

Organization

M.A.R.S.

By Chris Graham

Disclaimer

While the designer of this game wholeheartedly agrees with the principles of Black Magic and Devil Worship, he feels that such things should not be practiced during roleplaying sessions.

Ignorant people who wrongly associate roleplaying with these and similar morally objectionable concepts should be reassured that this game will not in any way encourage young persons to perform satanic rituals or participate in mass suicides.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Growing up on Mars was not as bad as you make it out to be. When you think back over the problems your family had they seem terrible, but back then you were just too young to know that life could be any different. As you grew older the hardships began to have a greater effect on you, you began to understand the realities of life's torment, the intricacies of political concepts became easier to comprehend, far removed as you were from the idealized image of the world as seen by those with a higher standard of living.

The system of always putting oneself before all else bred despite in your mind, a hatred for those better off than yourself that gushed through your veins like acid, burning away your faith in fellow man until there was nothing left. It was then that you experienced the real hard times, the world throwing everything it had at you, it's sorrows and regrets, every time that you saw corruption and decay at work, every time injustice ran rampant across the livelihood of an innocent man, another nail penetrated the depths of your soul.

You've always been familiar with the actions of the underground terrorist group known as the 'Organization'. Like many people you supported their cause, but not their methods. When they contacted you your feelings were mixed: Fear and worry were foremost but that underlying hint of excitement overruled all else, and, provoked in part by the misery of your then present condition, you happily joined up with them.

Your newfound friends and allies completely changed your position, and your view of the world. For a time you were finally free from the cares that had overburdened you and brought your life to its knees, but now the Organization wants to be repaid for taking you in. You have vowed to dedicate yourself to the cause that your colleagues follow, but the strength of that vow will soon be tested.

To combat the pondering, archaic system that rules the lives of the population methods of extreme violence are used. People's lives will be torn apart by the brutal actions that are supposedly for their own good. Coming to terms with that will be the greatest test.

What is the Organization?

The Organization is an illegal association committed to the downfall of the present government and the institution of a new one devoted to Organization ideals. The power it wields is great, due to the support it receives in some areas of the public. Still, most of its operations are necessarily covert. The groups and individuals that control the vast majority of political and governmental power can be ruthless in their attempts to retain their dominion. That is why the Organization must be equally ruthless.

The original name for the Organization, one that is still used in areas high up in the Organization's hierarchical structure, is M.A.R.S. or Mars, an acronym for Martian, Anti-Republican Soldiers, the Republican government of the western colonies being allegedly responsible for the troubles throughout the Colonies' political and social system. The government stolidly refuses to admit the existence of such troubles.

Roleplaying

A roleplaying game (**RPG**) allows you to take on the role of a character participating in a fictional adventure. The Gamemaster (or **GM**), determines the nature of the adventure as well as playing the part of the other characters that you interact with.

A board, counters and figures are all unnecessary to the playing of an **RPG** as it is played verbally, the **GM** describing a situation for you to see in your head and you, the player, describing your actions and reactions to what is happening in the game.

An important point about roleplaying is that the players cooperate with each other to reach a common goal, rather than compete with each other. The players should learn to rely on each other and work together in a cohesive group.

Before play begins, one person must be chosen as the Gamemaster, usually the person who has the greatest understanding of the rules and can help to teach the others. The **GM** is the coordinator of each game session. He chooses and creates scenarios to run and has the task of controlling characters that are not being played by the other players. Such characters are called Non-Player Characters (**NPCs**). Likewise, the central characters to the game, controlled by the players are Player Characters (**PCs**).

The rules presented here are designed to let you realistically and enjoyably operate your characters in the Game-world provided.

Game Materials

To play the game detailed in these rules you will need upwards of two people, photocopies of the character sheets on which the details of each Player Character will be stored and a set of polyhedral dice.

Dice: Each die is known by a **D** followed by a digit denoting the number of sides on that die, thus a ten-sided die is known as a **D10**. (Note that the zero on a ten-sided die is counted as a ten). A number before the die notation indicates a die to be thrown a certain number of times and the results added. Also, a fixed number may be added or subtracted onto the die result, denoted by a + or a - sign after the die code. For example, **2D10+5** would generate a random digit between seven and twenty-five.

Another important die roll is the **D100**. This is generated by making two consecutive **D10** rolls, the first generating the 'tens' digit and the second generating the 'units'. Rolls of seven and two, therefore would count as seventy-two, and rolls of zero and eight would merely count as an eight. It is important that you note that two zeros count as a roll of a hundred, not nought.

Character Objectives in Organization M.A.R.S.

Most of the roleplaying in Organization MARS is done when the people controlling activities within the Organization send the players on a mission. Characters will wish to succeed in these missions if they want to rise in the ranks of the Organization and further the cause for which the Organization fights.

The Organization itself has a strong hierarchical structure that is divided up many ways. Firstly, it is divided into sections controlling the operations in each region of the colony. Within each section there are several squads, each specializing in certain of those operations, such as Counter-Intelligence, and the placement of explosives. Lastly, within each squad are a number of groups, each containing a small number of people who work together in their activities. The players will work as a group such as this.

Groups range wildly in size, and not all operatives work in groups. However most people within the Organization like about three or four people to back them up when things go wrong.

Operations of the kind that the characters will become involved in will likely contain a high degree of danger. To combat this danger the characters will be given a great degree of power compared to the ordinary citizen. They will receive highly illegal armaments and training in how to use them. Abuse of this power is frowned upon by the Organization, however, and it may be seen as a betrayal of the Organization's standards. Demotion could result or, in extreme cases, expulsion from the Organization; and no one ever leaves the Organization alive.

Characters may have varied objectives. An individual who is highly dedicated to the Cause may wish to further his career in the Organization so that he can help lead the people to freedom. Less dedicated characters may only be in the Organization for personal profit or may regret their past mistakes and wish to try and leave the Organization quietly, without being executed as a traitor to the Cause.

Other, miscellaneous objectives include the accumulation of personal property and weapons for protection purposes or for greed, the improvement of skills and talents that the character has, and the avoidance of police or military forces as capture would mean immediate interrogation and subsequent extermination. True, the dangers that characters will face are many, but the prospective rewards are many.

The Colonies

Under a multitude of gigantic, pressurized domes live millions of people in cities little different from the ones we live in today. The year is 2225, but many things have happened in the previous two centuries to ensure little improvement of man's way of life. When the Western and Eastern Colonies decided to each instigate their independence plans, each dome with a regional government whose operations are only partially controlled by the two central administrative bodies of West and East, there followed a great technology lapse. All funding from Earth-bound authorities was withdrawn; all remaining government resources were needed to ensure survival of the Colonies.

Mars missed many technological advances, advances that were later lost in war. Communications between Earth and the Colonies were difficult. The distance between the two, and the travel limitations due to gravitational considerations, (the weakened bone structure of a life-time Mars inhabitant making him unable to survive on Earth without support), caused

profound social differences to emerge.

The urbanization of the Colonies was rapid, although only in strictly supervised areas, the artificial eco-system of Mars being somewhat more fragile than that of Earth. However, following the reduction in luxuries that the withdrawal of outside support caused there was a period of general social decline. Corruption in areas of public trust was inevitable.

There are nineteen domes that make up the Colonies, eleven of which make up the Western Colonies, originally founded by the Earth organization, NATO. The Western Colonies are still sometimes known by their former name of the United NATO Colonies, or U.N.C. Four more domes make up a more tenuous alliance, that of the E.C.U. or Eastern Colonial Union.

The remaining four domes, substantially smaller than the rest make up what are known as the Outlandish Colonies. This, older area was abandoned long ago. The reason for this is not publicly known. Nowadays the four domes contain wasteland, all that live there are outcasts, people who have fled the oppression of the main colonies. Criminals and revolutionaries, and all manner of political exiles are also put there. Most citizens of Mars have no idea of what happens in the Outlandish Colonies, and have no wish to know.

The Organization wants a radical change in the political system. The governments cannot be fought on their own terms. Petitions and campaigns have no effect, politics is controlled by money, and the big businessmen like things the way they are. Violent means is the only means remaining. When all enemies of the Cause are destroyed or subverted, then a new, better system can be built on the remains of the old.

This is what the Organization stands for!

2. CHARACTER GENERATION

Now that you've read the introduction you must be wondering how to play the game. Well, the most important element of any roleplaying game is your character. So that you can properly get into the role given to you, adequate information about your character is required.

You will be given a **character sheet**, a piece of paper on which to record your character's attributes, skills, equipment and relevant personal information. As your character progresses over time he will improve his abilities and acquire more items. All of this will be written down (in pencil) on the character sheet.

Before going into details of various character statistics you should first choose a name for him. Decide whether you wish to play a male or female character and then write down what age you want him to be. An age between 20 and 25 is suggested but it is your choice. Don't worry if you can't decide on a name, you can always come back to that at the end.

Attributes

Attributes are the basic characteristics that define the capabilities of your character. They are divided into 5 physical attributes and 3 mental attributes. Each attribute is given a number that represents your character's native aptitude in each area. This number ranges between 2 and 12, with an average of 7. The upper limit can be overcome with the effects of **Specialist Field** bonuses, or with the use of drugs or cybernetics to artificially augment these attributes.

Physical: These describe your character's capacities when relating to actions of a physical nature. All physical attributes are rolled on **2D6**.

Strength (STR): This is a measure of a character's muscle power. It reflects how much someone can lift or carry.

Endurance (END): Endurance represents the stamina of a character, and also his vigour and tenacity in a traumatic situation.

Dexterity (DEX): This attribute measures the coordination and aptitude for tasks that require manual dexterity that a character has.

Agility (AGL): The attribute of agility tells you how nimble and supple your character is. It also gauges a character's sense of balance.

Reactions (RCT): A measure of reflex speed and how quick off the mark a character is.

Physical attributes may be improved with training combined with the use of **Improvement Points**.

Mental: When performing actions relating to a person's mental capacities, these attributes are used.

Intelligence (INT): How well a character remembers, learns and evaluates a situation. A measure of brainpower. Rolled on **2D6**.

Dedication (DDC): This measures the commitment of a person to his primary motivations. In the case of the Player Characters it is mainly used as a measure of their commitment to the Organization and the Cause. Dedication is rolled on **2D6**.

Education (EDC): This is a measure of the general knowledge that a character has picked up through learning in educational establishments and through dealing with people in the outside world. This influences initial skill levels.

Whilst rated the same way as the other attributes, Education is rolled differently. Roll a **D4** and add to this one third of your **INT** score and also one third of your **DDC**. Any fractions are ignored.

Mental attributes may not be improved by any means once play has begun.

Rolling against attribute scores

An attribute success roll is the only kind of roll where the type of die that you roll can vary. When performing an action the **GM** will sometimes call upon you for a roll against the score of an attribute related to that action. Depending on the **GMs** decision as to how hard the task is you will have to roll a **D10**, **D12**, or a **D20**. If the die roll is **less than or equal to** the appropriate attribute score then you have succeeded. Otherwise you have failed in your attempt and must suffer the consequences.

Combat Skills

These are skills that your character has acquired that relate to combat. They are of particular importance because the life of your character will often depend on them. Combat Skills are rated on a score of one to a hundred. Each of them has a fixed starting level called the base.

Sidearm: Your character's skill in using pistols and similar, easily portable weapons. The base level for this skill is **40**.

Light Weapon: This refers to a character's facility for using rifles, submachineguns, shotguns and other medium-sized weapons. The base for Light Weapon is **20**.

Heavy Weapon: With a base of **10**, this skill indicates the amount of proficiency that a character has in using machineguns, rocket launchers and an assortment of other weapons of power.

Melee: This describes a character's aptitude at fighting hand to hand, whether armed with close-combat weapons or when fighting unarmed. The base for this skill is your character's **RCT multiplied by 3.**

Thrown Weapon: If your character has a high Thrown Weapon skill then he is familiar with the use of any kind of weapon that is used through throwing, including knives and grenades. This skill has a base of **20.**

Using Combat Skills

Combat skills are all rolled on a **D100.** A die result less than or equal to your skill indicates a success. With a particularly difficult or simple combat task the **GM** will give you a modifier to be used when rolling for that action. This is a number added to or taken away from your normal skill score to make it harder or easier to achieve success. More detail on Combat Skill modifiers is found in the Combat chapter.

General Skills

Other skills, unrelated to combat are known as General Skills. These are each rated from one to ten. Like Combat Skills each of them has a fixed base that the skills start at. This is either a number from one to three or a quarter your character's rating in an associated attribute. All fractions are dropped.

More details on skills and their usage is found in the Skills chapter.

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Base</u>
Acrobatics	AGL/4
Computer	INT/4
Disguise	2
Drive	3
Electronics	DEX/4
First Aid	3
Linguistics	INT/4
Mechanics	DEX/4
Pilot Helicopter	1
Pilot Plane	1
Pilot Spacecraft	1
Security	2
Stealth	AGL/4
Surveillance	2

Using General Skills

When rolling against General Skill scores a **D10** is used. As with Combat Skills, a modifier is added or subtracted from a character's skill level to alter the ease of success. Less than or equal to the modified skill score is required.

Special Talents

If a skill of either kind reaches a certain level, a Special Talent may be chosen. This is a unique bonus that confers an expertise that Non-Player Characters cannot have. (An exception to this is when an **NPC** must have a distinct talent for plot purposes).

Combat Skills gain your character Special Talents when they reach a score of **70** or over. Additional Talents are gained when that skill subsequently reaches **80, 90** and **100** points.

In the case of General Skills, Special Talents are awarded at level **7** and later at level **10**. An extra one can also be bought with improvement points once the skill already has a score of **10**.

Special Talents are listed in the next chapter.

Specialist Fields

Every character has a field of expertise that reflects the past experiences of that character and any training he received prior to the beginning of play. This training may have been received through the Organization, through ordinary employment, or from a variety of other means.

A character has points added to skills, and in some cases attributes, that are connected to his Specialist Field to simulate the effects of the training and experience that he has obtained. Also, the Specialist Field that you choose determines the amount of credits (creds), the unit of currency used in the Colonies, that your character starts with.

Choose one field from the following list and add the appropriate amounts onto the skills and attributes specified. Write the specified number of credits in the space provided on the character sheet.

Assassination

+**2D10** Sidearm, +**2D10** Light Weapon, +**2D10** Thrown Weapon;

+**1** Disguise, +**2** Security, +**2** Stealth.

CREDS: 100

Computing

+**5** Computer, +**3** Electronics, +**2** Linguistics, +**1** Mechanics.

CREDS: 250

Demolition

+**1** Disguise, +**5** Electronics, +**2** Mechanics, +**3** Security, +**1** Stealth.

CREDS: 100

Driving

+**1** Computer, +**4** Drive, +**2** Electronics, +**1** Linguistics, +**3** Mechanics, +**1** Pilot Spacecraft.

CREDS: 100

Engineering

+2 Computing, +2 Drive, +3 Electronics, +5 Mechanics, +1 Pilot Helicopter, +1 Pilot Plane, +2 Pilot Spacecraft.

CREDS: 120

Guarding

+2D10 Sidearm, +2D10 Light Weapon, +D10 Melee;
+1 First Aid, +1 Linguistics, +2 Surveillance.

CREDS: 150

Infiltration

+3 Disguise, +4 Security, +4 Stealth.

CREDS: 100

Intelligence

+2 Disguise, +3 Linguistics, +2 Security, +2 Stealth, +3 Surveillance.

CREDS: 100

Martial Arts

+1 AGL, +2 RCT;
+2D10+20 Melee, +2D10 Thrown Weapon;
+2 Acrobatics, +1 Stealth.

CREDS: 20

Medics

+1 END;
+1 Computer, +1 Drive, +1 Electronics, +4 First Aid, +1 Linguistics, +1 Pilot Helicopter.

CREDS: 200

Military

+1 END;
+D10 Sidearm, +2D10+20 Light Weapon, +2D10+20 Heavy Weapon, +D10 Melee; +1 Surveillance.

CREDS: 100

Spacecraft

+3 Computer, +3 Electronics, +3 Mechanics, +1 Pilot Helicopter, +1 Pilot Plane, +5 Pilot Spacecraft.

CREDS: 120

Survival

+1 END;
+3D10 Light Weapon;
+2 First Aid, +1 Mechanics, +1 Stealth, +1 Surveillance.

CREDS: 100

Translation

+1 EDC;

+2 Computer, +6 Linguistics.

CREDS: 300

Improvement points

Improvement points are a way of rewarding Player Characters for performance in adventures. You can use these points to improve any skill, and selected attributes. Additionally, you receive **EDC multiplied by 10** improvement points when your character is being created, to distribute as you see fit.

It takes **60** IPs to improve a **Combat Skill**. After spending this amount you can then add **D6+4** points onto that skill. The three Shooting Skills, Sidearm, Light Weapon and Heavy Weapon are linked to a greater degree than any other skills. It is because of this that whenever one of these skills is improved, **the other two improve by half of that amount**, with fractions rounded down. Note that this rule only applies to increases made using improvement points; bonuses to Combat Skills through Specialist field experience do not use this.

To increase a **General Skill** a variable number of **IPs** are needed. Increments are made one level at a time. The amount needed equals **ten times the level that the skill is being improved to**. *For example, a character improving his computer skill to level 7 would need to spend 70 IPs.* He would also gain a Special Talent.

The only exception to this is the Linguistics skill. In this case, for any improvement to be made **50 IPs** must be spent. This gives an increase of one point. The amount of **IPs** needed for this increase does not vary, regardless of the level that the skill is being increased to.

Physical Attributes may also be improved through experience. However, if this is done after play has begun the character must have the opportunity to receive the physical training that is requisite to the improvement of that attribute. It takes **100 IPs** to increase a physical attribute by one point.

For example, Robert's character has spent many months' regular weight training. The GM decides that this training has been sufficient, and allows him to spend the necessary 100 IPs. Improvement points can be saved up until you have the required amount. There is a space for surplus IPs on the character sheet.

Character Completion

Constitution: This is your character's capacity to withstand damage. The score is lowered every time he is shot, stabbed, blown up, or a similar painful situation occurs. If a character's Constitution falls to zero, he is dead.

Constitution is calculated by **STR plus END, divided by 2**. Fractions are rounded up to the next whole number. A low score indicates a particularly sickly and unhealthy person; a high

score indicates a vital and robust individual.

Handed: Choose either left or right. Alternatively you could roll on a **D20**: 1-17, right handed; 18-19, left handed; 20, ambidextrous. In the case of ambidextrous characters a preferred hand should be specified for the purposes of the **GM**: ambi-right or ambi-left. Ambidextrous is an option that can only be rolled for. It cannot be freely chosen.

Rank: The intricacies of Organization rank will be explained later. For the moment you are unranked. Leave this space on the character sheet blank.

Languages: Your native language depends on which region your campaign centres around. Most likely it will be English. You have a score of **3** in your native language and a smattering of other languages, depending on your Linguistics skill. Extra languages can be chosen later, after reading about how the Linguistics skill works, in the General Skills section of the next chapter.

Weapons and Equipment: Now you can spend up to your character's starting amount of Creds (see Specialist Talents) on various weapons or pieces of equipment, as listed in the appropriate chapters. Any remaining money should be noted.

The Organization will supply characters with any one sidearm size gun, and a single magazine or power-pack for that weapon. (Ordinary ammunition only, not armour piercing, explosive, or any other specialized types of bullets). Any further ammo/equipment must be purchased with your own hard-earned cash.

The Character Sheet Reverse Side

The information on the reverse side of the character sheet concerns less important information regarding a character. This information is not essential to play, but it is recommended that if you intend not to use this side, (and save on photocopying costs) that you firmly fix in your mind a description of the character's appearance.

More importantly, whether you use the reverse side or not you must have an idea of the character's personality. You should bear in mind his likes, dislikes, pet hates, habits and little quirks that make up the character as a whole. The more depth you give your character, the more enjoyment you will get out of the game.

Date of birth: The starting date for the campaign is 2225AD. To work out D.O.B. count back your character's age in years from this time.

Initiation age: Most likely, your character will have only recently joined the Organization. If this is so then write his current age in this space. However, it is possible that he has spent a few years performing propaganda work. The older that your character is, the more likely this occurrence becomes. Whatever the case, he will not have had the experience of front line work so far.

General Description: Here there is a space for a description of your character's appearance, as detailed as you wish to make it.

Clothes: The clothing that typifies your character. This can be as drab or as outrageous as you like, but bear in mind that there will be times when you will not want to stick out in a crowd.

Cybernetics: None, at first. Your character may wish to buy cybernetics at a later date for the purpose of augmenting human characteristics, or for replacement of body parts lost due to injury. In extreme cases the Organization sometimes loans money to members for the purchasing of life-saving cybernetic equipment.

Mutations: As an optional rule, a player may start a mutant character. Mutations sometimes have their advantages, bestowing skills on characters that are unavailable to ordinary humans, but all mutants are outcasts, pariahs to normal society. One thing that the Organization is fighting for is freedom from persecution for the mutants. Unfortunately, this kind of racism exists even within the lower ranks of the Organization itself.

There is no law against mutants to be found anywhere in the Colonies. There is also no law providing basic civil rights for mutants, no law to protect them from harassment by the police or other public groups and no law to protect them or their belongings from violence of any kind. The best mutation is the one that is easiest to hide in public.

Hidden Weapon Locations: A record for you and the **GM** of where you hid that laser cutter, or that stun grenade. Your character will not start out with many weapons, so this space will not become really useful until later on. Be imaginative when hiding weapons on your person, and remember to inform the **GM** when you hide them.

Transport: Any vehicles that your character owns, owns jointly with the Organization, or is holding for his group are detailed here. Proper transport is essential for those who wish to travel around on Mars. Your first vehicle will be supplied by the Organization to the group as a whole. This will be kept on behalf of the Organization by the group leader.

Cover: Although the Organization supplies the characters with money to buy food, clothing and equipment (this amount depends on the characters' performances), it is necessary for them to hold other jobs, real or fake, to provide a cover for the other work that they do. With these jobs come false addresses (the characters will usually reside in safe Organization bases) and other phoney information that helps to throw off any suspicion that the authorities may have of the characters' illegal activities.

Some Organization members have several separate covers for different occasions, often with different aliases to go with each one. Choice of cover is completely player's choice.

Photograph: Here is a space to draw a picture of your character, corresponding to the general description that you have given. Alternatively, you may wish to cut out a picture from a magazine or other source that fits the description.

Group Information: Finally, there is a place for data about the group that your character forms a part of Here you write the group's name/identity code, the group leader, and the other group members, which will be the other Player Characters, with the possible addition of a Non-Player Character or two. The **GM** will decide on the official code-name of your group, but you and the other players can decide on a nickname for it. Any additional group members (**NPC**s) will be assigned by the Organization, as decided by the **GM**.

Your character is now complete and ready to begin play. Over time, he will develop into a fuller personality, become more lifelike. Thus will your enjoyment of the game ever improve.

Feel free to create new, original characters if your interest in your present one diminishes. There are an infinite number of different characters that can be created like this, each one waiting for discovery so it can help you to view the gameworld from another perspective, giving you fresh enjoyment of the game.