
GRAVWELL
ESCAPE FROM THE 9TH DIMENSION
RULEBOOK
CRYPTOZOIC
ENTERTAINMENT

GRAVWELL

ESCAPE FROM THE 9TH DIMENSION

Game Design by Corey Young

You're among a flotilla of four ships that survived passing through a black hole. The fabric of space and the general physics you've known have changed. You have entered a new physical dimension where even gravity behaves differently. By mining asteroids and collecting basic elements from space dust (some never before encountered), you muster just enough thrust to move your spacecraft. You typically travel toward the nearest object, usually another ship. But they may not be where you thought. Sometimes you'll move forward, sometimes backwards. It's a real mind-bender!

Time is running out to save your crew and ship. Around you are grim reminders of failing to escape. You gape at the frozen hulks of dead spacecraft that litter the escape route. But with careful card play, you can slingshot past these derelict craft and your fellow players. Be the first to escape from the Gravwell!

GAME COMPONENTS

1 Game Board
26 Fuel Cards
4 Emergency Stop! Cards
6 Spaceship Miniatures with bases
1 Round-Tracking Pawn
1 Rulebook







OBJECT OF THE GAME

Be the first player to enter (land on or move past) the Warp Gate at the end of the Gravwell spiral arm (the game board's space #54). You do not have to land exactly on the Warp Gate to escape. If after 6 rounds of play, no player has entered the Warp Gate space, the player nearest to it (the one furthest from the "Singularity" starting point) wins the game. Only one player may escape the Gravwell. Will it be you?

SETUP

Place the game board in the middle of the table. Place the two derelict ships on the yellow spaces (spaces 26 and 36). However, in a 2-player game, place **only one** derelict onto space #36. Place the round-tracking pawn on the "Start" bubble of the Round Tracker at the bottom of the game board.



Each player chooses a color and places that color spaceship into the Singularity in the center of the board. Then each player grabs the "Emergency Stop!" card that matches their ship's color. Place your Emergency Stop! card **face up** (text side up) in front of you. These color-coded Emergency Stop! cards are a reminder to all players as to the color of spaceship each player has chosen.

Shuffle the 26 Fuel Cards. Off to one side of the board, deal out a number of cards **face down** equal to the number of players multiplied by 3. For example, in a 3-player game, you will place 9 cards face down in separate piles on your playing surface. Next, begin dealing that same number of cards face up. Place each card on top of a face-down card. The result is several stacks of two cards; the bottom card is face down, the top card is face up. This creates the pool of Fuel Cards that will be utilized in the first Round of the game. Place the unused cards face down and away from the play area. These cards cannot be looked at by any players during the Round.

FUEL CARDS

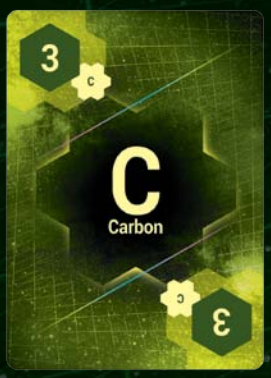
The 26 Fuel Cards are each uniquely lettered from A to Z. Each card represents a different element your crew has mined or gathered from the nearby dust clouds and asteroids. These basic elements are all you can find to fuel your spaceship. Remember, you're in competition with your fellow players to gather the best elements you can each Round.

There are six "Movement Phases" during each Round of the game. At the start of each Movement Phase, each player chooses one Fuel Card from their hand. Place it face down in front of you. Once each player has placed a Fuel Card face down, immediately flip all of these Fuel Cards face up for all to see.

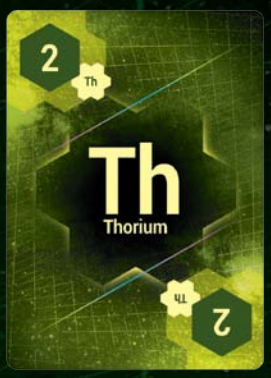
The order in which the cards resolve is based on how close they are to the letter A. In a 3-player game, the following three Fuel Cards might get flipped up by the players:



Second to resolve



First to resolve



Last to resolve

Again, the player whose Fuel Card is nearest to A resolves their card first, and so on all way down to Z. The first letter of the element's name is the "Initiative" of that card. But you don't have to play your cards in A to Z order. You may play them in any order based on your immediate needs. During each of the six Movement Phases each Round, each player will play only one Fuel Card. A player's other cards remain hidden in hand as each player is resolving their Fuel Card.

Each Fuel Card contains a number. That number is how far your spaceship will move. Most Fuel Cards have a number on them between 1 and 10. Simply move your spaceship a number of spaces equal to the number on your card. However, you always move toward the nearest spaceship (and possibly past it). The trickier parts of movement are discussed later on.

Several Fuel Cards contain a special symbol next to their number. The first symbol type is **Repulsor Movement**. You can identify a Repulsor Fuel Card by its purple color and the three))) Repulsor lines next to the number on the card. Instead of moving toward the nearest spaceship, you will move **away** from it equal to the number on your card.



The other special Fuel Card is a **Tractor Beam**. You may identify a Tractor Beam by its teal color and the inward pointing lines ≫ ≪ on either side of the number on the card. A Tractor Beam does not move your ship. Instead, it moves each of the other spaceships. As a result, these ships move **toward you** a number of spaces equal to the number on your card. Move the nearest spaceship to you first and work your way out to the farthest away ship, including the derelicts.

On the board you will find a helpful graph that shows the distribution of movement values from A to Z.



THE DRAFT

The game's competition begins over the Fuel Cards laid out earlier. In the first Round of each game, the youngest player drafts first. Drafting continues from youngest to oldest player. Rounds 2 through 6 of the game utilize a different draft order, and will be covered later.

Drafting allows you to choose a stack of two cards and place them in front of you. You can then look at the face down card you received. Other players only see the face up card you drafted. Once you have looked over both of your cards, place them both **face down** in front of you.

The draft continues in a youngest-to-oldest manner until all of the stacks are gone and each player has six cards face down in front of them. In a 3-player game, the first drafter will get picks 1, 4, and 7. When you draft, grab one stack of cards at a time. After each of the stacks have been drafted, place the six cards you drafted into your hand.

PLAYING YOUR CARDS

Each Round has six Movement Phases which correspond to the six cards in your hand. At the start of each Movement Phase, each player chooses one card from their hand and places it face down in front of them. The card you choose should be based on what is happening around you and what you can predict will be likely courses of action for your fellow players.

SAMPLE GAME ROUND AND EXAMPLES OF MOVEMENT

Movement Phase 1: Moving Out of the Singularity

Ships in the Singularity (at the center of the board) do not cause a Gravwell. The first player out of the Singularity is pulled out by the nearest ship, which at the start of the game is the derelict on space #26. Looking at your hand, you have the following six Fuel Cards:













You are the Blue Player, and decide to play Hydrogen to move 4 spaces. As soon as a card has resolved, discard it into a common discard pile near the cards that were unused this Round. At the end of the first Movement Phase, the board looks like this:





Movement Phase 2: Moving Towards the Nearest Spaceship

For your Phase 2 Fuel Card, you choose to play Yttrium, a card that will surely have you moving after the other players.



Yellow Player



Red Player



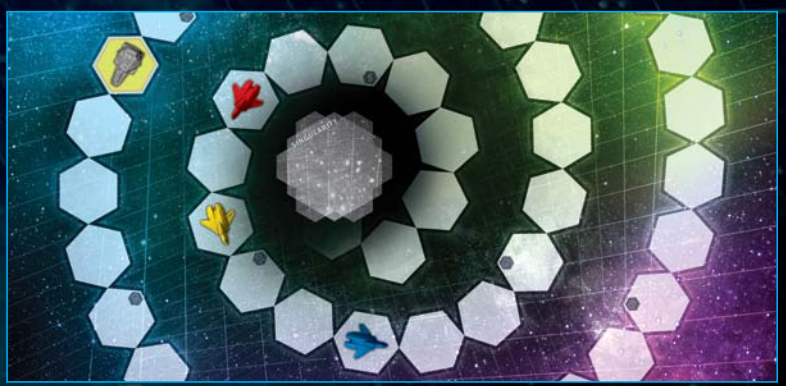
Blue Player



After Yellow goes first with his Boron card, the board looks like the above. The Red player is next to move with Iridium. The nearest spaceship to him is Yellow, which is behind him. The Red player moves backwards 6 spaces. Since Red was only on the #6 space to start with, he ends up back in the Singularity. When you make your move, the Yellow spaceship is nearest, so you move towards and past it 8 spaces.

Movement Phase 3: Repulsor Movement

Now you are way out in front. That means the nearest spaceship to you is far behind you. You could hope that Yellow uses your gravity and moves ahead of you before your movement letter comes up. However, you don't have many late-letter cards. The Xenon card, though, moves you **away** from the nearest spaceship. This will move you **forward** on the board towards the Warp Gate, unless Yellow manages to get ahead of you before your X resolves. If Yellow is the nearest ship when your Xenon resolves and it's ahead of you, you will move away from it backwards!





Xenon is a Repulsor card. Your two opponents have both already moved by the time your X resolves and the nearest spaceship to you is still behind you. The Repulsor Movement then moves your Blue spaceship forward 3 spaces onto the #15 space.

Movement Phase 4: Emergency Stop!

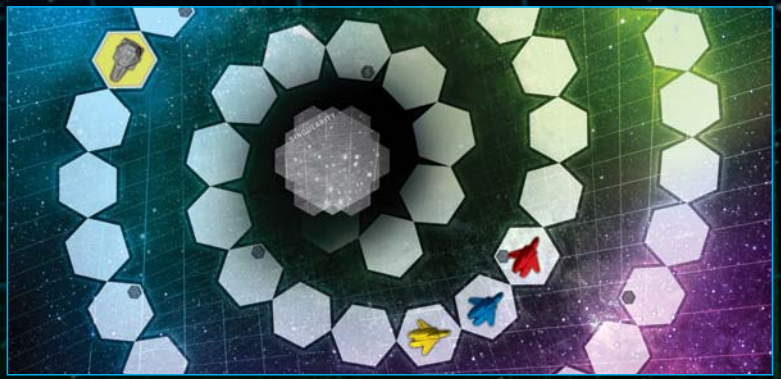
Now you are still out in front, but you don't have another Repulsor Movement card. You decide to play your Lithium card in the hopes that another player will get ahead of you before your L resolves. Unfortunately, your opponents play Plutonium and Thorium, which means your Lithium will resolve first. Since the nearest spaceship to you is behind you, you will move backwards. But wait! You have a trick up your sleeve in your Emergency Stop! card. You decide to use your Emergency Stop! card. You then flip it face down and discard your Lithium card without moving this phase at all. Your opponents still resolve their cards as usual.



Movement Phase 5: In the Middle

You are now surrounded by your opponents!

With only two cards remaining in your hand, you decide to play your Argon Fuel Card, as you know you will go first and only move 1 space. When your A resolves, you move forward 1 space. Since you land on the Red spaceship, you get to move 1 additional space, as there can't be more than one spaceship per space.



But hold on -- weren't the nearest spaceships equidistant ahead and behind your spaceship? When there is a tie for nearest spaceship **when your Fuel Card resolves**, the tie is broken by counting the total number of spaceships (including the derelicts) on each side of the surrounded spaceship. In this case, the two derelict spaceships are ahead of you (on spaces #26 and #36), and so the majority of the gravitational pull is ahead of you this turn. Note that a "surround" can happen where the nearest spaceship ahead and behind you are not immediately adjacent to you… they could be 5 spaces ahead and 5 spaces behind!

If the nearest spaceships are equidistant ahead and behind you when your Fuel Card resolves, and the number of spaceships on either side is also the same, you are stuck and do not move! Note that when you are trying to break an "equidistant tie" by counting the other spaceships ahead and behind you, do not consider the distance at which the other spaceships are in relation to you. If one other spaceship is 4 spaces behind you and another is 11 spaces ahead of you, you are still hopelessly stuck. The fact that the extra spaceship behind you is closer than the extra one way ahead of you is irrelevant. Also, do not count a spaceship in the Singularity for equidistant spaceships or in breaking a tie.

Movement Phase 6: Tractor Beam

Only one Fuel Card is left in your hand. You have no choice but to play it in Movement Phase 6. Your Jakarium (an element never before encountered) ends up resolving first and its Tractor Beam ability is going to move each spaceship on the board towards you by 2 spaces.





You move all of the other spaceships in order from nearest to farthest, including the derelicts. If there is a distance tie, move the spaceship nearest to the Singularity first. Players cannot use an Emergency Stop! to avoid this movement. The Red spaceship is nearest; you move it 2 spaces toward you. Since this will cause the Red spaceship to land on your space, the Red spaceship will slide over and ahead of you into the next empty space. The Yellow spaceship is next nearest; therefore it moves 2 spaces toward you. The derelict then moves 2 spaces toward you. Keep track of which spaceships you have already moved by temporarily turning them 90°, as you only get to move each other spaceship once this way. The derelict that is on #36 also moves towards you (but not seen here). After your Tractor Beam resolves, it changes from the above board situation to the one below:



Now the phase continues as usual and your opponents resolve the Fuel Cards they played. If Yellow is the next ship to move, it will be stuck, as the nearest ships are equidistant forward and backwards, and there is one extra ship on each side. Your Blue ship is behind Yellow and the other derelict is further on ahead.

END OF A ROUND

A Round ends when each player has played all of the six Fuel Cards in their hand. Each player now flips their Emergency Stop! card face up. It can be used again in the next Round. Shuffle all 26 Fuel Cards together. Advance the round-tracking pawn 1 space to the next highest number. If the pawn is on Round 6 or less, start a new Round!

DRAFTING IN ROUNDS 2 THROUGH 6

Shuffle all 26 Fuel Cards and then deal them into stacks of one **face-down** and one **face-up** card per stack. Create the same number of stacks as before: The number of players multiplied by 3. The draft during Rounds 2 through 6 doesn't use player age as the draft sequence. Instead, the order of the draft is based on the position of your spaceship on the board. The player **farthest** from the Warp Gate drafts first, while the player **nearest** to the Warp Gate drafts last. This draft order is also known as "Last place to first place." The drafting sequence will likely not be in clockwise order, as only your position on the board dictates the order.

NOTE: *If more than one player is in the Singularity at the start of a Round, they will draft in age order with the younger player drafting first.*

FURTHER EXPLANATIONS

When Your Fuel Card Resolves...

This is not so much a game rule than it is a reminder. Other spaceships in the game will be moving as erratically as yours. The trick is to predict where the nearest spaceships will be when your Fuel Card resolves. Choosing a card that starts with a letter close to A will have you moving early in the round, before the ships around you move to new positions and throw off your plans. Play a card close to the letter Z and you will likely move after the other players. Derelicts are much easier to predict where you they will be, as they don't move of their own accord. When deciding on which Fuel Card to play, there is no need to start counting out where you will be at the end of a Phase. You won't even know the direction in which you will be moving until your Fuel Card resolves! The other player's movement will frequently throw a monkey wrench into your best laid plans, but that's why you have an Emergency Stop! card.

Moving Past Other Ships

When you move past or over another spaceship, you still count their space. If you move 8 and after moving 3 spaces you enter another spaceship's space, you simply count their space as one of your 8 and continue moving past them. That's the whole idea behind Gravwell; you are using other players (and the derelicts) to pull or "slingshot" you toward victory. When your spaceship is still mid-move and you land on another spaceship, you don't get the "free move to an empty space on the other side of them" move. That only happens when you **end** your movement on another spaceship.

Derelicts

Spaceships that have failed to escape the Gravwell are now lifeless hulks. However, they do provide the gravity your spaceship needs to get to the Warp Gate and find your way back home. Derelicts never move of their own accord, but they are shifted by Tractor Beam card play. A spaceship cannot occupy the same space as a derelict. If you end your move on one while moving either forwards or backwards, you will move additional spaces until you land on an empty space.



The Singularity

Ships in the Singularity do not cause a Gravwell. Any standard movement card will propel you forward out of the Singularity. If you play a Repulsor Movement card while in the Singularity, you do not move. If you play a Tractor Beam while in the Singularity, that will cause spaceships outside of the Singularity to move towards you (including the derelicts).



Emergency Stop! Card

This special card has two game functions. First, it reminds you and other players which color spaceship you are playing. Second, it can save you from making a move that would be detrimental to your goal of getting to the Warp Gate. Your Emergency Stop! card starts each Round face up and in front of you. Once per Round, when your Fuel Card initiative comes up during a Movement Phase, instead of resolving the card you played, you may flip your Emergency Stop! card face down instead. This action cancels the movement of your Fuel Card for that Movement Phase and your card is discarded as usual. It's a smart way to avoid moving backwards at a bad time. However, because the player at the back of the pack gets to draft cards first each round, it's not always terrible to move backwards. At the end of each Round, flip your Emergency Stop! card face up and it can be used again during the next Round.



No bonus or reward results from not using your Emergency Stop! card. You can't "save it" to allow you to use it twice during a Round.

VARIANT GAME RULES

Solo Play

You will play as one spaceship as usual, but you will also move a Ghost Ship, piloted by pure chance. Place your spaceship and one other into the Singularity and place one derelict on space #36. After shuffling the Fuel Cards each round, make two face-down stacks of five cards. Then put one card face up on top of each stack. Choose one stack and the Ghost Ship will play the other. Shuffle the Ghost Ship's six cards together and place them face down.

Place the Fuel Card you wish to play each Movement Phase face up in front of you. Then reveal the top card of the Ghost Ship's deck. Resolve them in alphabetical order as usual and then discard both cards. Make it to the Warp Gate within four rounds or you lose! If the Ghost Ship gets to the Warp Gate first, you lose! No Emergency Stop! cards allowed, but place one face down next to you so you remember the color of your ship.

No Secrets

Some experienced players will want the chance to play perfectly by knowing all of the cards that each player has in their hand after the draft. In this variant, when making the typical two-card stacks, do not place either card face down. Each of the stacks will contain two face-up cards. When you choose a stack, leave it face up in front of you until after all stacks have been drafted. Then each player collects their cards into their hand and keeps them secret for the remainder of the Round. Play continues as normal after the draft.

Hardcore Mode

This variant is only for the hardiest of souls. You may only use your Emergency Stop! card **once during the entire game**! So use it wisely. Leave the card face down in front of you after you use it as a reminder of which color spaceship you are.

NOTE: *This variant may be combined with other variants.*

Warp Gate Activated!

When a spaceship enters the Warp Gate space (#54), it is immediately removed from the board. But the Warp Gate doesn't snap shut as it does in the basic game. Instead, continue playing out the rest of the Round. The game ends after Movement Phase 6 of the Round in which the first player entered the Warp Gate and activated it. Each player who enters the Warp Gate during this last Round of play shares in the victory of having escaped the Gravwell!

NOTE: *This variant may be combined with other variants.*

Chaos Theory

In this variant, the Fuel Card you play during Movement Phase 1 of each Round is random! After drafting as usual, shuffle the six cards in your hand. The player on your left chooses one of your cards at random and places it face down in front of you. When each player has a card in front of them, flip them all face up and resolve the cards in A to Z order as usual. Play the other Movement Phases as normal.

NOTE: *This variant may be combined with other variants.*

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START OF EACH ROUND

If your Emergency Stop! card is face down, flip it face up.

Shuffle all 26 Fuel Cards, and then make a number of stacks equal to the number of players multiplied by 3. Each stack will contain one face down and one face up Fuel Card.

Draft card stacks one at a time in the following order:

ROUND 1: Youngest to oldest.

ROUNDS 2 through 6: Last place to first place.

START OF EACH MOVEMENT PHASE

Each player places one Fuel Card face down in front of them. Once all players have done so, flip each card face up. They resolve in order from A to Z, based on the name of the element on the card.

As soon as a card has resolved, discard it.

Standard Fuel Card:
Move your spaceship toward (and possibly past) the nearest spaceship.

Repulsor Movement :
Move your spaceship away from the nearest spaceship.

Tractor Beam :
Move each other spaceship towards you.

Count occupied spaces as usual as you move over them. However, if you end your move on an occupied space, move past it in the direction you were heading until you land on an unoccupied space.

If you are equidistant to two nearby spaceships, count the number of other spaceships on both sides. You will move in the direction containing more spaceships. If both sides have the same number of spaceships, you are stuck and do not move.

Derelicts:
These count as spaceships in every respect, but they never move of their own accord.

Emergency Stop!
Flip this card face down when your Fuel Card would resolve to cancel the card.

WINNING THE GAME

Be the first player to enter the Warp Gate at space #54. If after 6 rounds of play no player has entered the Warp Gate space, the player nearest to it wins the game.

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