

Pyramid 2000

Title: **Pyramid 2000**

Game type: Text-based adventure

Vendor: Radio Shack

Year Published: 1979

Solution by: Branden Robinson

Date: 4 October 1998

Email: branden@purdue.edu

WWW: <http://www.ecn.purdue.edu/%7Ebranden/>

Foreword

Pyramid 2000 was written by Robert Arnstein for Radio Shack, who needed some software to go with their TRS-80 Model I computers, which, along with the Apple II and (arguably) the Commodore PET, were in the vanguard of the home computer revolution which started in the late 1970's. Those computers are lodged in a niche between the kit computers much beloved of hobbyists (but which scared ordinary folks who didn't know what a soldering iron was for), and the commoditized, commercialized, Madison Avenue-ized Intel/Microsoft consortium whose ball really started rolling in 1981.

Most people who played it were unaware that *Pyramid 2000* was not a wholly original creation. It borrowed very heavily from the original Crowther and Woods [Colossal Cave](#) adventure, which predated Pyramid by several years. Substitute a mummy for a pirate and a sarcophagus for a clam and you get an idea of how derivative a work Pyramid 2000 really is. Nevertheless, the game was easily enjoyable on its own merits, at least to the computer gaming audience of the late '70's and early '80's (let's face it, you couldn't exactly play *Final Fantasy VII* in 16 kB of RAM!).

I was first exposed to this game the year it was released, in 1979. It took me an embarrassingly long time to solve it; the main factor, I think, being an obscenely dirty trick on the part of the author. Nevertheless, it's solved now, with the final clue being hammered into my head by Steve McCoy, so the game that followed me from a TRS-80 Model I, to a Color Computer 2, to Tim Mann's [xtrs](#) TRS-80 emulator, can be finally laid to rest. The number of people even interested in this game must be very small by now, but the number that know how to solve it is smaller still; hopefully this document will bring those groups into convergence. Needless to say, if the following doesn't look familiar to you:



WELCOME TO PYRAMID!!
 YOU ARE STANDING BEFORE THE ENTRANCE OF A PYRAMID. AROUND YOU
 IS A DESERT.
 :

then you probably don't want to bother any further with this page. The rest of you are invited further into the pyramid to, at long last, uncover all its secrets (cue *Raiders of the Lost Ark* soundtrack)...

A step-by-step walkthrough, like Steve McCoy did for *Haunted House* and *Raaka-Tu*, would be very tedious for *Pyramid 2000*, where much of the time is simply spent moving through the very large map. Instead, I will take the approach of presenting a question-and-answer format, in approximate order of where particular obstacles present themselves in the game. Normally, for a FAQ-like resource such as this, I would include a list of all the questions before proceeding to the questions and answers, but on the off chance that anyone who's stuck really wants to try and solve the rest of the game on their own, I'm going to omit the summary, because the wording of some of the questions might spoil a surprise or two. A few of the answers will seem ridiculously obvious to some, but hey, I'm here to try to please everyone. Feel free to skip questions and answers that don't interest you -- that's what the scrollbar is for.

Those of you reading this page are probably retro-computing freaks; perhaps many of you never even finished this game. Take this opportunity to play it to completion! Have fun!

Part one -- outside the pyramid

Here is a [map](#) of the outside of the pyramid.

1. Is there anything in the desert?

No. Don't waste your time looking for undiscovered treasure there. See the [map](#) of the exterior of the pyramid to see how the desert works.

Part two -- inside the pyramid, "upper floor"

Actually there is quite a bit of up and down motion in this game, but as you'll see later, there is a convenient halfway point. Here's a [map](#) of the "first half" of the pyramid interior.

1. What is the object of the game, and how do I score points?

You're a tomb robber! Your goal is to collect treasures from within the pyramid and return them to the entrance, where the lamp, food, and bottle are initially found. You receive five points for carrying a treasure (which, apart from an item being described with an exclamation point, is how you tell it's valuable), and twenty for dropping it back at the entrance. When you drop it, you lose the points for carrying it. The `SCORE` command and some quick math will tell you that there are eleven treasures in the game. If it takes you less than nineteen years to get them all, consider yourself more fortunate than your humble author. (Of course, I did do some other things in the meantime. Honest, I mean it!) You also lose ten points for every time you are killed in the game. Three strikes and you're out.

2. It's pitch black and everywhere I go I fall into a pit and break every bone in my body! What do I do?

Turn on the lamp, silly. Remember the shiny brass lamp in the entrance? `ON LAMP` works for me.

3. I've been killed! Where's my stuff?

The lamp is returned, not to its original location, but to *your* original location, outside the entrance. It's also turned off. Your other items will be at the location where you died.

4. How do I get the statue bird? I can lift it, but I can't carry it!

The statue *bird* goes in the statue *box*. If you're carrying the statue box, you may pick up the statue bird. That is, of course, unless you're carrying something else...

5. How do I get the statue bird? It comes to life and flies away from me!

The statue bird does not like the scepter. Drop it. You can pick the scepter up again after you have the bird.

6. How do I get the nugget of gold up the steps?

You don't. You *can*, however, go *around* the steps in two distinct ways. We'll get to that later.

7. How do I get across the bottomless pit?

It's kind of funny how, when falling into a bottomless pit, you somehow manage to hit the bottom(!) and break every bone in your body. Or maybe Mr. Arnstein figured terminal velocity would grind your bones to powder. Anyway, if you `WAVE SCEPTER` on either side of the pit, it will cause a stone bridge to magically materialize and dematerialize. Don't worry, the bridge will never collapse out from under you.

8. Help! I've wandered into a maze of twisty passages and I can't get out!

Well, if you've only *just* wandered in there and not moved anywhere yet, or only tried to go north, there is help. Go up. If you're deeper in the maze, see part four, in which the maze is dissected. If you're this early in the game, though, the best thing to do is quit the game and restart. The maze is the *last* thing you need on your mind at this point.

9. Help! Every time I pick up some treasure and go somewhere with it, a mummy comes up and takes it away!

There are two ways of dealing with the mummy. The easy way is simply to not ever carry more than one treasure at a time. The hard way is to swallow your pride and let him take it. You'll learn, if you care to experiment, that he only bothers you once. After that, you can carry as much booty as you can fit in your arms, if you're lucky to find enough to fill them.

10. How do I get past the huge fierce green serpent?

Well, there are two ways, actually. One is straightforward, and one is roundabout (cue the first track on *Fragile*).

Make sure you are carrying the statue bird. You are? Good. `THROW BIRD`. Enjoy it, that's the most action you'll see in this game -- the rest is logic puzzles.

For the roundabout way, see the next question.

11. What's the story with that panel in the large room?

Simple -- it's just a shortcut to the entrance. GO `PANEL` to use it. In fact, you can use the panel from the very beginning of the game to "cheat" and get around the serpent (and "downstairs", into what I arbitrarily call the "second half" of the pyramid's interior), as I alluded to above. The serpent will still be a pain in the butt, though, since you can enter the pharaoh's chamber from any direction, but he always blocks your exit to the north, south, and west. He's kind of like a diode that way, I suppose. By the way, the panel is the first way to get the nugget of gold back to the entrance. The other comes much later, don't hold your breath.

12. The rooms west of the pharaoh's chamber and west of the bottomless pit don't make any sense!

It's a pain to get around in that part of the pyramid. I guess it's training ground for the maze, where things *really* get strange. My advice is to make a map, or [use mine](#).

Part three -- inside the pyramid, "lower floor"

While making my map I noticed that the only way to avoid room overlap was to break it in pieces. A convenient place to do this is just to the north of the pharaoh's chamber, where there is a hole in the floor. Below that, I call the "lower floor". Also, on the upper floor, the treasures are just sitting out in normal rooms for you to grab them -- about half of the total of eleven. You have to work harder for the remaining six. At this point, you should have collected the gold, the jewelry, the coins, the silver bars, and the diamonds. Two of these may be in the possession of the mummy if you weren't careful. So grab a map ([mine](#) or your own) and work for those remaining treasures.

1. Help! I'm trapped in the Land of the Dead!

"Those who proceed east may never return." Next time perhaps you'll listen! There is nothing of value in the Land of the Dead, so there's no reason to be there. It's also not a maze like the one with twisty passages, though it may seem like it. If you drop an item and move around you'll note the item always moves with you. There's your clue. The Land of the Dead is just one logical location, with exits that loop back on itself. The exit is selected randomly each turn, so eventually you'll get out if you keep moving. Shame on you if you dropped your lamp, a treasure, or some other useful item, and then got out without picking it back up! I think the author of this game left the *Egyptian Weekly* magazines outside in the Anteroom of Seker for a reason -- so the player would use that item figuring out the trick to the Land of the Dead.

2. What do I do with the sarcophagus?

You can't do much with it (aside from observe a sudden lapse of grammar on the part of game's author). You can heft that heavy sucker up and down those vertical passages, but you can't get it out to the complex junction. My suggestion is to try opening it, and wonder about what might be inside. Maybe the mummy, resting in there like Dracula in his coffin (does the `>GROAN<` come from him, or your aching back?), and you can beat the bandages off of him when you get that thing open. Anyway, think hard about this one and we'll come back to it.

3. What do I do in the chamber of Horus? Is there any point to "exploring at random"?

Indeed there is, particularly north and up. If you keep attempting to go a direction, eventually you'll get somewhere besides a U-turn. See the [map](#) for more information.

4. How do I get through the tight squeeze in the chamber of the high priest?

You have to drop everything. And I do mean everything, including that which is more precious even than treasure, that which stops you from falling into the ubiquitous pits and breaking every bone in your body. The **lamp**.

5. I got the delicate, precious vase, but when I drop it back at the entrance it breaks and I don't get any points for it!

Maybe you should drop it on something softer. You know, cushiony. Like a pillow. You mean you haven't been to the priest's bedroom?

6. What's a plover?

It's a kind of bird. I don't know how big their eggs are, but I always imagine an ostrich egg. That should be big enough to tickle almost anyone's avarice.

7. How do I get to the hole high up on the wall above the west pit in the twopit room?

Well, if you've bothered to climb down into the west pit, you'll notice a plant there clubbing you over the head with a very unsubtle clue. What, you already drank the water yourself? Or have you found that one dousing of the plant isn't enough? Don't despair, if you've been an intrepid explorer you'll have found a small clean climbable pit where a tiny stream enters and exits through slits. It is there that you can `FILL BOTTLE`. You can then return to the plant, `POUR WATER` again, and then `CLIMB PLANT` to get to the hole that was formerly inaccessible.

8. What do I do with the sarcophagus (revisited)?

Well, now that you've seen the chambers of Osiris and Nekhebet, perhaps it has occurred to you that the key can be used to *unlock* the sarcophagus. All you have to do is go to it and `OPEN` it.

9. How do I keep the pearl from rolling away?

You don't (or it didn't really roll anywhere, if you had picked the sarcophagus up, and put it down in the right place.). However, the magic of the pyramid is not sufficient to defy gravity, so a good guess would be that the pearl rolled in such a manner as to minimize its gravitational potential energy, right? So `GO DOWN` until you find it.

Part four -- the maze

Fourteen rooms with the same description -- "YOU ARE IN A MAZE OF TWISTY PASSAGES, ALL ALIKE.", twelve dead ends, and the brink of a pit. This thing is hell to map, but if you're up to some work, read on. Otherwise, keep handy a copy of my [map](#) and save yourself some sweat.

1. My lamp is getting dim! Where's this vending machine?

If you've read this far, you're approaching the end of the game. I'll give you a hint, you can complete the adventure with maximum points in fewer turns than it takes to make the lamp go dim. I suggest quitting the game and economizing your moves. If you're bound and determined, however, you can use my map of the [maze](#), and see that the vending machine isn't too far in. If you have the coins with you you can `DROP` them at the location with the machine, and it will magically scoop them up and dispense some batteries. However, spending the coins means you can't get all the treasures, doesn't it?

2. I've only been able to find ten treasures! What's the eleventh?

Before you ask, no, it's not whatever laid those eggs. The eleventh treasure, as the mummy alluded, is the chest, deep in the maze. If you're up to it, you can map the maze yourself using the time-honored Hansel and Gretel trick. It's simple. Load up with items, enter the maze, and drop one. Then start moving. In some cases you'll find that going a particular direction actually takes you no place at all, because the item you dropped is in the "new" location. Rather than the dropped item moving with you, what's happened is that you've really stayed in the same place. When you are in a new maze location with no item in it, drop another. Then, as you move within the maze, you'll be able to tell the maze locations apart by what items they contain, and you can draw a map. Of course, you're bound to run out of items before you've finished mapping the maze, so you'll have to go back out and get some more. I'll give you one hint -- the dead ends really are dead ends, there is always only one way in or out of those, so don't bother dropping stuff in them. The maze is basically laid out along the primary compass points (N, S, E, W), but there are a few places you can go up or down. And then there's the dirty trick the author of this game played that is Pure Evil...

3. What's the supremely evil dirty trick about the maze?

There is **one**, and only **one**, place in the maze where a secondary compass point (as in northeast, southeast, etc.) is used. When you find it, you'll hit a dead end. Note the significance of this odd direction. Of course, if you let the mummy steal your treasure before you came here, the significance will be quite obvious. This piece of unadulterated sadism, teasing the player into not checking secondary compass points in the maze locations by having them completely eliminated except in this one place, is what added about twelve years to my solution time. I was still a kid, playing *Pyramid* on the CoCo, when I made my first "complete" map of the maze. Turns out it wasn't complete -- I didn't know about location fourteen on my map, which didn't really matter, and I didn't know about the oddball dead end, which matters quite a bit. I've heard over the years (there's also an old [Dejanews](#) article to this effect) that there is a *specific* sequence of moves you have to take to find the treasure chest in the maze; one wrong turn, and it vanishes until you leave the maze and try again. That's not exactly true, though it might as well be if you don't draw a map. You can run around in the maze as much you want -- the dead end will be in the same place, and so will the treasure chest, if applicable.

4. Looking at your map makes my head spin. Come on, what's the magic recipe for getting through the maze?

You really don't want to do *any* work, do you? Okay, okay:

To get to the treasure chest from maze location 1 on my map (go south from the west end of the Hall of Gods): E, S, S, S, N, E, E, NW

To get out of the maze from the treasure chest dead end using the pit: SE, N, D

To get out of the maze from the treasure chest dead end without using the pit: SE, N, W, W, W, E, E, W, U

5. Yeah, well, I got to the secret northwest dead end, and still no treasure chest! What's up?

You had to show a willingness to part with your treasure earlier (or just a reluctance to waste time running around with only one treasure at a time to avoid the mummy). The mummy has to steal your treasure, or there will be no treasure chest.

6. Wait! What about the second way to get the gold around the steps?

Climb down the pit in the maze. It's conveniently located near the secret dead end so you don't have to waste time backtracking through the maze all the way to the Hall of Gods.

You're done! Haul the last three treasures back to the entrance, drop them, and gaze upon your haul:

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YOU ARE IN THE ENTRANCE TO THE PYRAMID.  A HOLE IN THE FLOOR
LEADS TO A PASSAGE BENEATH THE SURFACE.
A SMALL VELVET PILLOW LIES ON THE FLOOR.
OFF TO ONE SIDE LIES A GLISTENING PEARL!
THERE IS FOOD HERE.
THERE IS AN EMERALD HERE THE SIZE OF A PLOVER'S EGG!
THE VASE IS NOW RESTING, DELICATELY, ON A VELVET PILLOW.
THERE IS A JEWEL-ENCRUSTED KEY HERE!
THERE IS A LARGE SPARKLING NUGGET OF GOLD HERE!
THERE ARE DIAMONDS HERE!
THERE ARE BARS OF SILVER HERE!
THERE IS PRECIOUS JEWELRY HERE!
THERE ARE MANY COINS HERE!
THE PHARAOH'S TREASURE CHEST IS HERE!
THERE IS A LARGE NEST HERE, FULL OF GOLDEN EGGS!
:

```

You don't get much of a congratulations, though:

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A SMALL VELVET PILLOW LIES ON THE FLOOR.
OFF TO ONE SIDE LIES A GLISTENING PEARL!
THERE IS FOOD HERE.
THERE IS AN EMERALD HERE THE SIZE OF A PLOVER'S EGG!
THE VASE IS NOW RESTING, DELICATELY, ON A VELVET PILLOW.
THERE IS A JEWEL-ENCRUSTED KEY HERE!
THERE IS A LARGE SPARKLING NUGGET OF GOLD HERE!
THERE ARE DIAMONDS HERE!
THERE ARE BARS OF SILVER HERE!
THERE IS PRECIOUS JEWELRY HERE!
THERE ARE MANY COINS HERE!
THE PHARAOH'S TREASURE CHEST IS HERE!
THERE IS A LARGE NEST HERE, FULL OF GOLDEN EGGS!
:QUIT
YOU SCORED 0220 OUT OF A POSSIBLE 0220, USING 0203 TURNS.

```

If the game author had shaved a few bytes off that damn maze, maybe he could have put in a nice little "congratulations!" message, but alas; you have to be content with your own satisfaction.

As a final irony, the size of this HTML file, not counting the inlined images, is larger than the original *Pyramid 2000* executable. Just some food for thought, as quantities of RAM in the tens or even hundreds of megabytes becomes commonplace, and storage devices range into the tens of gigabytes. You kids today. Back when I got started with computers, we had only had 16 kilobytes of RAM, and the only "drive" we had was a cassette recorder that operated at 300 baud! Oh well, I'll shut up before some *real* old-timer starts yapping to me about punch cards, or someone has Charles

Babbage's corpse exhumed and shipped to my door.