

# The Galactic Architect: World-Building and Strategic Economics in Warhammer 40,000

## Lesson Overview

**Subject:** Creative Writing, Geography, and Economics

**Target Age:** 13 (8th Grade level)

**Duration:** 60-90 minutes

**Context:** This lesson uses the "Grimdark" universe of Warhammer 40,000 to teach the fundamentals of world-building, resource distribution, and the logical consequences of geography on culture.

## Materials Needed

- Blank "Planet Profile" sheet (or a notebook)
- Colored pencils or markers
- At least one six-sided die (D6)
- Access to basic 40k lore (Online wiki or Codex)
- Timer (optional)

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- **Identify** the three main types of Imperial Worlds (Agri, Forge, and Hive).
- **Analyze** how a planet's environment dictates its economic value and social structure.
- **Create** a detailed "Sector Dossier" for an original planet, including its Tithes Grade and primary exports.
- **Justify** why a specific faction (Orks, Tyranids, or Necrons) would want to invade their created planet based on resources.

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## 1. Introduction: The Hook (10 minutes)

**The Scenario:** You are a High Scribe for the Adeptus Administratum. The Emperor's tithe ships are coming, and you have been tasked with cataloging a newly discovered planet in the Segmentum Pacificus. If you get the details wrong, the planet might starve, or worse, be left defenseless against the Xenos threat!

### Discussion Questions:

- In a universe of "Only War," why do armies actually fight? Is it just for fun, or is it for "stuff" (resources)?
- If you were a Space Marine Commander, would you rather defend a planet that grows all the food

or a planet that builds all the tanks? Why?

## 2. Body: Content & Practice (40 minutes)

### Part I: The "I Do" (Teacher Modeling)

Explain the three "Foundational World Types" in the 41st Millennium. Use these talking points:

- **Agri-Worlds:** The "Farm Planets." Entire continents are fields of grain or pens for giant grox (alien cows). Without these, Hive Worlds starve.
- **Forge Worlds:** The "Factory Planets." Ruled by the Adeptus Mechanicus. They are covered in smog, metal, and lava. They build the Lasguns and Titans.
- **Hive Worlds:** The "City Planets." Billions of people living in massive skyscrapers called Hives. Their main resource is *manpower*—recruits for the Imperial Guard.

### Part II: The "We Do" (Guided Brainstorming)

Let's "roll" for a random environmental hazard to see how it changes a planet. Roll a D6:

1. **High Gravity:** People are shorter and stronger; buildings must be reinforced metal.
2. **Toxic Atmosphere:** Everyone wears gas masks; life happens underground.
3. **Eternal Darkness:** No sun; the planet relies on bioluminescent fungi or massive artificial lights.
4. **Ocean World:** No land; cities float or are anchored to the sea floor.
5. **Ice World:** Constant blizzards; heat is the most valuable currency.
6. **Jungle World:** The plants grow so fast they eat the buildings; constant clearing is needed.

*Task: Pick one of these and discuss: How would this change what the people do for fun? What would they eat?*

### Part III: The "You Do" (Independent Creative Project)

**Project: The Sector Dossier.** The student will design their own planet. They must fill out the following "Data Slate":

1. **Planet Name:** (e.g., Veridia Prime, Rust-7, Ognar's End)
2. **Classification:** (Agri, Forge, Hive, or Death World?)
3. **The Primary Export:** What does the Imperium take from this planet? (Food, Ore, Soldiers, Ancient Tech?)
4. **The "Grimdark" Twist:** What is the one thing that makes life difficult here? (e.g., "The water turns to acid every Tuesday.")
5. **Map/Illustration:** Draw a 2-inch diameter circle representing the planet. Color it based on its environment (e.g., rusty orange for a Forge World, mottled green for an Agri-world).

## 3. Conclusion: Closure & Recap (10 minutes)

**Summary:** Every planet in the 40k universe is a cog in a giant machine. If one planet falls, the others suffer.

**The "Inquisitorial Report":** The student must present their planet and answer one final question: "A *Tyranid Hive Fleet* is approaching your planet. Why are they coming for your specific world? Is it for the

*biomass (people/plants) or the minerals?"*

## Success Criteria

- The planet has a logical connection between its environment and its classification.
- The "Export" makes sense (e.g., an Ice World shouldn't be the galaxy's top fruit producer).
- The student used at least three pieces of 40k-specific terminology (e.g., Tithe, Throne-Gelt, Vox, Cogitator, Xenos).

## Adaptability & Differentiation

- **For the Reluctant Writer:** Use a "multiple choice" template for the Planet Profile where they can circle options instead of writing from scratch.
- **For the Advanced Learner:** Design a "Moons of the System" addition. How do the moons support the main planet? (e.g., the planet is an Agri-world, but the moon is a high-security orbital prison).
- **Kinesthetic Option:** Use clay or Play-Doh to sculpt the planet's surface, showing where the Hive Cities or massive farms are located.

## Assessment Methods

- **Formative:** Checking the "We Do" discussion to ensure the student understands how environment affects culture.
- **Summative:** The completed "Sector Dossier" and the final verbal justification regarding the Tyranid invasion.