

Introduction and Basic Rules.

This is the introduction that was originally written for the 2.3 and earlier versions of the rules. Please see the [new 2.4 rules page](#).

While I like the WH40K universe I've never been entirely happy with the war-gaming rules. There were many fine ideas in WH40K Rogue Trader (WH40K-RT) but there was also obviously room for improvement in some areas. WH40K 3rd edition fixed some of these points, but also introduced some other rules that were not an improvement in my opinion. WH40K 5th edition seemed to be an improvement, but kept the legacy of some of the less than elegant 3rd edition rules such as Cover Saves. 6th edition introduces some new ideas but many players feel the primary reason rules are being changed is just to sell more rulebooks. Much of 6th edition left me baffled so I decided to stop trying to accommodate these rules to be compatible.

Note that I'm not in any way affiliated with Games Workshop nor do I in anyway intend to infringe copyright or discourage you buying the official rulebooks etc. You'll actually need the rulebooks for some of the damage charts etc to use with these rules. I'd suggest also getting a copy of WH40K-RT if you can find one since it has lots of good ideas for scenarios, creatures, weird terrain and the like.

Units in Gemini-ARAP use the profiles published in the Official GW codices, with the addition of a Movement Characteristic (like older versions of WH40K). GW's Special Rules for units are also used, except where they are obviously incomparable with the Gemini-ARAP system.

It wasn't long before I thought about trying to combine the best of the old and new to create something that was easy to use but still fun and with plenty of flexibility. My first attempt was the Gemini Rules, which can be found elsewhere on this site and used a conventional IGO-UGO format. Since I wrote those I've come across a really nice set of war-gaming rules called [“Songs of Blades and Heroes”](#). These rules are very reasonably priced and I thoroughly recommend that you consider getting a copy.

[“Songs of Blades and Heroes”](#).

<http://www.ganeshagames.blogspot.com/>

One of the ideas used in SBH is that each figure needs to be activated before it is used, and how well this activation goes determines how many actions the figure can then make. With a little tinkering, this system could be adapted to the Gemini Rules. I call this version of the Gemini Rules Gemini-ARAP and this is now my preferred system for using the rules.

The ARAP system (Activation Roll, Action Point) makes games more fluid and dynamic and removes the need to keep track of things like which unit moved in the previous turn.

While these rules have been written in the context of the WH40K Sci-fi universe there is no reason why they can't be adapted for modern, near future, historical or fantasy games.

Gemini-ARAP WH40K Rules 2.3.1

Version 2.3 hopefully cleans up a few points and streamlines game play. The most obvious modification is the introduction of the Suppression points system and the Melee Radius.

How the Rules Work.

This page and the next few pages will have all of the basic rules you need to conduct an infantry vs infantry skirmish using Gemini-ARAP rules. The Advanced Section will cover rarer situations such as actions in smoke, woodland or urbanized areas. It will also cover other types of unit such as vehicles, bikes and cavalry.

The Basic Gemini-ARAP System.

Who has first turn is determined by scenario, flipping a coin, dice roll + strategy rating or any other means agreeable to all players or decided by the GM.

Each player turn effectively divides into several phases.

Compulsory Actions. This includes the movement of Routers and Pursuers and attempts to Rally.

Activation Phase. The controlling player attempts to activate each of their units and has them make actions such as move, fire or charge.

Reaction Phase. The other player(s) units may react to the actions of the previous phase.

Close Combat Phase. Both sides fight in any Close Combats that were started that turn or are on-going.

In the above scenario one player activates and moves all their units and then the other player(s) do. For simplicity the rules are written as though this is the manner of play. Sitting around watching another player move all his units can be rather boring for other players in large games. One alternative is to roll for initiative at the start of a turn to vary who goes first. More adventurous is for players to roll before each Activation to see who gets to attempt to activate one of their units. This continues until one player goes "Bust", after which the other player(s) continues until all units have been activated or they roll "Bust". If you want an even more random system, create a deck of cards with each card representing a unit. Shuffle the cards at the start of each turn and attempt to activate units as their cards are drawn.

Activation Phase.

If it is your turn you may attempt to activate each of your units once. If you wish you can choose not to attempt to activate certain units. Once you have made your actions and have no more units you have not attempted to activate then the other player(s) can make any Reactions and any Close Combats are fought. If the player rolls "Bust" then their attempts at activation end and Reactions and Close Combats are resolved. You may also voluntarily end an Activation Phase if there are units you do not wish to attempt to activate.

SBH makes activation rolls for individual figures. Gemini-ARAP rolls for units. Each vehicle is treated as a distinct unit, although players may treat squadrons of vehicles as units if they wish, providing all members make the same actions. An Independent Character without a retinue is treated as a unit of one, so gets their own activation roll.

Gemini-ARAP WH40K Rules 2.3.1

To activate a unit you roll one, two or three D6 dice. How many to use is up to you, and you can roll a different number for each unit. Rolls are made against the unit's Activation value, which is determined by the unit's Initiative.

Units with an Initiative of 1, 2 or 3 all need to roll a 3 or less.

Units with an Initiative of 4 need to roll a 4 or less.

Units with an Initiative of 5 or greater need to roll a 5 or less.

A roll of 6 is therefore always a failure, and a 3 or less always a success.

Gone to Ground, Routing and Pursuing units do not make Activation rolls.

For each success your unit gets one Action Point. Most Actions that a unit can make cost one Action Point but a few Actions need two or more Action Points. The GM may rule that some Actions need more points under certain situations. If a hill is particularly slippery it may need two Action Points to move up rather than one. If a creature is a poor swimmer it may still move D3+1" per move, but each move costs two points, and so on.

Once you have generated the Action Points the activated unit uses them to move, shoot or charge. Perform all actions with the activated unit before moving to activate another unit. The most likely exception to this is if a unit becomes involved in a Close Combat and still has remaining Actions. If they destroy all their opponents at the end of the Close Combat phase they can use the remain Action Points in hand.

Different types of Actions can be made in any logical order, provided this is allowed for by the rules.

Usually all the members of a unit will make the same type of action. If a unit has two actions and decides to Move and then Shoot members that cannot shoot do not get to move twice, for example.

If you roll two failures during an activation roll your unit is not activated, your Activation phase ends and you may not activate any more units that turn. The Activation phase ends and the Reaction or Close Combat phase commences. In Gemini-ARAP this is called a **"Bust"**. Obviously you will never go Bust if you only ever roll one dice for activation but your units won't get much done and it will become the next player's turn when you have attempted to activate all your units. In games where each side has a large number of units each player may be allowed more than one Bust before the turn switches. Only one attempt to activate each unit is allowed, however, and a unit that rolls a Bust cannot activate that turn.

Certain situations will automatically activate units. A unit that chooses to intercept a charge activates automatically, but must use its activation to enter Close Combat with the charging unit. Any unit that is in Close Combat will be automatically activated, but must use its turn to fight or disengage.

Certain situations such as Pinning create Activation Roll Penalties. A One Dice Activation Penalty means on the next turn when you attempt to activate that unit you get one less Action Point than successes you roll. You have to use at least two dice to attempt an activation of a unit under such as penalty. If you roll one failure and one success the unit cannot do anything but you do not go Bust. Two failures is a Bust as usual. Pinning is

Gemini-ARAP WH40K Rules 2.3.1

a Two Dice Activation Penalty which means you get two less Action Points than you roll. You have to roll three dice to attempt to activate a unit under this penalty and will only make one action if you roll three successes. Rolling two successes means the unit cannot do anything but the player does not go Bust.

How you use the Action Points you generate should become apparent as you read the following sections. Since Action Points are generated immediately before they are used the ARAP system doesn't really involve any complex book keeping.

Scale.

The following rules are written assuming you are using figures that are nominally 28mm. There is no reason you can't use these rules using smaller figures such as 1/72nd scale figures, or larger figures of 54mm, 1/32nd or 1/35th. In fact you could probably play these rules using Action men if you wanted.

I think the only rule that might need changing is the climbing rule that imposes a movement penalty for climbing up or down anything more than an Inch high. For 1/72nd figures I'd change this measurement to 2cm. For 54mm figures etc I'd recommend 1.5" or 40mm. Both these values allow you to use a handy 20mm or 40mm base as a quick measure. For 1/6th figures such as Action men impose the movement penalty for anything higher than chest height of a standing figure. That probably works out as being 10".

Horizontal distances have been given in inches. This is a useful measure for 28mm figures since many of them are mounted on 25mm bases. If you find it easier you can change the units. Having each unit 2cm if you are short of space or prefer metric is convenient since you just need to double any distances I give. If you decided to play with Action Men try doubling the given distances in inches.

Size Category.

Models are assigned a Size Category which may be relevant for certain aspects of the game. Creatures or objects of 30cm or smaller real world size are Size One. Most combatants in the WH40K universe are under 3 metres tall/long and therefore Size Two. Size Two is further divided into standard Size Two and large Size Two. A large Size Two is a model that is usually mounted on a 40mm base such as an ogryn or terminator. Size Three are vehicles, dreadnoughts and monstrous creatures. Size Four are super-heavy vehicles and gargantuan creatures such as titans and bio-titans.

Distances and Unit Coherency.

In the official WH40K rules distances are measured from the edges of the base. For a unit to be coherent there must be a distance of no more than 2" between models. This works if all the models have 25mm bases but does offer an unfair advantage to models with 40mm bases. With a 2" spacing far less models will be under a blast marker or template if on larger bases.

In Gemini rules unit coherency distance is taken to be 3" measured from the centre of the base. Members of the same unit must attempt to keep within 3" of at least one other member of the same unit. This rule means that models on 25mm bases are still placed with up to 2" between base edges but models on 40mm are placed with up to 1½" between base edges. Since 2" is two 25mm base diameters and 1½" is a 40mm base diameter this is all easy to set up. Measuring 3" centre to centre also allows the use of models mounted on other sized bases such as Warhammer 20mm square

Gemini-ARAP WH40K Rules 2.3.1

bases. A piece of sprue cut to 3" and painted bright colours (*so you don't lose it among all the other bits of model kit lying around!*) will prove very useful for checking spacing. It is also useful for measuring the move of models on 25mm bases with a M of 4. Place the sprue with one end touching the edge of the base, and then place the model so the rear side of the base is touching the other end of the sprue. This will be a 4" Move.

What happens when Unit Coherency cannot be maintained and how to split units is covered [later](#).

In Gemini-ARAP rules distances are measured from the base centre. If the model lacks a base use the centre of the model. Measurements involving vehicles are taken from or to the edge of the vehicle hull. Distances for vehicle shooting are taken from the weapon's muzzle.

Equipment.

Other than some models and the rules all you really need is a tape measure, some templates/burst markers and some dice. A 6" Rule, 12" Clear Ruler and 3" piece of Sprue will also prove very handy.

A clear 12" ruler will prove very useful for resolving shooting. Since it is clear any obstructions to the line of fire can be seen. The 3" piece of Sprue can be used for measuring unit coherency and moving M4 models. A rod cut to 9" length will be handy for measuring Reaction distance.

Some counters or markers will prove useful to indicate units that need to test for Suppression or show which units are Suppressed, Pinned, Hidden or in Overwatch.

The main thing to keep track of is which units are -1 to hit due to their speed or other activities in the previous round. Make a few counters you can place by a unit when they achieve this property.

Multiple wound models will need some way to show they have taken a wound. Small rubber bands or loops of string that can be hung on the figure can be useful for this. Other players like to place a dice by the figure with the relevant number value showing. Little mini-dice are sometimes used for this.

Dice.

All of the basic game play is made with six-sided dice and I suggest you have plenty of them. Games Workshop shops have a very nice set of dice in a tin. You get twenty red dice, ten black and a Scatter dice and a couple of artillery dice (the latter not used in Gemini rules). Very reasonably priced a £5 and there is room in the tin to add a few more dice of other colours. Mine also has two white, two blue, two large green, one small green and a red and a blue D10. A selection of colours can be very useful when one or more models in a unit require a different score.



A Scatter dice (*left*) has an arrow on four sides and a bull's-eye/crosshairs on two. If you look carefully you will see that the crosshairs on the "Hit" faces also have small arrows (*pointing to the right in the photo*). When using a Scatter dice to determine a direction only this arrow can be used without the need to re-roll a Hit score.

Gemini-ARAP WH40K Rules 2.3.1

When a Scatter dice is being used to determine if a shot hits or scatters it is referred to in these rules as a Hit/Scatter dice. When it is only being used to establish a direction it is called a Scatter Only dice.

Scatter dice come as part of GW dice sets or you may be able to buy them loose from Ebay. A few companies produce similar items and they are alternately called Vector Dice, Direction Dice or Deviation Dice. You can make a temporary Scatter dice by placing stickers on a normal dice. Some sites on the internet sell blank dice you can mark yourself. The bull's-eyes go on opposite sides and when one is uppermost the arrow on each other face points at the top left corner. If you own a set of Polygonal dice then you can establish Scatter Only by using a D12 and visualizing a clock-face. The following chapter on [New Dice Rules](#) describes another alternative to Scatter dice.

Although not essential it is strongly suggested that the GM acquires a set of Polygonal dice. If you don't have Polygonal dice a calculator that generates random numbers can be useful using some of the charts in WH40K-RT such as those for mutations or to generate psionic powers. One or two D10s and maybe a D4 is actually a lot quicker, however.

Occasionally you will be called on to roll a D3. This can be done with a D6 and treating 1-2 as a "1", 3-4 as a "2" and 4-6 as a "3". Some folks prefer to mentally halve the face value and round up. I find it easier to subtract 3 from any 4+ result. Use either method but make sure your opponent knows which you use and be consistent. If you need a D5 roll the same method can be used with a D10. Be aware that if you use an actual three-sided dice for a Swimming Roll you stand twice the chance of rolling a natural 1 and the model drowning!

A few polygonal dice such as a couple of D10s come in handy for some charts or randomly establishing casualties in a unit. If you want to use the Variable Terrain rules then a couple of actual D4s, D3s and/or D5s will make things easier. [Reaper's Revenge](#) are a useful source for D3s, D5s and other unusual dice. They also offer 12-sided dice with the sides labeled 1 to 4. These are somewhat easier to read than the isosceles tetrahedron D4s and a pair may be useful for rolling variable moves for M4 units.

If you are in London and do want Polygonal dice try [Orc's Nest](#) just off Cambridge Circus. As well as sets of Polygonal Dice they also sell them loose so are the place to get extra D10s.

Reaper's Revenge

http://www.reapersrevenge.co.uk/special_dice.html

Orc's Nest

<http://www.orcsnest.com/>

Within these rules some dice rolls will be referred to as "Higher D6/D6". This means roll two D6 and take the higher value. Sometimes you'll also see annotation such as R4D6P2↑ or R3D6P2↓. The first means "Roll 4 D6, Pick (use) the 2 highest scores", while the second is read "Roll 3 D6, Pick the 2 lowest scoring". "Higher D6/D6" can therefore also be written R2P1↑.

Tests.

Leadership Tests.

Leadership tests are made against the model's or unit's Leadership (Ld) characteristic and are passed if the player rolls 2D6 equal to or less than the Ld. A roll of a natural 2 is always a pass, irrespective of modifiers.

Some tests against Ld may be referred to variously as Break Tests, Morale Tests, Rout Tests or Rally Tests. This usually indicates a specific consequence that occurs if the test is passed or failed. Most Leadership tests may be taken against the Ld characteristic of the model leading the unit if this is higher.

Tests using Ld can be divided into several groups and it is important to appreciate the distinctions since some Units or Characters don't have to take certain tests.

Tests to use Psionic powers and tests to fire against Chargers or other targets are taken by all units that have an Ld characteristic. Psionic tests use the Psyker's Ld value. Some Psionic powers do not need a Psi-test to be made.

Rout Tests, Rally Tests, Shooting Morale Tests and Tank Shock Tests are all **Morale Tests** and not made by Units that are Fearless or Dogged.

Test to use Special Skills (covered in the Advanced rules section) are always rolled.

Pinning Tests caused by Pinning weapons are not usually taken by Fearless Units but are taken by Dogged, Stubborn and other Units.

Pinning Tests required from being in a vehicle that is damaged are taken by all units including Fearless.

Suppression Points modify Leadership tests except for Rally and Rout tests.

Initiative Tests and Characteristic Tests.

Initiative Tests are made against a single D6 and are passed if a value equal or lower than the Initiative characteristic is rolled. A roll of a natural 6 on an Initiative test is always a fail even if the model has an Initiative of 6 or greater.

Tests using the same mechanism may be made against other Characteristics such as Strength or Toughness. If a figure has to lift something heavy the GM may require them to roll equal or less than their strength. A roll against Toughness may be needed to resist the effects of certain gases or other attacks.

BODMAS.

Rules may require you to multiply, add or subtract from characteristics and when more than one rule is in effect this may cause confusion. For example, the Strength 3 test subject Hugo has been given a combat drug that temporarily doubles his strength and he has armed himself with a long handled hammer that gives him Strength +1 attacks. Should the strength of his attack be $(2 \times 3) + 1 = 7$ or should it be $2 \times (3 + 1) = 8$? In this case the narrative gives us a clue. The drug acts on Hugo, not his weapon and the weapon modifier adds to the user's strength, so the answer is 7.

After the drug has worn off Hugo encounters a creature subject to a special rule that all close combat attacks on it are treated as being of double strength. In this case Hugo's attack is strength 8 since it is the strength of the attack and not the user's strength that is modified, and $2(3+1)=8$.

If you are uncertain use the [BODMAS](#) rule of basic mathematics. Deal with operations inside brackets first, then resolve multiplication and division operations before additions and subtractions.

Psychology Tests.

Psychology is covered in the Advanced rules section. Psychology Tests are taken in the same way as Leadership tests but for some units are taken against the Cool (Cl) characteristic or Intelligence value when this differs from the Ld. Psychology Tests are taken against the lowest Ld or Cl value of the models present in the unit.

Units "Immune to Psychology" do not have to take Psychology tests, while some units always pass particular tests. Fearless units never need to take Fear or Terror tests, for example. Other units are subject to Psychology unless specified.

Movement Save.

The move-based saving roll is used in certain situations. The Move save is made by rolling a D6 equal to or less than the model's Initiative but is subject to the following modifiers. A model trying to avoid a vehicle running it over would make a Movement Save.

Models with a move of 2" or less roll against Int-1.

Models with a move greater than 2" and less than or equal to 4" roll against Initiative.

Models with a move of greater than 4" roll against Int+1.

The move value used is the current move allowance modified by factors such as encumbrance and terrain, not the basic move in the profile. Troops in boggy ground will be much easier for a vehicle run over, while



troops with Jump Packs will be near impossible.

The Movement Save is also used as an Agility test and is made in situations where there is a high chance of the model falling over or off of something. A model trying to move across very loose ground would take an agility roll, as would one trying to move quickly along a narrow plank or slippery branch. Moving across ice at more than half standard rate would require an Agility roll. Consequences of failing an Agility roll will vary. Simply falling over will prevent the model moving or making attacks that turn. Falling out of a tree will be more serious.

WYSIWYG Nazis.

Gemini rules games are intended to be fun for all parties so WYSIWYG restrictions do not apply.

The “What You See Is What You Get” rule appears on Page 167 of WH-40K 3rd Edition. I’ve not been able to locate this rule in the 4th Edition Rule book but it is repeated in some Army Codexes. Note that in 3rd Ed WH40K the WYSIWYG rule was clearly stated as not applying to grenades so you didn’t need to have grenades on your model for them to use grenades. The WYSIWYG rule states that any armament, equipment or upgrades held by a model must be represented on the model you use on the table-top.

For a well-equipped character such as an Inquisitor it is obviously not practical to represent all of the specialized gear they may carry, or would result in an exceptionally ugly and ungainly model. Many models that have been produced by Games Workshop have equipment that is not allowed for by the Army lists.

In practice WYSIWYG can lead to pettiness and bad sportsmanship. In Gemini games a combatant can have equipment not represented on the model providing the GM and other players are informed of this and the model can be clearly identified.

A Personal Thought.

Modern WH40K games are generally large-scale affairs, pitting army against army. What is and isn’t permissible for each army is proscribed by codices. While such games are very popular, I cannot help but think something has been lost along the way. When many WH40K players see an alien figure by another manufacturer often their only thought is “Can I use it as a tyrannid?”

It seems to me that one of the most desirable facets of science fiction is that it should stimulate the imagination, not limit it!

Readers are strongly urged to read the [original Rogue Trader rulebook](#). In this book it will be seen that not every conflict in the WH40K universe has to be a battle between two formally prescribed armies. Some conflicts are against the local wildlife or indigenous peoples. Scenarios included gathering scientific samples, exploring ancient ruins, bank robberies and getaways, prison breaks, rescues, assassinations or even just rivalry between farming communities.

Try some of these scenarios and ideas in some of your future games. It may open up a whole new universe.



Format.

For easier reading on-line these rules are in landscape format. To save your printer ink they are in Garamond font. The table of contents for each section has been moved to the end of the document, making it easier to omit when printing if you do not want that section.



[Webpage Introduction.](#)



[New Dice Rules](#)

Contents

Introduction and Basic Rules.....	1
How the Rules Work.....	2
The Basic Gemini-ARAP System.....	2
Activation Phase.....	2
Scale.....	4
Size Category.....	4
Distances and Unit Coherency.....	4
Equipment.....	5
Dice.....	5
Tests.....	7
Leadership Tests.....	7
Initiative Tests and Characteristic Tests.....	7
BODMAS.....	7
Psychology Tests.....	8
Movement Save.....	8
WYSIWYG Nazis.....	9
A Personal Thought.....	9
Format.....	10