

***Star Trek:
A Call To Duty***

*Cadet's Handbook
Play By Email Division*

v10408.18

Welcome

Welcome to Star Trek: A Call To Duty™, the only official online role-playing game of its kind ever endorsed by Paramount Digital Entertainment. We are pleased you have decided to heed the call!

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide you with the information you will need to participate in the wonderful world of Star Trek: A Call To Duty.

There are three divisions in which one can play: Chat, Newsgroup and PBeM (Play By Email). This Handbook includes a brief overview of Play By Email Training, detailed information about Game operation and important Game policies. It is essential that you review this Handbook thoroughly before participating in the training.

Training

Before you may begin participating in the Game you must first learn how to play. This is accomplished through Game training, where new players participate in training missions. The purpose of these missions is to prepare you for the Game and to make sure that you understand how to play.

Training is important because it ensures Game quality and player satisfaction. During the Chat Division Game, the pace is fast and there is little time to ask questions plus there are specific formats in Newsgroup or PBeM (Play By Email) missions. Without training, new players would quickly become frustrated and the Game might be impacted negatively. For this reason, all players are required to successfully complete Game training.

The training process is composed of three steps, signing up, attending, and completing training missions. Each of these steps is outlined below.

Signing up for Training

To sign up for training missions all you need to do is visit the main Star Trek: A Call To Duty website located at <http://startrek.acalltoduty.com> and click the "JOIN ACTD" graphic. Please read through the instructions and download your handbook. You can then click "Join PBeM Game". You'll be sent to ODN where you can follow the instructions to join the game of your choice.

You will receive an email from your instructor with further directions pertaining to the training you have chosen. The email will include information on where and how to begin your training. Included in this will be your unique player serial number. Please record this serial number for future reference.

Attending Training Missions

Reviewing the cadet's handbook

You are required to review the information in this Handbook prior to participating in a training session. Failure to review this Handbook will prevent you from participating since graduation and ship/station assignment is contingent on how well you know the protocols.

PBeM (Play By Email)

It is assumed that you are familiar with the operation of your email client software (Outlook, Outlook Express, Netscape Mail, Eudora, or similar) before you join the game.

You will be assigned to one of the PBeM (Play By Email) training mailing lists, which takes the form of an email address hosted on our server. All training takes place by posting to and receiving mails from this address, which handles distribution of mail to your trainer and the other trainees in your group. Your trainer will notify you of any special instructions you may need to follow to join the mailing list.

At the beginning of the training mission, your trainer will assign a position to every player who is scheduled to participate for that session. This may be an actual starship position (a complete description of these are contained within this handbook) or something more generic such as "academy cadet having lunch", or an academy exercise.

The positions that are assigned are non-negotiable, and are only for the duration of training. Please do not request a change of training position assignment – you will have the opportunity to select your preferences once training is completed.

PBeM training is scheduled for four weeks. Training may end earlier or later at the discretion of the trainer.

Completing Training Missions

Character Creation Form

This form will require you to provide the details of your proposed character. It is located on the ODN where you will receive instructions on how to log-on, create an account and create a character after graduation. It is best to fill out the form in its entirety but the background information can be updated at a later date.

PLAYER INFORMATION

Real Name:

Email Address:

CHARACTER INFORMATION

First Name:

Middle Name:

Last Name:

Species:

Age:

Gender:

Height:
Weight:
Eye Color:
Hair Color:
Other Physical Characteristics:
Birth date:
Birthplace:
Mother:
Father:
Siblings:
Spouse:
Children:

Note: Your character is subject to approval by the Personnel Manager. Please visit here for a list of races and the status of each in terms of acceptability: <http://species.acalltoduty.com/>. It is recommended that you choose to have a character with a standard Starfleet race (e.g. Human, Vulcan, Betazoid, etc.). Other races such as Klingon and Ferengi are acceptable. Half-Romulans are also accepted. We will not approve any character that is a Borg (or was once a Borg), a Jem'Hadar, a Changeling, a Q, or a character that has bionic implants that allow the character any supernatural strength. We cannot accept races that appear only in the Star Trek novels.

Due to copyright infringement laws, no reference to any Star Trek characters from the television shows, movies or books will be allowed anywhere in your characters biography. This pertains to any and all character and/or ships that have been portrayed in any of those mediums.

All characters submitted become the property of the player who created them, with the provision that all actions performed by the Characters while in a mission are the property of the "Game".

Stardate Format

In Star Trek: *A Call To Duty*, stardates are expressed in the format 1YYMM.DD, where YY is the last two digits of the current year, MM is the number of the month, and DD is the day of the month. Any single digits in MM and DD would be preceded by zero to make a two digit number.

Therefore, an ST: A Call To Duty entry made on January 15th 2004 would be represented by Stardate 10401.15.

Other examples:

May 31, 2003 - Stardate 10305.31
October 2, 2005 – Stardate 10510.02

Additionally you will find a Stardate Calculator by going to the ODN (<http://odn.acalltoduty.com>) and clicking on the Resources link. The link to the Stardate Calculator and other resources (like this handbook) can be found on the left hand side.

Training Chain of Command

Training Coordinator:

TCs are senior staff that manage the trainers and their classes. Their responsibilities include managing staff and cadet issues, questions and concerns of cadets and staff with regards to training. If a trainer has a question that is brought before them by a cadet that they do not know the answer, they run it up the chain of command and the TC will respond to the trainer. If there is an issue that arises that the trainer cannot resolve, the TC is there to be arbitrator and an additional resource for the trainer.

Trainers:

These are the primary people responsible for your training. They will provide information, game materials and instruction on how to complete your training and direct you in what you need to do and know. Additionally, they are there to resolve any questions or issues you may have with regards to the game. They provide the game environment and do what they can to ensure cadet quality and satisfaction.

Conflict Resolution:

If a cadet has a concern about or conflict with another cadet, an attempt should first be made to work things out directly with that player. Most conflicts can be solved in this manner as many conflicts arise out of a simple lack of communication or misunderstanding. If the conflict is not solved by cadet-to-cadet communication, the concerned cadet must then contact their trainer with the details of the problem. If a cadet is still not satisfied with the solution at this point, they can contact their TC with all the details including the trainer's proposed resolution and steps taken thus far.

In the Training BBS, found at: <http://training.subspace.acalltoduty.com/phpBB2/> we hope to provide both cadets and current players with information on how to make their playing better and more fun for themselves and everyone.

It is with this in mind, we present the articles you will find on this board. Feel free to browse and look around. If you have questions on a given subject, post your questions in the Feedback area and give us a few days to respond to your post or check with your trainer.

Character Officer Positions

These positions apply to all divisions.

Commanding Officer - (CO)

The primary responsibilities of the commanding officer are leadership and command of a crew or team in the direction of attaining a particular mission directive and the safety and well being of officers under his/her command.

Executive Officer - (XO)

The primary responsibilities of the executive officer are acting as a conduit for relevant information to the commanding officer, ensuring the safety and security of the commanding officer, and advising the commanding officer in all instances.

Flight Control Officer - (FCO)

- The primary responsibilities of the flight control officer are course plotting, position verification, and supervision of manual and automatic flight operations. The flight control officer is also the primary bridge liaison to engineering.
- **Course Plotting** - By using a combination of the navigational sensors, science sensors, and tactical sensors the flight control officer can calculate the course of the ship. Course can be input by desired destination, proximity to another vessel, relative bearing, absolute heading, or galactic coordinates.
- **Position Verification** - The flight control officer must know the exact location of the ship in order to make course corrections. Ship location can be determined by time space beacons, subspace radio relays, other vessels, probes, sensors, or celestial objects.
- **Flight Operations (Manual/Automatic)** - During manual and automatic flight operations the flight control officer must monitor navigational sensors, the navigational deflector, the structural integrity field, and the inertial dampening system.
- **Bridge Liaison (to Engineering)** - Since the flight control officer monitors several critical systems aboard a starship, it is not surprising that flight control serves as liaison between the bridge and engineering. The flight control officer will often contact engineering to note performance problems or requirements related to flight control, if and when an engineering officer is not present on the bridge.

Operations Officer - (OPS)

- The primary responsibilities of the operations officer are supervision of power allocation, coordination and scheduling of starship or unit resources, and assignment of away team personnel and equipment.
- **Power Allocation** - During critical situations the operations officer is responsible for supervising power allocation. This may require rerouting power, taking key systems off-line, and coordinating activities with engineering.
- **Resource Coordination/Scheduling** - At any given moment multiple requests for starship or station resources may be made. The operations officer must prioritize these requests and allocate the necessary resources. Starship and station resources include both equipment and personnel.
- **Personnel/Equipment Assignment** - During away team missions the operations officer is responsible for notifying away team members and issuing equipment. The operations officer is also responsible for monitoring away team location, activities, and communication.
- **Communications** - The operations officer has control of all communications systems. These systems include intraship communication, ship-to-ground communication, ship-to-ship communication, and long-range subspace communication.

Tactical Officer - (TO)

- The primary responsibilities of the tactical officer are control of starship or station shields, and weapons with the secondary duties of starship or station security.

- Shields - During alert conditions the tactical officer is responsible for the activation and monitoring of starship shields. This includes making manual adjustments such as shield modulation and recalibration.
- Weapons - The tactical officer has control of all starship or unit defensive systems. These systems include tactical analysis, targeting, and firing. All tactical maneuvers must be coordinated with the flight control officer.
- Internal Security - Security of the starship/station and its personnel is paramount. For this reason, the tactical officer is responsible for internal security. This can range from security for visiting diplomats to counterinsurgency.
- External Security - During away team missions, personnel are vulnerable to attack. For this reason, the tactical officer is responsible for arranging security for officers away from the starship/station.

Science Officer - (SO)

- The primary responsibilities of the science officer are control of starship or unit sensor arrays, coordination of scientific endeavors, and interpretation of sensor data.
- Sensor Arrays - The science officer has control of all sensor systems. These systems include navigational sensors, tactical sensors, long-range sensors, and sensor probes.
- Scientific Endeavors - Since sensor systems are a shared resource the science officer is usually involved in a number of scientific projects. Departments such as stellar cartography often contact the science officer for advice and input.
- Data Interpretation - Command decisions are made based on all available information; this includes scientific information. The science officer is responsible for the interpretation and dissemination of all scientific data collected by available sensor systems.

Engineer - (EO)

- The primary responsibilities of the engineer are monitoring, maintaining, and repairing starship/station systems.
- Monitoring - Since most systems are critical, they must be monitored on a continuous basis. While much of this monitoring is automated, during critical situations officer interaction is required.
- Maintaining - Keeping systems in prime condition is extremely important. For this reason, the engineer has control over diagnostic and maintenance equipment pertaining to each separate system.
- Repairing - Damage to any system can lead to disaster. For this reason, the engineer has many resources with which to repair damaged systems. These include personnel, materials, and special equipment.

Medical Officer - (MO)

- The primary responsibilities of the medical officer are prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of medical problems experienced by starship or station personnel.

- **Prevention** - Prevention of medical problems is accomplished through the use of routine physicals. All personnel are required to submit to physical examinations as required by the medical officer.
- **Diagnosis** - Diagnosis of medical problems is accomplished through the use of advanced medical systems. These systems include medical tricorders, biobeds, sensor clusters, and extensive medical references.
- **Treatment** - Treatment of medical problems is accomplished through the use of medical resources. These resources include medical equipment (e.g. hyposprays, neural stimulators, etc.) as well as holistic agents (e.g. medicines, physical therapy, etc.).

Counselor - (CNS)

- The primary responsibilities of the counselor are diagnosis and treatment of psychological problems experienced by personnel. The counselor also advises command personnel.
- **Diagnosis** - Diagnosis of psychological problems is accomplished through the use of in depth counseling sessions. All personnel are required to submit to psychological evaluations as required by the counselor.
- **Treatment** - Treatment of psychological problems is accomplished through the use of psychological resources. These resources include different types of therapy and continued psychological counseling.
- **Advising** - Since counselors are trained in psychological analysis it is not surprising that they often involved in command decisions. These decisions usually deal with diplomacy, negotiation, or first contact.

Civilian/Specialist - (CIV)

This position on either a starship or station can encompass any other position not already covered. It is a position created to acknowledge the presence of non-Starfleet personnel on starships or stations (like Guinan, Quark, Jake Sisko, and even Neelix). While the aforementioned characters didn't have a proper Starfleet rank, this does not mean that your character may not have a rank. Instead of a non-ranked non-Starfleet character, you could create a ranked Starfleet character and still have it placed in the civilian position. Examples of characters would be Kozinski (a warp specialist), Nog (a Starfleet Cadet), or even someone from Starfleet Intelligence to make observations during a crucial mission. Simply put, this position is so dynamic that it is really meant for those players who really care about the Game play, and not their rank. It is a wonderful position to role-play, offering greater flexibility than perhaps any other position in the Game.

Ranks

The standard ranks in Star Trek: A Call to Duty is as follows and applies to all divisions:

- **Cadet** (abbreviated Cdt) *A player must specifically request this rank when creating a new character.
- **Ensign** (abbreviated Ens)
- **Lieutenant Junior Grade** (abbreviated LtJG)

- Lieutenant (abbreviated Lt.)
- Lieutenant Commander (abbreviated LtCmdr)
- Commander (abbreviated Cmdr)
- Captain (abbreviated Capt)

Rules and Policies

Acceptable Writing Practices

Typing practices

Proper typing practices shall be used in all three divisions. This means punctuation, capitalization and complete words (i.e.: “u” is an unacceptable abbreviation for “you”, “im” is an unacceptable abbreviation for “I’m”). This applies to missions, emails and posts.

Spell-check – Spell-check- Spell-check

Please spell-check every email and post before sending. This applies for Chat, Newsgroup, and PBeM (PLAY BY EMAIL) Games. Most email software allows you to do this. If yours doesn't then try to compose in a word processing package that will perform the spell-check, then cut and paste into your email package.

Common Courtesies

PBeM (Play By Email)

It is considered bad form to do the following:

- Post conversation or actions by another player's character (or by an NPC you haven't created yourself) without their permission
- Verbally attack or abuse another player.
- Send a post that has not been spell-checked.
- Include text from a previous post in your own (an exception is made for a line or two of dialogue when you need to make it clear who and what you are replying to)

Participation Requirements

There are specific requirements for participation by each division. Failure to fulfill these requirements may affect your character's promotion and may even qualify for your character's removal from their ship/station. These requirements are per each character.

PBeM (Play By Email)

Any player who is assigned to a starship or station is required to post at least once weekly.

Assignment

After graduating from Training from any division, players are assigned to a starship or station. Only after graduation will players be assigned, and the player will be contacted via email with further information. There are currently several starships and stations so you will be asked to give a few choices since it is not possible to guarantee an assignment/position.

PBeM (Play By Email) Specific Items

Writing protocols

The majority of the writing in PBeM is what is considered a narrative format, like one would see in a novel. There are some specific exceptions (protocols) to this which we will get to later. It is for a consistency in play that we ask players to post in a standard perspective and tense, that being: third person, past tense.

Don't worry if this looks a little complicated – it's easily picked up once you've written your first couple of posts, and your trainer will work with you to get this right during your training mission.

Please spell-check all posts before sending.

You should not hit "reply" to post to the group. Please make a separate email for your post and if you need to copy the email address from a mail on your list to a new one. This will keep the archives neat and your ship/station managers will thank you for it.

Posting

Posts should usually be formatted in Plain Text format in your Email program, but may occasionally be sent in HTML format as long as the player is considerate in what they are doing with the extra HTML power (such as use of italics or font-sizes). Do not send web page style posts to your group.

A post is a piece of writing involving at least one character. It can be player or NPC and it is something that furthers the storyline or development of a character. Only when it is sent to the group's email address and is archived on the list server does it become an official post and you then get credit for posting for the week.

Headers

Posts, when written, should be headed in this format:

"Into the Unknown - Death of an Engineer"

=====

USS Agamemnon, Engine Room

Day 1 (morning)

Lt. Cmdr Andrew Callas - Counselor (Sam)

Crewman Jonas - Engineer [NPC]

At the beginning is a two -part title for your post. The first part should be copied from the part title line before the hyphen in the very latest post your SM has posted, and forms something akin to an “episode title,” The second is a subtitle for your individual post. Posts should read as a (very) short story. If you get stuck thinking up a subtitle, just use the main title (“Into the Unknown”, in the example above)

Next is the location that the scene starts in and a time setting. This helps readers set the context to read your post in and place it into the timeline of the ship you are playing on. Time stamps should have their own line in the header as seen above.

At this time, many ships/stations use the day timeline marker to place their post into a timeline in a mission arc. A general or specific time may be included for further detailing. Keep in mind that this may vary depending on circumstance and SM.

Finally comes a “cast list” – the speaking characters that appear in the post. You may have collaborated with another player on your post, or you may have included numerous “extras,” or Non-Player Characters (NPCs). At a minimum, you need to include your character and that of any player you collaborated with here. It can be helpful if you also include the names of NPCs. [NPC] marks that a person in this post is a non-player-character currently under your (the player’s) control.

If you have written an NPC that is yours exclusively, you need to follow NPC by a dash and your name. If the NPC is one that can be used by anyone, then leave it as just [NPC]. See below an example of an exclusive NPC and a general usage NPC.

"Into the Unknown - Death of an Engineer"

=====

USS Agamemnon, Engine Room
Day 1 (morning)
Lt. Cmdr Andrew Callas - Counselor (Sam)
Crewman Smith - Engineer [NPC - Bob]
Crewman Jonas - Engineer [NPC]

Exclusive NPCs should be used with discretion and care. These should be people with key relationships to your character such as: a key member of your staff, a best friend, a spouse or other family member, a rival, these would be good examples of exclusive NPCs.

Post Title/Subject

Your email client gives a line for “subject” – repeat the same “two-part-title” including the quotation marks from your post here. The mailing list server will further modify this to add a prefix to identify your game session. This can be useful in setting up “rules” in your mail client for automatically highlighting/filing game posts. From the example above, your subject title would be “Into the Unknown – Death of an Engineer”.

Communication Protocols

Non Face-To-Face Communications

Use "=^=" around text intended to be spoken over combadges or other communication devices.

Example:

Caught mid-stride, Ensign DeWitt heard the badge on his chest chirp. Freeing one hand from his load, Julius tapped the badge. ^= DeWitt here, sir. Can I help you? ^=

Telepathy

Use tildes ("~~~") around telepathic communication.

Example:

Sonal placed his hands onto Susan's temples, spreading his fingers to find the best points of contact. He established the meld easily, far more so than he had expected. ~~~Do not panic, I am just going to try to take you back to last night, and help you to remember what happened~~~

Other

There is no protocol for thoughts. Just write them in narrative form.

Example:

Akalise looked into the distance. The mountains were beautiful. She wondered idly if the captain would let her beam her climbing gear down.

Conditional Actions

Often, a player will want to cover as much activity as possible in a single post, without waiting for a response from another player or the SM. Character activity which depends upon a response not yet given is called *conditional actions*.

Conditional actions are set off by {curly brackets}.

An example of a conditional action would be the case of a player's character stopping by another character's quarters. The player posts his character arriving and pressing the door buzzer. Rather than waiting a day or two for the other player to respond with what might be a single line "Come in" (or a post saying the player is not in his quarters at the time), the player may post a conditional action that, if invited to come in, he does. The player may also include in the conditional action what he does if invited in. This way, the second player can post a message letting the first player in, if he wishes, and can immediately respond to what the first player does when let in.

Considerable time may have been saved by the use of conditional actions. If the second player is not in his quarters at the time, or chooses not to answer the door, that player will say so, and the conditional action will simply be ignored – in the game, it never happened.

This scenario would appear as below:

Lt Evans walks down the corridor to Maten's quarters and presses the door chime.

{If Maten is in and signals her to enter}

Evans enters the room and pauses, glaring at Maten, before launching into a lecture about his behavior at dinner.

It is also possible to use conditional actions to cover several possible responses. For instance, in a combat situation, the officer in command of the bridge might post an order, and then indicate what his immediate response would be to any of several possible results.

Seran stands; as the warbird closes on the Mah, he gives the order to fire all weapons.

{If the warbird is damaged and unable to return fire}

Seran turns to the tactical officer. "Mr. Muldoon, cease fire and open a communication channel to the Romulan commander."

{If the warbird sustains some damage but is still able to return fire}

Seran orders evasive maneuvers, and continued firing upon the warbird.

In the above conditional action post, the Ship/Station Manager would determine the severity of the damage to the warbird, and the game would continue following the path of the appropriate conditional action.

The discussion of conditional actions raises the question of character interaction between your character and another player's character, and how much leeway you have in attributing words/actions/responses to those other characters. The answer is simple: You should NEVER attribute words or actions to another player's character that has not been documented in a post by that player, or that you have not cleared in advance (via email) with that player. There is nothing worse in a PBeM game than reading a post by another player which has your character saying or doing something you have no control over.

Game Play

Participating in a mission

Participation in the game takes place through starship or station missions. Missions require a weekly commitment of one post.

A post is a scene involving at least one character. It can be player or NPC. It is something that furthers a plot or sub-plot in the story arcs. Only when it is sent to the group's email address and is archived on the list, does it become an official post and you then get credit for posting for the week.

A response to your fellow player in a joint post (JP) is not posting until the final version of the JP has gone out to the official list.

Cooperation

Your posts should encourage and build upon co-operation with other players. When confronted with a problem, try to involve other players in the solution rather than solving it yourself in a single post. The aim of PBeM is to tell an interesting story of character interaction, not to complete the mission in the shortest possible time.

Collaboration (Joint Posts)

Multiple players may decide to collaborate on a single post, either over email, IRC, or other mediums. This is frequently called a Joint Post or JP for short. A joint post is something you do with your fellow player(s) off the email list, back and forth and when the post is done then it then gets sent to the list.

As mentioned earlier, it can be done any number of ways. The important part is that its final format must be up to posting standards for the game. There would be no chat protocols in the final product unless those protocols were also part of the PBeM game, such as the protocols for telepathy; the post would be written in the narrative format, third person, past tense, etc. Find below some of the mediums in which you can write the first drafts of your posts:

Email: You can do a JP by writing back and forth via e-mail. One person will start the JP and they send what they have to the 2nd person. That person adds more and sends it back to the first. Once you are both satisfied with the way it looks and its content, then one of you should send it out to the list server. This method can take several days, but when separated by time zones or work schedules, it is a proven and effective method.

Instant Messaging: You can do a JP on an instant messaging service, such as AIM, ICQ, MSN or Yahoo, if both people have an account on the same service. You would simply type your actions back and forth. Just type them in as you would normally for a post, third person, past tense with proper grammar and punctuation. Depending upon the IM program you use, you may have to cut and paste the conversation into a word document or notepad in order to preserve what you are writing so it can be posted. Some IM programs allow you to save conversations, so then you can save the conversation and edit it. No matter how it has been edited, send it to your fellow JPers so they can make edits or tweaks to what they wrote.

IRC: Another way to do a JP is to do it via MS Chat or MiRC. If you're coming to PBeM from the Chat game, then you are already familiar with this. Like an instant message program, you can write in it the same way and you can save the conversation, or you can write in current ST: A Call To Duty chat protocols. Be sure to convert it to the PBeM format though.

All finished posts go to your list once it has been determined by your JPers the post is ready and not before. This should be agreed to by all players involved before posting. The post is then to be submitted by one player to the list at which time it becomes an official post and all who participated in the post get credit for posting.

Be aware that in a JP you can still only write for your character or for an NPC controlled by you. This was covered earlier in another part of the handbook, but it should be further stressed here. An example of how you can write more than a small amount of dialogue at a time follows:

Example (in email):

In comparison to his bulk and lined appearance, Sarah seemed a slip of a girl; she still had a fresh faced, youthful appearance. Her dark hair was swept back from her fair face and held in place by a simple comb. Yet as if it had a mind of its own, portions of it hung in long graceful curves over her shoulders. "I got a lot of good experience there, but I am glad to be back out in space," she said, a small smile warming her tones.

<please ask me why>

"I grew up in Starfleet. Both my parents served on vessels and when they were not serving together, I lived with one or the other of them. This is where I am most comfortable, on the decks of a starship or behind the controls of a runabout."

<to you>

This clearly leaves room for your fellow player to write his or her own responses. Of course, try to make allowances for if they change the subject on you. You can always add paragraphs in between. The beauty of joint posts is that it is a flexible medium and nothing is set in stone until the joint post has been officially posted to the list.

Etiquette and respect for your fellow player in a JP is very important to help you work closely and harmoniously your fellow crew. Here are some quick things to keep in mind when working on a JP:

- Do not write for others' characters
- Be quick to respond to your fellow JPers and if you cannot respond to a JP within 3 days, be sure to let your fellow JPers know.
- Spell check! (Remember some words are spelled differently in English depending on dialect, American, Canadian, British.)
- Make sure before sending the post to the list everyone has agreed the post is done.
- Don't make changes to other people's words (including titles) without discussing it with them first.

Narrative Form of Posts

It is very important that everyone in the PBeM game write in the third person, past tense. This combination is what is most typically used in novels because it is the easiest to read and understand. Also, it is really a difficult thing when you are doing a good deal of reading and suddenly the perspective or the tense changes on you.

Your mind has to adjust to the new style and that places a small strain on you the reader, lessening your enjoyment. So be conscientious of the others in your group and maintain the style. Find below the same story told four times using different perspectives and tenses.

First person, Present tense example (wrong):

I walk up to the replicator and I say, "One chili cheese-burger and don't hold the onions."

I watch the replicator as it quickly responds to my request with the chimes that let me know that my food is created. I smell the delightfully spicy smell filling the room and my stomach growls. I am really hungry! I get my food out of the replicator, then place it on the table.

"Mmm....!" I exclaim, eating my first bite. I am so hungry, I feel like I haven't eaten in a week!

First person, Past tense example (wrong):

I walked up to the replicator and said, "One chili cheese-burger and don't hold the onions."

I watched the replicator as it quickly responded to my request and I heard the chimes that let me know that my food was created. I smelled the delightfully spicy seasonings of the chili as it filled the room and my stomach growled. I felt really hungry! I got my food out of the replicator, then placed it on the table.

"Mmm....!" I exclaimed, eating my first bite. I was so hungry, I felt like I hadn't eaten in a week!

Third person, Present tense example (wrong):

Jessica walks up to the replicator and says, "One chili cheese-burger and don't hold the onions."

The replicator quickly responds with the chimes that let her know that her food is created. The delightful spicy smell fills the room and her stomach growls. She hungrily reaches for her food and pulls it out of the replicator, then sets it on the table.

"Mmm...." Jessica says eating her first bite. She is so hungry, she feels like she hadn't eaten in a week!

Third person, Past tense example (right):

Jessica walked up to the replicator and said, "One chili cheese-burger and don't hold the onions."

The replicator quickly responded and a moment later, she heard the chimes that let her know that her food was created. The delightful spicy smell filled the room and her stomach growled. She hungrily reached for her food, pulling it out of the replicator. Jessica then set it on the table.

"Mmm...." Jessica said as she ate her first bite. She reflected how it felt like she hadn't eaten in a week because she was so hungry!

Game Pace

It can be difficult keeping the same game running at a workable speed, especially when sometimes you have to wait a day or two for others to respond. Try to work with the things you've been given by your SM -- if you're currently in a battle with the Cardassians, and you're getting bored down in the Engine Room, a fire might liven things up a bit. Be careful though, not to step over the line of working with the story as opposed to steering in another directions altogether. When in doubt, contact your SM for such things. Often times, the SM will be able to give you additional direction or assistance.

Be thoughtful to other players in your game, and post an OOC line if you know you will not be able to reply to game mails for more than three days. That way, they can avoid asking you questions that they will have to wait a while for an answer from, and can concentrate on doing other things.

The SM (or XO in their absence) reserves the right to move the game ahead if a number of players are waiting for a response by another character. This will be done in a non-obtrusive way if possible, by changing the environment rather than performing actions on behalf of the character concerned.

Mission Orders

Mission Orders are usually distributed via email by your SM/CO prior to the beginning of a new mission, and usually detail the orders you have been given by Starfleet Command (either directly or via a regional commander). It's possible on rare occasions that these may be for "Command Staff Eyes Only" and restricted to the CO and XO.

Mission Briefing

Mission Briefings are a set of orders from the CO to the rest of the crew, detailing individual tasks that they wish particular officers to carry out. Depending on your CO's style of command and the exact situation you find yourselves in, you may receive a Mission Briefing email sent to all officers, a Mission Briefing within their own "in-character" post, or just a set of verbal "in game" orders.

PBeM Sample Mission

The following example shows part of a mission in action.

"The Silent Visitor - Mission Orders"

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Starbase 621 - Angeles Station, Operations Center, Ready Room
Day 1 (Morning)
Captain Stephen Roberts, Commanding Officer (Joe)

Stephen Roberts sat down in his ready room with a nice cup of ractajino. This was a typical morning for him, after a light breakfast and a loving good-bye kiss from his wife, he'd come here first and check on what needed doing on the station today. As he sipped his strong Klingon coffee, he opened what appeared to be a message from Starfleet Command. As he did, a flash of light appeared behind him, filling the room with a brilliant white glow that quickly faded. He turned and looked outside his window.

Outside was floating what appeared to be a large bronze colored, humanoid statue. From his perspective it appeared to be face down as if floating in some unseen lake. He was intrigued, it had about six arms and four legs and it reminded him of statuary he had seen in India, although the head was plainly the wrong shape to be of human origin.

He quickly tapped his badge, =\= Operations... can you give me a read on this... um... idol? =\=

"The Silent Visitor – What is That?"

=====

Starbase 621 - Angeles Station, Operations Center
Day 1 (Morning)
Ensign Lynna Kragen, Science Officer (Sophie)

It had been a boring night, but someone had to man the sensors. The sector was its typical quiet self and most of the blips on Ensign Kragen's panel were handled by someone else – Flight Control and Tactical.

But just as she was looking forward to getting off duty, her panel sounded in alarm. "What the?" the trill muttered to herself, "A wormhole?"

Sure enough, the sensors picked up what appeared to be an unstable wormhole opened right next to the station and slowly, a strange object emerged.

She trained the sensors on it. It was 200 meters in length, but it did not read like a ship. It was made of an organic material, but there were no life signs and inside was hollow, with a breathable atmosphere. It was then she got the communication from the Captain....

=\= Operations... can you give me a read on this... um... idol? =\= he said.

Lynna noted that Captain Roberts sounded a bit on edge. =\= Captain, it's like nothing I've ever seen, =\= she responded, =\= I mean it's organic... and... =\=

She was about to list off all the unusual properties she had found, when she saw the Captain's swift approach down the stairs from his office.

"The Silent Visitor – Mystery"

=====

Starbase 621 - Angeles Station, Operations Center

Day 1 (Morning)

Captain Stephen Roberts, Commanding Officer (Joe)

Lieutenant Gaalen Omtala, Chief Tactical Officer (Robert)

Ensign Lynna Krage, Science Officer (Sophie)

Ensign Richard Corless, Tactical Officer [NPC – Robert]

Roberts had quickly moved down to the operations center and saw that his Chief Tactical officer had just arrived. "Good morning Lieutenant... I already have need of your assistance," Roberts said.

"Oh?" the Andorian CTO asked cocking both an eyebrow and an antenna.

It was then Ensign Corless from the gamma shift spoke up, "Sir, sir, sir!" he said excitedly.

Omtala could see today was indeed getting interesting; he wondered what the eager Ensign had to report. A side-glance to his Commanding Officer told him that Roberts plainly had expected this. "Yes?" he asked and watched the young officer motioned for them to come over.

Roberts calmly followed behind the Andorian to witness the young ensign's report.

"Sir, this thing... is incredible!" Corless said, "It just popped out of a wormhole and is sitting in a stationary position just outside of the station."

Omtala raised his eyebrows, now plainly concerned, "Is it a threat? Has it done anything yet? What is it?"

"Well, near as I can tell it doesn't have any weapons..." the young ensign said, "but it doesn't seem to have any shields or engines either. I have no idea what that thing is, Sir, but its done nothing but sit there." He sighed, "I just do not understand how could it have gotten here if it did not have engines?"

"Perhaps through the wormhole?" Omtala suggested.

Science Officer Krage responded, "If it merely drifted through a wormhole, why is it now at a complete stop? It should have run into the station." The science officer looked at the others with a coy smile, then looked a bit disappointed, seeing the two tactical officers had missed her point.

Roberts spoke up, "Newton's first law of motion," he said, "a body in motion tends to stay in motion unless acted upon by an outside force." He nodded politely to the attractive blond trill, appreciating that there was a very intelligent young woman before him.

"The..." Stephen hesitated, looking for the right word, but finding none better than the one he used earlier, "idol, must have some means of locomotion that we do not yet understand or have the ability to detect... Here's what I want to know... why is it here? What is it? And where did it come from?"

"Looks like we have a mystery on our hands..." Roberts rubbed his hands together with some glee, "best we get about to solving it."
