

CHARACTER CREATION

DaiMon Barx stopped counting. He sniffed the air. Something was burning. Reluctantly tearing his eyes away from his stacked and sparkling piles of gold-pressed latinum slips, he rose, sniffing about the room for the source of the smell. A high-pitched noise assaulted his fine-tuned ears. It was coming from behind the door. The door was a meter-thick slab of duranium with the most complex force locks money could buy—and it was the thing that was burning. A pinpoint of light appeared near the handle and began working its way upward and around, tracing the shape of the door with a burnt line.

Barx dashed for his crate to fill it as fast as he could with latinum slips. He'd have only seconds before the phaser burned through the door and its owner kicked the slab in.

Sealing the crate, he engaged its hoverfield and dragged it through the air behind him, running to the picture of the Grand Nagus on the wall. He punched the image of the Nagus in the nose and a hidden door slid open beneath the picture. He bent down and pushed the crate through ahead of him, squeezing in after it just as the main door fell from its hinges and a voice yelled: "Ferengi! Where's my money?"

Barx, his finger almost on the stud to seal the door behind him, frowned. He couldn't resist yelling back at the intruder: "It was a fair deal! The Chazon Passage is prime property!"

"But it's already owned by the Klingon Colonial Command!" the disgruntled colonist yelled, aiming his phaser at the Ferengi he could now see crouched in a small passageway. "You sold me a pre-owned bridge!"

Barx quickly hit the stud and the door slid shut instantly, its laminate paint harmlessly absorbing the phaser fire. He crawled down the passage as fast as he could, awkwardly pushing the hovercrate before him. He couldn't help it if the Klingon who had sold the property to him was a known drunk who'd say anything for a shot of bloodwine. He'd had papers, right? It's not a Ferengi's job to test for forgeries, especially in a language he doesn't know!

Barx wondered how he was going to get the latinum back to his ship before the colonists figured out where he hid it...



CREATING A CHARACTER

In the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Roleplaying Game*, players take on the roles of persons who live and work on an outpost, space station, or one of the frontiers of the Alpha Quadrant—anyone from a friendly Klingon merchant to a Starfleet officer assigned there, to a colonist, to a space station's



chief engineer—in much the same way that an actor portrays a role in a television episode. Instead of speaking lines or performing actions written by a scriptwriter, the player makes up his character's dialog and determines his character's actions, based on the situation described by the Narrator. The more you play, the more your character becomes an alter ego, with his own desires and personality. The first step in playing this game is to create a character.

Here's your chance to create a character as adventurous, determined, and compelling as the leading characters from the TV show. This chapter provides players with all the guidelines they need to do just that. The *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Roleplaying Game* allows players to create characters in just a few minutes, so you can begin playing right away. First, start with an initial concept. Then, using the steps explained here, translate your rough idea into a character with innate capabilities, skills, talents, and abilities. These abilities are expressed in game terms with numbers and rules.

When a series' creators first get together to hammer out ideas for a show, they write detailed descriptions of the main characters—their motivations, past histories, concerns, and quirks. They don't describe the characters as having Fitness 2 or Tricorder 3. It may seem odd, at first, to assign numbers to an expression of your creativity, but these statistics allow your characters to interact with the rest of the *Star Trek* universe.

DEVELOPING THE INITIAL CONCEPT

When creating your character, start with a general idea of who your character will be. What type of character have you always wanted to see on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*? Pick a concept that really grabs you, one you'll enjoy playing for many months. Will you be a capable Vulcan science officer or a brash trader from Earth? Together, the character's species—Human, Bajoran, Ferengi—and what he does—ambassador, engineer, merchant—provide a solid starting point. Think of the characters you see in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Each can be described by his species and position. Benjamin Sisko is a Human captain. Quark is a Ferengi bartender and petty criminal. Kira is a Bajoran Militia officer.

Notice, however, how this basic idea doesn't even begin to describe the complexity and subtle nuances of those characters. Where is Sisko's love of baseball, or Kira's love for Odo? That's what the rest of this process is all about: building successive layers onto your basic concept until you've created an entertaining, vividly portrayed character.

Come up with a personality for your character. Decide how the character looks; *Star Trek*

main cast members are generally good-looking, or have some other striking visual attribute. Imagine the character's attitude and the image he projects to others. He may be straight-laced, gruff, cheerful, or whatever. First impressions needn't reveal the inner truth of your character; for example, a gruff, detail-minded engineer might actually be kind-hearted once you get to know him.

As you create your character, keep asking "why." No matter where you begin or how far you go, asking "Why?" adds additional depth to the character. Let's say you want to play a character who chafes at rules and regulations. Why is the character like this? Maybe he grew up in a strict environment and rebels against authority. Maybe he was raised with few rules and is unfamiliar with responsibility. Different answers lead to completely different interpretations of your initial concept. If this rebel against authority is a member of the Bajoran Militia or Starfleet, why did he join an organization with a lot of rules and regulations? Maybe a parent pushed him into it, the character is seeking something he feels is missing from his life, or he only wanted to explore the galaxy and didn't think about the particulars. Remember, whenever you get stuck for an idea, ask yourself a question starting with "Why?"

One of the distinguishing elements of a *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Roleplaying Game* series is that it is set in a particular location, such as a space station or frontier outpost of some kind; its action might just as easily be tied to a certain planet or sector. Just as this format is different from the roving, new-planet-every-week format of the *TNG* game, your character concepts should be different, too. One of the first questions you should ask yourself is: "Why does my character stay at the core location of the series?" Give him a compelling reason not only to remain at that location, but a big stake in its future and well-being, the way that the members of the Deep Space 9 crew have good reason to care about the fate of their station. To Odo, the station is the only place he's ever felt at home. Kira understands that it is crucial to the strategic interests of her beloved Bajor. Series writers gave Sisko two crucial ties to the station: He pursues not only his assigned duty as a Starfleet officer, but also his peculiar destiny as Emissary of the wormhole aliens. Players with the strongest connections to the base location(s) not only get more to do in the course of play, but feel a stronger connection to the action. Ask your Narrator to approve the choice you make, since it may rest on assumptions about the core location that differ from his. In some cases, the Narrator might have suggestions for characters, based on the type of series he has in mind.

Steve wants to create a Bajoran security officer for an upcoming game. That's his starting point. Then he thinks about this officer. Why is he a security officer? Steve sees his character as a former resistance fighter. Why, Steve wonders, is his character concerned with crime and security matters? The answer is twofold. First, having recently risked his life to free Bajor from the Cardassians, he wants to make sure it remains free and peaceful. Second, it's a natural career progression; there aren't many other fields open to someone with this character's skills. Steve decides his



Bajoran security officer is friendly but authoritative, tolerating no challenge to the laws he's supposed to enforce. The series setting is a starbase on the border between Federation and Cardassian space, commanded by Starfleet personnel but belonging to Bajor and staffed mainly by Bajorans. Steve decides that his character was rescued by Starfleet officers when he was a child; his family was fleeing a Cardassian warship when base personnel intervened and stopped the pursuit. He sees this assignment as a gift from the Prophets: They want him to repay his debt to the Federation by serving on the station and helping to improve Bajoran-Federation relations. He intends to defend the place to his last breath, if necessary—especially when Cardassians are involved.

NON-STARFLEET CHARACTERS

The big difference between a *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Roleplaying Game* character and a character for a more mainstream *Star Trek* series, such as the *Star Trek: The Next Generation Roleplaying Game*, is that not all characters are expected to be members of Starfleet. In fact, many *DS9* games concentrate on characters who have never donned a Starfleet uniform.

Don't think of non-Starfleet characters as problematic—think of them as exciting facets of the *Star Trek* universe which present countless new story opportunities. Take advantage of them to develop backgrounds and episodes unsuitable for squeaky-clean Starfleet characters—tales of intrigue, deception, compromise, and personal sacrifice. Just because a character wouldn't fit in on a Federation starship doesn't mean he can't contribute to a *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* series—heroes come in many forms, and an intrepid smuggler or freedom fighter can be just as heroic as a Starfleet captain. Indeed, many *DS9 RPG* series won't feature a single Starfleet character.

Certain concepts generally aren't appropriate for characters who belong to Starfleet, such as escaped criminals or underhanded con men. But that doesn't mean the concept won't work for a *DS9 RPG* series—it just means the character probably isn't a Starfleet officer. All kinds of people live and work on most space stations and outposts. Everyone from artistic, yet fierce, Klingons to roguish Ferengi con men with hearts of gold may darken a station's airlock doors. There are plenty of ways to fit such characters into a *DS9* setting or series; after all, out on the fringes of galactic civilization, you can't always choose who your neighbors are. Refer to the “Keeping the Peace” chapter for more information on setting and outpost creation.

CHARACTER COMPATIBILITY AND CONFLICT

Each player should try to create a character who complements the rest of the Crew (the group of player characters). Make sure your character contrasts with the others, so you'll have a wide range of character types to propel the series's stories. Things can grow dull if the Crew contains two Bajoran

priests or three Klingon warriors. Talk with the other players to determine how your character fits in with theirs. If two players want to play characters holding the same position on the station (both want to play Ferengi merchants, for example), one might work a different shift or perform different duties.

Just as importantly, characters should get along with each other most of the time. It's all right if characters engage in friendly rivalry, good-natured kidding, or mild friction, but a character who constantly argues with the rest of his Crew ruins the fun for everyone. This isn't to say that Crew members can't have their differences—that often makes for good roleplaying and dramatic scenarios—but they must be able to overcome those differences or see beyond them, or else the game will suffer.



Steve thinks it would be interesting if his Bajoran security officer were intolerant of Boliens. He thinks they look funny and can't stand their “officious meddling” and nonstop chatter. In talking with the Narrator, Steve describes a character who avoids Boliens as much as possible and chafes visibly in their presence. The Narrator thinks this is too strong—after all, this character must work closely with Starfleet officers (possibly including Boliens), and his Bajoran superiors won't tolerate that sort of bigotry. So he suggests Steve tone down his character's anti-Bolian sentiments a bit.

Ideally, the majority of the Crew shares a common motivation or agenda. Discuss this issue with the other players before creating characters. If every character in the game wants something completely different, your Narrator will give himself a migraine trying to create problems that all of them are motivated to solve. One or two oddball characters outside the main team can be accommodated; any more than that, and you'll tax your Narrator's ingenuity too much. The scriptwriters for *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* found ways to involve Quark and Jake in the action of various stories even though they weren't station personnel, but would have had a terrible time creating coherent stories if every character had been on the station for a completely different reason.



CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

Players who want to start playing immediately can choose one of the pregenerated characters detailed on pages 35-41. These are called archetypes. Instead of going through the steps to choose a Template and Overlay and then spending Development Points to customize your character's attributes or skills (as described later on in this chapter), you simply choose an archetype, personalize it a bit, and start playing in only a few minutes. Each archetype incorporates a Template and Overlay, with additional points allocated as though the character had been created from scratch. Each contains all the statistical information you need to start playing.

PERSONALIZING THE ARCHETYPE

Although the archetypes are ready to play as is, players should personalize their characters. Take 5 Development Points to improve an attribute or edge, buy new skills, increase existing skill levels, or purchase an advantage or disadvantage (each of these steps is detailed below—see the Development Point Cost Table on page 53). This way, your character feels more like your own creation.

Bill wants to play a Trill Diplomat, so he chooses that archetype. Looking over the character, he decides he wants to increase the skills gained from his Trill's previous symbiont host. Reviewing the skills listed, he decides the previous host was a Starfleet Command Officer (who provides him with the skills Charm, Command, and Diplomacy at level 0). With two points (the special cost for raising symbiont skills above 0), he raises his Command to 1 and takes Combat Leadership as his free specialization. He then purchases a specialization in Starship Command for an additional point. He then spends two points to raise his Charm to 1, and takes Influence as his free specialization. He then chooses a second specialization in Seduction by spending another point. Having spent 6 Development Points (more than the 5 allowed for personalization), Bill must recoup one point. He chooses Vengeful (Tholians) -1, figuring his character's previous host was killed by Tholians.

THE CHARACTER CREATION PROCESS

If none of the archetypes match the sort of character you want to play, you can create your character from scratch, using the four-step process outlined here:

1) Choose a Template: Templates define a character's species—Human, Klingon, or whatever the player wants and the Narrator allows in his game. The Template provides the basic attributes and skills of an average member of the species.

2) Choose an Overlay: After selecting your species, choose your profession, represented by an Overlay. When

combined with a Template, an Overlay provides a picture of a detailed character who is just about ready to play.

3) Customize your character with Development Points, advantages, disadvantages, and a detailed Background: No character should be a generic, "average" member of his species—instead, he should be distinctive and special. At this stage in the process, you get the chance to make him that way, by tracing his background with the Background History system. The History system traces your character's life from his early years right up to his career. At each stage along the History, you can use a number of Development Points to spend to improve your character's attributes, edges, and current skills, or buy new edges and skills.

4) Finishing touches: Last but not least, figure out your character's Renown and Courage Points, and if necessary his rank in the military or quasimilitary organization to which he belongs.

THE BASICS OF CHARACTER CREATION

All characters are defined by three basic elements: attributes and edges, advantages and disadvantages, and skills. Each of these elements is discussed later in this chapter. When constructing your character, you receive some attributes, skills, and advantages and disadvantages for free from the Template and Overlay you choose. You can purchase others with Development Points, discussed below.

Attributes represent the character's innate physical and mental characteristics—everything from how much weight he can lift, to how quickly he reacts, to how smart he is. Attribute scores are "open-ended," meaning there is no limit to how high they can go, though normally they range from 1 to 5. Your character's base attributes come from his Template, representing your character's species.

Edges represent facets of an attribute. For example, although two characters may both have Fitness 2, one might be stronger, while the other character possesses greater stamina. Each attribute has two edges expressed in terms of "+" or "-" values. Edges make the core attributes a bit more flexible. For player characters, edges range from -2 to +2. See page 62 for a list of edges.

Skills represent a character's learned abilities and knowledge—everything from how to shoot a phaser, to using a computer, to speaking strange alien languages. Skills range from 1 to 5, representing proficiency. A Flight Control officer with Shipboard Systems (Flight Control) 2 (3) knows more about navigating in space than a Science Officer with Shipboard Systems (Flight Control) 1 (2).

Many skills require a character to choose a Specialization, indicating his area of particular expertise in a broad and complex subject. For example, a character who knows the Shipboard Systems skill could choose to specialize in such areas as Communications, Sensors, Tactical, Flight Control, or some other shipboard or station system. The character understands the basics of the subject, and can still attempt a Skill Test in related areas. For example, even though a character specializes in Shipboard Systems (Flight Control), he understands the basics for operating all starship control panels; in a