



Roleplaying in *The Next Generation*

By James P. Gee

FASA, the maker of *Star Trek: The Role Playing Game*, has produced many useful scenarios and supplements for the original *Star Trek* era. Accurate, complete guides on the Klingons, the Federation, and starship construction, just to name a few, have been possible only because the basic facts about Kirk's time have been firmly rooted in our minds. Since the original television series is no longer being produced, every aspect of it could be explained without contradiction in future episodes. This is not true, however, for the current running series, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Because this show is currently in production, it is difficult to nail down a precise account of the nature of this latest time period. Detailed material about specific topics in *The Next Generation* is impossible because the horizons of the show are growing with each episode. All in all, about 70 years of history, the time between *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* and the present series, is unaccountable for because of this.

FASA's first attempt at bringing roleplaying to the 24th century was *The Next Generation Officer's Manual*—144 pages of material introducing players to the terms, technology and society in the new show. Produced during the first episodes, this book is lacking in many areas. For example, it says nothing about creating, playing or refereeing characters. The statistics given for the performance of many of the vessels were inconsistent, and many of the ideas have been contradicted by the second- and third-season shows. Despite its flaws, the *Officer's Manual* was a hot commodity when published and is a good introduction for the uninitiated into the realm of the 24th century. Also, referees will still find it useful for material on the rank insignia, uniforms and decorations, and some of the floorplans of *Galaxy*-class vessels (this may change as soon as FASA publishes the long-awaited *Galaxy-Class Blueprints* package.)

FASA's second endeavor in this area is the *First Year Sourcebook*. This text is infinitely better than its predecessor. As its name suggests, it is based entirely on information gathered from the show's first season. While it is more limited in scope, it sticks to the facts and is thus a much better reference text for gaming. But more importantly, the *First Year Sourcebook* contains limited information on creating characters for use in *The Next Generation*.

This article, therefore, is designed as an aid for referees and players who wish to adventure in this new part of the *Star Trek* universe. It expands the *First Year Sourcebook* by also using the second and third seasons as a reference. This text only covers playing characters in the Star Fleet of the United Federation of Planets as not enough information on the new Klingon Navy or the Romulans is available to update those characters for *The Next Generation* play.

STAR FLEET OF THE FUTURE

The organization of Star Fleet has changed dramatically from the days of Kirk and Spock. The fleet as a whole has become much more integrated, much more versatile. This fact is reflected not only in its internal structure but in the training of personnel and the



designs of its vessels as well. Originally, there were five major branches in Star Fleet—the Galaxy Exploration Command, Military Operations Command, Colonial Operations Command, Merchant Marine Command and Intelligence Command. Training Command was a small sub-branch which fed into all the larger departments, giving all personnel the same basic education.

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By the time of Picard and the *Enterprise* 1701-D, Star Fleet structure is somewhat different. Following are the individual branches of the modern fleet and a brief description of their function.

Galaxy Exploration Command: This branch of Star Fleet has remained relatively unchanged over the years. It is the largest branch in existence and uses nearly 65% of all Star Fleet personnel and resources. Most vessels serve in this branch, which is responsible for the administration of most starbases in existence.

Tactical Command (TacFleet): Star Fleet Tactical Command, also called TacFleet, was created to cope with the expansion of the Federation and the new peace with the Klingons. Not only does it take over the many tasks formerly delegated to the now-defunct Military Command, but TacFleet is also charged with diplomatic strategies and planning for all of Star Fleet. Further, it encompasses the old Training Command and the office of the Judge Advocate General (JAG), Star Fleet's judicial arm. While there are very few purely military vessels left in the Fleet, Tactical Command has been given authority over every Star Fleet vessel in order to facilitate immediate military action when needed.

Research and Construction Command: Research Command incorporates into one unified body many offices within Star Fleet that were formerly scattered throughout different branches. It is charged with the design and construction of all starships. The Star Fleet Corps of Engineers, which works closely with Colonization and Terraforming commands, is now part of this division. Research Command is also responsible for the development of new weapons, medical and vessel technologies (often in cooperation with Intelligence Command), plus purely scientific missions. A number of bases and about 25 small scout vessels are allocated for this department.

Intelligence Command: Star Fleet Intelligence Command (SFIC) has undergone little change over the years. Its duties are many and often secret. For the most part, it is charged with information gathering and processing; thus, SFIC is closely associated with the Tactical Command. For more information about this branch, see FASA's *Star Fleet Intelligence Command* sourcebooks.

Colonization Command: This branch is the same as the old Colonial Operations Command, except that terraforming operations have been transferred to another branch. Colonization Command is charged with the transportation, training, administration and protection of Federation colonies and their worlds. This branch has only a few large transports of its own and often calls upon ships from Exploration Command.

Terraforming Command: Terraforming Command controls the restructuring of nonclass-M planets into ones that can support life. For more information on this, refer to page 62 of the *First Year Sourcebook*.

Merchant Marine Command: Another branch which has not changed since the days of James T. Kirk, the Merchant Marine Command is in charge of transporting supplies within Star Fleet. While it is certainly not a glamorous job, it is important. Vessels of this branch are usually older classes of heavy cruisers and frigates, modified with limited transwarp drive. Players should not confuse the Merchant Marines with the Star Fleet Ground Forces, which is under TacFleet.

SHIPBOARD ORGANIZATION

The *First Year Sourcebook* does an excellent job of defining the changes in bridge positions on Star Fleet vessels. Below are the service branches in the regular fleet, plus the redefined command positions.

Captain: The captains of today's Star Fleet vessels have their traditional duties and responsibilities, with the exception that Star Fleet Command does not (under normal circumstances) allow them to take personal command of away teams. Instead, that duty now falls to the first officer.

First Officer: Now in charge of all away teams, the first officer aboard all Federation vessels is usually the first ranking officer to make direct contact with alien races. It is the "number one's" prerogative to decide, with the captain's approval, who makes up the away team and who is to command if he does not personally lead it.

Tactical Officer: The tac officer is a combination of security chief and weapons officer. He is charged with the protection of the ship from hostile forces. The tac post on most Federation starships controls the ships weaponry, along with some communications operations as well. All starship security personnel are trained as tactical officers.

Ship's Counselor: In charge of the mental well-being of the crew, most, but not all, ship's counselors are Betazoid. On larger vessels, such as the *Galaxy*-class starships, where civilian family members are present, the counselor acts as a crew chief as well. In many cases, the counselor is the captain's chief advisor and is an expert in many alien cultures. While most counselors are line officers, they are always invaluable on away teams during first contact missions. See the *First Year Sourcebook* for more on this.

Bridge Specialist: Newly created, this position eliminates the different positions of helm, navigation and communication. Each bridge specialist specializes in either helm/navigation (e.g., Wesley Crusher) or operations (damage control, communications, etc; e.g., Commander Data), but is also crossed trained in the other, allowing any bridge specialist to take over another station if needed.

Other Ship Positions: The positions of science, medical and engineering officers remain the same as they always have been.

CREATING CHARACTERS

The processes for creating characters for use in *The Next Generation* differs little from the original game. Basically, when generating new players, the referee should follow the steps provided in the rules for *Star Trek: RPG*, substituting the following information when appropriate. These changes in character design are based on those presented on pages 60-63 in FASA's *First Year Sourcebook*, although again, they have been updated through the third season.

New Races: The only new player race introduced to date for *The Next Generation* is the Betazoids. Rules for playing Betazoid characters are located later in this article. Players may choose to be either a full Betazoid or a half Betazoid (Counselor Troi of the *Enterprise*), with the former being more adept psionically than the latter. Below are the racial modifiers that are used for both:

Racial Modifiers

Species	STR	END	INT	DEX	CHA	LUC	PSI
Betazoid	—	—	+5	—	+5	-25	+40

Betazoid players are allowed to have PSI scores above 99 as in most cases they have severe modifiers against them.

While the Klingons are now allies to the Federation, Worf is the only known Klingon in Star Fleet. At times, crew exchanges between Star Fleet vessels and the Klingon Defense Force occur, but only on a temporary basis. If referees wish to allow their players to act as Klingon characters trained in Star Fleet, they should use the racial modifiers presented in FASA's sourcebook *The Klingons*. Remember to specify if they are Imperial Klingons, Human fusions or Romulan fusions.

Initial Training: To determine what skills the characters acquire during their schooling at Star Fleet Academy and its branch

schools, follow the original training process. Find the preacademy skills, plus assign the academy curriculum. Since the alliance with the Klingons may cause Star Fleet officers to work closely with that race, add the following skills to the list of Academy Curriculum skills: Social Sciences Klingon Law/Culture 5, Klingon Defense Force Operating Procedures 5.

Branch Schooling: For characters who are going to be either medical or science officers, use the published Branch Skill Lists. For others, changes in Star Fleet training and positions call for the use of the following supplement lists. Given in parenthesis after each branch heading is the number of years the course entails.

Bridge Command Specialists (3 years)

Branch Skills	Value	Primary Skill Area
Astrogation	20	Helm/navigation
Communication Systems Operation	20	Operations
Computer Operation	20	
Deflector Shield Operation	15	Operations
Starship Navigation	20	Helm/navigation
Starship Helm	20	Helm/navigation
Sensor Analysis	10	Operations
Starship Tactics/Strategy	10	
Damage Control Procedures	20	Operations

According to the *First Year Sourcebook*, one bridge specialist operates as helm and the other as navigation, much like on the original series—this statement seems to be in error. Many *The Next Generation* episodes show that the conn handles both these functions, while ops (operations) takes care of other matters. Thus, bridge specialists must pick a primary area of skills, either helm/navigation or operations. Characters should list their primary skills as double the value given.

Tactical Officer (3 years)

Branch Skills	Value
Communication Systems Operation	30
Communication Systems Technology	10
Deflector Shield Operation	20
Deflector Shield Technology	10
Starship Combat Tactics/Strategy	20
Starship Weapons Operation	35

Tactical officers are a combination of the old security and weapons officer positions. The chief tac officer is charged with the safety of the entire vessel, both internal and external. For the complete list of Tac Specialist Branch skills, referees can use the table listed in the *First Year Sourcebook* or may simply add these skills to the Security Branch list found in the original game set.

Engineering Specialists (4 years)

Use the skill list described in the original game to find these branch skills. In addition, engineering officers, according to the *First Year Sourcebook*, are cross-trained in a wider area of technological skills. Thus, to the original list, add Holodeck Systems Technology 10 and also allow the player to pick three more technology skills at 10 each.

Ship's Counselor (2.5 years)

Branch Skills	Value
Computer Operation	10
Communication Systems Technology	10
Communication Systems Operation	20
Languages	4 at 20 each
Medical Sciences Psychology	Any 3 races at 20 each
Negotiation/Diplomacy	30
Social Sciences	3 at 15 each
Starship Sensors	20
Transporter Operation Procedures	10

Ship's counselor is not a "wimpy" part to play; in fact, it is so challenging that I recommend it only for those who are experienced at roleplaying. While officers in this position may be non-Betazoids, they must be a member of a telepathic race. The above are the skills for ship's counselors as they appear in the *First Year Sourcebook*. They are printed here for simplicity's sake.

CADET CRUISES

Now that the branch schooling is complete, find the character's cadet cruise(s) normally. All the modifiers found in the original RPG creation process apply here, of course. Use the table below to find what division of Star Fleet the cadet cruise is served in.

Roll	Division
10 or less	Galaxy Exploration Command (large vessels)
11-45	Galaxy Exploration Command (small vessels)
46-65	Tactical Command
66-77	Colonization Command
78+	Merchant Marine Command

One of the major changes between this table and the one printed in the *First Year Sourcebook* is that a roll of 10 or less, which in the original game meant a position on a *Constitution*-class vessel, was supposed to place a cadet on a *Galaxy*-class ship. It was decided, however, that the *USS Enterprise* is the only known existing vessel of this class (the *USS Yamato* was destroyed in the second season). The *Enterprise* is spearheading the exploration of the galaxy, not being used as a training vessel. Thus, the special positioning of cadets on a "large vessel" is as specific a label as can be derived at this time. As a rule, cadets do not serve in Terraforming Command on their cruises, nor is the Intelligence Command an option (to create characters in this branch, see the *SFIC* sourcebook). Continue the creation process as normal.

TOURS OF DUTY

Just as a new table was required for cadet cruises in *The Next Generation*, a similar item is needed for tours of duty. Again, all the player

must do is substitute the following table for the original; the actual process has not changed. Use the standard modifiers for INT and LUC scores.



Roll	Division
01-20	Galaxy Exploration Command (starship duty)
21-40	Galaxy Exploration Command (starbase duty)
41-60	Tactical Command (starship duty)
61-75	Tactical Command (starbase duty)
76-86	Research Command
87-94	Colonization Command
95+	Terraforming Command

Terraforming is a long, slow process which takes many years of devoted service to culminate. Therefore, any character who rolls a 95 or higher spends an automatic two tours of duty there. Remember to roll twice for the combined lengths of the tour. The idea of defining either starship or starbase duty for the Exploration and Tactical commands comes from the new table printed in the *First Year Sourcebook*. The only difference between this table and the printed *The Next Generation* table is that this one incorporates the new divisions discovered in the second and third seasons of the television series.

PLAYING AND REFEREEING

Using the newly generated characters in the 24th century is quite similar to the original game, with the exception of the era involved. Both FASA's supplements and this article are designed to be easily incorporated into the old gaming system.

Weapons and Combat

Rules involving combat are unchanged, although the *First Year Sourcebook* does not provide any firing statistics for new weapons.

Weapons

Weapons	Dmg	PB	SH	MD	LG	EX	AM	GRZ	DRN	OR
Phaser V		1	2-6	7-12	13-40	41-60	20			35
Stun	75*							25*	1	
Wide	Stun	75*	1	2-5	—	—	—	25*	4	
H stun	150*							40*	2	
Heat	40							30	1	
Disrupt	75/150							50/70	2	
Disintegrate	D							60	4	
Phaser VIA/VIB		1	2-15	16-30	31-65	66-110	40			115
Stun	75*							25*	1	
Wide	Stun	75*	1	2-5	—	—	—	25*	4	
H stun	160*							40*	2	
Heat	55							30	1	
Disrupt	75/175							50/70	2	
Disintegrate	D							60	4	
Phaser VII		1-2	3-20	21-40	41-110	110-130	50			150
Stun	75*							30*	1	
Wide	Stun	75*	1	2-15				30*	4	
H stun	160*							50*	2	
Heat	55							30	1	
Disrupt	75/175							50/85	3	
Disintegrate	D							90	4	

*Nonpermanent damage. Stun lasts 2D10+15 minutes. H stun lasts 3D10+30 minutes.
D: Destroyed.

So far, we have seen over the past three years three different varieties of phaser sidearms. The first, called the Mk V in *The Next Generation Officer's Manual* is the small "hand" phaser. The Mk VI-A is the "broom-handle" pistol used in the first and second seasons of the show, while the Mk VI-B is a similar, more rectangular-shaped weapon used in the third season. For game purposes, these weapons are identical in function. Also mentioned in the *Officer's Manual* is the Phaser Mk VII, a rifle. Referees should refer to either of FASA's *The Next Generation* reference guides for a detailed explanation of the designs. Listed in the Weapons Table are the stats for all of these weapons. Information about the other equipment used by players in *The Next Generation* is well-explained in the *First Year Sourcebook*.

Playing Betazoids

The only new character race introduced for *The Next Generation*, Betazoids present an interesting challenge for players and referees alike. Using characters of this race is a balance between the possibilities and practicalities of being a telepath. Pure Betazoid characters may use their powers in a variety of ways. First, the character can use empathy to try to feel another's emotions. Betazoids can also telepathically communicate over distances with

another, or possibly several persons at once. Betazoid/Human hybrids, however, can telepathically communicate with other Betazoids and are only empathic with other races.

Restrictions apply even here. Even the most powerful of Betazoids cannot communicate over vast stellar distances (to calculate this distance, divide the character's PSI score by 100; this equals the maximum number of light-years the player can communicate across). Such communication is fatiguing to the player, who must rest for several days afterward. Also, due to the unique structure of their neural network, Ferengis cannot be emphatically read or telepathically spoken to. Finally, Betazoids cannot control minds or heal mental damage as Vulcans can, although with intense mental probing, they may detect either. When judging empathy, both full or hybrid Betazoids will automatically succeed in an attempt if the target being's PSI is lower than theirs; if the target's PSI is higher, then the player will have to make a roll against his own PSI minus the difference between the two's PSI scores. For example, a Betazoid player with a PSI of 88 tries to read the emotions of a visiting alien dignitary, whose own PSI is 92. Since the dignitary's PSI is higher and the difference of the two PSI scores is 4, the player must roll an 84 or below to succeed.

There are many factors to consider when judging telepathic attempts at communication. The Betazoid Telepathic Contact Modifiers table lists modifiers for PSI rolls used in such an event. Remember that distance modifiers apply to empathy.

It is suggested that the referee makes all rolls involving Betazoid psionic attempts so that the players will not gain any undue information from what modifiers are used. Also, this is a good way to prevent a Betazoid player from abusing his powers and to keep the group as a whole from depending too much on the one character. And remember, sometimes it is necessary, for the sake of plot, to keep the players in the dark about certain elements, so by making the telepathic rolls himself, the referee prevents a scenario from falling apart then and there. Another tip for referees is to write down or, in complex cases, speak privately to the Betazoid player about the results of the attempt, thus avoiding the chance that other players will learn something they shouldn't.

An excellent question which needs to be addressed involves Betazoid ethics. How far will a Betazoid go, even in the line of duty, in invading another mind? Many factors influence this topic. First off, the Betazoid culture is based on the openness one finds when dealing with a highly telepathic race. On the other hand, Betazoids do not enjoy the conflicting emotions impressed on them by alien thought processes of other races. For the most part, it is safe to say that full Betazoids will, out of respect for the other and for the sake of avoiding a headache, not mentally probe other life forms. They do, however, empathically evaluate every individual they meet; to a Betazoid, this is as natural as looking at someone. The only exception is contact with Vulcans, who consider this a breach of moral conduct.

History in the Making

Keeping scenarios within the accepted historical context is an important part of any *Star Trek* adventure, regardless of the era involved. Of course, doing this in *The Next Generation* is much more difficult a task than doing it in Kirk's time for all the reasons mentioned before—Kirk's time is the past, and we are dealing with the unforeseeable future. But, one finds oneself asking, just when does *The Next Generation* take place in relation to the original adventures? This was not a question easily answered until now. First, the referee must understand the basic concepts behind stardates. True stardates, such as the numbers used in the actual episodes of *The Next Generation*, can be used to find the chronological order of the series, but little else.

What few people realize, as explained by editor and *Trek* novelist

Betazoid Telepathic Contact Modifiers	
Type of Contact	Modifiers
<i>Empathy</i>	
*One being, PSI less than player	No roll
*One being, PSI greater than player	—the difference of PSI scores
*Group of beings	—5 per person
<i>Telepathy, One-Way</i>	
Read single mind	—10
Read group of minds	—15 per mind
<i>Telepathy, Two-Way</i>	
Simple feelings	0
Complex message/order	—25
Conversation with Betazoid	0
Conversation with non-Betazoid	—25
Type of Target	Modifier
<i>Intelligence</i>	
Intelligent being	0
Semi-intelligent being	—20
Unintelligent creature	—40
Creature type unknown	—25
<i>State of Mind</i>	
Willing telepath	+1/2 other's PSI
Willing nontelepath	+1/4 other's PSI
Unaware and unresisting	+10
Resisting contact (telepath)	—other's PSI
Resisting contact (nontelepath)	—1/2 other's PSI
*Resisting empathy (telepath)	—other's PSI
*Resisting empathy (nontelepath)	—1/4 other's PSI
Other's PSI previously mind touched (doesn't include empathy)	+10
<i>Conditions</i>	
*Subject in sight	+5
*Subject out of sight	—10
*Subject distant (planetary scale)	—10
*Subject distant (interplanetary scale)	—45
Subject extremely distant (maximum interstellar scale) (empathy not possible)	—80
*Modifiers used on Empathy attempts.	

Robert Greenberger in DC Comics' *The Next Generation* issue 1 (Vol. 2), is that the stardates given on the show always begin with a 4 (denoting the 24th century) and then another digit denoting the season the episode appears in. Thus stardate 41150 was used for the pilot, "Encounter at Farpoint," but stardate 42010 is used for the second season opener, "The Child."

As you probably know, FASA uses a different system of stardates, called reference stardates, for the game system. These dates are organized in the form of year-month-day as yymm.dd, with the century represented by an appropriate digit and slash preceding it. Thus, January 1, 2000 would be stardate 0/0001.01, and January 1, 1990 would be -1/9001.01. For more information on this system, refer to the rule books in the original game set.

Recently, information revealed in one of the last third-season episodes gave proof positive to exactly when *The Next Generation* occurs. In the episode "Sarek," which featured the triumphant return of Spock's father, the title character, we learned that he was 202 standard years old. In "Journey to Babel," the episode from the original *Star Trek* which marked Sarek's debut, McCoy said that Sarek was 102; this leaves us to deduce that roughly 100 years has passed between Kirk's first mission with the *Enterprise* and the launch of the 1701-D. The best estimates put the episode "Journey to Babel" around stardate 2/0600, which means the third season of *The Next Generation* takes place around stardate 3/0600, or the year 2306. Surprisingly, this data supports the statement in *The Next Generation's Officer's Manual* that the NCC-1701-D was launched on stardate 3/0301, three years prior to the events in the third season.

Admittedly, there exists a contradiction to the above theory. In the episode "The Neutral Zone," Data said it was the year 2364, which would be stardate 3/6400. John D. Wrbanek, who penned an article on stardates in **Challenge 43**, holds that this is a valid time period, although for the sake of clarity, this article uses Sarek's age as opposed to character dialog for a foundation for *The Next Generation* continuity. Following are some stardates of important events in

The Next Generation to help referees select a proper stardate for their scenarios. These dates are estimates based on the order of the episodes derived from the true stardate system seen on the show.

Stardate 3/0301: The USS *Enterprise* NCC-1701-D is launched; first season begins.

Stardate 3/0304.06: The *Enterprise* becomes the first Star Fleet vessel to directly communicate with the Ferengi while trying to retrieve a stolen T-9 energy conversion unit.

Stardate 3/0309.14: Picard and Riker of the *Enterprise* thwart an invasion of the Federation by a race of insectoid beings (called "Parasitic Invaders" in the *First Year Sourcebook*).

Stardate 3/0310.08: "The Neutral Zone" episode, where the Romulans directly confront a Federation vessel for the first time in 50 some years. Marks the emergence of the new Romulan Empire.

Stardate 3/0406.21: In an encounter with the powerful alien Q, the *Enterprise* is hurled thousands of light-years to the far reaches of the galaxy, where the crew encounters the Borg, a race of humanoid-mechanical fusions. The *Enterprise* escapes, but the Borg are believed to now be headed for the Federation.

Stardate 3/0408.19: Admiral Jarok of the Romulan Navy tries to defect to the Federation in hope of warning Star Fleet of a Romulan base in the Neutral Zone. The information was false, however, and Jarok kills himself.

Stardate 3/0512.12: The Borg reach Federation space before they were expected. Picard is taken captive and transformed into a representative of the Borg. The *Enterprise's* main deflector dish is converted into a "final-strike" weapon, and the crew confronts the massive Borg vessel as it makes its way to the heart of the Federation. Ω

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