

Ultra Tetris Documentation

Opening formalities

Before we go any further, we need to get some formalities out of the way. The program is Shareware, and although I had a lot of fun and learned a lot writing this program, I ask that you make a small contribution in the neighborhood of \$10 dollars if you enjoy playing the game (use the simple order form on the next page.) In return, you'll become a registered user, feel good inside, and I'll send you instructions on activating the game's hidden features.

Order Form

In order to make registering as painless as possible, I have included a simple form for you to fill out.

Name:

Address:

Where did you get this program?

What other computers do you own?

Mail to:

Tim Truesdale
1618 Highland
Glendale Heights, IL
60139

Thank you!

Loading Ultra Tetris

Ultra Tetris assumes that all the files that came in the ARC file are on the same disk, so make sure this is the case before trying to play Ultra Tetris.

Ultra Tetris requires TurboBasic to run, so the TurboBasic disk must be booted first. Make sure there are no cartridges in your computer, then insert the TurboBasic disk in your disk drive, hold down the OPTION key, and turn on the computer.

After TurboBasic has finished loading, and the "READY" prompt is on the screen, type RUN "D:INTRO" and press the RETURN key. The intro to the game will load and run. After watching the fantastic intro (you WILL watch it at least once won't you?), pressing any key will cause the game to be loaded.

Alternately, if you don't want to watch the intro every time, you may start the game by typing RUN "D:ULTRA.BAS" and pressing RETURN.

Selecting a Level

After the load is complete, a title screen and copyright notice will be displayed. After you have read this screen, press any key and Ultra Tetris will finish loading and begin running. The first thing you will see is the list of high scores, along with a list of level

numbers and their relative difficulties. Levels 0 to 4 can be selected from the high score screen, but levels 5 to 9 must be reached by playing the game. Selecting a level from the high score screen

results in a starting score of 1000 times the number of the level, so if you choose level 3 to start at, your score will start at 3000, while starting at level 0 starts you with a score of 0.

Playing Ultra Tetris

After you have selected a level, you are brought to the game screen. It is divided into two basic parts, the score/info line, and the rest of the screen, which is the playing field. The score/info line gives, from left to right, your current score, the number of blocks you have disposed of (more on this in a moment) and your current level. The number of blocks is useful as an indicator of how well you are doing. Crossing a multiple of 100 blocks results in your reaching the next level. The main area of interest in the playing field is the hollow space in the middle, which will fill up with blocks as the game goes on.

About this time, an object made up of three blocks will start falling from the top of the screen. The objects will fall inexorably downward, and will only stop when they run into the bottom of the playing field or are stopped by another block that has previously landed in the playing field. Unlike regular Tetris, the pieces in Ultra Tetris are all long and rectangular, and are made up of only three blocks. There are six colors, and each block can take on any of the available six.

The object of Ultra Tetris is to get at least three of the same color in a row, either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. If

you can get more than three in a row, the extras will be counted also.

Once you have at least three in a row, the set of blocks will

disappear, and any blocks that were on top of them will drop down. Sometimes, this will set up another row of three blocks of the same color, called a "chain reaction". This set will also disappear, and so on until there are no more color matches. Then, another piece starts from the top. This continues until there is no space for the next piece to enter at the top.

HINT: The more "chain reactions" you can set up, the better, because you get the most points for this.

Controlling the Pieces

The keyboard controls are as follows:

(The caps lock should be in caps mode, without inverse video on.)

A - "Rotates" the blocks in a piece. Use this to line up the colors of the falling object to match others that are already in the playing field.

* - (or right arrow key, without the control key pressed) Moves the piece right, until it is blocked on the right by another piece or the right edge of the playing field.

+ - (or left arrow key, without the control key pressed) Moves the piece left, until it is blocked on the left by another piece or the left edge of the playing field.

<Space Bar> - Drops pieces down. Normally, the pieces drop at a

fixed rate. However, to speed the game up and receive bonus points, the pieces can be dropped from any height, down until they hit the bottom of the playing field or another piece.

<ESC key> - Pauses the game. The piece that was dropping becomes gray, indicating the game has been paused. Press <ESC> again to resume the game.

High Scores

If you score enough points to get on the high score table, you will be given the opportunity to enter up to 5 characters to show the world your accomplishment. Type the characters you want, and then

press RETURN. The high score table will then be saved to disk.

If you want to clear out the high score table for any reason, you can delete the high score file, called ULTRASC.DAT, from the disk, via DOS. Ultra Tetris will automatically create a high score file and fill it with default scores if it doesn't find one on the disk. (This will happen the first time you run Ultra Tetris.)

Other info

Ultra Tetris was developed after I played it on an IBM PC and liked the game enough to sit down and write this Atari version. It's nice to know that some of the big, fancy programs that are out there nowadays can still be written to run on 8-bit Ataris.

Thanks to Mark McNiell for some programming help. Also, thanks to everyone who playtested the game and made suggestions. I hope you enjoy playing Ultra Tetris as much as I do, and make sure to watch for other fine software titles from the I.P.C.!