

The Lost Kingdom of ZKOL

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The Last Kingdom of ZKOL

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SOFTWARE FROM SCOTLAND.

THE STORY SO FAR

Many years ago, the dwarves of the mountain, who had lived in peace for centuries, were besieged by the men of Caras, from far in the south. The dwarves were all but beaten, driven back to their last refuge in the Domed City, when the great wizard Taradon, summoning his final reserves of strength, led the dwarves in a last, tragic assault.

The men of Caras were defeated, but at heavy cost to the dwarves. Few survived that day, and those who did remain there still, mourning their dead.

Of the wizard, little is known, although it is said that he remains in the Domed City, guarding the last precious secret of the old civilisation.

Although the history of these days has now lapsed into legend, you have heard tell of adventurers seeking the Domed City and the great treasures said to be hidden in the dwarves' mountain dwelling. Some have returned empty-handed, with tales only of failure. Most have never been heard of again.

Guided by your friend Eldomir, you have travelled to where he believes you will find the ancient dwelling place of the dwarves.

As you approach the river, he bids you farewell, leaving instructions for you to bring any treasure you may find to the house in the forest.

HOW TO LOAD THE GAME

Ensure that the QL, the TV and the power supply are correctly connected to each other, and to the mains.

Press the reset button on the right-hand side of the QL. Insert the microdrive cartridge into the left-hand drive (drive one). Once the memory test pattern has cleared, press the F2 key. The program will load, and start automatically. This will take about 15 seconds. Initially a title screen will be displayed. Hit any key to continue.

TO PLAY THE GAME

Seasoned adventurers can read on. Those less experienced should first of all read the introductory booklet, 'A Blueprint for Adventurers', supplied with this game.

There are over two hundred locations in ZKUL and many puzzles and problems to solve. By typing the appropriate instructions, followed by ENTER, you can explore the game. The computer understands many hundreds of words, and at least as many phrases. Commonsense and experimentation will help you to find the words and phrases you can use.

In your travels you are likely to come across travellers. Some are friendly, others are antagonistic. Each character in ZKUL, including yourself, has a health status. Your health deteriorates if you are struck in battle by other characters, or if you consume 'unhealthy' provisions. Your health will increase (to a maximum level) with time, or by other means left for you to discover

The same is true for other characters. Their health will deteriorate each time they are struck, but will improve with time.

Before becoming involved in a battle, it is advisable to check your health. As an adventurer, you will have to worry about this and ensure that you have sufficient food and water available. You can do this using the HEALTH command.

You will be warned whenever you are getting hungry or thirsty. Take care — it is possible to die of hunger or thirst.

Many events happen in real-time. Dwarves, swordsmen and other adventurers will appear and disappear seemingly at random. Sometimes you will have to type your next command quickly in order to gain an advantage from a real-time event. It is possible to type your next command, even if the machine is giving you a message. When the message has finished, the computer will obey your command. This may save you precious seconds.

As with all good adventures there is a strict set of rules by which you can discover those words and phrases the computer understands. This means that you can experiment with vocabulary before starting on your adventure.

If you type a word that the computer does not recognise it will respond with "I don't know that word".

If you type a phrase and all the words are unrecognised the computer will respond with "I don't understand".

If you use a verb, but omit the object you want to apply it to, the computer responds with a specific message. For example, HIT SORWD, (a mistype) will generate "I don't know what you want to hit".

If you type in a noun, for example, BOTTLE, but omit a verb the computer responds with the message "I don't know what you want to do with the bottle".

To get you started, the following words and phrases may be of use:

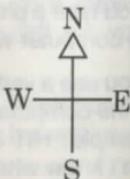
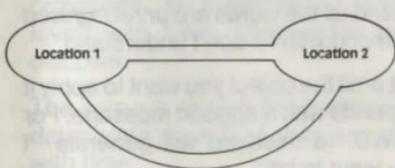
inventory	the computer tells you all the objects you are currently carrying (or wearing)
health	report on your current health
score	report your current score and status
look	describe the current location
what is X	ask the machine for help about X
examine X	look carefully at object X.
cross, push, eat	some useful verbs
gate, lamp, food	some useful nouns.

In addition to the above you can use all the compass points such as north, south, west etc.

Most commands have a brief or short form. For example you can type 'n' for north, 'i' for inventory, 'd' for down. Experiment to discover the vast vocabulary of ZKUL.

TRAVEL AND DESCRIPTIONS

Many of the passageways in ZKUL are curved —



so although you travel south from location 1 to arrive at location 2, you can also travel south from location 2 to reach location 1. Such passageways are not errors, they are there to make your task harder.

When you visit a location for the first time you will be given a full description of that location. If you ever revisit the same location, only a brief description will be given. If you cannot remember the full description of a location use the LOOK command.

MAZES

ZKUL has a number of mazes which you have to negotiate. You will need considerable ingenuity to find your way through them. The 'Blueprint' contains some further clues for beginners. A maze will never change during a game, but may change from game to game.

HINTS

Unlike conventional adventures, which provide a HELP command. ZKUL has a sophisticated built-in hint facility. If you are in a location and appear to be in trouble, the computer will offer you a hint. A hint is normally offered in return for points from your score. If you accept a hint, your score will not be affected immediately, but when you finally stop a game, the grade you are given will be reduced to reflect the hints you have accepted.

SAVE AND RESTORE

The SAVE command records your current game on to a microdrive. The RESTORE command enables you to continue a game from the place you left off.

The SAVE command has a novel 'notepad' feature. This enables you to leave some notes (about one screen of text) with the game. When you RESTORE a game the note is given back to you. You can use the notepad to keep memory-jogs such as the places you want to examine next, or how short of food you are.

Before issuing the SAVE command, place a microdrive cartridge, with at least 14 free blocks, in the left-hand drive. Type SAVE and ENTER. You will be prompted for your note which you terminate with an exclamation mark (!). The game and the note will be saved — this will take around 30 seconds. Once the SAVE is underway, the system will respond with its usual prompt. The microdrive will continue to run for another 10 seconds or so. Until the drive stops running you must not switch off your computer, or you may lose your SAVE file.

To return to a previously saved game, first load the adventure as normal. Place the cartridge with the saved game in drive one and type RESTORE and ENTER. The computer will print out any message you have left and respond with the usual prompt. You can continue your adventure from where you left off.

Occasionally the SAVE or RESTORE operation may fail. This can happen, for example, if there is insufficient free space on the cartridge, or if the cartridge is write-protected.

If an error does occur the bland message ERROR will be printed. Correct the source of the error, and repeat the operation.

SCORING

You score points by:

- Collecting objects — there are over thirty you can collect
- Visiting difficult locations
- Finishing

You lose points by:

- Getting killed
- Using bad language.

Whenever you finish an adventure (using STOP) you will be allocated a grade which ranges from below average (less than 50 points) up to Adventure Grandmaster (for 600 points). The SCORE command tell you how many points you have scored and gives additional information about the numbers of LOADS and SAVES you have made together with your current number of moves.

Adventure Grandmasters are rare in ZKUL. If you have achieved this grade we would like to hear from you! Write and tell us the exact message you get on completion.

LIVES

You have at most three lives in any game. To restart after all three lives have been lost you must either reload the game from scratch, or RESTORE a version from a saved tape.

It is not possible to score maximum points if you have been killed, but it is still worth proceeding to gain experience.

ZKUL is a difficult adventure. You should expect it to take many months to solve. If you get seriously stuck you can always write to Allan Black or Jon Malone at:

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explaining as carefully as possible what your problem is, and enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. They will do their best to assist you.

