

to be certain of its immediate relevance — but as sure as dragons' eggs are dragons' eggs, you will need it before you are done.

Many Adventures have a small maze in which every room or location is described in identical terms. The only sure way to map your way through such labyrinths is to emulate Hansel and Gretel and lay a trail by dropping objects, thereby uniquely identifying each room. This method has become so well-known that some authors have added extra problems — such as having a thief following you in to discreetly rearrange the objects behind you.

In some Adventures, although you must solve every puzzle and achieve every objective to complete the game successfully, the order in which the mysteries are cleared and the goals are reached is unimportant. This is in contrast to those Adventures where there is only one path to a triumphant conclusion.

A good Adventure may take you hours, even weeks of playing before it yields its secrets. It must allow you to save the state of the game at any time onto cassette or disk, so that you can resume play later. This is also useful when you reach a dangerous part of the Adventure — striding boldly

towards an army of Orcs armed with only a lamp and a bottle of water is asking for trouble. The prudent Adventurer saves the state of the game before striking up a conversation with the Orcs. Then, if the Orcs feel like having the Adventurer for supper, at least the game can be restarted and the Adventurer can try a different course of action — far less vexing than beginning the Adventure again from square one.

Even if the Adventurer is killed, that may not be the end of the journey. Some authors permit the deceased to be brought back to life, often in a puff of orange smoke, sometimes with a loss of possessions and/or points, and always in a less than desirable location, such as the nether-world, or the middle of nowhere.

How do you take part in and communicate with the program? You can be addressed directly or represented by a 'puppet', a character whom you control with commands. The computer acts both as interpreter of your wishes and as narrator. The player enters commands through the keyboard and the computer's responses are displayed on the screen.

Some Adventures display only text on the computer's screen, some purely graphics, others a

Map Reading

In an Adventure game, the player or the character he is representing has to move within some vast terrain or environment — a network of underground passageways is common. Some manufacturers supply hints in the instruction manuals for those who get completely stuck, but the only way to discover the layout is to work your way through it. Such games can take several weeks to complete, so keeping a rough sketch of where you've been and the obstacles you've encountered is essential



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