ALPHATRIS HELP

For information on how to use Help, press F1 or choose Using Help from the Help menu.

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Game Description

What do you get when you mix the classic arcade game Tetris with the classic word game Scrabble? **ALPHATRIS!**Thats the best way to describe this game. Players must move falling letters using the <u>right</u>, <u>left</u>, and <u>down</u> command buttons and arrange them into words. When a word is created, it is removed from the playing screen making room for additional letters. The game continues until the center row is filled and no more letters can fit. Special features such as <u>Power Zap</u>, <u>Bonus Letters</u>, <u>Bonus Word</u>, and <u>double letter pieces</u> add additional challenge to this game to make it a very fun game.

Alphatris is educational as well as fun. It is a great game for building word skills in school aged children, yet, is challenging enough for all ages. The included game dictionary contains over 13,500 two, three, four and five letter words. The dictionary is derived from the Scrabble game dictionary, therefore does include many slang and abbreviated words.

Game Dictionary

The word dictionary used by Alphatris is derived from the Scrabble Word Dictionary. For this reason, many slang, abbreviated, and other seldom used words can be found in this dictionary.

System Requirements

Alphatris Requires the following:
- 486 DX2-66 or greater processor (* Pentium Recommended)
- Windows 95 Operating System
- Mouse
- 10 MB free hard drive space
- Sound Card (Optional)
- For best results, display should be set to High Color (16 bit) or better.
  Using 256 colors or lower could result in screen flicker.
- System fonts should be set to the default SMALL setting.
  Other font settings could result in mis-aligned graphics.

* Testing conducted on a 486dx2-66 with 32mb of ram proved to be sufficient, however, noticeable loss of speed was apparent. For best results, this game should be used on a pentium class machine.

Technical Support and Ordering

Mace Software, Inc. is committed to providing full support for all of our products. If you have any questions or problems, please feel free to contact us. Registration is **not** required to obtain support, but registered users do receive priority.

Technical support may be obtained via the following means:

Web Site: http://macesoft.simplenet.com
Email: MaceSoftware@juno.com
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A fun and educational word game in which players must quess missing words based on clues derived from previous or preceeding words as well as letters given by the computer. Based on the TV game show of same name.

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A fun and educational word game in which players must create new words from a given puzzle word within a set time limit. Over 20,000 different puzzles and an 80,000 word game dictionary   included.

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A fun and challenging board game in which players must try to dominate the playing board with their marbles. Two player or try to beat the computer. Several different play boards included for varied challenge.

All of these games are available at http://macesoft.simplenet.com

Be sure to visit WWW.WIN-SHAREWARE.COM for a large selection of Windows95 shareware products.

Problems FAQ

Screen Flicker:
> If when you play this game, you notice a great deal of screen flicker, check your windows display settings. It is recommended that you use High Color (16 bit) or greater when playing Alphatris. Lower settings will result in screen flicker.

Graphics Mis-Alignment
> If the games controls appear to be mis-aligned with the games graphics, check your system font settings. They should be set to the default setting of Small. Other settings can result in graphic mis-alignment

Key Commands Don't Work
> If the keyboard commands for moving the game pieces do not work check to be sure that your keyboards NUM LOCK is selected (ON).

Loading Game

To start Alphatris, run the program **ALPHTRIS.EXE** from your start menu. You may also create a desktop shortcut for the game. (see your windows documentation for details).

When Alphatris is first loaded, the game <u>dictionary</u>   is loaded to memory and game is initialized. The time required to do this varies depending on system. Example testing on different systems showed that this takes about 79 seconds on a 486dx2-66 and 10 seconds on a pentium 166.

After initialization, you will be placed at the games main screen. Click on the <u>BEGIN</u> command button to begin play.

Object of Alphatris Menu

The object of Alphatris is to create words from the falling letters. The larger the word created, the higher the score. Letters come in three different colors. You do not need to use the same color letters to create a word, however, <u>scores</u> for words made are higher if same colors used. The game continues until the center row fills with unused letters and no more new letters can fit.

Scoring

List of scoring values:

2 letter word of different color - 100 Points (Level 1 and 2 only)
3 letter word of different color - 1000 Points (Level 1 to 5 only)
4 letter word of different color - 2500 Points
5 letter word of different color - 5000 Points

2 letter word of same color - 1000 Points (Level 1 and 2 only)
3 letter word of same color - 10000 Points (Level 1 to 5 only)
4 letter word of same color - 25000 Points
5 letter word of same color - 50000 Points

In addition to the point values above, the following points can be earned:

BONUS LETTER- Using a bonus letter doubles the words scoring value.
BONUS WORD- Creating the bonus word in same color scores a bonus 75000 points.

Power Zap

During game play, you will given a POWER ZAP game piece at random. This piece can be used to remove all of the same letters. No points are earned for removing letters with the power zap. If the power zap lands on the bottom of the board and lands on no letters, then no letters will be removed. You may use the ZAP command button to remove the power zap piece.

For example: If you get the POWER ZAP piece and you move it so it comes to rest on top of a RED C, all RED C's on the game board will be removed.

Bonus Letters

The letters **J Q V X** and **Z** are bonus letters. They are silver colored. Using a bonus letter to create a word, doubles that words <u>point value</u>. The bonus letter color is considered neutral. In other words, if you create a four letter word with three red letters and a bonus letter, then the word is still counted as being the same color.

Bonus Word

At the beginning of each game, a five letter bonus word is chosen at random. It is displayed in the upper right hand side of the playing screen. If you create this word during game using all the same color tiles, you receive a 150000 point bonus and a new bonus word is selected. If you create the bonus word in mixed colors, you receive a 75000 point bonus.

Double Letter Pieces

Most game pieces are a single letter only. Occasionally, the game will give you a double letter game piece. When you recieve this piece, you may use the ROTATE COMMAND BUTTON to rotate the piece clockwise. All other move functions are the same as with the single letter pieces.

NOTE:- When using the ZAP COMMAND BUTTON on a double letter game piece, you score will be reduced by 1000 points instead of 500 points if you have no free zaps left.

Begin Command Button

To begin play, click the **BEGIN COMMAND BUTTON**. It is located on the right side of your playing screen.

Once the game has been started, this button now reads **QUIT** and is used to quit the game prior to finishing. You will be prompted to ensure this button was not clicked in err.

You may also use the <u>keyboard</u> ESC key to perform this function.

Pause - Resume Command Button

During game play, should you need to take a break, click the **PAUSE COMMAND BUTTON**. This will suspend all activity. Once clicked, the pause button will then become a **RESUME** button. Click the resume button to continue game play.

You may also use the keyboard PAUSE key to perform this function.

ZAP Command Button

Once a new letter appears on the play screen, you may remove it by clicking on the **ZAP COMMAND BUTTON**. This will remove this letter and present the next.

When the game begins, you are given 3 **free zaps**to use. Additionally, extra free zaps are given for each new level you reach. Once the free zaps are all used, zapping a letter will cost you 500 points. If you have used all of your free zaps, and you don't have at least 500 point score, the zap command will be ignored.

NOTE:- When zapping Double Letter Pieces and you have no free zaps left, your score will be reduced by 1000 points instead of 500 points.

You may also use the keyboard 7, 8, or 9 keys to perform this function.

Rotate Command Button

The **rotate command button** is only used when <u>double letter pieces</u> are given. With this button, you can rotate the double letter pieces in a clockwise direction.

You may also use the <u>keyboard</u> 5 key to perform this function.

Right Command Button

The **right command button** is used to move falling pieces to the right. The button is located on the right side of the playing screen in the red area.

You may also use the keyboard 6 key to perform this function.

Left Command Button

The **left command button** is used to move falling pieces to the left. The button is located on the right side of the playing screen in the red area.

You may also use the keyboard 4 key to perform this function.

Drop Command Button

The **drop command button** is used to drop falling pieces quickly to the bottom. The drop button is located on the right side of the playing screen in the red area and appears as a down arrow.

You may also use the <u>keyboard</u> 0, 1, 2, or 3 keys to perform this function.

Speed Adjustment Bar

The **speed adjustment bar**is used to make **minor**changes to the games playing speed. This may prove useful on some slower systems (ie. 486 processors) if the pieces seem to fall too slow. Moving the slide bar to the right increases the speed slightly and moving it to the left reduces the speed slightly. The default speed setting is centered.

After each new level, the speed adjustment defaults to the center position. Should you desire to change the speed again, you will have to readjust after each new level.

NOTE:- Changes after Level 6 will be so small that they probably will not be appearant. This feature is mainly designed to help slower systems during the first few levels.

Volume Control

On the lower left hand side of the playing screen, there is a volume control slide adjustment. This controls the volume of the sound effects played. To control the volume of the background music, use your systems volume control device.

Keyboard Commands

You may use the following keys to operate Alphatris:

4 Key- * Moves falling letter left.
6 Key- * Moves falling letter right.
2 Key, 1 Key, 3 Key or 0 Key- * Drops falling letter.
5 Key- * Rotates a letter piece.
7 Key, 8 Key, or 9 Key- * Zaps a falling letter.
ESC Key- Begins or Quits Game.
PAUSE Key- Pauses or Resumes Game.
F1 Key- Help Files.

*NOTE:Number keys are those on the numeric pad. NUM-LOCKS must be selected for these keys to work.

Sound On/Off Toggle

The sound on/off toggle does as the name implies. It toggles the sound effects either on or off.

Music On/Off Toggle

The **Music On/Off** toggles the background music on or off. Additionally, you may select which group of tunes you wish to listen to. The tunes are grouped by decades 70's, 80's, or the 90's. To listen to a mix of all, select the **Play All** option.

You may also play your favorite audio cd as the background by selecting the **Play an Audio CD** option.

Background Graphics

The background menu option allows you to choose from the available background graphics. By default, the mountain background is displayed. Should you desire no background graphic, select **None**from the background drop-down menu.

You may also use your favorite bitmap graphic by clicking the **USER DEFINED**option. This will bring up the file select box from which you can select any *.BMP graphic file on your system. Be sure to <u>save</u> your settings if you wish this new graphic to be used after this play.

Saving Settings

After you configure the games settings to your preferences, you may save the settings by clicking on **Save Settings**from the settings menu. Once your settings are saved, the game will used them until you change and save again, or restore default settings.

Restoring Default Settings

By clicking on **Restore Default Settings**, you remove any previously saved settings and return the game to the original settings.