

THE RING OF DARKNESS

Welcome to THE RING OF DARKNESS. You are about to become an adventurer in a dangerous and exciting world filled with challenges that only your personal wit and ingenuity may overcome.

When the game begins you stand on an open plain, an insignificant traveller, weak, inexperienced and alone in an unfamiliar land. A sense of brooding menace hangs heavily over this cursed realm. Brigands and bandits seem free to attack innocent wayfarers, and foul, evil creatures have infested the darkest dungeons. You know only that you are here to seek your fortune, and that your immediate problem is one of survival.

We wish you many hours of enjoyable adventuring, and may luck travel your path:

CREATING A CHARACTER

This is a role playing adventure, so your first task is to set up a character for the game. You will be able to choose a name and select from several types and skills. Different characters have different attributes, so your choice will greatly effect proceedings. For instance, a warrior is strong, a thief may steal more effectively, and an elf is good at casting spells.

STARTING THE GAME

If you have been using your computer switch it off then on again. Use the command RUN" ([CTRL] small [ENTER]) to load the game. Loading is in two main stages, first of which is the unique character generation program that allows you to set up a new character or reload one that you have previously saved. Clear instructions are given on the screen. Once your character is ready the adventure control program is loaded from the game cassette.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMPUTER

The computer provides your view of the world in words and moving graphics. The program will ask:

WHAT NOW?

whenever it is waiting for you to do something. Most commands can be entered as single words, such as ENTER, BOARD and STATUS, but some will require you to specify a noun, for instance:

READY DAGGER

If the program does not understand your command it will respond with an appropriate message. A complete list of the verbs recognised by the program is given at the end of these instructions.

Whilst the program will normally understand abbreviated words it is recommended that you type in at least the first three letters of every word to be sure of the desired response. For instance, does the command ST mean STEAL or STATUS? The program will make a choice, but it may not be what you had in mind.

THE SCREEN DISPLAY

You will encounter several different screen displays, depending on the stage of the game you are playing. All of these are comprised of two independent WINDOWS. The upper part of the screen is a "graphics window" in which you see displays of your surroundings in pictures and scrolling graphics. The bottom of the screen is the "text window" in which all messages, descriptions and input appear.

Sometimes your actions may cause more text to be printed than can fit into the text window, so to give you time to read it there is a measured pause after each sentence. You can adjust the length of this pause with the command LAG. Enter a number between 0 and 10, the larger the number the longer the "lag time".

MOVEMENT – THE ARROW KEYS

On the scrolling map of the enchanted land, and in the towns, the arrow keys move your character north, south, west and east. When you are exploring a three dimensional dungeon the arrow keys move you forwards, and turn you around, left and right.

Each movement made on the scrolling map represents one days travelling, and uses a food unit. Be sure that you have plenty of food with you, because the map of the enchanted land contains almost 10000 travel days.

PROGRESSIVE PLAY

To get on in the world it is important to build up your EXPERIENCE. With each successful endeavour you will gain more EXPERIENCE POINTS, and the more you have the higher your LEVEL will rise. As your LEVEL progresses, technology and the variety of goods available in towns will increase.

To stay alive it is important to keep your HIT POINTS (a measure of your mortality) and FOOD UNITS as high as possible. If either fall to zero you will die, and lose many of your possessions. Keep an eye on your STATUS.

OTHER COMMANDS

@: This very useful command automatically repeats the last command entered.

ATTACK: This command allows you to engage in battle, using your currently READY weapon. In a dungeon you can only ATTACK creatures that are directly in front of you. In a town you may be surrounded by a number of enemies, so you must specify an attack direction (north, south, west or east). For example: ATTACK NORTH

READY: Before an item in your possession can be used it must be made READY. For instance, the instruction READY SWORD will make that weapon ready for your future attack commands. At any time you can have READY one weapon, one spell, and one suit of armour.

STATUS: This command gives a complete listing of your current status, including amounts of EXPERIENCE, HIT POINTS and FOOD UNITS.

INVENTORY: Use this command to list all the items that you currently own.

CAST: Allows you to use your currently READY spell.

BOARD: To board an item of transport on the map. First position your character over the item.

EXIT: To stop using an item of transport.

ENTER: This command allows you to ENTER a town, dungeon or tower from the map. First position yourself over it.

TRANSACT: Enables you to trade in towns.

SAVE: You are very unlikely to complete THE RING OF DARKNESS in a single sitting. SAVE allows you to record the state of play onto your own blank tape.

HOLD: Suspends the game until you press any key.

TIME PASSES. . .

THE RING OF DARKNESS is played in REAL TIME, which means the computer will not wait forever for you to give it a command. If after twenty seconds you have done nothing you will see the message:

TIME PASSES. . .

and the computer will have its turn.

THE COMMANDS

Movement Commands:

Arrows move your character in all locations.

Action Commands:

ATTACK A BOARD CAST C CLIMB ENTER E EXIT GET OPEN
READY SEARCH STEAL TRANSACT T UNLOCK

Special Commands:

@ HOLD H INVENTORY I LAG SAVE STATUS S

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