

Kerkerkruip Beginner's Guide

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1 Introduction

Welcome to *Kerkerkruip*! This beginner's guide will get you up and running in the shortest time possible. If you would prefer to read a more detailed manual, check the in-game help menu. There is also a series of instruction videos available, if you prefer that format.

This beginner's guide has been prepared for the Interactive Fiction Competition 2011. I will assume that you already know how to play parser-based interactive fiction.

2 Roguelike

Unusually for IF, *Kerkerkruip* is a roguelike game. These are the three features of roguelikes that make them most stand out from what you will be used to in interactive fiction:

1. Roguelikes are **combat-oriented**. *Kerkerkruip* is all about crawling through dungeons and killing monsters.
2. Roguelikes feature **permanent death**. You can never undo a mistake, and if your character dies, that is the end of the game. (*Kerkerkruip* saves your progress automatically every turn: if you quit the game, you can later continue from where you left off.)
3. Roguelikes use **random generation of content**. Each game, the dungeon will be different, with different locations, monsters and treasures.

Permanent death and random generation go hand-in-hand: the combination allows roguelikes to be extremely tense, without forcing the player through the boredom of replaying the same content over and over again.

3 Combat

Combat takes center stage in *Kerkerkruip*. To slay your enemies, you will need to use the following four commands:

- **Attack** your enemies to attempt to inflict damage. This command can be abbreviated to 'a'.
- **Concentrate** in order to make your next attack more effective. There are three levels of concentration, each more powerful than the previous one, so you may want to concentrate several times in a row. But beware: if you get damaged in combat, you lose all your concentration. This command can be abbreviated to 'c'.
- **Parry** the attacks of your enemy to reduce the chance that they will hit you. This command can be abbreviated to 'p'.
- **Dodge** the attacks of your enemy to reduce the chance that they will hit you. This command can be abbreviated to 'do'.

The relative usefulness of parrying and dodging depends on the circumstances: do not attempt to parry a huge hammer when you are holding a dagger; and do not attempt to dodge when standing on a narrow bridge.

4 Other commands

In addition to the four core combat commands, you will want to use the following verbs:

- **Retreat** allows you to run away from a fight. If you enter a room for the first time and don't make any move except looking and examining, you can then retreat without any risk. Use this to scout the dungeon!
- **Wield** or (equivalently) **ready** a weapon. You will use the weapon from that point onwards when you attack.
- **Status** shows you an overview of your character, including a summary of the special powers you have.
- **Remember** shows you a list of exits you have not yet explored; a list of rooms you have visited; and a list of monsters you have seen. This command can be abbreviated to 'r'.

- **Sense** tells you where the final enemy and the best items can be found. Only available after you have killed powerful monsters.
- **Go to** allows you to move to a room. You move one room at a time – simply press enter to repeat the command and move another step.
- **Pray** in temples to make the gods intervene. Beware: some gods may hurt you as much as they may help you.
- **Help** takes you to the help menu.

The standard IF commands all work as expected, except ‘save’, ‘restore’ and ‘undo’ which have been disabled. (But when you quit the game, you will be able to continue from the same spot later.) If you don’t know how to use an object, examine it – this will often reveal the right verb.

5 I keep dying!

You might be making one of the following mistakes:

- Perhaps you don’t concentrate enough? Almost no fight can be won by just typing ‘attack’ over and over again. Try to get one or two levels of concentration before attacking.
- Perhaps you concentrate too much? Three levels of concentration are great if you can get them, but trying to get them may not be worth the risk. Remember that you lose all concentration when you are hit.
- Perhaps you are trying to take on monsters that are too strong for you? When you examine an enemy, you will be told its level. Try killing a level 1 enemy before you move on to a level 2 enemy.
- Perhaps you are not using your special abilities? Defeating monsters gives you abilities; use the ‘status’ command to review them.
- Perhaps you are not using ‘retreat’? Use sequences of commands like “go north / examine ape / retreat” to scout the dungeon without risk.
- Did you check your inventory? Using `ment` can give you the edge you need.
- The in-game help menu gives you more information, should you need it. And why not head over to <http://www.intfiction.org/forum/> and ask your fellow adventurers for some advice?