



**The Great
Underground Empire**

INFOCOM

55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, MA 02138

Welcome to ZORK!

Until you've entered the world of ZORK, you've never truly adventured underground.

WEST OF HOUSE
YOU ARE STANDING IN AN OPEN
FIELD WEST OF A WHITE HOUSE,
WITH A BOARDED FRONT DOOR.
THERE IS A SMALL MAILBOX HERE.

Whenever you see the prompt (>), ZORK is waiting for you to type in your instructions. When you have finished typing in your instructions, press the RETURN key. ZORK will respond and then the prompt (>) will reappear. Next to the prompt (>), try typing the following:

OPEN THE MAILBOX
and press the RETURN key. ZORK responds with this:
OPENING THE MAILBOX REVEALS
A LEAFLET.

You may respond to ZORK by typing:
READ THE LEAFLET
and press the RETURN key. ZORK cooperates and tells you:

(TAKEN)
WELCOME TO ZORK
ZORK IS A GAME OF ADVENTURE,
DANGER, AND LOW CUNNING. IN IT
YOU WILL EXPLORE SOME OF THE
MOST AMAZING TERRITORY EVER
SEEN BY MORTALS.
NO COMPUTER SHOULD BE WITH-
OUT ONE!

Read the RULES AND STRATEGIES section for further directions and hints.

Talking to ZORK

When you play a ZORK game, you talk to ZORK in plain English, typing in all your requests on your keyboard when you see the prompt (>). (ZORK allows you to abbreviate some words, though, because you use them often.) When you have finished typing a line, press the RETURN key and ZORK will digest your request.

ZORK usually acts as though your sentence begins with "I want to . . .", although you should not type those words explicitly. ZORK then displays a response that tells you whether what you want to do is possible in the current situation, and if it is, whether anything interesting happens as a result.

All words you type are distinguished by their first six letters and all subsequent letters are ignored. For example, typing OPEN THE ENCYCLOPEDIA is equivalent to typing OPEN THE ENCYCL, or better still, OPEN THE BOOK.

ZORK "understands" many different types of sentences. A sentence must contain a verb and usually an object. Some examples:

TAKE THE GOLD. DROP GOLD. PICK
UP GOLD. PUT DOWN THE GOLD.
GO NORTH. NORTH. WALK NORTH.
N. WALK AROUND THE HOUSE.
PUSH BUTTON. PUSH THE RED
BUTTON. OPEN WOODEN DOOR.
LOOK AT THE WALL. LOOK UNDER
ROCK. LOOK BEHIND CURTAIN.
LOOK IN BAG. READ A BOOK. READ
ALL OF THE BOOKS.
DROP ALL. TAKE ALL. DROP ALL
BUT THE KNIFE.

You must separate multiple objects of a verb by the word AND or a comma. For example:

TAKE ALL BUT THE KNIFE AND THE
LAMP.
PUT THE GOLD AND JEWELS IN
THE TROPHY CASE.
THROW THE NEWSPAPER, THE
RED BOOK, AND THE MAGAZINE IN
THE CHASM.

You can include several sentences in one input line if you separate them by the word THEN or a period. You don't need to type a period at the end of an input line. For example:

TAKE BOOK. N. DROP BOOK AND
CANDLE.

TAKE THE BOOK THEN N. DROP
BOOK AND CANDLE

There are only two kinds of questions that ZORK understands: WHAT and WHERE. For example:

WHERE IS THE GOLD?
WHAT IS A GRUE?

ZORK tries to be clever about what you really mean when you don't give enough information. If you say that you want to do something, but you don't say what to do it with or to, ZORK will sometimes decide that there was only one possible object you could have meant. When it does so, it will tell you, by displaying, for example, (WITH THE ROPE). If your sentence is ambiguous, ZORK will ask what you really meant. Most such questions (for example, WITH WHAT?) can be answered briefly (for example, ROPE).

ZORK uses many more words than it "understands." ZORK's vocabulary consists of several hundred words which are nearly all you are likely to use when conversing with ZORK. However, ZORK's responses may tend toward "purple prose" at times, and ZORK will display English descriptions that it couldn't possibly analyze. Indeed, ZORK's response may refer to something to which you cannot refer (perhaps to your dismay). In that case, it is not essential to the story, and appears in ZORK's response only to enhance your mental imagery.

Completely mystifying sentences will cause ZORK to complain in one way or another. After making the complaint, ZORK will ignore the rest of the input line. Unusual events, such as being attacked, will also make ZORK ignore the rest of the sentences you typed, since the event may have changed your situation drastically.

Rules and Strategies

ZORK

The Great Underground Empire

In ZORK you are near a great underground labyrinth, which is reputed to contain vast quantities of treasure. No doubt, you wish to acquire some of it. In order to receive full credit for treasure, you must deposit it safely in the trophy case.

In addition to treasure, the labyrinth contains various objects that may or may not be useful in your attempt to acquire the treasure: you may need sources of light, since caves are often dark, and weapons, since dungeons often have unfriendly beings wandering about in them. Reading material is scattered around as well; you might even find some of it useful.

Beware of the thief! He is a dastardly anti-social type and a skilled pickpocket. Watch out for your valuable possessions when he is near.

To measure your success, ZORK keeps track of your score. You receive points for finding treasure, for securing it in the trophy case, for performing certain actions, and for visiting certain places. There is a penalty for getting yourself killed.

In this story, time passes only in response to your input. You might imagine a giant clock that ticks once per move and the story progresses only at each tick. Nothing happens in the story while you are thinking and planning your next move, so you can plan your moves slowly and carefully if you so choose.

Concepts for Exploring

Some things that you can do with objects in the story are not immediately obvious.

Containment: Some objects, called containers, can contain other objects. Some containers can be opened or closed, and some are always open. Some are transparent, and some are not. Most containers have a limited capacity, and all objects have sizes, so that it is possible to fill up containers. Similarly, some objects have surfaces on which other objects can be placed.

Fighting: Characters in the story will, as a rule, fight back when attacked. They may, in some cases, attack you unprovoked. Some of these beings are stronger than others: it might be advisable to wait awhile before tackling them. Coming off second-best in a fight may leave you somewhat the worse for wear: you might want to ask ZORK to diagnose your physical condition.

Vehicles: There are objects in the story that have the ability to transport you to mysterious regions that are inaccessible on foot. Needless to say, you face great personal peril in venturing into such regions.

Directions: The passages connecting rooms in The Great Underground Empire sometimes twist and turn unpredictably. You cannot always expect that, after going north, you can return to where you started by going south.

Commands for Exploring

The best way to move from place to place is to type the direction you want to go. Acceptable directions are NORTH or N, SOUTH or S, EAST or E, WEST or W, NE, NW, SE, SW (or NORTHEAST, NORTHWEST, SOUTHEAST or SOUTHWEST respectively), and also U or UP, and D or DOWN.

When you enter a particular place (ZORK calls any kind of place a "room") for the first time, ZORK usually displays the name of the room, a description of it, and then descriptions of any interesting objects in the room with which you might want to interact. When you return to a room, ZORK normally displays just the name of the room and the names of the objects in it.

The VERBOSE command tells ZORK to show the descriptions of rooms and objects every time you go there, not just the first time. The BRIEF command tells ZORK to fully describe only newly encountered rooms and objects, as it did initially. For moving through areas you already know well, the SUPERBRIEF command tells ZORK to show only the name of the room (even on your first visit there), and not even to mention objects in the room. You can always get a description of the room you are in and the objects in it by typing LOOK (or the abbreviation L).

Suggestions for More Successful ZORK Playing

It is essential that you draw a map. Some of the problems in the game (the Maze in ZORK for one example), cannot be solved without mapping. Remember that there are 10 possible directions. In certain circumstances ENTER, EXIT (or IN, OUT) apply.

Read everything carefully. There are clues in some of the descriptions, labels, engravings, and books, etc.

Most objects in the game which can be taken are important, either as treasures or for solving problems. Sometimes treasures are also needed to solve problems.

Unlike other games with which you may be familiar, there are many possible routes to the successful completion of ZORK. There is no "correct" order for solving problems. Some problems have more than one solution, or don't need to be solved at all.

It is often helpful to play ZORK with another person. Different people find different problems easy, and can often complement each other.

Don't be afraid to try something bold or strange—you can always save your state first if you want. Trying the bizarre can be fun and often will give you a clue. A nonsense example:

> GIVE THE CATERPILLAR TO THE CHRISTMAS-TREE MONSTER.
THE CHRISTMAS-TREE MONSTER IS REVOLTED AT THE THOUGHT OF ADORNING ITS BRANCHES WITH A CATERPILLAR.

You have just learned that there is probably something which would be a decoration pleasing to the monster and possibly a solution to the problem.

How to Quit

If you want to stop playing, and never continue from this particular position again, type QUIT. ZORK will respond:

YOUR SCORE WOULD BE score
(TOTAL OF 350 POINTS) IN number
MOVES. THIS SCORE GIVES YOU
THE RANK OF rank. DO YOU WISH
TO LEAVE THE GAME? (Y IS
AFFIRMATIVE):>

Type Y next to the prompt (>) and press the RETURN key.

If you never want to continue from this particular position again, but you want to keep playing, type RESTART after the prompt (>). ZORK responds by starting the game over from the beginning.

If you want to continue playing from this particular position, but at a later time, follow the SAVING A GAME POSITION instructions.

Saving a Game Position

It will take you some time to play ZORK through to the end, just as it takes you some time to finish a good book. You will almost certainly not finish in one sitting. ZORK allows you to continue playing at a later time without having to start over from the beginning, just as you can place a bookmark in a book you are reading. There is a ZORK command, called SAVE, that makes a "snapshot" of your position in the game. If you are a cautious or prudent player, you may want to save your position before you embark upon (or after you finish) any particularly tricky or dangerous part of the journey. Having taken a snapshot, you can go back to that position even though you may get lost or killed afterward.

When the prompt (>) appears, type: SAVE, then press the RETURN key. Then follow the instructions on your Reference Card.

Restoring a Saved Game Position

When you want to continue playing from where you made a snapshot, follow the RESTORE procedure. You can RESTORE a saved snapshot at any time during play.

When the prompt (>) appears, type: RESTORE and press the RETURN key. Then follow the instructions on your Reference Card.

ZORK will now let you continue playing from your restored position. You can type LOOK for a description of where you are.

List of ZORK Commands

To simplify your adventuring, you may order ZORK to give you information by typing specific commands. These commands can be used over and over again as needed, but they are each considered one complete move. Type your command as a sentence to ZORK after the prompt (>) appears.

The list of commands is:

AGAIN

ZORK will respond as if you had repeated your previous sentence.

BRIEF

This commands ZORK to fully describe only newly encountered rooms and objects. Rooms already visited and objects already seen will be described by printing the room name and the object names only.

DIAGNOSE

ZORK gives you a medical report of your physical condition. This is particularly useful if you have just survived a dangerous battle.

INVENTORY

ZORK lists your possessions. If you've noticed the thief lurking about, you might want to check to see if your belongings are still there. You may abbreviate INVENTORY by typing I.

LOOK

ZORK describes your surroundings in detail. You may abbreviate LOOK by typing L.

RESTORE

Restores a game position you saved with the SAVE command. See the section RESTORING A SAVED GAME POSITION.

SAVE

Saves a game position on your storage diskette. See the section SAVING A GAME POSITION.

SCORE

ZORK shows your current score with the number of moves you have made, and your rank. Your rank is your rating as a professional ZORK player and is based on the number of points you have.

SUPERBRIEF

This command tells ZORK to show you only the name of the room you have entered, and no other information. It is briefer than BRIEF.

VERBOSE

This command tells ZORK to show you a long description of the room and the objects in it whenever you enter a room.

VERSION

ZORK responds by showing you the release number and serial number of your copy of the game.

WAIT

This command causes time in the game to pass. Normally, between moves, no time is passing as far as ZORK is concerned—you could leave your computer, take a nap, and return to the game to find that nothing has changed. WAIT is used when you want to find out what will happen in the game if you do absolutely nothing while time passes. For example, if you encounter an alien being, you could WAIT and see what it will do.

Appendix

ZORK's Responses

ZORK may occasionally have a few words for you when it wants you to clarify your instruction. Some of ZORK's responses are:

I DON'T KNOW THE WORD 'your word'. The word you typed is not in the game's vocabulary. Sometimes a synonym or rephrasing will be "understood." If not, ZORK probably doesn't know the idea you were trying to get across.

I CAN'T USE THE WORD 'your word' HERE. ZORK knows the word you typed, but the word made no sense where you put it in the sentence: "Open the take", for example.

YOU MUST SUPPLY A VERB! Unless you are answering a question, each sentence must have a verb (or a command) in it somewhere.

THERE IS A NOUN MISSING IN THAT SENTENCE. This usually indicates an incomplete sentence, such as "Put the lamp in the," where ZORK expected another noun and couldn't find one.

TOO MANY NOUN CLAUSES. An example is "Put the troll in the basket with the shovel." A valid ZORK sentence has, at most, one direct object and one indirect object.

BEG PARDON? You did not type anything after the prompt (>) and before you pressed the RETURN key on your keyboard.

IT'S TOO DARK TO SEE. In the story, there was no light to see objects in the room.

I CAN'T SEE ANY 'object' HERE. In the story the object you referred to was not accessible to you.

MULTIPLE OBJECTS CANNOT BE USED WITH 'your verb'. It is legal for you to use multiple objects (that is, nouns or noun phrases separated by "and" or a comma) only with certain verbs. Among the more useful of these verbs are "take," "drop," and "put."

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT SENTENCE. You typed a sentence that is gibberish; for example, "Give troll with sword." You might try rephrasing the sentence.

Reference Section

Sentence Syntax

- A ZORK sentence must contain at least a verb or a command (e.g., AGAIN).
- Separate multiple objects of the verb by the word "AND" or a comma (,).
- Several sentences typed to ZORK at one time must be separated by a period (.) or by the word "THEN." A period is not needed at the end of a line of input.
- Only two kinds of questions may be asked: "WHAT" and "WHERE."
- Compass directions may be abbreviated to N, E, S, W, NE, NW, SW, SE, and UP and DOWN may be abbreviated to U and D, respectively.
- The letter "L" may be used to abbreviate the LOOK command.
- The letter "I" may be used to abbreviate the INVENTORY command.

Command Summary

The following commands can be entered when the prompt (>) has appeared on the screen. (For explanations, see LIST OF ZORK COMMANDS section.)

AGAIN	SAVE
BRIEF	SCORE
DIAGNOSE	
INVENTORY	SUPERBRIEF
LOOK	
	VERBOSE
	VERSION
RESTORE	WAIT

Common Verbs

The following is a list of verbs commonly used by adventurers. This list does not represent the entire vocabulary available and makes no mention of the numerous variations you can construct using prepositions (e.g., LOOK UNDER, LOOK AT, LOOK INSIDE, LOOK THROUGH, etc.).

ATTACK	MOVE
BURN	OPEN
CLIMB	POUR
CLOSE	PULL
DIG	PUSH
DRINK	PUT
DROP	READ
EAT	SLIDE
ENTER	TAKE
EXAMINE	THROW
FILL	TIE
FOLLOW	TURN
GET IN	WALK
GIVE	WAVE
GO	WHAT IS
KILL	WHERE IS
LOOK	