place it face-down as your new Personal Deck.

Example: At the beginning of your Draw Phase, you have three cards left in your deck. Draw those three cards, shuffle your Discard Pile into a new Personal Deck, then draw two more cards.

Gambits (Optional)

Gambit cards are optional. Try them after you've played a few games.

At the beginning of the game, shuffle the Gambits. Choose a number and deal that many of them face down to each player. Players may take fewer Gambits as a handicap. Set aside any remaining Gambits in a face-down pile (if anyone gets a *Wild Gambit* card, they may need this pile).

Players may look at their own Gambits at any time. Anyone may reveal any number of their Gambits by turning them face up at the start of the game and/or during their Main Phase. Once you reveal a Gambit, its abilities apply and/or may be used as normal.

Gambits never go into the trade deck, your hand, or your personal deck.



Icon Reference List



Blob faction icon



Machine Cult faction icon



Star Empire faction icon



Trade Federation faction icon

When the above icons appear in the upper-left corner of a card, they indicate the card's faction. When they are aligned to the left edge of a card's text box, they indicate Ally Abilities.



Authority - Players start the game with a score of 50 Authority. If your Authority is reduced to zero or below, you lose the game. When this icon appears in a card's text box, it indicates an amount of Authority that you gain. You may gain Authority even if it would cause you to exceed the amount you started the game with.



Combat - When this icon appears in a card's text box, it indicates an amount of Combat that you gain.



Trade - When this icon appears in the upper-right corner of a card, it indicates the card's cost. When this icon appears in a card's text box, it indicates an amount of Trade that you gain.



Scrap - When this icon is aligned to the left edge of a card's text box, it indicates a Scrap Ability.

OUTPOST

Outpost - A Base with this icon is an Outpost. If a player has an Outpost in play, they may not be attacked and their non-Outpost Bases may not be attacked or targeted by an opponent until all of their Outposts are destroyed.



Defense - A Base's Defense is the amount of Combat that it must be attacked with in a single turn to destroy it. (Any damage dealt to a Base without destroying it is removed at the end of the turn.)



Ready to Play!

You are now ready to play a standard two-player game! The remainder of this rulebook covers other cool formats you can try later.

Formats

Star Realms is designed to support a wide variety of formats that support various numbers of players. Unless otherwise specified, all the standard rules apply to each format. This box set supports 1-4 players. To support 5-6 players, combine it with Star Realms Colony Wars or Star Realms Frontiers.

Standard (2 Players)

Randomly determine which player is going first. That player gets a three-card starting hand. The other player gets a five-card starting hand.

Free-For-All (3-6 Players)

Randomly determine which player is going first. That player gets a three-card starting hand. Play proceeds clockwise around the table. The player going second gets a four-card starting hand. All other players get a five-card starting hand.

On their turn, players may attack/target any combination of Bases and/or players. If a player is eliminated, put all of their cards into the Scrap Heap. The last player remaining wins the game!

Hunter (3-6 Players)

Randomly determine which player is going first. That player gets a three-card starting hand. Play proceeds clockwise around the table. The player going second gets a four-card starting hand. All other players get a five-card starting hand.

Players may only attack/target the player to their left and/or the Bases belonging to players on their left and right. If a player is eliminated, put all of their cards into the Scrap Heap. The last player remaining wins the game!

Hunter First Blood (3-6 Players)

The same rules as Hunter, but when the first player is defeated, the game immediately ends and the player to their right wins!



Hydra (4 or 6 Players)

All players on a team share an Authority score (see below). Each individual player has their own Personal Deck, hand, Discard Pile, and in-play zone (for example, your teammate's in-play cards won't trigger your Ally Abilities).

Randomly determine which team goes first. Players on that team get three-card starting hands. Players on the opposing team get five-card starting hands. Teams alternate taking turns (rather than individual players), with all teammates sharing their Main, Discard, and Draw Phases.

Each player still has their own Trade and Combat Pools and still makes their own decisions regarding playing cards, acquiring cards, activating abilities, and attacking. Players may, as many times as they like each turn, transfer any amount of their Trade and/or Combat to a teammate's pool. This allows teammates to work together to destroy bases and purchase expensive cards. As long as any player on a given team has an Outpost in play, that team may not be attacked and any non-Outpost Bases belonging to that team may not be attacked or targeted by opponents.

When a team's Authority is reduced to zero, all players on that team are defeated.

Two-Headed Hydra (4 Players: 2 vs 2)

Each two-player team has a shared score of 75 Authority.

Three-Headed Hydra (6 Players: 3 vs 3)

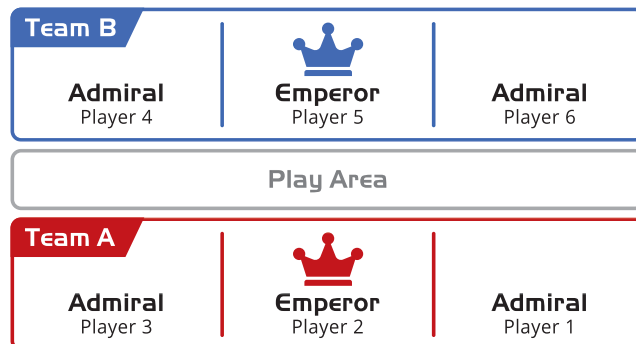
Each three-player team has a shared score of 100 Authority.

Note: When playing as a Hydra team against a challenge card (see page 8), the challenge's Setup section indicates the team's shared Authority score.



Emperor (6 Players: 3 vs 3)

Players split into two teams of three, with each team choosing one teammate to be their Emperor. The Emperors sit facing each other, flanked by their teammates (Admirals) on either side:



Each Admiral starts the game with 50 Authority and each Emperor starts with 60 Authority. The team going first (Team A) gets three-card starting hands. The team going second (Team B) gets five-card starting hands. Play begins with Player 1 and proceeds clockwise (each player on Team A takes their turn starting with the player to their Emperor's right, then each player on Team B takes their turn starting with the player to their Emperor's right, and so on).

Admirals may only attack/target the enemy Admiral across from them and/or Bases controlled by that Admiral. If that Admiral is defeated, they may then begin to attack/target the enemy Emperor and their Bases. Emperors may attack/target any player or Base.

During their Main Phase, any player may pay 1  to move a card from their Discard Pile to the Discard Pile of a neighboring teammate.

When an Admiral is defeated, they may put any one card from their hand, deck, or Discard Pile into their Emperor's Discard Pile. Put the Admiral's remaining cards into the Scrap Heap. When an Emperor is defeated, their team loses the game!

Raid (3-6 Players: 1 Boss, 2-5 Raiders)

Choose one player to act as the Boss, with all other players acting as the Raiders. Play starts with the Boss and proceeds clockwise around the table. The Boss begins the game with two fewer cards than their normal hand size (see table), while Raiders begin the game with a standard five-card hand. Raiders take their turns individually, but any damage dealt to the Boss' Bases doesn't repair until the start of the Boss' turn (so that one Raider can start an attack on a Base while another Raider finishes the job on their own turn).

Raiders

Raiders each start with 50 Authority. Raiders may look at each other's hands and discuss strategy. Though Raiders are playing as a team, each player still has their own Trade, Combat, and Authority, and still makes their own decisions regarding playing cards, acquiring cards, activating abilities, and attacking. When a Raider is eliminated, they may place one card from their hand, deck, or Discard Pile into each teammate's Discard Pile. Put the Raider's remaining cards into the Scrap Heap. If all of the Raiders are eliminated, the Boss wins!

The Boss

The Boss' starting Authority score and hand size is dependent on the number of Raiders. If the Boss has their Authority reduced to zero, the Raiders win!

# of Raiders	Boss Starting Authority	Boss Hand Size
2	50	7
3	70	7
4	70	8
5	90	8

Solo and Cooperative

Players battle against the game using Challenge Cards.



Additional rules and instruction for each Challenge Card can be found in the following pages.

Challenge Cards

The oversized Challenge Cards included in this set allow you to play by yourself, or on a team with your friends, against the game. In each challenge you will be fighting against a different bad guy (known as "the Boss").

You'll use normal Star Realms rules for hand size, acquiring cards, using Combat, etc. The next few titles cover general rules for challenge cards. Additionally, each challenge has its own special rules (pages 9-10).



After you pick the Challenge Card you want to play, go to its section, read the story (in italics) aloud to all players, and follow the setup rules to get started.

Challenge Difficulty Levels

There are four difficulty levels for each challenge:

Beginner - Players take three turns each before the Boss's first turn.

Intermediate - Players take two turns each before the Boss's first turn.

Veteran - Players go first.

Expert - Boss goes first.

The challenges are designed to be tough for an experienced player at Veteran level, so you may want to start out on Beginner or Intermediate and work your way up from there.

Mulliganing the Trade Row

A player may, during their Main Phase on any turn, scrap every card in the Trade Row. The Trade Row may only be mulliganed once per challenge game.

Challenge Notes

When the players play first (Beginner, Intermediate and Veteran), they get a three-card starting hand on their first turn of the game.

In Beginner and Intermediate difficulty levels, once the players have taken their extra turns at the start of the game, play proceeds as normal, with the players and the Boss alternating turns.

If the Trade Deck ever runs out of cards, shuffle the Scrap Heap into a new Trade Deck (first remove any cards that don't belong in the Trade Deck, like Scouts).

Boss Attacks

When the rules say, “the Boss attacks”, the Boss uses its Combat to make a series of attacks. For each attack, it follows the steps below, making the first possible attack. Repeat this process (starting at #1) until the Boss has no Combat remaining. For each attack, the Boss uses the minimum Combat required to defeat a player or to destroy a Base.

1. If the Boss can attack and defeat a player, it attacks the player with the highest Authority that it can defeat. (If tied, it attacks one of them at random.)
2. The Boss attacks the highest-Defense Outpost that it can destroy (If tied, it attacks the highest-cost tied Outpost. If still tied, it attacks one of them at random.)
3. The Boss attacks the highest-Defense non-Outpost Base that it can destroy. (If tied, it attacks the highest-cost tied Base. If still tied, it attacks one of them at random.)
4. The Boss attacks the player with the lowest Authority. (If tied, it attacks one of them at random.)

Remember, the Boss can't attack a player or a non-Outpost Base that is protected by an Outpost.

If an ability allows the Boss to “destroy a base”, it selects the Base using steps 2 and 3 above.

Nemesis Beast

1-4 players solo/co-op challenge

While exploring a new system for colonization, your scanners pick up what appears to be a massive geomagnetic storm on the fourth planet. The storm continues to grow in intensity, ripping the planet apart.

The storm moves away from the debris field and toward your fleet, matching your changes in course. You realize to your horror that the “storm” is a supermassive planet-swallowing space beast! You must defeat it to save your fleet, your realm, and perhaps the galaxy itself!

Challenge Setup

When playing with two or more players, for each player in the game, place one card from the top of the Trade Deck face down in front of the Boss.

The Boss starts the game with 50 Authority per player.



Note: The Boss has no hand, deck or Discard Pile.

Each player starts with a standard Personal Deck (8 Scouts and 2 Vipers).

All players share a score of 50 Authority (regardless of the number of players). When playing with more than one player, the players are a Hydra team (see page 7).

If a player would make the Boss discard a card, instead that player draws a card, then discards a card.

If a player would destroy a base, that player gains 3  instead.

Boss Order of Play

On the Boss' turn, follow these steps:

1. Scrap the card in the Trade Row furthest from the Trade Deck. Do not replace the card.
2. Move the entire Trade Row one position away from the Trade Deck.
3. Place the scrapped card face down in front of the Boss. The Boss gains Combat equal to the number of cards in front of it.
4. Reveal a new card from the Trade Deck to fill the empty spot in the Trade Row.
5. The faction of the card revealed determines which special ability the Boss gains that turn (see the Nemesis Beast card). If the revealed card has no faction (see *Merc Cruiser*), the player(s) choose any faction to determine which ability the Boss gains. If the revealed card has more than one faction (see cards from other Star Realms sets), the player(s) choose one of those factions to determine which ability the Boss gains.
6. The Boss attacks.
7. End the turn.

Note: The Boss'  ability allows the Boss to destroy bases equal to the number of players, regardless of which player the bases belong to. For example, in a three-player game, if one player had two bases in play, and the other players had none, the Boss would destroy both bases and gain 3 .

Pirates of the Dark Star

1-4 players solo/co-op challenge

The Pirates of the Dark Star are known galaxy-wide for their cruelty, laying waste to entire systems and leaving few survivors to tell the tale. Now they have their sights set on your star realm. They have smashed your frontier fleet and are now advancing on the inner planets. Defeat the pirates or see your realm lost!

Challenge Setup

The Boss starts the game with 25 Authority per player.

Note: The Boss has no hand, deck or Discard Pile.

Each player starts with a standard Personal Deck (8 Scouts and 2 Vipers).

Players start with 50 Authority each. When playing with more than one player, players have individual Authority and can be individually eliminated. However, players have a shared turn, and pool their Trade and Combat like a Hydra team (see page 7).

If a player would make the Boss discard a card, instead that player draws a card, then discards a card.

If a player would destroy a base, that player gains 3  instead.

Boss Order of Play

On the Boss' turn, follow these steps:

1. For each player remaining in the game, scrap one card in the Trade Row furthest from the Trade Deck. Do not replace the cards.
2. Move the remaining Trade Row cards one position away from the Trade Deck for each card scrapped.
3. Reveal a new card from the Trade Deck to fill each empty spot in the Trade Row.
4. The faction and cost of the first card revealed determines what the Boss does to the first player (see the Pirates of the Dark Star card). The second card revealed determines what the Boss does to the second player, and so on. If the revealed card has no faction (see *Merc Cruiser*),

the player chooses any faction to determine what the Boss does to them. If the revealed card has more than one faction (see cards from other Star Realms sets), the player chooses one of those factions to determine what the Boss does to them.

5. End the turn.

Credits

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The Blobs Story

These mysterious creatures are the first alien life forms encountered by the human race. Most of the initial encounters consisted of human colonies being completely obliterated. On the few occasions that a Blob ship has been recovered somewhat intact, the only biological remains found inside have consisted of a gelatinous mass, thus leading to the moniker, "The Blobs." While for several years all encounters between humanity and the Blobs have been extremely violent, there is currently some limited trade between various Blob factions and some of the more-daring human traders.

The Blobs are best at generating massive amounts of Combat, and at removing undesirable cards from the Trade Row.



Machine Cult Story

A cluster of industrial mining worlds were completely cut off from the Trade Federation by the Blobs. With the threat of annihilation always looming, and no contact with the rest of human space, these worlds were forced to take drastic measures. Soon a cult of technology arose, focused on using advanced robotics and computerization to create a powerful defense force that belied their relatively small population. Since their leaders believed salvation lay in technology, technology soon became their god.

The Machine Cult gains most of its power from being able to remove undesirable cards from your deck and from having a large number of Bases designed to defend your Authority from attack.



Trade Federation Story

In the far future, the traditional governing bodies of the human race have been replaced with corporate leadership. Earth and its surrounding colonies are ruled by a group of corporations called the Trade Federation. The Federation's policies are focused around commerce and growth, but especially on profits for those at the top of the corporate ladder. While they prefer to deal with other star realms using trade and diplomacy, they have a large defense branch dedicated to protecting the Federation's interests.

The Trade Federation specializes in generating large amounts of Trade and in gaining Authority (increasing your score).



Star Empire Story

The Star Empire consists primarily of former colonies that were on the outer edges of the Trade Federation. Not only did the colonists feel used by the corporations, but they felt the Federation failed to give them adequate protection from the Blobs. As a result, one ambitious colonial governor was able to unite several colonies into an independent empire under his control, one with a strong military, both for warding off the Blobs and for discouraging the Federation from trying to reclaim their lost colonies.

The Star Empire is a combat-oriented faction that draws many cards and makes the opponent discard cards.