

Microsoft Age of Empires II Trial Version Readme File
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Welcome to Microsoft® Age of Empires® II Trial Version: The Age of Kings™!

This file contains information to help you install the Age of Empires II trial version. It also includes late-breaking information not included in the manual or in-game Help.

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A. System Requirements

- Multimedia PC with Pentium 166MHz or higher processor.
- Microsoft® Windows® 95, Windows 98, Windows NT® 4.0 with Service Pack 5 operating system.
- 32 MB of RAM.
- 90 MB of hard disk space; additional 100 MB of hard disk space for swap file.
- Super VGA monitor supporting 1024x768 resolution.
- Local bus video card that supports 1024x768, 256-color resolution and 2 MB of VRAM.
- Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device.
- 28.8Kbps modem (or higher recommended) for Internet* or head-to-head play.
- Audio board with speakers or headphones.
- To access the MSN Gaming Zone you need Internet Explorer 3.02 or later software or Netscape Communicator 4.0 or later.

*Internet access required for Internet play. May require payment of a separate fee to an Internet Service Provider. Connection time and local telephone charges may apply.

B. Installing the Age of Empires II Trial Version

To install the Age of Empires II Trial Version, you must be using Microsoft Windows® 95 or later or Microsoft Windows NT® 4.0 with Service Pack 5 or later. (For information about how to get Service Pack 5, go to <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/downloads/>).

To install the Age of Empires II Trial Version

1. Turn on your computer and start Microsoft Windows 95 or later or Microsoft Windows NT 4.0 with Service Pack 5 or later.
2. Double-click the AOE2Demo.exe on the CD or in the folder where you downloaded the files, and then follow the instructions that appear on the screen.

C. Starting the Age of Empires II Trial Version

You can connect only to multiplayer games created with the same Age of Empires version you are using. For example, if you are playing the Age of Empires II trial version, only Age of Empires II trial version games appear in the multiplayer list, not Age of Empires or Age of Empires: The Rise of Rome Expansion games.

To start the Age of Empires II Trial Version

- Click the Start button, point to Programs, point to Microsoft Games, point to Microsoft Age of Empires II Trial, and then click Age of Empires II Trial.

D. Trial Version Features

The Age of Empires II trial version gives you a taste of what you'll experience in Age of Empires II.

Included in the trial version:

- The William Wallace Learning Campaign – Whether you are a master at Age of Empires and Age of Empires: The Rise of Rome or completely new to real-time strategy games, the William Wallace campaign will teach you the basics, plus you'll see what's new in Age of Empires II. To play the William Wallace campaign, click Learn to Play on the main menu.

- A Sample Random Map Game – This is the heart of Age of Empires II and the variations are endless. You start in the Dark Ages with just a Town Center, three villagers and a Scout. Build your empire to eliminate your two computer-player opponents. To play, click Random Map on the Single Player menu.
- Four-player multiplayer game – Using another sample Random Map, you can join your friends and battle your enemies on the MSN Gaming Zone. To play a multiplayer game, click Multiplayer on the main menu.

E. Getting Help

Information about Age of Empires II is in the in-game Help.

To display in-game Help

Pause your pointer over any button or interface item in the game and Help text automatically appears on the screen. (To turn off in-game Help, click the Help button near the mini-map in the lower-right corner of the screen.)

F. DirectX Troubleshooting

DirectX® 6.1 or later must be installed on your computer before you can play the Age of Empires II trial version. If you do not have DirectX installed on your computer, you will receive the message "A required .dll file, Dplayx.dll, was not found." To fix this problem, install DirectX 6.1 or later.

The current version of DirectX is DirectX 7.0. If you do not have DirectX 6.1 or later, you should download DirectX 7.0 from <http://www.microsoft.com/directx/>.

If Age of Empires II installed DirectX but could not update your video drivers to be compatible with DirectX 6.1, when you restart your computer you will receive the message "Age of Empires II could not initialize DirectX. Make sure that DirectX 6.1 or higher is installed and contact your hardware manufacturer for a video driver update." To fix this problem, either get updated video drivers from your video adapter manufacturer or install DirectX in safe mode, which will replace the video drivers.

To install DirectX in safe mode

1. Download DirectX 7.0 from <http://www.microsoft.com/directx/>.
2. Click the Start button, and then click Shut Down.
3. Select Restart, and then click OK.
4. When your computer restarts, press and hold down the F8 key until you see a Windows Startup Menu.
5. When you are prompted to enter a choice, select Safe Mode, and then press ENTER.
6. After Windows starts in Safe Mode, open the folder where you downloaded DirectX and run it.

If you experience sound or video problems using DirectX, go to <http://support.microsoft.com/support/directx/> to get the latest troubleshooting information.

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

G. Gameplay Troubleshooting

- Saving Games – You cannot name a saved game using certain operating system terms, such as COM1, LPT1, etc.
- Uninstalling the Age of Empires II Trial Version – If you uninstall the Age of Empires II trial version (to save disk space, for example), but you want to save your Age of Empires II trial campaigns and scenarios, you must click No when the uninstall program asks "Do you want to delete all user-created files?"

H. Video Troubleshooting

- Intergraph Intense 3D 100 Video Adapters – Intergraph Intense 3D 100 video adapters cause the game to crash during the opening cinematic. To resolve this problem, add the command line parameter Nostartup in your Age of Empires II shortcut. For information about adding parameters to the command line, see "Command Line Parameters," under "Performance Troubleshooting," later in this Readme file.
- Intergraph Intense 3D 100 Video Adapters – During gameplay, the bottom game screen border may be corrupt and pink in color. Also, the in-game custom mouse pointer may not be visible. Upgrading to the latest video driver (v. 4.3.0.3133 at the time of this writing) will fix these problems. You may not be able to view the game in 1024 x 768 resolution. To fix this problem, contact your video card manufacturer for the latest drivers.
- Diamond Stealth 3D 2000 – You may experience a black screen when starting the game (you may still hear game sounds and be able to click buttons). If this occurs, contact the video card manufacturer for the latest drivers, or download them at <http://www.diamondmm.com/>.
- Diamond Monster Fusion – You may encounter stability problems when starting a game using this card. If this occurs, contact the video card manufacturer for the latest drivers, or download them at <http://www.diamondmm.com/>. For the latest drivers to function properly, you may need to update your video bios. You can find information about how to do this on the Diamond Web site.

- 9FX Motion 531 – If you are running Windows 95, you may experience any or all of the following: screen corruption of the main menu and New Player dialog box, screen corruption during gameplay when scrolling from left to right and from right to left, and screen corruption as you select different objects on the game screen. If this occurs, contact the video card manufacturer for the latest drivers (<http://www.nine.com/>), or download the S3 Vision 868 reference drivers for the card at <http://www.s3.com/>.
- Hercules Terminator Beast – You may not be able to view the opening video using the retail drivers for this card (although you may be able to hear the sound). If this occurs, contact the video card manufacturer for the latest drivers, or download them at <http://www.hercules.com/>.
- Hercules Stingray 128/3D – If your in-game screen resolution is set to 1024 x 768, you may experience screen corruption and your computer may lock up if you restore a game using ALT+TAB. If this occurs, contact your video card manufacturer for the latest drivers.
- Matrox Millennium II PowerDesk Video Adapters – Your computer may lock up when you change the in-game screen resolution to 1024 x 768. To fix this problem, contact your video adapter manufacturer for the latest drivers.
- Matrox MGA Millennium – You may experience screen corruption when playing with an in-game resolution of 1024 x 768 or when using ALT+TAB in this resolution. To fix this problem, contact your hardware manufacturer for updated drivers.
- Permedia 2 Chipset-based Video Card with Latest 3D Labs Reference Drivers – You may experience screen corruption when playing Age of Empires II using this configuration. To fix this problem, uninstall the reference drivers and contact your video card manufacturer for the latest driver written specifically for your card. Many reference drivers are not supported, and may cause problems with certain applications.
- Sierra Screaming 3D Video Cards – Your computer may lock up when you exit the game. To fix this problem, contact your video adapter manufacturer for the latest drivers.
- Sierra Screaming 3D Video Cards (Rendition Verite 1000) – You may experience screen corruption when your in-game screen resolution is set to 1280 x 1024. If this occurs, exit the game using ALT+F4. Restart the game, and in the Options screen set your in-game resolution to a lower resolution.
- Rage Pro Turbo 2X Video Cards – Rage Pro Turbo 2X video cards may only allow you to use a 640 x 480 screen resolution. The minimum Age of Empires II in-game resolution is 800 x 600. Contact ATI for the latest drivers for your video card.
- Creative Labs Graphics Blaster Exxtreme – Creative Labs Graphics Blaster Exxtreme video adapters may cause screen corruption when you change the in-game screen resolution or press ALT+TAB to enter or leave the game. To fix this problem, check with your video adapter manufacturer for the latest drivers.
- ☛ Voodoo 3 Video Cards – If you are running Windows 2000, your mouse cursor may blink during gameplay. If this occurs, try a lower screen resolution. If this doesn't work, contact your video card manufacturer for the latest drivers.
- Screen flickering – Certain second-party applications may cause a brief flickering of the Age II video palette. Disabling all non-vital applications before running Age of Empires II will increase stability, performance, and visual quality. This problem may occur on some systems with the Creative SBLive! sound card with the Creative LiveWire 2.0 and 2.1 driver sets for this sound card.
- Black Screen After Video – A black screen may appear at the conclusion of the opening cinematic. To resolve this problem, press ESC or click the mouse button. Another workaround is to add the command line parameter Nostartup in your Age of Empires II shortcut. For information about adding parameters to the command line, see "Command Line Parameters," under "Performance Troubleshooting," later in this Readme file.
- Screen Corruption – If you experience problems such as a black screen after starting the game, black areas on the game screen, screen corruption when you press ALT+TAB to enter/leave the game, or other screen problems while playing the game, contact your video adapter manufacturer for the latest drivers.
- Black Screen Areas – Some video adapters may cause black areas on the game screen. To fix this problem, you can add the Mfill parameter to the command line in the Age of Empires II 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 cause the mouse pointer to disappear if you change the in-game screen resolution or reenter the game by pressing ALT+TAB. To fix this problem, contact your video adapter manufacturer for the latest drivers.
- 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 in this Readme file.
- Monitors and Lower-End Video Cards – You may see brief screen corruption or flashing when switching screens in the game. This is a limitation of some older video cards and will not affect game performance or stability.

If you notice screen corruption when switching to a high in-game resolution, this may be due to the limitation of certain monitors

or some older, lower-end video cards that do not support higher resolutions. Use ALT+F4 to exit the game, restart Age of Empires II, and then use the Options screen to switch to a lower in-game resolution.

I. Audio Troubleshooting

- Aztech Direct Sound Driver – You may experience choppy sound on this driver. If this occurs, contact the manufacturer for an updated driver.
- 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 in this Readme file.

J. Performance Troubleshooting

Command Line Parameters

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

To add parameters to the command line in the Age of Empires II shortcut

1. Right-click the Age of Empires II Trial shortcut, click Properties, and then click Shortcut.
2. In the Target box, type the name of the parameter after the existing command line text. For example, if you add the parameters NoStartup and NoTerrainSound, the command line will read "C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Age of Empires II Trial\Empires2.exe" Nostartup Noterrainsound. Parameters must be separated by a space; capitalization is not important.

To add parameters to the Age of Empires II registry for multiplayer games using the MSN 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 II Trial\CommandLine.
4. In the Value data box, type the name of the parameter after the existing command line text. For example, if you add the parameters NoStartup and NoTerrainSound, the command line will read "Lobby NoStartup NoTerrainSound." Parameters must be separated by a space; capitalization is not important. Do not remove the word "lobby" from the command line.

The command line parameters include:

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

Poor Frame Rate

- Voodoo 3 Video Cards – If you are running Windows 2000, you may experience poor frame rate. If this occurs, contact your video card manufacturer for the latest drivers.

K. Multiplayer Troubleshooting

- Best performance – For best performance, connect to the Internet before starting an Internet multiplayer game.
- Age of Empires Versions – In a multiplayer game, all players must be using the same version of Age of Empires. For example, if you are using Age of Empires II trial version, only Age of Empires II trial version games appear in the multiplayer list, not Age of Empires or Age of Empires: The Rise of Rome Expansion games.
- Serial or Modem Connections – You may have difficulty joining a multiplayer game or you may be dropped from a game before it starts when playing over a serial connection or a modem connection. To fix this problem, all players should install DirectPlay® 6.1A or later.

To install DirectPlay by downloading DirectX 7.0

1. Download DirectX 7.0 from <http://www.microsoft.com/directx/> and follow the installation instructions.
2. If you are prompted to restart your computer, do so. Then restart the Age of Empires II trial version.

- Multiple IP Addresses – If other players are not able to connect to a game you have created by typing the IP address that appears when you click the IP button on the Multiplayer 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.
- Multiplayer Performance – If you experience performance problems during a multiplayer game, try playing at a lower screen resolution or have the host set the game speed to Slow in the Multiplayer Game screen.
 - Connection Type – Always select Internet TCP/IP Connection for DirectPlay when starting a multiplayer game over the Internet. (Select the Local (LAN) TCP/IP Connection if you are playing on a private or home network.) If you choose LAN and you are playing on the Internet, the game may hang. If this occurs, restart Age of Empires II and select Internet TCP/IP Connection for DirectPlay.
 - Joining a restored game – If you attempt to join a restored game via direct IP and the game was launched from the Zone, you will not be able to join the game. If a Zone restored game fails, all players should exit the game and rejoin through the Zone.
 - Different modem speeds – If two players have different modem speeds, they will be unable to play with each other. To fix this problem, use the same modem speed as your opponent.
 - Home networks and dial-up connections – If you have a network card and you dial in to the Internet via modem, you may have trouble launching multiplayer games. To fix this problem, unplug the network cable from your network card before connecting to the Internet.

L. Age of Empires II Information

- For more information about Age of Empires II, visit our Web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/games/age2/>.
- If you'd like to play against opponents over the Internet, check out the MSN Gaming Zone at <http://www.zone.com/>.