

Purpose

FAQ is an acronym for Frequently Asked Questions. This FAQ is an attempt to provide a comprehensive source of information about the game Chiral, and was created in response to questions that are frequently raised by our customers. We hope you find it useful.

If there are any questions you have about Chiral that are not answered in this FAQ, please get in touch with us so we can include them in future revisions.

Credits

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Thanks to: David Freitas

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FAQ History

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General

[Q] - What is Chiral?

[A] - A fusion between the scientific concept of atomic bonding and the addictive game play of Tetris, Chiral is based upon the ill fated tale of Molecular Tendencies Laboratories. Attempting

to develop a new form of "clean energy," molecular chemists have created a machine that fabricates atoms out of thin air; or in the case of heavy atoms, not so thin air. Unfortunately for the chemists in the lab, and mankind in general, once the reaction has started there is no way to stop it. The result is the introduction of unattached, unstable atoms into our atmosphere. So much for clean energy, we should have stuck with windmills and water wheels. As an acting participant in this experiment gone wrong, the player must stabilize these newly formed atoms to avoid further turmoil in this already strife ridden world of ours.

Chiral has six separate difficulty settings and twenty four levels of puzzling play, for a grand total of 144 screens of mind boggling fun and excitement. A combination of high resolution 256 color graphics, funky digitized sound effects and addictively puzzling game play, Chiral continues Ambrosia Software's commitment to pulse quickening, high quality Macintosh games.

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[Q] - What computer do I need in order to play Chiral?

[A] - Chiral works on any Macintosh with a 256 color display and at least 2.3Mb of free memory. Chiral does work on 12" color monitors.

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[Q] - Who makes Chiral and how can I get in touch with them?

[A] - Chiral is published as shareware by Ambrosia Software, Inc., a Macintosh-only, shareware-only company. The game itself was written by Trevor Powell and Andrew Welch. To get in touch with Ambrosia, you can use any of the following methods:

Ambrosia Software, Inc.
PO Box 23140
Rochester, NY 14692

Tel: 716.325.1910 (technical support)
800.231.1816 (orders only)

Fax: 716.325.3665

America Online: AmbrosiaSW
CompuServe: 74777,1147
eWorld: AmbrosiaSW
GEnie: AmbrosiaSW
Internet: AmbrosiaSW@AOL.com

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[Q] - Where can I obtain Chiral?

[A] - The latest version of Chiral is always available in the Ambrosia Software, Inc. forums on the following services:

- America Online: While you are signed on AOL, choose Keyword... from the GO TO menu, type AMBROSIA and hit the return key.

- eWorld: While you are signed on eWorld, choose Go to Shortcut... from the PLACES menu, type AMBROSIA and hit the return key.

- CompuServe: While you are signed on CompuServe, use GO word AMBROSIA to reach the Mac Vender D area, where Ambrosia Software, Inc. maintains a forum.

- Internet: Maelstrom can be found at the following sites:
mac.archive.umich.edu: /mac/game/arcade/chiral1.0.cpt.hqx
sumex-aim.stanford.edu: /info-mac/game/arc/chiral-10.hqx

And last but not least, you can obtain Chiral from us for \$5.00 to cover shipping & handling. You place your order by sending us a check via US mail, faxing us your credit card number & expiration date, sending us your credit card number & expiration date via electronic mail, or calling our 800 number order line: 800.231.1816.

If you'd like a full color brochure featuring each of Ambrosia's products sent to you free of charge, simply drop us an eMail or call us at 716.325.1910 and we'll get it right off to you. Make sure you include your full name, address, and country when requesting a brochure.

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[Q] - What is the latest version of Chiral?

[A] - The current version of Chiral is 1.0.1, dated 7/25/95.

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[Q] - How much does Chiral cost, and how do I pay for it?

[A] - Chiral costs \$15 US funds. Chiral has an integrated registration system that allows you to easily register it a number of ways: cash/check/money order/credit card via US mail, credit card via fax, or credit card via eMail. Simply launch Chiral, and click on the Register... button in the splash screen that appears. You'll be painlessly lead through the registration system.

Ambrosia Software, Inc. also has a toll free order line. If you wish to purchase Chiral, you can use your Visa or Mastercard and call 800.231.1816. If you are calling outside the US/Canada region, or need technical assistance, please call 716.325.1910.

We will process your order right over the phone, and give you a license code immediately. We will also take orders for sending disks with the Ambrosia Software products you are

interested in, so that you can try them out and decide if you would like to purchase them (see below for more information).

After we have processed your registration, you will receive a license code that you enter to complete the registration process. This code removes the shareware notices and personalizes your copy of the product.

To enter your license code, simply double-click on the Ambrosia Software product for which you have purchased a license. A shareware notice will come up on the screen, with a few buttons along the bottom. To enter your license code, click on the Enter Code... button, and make sure you enter all of the license information exactly as it is shown. That's all there is to it.

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[Q] - Why should I register (pay for) Chiral?

[A] - We're attempting to offer high quality products at a low price, on a "try before you buy basis." Supporting us by registering Chiral -- assuming you like the game -- is the only way you can ensure that we will continue to produce more high quality software distributed as shareware.

Beyond that, you will receive a license code that removes the shareware notices and personalizes Chiral with your name, giving you a legal copy of Chiral on your Macintosh.

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[Q] - My license code is invalid; what's wrong?

[A] - The license code you were sent is based on your name as you gave it to us when you registered. Make sure that you are entering your name exactly as it appears on your registration confirmation. If you still have a problem with your license code not working, please get in contact with us and we will take care of the situation for you.

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[Q] - Will there be future versions of Chiral?

[A] - We consider Chiral a "done" work. We will of course continue to maintain the game by fixing bugs and adding ancillary features, but we will not be making changes to the basic game itself.

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Game Play

[Q] - What is Chiral Basics?

[A] - Chiral Basics is an instructional application for Ambrosia's award winning puzzle game Chiral. Using interactive media, Chiral Basics walks you through the layouts, game play and strategies needed for Chiral. Chiral Basics has five different chapters, each containing an interactive lesson on one aspect of the game. Chiral Basics starts out with an introduction to the game itself, covers the fundamentals of molecular construction, describes the different attributes of each atom, and sums it all up with some helpful hints for those sticky situations that we all get ourselves into.

Chiral Basics is included with Chiral 1.0.1, or can be downloaded separately if you already have a copy of the game.

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[Q] - What are all of the elements on the screen, and what do they do?

[A] - There are essentially two main elements on the screen that are used for game play. The Playfield is the large area in the middle of the screen, and the Vial runs along the right side of the Playfield.

You place atoms in the playfield by clicking anywhere within using your mouse. The bottom atom in the Vial will be placed where you have clicked. Using this method, you need to place atoms in such a way (depending on which atoms you get, they fall into the Vial randomly) that you build a complete, satisfied molecule.

Other elements you will see when playing are the Schzapp indicator, Score box and Bonus box. A schzapp is similar to an extra life. It will clear the Vial of atoms in the event it overflows. If you have no Schzapps and the Vial overflows, you loose the game. The Schzapp indicator will also tell you how many molecules you need to build to complete the level.

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[Q] - How do I play Chiral?

[A] - Each level in Chiral is introduced by the requirements you need to polish off before you can go on to the next level. This consists of forming a certain number of molecules that are composed of a certain number of atoms. Complete these requirements and you are on your way to the next level!

Each atom has a dot pattern representing the number of bonds it needs to form. In order to clear assembled molecules from the screen and score points, every atom in each new molecule must be "satisfied." To be satisfied each atom must have all of its bonds fulfilled. An atom with three dots must have bonds to three other atoms to be truly satisfied, an atom with one bond may only bond with one other atom, and so on.

Atoms bond automatically to other atoms that are on the playfield, you simply need to strategically place the atoms so that they satisfy each other's bonds. A molecule is formed when all of the atoms in that molecule are bonded together and satisfied. When you form a molecule, it is removed from the playfield, and points are added to your score. Additionally if the molecule was big enough (ie if it had enough atoms in it), you'll be that much closer to reaching your goal for that level.

Atoms drop into the vial periodically (how quickly they fall is dependent on the skill level you have chosen), your task is to place these atoms on the playfield so that they bond together to form molecules. The bottom-most atom the in vial is always the atom that will get put on the playfield when you click the mouse button to place it. Watch that vial though -- if the vial overflows with atoms, the game is over!

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[Q] - What do all of the special atoms do?

[A] - Here is a list of the special atoms in Chiral.

- Heavy Atoms: These atoms look like granite version of the regular atoms, and they behave the same way in all respects but one: once you have placed one of these suckers, you can't move it later on. Place 'em carefully!

- Speed Atoms: These atoms are just like the regular atoms, but they have a little bunny embossed on them. Funny thing is, as long as they are on the playfield, the atoms fall into the vial faster! Best get rid of these guys soon by building them into a molecule!

- Multiplier Atoms: Once again, these guys are regular atoms with a twist: they have a x2, x3, or x4 embossed on 'em, and if you use them in a molecule, they multiply the score you receive for it!

- Mystery Atoms: These appear as grey atoms with question mark's on 'em (?). They behave like regular atoms, but you don't know how many bonds they need until you experiment a bit!

- Radioactive Atoms: These nasty atoms destroy all of the atoms they touch. They can be handy for getting rid of atoms that are cluttering up your playfield, but be careful not to destroy the molecule you've been working so hard to build!

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[Q] - How are the scores calculated in Chiral?

[A] - You get points for forming stable molecules with the atoms you place. The more atoms that are in a molecule, the more points you get for it. You also get bonus points for completing

levels successfully, and a speed bonus for clearing the levels quickly.

Your score is also dependent on the skill level you are playing on -- the higher the skill level, the more points you'll score for forming atoms and completing levels.

Bacially, scoring follows simple rules. The bigger the molecule, the better; the faster the molecule is built, the better; and as little stray atoms as possible, the better. Skill level also comes into play, especially with the stray atom penalty. If you are playing on a higher skill level, you will be penalized more for stray atoms.

For the algebraically inclined, here are the scoring formulas:

When you complete a molecule:

$(\# \text{ bonds}) \times (\# \text{ atoms}) \times (\text{multiplier factor}) \times (\text{skill level})$

whereas:

bonds = the number of bonds in the completed molecule

atoms = the number of atoms in the completed molecule

multiplier factor = The value of any multiplier atoms in the molecule

skill level = the factor of the skill level (fresh., soph., etc.)

When you complete a level:

$(\text{level bonus}) + (\text{speed bonus}) - (\text{stray atom penalty})$

whereas:

level bonus = $(\text{level number}) \times (\text{skill level})$

speed bonus = the remaining bonus from the level

stray atom penalty = $(\# \text{ of bonds possible}) \times (\text{level bonus})$

The stray atom penalty is the one you want to watch, especially at the higher levels. The potential bonds that are possible of all the remaining atoms is used, so a purple atoms (four bonds) are worse than the blue atoms (one bond).

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[Q] - What is a Schzapp?

[A] - You start off with one Schzapp when you start playing Chiral, and you can earn more later on if you manage to complete the occasional bonus round in time. If your vial gets filled to overflowing with atoms, usually the game is over. However if you happen to have a Schzapp or two, it'll blast those atoms to bits and you'll start out with an empty vial, and a bit more time to complete your molecules. Handy things, those Schzapps.

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[Q] - How can I pause or abort a game?

[A] - The Caps Lock key pauses Chiral while you are in the middle of a game, allowing you to take a breather or switch out to another application if you desire. To resume a game after you've paused it, simply depress the Caps Lock key.

The ESC (escape) key aborts the game you're playing. This is not a "quit" key, but an "end the game because the pizza's here" key. It is only operational when you are playing the game.

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[Q] - Do you have any hints or tips for playing Chiral?

[A] - Oh yeah!

- Learn where atoms should be in a molecule. For instance, a purple molecule, which has four bonds, works best in the middle of a molecule, whereas a green or red one will work better on the edges. Blue atoms are useful for filling in extra bonds.
- Switching atoms is the key to Chiral. Once you place an atom, it is **not** necessarily there to stay. You cannot move atoms around, but you can switch them around to move them to better positions.
- Learn to toss aside atoms that you do not need immediately. You can always switch them into your molecule later on if you need them.
- Stray atoms can be cleaned up easily with a radioactive atom. But, they will need to be close to each other in order for the radioactive atom to zap them all away.
- A Schzapp is like an extra life. It clears your vial of atoms when it overflows. When you get to a Schzapp round, don't worry about stray atoms or pretty molecules. Concentrate on filling the requirement for the Schzapp, you will need them later on in the game.
- The edge of the playfield and the red walls can be tricky. Make sure you are placing atoms strategically around the wall mazes. They will fit, but only in a certain fashion.
- Use special atoms wisely. You can get many points by using them, but you can also get into some trouble. The Speed atom, if not placed in a soon to be completed molecule, should be cleared away

with a radioactive atom as soon as possible.

- Spend 10 minutes and go through Chiral Basics to learn the fundamentals.

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Compatability

[Q] - When I start Chiral, a paused screen appears and it makes a funny sound; what's wrong?

[A] - Congratulations, you've found Chiral's pause function! Chiral uses the Caps Lock key for pausing the game; simply depress the Caps Lock key and you'll be able to continue playing Chiral.

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[Q] - Does Chiral work on a PowerMac? Is it PowerPC native?

[A] - Chiral works just fine on all PowerMacs. The 68K emulator does a great job with non-native applications. However, it is not currently PowerMac native.

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[Q] - Why does the sound occasionally break up?

[A] - Certain video cards may cause the sound to break up during fades. This is because all video card drivers turn off interrupts while they are changing color table entries, and some video cards do not handle color table changes in an optimal manner. Since interrupts are off while the video card is changing color table entries, the Sound Manager cannot service the sound chip quickly enough, and the sound breaks up.

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[Q] - Will Virtual Memory affect game play?

[A] - If you have virtual memory turned on, it may slow down Chiral's game play. This is unavoidable; the only solution is to turn virtual memory off before playing Chiral.

On slower machines, virtual memory may also cause the sound to breakup or screech on occasion. We recommend against using virtual memory while playing Chiral (or any other game for that matter), but it does work.

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History

[Q] - What does "Chiral" mean?

[A] - Chiral /'kaier(e)l/ adj. Chem. (of a crystal, etc.) not superposable on its mirror image.

From Lederman's The God Particle: "Chiral symmetry is one of these elegant symmetries that describe the early universe--one pattern that repeats and repeats and repeats like wallpaper, but unrelieved by corridors, doors or corners--unending."

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[Q] - What language is Chiral written in?

[A] - Chiral was written in THINK C 5.0.4, and is approximately 25,000 lines of C code.

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[Q] - Who did the artwork for Chiral?

[A] - Mark W. Lewis did the title screen and background artwork. Other artwork, such as the atoms, were done by Andrew Welch.

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[Q] - When was Chiral first released?

[A] - Chiral was first released in April of 1994.

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[Q] - How long did it take to create Chiral?

[A] - The initial (1.0.0) version of Chiral was written by Trevor Powell. After it was acquired by Ambrosia Software, development took about 4 months to refine the code, create and place all of the artwork and sounds, and beta test the program.

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End
