

SESSION 5

Cargo, Passengers, and Lies

A Beginner-Friendly Traveller Teaching Campaign

REFEREE USE

The ship has made its first trip, but now the bills arrive. Freight offers, passenger requests, docking fees, and a tempting questionable cargo force the Travellers to learn that earning money in the Trojan Reach is never just arithmetic. Every manifest is a story waiting to become trouble.

Field	Briefing Detail
Campaign	Book One: The Drinax Training Arc
Session Type	Adventure Session
Target Play Time	Three Hours
Audience	New Traveller players and a new Referee
Rules Goal	Teach freight, passengers, operating costs, broker checks, and legal risk
Campaign Goal	Prepare the crew to see commerce as pressure, opportunity, and future leverage

DESIGN NOTE

This is an original teaching session document for personal table use. It is designed to be compatible with the tone and campaign frame of Traveller and The Pirates of Drinax, but it does not reproduce or replace official rulebooks or published adventures.

2. Session Snapshot

Item	Session 5 Detail
Session Number	5
Session Title	Cargo, Passengers, and Lies
Target Play Time	Three hours
Primary Teaching Focus	Freight, passengers, ship operating costs, broker checks, steward checks, cargo legality, and smuggling pressure.
Primary Story Focus	The crew needs income after its first trip and chooses between safe work, passenger complications, and a suspicious high-profit cargo.
Main Traveller Mechanics	Operating expense pressure, freight and passenger choices, Broker, Steward, Admin, cargo inspection, and fail-forward legal risk.
Main Drinax Concept	A privateering crew cannot live on royal promises. Money, trade networks, and plausible legality make future piracy possible.
Expected Session End-State	The crew accepts paid work, identifies at least one hidden risk, updates cargo and passenger records, and prepares for a morally complicated delivery.
Recommended Prep Time	Sixty to ninety minutes. Prepare three job offers, one passenger secret, and one inspection complication.
Difficulty for New Referee	Moderate. The session is rules-light but choice-heavy.

CONTINUITY FROM PRIOR SESSION

Session 4 should have left the crew with a port reaction, possible medical or legal costs, and a stronger sense that money matters. Before play, check credits, ship status, docking fees, any local suspicion, broker reaction, and whether the crew made a friend or enemy at the port. If the previous session ended messily, some offers may be worse or riskier.

3. Referee Overview

This session teaches the economic side of Traveller without turning the table into an accounting exercise. The Travellers have a ship, but the ship costs money. Docking, fuel, repairs, supplies, crew expectations, and local fees create pressure. That pressure makes cargo and passenger offers matter.

The session should feel like practical business with hidden knives. The crew is not yet running a full trading campaign. They are learning that a manifest can carry debt, politics, contraband, desperation, or leverage. The best offer is not always the safest. The safest offer may not pay enough.

Build from Session 4 by using the consequences of the port trouble. If the crew behaved well, better brokers approach. If they made a mess, their options are thinner, costlier, or more criminal. Point toward Session 6, where the line between privateering and piracy becomes active.

REFEREE NOTE

Use money as story pressure, not punishment. The goal is not to bankrupt the crew. The goal is to make them ask what risks they will accept to keep the ship moving.

4. Teaching Goals

Player Learning Goals

- Understand that ship operation creates ongoing costs.
- Learn the difference between freight, passengers, and questionable cargo as story choices.
- Practice using Broker, Steward, Admin, Persuade, and Streetwise in commercial scenes.
- See that legal cargo, illegal cargo, and suspicious cargo can look similar at first.
- Track cargo, passengers, credits, promises, and risks in the campaign ledger.

Referee Learning Goals

- Present several job offers without forcing one correct choice.
- Keep trade choices simple and dramatic.
- Use passengers as NPCs with needs, secrets, and leverage.
- Run an inspection or customs scene without becoming a legal textbook.
- Record credits, cargo, passengers, and debts clearly.

Campaign Learning Goals

- Connect commerce to reputation and law.
- Show that brokers and passengers can become recurring contacts.
- Prepare the crew for smuggling, cover stories, and privateering claims.
- Make the ship feel like a business as well as a weapon.

5. Rules Introduced This Session

Rule or Concept	Why It Matters	How It Appears in Play	Teach Detail	Beginner Mistake to Avoid
Operating Costs	The ship creates pressure even when no one is shooting.	Docking fees, fuel, supplies, repairs, and crew expectations are summarized.	Use simplified totals.	Do not make accounting the whole session.
Freight	Freight is safer income but rarely exciting by itself.	The crew can take a low-risk shipment with modest pay.	Teach concept and ledger entry.	Do not require full trade mastery yet.
Passengers	Passengers are income and complications.	One or more people request passage and bring demands or secrets.	Teach categories lightly.	Do not treat passengers as cargo boxes.
Broker Checks	Deals depend on contacts and leverage.	Used to find better offers or read bad terms.	Use one or two checks.	Do not let one roll replace a decision.
Steward and Passenger Care	People aboard the ship require attention.	Passenger comfort, complaints, and discretion matter.	Teach as roleplay plus one check.	Do not ignore passenger reactions.
Cargo Legality	The same crate can be legal, questionable, or dangerous depending on world and paperwork.	Customs or manifests raise questions.	Use practical categories.	Do not reveal every secret immediately.

6. Rules Intentionally Avoided

Rules or Subsystem	Why It Is Delayed
Full Speculative Trade	The crew needs to understand job pressure before engaging full market play.
Detailed Passenger Life Support Accounting	Use simple upkeep and comfort pressure. Add detail later if the table enjoys it.
Starship Combat	This session is about business and risk, not weapons.
Piracy and Prize Law	Privateering begins next session after the crew understands cargo value.
Complex Customs Codes	Use clear stakes: safe, questionable, illegal, or politically dangerous.
Advanced Ship Maintenance Economics	Track repairs and stress, but do not bury play in invoices.

7. What the Players Should Learn

Players should learn that commerce in Traveller is not just profit calculation. It is risk selection. Every job tells the crew what kind of people they are becoming and what kind of trouble follows the ship.

- The ship needs income to keep moving.
- A small safe job can buy time and reputation.
- A risky job can solve money problems while creating bigger ones.

- Passengers should be treated as people with motives, not cargo labels.
- A manifest, a cover story, and a reputation can matter as much as weapons.

8. What the Referee Should Practice

- Present costs clearly without shaming or punishing the crew.
- Offer three jobs with different risk, pay, and story texture.
- Let Broker and Streetwise reveal pressure, not automatic answers.
- Give every noncombat character something useful to do.
- Use inspections as tense social scenes.
- Track cargo, passenger names, credits, and legal exposure in the ledger.
- End with a choice that points naturally toward privateering or smuggling.

REFEREE NOTE

If the crew chooses the boring safe job, respect that choice. The story can come from low profit, a talkative passenger, a delayed payment, or pressure to take something riskier next.

9. Three-Hour Session Timeline

Time	Segment	Purpose	Referee Notes
0:00 to 0:15	Opening recap	Review port outcome, money, ship needs, and local reputation.	Make costs visible but manageable.
0:15 to 0:45	The Bill Comes Due	Present fees, repair needs, supplies, and crew expectations.	Do not overdo accounting.
0:45 to 1:30	Job Offers	Present freight, passenger, and questionable cargo options.	Let players compare risk and reward.
1:30 to 2:15	Passenger and Manifest Trouble	Reveal one lie, missing paper, nervous passenger, or hidden cargo concern.	Use social and admin checks.
2:15 to 2:45	Inspection or Departure Choice	Run customs, port clearance, or a broker deadline.	Let the crew choose their story.
2:45 to 3:00	Debrief and Hook	Update ledger and point toward privateering or cargo consequences.	End with a risk accepted.

10. Required Materials

Checklist	Checklist
☐ Character sheets	☐ Cargo and passenger ledger
☐ Ship record sheet	☐ Three job offer cards
☐ Campaign ledger	☐ Passenger NPC cards
☐ Sector or subsector map	☐ Simple port fee summary
☐ World profile notes	☐ Customs or inspection prompt
☐ Session handout	☐ Scratch paper or index cards
☐ Dice	☐ Optional rumor cards
☐ Basic trade and passenger reference	☐ Optional ship expense worksheet

For this session, the ledger matters more than exact accounting. Track enough to make the crew feel pressure: credits, fuel, cargo, passengers, debts, and legal exposure.

11. Opening Situation

READ OR PARAPHRASE

The ship survived its first real trip, but the port does not care about royal dreams. Docking fees come due. Fuel must be replaced. A repair estimate appears on the ledger. A broker smiles too quickly. Passengers ask about cabins. Freight waits in sealed containers. One offer pays enough to make the numbers easier, but the paperwork is thin and the person offering it is careful not to say too much.

12. Key NPCs

Name	Role	First Impression	Wants	Knows	Helps	Complicates	Skills
Merev Sol	Port Broker	Friendly, quick with numbers, never fully still.	Earn commission and test the crew.	Which cargos are safe, thin, or dirty.	Provides job options and local market read.	May hide risk inside polished terms.	Broker, Persuade, Deception, Admin
Dr. Arlen Vaust	High Passage Applicant	Formal, tired, overprepared.	Reach the next world quietly.	His papers are valid, but his reasons are incomplete.	Pays well and behaves politely.	Draws attention from someone at port.	Medic, Science, Persuade, Steward
Kira Pellan	Middle Passenger	Practical, observant, traveling light.	Get passage and avoid questions.	She knows a rumor about the cargo offer.	Can provide a clue if treated well.	May become suspicious of the crew.	Streetwise, Investigate, Deception
Nim Calder	Cargo Handler	Greasy coveralls, direct, impatient.	Move containers and get paid.	One container was added late.	Can identify irregular handling.	May refuse risk without hazard pay.	Mechanic, Athletics, Streetwise
Customs Clerk Saro Jent	Port Official	Polite, slow, and paper-focused.	Correct manifests and no trouble.	Knows which forms are weak.	Can clear the ship legally.	Can delay departure or flag cargo.	Admin, Advocate, Persuade
Sella Vorn via Message	Drinax Dockmaster	Dry voice, practical advice.	Keep the Harrier intact.	Ship wear will become expensive.	Warns what not to ignore.	May insist on repairs before riskier work.	Engineer, Mechanic, Admin

13. Key Locations

Location	Description	First Notice	Useful Details	Complications	Relevant Checks	Campaign Connection
Broker Concourse	A busy market of job boards, agents, kiosks, and watchers.	Scrolling offers and quiet side deals.	Best place to compare jobs.	Bad offers look good at first glance.	Broker, Streetwise, Admin.	Shows trade as social pressure.
Harrier Cargo Bay	The ship space where freight becomes real.	Tie-down rails, seals, cargo tags.	Lets players inspect what they accept.	A container may not match its manifest.	Admin, Mechanic, Recon.	Makes cargo part of ship life.
Passenger Common Area	Small shared space aboard ship.	Everyone notices everyone.	Good for social scenes and Steward checks.	Secrets become harder in close quarters.	Steward, Persuade, Investigate.	Turns passengers into story.
Customs Desk	Official clearance point.	Forms, seals, queues, bored staff.	Can clear or delay the ship.	Poor papers create leverage or fines.	Admin, Advocate, Persuade.	Introduces legal risk.
Fuel and Supply Yard	Practical service area for fuel and stores.	Costs posted in plain numbers.	Shows operating expenses.	Price changes create pressure.	Broker, Admin, Engineer.	Keeps ship economics visible.

14. Scene-by-Scene Outline

Scene 1: The Bill Comes Due

PURPOSE	Make ship costs visible and motivate job selection.
SETUP	Docking, fuel, supplies, and a repair estimate arrive before the crew chooses new work.
WHAT THE PLAYERS CAN DO	Review ledger, argue priorities, delay repairs, seek credit, or ask brokers for work.
RELEVANT CHECKS	Admin 8+, Broker 8+, Engineer 8+, Steward 8+.
LIKELY OUTCOMES	The crew knows what it needs to earn and what it can delay.
FAILURE COMPLICATIONS	A cost is misunderstood, ignored, or turned into debt.
REFEREE ADVICE	Keep numbers simple: enough pressure to matter, not enough to stop play.
TRANSITION	The broker concourse offers options.

Scene 2: Three Offers

PURPOSE	Let players compare risk and reward.
SETUP	Merev Sol presents safe freight, passenger revenue, and a high-paying questionable cargo.
WHAT THE PLAYERS CAN DO	Ask questions, check paperwork, negotiate, split capacity, or refuse.
RELEVANT CHECKS	Broker 8+, Admin 8+, Streetwise 8+, Persuade 8+.
LIKELY OUTCOMES	The crew chooses work and understands obvious tradeoffs.
FAILURE COMPLICATIONS	They miss hidden risk, accept poor terms, or offend a useful broker.
REFEREE ADVICE	Make all options viable. The best choice depends on crew values.
TRANSITION	The chosen offer produces a passenger or manifest complication.

Scene 3: Passenger Questions

PURPOSE	Teach that passengers are people with secrets.
SETUP	Dr. Vaust, Kira Pellan, or another traveler boards or seeks passage.
WHAT THE PLAYERS CAN DO	Interview, verify identity, assign cabin, set ship rules, or refuse.
RELEVANT CHECKS	Steward 8+, Persuade 8+, Investigate 8+, Admin 8+.
LIKELY OUTCOMES	The crew learns what passenger care and discretion mean.
FAILURE COMPLICATIONS	A passenger feels insulted, hides something better, or spreads a complaint.
REFEREE ADVICE	Do not reveal the secret too fast. Let behavior invite questions.
TRANSITION	Cargo and passenger records must be finalized.

Scene 4: Manifest Trouble

PURPOSE	Create commercial tension without a fight.
SETUP	A late container, mismatched seal, extra passenger bag, or unclear document appears.
WHAT THE PLAYERS CAN DO	Inspect, accept, reject, hide, rewrite paperwork, or ask who benefits.
RELEVANT CHECKS	Admin 8+, Recon 8+, Mechanic 8+, Advocate 8+, Streetwise 8+.
LIKELY OUTCOMES	The crew identifies whether the risk is legal, political, or criminal.
FAILURE COMPLICATIONS	They accept cargo without understanding the risk or create a port record.
REFEREE ADVICE	This is the session center. Let them decide how honest they want to be.
TRANSITION	Customs or port clearance forces a cover story.

Scene 5: Clearance and Departure Choice

PURPOSE	Make the crew commit.
SETUP	Customs Clerk Saro Jent reviews the manifest before departure.
WHAT THE PLAYERS CAN DO	Tell the truth, bluff, bribe, produce paperwork, delay, dump cargo, or depart clean.
RELEVANT CHECKS	Admin 8+, Advocate 8+, Persuade 8+, Deception opposed.
LIKELY OUTCOMES	The crew leaves with cargo, passengers, a debt, or a cleaner record.
FAILURE COMPLICATIONS	The ship is flagged, delayed, underpaid, or watched.
REFEREE ADVICE	Failure should create risk on the route, not stop the campaign.
TRANSITION	Session 6 begins with cargo value and privateering temptation.

15. Core Checks and Suggested Difficulties

Situation	Skill	Difficulty	Success	Failure
Estimate immediate ship costs	Admin or Broker	8+	Clear picture of fees, fuel, and repair pressure.	Costs are incomplete or underestimated.
Negotiate a freight rate	Broker or Persuade	8+	Improve pay or terms.	Broker keeps advantage or adds conditions.
Read a questionable offer	Streetwise or Broker	8+ or 10+	Spot the risk category.	The offer looks cleaner than it is.
Screen a passenger	Steward, Admin, or Investigate	8+	Find a useful inconsistency or concern.	Passenger conceals motive or feels insulted.
Inspect a sealed container	Recon or Mechanic	8+	Notice tampering, mismatch, or late addition.	Problem appears during customs or transit.
Prepare clean paperwork	Admin or Advocate	8+	Manifest supports the crew story.	Customs asks sharper questions.
Handle customs pressure	Persuade, Advocate, or Deception	8+ or opposed	Clear departure or buy time.	Delay, fee, flag, or official suspicion.

16. Player-Facing Choices

Choice	Why It Matters	Benefit	Risk	Later Effect
Take safe freight or risky cargo	Defines money versus exposure.	Safe work protects reputation.	Risky cargo may solve cash problems fast.	Shapes future broker offers.
Carry passengers or keep privacy	Passengers bring income and stories.	Good passengers become contacts.	Bad passengers create trouble aboard.	Adds recurring NPCs.
Be honest with customs or manage the story	Determines legal exposure.	Honesty reduces later blackmail.	A false story may be profitable but fragile.	Creates law and reputation tracks.
Repair now or earn first	Ship condition versus cash flow.	Repairs reduce danger.	Delay may make later crisis worse.	Affects ship ledger.
Trust the broker or verify everything	Controls pace and certainty.	Trust saves time.	Verification may reveal hidden value or hidden danger.	Defines business style.

17. Consequences and Branching Outcomes

Clean Success

The crew selects work that pays enough to matter, screens passenger or cargo risks, completes a credible manifest, and departs with no immediate legal flag. Add a useful broker contact or satisfied passenger.

Mixed Success

The crew gets the job but accepts cost, suspicion, weak paperwork, a difficult passenger, or a delayed repair. The ship departs with profit and a complication already attached.

Complicated Failure

The crew is underpaid, flagged, fined, deceived, or forced to accept riskier work than planned. The campaign continues. The problem travels with them as cargo, passenger, debt, rumor, or customs record.

CONSEQUENCE

This session should leave the ship moving, but not cleanly. The best outcome is not "nothing goes wrong." The best outcome is a crew that understands what risk it knowingly accepted.

18. Combat, Conflict, or Crisis Guidance

Combat is not the focus of this session. Use conflict as commercial, social, legal, and logistical pressure. If violence occurs, keep it small and consequential. A broker office, customs desk, or passenger lounge should not become a battlefield unless the players force that escalation.

- Enemy purpose: no default enemy. Opposition wants money, secrecy, delay, or leverage.
- Morale: brokers and passengers avoid violence unless desperate.
- Nonviolent exits: refuse the job, renegotiate, split cargo, pay a fee, delay departure, or report the risk.
- Consequences of injury: port reports, passenger panic, lost contracts, and immediate suspicion.
- How to keep fast: return to the manifest, payment, and departure decision.

19. Ship, Trade, Law, or Faction Notes

Category	Session 5 Use
Ship Operations	Expenses, repairs, cargo space, passenger space, and departure readiness matter.
Trade	Primary focus. Keep it practical: offers, terms, risk, and ledger entries.
Cargo	Primary focus. Cargo is safe, questionable, illegal, or politically sensitive.
Passengers	Primary focus. Passengers provide income, information, and complications.
Fuel	Visible cost pressure. Fuel may limit choices or reduce profit.
Starport Procedures	Customs, manifests, docking, and departure clearance are central.
Law Level	Simplified. Use paperwork, inspections, fines, and flags rather than full legal procedure.
Local Authority	Customs Clerk Saro Jent and port procedures define legal pressure.
Drinax Reputation	Indirect. The crew may hide Drinax ties or quietly use them as leverage.
Imperial Attention	Possible if cargo, passengers, or documents involve Imperial records.
Aslan Attention	Not emphasized. A rumor or passenger may foreshadow later Aslan ties.
Pirate Reputation	Not used yet. Smuggling choices begin shaping future criminal reputation.
Merchant Reaction	Strongly affected. Brokers notice whether the crew is reliable, desperate, or reckless.

20. Campaign Ledger Updates

Checklist	Checklist
☐ Credits gained, spent, or promised	☐ Cargo accepted or refused
☐ Fuel cost recorded	☐ Passenger names and terms recorded
☐ Docking, supply, or repair costs noted	☐ Passenger secrets or concerns noted
☐ Ship repair priorities updated	☐ Customs status recorded
☐ Broker reaction recorded	☐ Legal risk or flag noted
☐ Cargo manifest status noted	☐ Favors owed or earned
☐ Local reputation adjusted	☐ Merchant reaction adjusted
☐ Drinax Trust adjusted if relevant	☐ Hook to Session 6 recorded

21. End-State of the Session

- The crew understands that the ship requires income to stay active.
- The players have compared safe, risky, and suspicious work.
- At least one cargo or passenger is recorded in the ledger.
- The crew has faced a manifest, customs, or legality decision.
- The Referee has recorded merchant reaction and legal exposure.
- The campaign is ready to introduce privateering and prize-taking in Session 6.

22. Hooks into the Next Session

Hook Type	Hook
Direct Hook	The chosen cargo, passenger, or broker lead points toward a target vessel or privateering opportunity.
Optional Player-Driven Hook	A passenger or broker asks the crew what they would do if the cargo were taken by force from someone worse.
Consequence-Based Hook	Questionable work gives next mission leverage. Clean work brings Drinax pressure for bolder income.

23. Referee Quick Reference

Item	Reference
Session Goal	Teach ship economics, freight, passengers, cargo risk, and legal pressure.
New Rules	Operating costs, freight, passengers, Broker, Steward, cargo legality, manifest checks.
Important NPCs	Merev Sol, Dr. Arlen Vaust, Kira Pellán, Nim Calder, Saro Jent, Sella Vorn.
Important Locations	Broker Concourse, Harrier Cargo Bay, Passenger Common Area, Customs Desk, Fuel Yard.
Likely Checks	Broker, Admin, Steward, Persuade, Streetwise, Investigate, Recon, Advocate, Mechanic.
Main Complications	Weak paperwork, hidden passenger motive, late container, inspection, cash pressure.
End-State	Work accepted, ledger updated, ship departs with profit and risk.
Ledger Updates	Credits, fuel, fees, repairs, cargo, passengers, broker reaction, legal exposure.

REFEREE NOTE

The session should end with the players owning their choice. They should know what they accepted, what they ignored, and what might come back later.

24. Player Handout Page

PLAYER HANDOUT: CARGO, PASSENGERS, AND LIES

The ship is yours to operate, but not free to operate. Fuel, docking, supplies, and repairs all cost money. The port offers work: safe freight with modest pay, passengers with needs of their own, and one job that pays well because someone wants questions kept short.

Known Situation

- The crew needs income after its first journey.
- Several paid opportunities are available at the port.
- Some offers are safer than others.
- Passenger treatment can affect reputation and future contacts.
- Cargo paperwork may matter as much as cargo value.

Job Offer Summary

Offer	Known Benefit	Known Risk
Safe Freight	Reliable, legal, modest pay.	May not cover every expense.
Passenger Passage	Good income and possible contacts.	Passengers bring needs, secrets, and complaints.
High-Pay Cargo	Strong payout and future broker interest.	Paperwork is thin or pressure feels wrong.

Player Questions

Question	Why It Matters
What must we pay before launch?	Sets real pressure.
What does the manifest say?	Controls legal exposure.
Who is aboard our ship?	Passengers can help or hurt.
What are we willing to hide?	Defines crew ethics.
What happens if customs asks?	Tests the crew story.

25. Appendix: Notes, Tables, and Optional Adjustments

Shorter-Session Adjustment

Use only two offers: safe freight and questionable cargo. Add one passenger only if time remains.

Longer-Session Expansion

Add a negotiation scene with two brokers competing for the crew. Let the crew use reputation from Session 4 as leverage or liability.

If the Players Choose Violence

Violence should complicate contracts and customs. Brokers may withdraw, passengers may cancel, and officials may delay clearance.

If the Players Avoid Violence

This is expected. Reward careful questions, clean manifests, and passenger diplomacy with better terms or future contacts.

If the Players Ignore the Hook

Have the ship expenses remain unresolved. The port will not force adventure, but unpaid bills limit fuel, clearance, or repair access.

If the Crew Lacks a Key Skill

Let common sense work. A good plan may substitute for perfect Broker or Steward skill, but expert help will cost money or favors.

If the Referee Wants More Roleplay

Make each passenger ask one uncomfortable question about the crew, Drinax, or the ship.

If the Referee Wants More Action

Use a tense cargo inspection or a panicked passenger trying to board at the last moment. Keep it social and logistical, not a gunfight.

Optional Rumors

Rumor	Use
The richest cargo never comes with clean papers.	Foreshadows smuggling risk.
A passenger who pays in advance is running from something.	Adds suspicion to passage choices.
Some brokers test crews before offering real work.	Makes Merev Sol useful later.
Customs cares more about who complains than what is true.	Explains social pressure.
Drinax cannot rebuild a kingdom on unpaid fuel bills.	Connects money to campaign purpose.

Optional Complication

OPTIONAL COMPLICATION

The high-pay cargo is not obviously illegal. It is politically sensitive: embarrassing to one faction, useful to another, and profitable only if delivered quietly.

Optional NPC Reaction

Merev respects profitable caution. Saro respects clean paperwork. Kira respects privacy. Dr. Vaust respects professionalism. Nim respects crews that do not make cargo handlers take the blame.