

ALTERNATE ADVANCEMENT RULES

The rules for character advancement in *Star Trek Adventures* (covered on pages 203-204 of the core rulebook) rely on a fairly narrative structure. When your character spends time advancing the plot of the story, and especially when they spend time at the center of the story, then their mechanics change accordingly. They can also become more able (have higher ratings) when the story finishes a major arc of plot.

This can work really well for modeling the sort of season-long character development seen in *Star Trek* series, but it's more reminiscent of later series which had long arcs than it is of the original series and *The Next Generation* which were almost entirely episodic. What's more, it often is at odds with gaming groups which have plots that are organized around gaming sessions. Our group also wasn't comfortable with the voting mechanic for which character was in the spotlight for an episode and wanted something a little less personal.

If you want more of an episode- or session-based advancement option without voting on who is the star, this is that option.

Collecting Episodes

The basis of the advancement option is "Episodes" which might be defined as a three-act story (like in a *Star Trek* series), a particular mission, or a game session depending on the needs of the gaming group. Whatever definition you are using, every time a character completes an Episode (by being active in at least half the scenes of that episode), record the name of that episode on their character sheet.

At any point during any subsequent adventure, you may make a callback (a direct reference in dialogue or narration) to a similar situation your character experienced in a saved episode gains the effects of a point of Determination as if they had used a Value or Directive in a positive fashion. Cross out that episode from the character's Episode List.

Spending Episodes

At any point between episodes, you may remove a number of completed episodes from a character sheet to buy any of the following changes:

Changes for 1 Episode

- Pick a new Value to replace one that was challenged and removed during play
- Reduce one Discipline by 1 (to a minimum of 1) and increase one other Discipline by 1 (to a maximum of 4)
- Replace one Focus

Changes for 3 Episodes

- Reduce one Attribute by 1 (to a minimum of 7) and increase one other Attribute by 1 (to a maximum of 11)
- Replace one Talent
- Reduce one Ship's System by 1 (to a minimum of 6) and increase one other Ship's System by 1 (to a maximum of 12)
- Reduce one Ship's Department by 1 (to a minimum of 1) and increase one other Ship's Department by 1 (to a maximum of 4)
- Replace one of the Ship's Talents

Changes for 6+ Episodes

Each of the below options increases in price by 1 every time you use it: 6 Episodes the first time, 7 Episodes the second, etc. This includes taking different options (i.e. increasing a Discipline, then increasing a Ship System) as well as taking the same option twice (i.e. taking an additional Advancement, then taking another).

These options also reduce your character's maximum Determination pool by 1 for each 6+ Episode upgrade taken. For any of these options, you may also choose to upgrade a supporting character instead of your main PC. Applying an upgrade to a Supporting Character, or to a Ship does not affect your maximum Determination.

- Increase an Attribute by 1 (to a maximum of 12)
- Increase a Discipline by 1 (to a maximum of 5)
- Add one additional Talent
- Add one additional Focus
- Add one additional Value
- Increase a Ship's System by 1 (to a maximum of 12)
- Increase a Ship's Discipline by 1 (to a maximum of 4)
- Add one additional Ship's Talent (can only be chosen once per ship)

Finale Episodes

From time to time you might want to have a big arc-like story in your campaign, something like the Arc Milestones in the core rulebook. In an episodic series like *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, there were occasionally big episodes to cap off a season or as part of a long-running plot in the show like Worf's family or Wesley Crusher's time aboard the *Enterprise*.

You can do something similar in your campaign by having a Finale Episode. This mission (or game session) will have heavy story weight because of what your characters encounter and accomplish, and consequently players can write the episode title *twice* on their Episode List and they can spend each of those instances separately. In effect, this makes a Finale Episode worth two regular episodes. It's not recommended to have any more weight than that, however, as it will lead to a hierarchy of missions and lead to some seeming trivial rather than others seeming important.

Adjusting the Advancement Rate

Pacing in a game played over play-by-post forums can be slower than normal and you might want to adjust the rate of advancement to accommodate this. A faster advancement rate would be one Episode for the first set of options, two for the second set, and three or more for the third set. On the other, a slower advancement rate for a group that meets very frequently or who wants to stay less powerful (say, for a Lower Decks campaign) would be to change the sets of options to two, four, and eight (or more).