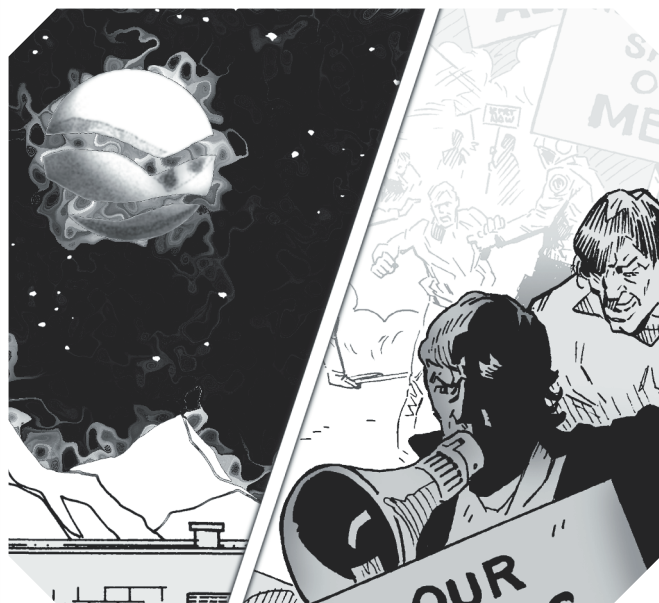# GURPS® Fourth Edition

FUTURE HISTORY™

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INTRODUCTION

GURPS Future History is a guide to the creation of imaginary futures, emphasizing society, culture, and the forces that shape them. This supplement also gives tips for how to roleplay in such futures.

In the first place, this volume *complements* **GURPS Space.** It's likely that most of humanity's ventures into space have not yet happened. Running games focused on such ventures calls for envisioning the people and societies that pursue them – and the new societies that they may give birth to.

In the second place, it *parallels* **GURPS Infinite Worlds.** Like that book, it provides guidelines for inventing plausible histories. But where **GURPS Infinite Worlds** is about histories that *might have happened*, **GURPS Future History** is about histories that *have not yet happened*. In particular, it looks at histories that may grow out of technologies that haven't yet been invented: in **GURPS** terms, TL9-12.

In the third place, it doesn't limit itself to higher tech levels. An imagined future can just as well involve catastrophic or gradual technological retrogression, or human near extinction and the survivors' creation of new civilizations, or even actual human extinction and the appearance of new sapient races. Any of these situations will require the use of older technologies, either as a stable tech level or on the way back to advanced technology. So, it *relies on* all of **GURPS Low-Tech, High-Tech, Ultra-Tech,** and **Bio-Tech.**

Future history as a literary form goes back to Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (originally published 1826). The philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857) wrote plans for a future world guided by his nontheological Religion of Humanity. Later, such groups as the Russian Cosmists, the Italian Futurists, and the American Technocrats actively tried to bring about their specific visions of the future. Since then, the future has proven less easy either to control or to predict than was once imagined. But the idea of the future is increasingly part of popular culture, and future history remains a viable genre for literature, visual media – and games.

The idea that the future will *have* a history isn't inevitable. Many religions look instead to a miraculous divine intervention that would bring history to an end. More recently, Vinge's concept of a technological singularity suggested that human (or AI) capabilities would increase in the near future to a point where change was too fast to be predicted. There is also the grim possibility of planetary catastrophe bringing both history and humanity to an end. But this book assumes that we still have a future, and explores what that future might be like.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

If you want to run a campaign set in a high-tech future, you will want **GURPS Ultra-Tech** and, if it includes interplanetary or interstellar travel, **GURPS Space.** For campaigns set in technologically regressive futures, at least one of **GURPS Low-Tech** or **GURPS High-Tech** will be useful.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William H. Stoddard lives in Lawrence, Kansas with his wife Carol and their cat Macavity. He has traveled in time to a world very different from his native era, where he has access to technologies once only dreamed of, including devices that he used in writing this book. He has read science fiction, including histories of the future, as long as he can remember. He has run 14 campaigns in **GURPS** and has been writing for it since the start of the third millennium.

CHAPTER ONE
FUTURE TENSE

What makes a story "science fiction"? If you asked people who don't read or watch much (or any) science fiction, you'd get two main answers: science fiction is stories set *in outer space* or *in the future*. Both of these do describe a lot of science fiction stories. Many stories are actually both: When science fiction emerged as a genre, going into space *was* in the future. A complete treatment of the genre needs to include other themes, such as marvelous inventions, people with strange powers, and cyberspace; but it certainly has to cover outer space and the future.

GURPS already provides a detailed treatment of outer space, in *GURPS Space* and other supplements. But it hasn't gone into the future in as much depth, up to now. *GURPS Ultra-Tech* examines possible future technologies; but it doesn't provide much historical, social, or cultural context for those technologies – the focus of "soft science fiction," where "hard science fiction" emphasizes science and technology. For this, we need to explore *future history,* the subgenre that looks at the actual life of the future, from daily routines to the rise and fall of civilizations.

DEFINING THE GENRE

In the broadest sense, any story that takes place in the future could be considered a future history. Even if it's a simple adventure story, its characters have a goal to attain, and often an opposition to struggle against; and they may have jobs, or resources, or an organization that gives them missions to carry out. Whatever the author says or hints about these provides some sort of sketch of what the future is like.

However, serious treatments of future settings go further than this. Asimov distinguished three broad types of science fiction: the action/adventure story, the gadget story, and the social science fiction story. (This list may not cover all of science fiction; there are stories about the nature and destiny of the cosmos, such as Asimov's own "The Last Question" or Stapledon's *Star Maker,* that seem to form a category of their own.) Some stories attempt to portray future societies in depth, as a historian would portray a society of the past, seeking to understand how it functioned and what made it what it was. In *GURPS* terms, they describe a setting's culture, laws and customs, government type, economics, and technology (pp. B505-519). Any story that's primarily future history addresses these issues.

Beyond that, there's the type of fiction that Heinlein created in his Future History series: a series of connected stories and novels, sharing a common background, but set at different times and showing how that background changed over time, sometimes as a result of the protagonists' actions. It's hard to do this in a single book – and even harder not to abandon ordinary elements of fiction such as plot and characterization in doing so (as Stapledon did in his *Last and First Men,* whose account of future humanity spanned two billion years). For the same reason, it's hard to run a campaign that covers a long span of historical change. But working out a future history, as Heinlein did, can provide a more fully thought out setting for a story or a game. That working out, and that specialized fictional genre, will be the main focus of this supplement.

A form that *isn't* future history, but owes something to it, is the story of time travelers from the future to the present trying to bring about a *different* future – or to prevent this from being done. This is common in video works such as *Continuum, Terminator,* and *Twelve Monkeys.*

APPROACHES TO THE FUTURE

To tell stories set in the future, you need to have a concept of the future. There are two main approaches to getting to such a concept: *extrapolation* and *speculation.*

EXTRAPOLATION

Extrapolation is an approach to the future that says, "If this goes on . . ." In the terms used on p. 29 of *GURPS Space,* it projects

a no-miracle future. The extrapolative writer identifies trends that have been acting in the present and the recent past (see *Directionality,* pp. 17-21, and *Cycles,* pp. 21-24) and projects them forward. This is also the typical method of futurology as an academic field, in variants ranging from back-of-the-envelope estimates to multi-dimensional computer models.

Todd defines several different family patterns:

● The *absolute nuclear family,* found mainly in the English-speaking world, has exogamous marriage (marriage between cousins is discouraged). Married couples set up their own households rather than living with their parents. Usually one of the children inherits most of the family property. Some historians claim that this pattern goes back to medieval England, and associate it with, in **GURPS** terms, CR1-3 and a tendency to rely on markets.

● The *egalitarian nuclear family* – found in France, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and much of Latin America – is similar, except that inheritances are divided as equally as possible between all the children. It goes with societies that try to balance liberty and equality, and have CR2-4.

● The *stem family* – found in Germany, Scandinavia and Japan – has exogamous marriage, but keeps children (including adults) in their parents' houses and under their control; one child is singled out to take over from the parents and is permitted to marry. Societies based on this family type tend to hierarchy, emphasizing duty and chain of command; they have CR3-5.

● The *exogamous communitarian family* – found in Russia, parts of the Balkans, China, and Vietnam – keeps children (including adults) under their parents' control, but shares the family wealth among them. Todd points out that this family type is characteristic of countries with self-imposed communist régimes, which have CR4-6 and limit or exclude markets.

● The *endogamous communitarian family,* found in North Africa and the Middle East, accepts cousin marriage; in fact, the ideal wife is a man's father's brother's daughter. Societies with this pattern tend to be divided into parallel and largely independent clans that have few ties by marriage; they often have CR0-1, unless a powerful state with CR5-6 forces all its clans into subordination.

● The *anomic family* – found in much of Southeast Asia and in the Andes (perhaps coincidentally, the territory of the Transpacific Socialist Alliance in **Transhuman Space!**) – accepts marriages of cousins and sometimes of uncles and nieces or half-siblings. Households are usually small, based on nuclear families, and their form is less standardized than in other family systems; they tend to give more weight to informal cooperation. CR ranges from 0 to 4.

● The *matrilineal family,* found in parts of Africa (especially southern Africa), has men and women leading somewhat separate lives. Marriage is unstable, and inheritance is from mother to daughter (or from uncle to nephew). Commonly, men and women have distinct and parallel political organizations, though men may be nominated to positions of authority by the heads of their maternal clans. CR ranges from 1 to 5, but the sexes may have different CRs.

ALIEN SOCIETIES

Societies may also be different if their inhabitants are nonhuman. For example, an alien species might have evolved with a different capacity for spontaneous social coordination, and have larger or smaller communal groups. Conceivably, their cooperation might be entirely consciously chosen rather than spontaneous. **GURPS Template Toolkit 2: Races,** pp. 40-41, and **GURPS Space,** pp. 175-176, suggest social patterns based on different racial personality profiles, which can be a useful tool in created nonhuman or multispecies histories. In a science fictional setting that includes psionics, telepathic abilities might enhance communication enough for spontaneous sociality on a much larger scale, or even a racial group mind.

Natural Disasters

The natural environment provides a variety of extreme events.

GURPS Fantasy, pp. 85-90, offers game mechanics for random occurrence of natural disasters in the course of a campaign, rolled for once per year. However, most of these are minor or major disasters that won't have lasting historical impact. For disasters that do, roll once per 10 years, with the following results: 3-15, no lasting impact; 16-17, historic disaster with local impact; 18, massive disaster, often with global impact.

Examples of historic disasters include the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 (described in Voltaire's satirical novel *Candide*), in which at least 10,000 people died; and the eruption of Krakatoa in 1883, which killed over 35,000 people and lowered summer temperatures by 0.7°F in the following year.

Examples of massive disasters could include the eruption of the Deccan Traps in the land mass that is now India, some 66 million years ago, which contributed to the extinction event at the end of the Cretaceous by releasing toxic sulfur compounds into the atmosphere (treat this as a marginal atmosphere with sulfur compounds, as in **GURPS Space,** p. 81), or the flooding of the Ur-Shatt river valley that created the Persian Gulf about 8,000 years ago, perhaps destroying one of the first human homelands outside of Africa. A possible future example might be a supervolcano eruption at Yellowstone, which last had one 640,000 years ago; such an eruption could cover thousands of square miles with volcanic ash.

Beyond even these disasters, Earth has experienced extinction-level events at intervals of tens or hundreds of millions of years, starting 2.45 billion years ago when the atmosphere was flooded with the toxic gas oxygen. Such events can kill significant fractions of all species, 75% or more; the near-total coverage of Earth with ice 252 million years ago (the *Permian-Triassic event*) killed 96% of marine species, the worst case known. An extinction-level event might wipe out humanity, but it might leave a few desperate survivors on a wrecked planet, with the payoff of their adventures being human survival.

For a closer look at certain kinds of extreme events, see the **GURPS Disasters** series.

Astronomical Disasters

For a science fictional campaign, it's worth considering natural disasters of extraterrestrial origin. Such events convey the idea that humanity and Earth are part of a larger cosmos and subject to its influence. It's conceivable that an astronomical disaster might kill off humanity or destroy the Earth, but for dramatic purposes, it's more interesting to have survivors struggling to rebuild civilization in the ruins. A model for a cinematic campaign about astronomical disaster can be found in Balmer and Wylie's *When Worlds Collide.* Several types of disasters could be used.

Asteroidal impact: Depending on the size of the colliding body, this may be anything from a minor disaster to an extinction-level event. On a very near miss, an asteroid might come within the Roche limit (from 6,000 to 12,000 miles for a rocky body) and be broken up into fragments, likely resulting in widespread meteoric bombardment of the surface.

Gamma ray burst: An extinction-level event. A supernova within 33 light-years of Earth emits a tightly focused beam of radiation that hits Earth. Estimated to happen roughly twice per billion years. Little direct radiation reaches the surface, but the atmosphere is chemically altered, being flooded with nitrogen compounds for several years (roll daily vs. HT to avoid 1 point of toxic damage).

Geomagnetic storm: A historical disaster, comparable to the Carrington event of September 1, 1859. A solar flare induces electromagnetic activity on Earth, including extremely bright auroras visible through the temperate zones (reducing darkness penalties to Vision to -1) and damaging effects on electrical systems similar to those of electromagnetic pulse. Roll HT for electronic devices (HT+3 for Hardened devices and purely electrical systems). On a failure, the device shuts down and must be repaired to get it working again; repair rolls for non-Hardened electronic devices are at -6. Consequences range from power-grid blackouts to failure of medical electronics.

Rogue planet: A body of planetary mass or greater mass enters the solar system on an orbit that takes it close enough to Earth to have significant gravitational effects, as in Wells's "The Star" or Leiber's "A Pail of Air." (If it actually collides with Earth, terrestrial life becomes extinct!) The magnitude of the effects depends on the mass of the intruder and how close it comes to Earth (see *Effects of Gravity,* p. 26).

Tides: An Earthlike planet in a close passby (four or five times more distant than the Moon) will have as much tidal effect as the Moon does. If it's on the same side of Earth as the Moon, *or* opposite it, the two effects will add up, effectively doubling the height of the tides, ranging from 1.2 to 1.4 yards in midocean to 24 to 28 yards at the Bay of Fundy or the Severn Estuary. On most coasts, it would add from 1.4 to 4.2 yards to mean high tide, comparable to hurricane storm surges, which could be considered a historic disaster. However, if it's at right angles to the Moon, the tidal effects roughly cancel out. A closer approach, or a larger body such as a gas giant or white dwarf star, can cause much greater tidal effects.

Asteroidal Impacts

In assessing damage from astronomical events, the Earth can be taken as having DR 5 million from its crust and 2 billion HP from its total mass. A rocky asteroid a mile in diameter has about 200,000 HP. A typical speed for an asteroidal collision with Earth is 17 miles/second or Move 30,000. Using the formula for collisions (p. B430), this inflicts crushing damage of 60,000,000d, averaging 210,000,000 points. This will easily penetrate Earth's DR and inflict about 1/10 of its HP (about like inflicting a 1-point injury on an average human). This could be considered a massive disaster. For larger or smaller asteroids, multiply HP, and therefore damage, by the asteroid's diameter in miles. An asteroid five miles in diameter would inflict about half of Earth's hit points in a single collision, which would be a major wound; this could be equated to an extinction-level event. Asteroids less than 1/16 of a mile in diameter undergo airbursts and don't reach the Earth's surface.

The Societal Level

Conflicts on a larger-than-individual scale make up a big part of both past and future history. In literary terms, these could be described as *organization vs. organization* (for example, business rivalry, political campaigns, crime and law enforcement, or revolution and civil war); *society vs. society* (including military science fiction, but also stories of diplomacy); and *culture vs. culture* (clashes of ideas and beliefs – often a societal analog of *character vs. self*). The outcomes of such conflicts determine the course of historical events.

GURPS provides tools for resolving such conflicts, to be found in **GURPS Mass Combat** and **GURPS Realm Management.** Bear in mind, though, that these books examine events on a short timescale, from a single battle to a single year. Working through every step of such a progression would be a cumbersome way to develop a history spanning decades, centuries, or longer. It's better to confine their use to times of crisis, when the fate of a society or a world is in the balance.

Societal-level conflicts as such don't make a good campaign; players don't take on the roles of societies, but of individual characters. To use a societal-level conflict in roleplaying, find out where the protagonists stand in the conflict – or assign them to a specific place, as part of the campaign premise – and give them tasks and missions that will advance the conflict or profit from it. In a war, they might belong to a military unit; in a story of business rivalry, they could be employees or subcontractors of one of the rival firms. For protagonists with greater agency, make them leaders of one of the sides, and face them with the question of what to do about the other faction or factions. To turn a societal conflict into effective drama, make it personal.

Societal conflicts, especially of culture vs. culture, can also be kept in the background, as a source of characterization. Two characters may have different sympathies and approach their situations from different perspectives, without actively opposing each other. This need for people to work together despite disagreements can itself be a form of drama. For example, **Transhuman Space** shows a future solar system with an ongoing tension between transhumanist and preservationist points of view; but most of the time, the two factions arrive at compromises and manage to work together. A group of player characters whose members have different goals, loyalties, and ethical standards can make for an interesting campaign – if the players don't take their characters' conflicts personally.

War

Relative military resources can predict the likely outcomes of wars, and thus the likely changes in the boundaries between societies, using the Strategy bonuses from **GURPS Mass Combat** (repeated here in the *Relative Troop Strength Table*, p. 37). To find the Troop Strength ratio, divide the stronger foe's MR by the weaker's; see pp. 34-35 for determining this value.

Most of the modifiers to Strategy are situational, and don't apply over the course of an entire war. However, each country's defense bonus, based on its boundaries prior to the war, can be taken as a *penalty* to the attacker's Strategy modifier: -1 for plains, -1d/2 (rounded up) for other terrain, an extra -1 for hills, and an extra -2 for mountains or built-up areas.

Very-Long-Term Goals

Various projects in a future historical setting may require efforts prolonged over thousand or even millions of years. Examples include planetary-scale or astronomical engineering projects such as terraforming, eugenic programs aiming to direct the evolution of a species, and slower-than-light interstellar journeys. While individual characters with multiple levels of Extended Lifespan or with Unaging (see *Visitors*, p. 43) might carry on such efforts, they normally require organizations to manage them. But maintaining a consistent purpose over thousands of years demands far greater stability than human organizations normally attain.

In *GURPS* terms, the personnel of such as organization need to have Very Good or Excellent Loyalty (Loyalty score 16 or more). If the organization is recruiting from a larger population, this can be attained by building trust in potential recruits (see **GURPS Social Engineering,** pp. 40-41). If *everyone* in the younger population needs to work for the organization's goals (as in the crew of a slower-than-light starship), they can be encouraged to develop self-imposed mental disadvantages (p. B121) by teaching (see **GURPS Social Engineering: Back to School,** p. 12). For either process to work, the organization's leaders and teachers need high skill in Leadership and/or Teaching – *and* exceptionally high loyalty to the organization's purpose (treat as Excellent Loyalty, a score of 19 or more). If these requirements aren't met, the organization will gradually acquire senior personnel who put their personal convenience or profit, or their beliefs and feelings, ahead of the organization's goals; increasing numbers of junior personnel will soon follow their lead. In the terms of **GURPS Boardroom and Curia,** pp. 13-14, the Loyalty rating for *the organization itself* should probably be 19 or higher (Excellent) to preserve its original goals over such long spans of time.

An organization such as this offers a reconciliation of structure and agency. In the first place, the organization itself is an embodiment of human agency over a historical time span (or in some cases, a span far longer than human history). In the second place, to the people who work for it and embody it, it's a structure: a stable situation of relationships that supports and provides context for their actions (as discussed in **GURPS Boardroom and Curia**). In the third place, because they are committed to its goals, it offers them a purpose on behalf of which they can exercise agency. In terms of campaign designs, such an organization can provide a campaign with a mission statement as a basis for character design.

Other extreme events may occur on their own, rather than by human agency, but they may also give rise to intensified conflicts, or create situations where a new idea or a new resource is the focus of conflict. The process of working these things out can be carried forward systematically, a decade or a generation at a time, with the historical forces being reassessed after each step.

In a middle or far future, it's also possible to look backward – to ask, "How did we get here?" This backward history doesn't need as much detail. In fact, it's often better to avoid detail; the least convincing parts of some future histories are often the early parts that describe the immediate future – especially one or several decades later, when that immediate future has turned into an alternate past (as is inevitable, since science fiction writers aren't really prophets). Leaving "how the next few elections came out" or "how humanity reached the stars" vague avoids distracting the audience with irrelevant questions and arguments. (See *Yesterday's Tomorrows,* p. 5.)

One reason for working out a future history, rather than simply presenting a static sketch of a future world, is to help with this trick of perspective. As historical events progress, they'll add layers of detail to the future world. Reader, viewers, or players won't see just a flat background, but multiple strata at increasing depths.

LOCATION

After the history of the setting as a whole has been sketched out, it's time to zoom in on the particular location where the campaign will take place. Where supplements such as *GURPS Space, GURPS Realm Management,* and *GURPS City Stats* portray planets, political domains, and cities as single points or undifferentiated regions, the principal location should be described more fully and probably mapped. A review of the Area Knowledge skill (pp. B176-177) can suggest the kind of questions that should be addressed in such a description.

Most locations have organizations of various sorts. At least a sample of these, including the powerful or influential ones, should be described more fully. For a really detailed treatment, use the statistics defined in *GURPS Boardroom and Curia.* If the location can support military forces, they can be defined using *GURPS Mass Combat.* Again, the abstract statistics given in these works may be only a starting point; an organization that the

> *Only a single fantastic assumption was admissible per story, and must thereafter be developed with the strictest logic.*
> *– James Blish (as William Atheling, Jr.)*

BORROWED HISTORY

One option for creating a future history is not to create a new one, but borrow an old one. Asimov provided an early example of this in his Foundation series, with a Galactic Empire modeled on ancient Rome and faced with a similar fall. Weber's Honor Harrington novels take the Napoleonic Wars as a model for a future interstellar conflict, and Heinlein's *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* is based on the American Revolution. At a more abstract level, Blish used Spengler's detailed historical cycles (see *Civilizational Cycles,* p. 23) as a basis for his Cities in Flight series, in effect building his future history on *all* of Earth's major civilizations.

On the one hand, this isn't a rigorous approach to future history. If the goal is what might be called "hard social science fiction," it's safest to assume that the future won't repeat the past or even much resemble it. This is especially true if the scale is an interstellar milieu (pp. 10-11), but even for a campaign confined to a future Earth, the planet itself, humanity, technology, or all three may be as different from recorded history as that is from the vastly longer human prehistory. Building on this is likely to call for inventing new sorts of societies and events.

On the other, it's a common human habit to think of the present in terms of the past; many Western societies have compared themselves to Rome, and Mao Zedong is said to have modeled his rule of China on that of Qin Shihuangdi. People in the future may think of their own time as like some era on historical Earth, whether or not a theoretical sociologist would agree. Players may find that this approach helps them get into a setting, whether they care about the scaffolding that supports it – and often whether the GM has bothered designing those supports.

A related approach is to model the *societies* of the future on societies of the present or the past – borrowing the *statics* of a historical setting, but not necessarily its kinetics or dynamics. In a future history set on Earth, there are somewhat plausible justifications for this: the future may have historical continuity with the present, or the constraints of climate, ecology, and transportation may give rise to similar political geographies. In an interplanetary or interstellar future, having a close analog of a single Earth culture on some remote planet – either surviving unchanged or reemerging – is much harder to justify. However, such a culture might *look back* to some Earth culture, as present-day Israel looks back to ancient Israel without having a similar economy or government.

player characters actually interact with should be written up in more detail.

It's also possible to skip over the gaming statistics and go directly to the narrative details, just as it's possible to write a short character sketch rather than providing a full character sheet. What's important is to have an idea of what the people and places are like, as a basis for deciding how the protagonists will experience them.

At the same time, it's often best not to define everything about a location! As the campaign progresses, it may be useful to introduce new places, new people, and new organization; spelling everything out ahead of time means there won't be room for these.

Future Primitive

75 points

You live in a future world that has long since reverted to lower technology, and you have the skills needed to survive there. Your abilities are above average, making you suited to set out on a life of adventure.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [5]; Per 11 [5]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: 15 points chosen from among Absolute Direction [5], Combat Reflexes [15], Fearlessness [2/level], Fit [5] *or* Very Fit [15], High Pain Threshold [10], Outdoorsman 1 [10], or Resistant to Disease (+3) [3].
Disadvantages: -20 points chosen from among Bad Temper [-10*], Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5] *or* (Gentleman's) [-10], Delusions (Legends of the ancients) [-5], Disciplines of Faith (Ritualism) [-5], Innumerate [-5], Overconfidence [-5*], Technophobia [-5*], or Sense of Duty (Companions or tribal community) [-5].
Primary Skills: One of Farming (A) IQ+2 [8]-12; Fishing (E) Per+3 [8]-14; Gardening (E) IQ+3 [8]-13; or Survival (any land terrain) (A) Per+2 [8]-13. ● *Three* of Knife, Shield, or Thrown Weapon (Spear *or* Stick), all (E) DX+2 [4]-12; Axe/Mace, Bolas, Bow, Lasso, Shortsword, Spear, Spear Thrower, or Staff, all (A) DX+1 [4]-11; or Blowpipe, Net, or Sling, all (H) DX [4]-10.
Secondary Skills: Stealth (A) DX+2 [8]-12. ● *One* of Boating (Sailboat *or* Unpowered) or Riding, all (A) DX+1 [4]-11; or Hiking (A) HT+1 [4]-13. ● *Two* of Camouflage (E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Animal Handling (any), Armoury/TL (Body Armor, Melee Weapons, *or* Missile Weapons), Disguise (Animals), Leadership, Navigation/TL (Land *or* Sea), or Traps/TL, all (A) IQ+1 [4]-11; Observation or Tracking, both (A) Per+1 [4]-12; all (A) IQ+1 [4]-11; or Esoteric Medicine (H) Per [4]-11.
Background Skills: Area Knowledge (Large Nation or smaller) (E) IQ [1]-10 *and* Brawling (E) DX [1]-10. ● *Four* of Knot-Tying, Leatherworking, or Sewing, all (E) DX+1 [2]-11; Dancing, Throwing, or Wrestling, all (A) DX [2]-10; Carpentry, Current Affairs/TL (Regional), Gesture, Masonry, or Savoir-Faire (High Society), all (E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Musical Instrument (Untuned Drum), Public Speaking, Smith/TL (any), or Weather Sense, all (A) IQ [2]-10; Artist (Body Art, Drawing, Painting, Pottery, Sculpting, *or* Woodworking), Expert Skill (Natural Philosophy), Mimicry (Animal Sounds *or* Bird Calls), Naturalist, Pharmacy/TL (Herbal), or Poisons/TL, all (H) IQ-1 [2]-9; Singing or Swimming, both (E) HT+1 [2]-13; or Intimidation (A) Will [2]-11.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

Habitat Manager

125 points

You're in charge of a technologically advanced human community in a challenging environment – an alien planet, an asteroid or orbital colony, or a generation ship. You have the skills that are needed to keep things running and deal with emergencies.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 11 [10].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: 25 points chosen from among Ally (Batman/Servant/Orderly; 50% of points; 9 or less) [2], Ally (Chief of Staff/Right-Hand Sapient; 100% of points; 9 or less) [5], Charisma 1 [5], Empathy [15] *or* Sensitive [5], Fearlessness 1 or 2 [2/level], Fit [5], Higher Purpose (Preserve and protect the habitat) [5], Less Sleep [2/level], Penetrating Voice [1], Resistant to Influence (+3) [5], Tenure [5], Administrative or Military Rank +1 [5 with Status or 10† without] or +2 [10 with Status or 20† without], or additional levels of Wealth [varies]. ● *One* of these two packages:

1. *One* of Administrative or Military Rank 5 [50†].
2. Status +1 [5] *and* Wealthy [20]. ● *One* of Administrative or Military Rank 5 [25].

Disadvantages: Duty (To community; 12 or less) [-10]. ● -15 points chosen from among Bully [-10*], Code of Honor (Professional) [-5] *or* (Soldier's) [-10], Honesty [-10*], Intolerance (One group) [-5], Overconfidence [-5*], Pacifism (Reluctant Killer) [-5], Selfish [-5*], Sense of Duty (Residents of the habitat) [-5], Social Stigma (Second-Class Citizen) [-5], Stubbornness [-5], Workaholic [-5], or adding Extremely Hazardous to Duty [-5].
Primary Skills: Area Knowledge (Neighborhood, Village or Town, City, *or* Mega-city) (E) IQ+1 [2]-13 *and* Leadership (A) IQ+1 [4]-13. ● *One* of Politics (A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Diplomacy or Shiphandling/TL (Spaceship), both (H) IQ [4]-12; or Body Language (A) Per+1 [4]-13.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A variety of works may provide inspiration for creating an original future history – or be adapted into future history settings. This bibliography limits its suggestions to a few examples that actually portray a future history at some extended length; that portray a moment or time of historical change; or that illustrate a particular kind of future. Additionally, some creators produce many fine examples, of which only a few are given here.

Many of these creative works have their own roleplaying games devoted to them, not all of which are mentioned herein.

Series

Many future histories are published in multiple volumes, making up entire series of stories or novels. Thus, this list points to the entire series.

Adams, Robert. The Horseclans. A massive series of novels set in a neoprimitive future following a global thermonuclear war, focused on a culture of mounted pastoralists. **GURPS Horseclans** provided a gaming treatment.

Anderson, Poul. The Polesotechnic League/The Terran Empire/The Long Night. Three originally separate series later brought together into a unified larger history with a tragic and cyclical vision.

Asimov, Isaac. The Robot Series/The Galactic Empire. Two originally separate series, of which the latter started out with the Foundation subseries; subsequently the latter series was extended and the two series were merged. The Foundation series is largely modeled on the fall of the Roman Empire.

Barnes, John. The Thousand Cultures. Examines the conflicts that arise as instantaneous interstellar teleportation reunites a scattered humanity. Notable for its use of revelatory plots where successive novels reveal unsuspected deeper levels of historical cause and effect.

Blish, James. Cities in Flight. A series of four rather disparate novels about a future where antigravity enables entire cities to move into space and travel between the stars.

Bujold, Lois McMaster. The Vorkosigan Saga/The Wormhole Nexus. A series of novels about Miles Vorkosigan, military genius with a physical handicap, that makes up most of a larger future history. **Vorkosigan Saga Sourcebook and Roleplaying Game** provides a gaming treatment.

Butler, Octavia. The Patternist Series. A narrative of the emergence of psi powers within humanity and the rise of their possessors to domination over the ungifted. Spans from the colonization of North America to an unspecified time in the future.

Cherryh, C.J. The Alliance-Union Universe. Comprises several shorter series and freestanding novels, mainly focused on interstellar trade and warfare in stars fairly close to the Sun.

Collins, Suzanne. The Hunger Games. The leading example of young adult dystopia, set in a future North America where a single wealthy city dominates and exploits twelve impoverished provinces.

Corcoran, Travis. Aristillus. A two-volume narrative of lunar revolution, space entrepreneurship, and ethnogenesis.

Corey, James S.A. The Expanse. A story of political struggle between a unified Earth, Mars, and the asteroids triggered by the discovery of an advanced alien technology. A gaming adaptation is available from Green Ronin Publishing.

Dickson, Gordon R. The Childe Cycle (also called the Dorsai Series). An interstellar future in which humanity fragments into Splinter Cultures emphasizing different human traits. Left incomplete by Dickson's death.

Flynn, Michael. The Firestar Series. A (now alternative) history of humanity's exploration in space in the near future – and the social changes that make it possible.

Gibson, William. The Sprawl Trilogy. The series that made cyberpunk a recognized genre and established the prototypical cyberpunk future.

Heinlein, Robert A. The Future History. Collections of short stories and one novel, *Methuselah's Children,* set against a shared historical background; established the concept of future history as a literary form. Later expanded to include several novels featuring the protagonist of *Methuselah's Children.*

Herbert, Frank. The Dune Series. Portrays the founding of a new religion and the takeover of a future interstellar empire by an extraordinarily gifted young man, and the vicissitudes of the dynasty he establishes.

Le Guin, Ursula K. The Hainish Cycle. A loosely associated group of novels and stories, often set centuries apart, in a shared background where Earth and various other planets were colonized from an earlier civilization on the planet Hain.

McDonald, Ian. Luna. A three-volume history of a middle future Moon ruled by five great clans, where all law is contract law. Explores the idea of a libertarian future in space from an anthropological perspective.

MacLeod, Ken. The Fall Revolution. Four novels exploring a hard-science fiction future influenced by Trotskyism and libertarianism – or, actually, two different futures growing out of different choices made in one of the earlier volumes.

Moon, Elizabeth. Vatta's War/Vatta's Peace. Two series with a common background, exploring the ethical tension between the military and commercial virtues in a weakly transhuman future.

Niven, Larry. Known Space. A region inhabited by humans and several alien races, in a future with multiple advanced and superscience technologies.

INDEX

We've been stopped for six weeks now. That's not long compared to some of our stops, but it's long enough for me to get the feeling: The animals aren't changing. I look out and the mountains just sit there.
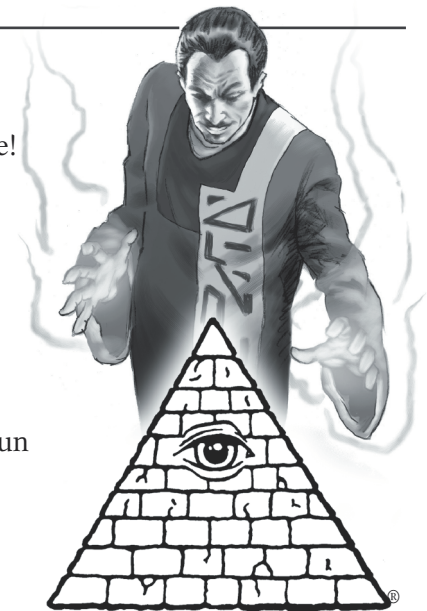
– Vernor Vinge,
Marooned in Realtime