

Galactic Civilizations II:

Beginners Strategy Guide

Written by Draginol, converted by Klaus

This guide is designed to give brand new players a quick introduction into how they can get going in the game without being crushed.

Created by Draginol (<http://forums.galciv2.com/post.aspx?postid=104908>), this great guide was extended by user comments and made printable by Klaus (<http://www.breueronline.de/klaus/>).

Journal Entry: Starting up the game...

Alright, I've got the box home. Now, if I can just get the top off, why do they make these things so that it's nearly impossible to get the top cover of the box off without wrecking the box itself? You know, the little plastic thingy at the top. I don't have a knife, so I'm using my fingernail here to get the thing off. That's it, flame forum post on the way!

Okay, let's fast forward a little...

First, let's start a new game.



I'd recommend going with a small galaxy at first. Use all the defaults whatever they are because they've been set up for new players.



For your first game, play as the humans since, hopefully, you're somewhat familiar with that species.



Now, for the abilities, I'd recommend putting your points into economics, morale, and research. This way, it's easier to get money, your people are happier, and you get stuff faster.



Now for picking your opponents, pick just a few and put their intelligence very low for your first games. That way they won't really do much other than drool and make snarky remarks.

With the humans, they're good at diplomacy naturally. This is good because it'll help keep me out of war a little easier. My first few games I don't want to just get crushed. I think I'll also play on a small galaxy so not to get overwhelmed right away.

So now I've started the game. The first screen I get is one asking me to pick a technology to research. There's 6 to choose from. Since I've kind of decided to be diplomatic, I'll choose Universal Translator. It says it'll take 7 weeks (turns) to research that. Okay, fine.



If you hold down the left mouse button on the main map and drag your mouse around, you can move the screen around. Very handy for getting around.

Your planets...

Now I'm brought up to Earth. Gosh, there's only 5 billion people on Earth in this universe. Okay, I'm looking at this map of Earth with a big grid on it.

I click on the yellow tile and it says I need soil enhancement to use it. Fine. So yellow must mean that the tile is useful but only in the future. That implies the green tiles are ready to go. So I click on one of them.



Now I see 5 different things I could build here. Factories, farms, a lab, an entertainment network, and a market center. Those correspond with the things at top. Factories give me more shields and hammers. The lab will give me more beakers. The entertainment network will improve my approval (which is at 90% already so no need for that right now). The farm will increase my food by 5 mt/wk which means my population will be able to grow. But I don't need a farm right now, Earth is doing fine with 15 mt/wk and I only have 5 billion population so I can go to 15 billion based on what I have.

So I click on Basic Factory and then press the Build button and it adds it to the build queue. I then click on Basic lab and do the same thing. Then I try double-clicking on a basic factory and I see that it adds it to the queue (ooh, faster, good!).

Now I click on some of the tiles that have something on them. The first thing I click on is a star port. It says it lets me build ships. Great. The other one is my civilization capital. It says it produces 24 manufacturing points. So I'm off to a good start.

Here's how things work on planets:

- **Your population will not go higher than the food production.** If your food production is 10 mt/wk then 10 billion people is where your population will cap off at. Your tax income comes from people. The more you have, the more you get. Population increases based on your population growth ability and your planetary approval. TIP: Don't just build farms for the sake of building farms. Only build farms when you need to increase your population cap.
- **Your influence (ip)** determines how far from the planet your sphere of influence will go. The higher it goes, the further it goes. And conversely, when it meets someone else's sphere of influence, they push against each other. You can increase your influence by building things like embassies which you get from Universal Translator.
- **Your Approval** is what % of the population thinks you're doing a good job. It is not as important as you might think. At the start of the game, you're a dictator, so what do you care what the masses think? Other forms of government are available that give you more money, and then you can worry about it. Approval is affected by population (more people, the more demanding they are) and your tax rate. You can increase your approval rate by building entertainment centers.

I typically start by building a couple of factories. A basic factory can product 8 manufacturing points if it's fully funded. That is, if your spend-rate is 100% and all of that spending is put toward either military or social production (or a combination). Each of those 8 points costs 1bc to produce. You can get bonus production through your abilities which you are not charged for. You can also build starbase factories which enhance your production rate but you are charged for that additional production.



Players typically start out with 5000 bc. My suggestion is to use that money to quickly build things. For instance, select a factory, press the buy button and you will be given a number of purchase options. I tend to

pick only the first two unless I'm desperate since I don't like paying interest. This way, you can really get your civilization going early on.

I notice in the top right the starport says it's idle. So I click on the Build Ship button.

This is what I see:

Pretty empty. I'm not doing anything. Well, since the goal of the game is to expand my goodness out into the universe, I need to build a colony ship. So I do. The little number in () means how many weeks it's going to take. It says 17 which isn't good. Good thing I'm building those factories. Scout only takes 8 weeks in this example.



I click end up selecting the colony ship and hitting "back to planet".

I see up at the top little button thingies right by the number that shows how much production is going on in each category. I click on the one by military and the military box lights up and now instead of only having 6 shields it has 10. But social and research both lost some of their symbols. This is how I can focus production on a planet. But I only gained a few shields but lost six production points total from the other two categories so this isn't the best way to do it at this point. I will see what I can do with my economy.

Looking at planets...

Now I'm on the main screen and I see earth's solar system.



Looking at earth here I see a "10" by it. That's what class it is. So I know that a class 10 planet must be pretty decent. Higher numbers are better and lower numbers are worse. The 10 means how many tiles I can use on the planet by default.

Jupiter, Saturn and Mercury are class 0. That means they simply can't be used by us. Mars is class 4. Not exactly a vacation destination but it's useable.

I also have two ships. One is a colony ship ready to go. The other is called the Terran Alliance flagship. It says it's of class "Survey Ship". That means it can explore anomalies. That's a fancy way of saying space junk collector.

When I click on my ships, I see that the mini map in the corner has various levels of lit up space. That represents how far from Earth that ship can go. If I want to be able to travel further, I need to either improve my life support systems through research, build a starbase somewhere which extends my range or colonize a planet that will add range around that planet.

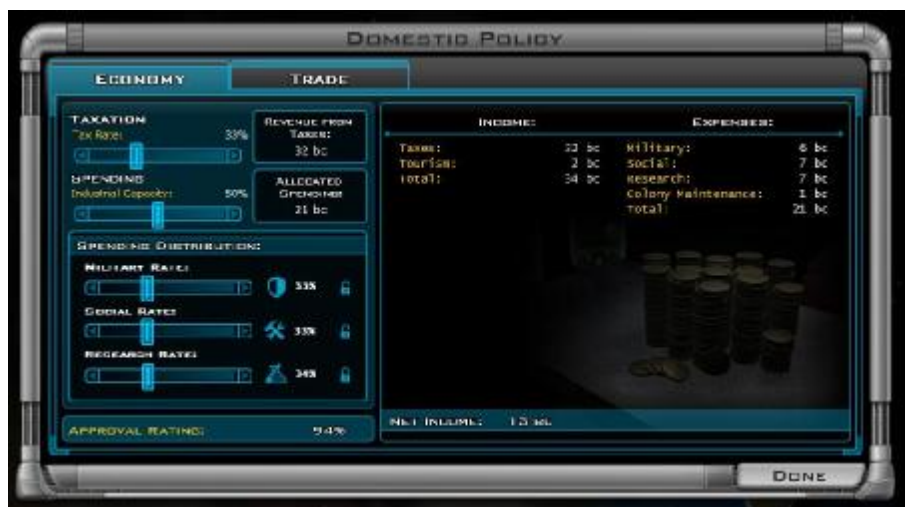
On the mini-map to the right are some little buttons. One of them looks like 3 intersecting circles. If I click on that the map lights up:

That represents the influence borders of different civilizations. It also gives away their position. In Galactic Civilizations II, I know where the aliens live. So if I want to expand, I should probably go where they don't live. So looking around, I see some stars that are outside that influence area. I send my colony ships there.

At this point there's nothing more I can do on the map. So let's take a look at that bottom bar. Remember how my planet is going to take a bunch of weeks to build that colony ship? That's a lot of turns. So let's go to the domestic policy screen.

Domestic Policy

Here I have my Tax Rate and my Industrial Capacity sliders. My taxes are at 33%. If I make that higher, I get more money but my people get unhappy which slows down their rate of growth which hurts me in the long run and would hurt me if I weren't a dictatorship (i.e. later on I'll research other forms of government).



The industrial capacity slider, by contrast, is only at 50%. That means my factories and labs are only working at half-speed. Since I'm currently making 11bc per week, I decide to increase my industrial capacity rate to use all of it (100%).

So now my factories are working a full power. Those beakers and shields and hammers cost 1BC each to turn from their raw component into something that's useable so my net income drops. But now when I look at Earth, it's only going to take 8 weeks to build that ship. Good, but not good enough.

So let's move the military rate to the right and change my relative priority more to military. Now it's only going to take 4 weeks to build the colony ship. Better.

Money vs. Production

Your tax rate and your industrial capacity slider have nothing in common. They are unrelated. Your spending % determines what % of your industrial/research capacity you are going to use. Every shield, hammer, and beaker you product on your planet costs 1BC to produce. So you do need to have taxes to fund that. However, it doesn't matter whether you are spending more than you make because they aren't related to one another.

It takes 1bc to create 1 point of research or 1 point of industrial production. That's it. We only have the two sliders on this screen out of convenience.

Time passes...

So I've been building colony ships, building things on Earth, and colonizing the galaxy. I've started meeting some of the aliens.

I've also started running into these:



Basically, these are moral dilemmas. They were inspired years ago when I was in high school and I kept hearing about how horrible the United States had been to the native population. I remember, as I sat in a class room that was almost certainly once inhabited by the natives who had settled here some 3,000 or so years ago the hypocrisy of the whole thing. Were they suggesting giving it back? No. It's easy to condemn after the fact. So in the game, you run into those situations too. You land on a planet and it's already

inhabited. Whatcha going to do? Do the kind thing and take huge penalties to production? Or make them slaves? Or something in-between? Your choice will affect your ethical alignment:

- Good civilizations tend to team up together.
- Neutral civilizations tend to have nobody that really likes them but no one really hating them either.
- Evil civilizations get advantages on a planet by planet basis but are at risk of getting ganged up on.

Researching



The research tree is big. Very big. *If you use the left-mouse button (hold it down) on the tree and drag it, you can move the tech tree around.*

Moving on up...

At this point, I've colonized most of the planets I'm going to colonize so I'm going to switch over to researching faster. So I pull up the domestic policy manager and move the military production slider down and increase the research slider.

But let's look at a few important technologies:

- **Trade.** You need trade to build freighters. When you build a freighter, you can send it to an alien world and it will create a trade route which gives you money. The number of trade routes you have is dependent on your trade route ability. Typically, trade will give you roughly 3 trade routes. You can research Advanced trade and beyond to get more trade routes.
- **Planetary Invasion.** You need this technology in order to invade planets.
- **Weapons.** You don't get to just blow things up right away. You have to research weapons technologies first to do that.

- **Alliances.** You need to research alliances. The other player must have the technology as well. Then, if you have "close" relations or better, you can ally.

Starbases

You can pretty much build a starbase anywhere. However, in 1.0X and earlier, you have to have them be at least 3 tiles apart on the map (this is going to eventually be changed to X number per sector -- probably 4 which is what the AI is stuck with).

There are 4 types of starbases:

- **Military starbases.** These can pump up the attack and defense of your ships within their zone of control.
- **Economic starbases.** These can pump up your trade route money for freighters that pass through their zone of control as well as pump up the production on planets in their zone of control.
- **Influence starbases.** These pump up your background influence in their zone of control.
- **Resource starbases.** These can only be built on a galactic resource. With additional constructors, you can keep increasing the benefit you get from them.



As you build up starbases by sending more constructors to them, the graphics change and they get increasingly powerful. Don't forget to equip them with weapons and defenses so that they can defend themselves from attack.

Rally Points

If you're playing on a large galaxy, rally points are very important because otherwise, it can be a pain in the butt to manage your civilization.



To create a rally point, just press the rally point button and then place the rally point anywhere on the map.



Then you can name it however you want. If you click your ship and press the T button it will allow you to send it to one of your rally points (or if you click on the command button on the ship and choose "Go To" on that screen)

You can also tell your planets to automatically send ships to a rally point:



Governors



If you click the little button that looks like it has 2 line graphs on it you are taken to the Civilization Manager. One of the most useful ways to automate things is with governors. The governors allow you to give orders globally and have them carried out. So for instance, you could have all your ships that are going to rally point X to change to rally point Y (or stop going to one at all). You can tell all your planets that are building ship A to build ship B. It's a great way to keep from getting bogged down.

Trading things



On the foreign policy dialog you can initiate discussions with other players. Just select the one you want and press the Speak to button.



The column on the LEFT is what you have. The Column on the right is what they have. You can trade anything for anything if you name the right price. Because of this flexibility, there is no "What will you give me for X?" type functionality that other strategy games usually have since there's an infinite number of possibilities. Instead, we color-code the offer text. If it's red, they won't take it. If it's green, they will. The dialog updates as you add items.

General Tips

There are a lot of different strategies that you can take from here...

- You can take the standard "conquer them all" approach and just build up your military and try to conquer them. See your user manual on how combat works.
- You can become the ultimate behind the curtain power broker and become incredibly rich and win by paying different civilizations to war each other into oblivion and buy up their planets and ships as you need them until you win through overwhelming dominance.
- You could become the ultimate influencer. Built up your influence on your planets, make sure you get the influence resources, and then build influencer starbases which expand the borders of your influence until everyone defects to your side.
- You could go for the master politician route in which you get everyone to like you through a variety of means and then ally with them.
- You could take the role of conqueror in which there are many different strategies for that. For example, you could focus on building fleets of small ships or just a few capital ships. You could go with relatively cheap ships supported by powerful starbases. You could pour money into research to make sure you have incredibly powerful ships. Or you could pour money into manufacturing and make sure you have lots of mediocre ships. There are many different paths to military conquest available.
- You could also become a technological titan and research "Technology Victory". It's expensive but if you can fortify your corner of the galaxy you might just be able to hold them off long enough.

The general idea is to make sure you can play the game over and over and over again without running out of ways to play.

Also make sure you visit Galactic Civilizations II's website (www.galciv2.com) to obtain downloads. The game's computer AI is designed to be heavily enhanced over time based on player strategies. The computer players should feel like real human beings in most respects (except minus the disconnects and abuse).

Most of all – have fun!

Reader Comments and Ideas

There were quite a few good ideas from the readers in the comments following the article, and thus I added them here (up to today: 13th March 2008).

spiceant: I think it would have been very useful if you had made a comment of how the ship designer can be used to, for example, make fast colony ships instead of the normal but inefficient colony ships.

ender1983: Perhaps you should mention that if you buy stuff to go easy on the loan options, especially in the beginning. It might seem appealing to new players, but if you overdo it (and that can happen pretty quick) it means a slow, agonizing, but sure financial death, as I learned the hard way

What also isn't obvious, but helpful to know for the novice, is that morale bonuses are more important than they may appear at first sight. If you can keep your morale high, it means more population, and you can tax them more, and you can run your empire at consistently high industrial output favoring all three branches.

agnostangel: You should definitely mention something about Focusing production on a planet scale basis. Look up at the top of the screen in planet view, where the shields are for production and research. There's a little bulls eye like thing (i think it looks like an antenna with radio waves but the community says it's a bulls eye).

Click it. Watch shields (usually, almost always if you have a factory and spending in that category) jump for that type. Watch them fall for another.

So, if you've got a planet that only has labs, isn't upgrading them, and can't build ships? Focus on research. Need those factory's your building in the early game to come out that much faster? Focus on social. You get the picture.

Jurfop: You should also throw in a mention about how to do fast ship designs. I.e. double click components to add them onto a hull type (which automatically places them) kind of design. Then beginners don't have to be confused about hard points and don't have to worry about having to take a long time designing a ship if they only want to upgrade engines.

William Becker: Factories give you build credits on a per planet basis. These build credits can be used for building more buildings (labs, farms, etc.) or ships. That's why you can build the Xeno lab faster after you've built a factory (and for that reason, I generally build a factory or two before anything else on most planets). Your initial colony has a few build and research credits that it can throw around, but if you are trying to make your colony expand at faster than a snail's pace, you need to have factories.

Labs give you research credits (beakers), which are applied to doing research on expanding your technology tree.

Your money for those build and research credits comes from your whole empire. The benefits from the research credits are applied over your whole empire, but the build credits for military and social production only occur on the planets where they exist.

Frogboy: (increasing soldiering) Best bet is to keep researching up the planetary invasion tree. Space Marines and such will improve your soldiering considerably.

Kalin: (food and population) If you add farms to your planet, you can have a higher population as long as the planet quality is high enough (there's no point of adding a farm to a planet less than 7 quality, since they won't grow past a certain point unless you want to micro manage the transport of people to those planets). High population in turns gives you more taxes, which can be used to pay for construction and research. High population also gives you more troops to attack or defend from assaults. On the other hand, high population causes your morale to drop rapidly, so you have to build a lot of morale buildings to keep them happy.

Kenhoff: I've found a couple of strategies that have helped me. On the first turn, buy a factory on your home world, then build, a research lab and 2 more factories. The I build a marketing center and multimedia center.

I also design a new Colony ship. I put two engines, a colony module and two basic life support. This give me a colony ship that can go further twice as fast. I purchase this on the first turn as well. I build all my ships with at least 2 engines. Having ships that can get places fast is a huge advantage when playing on a large map. I then check to see where the other Civs are using the minimap. I send my colony ship to the system closest to me that borders the others Civs so that if there is a good PQ planet there I get it first. I then look to see if there are any anomalies and if so send the flagship to investigate. If not I send it in the opposite direction of the colony ship. I usually research universal translators or ion drive first. Next I research planetary improvement and

then research academies. My goal in the beginning of the game is to colonize as many high PQ planets as possible. This usually means purchasing a few colony ships in the beginning. When I colonize a new planet I usually build a factory and then a starbase. If I see a particularly attractive planet I buy the starbase and then the colony ship on the next turn so I can be sure I get there first.

SrGalen: Think of starbases as more of a supply depot (for extending the range of starships) and a support structure reflecting its "type" rather than being a starship itself.

Iztok Bitenc: (what freighters do) They bring you money. The longer on the route, the more money you receive. When the freighter returns to the starting planet, trade route starts again with the initial money. Planets with better econ give a better starting value of the route. The player you have the route to receives the same amount of money you get. A trade route also increases relations with the other player.

(and how they are used) You put one trade module on a cargo hull, put there some range-enhancing modules (to go further), rest engines. You send that ship to:

- the very strong race you want to have better relations with, or
- a race that you'll not attack in some time (so trade route will give you full amount of money), or
- a race you'd like to help with the money, or
- unexplored star systems that are out of range for your regular scouts.
- In any case make sure the route avoids potential zones of conflict: don't send the trade route to a race that is behind the race you plan to attack (or the race that's hostile to your race). Trade ships are first targets in a war, so better have a safe route to some backwater planet on the far side, that the destroyed one.

(how to transport trade goods) Once you produce (build) them, you sell them in a diplomacy window. However some trade goods should be not for sale. Those are built only to deny others to have them (like Diplo Translators).

Actuarian: (on avoiding debt) In no particular order...

1. Build more structures on your planet that help your economy.
2. Build economic star bases
3. Raise taxes (or reduce taxes for a few turns to grow your population). Don't raise taxes too high or you get into an economic death spiral. I make 49% my max tax rate.
4. Research economic improving technologies.
5. Set your industrial capacity level lower than 100% temporarily if you get in trouble.
5. Play with a race/political party that gives you good economic or population growth bonuses.
6. In the early game set your tax rate at the maximum the keeps your home planet morale at 100%. It doesn't cost you much in lost revenue and it will build up your population quickly. Play the Torians (extra pop growth at 100% morale) and this strategy will really jump start your economy.
7. Browse the strategy folder for much more advice.