

Microsoft Age of Empires Trial Version Readme File

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Welcome to the Microsoft Age of Empires Trial Version!

This file contains information to help you install the Age of Empires Trial Version on your computer, as well as late-breaking information about the game.

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A. Hardware and System Requirements

- Personal computer with a Pentium 90 or higher processor.
- Microsoft Windows 95 operating system, or Windows NT Workstation 4.0 with Service Pack 3.
- 16 megabytes (MB) of RAM for Windows 95, or 24 MB of RAM for Windows NT (or Windows 95 for an 8-player multiplayer game).
- 80 MB of available hard disk space.
- 50 MB of free disk space for swap file.
- Local Bus SVGA video display (with 1 MB of VRAM).
- Keyboard and Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device.
- Double-speed CD-ROM drive for gameplay (quad-speed CD-ROM drive for cinematics).
- Windows-compatible sound card with speakers or headphones to hear audio.
- 28.8-Kbps (or faster) modem for head-to-head play.

B. Starting the Age of Empires Trial Version

To start the Age of Empires Trial Version, click the Start button, point to Programs, point to Microsoft Games, point to Age of Empires Trial, and then click Age of Empires Trial.

You can skip the opening cinematics by clicking the mouse or pressing ENTER, SPACEBAR, or ESC.

C. Getting Help

Age of Empires Trial Version provides online and popup Help.

To display online Help:

On the Age of Empires Trial Version menu, click **Help**. Or, from within the game, press **F1**, or click the **Menu** button on the menu bar and then click **Help**. To return to the game from online Help, click the **Game** button.

To display popup Help:

Click the ? button in the lower-right corner of the game screen, and then click an item on the screen. To display online Help from popup Help, click the **More Help** button.

Note: The Help in the Age of Empires Trial Version is the the Help used in the retail version of the game. Not all Help topics are relevant to the Trial Version.

D. DirectX Troubleshooting

DirectX version 5 must be installed on your computer before you can play Age of Empires Trial Version. If you do not have DirectX installed on your computer and you chose not to install DirectX when you installed the Age of Empires Trial Version, you will receive the message "A required .dll file, Dplayx.dll, was not found." To fix this problem, reinstall Age of Empires Trial Version and install DirectX 5.

If you experience sound or video problems using DirectX, connect to the DirectX Web site for the latest troubleshooting information. To do this:

1. Connect to <http://www.microsoft.com/directx/default.asp>
2. At the Web site, click the **DirectX Pavilion** button.
3. On the left side of the Web page, click **Games**.
4. Click **DirectX Games FAQ**.

You should also check with your video or sound card manufacturer for the latest DirectX-compatible drivers.

E. Gameplay Troubleshooting

- **Technology Trees** -- The technology trees for each civilization are in the Docs folder where the Age of Empires Trial Version was installed. The technology trees have been provided primarily for you to print and may be difficult to read online. Each technology tree should print on a single page. If you are using WordPad to print, you may need to reduce the width of the margins to fit each technology tree on a single page.
- **Tribute** -- You must build a Market before you can Tribute resources to other civilizations. For more information about the Market and paying Tribute, see Age of Empires Trial Version online Help.
- **Phoenician Villagers** -- Phoenician villagers can carry more wood than other civilizations.
- **Unit Range** -- The range of Elephant Archers, Watch Towers, Sentry Towers, Guard Towers, Ballista Towers, and Priests is slightly higher than documented on the Technology Tree Foldout and in online Help.

F. Video Troubleshooting

- **Horizontal Line** -- Matrox video adapters may cause a horizontal line to appear in Age of Empires Trial Version. To fix this problem, you can add the **Mfill** parameter to the command line in the Age of Empires Trial Version shortcut. For information about adding parameters to the command line, see "Command Line Parameters" under "Performance Troubleshooting" later in this Readme file.
- **Mouse Pointer** -- Some video adapters may not display the custom mouse cursor correctly. To fix this problem, you can add the **NormalMouse** parameter to the command line in the Age of Empires Trial Version shortcut. For information about adding parameters to the command line, see "Command Line Parameters" under "Performance Troubleshooting" later in this Readme file.

- **Mouse Pointer** -- If you are using Windows NT 4.0 Service Pack 3 with ATI Mach 64 drv 3.1.76, the mouse cursor may not appear when you start Age of Empires Trial Version. To fix this problem, you can add the **NormalMouse** parameter to the command line in the Age of Empires Trial Version shortcut. For information about adding parameters to the command line, see "Command Line Parameters" under "Performance Troubleshooting" later in this Readme file.
- **Diamond-Shaped Map** -- If you are using Windows NT 4.0 Service Pack 3 with ATI Mach 64 drv 3.1.76, the diamond-shaped map may not appear correctly as you scroll to different map locations. To fix this problem, you can open any dialog box to repaint the diamond-shaped map so it is displayed correctly.
- **DirectX** -- If you experience video problems using DirectX, connect to the DirectX Web site for the latest troubleshooting information, as explained in "DirectX Troubleshooting" earlier.

G. Audio Troubleshooting

- **Music/Sound Volume** -- Certain hardware configurations may cause the **Sound Volume** to control the volume of both the Age of Empires Trial Version music and sound effects.

To turn off the music and change the volume of the sound effects:

1. Click **Menu** on the menu bar, and then click **Game Settings**.
2. Set the **Music Volume** to the **Off** position.
3. Adjust the **Sound Volume** to set the sound effects to the preferred volume.

- **DirectX** -- If you experience audio problems using DirectX, connect to the DirectX Web site for the latest troubleshooting information, as explained in "DirectX Troubleshooting" earlier.

H. Performance Troubleshooting

- **Sound Blaster AWE 64 Adapters** -- Sound Blaster AWE 64 adapters in certain hardware configurations may cause Age of Empires Trial Version to lock up after several minutes of gameplay. To fix this problem, be sure you are using the latest drivers. If Age of Empires Trial Version continues to lock up, add the **Msync** parameter to the command line in the Age of Empires Trial Version shortcut and to the Age of Empires Trial Version registry for multiplayer games using the Internet Gaming Zone. For information about adding parameters to the command line, see "Command Line Parameters" under "Performance Troubleshooting" later in this Readme file.

Game Performance

The following items affect overall game performance (listed from most to least impact):

- The more moving units (villagers, military units, and boats) on the map, the greater the impact on game performance. Combat, particularly with missile weapons, such as archers, Ballistas, and catapults, also affects performance.
- The faster the game speed, the greater the impact on game performance.
- The faster the scroll speed, the greater the impact on game performance. In a multiplayer game, scroll speed does not affect overall game performance, except on the slowest computer.
- Other applications running while you are playing Age of Empires Trial Version decrease game performance. Close other applications before you start Age of Empires Trial Version.

Multiplayer Game Performance

The following items should be noted in addition to the preceding list to improve game performance in multiplayer games:

- The fewer players in the game, the faster the game will run. Game performance is slower in an 8-player game than in a 2-player game.
- The player with the fastest computer should be the host, even if there are no computer players. A little extra work is done on the host machine.
- Multiplayer games run only as fast as the slowest machine in the game. To see which players are experiencing internet latency or frame rate problems, click the **S** button in the lower-right corner of the game screen to display the player scores and the following information:

If a player's frame rate drops below 15 frames per second, a turtle appears beside the name of the player with the slowest system. If the frame rate of more than one player drops below 15 frames per second, a turtle is shown only beside the name of the player with the slowest system. The player can try to improve performance, as explained throughout this section, or drop out of the game.

If you are connected to a multiplayer game across the Internet, a yellow or red symbol appears beside the names of players with whom you have a slow connection (yellow = latency of 300 milliseconds to 1 second; red = latency greater than 1 second). To decrease the latency problem, the player can try to reestablish the Internet connection and restart the game.

- Other applications running while you are playing Age of Empires Trial Version decrease game performance. If you are connected to a multiplayer game through the Internet Gaming Zone, once the game starts, you can press ALT+TAB to display and close your Web browser. Your Web browser does not need to be running after you are connected to a game through the Internet Gaming Zone.

Command Line Parameters

You can add parameters to the Age of Empires Trial Version command line to customize startup or resolve problems with certain hardware configurations.

To add parameters to the command line in the Age of Empires Trial Version shortcut:

1. If you are using Windows 95, click the **Start** button, point to **Settings**, click **Taskbar**, click **Start Menu Programs**, click **Advanced**, and then double-click **Programs**.
-or-
If you are using Windows NT, right-click the **Start** button, select **Open All Users**, and then double-click **Programs**.
2. Double-click **Microsoft Games**, and then double-click **Age of Empires Trial Version**.
3. Right-click the **Age of Empires Trial Version** shortcut, click **Properties**, and then click **Shortcut**.
4. In the **Target** text box, type the name of the parameter after the existing command line text. For example, if you add the parameters **NoSound** and **NormalMouse**, the command line will read: "C:\Programs\Microsoft Games\Age of Empires Trial Version\Empires.exe" Nosound Normalmouse. Parameters must be separated by a space; capitalization is not important.

To add the **Msync** parameter to the Age of Empires Trial Version registry for multiplayer games using the Internet Gaming Zone:

1. Click the **Start** button, and then click **Run**.
2. Type **Regedit**, and then click **OK**.
3. Double-click **Hkey_local_machine/Software/Microsoft/DirectPlay/Applications/Age of Empires Trial Version/CommandLine**.

4. In the **Value data** text box, type the name of the parameter after the existing command line text. For example, if you add the parameters **NoSound** and **NormalMouse**, the command line will read: "Lobby Nosound Normalmouse." Parameters must be separated by a space; capitalization is not important. Be sure not to remove the word "lobby" from the command line.

The command line parameters include:

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- **Mfill** -- Fixes horizontal line problem that may occur with some Matrox video adapter configurations.
- **NormalMouse** -- Replaces the custom mouse pointer with a standard mouse pointer.
- **NoSound** -- Turns off all sounds, except those played in cinematics.
- **NoMusic** -- Turns off all music.
- **Msync** -- Fixes lock-up problem that may occur with some SoundBlaster AWE configurations.

I. Head-to-Head Play Troubleshooting

- **Multiplayer with Eight Players** -- If you are playing a multiplayer game with eight players, performance is best with the minimum system requirements of a Pentium 90 processor and 24 MB of RAM for each player. The game creator should have the most powerful computer and the most RAM.
- **Multiplayer Performance** -- If you experience performance problems during a multiplayer game, see "Performance Troubleshooting" earlier in this Readme file.
- **Modem Connections** -- You do not receive a busy signal if you join a multiplayer game using the connection type **Modem Connection for DirectPlay** and the phone line of the host computer is busy.
- **Microsoft Internet Gaming Zone** -- The Microsoft Internet Gaming Zone currently supports only Microsoft Internet Explorer but is in the process of adding support for other browsers.
- **Multiple IP Addresses** -- If other players are not able to connect to a game you have created by typing the IP address that displays when you click the **IP** button on the **Multiplayer Create Game** screen, you may have multiple IP addresses. You can display all of your IP addresses by running Winipcfg.

To run Winipcfg:

1. Click the **Start** button, and then click **Run**.
2. Type **Winipcfg**, and then click **OK**.
3. Select **PPP Adapter**. The correct IP address is displayed in the **IP Address** box.