***The Outer Worlds*** is a 2019 [action role-playing game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_role-playing_game) developed by [Obsidian Entertainment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obsidian_Entertainment) and published by [Private Division](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_Division). The game was released for [PlayStation 4](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_4), [Windows](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windows), and [Xbox One](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_One) in October 2019, with a [Nintendo Switch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Switch) version released in June 2020. The game received generally favorable reviews from critics and sold over 4 million units by August 2021.

Gameplay[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Outer_Worlds&action=edit&section=1)]

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Outer_Worlds_pre-release_gameplay_screenshot.jpg)

Pre-release gameplay screenshot of *The Outer Worlds*.

*The Outer Worlds* is an [action role-playing video game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_role-playing_video_game) featuring a [first-person perspective](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First-person_perspective). In the early stages of the game, the [player](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Player_character) can create their character and unlock a ship, which acts as the game's central hub space. Though the player cannot control their ship directly, it serves as a [fast travel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fast_travel) point to access different areas in the game and acts as the player's persistent inventory space.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-1) The player can encounter and recruit [non-player characters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-player_character) (NPCs) as companions who have their own personal missions and stories. When accompanying the player, the companions act as an aid in combat. Each companion has their own individual skills and special attacks, and they can develop their own skill specialization. When exploring, the player can bring up to two companions alongside them while the rest stay on the ship. The player can make numerous [dialogue decisions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialogue_tree) which can influence the game's branching story. They can respond to NPCs in various ways, such as acting heroically, maniacally, or moronically.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-IGNPrev-2)

During combat situations, the player can use various weapon types such as melee and firearms, which have three ammo types: light, heavy and energy. These weapons can be customized to add elemental damage.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-PCGPre-3) The player can use [stealth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stealth_game) or social skills (persuasion, lying and intimidation) to avoid combat altogether. As the player progresses, they gain [experience points](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experience_point), which the player and their companions can use to level up and unlock new skills. The player can develop their technical skills, which are further divided into three categories: Science, Medical, and Engineering. For instance, the player can use a [shrink ray](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrink_ray) to shrink down an enemy. The player is able to invest points into these skills, which will unlock new perks that enhance combat efficiency. The player can also enter a "Tactical Time Dilation" state, which slows down time and reveals opponents' health statistics, granting the player tactical advantages. As the player leads their companions, they improve their companions' combat strength and resilience.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-IGNPrev-2) The player can gain a "flaw" that occurs when the player fails repeatedly in certain gameplay segments. Flaws impede the player in some way, but give additional perks and advantages.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-4)

Plot[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Outer_Worlds&action=edit&section=2)]

**Setting**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Outer_Worlds&action=edit&section=3)]

The game is set in an [alternate future](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternate_history) that diverged in 1901, when U.S. President [William McKinley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_McKinley) is not [assassinated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassination_of_William_McKinley) by [Leon Czolgosz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Czolgosz) at the [Pan-American Exposition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan-American_Exposition). As a result, [Theodore Roosevelt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Roosevelt) never succeeded him, and the great business trusts of the era were never broken up, leading to a hyper-corporate, class-centric society dominated by the power of [megacorporations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megacorporation), which, by the distant future, have begun to colonize space and [terraform](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terraforming) alien planets to varying results.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-5) Hundreds of Earth residents, lured by the promise of a fresh start, sign up for the chance to travel to this new frontier.

Among them is Halcyon, a small, six-planet [star system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_system). Traveling to Halcyon requires both the usage of advanced spacecraft with a [faster-than-light](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faster-than-light) skip-drive and a ten-year [cryosleep](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspended_animation_in_fiction) for the colonists. In 2285, two colony ships were dispatched to colonize Halcyon — the *Hope* and the *Groundbreaker*. While the *Groundbreaker* successfully arrived in Halcyon, colonizing the planets Terra 1 (later renamed Monarch) and Terra 2, the *Hope* and its cargo mysteriously disappeared in transit, slipping into myth among the citizens of Halcyon. The *Groundbreaker*, meanwhile, goes into permanent orbit near Terra 2, with the original crew and their descendants converting the ship into an independent port and armored citadel.

**Synopsis**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Outer_Worlds&action=edit&section=4)]

In 2355, the *Hope* is discovered drifting on the outskirts of the Halcyon system by mad scientist Phineas Vernon Welles, who manages to safely revive one of the passengers (the "Stranger"). Welles informs the Stranger that the Halcyon colonies have fallen on hard times due to the incompetence and greed of the various mega-corporations (referred to collectively as "The Board") that govern every aspect of life in Halcyon. Due to the after-effects of prolonged cryosleep, the Stranger has substantially higher mental and physical abilities, including the ability to briefly slow time. Welles tasks the Stranger with securing the resources needed to revive the remaining *Hope* colonists, who he believes hold the key to Halcyon's salvation.

Welles jettisons the Stranger in an escape pod onto Terra 2, where a contact, smuggler Alex Hawthorne, is waiting. Unfortunately, the Stranger's pod lands on Hawthorne, killing him instantly (since Hawthorne didn't listen to Welles' instructions properly). The Stranger commandeers Hawthorne's ship, the *Unreliable*, which is piloted by an [artificial intelligence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_intelligence) named ADA. Needing a new power converter to repair the aging ship, the Stranger ventures into Edgewater, a company town on the verge of collapse due to a group of unsatisfied workers (referred to as "dissenters") [refusing to work](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strike_action) until they get better treatment. The mayor of Edgewater, Reed Tobson, hires the Stranger to sabotage a nearby [geothermal plant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geothermal_energy) to cut off the dissenters' power; the player must then decide whether to go through with his request, side with the dissenters by cutting off power to Edgewater, or manipulate events so Reed is forced to leave Edgewater in exchange for the dissenters' return.

As the Stranger repairs their new ship and starts to explore Halcyon, they can recruit other helpful individuals to form a crew, starting with Edgewater's bashful town mechanic [Parvati Holcomb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parvati_Holcomb). Other members include cynical [pirate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pirate) Dr. Ellie Fenhill, loyal-but-naive ship's hand Felix Millstone, overzealous [vicar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vicar) Maximillian DeSoto, [alcoholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alcoholism) monster-hunter and [mercenary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercenary) Nyoka Ramnarim-Wentworth III, and a modified cleaning robot named SAM. The Stranger also learns that Welles is wanted by the Board for acts of alleged terrorism and illegal experimentation, and must make another choice: continue to help Welles or betray him to the Board and assist them with his capture.

After leaving Terra 2, the Stranger heads to Monarch, a colonized moon orbiting the gas giant Olympus, where an information broker holds the location of a batch of [dimethyl sulfoxide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dimethyl_sulfoxide), a chemical Welles needs to revive the remaining colonists. As landing on Monarch is prohibited due to a Board [trade embargo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_embargo), the Stranger must first retrieve a passkey from aboard the *Groundbreaker*. The Stranger then lands in the town of Stellar Bay to discover that the abandoned colony is divided between two factions - Monarch Stellar Industries (MSI), a rogue corporate entity with a collectivist mindset that seeks a new relationship with the Board, and the [anarchist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchism) Iconoclasts, who want to build a new society free from its influence. After helping the Broker regain control of Monarch's airwaves so he can collect the intel, the Stranger witnesses a Board gunship crash nearby. Both MSI and the Iconoclasts ask the Stranger to retrieve the gunship's weapons; the Stranger can choose to give the weapons to either side, triggering all-out war, or try to negotiate peace between the two factions.

With the Broker's intel, Welles directs the Stranger to Halcyon's wealthy capital Byzantium, where the Minister of Earth, Aloysius Clarke, has just signed on a shipment of dimethyl sulfoxide. Tracking down Clarke to his townhouse, the Stranger learns that Clarke has been placed under house arrest by Board Chairman Charles Rockwell, the true recipient of the chemicals. In Rockwell's private quarters, the Stranger discovers a video in which Rockwell announces the "Lifetime Employment Program"; the Board is conspiring to place the majority of the colonists in indefinite cryosleep, ostensibly in order to save humanity but in actuality to hoard the remaining food supplies for the wealthiest citizens. In order to store these frozen workers, the *Hope* colonists will be ejected into space, with the *Hope* turned into a vast cryogenic warehouse. The dimethyl sulfoxide is being used on human test subjects to attempt to recreate Welles' formula, in the hope that workers can be repeatedly pulled out of extended periods of suspended animation. The Stranger retrieves the chemicals, with or without killing the test subjects in the process.

Welles suggests using ADA and the *Unreliable*'s power to "skip" the *Hope* into the inner Halcyon system, placing it in orbit near his laboratory above Terra 2 so that he can begin the revival process. Sophia Akande, the Adjutant for the Board, instead proposes that the Stranger skip the *Hope* to Tartarus, a planet home to the Board's infamous Labyrinth prison complex, so that the Board can apprehend Welles and begin killing the colonists. The Stranger infiltrates the *Hope* and learns of what occurred during the ill-fated voyage; the *Hope*'s skip drive developed an unforeseen fault, extending the planned 10-year mission to 60 years. As food rations ran out, some of the crew turned to cannibalizing the frozen colonists in order to survive, before staging a mutiny. The captain sealed the *Hope*'s cryo-chambers and locked the ship on course for Halcyon, leaving everyone aboard to succumb to starvation. The Stranger also discovers that they were not the first colonist Welles attempted to reanimate; he actually tried at least twelve times prior with fatal results for the colonists involved.

Wiring ADA through to the *Hope*'s control system, the Stranger skips the *Hope* either to Terra 2 or to Tartarus. Depending on where the *Hope* arrives in Halcyon, the ending diverges:

* If the Stranger chooses to skip the *Hope* themselves rather than ask ADA to do it, and the game has been played with low-intelligence settings, the game ends here. The *Hope* will be launched straight into Halcyon's Sun, destroying the ship and killing everyone aboard.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-6)
* If the *Hope* was skipped to Terra 2, the Board will apprehend Welles at his base and take him to the Labyrinth on Tartarus. The Stranger and their crew land on Tartarus and fight their way through the prison, learning Welles is being held hostage by either Akande or Rockwell. The Stranger must reach Welles and negotiate with his captor, forcing them to release him either peacefully or by force.
* If the *Hope* was skipped to Tartarus, an enraged Welles will travel to Tartarus himself and start a riot in the Labyrinth, taking Akande hostage in a bid to get to the *Hope* and her colonists. The Stranger and their crew land on Tartarus and fight their way through the prison. The Stranger must reach Welles and confront him, forcing him to release Akande either peacefully or by force.

Regardless of the outcome, the Stranger is informed that contact with Earth has been lost, and that a Board troopship en route to the home planet mysteriously disappeared in transit. The Stranger is offered leadership of the Halcyon colonies and allowed to shape humanity's future however they see fit. With Halcyon free of Earth's influence the colony is free to shape its own destiny, either under the Board's Lifetime Employment Program or under the freedom brought by the loss of the Board's influence. The Stranger and their crew go their separate ways as their individual fates are explained, and the story of the *Unreliable* slips into legend.

Development[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Outer_Worlds&action=edit&section=5)]

*The Outer Worlds* was developed by [Obsidian Entertainment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obsidian_Entertainment) and published by [Take-Two Interactive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Take-Two_Interactive)'s publishing label [Private Division](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_Division).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-7) Though Obsidian was in progress to be acquired by [Microsoft Studios](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_Studios) at the time of the game's announcement, the project had been under development before that point, and Take-Two had secured the publishing rights prior to Microsoft's acquisition offer.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-8)

[Tim Cain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Cain) and [Leonard Boyarsky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonard_Boyarsky), the creators of the [*Fallout*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fallout_(series)) series, served as the game's directors, taking inspiration from *Fallout*, [*Firefly*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Firefly_(TV_series)), [*Futurama*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Futurama), [*Deadwood*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadwood_(TV_series)), and [*True Grit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_Grit_(2010_film)).[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-9) The duo directors described the game as "the combination of [Boyarsky's] dark morbidity and Tim's silliness", and they hoped to seek a balance between silliness and drama when creating the game's tone and narrative.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-PCGPre-3) Romantic options were initially considered, but the feature was eventually cut by the studio.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-10)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-11) The game's writers include Boyarsky and Megan Starks.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-sickhumor0613-12)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-e3leo061619-13)

The game was in development since 2016, when Obsidian CEO [Feargus Urquhart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feargus_Urquhart) mentioned that a small number of people in the studio which included Cain and Boyarsky were working on "something completely new" in the [Unreal Engine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unreal_Engine) during an interview with Game Pressure.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-14) Obsidian later revealed the game's development in 2017. In December 2017, Private Division announced the project as their first slate of published games.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-15) It was announced at [The Game Awards 2018](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Game_Awards_2018) and was released for [PlayStation 4](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_4), [Windows](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windows), and [Xbox One](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_One) on October 25, 2019.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-Alexander2018-16)[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-Fingas2019-17) In March 2019, it was announced that the game would release exclusively on the [Epic Games Store](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epic_Games_Store) and [Microsoft Store](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_Store_(digital)), with its original [Steam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steam_(service)) release being delayed until October 23, 2020.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-18)[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-19)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-20) Fan response to the announcement was negative.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-responseavellone24-21) A [Nintendo Switch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Switch) version was originally scheduled to be released on March 6, 2020, but was delayed to June 5 due to issues caused by the [COVID-19 pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic).[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-22)

The game's first piece of [downloadable content](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downloadable_content) (DLC), *Peril on Gorgon*, was released on September 9, 2020.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-23)[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-24) The second DLC, titled *Murder on Eridanos*, was released on March 17, 2021.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outer_Worlds#cite_note-25)