

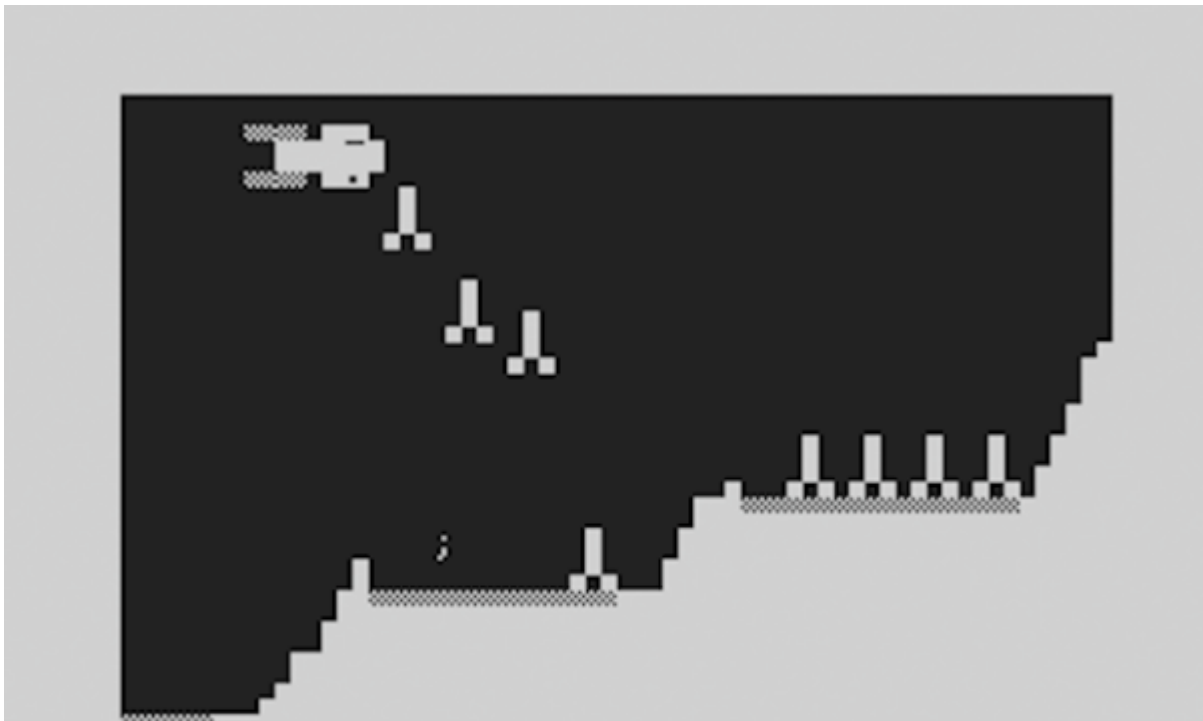
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## TOP TEN ZX 81 GAMES

by **Retro Gamer Team**, 3 February 2014

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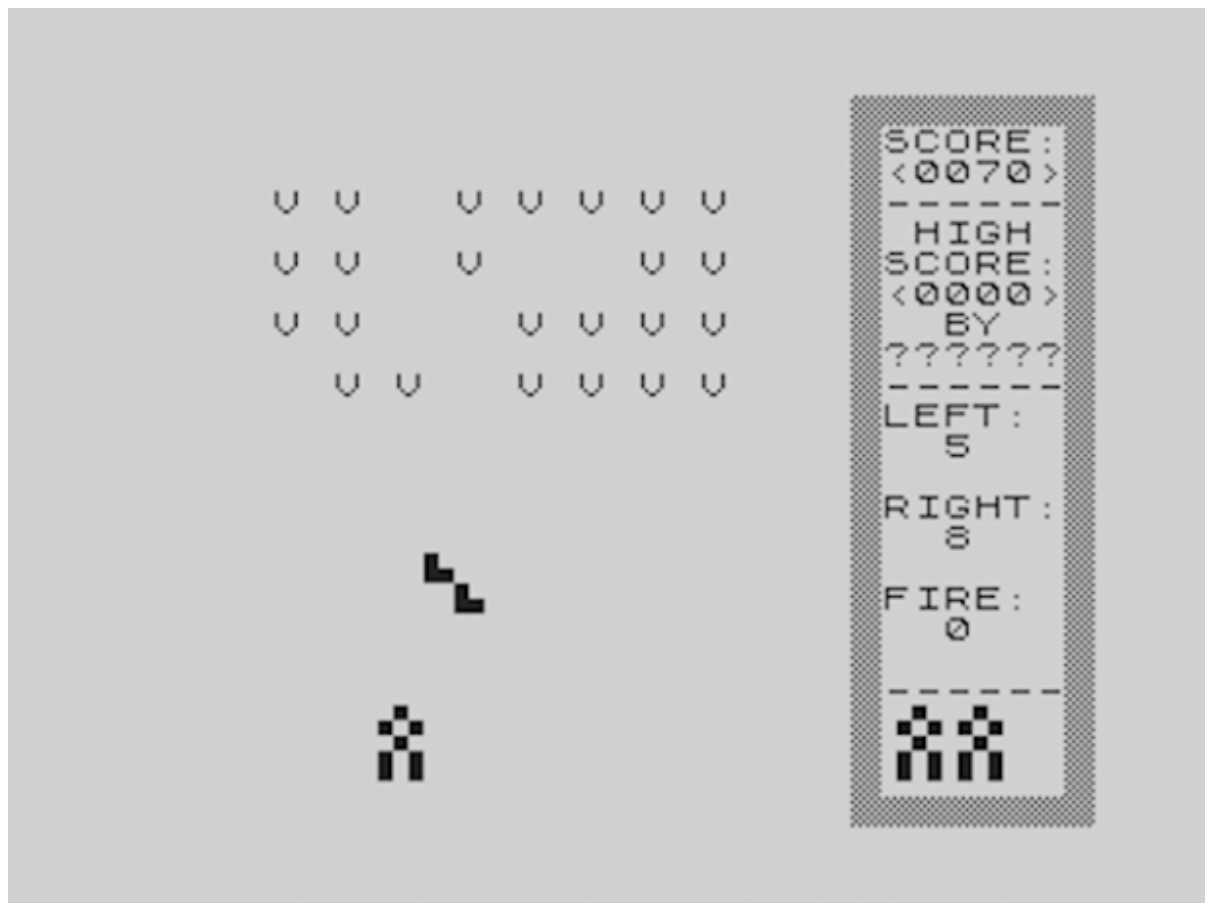
The ZX 81 may have been one of the earliest home computers in the UK, but that doesn't mean it should be ignored. Look beyond its drab looking visuals and you'll find a selection of genuinely brilliant titles that can still captivate some three decades later. Here are ten such examples everyone should get to play.



### Galaxians

**Released:** 1982

There's a slew of Space Invaders and Galaxian clones available on the ZX81 (hardly surprising when you consider the massive popularity of them), but this conversion of Galaxian by Artic is easily one of our favourites. The action is absolutely relentless and you'll have your hands full dodging the many flying enemies and the hail of bullets they constantly bombard you with. Granted, it lacks the same attack patterns from the original game, but, in a way, the complete randomness of the alien attacks simply adds to the excitement, as you never quite know what to expect. This is a superb clone of the hit coin-op and is definitely worth tracking down if you love a good blaster.



### 1K ZX Chess

**Released:** 1983

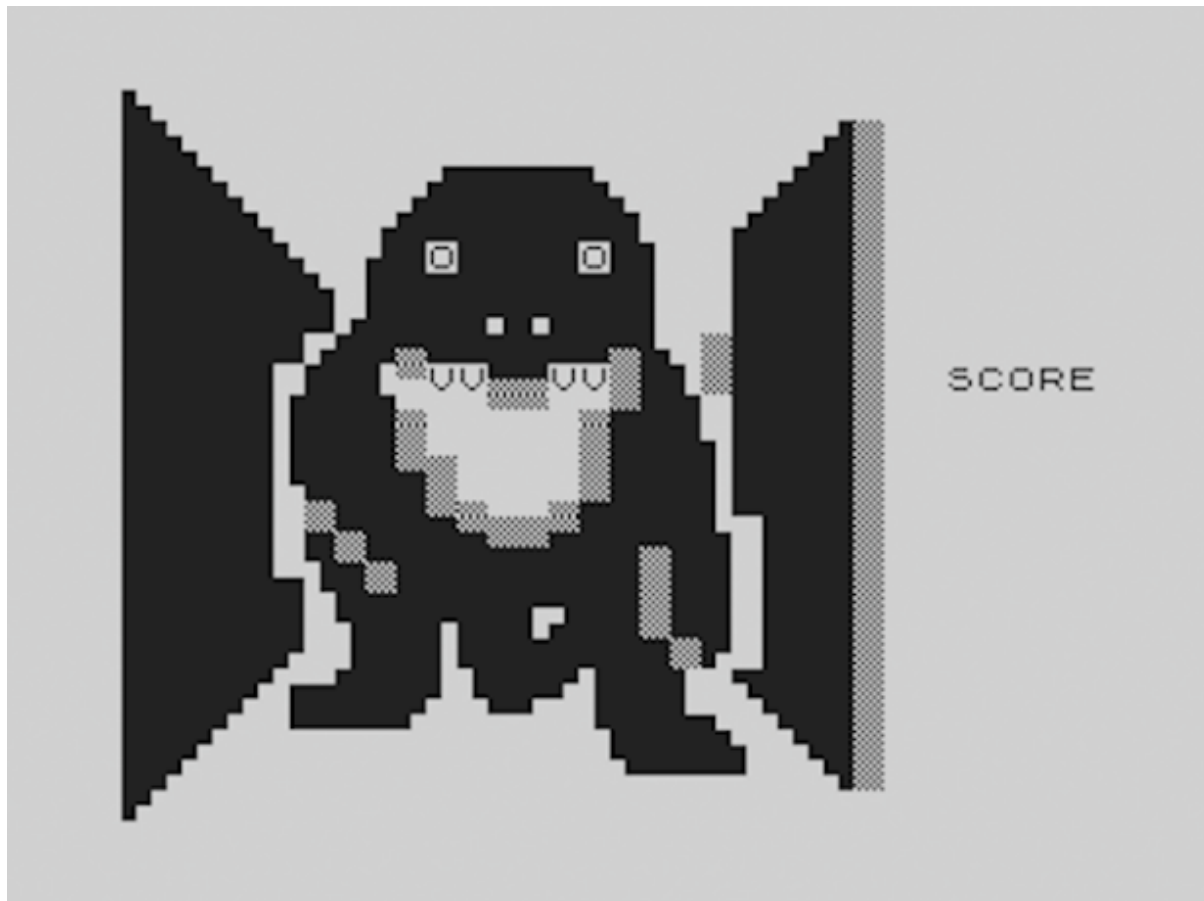
Considering the sheer number of potential moves available in chess, we're amazed to find it so well replicated on the ZX81. Created with less than 1K of RAM (so you can play it without the need for a RAM pack). Okay, so certain rules - queening, castling and en passant capture - didn't make the cut, but this is still a resoundingly solid effort and proves just how talented early coders (in this case, David Horne) actually were. The computer AI takes a fair amount of time to plan all of its moves, but the actual game itself plays a pretty good game of chess, so you can forgive it for the lengthy pauses. A solid adaptation of the classic strategy game.



### 3D Monster Maze

**Released:** 1981

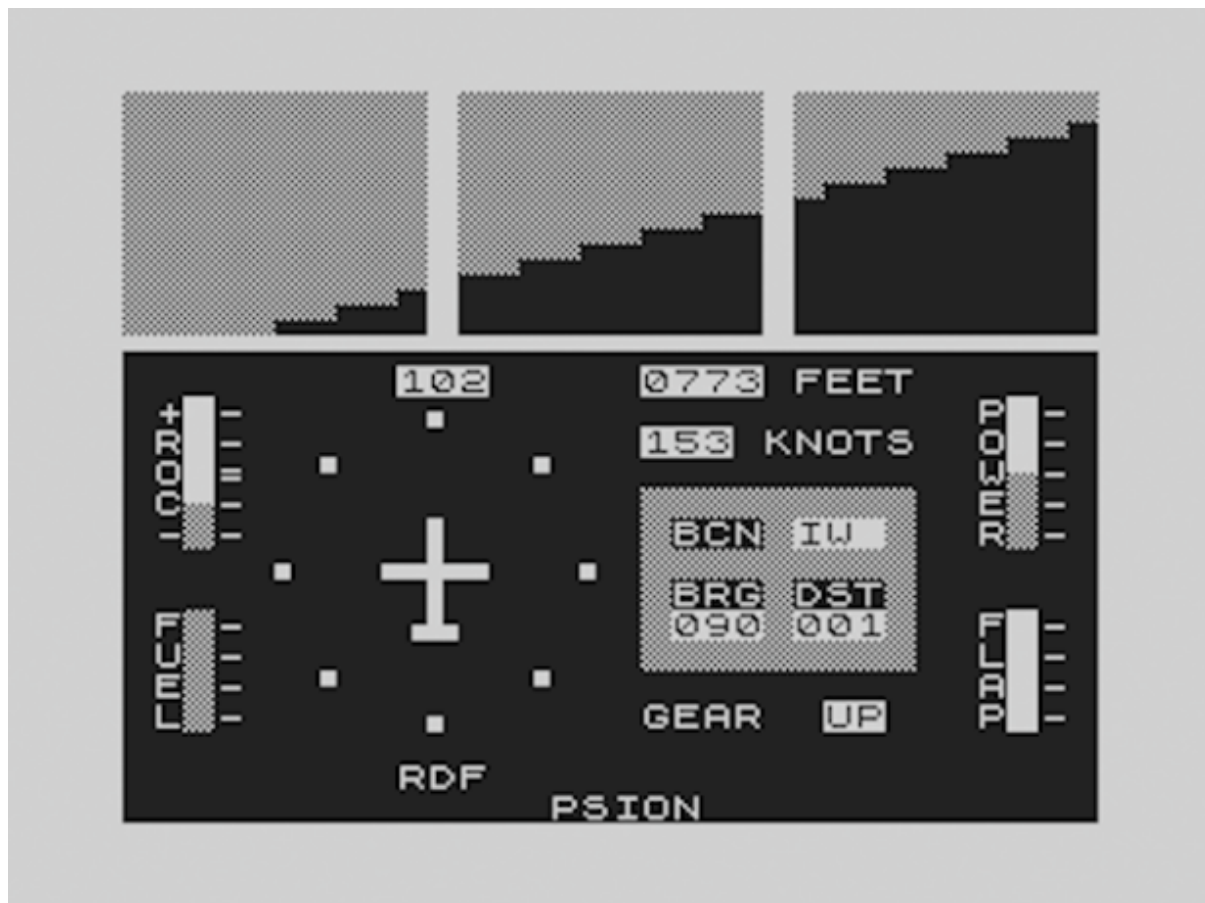
Survival horror may have been a phrase first coined by Resident Evil, but it could've easily applied to Malcolm Evans' massive hit. Boasting sensational visuals and an incredibly slick maze, traversing the huge labyrinth was truly terrifying and scared a generation of gamers. It may have sported a paltry 16K of RAM and no sound, but 3D Monster Maze remained an amazingly atmospheric title, which, in a way, was elevated by its clumsy control system that saw all the arrow keys laid out on a single row. An instant classic that, even today, remains a truly mind-blowing experience. Perfect proof that you don't need state of the art visuals to create a truly great game.



### Flight Simulation

**Released:** 1982

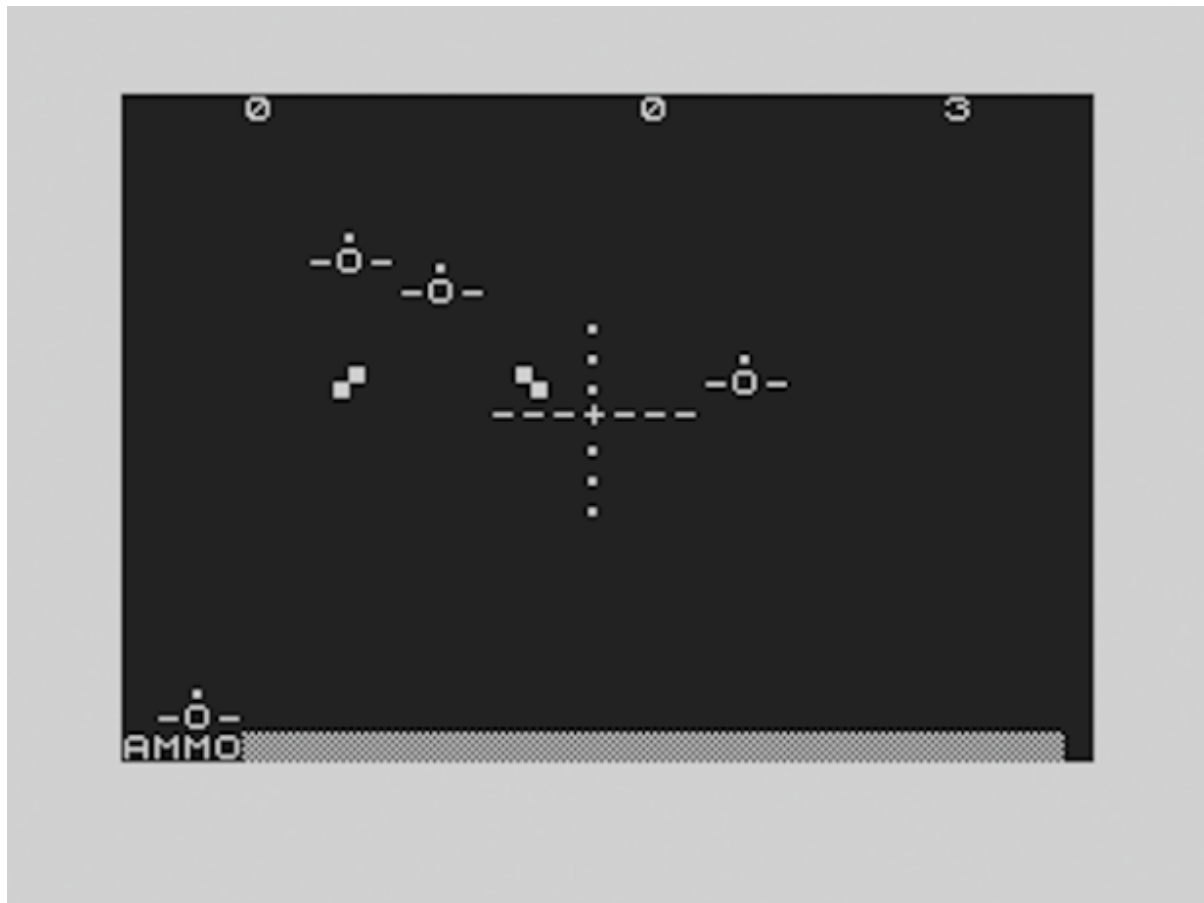
Ask people about their favourite ZX81 game and Flight Simulation almost always charts highly - usually in the number one spot. Maybe it's because you'd sit there making engine noises as your plane flew towards its landing strip, but we'd say that it was mainly due to the fact that it simply looked astonishing on a machine that normally required you to guide an asterisk through a simple-looking maze. While it was possible to just play the exhilarating final approach it was just as fun to simply take to the skies (you could add wind for an extra challenge) and just fly around to your heart's content.



### Night Gunner

**Released:** 1982

Who would've thought that a game made entirely of '-' and '0' signs could turn into one of the ZX81's most enjoyable games? No, we wouldn't have thought so either, but replaying the wonderful Night Gunner reaffirms that this is exactly the case. Moving at a very impressive speed, you fly through the air taking out as many enemy planes as you can before your ammo runs out. Like many ZX81 games it's incredibly simplistic to look at, but our active imaginations easily saw those basic characters as magnificent planes plummeting earthwards as we filled them full of lead. A solid shooter that gave you plenty of bang for your money (even if you couldn't hear the bangs).



### 3D Defender

**Released:** 1981

Like Night Gunner, 3D Defender has you controlling a pair of cross hairs and trying to gun down as many enemies as possible. Unlike Night Gunner, however, 3D Defender is set in space and features some absolutely massive UFOs that really do scare the absolute bejesus out of you as they zoom in and out of your view. It's certainly a lot trickier to control than Night Gunner (you'll spend your first few goes crashing into the ground at every opportunity, and the collision detection is rather iffy), but once everything clicks you'll discover a title that's just as much fun and a hell of a lot slicker. And you really have to see those UFOs. Fantastic stuff.

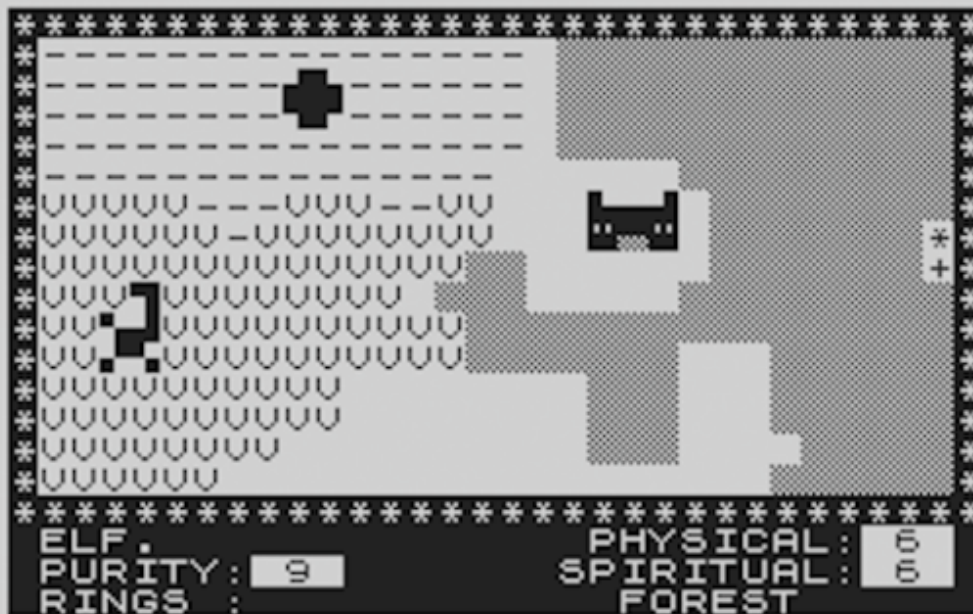


### Black Crystal

**Released:** 1982

Not to be confused with the Jim Henson movie starring ugly puppets, Black Crystal is a great graphic adventure that sees you traversing a variety of different environments to destroy the gem of the title. Spread across six impressive-looking maps, you're given a variety of tasks ranging from retrieving keys to fighting dragons. It's a very entertaining romp that plays up well to the strengths of the ZX81 and delivers a truly immersive experience that many other adventures on the machine simply can't match. It's a little fiddly in places, and it's all too easy to die, but the gripping gameplay will constantly push you forward for one more go.

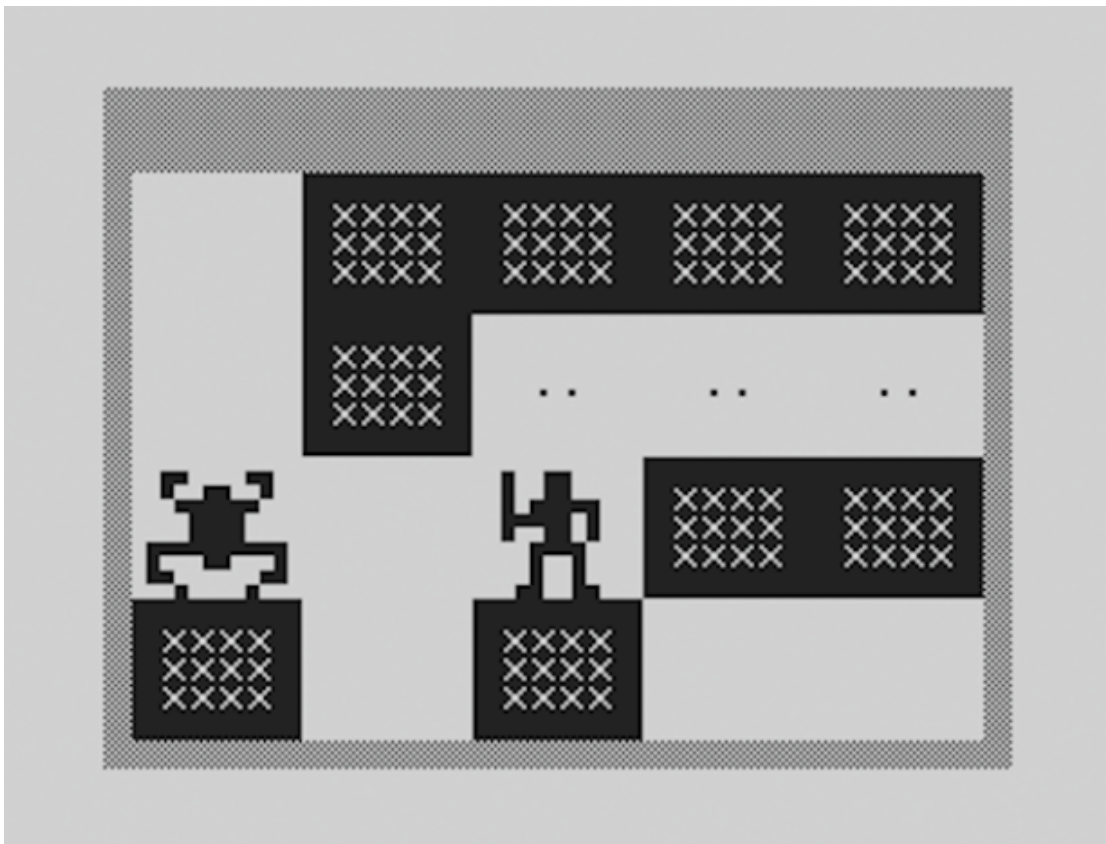




### Mazogs

**Released:** 1982

When Don Priestley's Mazogs appeared on the ZX81 it's fair to say that its arrival was something of a revelation. Featuring absolutely huge characters and set in a massive maze, it was an incredibly slick release that made virtually all its peers look absolutely archaic. With so many maze games featuring dollar signs being chased by asterisks, the huge sprites of Mazogs (created by the Sinclair's Sugar Cube Graphics) certainly left an impression on people. Luckily the game was just as good as its visuals, and many ZX81 owners will, no doubt, fondly remember hurtling through the huge mazes, picking up treasures and using their sword to battle the evil Mazogs.

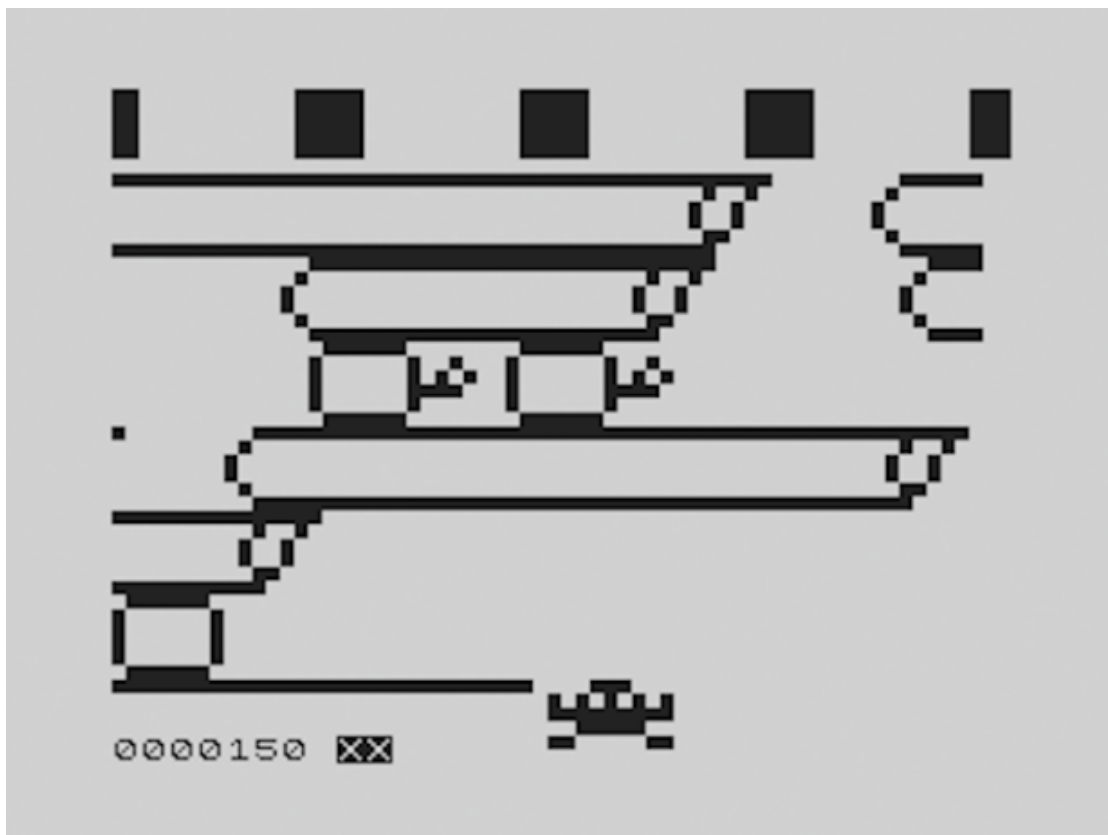


### Frogger

**Released:** 1981

First released in 1981, Frogger is not only an incredibly faithful conversion of the popular coin-op, but it also pelts along at a fair old speed, in short it's a pretty amazing conversion that we're still finding ourselves returning to over three decades on.

Honestly, you'd be forgiven for thinking it's running on another machine. Granted, the original arcade screen has been split into two - the first section has you crossing the road, while the second sees you hopping to your pad - but this is otherwise a fantastic conversion that proves just what feats were possible on the humble home micro.



### The Gauntlet

**Released:** 1982

Considering the rather flaky processor beating away inside the heart of the ZX81 it has churned out a fair few nippy shoot-'em-ups in its time. The Gauntlet is a perfect example, and while it's nothing we've not seen before (it's basically a clone of Konami's excellent Scramble), it is a very slick product that manages to push all the right buttons. It certainly takes quite a while to get used to the huge size of your spaceship, but once you've worked out all of the controls you'll soon be shooting and bombing enemy emplacements with ease. It does get ridiculously tough as the game progresses, but if you're looking for a classy blaster you'll be hard-pressed to find anything better than The Gauntlet.



Tags: 1K ZX Chess, 3D defender, 3D monster maze, black crystal, flight simulation, frogger, galaxians, mazogs, night gunner, Sinclair, the gauntlet, zx 81

## TOP TEN DRAGON 32 GAMES

by **Retro Gamer Team**, 31 January 2014

37,030 views

5 comments

The Dragon 32 is often derided by other 8-bit gamers, but this is unfair as it has plenty of interesting games on it. As well as notable classics like Chuckie Egg and Jet Set Willy, it also has some great exclusives. Here are just ten games that every Dragon 32 owner needs in their collection.