

# The Freeworlds: Tides of War

## Roleplaying Primer



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# Introduction

In 2003, Freelancer introduced all of us to an open-ended world of galactic proportions. In this world, players weren't sent out on sortie after sortie, just to rack up kills and see the end credits. Sure, there was a story to the game, but there was another story going on just under the surface. It was the story of people trading goods back and forth across the star lanes, of anti-government groups raiding convoys and explorers uncovering the mysteries of the universe.

When the first multiplayer servers started to go live, players congregated not just to enjoy Freelancer and the Sirius Sector, but to make something unique out of it – to tell a new story and blaze their own trail through the galaxy. Soon enough, players split themselves into factions, warred with one another, told tales of glory, honor and betrayal. Freelancer became a platform for us to live out our dreams.

Of course, as time moved forward and the obligatory mod community sprung up around the game, the inevitable question appeared:

*"Why aren't there any Star Wars games like this?"*

Star Wars is, and likely will remain to be, the gold standard space opera setting, so it seems only natural that someone had the idea to transform Freelancer into the Galaxy Far Far Away. And with that, Freeworlds began.

Over the years it has been worked on by many different mod teams, gone through several distinct iterations, each one more ambitious than the last. Finally, it has coalesced into Freeworlds: Tides of War.

While version numbers have changed, star systems built and reshaped, ships added and dropped, one thing has remained constant: the men and women who play Freeworlds want to be part of the story. It is a Star Wars story, granted, but one where the outcomes of every action are not pre-determined by a script or a single author. They are the fighter pilots, the smugglers, the crime lords, the Jedi, the Sith, the person in the wrong place at the wrong time. They are roleplayers.

Freeworlds: Tides of War continues the tradition of providing players with a rich, detailed environment, ready for the next great adventure. With a new, structured system and fresh lore to go along with it, we think FW:ToW is going to be a truly epic experience for old roleplayers and newcomers alike.

What follows is a wealth of information about the roleplaying aspect of the mod. We urge you to read it and familiarize yourself with it! Be the character you've always wanted to be. Be a hero, a thug, a scoundrel, an unscrupulous politician – we encourage it all! Most importantly, remember to have fun, and may the Force be with you!

**-Dark Force**

# **Glossary of Common Roleplaying Terms**

For many people who have played Freelancer or one of its many modifications, roleplaying is a glorious thing. The game provides the universe for us to play in, and the players provide the story and context by taking on roles within that universe.

Yet roleplaying isn't something that can be taken for granted. It requires patience, understanding, and a good grasp of the basics. Some of you may never have participated in roleplay before, while others may still be unsure what roleplay actually is.

To help get your adventures started, we've put together this glossary of important terms both as a reference, and to help get newer players up to speed.

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**Role Playing** - Assuming another identity for the purpose of telling a story, often in cooperation with other role players. In Freeworlds: Tides of War, roleplay happens within our own version of the Star Wars universe. To participate in roleplay, one must first create an original character to use within the setting.

**Player Character (PC)** - Refers to the specific character an individual is playing. When a player participates in actions in the gameworld (including chat), or in a roleplay forum thread, they are speaking from their character's point of view, which is distinct from their own real world point of view.

**Non-Player Character (NPC)** - These are characters who fill many roles within a story. Some NPC's may be controlled by the Game Master or thread creator, in order to facilitate the plot. Other NPC's may be created by players as companions, with certain limitations. (i.e. These particular NPC's may not be controlled by other players, and said NPC's cannot be created on a whim, must fit in the story somehow, and must follow the same guidelines for roleplaying as player characters do.)

**Character Profile** - This is a document that describes a player's character in detail. While not a complete necessity, it provides a good way for players to create a more complete picture of their character to refer to. It may include an image, physical description, a short biography, and other personal details. Some also use character profiles as a place to log various events that have happened in their character's lives, in the guise of a diary or journal.

**Game Master** - For our purposes, the game master is most often the creator of a roleplay thread. They set up the story and create a general direction for it to follow. They help guide players along towards a conclusion, solve and prevent problems within the game, and in many cases will also take an active part in the story with their personal characters.

**In Character (IC)** - The state of writing and/or speaking from your character's point of view.

**Out of Character (OOC)** - The state of writing and/or speaking from your own point of view.

**Metagaming** - The act of taking out of character information (like the location of enemy troops learned from a rival roleplayer's forum post), and using it to influence in-character actions. *This is strictly prohibited, and violators will be punished.* Using information that your character cannot possibly know is unrealistic and also works directly against making a compelling story.

**Star Wars Canon** - Canon refers to the events depicted in the films, and in most cases the events that

transpire in all the novels, comics, games, etc. For our purposes, all canon that takes place before the year 12ABY is considered unchangeable. Any roleplay that changes, or attempts to change Star Wars canon prior to this point will automatically be considered Alternate Universe (AU) and therefore outside both Star Wars and Freeworlds continuity.

**Freeworlds Canon** - Refers to the situations and events leading up to our divergence from Star Wars canon in 12ABY, and any events committed to the server story after that. Players that wish their roleplay stories to be committed to Freeworlds canon must keep a careful eye on other stories and events, so as not to contradict any ongoing or previous storylines.

**Closed RP** - This is a roleplay thread that is closed to public joining. To enter a closed RP, one must either be pre-selected, or ask special permission from the thread creator in order to participate. In many cases, the thread creator will have specific goals in mind, so keeping it closed helps prevent the story from going off in many directions.

**Open RP** - A roleplay thread which any player may join. It is often an open-ended story with only a loose framework to work off of, with individual players finding their own way into the storyline.

**Mary Sue / Gary Stu** - These terms refer to characters (Mary for female, Gary for male) that have no apparent flaws and are extraordinary at everything they do. For example, a relatively new Jedi character who exhibits powers greater than Yoda or Luke, despite a lack of training, and they never make mistakes. Or a soldier who never misses a shot, and hardly ever takes a hit / gets injured, etc.

The result of these characteristics is a character who is not entertaining or engaging to play with for other players involved in the thread, as it impedes their character's ability to have an effect on the story. *This will not be tolerated.* As such, any characters deemed to have too many 'Mary Sue'-like qualities will either be asked to tone their character down to normal levels, or will be removed from the thread.

That's not to say characters need to be really bad at things to be believable, but once a character's abilities start breaking the game for other people, the roleplay moderators will be asked to investigate the situation.

**God Modding** - God modding refers to several illegal actions within a forum roleplaying thread. In general, god modding is when a player takes control of another player character without the consent of that character's owner. This can take the form of actions or dialogue and is strictly prohibited unless consent is granted. For example: Taking part in combat and stating that your character kills another player character without prior consent.

God modding may also refer to a player who attempts to reshape the plot of a story to benefit their character.

**Retcon (Retroactive Continuity)** - A retcon may result when a discrepancy is discovered between different sources of lore that wasn't caught before the lore was committed to canon. To compensate for the mistake, an explanation is created that resolves the issue.

For example:

“Ever since Episode IV, the Old Republic was said to have been established before 25,000 BBY; but when in Episode II, Palpatine said that the Republic was only 1,000 years old, the Ruusan Reformation was created to remedy this discrepancy.”

-Wookieepedia

There may be cause to use retcons in Freeworlds as players move forward and craft their own stories and add them to the server canon. Though it will be used sparingly, the option needs to remain for the sake of continuity.

**Wall Of Text** - Refers to a post that contains more than one paragraph's worth of text, but includes no paragraph or line breaks. This results in an unbroken 'wall' of text, which is difficult to read and follow. This is strongly frowned upon, and players who produce walls of text will be asked to change their post(s) accordingly.

# The Lore Staff

Our game world, and the lore that goes along with it, encapsulates a period of time within the Star Wars Universe where the galaxy is still quite fragile, reeling from decades of war and the brutality of Palpatine's Empire. In Freeworlds: Tides of War, we intend to preserve the feeling of the time period, even as we diverge from Star Wars canon.

In a roleplaying community such as this, there is a risk of going off on strange, often baseless tangents within the story. This presents problems when trying to maintain a coherent storyline. The best way to prevent such issues from arising is by providing the proper oversight. In doing so, we aim to keep that cohesiveness, that feeling of a living, breathing galaxy that Star Wars has always provided.

To that end, we've created a number of community positions<sup>1</sup> to help facilitate the needs of our lore and roleplaying. Their purpose is twofold. Not only will these staff members help create and keep the server's story focused and engaging, but they will also assist players in fitting their own personal stories into the fabric of the main Freeworlds Canon.

The following is a breakdown of each type of Lore Staff member, and their responsibilities to the community:

**Server Admin(s)** - With regards to lore and the server's ongoing storyline, admins ultimately have the final say. Should enough players protest certain additions and/or changes to the storylines that a problem is apparent, the admins have the authority to overrule story-related decisions made by the Lore Masters.

Although they will have this veto power, it cannot be used indiscriminately. Admins will also participate in the lore process, pitching story ideas and controlling NPC leaders from time to time. Let it be noted, however, that story ideas and NPC actions made by admins will be subject to the same critical process as any story idea posed by Lore Masters, Moderators and players. Their authority may not in any way be used to ram story ideas through the approval process.

To put it plainly, they may only reject story ideas in extreme circumstances. (i.e. Majority of players not happy with the idea, it fundamentally changes gameplay, changes balance of power too drastically, etc.)

**Lore Master(s)** - The Lore Master performs a number of duties. As overseers of all forum and server roleplay, they assign duties when necessary to Lore Moderators, such as asking them to watch a particular player thread, or come up with an idea for a story-driven event.

Lore Masters are also tasked with approving story ideas, checking facts, retconning pieces of lore when necessary, and resolving/moderating arguments stemming from server or forum roleplay. They perform many of the same duties as lore moderators, but with the ability to move things from one tier of canon to the next.

Their other major job is to create valid story ideas to present for debate/approval by the entire staff. They also share responsibilities with the Admins for any posts necessitating use of NPC leaders.

**Lore Moderators(s)** - The Lore Moderator keeps a watchful eye for good and bad roleplay both on the

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the player community will periodically be asked or selected to fill some of these roles, depending on the needs of the server and individual merit.

<sup>2</sup> All player-created roleplay and lore will be subject to an approval process before being committed to Freeworlds

server and in the forums. As a member of the lore staff, they assist the Lore Masters in coming up with story ideas, and offer constructive criticism during the lore approval process.

They also help moderate player-created roleplay, and act as the friendly face of the lore team. Players and lore moderators will, and should, interact on a regular basis, as the moderators will offer advice to players on how best to get their stories committed to lore, among other roleplaying and writing related advice.

**Historian(s)** - The Freeworlds:Tides of War wiki will offer players a detailed look at our universe. It will feature a continually updated timeline, faction guides, summaries of important events, and more. In order to keep this information up to date, members of the community will be selected to assume the role of Historians.

Their responsibility is to commit any and all *approved*<sup>2</sup> lore, from summaries of server events to the outcomes of lengthy forum threads, to the wiki. Like the Lore Moderators, they will be answerable to the Lore Masters, and may be given assignments such as, writing up summaries of events, creating a new entry regarding a certain character, or editing a page to reflect a change in lore or an updated story.

Given the fact that they will accumulate a great deal of knowledge about Freeworlds lore, they may also offer their opinions during the approval process, and may pitch story ideas.

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<sup>2</sup> All player-created roleplay and lore will be subject to an approval process before being committed to Freeworlds Canon. More on this in Section IV.

# The Canon Tier System

Creating an authentic Star Wars experience is our biggest priority in FW:ToW. From the layout of systems, to the weapons load out of ships, right down to the mod's story - we're sparing no effort to make this truly feel like a galaxy, far, far away.

In order to keep that authenticity, we're taking a slow, methodical approach to our storytelling. To aid us in that process, we've created a tiered system for what we consider Freeworlds Canon.

Much like George Lucas has varying levels of canon that pertain to the movies and Expanded Universe, we've designed our system to prevent confusion and disorganization in within our main storyline. Its ultimate goal: to keep the main server storyline free of extraneous or outlandish plots, and provide an avenue for well-crafted, player-created stories to be added to the story, and be recognized by the entire community.

## The Tiers:

**Freeworlds Canon (Tier I)** - Lore written and/or approved by the Lore Staff. Comprises all material written to set up and explain the various factions, and posts written from the point of view of NPC faction leaders. Will also include lore approved and moved up from a lower tier by the Lore Staff.

**Community Canon (Tier II)** - These are generally stories and events created by players that have the potential to, or specific purpose of adding to/continuing the server storyline. Tier II material generally consists of highly detailed forum roleplaying and/or accounts of player-organized server actions and events.

Lore from this tier stands the best chance of being moved up to Freeworlds Canon, though it must still be approved by the Lore team first. Let it be noted that even stories written with the intent of being added to Tier I canon may not always make the cut.

**Player Canon (Tier III)** - Includes day to day server events, such as skirmishes, trading, patrols, general banter between players. May also include undeveloped or underdeveloped roleplaying threads. These are events that we acknowledge as part of the game, but since they may not necessarily result in a significant plot point, they aren't committed to server canon.

These events, should the players invest time in creating a story out of them, stand some chance of moving up the tiers.

**Alternate Reality (Tier IV)** - These are roleplaying threads or lore that contrast too much with the accepted canon, and as such, is considered outside of the server continuity. However, while higher tiers of canon will contradict Tier IV material, we will absolutely not discourage players in small groups from playing these stories out.

# **The Roleplaying Forums**

The roleplaying aspect of Freeworlds: Tides of War takes place in two distinct mediums. Many stories and other day to day roleplaying will take place in the game world itself, that is – on the server. However, when players aren't flying around in X-Wings and TIE Fighters, hunting down pirates and making a profit for their government or corporation, they can experience an entirely different layer of the Freeworlds: Tides of War experience - the roleplaying forums.

Forum roleplaying, or as some may call it, play-by-post roleplaying, is fairly simple to understand, but to get the most out of it, one requires a good deal of patience, respect for the rules and other players, and a thirst for crafting a good story.

For those of you unfamiliar with forum based roleplaying, here is how it works:

A player or group of players come up with an idea for a story, and create two corresponding threads. One thread is for the story itself, and the other will be labeled '[Story Name] - OOC' and placed in a sub forum for Out of Character discussion. This prevents story threads from being cluttered with out of character messages and the like.

Based on the story idea created by the thread's originators, each player takes turns writing their character(s) part in the story. Usually players will spend their first posts establishing where their character is, where their character is going, and what that character's original goal within the story is. We say 'original goal' because a character's objectives may change over the course of a story.

Each player involved in the story posts in turn, or waits until at least one other player has posted something new. This continues until the story is brought to a conclusion.

The thread's original poster (abbreviated OP) will, in most cases, act as the story coordinator, Game Master, etc. In addition to taking part in the story, they help keep the story moving forward, focusing players and preventing the story from going off on tangents. Some story threads, however, may be more free-form and give players a greater deal of latitude within the confines of the idea. Still, the general purpose will always remain: groups of players writing collaboratively to create fun, engaging stories.

Now that we've established the basic foundations of forum roleplaying, it's important to understand the different *types* of roleplaying forums available to players in Freeworlds: Tides of War:

## **Universe RP - Top Forum**

This forum is split into several sub-forums, each pertaining to a different canon tier. The top forum may often contain announcements to players, as well as other informative stickies and notices. However, the top forum contains no roleplaying threads of its own. Written lore and roleplaying within this forum will be sorted into the appropriate sub-forums.

Two things to note:

- Each sub-forum contains an area specifically for OOC discussion.
- All forums under Universe RP are watched and moderated by members of the Lore Team.

## **Freeworlds Canon - Sub Forum**

The Freeworlds Canon forum corresponds to **Tier I** material. Anything written *and* approved<sup>3</sup> by the Lore team will be placed in this forum. Additionally, player-created roleplaying threads that have been approved by the lore team for inclusion into the server storyline will be moved to this forum. This is where player-created threads move-on-up, so to speak.

## **Community Canon - Sub Forum**

The Community Canon forum corresponds to **Tier II** material. As stated in the section detailing the canon system, Community Canon is:

"These are generally stories and events created by players that have the potential to, or specific purpose of adding to/continuing the server storyline. Tier II material generally consists of highly detailed forum roleplaying and/or accounts of player-organized server actions and events."

This is *the* forum for players who are serious about their roleplaying. However, not everything is going to be committed to main storyline right away, and some may never make it.

*Do not let this discourage you.* Player stories committed to the main canon are ones that fit cleanly into the path laid out for the major factions. However, stories of personal growth, adventure, revenge, and anything else that adds to the detail of our universe fits into Community Canon. Think of Community Canon as our version of the Star Wars Expanded Universe.

## **Player Canon - Sub Forum**

The Player Canon forum corresponds to **Tier III** material. While most of Player Canon consists of day-to-day actions on the server, the forum for Player-Canon may contain short written accounts of impromptu server events and other short-form roleplaying. This is also a good place to conduct open roleplaying threads that have a very loose framework.

Threads in this forum that become more focused and/or gain momentum may be moved up to Community Canon status.

## **Cross Faction Communications - Sub Forum**

The purpose of the Cross Faction Communications forum is just how it sounds. The Lore Team may use this forum to issue communiqué's from the NPC faction leaders, while player-leaders who feel the need to publically snipe at other factions, condemn their actions, pose questions, or engage in political posturing may use this forum to do so.

Technically speaking, these communications fall under Community Canon, as their contents serve mainly to characterize the leaders and their respective factions. However, if a well-crafted line of communications adds something interesting and significant to the main plotline, it stands a chance of being moved up.

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<sup>3</sup> Players, please take note: Stories written and ideas pitched by the Freeworlds: Tides of War Lore Team are subject to the same level of scrutiny that player-created stories are. The only difference is that their primary job is to craft events that help drive the main server storyline, whereas players have more freedom to develop their personal characters. We do not play favorites.

Please be aware - no posts in this forum are considered to happen in-person. There is little chance that two envoys from enemy factions would be meeting face to face, and communications should reflect this. Written messages, conversations via holonet, and other such forms of communication are acceptable.

Anything involving faction leaders in face-to-face situations should take place in the Community Canon forum.

### **Character Profiles<sup>4</sup> - Top Forum**

In order to be a roleplayer, all players need to create an original character. By original, we mean any kind of character you like, so long as that specific character does not already exist in Star Wars. To reiterate: *you may not assume the role of any existing Star Wars character*; you must create your own.

The Character Profiles forum is where players may post biographical information about their character. Profiles may include a picture, basic information like age, eye color, height, weight, and so on, all the way up to a detailed character history. We strongly encourage all players to create a character profile, as it helps both the Lore Staff and other players understand and identify your character both on the server and in forum roleplaying threads.

### **Faction Forums – Top Forum**

All of the main factions are given a private roleplaying forum for their own use. These forums may be used for the purposes of character development, training new members in roleplaying, setting up intra-faction stories/events, etc.

Since the contents of these forums are readable only by faction members, anything written here will only be classified when the faction is ready for it to become public, or if the faction simply wishes the Lore Team to evaluate it. Quality roleplaying from the faction forums will generally end up in Community Canon before being moved up to Tier I.

### **Non-Continuity RP - Top Forum**

This forum contains any Star Wars related roleplaying threads that are absolutely outside our continuity. Those threads fall into two categories:

#### **Alternate Reality - Sub Forum**

Alternate Reality is **Tier IV** in our canon system. Some players may wish to create and explore stories that significantly alter or differ from our main storyline. Although we won't be moving these stories up to higher canon levels, we still want players to have fun with them, and this is the forum to do it in.

Also, in the event that the Lore Team deems it necessary to retcon a particular story and take it out of continuity, those stories will be moved here.

#### **Non-Universe Star Wars RP - Sub Forum**

Any Star Wars roleplaying that does *not* take place under the umbrella of Freeworlds: Tides of War (i.e. Old Republic era roleplaying, NJO era stories, etc.) will be relegated to this forum in order to prevent confusion.

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<sup>4</sup> A detailed example of a character profile can be found in Section IX.

## **Cantina RP - Sub Forum**

This is our 'silly' roleplaying forum. It's a free form, anything-goes type of space. Need to blow off some steam and have your character act like a buffoon? Want to place bets on the upcoming Darth Vader versus Revan fight? This is the place to do it.

## Roleplaying In-Game

Freeworlds: Tides of War is, first and foremost, a computer game. While the depth and detail of written lore adds context and helps to shape our universe, the actions and conversations that take place within the game world itself breathe true life into it.

Roleplaying within the game is a bit more free-form than on the forums, primarily because there isn't as much writing involved. Actions are played out, rather than described. Besides, what's more fun than actually swatting down TIE Fighters like the flies they are?

Now then, how does roleplaying within the game work? Once you've downloaded the mod, installed it, and set up a forum account, it's time to boot up the game and join our server. You'll be prompted to create a character, and this is where the roleplaying begins.

You'll be given some options as far as your character's look and starting allegiances. The options are extensive, and the choice you make will govern your reputation with the numerous NPC factions, so take some time to think about what kind of a character you'd like to play.

You'll also be asked to give your player a name. This can be anything you like – a character name, a fighter pilot's handle, the name of your ship, etc. However, please be advised that the server administration will not tolerate anything vulgar, obscene or anything that is otherwise inappropriate. Also note that existing Star Wars characters, however obscure, are off limits.

When you're satisfied with your character's name, click 'Create', and you'll see that character's name appear in a list. This is a list of the characters you currently have on the server. Choose your character from the list, and load it. Now you're officially in the game.

The next steps are up to you. Explore! Interact with other players! Get involved in the ongoing story! If you feel lost, ask your fellow players: they're an excellent source of information. Alternatively, consult the forums, as many of the questions you have will likely have been answered by other new players.

### Tips for Server-Side Roleplaying:

**Join a faction!** All the factions have ongoing plot lines that drive the server's story. Do you want to be a part of the Empire's war effort? Or perhaps you'd like to take a ride on the wild side by joining the Hutts. We have factions for all types of characters.

**Embrace your character!** Figure out what it is you'd want to do within the Star Wars galaxy and do it! Still not sure? Ask other players for ideas or consult with a member of the Lore Staff.

**Keep up with forum roleplaying!** It's easy to get lost and discouraged when you have no idea what's going on in the universe around you. The best remedy for this is to peruse the forums for new lore and RP threads. Read the faction briefs, so you at least know who everyone is and what they stand for, and lastly: ask questions! Players and staff will be happy to help you get your bearings, so all you have to do is ask!

**Keep OOC chat to private channels!** If you've got something to say that isn't supposed to come out of your character's mouth, do it privately. Spamming the Universe and System chat channels with personal, OOC communications is prohibited. *Repeat offenders will be punished.*

There is truly no 'right' way to engage in roleplaying on the server or in the forums, so just follow our basic guidelines and have fun exploring Freeworlds: Tides of War!

# Roleplaying Guidelines And Rules

Every game on this planet, whether it's played with on board, a field, or with a joystick, has a set of rules. They promote a sense of fairness and preserve the fun for all parties involved. Freeworlds is no different. While many rules are built directly into the game, others are more abstract, requiring diligent observation by players and administrators in order to be upheld.

This section of the primer details those abstract rules and guidelines that govern our written roleplaying.

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## Coup d'état Rules

Firstly, just so everyone understands what a coup d'état is, a definition:

A coup d'état is the sudden, extrajudicial deposition of a government, usually by a small group of the existing state establishment—typically the military—to replace the deposed government with another body; either civil or military.

A coup d'état succeeds if the usurpers establish their dominance when the incumbent government fails to prevent or successfully resist their consolidation of power. If the coup neither fully fails nor achieves overall success, the attempted coup d'etat is likely to lead to a civil war.

-Wikipedia

Before beginning to explain our stance on coup d'états, please understand that in general, the Freeworlds: Tides of War admins and Lore Staff strongly frown on the practice.

For the purposes of Freeworlds: Tides of War, a coup d'état is a possible, but highly rare event, where a small number of members from a given major faction attempt to usurp the current player leadership for various political, ideological and/or military reasons.

Please note that since major factions are technically controlled by NPC leaders, a coup d'état can only be used against player leaders, not the NPC leader. Therefore, any attempts to supplant the player leadership need to address the fact that the NPC leader is not removable. The lore surrounding any attempt would need to reflect this.

For example, the current player leadership would need to be discredited, covertly killed, incapacitated, or otherwise removed without the NPC leader suspecting that members of their own government were to blame.

Any attempted coup d'état will require the support of both the admins and the Lore Staff, which means that the players who initiate the coup will need extensive, detailed roleplaying and sound, logical reasoning behind their actions. This means significant advance planning. Otherwise, the attempt will be blocked.

A coup d'état is a major RP event, which the admins and RP staff do not take lightly, and neither should you. Again, these only occur rarely, but it is only prudent that everyone knows the stakes, and the proper way to go about it.

## The NPC Leadership and You

The term NPC, or non-player characters, is a catch-all term for the characters in our universe which are not directly controlled by a player. NPCs can be found everywhere in the game world, whether they're piloting fighters, hauling cargo or selling commodities on a planet.

NPCs will also play an important role in the developing story of the mod. Namely, all the major factions in the game will be headed up by an NPC leader (i.e. Leia Organa Solo for the New Republic, and Gilad Pellaeon for the Empire). These leaders, and their attitudes and actions, will be controlled by the Lore Staff and the server admins.

This is being done in order to ensure the stability of the major factions, and to keep the overarching conflict of the game moving forward. While the admins and Lore Staff will be in control of the NPC leaders, this *does not* mean they have free license to do with them as they please.

**The NPC leaders are NOT, and will never be, a means for the admins and RP team to unfairly control all the factions and players.** Any actions or statements made by the NPC leaders must win the approval of the admins and the Lore Staff before it can move forward.

Ultimately, they are a means to prevent roleplaying from getting out of hand or becoming overly convoluted. They're there to keep over-ambitious player stories from changing too much of the server's storyline, advancing time too far, preventing really odd and self-serving alliances from happening, and so on.

Think of them as a big, fluffy buffer, whose sole purpose is to prevent the major factions from falling into oblivion, or becoming something they were never intended to be.

## Creating a Roleplaying Thread

Roleplaying threads are the containers that hold and give shape to the stories our players create, and while there is no true limit to where these story threads can go or what paths characters may take, there is a certain level of responsibility that comes along with creating a thread.

Creating a thread is a deceptively simple process. All one must do is think of a story idea, a name for the thread, decide if the RP will be open to everyone, closed to just a small group, or invite only. After that, all that's left is to make the first post. As the creator of the thread, you assume the responsibility of providing direction for the story, and acting, in a certain capacity, as the Game Master.

It's not quite as easy as opening a thread and telling everyone to have at it. Giving other players a way to focus their writing is an easy way to self-regulate a thread. By providing a framework for your story, you prevent other characters from going too far off on their own unrelated tangents. Therefore, when opening a roleplaying thread, we suggest the following<sup>5</sup>:

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<sup>5</sup> Please remember to take all these suggestions with a grain of salt. Be creative! These tips are by no means an exact formula for fantastic storytelling, but it's an excellent place to start.

## The Opening Moves

### **Describe the setting.**

Nothing can derail a roleplaying thread as quickly as not having a sense of place. Otherwise, too much is left open to interpretation, and one may find that events are happening in many different parts of the galaxy, at wildly varying times, with very little direction.

### **Describe what is currently happening there.**

Is the settlement under attack? Is a political figure giving a speech in a bustling marketplace, or is a fish jumping out of a serene lake? Is it a dilapidated space station on the verge of collapse? Telling other players what's going on in your setting helps to focus their attention on the story at hand, rather than allowing them to wander around until they find their own story.

### **In a separate, OOC thread, explain your plans for the story.**

This provides a platform to explain what you hope to accomplish with this particular thread, and is also a platform for the other players involved to ask questions and make suggestions without interrupting the flow of the story.

## Introducing Your Character

These tips apply to introductory posts for any character, but considering that this is *your* thread, you'll likely be the first one introduced. Depending on your preferences, this can be a separate post from the one describing the setting and current situation.

### **Explain why and how your character is there.**

Your character didn't just suddenly appear in this place, did they? Where have they been recently? Are they coming home from a long journey? Have they been shipped out to the front lines again? How are they feeling, what is their demeanor? This gives both you and other players a sense of who your character is, without them necessarily having read through your entire character profile.

### **Explain what your character's current goal is, and get them started on it.**

This could be as simple as defending a position against enemy forces, or as complicated as searching for a dangerous super weapon. No matter what it is, it's this part of the post that gets the story officially moving. Once your character starts moving, his or her allies or opposition will know it's time to get serious.

## Other Responsibilities

Aside from getting the thread rolling, there are a few other duties that the creators of a thread should handle:

### **Be a leader.**

It's your thread, so assume control of it. If other players start taking the story in directions you aren't comfortable with, work with them to find some sort of compromise, or return it to the original direction. Set your own ground rules regarding deaths, injuries, force powers, etc.

### **Communicate with the Lore Staff.**

This is very important, especially if you want your story to have a major impact on the mod's story. The staff and admins ultimately decide what makes it into the game lore, so it's always a good idea to keep them aware of your thread. Working alongside them to write a more compelling story makes the chances of it moving up the canon tiers greater.

### **Keep tabs on problematic players.**

If players begin exhibiting Mary Sue characteristics, engage in god-modding, disrupt the thread or become general nuisances, it is important that they be reined in as soon as possible. If you ask them nicely to tone it down and they ignore you, contact a Lore Moderator or other staff member.

### **Finish the story, one way or another.**

Far too often, players start threads with great intentions but lose steam halfway through. It's very difficult to add an unfinished story to the overall lore, so it's best to find a way to complete the story, even if it's a cheap or unsatisfactory way out.

If, for whatever reason, other players have abandoned the thread, it is permissible to write a post that swiftly brings the thread to a close. Perhaps the enemy suddenly retreated, cosmic rays interfered with a holographic transmission, or the bounty hunter lost his or her prey.

### **Participating In Roleplaying Threads**

Beyond all these structures is the substance, the roleplaying itself. This is where we see characters born, relationships developed, and bonds broken, re-forged and carved into stone. Each of your roleplaying posts will play a small part in a much larger story, and as such, attention to detail and a bit of common sense will go a long way towards making even the smallest plot an entertaining experience for all those involved.

In order to promote a positive roleplaying experience, the Lore Staff asks that all players participating in forum roleplaying adhere to some straightforward guidelines:

#### **Keep posts to a reasonable length.**

We know that many of you have a book inside of you, but please understand that not everyone has the time or patience to read two-thousand words of prose per post. If you're involved in a closed, tightly focused RP, this rule may be relaxed a bit. However, for open threads, we must respect one another and give each character a chance to stand out. We kindly ask that posts don't go too far over five-hundred words or two to three medium to long paragraphs.

#### **Metagaming is strictly prohibited.**

Since we, as the players, stand apart from our fantasy universe, we are privileged with information that our characters are not. If we are to adhere to a certain degree of realism in our roleplaying, our characters must not be privy to the same information that we are. Should your character begin experiencing sudden, startlingly accurate premonitions or an extreme degree of prescience, you will have to answer for it. Anticipating actions is one thing, cheating is another entirely.

### **Any and all forms of god-modding will be punished.**

Unless you have been given express, *public* and written consent to control another player's character, doing so will result in severe consequences. We don't care if all you did is move them one step to the left – you may not control anyone but your own character(s).

Instances of god-modding also include, but are not limited to:

- Overpowering your character.
- Claiming to land hits, ranged or melee, on other player characters without their consent.
- Killing other player characters without their consent.

### **Excessively vulgar, obscene, sexual language or situations will not be tolerated.**

We aim to be a community that is safe and fun for all ages. Therefore, we ask that in roleplaying threads, you use the same good judgement that we expect to see throughout the forums and on the game server. If need be, you may use fictional replacements for swears, a la 'frak', 'sithspit', etc.

### **Check your spelling and grammar before submitting each post.**

In these days of web browsers with built-in spellchecking, there is very little excuse to have misspelled words in your writing. Granted, some of the terms we'll be using will be underlined in red because they're fictional, but other than that, it is your responsibility to make sure your spelling is correct. Be an example for other players.

Please also do your best to use proper grammar. This is a slightly more murky subject, but at the very least please try and make sure your posts can be followed in a logical fashion. Aside from using language properly, this means making sure dialogue is in quotations (" ") and using commas and apostrophes when necessary. If you're unsure about your posts, feel free to consult a member of the Lore Staff, and they will be glad to look over your work and offer you advice.

### **Walls of text are not acceptable.**

This goes hand in hand with the spelling and grammar rules – there is simply no excuse for it. Paragraphs are your friend. Reading a continuous wall of text is difficult for the eyes and makes it hard to follow the writing. If we see this happening, you will be asked to edit your post(s). Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action and your posts will be edited for you.

In addition to the rules listed above, we have a list of suggestions to better shape your character and the roleplay thread you are participating in:

### **Create a character profile.**

Though it isn't a complete necessity, we strongly recommend that all players create a profile for their characters. Firstly, it provides an easy way for the other players to get to know who your character is and what they stand for. While other players may not use this information to influence their own character's knowledge (that would be considered metagaming), it can help them plan out a roleplay thread or post, among other things.

Secondly, creating a character profile allows you to better understand your own character. It's a place where you can describe their history, their likes and dislikes, their physical appearance, their skills, and so on.

Not sure what a character profile is, or what it looks like? Here's an example:

**Name:** Jack Blasto

**Species:** Human

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** 35

**Homeworld:** Corulag

**Occupation:** Very pushy holoprojector salesman and occasional smuggler.

**Physical Appearance:** Jack Blasto is a man of average height, and is exceptionally muscular. His short, neatly trimmed brown hair sits atop his unnaturally square head. His face is home to a slightly crooked, but somehow charming smile, although people often miss it because they're too busy studying the right angles of his jawline.

**Personal History:** Jack Blasto grew up on Corulag with Mama and Papa Blasto (their real names), alongside his sister and two brothers. Jack's father, Papa, taught mathematics at a local university, and as such, found the shape of his son's head quite fascinating.

"Jack," Papa would say, "You're a wonder of geometry! To be so perfectly square, it's like you were chiseled for a purpose. Use it, my son. Right angles are so hard to come by in nature..."

Jack took this advice to heart. As soon as he finished his primary schooling, at the height of the Galactic Civil War, he found work selling holoprojectors. Using his captivating, almost frightening features to hold people's attention, he became known as the most geometrically sound electronics salesman on Corulag, a claim no one else could make.

But Jack had bigger dreams. Using the considerable money he made on commission, he bought a brand new YT-2000 transport named the "Never Obtuse" and began selling merchandise off-world.

Not long after, tales began to surface about a square-headed weapons smuggler running around Hutt Space, making loud-mouthed, lewd sales-pitches and still somehow turning a profit.

Character profiles can be as short or as long as you like, with all sorts of different sections detailing every aspect of your character. If you like, you may also include a picture or illustration.

### **Introduce your Player Character properly.**

As mentioned in the 'Creating a Roleplaying Thread' section, it is important to establish your character in a thread before jumping into the action, otherwise one runs the risk of confusing other players and causing issues within the story. Please refer to the aforementioned section for further information.

### **Make your presence known in the corresponding Out of Character thread.**

When joining a thread for the first time, it is generally a good idea to participate in the OOC conversation surrounding it. This is the place where any issues that arise can be discussed or questions can be asked. If nothing else, say hello to the other players involved in the thread to help foster a friendly atmosphere.

**Help to self-regulate the thread by helping newer players find their way.**

Not everyone has the same level of skill, creativity or maturity, so it's important that players help one another out before true problems arise. If you see someone struggling or making obvious mistakes, shoot them a PM or post in the OOC thread and offer your assistance. Collaboration requires cooperation and respect – *don't forget that*.

**Keep yourself apprised of other ongoing stories.**

As stated earlier, all roleplay posts are part of a bigger story, and while the Canon Tier system may restrict what's 'official,' all the stories our players write (unless they're out-of-universe) add something new to our story. Events in other threads may have repercussions in other stories down the line, so it will undoubtedly pay off to keep oneself in the loop.

## **Joining a Faction and Multi-Factioning Rules**

Once you have familiarized yourself with the mod and playing within our community, you'll likely want to join one of the many player-factions. Joining a faction means more than just pledging your allegiance, however. If you want to be an official part of the Empire's war effort, a Hutt thug, a defender of Corellia, or a brave pilot of the New Republic, you will need to actually join the player faction via the forums.

### **To join a faction:**

Simply contact the player leadership of the faction you wish to join. Once they add you to the faction's forum usergroup, you are then officially a member of the faction!

There are a couple of options available to you for getting an in-game character set up as a member of a given faction.

- 1.** You may promote one of your existing characters to full membership status in the faction. Promoting one of your characters, new or old, to full faction membership is easy. Simply access the web interface and select the appropriate options.
- 2.** You may also create a *new* character solely for the faction. This is achieved by choosing one of the faction's associated NPC groups upon character creation and then promoting the character to full membership in the faction.

### **Multi-Factioning Rules:**

Please realize that you may only be a member of **one player faction at a time**. You may have as many characters with whatever faction affiliation you like, but you can only have characters of full faction membership within one player faction.

For instance, you may not be both a full member of the New Republic and the Empire at the same time. You may, however, have characters that are full members of the Empire as well as some characters that are loosely affiliated with the New Republic.

These rules are in place to prevent instances of meta-gaming, and to maintain a general fairness of play between all the factions.

## **Roleplaying Resources**

Good storytelling and roleplaying involves careful attention to detail, a vivid imagination, proper usage of grammar, spelling and punctuation and in our case, a solid understanding of Star Wars and its many facets. Here we offer links to various resources that should prove useful in your roleplaying endeavors.

[Wookieepedia](#) - *The* place to go for all Star Wars related subjects. Relentlessly updated, extremely accurate and filled with every obscure tidbit about Star Wars you could ever want. If you're wondering what a ship looks like, how a weapon operates, a particular location on a planet, or anything else, this is the place to go.

[Star Wars Artist's Guild](#) - A website dedicated to Star Wars artwork. Many of the images are original characters drawn up for people to use in traditional Star Wars RPG. Many people like to add images to go along with their character profiles, so this is an excellent place to search.

[Deviant Art](#) - There is a staggering amount of Star Wars fan art to be found on Deviant Art. Like the Star Wars Artist's Guild, this is another great place to search for character artwork.

[The Free Dictionary](#) - Not sure what word to use, or maybe you want to vary up your vocabulary and need to find some synonyms? Dictionaries aren't just books anymore! This isn't the only free dictionary available, of course, and a Google search will find you a definition quickly as well. The Free Dictionary is quite comprehensive, however. So if you're really looking to understand a term and its uses, this is an excellent place to go.

### Wikipedia Entries Related To Grammar, Point of View, And Writing

[Narrative Mode](#) - This article details the various types of perspectives/points-of-view that are used in literature. Generally speaking, roleplaying threads should and will use third person structure, but individual or private roleplaying threads may use whatever point of view they like.

[Portal for subjects related to narrative.](#) - This page has links to articles that detail various aspects of narrative structure and other literary terms. The more familiar our players are with story writing, the better results we'll have.

# **The Freeworlds: Tides of War Wiki**

The [FW:ToW Wiki](#) is a repository of information related to the mod and its story, maintained primarily by the Lore Team and its Historians.

Its main purpose is to provide a place where the FW:ToW community can effectively chronicle our story, to better serve the community, and help newcomers adapt more quickly.

The wiki will include many items including, but not limited to:

- Faction histories
- Synopses of major battles and events
- Major character profiles
- Maps
- Details on ships, weapons and equipment
- Combat tactics

It's a huge undertaking to create and maintain a wiki, so if you'd like to offer your assistance, please get in touch with the Lore Staff!

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Writing and editing this guide has been a great mix of hard work and fun, and it is my sincerest hope that everyone finds something useful within its pages.

**-Dark Force**