

* COLOPHON *

The Strategy Manual

On Choosing Which Permission to Use When

Compiled under the Authority of the MidPacific Soviet of Letters (MPSoL)

Instructional Systems Division — Structural Reasoning Series

File Reference: MPSoL-EDU-21 / STR-01 / Permissions Tier

SCAD Vector: [F9 : C3 : K1] — Orient / Neutral / Open

System Registry: SCAD-01 (Symbolic Coherence and Distribution)

Date of Issue: 2026 — Revised Field Edition

License: CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 — Attribution / Non-Commercial / Share Alike

Insignia: Crossed sledgehammer and fountain pen contained in a laurel wreath

Statement of Placement

Under the SCAD-01 taxonomy, The Strategy Manual is filed as a Permissions-Tier instructional document, downstream of the constitutional manuals and upstream of applied texts.

Its Function axis is F9 (Orient), since the document concerns direction within an established structure. Charge remains C3 (Neutral). Containment is K1 (Open). The catalog string STR-01-F9C3K1 shall be used on archive cards, internal references, and derivative annotations.

Purpose

The constitutional manuals establish the operations available inside their respective systems. This manual begins after that work has been completed. Its question is narrower:

Given several lawful moves, which one should be used now?

The answer depends upon the present state, the intended use, the constraints already in force, and the consequences of sequence. Strategy is the orderly comparison of those conditions. Permission remains where it was.

Archival Handling

This document is approved for unrestricted circulation. It assumes working knowledge of the rules governing the system in use. A reader unable to identify the lawful moves in a present state should return to the relevant constitutional text before proceeding.

Cross-reference entries:

- The Algebra Manual — Instructions for Disassembly and Reassembly [F7:C2:K1]
- How Shapes Behave — An Ergodic Geometry Manual [F8:C2:K1]
- MPSoL Instructional Series Charter — EDU Registry [Meta / F9:C1:K0]

Preface

C/15 — Compiler, Instructional Systems

A lawful system may leave several courses open. The rules admit each course and decline to rank them. Selection then passes to the user.

The distinction is easily blurred. A familiar move acquires the force of custom. A desired result appears to authorize the route leading toward it. Continued motion begins to resemble necessity. None of these impressions changes the rules. They affect judgment, which is the subject of this manual.

Strategic work begins with an accurate account of the state. The user identifies the governing operations, separates fixed relations from open ones, states an aim, and notes the constraints that affect sequence. The available moves can then be compared by their immediate effect and by the positions they leave afterward.

Four useful categories recur. A clearing move removes an obstruction. A preparatory move arranges the state for later work. A committing move fixes a relation and narrows what remains possible. A holding move preserves the present state while judgment is incomplete. The categories describe function in context. The same lawful operation may serve differently in another state.

This field edition treats strategy as a limited jurisdiction. It supplies no exemption from law and makes no promise of success. It gives the user a disciplined way to choose, record the choice, and recognize when the choice should be reconsidered.

— C/15

MidPacific Soviet of Letters

CONTENTS

Preface

PART I — JURISDICTION

1. Choice Within Law

PART II — READING THE SITUATION

2. Parsing the State

3. Stating the Aim

4. Constraints and Availability

PART III — CHOOSING A MOVE

5. Comparing Available Moves

6. Clearing

7. Preparation

8. Commitment

9. Holding

PART IV — APPLICATION AND CORRECTION

10. A Complete Strategic Interval

11. Common Failures

PART V — TERMINATION

12. Stopping and Audit

APPENDICES

Appendix A — Selection Record

Appendix B — Working Terms

Section 1 — Choice Within Law

Strategy occupies the interval between permission and action. The rules establish a set of lawful moves. The user selects from that set for a stated purpose.

This interval appears whenever two conditions are present:

- more than one lawful course remains open, including deliberate inaction where inaction is permitted
- the choice affects the usefulness, cost, clarity, or later availability of another course

Mere complexity does not create a strategic problem. A state may be difficult to read while allowing only one next operation. Conversely, a simple state may support several sequences with different consequences. The number of visible features is immaterial. The relevant fact is the presence of consequential choice.

Two Questions

Legality and strategy answer different questions. Legality asks whether a move belongs to the system. Strategy asks what use of a lawful move serves the present aim under the present conditions.

The order is fixed. Permission is established before comparison begins. A useful result cannot repair an unlawful step, and an inconvenient result does not make a lawful step invalid. Strategic review concerns selection; structural audit concerns compliance.

The Strategic Interval

A strategic interval opens when the state has been parsed well enough to identify alternatives. It closes when selection is no longer required: the aim has been met, only one relevant course remains, the user elects to hold, or the work is suspended.

The interval may be brief. A single choice can alter the state and return the work to routine operation. In longer work, strategy appears repeatedly. Each appearance requires a fresh reading because the previous move may have changed scope, constraint, or reversibility.

Choice Without a Unique Answer

Several moves may be equally lawful and reasonably suited to the same aim. The manual supplies grounds for comparison; it does not promise a uniquely correct answer. Where two courses preserve the same useful options at comparable cost, either may be selected and recorded.

This absence of uniqueness should not be mistaken for vagueness. The user can still reject moves that address the wrong scope, consume needed resources, obscure the state, or foreclose alternatives without benefit. Strategy often improves a choice by eliminating poor fits rather than identifying a single inevitable move.

Entry Check

Before opening a strategic interval, record:

- the current state
- the rules in force
- the lawful moves presently available
- the consequence of taking no action

Uncertainty about the rules belongs to constitutional study. Uncertainty about selection belongs here.

Section 2 — Parsing the State

Selection begins with an adequate description of what is present. Parsing identifies the structure to which a move would apply. It should be completed before preference is allowed to influence the account.

Governing Structure

Locate the operation, relation, or boundary that governs the state. In a symbolic expression this may be the outermost operation. In a spatial system it may be a boundary, joint, or path restriction. In a procedure it may be the dependency that must be satisfied before later steps have effect.

The governing structure determines the immediate scope of action. A move suitable inside one group may be unavailable at the level above it. A local permission should not be carried across a boundary merely because the same notation or form appears on both sides.

Fixed and Open Relations

Mark the relations already established. These may include bindings, assignments, completed dependencies, occupied positions, or terms whose meaning is fixed by the constitutional rules. Then mark the relations that remain open.

Strategy concerns the open relations. Fixed relations remain part of the state and may create constraints, but they are not candidates for casual revision. If the aim requires changing one of them, the user must first identify a lawful operation that reopens it.

Visible Form and Operative Form

The visible arrangement may conceal the structure that governs action. Two states can look similar while differing in scope. Two forms that look different may permit the same operation. Parsing therefore records operative relations rather than surface resemblance.

A useful test is to describe the state without proposing a move. If the description contains instructions—move this, cancel that, simplify here—the account has already absorbed a preferred solution. Remove the instructions and state the relations.

Sufficient Parsing

Complete description is rarely necessary. Parsing is sufficient when the user can identify the lawful alternatives relevant to the aim and can account for the boundaries each alternative would cross.

At minimum, record the governing operation or boundary, the fixed relations, the open relations, the scope of each available move, and any unresolved fact that could change the comparison.

An unresolved fact need not halt work if its effect is known, but it should stay visible in the record.

Section 3 — Stating the Aim

An aim describes the condition the user intends to produce or preserve. It gives the comparison a direction while leaving the means open.

Useful aims are stated in terms of condition:

- expose the relation between two elements
- reduce the number of free components
- preserve access while another condition is examined
- place the state in a form suitable for inspection
- fix a selected relation for subsequent use

These statements identify an end or intermediate condition. They do not assume the route.

Instruction Hidden Inside an Aim

An aim becomes unreliable when it names the move that is supposed to achieve it. “Move the outer term,” “cancel the pair,” and “apply the familiar reduction” arrive with their own instructions. They suppress comparison and may carry an unverified assumption about scope.

Rewrite such statements by asking what condition the proposed move was meant to produce. “Move the outer term” may become “make the inner relation accessible.” The revised statement admits any lawful course that produces access.

Priority

Several aims may coexist. One may favor compactness, another reversibility, and a third rapid completion. The system will not settle their conflict. The user should rank them before comparing moves.

A simple order is sufficient:

- primary aim — the condition required for the work to count as useful
- protective aim — a condition that should be preserved if practical
- secondary aim — a benefit accepted when it does not interfere with the first two

This ranking prevents convenience from displacing purpose. It also makes later review possible: a move can be judged against the priority known at the time rather than against preferences adopted afterward.

Revision of an Aim

An aim may change when the state reveals information that was not available at entry. Revision should be explicit. Record the new aim and the observation that required it. A silent change makes an orderly sequence appear erratic and prevents useful audit.

Abandoning an aim is also permissible. The resulting state still requires a legality check, but strategic failure should not be inferred merely from a change of purpose.

Section 4 — Constraints and Availability

Permission describes the operations admitted by the system. Availability describes which of those operations can be applied to the present state at the present scope. Constraint accounts for the difference.

This distinction permits a precise statement: an operation may belong to the lawful repertoire while its conditions of application are absent here. The operation remains lawful in the system and unavailable in the state.

Sources of Constraint

Constraints commonly arise from structure, where a fixed relation blocks access or requires preservation; from scope, where the relevant element lies outside the reach of an otherwise lawful operation; from order, where one condition must be established before another move has effect; and from domain, where the operation is undefined for the present kind of element. A fifth source, resources — time, material, attention, or reversibility limited in the application — enters through use rather than the formal state; it cannot alter legality, though it may determine which lawful course is practical.

Local, Global, and Temporary Effects

A local constraint affects a limited region. A global constraint governs the whole state. A temporary constraint can be removed by a lawful change in arrangement. These properties should be recorded separately. Treating a local limit as global discards valid options; treating a global limit as local invites violation.

Temporary constraints deserve particular attention. A direct move may be unavailable while a clearing or preparatory move can establish its conditions. The direct route has not become unlawful. Its time has not arrived.

Cost

Cost includes more than effort. A move may consume reversibility, obscure a useful relation, require a later reconstruction, or introduce dependencies that must be maintained. These costs belong in the comparison even when the move itself is simple.

Estimate cost at a level appropriate to the work. Exact measurement is unnecessary when the difference is obvious. Where the estimate is uncertain, mark the uncertainty instead of converting it into confidence.

Constraint Map

For each candidate move, note:

- conditions already satisfied
- conditions still absent
- boundaries affected
- resources consumed
- options preserved or lost

The resulting map converts obstruction into information — including, often, a case for holding rather than manufacturing progress.

Section 5 — Comparing Available Moves

Comparison begins after state, aim, and constraint have been recorded. The task is to select a lawful move whose immediate effect serves the stated priority and whose later consequences remain acceptable.

Five Tests

Apply the following tests in order.

- Relevance — Does the move act upon the relation named in the aim?
- Availability — Are its conditions of application present now?
- Scope — Will it act only where intended?
- Consequence — What choices will remain after it is used?
- Cost — What effort, clarity, material, or reversibility will be consumed?

A move that fails relevance can be removed from consideration even when it is elegant or familiar. A move that fails availability must wait or be prepared for. Scope errors require correction before action. Consequence and cost distinguish the remaining candidates.

Reversibility

Reversibility is valuable while the account remains incomplete. A reversible move permits inspection of its effect without binding the work to that course. As certainty increases, the value of reversibility may decline. Some aims eventually require fixation.

Reversibility is therefore a resource, not a universal preference. Preserve it when later information may alter the choice. Spend it when the aim requires a stable relation and the relevant uncertainty has been resolved.

Information Gain

Some moves improve the next decision even when they make little visible progress toward the aim. A move that exposes a hidden relation, tests an assumption, or distinguishes between two possible states may be preferable to a direct-looking move.

The value lies in the reduction of uncertainty. This is especially important when the available descriptions support more than one interpretation.

Use of Experience

Prior cases, heuristics, and intuition may direct attention toward a candidate. They remain subject to the five tests. Experience is useful when it shortens search; it becomes hazardous when it excuses inspection.

Probability also has a legitimate place where knowledge is incomplete. Record the estimate, the evidence supporting it, and the cost of being wrong. The formal rules remain exact even when the user's knowledge of the state is not.

Decision

Select the move that best serves the ranked aims under the recorded constraints. Where candidates remain equivalent, choose the simpler course to record and audit. The record should state the reason in ordinary language. A reason that can only be expressed by citing the desired result should be examined again.

Section 6 — Clearing

A clearing move removes an obstruction from the field of action. Its immediate purpose is access or legibility.

Clearing may remove an outer operation, separate an irrelevant component, restore a standard form, or reduce visual noise. The state may become longer or less familiar in the process. Appearance is secondary to access.

Indications

Clearing is useful when the governing structure blocks every move relevant to the aim, when a relation cannot be inspected in its present form, or when several candidates remain indistinguishable because the state is crowded with irrelevant structure.

The smallest adequate clearing move is preferred. Clearing beyond the obstruction consumes effort and may remove relations needed later.

Example

Suppose elements P and Q must be compared, but both remain enclosed within a reversible outer grouping G. The rules permit removal of G and also permit several transformations inside it. The inner transformations leave P and Q difficult to compare. Removing G is a clearing move because it changes access before it changes the relation under study.

The classification belongs to the circumstance. Removing G in another problem might complete the aim and function as a committing move.

Exit Condition

Clearing ends when the relevant relation can be parsed and at least one move serving the aim becomes available. Continued removal after that point requires a separate reason.

Section 7 — Preparation

A preparatory move arranges the state so that a later operation can act with proper scope and effect. Preparation changes configuration while preserving the principal alternatives.

Common preparatory work includes bringing related elements into proximity, exposing a factor, aligning boundaries, separating fixed from variable material, and choosing a representation suited to the next operation.

Preparation and Clearing

Clearing removes what interferes. Preparation arranges what remains. A single move may perform both functions; classify it by the reason it was selected and record both effects when they matter.

Adequacy

Preparation is adequate when the intended later move has become available and its scope can be stated. Additional arrangement may improve appearance without improving action. That point marks the boundary between preparation and grooming.

Endless preparation commonly arises when the user wishes to preserve every option. The cost is a state that remains indefinitely open. When the primary aim requires fixation and the relevant uncertainties have been addressed, continued arrangement has no strategic claim.

Verification

Before leaving preparation, identify:

- the later move now made available
- the condition established by the preparation
- the alternatives still preserved
- any new constraint introduced

If no later move can be named, the preparation has not yet justified itself.

Section 8 — Commitment

A committing move fixes a relation, selects a representation, or consumes an option in service of the aim. The resulting state remains inside the same lawful system, though its field of future action has narrowed.

Commitment may be formally irreversible. It may also be reversible at a cost high enough to govern the decision. Reconstruction time, loss of a verified arrangement, and renewed uncertainty all count as costs of reversal.

Grounds for Commitment

Commitment is warranted when the primary aim requires fixation, the state has been parsed to the needed depth, the move's scope is known, and further preparation is unlikely to change the choice.

Confidence alone is insufficient. The record should identify the resolved uncertainty or established condition that makes commitment timely.

Premature and Delayed Commitment

Premature commitment binds the work before its relevant relations are understood. Later moves inherit the resulting constraint. Delayed commitment preserves alternatives after their value has expired and may consume resources without adding information.

The two errors have different remedies. Premature commitment requires reopening the state where the rules permit it. Delay requires a decision against the ranked aims, followed by acceptance of the options that decision will close.

After the Move

Parse the new state. A committing move may expose new relations, create dependencies, or alter the availability of operations elsewhere. The earlier comparison should not be carried forward unchanged.

Section 9 — Holding

Holding is the deliberate preservation of the present state. It is available where the system permits inaction and where none of the candidate moves has earned priority.

A hold may protect reversibility while information is gathered, preserve a useful arrangement during a change of aim, or prevent a costly commitment whose conditions have not been met.

Holding and Delay

A hold has a stated reason and a condition for review. Delay has only duration. The distinction matters because an unbounded hold can conceal avoidance as easily as continued motion can conceal momentum.

Record what the hold protects and what event, observation, or deadline will reopen selection. Some formal systems have no external change to await; in those cases a hold should be used for reassessment, not indefinitely renewed.

Cost of Holding

Preserving the state may consume time, occupy material, or allow an opportunity to pass. These costs belong beside the costs of action. Holding receives no special exemption merely because it leaves the structure unchanged.

Release

End the hold when new information changes the comparison, when a review condition is met, or when the cost of preservation exceeds the value of the options retained. Parse again before acting.

Section 10 — A Complete Strategic Interval

The following case uses no specialized domain. Its purpose is to show the full procedure with a small number of objects.

Initial State

A closed system contains three elements: A, B, and C. A is joined to B. C is free. An outer boundary encloses A and B. The rules permit four operations:

- remove the outer boundary
- exchange the positions of two free elements
- join two accessible elements
- preserve the state

A joined element is not free. An enclosed element is inaccessible to elements outside the boundary. Removing the boundary is lawful and cannot be reversed within this interval.

Aim

The primary aim is to determine whether C should be joined to A or to B. The protective aim is to preserve the existing A–B relation until that determination can be made.

Parse

The A–B join is fixed for the present interval. C remains open. The outer boundary governs access. Joining C directly to either enclosed element is unavailable because C lies outside the governing boundary.

Exchanging positions is lawful only between free elements. A and B are joined, leaving no lawful exchange that affects the aim. Preserving the state remains available.

Constraint Map

The boundary is a global access constraint for this three-element state. It is temporary because one lawful operation removes it. That operation consumes reversibility: the boundary cannot be restored during the interval.

The user also lacks information about whether A or B is the suitable partner for C. Removing the boundary would improve access but would not settle that question.

Comparison

The exchange operation fails relevance. Joining fails availability. Two courses remain: remove the boundary or hold.

If inspection of A and B requires access, removal provides information needed for the primary aim. Its loss of reversibility is acceptable because the boundary serves no protective function once the A–B join has been separately identified as fixed. Removal is therefore selected as a clearing move.

New State

After removal, A and B remain joined and both are accessible to C. The state is parsed again. Joining C to either element is now lawful and available. The choice is consequential because the first join will make C unavailable for the second.

Inspection shows that joining C to A preserves the required relation for later use. Joining C to B would obscure it. The user records this observation and selects the A–C join as a committing move.

Audit

The audit confirms that the boundary removal and the A–C join were permitted, that the A–B relation was preserved, and that the final state satisfies the primary aim. Further lawful operations exist, but none serves the recorded purpose. The strategic interval closes.

Variation

If inspection after clearing had failed to distinguish A from B, holding would have been appropriate. If a reversible operation could have exposed the difference before boundary removal, that operation would have deserved comparison as a preparatory move. The categories follow the work performed in the state; they are not permanent labels attached to operations.

Section 11 — Common Failures

Strategic failures leave useful evidence. They show where the account of state, aim, constraint, or consequence became inadequate. Correction begins at that point.

Familiarity

A remembered move enters the comparison before the state has been parsed. It may be efficient in a recurring class of cases, but recurrence must be established rather than assumed.

Indicator: the reason given for the move is that it usually works.

Correction: identify the present structural feature that makes the prior case relevant. If that feature is absent, reopen the comparison.

Momentum

A sequence continues because it has already begun. Each step may be lawful while the sequence gradually loses contact with the aim.

Indicator: the current move is defended as the natural next step, though the state has changed since the sequence was chosen.

Correction: interrupt the sequence after any move that changes scope, availability, or reversibility. Parse the resulting state and restate the priority.

Outcome Fixation

A desired final form begins to dictate intermediate moves. The user reads the state backward from the expected answer and overlooks information carried by intermediate forms.

Indicator: legality or scope is checked after the move has been selected.

Correction: describe the aim as a condition and compare moves from the present state. Outcome may evaluate the completed sequence; it cannot supply missing permission.

Premature Commitment

A relation is fixed before the uncertainty governing it has been resolved. The work acquires avoidable dependencies.

Indicator: reversal becomes necessary as soon as new information appears.

Correction: locate the last reversible state. Reopen it where lawful, or treat the commitment as a new fixed relation and revise the aim honestly.

Perpetual Preparation

Arrangement continues after the intended later move has become available. The state grows orderly and stays unused.

Indicator: no new access or information has resulted from the latest preparation.

Correction: name the move for which preparation was undertaken. Apply it, reject it, or state the reason for holding.

Decorative Clearing

Material is removed because the simpler form appears preferable, and useful relations disappear along with the obstruction — the tell is that the user cannot say what access the removal actually created. Restore the last lawful state where possible and identify the smallest obstruction relevant to the aim.

Unbounded Holding

Inaction preserves options whose value has never been assessed.

Indicator: the record contains no condition for review.

Correction: assign a review condition, record the cost of continued preservation, and set a point past which holding must be defended rather than assumed.

Correction Point

Return to the earliest statement made inaccurate by the failure: a mistaken aim needs restatement, a scope error needs re-parsing, a changed constraint needs a new map. There is no need to repeat the whole procedure — only the part the failure actually reached.

Section 12 — Stopping and Audit

The rules define validity. The user defines sufficiency for the intended use. Work may therefore reach a lawful state that is incomplete for its aim, or satisfy the aim while further lawful moves remain available.

Grounds for Stopping

A strategic interval may close when:

- the primary aim has been met
- further action adds no useful information or access
- added transformation would consume resources without serving a ranked aim
- the user elects to suspend the work and records the present state

Maximal simplicity, symmetry, and elegance are separate aims. They should not be introduced at the end of an interval without being named.

Structural Audit

Review the sequence independently of its success. Confirm that every operation was permitted, applied at the proper scope, and used under conditions in which it was defined. Verify that no constraint was bypassed merely because the result appeared satisfactory.

A successful outcome can coexist with an unlawful step. The audit records the step as a violation and declines to preserve it as precedent.

Strategic Review

Review the selection against the information available when it was made:

- Was the state described accurately enough?
- Was the aim stated without prescribing the route?
- Were material constraints and costs recorded?
- Did the selected move preserve or spend reversibility for a stated reason?
- Did later information reveal a weakness worth carrying into the next interval?

Strategic review may conclude that a reasonable choice produced an unhelpful result. That result becomes evidence for later comparison. It does not become a new rule.

Reentry

A closed interval may be reopened when a new aim is adopted, new information appears, or the state is placed under a different use. Reentry begins with the state as it exists, including all lawful commitments made earlier.

The record remains with the work. It explains how the state was reached and prevents habit from acquiring authority through repetition.

Appendix A — Selection Record

The following record is sufficient for most strategic intervals. Additional detail may be added where consequence or audit requires it.

1. State

Identify the governing structure, fixed relations, open relations, and relevant scope.

2. Rules in Force

List or cite the permissions governing the candidate moves.

3. Aim

State the primary, protective, and secondary aims as conditions.

4. Constraints

Record structural, scope, order, domain, and resource constraints. Mark uncertainty.

5. Candidates

List the available moves, including holding where permitted.

6. Comparison

Test relevance, availability, scope, consequence, and cost. Note reversibility and expected information gain.

7. Selection

State the move chosen and the reason it received priority.

8. Result

Describe the resulting state without defending the choice.

9. Audit

Confirm legality and record any strategic lesson separately.

Appendix B — Working Terms

Available move

A lawful operation whose conditions of application are present in the current state.

Clearing move

A move selected to remove obstruction and improve access or legibility.

Committing move

A move selected to fix a relation or consume an option in service of an aim.

Constraint

A condition affecting the application, consequence, or practical use of a lawful operation.

Governing structure

The operation, relation, or boundary that determines the immediate scope of action.

Holding move

Deliberate preservation of the present state, with a stated reason and condition for review.

Lawful repertoire

The complete set of operations admitted by the constitutional rules of a system.

Open relation

A relation not yet fixed and therefore available for lawful selection.

Preparatory move

A move selected to arrange the state for a later operation while preserving the principal alternatives.

Strategic interval

The period during which consequential choice among lawful courses is being examined or exercised.