

## **Kerbal Space Program Board Game**

*As Follows is the Official Rulebook as it stands for the Kerbal Space Program Board Game. Although it is still in flux, it should be properly maintained. Brainstorming and ideas, and the like, all belong in their respective documents. If something is in here, those are the rules until they're changed.*

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## **Components**

The Kerbal Space Program Board Game consists of the following play pieces:

- **Boards**
  - Main Board x 1
  - Reference Board x 4
- **Decks**
  - Project Cards
  - Action Cards
  - Planet Cards
- **Resource pieces**
  - Science chits
  - Funds chits
  - Victory Point chits
- **Ship Pieces**
  - Command Modules - 3 per player
  - Probes - 12 per player
  - Stations - 4 stations per player
  - Bases - 3 per player
  - Small, Medium and Large Fuel Tanks - Unknown number
- **Die**
  - 1 normal 6 sided die

## Objective

Your goal is to apply your mastery of economics, logistics and strategy in order to explore and exploit the mysteries of the Kerbol System. Scattered throughout the system and at home on Kerbin are a variety of ways which can earn you Victory Points, which will advance you along your quest to become the greatest Space Program!

## Winning The Game

Whoever passes the Victory Point threshold first, wins! What this threshold is will be determined at the start of the game by the players depending on how long they want the game to be.

Short Game: 7 points

Normal (Recommended length) Game: 10 points

Long Game: 15 points

...or any other number you want. Just note that really extreme numbers can affect game balance

## Sources of Victory Points

**Monolith Planet Cards:** There are 3 of these in the Kerbol System, each contains 3 Victory Point tokens. If you can collect 2 or more of these, you'll be well on your way to victory! Be warned though, you gotta be quick, and it is unlikely the other players will just sit idly by...

**Deep Space Anomaly:** This Planet Card is the main path to Victory for folks who like Stations. You gain a Victory Point for every turn you have more Stations over it than anyone else

**Manifest Destiny:** This Planet Card is the main path to Victory for folks who like Bases. You gain a Victory Point for every turn you have more Bases scattered around the Kerbol System than anyone else.

**Treasure Hunt:** Most of the planet cards have a number on them which determines when Victory Points appear on those cards. Once #1 is revealed, it gets a Victory Point placed on it, to be collected by a Command Module. Once collected, #2 gets a point when revealed (immediate if already revealed), and so on.

**Victory Projects:** These are project cards you can purchase that give you a slow trickle of Victory Points every turn. Be warned, they require quite a few resources to startup and maintain, if you get one too early, you can cripple your economy and be forced to throw it out, wasting resources.

**Action Cards:** Some Action Cards give you 2 Victory Points instead of doing anything. These hidden Victory Points can be extremely helpful at pushing you to victory without anyone suspecting how close you are.

## The end of the game

First person to cross the threshold wins. Ties are possible so if you want to ensure there is a winner, use your discretion for tie breakers as desired (ex. Play more rounds until someone has more points etc.)

### **Setup**

1. Shuffle the Planet and Action Card Decks
2. Separate the Project Cards into piles of each type (Command Module, Station, Base, Victory Point)
3. Distribute Planet Cards into the slots along the sides of the board corresponding to each planet
4. Give each player 8 Funds, 8 Science and 2 Action Cards

### **Playing The Game**

Kessler Syndrome is played in rounds, with each round having a build phase, and an action phase. The Build Phase happens with all players simultaneously, the Action Phase is done one at a time. Roll the die to determine who goes first when the game starts. On the next Action Phase, the player sitting clockwise from the first will then go first, and so on. The turns themselves proceed in the usual clockwise fashion.

#### **Build Phase**

- Accept your grant (3 Funds, 2 Science)
- Place a Fund on each active Project (if any). If a project is completed, place the completed ship on the desired location and return the project to the deck.
  - In the case of Victory Point cards, once the Funds indicated on the card have been accumulated, it does not collect more.
- Add a Fuel Tank to any ship currently landed on Kerbin or one of your bases
- Collect Science from Stations
  - For each planet that has a station in orbit, collect 1 Science, unless otherwise noted on that planet's Planet Card. Note this means only 1 station can collect per planet, unless otherwise noted on that planet's Planet Card
- Collect Funds from Bases
  - The number to collect per Base is noted on the Planet Card of each planet
- Collect Victory Points from Deep Space Anomaly and Manifest Destiny Planet Cards where applicable, as well as any active Victory Point Cards you possess.
- Spend Funds on maintaining currently active Victory Point Cards (details on card)
- Make Purchases and assemble rockets
  - In order to build a spaceship (excluding Probes), you must first research a Project. Projects cost 3 Science each.

- Once you have a project, you can spend Funds to rush its completion, as well as buy additional Fuel Tanks for it.
- Refuel your ships (see below)
- You can also purchase and play Action Cards on this phase

## **Refueling**

If a ship is in orbit around or landed on Kerbin or one of your Bases, you can purchase Fuel Tanks for it at the normal rates (see Costs below). Can only be done during a Build Phase.

## **On your Turn: Action Phase**

- Move your ships. Each ship can move up to 3 times
  - Movement includes all transfers between planets/moons, as well as takeoff and landing
- Collect Victory Points with any Command Modules that are landed on planets/moons with Victory Point tokens present
- Play Action Cards
- Transfer Fuel Tanks between your spaceships that are in the same orbit. Does not require any actions. Medium and Large Fuel Tanks can be broken up into equivalent Small Tanks and vice versa (ex. 2 Small Tanks -> Medium Tank, 1 Large Tank -> 3 Small Tanks)

## **Action Cards**

Action Cards can only be purchased on a Build Phase, however *they can be played at any time, even on another player's turns!* In order to ensure the card is played at the correct time, you can declare a specific moment from the last performed action when that card was to be activated, or ask the other player to redo the last set of actions slowly.

Ex. If Player A quickly launches a ship from Kerbin to Minmus, but Player B wants to play a card when that ship passes through Mun's orbit, Player B can declare that the card was used on Mun when Player A's was there, resetting Player A's ship to that point in time, or Player B can ask Player A to redo the set of actions slowly, passing through each step with enough time for Player B to play their card at the moment they want.

In the event of disputes, use whatever house rules/democratic process you feel like to resolve it.

## **Revealing Planet Cards**

There are two ways a Planet card can be revealed.

- Landing a Command Module or Base. This automatically reveals the Planet Card associated with that planet/moon
- Orbiting Probe. If you have a Probe in orbit, on your turn you can peek at the card, and if you so choose, reveal it to the other players. Exceptions are Planetary Rings and Asteroid Field, which must be revealed when you peek at them.

- You can only peek at cards you currently orbit, so try not to forget what a card was, or you might have to go back and look again!

When revealed, the card comes into effect immediately, which may or may not require action on the part of the players.

Edge Case: If a Base lands on a card revealing Planetary Rings or Asteroid Field, it does not affect that Base, as they are already landed when it becomes known. Ignorance truly is bliss.

## **Kessler Syndrome**

Kessler Syndrome is a chain reaction of destruction! When an object in orbit is destroyed, it's debris may hit other spacecraft, which is then destroyed continuing the chain reaction. In the game, this happens when a planet or moon has too many spacecraft orbiting it.

Any planet or moon that has the same number of vessels orbiting it as there are players must roll the die. The process goes as follows:

- Declare which vessel you are rolling for
- roll the die
- If you roll a 1, the vessel must consume 2 Fuel Tanks in order to dodge the incoming objects. If a 2 or 3 is rolled, 1 Fuel Tank is required. If a 4, 5 or 6 is rolled, it has no effect.
- If a ship does not have sufficient Fuel Tanks, it is hit and destroyed by the objects

## **Spaceships**

### **Bases**

Bases are permanent structures placed on the surface of a planet or moon. Placing a Base on a planet or moon allows you to collect Funds (see Build Phase above for details) and build Probes or Stations from that planet or moon. Only 1 base can exist on any given planet or moon, unless the Planet Card states otherwise.

### **Stations**

Stations earn you science every build phase. See Build Phase above for details

### **Command Modules**

Command Modules are what let you collect Victory Point tokens from planets and moons around the Kerbol System

### **Probes**

Probes are unique in that they do not cost Fuel Tanks to perform any movement, and *do not count towards Kessler Syndrome*. They also possess the ability to peek at Planet Cards on planets/moons they orbit, and reveal those cards if you so desire (see

Revealing Planet Cards above for more details). This makes them useful for both exploration and refueling.

### Costs

All costs (except Probes) are also indicated on their Project Cards

Command Modules: 3 Funds

Stations: 3 Funds

Bases: 3 Funds

Probes: 2 Funds

Victory Projects: 3 Funds, 3 Science + 3 Funds Maintenance (details on card)

The number of **Fuel Tanks** a **Rocket** has determines how far it can move. As you put more **Fuel Tanks** on a **Rocket**, the more each **Fuel Tank** will cost. You may put up to 9 **Fuel Tanks** on a single *Rocket*. The first three of these tanks are considered to be part of the first *Stage*. The next three part of the second *Stage*, the final three part of the third *Stage*.

Buying **Fuel Tanks** for the first **Stage** costs 1 **Fund** per tank, 2 **Funds** per tank for the second **Stage**, and 3 **Funds** for the third **Stage**. The total **Fund** cost for a **Rocket** of any given size is listed here (does not include payload cost):

Rocket Size	Fund Cost
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	5
5	7
6	9
7	12
8	15
9	18

## **New Player Strategy Guide**

The purpose of this guide is to introduce a few of the core strategies of the game, as well as a detailed rundown of what the first couple turns of the game will likely look like in order to kickstart your Space Program. This is not intended to be comprehensive, there are many viable strategies not listed here for you to discover.

The first turn of the game is largely independent of what strategy you choose to employ later for Victory, as most things you can do here will be helpful regardless.

### **The First Build Phase**

You're Rich!, you got 8 Funds and 8 Science and the whole Kerbol System ahead of you... Now what? There are a large number of different combinations of things you can buy, many of them perfectly viable. For the sake of brevity, I will detail 3 examples here. Note the difficulty designations aren't strict, as none of them are particularly difficult, just some are more forgiving than others. These will also be more or less effective depending on what Action Cards you have and what Planet Cards turn up in the early game.

The Deep Space Colonizer (Beginner):

This is the most balanced of the strategies listed here, it is well suited to transition into any of the major victory strategies.

- Purchase: 1 Base Project Card - Cost 3 Science
- Purchase: 1 Station Project Card - Cost 3 Science
- Purchase: Complete Base Project + 3 Fuel Tanks - Cost 6 Funds
- Purchase: 1 Probe - Cost 2 Funds
- Remaining Resources: 0 Funds, 2 Science

The idea here is to get your Fund income up, as well as position yourself for further development early on, as with this strategy you will have a Base with enough Fuel Tanks to land on Ike or Gilly, or even further if you have the right Action Cards, which are excellent staging and refueling points. The 2 extra Science will let you still buy a Project Card a turn for the next 2 turns before a Station is needed, which is helpful.

The Scholarly Explorer (Intermediate):

This strategy relies on knowing what is out there before anyone else does for its success. This makes it best at claiming Monolith Victory Points, although the advance knowledge of the locations of Manifest Destiny, Science Rich Environment and Deep Space Anomaly help it with any strategy (see Roads to Victory below for why these Planet Cards are important).

- Purchase: 1 Station Project Card - Cost 3 Science
- Purchase: Complete Station Project + 1 Fuel Tank - Cost 4 Funds
- Purchase: 2 Probes - Cost 4 Funds
- Purchase: 1 Action Card - Cost 5 Science
- Remaining Resources: 0 Funds, 0 Science



The idea here is to bring your per turn Science income up to 3 as soon as possible so that you can buy 1 Project every turn while you rapidly explore the Kerbol System for valuable Planet Cards and Victory Points. Knowledge is power. The extra Action Card can also open up some rather interesting options.

The Industrialist (Advanced):

This strategy relies on its significant income and extra building/refueling locations to lead it to victory. It can transition into any of the strategies as a result, however its weak early exploration can make it difficult to compete for Monoliths

- Purchase: 2 Base Project Cards - Cost 6 Science
- Purchase: Complete both Base Projects + 2 Fuel Tanks under 1 of them - Cost 8 Funds
- Remaining Resources: 0 Funds, 2 Science

This is the all in on Bases strategy. You want money, and nothing is going to stop you from getting it.

### **The First Action Phase**

Unless you have Action Cards to play, this is a very simple turn, not a whole lot is likely to happen.

**Watch out for Kessler Syndrome**, while not very likely at this point, a failed Kessler roll here could be extremely painful.

The Deep Space Colonizer:

- Send the Base to Minmus (2 Fuel Tanks remaining)
- Send the Probe to Minmus, peeking at Mun and Minmus along the way.

The Scholarly Explorer:

- Launch the Station into orbit around Kerbin. if it is looking like it might get congested there, move it to Mun
- Send both Probes to Minmus, peeking along the way

The Industrialist:

- Launch the Base that has Fuel Tanks and immediately move and land it on Mun, if it's still available. If you are first to go, you will have no competition, if you go last, you might be in trouble, depending on what other players do.

### **The Second Build Phase**

At this point, you'll probably want to start thinking about what kind of strategy you wish to employ to win the game (see Roads to Victory below). You probably won't want to decide anything just yet, but you should now have your first look at what everyone else is doing and you can glean some hints from that.

Otherwise, at this Build Phase will be to shore up the weaknesses or push the strengths of what you did in the first Build Phase. Significant deviation from the examples below is quite likely

The Deep Space Colonizer:

- Starting Resources: 3 Funds, 4 Science (3 Fund, 2 Science Grant)
- Purchase: 1 Command Module Project - Cost 3 Science
- Purchase: 1 Probe - Cost 2 Funds
- Remaining Resources: 1 Fund, 1 Science

This starts you working on the Command Module you will need to claim the Victory Points from the Monoliths you will likely be discovering over the next couple turns, which the extra Probe will help you do. Don't complete the Station card just yet, let it accumulate an extra Fund and wait for your Base to land so you can build it from there.

The Scholarly Explorer:

- Starting Resources: 3 Funds, 3 Science (3 Fund, 3 Science income)
- Purchase: 1 Base Project Card - Cost 3 Science
- Remaining Resources: 3 Funds, 0 Science

Since you don't have enough money to finish and launch the Base anywhere, just hold on to the Funds, they might be very helpful if a Monolith turns up and you need to rush a Command Module

The Industrialist:

Assuming successful landing on Mun

- Starting Resources: 4-5 Funds, 4 Science (4-5 Fund, 2 Science income)
- Purchase: 1 Station Project Card - Cost 3 Science
- Purchase: 2 Fuel Tanks for the Base on Kerbin (should now have a total of 3)
- Purchase: 1 Probe - Cost 2 Fund
- Remaining Resources: 0-1 Funds, 1 Science

Time to start exploring and getting that Science income up to at least 3, as well as get that second Base on the move

## **The Second Action Phase**

The Deep Space Colonizer:

- Land your Base on Gilly or Ike. Use your Probe to see which one you like better, though Ike is better positioned to reach the outer Kerbol System, which tends to make it the better pick.

The Scholarly Explorer:

- Use 1 Probe to start exploring the inner Kerbol System, and the other to explore the outer Kerbol System.

The Industrialist:

- Launch your Base and get it to Minmus (unless it's too crowded, then stay in orbit around Mun). Your goal should be Gilly or Ike if available, though you could use your Probe to refuel it from Mun next round to go further (probably Dres)
- Launch your Probe to Minmus, unless you want to refuel your Base, at which point leave it around Mun

## Going Forward

The game has a huge number of possible paths it can take, and predicting how it will go beyond the first couple turns is practically impossible before the game starts. Below is some general good advice for any strategy going forward:

- Don't neglect exploration! If you know where a Monolith is and no one else does, it is a huge advantage. If you have more Bases than anyone else, but haven't found Manifest Destiny, it is useless for Victory Points, and no one is likely to reveal it for you.
- Action Cards, while expensive, can be very powerful, and can even give you Victory Points no one can see. Don't let the price tag scare you too much.
- Adapt! Even your best laid plans can get thrown into chaos by an Action Card or Kessler Syndrome. Don't get too focused on a single strategy, always have backup plans for if the worst happens.

## Roads to Victory

Monolith/Treasure Hunt (Command Module) Victory:

This method is characterized by utilizing Command Modules to rapidly scoop up the Victory Points from Monolith cards, and once those are depleted, the Treasure Hunt Victory Points scattered around the Kerbol System.

The greatest strength of this strategy is the sheer number of Victory Points that can be collected very quickly. Be warned though, there will likely be fierce competition, and unlike with Stations or Bases, Command Modules don't give you any resources.

Science Rich Environment/Deep Space Anomaly (Station) Victory:

This method is characterized by building lots of Stations, preferably with a Base or Bases close to Science Rich Environment and Deep Space Anomaly. Note while Science Rich Environment doesn't give you any Victory Points directly, controlling it can give you a significant boost to building more Station (or even other stuff) in order to become the undisputed Station master. Finding Science Rich Environment and Deep Space Anomaly early should be a priority.

The greatest strength of this strategy is you will likely have lots of Science for more Project Cards or Action Cards, as well as the mobility of the Stations. Beware Kessler Syndrome though, Station groups are highly vulnerable to it.

Manifest Destiny (Base) Victory:

This is similar in a lot of respects to the Station Victory, except with Bases rather than Stations. Your goal will generally be quantity over quality, it doesn't really matter where the Bases are, they still count. This strategy has a significant long term economic advantage over others, and

Bases can't be destroyed once landed. However since most people build at least some Bases, you'll have to invest heavily to capitalize on Manifest Destiny, which you will also need to hunt down. Also, since Bases can only be built on Kerbin (except with Recursive Constructors Action Card), you can't respond as quickly to events, and setbacks like Kessler Syndrome or Action Cards can be really unpleasant.

Hybrids:

These core strategies can of course be combined in all sorts of interesting ways, it'll be up to you to experiment with them!

### **Conclusion**

Remember, this guide is hardly comprehensive, and things can change rapidly in a game, and drastically between games. Planning ahead will take you far, but you'll need to be flexible if you want to truly thrive.