

DISPEL CONFUSION

STAR FRONTIERS™

SCIENCE FICTION ROLE-PLAYING GAME

SFQ: Why can't Level 1 Pilots fly starships within a system? According to the Pilot Certification Table (KH page 24), a Level 1 Pilot can fly system ships of all sizes. Is there a difference between flying a system ship and flying a starship within a system?

SFA: Yes. Starships are radically different in design, propulsion, and equipment from system ships. They do not suddenly shed all their complex machinery when they enter a star system. Whether the starship is going on an intergalactic voyage or just a spin around the solar system, it still takes an experienced pilot to get it out of the docking bay.

SFQ: Does an Engineer's Toolbox (KH page 30) come with a Techkit?

SFA: Yes, the basic Techkit is included in addition to the other specialized equipment.

SFQ: With a sick bay, a medic gains +20% on all Success Rates (AD, page 90). How much does a spaceship sick bay cost?

SFA: For basic medical facilities capable of treating most wounds, infections, common diseases and poisons, the sick bay will require 6 square meters of space and 8,000 Credits per patient to be accommodated. This includes bed, monitoring devices, and 10 times the amount of each drug found in a standard medkit, plus computer facilities able to accommodate a level 3 medical treatment job maxiprogram. A basic sick bay allows the medic to gain the bonus for treating wounds and infections, but not for other specialized medical skills.

More elaborate facilities may include a separate laboratory for analyzing new disease organisms and developing new drugs and anti-toxins. A laboratory costs 100,000 Credits and includes equipment and maxiprograms for analysis, diagnosis, and testing. A sick bay with a laboratory allows the medic to gain the bonus for diagnosis and for treatment of disease, poison, and radiation.

Larger starships and space stations are normally equipped with a surgical unit as well. Surgical facilities cost an additional 100,000 credits and include surgical equipment, plus specialized level 6 life support and medical treatment maxiprograms. The surgical unit will allow the medic to gain the stated bonus for surgery and forensic medicine.

SFQ: How is the pay/day determined for a character with two skills that pay an equal amount? For example, according to the pay/day table (AD, page 60) a Level 3 Robotist/Level 2 Medic could be paid

100 Cr (80 + 20) or 110 Cr (30 + 80), depending upon which skill was considered full rate.

SFA: If the character is hired for a job where one of the skills is critical, that skill should be paid at full rate. Otherwise, the higher level skill is paid at full rate, and the lower level one at an additional +10/level/day, as given. Therefore, your example character would receive (80 + 20) = 100 Credits/day.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

ROLE-PLAYING GAME

ADQ: When a thief successfully sneaks up to a victim and backstabs, should there not also be a surprise roll? As the thief truly did surprise the opponent, and other character classes in this situation would have the chance to attack in each surprise segment gained, why not the thief? Or is maximum surprise assumed — modified by dexterity?

ADA: The degree of surprise is not assumed. At the first confrontation, the thief gains the backstab bonuses (+4 "to hit" and multiplied damage) only if a standard roll indicates surprise. If the victim is not surprised, only the +2 bonus "to hit" from behind applies to the backstab attempt, and multiple damage is disallowed, since it is contingent on surprise. Assuming surprise, multiple attacks may be possible (as per normal surprise rules); if so, the +4 "to hit" bonus applies for all such attacks, but only the first gains the multiplier, as the victim who has been hit once does not remain surprised per se. Another backstab attempt against the same victim may be made by a different thief, or by the same thief if he or she disengages, departs, and successfully gains surprise upon returning. Surprise is not possible if the victim is aware of the thief's presence and position.

ADQ: If a half-orc with a dexterity of 12-14 is limited to 8th-level as a thief, why can that same character advance up to 15th-level in the assassin class and thereby gain the same abilities as a 13th-level thief? It seems that no evil half-orc should bother being a thief, since he can get more complete thief training as an assassin, plus the assassin abilities as well.

ADA: That assessment is correct; a smart evil half-orc will nearly always choose the assassin path over straight thievery. The orcish race is vicious by nature, and that

tendency is reflected in the career paths available to half-orcs.

But life's a lot tougher for an assassin than for a thief. The latter class is respected and tolerated (or even encouraged) by adventurers, and possibly even rulers; the former, however, is usually despised by all.

ADQ: Why do magic-users seem to be more attuned to the elements (at a medium level) than druids? Magic-users as low as 9th-level can conjure any of the four "most common" elementals, assuming that they have the spell, whereas druids must wait until they reach 11th-level to conjure fire elementals, and 12th-level to conjure earth elementals. Even though the druid may control the summoned elemental with basically no chance of failure, it seems that the druid should have more power over elemental-summoning than the magic-user. The magic-user is, in my opinion, one of the strongest of the player character classes, and mages do not need any druidical powers.

ADA: Druids are attuned to nature, which is the perfect blending of all four elements. It is against their basic nature to bring one element into dominance over the others; that creates imbalance. Magic-users, on the other hand, may be adept at conjuring. Those who are make careful studies of other planes, including elemental planes, whereas druids study only the Prime Material Plane.

Note also that druids gain the cooperation of elementals, but magic-users must coerce the poor creatures, and thus run the ever-present risk of losing control and being attacked by their conjurations.

ADQ: The description of the 9th-level magic-user spell *prismatic sphere* in the *Players Handbook* specifies that the seventh sphere confers force field protection. Is this protection akin to a wall of force? If so, the seventh sphere is equal to all six former spheres put together, and the magic-user could not cast spells out of it. This makes the *prismatic sphere* spell an expensive delay only for the magic-user, and leaves the mage's comrades out in the cold.

ADA: No, the force field is NOT a wall of force. It is exactly as the spell description states — a barrier which sends anyone trying to penetrate it to another plane unless a save vs. spells is made. If the save is successful, the attacker may pass through it to the mage. Note, however, that said attacker is once again subject to all the effects on his way out, and must make a new save vs. that effect and each of the others for which one is required to escape.

There is nothing in the spell description to indicate that the creator of the *sphere* cannot cast spells out of it. Indeed, the caster may pass through the sphere with no ill effects, and his or her spells can as well.