GURPS® Fourth Edition

Template Toolkit™ 2 Races

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Introduction

Nonhuman races have been in ***GURPS*** from the start. The original edition of ***GURPS Fantasy*** (1986) presented dwarves, elves, orcs, and other fantasy races of Yrth; ***GURPS Banestorm*** (2005) still has them. Many advantages and disadvantages are now classed as "exotic" or "supernatural," meaning they don't occur in standard human beings but may be found in other races – and both racial templates and meta-traits are intended for use in describing such races. The ***Basic Set*** has two chapters on templates: one on how players should use them (pp. B258-263) and one on how GMs can design them (pp. B445-454).

But there's a lot more to be said about templates! ***GURPS Template Toolkit 1: Characters*** spent 48 pages on occupational, dramatic, and cultural templates and lenses for individual characters. This book continues the job by bringing the same level of detail to racial templates. Here you'll find guidelines for creating templates for all sorts of nonhumans, supplemented by discussions of meta-traits and features that such beings could have; a few new and modified traits; and some more detailed game mechanics on relevant topics.

Using This Book

If you're a GM using this supplement for the first time, read Chapter 1 closely for information about racial templates in general and the different types of "races." If you haven't seen templates before, look at the end of Chapter 4, and then at Appendix B, which has several. Skim Chapters 2 and 3, to get an idea of what's where, and then go to Chapter 4, which discusses how to use templates in a campaign. When you're ready to create your own templates, go back through Chapters 1-3, pinning down all the details you need for each template.

If you're a player choosing a racial template for your character, skim the first three chapters – but search through Chapter 4 for everything that applies to your character concept.

About *GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of ***GURPS*** players. We can be reached by email: **info@sjgames.com**. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for ***GURPS*** releases are available at **sjgames.com/errata/gurps**.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the ***GURPS Basic Set,*** *Fourth Edition.* Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

Publication History

This is the first edition of ***GURPS Template Toolkit 2: Races.*** Many existing ***GURPS*** supplements have racial templates for various sorts of beings; e.g., biologically created or modified species in ***GURPS Bio-Tech,*** fantastic races in ***GURPS Fantasy,*** monsters in ***GURPS Horror*** and ***GURPS Zombies,*** and robots in ***GURPS Ultra-Tech.*** This book borrows from them all – but puts all those borrowings into a comprehensive framework, with a lot of new material.

Racial traits in this work come from the ***GURPS Basic Set;*** from ***GURPS Powers;*** and from ***GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks*** and ***GURPS Power-Ups 6: Quirks.*** Traits from other supplements, along with a few new traits, appear in Appendix A.

About the Author

William H. Stoddard lives in Riverside, California, with his wife, their cat, an uncertain number of computers, and about 100 shelf feet of books. Both the books and the computers contribute to his hobby of doing research, which has been a big help in writing ***GURPS*** books. His first one, ***GURPS Steampunk,*** appeared in 2000; since then he has written, co-written, or compiled more than two dozen books for ***GURPS.***

Animated Character

85 points

You're a three-dimensional drawing that can interact with the physical world but can't be permanently hurt by doing so. However, you're vulnerable to one special sort of attack. Unkillable 2 (Achilles' Heel, Cosmic attack, Rare, -10%) [90]; Unnatural Features 5 [-5].

Bioroid

-5 points

You're an artificially constructed being made from living tissues, typically but not necessarily humanoid. Early Maturation 1* [0]; Sterile [0]; Unusual Biochemistry [-5].

* Additional levels of Early Maturation are common.

Machine

25 points

You're an artificially constructed being made from nonliving parts. Fuel Supply [0]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Injury Tolerance (No Blood; Unliving) [25]; Not Pressurized [0]; Not Subject to Aging [0]; Not Subject to Fatigue [0]; Sterile [0]; and Unhealing (Total) [-30].

Mentality Meta-Traits

You think differently than human beings in some way.

AI: A computer mind. Absolute Timing [2]; Digital Mind [5]; Doesn't Sleep [20]; Intuitive Mathematician [5]; Photographic Memory [10]; Reprogrammable [-10]. *32 points*.

Automaton: A mind lacking creativity and free will. Suited to such beings as golems, magically reanimated corpses, and simple AIs. Hidebound [-5]; Incurious (6) [-10]; Low Empathy [-20]; No Sense of Humor [-10]; Slave Mentality [-40]. *-85 points.*

Domestic Animal: A farm animal, mount, or pet, or a trained wild animal. Cannot Speak [-15]; Hidebound [-5]; Social Stigma (Valuable Property) [-10]; Taboo Trait (Fixed IQ) [0]. *-30 points.*

Upload: A formerly living being whose brain is now being emulated on a computer. Your maximum possible IQ is (2 × Complexity). Complexity-Limited IQ [0]; Digital Mind [5]; Reawakened [0]. *5 points.*

Vehicle: An ordinary vehicle without sentience or the ability to set its own course (*Vehicles,* p. 7). IQ 0 [-200]; Compartmentalized Mind 1 (Controls) [25]; Injury Tolerance (No Brain) [5]; Insensate [0]; Nonautonomous [0]; Social Stigma (Subjugated) [-20]; Taboo Trait (Fixed IQ) [0]. *-190 points.*

Wild Animal: An ordinary animal found in nature. Bestial [-10]; Cannot Speak [-15]; Hidebound [-5]; Taboo Trait (Fixed IQ) [0]. *-30 points*.

Morphology Meta-Traits

Many races are non-humanoid, including aliens, animals, chimerae, vehicles, and some robots and embodied spirits. Their body forms can be described in game terms using an expanded set of *morphology meta-traits* (see p. B263). Such meta-traits fall into two main groups: biological and vehicular/robotic (questions of morphology don't apply to infomorphs, and seldom affect intangible spirits). The following examples address the most common cases and make it relatively straightforward to extrapolate others.

Organisms

Most of the animal body plans provided here are based on *Non-Humanoid Hit Location Tables* (pp. B552-553). Cancroid and Vermiform have each been split into two types. For additional hit location tables for new body plans, see p. 10.

Angeloid: A humanoid with separate wings growing out of the shoulders, such as an angel or devil. Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]. *30 points.*

Arachnoid: A spider or similar eight-legged creature. Extra Legs (Eight Legs) [15]; Horizontal [-10]; No Fine Manipulators [-30]. *-25 points*.

Asteroid: A creature with radial symmetry and five arms, such as a starfish. Extra Arms 3 (Foot Manipulators, -30%; Short, -50%) [6]; Extra Legs (Five Legs) [10]; Horizontal [-10]; Injury Tolerance (No Head; No Neck) [12]; Short Foot Manipulators 2 [-16]. *2 points.*

Avian: A bird. Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; Foot Manipulators 2 [-6]; Tail [0]. *24 points.*

Concentration

Ability and inclination to focus on long-term tasks. High in races that depend on resources that take a long time to find or harvest, and in elemental spirits of solid materials. Low in races that react opportunistically to sporadically available resources, and in elemental spirits of air and fire.

The fox runs for his dinner; the rabbit runs for his life.

– Traditional proverb

Score	Traits
+3 or more	Single-Minded, and *either* High Pain Threshold *or* one 5-point Talent
+2	Single-Minded
+1	Attentive or Patience of Job
0	Normal
-1	Distractible
-2	Short Attention Span (12)
-3 or less	Short Attention Span (9)

Curiosity

Level of attention paid to new things, and interest in finding them. High in omnivorous biological species, and in infomorphs. Low in herbivorous biological species; in spirits and the undead; and in races with no primary sense.

Score	Traits
+3 or more	Curious (9) (becomes Curious (6) if Concentration or Suspicion is 0 or less)
+2	Curious (12) (becomes Curious (9) if Concentration is 0 or less)
+1	Nosy (becomes Curious (12) if Concentration is 0 or less)
0	Normal
-1	Staid
-2	Incurious (12) (becomes Incurious (9) if Suspicion is less than 0)
-3 or less	Incurious (9)

Egoism

Focus on personal gain or honor, and resistance to subordination. High in biological races that rarely form groups, in males in harem species, and in free-willed undead; low in races that form hives, and in free-willed robots and bioroids.

Score	Traits
+3 or more	Selfish (9)
+2	Selfish (12) (becomes Selfish (9) if Empathy is less than 0 or Suspicion is greater than 0)
+1	Proud (becomes Selfish (12) if Suspicion is greater than 0; becomes Selfish (9) if Empathy is -2 or less or if Suspicion is +2 or greater)
0	Normal
-1	Humble
-2	Selfless (12) (becomes Selfless (9) if Chauvinism is +2 or greater)
-3 or less	Selfless (6)

Empathy

Awareness of the feelings of others; avoidance of giving offense. High in races that form small groups, and in carnivores that pursue intelligent prey; low in races that rarely form groups, and in free-willed robots and infomorphs.

Score	Traits
+3 or more	Empathy (add Charitable (12) if Gregariousness is greater than 0)
+2	Sensitive
+1	Responsive (becomes Sensitive if Gregariousness is greater than 0 and Suspicion is less than 0)
0	Normal
-1	Oblivious
-2	Callous
-3 or less	Low Empathy (add Bloodlust (12) for carnivores)

Gregariousness

Sociability, need for the company of others. High in biological races that form herds or (especially) have hive societies; low in races that rarely form groups, particularly solitary hunters, and in the undead.

Score	Traits	Score	Traits
+3 or more	Gregarious	-1	Uncongenial
+2	Chummy	-2	Loner (12)
+1	Congenial	-3 or less	Loner (9)
0	Normal		

Imagination

Ability to see patterns, invent new behavior, and come up with new ideas. High in biological races with flexible feeding strategies, and in infomorphs; low in races with stereotyped feeding strategies.

Score	Traits
+3 or more	Imaginative (becomes Versatile if Concentration is 0 or greater and Egoism is less than +2; if Empathy is less than +1, add Odious Racial Habit (Nonstop idea factory) [-5])
+2	Imaginative (becomes Versatile if Concentration is 0 or greater and Egoism is less than +2; if Concentration is less than +1 or if Egoism is greater than 0, add Dreamer)
+1	Imaginative (becomes Versatile if Concentration is 0 or greater and Egoism is less than +2)
0	Normal
-1	Dull
-2	Hidebound
-3 or less	Hidebound and reduce racial IQ by 1

Resistant

see pp. B80-81

The computer design option Hardened – which gives +3 to HT against electromagnetic pulses, microwaves, and power surges – can be interpreted as being Resistant to a Common attack. As such, it can have a version that gives +8, for advanced battle-hardened designs, and an Immunity that totally prevents surge effects. Immunity costs 15 points; Resistant (+8) and (+3) cost 7 and 5 points, respectively. Any character with Electrical can benefit from these traits, which have no effect on attacks that *drain* electrical energy.

Telecommunication

see p. B91

A new variety is applicable to computers, robots, and vehicles:

Cable Jack: You can send and receive information through a conductive or fiber-optic cable. This allows direct, unjammable communication with any other computer with a similar jack; wired remote control of a vehicle with Compartmentalized Mind (Controls); or plugging into an external device that provides longer-range telecommunication. Includes a cable up to 10 yards long. *5 points.*

Vibration Sense

see p. B96

Some animals and alien races have an ability that can be treated as a form of Vibration Sense:

Active Electroreception: This uses a completely different mechanism from standard Vibration Sense – sensing electric field distortions rather than air or water currents – but provides very similar capabilities. It functions only in water, and can only detect objects that are either insulators or conductors relative to water. Water currents don't hinder it, and it can't detect them. A successful Sense roll identifies an object's size, location, and speed and direction of movement. The roll is modified for the range to the target, per the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550); in addition, *add* the target's SM to the roll and *subtract* your own. Using this sense generates an electric current that can be detected. *10 points.*

New Advantages

Two new advantages are especially useful when designing races.

Good Grip

5 points/level

The converse of Bad Grip (p. B123). This can represent hardened, closely opposed gripping surfaces like a crab's claws or a set of pliers or forceps (typically one level), or a suction apparatus like an octopus' suckers (typically two levels). Each level gives +2 with tasks that require a firm grip (including climbing).

Signals

15 points

You have the ability to communicate in a physical medium other than sound. It typically originates in biological rather than technological processes, and it can't carry digital signals. Your range is short compared to Telecommunication, limited by the recipient's senses.

There are several versions, none of which can take the Vague limitation. "Vague Communication" is a 0-point feature that can accompany the *prerequisite* trait.

Blinker

Prerequisite: Illumination (***GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks,*** p. 10).

Your communications take the form of series of light flashes, about as bright as a torch or flashlight. Receiving them requires vision or Detect (Light; Precise, +100%).

Chemical Messengers

Prerequisite: Discriminatory Smell (Emotion Sense, +50%).

Your communications involve release of a wide range of different molecules into the air or water. All living organisms emit vague signals, except those with Sanitized Metabolism (p. B101). However, the ability to *interpret* chemical signals is an aspect of Discriminatory Smell.

Color Changes

Prerequisite: Chameleon (Controllable, +20%).

Your communications involve changing the coloration of your skin in complex patterns. Receiving them requires vision. You can take the modifier Video (+40%), allowing you to produce high-resolution patterns that copy what you see in detail.

Under the Hood: Signals

The advantage Signals, in its various forms, represents the ability to "speak" in a medium other than sound. How much should this be worth?

The human ability to speak is a baseline ability that costs 0 points; the ability to make only animal noises is Cannot Speak, worth -15 points. Telesend costs 30 points, but Telesend (Vague, -50%) is worth just 15 points, and limits the user to general concepts and emotions. So 15 points seems a fair price for the difference between vague and non-vague communication.

On the other hand, while Telesend (Vague) costs 15 points, Mute is -25 points – 10 points less than Cannot Speak. And *any* person's or animal's emotional state can be detected by a race with Discriminatory Smell (Emotion Sense); it costs nothing to emit *vague* chemical signals. So rather than being defined as Signals with a limitation, other forms of vague, animal-level communication are each identified with whatever existing traits provide suitable capabilities.

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Enter FERDINAND; and ARIEL, invisible, playing and singing.

– William Shakespeare, ***The Tempest***

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Interviewer: HAL, despite your enormous intellect, are you ever frustrated by your dependence on people to carry out your actions?

HAL: Not in the slightest bit. I enjoy working with people.

– 2001: A Space Odyssey

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They themselves do not see the world as we do, but our shapes cast shadows in their minds, which only the noon sun destroys; and in the dark they perceive many signs and forms that are hidden from us: then they are most to be feared. And at all times they smell the blood of living things, desiring and hating it.

– J.R.R. Tolkien, ***The Lord of the Rings***

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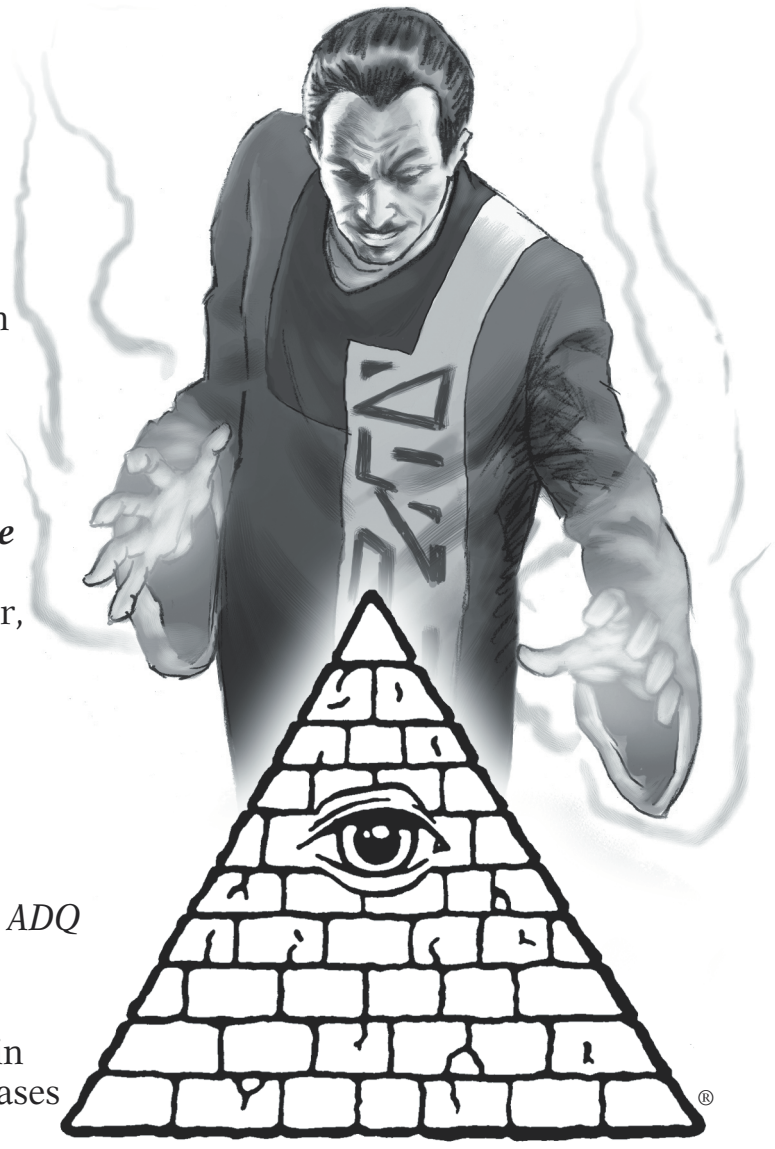

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