

# Getting Started

1. Download DarkUnknown.zip and unzip it anywhere on your system. Given that you are reading this document you may have already completed this step.
2. Open darkunknown.html in a web browser. Currently only Firefox is supported. If one of those is your primary browser you can simply double click on darkunknown.html, otherwise you will need to use File->Open or just drag it into a new tab.
3. Create your character. All choices made here are purely cosmetic—your choice of gender and appearance will not change any game content.
4. Watch the Introduction! It helps set the stage.
5. Journey Onward! Note that you will need to make sure that the browser tab is active—if you are seeing the game but it isn't responding, try clicking in the window to give it focus.

## Movement

In The Dark Unknown, you can only move in the cardinal directions. To move, use the Arrow Keys for the direction you would like to travel. (Additionally, for those who grew up on the Commodore as I did and would like the old school flavor, the [;/' keys will also serve.)

The same keys function when traversing a menu or the stats screen. In a menu, up and down will change selection, enter or space will select, and ESC will back up. In the stats screen, up and left will go back a page while down and right will go forward.

## Commands

Below is a list of commands that can be executed by pressing the listed key. Note that unlike some games of this type, not every key on the keyboard is used!

**A – Attack.** When used on one of the world maps, you engage a group of monsters in combat and are taken to a zoomed in battle map where the combat takes place. Hitting Attack will bring up a prompt for direction. You can press ESC to change your mind or a movement key to

choose a direction. When in any zoomed in map—towne, dungeon, combat maps, and so on, Attacking will bring up a target cursor. If you select an adjacent enemy (and here adjacent includes on the diagonal!), you will attack with a melee weapon. If the enemy is more distant, you will try to use your equipped ranged weapon, if any. You cannot shoot at a distant enemy if there are any enemies adjacent to you.

**C – Cast.** Requires a spellbook. If you have one, pressing Cast will bring up the spellbook showing which spells you have learned. Use the arrow keys to select a spell, and cast it if you have enough mana. Some spells will prompt you for further choices, like a direction or a target.

**D – Descend.** Go down a ladder or flight of stairs.

**E – Enter.** Enter townes, dungeons, castles, and other locations; this command will also work when standing on a ladder or stair to take you between floors of a building or dungeon.

**G – Get.** Pick up gold or items you find in your adventuring. You will be prompted for a direction—pressing Enter will take something you are standing on top of. There is no weight or item limit to your inventory.

**I – Infuse.** Infusion is a more powerful and dangerous form of spellcasting, a lost art that was only taught to initiates who showed great promise. If you have been taught how, infusing a spell casts a more powerful version of it at the cost of additional mana.

**K – Klimb.** Go up a ladder or flight of stairs.

**L – Look.** Identify items, terrain, or creatures around you. Looking does not take time, so you don't need to worry about it taking up your turn.

**CTRL-L – Load Game.** Brings up a menu of your saved games. Press the number for the game you wish to load. (Two of your save slots are special: slot 0 is always taken up with an autosave that occurs when you change maps, and slot 9 is always the most recently created character.)

**M – Music.** Toggles the music on and off. The Options menu allows a more fine-tuned control of the music.

**O – Open.** You will get a prompt for a direction- the arrow keys will choose a direction, ENTER will bring up your inventory. Either way, select something to try to open. Note- Use will always Open something, but Open only works on things that make sense.

**CTRL-O – Options.** Opens an options menu that can be configured to taste. There are more details on this later in this guide.

**P – Push/Pull.** Some items and pieces of furniture can be pushed and pulled. If there is space for it, the object in the specified direction will be pushed away from you. Otherwise you and the object will swap positions.

**Q – Quit and Save.** Named such for legacy reasons (and because S is taken by another command), really it just saves the game. Brings up a menu of save slots for you to choose between. Note that you cannot save in slots 0 and 9, as they are special (see **Load Game** above).

**CTRL-Q – Export Save.** Opens a new window which contains a saved game. You will need to copy/paste the text of the saved game somewhere and save it yourself. To re-import it, use the Import Save option on the title screen. Exporting and importing your saves is primarily for if you want to move a saved game to a different computer, or make a backup.

**S – Search.** Makes a careful inspection of something next to you. Might find a secret door, a trap on a chest, or an interesting item in a bookshelf. (Unlike just Looking, Searching takes time as you are closely inspecting your target.)

**T – Talk.** Brings up a target cursor. Select someone within 3 spaces that looks interesting to speak to. Saying BUY or SELL to a merchant will bring up a menu to make a transaction. See **Hints** below for more on conversations!

**U – Use.** Prompts for a direction. If you press an arrow key, will try to use an item or object next to you in that direction, including opening and closing doors and chests. If you instead press Enter, will show your inventory and allow you to select an item from there to use.

**V – Volume.** Toggles the sound effects on and off. The options menu allows a more fine-tuned control of the sounds.

**W – Wear/Wield.** Equip a weapon, missile weapon, or some armor. Will automatically take off whatever you are replacing. Note that some weapons and armor require a minimum amount of dexterity or strength to use.

**Y – Yell.** You will be given the opportunity to type in any word and will call it out. You never know who or what might be listening.

**Z – Zstats.** Brings up the stats screen for your character. This screen has five pages, for your stats, inventory, known spells, and current effects and afflictions that are on your character. Use the right and left arrow keys to move between pages.

**\_ – Space Bar.** Passes your turn.

## Your Character

A character has three main stats: **Strength**, **Dexterity**, and **Intelligence**. All three stats start at 10. Each can be raised as high as 25 by being trained, or to 30 by finding magical stat raising artifacts in your adventures. These are tracked separately, so if you have raised your Intelligence to 24 by training alone and then find a magic orb that raises it to 25, you will still be able to raise it one more point through training.

### MAIN STATS:

**Strength** – Strength depicts your physical prowess, and primarily dictates two things. The first is that it increases the damage dealt by melee weapons. The amount of benefit varies by the weapon—a dagger sees very little benefit for increasing your strength, while a mace sees a great deal. The other benefit to strength is that it is a prerequisite for wearing heavier forms of armor. It is necessary to raise your strength before you will be able to wear anything heavier than leather armor.

**Dexterity** – Dexterity is your speed and reaction time. A higher dexterity will mean you will take your turn more often relative to the other creatures on the same map. It will also make you harder to hit and more likely to dodge attacks. Finally, dexterity increases your accuracy with

missile weapons and raising your dexterity is a prerequisite to using any ranged weapon better than a sling.

**Intelligence** – Intelligence is your wit and smarts. It dictates your maximum mana, and some spells have their power increased by a higher intelligence. Additionally, to cast a spell requires that you have a minimum intelligence of three times its level. Therefore, it is necessary to raise your intelligence before you can cast any spells of fourth circle or higher.

#### **OTHER STATS:**

**Hit Points** – This is a measure of your current health. Your maximum hit points increase as you go up in level. Damage reduces your hit points, and time and healing increase it. If you reach 0 hit points, you will die.

**Mana** – Mana is used to power spells. Each spell costs mana equal to its level to cast, unless cast from a scroll (in which case it is free, but consumes the scroll). Mana regenerates over time, or can be restored with sleep or potions. Your maximum mana is dictated by your Intelligence.

**Gold** – The currency of the realm. Can be exchanged for goods and services. Get gold by exploring dungeons, fighting monsters, and selling to merchants.

**Experience** – Experience points, or XP, are a measure of advancement. You start at first level and will reach second level when you have gained 100 experience points. Thereafter the threshold to reach each new level doubles. Eighth level is the highest level obtainable, and requires 6400 experience points.

**Training Points** – These are gained when you gain a level, and can be spent at trainers to increase your stats by one for each point so spent. Trainers can be found in the throne room of Castle dea Olympus.

**Karma** – Though having good karma is not necessary to complete the game, your karma is tracked. Evil acts will lower your karma, which can make it more difficult to gain XP, while good and beneficial acts will raise your karma, which will let you level more quickly. You may

additionally find that there is some benefit to raising your karma. You will have to use your own judgement when trying to gain karma.

## Combat

Combat is an important part of an adventuring career in the lands of Ellusus. Most things that you encounter in dungeons and on the world map will be hostile, and will need to be defeated!

When you attack or are attacked by creatures on the world map, you will be moved to a smaller map for the actual combat. The layout of that map will vary depending on what terrain the combatants were standing on when the fight began. Walking off the edge of that map will return you to the world map. Note that fleeing a fight where there are still combatants, once your adventuring career is underway, is considered cowardice and may cost you karma. (A level one character can flee freely, but will have trouble gaining enough experience to reach level two if they do not fight.)

The actual combat takes place in close-up maps: combat maps, dungeons, occasionally even towns. To attack an enemy, press **A**—on these maps, this will bring up a target cursor. Select the foe you wish to attack and press **A** again, or **Enter**. If the enemy is next to you, either orthogonally or diagonally, you will swing your melee weapon (or fists, if you have no weapon equipped). If you target an enemy farther away, you will try to use a ranged weapon, but for this to work you have to both have one equipped *and* there cannot be a nearby enemy to interfere.

Your chance to hit is a contest between your attack value and your opponent's defense. Attack is influenced by your strength for a melee weapon or dexterity for ranged, your level, and bonuses from spells and other effects. Defense is based on dexterity, armor, and again spells and effects. If you hit, you will deal damage based on your weapon. Once the damage dealt exceeds its hit points, it will die, and you gain experience points for killing it! (Try not to let the reverse happen to you.)

When a creature dies, there is a chance that it will leave behind a chest of treasure, a corpse (if it was humanoid), or just a splatter of blood. Be careful with chests—they can be trapped! (A high dexterity or the Disarm Traps spell can help you avoid them. Sometimes searching will allow you to find them before they go off.) Corpses and even blood can have minor treasures as well—**(S)earch** them as well to check.

## Options

Pressing **O** will bring up an Options menu, where you can toggle certain facets of the game. Here the options are explained in full.

**Play Music** – Turns the game’s music on and off.

**Loop Music** – Has no effect if the music is off. If it’s on, this dictates whether the song playing will loop when it is finished, or if music will stop until a different song would play.

**Play Sound** – Turns the game’s sound effects on and off. Music will still play if music is turned on but sound is turned off.

**Ambient Sound** – Has no effect if the sound is off. If it’s on and this is turned on, certain objects and places in the game will play a soft ambient sound effect, like a fountain or waterfall.

**Move Opens Doors** – If YES, having your movement blocked by a closed door will cause the door to be opened if it is unlocked. If NO, a door must be **(U)sed** explicitly to open it.

**Move Attacks/Talks** – If YES, having your movement blocked by monsters on the world map will be treated as **(A)ttacking** in their direction, and having it be blocked by a friendly towns person will be treated as **(T)alking**.

**Sticky Targeting** – If YES, an attack or spell that requires a target cursor will have that cursor start over whatever creature was most recently targeted. If NO the cursor will always start over the player character.

## Hints

**Talk to everyone!** Be sure to Talk to everyone you can. Only by talking to the inhabitants of each towne and settlement will you be able to

piece together what you need to know to complete your quests. Be prepared to talk to some people more than once, as others may send you to ask them about new and interesting things. If there is something you want to know, ask around! If you're not sure what to do next, make sure you've explored each town thoroughly- some people may be hiding off the beaten paths.

Anyone who will speak with you will respond to NAME and JOB. A merchant will also let you BUY, and might be willing to let you SELL things you have acquired in your adventuring. In addition, words in blue are subjects that they have more to say about, so be sure to ask about those! When you are done talking to someone, say BYE or just hit enter to end the conversation.

**Take notes!** The Dark Unknown has no in-game journal. Write things down to keep track of the clues and quests you have obtained in your journeys. If you forget something, you can always ask for the information to be repeated.

**Don't be afraid of death!** Dying carries no penalty except that you will be transported back to a safe place. So go ahead and take some risks!

**Explore, explore, explore.** Fully investigate the townes and castles, peek into side passages in dungeons and caves. You never know what you might find or learn. When exploring the surface world, keep in mind that traveling along the roads is faster than crossing the wilderness, and you can sometimes outrun foes that might be chasing you this way. In addition, monsters will usually stay away from cities or fortifications that might have guards.

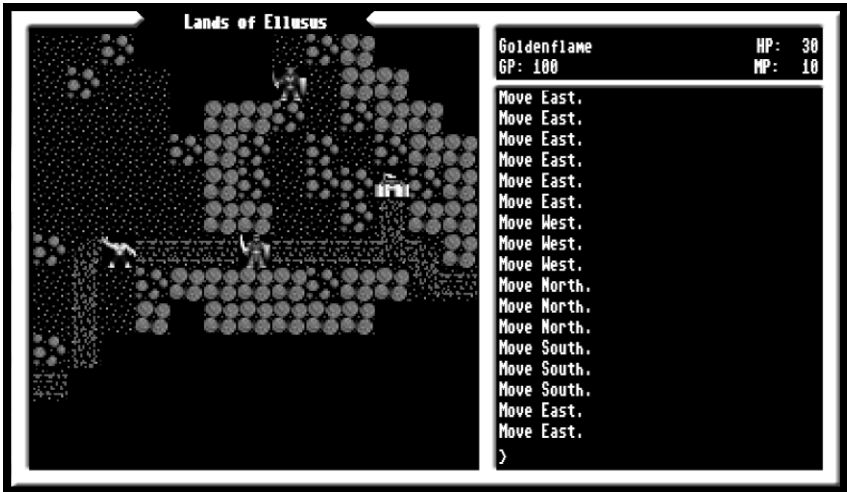
**Not all XP comes from fighting.** You should not expect to be able to complete the game without combat, but you will also gain XP from helping the people you meet.

**A word on Magic and Time.** Each step you take on the world map takes as much time as one hundred steps in a town, as befits the fact that you can cross an entire town in two steps on the world map. This means that many spells that provide a benefit in combat will expire after a single step in the wider world. Similarly, if you are poisoned or otherwise afflicted with something dealing you damage slowly over



time, if you leave combat or a dungeon without removing it, the affliction will probably immediately run its course, dealing you the rest of the damage seemingly at once.

## Game Screens



Here, a new character has wandered along the road a ways. At the top we see the name of the map they are on: in this case, the Lands of Ellusis, which is the main world map. Looking at the main viewscreen, there's a town to the east, and monsters to the north and west. (Monsters that this character would have trouble handling!) On either side of the character are forests, which block some of his view.

In the upper right is the character screen. Clockwise from the upper left, it shows your character's name, current hit points, mana, and gold. It will also display letters that represent what afflictions and effects you may have on you, like being poisoned or blessed. You can always get a fuller description of these effects by checking your ztats.

The last window is the log of commands you've executed and their results. Here, this is just a lot of Move commands. This window also includes your conversations, as seen on the following page:



Here, Goldenflame is talking to the herbalist in the refugee towne of Poverty. We can see not only some of the conversation, but a glimpse of how buying from a merchant looks.

You can get more information about your character on the stats screen, accessed by pressing Z.



This shows you more than the character screen in the upper right does. Your hit points and mana are shown with their relevant maximums, and

you can see your stats, your current level and XP, and whether you have any Training points to spend. Training points are acquired when you gain a new level and can be spent with trainers to increase your stats.

Lastly you can see your current weapon and armor (in this case, our hero does not have a missile weapon equipped). Looking at your armor, Defense is how much less likely your enemy is to hit you at all. If they do hit, Absorb is how much of the damage the armor will absorb for you. Resist is instead the resistance to magic that the armor provides—your starting armor provides none.

Hitting Right and Left from this screen will bring up the other pages of your stats—your inventory, your spellbook, and what spells and other effects (such as poison or disease) are currently aiding or afflicting you.

Thank you for playing, and I wish you good fortune on your journeys in Ellusus!

