Alternate World Simulations

ORBQUEST(tm) Primer

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Second Edition

Written by Walt Donovan

W e l c o m e   t o   O R B Q U E S T !

Find the glittering Orb, and get out alive -- that is your
quest. But the Orb lies buried somewhere in the unknown
depths of a multi-level dungeon, and a horde of monsters
bar your way. Each trip you make into the dungeon -- if
you survive -- gains you experience and magic: making you
stronger, allowing you to go deeper, bringing you closer
to the fabulous Orb!

ORBQUEST is a simulation game (NOT an "adventure"-type game) where the player
controls a "character" in a world of Magic, Monsters and Treasure. After
"rolling" up a character, the player is initially poised at the entrance of a
(nameless) Dungeon, and must enter and win his way out to safety. Gold,
Treasure Chests, Potions, and Tomes (and who knows what else) lie about, free
for the picking, and Monsters roam the Dungeon maze, looking for tasty
adventurers. Each trip the player makes allows his character to accumulate
Magic Items and experience -- and so he becomes stronger. If the character
survives the early trips, the lower levels of the Dungeon await him. The
Monsters and dangers are much more severe deeper down, the mazes more
difficult to map, but the rewards are correspondingly greater.

After many trips, the character may become skilled and strong enough that he
considers himself ready for further challenge. Then let him head for the tenth
Dungeon level, where awaits the Demogorgon, the Guardian of the Depths. The
Demogorgon must be slain before the lower reaches of the Dungeon will be
accessible to the foolish and greedy adventurer.

Hidden on the deepest level of the Dungeon -- guarded by the Dragon Wizard --
is the ultimate treasure of ORBQUEST: The Orb! A glowing sphere possessing
incredible magic powers, surrounded by huge amounts of treasure, it awaits the
adventurer prepared for the final trip of ORBQUEST. Those who bring out the
Orb will be honored by all the game's players and enshrined in ORBQUEST's
Valhalla of Fame!

However. If the player has managed to slay the Dragon Wizard and successfully
obtain the Orb, he will find that he has awakened something. Lurking in the
depths, following the luckless adventurer's footsteps up, waiting to pounce
when the time is ripe, will be the greatest Monster of all -- The Grim Reaper!

ORBQUEST awaits you, my friend. May you spend long, enjoyable hours attempting
to conquer the Dungeon. And remember -- Greed Kills!

Expected playing time to a win: 20 hours
Game can be interrupted and character state saved
Easy to play, requires mental skill to win, complex simulation

CP/M (tm) Implementation

ORBQUEST requires a 56K CP/M running on an 8080, Z80, or 8085, and will work with practically any 24 X 80 cursor-addressable terminal with upper and lower case. Media currently supported are: 8" single density, 5" NorthStar double density, 5" Osborne.

ORBQUEST was written in Ratfor and developed using the CP/M Software Tools environment available from Unicorn Systems, 30261 Palomares Road, Castro Valley, CA 94546. Alternate World Simulations would like to thank Unicorn Systems and Philip Scherrer for making a pre-release version of the Software Tools package available.

ORBQUEST comments and suggestions should be sent to the ORBQUEST User's Group, c/o Alternate World Simulations.

ORBQUEST: $35 for diskette and manual from
Alternate World Simulations
P.O. Box 941
Milpitas CA 95035

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Introduction

ORBQUEST is a game where beginning players should expect to die a <u>hundred</u> times before they learn enough about the Dungeon to survive. This primer will explain the different displays and commands of ORBQUEST, and perhaps will supply a few hints. The exact effect of various spells, magic items, and potions, however, is up to the player to discover by trial and error.

A Glossary of the possibly unfamiliar terms used in ORBQUEST can be found at the end of this primer.

Comments for the first time user:

> Character case is significant: "G" is not "g". BACKSPACE can be used to correct some typing errors.

> ORBQUEST is not a "real-time" game; nothing happens until you press a key, so you have all the time you want to think your actions through.

Getting Started

First of all, "PIP" all the files from the ORBQUEST master disk onto a bootable disk and put the master away in a safe place. In the following discussion, we will assume that CP/M has just been booted up with the ORBQUEST disk in drive A. If you do not understand what you have just read, please get the help of somebody with more CP/M experience.

The program SETTERM must be run first to set up the terminal control file for your terminal. You will need to know the character sequences that control your terminal's graphics: clear screen, clear line (if any), and cursor control. SETTERM is self-explanatory in operation, and will allow you to test your terminal graphics. SETTERM creates a file "TERM.CTL" containing all of the information describing your terminal. To run SETTERM, type "SETTERM" and a RETURN after the "A>" prompt, and follow the instructions. (Note: to enter the hex value of a character, enter the two hex digits of the character's ASCII code, e.g., 1B for ESCAPE. Use leading zeroes for character codes 01-0F. Terminals that use a NULL (00) as part of their terminal graphics commands, other than for padding, cannot be used with ORBQUEST.)

After creating a satisfactory TERM.CTL file, you are now ready to quest for the Orb! Type "ORBQUEST" and a RETURN after the "A>" prompt. ORBQUEST will take a while to load, and then you should see the Welcome Page. You can now enter "m" to see the message of the day, "h" to see the Hall of Fame, or any other key to begin the game proper.

The Roll

Upon entering the game without a previously-saved character, the player will

be sent to the Character Rolling page. Four basic "stats" are randomly generated for each character each time a key other than "T" or "Q" is pressed. The stats all are in the range 3..18, and stand for:

STR -- Strength. Affects character's fighting ability.
INT -- Intelligence. Affects character's magic spell effectiveness and number of available magic spells.
PIE -- Piety. Affects character's cleric spell effectiveness and number of available cleric spells.
DEX -- Dexterity. Affects character's ability to evade and his ability to open trapped treasure chests.

Larger stats reflect a better ability. Press "Q" at any time to leave the game.

Once a satisfactory set of stats is rolled for your character, press "T" to take it and enter the (19 letter or less) name for your character. BACKSPACE is active here. Type a RETURN when done. You will now go to the Entry Page.

The Entry Page

This page shows the current status of your character as he awaits entry into the dungeon. Your character will also arrive here if he makes it out of the Dungeon.

The information shown on the entry page consists of the character info blurb on the left and the magic item info blurb on the right. (The item blurb is initially blank since you start off with no magic items. Osborne users will have to shift the screen window right to see the item blurb.)

Information about your character is shown on the character blurb. Reading from the top down, the lines are:

Name -- the name of your character

Level -- your character's level. This number is a function of your character's experience. Everyone starts at level 1. Your ability to affect Monsters is usually proportional to your level.

Experience -- your character's experience. Here is the mapping from experience to levels:

Level	Experience Needed
1	0
2	2000
3	4000
4	8000
5	16000
6	32000
7	64000
8	128000
8 + n	256000 * n

STR, INT, PIE, DEX -- current values for your character's stats. These
        can be changed temporarily or permanently by Tomes, Potions, and
        Magic Items. Monsters have been known to reduce stats. Stats
        that become zero result in the (merciful) death of the
        character.

Protection -- the current amount of protection afforded your character
        by the Magic Items he possesses. One unit of protection absorbs
        one hit of damage. (See "Hits" below.)

Hits -- this is represented as "current hits"/"maximum hits". Hits
        reflect the amount of damage your character can take. When his
        current hits reach zero, the character is dead. Maximum hits
        increase whenever the character makes a new level, by a random
        amount in the range 1-8. Maximum hits can also be increased in
        other ways. Current hits can be increased by Potions or Magic
        Items, but never exceed maximum hits. Current hits are decreased
        in many ways, from blows sustained from Monsters, from Evil
        Potions, and from exploding Treasure Chests and Tomes.

Gold -- the amount of gold currently carried by your character,
        denominated in $. If your character makes it out of the Dungeon
        alive, the amount of gold he carries is added to his experience
        total (and his level updated.) Large amounts of carried gold
        attract bigger Monsters, naturally.

Dungeon level -- the level of the Dungeon the character is currently
        on. Other messages here may appear from time to time, depending
        on what has happened to the luckless adventurer.

Magic, Cleric -- the number of remaining spells of that type possessed
        by your character.

Below the spell counts, a list of special state flags will appear whenever
your character has the appropriate Magic Item or has drunk the appropriate
Potion. For example, drinking a Potion of Healing will cause the flag
"Healing" to appear here.

The Magic Item blurb appears on the left, and shows the Magic Items possessed
by your character. Every Magic Item is normally beneficial to your character.

The player may press "E" (not "e") to Enter the Dungeon, "Q" to quit the game
(saving your character's state), and "R" to rename his character. For "R",
enter up to 19 characters, followed by a RETURN. (Enter only a RETURN if you
don't want to change the name; BACKSPACE works.)

The Dungeon

After pressing "E" to enter the Dungeon, the player will be transported to the
first level of the Dungeon, always to the same spot. The exit is a reasonable
distance away, and finding it is the first challenge for the player.

The visible area of the Dungeon around the player's character is shown in the center of the screen. "-" and "|" indicate apparent walls, "/" indicates an apparent door, and blanks indicate either open space or darkness. The "@" indicates the current position of the player's character. Other symbols may appear from time to time, and it is up to the player to deduce the meaning of them. For example,

```
            -
          |@|

           |

            -
```

shows a 1 X 2 area, with an open space or darkness on the southwest side. The player would normally only be able to move down the screen one square. After pressing "x" to move down, he might then see

```
            -
          |  |
            -
          @|
            - -
```

Now he can see around the corner to the beginnings of a corridor or large room. The player's character cannot see more than one square away from where he is.

Note that darkness in the Dungeon hides many things, such as Pits, Transports up and down the Dungeon, and other surprises for the player. The Dungeon mazes on the upper levels (levels 1 and 2) are simple and easy to understand, but the player should not take anything for granted deeper down!

The following commands are available when the player is just sitting in the Dungeon, not facing a Monster or looking at a Chest, Potion, Tome, or other item:

    c -- show character info blurb. This forces the display of the entire
         blurb (not shown in "brief" or "superbrief" mode, see C below)

    C -- cycle through verbose, brief, or superbrief character blurb mode.
         In brief mode, only the essential items are displayed. In
         superbrief mode, it only displays information that has changed
         since the last display of the blurb. In verbose mode, everything
         is displayed.

    dwax -- These four keys (note lower case) move the player's character
         Right, Up, Left, and Down the screen, respectively. No real wall
         or door should be in the way.

    DWAX -- These four keys work as above, except that a door must be
         present. Essentially, this command opens the door and moves the
         player's character through the door. Secret doors exist in the
         Dungeon, and DWAX will move through them.

F -- set autofight level. Requests a Monster level at or below which the player's character will automatically fight the Monster. Enter a non-negative integer, followed by a RETURN. (Entering a 0 will turn off autofighting.) This command is for the case when the player's character has attained some strength, and no longer wishes to bother with small and weak Monsters.

g -- drop some gold. An amount to drop is requested, and that amount of gold is removed from what the character is carrying. Enter a non-negative integer, followed by a RETURN. (Entering a 0 will not drop any gold.) Note: gold is only accurate to about six significant figures, so if your character is carrying say 523450290 gold, have him drop 523000000 gold first. "Huh?" is printed if the player's request did not make sense.

G -- toggle between gold grabbing or leaving. Normally the player's character picks up all the visible gold lying about. Toggling this off results in the character leaving all the gold he finds.

i -- display the Magic Item blurb. This blurb is normally on but can be turned off by the I command (see below).

I -- toggle beween a brief or verbose item blurb. The brief mode displays nothing, and the verbose mode shows all items.

L -- toggles Levitation. If the player's character is Levitating, he may choose to come to earth by using this command. Another L will send him back up. Levitation protects the player's character from falling down Pits in the Dungeon.

Q -- quit. Leave the game, saving the state of the player's character. When the game is reentered, it will take up where it left off after the Q. This command must be confirmed with a "Y" or "y"; any other keypress aborts this command.

s -- sit. Pass the time sitting in one location.

T -- attempt a teleport up. This is a very special spell, requiring one Magic and one Cleric unit. It will move the player's character up to a safer Dungeon level (e.g., from Dungeon level 3 to Dungeon level 2). If it fails, the player's character will be teleported to a more dangerous Dungeon level. The chances for a successful Teleport are initially very good, but do decrease somewhat with further attempts.

? -- show a list of the available commands, with a brief description for each.

The Monster Page

As your character wanders about in the Dungeon, he will encounter Monsters from time to time. Monsters are mean and greedy and will always want to attack

the adventurer. When facing a Monster, a description of the Monster appears on the screen, followed by a list of options available to the player.

The Monster's description includes its apparent level and its name. However, if the adventurer is BLINDED, all you will know is that a Monster is there about to attack you! There are more than ten different Monsters, some with peculiar abilities. Note that the level assigned to the Monster can be off by a considerable amount from the Monster's true level. Special Monsters like the Demogorgon have a level assigned to them, but the player's character is unable to determine any numerical value. We suggest you assume that the special Monsters are considerably bigger than the ones you would normally come across on that Dungeon level. Unusually large amounts of gold carried by the adventurer tends to attract bigger Monsters!

There is a very useful property that the Dungeon's level 1 has, and that is that Monsters bigger than level 1 do NOT (normally) appear! Thus, a character that can autofight at level 1 safely is essentially safe once he has reached Dungeon level 1.

The player's options on facing a Monster are described in more detail below. The option page describes the commands briefly by using a period to separate out the command character.

> f -- fight the Monster. Engages the player's character in battle with the Monster, until one is dead. Monsters that perform special actions (e.g., Mindworms attack a character's INT) will succeed unless the Monster is smashed without any damage at all to the character.

> e -- evade the Monster. An attempt is made to scoot to a neighboring square so as to evade the Monster. The Monster may follow the player's character, though, and some Monsters are harder to evade than others. The Monster's chances of following the character depend on how many ways the character could have moved to escape the Monster. If evasion fails, the character must FIGHT the Monster -- there is no time to throw a spell.

> If the character is invisible, he can normally always evade all Monsters except the Undead, who have the ability to see invisible things.

> L -- leave half of your character's Gold and then try evading. You have as good a chance to evade Monsters as you would with an "e", but with a "L", the Monster NEVER follows you, since it is eagerly snatching at the gold you have left behind.

> m -- cast a magic spell. There are six magic spells available to use against Monsters:

>> 1. Fireball -- Throw a ball of intense fire
>> 2. Lightning Bolt -- Cast a bolt of power-packed electricity
>> 3. Mind Blast -- Destroy the Monster's brain psionically
>> 4. Fatal Charm -- Appear as the Monster's friend, and kill it
>> 5. Magical   Sleep -- Toss the sleeping sands into the

Monster's eyes
6. Fear -- Scare the Monster into helpless jelly

The first three spells are the normal "attack" spells. They do damage to a Monster proportional to your character's level. Some Monsters have natural abilities or have experience handling certain types of energy, and thus will be able to GAIN power after an allegedly attacking spell is thrown at them. You should read the messages that are displayed after a spell is cast to deduce what effect it had on the Monster.

Fatal Charm and Fear are "subversion" spells which will either allow you to kill the Monster dead or have no effect whatsoever on it. These are useful for situations where attack spells would not do enough damage, for Charm or Fear work regardless of the Monster's (or adventurer's) level!

Magical Sleep is very useful for beginning characters, since it is guaranteed to work on Monsters other than Undeads, as long as the Monster's true level is 5 or less. (Note: if your character's INT is low, there is a very small chance that Magical Sleep will fail.)

There is a best spell to use on any given Monster, and it is up to the player to determine by trial and error what it is. Most of the correct ones can be guessed relatively easily. A good ORBQUEST Spell Table is one of the most important possessions a player can have, and should have entries for the best attack spell to use (both magic and cleric) and the best subversive spell. It is not impossible to deduce what spells will work well on the special Monsters.

Finally, if the attack spell does not destroy the Monster, the player's character must FIGHT whatever remains of the Monster.

c -- cast a cleric spell. The available cleric spells are:

1. Dispell Evil -- Remove the evilness from the neighborhood
2. Exorcise -- Exorcise the Monster from the Dungeon
3. Holy Word -- Use the Holy Word of Power to shrivel the Monster
4. Holy Water -- Spray Holy Water onto the Monster
5. Pray -- Pray to the Gods for succor
6. Clerical Hold -- Use the Force to immobilize the Monster

The first four clerical spells are attack spells, while the last two are subversive.

Good Luck on all of your Monster encounters, and may you never throw a Fireball at a Demon!

Treasure Chest Page

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From time to time, as the player's character moves about the Dungeon, he will find a Treasure Chest! Treasure Chests usually contain considerably more gold than is laying about, and may even contain a Magic Item, but are sometimes trapped. The choices available when facing a Treasure Chest are as follows:

O -- open the Chest, forcibly setting off any Traps it has. But Opening is quick, and does not attract as many Monsters as C below.

C -- carefully open the Chest, attempting to disarm every Trap it has. Your character's ability to disarm depends on his DEX. C takes longer and produces a certain noise, as of a Chest opening, which tends to attract Monsters roaming the neighborhood.

i -- inspect the Chest for Traps. The Chest will either be safe to Open, be seen to be Trapped (but could be opened by a successful C), or it will be impossible to observe which of the previous is true.

c -- clerically examine the Chest for Traps. This uses a cleric spell to determine the Trappedness of the Chest's exterior. It may succeed or fail, and can be tried as often as desired. Clerical spells never lie.

L -- leave the Chest there. If the player so chooses, the Chest may be left there unopened.

Magic Items are found only in Treasure Chests. Some Magic Items are found only on the deeper levels of the Dungeon, though a basic outfit can be found on Dungeon level 1. The better the Magic Item, the deeper you will have to go to find it.

Treasure Chests from time to time contain a valuable Bright Gem, which will temporarily blind your character's dark-adapted eyes. It is impossible to tell if a Chest contains such a Gem of Blinding!

Here is a short course on Magic Items and what they may do for you:

The + on a Magic Item is a (logarithmic) measure of its quality -- a Sword+3 is a much better item than a Sword+1.

Swords, Shields, Haumes, and Hauberks protect you from Monsters' attacking swings and therefore allow you to fight bigger Monsters than you could otherwise. You will notice your character's Protection increase after he obtains one of these items.

Miscellaneous Magic Items give your character special abilities or increase the effectiveness with which your character does something. For example, the Small Idol of Luck makes your character considerably luckier in finding Gold, Treasure Chests, Potions, and Tomes.

The Potion Page

Potions are very useful to a character and can, for example, increase a character's STR or INT, turn him invisible, attract gold to him, or allow him to survive his own death! Of course, there are Evil Potions and Potions that do nothing at all. Options available to the player when a Potion is found are:

D -- drink the Potion and partake of its effects. A message will appear telling the player what kind of Potion it was. This message should be self-explanatory. The Potion of Revival, for example, will carry the character's dead body and magic items out of the Dungeon and raise him from the dead (if the character should die.)

c -- clerically examine the Potion. A clerical spell is used to attempt to determine if the Potion is Evil or not. The attempt may be made as many times as desired. Clerical spells never lie. The chance of clerically examining Potions successfully is somewhat less than that for examining Chests.

L -- leave the Potion behind. The player may choose to forget about the Potion and not have his character partake of the potential gain.

The Tome Page

Tomes are found lying about in the Dungeon, and can be even more valuable to your character than the best of the Potions. There is no way to determine if a Tome is dangerous or not beforehand, so you have just the choice of "R"eading the Tome or "L"eaving it behind. Good Tomes will increase your PIE and DEX or give you experience! Bad Tomes will explode doing up to 45 hits of damage, and once in a very long while, you may meet with a Cursed Tome! Characters who have been Cursed and survived have a fascinating tale to tell!

The Death Page

Alas. If you get here, your character is dead. You may press "Q" to quit the game, or "R" to roll another character (this takes you to the Roll page.) If you were lucky enough to have Revival, you can press any other key to revive your dead body!

Summary

Here are a few rules that players should follow if they are to get anywhere in ORBQUEST:

Roll for characters with decent stats

Find the exit from Dungeon level 1 first of all

Find out what spells work best against which Monsters

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Map the Dungeon

Don't make mistakes

Remember -- Greed Kills!

The End

Glossary

Balrog -- A Monster, known to fans of Tolkien.

Cleric -- Number of Clerical spells left. Clerical spells tend to work better against Undeads, and are also useful for examining dangerous items.

Darkness -- An area of the Dungeon you cannot see into. Darkness can hide Pits and Transports, among other things.

Death -- Either an Undead Monster, or what happens to every character sooner or later (heh).

Demogorgon -- Guardian of the Lower Depths.

Demon -- An Undead Monster. Enjoys fire.

DEX -- Your character's Dexterity. This affects his ability to evade and open trapped Treasure Chests.

Doors, regular -- Plotted on the screen as "/", traversed via the shifted movement keys "DWAX".

Doors, secret -- Normally plotted on the screen as Walls. Can be traversed via "DWAX".

Dragon -- A Monster.

Dragon Wizard -- The Orb's Protector.

Dungeon -- The underground lair of a horde of Monsters that stand between you and the Orb.

Evil Curate -- A Monster, man-type.

Experience -- What determines your character's level. When you exit the Dungeon safely, whatever amount of Gold you have is transferred to your Experience, and your Level increased appropriately.

Ghoul -- An Undead Monster.

Gold -- Treasure found in the Dungeon.

Green Slime -- A Monster, not strictly Undead but acts like it.

Grim Reaper -- What stands between your character and glory; the biggest Monster of all.

Hauberk -- Magical mail. Protects from Monster attacks.

Haume -- Magical helmet. Protects from Monster attacks.

Hirebrand -- A man-type Monster.

Hits, current -- What your character always seems to lose. If zero, your character is dead.

Hits, maximum -- What your character needs more of; what is increased when your character makes a Level.

Huge Spider -- A Monster.

INT -- Intelligence. Affects your character's Magic spell effectiveness and number of spells he can use.

Level, character -- Reflects overall ability and power of character.

Level, Dungeon -- Indicates "depth" of Dungeon floor; tougher Monsters are found on lower Levels, as is greater Treasure.

Level, Monster -- Reflects overall ability and power of Monster. A level 5 Monster is usually as tough as a level 5 Character.

Levitation -- What will allow your character to sneer at Pits!

Luck, Small Idol of -- What will help your character find more things in the Dungeon

Magic -- Number of Magic spells left.

Mindworm -- An Undead Monster that attacks your character's INT.

Orb, The -- The goal of ORBQUEST: find the Orb, slay its Protector, and get out of the Dungeon alive! The most powerful Magic Item in the Dungeon.

PIE -- Piety. Affects charracter's Cleric spell effectiveness and number of available cleric spells.

Pits -- A darkness in the Dungeon that sends the unwary un-Levitating to the depths.

Potions -- Magical liquids in dusty, stoppered bottles that must be completely drunk before they take effect. Can be examined clerically. Most Potion effects wear off when the character leaves the Dungeon.

Revival -- A special state that your character can attain by drinking the Potion of Revival. If your character dies, he and his magic items will turn to smoke, ooze up to the Dungeon entrance, and reconstitute.

Shield -- A Magical shield. Protects from Monster attacks.

Spectre -- An Undead Monster.

STR -- Strength. Affects your character's fighting ability. (DEX would also affect fighting ability, but we have separated fighting DEX from other types of DEX and included it in your character's STR.)

Sword -- A Magical sword. Protects from Monster attacks.

Teleport -- A special spell, requiring one Magic and Cleric unit, that attempts to move the character up a Dungeon level. Repeated use tends to fail badly.

Transports -- Darkness also hides Transports that move the character to another level of the Dungeon.

Tomes -- Magical lore bound in dusty volumes that can do your character great good or great evil.

Treasure Chests -- Bound oaken chests, trapped or safe, containing Gold or Magic Items, and a Bright Gem from time to time.

Undead Monsters -- These monsters are not affected by Magical Sleep, Fatal Charm, or invisibility. Clerical spells tend to do them more damage.

Walls -- Areas of the Dungeon that cannot be traversed. Plotted as either "¦" or "-".

Wizard -- A man-type Monster.

Zombie -- An Undead Monster.

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