



B·L·U·E·P·R·I·N·T

for

Adventurers

WARNING!

**THIS BOOKLET CONTAINS CLUES TO
BOTH ZKUL AND WEST.**

**EXPERIENCED ADVENTURERS SHOULD
READ NO FURTHER.**

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In the past, high-quality adventures were only available on big main-frame computers. Now Talent Computer Systems is able to produce similar sophisticated and complex adventures for your micro. We've made this possible with the help of our Adventure Compiler which has taken many years to develop. It carries out all the 'book-keeping' and associated checking needed to produce large games. In addition, the compiler applies well-researched data compression techniques. Without the compiler, your computer would need four or five times the memory capacity to run the same adventure.

All our text adventures require your full concentration and imagination. To be successful, you will need to think logically about every problem. And in modern adventures, like WEST, you will need to think fast!

TALENT's adventures are difficult — so difficult, in fact, that many reviewers are unable to succeed without our help. Can you do any better?

Finally, we warn you that this booklet contains clues to TALENT adventures. If you are keen to solve them by yourself, THEN READ NO FURTHER.

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SOFTWARE FROM SCOTLAND.

The most challenging and exciting computer game available today is the text adventure. A world is created which you must explore, the computer acting as your eyes and ears. You must face up to all manner of strange and dangerous situations, which will tax your ingenuity and intelligence to the very limit! A good adventure should take a long time to solve — don't give up after one or two attempts.

This booklet gives you some general hints for adventure-playing, with particular reference to ZKUL (pronounced 'skull') and WEST.

THE MAP

As a true adventurer, you should never create a written map of the world you are exploring. You must memorise this world and make only cryptic notes. Beginners may wish to help their memory by keeping some form of drawn map. Be warned — ZKUL is mapped out on nearly thirty pages of A3 paper. If you must create a map, don't use the back of a postcard.

THE OBJECTIVE

In all adventures you have to complete a task or tasks. One objective of ZKUL is to collect some 20/30 objects of treasure plus a very important piece of information and transport these to a safe place (the hut). In WEST the theme is similar, but the setting is different. You have to locate various items of loot which have been deposited by thieves in a town, and escape with the loot and your life.

Typically, this is all the information a seasoned adventurer requires.

How do you start?

WORDS AND PHRASES

The most important part of any adventure is establishing a rapport with the system, and discovering the words and phrases which are of use to you. In adventures like ZKUL and WEST, you are assisted by standard replies, which give you clues about the words and phrases you are typing.

The first level of attack is to think up a list of nouns and verbs which might be of use. Write some down now, starting with nouns. Type each one in, on a line by itself, and examine the result. Words like 'scissors', 'cat', 'car' and 'elephant' will produce the message "I don't know that word". In such cases there is absolutely no use persevering. The computer does not understand the words and never will.

Now choose some verbs, typing one verb on each line. A message in the form of "I don't know that word" is a clear sign of rejection. If you are lucky you will get a more specific message. Try 'hit'. The machine will most probably respond with "I don't know what you want to hit". The verb has been recognised. Clearly you must also supply a noun. Choose one you have found to be valid and make up a phrase like "hit swordsman".

Well done — that's your first phrase. To a true adventurer much of the skill and excitement is in discovering how to communicate with the system. In case you get badly stuck we have listed on the next page, in code, some of the verbs and nouns recognised in ZKUL and WEST. Appendix 1 tells you how to convert them.

ZKUL

IUSQMA	RYTO	OWYEM
IEUYSE	OVLMQZ	VMIQAV
OLQFME	OCIZM	LPFMPAYEG
WQLUR	UMPZ	PYEAV
ZLJ	VYEP	OYSAV
MDLA	EYCM	MIOA
AVSUC	LP	OTLU
CILPALPJ	PLRRQM	YSA

WEST

PYEAV	QYIZ
OYSAV	EMQYIZ
WQLUR	JYQZ
LPFMPAYEG	TVLOBG
ZEYC	CICME
UYSPA	PLAEY
ZLOUYSPA	FISQA

Arm yourself with a collection of words and phrases. Don't get deeply involved in ZKUL until you have found at least thirty of these. With WEST you will need at least twenty. You are now able to tackle the next set of problems.

MOTION

The most usual methods of moving involve the use of obvious verbs — go south, climb rope etc. It is also typical for adventures to provide means of teleportation or to make random moves. Such facilities can be found within ZKUL. Certain 'special' words cause you to be transported immediately to objects of the same name. It is up to you to find what these special words are, but watch out for what other characters do, and for messages on walls!

ENTERING THE ADVENTURE

Classic adventures (such as ZKUL) always start with the adventurer in an area outwith the game. Many amateur adventurers give up before ever embarking on the real task, since they never enter the real adventure land. How do you know if you are 'outside' the adventure world? Normally by the total lack of activity. You can wander around aimlessly, and nothing ever happens!

From your starting point you must explore everything, remembering that you are searching for a way into the action. Anything which could conceal an entrance should be examined. During this stage of the adventure you should think 'real world' — if you see a tree, try to climb it (you may see further from a height), if you see a river, you may want to go for a swim, and so on.

Eventually you should find one of the entrances to the adventure. Now the fun can really start!

OBJECTS

There are at least three classes of object in a good adventure: treasure, tools and trash. There are a limited number of objects which you can carry at once. So, from time to time, you should create hoards of objects to which you can return. Early in the game tools are far more likely to be of use than treasure, and both of these are better than trash.

How can you determine the class of an object? One way which sometimes works is to take your score before and after picking up an object. If your score has increased you probably have a treasure. If not, you will have a tool or trash. The problem is made more difficult in ZKUL. Objects are not worth anything until they have been taken to the hut.

Tools will enable you to survive. A rope for example can be climbed down (or up). Food is a kind of tool, which keeps you alive. Why have trash objects? Simply to limit the number of items you carry at one time. A poor adventurer, who tries to carry everything he finds, will likely end up with a lot of trash — which is no use in solving problems. A skilled adventurer will discard these, and so can carry more practical objects.

Adventuring styles vary on what to do with the objects you collect. Some adventurers make neat piles in easy-to-get-at locations and remember where they have left everything. Others wander through the world moving piles of objects from one location to another — rather like the base camps of mountaineers who are tackling a severe mountain.

Both strategies have deficiencies. If you are killed far into an adventure most of what you are carrying is left in an inaccessible area which you can never reach because you lack the correct tools.

Many adventurers have found this a problem in WEST. When killed, your main weapon (the gun) remains with your corpse, or it may be put in the sheriff's office. But when you are reincarnated outside the town, you may not be able to get to your gun before being attacked. The solution to this problem is simple. Find another weapon and place it somewhere near the point of reincarnation. Now you can use this weapon to make your way to your gun! Simple, but only discovered by a very small number of adventurers.

CHARACTERS

With any luck, you will encounter other characters in the adventure. But how do you deal with them? Some will be friendly while others will be aggressive. A golden rule of adventuring is only to attack a character who is showing signs of aggression. Attacking friendly characters may cause them to gang up on you, or to conceal information. It is always worth behaving in a friendly manner to friendly characters. Give them objects, or speak to them nicely since your kindness may be rewarded. Sometimes, of course, it is difficult to tell the good from the bad. The dwarves in ZKUL are rather like this. Some of them will give you poisoned provisions while others will be perfectly friendly and give you good food. However random their behaviour appears, there **is** a pattern which you should eventually spot.

If you do become involved in a battle take care of your health.

Classic adventures provide a hit point system, in which continual battle weakens you, but time heals. Modern adventures are much more fatal — one of the two combatants wins quickly.

In classic adventures like ZKUL, a command in the form of STAMINA or HEALTH will report on your current state of health. If you are poorly, you may need to rest, or to find potions of healing.

When doing battle think logically, and use the most appropriate weapon available.

A bland 'hit' will most probably punch your opponent — not very effective. 'Fight thief with sword' may be more appropriate. It is up to you to discover the most effective way of doing battle.

Both WEST and ZKUL have a number of (apparently) randomly generated antagonists. From time to time armed robbers appear in WEST. These sharp-shooters are very likely to gun you down if you are not careful. In ZKUL a thief will approach you, and most probably steal all your treasure. How do you combat such events? First, despite everything you may think, the appearance of these characters is not totally random. There are ways, if you are methodical, of predicting when an aggressor will appear — take notes of a game over a few runs and think long and hard. You will spot a pattern.

To those skilled in adventure playing, this pattern is as obvious as the appearance of beards on dwarves!

Another reasonable strategy is to search out the lair of these aggressors and surprise them before they surprise you! Within WEST you may find that hiding — perhaps up a tree — will enable you to spot a robber before he spots you!

MESSAGES

While playing an adventure you are likely to come across messages — perhaps written on walls or on parchment. It is important for you to say these messages, or what appears to be the most important part of the message, 'out loud'. If nothing happens the first time you type it and you do not get a "I don't know that word" reply, you should repeat it regularly until you understand what it does.

Beware, all messages may not be to your advantage. Some may attract unwelcome visitors. You will have to experiment to find out which words are 'good' and which are 'bad'.

Not all messages are written down. Some you will hear being muttered by other characters you encounter.

You must also be careful since the same messages may have different effects at different points in your adventure.

It is normal for messages to be concealed from you. For example in WEST there is a message written on the jail-room wall within the sheriff's office. You will only find this message by cleaning the wall! How do you know to clean the wall? Well, where else would you expect to find a message! There is also a clue in the description of the locations leading into the jail-room — we leave it to you to decipher the clue.

MAZES

Mazes can be the bane of many adventurers' lives. To navigate a maze requires tremendous skill and cunning. Worse, when mazes have curved tunnels, as in ZKUL, it is very easy to become disorientated.

Mazes in some TALENT adventures are random, but that is not to say that they change while you are in them. Rather, they are created once at the start of the game and remain the same for the duration. Just because you have solved the adventure once, does not mean that you can do so again!

There is an obvious way to tackle mazes. First of all, collect a reasonable helping of 'trash' objects. Use these as markers throughout the maze. Take a few steps and leave an object in that location. If you do get lost, you will still be able to detect when you have returned to a location you have been in before.

Some of the mazes in ZKUL are particularly difficult, since a number of different locations have identical descriptions and exits. You need to use a technique like the one already described to be successful in understanding these.

If you get badly lost, you can always leave treasures or tools behind you, but be very careful — you may never find the objects again! In WEST, the desert is a kind of maze, but moves are of random length. If you put an object down and move north, you cannot be sure that a move south will actually locate the object again.

SAVE AND RESTORE

These commands can be used to your advantage, though — like the use of a map — they are frowned upon by true adventurers. One use would be to save your game just before you enter a particularly difficult area (such as a maze). If you get lost, you can quickly return to the beginning of the maze by using the RESTORE command.

You will notice that ZKUL and WEST both count the number of saves and restores you make. To consider yourself an Adventure Grandmaster, not only should you achieve maximum score, but you should also have a save/restore count of zero.

Many of the TALENT adventures have a notepad feature incorporated into the SAVE and RESTORE commands. This allows you to leave notes for yourself — which can be about 100 words in length — subsequent restores will cause the note to be given back to you.

It is up to you to leave whatever information you think suitable as a note.

FINAL COMMENTS

Finally, remember not all passages and roads are straight. Frequently, if you go up stairs, the stairs may curve — to try to disorientate you. The same can also be true of passageways in mazes!

When you are given the description of the location, you may not be told of all the possible exits available to you! Only by experimenting, and trying all sensible moves can you really be sure nothing has been concealed from you.

As in real-life, you will sometimes find that when you carry out an operation like digging a hole, it does not work first time. If you persevere, the outcome may surprise you!

Good luck and good hunting. We hope you have many happy hours of adventuring.

APPENDIX 1

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

TKPXR VYZAGJIEQSNLBUWMHCFOD

Replace the coded letter with the 'real' letter immediately below. Thus AIQMPA spells TALENT.