

# Space Explorers

Game Rules



A game by  
Yuri Zhuravlev

The conquest of space was one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century. In 1957, the first satellite - named *Sputnik 1* - was launched into orbit. Just four years later, Yuri Gagarin was the first human in space, aboard the spaceship *Vostok 1*.



This game is dedicated to the early space explorers: all the outstanding people who worked to make space travel possible. As Yuri Gagarin said at the moment of his launch: "Let's go!"

## THE GOAL

You are the head of a Research & Development Hub in a Space Research Center, competing with other such Hubs in the spirit of the Golden Age of Astronautics. Your goal is to complete large-scale space projects by gathering the best and brightest minds humanity has to offer.

Thanks to your efforts, satellites, manned spaceships, and orbital stations will be launched into space!

You score Progress points by recruiting Specialists and completing Projects. The game ends when all available Projects are completed, or you have recruited 12 Specialists to your Hub. The player who made the most Progress is the winner!

## COMPONENTS

60 Specialist cards



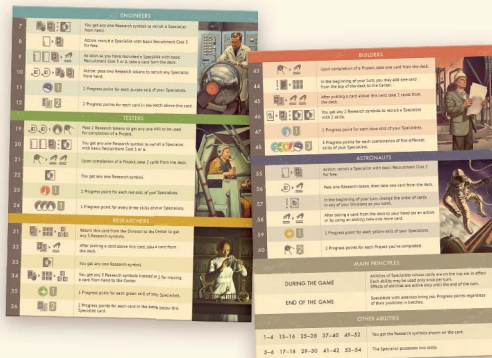
10 Project tiles



4 two-piece Hub boards



4 Player Reference sheets



20 Research tokens



First Player marker



## GAME SETUP

1. Shuffle the Specialist cards and place them face-down in the center of the table to form the Specialist Deck. Reveal the top 6 cards and place them face-up beside the deck to form the Space Research Center.
2. Take Project tiles equal to the number of players plus 2, choosing at random. For example, if there are 3 players, take 5 random Project tiles. Return unused tiles to the game box. Note: Project tiles are double-sided. The recommended way to choose which side to use is to toss each tile into the air and use the side that lands face-up. However, you may use any other method you wish. Put the chosen Projects in a line beside the Specialist deck.
3. Give each player:
  - A Research & Development Hub, with the two pieces connected as shown in the picture.
  - 5 Research tokens, one of each color.
  - A Player Reference sheet.

Place any unused Hubs, Research tokens and Player Reference sheets back in the game box.

4. Deal one card to each player from the Specialist deck to form their starting hand. Players must keep the cards in their hand secret.
5. Give the First Player marker to the player who has been to space most recently. If no-one has ever been into space, then the player who most recently watched or read something about space receives the marker and begins the game. Note: The First Player marker is not passed to other players during the game. Knowing who started is important at game end.



*Example setup for a 3-player game*



## KEY TERMS

**Projects** are the aim of the game: building and launching spacecraft from the historical US and Soviet space programs.

**Skills** of different types are required to complete a Project. The type of Skills required, and how many of each, are marked on each Project with circular icons.



**Specialists** are distinguished Engineers, Testers, Scientists, Builders, and Astronauts, who contribute their Skills to help you complete Projects. The Skills that each Specialist can contribute are marked with circular icons.

The **Space Research Center**, or simply the **Center**, consists of the Specialist cards placed face-up beside the Specialist deck. These are the Specialists currently available for you to recruit to work on Projects.

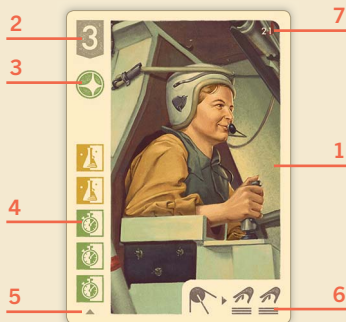
The **Research & Development Hub**, or simply the **Hub**, is a structural element of the space industry that allows you to assemble teams to work on Projects. Each player is in charge of their own Hub, which has five **Divisions**:

- Engineering (blue)
- Testing (green)
- Science (yellow)
- Construction (red)
- Space Flight (purple)

**Research** is the main resource for recruiting Specialists. Specialists are not hired for money — the Government already pays their salary. Instead Specialists are recruited by the promise of research studies to be carried out in the Hub. The Research requirements to recruit a Specialist are marked with square icons.



### PARTS OF A SPECIALIST CARD



1. **Picture** - reflects the primary Skill of the Specialist.
2. **Progress points** - scored by the Specialist at game end. If the Progress score is marked with an asterisk, it means the score depends on some other condition, such as other Specialists employed in your Hub or the number of Projects you've completed.
3. **Skills** - these indicate:
  - what the Specialist contributes to completing a Project, once they are recruited to your Hub;
  - which Divisions of the Hub the Specialist may be assigned to; and
  - how much this Specialist reduces the Recruitment Cost for new Specialists added to the same Division
4. **Recruitment Cost** - shows the Research icons required to recruit the Specialist.
5. **Triangle arrow** - a reminder that the Recruitment Cost is reduced from the bottom up.
6. **Ability** - active while the Specialist card is on top of their Division, or during scoring at game end.
7. **Card number** - you can look up the matching ability number in the reference on pages 12-14 for a detailed description of the Specialist's ability.

## HOW TO PLAY

Starting with the First Player and proceeding clockwise, players take turns to choose one of two actions. When it is your turn, you may take a Specialist card into your hand, or you may recruit a Specialist to your Hub.

You must perform one and only one of these actions on your turn.

### TAKING A SPECIALIST CARD INTO YOUR HAND

On your turn, you may take one Specialist card into your hand:

- by taking a Specialist from the Center, **OR**
- by drawing a card from the Specialist deck.

There is no cost to take a Specialist into your hand.

If you take a card and there are less than 6 Specialists remaining face-up in the Center, reveal the top card of the Specialist deck to fill the vacant place.

### RECRUITING A SPECIALIST TO THE HUB

On your turn, you may recruit a Specialist to your Hub:

- directly from the face-up Specialists in the Center, **OR**
- from your hand.

Take the following steps to recruit the chosen Specialist:

1. Choose the Division of your Hub that the Specialist will join.
2. Determine the Research required to recruit that Specialist.
3. Provide the necessary Research icons, then place the Specialist card into the chosen Division slot on your Hub.

### STEP 1: CHOOSE THE DIVISION

All Specialists possess a Skill in a particular field. Some Specialists possess more than one Skill. These Skills are marked with round icons on the upper left of the card.

A Specialist may only be assigned to a Division that matches the Specialist's Skills. For example, a Tester (a green Skill icon) must be assigned to the Testing Division (the green Hub section).

If the Specialist has Skills in two different areas, you may choose which of those two Divisions the Specialist joins.



*Specialist with 1 Skill*



*Specialist with 2 of the same Skill*



*Specialist with 2 different Skills*

### PARTS OF A PROJECT CARD



1. **Picture** - each illustration shows a real satellite, spaceship, or interplanetary station, one of ten American and ten Soviet spacecraft included in the game.
2. **Progress points** - added to your score if you complete this Project by game end.
3. **Skills** - required to complete the Project.

## STEP 2: DETERMINE THE RECRUITMENT COST

Specialists have a basic **Recruitment Cost**, marked on the lower left of the card with square icons, showing the Research they require.

When you recruit the first Specialist in a Division, you pay the full basic Recruitment Cost, providing Research icons matching all of the icons shown. (See Example 1, page 7.)

Each Specialist added to a Division reduces the cost to recruit the next Specialist into the same Division. (See Example 2, page 7.)

Once a Specialist is added to your Hub, each Skill icon they have that matches their Division will reduce the cost for new recruits, allowing you to ignore one Research icon in the Recruitment Cost.

The following rules apply:

- If a Specialist has two Skills, only the Skills that match the Division are counted toward Recruitment Cost. (See Example 3, page 7.)
- The Recruitment Cost decreases from bottom to top. The triangle arrow in the lower left corner of the card is a reminder of this.
- The Recruitment Cost can be reduced to zero if there are enough Specialists already in that Division with matching Skills.



The basic Recruitment Cost is 2 Research icons



The basic Recruitment Cost is 6 Research icons

## STEP 3. PAY THE REQUIRED RESEARCH AND ADD THE SPECIALIST TO THE DIVISION

Now that you have determined the Recruitment cost, you must provide the required icons to recruit the Specialist.

There are three ways to provide Research icons. You can combine these methods any way you wish to produce the Research icons you need.

1. You can provide the Research icons directly, by giving matching tokens from your supply to the player on your left. *Sharing Research is vital to progress!*
2. You can return one or more Specialists from your hand to the Center (there can be more than 6 Specialists in the Center). Each Specialist returned counts as up to two Research icons of any type you need. These icons do not carry over to the next turn and must be used immediately. *Visiting Specialists share their Research before they leave.*

Note: You cannot return a Specialist to the Center and recruit that same Specialist in the same turn.

3. Specialists have abilities that are active whenever they are the top card in their Division, and some of those abilities provide Research icons that you can use each turn when recruiting a new Specialist. *Everybody contributes to the common cause!*

Note that the order of Research icons on the Specialist card is not important in this step. The required icons can be obtained in any sequence.

After you have provided all the required Research icons, place the newly recruited Specialist on top of the other Specialists already in that Division. Any ability of the new Specialist cannot be used immediately — the new ability becomes available on your next turn.

When a new Specialist is added to a Division, the abilities of the previous Specialists are covered up and no longer available. Only the abilities of Specialists on the top of each Division are active.

## COMPLETING A PROJECT

At the end of your turn, you may complete any Project not already taken by another player. This does not require an action. You can only complete one Project per turn, even if you have enough Skills in your Hub to complete more.

Compare the combined Skills available from all Specialists in your Hub with the Skills required by each Project. If you have Skills that meet or exceed a Project's requirements, you can complete that Project. Take the Project tile and place it beside your Hub for scoring at game end.

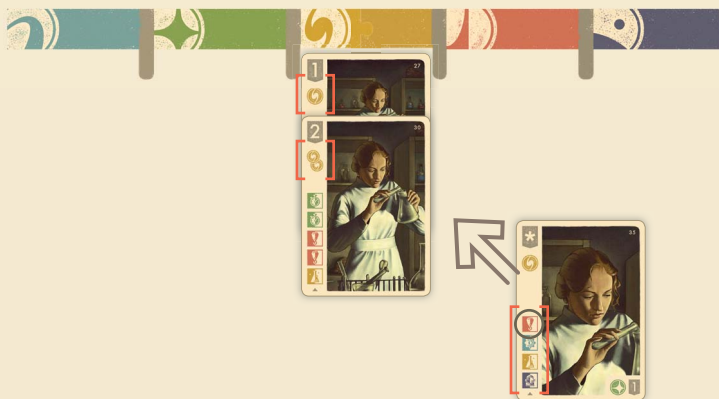
Completing a Project does not use up your Specialists. They remain in your Hub and can use their Skills on the next Project.

**Example 1.**

This is the first Specialist recruited to the Space Flight Division. The player must provide all three required Research icons (circled).

**Example 2.**

Here, Specialists already employed with the Division have three Skill icons matching the Division color. This means the player can ignore the first three Research icons in the basic Recruitment Cost, so the only Research icon still required is the Construction (red) icon (circled).

**Example 3.**

The Specialists in this Division have two Skill icons matching the Division color. The third Skill — Engineering (blue) — does not match the Division color and is not counted. This allows the player to ignore the first two icons in the basic Recruitment Cost, so only the upper three Research icons are required (circled).





Ultimately your Hub may look something like this. Remember that only the abilities of Specialists whose cards are on the top are active.

In this example, the abilities of the Engineer, Builder, and Astronaut are active. The Tester has no ability (but has two skills), while the Researcher's ability scores Progress points at game end.

## END OF GAME

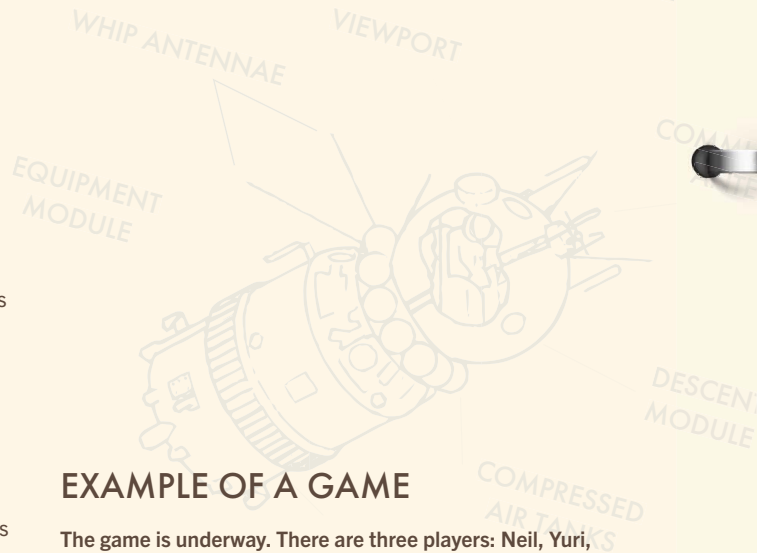
The game enters the last round when all available Projects are completed, or when one player recruits 12 Specialists to their Hub. To allow all players to take the same number of turns, play continues until it reaches the First Player. That player does not take another turn, and the game ends.

## SCORING

Total your Progress points to determine your Hub's contributions to the field of astronautics.

- Count the Progress points marked on your completed Projects.
- Count the Progress points marked on all Specialists in your Hub, whether they are on top of the Division or not.
- Determine the score for Specialists marked with an asterisk in the upper left corner. These abilities score Progress points according to their ability. Scoring abilities are active even if their cards are not on top of their Division. You may find it easier to count the ordinary Progress points first and then add Progress points scored by Specialists with asterisks.
- Do **not** count Specialist cards in your hand.

The player who made the most Progress wins. In case of a tie, the player with the most points from completed Projects wins. If there is still a tie, both players are proclaimed the winners!



## EXAMPLE OF A GAME

The game is underway. There are three players: Neil, Yuri, and Valentina.

The illustrations on the following pages show the current game setup for each player, including their Hubs, the Specialists in the Center (marked A to F), and the five available Projects.





## NEIL: AMBITIOUS PROJECTS!

Neil's turn begins. He has all of the Testing (green) Research tokens. He also has two Science (yellow) Research tokens. In addition, Neil's Specialists bring him the following Research icons each turn: 1 Science (yellow) icon, 2 Construction (red) icons, and 1 Space Flight (purple) icon.

But Neil has no cards in his hand. His Tester's ability will score him 1 Progress point for each 3 Skill icons in his Hub — but only at game end.

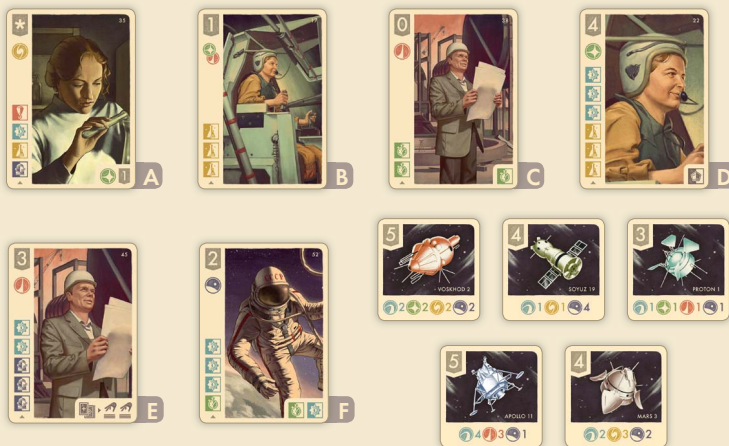
Neil may recruit either a Tester (B) or a Builder (C) from the Center. He picks the Tester (B). That Specialist has two different Skill icons, and may be placed into either the Testing (green) Division where the Recruitment Cost is reduced to two icons, or into the Construction (red) Division where the Recruitment Cost is not reduced and is still three icons. After considering all the pros and cons, Neil chooses the Construction Division.

Now he must provide the Recruitment Cost, three Science (yellow) Research icons. One Science (yellow) icon is provided by an Engineer in the Neil's Hub. Neil provides the two remaining icons by giving two Science (yellow) Research tokens to the next player — Yuri. Then Neil adds the new Tester to the Construction Division and immediately reveals the top card of the Specialist deck to refill the Center up to 6 cards.

At the end of his turn, Neil checks whether he can complete any Projects. Yes, he can! Thanks to the recruitment of a Tester with Tester (green) and Construction (red) Skills, Neil's Hub now has the Skills to complete two Projects: *Voskhod 2* and *Proton 1*.

Only one Project may be completed per turn, so Neil chooses *Voskhod 2* and takes its tile.

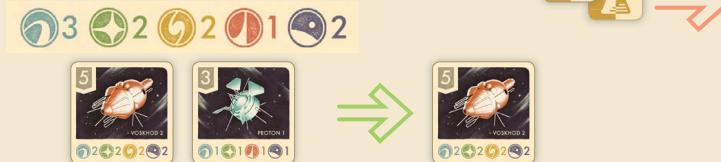
### Neil's Turn: The Center



### Neil's Hub



### Specialists' Skills in Neil's Hub



## YURI: RESEARCH IS THE KEY!

**Yuri's turn begins.** An Engineer card has appeared in the Center, revealed during Neil's turn. Four Projects are still available. Including the two Science (yellow) Research tokens just received from Neil, Yuri has two thirds of all the Research tokens in the game! He also has two Specialist cards in his hand (**H1** and **H2**)

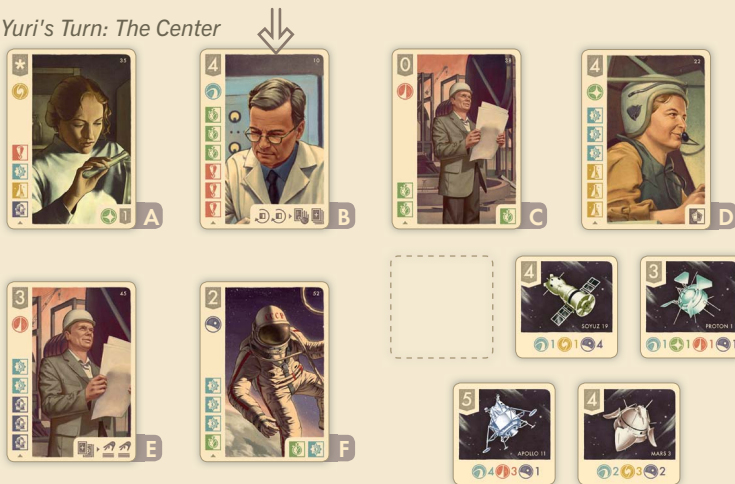
Yuri can easily recruit any Specialist from the Center or his hand. Even the Engineer (**B**) who has recently appeared in the Center is available to him. However, the recruitment of this Engineer would be quite expensive — Yuri would need to return both cards in his hand to the Center to produce the required Research icons.

But Yuri takes a different approach: he decides to keep control of most of the Research tokens for later turns, but he does use one token for his Astronaut's ability. The Astronaut's ability allows him to pass one Research token to draw a Specialist card from the deck. Yuri chooses to give a Construction (red) Research token to the next player, Valentina, and draws a card — his third — another Scientist card (**H3**).

Yuri then takes his action for this turn, and returns the Builder (**H2**) from his hand to the Center to gain two Research icons of his choice. He uses these icons to recruit a Builder from the Center (**B**); this Builder will provide a Testing (green) Research icon starting from the next turn.

Because the Center already has 6 cards, Yuri does not need to reveal a new card to refill it. At the end of Yuri's turn, he still has 2 Scientist cards in his hand.

### Yuri's Turn: The Center



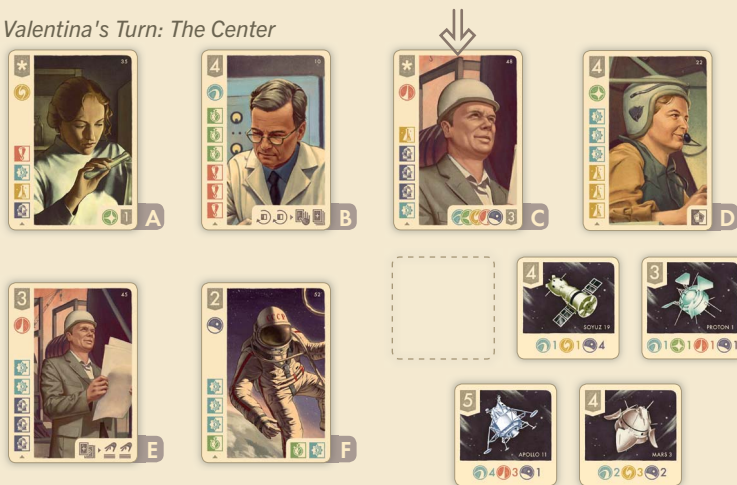
### Yuri's Hub



### Yuri's Hand



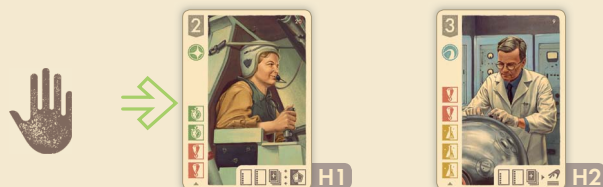
### Valentina's Turn: The Center



### Valentina's Hub



### Valentina's Hand



## VALENTINA: PREPARATION IS THE BEST SOLUTION!

Valentina's turn begins. Valentina has no cards in her hand, and the Specialists in her Hub do not produce extra Research icons. The three Research tokens she has are not enough to recruit a single Specialist from the Center. The situation seems sad... but only at first glance!

Valentina uses her action to draw a card from the deck. Because of her Astronaut's ability, she draws an extra card, taking two cards instead of one: a Tester (H1) and an Engineer (H2).

In the following turns, Valentina expects to use the ability of her Scientist by gaining 3 Research icons instead of the usual two for returning a card from her hand to the Center, and the ability of her Engineer to reduce the Recruitment Cost of new Specialists from her hand by one icon.

Combining these two abilities means that if Valentina recruits a Specialist from her hand, and returns another card to the Center, she will have up to 4 Research icons to pay the Recruitment Cost - all without giving away a single Research token!

For instance, on her next turn she could recruit the Tester (H1) to her Hub from her hand, using her Engineer's ability to reduce the cost by 1 icon, and returning the other card from her hand (H2) to pay the remaining 3 Research icons.

But these are only plans so far...

Now it's Neil's turn again, and he's all set to complete another Project — *Proton 1*.

## SPECIALISTS' ABILITIES

Many Specialists have extra abilities.

Specialist whose cards are marked with an asterisk in their Progress points have abilities that are used during scoring at game end. These apply whether the Specialist is on top of their Division or not.

Other abilities are available during the game, for as long as the Specialist is the top card in their Division. Each turn, you may choose whether to use each ability or not. Each such ability can be used at most once per turn.

Each Specialist card is numbered so you can look up a detailed explanation of their ability. A simplified listing is also available on the Player Reference sheet.

MERCURY CAPSULE

ANTENNA  
CANISTER

RECOVERY  
COMPARTMENT

SHINGLE

## ENGINEERS

*"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."*

*Neil Alden Armstrong*

- 1-4 The Specialist provides extra Research icons as shown, to use when recruiting a new Specialist to any Division. These are not used up; they are available each turn.
- 5-6 The Specialist has two Skills.
  - 7 The Specialist provides one extra Research icon of any type you choose, to use when recruiting a new Specialist from your hand only. This is not used up; you may choose a different type each turn.
  - 8 Instead of your usual action, you may recruit a Specialist with a basic Recruitment Cost of exactly 3 Research icons for free.
  - 9 After recruiting a Specialist with basic Recruitment Cost 5 or 6, draw a card from the Specialist deck.
  - 10 Instead of your usual action, you may pass two Research tokens of any type to the next player and immediately recruit any Specialist from your hand only, regardless of their cost.
  - 11 At game end, score 1 Progress point for each Space Flight (purple) Skill icon in your Hub.
  - 12 At game end, score 2 Progress points for each Specialist placed on top of this Specialist in the same Division.



## TESTERS

*"Once you've been in space, you appreciate how small and fragile the Earth is."*

*Valentina V. Tereshkova*

- 13-16** The Specialist provides extra Research icons as shown, to use when recruiting a new Specialist to any Division. These are not used up; they are available each turn.
- 17-18** The Specialist has two Skills.
- 19** At the end of your turn, you may pass two Research tokens of any type to the next player in order to gain one Skill icon of any type you require to complete a Project.
- 20** The Specialist provides one extra Research icon of any type you choose, to use when recruiting a new Specialist with basic Recruitment Cost 5 or 6.
- 21** Each time you complete a Project, draw two cards from the Specialist deck.
- 22** The Specialist provides one extra Research icon of any type you choose, to use when recruiting a new Specialist. This is not used up; you may choose a different type each turn.
- 23** At game end, score 1 Progress point for each Construction (red) Skill icon in your Hub.
- 24** At game end, count the number of Skill icons of all types in your Hub. Score 1 Progress point for every three Skill icons.



## SCIENTISTS

*"It is difficult to say what is impossible, for the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and the reality of tomorrow."*

*Robert H. Goddard*

- 25-28** The Specialist provides extra Research icons as shown, to use when recruiting a new Specialist to any Division. These are not used up; they are available each turn.
- 29-30** The Specialist has two Skills.
- 31** You may return this Specialist from your Hub to the Center to get any three Research icons when recruiting a new Specialist. Note: if you recruit that Specialist to the same Division, the Recruitment Cost does not increase because it has already been determined in the previous step.
- 32** When a new Specialist is placed directly on top of this one in your Hub, draw a card from the Specialist deck. This ability normally occurs only once during the game.
- 33** The Specialist provides one extra Research icon of any type you choose, to use when recruiting a new Specialist. This is not used up; you may choose a different type each turn.
- 34** When you return a Specialist card from your hand to the Center, you produce three Research icons of any type instead of the usual two.
- 35** At game end, score 1 Progress point for each Tester (green) Skill icon in your Hub.
- 36** At game end, score 2 Progress points for each Specialist placed below this Specialist in the same Division.

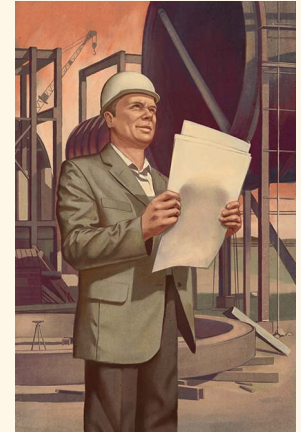


## BUILDERS

*"The time will come when a spacecraft carrying human beings will leave the earth ... the way to the stars is open."*

*Sergei P. Korolev*

- 37-40 The Specialist provides extra Research icons as shown, to use when recruiting a new Specialist to any Division. These are not used up; they are available each turn.
- 41-42 The Specialist has two Skills.
  - 43 Every time you complete a Project, draw one card from the Specialist deck.
  - 44 At the start of your turn, you may reveal the top card of the Specialist deck and add it to the Center. The Center can have more than 6 cards.
  - 45 When a new Specialist is placed directly on top of this one in your Hub, draw two cards from the Specialist deck. This ability normally occurs only once during the game.
  - 46 The Specialist provides two extra Research icons of any types you choose, to use when recruiting a new Specialist who has two Skills.
  - 47 At game end, score 1 Progress point for each Engineering (blue) Skill icon in your Hub.
  - 48 At game end, count the number of complete sets of all 5 types of Skill icons in your Hub (Engineering, Testing, Research, Construction, Space Flight) . Score 3 Progress points for each complete set of 5 different Skill icons.



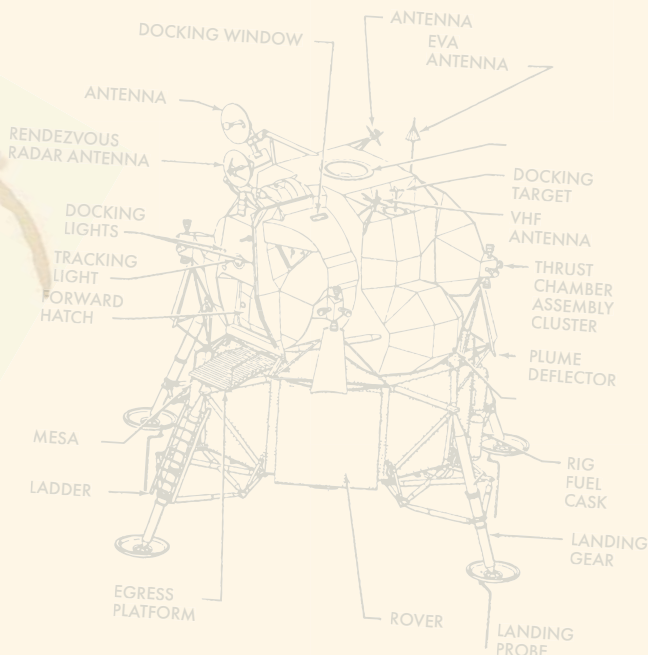
## ASTRONAUTS

*"To be the first to enter the cosmos, to engage, single-handed, in an unprecedented duel with nature — could one dream of anything more?"*

*Yuri A. Gagarin*

- 49-52 The Specialist provides extra Research icons as shown, to use when recruiting a new Specialist to any Division. These are not used up; they are available each turn.
- 53-54 The Specialist has two Skills.
  - 55 Instead of your usual action, you may recruit a Specialist with basic Recruitment Cost of exactly 2 Research icons for free.
  - 56 At any time during your turn, you may pass one Research token of any type to the next player to draw one card from the Specialist deck.
  - 57 At the start of your turn, you may change the order of Specialists in any one Division of your Hub, making a different Specialist the top card in that Division.
  - 58 Whenever you draw a number of cards from the Specialist deck, draw one extra card. Remember that abilities may be used only once per turn!
  - 59 At game end, score 1 Progress point for each Science (yellow) Skill icon in your Hub.
  - 60 At game end, score 2 extra Progress points for each Project you have completed.





## GAME CREDITS

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Space Explorers has been developed jointly with Crowd Games and Moroz Publishing.



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All portraits are based on composite characters. Any resemblance to real characters is purely coincidental.

## ICONS ON SPECIALIST CARDS



Any Research symbol.



Any Specialist card.



Specialist card whose base Recruitment Cost is equal to the number of Research icons shown.



Specialist card with two Skills.



Specialist recruited to a Division.



This Specialist card.



A Division of your Hub.



A Specialist card in your hand.



Draw a Specialist card from the deck.



Specialist cards in the Center.



Any Project.



Pass one Research token to the next player clockwise.



Change the order of Specialists in one Division of your Hub as you choose.



This Specialist's ability can only be used at the beginning of your turn.



Any skill.



Progress points you gain at game end.

## PLAYER'S TURN

1. Perform one of the two actions:
  - Take a Specialist card from the Center or from the top of the deck into your hand; or
  - Recruit a Specialist from the Center or from your hand to your Hub.
2. At the end of your turn, complete one Project if the combined skills of all Specialists in your Hub meet the Project's requirements.

## RECRUITING A SPECIALIST

1. Choose a Division of your Hub matching the Specialist's skills.
2. Count the number of skill icons on Specialists already in the Division that match with that Division, and reduce the Recruitment Cost by that number of icons. The Recruitment Cost decreases from bottom to top, as shown by the triangle arrow.
3. Provide the remaining Research icons required, using these three methods:
  - Pass matching Research tokens to the next player;
  - Return one or more Specialist cards from hand to the Center for any two Research icons each.
  - Use abilities of Specialists. Some specialists produce Research icons when their ability is active (i.e. on top of their Division).
4. Place the newly-recruited Specialist on top of the Specialists already in that Division.

## END OF GAME

- 12 Specialists have been recruited by one of the players;
- OR**
- All the Projects have been completed.

Play continues until it reaches the First Player, who does not take another turn. Total each player's Progress points to determine the winner.