Starship Kit - Volume 2

- Size & Shape -

Ennead Games

Preface

Starship Kit
Volume 2 – Size & shape

Your species or corporation has finally achieved a dream that almost every species has, to leave their home world and travel to the stars.

Your ship has a name, but how big is it? What is its shape? What about its colour?

This is part 2 of the Starship Kit.
Future parts will include:

- Ship role & type
- Ship systems
- Captain & crew
- Weapons
- Defence systems
- Special Features
- Operation Modes
- Cargo, both legal and illegal
- Ship Quirks
- Technobabble for that "authentic" sounding description of parts and equipment

You do not need to have all the parts in the kit to use them, but it does help and is recommended.

There will also be several supplements with examples and pre-generated samples, but these are not required.

Coming Next

Starship Kit Volume 3 -
Will cover:

- Type & Role of the ship
- Is it military or civilian?
- What type of military ship is it?
- What's the ship main task
- Is it a prototype or mass-produced?

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Contents

Size, shape & style

When your sensors first pick up a ship in the distance, know the size shape and style can often help you determine what kind of threat or problem you may be facing.

Picture this: You are in a 100 crew Heavy Cruiser and approached by a small 2 person fighter demanding you leave their space or face their wrath. Rightly so, you tell them to go home to their mothers, so they call in reinforcements and a huge Mega Dreadnaught with a crew in the thousands appears from behind the nearby small moon with a massive charge seeming to build within it. Chances are in the first case, you would win…in the second you'd probably be space dust, so you decide to activate the jump drive and go home.

Size

The size of the ship can determine many things. From how many weapon emplacements it may have to the maximum amount of crew it can support.

This system is highly simplified to keep record keeping down.

The basic rule is the bigger the ship the more sub-systems it has. Bigger systems, like weapons, require other systems which in turn increase the size which means a bigger engine etc.

As such, these size categories are rather broad but you know that a size 5 ship will be smaller than a size 10, but bigger than size 2.

This becomes more important for ships that carry other ships, such as shuttles or the fighters carried by a carrier class ship.

Every group has a different classing structure for the size of vessels. One group may class any ship with size 5 or less as a fighter, but for another that number may be 30, with their Heavy Capital Class Dreadnaughts being over 1000!

Keep in mind that the size and nature of the crew the ship is designed for will have a huge impact on the size of the ship. A vessel designed for beings 6 foot tall is not suitable for creatures 12 foot in height for example. "The more complex the life form, the more complex the ship" is a good rule to follow.

This is more for descriptive purpose than anything else and for setting a standard to work by. You may find it handy to keep all ships to the same standard across all races and groups.

If the ship is manned it needs at least the following:

- Life support (including somewhere for the crew to work)
- Propulsion & fuel storage
- Computing system

This will be covered in more detail in the next part, but for now bare this in mind. The larger the ship the more it can do, but the more expensive and complex it becomes.

Unmanned or automated ships can be a lot smaller, but are either:

- Dumb, almost like missiles
- Have sophist aced AI, but this radically increases costs and complexity, plus most AI's have trouble dealing with events outside their programming

As with manned ships, the larger the unmade vessels are, the more they can do. If the size is kept the same as the manned equivalent then the extra space taken up by life support may be given over to more sophisticated weapons, or increased fuel supply or anything else.

Scale

When making the map or outlines of your ship(s), you will obviously not be able to draw it life size. So you need to scale it. A good scale system is one that can be used in multiples. Such as 1 square on your grid/map is equal to 5 feet, or 10, or even more.

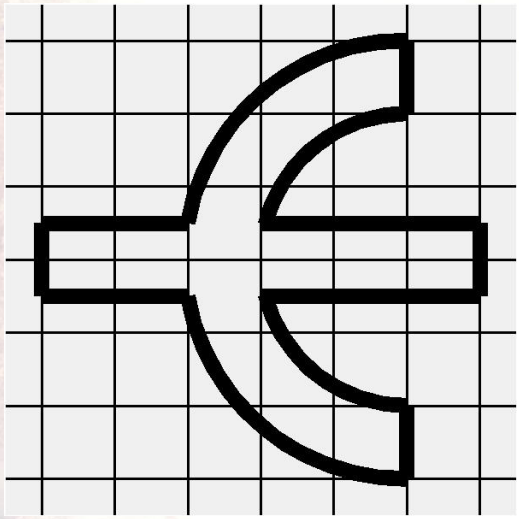
This comes in handy when comparing ships and vessels of various sizes, especially when 1 is very small and the other is very large.

One thing you should never do is to mix scales on one map. This leads to problems when laying out the ship and its components.

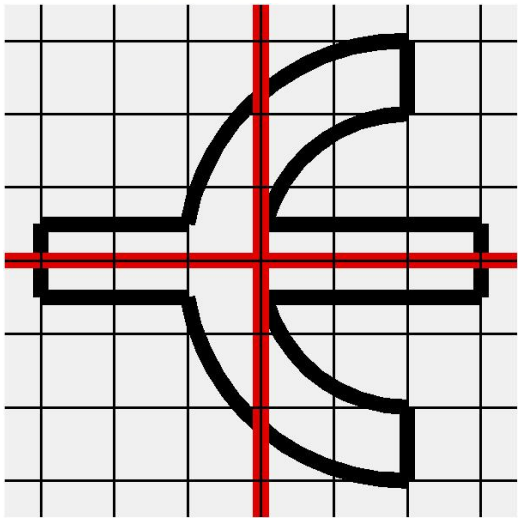
Something else to bear in mind is the larger your maps and the smaller the scale, the more detail you can fit in. However you entire ship may not then fit on your map.

If your outline is too large then the simple solution is to split it up into 4(or more) parts, then zoom-in on those parts.

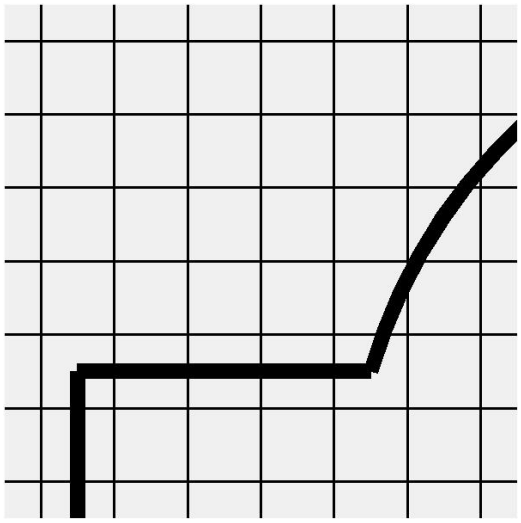
For example, let's say the ship outline below was the one you decided on. The scale below is 1 square = 100 feet.



Then simply divide the map up into 4, as shown:



Then you zoom in. As the previous map scale was 100 feet per square, it is now ¼ of the size, or in other words each square is now 25 feet. The top left section of the above map would now look like this:



This process can be repeated as many times as needed. Labelling the sections in some kind of logical fashion is highly recommended, such as 1 being the top right, 2 being the top left, etc. Then repeating the process the further detailed you go, 1.1 being the top left of that map, etc.

Shape

The overall shape of the ship can affect it in rather subtle ways not always apparent at first glance.

Some shapes are more suitable for certain tasks than others. E.g. an aerodynamic shape doesn't matter too much in the so-called emptiness of space, but if the ship has some kind of atmospheric capabilities then it does become important.

Something to bear in in mind though that the shape of the ship is the over look to it. A rectangle shaped ship would have engines, wings and sensor arrays sticking out all over the place. A diamond shaped ship might be split in two with the control centre in the middle. The shape gives a rough outline and gives an easy description such as:

"The ship flying towards you is shaped like an eagle", tells you that the ship would have long wings and a pointy beak like prow.

Use the basic shape as a template, mix and match, or use the random generator in this section to really design a messed up ship with various parts and designs.

There is also the psychological aspect of the ships shape. Seeing something that resembles a massive pyramid hurting towards your home world at a sizable fraction of the speed of light may give a different response if the same ship was in fact shaped like a massive eagle or even a huge cube. Likewise being on a ship shaped a beast that was feared in the quadrant can be morale boost for the crew flying her.

Basic Terminology

Some basic terminology that may help when describing or designing the ship outline and shape. Although you don't need to use these terms, doing so adds an aspect of authenticity that can improve immersion. Some shapes though may not have an obvious bow or aft though.

Aft
Towards the tail or end of the ship, generally refers to inside the ship, with Stern being outside

Bow
Forward part of the ship.

Dorsal
The "top" of the ship

Forward
Direction of travel the ship is primarily designed to go in.

Port
To the left as you face forwards

Primary/Secondary/Tertiary
Some ships have two or more of an important feature, such as hulls or engine complexes. The main one is called the primary, the next is secondary, the third is tertiary. A few races have more redundancy but this is very rare.

Starboard
To the right as you face forward

Stern
The rear of the ship, outside, with Aft being inside

Ventral
The "bottom" of the ship

These descriptions can be combined in many ways, so if you have, for example, a hull breach on the top, forward, right side of the ship, it could be described as:

"You spy a gaping hole leaking gas on the dorsal forward hull, port side"

Shape Guide

The first thing to decide when working out the shape of the ship is regarding symmetry.

A symmetrical ship is easier to design as you simply copy what has already been done and flip it around. Most ships that are symmetrical are so along a line that goes forward/aft so the port side looks the same as the starboard. A few have the axis going dorsal/ventral so the top is the same as the bottom.

Very few ships have symmetry with the axis going port/starboard. Doing so means that it has engines at front and back. Even less ships have multiple axis of symmetry, so the side is the same as the top, or something similar. The ones that do normally have some kind of reaction-less or exotic drive system in which having regular engines would be a hindrance. Every direction is the same for these types of ships and they have no obvious true forward/aft/port/starboard etc. The classic example is a vessel shaped like and closely follows a sphere. Where is the front or side on a sphere?

Unsymmetrical ships, while they look a mess still follow a rough shape, but it might be clustered towards one section of the outline.

They are complex to design, build and maintain, but often make up for it by being harder to destroy. After all, having multiple engine clusters means if one is blown up the others can still function.

The following charts are for randomly designing your ships shape. Don't feel bound by any of the results you get, use them as a starting point for your own ideas.

You may wish to get some square lined paper to help you sketch out your ideas and placement of hulls etc.

Symmetry

First you need to decide on the rough symmetry your ship will follow.

D100	
01 – 64	Symmetrical – Left/Right
65 – 84	Symmetrical – Top/Bottom
85 – 90	Symmetrical – Other (*)
91 – 00	Unsymmetrical/Random

(*) = Covers truly symmetrical ships or those with multiple symmetries.

Rough Shape

D20	
1 – 4	Animal outline -Flat
5 – 8	Animal outline -3d
9 - 12	Geometric - Flat
13 – 16	Geometric – 3d
17 – 18	Other Shape – Flat
19 – 20	Other Shape – 3d

Flat shapes are as the name suggests, flat. Their shape or outline is obvious from above or below. They are not truly flat, as with hatches, sensors etc., but they are more "flat" than a 3-d version of the shape.

3-d shapes are those that are, again as the name would imply, 3-d. If they are circle, they become a sphere; a triangle could be a pyramid shape or cone.

There are advantages and disadvantages to being flat vs. 3-d. For example, flat ships are easier to attack if you aim for their dorsal or ventral hulls, but harder if you attack from port or starboard as there is less to aim at.

At this point, you also need to decide what part of the ship the bow is and what is the aft of the ship, or randomly decide.

Next, you need to figure out the shape itself, so roll on the appropriate sub chart.

Animal outline

D10	Suggested animal shape
1 - 5	Bird
6	Crab/Lobster
7	Whale/shark/fish
8	Insect/Arachnid
9	Jelly fish/Squid
10	Amphibian

Animal shapes for your ships should be simple and suggest the animal. You want people to say "That ship looks like a crab". The symmetry of the ship would decide what features, if any, are duplicated.

The sorts of animals used tend to be ones that "fly" through some kind of medium like air or water. Land based animals are typically not used.

Bird shaped ships have a pointy beak like protrusion at the bow with wings on port and starboard sides, often with a tail of some kind at the aft that normally houses the engines or other propulsion system. This are among the most common of animal based designs due to the possible variation of birds or other flying creature, even those of mythology like dragons. Ships with this typical shape are more likely to be attack vessels of some kind.

Crab/Lobster shaped ships have a pair or more of arms or claw like sections at the front. They may also have smaller legs or arms used for landing or manipulation. Vessels shaped like this are often used in construction.

Whale/shark/fish are generally streamlined but go about it different ways. Whale shaped are large and bulky vessels suitable for haulage. Shark shaped can be fast and deadly, whereas fish shaped tend be smaller.

Insect/Arachnid like crab/lobster ships, resemble an insect of some kind. This can be from something like a spider or even a dragon fly. These ships have a tendency to be very manuverable.

Jelly fish/Squid shaped ships have a central body with several legs, tentacles or tendrils coming off of it. Squid (aka Kraken ships) have about 8 grasping tentacles or manipulation arms that feed to a central beak or processing unit. These shaped vessels are often found doing salvage or dismantling.

Jelly fish have tendrils coming from the aft side. These tendrils are often filled with sensor arrays of some kind that check and examine the space through which they are dragged.

Amphibians are a mess of a ship. Designed to work in space and on land they are master of neither. However being able to transition from one medium to another can be quite an advantage and these shaped craft are often used to explore planets, but are not used much as deep space vessels.

Geometric

D10	Simple shape
1	Circle
2	Diamond
3	Hexagon (6 sided)
4	Kite
5	Octagon (8 sided)
6	Oval
7	Pentagon (5 sided)
8	Rectangle
9	Square
10	Triangle

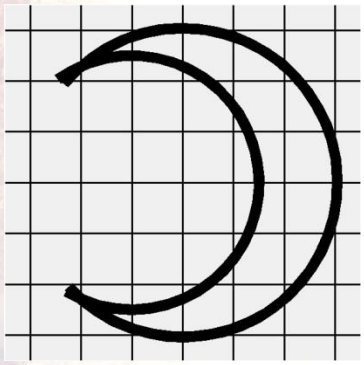
Simple geometric shapes are mostly suitable for symmetrical shaped ships. For unsymmetrical/random designs, a bit more work is needed. One side may be bigger than the other, due to a design choice/flaw or damage.

The ships may not always have their sides of equal length, but will follow their designers symmetry rules.

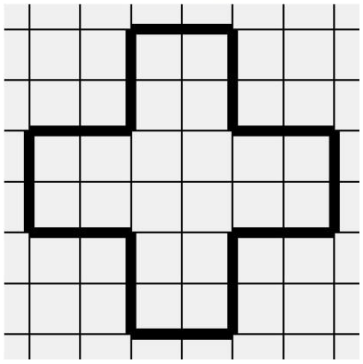
Other shape

1	Crescent
2	Cross
3	Cross - curved
4	Eye
5	H-shape
6	I-shape
7	Leaf
8	Simple - Hollow
9	Simple - Open
10	Star
11	Torus
12	Torus - Open
13	T-shape
14	V-shape
15	W-shape
16	Y-shape
17	Air-based vehicle
18	Water-based vehicle
19	Other Letter-based shape
20	Other shape

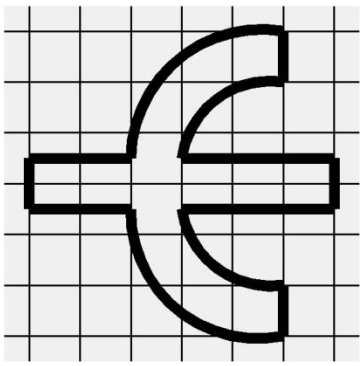
Crescent ships resemble a circle that has had another circle taken out of it from one edge as in the simple diagram below. The size of the gap and the distance between the two points varies from design to design, but they all roughly follow this shape, as seen from above.



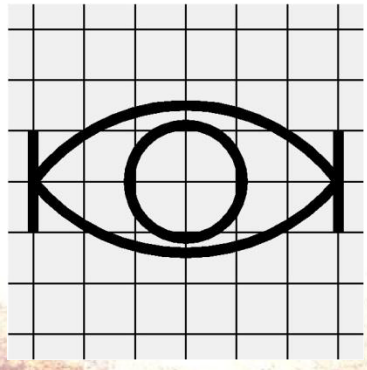
Cross have 4 (rarely more) arms joined at a central point. These arms can be all the same length and width (as shown below) or of various lengths/widths as long as it follows the original symmetry rule diced on.



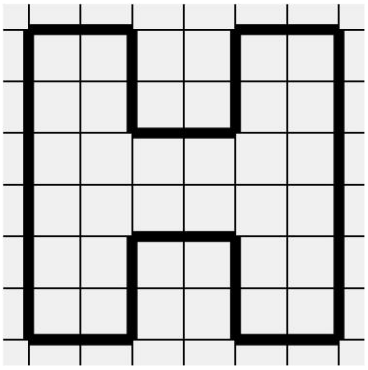
Cross – curved shaped ships are the same as normal Cross shapes, but the arms are, as the name suggests, curved. The direction of curvature and how many of the arms curved is based off symmetry and designers choice



Eye shaped ships are a hollow circle in an oval or other curved shape (see example below). Quite often they have platforms at the edge for weapons or docking ports to attach. This view is often only seen from the front or above.

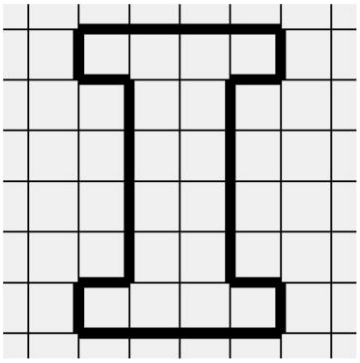


H-shape are described as such as, from the front(and top), they look like the capital letter “H”, as in the diagram below. The main arms of the H tend to be another simple shape (roll randomly) so that it looks different when view from port or starboard. The arms cover the inner hull and can vary in thickness

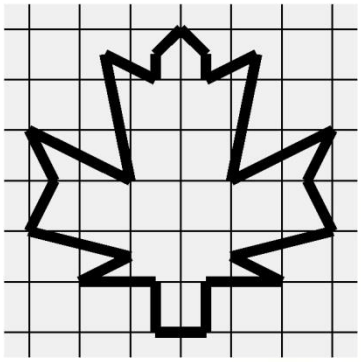


I-shaped ships are similar to H shaped, but the main core/hull is much large and the arms/wings are more for stability than anything else.

The view below shows an “I” shaped ship, when viewed from above or below. Like the “H” shape, the two wings/arms are often in another simple shape so that when looked on from port or starboard that shape is viewed instead.

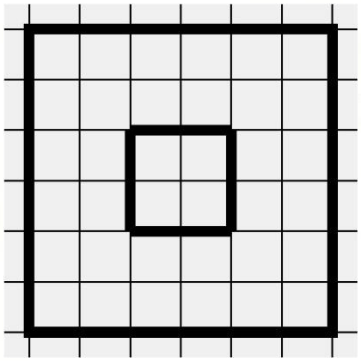


Leaf shapes come in many varieties, but all share a common design of a small stalk like area at the aft with the bulk attached to it. Although smooth /curved versions do exist, the most typical outline shape is sharp edges, as in the example leaf shape below.

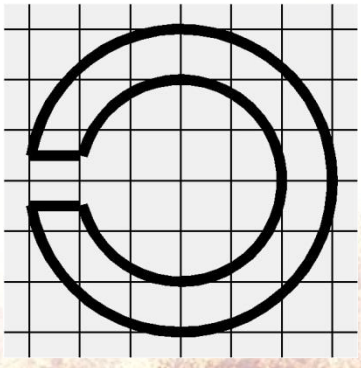


Simple – Hollow & Simple – Open follow very similar designs. Take a simple shape and make it hollow. Open takes this design one stage further and introduces a break into the pattern.

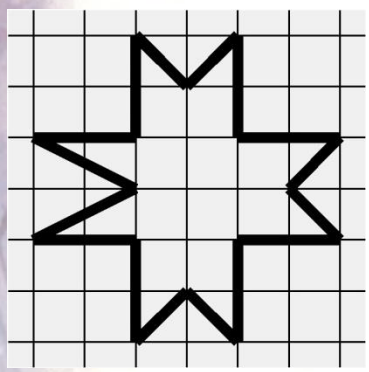
A hollow square could look like this when viewed from the top or from port/starboard:



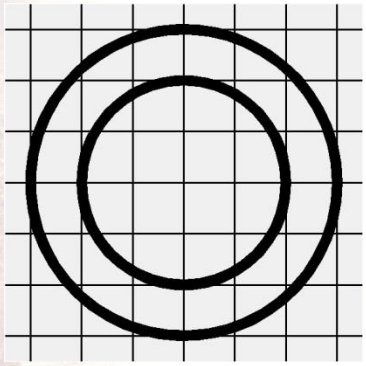
Whilst an open circle ship could out this as an outline when viewed from above:



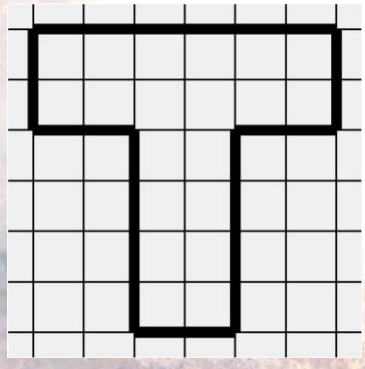
Star, like the leaf design, comes in several variations. Flat ships have 5 to 10 points (with a few having more) around a central core. 3-d versions often have many many more points and can sometimes resemble sea urchins.
An example 8 pointed star can be seen below



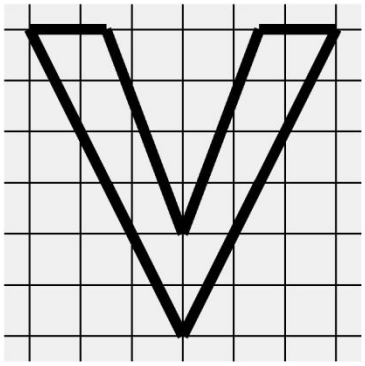
Torus/Torus – Open is often called the doughnut ship and for good reason. Whilst the open/hollow circle ship design is flat, the torus is rounded in all dimensions. The open version, it has been said, often looks like someone has taken a bite out of the doughnut.



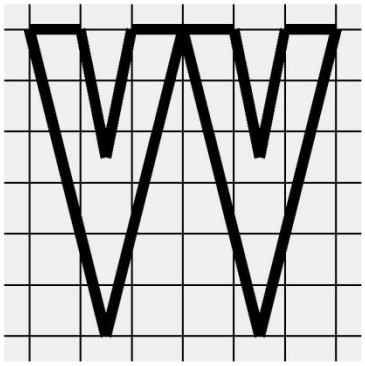
T-shape vessels are shaped like a capital letter T. The bow is quite often the bottom part of the T, to give more room for the engines.



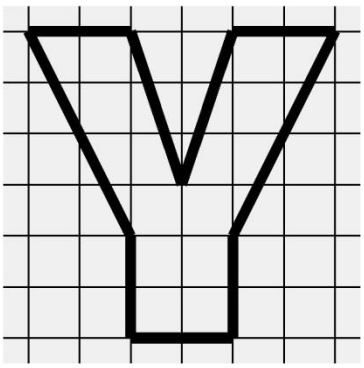
V-shaped ships seem to be more suitable to fighters or any vessel that has to enter an atmosphere of some kind, due to its aerodynamic nature, assuming of course the designer made the bow the point. The join between the arms/wings is often a structural weak point and if this design is used extensively, then some kind of armour is needed here.



W-shaped ships often resemble two V shaped vessels stuck together (as in the outline diagram below). A few cheap organisations in fact do this, introducing more weakness for extra space or engine capacity. Many of these vessels have some kind of support structure between the two hulls. Those that don't normally don't last long in combat.



Y-shape vessels tend to be developed rather quickly after the V shaped vessels. They provide more structure and stability than their predecessor and in many ways combine features from the T shape and the V-shape. A surprisingly popular design amongst many races.



Air-based vehicle designs resemble planes, zeppelins or another vehicles used on the designers world or origin.

When a race first ventures into the vast infinity, it's not unusual to take old air transports to modify for low-orbit entry, before progressing into true space born designs. These vessels also require few modifications for atmospheric flight, apart from basic system modifications, the structure and hull is normally untouched.

Once a race has become truly proficient at space travel, a few ships are kept like this on purpose, for tactical reasons or simply from some kind of nostalgia.

A water-based vehicle covers any vehicle used to travel on a liquid, not just water. A space going vessel that resembles a water going transport system is rare, but often found being developed on planets with a higher than average liquid % on their surface. Although they can travel within an atmosphere they work best in liquid or the void.

Other Letter-based shapes cover the other letters of the alphabet, plus symbols used by many alien species. Although it could be said that the "Y" shaped vessel would not be called that by a non-terran species, the design would be the same.

For example, in one part of the universe a ship was shaped to look like what Earthers would call the letter "X". Many races thought it was a good idea until it was pointed out that it resembled the same shape as the "personal anatomy" of one of the most feared and incredibly violent sentient beings in the multiverse and the design was quickly shelved. A few of them can still be found, lying in swamps or hidden on desert worlds.

A few races have experimented with lower case letters as design, but these tend not to work as well and these are quickly abandoned or only used in concept ships or prototypes.

The only letters that seem to not be used are those with accents, such as á, é, í, ó, or ú. As you can imagine adding the accent would be impractical, but not impossible. One race in particular made many different ships shaped like various letters in the local language for the sole purpose of insulting their neighbours, as when the ships were lined up in the correct formation, they formed a rather rude sentence.

Other shapes cover, well, anything else. From an arrow to something that makes you think the designers who make these ships got drunk one weekend and designed in their sleep. These ships when first can confuse, entertain from laughing, or even cause great offense to those viewing them.

This class of design outline also covers the very rare and unique. Sometimes a designer creates something that brings awe to those who are lucky enough to gaze upon it.

Whatever the reason, these designs are not seen often and are very memorable when they are.

Additions

Now you have the basic shape of your ship you can add extra parts. These can change the outline of ship and make it more unique. They vary from wings (or additional wings in the case of animal shaped vessels) to secondary hulls or more.

This part is entirely optional for symmetrical ships, but can help flesh out your ship designs or make them more unique. If used on symmetrical ships remember to follow the axis of symmetry used and duplicate any result on the other side.

These can be fitted within the outline, which keeps the design more in line with the original shape, or joined to the primary hull. For example, if your ship is a sphere based design but you have decide to add wings, keeping within the outline would make them curved and possibly small, whilst not keeping within the outline would make them more noticeable and larger.

Starting with the primary hull roll for the location of the additional part, deciding if you wish to keep within the original outline or outside it (50% chance of either if you wish for a more random design process).

Unless you are going for truly chaotic design, use some sense when deciding where to add additions. Wings would not make much sense to add at the bow or aft, but can look good on the port/starboard, or even the dorsal/ventral sides of the ship.

Decide or roll 1d6 times how many additions you have.

D10	
1	Connecting Corridor (*)
2	Docking Port
3 - 5	Hull
6	Sensor Cluster
7	Support Structure (*)
8 - 9	Wings
10	Other structure

(*) = Must be attached to at least 2 other additions, such as hulls or wings

Connecting Corridor (*) connect from one hull to another, or from one hull to the wings or even from a hull to another structure. They can be of any length. The longer they are, the more dangerous the connected structure is. For example one hull may contain a power plant that is needed for FTL travel but is dangerous for organic matter to be exposed to for long periods of time.

Docking Ports are often large, bulky and noticeable. They functions as airlocks and on some vessels a basic quarantine system. For ships without a matter-teleportation system they are essential for getting supplies and crew on board. Although they can be built inside one of the hull, this reduces the amount of useable space within the ship.

Hulls are the areas of the ship where practically everything is stored. They can be incredibly varied. Every ship has at least one hull and many have secondary or more hulls. These hulls can be the same shape and size as the primary, or a different shape. They are attached to another hull directly of with some kind of connecting corridor.

Sensor Cluster, are, well, clusters of sensors. Although you can have your sensors inside your ship, the best ones work when then is little to no interference between the sensor and the target. They are found almost anywhere on a ship, but generally kept away from engines or other system with a high energy output to reduce interference and false readings.

Support Structures are, as the name suggests, allows the various other structures to withstand the stress of interstellar travel, which can be very handy if your ship has a design flaw or is inherently unstable. Unlike corridors though they are not meant for travel, but can support wiring, control conduits etc.

Wings are often not needed for space going vessels, but are needed if some kind of atmospheric flight is required. They can hold landing gear or even weapons of some kind. Wings also add to the psychological aspect of the ship and it's not unknown for wings to be added just for the visual effect. If the wings are on the port/starboard they normally come in pairs.

Other structure covers anything else, from rotating or moving sections, to fuel pods or more.

Placing the additions

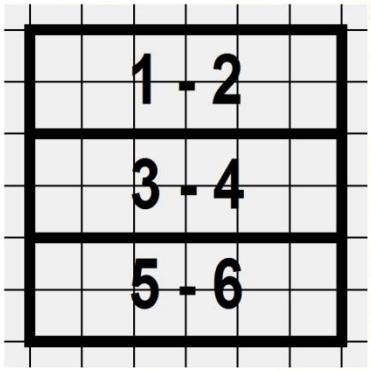
Now you have the amount and type of additions your ship shape has, you have to decide where you are going to place them.

For the majority of your designs you are going to want to place them yourself. Each part would have a logical place and scale. Wings would go on the side or a hull, support structures between a hull and a wing, or a hull and another hull etc.

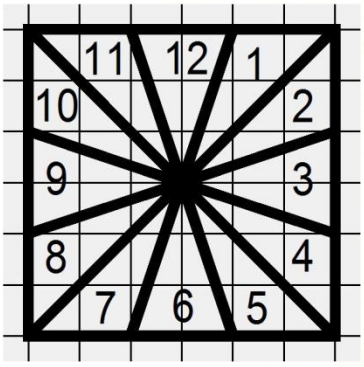
Sometimes however, you want a ship that looks like it has been designed by a mad being or simply not finished before being forced to launch. Sometimes having an alien and odd design can add to a ships and race's character. Not every group of beings would find the same thing aesthetically pleasing and to one group what looks like a jumbled up mess would to another be the pinnacle of design and form.

The easiest way to randomly design a ship that follows these principles is to roll 2 dice and place the next component somewhere in the section rolled. The first die (a d6) would determine if the part would be placed on the Dorsal, central or ventral area of the ship, the 2nd die (a d12) would determine if it would be the bow, aft or somewhere in between, like a clock.

As viewed from the side, with 1-2 being dorsal section, 3-4 the centre and 5-6 the ventral:



As viewed from the top, with 12 being the bow and 6 the aft and 3 and 9 being the starboard and port sides:



Example:
Trying to decide where to place a secondary hull for your design you roll on the placement charts and get a 4 on the d6 and a 6 on the d12.

This would place the second hull at the rear of the main hull and centre.

When placing extra parts you must look at the ship as a whole, so if a 6 was rolled again for placement of another hull or part it would go at the rear of the secondary, not the first.

Style

With all the various race and groups out in the universe, not all of them use the same style of technology. You may encounter a vessel that looks like a giant spider or made from a grown crystal.

Another thing to bear in mind is the style also determines in many ways the construction method and time for the ship. A biological based ship might be grown in a vat and get bigger over time, but a crystal ship may only be grown in micro or zero gravity.

Decide or roll a d10 to determine the technology style.

D10	Tech style
1	Biological
2	Crystalline
3	Energy/Hologram
4	Magictech
5	Mish-mash
6	Pseudo Ancient
7	Rough & Ready
8	Sleek & High Tech
9	Steampunk
10	Hybrid

You have two choices at this point:

1. The ship style has no real impact of the systems and is just for visual effects. This requires less work, but can result in all ships being practically the same.
2. The style of technology used does have an effect on the ship systems. This does require more work, but results in more variety of vessels and equipment.

Although the end result is normally the same no matter what technology method is used, there will be subtle differences.

A ship that uses biological tech may be resistant to EMP attacks; whilst plasma weapons causes more damage as the living ship burns in agony.

Each of the tech styles listed below has a brief overview and one or more suggested advantages and disadvantages to using this technology style.

Biological

Overview

Biological ships are basically living beings who have been bred and/or genetically engineered to be living vessels or transport and combat. They are born and die like other beings and can heal themselves given the right nutrients.

A few are sentient and treated as such by those who ride in them. There are some though who treat their living ships as slaves and some form of control over them to prevent accidents or the ship itself rebelling.

Quite often, the ship has a “handler”, who is often the captain and/or chief engineer. The ship may only respond to commands from their handler and can panic if they are hurt or killed.

Advantages

- Can heal/repair itself
- Can get bigger and more powerful over time
- EMP style attacks don’t always knock out systems
- If they have a handler, trying to forcibly take command of one is almost impossible
- May develop mutations and abilities beyond what the designer intended

Disadvantages

- Psionic users, especially empaths, have to be shielded or specially trained to travel on board.
- Difficult to develop
- Hard to control if a slave race
- May panic if their handler is killed or hurt
- Prone to mutations
- Susceptible to bio-weapons

Crystalline

Overview

These ships are made of crystals and gems. Like biological ships they are grown, but in a massive nutrient like bath. They are very resistant to damage. Psionic based species use them as the crystal help to focus and amplify their abilities, even though it makes them more vulnerable to attack themselves

They take a long time to grow, but can be quite resilient to laser (or other light) based attacks. They can be incredibly beautiful ships and owning one is a sure sign of wealth and/or power, due to the lack of massive amounts of crystals needed to make the ship on many planets.

One major problem with them though is that whilst they are hard to damage, they are often even harder to repair, as the ship is basically one giant part. The more one of these vessels are damaged, the greater the chance of more damage occurring.

Advantages

- Laser/light damage is practically negated
- Hard to damage
- EMP style weapons have no effect on them
- The crew is highly protected against radiation or other such effects
- Can amplify psionic abilities

Disadvantages

- Very difficult to repair if damaged
- Psionic attacks against the ship have a greater effect
- Chances of the ship being targeted by pirates/raiders/etc is vastly increased due the ship being a flying diamond of immense value

Energy/Hologram

Overview

The hologram or energy ship is a rare type of ship. The ship is composed of photons and force fields. Not including the crew or cargo or hologram systems (including life support) the ship is, in effect, not real.

These ships always look brand new and undamaged because they are constantly being created or generated. They can change form or adapt too many situations. They can reconfigure themselves internally and externally in a matter of seconds. The crew can barely feel anything when attacked due to internal force field projectors keeping them safe.

So why do many races not use them? Two reasons. The first is they require astronomical amounts of power and computer systems. The tech to make them is complicated and very expensive.

The second reason is holograms do not mix well with EMP attacks (natural or otherwise) and have a nasty tendency to shut down and become unusable until repaired. As Holo-ship are quite distinctive in their energy outputs, it's also very easy to take one out, if you can catch it.

Advantages

- Most damage is repaired instantly or otherwise ignored
- Can change form instantly
- Crew are protected from impact damage and speed/inertia changes

Disadvantages

- EMP attacks are deadly and can shut the entire ship down with one hit.
- Requires an immense amount of power and computer systems
- If hacked into can be taken over and reconfigured – High security is a must

Magictech

Overview

In a few universes, magic is a viable force as much as electromagnetism or gravity is in others. The ship has some way of tapping into this power, normally through some kind of portal or a living being. There are other types of ships that simply use a form of technology so advanced or complex that it appears to be magical. These ships are rarely made and often found by other races who figure out how to use them. They are unique and highly sought after. Wars have been fought to possess just one and unlock it's secrets.

From the outside magitech ships look practically impossible. A ship the size of shuttle may have the power of a cruiser, or a dreadnaught may suddenly be able to move like a fighter. This comes at a price though as the power source either drains quickly or prevents too much being used at once.

These ships come in many forms and style, and are often mistaken for other types.

Advantages

- Can have abilities way beyond the ships size and form
- Often mistaken for other ship styles
- Can recharge quickly
- Often have abilities and defences other ships do not have.

Disadvantages

- Can turn off and become unusable if isolated from their power source/universe
- Susceptible to psionic damage
- Often not fully understood by those who use them
- Burn through resources and power quickly
- Unpredictable when used

Mish-mash

Overview

A few ships simply look like they have been thrown together from what has been found, begged or salvaged. They have parts that obviously do not go together and sometimes where never meant to.

Those who serve on this kind of ships know their ship inside and out. They have to; otherwise the ship would fall apart. They may have the engine from one group, or the weapon system from another.

Having a ship like this is often a sign of not being able to afford to make or purchase a fully functional vessel.

They do have one major advantage over other ships and that is when you encounter one, you just simply do not know what it can do. Even it's the same ship you saw last week, it may have been upgraded or got something new added to its weapon system.

Quite a few captains have laughed on seeing one of these vessels and it was the last thing they ever did.

Advantages

- Can have abilities and advantages from many race or groups
- Very cheap to make as they mostly made from salvage etc.
- Easy to upgrade and alter without needed major shipyards etc.
- Unpredictable

Disadvantages

- Unstable and prone to breaking down
- Hard to repair if the ship is not-known
- Unpredictable

Pseudo Ancient

Overview

Note: This style applies to any race that embraces the design style of their own past, not just medieval as it could be what is for them ancient history of thousands of years, such as ancient Egypt or Greece on Earth.

Many races maintain their love of their own history. This carries through their culture and to the stars. Their ships look like sea going vessels or monuments or even flying machines.

Wood, stone, marble, or more likely materials that resemble these are used in their construction. In fact a few groups use old ships that have been retrofitted for space travel, but these are rare as they are very fragile and easy to damage.

Advantages

- Simple to build and repair
- Can easily travel through different mediums, such as liquid or space
- EMP style attacks often reduced in power

Disadvantages

- Easily damaged, more so if a retro-fitted vessel.
- Crew often not well protected
- Often slow
- Not very manoeuvrable or able to sustain high speeds for long

Rough & Ready

Overview

These ships are simple and practical. They value function over form. Does it matter if the ship looks like it is an ugly metallic whale if it' does what it was designed for.

These vessels are often used as haulage or freighters or anywhere where being practical is more important than design.

Warships are sometimes constructed using this style to give a psychological edge to those flying them and seeing them in action.

One major advantage they have is the ability to be modular. This means that the engines from one vessel can easily fitted to another with little work, if any needed. Repairs are also easy to make as you can simply remove the damaged module and replace it with another. This though does introduce a weakness in that modules may be easily removed or damaged/ejected in combat.

Advantages

- Cheap to design and build
- Easy to repair
- Can be modular and have parts changed around or upgraded easily
- Can be quite intimidating to look at

Disadvantages

- Often ugly vessels
- Atmospheric flight is almost impossible for these kinds of ships
- Weak at the module joins in not protected

Sleek & High Tech

Overview

These ships are the pinnacle of design. Their designers considered genius across many species. They have the best technology available and use the most up to date design methodologies. The only ships more advanced than these are prototypes or concepts.

High tech ships are, as the name suggests high tech. They can turn a battle, or even prevent one by simply being there. A group that has a lot of these ships is one to be feared and respected.

Advantages

- Cutting edge technology
- Latest weaponry and defences
- Often quite fast
- High psychological benefit to being in battle with and on one

Disadvantages

- Expensive to build and maintain
- Difficult to mass produce
- If lost (or damaged) the psychological blow can be devastating to moral

Steampunk

Overview

Many regard steampunk as a combination between Pseudo ancient and rough & ready, with a bit of Magictech thrown in. The technology is surprisingly easy to develop and many races who decide to explore the stars early on use this style of technology. Valves, piston, rails for launchers and more. Steam everywhere, clockwork for the large "thinking engines"

Advantages

- Easy to fuel
- Easy to maintain & develop and build

Disadvantages

- Bulky & much large
- Prone to breaking down
- Unreliable in terms of power

Hybrid

Overview

Sometimes, a ship designer wants something from one tech style meshed with another, like bio-tech and high-tech combined. The result is called hybrid technology. Done right, you get the best of both worlds, with the disadvantages of the two (or more) technologies either removed or reduced. This doesn't happen often though, as combining technologies is dangerous and you run the risk of having both system disadvantages as well

Advantages

- Has the advantages of the parent styles
- Often unique

Disadvantages

- Has the disadvantages of the parent styles
- Very hard to develop
- May be feared or banned depending on the technology combined

Other Designs

There will probably come a point when you want to add a new technology style. When doing so, keep in mind that no technology is perfect. The best way to balance is by giving it one disadvantage for every advantage. More powerful? Then it's more unreliable or hard to refuel.

As with anything, breaking the rules can be fun as well, if done right. Unique ships designed by the First Ones may show up, prompting a galaxy wide hunt for a suitable power source. A ship with temporal capabilities is found, the possibilities are endless.

At the end of the day, as long as you are having fun with the ship, that's the most important thing.

Colours and Patterns

The last thing you need to decide on your ship design (externally at least), is what colour scheme and pattern it uses.

The colour scheme, some posologists argue, tells you a lot about the nature of the designer and owner. One space faring organisation for example, has their ships bright white, as both a defiance against the evils that lurk in the darkness of the void and as a message that says “Here I am” to those who may stumble across them.

Almost every ship has some kind of logo on it. This can be the logo of the company who owns it, or to which organisation it belongs to. Independent ships may simple have an image that is used for the ship and represents its name or its role in combat, such as a bomber has a picture of a grinning bomb.

The chart below gives you the typical colour scheme for the ship. Not everything on this ship will be that colour, but 90% will be, with the rest being colour that can’t be changed

D20	Basic colour scheme
1	Beige
2	Black
3	Blue
4	Bronze
5	Brown
6	Copper
7	Gold
8	Green
9	Grey
10	Materials natural colours
11	Orange
12	Pink
13	Purple
14	Red
15	Reflective/chrome
16	Sandstone
17	Silver
18	White
19	Yellow
20	Other colour

A few designers often add a pattern to the colour scheme. This is simply for visual effect but can help distinguish ships in one squadron from another and help provide a sense of unity between those who fly in them, in the same way some ground combat squadrons will have a unit symbol or mascot.

If you need a random value to determine of the ship has a pattern on its hull, then 20% is a good base value to start with.

Roll on the previous chart to determine the colouring of the pattern (using a darker version of the colour rolled if the same as the base)

D20	Pattern
1	Aztec
2	Camouflage
3	Chevrons
4	Circles
5	Diamonds
6	Egyptian
7	Jigsaw
8	Lattice
9	Lines – Curved
10	Lines – Dotted/broken
11	Lines - Jagged
12	Lines - Straight
13	Random Blobs
14	Spots
15	Squares
16	Stars
17	Stripes
18	Other Pattern - Simple
19	Other Pattern - Complex
20	Combination Roll again, ignoring a 20

The orientation, length, actual details etc. are left up to you to decide, but it’s best to keep them simple. You may decide to have a particular pattern on one class of ships and another on another class. Some may have a pattern on the dorsal, but a different on the ventral side etc.

Upcoming Products

Keep an eye out for these forthcoming planned releases
(In no particular order)

Treasure Hordes
[PFRPG/D20]

More pre-generated treasure hordes & collections for various levels of play.

Books & Libraries Kit
[Generic]

Every fantasy world and wizard worth their salt needs a library. But details are needed, such as what it contains, its layout and what secret tomes are hiding in its vaults…

Fantastic Feats
[Pathfinder – On-going]

A new, on-going series of products of feats themed around a certain subject, class, race or some other theme. Some will be good, others nasty, some even deliberately overpowered

Backgrounds & Details Kit
Volume 2
Sci-Fi
[Generic]

The sequel to Backgrounds and Details Kit deals with characters (and NPCs) from a sci-fi setting. Some of the basic options from Background and Details Kit – Volume 1 will be present, modified and with options for a sci-fi (or even modern style) setting.

Menagerie of the Mad
[PFRPG/d20]

What happens when someone experiments and creates a herd of messed up and disturbing animals, just because they could?
This is the first in hopefully many volumes, taking normal everyday animals and twisting them in weird ways.
Featuring:

- The feared Demonic Chicken
- The silent Phase Sloth
- The dreaded Vampire Koala
- And more…

Empire Kit
(Generic – Multi-part)

You are the ruler of a kingdom. How big is it? What is called, how is it ruled?
All these questions and more will be answered

Settlement Kit
(Generic/Pathfinder – Multi-part)

Towns, villages and cities need details as well. From their layout to features such as the rulers, the layout and who (or what) calls this place home.

Easthalen
(Game World Core Book)
[Pathfinder/D20]

A prison designed to trap a mad god and you are stuck in here with him. The rules and law of reality in certain places are getting weaker and in some places starting to fall apart…
Featuring:

- A world where everyone can use magic…but you may not want to
- Areas that never stay the same, including the great city of Franner.

Take part in the development and design process Here @ Reddit