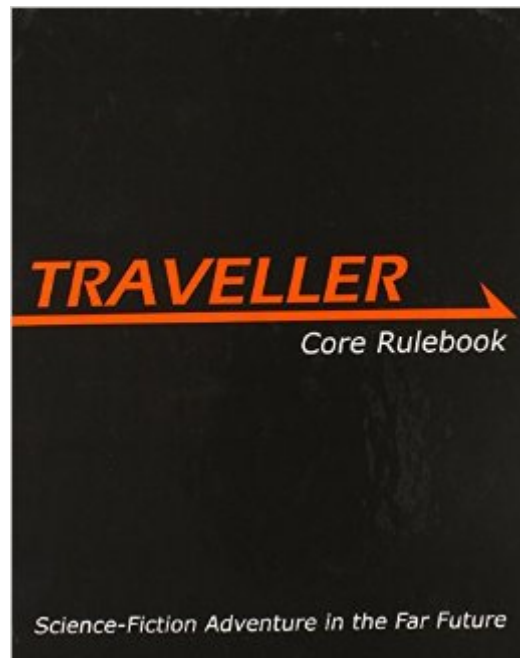


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Traveller Core Rulebook



Synopsis

Traveller is back, and it is better than ever! Based on the Classic Traveller rules set, this book has been streamlined for modern roleplaying, and yet still retains that unmistakable Traveller aura. With complete rules for character and world creation, spaceships, encounters and trading, it is your gateway into new universes. The Traveller Main Rulebook is the cornerstone of all your Traveller games, to be expanded upon with core supplements such as Mercenary and High Guard, or used with different settings like Starship Troopers, Judge Dredd and, of course, the Original Traveller Universe. Written by Gareth Hanrahan, the Traveller Main Rulebook contains many things fans of the classic game will find familiar, but always with a new twist Traveller has come back. Discover what is out there. --This text refers to an alternate Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

This new edition of Traveller is, quite frankly, much better than I expected. It manages to evoke the style and mechanics of the original edition while consolidating information and updating content to feel slightly less dated. The whole game seems designed first and foremost with the goal of being playable. The book is well-bound and sturdy. The layout isn't fancy or flashy, just black and white with grayscale tables. The art is mainly black and white line illustrations. I might have hesitated to pick this up at the \$40 it retails for at most game stores; that price is the result of the brutal pounds sterling to U.S. dollar exchange rate (Mongoose is a British publisher). Incidentally, the price is the best one that I have found for this game, and brings the price point very much into line with other rpg core books. As for the contents, they are well-written, nicely organized, and easy to read. The game starts with a very brief introduction to the Traveller setting and the dice conventions. Basically,

you roll 2d6, add the level of any appropriate Skill and any positive or negative modifiers for a relevant attribute (Dexterity if shooting at someone, Intellect if trying to crack a computer code, for example) and try to roll an 8 or higher to succeed. The next 43 pages cover character creation. Just as in the original Traveller, players roll their character's six core attributes (Str, Dex, End, Int, Education, and Social Status) and then choose from a wide variety of career paths (Agent, Army, Citizen, Drifter, Entertainer, Marines, Merchants, Navy, Nobility, Rogue, Scholar, or Scout). Each career path has three specialized sub-paths that players must choose from. For example, an Agent could be a law enforcement officer, an intelligence agent, or a corporate espionage person. You don't get to just choose your skills in the standard character creation system--you roll to gain entry to a career and must make survival and advancement rolls to continue in it. Fail and you get kicked out of that career, collecting benefits based on how many four-year terms you've served. Then it's off to try another career path. Once you've served 4 terms overall, you start making aging rolls, which start off pretty kind and get harsher the longer you serve. Most players will probably start with 4-6 terms, which generate either a decent range of average skills or a few excellent skills and some basic knowledge, depending on how well you roll. The process is really a lot of fun--there are lots of events on the tables designed to spark creativity and help create both a backstory and ties to other characters. There's also a simple point-buy system if you prefer that approach. The next twelve pages deal with skills, with examples of tasks for each skill at varying degrees of difficulty. Then you get nine pages on Combat, seventeen pages on Encounters and Dangers (lots more tables here in the old Traveller tradition), nineteen pages of Equipment (which covers a very good range of armor, weapons, vehicles, and other gear), and about 47 pages on designing and operating spacecraft, including game statistics and deck plans for 18 spacecraft common to the Traveller setting. This is followed by rules for Psionics, Trade, and basic World Creation. It's a very complete package, with pretty much everything you need to play a game in the vein of Firefly or classic Imperial science fiction in one book. The rules for creating aliens aren't very sophisticated as presented in this volume, but you can do most of the humanoid style aliens you see on television shows. The random roll tables are actually quite thorough and often creative in the types of events they produce. Career events are nicely tailored to each general career path, for example. It's all clearly done with the goal of producing usable results/inspiration for gamemasters without requiring lots of planning or lengthy writeups for NPCs (spaceships may require a bit more, but there are plenty of premade designs to choose from). There isn't a whole lot of background fluff on the Traveller setting, but the mechanics/equipment provided reflect the assumptions of the Traveller backdrop quite well. Being more generic actually makes it easier to adapt these rules to other settings. I particularly like how

the descriptions of the technologies feel less dated than the original Traveller material (based in 1970s science fiction) but stay grounded and easily accessible to most consumers of contemporary cinematic science fiction, much less readers of more sophisticated written s.f. Overall, this is a very nice set of core rules that pleasantly surprised me with its accessibility, clarity, and quality.

I began playing Traveller way back in 1977, and have played, run, and written for various editions of the game ever since. I'll admit that I ordered the book with some reservations, as I saw it as a step backwards. Happily, I was wrong. Mongoose Traveller is an excellent repackaging of the feel of the Traveller early days with updated rule concepts that bring everything into the 21st century.

Character generation is smooth, the dice mechanics are simple to remember and use, and the rules in general are easily grasped. My only complaints are with the artwork. Traveller has a feel, one developed over the last 31 years, and the artwork in this book had more of a WH40K look to it. Also, the equipment selection was very limited. This is a good buy for fans of Traveller from the old days, or anyone looking for a simple SF-RPG.

The flavour has returned to 'classic traveller'. Mongoose rules seem to take all the good stuff from the latest generation of games (d20, White Wolf etc) and elegantly blend them into the original traveller setting. The basic task system uses 2D6 and you make checks against a target number and add your skill and ability bonuses, so players from d20 and d6 etc will have no problem getting into this system. The skills system has been updated to include 'modern' concepts such as opposed checks, degrees of success, timeframes, chained/sequenced and teamwork checks. Character creation allows for a broader range of backgrounds than CT and optional rules are also given for point based creation, instead of traveller career based creation. At first parse, all the original elements of the game are included in this book - including much material (eg. deckplans) that used to be in supplementary material. The text is well layed out and the black and white artwork is first class. I can remember when GURPS traveller came out, I was generally pretty disappointed because it was basically just a conversion tool to bring your Traveller campaign over to GURPS Space rules, and the artwork let it down. However I still have the GURPS stuff because the library data (background fluff) by Loren K. Wiseman was excellent. Mongoose have left the Imperial fluff stuff to a minimum much like the original traveller book. To address this they have released a separate book for the Spinward Marches sector (the default traveller setting). If you liked the classic hardcover Traveller Book, then you'll LOVE this because it is magnitudes better. As a generic SF rpg, I think its much better than GURPS Space, as well. It certainly got me thinking about starting up

a 'hard-SF' campaign.

Sure, I started out on D&D like everyone else, but the Original Traveller (note capitalization) was my first true love. The day that little black box appeared in my life (supplied by my mom, who is an even bigger SF devotee than me) was a life changing moment. Yeah, my D&D players refused to convert (half their players died in character generation, the other half fell to The Charmax Plague) and went on strike until I relented to DMing D&D again. What do you do if your friends hate your girlfriend? Get new friends! Which I did not do, by the way. But I have carried that little black box from move to move, it's corners getting fuzzy with love... Much credit is due to Mongoose Publications for doing such an excellent job of taking us back to those halcyon days of free traders and d6 fun. My only complaint (and it's small but pertinent) is the change on the character sheet from hexadecimal values... it made things simpler, not harder, when your basic traits were a simple line of six figures. (It looks way cooler, too.) Still, the decision to maintain the appeal of the iconic black cover with the red stripe makes this old gamer feel all warm and fuzzy inside. Buy it. Buy it. Buy it.

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