THE PYRAMID : THE SCENE

WARNING! This is probably quite the silliest scenario ever written for any video game and we make no excuses for it. The more sober minded of you should turn over for the instructions.

The original answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the universe and everything was 42 but many aeons have now passed since Deep Thought produced that magical number. Ever greater and greater mega-computers have come and gone since then with no further advances being made – that is, until Ziggy came along.

Ziggy was both very inquisitive and very ambitious from birth. At the age of three months he decided that his life's quest would be to solve the puzzle once and for all. Instead of turning to the much tried computer, Ziggy decided to search for clues back in history and spent his 200 years of adolescence plugged into the memory banks at the offices of the Encyclopaedia Galactica.

At the age of 218 Ziggy obtained his Cosmonaut's licence and was free to fly the Universe on his great mission armed with just one clue from all his years of research. This concerned two amazing coincidences in connection with a small microcomputer known as the Spectrum. The Spectrum originated on a seemingly insignificant planet known curiously as 'The Earth' and when that planet was destroyed in a galactic highway clearance scheme some enterprising cosmic salvage expert recovered one of these machines and claimed universal patent rights. Within a matter of years the Spectrum became the universally biggest selling microcomputer of all time.

The first amazing coincidence occurred on the planet of Imagit where 99% of the population were involved in the production of games for the Spectrum. On one fateful day, each of the 15,217 Software Houses on Imagit revealed their latest and greatest game to the realisation that they were all exactly identical, down to the very last byte. The resulting bitter conflict over rights was solely responsible for the outbreak of Cosmic War V.

This game, The Pyramid, simultaneously created independently by 15,217 Software Houses became an all-time best seller once Cosmic War V was over and played a major part in the second amazing coincidence.

The people of the planet of Sunder were games nuts and at this particular time were all nuts on 'The Pyramid'. In a moment of unparalleled frustration the entire population of 8,000 million, while playing the game, began leaping up and down in perfect synchrony and at a devastatingly destructive resonant frequency. The shock wave created sparked off a series of massive earthquakes and volcanic eruptions which tore the planet Sunder asunder.

The Pyramid was subsequently banned from sale resulting in the creation of the most lucrative black market in history.

To Ziggy, the odds against these two events occurring by chance were so ginormously ginormous that he reasoned there must be some fundamental significance in them. Ziggy got hold of a Spectrum at a space museum in a nearby galaxy and started conducting tests. For many years he toiled away searching for some vital clue to point the way on his quest until one day when the Spectrum was routinely churning out its pseudo-random number sequence he noticed a familiar pattern – the Spectrum has produced an Astral Co-ordinate. A computer check revealed that the co-ordinate belonged to the remote and largely unknown planet of Zargon, and in the centre of a large desert area.

You now join as Ziggy arrives after a long journey to discover that at the precise astral co-ordinate produced by the Spectrum lies (yes...you've guessed) a PYRAMID. This third coincidence confirms Ziggy in his belief that he is close to the Ultimate Answer.

We can reveal that as Ziggy you must battle your way through the Pyramid, chamber by chamber, to slowly discover its secret numbers. Once a chamber has been successfully negotiated its Key Number may be revealed to you – but not always. The guardians of the Pyramid have not made it easy so you will have to puzzle out the missing secret numbers from the relationship to the other numbers on that level (or possibly the ones above). The Ultimate Answer is the number for the inner sanctum chamber, the centre chamber on the lowest level. This number will have to be puzzled out and the techniques learnt from the puzzles of higher levels may well be of good use to you.

The Pyramid was designed and written by Bob Hamilton. Graphics for chambers 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 16, 20, 21, 22, 34, 39, 45, 60 and opening titles by Darren Hamilton.
Graphics for chambers 2, 18, 26, 29, 40, 48, 53 and 61 by Ian Hamilton. © FANTASY SOFTWARE 1983.

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THE PYRAMID : THE GAME

To explore the Pyramid you have an exploratory capsule with great defensive shield power and a highly effective phased plasmic laser to atomize the aliens. The Pyramid contains 120 chambers on 15 levels with the principal object of the game being to reach the base level (level 15) as quickly as possible.

Each chamber is inhabited by one of a variety of 60 wierd and exotic aliens. Contact with these aliens is deadly but your shield power will protect you. Your shield energy is used to atomize the unfortunate aliens on contact but this repeated action will deplete your supply of energy. When no power is left in your shield you become totally vulnerable to attack which will result in you (poor Ziggy) being splatted all over the screen on being hit. You will be pleased to know that your total shield power is fully replenished to 100 units every time you enter a new chamber. Your current level of shield power is indicated against 'P' on the scoreline. As you descend deeper into the Pyramid the aliens generally require more energy to atomize so you'll have to keep out of their way as much as you can.

There are two exits from each chamber, both of which are guarded by a force field. The force field has to be neutralized in order to leave the chamber. This is achieved by means of an energised crystal which will descend from the top of the screen after a certain number of aliens have been atomized. The number of aliens to be destroyed, before the next crystal is released is indicated on the scoreline against 'A'.

The crystal has 3 energy states. In its highest energy state (white), the crystal will destroy any aliens that come into contact with it and has too much energy to enable you to pick it up.

Any contact with the crystal in this state will result in loss of shield power. In its intermediate energy state (yellow) it is still not possible to pick the crystal up but it is now vulnerable to destruction by the aliens. In its lowest energy state (cyan) the crystal can be picked up and this is achieved simply by moving into it with your capsule. When you are carrying the crystal your capsule changes colour to cyan, however the crystal remains vulnerable to the aliens and is lost if the capsule is hit.

The force fields guarding the two exits also have different energy states, four of them, indicated by yellow (highest), cyan, green through to magenta (lowest). Dropping a crystal through a force field decreases the energy state by one level or if in its lowest state will neutralize the field, allowing you to exit. Release of the crystal takes place automatically as the capsule passes over either of the exits although it can be picked up again in an emergency.

Scoring for the game is a little unusual in that points are awarded for the speed with which you negotiate each chamber. As you enter a chamber the available points starts at 9999 and inexorably decreases as time goes on. You can still enter the next chamber even if the points have dropped to zero, your score will simply stay as it is. The points can be seen ticking away against 'S' on the scoreline. For each person there will probably be an optimum route through the Pyramid which you will have to gradually discover with experience. If you score more than 30,000 your high score will be coded. Send your score and its code to us and you may earn a place in our ranking list of the top 1000 scorers published every 6 months.

After successfully negotiating a chamber the entire pyramid will be displayed showing your route so far and the next chamber to be entered (flashing). The key number for the previous chamber will also be displayed and this should be noted down. If a line of question marks is displayed then the key number for this chamber is missing and will have to be puzzled out. Watch our for details of a competition connected with the number puzzles in the Fantasy Micro Club newsletter.

The following four joystick options are available:
1. FULLER   2. KEMPSTON   3. AGF/PROTEK   4. MIKROGEN

There are three keyboard options available (and additionally the cursor keys can be used by selecting the AGF (Protek option). These are detailed on the opening page when the game starts. Keyboard use is very subjective and we hope to have covered everybody's tastes — let us know if we haven't! The required option is selected on the opening page and stays in force for the duration of the game.

We hope you have a lot of fun playing 'The Pyramid' and that you enjoy meeting all the aliens invented to do battle with you. We strongly urge you to send back the reply slip and join the Fantasy Micro Club which has a regular newsletter with member's offers on both software and hardware, news on games, scores and member correspondence.

One last point, the game can be held at any time by pressing "ENTER" on the keyboard. It can be restarted in the same way.

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SCORE | | | | | | |

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