

# FEDERATION COMMANDER: SCENARIO DESIGNER GUIDE

Scenarios for *Federation Commander* follow a specific, but flexible, format. Following this format not only helps players (who can find the information they need where they expect it to be) but helps you by eliminating the need to “reinvent the rule about maps” every time you write a new scenario, and by ensuring that the scenario includes all of the parts it should.

It should be noted that we (here at ADB, Inc.) failed to establish a standard *Federation Commander* scenario format before the first product was published in 2005, and have (sadly) made up the “standard wordings” as we went along. With *Briefing #1* it is time to define and provide standard wording, terminology, and formatting, for the good of everyone.

Resources are available on [StarFleetGames.com](http://StarFleetGames.com) and in this briefing to help the prospective scenario writer, including an index of published scenarios and this format guide. Also on that website are many Input Guide articles from *Captain's Log* which provide helpful tips and things to look out for. On that webset there is the continually-updated *Federation Commander Master Ship Chart* which helps you determine what ships are available for use, and a ship name list. (You can certainly suggest your own ship names, and even slightly clever writing can eliminate the need to actually name the ships at all, but if you want to pick real ship names, or see what theme the ships of a given class or type use for names, you can check the file.) There is also a Capitalization Guide so you can tell what rates a capital letter and what is just a common noun.

Unlike some game companies which reject submissions on the third typo found, we're far more interested in seeing you create an entirely new situation than in whether you properly capitalized or punctuated the text. We can fix simple mistakes (spelling, format, grammar, punctuation) in a good scenario, but we cannot fix a bad scenario even if it is perfectly spelled and formatted. Even so, running the spell check and having someone proofread your work does make our job easier, and every minute we spend fixing things you could have fixed means a minute not spent on some other new product. If everybody who submitted anything did a better job on this “basic English” stuff, we would have enough spare man-hours to do one extra product a year, and that would be great for everyone (players, writers, and the company).

You need to pay attention to some data files when writing scenarios. Do not include ships which are not in the game, although you might (if you are using an *SFB* ship not yet in *Federation Commander*) ask if we would consider publishing that ship in the *Briefing*

or *Communique* where your scenario is to be published. A good source for historical data is the *Prime Directive Core Rulebook* (for any of the RPG systems). Keep track of geography; even though *Federation Commander* is far less picky about such things, it is just not likely that Gorn and Klingon ships would accidentally encounter each other in some remote sector of the galaxy. Similarly, keep track of who is on which side of the overall scheme of galactic politics. The Alliance includes the Federation, Gorns, and Kzintis; the Hydrans are a “co-belligerent” and the Tholians were briefly part of the Alliance. The Coalition includes the Klingons, Romulans, and Lyrans. The LDR and ISC are neutral and the Orion Pirates are just criminals (but are sometimes mercenaries working for one side or the other). A few decades before the main time period of the game, the Federation and Kzintis fought two border wars, and the Klingons were neutral (and friendly to the Federation).

Below you will find a number of standardized example formats. Our Director of Proofreading and Product Professionalization, Jean Sexton, has certified that these are correctly spelled, punctuated, and capitalized, and are in the approved standard format and syntax. This example file is on the website as a text file and as a PDF, and you can simply “copy and paste” the best formats for your scenario (assuming one fits, which in most cases will be the case). If what you want your scenario to do is done by one of the standard paragraphs, then by all means use it. This makes it easier for players (and editors) to get beyond the obvious stuff and get to work on the real creative “meat” of your idea. Having lots of scenarios with “different” text that accomplishes the same thing not only confuses people, it leads them to question if the scenario designer's intent was something different from the standard. Why use a different path to the same goal if it (incorrectly) convinces people that your path goes to some other destination?

Many scenario writers simply start with this document and delete whatever they *don't* need before adding their scenario's unique *don't* and other data.

One last comment. The format is intended to help you design scenarios, not to block you from designing scenarios. If the format for a minor sub-rule doesn't work for your special case, don't use it. Just produce clearly understandable and properly written English and if we need to change it, that's our problem.

## (8PT1) SCENARIO TITLES (Part 1)

The title is the first thing anyone will read (including the people at ADB, Inc., who decide if your scenario gets published). Find something short, punchy, and intriguing. You could use a play on words based on a popular movie title or song, or a brief quote from a favorite book, or something original. Read over the list of published scenario titles, not so much for ideas as for the “feel” you need to portray. You want to get people interested. You need to make people *want* to read and play your scenario.

Scenarios converted from *Star Fleet Battles* must



keep the original scenario title.

A word about scenario numbers. Current theory is to use this format: (8PT1) where 8 is the chapter all scenarios are in, PT is the initials of the product title, and the final number is the scenario within that product's scenario section. As you can see in the scenario index, all previous scenario numbers are being changed in the reprints to this format, thus scenario (8KA), the first scenario in *Klingon Attack*, will become (8KA1) in a future reprint.

For your purposes, use your own initials. For example, the first scenario recently submitted by one author was (8GWB1). For purposes of our examples in this article, we will use scenario (8PT1).

For the record, the scenarios in *Briefing #1* are numbered (8B101) through (8B124) with B1 being the product and 01-24 being the individual scenario.

### (8PT1) SCENARIO BACKGROUND (Part 2)

The background of a scenario is critical. It sets up the scenario, gives the players key information, establishes the mood, and ties the scenario to the overall strategic situation. It is often said that the history of the *Star Fleet Universe* has been told primarily through the background paragraphs of its scenarios.

A background paragraph is a miniature fiction story (or the first part of one; the players will write the rest of it for themselves). Like all fiction, it needs to be long enough to explain the situation and short enough to avoid boring the reader and convincing him to stop reading (or, worse, stop playing). Look at your introduction (after you write it) and see if there are sentences you can leave out as extraneous clutter.

In the following sections, we have used italics to show the instructions and left the example formats in plain text, for your convenience.

### (8PT1a) NUMBER OF PLAYERS

*This is always the first rule, and has the subscript "a" in its rule number. There are several possible formats listed below; use one of them if at all possible. Do not invent a new format if one of these will work. Here are those examples:*

**Two:** The Federation player and the Klingon player.

*Notice that "The" after the colon is capitalized, and that "Two" (or whatever the number is) goes in bold. Putting the number in bold isn't strictly required by the rules of English, but it will make this section look like the later sections which have bold subheadings.*

**One:** The Fleet player controls the ship; the monster moves by automatic rules.

**Two:** The Federation player and the Klingon player. Additional players could be accommodated by having each command one ship in teams.

**Four:** The Gorn player, the Federation player, the Romulan player, and the Klingon player. The Gorn and Federation ships (which are allied) could be controlled by one player, as could the Romulan and Klingon ships (which are allied).

**Six** (one for each ship) or four (Pirate, Klingon, Kzinti, and Federation).

**Any** number of "conspiracy" players, each with one ship, plus the Federation player, who has multiple ships.

**Two or more:** At least two (one Coalition and one Pirate), but different players could control each Coalition ship.

### (8PT1b) INITIAL SETUP (Part 1)

*This is always the second section, and has the subscript "b" in its rule number.*

*Remember that "Setup" is one word in this case because it is a noun. The first paragraph is always how to set up (two words in this case as it is a verb) the map, and is in three parts: map shape, special map features or terrain, and map status. This is always one paragraph, unless it gets so long (say, eight sentences) that a single massive paragraph would be hard to read. In that case, grant yourself an exception and break it into paragraphs.*

*The first sentence(s) of the first paragraph defines the map shape. The most common format (which we came to use only recently) is:*

**Map:** Set up the map with 3 panels across and 2 panels high if using small hexes (4 wide and 3 high if using large hexes).

*Anything else will, by definition, be a special scenario format unique to your scenario, but we have included a few examples of such special formats. If, perchance, you could use one of them, feel free:*

**Map:** The map for this scenario is one panel wide if using small hexes (two panels if using large hexes), and extends for 100 hexes in direction B/C ("east"). Take the six map panels and set them up either one panel "high" and six wide (small hexes) or two panels high and three wide (large hexes). This will be a running battle, as the Klingons move toward the base, so you will have to keep picking up the panels behind the Klingons and adding new panels in front of them.

*The second part of the map paragraph defines any terrain or special map panels. If there is a planet or some other feature, it is noted here. However, if there is a base, it is noted in the setup for that empire (in paragraphs after the map paragraph). Some example statements include:*

The center two panels are asteroid panels. *Note that this cleverly works with both six and twelve panels, although in the first case they would be bottom-to-top and in the second they would be side-by-side.*

Place a planet in a hex near the center of the map.

Include a web panel in the right side of the map.

*The final sentence of the map paragraph defines the map as a "fixed", "location", or "floating" map. See rule (8A1). The most common forms for this definition include:*

The map is "fixed", and does not float. Any unit leaving the map has disengaged and cannot return.

The map is a "location map"; any ship which is more than 35 hexes from the [planet, base, or what-

ever you decided was the center point of the battle, the reason why people have come here to fight) has disengaged and cannot return.

Use a "floating" map since the battle is in open space with no borders or terrain features to restrict the movement of the ships.

The map will "float" up and down, but not side to side. Any ship which leaves the side of the map has disengaged and has disengaged and cannot return.

The map is "fixed" on the upper and lower edges and only floats to the right if there are not enough map panels available to set up the full 42 hexes needed for the scenario.

Any unit which is more than 35 hexes from the [name a specific ship which is the purpose of the scenario] has disengaged and has left the scenario. In this case, define what happens if the ship named as the center-purpose of the scenario happens to get destroyed. The simplest solution is to add: "... or the hex in which it was destroyed."

Note that the final section of the map paragraph may include rules on disengagement; generally speaking, ships can only disengage toward their home bases or they will be trapped and destroyed. This is another reason for geographic alignment of starting positions.

For a fixed map, indicate which map edges can be used by each empire for disengagement. For a floating map, this is much more complicated, as ships must disengage in a direction, and that assumes they have no enemy forces in front of them. Consider this rules paragraph:

Any unit which is more than 26 hexes from all enemy units has disengaged and left the scenario. Klingon ships can only disengage in directions E or F (or between those directions), and must have no enemy ships in their FA arc at the time of disengagement. Ships which disengage in unauthorized directions are considered destroyed.

Now imagine playing this scenario. The Klingons have reached the Federation convoy and destroyed it, but the angry Federation ships are now between them and home. Even though the Federation ships may be more than 26 hexes from the Klingons, they are in the way of the Klingon retreat ... err ... strategic withdrawal. The outnumbered and badly damaged Klingons either have to drive straight through the Federation fleet until they can get away, or go around it.

### (8PT1b) INITIAL SETUP (Part 2)

The second (and subsequent) paragraphs of the Initial Setup rule define the forces of each empire (also known as race, faction, side, or nation, but the preferred term is "empire") involved. Each begins with the bold (upper and lower case) name for the empire, followed by a colon. Some example formats include:

**Federation:** Set up a heavy cruiser in any convenient hex (in one corner of the map).

**Klingon:** Set up a Klingon D7 in any convenient hex that is 26 hexes away from the Federation ship in direction C/D. (The Klingon player can pick a hex; it

doesn't have to be in a straight row of hexes.) The two ships should be facing each other (i.e., have each other in their FA arcs).

*Try to line up your forces geographically by checking the maps in the products. The Klingons are west of the Federation, so set up your scenario with the Klingons on the left side of the map and the Federation on the right side (unless, maybe, Klingon ships in Federation space are trying to get home, in which case the reverse would obviously be appropriate. Gorns are north of the Romulans, and so would be at the top of the map with Romulans at the bottom.*

*This is a good point to mention a key difference between Federation Commander and Star Fleet Battles. While SFB has a single big map (with hexes numbered 4230), FC has numerous identical map panels. This means you cannot use hex numbers to set up the ships. The preferred and simplest manner is to place one ship in a general area (say, the lower left corner) and then define the other ships by their distance and direction from this ship. Be sure that the "key ship" is the first unit mentioned in that empire's paragraph, and that the paragraph for that empire is first in the sequence. Other than this, there is no particular requirement or method for selecting the order of the empire paragraphs in the set up rules. Generally speaking, if there is a base in the scenario, it will be the most convenient unit to use as the "key" unit. However, in some cases, the base is the objective of an attack and is 100 or more hexes off the map, in which case it might well be mentioned last.*

*Here are some other formats that could be used:*

**Klingons:** Place the Klingon F5 frigate *Khedive* in the hex adjacent to the asteroid in direction D.

**Federation:** Place the heavy cruiser *Kongo* sixteen hexes away from the planet, directly along a hex row in direction B.

*In some scenarios, one empire might have numerous forces, each with separate and specific deployment rules. In this case, use bullet points to make it easier for players to tell where one instruction stops and another starts. For example:*

**Federation:** Set up as follows:

- A police cutter two hexes from the base in direction C.
- A frigate six hexes from the base in direction D.
- A heavy cruiser anywhere on the map which is not within ten hexes of the base or either ship.

*Veterans of SFB expect to see some other information, such as facing (the direction that a ship is pointing), speed on the previous turn, and weapon status. In the simpler and kinder world of Federation Commander, facing is generally left up to the player (although there could be specific cases in which it is important, and in those cases, define it). Speed on the previous turn is not relevant as FC has no acceleration limits, and of course, FC does not have a weapon status system. In special cases in which it is important to define what weapons are and are not armed, this should be covered, for example:*

**Federation:** Place a frigate four hexes in direc-





