



ARCANA  
SOFTWARE  
DESIGN



# POWERPLAY

THE GAME OF THE GODS

# **POWERPLAY**

## **THE GAME OF THE GODS**

Copyright © 1986 Arcana Software Design  
All rights reserved  
First published in 1985 by Arcana Software Design

No part of this booklet may be reproduced by any means  
without the prior consent of the copyright holder.

FIRST EDITION. NOVEMBER 1985

# **POWERPLAY**

## **The Game of the Gods**

### **CONTENTS**

1. The Game of the Gods	...	...	...	3
2. Loading the Program	...	...	...	3
3. Playing Options	...	...	...	4
4. How to 'POWERPLAY'	...	...	...	5
5. Sound	...	...	...	9
6. Summary of Game Controls	...	...	...	9
7. Compiling your own Questions	...	...	...	10

## 1. THE GAME OF THE GODS

Upon the heights of Mount Olympus, the mighty gods are once again arguing over which of them is the wisest and most powerful. To settle this quarrel, Zeus has decided that each should compete in a battle of sheer wit and speed he has devised, to be called the **POWERPLAY**.

A special courtyard in the gardens of the Temple of Apollo has been selected as the arena for the competition.

To avoid personal injury, each god will have at his disposal four warriors to fight the battle according to his commands. Throughout the contest, the gods will be tested on their knowledge of the universe, having to respond quickly and correctly to make best use of their warriors. The better a god responds, the wiser he becomes, and he may use stronger warriors. The four grades of warrior he may use are, in order of strength:

- HERCULES — A mere mortal. The weakest, but nevertheless a strong character.
- CYCLOPS — A huge one-eyed giant possessing the strength of many men.
- MINOTAUR — A powerful monster, half man and half bull with great physical strength.
- SATYR — The most evil and powerful, half man and half goat. A demon of the woodland with great mystical ability.

By using the resources available to them, these warriors will fight bravely to the death for their masters. The battle will rage until only one god remains with any warriors in the courtyard. Having managed to win the conflict by creating the strongest warriors, only this god may claim the title of 'Wisest and Most Powerful God of All'.

## 2. LOADING THE PROGRAM

To load the program rewind the cassette to the beginning of side one and then follow the loading instructions given below for your machine.

- AMSTRAD:** If your machine is fitted with a disc drive, first type **tape**. Now press the **CTRL** key and the little **ENTER** key simultaneously to load the program.

**COMMODORE 64:** Press the **SHIFT** key and the **RUN/STOP** key to load the program.

**ATARI:** Switch on the machine whilst holding down the **START** key and the **OPTION** key. After hearing the bleep press **PLAY** on the tape deck and then the **RETURN** key. The program will then load.

**MSX:** Type **BLOAD "CAS:",R** and press **RETURN** to load the program.

Once loaded the title page will be displayed which illustrates the **POWERPLAY** characters. Before the game can be played it is necessary to load in a question file. There are a number of these provided on both sides of the cassette in total containing over 2000 questions. To load a file position the tape and press the **L** key, then type the name of the file to be loaded and press **RETURN** or **ENTER**. Note that the tape is correctly positioned to load in the first question file after having loaded the main program.

### **3. PLAYING OPTIONS**

Before play starts, you will be asked to select the number of players competing and the difficulty level of the game. There may be two, three or four players. The difficulty level determines the time allowed to answer each question and may range from 10 seconds on level one to 2.5 seconds on level four.

Each player will then be asked to select which input device they wish to use throughout the game. More than one player may use the same device and can choose between the keyboard or one of two joysticks (if these are connected).

The current player selecting a device is highlighted. By pressing **SPACE** a player may cycle through the options and should press **RETURN** or **ENTER** when the selection has been made. The game will not play correctly if a device is selected which is not available on your computer.

When all selections have been made, press the key in the top-left corner of the keyboard, normally marked **ESC** or **ESCAPE**.

## 4. HOW TO 'POWERPLAY'

### 4.1 Outline of the game

Each player begins the game with four pieces, three Hercules and one Cyclops, located in one corner of the courtyard. Each player's pieces are distinguished by the following characteristic colours:

---

PLAYER 1	BLUE
PLAYER 2	RED
PLAYER 3	GREEN
PLAYER 4	WHITE

---

The object of the game is to eliminate your opponents' pieces from the courtyard.

Players take turns to select one of their pieces and answer a question which will appear at the bottom of the screen. If the question is answered incorrectly, play will pass to the next player. If the correct answer is given, a number of points will be added to that piece's wisdom score. The player may then move the piece onto any free adjacent square to end the turn.

If after answering correctly enough points have been accumulated, the player is given the opportunity to change the piece into one of greater strength by means of a 'mutation'.

Moving a piece onto a square occupied by an opponent will invoke a 'challenge'. The piece losing the challenge will be mutated down to a lower strength level or eliminated from the game.

### 4.2 Selecting a Piece

When prompted, a player may select a piece.

The current player and piece number will be indicated on the base of the left hand statue. The current piece will also be shown bouncing up and down on its square. The strength level and wisdom score of this piece are indicated on the base of the right hand statue.

The current player may cycle through his pieces by pressing **SPACE** on the keyboard or moving the joystick up or down. Having selected a piece, the player must press **RETURN** or **ENTER** on the keyboard or press the **FIRE** button on the joystick to receive a question.

It is not possible to select a piece which has no free adjacent squares to move onto after answering the question.



### 4.3 Answering a Question

The squares on the courtyard are divided into four colours corresponding to the following subject areas:

---

COLOUR	SUBJECT
BLUE	GENERAL KNOWLEDGE
RED	SPORTS AND LEISURE
GREEN	SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
YELLOW	HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

---

The question will be presented on a scroll which will appear on the lower portion of the screen. The subject of the question is determined by the colour of the square occupied by the selected piece. The difficulty of the question is determined by the strength level of the selected piece as follows:

---

PIECE	QUESTION DIFFICULTY
HERCULES	1 (EASY)
CYCLOPS	2
MINOTAUR	3
SATYR	4 (HARD)

---

Four possible answers will be presented with the question. These are arranged around a cross in the centre of the scroll. If using the keyboard, the player may select an answer by pressing the appropriate cursor key. If using a joystick, the answer can be chosen by moving the joystick in the appropriate direction.

If the selected answer is correct, points will be added to the wisdom score of the piece. The more time taken to answer, the less points will be added. The player may then move his piece, or if over 25 wisdom points have been accumulated, will be given the option to mutate to a stronger level.

If the player answers incorrectly or runs out of time, no points are added and play passes to the next player.

### 4.4 Moving a Piece

A piece may be moved onto any free neighbouring square by moving the joystick in the desired direction and pressing the fire button, or by using the appropriate direction key shown in the table below:

---

KEY	DIRECTION
J	BACK
N	FORWARD
X	LEFT
C	RIGHT
A	BACK-LEFT
Z	FORWARD-RIGHT
M	FORWARD-LEFT
K	BACK-RIGHT

---

A piece may not be moved off the board or onto a square occupied by a piece belonging to the same player. Moving onto a square occupied by an opponent's piece will invoke a challenge.

There are four magical squares in the courtyard which are coloured cyan. These are known as 'teleport' squares. Moving a piece onto one of these squares will cause it to disappear and reappear on any of the four teleport squares, including itself. These squares may thus be used for rapidly crossing the board or to escape an impending challenge. However, since the piece may reappear on the same square, this is not a foolproof method of escape.

A piece will not reappear on a teleport square which is already occupied by another piece.

## 4.5 Mutations

If after answering a question correctly, a piece of strength level one to three has accumulated a score of 25 wisdom points or more the option to mutate to a higher strength level will be given.

The player may choose to postpone mutation to a later move, in which case the piece may be moved as described in the previous section.

If a mutation is desired, it can be initiated by pressing **SPACE** on the keyboard. If using a joystick, the **FIRE** button must be pressed with the joystick centred. After a mutation, 25 wisdom points will be deducted from the piece.

Having mutated the piece, the player may then continue to move it onto a new square in the manner previously described.



The advantage of mutating a piece to a higher level is that it can withstand more challenge defeats before eventually being eliminated. The disadvantage is that the subject matter of the questions presented becomes more difficult.

## 4.6 Challenges

To invoke a challenge, a player must attempt to move his piece onto a square already occupied by an opponent.

A challenge consists of two players competing against each other to answer the same question. The challenge question will be set on a random subject and at the difficulty level of the stronger piece contending.

The contesting players will be informed which devices they should use to answer the challenge question. If the keyboard is the only device available, one player will be allocated the arrow keys to use as normal and the other will be allocated an alternative set of keys. This set of keys should be used if a player is allocated **KEYBOARD 2**. They are arranged as follows:

---

KEY	DIRECTION
6	UP
G	DOWN
T	LEFT
Y	RIGHT

---

The challenge question will not be presented until both players have indicated that they are prepared to answer. This is done by pressing the **FIRE** button on a joystick or **SPACE** on a keyboard.

When the question is presented, both players must attempt to answer as quickly as possible. The player answering first wins the challenge if the correct answer is given, but loses the challenge if the wrong answer is given. If neither player manages to answer within the time limit the challenger will be penalised by losing the challenge.

The piece belonging to the player losing the challenge is mutated down a level of strength, with no wisdom points being restored in the process. If the piece is already on the lowest strength level, it will be eliminated from the game. The stronger pieces thus run a lower risk in a challenge situation.

If the piece being challenged is eliminated, the challenging piece will move onto its square. Otherwise, both pieces will remain on their current squares.

## 5. SOUND

The program makes use of the sound facilities offered by your microcomputer. If you wish to inhibit the sound effects at any point in the title program or the game itself then this can be achieved by pressing the **Q** key. To reenable the sound press the **S** key.

## 6. SUMMARY OF GAME CONTROLS

### Selecting Options

SELECT PLAYER	RETURN	or ENTER
SELECT DEVICE	SPACE	
START GAME	ESCAPE	or ESC

### Sound

ENABLE SOUND	S
DISABLE SOUND	Q

### Game Controls

#### KEYBOARD JOYSTICK

SELECT PIECE	SPACE	UP/DOWN
CONFIRM PIECE	RETURN	FIRE while centred
MUTATE	SPACE	FIRE while centred
MOVE BACK	J	FIRE while UP
MOVE FORWARD	N	FIRE while DOWN
MOVE LEFT	X	FIRE while LEFT
MOVE RIGHT	C	FIRE while RIGHT
MOVE BACK-LEFT	A	FIRE while UP-LEFT
MOVE BACK-RIGHT	K	FIRE while UP-RIGHT
MOVE FORWARD-LEFT	M	FIRE while DOWN-LEFT
MOVE FORWARD-RIGHT	Z	FIRE while DOWN-RIGHT

### Answering Question

	KEYBOARD	KEYBOARD 2	JOYSTICK
CHOOSE LEFT ANSWER	←	T	LEFT
CHOOSE RIGHT ANSWER	→	Y	RIGHT
CHOOSE TOP ANSWER	↑	6	UP
CHOOSE BOTTOM ANSWER	↓	G	DOWN

## 7. COMPILING YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

### 7.1 Introduction

There are over two thousand questions supplied with **POWERPLAY** which we believe will keep you playing for quite a while. However, you may eventually wish to compile your own questions, so a program has been provided to allow you to do this called **The Question Compiler**.

All the questions for **POWERPLAY** are held in a number of separate files, containing questions on each of four topics at four difficulty levels. Although we do not allow you to examine or alter these files, you may create new files of your own or edit files you have previously created.

### 7.2 The Question Compiler

To use the compiler rewind the cassette to the start of side two, and load in the same manner as **POWERPLAY** (see section 2).

When prompted, type in the name of the question file you wish to alter followed by **RETURN** or **ENTER**. The compiler will then load the named file provided that the tape has been correctly positioned. If you want to start a completely new file, simply press **RETURN** or **ENTER** without a filename.

### 7.3 The Editor

You will now be presented with the editing screen. This consists of a number of boxes into which the various parts of the question are entered. The cursor starts in the **TOPIC** box, and can be moved to other boxes by pressing the up or down cursor keys.

In the boxes that consist of more than one character a simple line editor is invoked. This uses the cursor keys to move left and right through the box. Pressing **DEL** deletes the character to the left of the cursor and moves the rest of the line left. Characters are inserted into the line at the cursor position simply by typing them.

Note that in all multi-character boxes except the **TITLE** box only numeric digits, letters, full stop, comma, apostrophe and the percentage sign are allowed.

You can move through the questions by pressing **CTRL-N** for the **Next** question, or **CTRL-P** for the **Previous** question. You cannot move off the current question unless the whole question is either totally completed or totally blank.

## 7.4 Question Format

The contents of each box are described below:

### a) Topic

A number between 1 and 4 may be entered into this box. It selects the topic number of the questions you wish to alter. To the right of this is displayed the colour of the square a piece must land on to receive a question on this topic.

### b) Level

A number between 1 and 4 may be entered into this box. It selects the difficulty level of the questions you wish to alter. To the right of this is displayed the type of piece that can receive a question on this level.

### c) Title

This is the message that will be printed during the game after a piece has been selected. It gives a forewarning of the subject matter of the question before the question itself is displayed, for example '**HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY**'. You are not restricted to the four subjects that the supplied question files use.

### d) Question

This box holds the actual question that will be asked. When you move off this box, the compiler will try to centre the question in the same way as the game itself does. If there is no room to do this within the box the computer will emit a 'bleep', and you must shorten it.

### e) Answer Indicator

This box is to the right of the word **ANSWERS**. It should contain a letter between A and D and nothing else. This indicates which of the following four answers is correct. A indicates that the first answer is correct, B the second, and so on.

### f) The Answers

The next four boxes contain the four possible answers to the question, only one being the correct answer. The first two answers correspond to the 'left' and 'right' answers. The second two correspond to the 'up' and 'down' answers.

## 7.5 Saving a Question File

Before you can save a question file, it must contain at least one question for each topic at each difficulty level.

When you are ready to save, press **CTRL-X**. You will then be asked to supply a filename to save the question file under. Pressing **RETURN** or **ENTER** without supplying a filename at this stage will take you back into the editor without saving. After the question file has been saved, you may proceed to edit another file.

If this product should prove to be faulty, return it to:  
**ARCANA SOFTWARE DESIGN**  
Avondale Workshops  
Woodland Way  
Kingswood  
**BRISTOL BS15 1QH**

