PETER McPHERSON

WORMHOLES™

RULEBOOK

CONNECTING THE GALAXY ONE WORMHOLE AT A TIME

In a peaceful galaxy, a new technology has been invented: wormholes. They allow ships to warp instantaneously from one point to another and open up countless possibilities for commerce and travel. But someone has to make those wormholes first, flying out to remote planets to build a network linking points in spacetime. That's where you come in.

As the captain of a passenger spaceship newly equipped with a wormhole fabricator, you can become the best in the business by building a robust network of wormholes. Link the farthest reaches of space while delivering passengers to become the most successful captain in this golden age of spacefaring.

It's time to bend space and go fast.

A game by Peter McPherson for 1-5 players, ages 14+.

OBJECTIVE

In *Wormholes*, each player is the captain of a passenger ship capable of creating wormholes. A player on a wormhole token may instantly warp to its pair, no matter the distance.

When there are wormholes next to all planets, play continues for 3 more rounds before the game ends. **The player with the most points is the winner.**

Players earn points by:

- Placing wormholes next to planets with no wormholes.
- Other players using a player's wormholes.
- Dropping off passengers.
- Having dropped off passengers to more than 5 planets.

COMPONENTS

10 Space boards
100 Passenger cards
5 Ship tokens
50 Wormhole tokens
15 Energy tokens
5 Pickup tokens
1 First player token
10 Exploration tokens
46 Point tokens
1 Space Randomizer token
5 Reference cards
3 Round countdown tokens
1 Planets connected token





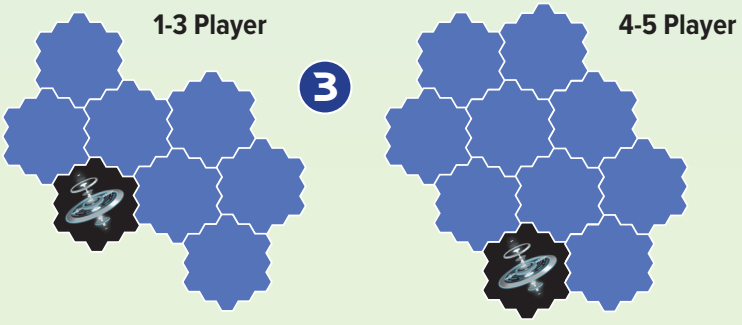
SETUP

1. Flip the space board with the Space Station to the side that matches the player count and place it in the center of the play area. If playing with 4 or 5 players, also randomize the rotation of the board with the Space Station.
2. Gather the rest of the space boards according to the player count:

   2-3 players: Remove boards marked "4+".

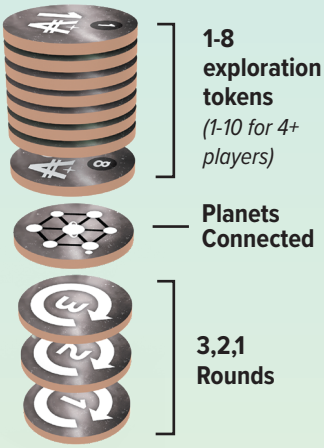
   4-5 players: Use all space boards.

   Shuffle the space boards and form a stack.



3. Place the space boards around the Space Station in the pattern indicated for the player count. For the basic game, place all boards ⊙-side up. For the full Wormholes experience, flip the space randomizer token like a coin to determine whether to place each board ⊙- or ✕-side up and the rotation of the board. Planets must have at least 2 spaces between each other. If any planets have fewer than 2 spaces between them, rotate their tiles until there are at least 2 spaces between them. In the rare case there is no possible path without obstacles between the Space Station and a planet, rotate the planet's tile until it can be reached.

4. Form the exploration stack: Stack the round countdown tokens from 3 to 1, with 3 on the top, then place the planets connected token on top of those. Finally, stack the exploration tokens in ascending order (low numbers on top) on top of the planets connected token. In a 1-, 2-, or 3-player game, remove the exploration tokens numbered 9 and 10.



5. Put the point tokens in a pile reachable by all players.

6. Give each player:
   - 3 energy tokens, active side up.
   - A ship, a pickup token, and a reference card in their player color.
   - A matching set of 10 wormhole tokens in their player color, stacked inactive-side-up in ascending order with **1** tokens at the top and **5** tokens at the bottom.

7. Form the passenger deck according to the player count and shuffle it:



2-3 players (64 cards): Remove cards marked "4+".

4-5 players (100 cards): Use all the cards.

8. Give the first player token to the player who most recently passed through a doorway (or determine first player randomly). It will remain there for the rest of the game.

9. Deal passenger cards to all players according to the play order:

   1st player: 1 card.

   2nd and 3rd player: 2 cards.

   4th and 5th player: 3 cards.

   Players keep the cards in their hand. A player may look at their own hand at any time, but should keep it hidden from other players.

FIRST TURN

On a player's first turn, they begin by placing a **1** wormhole token inactive side up on an empty space adjacent to the Space Station, placing their ship on the same space. They play the rest of their turn as normal.

TURN OVERVIEW

Each turn, a player has 3 energy they may spend on moving their ship. Players don't have to use all their energy each turn, but energy **can't** be saved for future turns. Once per turn, players may flip their pickup token to pick up passengers. A player may perform any amount of free actions on their turn any time before, between, or after using their energy. When a player's turn is over, play proceeds clockwise.

MOVING

On their turn, a player may spend 1 energy to move their ship to any adjacent space. Ships can't move through or onto spaces with a solid dark background (planets, the sun, the Space Station, or asteroids) but they can move onto a space containing any number of other players' ships or a wormhole token. Flip the energy tokens to their dark inactive side as they're used.

Energy is **only** spent when moving between adjacent spaces (not when warping through wormholes).

FREE ACTIONS

Players may perform any of these actions any number of times on their turn.

- Place a wormhole token.
- Warp through a wormhole.
- Drop off passengers.
- Use a map feature, if it has a free action (See "Understanding the Map," page 6).

✦ WHEN IN DOUBT, PLACE A WORMHOLE

It's rarely a bad idea to put down a wormhole token. It will probably come in handy at some point!

A player with no remaining energy may still perform free actions.

PLACING WORMHOLE TOKENS

As a free action, a player may place a wormhole token on or adjacent to their ship's space according to these rules:

- Wormhole tokens may be placed **on any blank space without a wormhole token**. The space may contain any number of player ships.
- Players must place the next wormhole token from the top of their stack, either completing a wormhole pair or starting a new one.
- A player may **not** have more than 1 of their wormhole tokens adjacent to the same planet or the Space Station (but different players may have wormhole tokens adjacent to the same planet).
- Wormhole tokens can't be moved or removed.

When both wormhole tokens in a pair have been placed, flip them to their active side and point the tokens at each other. Wormhole pairs may be completed in one turn or in separate turns, but a player's wormhole tokens must always be placed in order.



Inactive



Active

✦ THE LONELY VOYAGE

Avoid flying out to a remote planet without first starting a new wormhole pair. This way, you only have to make the trip once!

Exploration Tokens

If a player places a wormhole token adjacent to a planet with no other adjacent wormhole tokens, they earn the top exploration token from the stack, placing it in front of them. There is 1 exploration token for each planet in play.

WARPING THROUGH WORMHOLES

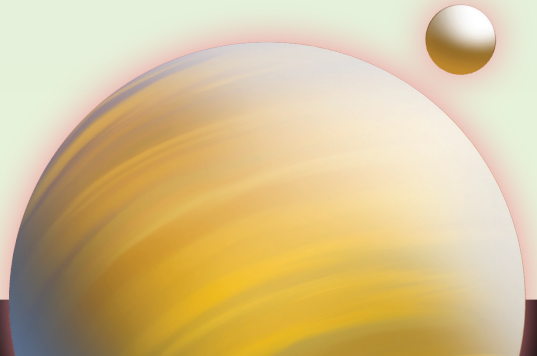
As a free action, a player on the same space as any player's active wormhole token may warp to its pair: the exact match in number and color. This does not count as moving and does **not** cost energy. If a player uses another player's wormhole, the owner of the wormhole earns 1 point from the supply, placing it near their play area. A player can never prevent other players from using their wormholes. A player may warp through wormholes any number of times on their turn, but must perform another action (free or movement) between each warp. Players may use their own wormholes freely, but do not earn 1 point when doing so.

A player on a space containing a wormhole token is not considered to be in both locations of that pair of tokens. They must warp through a wormhole to reach its other end.

Players may move onto or over a space containing a wormhole token without using the wormhole.

✦ THANKS FOR THE RIDE

After using another player's wormhole to reach a planet, consider placing one of your own wormhole tokens to use in the future.



DROPPING OFF PASSENGERS

As a free action, a player adjacent to a planet may drop off **all** passenger cards from their hand showing that planet. When dropping off passengers, the player reveals all passenger cards showing that planet and places them in a face-down pile near their play area. After being dropped off, passenger cards are kept secret and can only be viewed or counted by their owner. **Each dropped off passenger is worth 2 points at the end of the game.**

Galactic Tour Bonus

At the end of the game, each player earns 3 points for every **different** planet beyond the first 5 on their dropped off passenger cards.

For example, a player who delivered to 7 different planets would score 6 points for the Galactic Tour bonus at the end of the game.

PICKING UP PASSENGERS

Once per turn, when a player is adjacent to a planet or the Space Station, they **may** pick up passengers. First, they **may** discard any number of passenger cards from their hand face up to the Space Station Docks. Then, they draw new cards.

Discarding Passenger Cards

When a player discards passenger cards, they always discard them face up to the Space Station Docks area. Cards in the Space Station Docks should be arranged in separate piles for each planet, making it easy for all players to tell how many cards of each planet are there.

Picking up from a Planet

If a player draws passenger cards at a planet, they draw cards from the passenger deck until they have 4 cards in hand. If a drawn card matches the planet the player is adjacent to, they must discard it face up to the Space Station Docks area and draw a new card.

Picking up from the Space Station

If a player draws passenger cards at the Space Station, they take face up passenger cards from the Space Station Docks of **up to** 2 different planets until they have at most 4 cards in hand. Players can't draw passenger cards from the deck while adjacent to the Space Station.

After drawing cards, the player flips their pickup token to its inactive side to show they have already picked up passengers this turn.

END OF TURN

A player may end their turn at any point, but will usually do so after using their 3 energy and drawing cards. When ending their turn, the player refreshes their 3 energy tokens and their pickup token, turning them over to their active side.

Play continues with the player to the left.

GAME END

When the planets connected token is revealed, meaning every planet has a wormhole token next to it, players finish the current round plus **3 additional rounds** so that all players have an equal number of turns. Once the Planets Connected token has been revealed, the first player will discard the top token in the exploration stack at the start of each of their turns. When the stack is empty, the game is over.

In the rare case that the passenger deck is depleted, finish the current round and play 1 more round. Players can still earn exploration tokens by placing the first wormhole token adjacent to a planet.

Players count up their points. Players earn points for:

- ✦ Exploration tokens: 1 or 3 points, as shown on the tokens.
- ✦ Point tokens from wormhole uses: 1 point each.
- ✦ Dropped off passenger cards: 2 points each.
- ✦ Galactic Tour bonus: 3 points per different planet delivered to beyond 5.

✦ PATIENT PASSENGERS

Passenger cards still in your hand at the end of the game are not worth any negative points, you just miss out on scoring them this game.

The player with the most points is the winner. In the event of a tie, the tied player who delivered more passengers is the winner. If still tied, the tied player with more point tokens is the winner. If still tied, the tied players share the victory.

UNDERSTANDING THE MAP

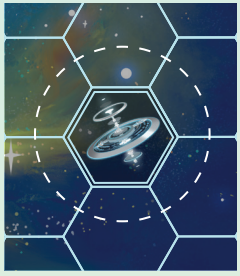
On the map, there are obstacles and map features that affect the ships as they move through space.

OBSTACLES

Some spaces contain obstacles like planets, asteroids, the Space Station, or the sun. Wormhole tokens can't be placed on these spaces, and players can't move onto or through these spaces. Obstacles can be recognized by their solid dark background.

MAP FEATURES

Spaces containing nebulas, wild wormholes, the Photon Cannon, or the Black Hole can be moved onto like normal spaces. Except for the Black Hole, players may still perform free actions while on a map feature space.



Orbit

An orbit allows players to move from any space in the orbit to any other space in that orbit for only 1 energy, regardless of distance. Wormhole tokens may be placed on orbit spaces, and a covered orbit space can still be moved through with normal orbit rules.



Big Ring Planet

The Big Ring Planet is larger than other planets and has an orbit. Unlike other planets, players may place any number of their wormhole tokens adjacent to this planet.



Nebulae

A player on a nebula space can move to any adjacent space (either a nebula space or a regular space) **without** spending energy. It still costs energy to move onto a nebula space if the player is not moving from another nebula space.



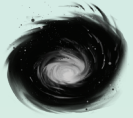
Wild wormholes

Each wild wormhole has a number corresponding to a specific pair of player wormholes—either 3, 4, or 5. A player may warp to a wild wormhole from either of their own active wormholes of the same number, and they may warp to either of their own matching active wormholes from that wild wormhole. Each player may **only** warp between a wild wormhole and their **own** wormholes.



Photon Cannon

A player on the Photon Cannon space may, as a free action, launch themselves as many spaces as they choose in a straight line of adjacent hexes in any direction starting at the Photon Cannon. They must move at least 2 spaces, and they may move through any obstacles (but not stop on them). Players may even traverse gaps between space boards, as long as the Photon Cannon forms a line with the spaces across the gap. Moving onto the Photon Cannon space costs 1 energy as normal.



Black Hole

When a player moves onto the Black Hole, they **must** immediately reveal the top card of the passenger deck and place their ship on any space adjacent to the planet on the passenger card. The passenger card is then discarded face up to the Space Station Docks.

TURN EXAMPLE: 1 The red player uses their first energy to move 1 space onto their 2 wormhole. For a free action, they warp through the wormhole and drop off a passenger that matches the planet. 2 They use their second energy to move onto the yellow player's wormhole, then warp through for a free action, scoring the yellow player 1 point. The red player drops off a passenger at this planet, then flips their pickup token to pick up new passengers. 3 Finally, the red player places their second 3 wormhole token and uses their last energy to move onto it. They warp through and deliver 2 more passengers before ending their turn.



SOLO VARIANT

As you set out to build a wormhole network in your passenger ship, you realize a powerful Artificial Intelligence (AI) is infringing on your business.

In the solo variant of Wormholes, **the player wins if they have more points than the AI** at the end of the game.

SETUP

1. Set up as if for a 2-player game. Give the player the first player token. They draw 1 passenger card for their starting hand, since they're the 1st player. The AI does not draw any cards.
2. Choose an unused player color for the AI and create their stack of wormholes.
3. Decide which AI to play against: **Echabod-Z (Normal), B.R.O.O.D. (Hard), The Azimuth Supersystem (Expert)**

GAMEPLAY

The player plays their turn just like in the standard game, except that whenever the player picks up passengers **from the Space Station Docks**, the AI collects 1 point, taking the token from the general supply. After each player turn, there is an AI turn.

On the AI's first turn, place the AI's starting 1 wormhole adjacent to the Space Station, the same way a player would. When placing AI wormholes, the player may always choose where to place the wormhole, within the confines of other placement rules.

Only the player will be using the AI wormholes to move around the map, so it is recommended to place them in an advantageous position for building a robust network.

On the AI's turn, follow these steps:

1. Discard passenger cards from the passenger deck face up to the Space Station Docks according to the AI difficulty:
   - Echabod-Z (Normal) - Discard 2 cards.
   - B.R.O.O.D. (Hard) - Discard 3 cards.
   - The Azimuth Supersystem (Expert) - Discard cards until 2 planets in the Space Station Docks have 2 or more cards.
2. Check the Space Station Docks. For each planet with 2 or more cards:
   - If the AI has an **active** wormhole token adjacent to that planet, place **all** those cards in the AI's score pile.
   - If the AI has an **inactive** wormhole token adjacent to that planet, place **1** of those cards in the AI's score pile.
   - If the AI has **no** wormhole token adjacent to that planet, place **1** of those cards in the AI's score pile. Then, place the next wormhole token in the AI's wormhole stack in any empty space adjacent to the planet.

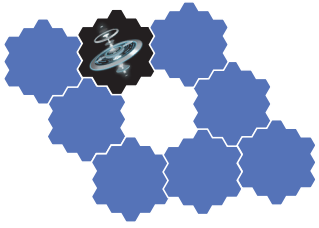
SCORING

The game ends as in a standard game. The AI collects exploration tokens, scores points for dropped off passengers and the Galactic Tour bonus, as well as scores points when the player uses the AI's wormhole, just like a player. Additionally, the AI collects 1 point whenever the player picks up passengers from the Space Station Docks.

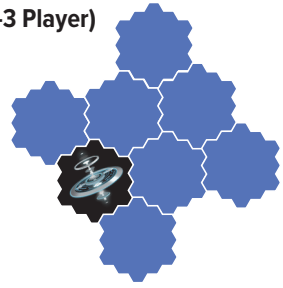
At the end of the game, count up the points. **The player wins if they have more points than the AI.**

For even more variety in your games, try one of these alternative tile patterns to visit a new galaxy.

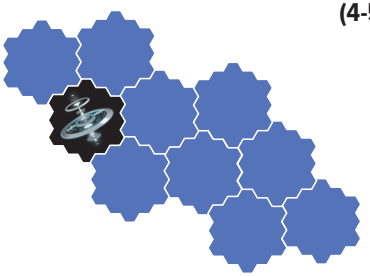
Asteroidea I (1-3 Player)



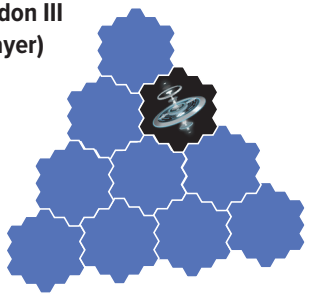
Decapoda II (1-3 Player)



Geotria VII (4-5 Player)



Chaetodon III (4-5 Player)



CREDITS

Design: Peter McPherson

Solo Design: Neil Kimball & Peter McPherson

Director of Projects: Nicolas Bongiu

Production: David Lepore

Development Lead: Neil Kimball

Graphic Design: Brigette Indelicato

Art Direction: Neil Kimball

Writing: Hanna Björkman (We are Knytt)

Illustration: Caring Wong

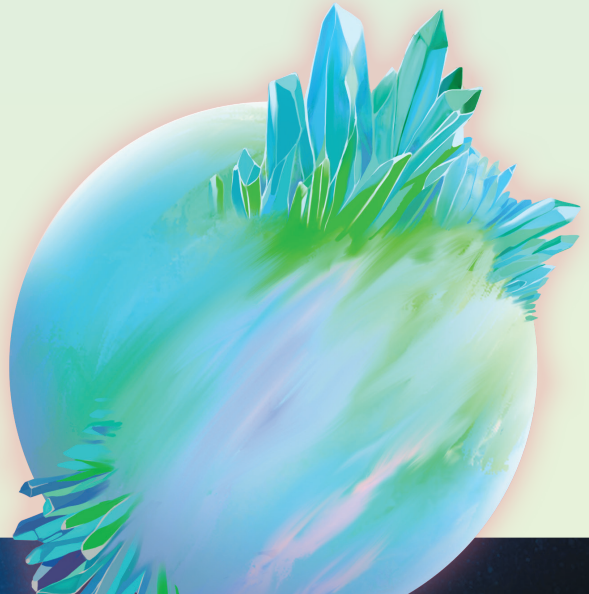
SPECIAL THANKS

Peter McPherson is a board game designer living in upstate New York.

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- Thank you to Neil Kimball for pushing *Wormholes* to be the best it could be, even when Peter was content with the design.
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Playtesters

Jess Barber, Tyler Barber, Stefan Barkow, Nicolas Bongiu, Eric Buckendorf, Kirk Buckendorf, John D Clair, Ryan Dancey, Kekoa Derego, Steve #3 Ehrensperger, Robert Fisk, David French, Jen Fosberry, Kevin Gibson, Mitchell Golden, John Goodenough, Erin Harrington, Dean Howard, Quentin Hudspeth, Ashwin Kamath, Leonardo Kammer, Bryan Kromrey, James Lang, Emma Larkins, Chris Lawrence, Jacqueline Layman, David Lepore, Griffin McPherson, John McPherson, David Marron, Roger Meloche, Mark Minick, Indiana Nash, Kyle Nunn, Kaz Nyborg-Andersen, Vladimir Orellana, Luke Peterschmidt, Danielle Reynolds, Ian Rickett, Kevin Root, Kristen Root, Todd Rowland, Lila Scott, Taylor Shuss, Connor Wake, Jeff Warrender, Amanda Panda8ngel Wong, Josh Wood, Mark Wooton, Ian Zang, Echoes Zimet, John Zinser, Alon Zwick, Emilia Zywot



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