The Frontiers Engine is an open-licensed tabletop RPG toolkit for building your own games: a starting point and an educational resource for anyone designing a system, new to it or not.

Anyone who undertakes building their own game can get overwhelmed very quickly. Dice mechanics, conflict design, character building, abilities, classes, skills, and the list runs on. Most of those decisions settle how the whole game feels before you ever get to the fun part of tabletop design, and plenty of them are made without even knowing a decision was made at all.

Frontiers is built to support people in that stage of design; it hands you the tools, teaches you the design philosophy, and offers you curated Rulesets as groundwork to build from. And for those who would rather make those calls themselves, Frontiers includes variant and alternative rules to swap into the Rulesets, as well as curated and community-submitted modules to use in your games and projects.

Frontiers provides all of this **for Free**.

Learn more about Frontiers

Getting Started

Depending what you are looking for, you will start in different places in the Documentation, so feel free to choose what you're most interested in checking out below.

For Designers

Start with the Design Documentation.

The first two documents settle what your game is: its scope and genre, and what conflict means in it. After that, each document takes one subsystem — resolution, flow of play, equipment, and so on — and works through it: what it is in the wider language of tabletop design, how other games have answered it, and what Frontiers does about it and why.

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They are written to **teach** and not to instruct, so none of them hands you a "right answer". A document lays the problem out in front of you, works through the benefits of each approach the field has tried, and then tells you what Frontiers chose and why that decision was made. It never tells you which one is best. It gives you the knowledge and the references you need to come to your own conclusions.

And for those who want to sandbox a little, with Frontiers as their starting point, every document after Scope and Genre ends with two lists:

- **Variants** are small changes to Frontiers' core Rulesets that don't massively overhaul the balance, letting you mix and match simple rule changes to fit the style you prefer in your game.
- **Alternatives** are the changes that make it a different game. Each explains what it costs and which other subsystems it reaches into, tells you the gains and losses of a removal or a swap, and how to do it, with a little more work than the Variants.

You can read, and use, any of the Design Documentation having never played Frontiers and never intending to. The problems are the same whichever engine or system you build on, so it will help you make those decisions either way.

For Builders

Pick a Ruleset. Each is the same engine expressed through a different shape of chance, and each one is complete on its own.

- **The d18 Ruleset** — `1d12 + 1d6` summed, with the `d6` read a second time as the Gradient Resolution (how good or bad a result is). It curves toward the middle, and it is the form the rest of Frontiers is tuned around.
- **The d20 Ruleset** — one flat `d20` with an independent `d10` Gradient. The swing is much wider, and it runs on the die most tables are already intimately familiar with.
- **The d100 Ruleset** — percentile `2d10`, roll-under resolution, with the `1d10` units die read as the Gradient. Granular and specific, for those games that need that little more attention to detail.

From there, give the Modules a look too, for some additional non-Ruleset-based options. It is also recommended to at least skim the Design Documentation, but it's not required.

For Players

The three Starter Sets are small, complete games made with the Frontiers Rulesets. Each comes with a stripped-back summary of the rules, a set of pregenerated characters, and an adventure to run.

- **Wasteland** is the `d18` Starter Set, inspired by Fallout, Kenshi, and Vagrus: The Riven Realms. It covers a large expanse of desert with its own travel-based gameplay loop, where you and your crew traverse **Journey Legs** and do your best to survive.
- **Fantasy** is the `d20` Starter Set, for those familiar with the Dungeons & Dragons and Pathfinders of the world, with unique **Folk** and **Callings** built on very familiar fantasy tropes.

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- **Sci-Fi** is the `d100` Starter Set, for those drawn to the more complicated mechanics of Cyberpunk RED or LANCER, draped in a **Skill Tree progression system** and a mix of high sci-fi and cyberpunk tones.

Play them as they are, or take one as the foundation for something of your own.

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