Circular Gallifreyan

[Mechanic weight: This is a very minor mechanic. We don't expect any PCs to spend more than a few minutes at a time on this mechanic unless they're particularly invested, and we don't expect any PCs to have to use this mechanic under time pressure. If this mechanic becomes a burden on you, either the GMs have made a mistake or your opposition has done something clever. You may want to tell a GM about it.]

This sheet is a guide for writing in Circular Gallifreyan, both in conjunction with mechanics, and for schtick purposes. Note that this is purely an alphabet, not a language: to keep things simple for game, we'll use English transcribed into Gallifreyan writing.

This sheet is adapted from the fabulous guide available at http://bit.ly/2hUu6Tn . It was written and copyrighted by Loren Sherman, inspired by Catherine Bettenbender. We appreciate the authors work, and we thank them for letting us rip it bleeding for our game.

Note that there might be discrepancies between Loren's Guide and this sheet. For the purposes of game and with many apologies to Loren's superior and beautiful system, follow this sheet in the case of a discrepancy.

Each word consists of a circle with letters going around it, starting at the bottom and going counterclockwise.

1 The Alphabet

These are the consonants. There is no C: write S, CH, or K instead depending on the sound. There are symbols for TH, SH, NG, and QU, but there is no lone Q. Other than these few consonant exceptions, Gallifreyan follows letters and not sounds. Each letter consists of an arc or circle, as specified by its row in this chart, and might have dots inside it, or lines extending from it, as specified by the column:

These are the vowels. If preceded by a consonant, they are placed on that consonant, otherwise they can be on their own.
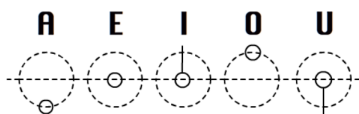
Note that exact positioning is left to the artist — with the exception of I and U pointing "in" or "out", line direction is "whatever you think looks good", and the position of the circle for A and O can be rotated if you think it looks better, what matters is that they are on the "inside" or "outside" of the letter.

2   Words

A word consists of a circle, with letters around it. To read a word in Gallifreyan, start at the bottom, then read counterclockwise. For example, here's how to construct the word "Bow".

- Here are the individual letters as they appear in the alphabet grid.

- Place the B at the bottom of the word, since it's the first letter. Because the word is short, the B can be rather large. The first letter of the word doesn't have to be exactly at the bottom, but it does have to be the first letter when reading counterclockwise from the bottom-most point on the circle.
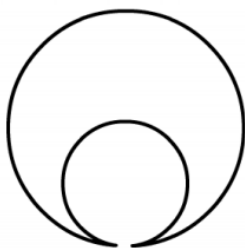
- Because the O is a vowel and it comes after a consonant (in this case, B), it is placed "on top of" the B. The dotted circles in the vowel list show how each vowel attaches. In the case of O, it would look like this:
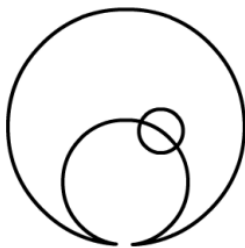
- If the O were not preceded by a consonant, it would look more like the following picture. This is also what it would look like if it were at the beginning of the word (but it would be the bottom-most letter on the circle). You could also leave it detached from the preceding consonant for cosmetic appeal.
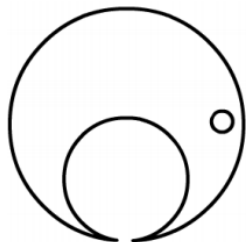
- Continue along the circle and write the last letter, the W. The W has lines coming out of it. It's a good habit to indicate however many lines are needed with short marks on the letter, then go back and extend them fully once the full sentence is created. That way, you can connect letters (even between words) that have lines on them.

Now you can form words. Can you tell what these words are?[1]

Double letters, such as the "oo" in "cool," can also be denoted by another circle. So an alternate version of "cool" as written above would be:
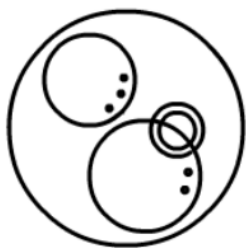

3   Sentences

Words are fine, but sentences look way more impressive. Sentences, like words, are read counterclockwise from the bottom-most point. The divots of the letters T, SH, R, S, V, and W can be used to make words "interlock", which, like many aspects of Gallifreyan, is purely an aesthetic decision on the part of the writer. Here are the words from above, "Bow Ties Are Cool", arranged in a sentence.
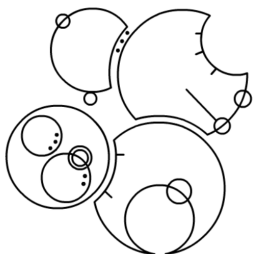
The next step is to add two circles around the entire sentence. The outer circle is simply a circle containing the sentence. The inner circle isn't a perfect circle; it has divots. These, again, are purely aesthetic. Punctuation is placed on the inner circle as well (but don't worry about that: punctuation won't show up in game mechanics). After that, it's time to extend the lines from the short lines you drew earlier. Other than the difference between I and U, it doesn't matter which direction they point or how far they go. A line can connect two letters; just make sure that each letter still has the correct number of lines extending from it. For example, here's the previous sentence, encircled, with lines extended, and with a period:

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[1] Answer: "ties", " are", and " cool".
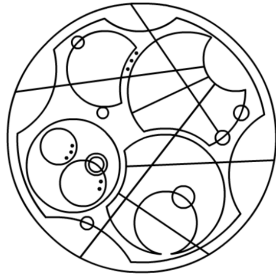
Congratulations—this is all the Circular Gallifreyan you need to know for game. For more fun and more characters (punctuation and numbers, for example), check out the "Guide to the Gallifreyan Alphabet", linked above.