

The Game of Blackguard

This paper describes how to play Blackguard and gives a few hints for those who might otherwise get lost (or killed) in the Dungeons of Doom.

1. INTRODUCTION

You have just finished your years as a student at the local fighter's guild. After much practice and sweat you have finally completed your training and are ready to embark upon a perilous adventure. As a test of your skills, the local guildmasters have sent you into the Dungeons of Doom. Your task is to return with the Amulet of Yendor. Your reward for the completion of this task will be a full membership in the local guild. In addition, you are allowed to keep all the loot you bring back from the dungeons.

In preparation for your journey, you are given an enchanted weapon, taken from a dragon's hoard in the far off Dark Mountains. You are also outfitted with elf-crafted armor and given enough food to reach the dungeons. You say good-bye to family and friends for what may be the last time and head up the road.

You set out on your way to the dungeons and after several days of uneventful travel, you see the ancient ruins that mark the entrance to the Dungeons of Doom. It is late at night so you make camp at the entrance and spend the night sleeping under the open skies. In the morning you gather your weapon, put on your armor, eat what is almost your last food and enter the dungeons.

2. WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?

You have just begun a game of Blackguard. Your goal is to grab as much treasure as you can, find the Amulet of Yendor, and get out of the Dungeons of Doom alive. On the screen, a first-person view of the room you are in appears. An overview of the rooms you have visited can be seen by clicking the screen.

One of the difference between Blackguard and other fantasy games is that once you have solved all the puzzles in a standard fantasy game, it has lost most of its excitement and it ceases to be fun. Blackguard on the other hand generates a new dungeon every time you play it and even the author finds it an entertaining and exciting game.

3. WHAT DO ALL THOSE THINGS ON THE SCREEN MEAN?

In order to understand what is going on in Blackguard you have to first get some grasp of what Blackguard is doing with the screen. The first-person screen shows your view of walls, floor, and doors. Items and monsters are shown as characters. The overview is a character-based top view of the level. Here is a sample of what a Blackguard overview screen might look like:

```
-----
| .....+#####+
| ...@.....[...|
| .....H.....|
| .....|
| .....|
-----+-----
      ###
      +
```

```
Level: 1   Gold: 0   Hp:12(12)  Ac: 6   Exp:1/0   Vol:36%
Str:16(16) Exp:12(12) Dex:11(11) Wis:14(14) Con:18(18)
Carry:50/170
```

4. THE BOTTOM LINES

At the bottom line of the screen is a few pieces of cryptic information, describing your current status. Here is an explanation of what these things mean:

4.1 LEVEL

This number indicates how deep you have gone in the dungeon. It starts at one and goes up until you get killed or decide to quit. Level 500 is really the maximum, but almost impossible.

4.2 GOLD

The number of gold pieces you have managed to attain.

4.3 HP

Your current and maximum hit points. Hit points indicate how much damage you can take before you die. The more you get hit in a fight, the lower they get. You can regain hit points by moving around. The number in parentheses is the maximum number of hit points you can regain.

4.4 AC

Your current armor class. This number indicates how effective your armor is in stopping blows from unfriendly creatures. The lower this number is, the more effective the armor. Armor class can get lower than zero.

4.5 EXP

These two numbers give your current experience level and experience points. As you kill monsters, you gain experience points. At certain experience point totals, you gain an experience level. The more experienced you are, the better you are able to fight and to withstand magical attacks. You must gain 10 experience points to advance to the 2nd experience level. Now you must double the previous experience point total to advance to the next experience level. (i.e. 20 to get to level 3, 40 to 4...) Every time you advance to a new experience level, your hit points will increase. This is random, so don't expect a lot every time.

4.6 VOL

This is the percentage of what your pack contains. 100% means that your pack is full.

4.7 STR

Your current strength. This can be any integer from 0 to 24. The larger the number, the stronger you are.

4.8 DEX

This is your dexterity. Dexterity gives you the ability to dodge arrow and dart traps more effectively. It also gives you the ability to dodge attacks from monsters (maximum of 18).

4.9 WIS

This is your wisdom. If you are smarter than the monsters, then you have a better chance of defeating them (maximum of 18).

4.10 CON

This is your constitution. Constitution makes up your ability to regain your hit points, once you have been

battered. The higher your constitution (maximum of 18), the faster you will gain back the hit points you have lost.

4.11 CARRY

This is similar to your volume, but tells you the maximum of what you can carry and what you are currently carrying in weight.

5. THE TOP LINE

The top line of the screen is reserved for printing messages that describe things that are impossible to represent visually. If you see a -- More -- on the top line, this means that Blackguard wants to print another message on the screen, but it wants to make certain that you have read the one that is there first. To read the next message, just press a space.

6. THE REST OF THE SCREEN

The rest of the screen is the map of the level as you have explored it so far. Each symbol on the screen represents something. Here is a list of what the various symbols mean:

@ This symbol represents you, the adventurer.

| A wall running north/south.

- A wall running east/west.

+ A door to/from a room.

. The floor of a room.

The floor of a passage between rooms.

* A pile or pot of gold.

) A weapon of some sort.

] A suit of armor.

! A flask containing a magic potion.

? A piece of paper, usually a magic scroll.

/ A wand or staff of magic.

= A magical ring. Can be good or bad.

{ An arrow trap. Loss of hit points.

} A bear trap. Holds you for awhile.
 ~ A teleportation trap. Teleports you to a random room.
 ` A dart trap. Loss of strength.
 \$ A sleeping gas trap, watch out for these.
 > A trap door leading down to the next level.
 ^ A flee market to exchange gold for objects, or vice-versa.
 \ A trap door that leads down to an invisible maze.
 " A magical pool that does strange things to wielded objects.
 % The staircase leading down to the next level.
 : A piece of food or zany fruit.
 , AMULET OF YENDOR.
 a-Z There are 52 inhabitants of the Dungeons of Doom.

7. COMMANDS

Commands are given to Blackguard by pressing single letters and arrow keys. Some commands can be preceded by a count to repeat them (i.e. typing 10s will do ten searches) The list of commands is rather long, but it can be read at any time during the game with the ? command. Here it is for reference, with a short explanation of each command:

?	The help command. Asks for a character to give help on. If you type a *, it will list all the commands, otherwise it will explain what the character you type does.
/	This is the What is that on the screen? command. A / followed by any character that you see on the level, will tell you what that character is. For instance,
typing	/@ will tell you that the @ symbol represents you, the player.
h, H	Move left. You move one space to the left. If you use upper case, H, you will continue to move left until you run into something. This works for all movement commands. (i.e. L means run in direction l)
j, J Down	Move backward.

k, K	Move forward.
Up	
l, L	Move right.
y, Y	Move diagonally forward and left.
u, U	Move diagonally forward and right.
b, B	Move diagonally backward and left.
n, N	Move diagonally backward and right.
Left	Turn left. With shift key twice.
Right	Turn right. With shift key twice.
f	Move forward until you pass something interesting or run into a wall.
t	Throw an object.
z	Zap an object with a staff or wand.
D	Dip an object in the magic pool.
>	If you are standing over the passage down to the next level, this command means to climb down.
<	If you have found the Amulet of Yendor, then you have the ability to climb back up a level, hopefully your way out.
s	Search for traps and secret doors. Examine each space immediately adjacent to you for the existence of a trap or secret door. There is a large chance that even if there
is	something there, you won't find it so you might have to search a while before you find something.
.	Rest. This is the do nothing command. This is good for waiting and healing."
i	Inventory. List what you are carrying in your pack.
I	Selective inventory. Tells you what a single item in your pack is.
q	Quaff. Drink one of the potions you are carrying.
r	Read. Read one of the scrolls in your pack.
e	Eat food. Take some food out of your pack and eat it.

w	Wield a weapon. Take a weapon out of your pack and carry it. You must be wielding a weapon to use it (except to throw things). To fire an arrow, you must wield the bow. You can only wield one weapon at a time.
W	Wear armor. Take a piece of armor out of your pack and put it on. You can only wear one suit of armor at a time.
T	Take armor off. You can't remove armor that is cursed.
P	Put a ring on your finger. You can only wear two rings at a time.
R	Remove a ring from your finger. Cursed rings are hard to remove.
d	Drop an object. Take something out of your pack and leave it lying on the floor. Only one object can occupy each space.
O	Examine and set options. This command is further explained in the section on options.
^l	Redraws the screen. Useful if spurious messages or transmission errors have messed up the display.
^r	Repeat last message. Useful when a message disappears before you can read it.
^[command.	This is the escape key. This will cancel the last command.
a	Reports your encumbrance. This is the weight factor of your pack. The heavier your pack is weighted down with objects, the less effective you are in an attack and the more food you'll eat.
c	Call an object. You can call an object anything you like.
v	Prints the program version number.
Q	Quit. Leave the game. This is the chicken-way out.
S	Save the current game in a file. Blackguard won't let you start up a copy of a saved game, and it removes the save file as soon as you start up a restored game. This is to prevent people from saving a game just before a dangerous position and then restarting it, if they die. Sorry no linking, copying, moving, or anything.
Mouse	Toggle overview.
F10	Toggle mute.

8. DEALING WITH OBJECTS

When you find something in the dungeon, it is common to want to pick the object up. This is accomplished in Blackguard by walking over the object. If you are carrying too many things, you won't be able to pick the object up. Otherwise, the object will be added to your pack and you will be notified of what you just picked up.

Many of the commands that operate on objects must prompt you to find out which object you want to use. If you change your mind and don't want to do that command after all, just press an escape key and the command will be aborted.

9. ROOMS

Rooms in the dungeons are either lit or dark. If you walk into a lit room, the entire room will be drawn on the screen as soon as you enter. If you walk into a dark room, you will only be able to see the spaces immediately next to you. Upon leaving a dark room, all objects inside the room are removed from the screen.

10. FIGHTING

If you see a monster and you wish to fight it, just attempt to run into it. You also may throw things at it or zap it with a wand or staff. Many times a monster you find will mind its own business unless you attack it. It is often the case that discretion is the better part of valor.

Smart monsters have the ability to run when they realize that their lives are endangered. This will be denoted that you have wounded the monster.

Monsters will avoid lit traps. You can use this to your advantage, if you figure out how. If the traps are not lit, they can fall through them as you would. The hard part is trying to get them to fall through a trap that you don't know is there.

11. ARMOR

There are various sorts of armor lying around in the dungeon. Some of it is enchanted, some is cursed and some is just normal. Different armor types have different armor classes. The lower the armor class, the more protection the armor affords against the blows of monsters. If a piece of armor is enchanted or cursed, its armor class will be higher or lower than normal. Here is a list of the various armor types and their normal armor class:

+-----+

TYPE	CLASS
LEATHER ARMOR	8
RING MAIL	7
STUDDERED LEATHER ARMOR	7
SCALE MAIL	6
PADDED ARMOR	6
CHAIN MAIL	5
SPLINT MAIL	4
BANDED MAIL	4
PLATE MAIL	3
PLATE ARMOR	2

12. WEAPONS

There may be many different types of weapons lying around in the dungeon, probably left there when their previous owners ran into a monster they couldn't handle. In order to fire arrows and crossbow bolts you must be wielding the bow or the crossbow. Rocks are effective when thrown but can be even more dangerous when hurled with a sling. Daggers can be used as stabbing weapons or they can be thrown. Beware of cursed weapons, they will not work as well as normal or enchanted weapons and once you wield them, you will be stuck with them until you can get the curse removed. Staves and wands are special weapons. They need not be wielded for you to use them.

13. POTIONS AND SCROLLS

Left by the wizard Yendor, the potions and scrolls found in the dungeon constitute a mixed blessing. By drinking or reading these magical items, the intelligent adventurer can greatly increase his chances of survival. A few of them can backfire on the unwary player, causing everything from a weakening sickness to the creation of an angry monster.

14. OPTIONS

Due to variations in personal tastes and conceptions of the way Blackguard should do things, there are a set of options you can set that cause Blackguard to behave in various different ways.

14.1 SETTING THE OPTIONS

There are basically two ways to set the options. The first is with the O command of Blackguard, the second is with the BLACKGUARDOPTS environment variable.

14.2 USING THE O COMMAND

When you press O in Blackguard, it clears the screen and displays the current settings for all the options. It then places the cursor by the value of the first option and waits for you to type. You can type a RETURN which means to go to the next option, a - which means to go to the previous option, an escape which means to return to the game, or you can give the option a value. For string options, type the new value followed by a return.

14.3 USING THE BLACKGUARDOPTS VARIABLE

The BLACKGUARDOPTS variable is a string containing a comma separated list of initial values for the various options. Thus to set up an environment variable so that the name is set to Tom Terrific, the fruit is cherry, and your save file is fun, use the command:

```
BLACKGUARDOPTS="name=Tom Terrific,fruit=cherry,file=fun"
export BLACKGUARDOPTS
```

14.4 OPTION LIST

Here is a list of the options and an explanation for each one. The default value for each is enclosed in square brackets:

- o NAME [LOGIN NAME] This is the name of your character. It is used if you get on the top ten scorer's list. It should be less than eighty characters long.
- o FRUIT [JUICY-FRUIT] This should hold the name of a fruit that you enjoy eating. It is basically a whimsy that the program uses in a couple of places.
- o FILE [BLACKGUARD.SAV] The default file name for saving the game. If you are disconnected by accident, Blackguard will automatically save the game in this file. The file name may contain the special character ~ which expands to be your home directory.

15. SAVED GAMES

This is how one would restore a saved game:

```
blackguard blackguard.sav
```

This is how one would read the top ten score list of Blackguard:

```
blackguard -s
```

16. SYNOPSIS

Blackguard is a game with the object being to survive the attacks of various monsters and gather a lot of gold. To get started, you really only need to know two commands. The command ? will give you a list of the available commands and the command / will identify the things you see on the screen.

To win the game (as opposed to merely playing to beat other people high scores) you must locate the Amulet of Yendor which is somewhere below the 35th level of the dungeon and get it out.

When the game ends, either by your death, when you chicken-out by quitting, or if you (by some miracle) manage to win, Blackguard will give you a list of what was in your pack and will give you a list of the top ten scorers. The scoring is based upon how much gold you get. If for some reason you manage to win, then the stuff in your pack is also worth points. The better the stuff, the more points you'll get. There is a 10% penalty for getting yourself killed.

17. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rogue was originally conceived of by Glenn Wichman and Michael Toy. Super-Rogue 9.0 was developed by Robert D. Kindelberger and a co-worker possibly known as Dr. S.

18. FILES

- o blackguard: Blackguard game (object)
- o Blackguard score file search for as follows:
\$BLACKGUARDHOME/blackguard.scr
/var/games/roguelike/blackguard.scr
/var/lib/roguelike/blackguard.scr
/var/roguelike/blackguard.scr
/usr/games/lib/blackguard.scr
/games/roguelik/blackguard.scr
blackguard.scr:
- o blackguard.sav (user defineable): Blackguard save file

19. BUGS

As of the release of this memo, there are no known bugs. Going past level 500 would be suicidal.

20. SHORT REFERENCE OF COMMANDS

?	prints help	/	identify object
h	left	H	run left
j	down	J	run down
k	up	K	run up
l	right	L	run right
y	up & left	Y	run up & left
u	up & right	U	run up & right
b	down & left	B	run down & left
n	down & right	N	run down & right
i	inventory pack	I	one item inventory
w	wield a weapon	W	wear armor
a	encumbrance	O	examine/set options
c	call object	R	remove ring
d	drop object	P	put on ring
e	eat food	T	take armor off
q	quaff potion	Q	quit game
r	read a scroll	S	save game
v	program version number	D	dip object in magic
pool			
z	zap a wand or staff	s	search for traps
t	throw something	f	forward until find
.	rest for a while	>	go down a staircase
<	go up a staircase	^r	repeat last message
^l	redraw screen	^[cancel last command
Arrows	move and turn	Mouse	toggle overview
F10	toggle mute		

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