

The background of the cover is a vibrant, orange-hued illustration of a Mars terraforming project. In the upper left, a large, complex orbital station or lander is suspended in the sky, emitting blue energy beams. Below it, a massive, skeletal metal structure, possibly a greenhouse or habitat, is under construction on the ground. In the foreground, a lone astronaut in a full suit stands on the dusty, reddish terrain, looking towards the structures. The overall scene is set against a backdrop of rugged, rocky mountains under a hazy, orange sky.

TERRAFORMING
MARS

THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME
QUICKSTART GUIDE

**QUICKSTART
GUIDE**



▲ CREDITS

Design and development: Shadowlands Games Team

Scenario: Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan / **Game system:** Enrique Camino

Editing: Francisco Javier Valverde / **Layout and graphic design:** Claudia Andrade, Laura Faílde

Illustration and graphic design: Andrés Sáez «Marlock», Alberto Martínez «Kisama»

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Shadowlands Ediciones Juegos de mesa y rol, S.L.

Calle Pere IV, 51, 4º 4ª, 08018 Barcelona

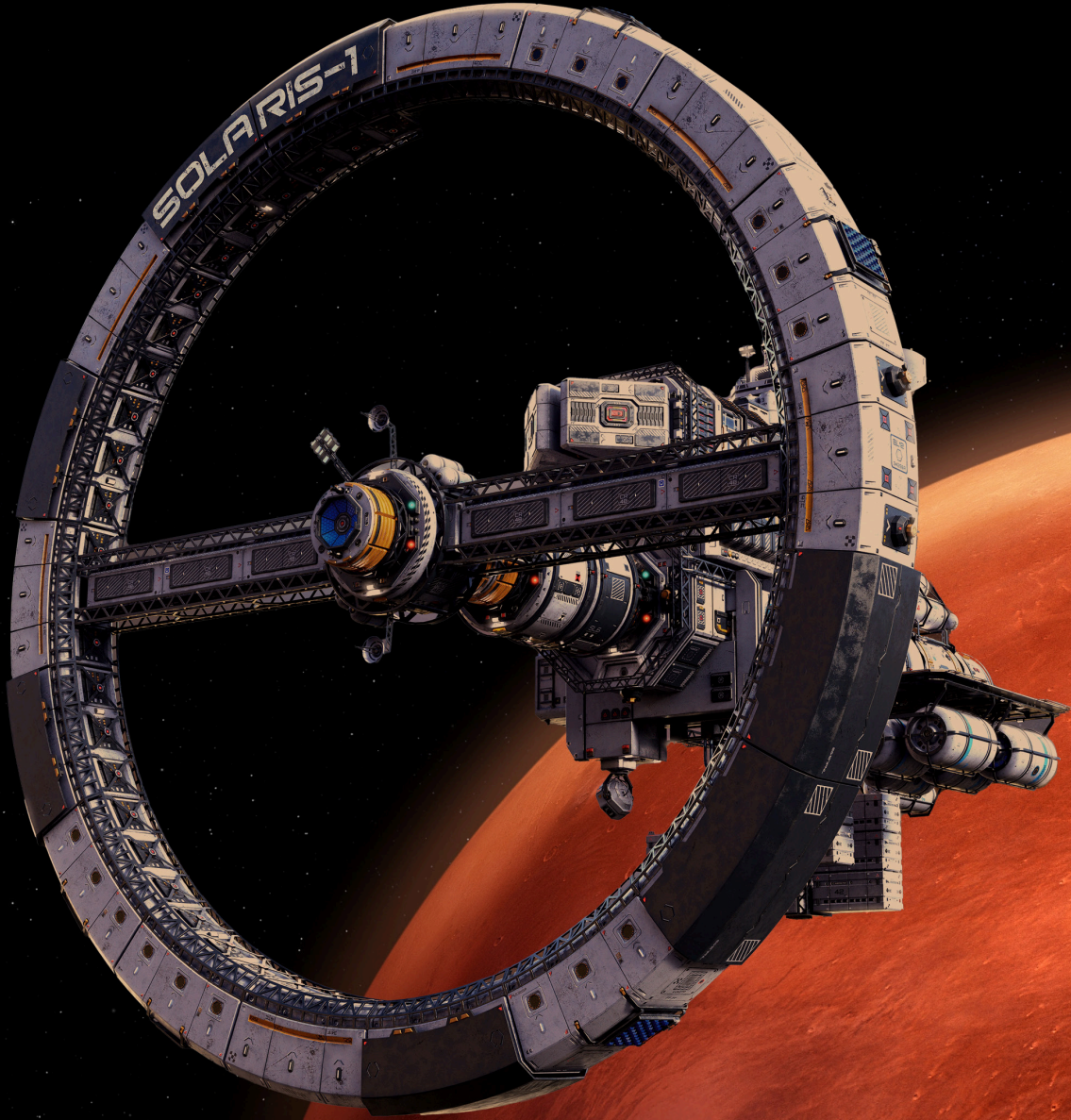
<https://shadowlandsgames.com/> info@shadowlandsgames.com

Shadowlands


TERRAFORMING MARS

THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME
QUICKSTART GUIDE

A role-playing game based in Terraforming Mars, by Jacob Fryxelius, published by Fryx Games, for the ESTIRPE game system





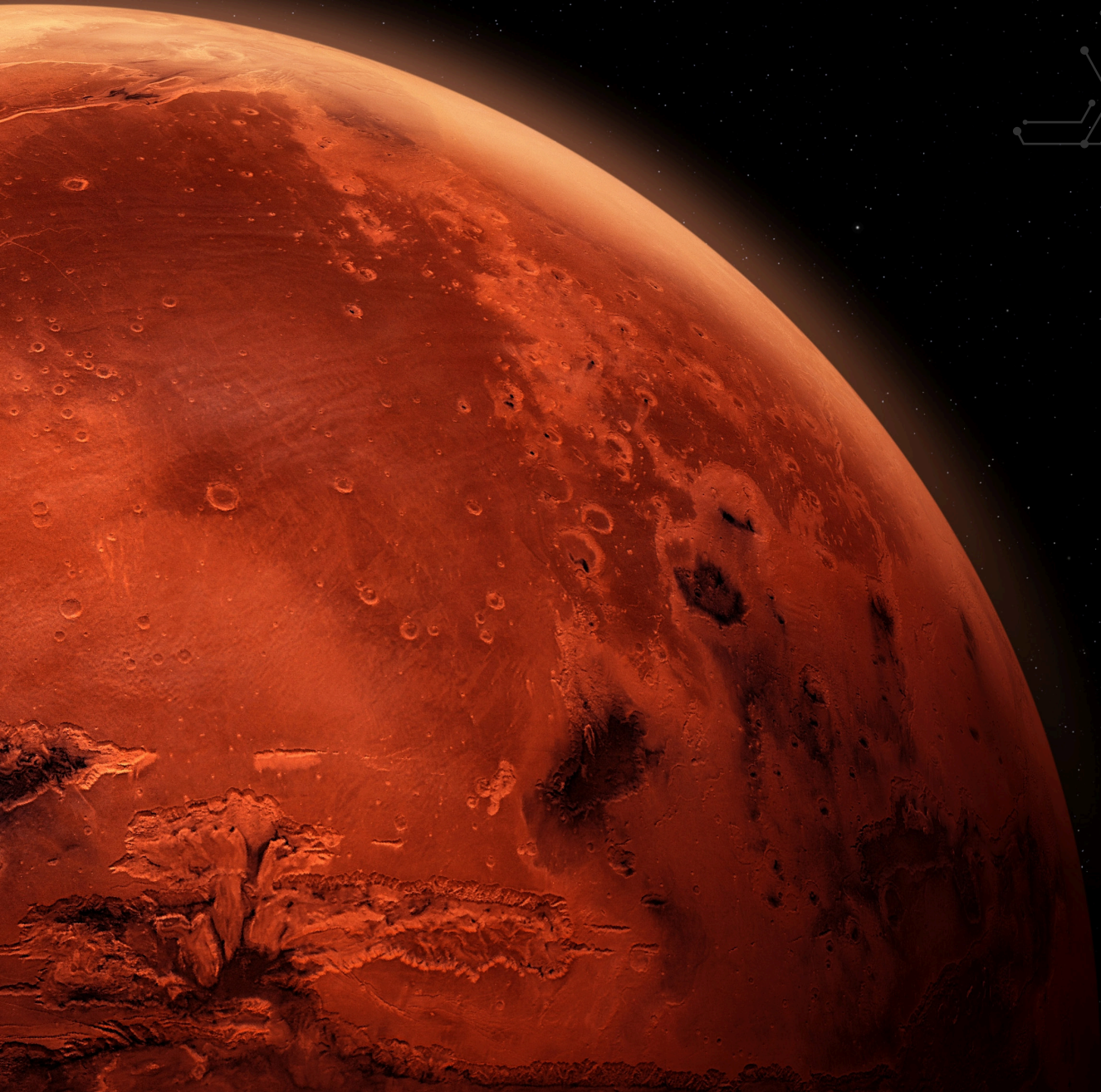
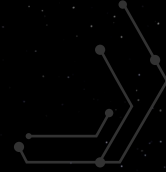
▲ THE TERRAFORMING ANNOUNCEMENT

“Since its inception in 2174, the World Government has continually strived for global unity and peace. Our mission is to be humanity’s shared tool for shaping a better future. Earth is overpopulated and resources are dwindling. We now face the choice, either to recede, or to expand into space to find new homes for humanity. For this reason, we need to turn Mars into a habitable planet.

The terraforming of Mars is an endeavor so great that it will take the united effort of mankind to accomplish. The World Government will therefore inaugurate a Terraforming Committee, and instate a universal tax for this purpose. Any corporation or enterprise contributing to the terraforming process will be generously rewarded by the Committee. We believe that these measures will, eventually, result in a habitable planet for our descendants.

Thank you for your attention!”

Levi Uken, World Government communicator, January 16, 2315 AD.



WHAT IS TERRAFORMING MARS TTRPG?

▲ **TERRAFORMING MARS - THE OFFICIAL TABLETOP ROLE-PLAYING GAME** OFFERS YOU AN ULTIMATE SCIENCE FICTION EXPERIENCE IN THE EPIC, RISKY AND CONFRONTATIONAL RACE FOR DOMINANCE IN THE CONQUEST AND TERRAFORMING OF MARS... AND BEYOND!



You are the hope of humankind. The expansion and the survival of our species depends on you. Put your name down on human history as a pioneer - one of the first Martians.

Live the greatest feat through stunning stand-alone adventures or as part of your own incredible generational saga across the terraforming eras of Mars.

SHAPE MARS FROM RED DESERT TO A NEW HOME

Terraforming Mars: the role-playing game, is a science fiction and extreme exploration game based on **Terraforming Mars, the board game by Fryx-Games**. It is set in the thrilling and enormous challenge of human expansion and colonization of the Solar System. Science, technology, diplomacy and survival are pushed to the limit to overcome the risks of the greatest feat in history: transforming Mars from a barren wasteland into a home.

Who do you play in Terraforming Mars, the role-playing game? Players step into the shoes of a multidisciplinary group who seek to leave their mark in the history of the terraforming of Mars and Solar System colonization. Several professional archetypes are available. As scientists, technicians, doctors, researchers, explorers, diplomats and other workers, they coordinate to face unexpected events and the deadly conditions of the Red Planet to achieve the common benefit of a new life on Mars.

Multiple corporations compete within the protocols of the Terraforming Committee created by the World Government since 2315 A.D. But not all of them have compatible ideas and ambitions, leading to tensions as they follow different paths towards the greater good. This necessitates the existence of security and control mechanisms by the Terraforming Committee, which will not hesitate to act to protect the efforts to terraform Mars from the intrigues and mischief of those who divert its path.

Will your characters be a group of colonists exploring the unknown? Part of a research and support group of the Terraforming Committee? An emergency squad investigating a strange condition in a dome? A family that controls or serves a corporation pursuing terraforming through sev-

eral generations? Experience amazing adventures through your player characters: exploration and survival, solving problems with science and technology in extreme environments, facing unexpected events and threats, defending your company's interests in diplomatic plots, investigating acts of sabotage and maintaining security on Mars. Or a mixture of all of the above, always with the common goal of achieving terraforming.

WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

A role-playing game (RPG), such as Terraforming Mars TTRPG, is an immersive exercise in collective imagination. It involves embarking on adventures with companions, collaboratively shaping the narrative through shared decision-making. One participant assumes the role of game master, while the others play as protagonists. When confronted with uncertainty, the roll of dice and the character's Abilities determines the outcome.

The best way to understand how it works is to simply play a game. However, for those who would like to get a better idea beforehand, there are plenty of sample games to watch on Youtube or listen to in your favorite podcasting platform.

IN TERRAFORMING MARS TTRPG...

- Is generational sci-fi that lets you experience from first landing to a Green Mars of the far future.
- You are humanity's hope, and your actions will influence terraforming along the Mars eras.
- You work for a corporation in a race to dominate terraforming, evolving with your actions and facing the moves of your competitors.
- A scientifically feasible fiction lore where the characters can make a difference against the perils of Mars and human nature.
- Develop projects that face the tensions of survival, corporate intrigue, and stellar events.
- Your decisions can mean life or death, rise or fall. Work together with your multidisciplinary team to achieve the impossible.
- Experience the expansion and terraforming of a planet firsthand, working for you and for all humankind.

ERAS

▶ THE LORE OF THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME WILL INCLUDE A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ERAS AND IMPORTANT EVENTS OF THE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS. THIS IS INTENDED TO OFFER THE GAME DIRECTOR AND PLAYERS DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CHALLENGE, RISKS AND CONFLICTS, BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE WHAT BEST SUITS THEIR TASTE.

AGE OF PIONEERS

The first generations. The harshest conditions. The most demanding environmental challenges for the first explorers and corporations.

AGE OF CORPORATIONS

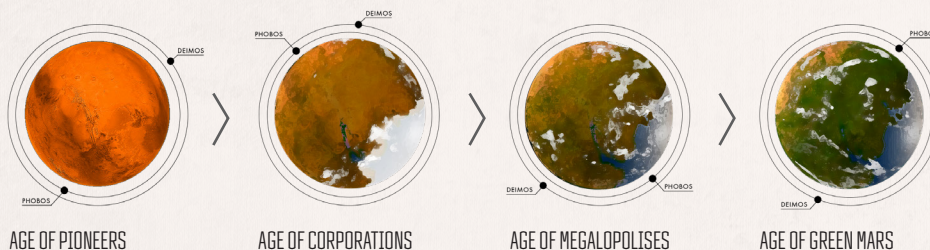
The next generations achieved the settlement of a larger infrastructure. Small cities that try to grow and maintain themselves on the planet with a delicate balance. Humanity expands into space colonies in the Jovian system and asteroid mining.

AGE OF MEGALOPOLISES

The population of Mars has grown, and the more advanced generations enjoy ecological reserves, infrastructure for getting around, improvements in energy technology, alloys, food and water. There are still threats on the planet that can set back the project. Solar system colonization continues.

AGE OF GREEN MARS

Terraforming is almost a reality. But there are still problems, like the scramble for resources, tensions between the corporations, the new Martian government and the Earth government, diseases and more.





QUICKSTART TO THE GAME SYSTEM

▲ TERRAFORMING MARS, THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME USES THE ESTIRPE GAME SYSTEM. SHOWN BELOW IS A SNAPSHOT OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENT.

ABILITIES & SPECIALTIES

▲ APTITUDES, EXPERIENCE, AND, ULTIMATELY, EVERYTHING CHARACTERS KNOW AND CAN DO – AND HOW WELL THEY DO IT – ARE DETERMINED BY THEIR ABILITIES AND SPECIALTIES.

ABILITIES

These are traits that determine characters' areas of expertise, experience, and skill. There are five general Abilities and a separate one for combat. Each Ability has an associated level, expressed by a number, usually between 0 (worst) and 4 (best), with an average score of 2 for a normal person. This score will initially be what determines how many (six-sided) dice players should roll to determine whether they succeed or fail at a task that depends on one of these Abilities.

GENERAL ABILITIES



SCHOLARSHIP. This refers to both the characters' book smarts and their general cultural knowledge and memory. Computers helps, but it's easier to find what you already know. *Ex: quickly identify the person you are speaking with as the Human Resources Manager for ThorGate Corporation, memorizing the constellations of Mars to find your way when a dust storm kills your navigation computer, recalling the geology of Mons Olympus to find shelter.*



ANALYSIS. This includes everything requiring perceiving clues in your surroundings, identifying patterns, analyzing documents, understanding data, and drawing conclusions. *Ex: examining the sheer financial data of a Corporation to find who is receiving dirty money from an Earth mafia, investigate a crash site to find the cause of the shuttle accident.*

MEMORANDUM

Terraforming Mars TTRPG Core Rulebook includes list and examples of Specialties associated with each Ability, giving options to associate characters' experience to their profession and personal history.



INTERACTION. This includes not only a character's charisma and ability to influence others, but also their personality and empathy. *Ex: giving a heartwarming speech to the Terraforming Committee, convincing the reluctant CEO that you're here to help, seeing through the rogue technician's lies and finding out which crane he's sabotaged.*



TECH. This comprises anything involving technical applications, coordination, and manual dexterity that requires both knowledge and skill. *Ex: Driving a rover, piloting a shuttle, hacking a computer code to learn about that illegal asteroid launching, treating wounds, building a shelter on Mars surface...*



BODY. This refers to getting the most out of your body, in terms of strength, endurance, finesse and reflexes. *Ex: running before the falling dome ceilings crush you, withstanding long walks on your rad suit, silently infiltrating the abandoned algae processing plant turned criminal hideout...*

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SCHOLARSHIP AND ANALYSIS

The use of Scholarship, Tech and Analysis involves different types of know-how and applied techniques. Often, the successful completion of a task in one of these two Abilities seems to require both theory and practice. A scholar hoping to apply his knowledge might lack the necessary hands-on experience to pull it off. Likewise, a mechanic who's good with her hands is unlikely to know how to operate the complex controls of a space shuttle all by herself. In such cases, the game master will take the situation into account, along with character's past and concept, to determine whether the task falls within the scope of their abilities and they can carry it out.

COMBAT ABILITY

Terraforming Mars is a game that encourages fighting battles with wits, diplomacy, and cunning, but sometimes there's no other choice but to roll up your sleeves and put your fists to work.

- **Combat:** This Ability encompasses all the skills related to violence, with or without weapons, including firearms.

SPECIALTIES

These are the specific skills a character excels at within an Ability. They reflect what the character

specialized in during their training and where they have gained the most experience. Every PC starts with four Specialties. They are listed in parentheses after the Ability on their Character Sheet.

When attempting a task that falls within one of their specialties, players can reroll any dice that did not result in a success (i.e., any dice that did not roll a 5 or 6, as explained in the next section). This means that the character not only has a greater chance of succeeding, but is also more likely to receive additional benefits due to their greater skill.

SOLVING TASKS

▶ WHEN CHARACTERS WANT TO ATTEMPT TASKS WHOSE OUTCOME IS UNCERTAIN OR COULD HAVE CONSEQUENCES (THERE IS NOT ENOUGH TIME, THERE IS DANGER NEARBY, ETC), THEY ROLL DICE AND TRY THEIR LUCK.

THE BASIC ROLL

Roll the same number of six-sided dice (referred to as 'd' from now on) as your level in the Ability related to the task to be performed. Don't add up the results; read each die individually. Each 5 counts as a success, and each 6 counts as two successes. If you have at least one success, you achieve what you set out to do. Each additional success can enhance the result of your action.

Audhild Berg, an engineer working for the United Nations Mars Initiative, feels the ground move beneath her feet as she overlooks the construction of a new wind turbine field. They have unintentionally opened up an underground cavern! Audhild should roll to avoid a nasty fall. Her Body level is 3, so she throws three dice and gets a 2, a 4, and a 5. That's one success, enough for her to grab the edge of the open pit and desperately pull herself to safety.

DIFFICULTIES

If the game master decides that there are external factors that could alter the chances of success, he or she may add or subtract dice from the player's roll. For instance, the game master might take into account factors such as time constraints, the difficulty of the action being attempted, or the attitude of the person the character is dealing with.

Easy task = Roll +1d / +2d

Difficult task = Roll -1d / -2d

Extremely difficult task = Roll -4d

When the difficulty reduces the number of dice you can roll to 0d or fewer, you can still try, but you're going to need a lot of luck. Roll 2d and keep the worst result.



Was that hidden cavern an unfortunate coincidence? Or is there a whole network of underground tunnels under the new wind farm? To avoid a disaster, Audhild should check the geological reports of the area, but she should do it ASAP to stop the construction before another accident happens. Due to time constraints, she rolls Analysis with a -2d difficulty. She has Analysis 4, so that's 2d for her to roll: 1 and 2. A failure! Fortunately, she has Geology as a Specialty, allowing her to reroll both failed dice. This time she gets a 3 and a 6. Two successes, she finds enough evidence to convince the Terraforming Committee to postpone the work and send a team to map out the underground tunnels.

BENEFITS FOR EXTRA SUCCESSES

When a character rolls more successes than they need, they can improve the outcome of the task they are performing. Depending on the situation, and always at the discretion of the GM, they may receive one of the following benefits.

- The result is better than expected.
- They do it faster.
- They don't leave any trace.
- They get additional information.
- It changes the attitude of the person they're dealing with.
- It facilitates an immediately following task (adding extra dice).
- Other possible special effects.

In the case of combat, extra successes work slightly differently (see below).

TASK CHAINS

There are times when the situation or a character's bravado will cause them to attempt several tasks at once, so that the outcome of the first one will affect the outcome of the next. There are four main cases in which tasks can be linked in this way:

- **Quality:** The successes from the first roll are added as extra dice in the second. *You use Analysis to determine how a piece of equipment works and then sabotaging it with Tech, or using Erudition to show off your knowl-*

edge after asking a reluctant astrophysicist for a favor with Interaction.

- **Speed:** If a character needs to accomplish multiple tasks in a short amount of time, the success of the first roll determines the maximum number of dice to roll on the second. *You roll Body to reach the sabotaged crane as quickly as possible. The success you get is the maximum number of dice you can roll with Tech to prevent it from dropping its heavy load on a group of workers.*
- **Hindrance:** The first roll's successes subtract dice from the second. You madly write code to build firewall software to stop a hacker from getting into your files. *Your successes on a Tech roll will hinder the hacker's own Tech roll.*
- **Help:** When one character's success in a task can make another character's subsequent task easier. In this case, the additional successes of the first player's task add dice to the second player's task. *You roll Erudition to recall the easier route through the outskirts of Mons Olympus, aiding your fellow explorer with her Body roll to endure the trek.*

COMPLICATIONS

A roll of a 1 on any die means a complication - not a failure, but a problem for the future. Maybe you dropped your toolkit while navigating that tricky terrain. Maybe you left a clue behind while infiltrating that corporate enclave. In a struggle, complications give bonus Advantage Points to your opponent.

FAILING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

If a roll results in a Fail, the task can be resolved in one of two ways:

- If failure doesn't stop the scenario progression, because there are alternatives or another way for the character to get what they want, you can simply assume that they failed to achieve their goal and should find another way.
- If failure would halt the progression, the game master can consider the character to have succeeded, but not without suffering consequences. These consequences may be immediate or delayed in time, and they may be material or narrative (physical damage, loss of resources, leaving traces of their actions, affecting or

breaking something important on stage, losing important equipment, being discovered by someone unwanted, triggering an antagonistic response).

MORE EXAMPLES

In the Terraforming Mars TTRPG, the role-playing game Core Rulebook, you will find more examples of possible consequences of failing rolls.

PASSIVE TASKS AND THEIR RESOLUTION

There are times when the game master can measure characters' ability to succeed in an intuitive task or the involuntary use of an Ability. These are called Passive Tasks.

For example, a character is reading a routine report on the latest batch of Earth migrants, but one of them is a convicted criminal whose name should ring a bell. Or a rover follows you across the surface of Mars, leaving a cloud of red dust in its wake. In neither case is the character actively using their Abilities. But the GM can decide whether the character finds the criminal (Scholarship) or notices the trail (Analysis), depending on the level of the character's Abilities.

Sometimes it can be risky for the story to ask a player to make a roll, as it can unintentionally give away clues and put players on alert. Therefore, the GM can ask themselves these questions: What makes the most sense for the scenario? What would have a greater dramatic impact or be more interesting for the story?



ENGINEERING RULES

▲ THERE WILL BE TIMES IN TERRAFORMING MARS WHEN A CHARACTER DOES NOT HAVE THE PROPER TOOLS, AND MUST IMPROVISE USING THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE TO REPAIR OR BUILD A DEVICE; IT IS IN THESE SITUATIONS THAT THE FOLLOWING ENGINEERING RULES COULD BE USED.

We must be aware that these rules are, of course, an abstraction, and that the game takes place more than 200 years in the future. Therefore, we must be flexible in our idea of what the technology at hand will be like. At that point in the future, even tasks and operations that are considered mundane today will be performed differently and with different technology. For example, if we improvise, it may be that the material of the component used to adjust the frequencies in our radio receiver turns out to be just as useful for triggering the chemical reaction we need in a water filter.

For the sake of simplicity, in the following paragraphs, whatever is being repaired or built will be referred to as a “device,” regardless of whether it is a mechanism, a tool, a vehicle, etc.

MINIMUM REQUIRED

Obviously, the GM is in charge of determining whether the characters have the minimum required elements and materials to even undertake the task of repairing or building something. For example, you can't create a land vehicle without something it can move on (wheels, skis...), you can't start an electrical system without something that generates a first spark... That said, as we mentioned above, the GM should be generous in their criteria and welcome the (good) ideas that the players may have. In any case, the quantity and quality of the resources available will influence the check as modifiers to the roll (as explained below).



TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Characters who have received practical training in engineering or scientific fields that allow them to repair and manufacture devices must record this on their sheet according to the rules below.

When creating a character, a player may decide to give up one point of any of their Abilities in order to get TEN points to distribute among the Fields of Expertise (FoE). In exceptional cases, the GM may allow a character to sacrifice two points of Abilities (two from the same Ability or one point each from two) and receive TWENTY points to distribute among Fields of Expertise (FoE). When creating a character, the minimum you can assign to each FoE is 0 points, and the maximum is 8. We recommend that you assign at least 6 points to the FoE you consider the character's main one.

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE (FOE):

- Electronics and Electricity
- Transportation
- Optics
- Orbital Operations
- Sensors
- Communications
- Mechanical Engineering
- Chemistry
- Microbial Genetics
- Plant Genetics

BUILDING A DEVICE

The usefulness of a device is determined by the quality of two factors.

The player must make a check by rolling a number of dice equal to their level in the relevant FoE plus/minus the dice shown on the Circumstances table (see next section). They must then distribute the successes among the various factors, at a rate of one point per Quality level. For example, with three successes, they can create a device that will work for at least a day (Reliability – Quality 2), and whose Power/Range is similar to something a professional could make on their own (Power/Range – Quality 1). That is, they may need, or prefer, a low-power device, but being assured that it will continue to work for at least two weeks... or conversely, they may only need to get it to work once, but to get it to work as well as possible on that sole occasion. If there are zero successes on the dice, the device has both Reliability and Power/Range 0.

Optional rule: A roll where all the dice come up 1 results in a completely useless device.

Example: with three successes you can create a device with

**Reliability 3 and Power/Range 0, or
Reliability 2 and Power/Range 1, or
Reliability 1 and Power/Range 2, or
Reliability 0 and Power/Range 3**

FACTOR	RELIABILITY (The device is going to fulfill its function...)	POWER/RANGE (This device has the power/range of...)
QUALITY 0	Once	Something a hobbyist could make
QUALITY 1	At least 1 hour	Something a professional could make on their own
QUALITY 2	At least 1 day	An average commercial product
QUALITY 3	At least 2 weeks	A quality commercial product
QUALITY 4	No time limit	A state-of-the art commercial product or a next-generation prototype

In the rare case where the GM determines that two different FoEs may be relevant to working on a device, they may allow the player to roll as many dice as their highest level among the FoEs in use, and then re-roll as many dice on which they did not obtain successes as their level in the other.

Marina has Aeronautics 5 and Optics 2. Since she is attempting to build a flying drone that is guided autonomously via a camera, the GM allows her to roll 5d and re-roll up to 2 of the dice on which she had zero successes. (A petty GM or a complex design might have required two different checks, one for the Aeronautics part of the drone, and another one for the Optics.)

Similarly, if it is feasible for multiple characters to work on a single device; use the highest present value for the check, and the second highest to determine how many unsuccessful dice can be re-rolled.

CIRCUMSTANCES

In addition to the Reliability and Power or Range of the device being created, we need to consider the starting point of the characters in comparison with what would be the usual situation for manufacturing such a device.

For each of the following circumstances, the GM should determine what level would be the usual one, and modify the roll with +Xd or -Xd depending on how different the character's situation is.

For example, looking at the "Complexity" Circumstance, if the character is working on a device that would normally require a small team in a workshop (level 3), but the PC is alone, albeit in a well-equipped workshop (level 2), the roll is made at -1d. If the workshop was not even well-equipped, the penalty would be -2d.

	COMPLEXITY (Under normal conditions this can be done by...)	SPEED (This usually takes...)	REPURPOSING (How far from the original purpose of the components you want to go)
LEVEL 1	<i>A person in a workshop</i>	<i>A few minutes</i>	<i>They are basically equivalent</i>
LEVEL 2	<i>A person in a well-equipped workshop</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>They are used for the same thing, but they work differently</i>
LEVEL 3	<i>A small team in a workshop</i>	<i>Half a day</i>	<i>The base component is useful, but it has been processed for another function and work needs to be undone</i>
LEVEL 4	<i>A small team in a well-equipped workshop</i>	<i>One day</i>	<i>The base component is useful, but it needs to be processed and prepared for this new purpose</i>
LEVEL 5	<i>A professional team in a company in the corresponding industry</i>	<i>Several days</i>	<i>It might work in theory, but it's not certain that there aren't dependencies that would prevent it from working</i>

Laura needs to improvise a receiver to re-establish contact with her corporation's base. Ideally, it should work for at least an hour, and given the complexity of the communication protocols in use, she needs a device that is at least equivalent to a mid-range commercial one.

Her Circumstances are as follows:

Complexity: This is a device that would normally be built by a small team in a workshop. She is alone, but has a well-equipped workshop. This modifies the check by -1d.

Speed: It would take a couple of hours to make this, and Laura has more time than that, being able to spend half a day. This modifies the check by +1d.

Repurposing: Laura has the tracking module from her vehicle and some other mining equipment that she can dismantle and use. The GM determines that what she has is useful, but it has been processed for another function and work needs to be undone. This modifies the check by -2d.

The total sum of the modifiers based on the Circumstances is -2d.

Laura has 5 points in Communications, and 2 in Electricity and Electronics. She rolls 3d (due to the -2d modifier) and can re-roll up to two of them. She rolls the 3d and gets a 2, a 4 and a 5. After rerolling the two failed dice she gets a 1 and a 5. In total she has achieved two successes (one for each 5). She should lower her expectations. Either the device will do what she needs it to do, but won't last long; or she will end with something worse, but that will work for longer, at the risk that it won't be powerful enough...

REPAIRING A DEVICE

A simple repair can be accomplished with a Tech Ability roll, provided the character's background warrants it. For more complex repairs, you can use the device construction rules described in this section.



MENTAL STRESS

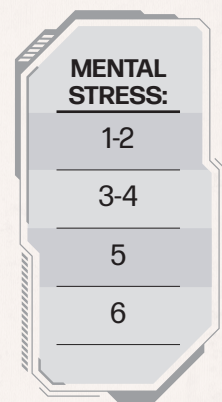
▲ THE MENTAL STRESS A CHARACTER ENDURES AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT CAN ALTER THE WAY THEY INTERACT WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS, EITHER TEMPORARILY, IF THEY RECOVER QUICKLY OR, IN THE LONG TERM, IF THE ACCUMULATION OF STRESS IS NOT BEING PROPERLY MANAGED BY THEIR BRAIN AND THEY BEGIN TO LOSE TOUCH WITH REALITY.

Any stressful situation has the potential to cause Mental Stress to a character. Mechanically, this is represented by rolling a certain number of Stress dice, more dice for more stressful situations. Note that if multiple characters are exposed to the same situation, each player must roll the dice separately, i.e. the same situation causes different impacts on different individuals.

THE MENTAL STRESS TRACK

The character sheet includes a track to record the current amount of Mental Stress the character has accumulated (this track works similarly to the Vitality one).

This track has four boxes labeled 1-2, 3-4, 5, and 6. Roll the Stress dice and check the boxes corresponding to the results obtained (if they are unchecked). If any result



David and Arthur head off to check the air recycling system in their habitat. Upon arrival, they find that someone has ripped out the cables. This is (another!) clear evidence of a sabotage, which the GM determines represents a 2d impact to their Mental Stress (How many hours has it been out of order? They could suffocate any minute!). David rolls a 1 and a 5, marking the two corresponding boxes on his sheet. Arthur rolls a 3 and a 4, which means he has to cross out the same box twice. As we have discussed above, checking the same box a second time leads to a loss of control. Arthur could drop to his knees and sob in despair, muttering “we are lost,” or he could react by trying, obviously in vain, to reconnect all the cables one by one.

rolled matches a box that was already checked (even if it was just checked by the same roll), the character suffers an episode of Loss of Control for a number of minutes equal to the number of duplicated results rolled. Depending on the situation, the GM must decide, or discuss with the player, whether the character spends those minutes incapacitated, screaming or sobbing, running away, or trying to resist or deal with whatever caused the effect. This episode serves as an outlet for the character's brain, so the character can uncheck this box afterwards, leaving it blank.

When the boxes labelled 1-2 and 3-4 are both checked, the character is feeling uneasy and is starting to think about putting some distance between themselves and the situation. If a character with boxes 1-2 and 3-4 already checked is forced to check the box 5 or the box 6 as well, the adrenaline starts to take over and from then on, until they

calm down, their Body checks receive a +1d modifier, and all other checks receive a -1d penalty. If at any point all boxes are checked, the modifiers become +2d/-2d. Having all boxes checked does not mean losing control, it means being on edge. Also, when all the boxes become checked, the PC adds one Trauma point. The details are explained a little further down.

The Mental Stress rules are meant to be used for thrilling and pivotal situations, to add a layer of difficulty and uncertainty. Make good use of them, but do not overburden players with stress checks, this isn't a space horror game after all. Both the perils of Mars, menaces (natural or human!), and violence can provoke stress checks. Choose which ones of those are relevant for the flavour you want your game to have, and stick to them as your stress triggers.

<i>Finding an obviously sabotaged piece of equipment</i>	<i>1d</i>
<i>Seeing a corpse by surprise</i>	<i>1d</i>
<i>Finding a charred corpse</i>	<i>1d</i>
<i>Discovering that a device you rely on has been malfunctioning for some time (for example, your location system has led you to the wrong place)</i>	<i>2d</i>
<i>Waking up immobilized in an unknown environment</i>	<i>2d</i>
<i>Being forced to stop helping an innocent colleague, knowing that it will result in their death</i>	<i>3d</i>
<i>Anticipating that you will not be able to avoid a potentially deadly threat (for example, when the sun's rays are about to hit you and you have no protection)</i>	<i>3d</i>

STRESS STIMULI

Some sample situations and their corresponding Mental Stress impact, for you to use as a guide:

PASSING ON YOUR STRESS

The fact that one member of the group begins to lose control can lead to the rest being affected by their behaviour, even if they have not been directly exposed to the same stimulus.

Each time a character (either another PC or a friendly NPC that is part of the same group in which the PCs are) suffers an episode of Loss of control, the rest of the members of the group who see them out of control and who have not been exposed themselves to the same stimulus (since those would have already made their own Mental Stress rolls), receive a 1d impact to their Mental Stress.

CALMING DOWN

When a character is no longer exposed to a stressful situation (the threat has disappeared, the character has left the area, etc.), they can rest and try to calm down. A short rest (at least 1 hour) allows a check to be made with 4d. Each success achieved in this roll allows the character to remove one check from a box on their Mental Stress track (starting with the highest numbers).

UNDERLYING AND LONG-TERM TRAUMAS

At the end of each game session, each player must roll as many dice as their character has Trauma points. Count how many dice have rolled failures. Ignore any “5” results (these are successes, meaning the brain is able to deal with the stress). Then, for every “6” (double successes) rolled, remove one failed dice from the count. The number of failed dice remaining is the Severity of the Long-Term Trauma the PC develops. Delete as many Trauma points from your sheet as dice you failed the roll with (as before, developing this disorder releases stress on the brain).

We suggest a discussion involving both the GM and the impacted player to decide on a disorder that is consistent with the situation suffered and with the character’s personality and history. They may simply become wary of having to leave a habitat for the outer Mars, or they may begin to develop their own conspiracy theory (“Now it all makes sense”), or they may become paranoid and start making plans against their fellow characters (“And you knew what was going to happen all along, right?”), for example.

If a character develops a disorder and at a later time acquires another, the second disorder may be an exacerbation of the first or a different one that is suffered in parallel. The GM must decide what is more appropriate. If exacerbating the original disorder is preferred, the new Severity will be equal to the greater of the two (the old or the new) plus one.

SEVERITY OF THE DISORDER

1 SPORADIC >

Avoid windows that overlook the Martian landscape.

2 LIGHT >

You need to place your tools in a specific order before using them. If someone does not respect or alter the order, you must stop and re-arrange them in your own way before continuing work.

3 MILD >

You open and close the door twice every time you leave a room.

4 IMPORTANT >

You may not wear or use any yellow piece of clothing or equipment.

5 SEVERE >

You cannot go outside on Mars.

6 DISABLING >

You cannot lose physical contact with your left boot.





COMBAT

▲ THERE ARE TIMES WHEN NEITHER DIPLOMACY NOR WITS CAN PREVENT A CONFRONTATION. WHEN SOMEONE WANTS TO HURT YOU PHYSICALLY, THE COMBAT RULES COME INTO PLAY.

COMBAT TURNS

During a combat, turns become more important. A combat turn usually lasts just a few seconds, with each combatant performing a combat task. Once all the parties involved have acted, a new turn begins and so on until the fight is over.

INITIATIVE TURN

The combatants act in order, based on their Initiative score.

Initiative is the sum of the Body and Combat scores. If a character is to take an option different than attacking, their Initiative is equal to their Body x2.

Landing the first blow has its perks, and there are situations that help you do so. Characters who have firearms at the ready can add +2 to their Initiative. Conversely, those who fight unarmed or with makeshift weapons (objects that are unbalanced or awkwardly shaped, such as a wrench or a drone axle) must subtract -1 from their Initiative.



The chosen maneuver also determines how quickly a character will be able to join the fray. As explained in greater detail below, characters who intend to Damage an opponent add +2 to their Initiative, those hoping to Gain Advantage add +1, and those planning to focus solely on Defending themselves add nothing. In case of a tie, player characters act before NPC.

THE COMBAT SEQUENCE

The combat sequence begins when one character decides to attack another. The characters are ranked in order of their Initiative scores (based on what each player states that their character wants to do) to determine who will go first. When it is a character's turn, if they have not yet acted (in response to the attack by another combatant), and depending on what they said they would do when the Initiative was determined, they may:

- Move up to 21 feet and perform one action, which may or may not be a combat maneuver. They may do this in any order they choose: move and then perform the action, perform the action and then move, or move while performing the action.
- Run. The character concentrates their action on moving in order to go farther. Pass a Physical roll to add 12 feet to the initial 20, plus 3 more for each additional success.

If a character is more than 15 feet away from any opponent when it is their Initiative turn, and they can still act, they can choose to launch a Ranged Attack as their combat action.

If a character is within 21 (unobstructed) feet of any opponent when their Initiative turn comes, and they can still act, they may choose to move toward their target and launch a melee attack as their deliberate action.

A character whose Initiative turn has not yet come up who is targeted by an enemy melee attack (see below), must respond to the aggression and remains engaged with their enemy for the rest of the turn, losing their Initiative turn. (In practical terms, the action of a character who is attacked is focused on defending themselves from the melee attacks received.)

A character involved in a fight who chooses to focus on a task other than fighting (pushing a heavy crate on the enemy's head, close the blast door before they area launched to space...) can only respond to melee attacks with the Defend maneuver. Since they

are more focused on their task than on defending themselves, they suffer the penalty of not being able to reroll any dice (see below), but they can keep trying to accomplish the task when their Initiative turn comes. This penalty applies to them throughout the turn.

RANGED ATTACKS

To determine whether a ranged attack hits, players roll the same number of dice as their Combat score. The difficulty of landing a blow may be subject to penalties depending on the player's movement and the target, the distance, visibility, etc. The details are explained in the complete rulebook, but generally speaking you can apply a bonus of +2d for easy rolls and a penalty of -2d for difficult rolls.

CLOSE COMBAT

When a character launches a melee attack, he chooses a combat maneuver and engages his target, who picks a combat maneuver in response. The outcome is determined on the spot with an opposed Combat roll, without waiting for other Initiative rolls. In other words, a character with a low Initiative score may have a plan of action, but be unable to execute it because they are attacked by an opponent before they can do so, and can only react.

The combat maneuvers are:

- **Damage:** A character who states that they intend to inflict Damage on an opponent get +2 to Initiative. They must choose a specific target for their attack. If the character who chose Damage has not yet acted on his Initiative turn, he attacks the opponent. The target of the attack must immediately decide what action to take (they can also try to damage their attacker, try to gain an advantage, or try to defend themselves).

If a character succeeds in a Damage maneuver, they may make a Damage roll, adding a number of dice equal to the difference in successes by which he won the opponent's roll.

- **Gain Advantage:** Characters who state that they intend to Gain Advantage receive +1 for Initiative. They must choose a specific target to gain advantage over. If, when their Initiative turn comes, the character who has chosen Gain Advantage has not yet acted, they engage with the rival in an opposed Combat roll.

If a character succeeds in a Gain Advantage maneuver, they receive a number of Advantage points equal to the difference they got on the opposed roll. The uses of these Advantage points are described below.

- **Defend:** Characters who chooses to Defend themselves receives no Initiative bonus. A character who Defends may reroll (once only) any dice that did not yield a success in the opposed Combat roll.

If a character who has chosen Defend succeeds, he avoids being hit and, therefore, takes no damage.

USE OF ADVANTAGE POINTS

- ▶ *Gain the Initiative against the same opponent on the next turn.*
- ▶ *Add 1d to the next opposed Combat roll against the same opponent. This should be declared right before the roll is made.*
- ▶ *Allow an ally to add 1d to their opposed Combat roll, if they are also engaged in a melee fight against the same opponent. This should be declared just before the ally makes the roll.*

Once both combatants have chosen their maneuvers, they each roll a number of dice equal to their Combat Ability. If one character has more successes than the other, the result is based on the chosen maneuver, as explained above.

If there is a tie, the combatants block each other and decide what to do next turn.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

A character who has already acted and receives a melee attack can only respond with the Defend maneuver. If this maneuver is their second action of the turn, they receive a penalty of -2d; if it is the third, the penalty is -4d; etc.

DAMAGE

There are two tracks for measuring a character's status: Vitality and Incapacitation. When a player makes a damage roll, the result of each die must be read separately to determine whether they need to mark any boxes in either track.

VITALITY TRACK

This track consists of eight boxes, numbered according to the die result requiring each one to be marked (1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 6). Thus, if a damage roll against a character yields a 1, a 3 and a 5, the victim should mark the 1 box, one of the 3 boxes, and the 5 box. If there are no boxes left to mark for a given number, they can disregard the result (the hit causes no further damage to the target; for example, it lands on an arm that had already been immobilized). Penalty for injuries. When characters take damage, it causes them injuries that affect their concentration and physical activity. The highest unmarked number on a character's Vitality Track determines the maximum number of dice they can roll.

Example: Carla has shot Kieran in the leg. Kieran makes a damage roll using three dice and gets the following result: 5, 6, 6. Kieran thus has to cross out the 5 and the 6 on his Vitality Track. He can disregard the second 6, as there is only one 6 box on the Vitality Track. From now on, Kieran will not be able to roll more than four dice at a time (since 4 is the highest remaining unmarked number on his Vitality Track).

INCAPACITATION TRACK

This track consists of four unnumbered boxes. For each even number in a damage roll, mark off one Incapacitation box, regardless of whether you have also marked a Vitality box. If all the Incapacitation boxes are marked, the character is incapacitated and can no longer participate in the combat. Depending on the story, this could mean they have been knocked out, immobilized, overpowered, etc.

Example: Continuing with the previous example, the damage roll for the bullet was a 5 and two 6s. Kieran has marked a 5 and a 6 on his Vitality Track. He must also mark two boxes on his Incapacitation Track, one for each even result. (In other words, even though he can disregard the second 6 for the purposes of the Vitality Track, he still has to mark an Incapacitation box for it.)



WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THE COREBOOK

In this Quick Start Guide we've outlined the basics of Terraforming Mars RPG system. This should be enough for your first games. However, in the Corebook you'll find advanced game mechanics for resolving your Projects and adding new layers to the game, including:

- **Corporation sheets:** Choose one of the corporations from the original board game or create your own, each with its own interests and resources. Each will give the characters benefits and hindrances.
- **Projects & Challenges:** Full-fledged projects for your characters to overcome, such as the ones you can find on the board game cards, and a guide to creating your own.
- **The everchanging Mars:** Adapt the evolution of the planet to the choices of your gaming group with a system that allows you to represent different environments and biomes.
- **Generational play:** The successes and failures of one generation of player characters will affect those who come after. The future is built on the effort of many.
- **Social & technical crisis:** Most conflicts in Terraforming Mars will be solved with your wits & mind, not with your fists. The new mechanics will keep this kind of crisis exciting without need for violent exchange.
- **Oxygen consumption:** Add a layer of urgency to the crucial moments, making the oxygen in the radiation suits a valuable resource.

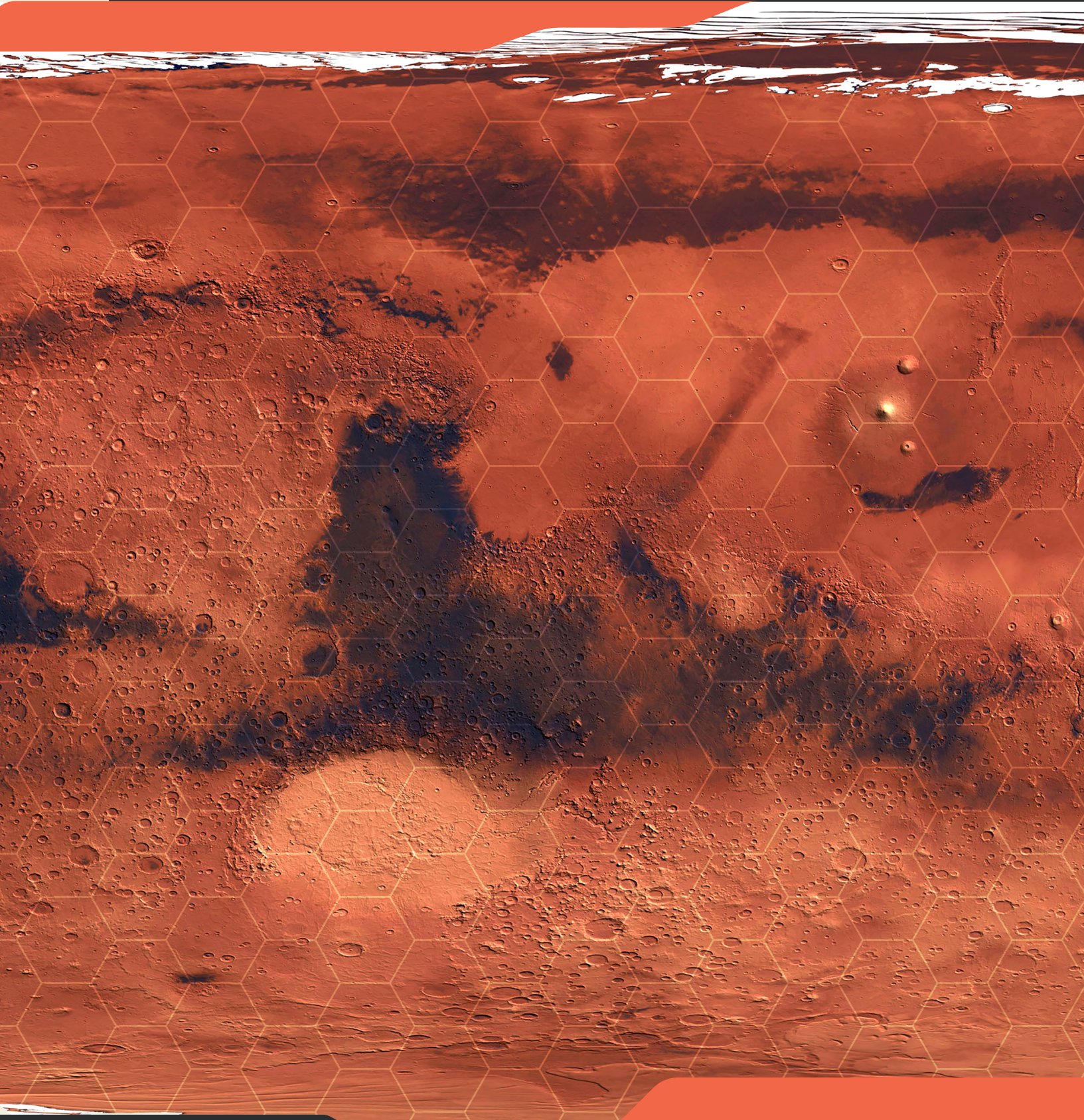
Please feel free to let us know what you would like to see in the game and your experiences if you try this Quickstart. We'd love to hear your thoughts at info@shadowlandsgames.com.



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TERRAFORMING
MARS
THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME

THE AGE OF COL



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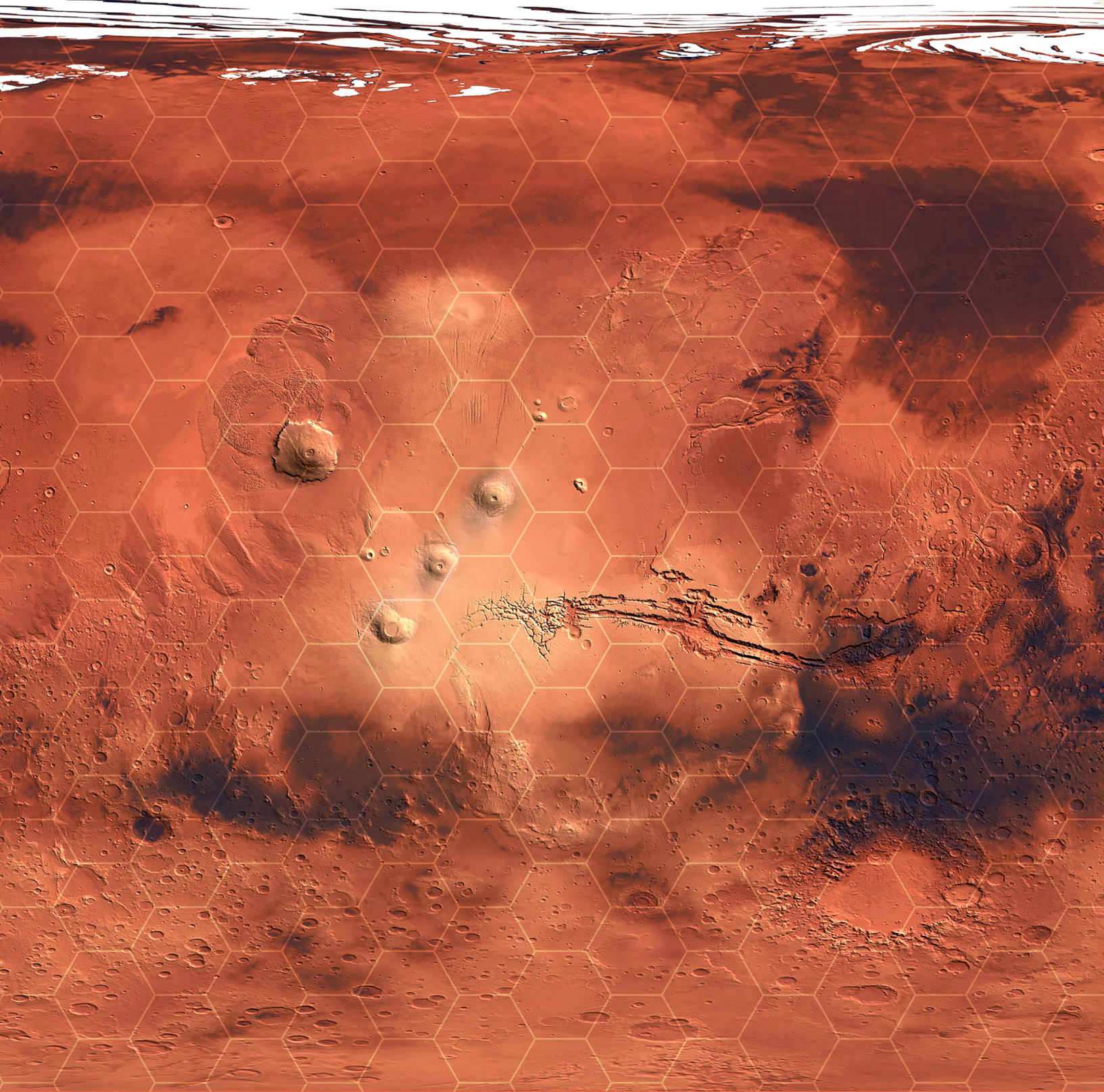
SHAPE MARS FROM RED DESERT TO A NEW HOME

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150 - 400
0-84
4+5





Terraforming was always the wrong term. Mars could never be another Earth, despite the intentions of those who first came here.

We were Martians now, and with each generation Mars was changing us.

Alyse Kim, Mars University, 2514



