

# L I F E O N M A R S

what would it be like  
to leave the earth behind?



Life on Mars is a tabletop storygame where you and your friends explore what life might be like aboard the first manned mission to Mars.

We start small, choosing a name and role for our crew members. Each turn we move to a new place on the ship, and describe a little snapshot of their life: What gives you comfort? Your face in the glass, who you left behind.



When we arrive on the red planet, play continues with more opportunities to explore who these people are, how we relate, and how life on mars changes us.



2 - 4  
Players



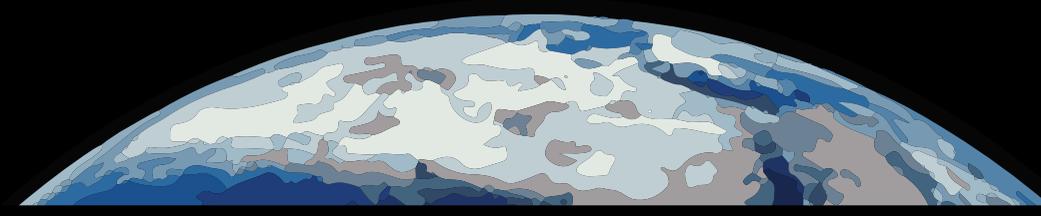
2 - 3  
Hours



No  
Prep



\$ 25  
USD



# L I F E O N M A R S – a n n o t a t e d r u l e s

All of the instructions you need to play the game are printed on the game board so read that first. If you have any questions come back here and read these comments. You can also find an example of play video at [heartofthedeernicorn.com/lifeonmars](http://heartofthedeernicorn.com/lifeonmars).

## T h r e e T h i n g s

Here are a few things I always like to say at the start of a storygame.

## L i s t e n a n d A s k Q u e s t i o n s

We're creating these stories together so listen, be curious, and ask questions.

## S a y t h e O b v i o u s

You don't have to be creative, funny, or original to play a storygame. Say something obvious, steal from your life, from a friend's life, from a book, or from a movie. Since we're all different people, the combination of our "obvious" ideas will still be interesting and original.

## T h e V e i l

Stories are powerful and you might be surprised at what can come up at the table. If something happens in the story that is making you feel uncomfortable you can ask for it to be "Veiled". We can remove that thing from the story, "fade to black", do it differently, or just take a break if you like, no questions asked.

## p r e p a r a t i o n

Folded note cards work best for name tags. Make sure you distribute all four of the roles. This might mean that one or more crew has two roles. All of the names are asexual. You can decide your character's gender right now, or let that emerge through play.

## e a c h m o n t h

It takes six months to fly from Earth to Mars. After the Ship reaches Mars, take one more turn and then open the board to the inside.

## o n y o u r t u r n

Every month we each take a turn. On your turn, move your counter to one of the spaces and follow one of the protocols listed on that space. Each protocol gives us a prompt to describe a little snapshot of our crew member's life.

## p r o t o c o l s

 describe this to us

You can say as much or as little as you like. When I play, sometimes I like to describe things in character, sometimes I like to take a step back and describe what we are seeing as though we were watching a documentary or a movie together. Do whatever works for you.

 write this on any name tag and describe how this is true

You can use this on yourself as well as another crew member.

 describe deploying this module. always choose this first

Players have to describe deploying a module before they can use the other protocol listed on that space. For example: the first time I go to the Workshop, I describe setting it up. Later, on your turn, now that the Workshop is set up, you can use the other Protocol listed there.

 choose another crew member and describe this together. then, roll a die and describe the result by yourself.

When you choose the Rover, flip to the back (you might have to move some counters temporarily). Then, choose another member of the crew to accompany you and select one of the destinations. Describe the first prompt together. Play it out like a scene in a movie or play. Describe what your characters are doing, what they say, what they're thinking and feeling, what it looks like. When you decide that the scene is finished, roll the die, look up the result on the table, and describes that by yourself.

## l a u n c h w i n d o w

The game ends when the sun reaches the launch window. This is when Mars and Earth are close enough for the astronauts to return to Earth. (Should they choose to). You can take one more turn or just end there if you like.

## c r e d i t s

Game and Graphic Design: Ross Cowman

Development: Robert Bruce, Orion Canning, Ross Cowman, Morgan Stinson, and Jackson Tegu

Filmography: Orion Canning

French Translation: Maitre Sinh ([narrativiste.eu](http://narrativiste.eu))

German Translation: Malte Böhm

Playtesting and Feedback: Robert Bruce, Jonathan Fischer, Megan Grugett, Caroline Hobbs, Marc Hobbs, Jason Morningstar, Hannah, Jackson Tegu

Originally commissioned as a part of OCTO: Games of Spring 2013