

Mekton Alpha

A Free Introduction to Mekton Zeta

By Christian Conkle



Trial by Fire

Lt. Donchoi Yuh gripped the controls of his Rapier and swung it around so fast its servos groaned in complaint. He opened fire at his pursuer. It was the Vermilion Ace! The Vermilion Ace had claimed the lives of several of Donchoi's friends. His giant red Gorgon-class mecha was the scourge of the entire Earth Defense Force, and now he was after Donchoi! His autocannon sprayed hundreds of rounds at the giant robot bearing down on him. Amazingly, the Gorgon nimbly dodged the fire and kept coming!

Donchoi cursed and pushed the Rapier into a collision course. The Vermilion Ace veered upwards, and Donchoi's rapier followed. Suddenly, the Vermilion Ace's Gorgon spun about, kicking Donchoi's Rapier in the "head", sending its sensors spinning. The Rapier fell away for a moment as the Vermilion Ace swooped around for another attack.

Donchoi managed to regain control of his spinning humanoid giant just in time to see the Vermilion Ace bearing down on him with guns blazing. Donchoi quickly shifted the Rapier into a zig-zag evasive maneuver, but it was too late. He could hear several rounds ping-pang off the Rapier's torso armor, then came the dreaded "TUNK! TUNK! TUNK!" of dreaded armor breaches, followed by a shower of sparks inside the cockpit and a violent cacophony of noise as internal damage control sensors wailed and readouts flashed red. Donchoi had lost some lateral maneuver verniers in the attack, but worst of all, his Autocannon was now useless!

"I've had enough of this!" Donchoi exclaimed as he pushed his controls forward full blast. The thrusters on the Rapier's back roared to life and he rammed into the Vermilion Ace. The Rapier's arm servos grabbed the red Gorgon's gun by the barrel and wrested it away. With another roar from the main thrusters, Donchoi screamed in fury as he swung the gun around like a club onto the Gorgon's "head". The impact caved in the Gorgon's sensors and sparks flew from the delicate servo-mechanisms underneath. Then, still enraged, Donchoi used both of the Rapier's arms to grab the Gorgon by its breast-plate and swing it around. The breast-plate ripped off and the Gorgon flew away, revealing the exposed cockpit underneath. To Donchoi's shock and horror, the pilot of the Gorgon, the Vermilion Ace, was his lover, Lt. Mariko Lim, thought killed at the Battle of Mars months ago!

What is Mekton Alpha?

Mekton Alpha is a free introductory set of rules to the popular Mekton Zeta Role-Playing Game.

These rules will give you a taste of the actual game, but just a taste. One can run a fun mini-RPG session with nothing but these rules, but the full Mekton Zeta rules provide 1000 times more detail, more explanation, and more fun.

What is Mekton Zeta?

Mekton Zeta is the Anime Mecha Role-Playing Game by R.Talsorian Games. Using Mekton Zeta, several players and a Game Master gather together to recreate the action, romance, and adventure of Japanese Mecha Anime.

Mekton Zeta is a stand-alone book, providing everything necessary to play. Mekton Zeta Plus adds even more to the game with extremely flexible and detailed mecha generation rules.

What is a Role-Playing Game?

A Role-Playing Game, or RPG, is a game in which several friends get together and take control of imaginary characters in a story created and maintained by a Game Master.

Terms

Player: The human being controlling the character. He/She speaks for the character, makes the character's decisions, and rolls dice for that character.

Game Master: The human being who acts as a referee between players, and as the director of the story. The Game Master, or GM, speaks for all Non-Player Characters, makes their decisions, and rolls for them.

Character: The imaginary person upon who's life and adventures the game chronicles. There can be several characters in a role-playing game, each with their own imaginary emotions, opinions, and motivations.

Mecha: Generic term from Japanese Anime fandom that refers to any mechanical device used in an anime. Usually, this refers to vehicles and giant robots.

Anime: Japanese cartoons. Anime is to Japan as big-budget Hollywood movies are to America. In other words, Japan can't afford to make live-action science-fiction movies with lots of SFX, so they animate them

instead. The stories, plots, and characters rival or surpass many Hollywood live-action films, without the crippling budget.

Dice: Two kinds of dice are used in Mekton, the six-sided die and the ten-sided die. Use of these dice are abbreviated as either d6 or d10. If a number precedes the d, roll that many dice and total the results. For example, 3d6 means roll 3 six-sided dice and total their results. If a number indicates to add or subtract from the dice, then add or subtract that value from the result. For example, 3d6+3 means roll 3 six-sided dice, total their results, and add 3 to the total.

Really Quick Example

GM: "You round the corner and find yourself surrounded by 10 enemy guards, what do you do?"

Player 1: "My character prefers peaceful resolutions, so she'll try to bluff her way out of it, exclaiming, 'Help! We're lost and we need to get to the shuttle bay!'"

Player 2: "I'll play along, 'Uh, yeah. We must have taken a wrong turn back there. Where are we?'"

GM: "The Guards look at each other, confused. Your escape has not been noticed yet, and there's a reasonable chance they might mistake you for lost civilians. Both of you roll a skill check using your Empathy plus Fast Talk skill vs. a difficulty of 15."

Player 1: "My Empathy is 4, about average, and my Fast Talk skill is 5, that's a total of 9.." (rolls a ten-sided die) ".. I rolled an 8, that's a total of 17!"

Player 2: "My Empathy is 6, above average, and my Fast Talk skill is 2, for a total of 8, er.." (rolls a ten-sided die) "..I rolled a 3! That's a total of 11! We're doomed!"

GM: "Maybe, maybe not. The guards look sternly at you for a moment before their leader steps forward. He's pauses menacingly, then points down the hall, saying, 'The shuttle bay is down that way. Follow the blue lines.' As you begin to walk past, he puts his arms out, stopping Character 2, 'Hold on there a minute. I'd like to see your ID.' What do you do?"

Player 2: "Uh oh. I say, 'Uh, ID, officer? Yes, it's right here somewhere.' I look like I'm searching, stalling for time. I drop some papers on the floor, the ones we stole from that laboratory? I lean down to pick it up. When I get up, I rush into him, hoping to knock him over!"
...**To be Continued!**

Character Concepts

Statistics: Statistics are numerical values that define a character. How smart is the character? How strong is the character? How fast is the character? These Statistics answer these questions by assigning a value from 1 to 10.

- **Attractiveness:** How good looking is the character?
- **Body Type:** How strong and resilient is the character?
- **Cool:** How well can the character stand up to pressure and stay in control?
- **Empathy:** How friendly or charismatic is the character?
- **Intelligence:** How smart is the character?
- **Luck:** How often to unexpected good things happen to the character?
- **Movement Allowance:** How fast is the character?
- **Reflexes:** How dexterous and nimble is the character?
- **Technical Ability:** How good is the character with machines?

Stun: A number that the character must roll or less with a d10 whenever their character might be stunned or knocked unconscious.

Hits: The amount of damage a character's body parts can take before being useless, in the case of limbs, or dead, in the case of the head or the torso.

Damage: An abstract measure of how lethal a weapon is. A weapon's damage is listed as the number of dice to roll. The amount rolled is then subtracted from a character's limb's Hits (see above).

Skills: Any special training the character possesses. The character might know how to pilot a mecha, or how to fix a computer monitor. Each skill is listed with a numerical value of 1 to 10, similar to Statistics.

Skill Rolls: Whenever the outcome of a character's action is uncertain or in dispute, the player should make a skill roll. A skill roll is made by selecting the appropriate Skill value + the appropriate Statistic value + 1d10 vs. a Difficulty value chosen by the GM.

Difficulty: A numerical value representing the relative complexity or importance of a character's action.

Easy	10
Average	15
Difficult	20
Very Difficult	25
Nearly Impossible	30

Mecha Concepts

CP (Construction Points): A measure of how powerful a mecha is. The GM can use this value to compare two mecha, or the GM can allow a player to build a mecha by keeping it under a certain amount.

Kill: An abstract unit of large-scale damage, equal to 25 Hits. All Mecha damage is measured in Kills. Kills are abbreviated as "K".

SP (Stopping Power): A measure of the mecha's armor. This many Kills is subtracted from all damage the mecha takes to that servo. However, whenever a servo is hit, the SP of that servo is reduced by 1.

MV (Maneuver Value): A measure of how maneuverable the mecha is. This value is added to the pilot's skill rolls while in the mecha. MV is almost always a negative value.

MA (Movement Allowance): How fast the mecha is. A mecha can move this many hexes and perform no other action, or half this many hexes and perform one other action.

Range: The distance a weapon can accurately shoot a target in hexes.

BV (Burst Value): Used for auto-firing weapons. If the attacker's roll beat the defender's evasion roll, as many shots hit as the difference between the rolls, up to the BV of the weapon.

Damage: The destructive power of a weapon, measured in the amount of Kills subtracted from the target's Structure before Armor.

WA (Weapon Accuracy): Added to the attacker's skill roll when attacking with that weapon.

Space: Each weapon or equipment takes up space in the servo or limb. Each servo can mount as many spaces as it has Kills. If the mecha has hands, a hand can carry as many extra spaces as the arm has.

Servo: A moveable limb connected to the torso. A servo can be an arm, a leg, or a rotating sensor turret otherwise known as a head. Each servo is rated by the amount of Kills it can lose before being inoperable, in the case of limbs or head, or destroyed, in the case of the torso

Example Characters

Lt. Donchoi Yuh

Age: 21

Stats

8	Intelligence	Head	6 Hits
9	Cool	Torso	12 Hits
10	Reflexes	R.Arm	9 Hits
8	Attractiveness	L.Arm	9 Hits
8	Empathy	R.Leg	9 Hits
7	Tech Ability	L.Leg	9 Hits
9	Luck	Stun	6
8	Movement Allowance		
7	Body Type		
0	Psi Potential*		

Skills

Skills	Level
Aircraft/Shuttle Pilot	9
Zero-Gee Maneuver	5
Awareness	5
Basic Repair	3
Seduction	2
Dodge & Escape	4
Driving	3
Expert: Tactics	4
Handgun	3
Human Perception	2
Hand-to-Hand	3
Leadership	5
Mecha Piloting	10
Mecha Fighting	6
Mecha Melee	7
Mecha Gunnery	8
Mecha Missiles	8
Personal Grooming	1
Wardrobe & Style	2
Persuasion	2

Weapons

Weapons	WA	Range	Damage	Shots
Combat Pistol	+1	15/100	2d6	15



“The Vermilion Ace”

Age: 28

Stats

8	Intelligence	Head	5 Hits
7	Cool	Torso	10 Hits
10	Reflexes	R.Arm	7 Hits
9	Attractiveness	L.Arm	7 Hits
10	Empathy	R.Leg	7 Hits
5	Tech Ability	L.Leg	7 Hits
10	Luck	Stun	5
6	Movement Allowance		
4	Body Type		
10	Psi Potential*		

Skills

Skills	Level
Zero-Gee	4
Awareness	4
Seduction	3
Dodge & Escape	4
Handgun	2
Healing*	4
Telepathy*	5
Danger Sensing*	3
Emotion Scan*	2
Telekinesis*	2
Hand-to-Hand	2
Mecha Piloting	10
Mecha Fighting	5
Mecha Melee	8
Mecha Gunnery	9
Mecha Missiles	9
Personal Grooming	4
Wardrobe & Style	2
Persuasion	4
Human Perception	5

Weapons

Weapons	WA	Range	Damage	Shots
Combat Pistol	+1	15/100	2d6	15
Sword	+1	2	2d6	-



*For more on Psychics, see **Mekton Zeta Plus**.

Creating Mecha

One of the key strengths of the Mekton system is the ability for Players and Game Masters to create new custom mecha. Although these rules cannot recreate the flexibility and comprehensiveness of the Mekton Zeta or Mekton Zeta Plus rules, the following should provide a taste of how the process works.

- 1. Pick a Torso:** Choose a base frame size for your Mecha.

Class	Structure/ CP Cost
Med.Striker	8
Hvy.Striker	10
Med.Weight	12
Lt.Heavy	14
Med.Heavy	16

- 2. Add Limbs:** Add arms legs, and a head to your torso. A limb may not be more than 1 level higher or lower than the torso it's attached to.

Class	Head Kills/ CP Cost	Arm Kills/ CP Cost	Leg Kills/ CP Cost
Med.Striker	4	5	5
Hvy.Striker	5	6	6
Med.Weight	6	7	7
Lt.Heavy	7	8	8
Med.Heavy	8	9	9

- 3. Add Armor:** Purchase armor plating for the torso and each limb. Armor may not be more than 2 levels above that of the servo it is protecting.

Class	SP/ CP Cost
Med.Striker	4
Hvy.Striker	5
Med.Weight	6
Lt.Heavy	7
Med.Heavy	8

- 4. Purchase Weapons and Hands:** Use the chart below and assign each weapon to a servo. Remember, weapons and hands require Spaces in the servo in which they are placed. A weapon's Space requirement can be lowered by increasing it's CP cost by 0.5 CP per Space reduced.
- 5. Determine Weight:** Add up all the Kills of all the servos and divide by 2, this is the weight of the mecha in tons. Now add the weight of the weapons.
- 6. Purchase Thrusters:** The CP cost for thrusters equals the mecha's weight x 0.0375 x desired flight MA. Thrusters require Spaces in the servo in which they are placed. Thrusters require as many Spaces as their CP cost, but, unlike Weapons, Thruster Spaces can be distributed among different Servos. Assign an amount of MA to each location of Thrusters. Should the servo that contains those Thrusters be destroyed, the mecha's Flight MA is reduced by that amount.
- 7. Determine Cost:** Add up all the CP costs of the mecha. This is the total CP cost. It's okay to round to the nearest integer.
- 8. Determine Statistics:** Use the following table to determine the mecha's ground MA and MV.

Mecha MA and MV chart

Weight	MA*	MV
01-19t	6	-1 to REF
20-29t	5	-2 to REF
30-39t	5	-3 to REF
40-49t	4	-4 to REF
50-59t	4	-5 to REF
60-69t	3	-6 to REF
70-79t	3	-7 to REF
80-89t	2	-8 to REF
90-99t	2	-9 to REF
100t +	2	-10 to REF

Weapons	Range	WA	Damage	BV	Shots	Weight	Spaces	CP Cost
Hand	1	+0	1K	0	Na	0.5t	1	1.5
Med. Beam Gun	7	+1	3K	0	inf	1.5t	4	5
Autocannon	4	-2	2K	8	10	1.0t	5	6
Hvy. Autocannon	7	-1	6K	4	10	3.0t	10	13
Rocket Launcher	7	+0	4K	0	10	1.5t	4	4
Bazooka	17	+0	12K	0	10	6.0t	15	15

Reloads for weapons with limited shots cost 10% of the weapon's CP cost

Mecha Examples

Rapier

Name: Defense Mekton "Rapier"

Weight: 44.5t Cost: 153 CP

MV: -4

Land MA: 4

Flight MA: 8

Servos and Armor

SP	Kills	Servo	Class	Space	Cost	Armor	Cost
5	4	Head	Med. Str.	4/4	4	5	Hvy.Str.
5	6	R.Arm	Hvy. Str.	6/1	6	5	Hvy.Str.
5	6	R.Arm	Hvy. Str.	6/1	6	5	Hvy.Str.
5	8	R.Leg	Lt.Hvy.	8/3	8	5	Hvy.Str.
5	8	R.Leg	Lt.Hvy.	8/3	8	5	Hvy.Str.
5	12	Torso	Med.Wt.	12/0	12	5	Hvy.Str.

Movement Systems

System	Location	Spaces	CP
Thruster (2MA)	Torso	2	2
Thruster (3MA)	R.Leg	6	6
Thruster (3MA)	L.Leg	6	6

Armament

Weapons	Location	Spaces	CP Cost	Weight
Right Hand	R.Arm	1	1.5	0.5t
Left Hand	L.Arm	1	1.5	0.5t
Rocket Launcher	R.Arm	4	4	1.5t
Rocket Launcher	L.Arm	4	4	1.5t
Rocket Launcher	R.Leg	4	4	1.5t
Rocket Launcher	L.Leg	4	4	1.5t
Autocannon	Torso	5	6	1.0t
Autocannon	Torso	5	6	1.0t
Hvy. Autocannon	Handheld	10	5	3.0t



The Vermilion Ace

Name: Assault Mekton "Gorgon"

Weight: 56.5t Cost: 141 CP

MV: -5

Land MA: 4

Flight MA: 8

Servos and Armor

SP	Kills	Servo	Class	Space	Cost	Armor	Cost
7	5	Head	Hvy. Str.	4	4	7	Lt.Hvy.
7	7	R.Arm	Med. Wt.	7	7	7	Lt.Hvy.
7	7	R.Arm	Med. Wt.	7	7	7	Lt.Hvy.
7	9	R.Leg	Lt.Hvy.	9	9	7	Lt.Hvy.
7	9	R.Leg	Lt.Hvy.	9	9	7	Lt.Hvy.
7	14	Torso	Med.Wt.	14	14	7	Lt.Hvy.

Movement Systems

System	Location	Spaces	CP
Thruster (2MA)	Torso	5	5
Thruster (3MA)	R.Leg	6	6
Thruster (3MA)	L.Leg	6	6

Armament

Weapons	Location	Spaces	CP Cost	Weight
Right Hand	R.Arm	1	1.5	0.5t
Left Hand	L.Arm	1	1.5	0.5t
Rocket Launcher	R.Arm	4	4	1.5t
Rocket Launcher	L.Arm	4	4	1.5t
Autocannon	Torso	5	6	1.0t
Bazooka	Handheld	26	15	6.0t



Combat

Combat plays a large role in anime and, thus, is important to many Mekton games as well. The following basic rules provide a hint at how conflicts are resolved in Mekton. Both man-to-man combat and mecha-to-mecha combat are resolved using the same basic rules.

Step 1. Determine Order (Initiative)

Each combatant rolls 1d10 and adds their character's Reflexes, modified by their mecha's Maneuver Value if piloting Mecha. The highest result goes first, with each combatant following in descending order.

Step 2. Actions

On his/her turn, in addition to automatically being able to move their character or Mecha up to half its MA, the player may choose to either move and attack, or attack twice.

- **Move:** each character or mecha may move its remaining MA.
- **Attack:** each character or mecha may attack 1 target in a single action.

Step 3. Resolve Attacks

Determine whether the target character or mecha is within range and is not obscured by any obstacles or terrain.

If so, then the attacker rolls 1d10 and adds the result to their Reflexes + Appropriate Weapon or Fighting skill taking into account the weapon's WA and the mecha's MV.

Appropriate Weapon or Fighting Skills include:

Handgun: used with pistols.

Rifle: used with rifles.

Autoweapons: used with machineguns.

Melee: used with clubs, swords, and axes.

Hand-to-Hand: used with punches and kicks.

Mecha Gunnery: used with cannons and lasers.

Mecha Missiles: used with rockets and missiles.

Mecha Melee: used with giant swords and axes.

Mecha Fighting: used with mecha hand-to-hand.

The target then rolls 1d10 and adds the result to their Reflexes + Appropriate Evasion skill, taking into account the mecha's MV if piloting Mecha, or + Acrobatics otherwise.

Appropriate Evasion Skills include:

Dodge & Escape: for Character combat.

Mecha Piloting: for Mecha combat.

If the defender's total is higher than the attacker's total, the attack has missed, move on to the next action or the next character in initiative order.

If the attacker's total is higher than the defender's total, the target has been hit! Move on to step 4.

Step 4. Resolve Damage

If a mecha or character is hit by a weapon, the mecha or character takes damage. The first step is to determine the location of the hit. Use the following table to determine location:

<u>1d10</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Result</u>
1	Head	The Head takes damage after armor protection
2-6	Torso	The Torso takes damage after armor protection
7-8	Right Side Limb	A Right Limb takes damage after armor protection
9-0	Left Side Limb	A Left Limb takes damage after armor protection

If the attacker's roll beat the defender's roll by 10 or more, then the attack ignores armor and damage is done directly to the location hit.

If the mecha's head loses all its Kills, then the mecha's sensors have been destroyed and it is effectively blind. Subtract 6 from all rolls made by the pilot of that mecha. Likewise, any weapons in the head are destroyed as well.

If one of the mecha's arms loses all its Kills, the arm is destroyed along with any weapons attached to that arm.

If one of the mecha's legs loses all its Kills, the leg is destroyed along with any weapons or thrusters in that leg. The mecha falls and loses the ability to walk. If flying, the mecha loses an amount of flight MA equal to the MA provided by the thrusters in that leg.

If the mecha's torso loses all its Kills, then the mecha is destroyed and the pilot must make a successful Reflexes +1d10 vs. a difficulty of 10 to eject to safety.

For characters, if they lose all the Hits in their Head or Torso, they are dead. If they lose all the Hits in an arm or leg, that limb is useless and their Reflexes are halved.

Step 5. Continue until each Combatant has acted, then repeat from Step 1.

Battle of Space Habitat Gamma

This is a sample scenario that pits Lt. Donchoi Yuh against his arch nemesis, the Vermilion Ace.

This scenario will require one photocopied sheet of hex paper and two playing pieces. Label each of the faces of the graph paper North, South, East, and West. On the West face, choose one hex to be the "Airlock". Choose one playing piece to be Lt. Yuh, and the other to be the "Vermilion Ace".

In this scenario, The Vermilion Ace has found itself stranded inside the orbiting Space Habitat Gamma, which has been retaken by the Earth Defense Force. Lt. Yuh has finally tracked the Ace down and has it cornered. The only way out is through a complicated airlock which leads to deep space. Unfortunately for the Vermilion Ace, it will take several minutes to open the airlock, and Lt. Yuh is not likely to let it escape so easily. The situation has led to a showdown between Lt. Yuh and the Vermilion Ace.

The scenario opens with Lt. Yuh stationed by the airlock and the Vermilion Ace, piloted by the brainwashed Mariko Lim, at point A on the far side of the map. This is the narrow end of the long cylindrical space habitat, so the north end of the map connects to the south end. Any movement or weapons fire going off the north end of the map carries over to the south end. The east end of the map goes deeper into the colony. Any unit moving off the east end of the map can be considered retreating and out of the scenario.

The Vermilion Ace must stand by the airlock for 5 continuous turns to open the hatch.

If the Vermilion Ace retreats, Lt. Yuh wins.

If the Vermilion Ace is destroyed, Lt. Yuh discovers the truth that his lover has been brainwashed and is now dead. Neither side wins.

If the Rapier is destroyed, Mariko Lim realizes that she has killed her lover and breaks her brainwashing, turning against her Imperial overlords. Neither side wins.

If the Vermilion Ace manages to escape through the airlock without killing Lt. Yuh, Lt. Lim wins.



Credits and other Information

Mekton Zeta rules written by Mike Pondsmith, Mike MacDonald, Benjamin Wright, and Mark Schumann.

Mekton Alpha written, illustrated, and edited by Christian Conkle.

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I have the utmost respect for the creators of the original **Mekton Zeta** and only wish to improve upon their outstanding work.

Mekton Zeta and **Mekton Zeta Plus** can be purchased from R.Talsorian Games at <http://www.talsorian.com>

Lt. Donchoi Yuh and Lt. Mariko Lim can be found in **Mecha Manual 2: Invasion Terra Files** by Craig Sheely. I have taken liberties with the characters and plot of that setting for dramatic purposes.