



# How to Play Teaching Guides: #43 Merchant of Venus

This guide is intended for use by owners of the game looking for a quick outline with a recommended order and structure with which to teach the game. To hear a sample explanation or to learn the game yourself listen to episode #43 of The How to Play Podcast available at [www.howtoplaypodcast.com](http://www.howtoplaypodcast.com)

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## The Hook - What the Game is About

*"Welcome to Merchant of Venus. In this game you are an interstellar businessman trying to make your fortune shipping goods across the wilds of outer space. The first player to amass a wealth of 2,000 space credits will win the game. (Or more or less depending on the length of game you desire.)"*

*Becoming the wealthiest merchant in the galaxy and the winner of the game just takes three easy steps.*

- *First explore the galaxy to make contact with alien species and discover trade routes.*
- *Then exploit those newly discovered routes to buy and sell goods to start to amass your fortune*
- *Finally invest your fortune in spaceports and factories to help you accumulate wealth even quicker*

*The player that does these three things the most successfully will get to the target amount of money the fastest and win the game."*

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## The Meat - How to Play the Game

### Explore the Galaxy

1. Basics of a Turn;
  - 1.1 You may move your ship by rolling the dice and moving
  - 1.2 You may buy/sell if you are on a spaceport/planet
2. How to Move
  - 2.1 Declare your heading THEN roll
  - 2.2 Move your ship the full roll or land
  - 2.3 No backtracking, may move past or be on same space as other ships
  - 2.4 Landing and taking off takes 2 movement points
  - 2.5 You may peek at culture if you are in the system

### 3. Making First Contact

3.1 Flip the first contact card

3.2 Place all the tokens for that culture on the system

3.3 Keep the first contact card as an IOU for buying things

### 4. How Many Transactions?

4.1 You always move first (if you wish) then sell and buy

4.2 If you land on a surface city/neutral spaceport one sell/one buy

4.3 If you pass your movement you may do unlimited selling & buying

## **Exploit discovered trade routes**

### 1. How do you make money?

1.1 Buy goods where they are produced

1.2 You are looking for the next 4(5) system numbers because those are the aliens that will buy it. Good produced at system 1 sold at 2-5 etc.

1.3 Example: Finest Dust; buy for 10, sell it for 50

1.4 Looking for a trade circle; Go from 1 to 4 to 8 to 12 to 1 etc.

### 2. Buying/Selling Rules

2.1 Don't forget to use your IOU (Does not count as a "buy")

2.2 Goods take one cargo hold - limited to two

2.3 For each good you sell you will trigger, "THE BONUS CUP"

2.3.1 Mix the cup and draw one out

2.3.2 Place the good/passenger/demand on the appropriate system

2.3.3 This is how goods are refreshed, passengers become available and, demands appear to make selling items more valuable

2.4 Demands give bonus money as well as trigger the bonus cup

2.4.1 Multiple demands give full money but only 1 token goes away

### 3. Passengers are like free goods that appear via the bonus cup

3.1 Getting/Dropping off passengers is not a buy/sell action

3.2 Passengers require half a cargo hold

### 4. Offloading - Players may choose to offload goods/passengers/this will trigger the bonus cup

## **Invest your Fortune**

1. Purchase spaceports to make money quicker
  - 1.1 “Cost” of 200 BUT deed counts towards total wealth
  - 1.2 Ten percent commission on ALL purchases/sales
  - 1.3 Speeds you up as allows unlimited buys/sells on landing
2. Purchase factories to make money quicker
  - 2.1 “Cost” of 100/200 BUT deed counts towards total wealth
  - 2.2 Allows for purchase of a premium good worth more money
  - 2.3 Fifty percent commission on purchase of premium good
3. 20 percent discount on spaceports/factories in home system

## **Dangers of the Galaxy**

1. Hazards - pay listed amount or end turn
2. Navigation circles - choose a navigation die, may not change
3. Encounters - About half are hazards, half are goodies
  - 3.1 Relics - Special ability, end turn if you want to pick up, play asteroid
  - 3.2 Open Spaceport - quick place to buy/sell for the system
  - 3.3 Telegates - allow travel to other telegates using navigation die
4. Asteroids - Free places to land

## **Upgrading your ship**

1. Type of culture determines what equipment & ships are available
2. Shields - reduces hazards by 20 - 2nd and more require cargo space
3. Drives - Allows you to skip red/yellow dots to move faster
4. Bartering Equipment and Relics - As a sell action, trade in equipment for half its value or a relic for full value towards purchases in a system
5. Trading - you may trade with other players landed on the same space
6. Improve Ship - sell ship at half cost purchase new ship
  - 6.1 May only ever have one ship
  - 6.2 Ships alter speed and cargo capacity
  - 6.3 Also available at galactic base

## **Winning the Game**

A player who has reached the goal amount of wealth (usually 2,000 credits) in credits and deed value at the end of their turn may declare victory.

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## **The Hamster - How to Win the Game**

1. Early Game - Exploring the galaxy
  - 1.1 Get to as many planets first as you can
  - 1.2 Go “Relic Hunting” -Trying to find relics from encounter chits
2. Mid Game - Exploit trade routes by creating a loop
  - 2.1 Change plans based on demand chits or lack of goods
3. Late Game - Buy Spaceports/Factories as soon as possible
4. Consider ONE ship upgrade before the halfway point of the game
5. Pay attention to the flow of the game by watching players’ wealth
6. Good luck and have fun!

### Credits:

Game Design: Richard Hamblen

Game Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games

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Teaching outline based upon How to Play Podcast Episode #43

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