

Zero Space : Aliens

At its height, the Imperium encompassed millions of populated worlds, and that is just a fraction of the populated worlds in the galaxy. Across these worlds is scattered a variety of sentient life forms, the diversity of which beggars the imagination. Rather than provide a comprehensive list of alien species, *ZeroSpace* provides you with a toolbox of alien traits, with which you can build any alien species you can think of (or nearly so).

That being said, the aliens in *ZeroSpace* can generally be categorized as one of three types: humanoid, android, or exotic.

Would you like to create a random alien? You can!

Table: Random alien type

Roll 3d6	Type
3-13	Humanoid alien
14-15	Android
16-18	Exotic alien

Humanoid Aliens

Humanoid aliens are the most common, and resemble humans in size and physique. They may differ cosmetically (skin color, eye color, hair color, etc.), but they typically have the same number of arms and legs, the same facial features, and so on. A humanoid alien species might have pointed ears, exaggerated brow ridges, or they might have tentacles or horns instead of cranial hair (or in addition to hair).

Would you like to create a random humanoid alien? You can!

Table: Random humanoid alien, skin

Roll 1d6	Saturation	Roll 1d6	Color
1	Pale	1	Blue
2	Light	2	Brown
3	Medium	3	Green
4	Deep	4	Grey
5	Dark	5	Red
6	Patterned (roll twice!)	6	Yellow

Optionally, a "pale grey" result can mean "snow white", and a "dark grey" result can mean "pitch black".

Table: Random humanoid alien, eyes

Roll 1d6	Type	Roll 1d6	Saturation	Roll 1d6	Color
1	Circular pupil	1	Pale	1	Blue
2	Horizontally slit pupil	2	Light	2	Brown
3	Vertically slit pupil	3	Medium	3	Green
4	Pupilless	4	Deep	4	Grey
5	Solid color	5	Dark	5	Red
6	Compound	6	Glowing	6	Yellow

Optionally, a "pale grey" result can mean "snow white", and a "dark grey" result can mean "pitch black".

Table: Random humanoid alien, head

Roll 1d6	Type	Roll 1d6	Structure	Roll 1d6	Hair Saturation	Roll 1d6	Hair Color
1	Hairless	1	Antennae	1	Pale	1	Blue
2	Hair (normal)	2	Brow ridges	2	Light	2	Brown
3	Structure, hairless	3	Cranial ridges	3	Medium	3	Green
4	Structure, hairless (roll twice!)	4	Horns	4	Deep	4	Grey
5	Structure, with hair	5	Pointed ears	5	Dark	5	Red
6	Structure, with hair (roll twice!)	6	Tentacles	6	Bright	6	Yellow

Optionally, a "pale grey" result can mean "snow white", and a "dark grey" result can mean "pitch black".

Skin color and eye color here are those of an individual, of course. An alien species may have lighter or darker tones among the population, or even a range of colors.

Androids

Androids are artificial beings designed to interact with biological sentients using ordinary conversation and social cues. Androids are usually constructed to serve a particular purpose. Whether androids are sentient is a subject of some controversy. On some worlds, androids are considered to be no more than ambulatory tools, while on other worlds they have the same rights and privileges as any other sentient. On worlds where androids are considered property, there are usually restrictions on how advanced their behavioural heuristics are permitted to be, while on worlds where androids have the rights of sentients, there are usually limitations on their manufacture. Androids might be humanoid in shape, or they might be shaped completely unlike humans, depending on their original purpose and the whims of the maker. Androids might be obviously artificial, or they may be lifelike and virtually indistinguishable from the species they have been constructed to resemble. Lifelike androids are illegal on some worlds. A prohibition against harming biological life is the most common directive hard-wired into androids during manufacture, and removing that prohibition is among the most common modifications made to them afterward.

While androids are inorganic, and thus do not "eat", "sleep", or "heal" in the biological sense, they have functional requirements that serve the same purposes -- recharging, "powering down", "auto repair", and so on. As with exotic aliens, these requirements can be removed with the purchase of a suitable alien trait.

However, all androids *must* purchase the following alien traits:

- Immunity To Suffocation
- Immunity To Poison

Some alien traits which are common for androids, but not required, are:

- Armor
- Data Jack
- Immortality
- Mental Calculator
- Perfect Recall
- Self-sustaining

Exotic Aliens

Exotic aliens might superficially resemble humans, or they might be utterly alien. What makes them a distinct group is that they possess traits beyond those possessed by humans and humanoid aliens. The line between humanoid alien and exotic alien is an arbitrary one.

Would you like to create a random exotic alien? You can!

Table: Random exotic alien type

Roll 1d6	Type
1	Animal-headed humanoid
2	Anthropomorphic animal
3	Anthropomorphic plant
4	Insectoid
5	Symmetrical organism
6	Weird biology

Table: Random exotic alien details

Roll 1d6	Animal Type	Roll 1d6	Symmetry Type	Roll 1d6	Weird Biology
1	Avian	1	Dendriform with bilateral symmetry	1	Colonial organism (roll for Symmetry Type)
2	Canine	2	Dendriform with radial symmetry	2	Crystalline (roll for Symmetry Type)
3	Cephalopod	3	Globular with bilateral symmetry	3	Cybernetic non-humanoid (roll for Symmetry Type)
4	Feline	4	Globular with radial symmetry	4	Gaseous
5	Mustelid	5	Serpentine with bilateral symmetry	5	Myconoid (roll for Symmetry Type)
6	Reptilian	6	Serpentine with radial symmetry	6	Viscous fluid

Alien Traits

This is a list of typical alien traits found in a *ZeroSpace* game. This list is not exhaustive. A character may well have a trait not listed here, subject to GM approval. However, any new traits should be approximately as useful as these traits, in order to maintain a sense of fairness with other characters. Each alien trait costs one character point. We suggest spending no more than 5 character points total on alien traits, gifts, and esoteric powers.

Would you like to randomly generate a character's alien traits? You can! If the character is a humanoid alien, randomly roll one alien trait. Otherwise, consult the "Number of alien traits" table.

Table: Random alien traits

Roll 1d6	Traits
1	Roll once on Typical alien traits
2-5	Roll twice on Typical alien traits
6	Roll three times on Typical alien traits

Count the number of alien traits, and subtract that number from your pool of character points. If the character is an android, they must also purchase the two required traits, Immunity To Suffocation and Immunity To Poison.

Table: Typical alien traits

Roll 1d6	Roll 1d6	Trait	Benefit
1	1	360° Vision	Can see equally well in every direction simultaneously
	2	Aerial	Winged or floating, the character can fly at twice their ground speed
	3	Aquatic	Can breathe water and survive in environments of extremely high pressure, such as in the ocean depths
	4	Armor	Chitin, scales, fur, or exceptionally tough skin protects the character from attacks
	5	Camouflage	Blend into surroundings and become difficult to perceive
	6	Clinging	Can move at normal ground speed along walls, ceilings, and other surfaces
2	1	Data Jack	Can connect to and communicate with computers
	2	Energy Shield	A force field or deflector shield protects the character from attacks
	3	Exceptional Beauty	Get attention, and perhaps favors, from admirers
	4	Frigian	Can breathe methane or ammonia, and comfortable in environments of extreme cold
	5	Gelatinous	An undifferentiated mass, able to squeeze through a hole the size of a tennis ball
	6	Healing	Revitalize a character who has lost Endurance in combat
3	1	Heavyworlder	Stronger and more massive than typical humanoids

2	Hyperacuity	Can sense details far too small or faint for ordinary human senses to detect
3	Huge	Larger and stronger than typical humanoids
4	Immortality	Never grow old nor die from "natural causes"
5	Immunity To Poison	Unaffected by pathogens and poisons
6	Immunity To Suffocation	Does not need to breathe, and can survive in a vacuum

4	1	Infernal	Immune to the effects of environmental ionizing radiation, and comfortable in environments of extreme heat
	2	Life Drain	A Close Combat attack which ignores all normal forms of protection
	3	Linguist	Learn new languages with minimal effort
	4	Mental Calculator	Solve complex mathematical operations by thinking about them
	5	Mind Link	Characters who both have Mind Link can communicate telepathically over any distance
	6	Mind Shield	Resistant to mental attacks and unnatural coercion

5	1	Multitasking	Take additional actions during a round
	2	Natural Weaponry	Claws, fangs, spines, or some other natural Close Combat weaponry
	3	Night Vision	Can see in the dark with infrared, ultraviolet, or low-light vision
	4	Perfect Recall	Remember something perfectly with a Reason roll

5	Regeneration	Heals much faster than the typical humanoid	
6	Self-sustaining	Can survive without eating through photosynthesis or some other metabolic process	
6	1	Shapeshifter	Can change shape and appearance
	2	Subterranean	Move through earth and rock as easily as air
	3	Telepathy	Communicate directly with the mind of another person
	4	Time Theft	Put a target into a fugue state, unable to move, think, or take any actions
	5	Tiny	Smaller and harder to hit than typical humanoids
	6	Unsettling	Make people nervous for no real reason

360° Vision

The character with 360° Vision can see equally well in every direction simultaneously. They probably have very large eyes, or many very small eyes.

Aerial

Aerial allows a character to fly at their ground speed. They might have wings, or they might be naturally lighter than air.

Aquatic

An Aquatic character may breathe underwater, and is comfortable in environments of extremely high pressure, such as in the ocean depths. The character can also swim at their ground speed.

Armor

A character with the Armor trait has chitin, scales, thick fur, or just exceptionally tough skin which provides protection against most forms of direct damage: anything which inflicts Endurance damage. The defense value (DV) of a character with Armor is equal to their relevant defense attribute (Brawn for close combat, Agility for ranged combat) plus their Power. As always, this does not stack with conventional armor, energy shields, or other forms of defense -- only the highest defense value applies.

Camouflage

Camouflage allows the character to become difficult to perceive, by both living beings and machines. For example, the character might become transparent, they might bend light around them, or they may blend into their surroundings by modulating chromatophores in their skin. However the camouflage is achieved, the character is hidden from normal sight unless someone is actively looking for them or there is some environmental circumstance that might reveal the character's location. The action value (AV) of the Camouflage is equal to the character's Agility + Power.

If someone is actively looking for the character, perhaps by isolating their heat signature or tracking them by scent, the person trying to locate the camouflaged character must make a successful Perception (Reason) roll against the action value of the camouflaged character. A character with Clairvoyance or Hyperacuity may add their Power to their Reason when attempting to notice a camouflaged character. If an environmental circumstance might reveal the character's location, anyone in the area may attempt a Perception (Reason) roll against 2d6 + the Agility of the camouflaged character in order to notice the character. For example, fog might reveal the camouflaged character's outline, or fresh snow might reveal their footprints.

Clinging

A character with the Clinging trait can move at their normal ground speed along walls, ceilings, and other surfaces as if they were level. The strength holding the character to the surface is equal to their Brawn. If the surface is slippery or unstable, the GM might require the character to attempt a moderately difficult (DV 3) Athletics (Agility) roll to keep from sliding or falling.

Data Jack

A Data Jack permits a character to connect to and communicate with computers, typically at speeds much faster than would otherwise be possible.

It is rare for creatures other than androids and cyborgs to have a Data Jack.

Energy Shield

A character with the Energy Shield trait has a force field or deflector shield which provides protection against most forms of direct damage: anything which inflicts Endurance damage. The defense value (DV) of a character with Energy Shield is equal to their relevant defense attribute (Brawn for close combat, Agility for ranged combat) plus their Power. As always, this does not stack with conventional armor, energy shields, or other forms of defense -- only the highest defense value applies.

It is rare for creatures other than androids and cyborgs to have an Energy Shield.

Exceptional Beauty

A character with the Exceptional Beauty trait is naturally, effortlessly attractive. It is difficult for the character to pass unnoticed, because they will be the focus of attention in nearly any circumstances. People who are swayed by appearance may be more likely to cooperate with the character, and the character can sometimes gain favors from admirers. If this is the case, the character gains a bonus die on relevant Presence rolls.

Frigian

A character with the Frigian trait can breathe a super-cooled atmosphere such as methane or ammonia, and they are comfortable in environments of extreme cold.

The character might require some form of life support, such as a "breather" or an "environment suit", to operate comfortably in an atmosphere that most humanoids consider normal.

Gelatinous

A character with the Gelatinous trait is an undifferentiated mass, able to squeeze through a hole the size of a tennis ball.

Healing

Healing is a Close Combat (Power) "attack" which restores lost Endurance. The character with Healing may use a task action to attempt a moderately difficult (DV 3) Close Combat (Power) roll to heal the victim's injuries. If the character succeeds at this roll, then one Endurance is restored to the victim (or more, if using the optional margin of success rules).

Healing can remove diseases, pathogens, and poisons from the target. The character with Healing may attempt a moderately difficult (DV 3) Close Combat (Power) roll to cure a single disease or purge a single toxin from the victim's system.

Heavyworlder

A character with the Heavyworlder trait is stronger and more massive (but no larger) than a typical humanoid: +1 Brawn and a mass up to 200 kilograms. The character is also comfortable in environments of extremely high pressure, such as might be found on the surface of a heavy-gravity world.

Hyperacuity

Hyperacuity allows a character to make a moderately difficult (DV 3) Perception (Reason + Power) roll to sense details far too small or faint for ordinary human senses to detect. The action value (AV) of the Hyperacuity is equal to the character's Reason + Power. On a successful roll, they can taste the number of salt grains on a pretzel, read text on a computer display by touching it, see fingerprints on surfaces, identify a person by the sound of their heartbeat, track someone through a city by their scent, and so on.

Huge

A character with the Huge trait is larger and stronger than a typical humanoid: +1 Brawn and from 2.5 meters to 4 meters tall.

Immortality

The Immortality renders a character immune to the ravages of time. The character will never grow old or die from "natural causes".

Optionally, the character is never truly "dead" -- they can be re-assembled, repaired, and revived if all of their component parts can be collected or replaced.

It is rare for creatures other than androids to purchase this trait.

Immunity To Poison

A character with the Immunity To Poison trait is unaffected by chemical and biological poisons, toxins, and venoms. The character is also unaffected by infectious viruses, bacteria, fungi, etc.

Immunity To Suffocation

A character with the Immunity To Suffocation trait does not need to breathe at all, and the character is comfortable in environments of extremely low pressure, such as in outer space.

Infernal

A character with the Infernal trait is comfortable in superheated environments. They are also immune to the effects of environmental ionizing radiation.

The character might require some form of life support, such as a "breather" or an "environment suit", to operate comfortably in an atmosphere that most humanoids consider normal.

Life Drain

Life Drain is an unarmed Close Combat (Power) attack which inflicts Endurance damage. The action value (AV) of Life Drain is equal to the attacker's Power, and the target's defense value (DV) is equal to their Presence. Life Drain ignores all normal forms of protection such as armor and energy shields. However, Life Drain is completely ineffective against non-living objects, even if they are sentient.

Linguist

Universe, an artificial language created thousands of years ago, is the official language of the Imperium. Every civilized being understands Universe, although not every species is physically capable of speaking it. Additionally, every alien species has one or more languages which they speak among themselves: some civilizations have hundreds of indigenous languages.

Barring unusual circumstances, characters are assumed to be fluent in Universe, as well as any other languages they could reasonably be expected to know. A character with the Linguist gift is fluent in over six million forms of communication, and is capable of quickly deciphering new forms of communication when they encounter them.

Mental Calculator

The character with the Mental Calculator trait can perform complex mathematical calculations in their head in the same amount of time that a skilled mathematician could perform the same calculations on a powerful computer. Also, the character has an intuitive understanding of higher mathematics, and is able to comprehend and remember intricate formulae and equations after examining them briefly.

Mind Link

Two characters who both have the Mind Link trait can communicate telepathically over any distance.

Mind Shield

A character with Mind Shield is resistant to mental attacks and unnatural coercion. When targeted by an attack which bases the target's defense value (DV) on the target's Presence, the character's effective Presence is doubled.

Mind Shield does not need to be activated: it is always active, as long as the character is alert.

Multitasking

A character with the Multitasking trait may take additional actions at the end of a round. The character may use these additional actions to make additional task actions, including combat rolls. All of the character's additional actions are resolved after all other rolls are resolved that round.

During each game session, the number of additional actions the character may use is equal to their Agility. The character may only use half of their total additional actions in any one round, and once an additional action has been used, it may not be used again in that game session. The player may wait until the end of the round before deciding whether their character will use any of their additional actions.

Natural Weaponry

A character with the Natural Weaponry trait is equipped with claws, fangs, spines, or some other natural close combat weapon. These natural weapons are difficult to take away, and will usually regrow if removed. Natural Weaponry has an attack value (AV) equal to the character's Brawn + Power.

Night Vision

Night Vision allows a character to see in the dark. This capacity could be the result of infrared vision, ultraviolet vision, or simply exceptional low-light vision. Alternately, the character has sonar, a sense of touch so acute that they can detect and locate vibrations, or some other unusual sense.

Perfect Recall

A character with the Perfect Recall trait may perfectly remember any event, document, recording, or picture which the character has taken the effort to study and memorize. The character does not

need to understand the items to be memorized, because the information memorized is not stored as text; it is in the character's memory as a picture. As such, the information is not subject to instantaneous retrieval, but the character may mentally "scroll down" or "fast forward" looking for a specific bit of data.

Regeneration

Regeneration accelerates the healing process and allows the character to recover from injury more quickly. Normally, an injured character may recover half of their lost Endurance (rounded down) by resting for about half an hour. After that, a character may only recover additional Endurance by getting a good night's sleep (or its equivalent, for characters who don't sleep). Barring some gruesome disfigurement, a character's Endurance will be completely replenished after a solid night's rest.

Regeneration drastically reduces this recovery time: the character recovers half of the Endurance they have lost (rounded down) after they have had a chance to rest and recuperate for one full minute. After that, the character will regain the rest of their lost Endurance by resting for about half an hour. Most characters with Regeneration can even regrow lost limbs or damaged organs.

Self-sustaining

A character with the Self-sustaining trait can survive without consuming physical matter. This might be through photosynthesis, chemosynthesis, or some other metabolic process. Alternately, the character can eat anything that will fit into their mouth.

Shapeshifter

A character with the Shapeshifter trait can change their shape and appearance, but may not increase their mass or size. The character may re-assign their physical traits (Brawn and Agility) to suit their new shape, as long as the total of Brawn + Agility remains the same or lower. The action value (AV) of the Shapeshifter is equal to the character's Presence + Power.

Assuming the shape of a specific person, creature, or object is more difficult than changing into a generic example of a particular shape. If someone is actively looking at the character, or has any reason to suspect that the character is not the genuine article, the person observing the shapeshifted character may attempt a Perception (Reason) roll against the shapeshifted character's action value. If the Perception (Reason) roll is successful, the observer can tell that the shapeshifted character is not who or what they appear to be.

Subterranean

A character with the Subterranean trait can move through the earth almost as easily as other people do above it. The character can tunnel through earth and rock at their ground speed, leaving a tunnel behind them.

Telepathy

The Telepathy trait permits a character to communicate directly with the mind of another person. The attack value (AV) of the Telepathy is equal to the attacker's Presence + Power. The defense value (DV) of the target is equal to their Presence. Telepathy is normally a short range (10 m) power. However, if the target of Telepathy also has Telepathy, the maximum distance between the telepath and the target is effectively unlimited.

With a willing target or a successful attack roll, the telepath may mentally communicate with the target and may read their thoughts and memories.

To break free of the Telepathy, the target must make a successful defense value roll against the attack value of the attacker. For example, if a character is affected by Telepathy from a character with attack value 7, they would need to make a defense value roll against $2d6 + 7$.

Time Theft

Time Theft is a short range (10 m) power which prevents the target from moving, thinking, or taking any actions other than trying to break out of it. The attack value (AV) of Time Theft is equal to the attacker's Power. The defense value (DV) of the target is equal to their Agility, or their Agility + Power if the target also has Time Theft.

To break free of the Time Theft, the target must use a task action to roll their defense value against the attack value of the attacker. For example, if a character is affected by Time Theft from an attacker with attack value 9, they would need to make a roll against $2d6 + 9$.

Tiny

A character with the Tiny trait is smaller and more difficult to hit than a typical humanoid: from 50 centimeters to 100 centimeters tall. Tiny characters are more nimble than larger humanoids (+1 Agility).

Unsettling

A character with the Unsettling trait puts off a disturbing vibe that makes people nervous for no discernible reason. Strangers will find themselves disliking the character without knowing why, and normal animals will avoid the character unless forced to approach by a trainer or some other

circumstance. On the other hand, the character may find it easier to intimidate others, providing a bonus die on relevant Presence rolls.

Alien Motivations

The motivations of individuals are often at odds with the motivations of the culture to which they belong. Individually, a colonist may be kind and compassionate, even as her civilization systematically commits genocide and destroys entire ecosystems in their quest for expansion. This is a paradox; nonetheless it is true.

Would you like to randomly generate the motivations of an alien culture? You can!

Table: Random alien motivations, Table 1

Roll 2d6	Complexity
2	Roll twice on Table 2
3-7	Roll three times on Table 2
8-11	Roll four times on Table 2
12	Schism: roll on table 1 again, and see the note below

Schism: The species' society is divided into two or more opposing and mutually antagonistic cultures. Roll on Table 1 again to determine the complexity of the species' motivations. When rolling on Table 2, make a note of the first roll and its opposite. The majority of the society has the first motivation rolled (and all successive rolls), but a significant minority has the opposing motivation (the rest of their motivations are all the same). For example, the opposing motivation of "adventure" is "security".

Table: Random alien motivations, Table 2

Roll 1d6	Roll 1d6	Motivation
1	1	Adventure
	2	Asceticism
	3	Audacity
	4	Community
	5	Compassion
	6	Courage
2	1	Curiosity
	2	Detachment
	3	Enlightenment
	4	Exploration
	5	Freedom
	6	Idealism
3	1	Justice
	2	Mercy
	3	Nobility
	4	Passion
	5	Pride
	6	Rebellion

Roll 1d6	Roll 1d6	Motivation
4	1	Security
	2	Materialism
	3	Subtlety
	4	Individualism
	5	Wrath
	6	Fear
5	1	Faith
	2	Responsibility
	3	Secrecy
	4	Isolation
	5	Control
	6	Pragmatism
6	1	Vengeance
	2	Ruthlessness
	3	Fellowship
	4	Serenity
	5	Humility
	6	Traditionalism

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