Opening extract from
Beat the Game

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BEAT THE GAME

You're a computer game whiz and you've just received a strange email. It's inviting you to test your skills on a new computer game called Knight's Peril! You're about to start the game when a warning pops up.

Knight's Peril

COLLECT 26 CUBIES

BEWARE!

Once you start the game, you cannot leave until you complete it. Your mission is to collect 26 cubies throughout the game. The cubies will make a Rubik's Cube—your key to the exit, where you must defeat the Black Knight.
Make your choice and press CONTINUE or CANCEL.

CONTINUE   **CANCEL**

Correct! A duplicate of you appears, before being taken to the RAM.

Back in the game, you find the doors are all locked. You look for a key and notice two chests labeled with letters. There's a plaque on the wall.

THE KEY IS INSIDE THE CHEST LABELED WITH THE NAME OF THE FASTEST AND MOST DURABLE DRIVE.

SSD   **HDD**

Which chest do you choose?

Wrong! You need to start the triangle by moving forward.

Oh dear! A modulo doesn't collect viruses.

Wise choice! ASCII, or the American Standard Code for Information Interchange, is one of the oldest codes used to represent characters on the screen.

You release the door and enter level one. The first cubie is above you. You touch it to collect it. How easy! There are lots of platforms above you, connected by ladders and ropes.
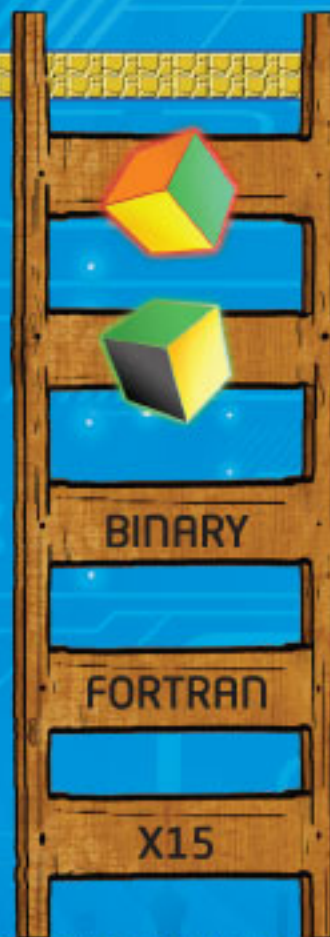
LEVEL 1

X 1

A smiley face pops up and speaks to you!

You start to climb the first ladder, but the rungs suddenly disappear and you fall off. Rubbing your arm, you look up and words appear.

Reach the top to complete the level. Climb the ladders and ropes, but avoid the trapdoors. Beware—dragons will try to scorch you! Smiley faces like me will provide tips and hints.

STEP ONTO THE RUNG MARKED BY THE NAME OF A PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE.

Which rung do you step on first?

BINARY
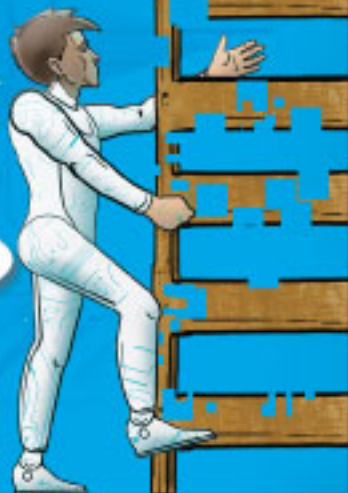
FORTRAN

X15

Correct! One terabyte equals 1,000 gigabytes (GB).

Very good. Question two: What does USB stand for?

UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS

UNIVERSAL STORAGE BANK

LEVEL 1
x6

No! If you divide 8 by 2, there is no extra 1 left over.

Good! A loop repeats the instructions until the action is no longer required.

SPHERE tells you that the only way to stop the loop is to reprogram the code controlling the virus.

You approach the monster and study the code.

Which part of the code do you reprogram?

X = 1
WHILE X = 1 START LOOP
DESTROY ALL DATA 1s
DESTROY ALL DATA 0s
RETURN TO START LOOP
ATTACK NEXT RAM

CHANGE THE VARIABLE X TO 2

REMOVE "DESTROY ALL DATA 1s"

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Correct! Antivirus programs examine parts of a program or file for virus patterns. Once a virus has been found, it can be repaired or quarantined.

You open the file to activate it and a login window appears.

USERNAME: Administrator
PASSWORD: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
PASSWORD HINT:
WHO CO-FOUNDED MICROSOFT?

ANTIVIRUS

What do you enter?

BILL GATES

STEVE JOBS

No, an algorithm is far more important than a tune!

Wrong! A byte is made up of eight bits, so it isn't the smallest piece of data.

No, it's not called static current.

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Well spotted! Brainiac is a made-up name for a computer.

You open the door to level three. Behind it is a bridge leading to another platform. You can see 5 cubies on the other side!

As you start walking across the bridge, a plank breaks—then another and another. You're stranded in the middle. The Master Programmer's voice fills the air.

The bridge represents the computer's power system. One false step and your computer will lose power—and it'll be game over for you!

The gameplay screen dims, showing the power levels have gone down. Oh dear! A screen drops down in front of you.

TO EARN NEW PLANKS AND BOOST THE COMPUTER'S POWER, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS CORRECTLY. EACH INCORRECT ANSWER EQUALS A LOSS IN POWER.

WHAT IS THE UPS?

Think quickly. What do you say?

UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLY

UNIVERSAL POWER SYSTEM