

# Formation Z FAQ/Walkthrough

by EntropicLobo

Updated to v1.0 on Mar 29, 2006

FORMATION Z guide

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Version 1.0            9/19/04  
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Version History:

-3/27/2006, added lup as a host.  
1.0            (9/19/04) - The Basic Guide

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\*\*Section 1: Introduction\*\*  
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Ah, don't you just love those old pirate favourites? Yep, this is a FAQ for another member of the multicart clade. Of course, you may have played the game as "Formation 2," or possibly the original copy. It's also been known as "Formation Zet" and Aeroboto (arcades). Whatever the name of the game, and whatever the medium, it's fun.

I've been a long time fan of this game. I had first played it on a 31-in-1 cart and it instantly clicked with me. The factor that appealed to me the most

was that the gameplay revolved around transformation, and at that time I would have been somewhat in thrall to the siren song of the Transformers. Not only that, but it was a shooter like I'd not played before.

You begin the game as a large robot humanoid with a gun. However, this robot can transform into an airplane. The airplane uses Energy (Fuel) and needs to be replenished on the ground. The game itself consists of a primarily-ground segment and then an aircraft section.

The game is short - only a few looping environments, but it's a blast anyways. This guide covers the environments, the enemies, and how to play the game. "Playing the Game" has some important notes regarding survival.

\*If at anytime I call Energy "fuel" during this guide, it's just an old habit. They mean the same thing.

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## \*\*Section 2: Playing the Game\*\*

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The mechanics of Formation Z need to be discussed briefly.

\*The B Button is your shot.

Rapidly pressing the B Button will allow you to shoot a few shots in a row. Holding the B button will make you fire a Charged shot

These both have very important uses. Many of the smaller enemies attack in formations which aren't exactly linearly dispersed. Spraying shots under or above them is an effective way of destroying them. Also, since you can't hold the charge of the charged shot, you can fire this when you want. Enemies only die in one hit anyways. The charged shot can rip through enemies - it keeps going after hitting them where the normal shot cannot. If the enemies are in a line (or close to it), or you think you can peg two with one shot, use this. The charged shot is also a necessary tool for fighting bosses. A boss will not fall to standard fire.

\*The A button is a jump.

Jumping then holding up will transform you into the aircraft.

While approaching the ground, press A to transform into the humanoid again.

The jump really isn't anything to write home about - you really don't go very high. However, it is necessary to dodge certain obstacles so it will be used. You could use the plane as an extended "jump" but that uses energy.

\*Left/Right moves your character left or right.

The screen scrolls automatically because your character is always moving. However, the left and right movement is necessary to avoid enemies and their firepower.

### \*Humanoid Notes

Up and Down will aim your gun. Release the control pad for a forward shot. Most of your enemies will come from the air, so you'll be looking up most of the time. There are some things that require a straight forward shot or a downwards shot, however, and they only serve to make the airborne threat much more difficult. While some can be jumped over, there are some that pose an immediate threat if you jump over them. Weigh your options accordingly.

If there is a mine, shoot it. If there's a white ball, you may be able to jump it, and if there's a tank then a jump is the usual bet. If things get too harsh, employ your flight - but not for too long.

Also note that your backwards motion isn't too great. Don't rely on backstepping shots too much.

You'll notice some red circular objects on the ground as you play as the humanoid. These are there to refill your energy by 10. You'll need to get them, especially after a flight session.

#### \*Air Craft Notes

Up and Down will aim how the aircraft fires, but it also serves move the craft up and down. So use some discretion - enemy patterns are often erratic and you may be flying into danger just to shoot an enemy.

The aircraft uses energy fairly quickly... you may be in dire condition when you land. There is something to help you out, however. That would be "The Sweet Spot" where your fuel runs out slower. Look for it just above where the ground disappears. You can check your energy in the bottom right corner of the screen. At one point, you'll see that the energy depletes at a slower rate. You're going to want to stay here for the duration of the flight, or you may plummet into the sea. The obvious things to move for are enemies deterring your progress and the occasional dip to look for the next section of land.

Land as soon as you can to begin collecting fuel.

I should also mention that up and down movement in the aircraft makes you vulnerable. You see, when you move up and down your aircraft tilts up or down making you a taller target. Use discretion.

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\*\*Section 3: Environments\*\*  
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The environments of Formation Z still blow me a way with their beautiful transitions and detail. One loop of the game is travel between all the enviros in the game. Then there's a pause before you get to DESTROY the next ALIEN WEAPON!

Changes in the backdrop tell you of upcoming changes in the game.

The so-called stage 1 starts out with mountains and grass. The grass is in the foreground and the mounts are in the back. Many of the enemies are introduced here and while they're not super-intense, the enemy presence will make you adhere to the learning curve fast. Get used to it, there's a lot of enemies in this game and predicting them can be difficult.

Eventually, the mountains will be gone. There will be no grass in the scene either. You should now seriously start considering saving your energy if you have been liberal with the aircraft.

Well, the small hills in the background will soon show some water behind them, meaning the first aircraft portion of the game is coming soon. When this does come, the scene will drastically speed up. Change into an airplane or you will die.

While up here, seek out the spot I told you about earlier. If you have all 99 energy, you should be able to make it without it, otherwise you'll want to use it. There's only enemies to worry about here, no boss. Keep an eye out for the beach, there's an energy very close to the coast. Press A as you descend to transform into a humanoid and you'll now be running in a desert. The background is dotted with pyramids and sphinxes. There's no new enemy presence here, maybe just an increase in the population of those odd tentacled balls.

Again, this will give way to a primarily flat desert. Remember, you're going up in the air again soon so stock up now. No sense in losing a life. Again, the area will speed up and you'll be required to transform again.

Now, the next part is a flight over the sea followed by a boss battle. I find that the boss is reached quicker while flying close to the sea, but you may want to use the less-fuel-zone. Either way, you don't lose energy during the fight so don't worry about it.

The boss will appear from the right hand side of the screen. Destroy it and then you'll begin to head upwards. The screen flashes multiple times and you arrive in space. Transform into the humanoid as soon as possible - chances are you only had a bit of energy left when you killed the boss.

You'll have arrived at a purplish-blue landscape with a blackish sky. There's various craggy hills throughout the area. Some are on the same plan as you but don't pose a threat. You just walk over them because they're part of the background. Anyways, you're going to be fighting some new versions of enemies you already fought and have the same attacking schemes. The level is a little harder but it's all the same really.

This does on for a while until the stage speeds up. You're going to jump out and turn into the aircraft - playing the remainder of the game in outer space. You do not lose any energy in this portion of the game, so don't worry about it. Fly through space fighting the enemies and you'll fight the last boss.

Defeat it, receive the ending message, and the game will begin you at the grass and mountains area with full energy. You've just rolled Formation Z!

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**Section 4: Enemies**
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*Enemy shot: A white shot which may be destroyed.
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The enviros are one thing but what about the enemies? Those delightful aliens employ legions of crafts in an effort to destroy - even some tanks! Enemies give you a bigger goal than just running and flying to the end of the game, and are the source of 1-ups (point accumulation).

You're defeated in one hit of these enemies

Enemies are introduced in the order I fought them the last time I rolled the game. There may be a little variance when you do it, but it should be almost the same. The names aren't official, they just reflect the enemy.

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**Small Formation Craft #1
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-These are the first airborne enemy that you'll fight, they look like little
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versions of the letter Y.

-Dealing with them: The cool thing about these guys is that they're totally erratic in their movements! They're one of my absolute favourite aspects of Formation Z because of this. Anyways, they'll often arrive in formations. Now, if the formation is linear, or linear in two groups or something, you may want to employ a charged shot. If it's a little more dispersed, you may want to just spay them.

So how do these things attack you? They ram into you. Consequently, it's a rather good idea to destroy these things before they zip after you. They will arrive on the screen, stop momentarily, and then leave at a high speed in an effort to trip you up. They will usually zigzag while they're doing this so you'll be able to react, but I suggest not setting that scenario up for yourself. At the same time they may only move slightly up or down, or just fly straight on through. These are less threatening patterns, but deal with them anyways.

They have one other method of attack: dropping. That's right, the alien bombers are the alien ships. They usually do this when attacking the humanoid, they'll fly on screen, stop, and drop. This is actually their most deadly mode of attack - there's usually more to worry about on the ground than in the air. You'll have to think quick, while you could easily destroy the group of them - what about Mines, White Orbs, or Tanks on the ground? That's why this is the most deadly mode of attack - external obstructions. Anyways, they don't always arrive to drop in a line either. They could have a few different formations, but the one I think is cool is when 1 ship arrives on screen, and stops. Then a line of them zoom past it and stop. Take out the little ship first - it's most likely lower than the others and is there to kill you as you dodge or shoot the others.

The little explosion it leaves is not dangerous, but then you shouldn't be in proximity to that anyways.

**\*\*White Orbs:**

-A terrestrial trap who doesn't pose much of a threat unless coupled with other enemies.

-Dealing with them: White Orbs are an easy kill - you'll just want to employ a forward shot to destroy them. They move up and down with no horizontal movement (besides the scrolling screen, of course) and are just there to make dealing with other enemies a problem.

If need be, you can jump over it when it's at the low of its path, but it is not recommended.

**\*\*Mines:**

-A terrestrial trap that's a danger even when it's below you.

-Dealing with them: Mines are an interesting lot. There's really two types of them: those that stay in the ground and those that fly upwards. It's impossible to tell if it will fly up or not.

So don't jump over them unless you absolutely have no choice. They may fly up and strike you down. The best way to deal with them is to aim down and shoot them while they're in the ground. If you're totally boxed in, you might want to fly over them.

While mines are on the ground, if you're out of sight of them they're not a threat. Don't worry about a mine flying up into the air after you.

#### \*\*Flying Green Pods:

-A shooting enemy with erratic flight.

-Dealing with them: These are the enemies that will likely kill you the most, they will ram into you and shoot you. Again, I find these enemies quite neat because of their erratic flight. They'll fly in loops in the sky shooting at you before darting off the screen. Some will even try to loop into you and kill you. Others stop just before they leave the screen, fire off a few shots, and then take off.

So what can you do? Fire at them of course! Seriously, that's all you can do with them. Their shots can be destroyed, and they can be destroyed, so use your shots rapidly. If you fear they're coming down after you or you need to escape, don't be afraid of a temporary flight.

#### \*\*Tanks:

-A large stationary trap that doesn't do anything.

-Dealing with them" Tanks would be a problem if they had the ability to shoot. They don't so you may want to just jump over them. If need be, charge your shot and destroy it.

#### \*\*Vanish Orbs:

-An enemy that appears briefly in the sky and fires a shot.

-Dealing with them: Probably the hardest airborne enemy to destroy, they only appear very briefly before leaving. It may seem they're traveling in a path, but it is actually a number of them. As you'll observe, destroying the second doesn't prevent the third from appearing.

Their shots are destroyable, so focus on them. If you hit an Orb while firing, great. They don't shoot too vigorously so they're not too big of a threat. I have never had one appear on top of me, so I don't know if that's a threat or not. They usually appear in proximity to each other, so if you want to destroy them or avoid them, keep that in mind.

#### \*\*Small Formation Craft #2

-A more organic version of the first.

-Dealing with them: These odd, tentacled orbs are essentially another version of your standard little ship. They seem to have a pattern of their own, where they fly in on a horizontal and then fly back up on their path. Handle them the same as the #1's.

They often appear when you're approaching a flight section.

#### \*\*Underwater Ships

-An aquatic trap which flies up at you.

-Dealing with them: A less threatening and aquatic version of a Mine. Shoot them if they come up to meet you. You'll see their silhouettes on the surface

of the water, and they'll fly up at you when you come close. They're not too fast and not too big, so they're not too threatening.

They're only a danger if you're flying close to the sea, if you take to the air, you won't see any.

-BOSS 1- See Bosses-

**\*\*Small Formation Craft #3**

-The third version of this enemy type, and basically the same as the first.

-Dealing with them: You'll fight these guys, that kind of look like missiles, after you fly out into space. They're basically the same as version #1, so deal with them accordingly.

**\*\*Red Flying Pod:**

-A red version of the Green Flying Pod

-Again, basically the same enemy as the original version. Because of how far you are into the game now, they'll be harder, but deal with them in the same way.

-BOSS 2- See Bosses-

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**\*\*Section 5: Bosses\*\***

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Well, I given the two bosses their own section for the sake of convenience. While they are bosses, their stamina is frail so if you're looking for just a general tip: Use charged shots.

Do not use your normal shots or you'll never beat them

Is there any reason to use normal shots?

Yes, points. But it's a risky proposition, if you let a boss progress too much they become rather hard to deal with.

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**\*\*\*BOSS 1\*\*\***

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This boss looks like an old sci-fi robot in ways. It's a spinning head on top of a fair sized body. It will arrive on the right hand side of the screen, moving up and down. It fires many shots at you in the process. They can be diagonal, horizontal, or vertical, so you're not safe anywhere on the screen. Of course, the shots are destroyable if they're that much of an issue to you. The boss moves slowly to the left in the process. If he gets past about the halfway point of the stage, it would be very unwise to attempt to attack him as you will find it very hard to dodge his shots. Of course, you don't want it to get over here because you won't be able to shot the shots - you'll be left to dodge until it reaches the edge of the screen. when it does, it will loop across the screen.

Take your time in the battle, even though it can be won easily, you have infinite fuel and you're going to want to try and aim at its head. Fire your

charged shots at its head to blow it up.

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\*\*\*BOSS 2\*\*\*

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The final boss of the game bears very close resemblance to the Gradius cache of core bosses. And consequently, the core is the weakpoint.

It appears from the right side of the screen... with two options! Yes, little enemies that fire for it. It can fire itself so there will be a fair spread of shots in this battle. The options have different looks from each other, but both will be destroyed from a charged shot. If you feel they'll be a major problem for you, go for them rather than the core. It'll free up a lot of the screen!

Don't let this boss get to the middle of the screen or you're going to have a very hard time fighting it. It doesn't seem to wrap around the screen like the first boss, instead, it will slowly follow you on the horizontal plane. The boss is large, especially with the options, so avoid having to steer around it.

Your charged shots will make short work of the core, which is where you must shoot this boss. When you destroy it any remaining options will also be destroyed. The game will then refuel your energy, and start you back at the beginning of the game. Classic loop.

Note that you don't use energy for the flight section or the boss, the energy refill will help refill any energy you lost back at the purplish-blue area.

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\*\*Section 6: Credits\*\*

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Yeah, I'm crediting my brother again. He found the lower-fuel usage area and reminded me of the charged shot. When I was writing this guide, I had wasted more than a half hour on the first boss because I forgot about charged shots.

And Jaleco, for making neat games like this. Formation Z carries its own flavour despite several typical factors in it.

-If there's anything I've missed or you feel I should add, OR if I made a mistake, don't hesitate to reach me at [entropiclobo@yahoo.ca](mailto:entropiclobo@yahoo.ca)

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