BLOCKDOWN

Traditional falling blocks puzzle game for one or two players. Written in 100% Machine Code.

System requirements

Blockdown will run on any Dragon or Tandy Colour Computer with at least 16K of RAM.

Blockdown detects whether you are running on a PAL or NTSC system and adjusts certain parameters accordingly. While some effort has been made to provide a similar challenge on PAL and NTSC systems, the timings are not quite the same, so be aware of that if you're comparing scores.

Note: The Tandy Colour Computer 3 does not fully support the Semigraphics video mode used—while some text will not be readable, the game should remain playable.

Acknowledgements

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Thanks to Stewart and Eddie Orchard, for testing the two-player game.

And my gratitude to John Linville and Neil Blanchard for their hard work assembling game cartridges and packaging them for sale.

Controls

Control is with the keyboard only. There is a set of keys for each player: player one to the left of the keyboard, player two to the right. In single player mode, you can use keys from either set.

Player	←	→	Turn ↶	Soft ↓	Hard ↓	Hold	Turn ↷
1	Z	C	S	X	3	2	1
2	M	>	K	<	9	8	7

Press Clear+Enter to pause the game (then Space to resume). To turn off music during a game, press Clear+N; to turn it back on, press Clear+M. Press Clear+Break to quit the game.

Starting the game

Ensure your computer is turned **off**. Insert the game cartridge, then power on your computer.

The title page will show, and after a time it will cycle through various other screens: a controls summary (as below), single-player leaderboards (fast and slow games) and game options. You can manually switch between these screens with the Left and Right arrow keys.

Pressing Space starts a game.

Options

On the options screen, you can select number of players, normal or fast game, background music volume and (for two-player mode), how garbage is sent. On the Tandy Colour Computer 3, you can also select between RGB and Composite (CMP) video palettes.

A normal speed game increases level every 10 lines. A fast game increases the level every 5 lines.

Easy garbage means each line of a sent group has the "hole" in the same place, hard garbage randomises every line.

How to play the game

You know the drill. Pieces comprised of four blocks in various shapes fall from the top of the screen; you rotate them and fit them together to form complete lines, which disappear giving you points. The more lines you clear in one turn, the more you score. The game is over when there is no space for a new piece to appear.

Advanced moves like T-spins score more points. An increasing combo bonus is awarded for clearing lines on successive turns. In addition, back-to-back "difficult" clears score more—that is, T-spins or four-line clears without intervening easier clears.

You can hold a piece once per turn—it will appear above and to the left of your playfield—and you can see the next six pieces coming your way at all times to the right.

In the two-player game, clearing more than one line at a time sends "garbage" to your opponent. These appear on a timer, giving an opportunity to pare them down with clears of their own. When the timer runs out, random lines appear at the bottom of their stack.