

1. Time Perception and Galactic History

- **Galactic Standard Notation (GSN):** All major events, laws, and treaties are recorded in GSN. Given the millennia of human expansion, most people think in historical epochs rather than specific years. Characters might refer to "The Exodus Era" or "The Golden Age" as shorthand for entire millennia.
- **Decay of Earthly Connections:** Earth's distant past and myth-like status affect historical awareness, and people's understanding of pre-spaceflight Earth history is fragmented, with some details lost or altered.

2. Universal Language and Communication

- **Common Tongue:** The UEA has compiled a common language, though regional dialects persist, especially in frontier worlds. Communication tech allows instantaneous translation for well documented languages, but dialects and linguistic nuances still cause misunderstandings.
- **Communication Limits:** Though FTL communication is available, bandwidth restrictions and reliance on "data relays" mean that information lags in fringe areas, creating an ongoing information divide between core and frontier worlds.

3. Technology Level and Limitations

- **Advanced but Practical:** Technology in this universe is advanced, with FTL travel and planetary terraforming, but it still faces limitations. FTL travel may be slow between distant points, reinforcing isolation on the frontier.
- **Resource Dependency:** Despite advancements, humanity is still resource-dependent. The UEA enforces resource-sharing treaties, especially around essential materials like water, rare metals, and antimatter.

4. Cultural Fragmentation and Evolution

- **Localized Cultures:** Colonies have developed independently for thousands of years, leading to a galaxy rich in distinct cultural identities. Core worlds are more unified, sharing similar customs, while frontier cultures are diverse, with strong local identities.
- **Ancestor Myths and Collective Memory:** Most planets have unique creation myths and ancestral legends, some tracing back to Earth's past in distorted ways, adding layers to how people see themselves within the galaxy.

5. The Role of the UEA

- **Balance of Power:** The UEA is the central authority, maintaining a delicate balance between maintaining order and respecting local autonomy. It operates by enforcing the

Universal Charter, a document regarded with reverence in core worlds and ambivalence in the frontier.

- **Selective Enforcement:** The UEA can only maintain order on a practical level, not an ideal one. Its influence wanes the further one gets from the core, with frontier worlds enforcing their own version of law and order where the UEA's reach is weak.

6. Earth as a Cultural Artifact

- **Sanctuary Status:** Earth's protected status is non-negotiable and enforced by the UEA. It exists as a symbol rather than a practical destination, with strict access regulations, making it an almost mythical relic.
- **Mythology of the Homeworld:** Earth's mythological standing varies from world to world. For some, it's a sacred symbol of humanity's origins, while others dismiss it as a distant legend with little relevance to daily life.

7. Interstellar Economy and Exchange

- **Trade-Driven Expansion:** Interstellar trade shapes many worlds, and the economy is centered on exchanging resources, technology, and luxuries. Frontier worlds often rely on this trade for essentials, creating a dependency on the core worlds.
- **Currency Standardization:** The UEA's standardized currency facilitates trade, though black markets and barter systems flourish in regions where the UEA's authority is weak.

8. Moral and Ethical Ambiguity

- **Gray Morality:** Morality in this universe is complex and ambiguous. The UEA's actions, while generally aimed at stability, sometimes conflict with the needs of local populations. Characters and factions often face dilemmas where "right" and "wrong" are not clear-cut.
- **Cultural Relativism:** Given the diversity of worlds, there's no single moral standard. What one planet considers a crime, another might see as tradition, leading to conflicts over the UEA's authority to enforce a universal code of conduct