POCKET IMPERIUM

David J. Mortimer
3 players • 45 minutes

War has erupted across the Imperium! Three spacefaring races struggle for supremacy, launching fleets of starships across the galaxy to battle for control of the most prosperous systems. Only one race will successfully Expand, Explore, Exploit and Exterminate their way to victory!

THE CARDS

The game contains the following 18 cards:

- **9 sector cards**
- **9 command cards**: Expand, Explore & Exterminate

You will need to find the following components, plus a way to keep score:

- **45 ships**: 15 counters in each of 3 different colours
- **1 start player marker**

SETUP

Each player takes a set of 3 command cards (Expand, Explore and Exterminate) and chooses a ship colour. Place all the ships in a common supply beside the play area. Give one player the start player marker.

Lay out the 9 sector cards as follows:

- Place the 'Tri-Prime' sector card in the middle of the play area.
- Randomly arrange the 2 sector cards without a blue stripe on either side of the Tri-Prime sector card.
- Randomly place the 6 remaining cards above and below the other cards to complete the 3×3 card layout. Make sure that the card edges with a blue stripe are on the outside of the layout.
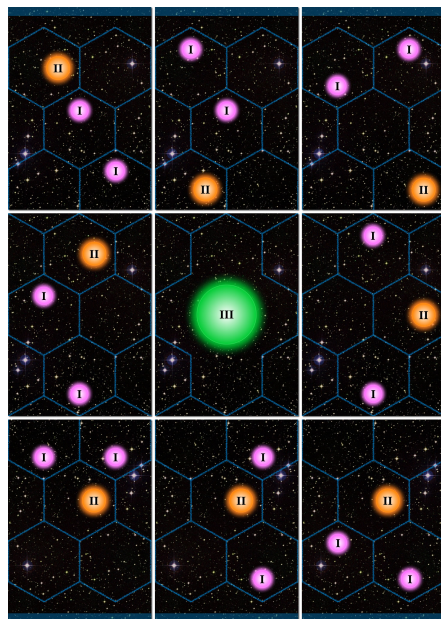
Initial ship deployment

Beginning with the **start player** and going *clockwise*, each player places 2 of their ships on a single, unoccupied Level I system in an unoccupied sector.

Then, starting with the **last player** and going *anticlockwise*, each player repeats this action, placing 2 more of their ships on another unoccupied Level I system in an unoccupied sector.

Each sector contains two Level I systems. During setup only __one__ of these two systems may be occupied by any player.

AIM OF THE GAME

The player who has scored the highest number of points at the end of the game is the winner.

HOW TO PLAY

Each turn consists of the following 3 phases, performed in order:

1. **Plan**: Choose the order of your commands.
2. **Perform**: Reveal and execute your commands.
3. **Exploit**: Sustain your ships and score sectors.

Phase 1: Plan

In this phase, all players secretly and simultaneously choose the order in which they will perform their commands in this round.

Take your 3 command cards — Expand, Explore and Exterminate — in hand, and decide the order in which you wish to perform them. Place the cards in a face-down stack so that the first command you wish to perform is on top.

Phase 2: Perform

This is the main phase of the game, where you will Expand, Explore and Exterminate.

The greater the number of players performing a command, the less effective the command becomes. This represents the supply and demand of raw materials if more fleets wish to Expand, the complications of overloaded interstellar flight paths if more fleets wish to Explore, and signal jamming and plan disruption if more fleets choose to Exterminate.

Commands are performed as follows:

- All players flip over the top command card in their face-down stacks to reveal their first commands.
- Commands are always performed in the following order: Expand, Explore, Exterminate.

*See the **Commands in detail** section for more information about each command.*

- In the event that more than one player has chosen the same command, the players who chose the command perform it in player order, beginning with the start player and going clockwise.
- Once all players have completed their first command, everyone reveals their second command and performs it in the same way.
- Finally, everyone reveals their third command and performs it as before.

Phase 3: Exploit

During this phase, players use systems they control to sustain their ships and choose sectors to score.

Sustain ships

Each hex has enough resources to sustain a number of ships equal to 1 plus the level of any system in the hex. For example, all hexes without a system in them can sustain just 1 ship, but a hex containing a Level II system can sustain 3 ships. Look at every hex in turn and remove any ships that cannot be sustained. Return all removed ships to the supply.

Score sectors

Beginning with the start player and going clockwise, each player **must** choose one sector to score.

- The start player may choose any sector card. Each of the other players must then choose a different sector. No sector may be chosen twice in any round.
- You may not choose an unoccupied sector. If there are no remaining occupied sectors, skip this step.
- You may not choose the central Tri-Prime sector. However, the player that **controls** Tri-Prime chooses **one additional sector** to be scored.

Once each player has chosen a sector to score, and the player controlling Tri-Prime has chosen an additional sector, all players receive points equal to the level of any systems in the chosen sectors that they control.

For example, if you control 3 Level I systems and 1 Level II system in the chosen sectors, score 5 points.

End of round

Pass the start player marker clockwise and begin a new round.

END OF THE GAME

The game ends after 9 rounds, or at the end of an earlier round if all of one player's fleets are completely eliminated.

After the game ends, a final scoring is performed as follows:

- All 9 sectors are scored again — all systems including Tri-Prime score **double** their value.
- The player who controls Tri-Prime does not choose an additional sector to score.

Add the points scored by each player during the final scoring to the points scored by them during the game. The player with the most points is the winner!

COMMANDS IN DETAIL

The commands are explained in detail on the next page.

__Important!__ You may choose not to perform the command you chose, or to only perform some of its possible actions. However, even if you do not perform a command, your choice of command still affects the number of times any other player who chose the command at the same time can perform the action.

When you perform the **Expand** command, you may take ships of your colour from the supply and add them to any system hexes you control. The number of ships you can add depends on how many other players chose the Expand command at the same time.

Important! *You may only add new ships to your* <u>*controlled systems*</u>*. You cannot add ships to non-system hexes you occupy or to unoccupied hexes.*
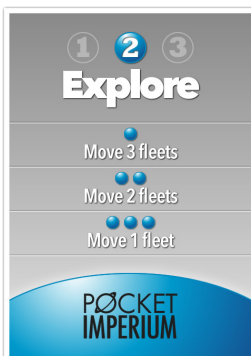
When you perform the **Explore** command, you may move your fleets of ships from hex to hex. The number of fleet movements you can make depends on how many other players chose Explore at the same time.

All ships in the same hex may be moved together as a single <u>**fleet**</u>. Each time you move a fleet you may move it up to <u>**2 hexes**</u>.

- You cannot move your fleets <u>**into**</u> or <u>**through**</u> any hexes occupied by another player.
- You cannot move a fleet <u>**through**</u> the Tri-Prime system hex. If you move into this hex you must stop.
- If you move into and occupy an unoccupied system hex you immediately gain control of the system.
- Individual ships may be added to a fleet as it passes through a hex, or left behind in a hex while the fleet moves away to an adjacent hex.
- You cannot move into the 'half hexes' on the edges of the card layout.

Important! *Each ship may only be involved in one fleet movement in each round.*

When you perform the **Exterminate** command, you may use your ships to invade adjacent systems. The number of individual systems you can invade depends on how many other players chose Exterminate at the same time.

You can only invade <u>**systems**</u> that you do not control. To do this you must move ships into the target system hex from your own fleets in directly adjacent hexes. You may move in ships from any number of <u>**different**</u> adjacent hexes to create your invasion fleet.

When you invade, resolve the invasion as follows:

- You and the player who controls the target system must <u>**both**</u> remove a number of ships equal to the size of the smallest fleet now in the invaded system hex. Return all removed ships to the supply.
- Every invasion has one of two possible outcomes: *either* ships belonging to only one of the players will remain and that player will then control the system; *or* the system will be left unoccupied, which will happen if the two fleets were the same size.

For example, if an invading player moves 5 ships into a system hex containing 3 ships belonging to another player, both players must remove 3 ships. The invading player will have 2 ships remaining in the hex, and the other player will have none.

- You can invade unoccupied systems, including systems that you moved your own ships out of during this round.
- You can invade a system using fewer ships than the player who controls it, in order to weaken that player.
- You cannot invade a system hex that you already control.
- If you are invading more than one system, you can choose the order in which you invade them.
- A single system may be invaded by more than one player during a single round.

Important! *Each ship may only be involved in one invasion in each round.*

EXAMPLE INVASION
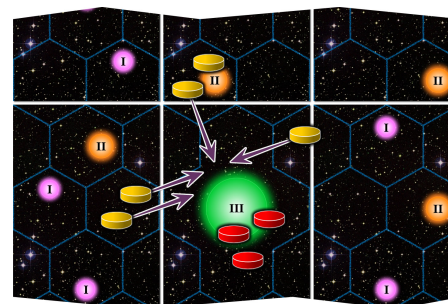
Yellow chooses to invade Tri-Prime, which Red currently controls with 3 ships. Yellow moves in an invasion fleet of 4 ships from the adjacent hexes.

Yellow does not have to use every available ship in the invasion, and leaves 1 ship behind to keep control of the Level II system.
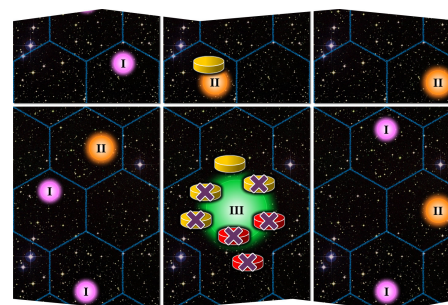
Both players must remove 3 ships from the Tri-Prime hex, leaving Yellow with a single ship in the hex and Red with no ships in the hex.

Yellow has taken control of Tri-Prime!
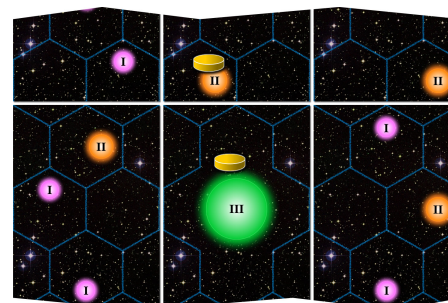
GLOSSARY

- **Command**: There are 3 commands: Expand, Explore and Exterminate. Each player has one command card of each type.
- **Sector**: A sector is any one of the 9 cards which make up the card layout. A sector contains several hexes or part-hexes.
- **Hex**: The blue borders split the play area into hexes. Some hexes span the edges of adjacent sector cards. The large region on the central sector card should also be considered as a single hex. Ships are placed into hexes and moved between directly adjacent hexes across the blue borders. You cannot move ships into the part-hexes on the edges of the card layout.
- **System hex**: A system hex is any hex that contains a pink Level I system or an orange Level II system.
- **Tri-Prime**: The green Level III system on the central sector card is called Tri-Prime. The large region that contains it should be treated as a single 'system hex'. Fleets cannot move through the Tri-Prime system hex.
- **Ship**: A ship is a single ship token. Each player has 15 ships in the supply.
- **Fleet**: A fleet is any number of ships belonging to one player within a single hex.
- **Controlled system**: A player controls a system if they have at least 1 ship in the hex.
- **Elimination**: A player is eliminated if all of their ships are removed from the card layout. If this happens before the ninth round, the game ends early.