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Q*bert for Atari 8-bit Computers FAQ

by BHodges

Version 1.0
Created 12/06/09

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I. Introduction

This is a FAQ for the Atari 8-bit Computer game Q*bert. It contains information on how to play the game and a mini-review.

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II. Getting Started

On the Title Screen, press Start to begin playing or press Select to choose the game you wish to play:

- Game 1 One Player 5 lives
- Game 2 One Player 4 lives
- Game 3 One Player 3 lives
- Game 4 Two Player 5 lives each
- Game 5 Two Player 4 lives each
- Game 6 Two Player 3 lives each

Note: In two player games, the players alternate turns.

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III. Gameplay

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A. Controls

Note: You need to turn your joystick a quarter turn clockwise so that the fire button is at the top of the "diamond", but the directions given here are listed as though the joystick was held normally. (Yes I know it's extremely confusing).

Joystick Up	Move to the Up/Right
Joystick Left	Move to the Up/Left
Joystick Right	Move to the Down/Right
Joystick Down	Move to the Down/Left

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B. Basic Gameplay

The object of the game is to change the color of all cubes of the pyramid to the proper color (displayed on the left side of the screen). As you play, various enemies will appear to impede your progress. Touching an enemy or jumping off the pyramid will cost you one life, lose all of your lives and the game is over.

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C. Enemies

Red Ball

Red Balls start at the top of the pyramid and make their way to the bottom. Touching a Red Ball will cost you one life.

Purple Ball

Purple Balls are just like Red Balls except that once they reach the bottom they will hatch into a Coily.

Coily

Coily is the most dangerous and persistent enemy you'll have to deal with. He hatches from Purple Balls when they reach the bottom and will pursue Q*bert relentlessly. The only way to get rid of him is to lure him off the pyramid by hopping onto a Flying Disc.

Sam

Sam is probably the most annoying enemy you'll encounter. He starts at the top of the pyramid and makes his way down, any cubes he lands on will change back to the previous color. Unlike other enemies, Sam won't hurt you when you touch him, in fact touching him removes him from the playing field.

Ugg and Wrong Way

These guys appear in the bottom corners of the pyramid and make their way to the opposite side. They are unique because they land on the sides of the cubes instead of on the tops.

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D. Powerups

Flying Disc

Flying Discs are a great way to get out of a jam, hop onto one and it will take you to the top of the pyramid. As an added bonus, if you time it right, you can make Coily leap to his doom as he tries to follow you!. Flying Discs appear to the sides of the pyramid and their number/locations depend on the stage.

Green Ball

The Green Ball may look like an enemy, but it is actually a handy powerup that will freeze time for a few seconds. While time is frozen, enemies cannot move and touching them will not harm Q*bert.

E. Levels

Each level consists of four rounds. As you progress through the levels, the number of times you have to land on a cube before it turns to the correct color changes is as follows:

Level 1: 1 Time
Level 2: 2 Times
Level 3: Toggles
Level 4: Hit twice, then toggles, never goes back to original

F. Strategies

- Holding the joystick the "correct" way is awkward and tiresome, I recommend placing the controller on a table and pressing down on the base with your off hand to keep the joystick oriented properly.
- Wait until Coily is on an adjacent cube before hopping onto a Flying Disc.
- Don't loiter on the two cubes adjacent to the top of the pyramid, this is where the balls enter the playing field and you don't want to get hit!
- Try to take care of the cubes on the sides and the bottom first.
- You earn a bonus Q*bert at 8,000 points, then 14,000 points, then each additional 14,000 points thereafter.

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IV. Scoring

Change a cube to correct color	25 points
Change a cube to intermediate color	15 points
Catch Sam	300 points
Catch Green Ball	100 points
Coily jumps off pyramid	500 points

Bonus Points

Unused Flying Discs	50 points each
Completing a round	1000 points (increases 250 points each round up to 5000)

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V. My Top Score

My top score is 30,610 points (Game 1).

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VI. Game Review

Q*bert is one of the all time classic arcade games. You control the titular character and your goal is to change all of the squares on the pyramid to a particular color. Coily the Snake, Ugg, Wrong Way, and Sam may not be on the same level of notoriety as Bowser and his minions, but they definitely make life difficult for you. Fortunately you have a couple of tools at your disposal, namely the time freezing Green Balls and the self explanatory Flying Discs.

The Atari 8-bit Computer version of Q*bert is an excellent port that captures all of the fun and action of the arcade version. This is definitely a must own for anyone with an Atari 8-bit system!

Pros

- + Excellent port of the arcade classic.
- + Still fun/challenging after all these years!

Cons

- Controls are awkward and take a while to get used to.

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VII. Version History

1.0 12/06/09 Completed FAQ.

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VIII. Contact Information

You can contact me at Bhodges080@aol.com

I would appreciate hearing what you thought of this guide and any thoughts you have for improving it. Be sure to let me know if I have missed anything.

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