

Star Fox FAQ/Walkthrough

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"Star Fox FAQ and Flythrough" version 2.01 by William Matheson
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Star Fox was published in the United States of America in 1993 for the Super
Nintendo Entertainment System.
Star Fox was released as 'Star Wing' in PAL countries.

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processor (usually Ctrl+F) and search for a word - you should find what you're
looking for without too much trouble. If you have a suggestion, clarification,
or contribution, please contact me - if your addition makes the FAQ, full
thanks and credit will be given to you.

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* - From the black hole you can warp to Level 1-5 (Venom Space), Level 2-4 (Sector Y), or Level 3-4 (Sector Z).

** - This is essentially a dead-end, though you can sort of beat the game by this route. Kind of.

Note: Since I may sometimes make the game sound easy, I have to remember that this is really a difficult game. Getting through some of these levels may take you many, many tries; please don't get discouraged. I am sure that you can do it!

=====
I - Introduction [I-0]
=====

Star Fox was an important milestone in video game history, for it was the first Super NES game to use polygons en masse or real 3-D scaling. To accomplish this, a special kind of math coprocessor that was relatively cheap to construct and mass-produce was installed inside the cart. This chip was named the "Super FX chip." (It had better be cheap - you have to install a new copy of the chip in every cartridge that requires it, rather than just counting on the standard SNES hardware!) It helped a lot that the game was likeable and *good* - I must have rented it a dozen times or more before finally being given my own copy for

So what is a polygon? Geometrically, it's just a shape with some number of sides. Virtually all the games being developed now use polygons, but now it's commonplace to see tens of millions of polygons being used at once on your screen. The characters in Final Fantasy VII, Final Fantasy VIII, and Gears of War are all rendered with polygons - that is, thousands and even millions of computable, movable geometric shapes. Newer systems use so many so well that sports games look like live TV, and RPGs now look like animated movies - even outside of FMV cutscenes (where all the vector rendering is done by far more powerful computers and the result is saved as a raster animation).

Older games didn't use 3-D polygons much, because the processing power just wasn't there. Take an old game like Super Mario Bros., for instance. That particular game uses only bitmaps, so all of Mario's moves are part of an animation. For a game that only utilizes one or few points of view, though, polygons would be less useful anyway.

Part of the idea behind polygons is that you want the computer to be able to reconstruct the image you should be seeing no matter where you stand. Imagine how slow and how much of a disk hog Gears of War would be if a new static background has to be called up every time you move. Actually, it'd be next to impossible to create or run, wouldn't it?

You can still do 3-D without scaling or polygons, though. Take Super Star Wars, for instance. Actually, it's fake 3-D - something called Mode 7 where the bitmap of the ground is flattened out and you can zip over it in any direction. You'll also see Mode 7 in games like Final Fantasy VI. Back to SSW, though, if you play the game you'll notice that all the things coming at you look flat, and when they approach and retreat, it doesn't happen very smoothly. That's because the game has to call up a new or resized image for all the different distances away the object is supposed to be. (Super Empire Strikes Back improved on this method and accomplished convincing 3-D scaling without the use of the Super FX chip.)

Meanwhile, Star Fox uses the polygons (albeit hundreds and not millions, plus the shapes that are used are pretty basic - remember, this is the Super Nintendo) and the limits are suddenly gone. The scaling becomes nearly perfect. Objects can now rotate freely. It's a 3-D world! (Yeah, yeah - we fly through it in a fixed corridor, but the principle is the same.)

Naturally, there is a long stretch of innovations that line the road between Star Fox and, say, Modern Warfare. Star Fox, did, though, help inspire Super Mario 64. I suppose we have to count Star Fox 64 as well, but I'm not too keen on talking about Star Fox 64 - it's a good game, but I don't think it was very consistent with the story and world laid out in the Super NES game. We also didn't get Star Fox 2, and that's still a pretty big disappointment, though you can seek out ROMs and patches for the latter online. For legal reasons, you have to be on your own for that, but you could give it a shot.

Because an unrelated Atari 2600 game of the same name was trademarked in Europe, Star Fox was released as 'Star Wing' in PAL countries. Star Fox 64 became 'Lylat Wars'. Then Nintendo got the rights cleared up and it was all 'Star Fox' going forward.

Anyway, enough with the preamble. The game lies before us.

[B-1] - Miscellaneous Tips

- Keep in mind is that it takes time for your blaster bolts, once fired, to strike your enemies. Far-away enemies take longer to hit - but if you want to get high scores and stay safe, these are the ones to hit! A few targeting tips: 1) For moving enemies, shoot where they're going to be, not where they are. 2) If you're confident your bolts will strike, move on - get a head start on the next enemy.

- Don't be afraid to lob a few nova bombs to help clear stray enemies so that you'll get a high score, especially on the easier stages. But think carefully before you deploy your last one - you might need it to get out of a desperate situation.

- Going through the black hole may shorten your game time in more ways than you intend. You miss out on getting points towards continue credits that you would have gotten from at least three stages: the asteroid belt, the black hole itself, and any level(s) you skip.

- Rolling is your friend - your rolls can deflect anything except collisions and missiles. It's a skill of central importance.

- Do play this game in stereo. Not only does it sound better, but you'll be able to use the left-and-right channels as directional cues for the sounds of engines, blaster bolts, and missiles headed your way.

[B-2] - Story

For those genuinely interested in the Star Fox story, I point them in the direction of Benimaru Itoh's masterful Star Fox comics from Volumes 45-55 of Nintendo Power. But in case you don't have your old Nintendo Powers lying around at arm's reach, you can check it out in the form of some very crisp scans here:

<http://arwinglanding.net/gallery/thumbnails.php?album=1>

Another page I looked at suggested that the comics were of Star Fox 64, even though they predate the Nintendo 64 system by more than three years! For the record, the comics are based on the SNES Star Fox, not Star Fox 64. At any rate, the comics add a great deal of depth to the story and the comics and game compliment each other well. I remember feeling the same way about the subsequent Super Metroid comic, also drawn by Benimaru Itoh, though it sadly lasted only five issues. I remember Nintendo Power dumping comics for their big "Play It Loud" edgier marketing scheme. (Oooh! Same crappy-screened brick-like Game Boy, now in not-so-svelte black, and also "hot dog", and "puke". The only good thing to come out of the campaign was the open promulgation of the fact that you had to use your A/V multi out to get stereo sound - this at a time when I felt like I was the only person on the entire planet who knew that the RF output mixed the audio channels together.) I hated the new look, and after the comics ended I let my subscription expire.

Here's the "official" game story from the manual. It's not nearly as rich as the comic - for me, the comic takes precedence although some fans of the series as a whole would consider only the actual game to be truly canonical.

>> The official story, straight from the manual <<

Background Story: Origin of the Lylatian Conflict

The Lylat solar system, located near the center of the Milky Way galaxy, is made up of several bountiful planets. No fewer than three of these worlds were home to civilizations teeming with industrious inhabitants. The other planets in the system provided boundless natural resources. The comfortable lifestyle enjoyed by the Lylatians was the envy of the galaxy, until the coming of the evil Emperor Andross.

Emperor Andross was once known as Doctor Andross, a scientific genius who worked at an advanced lab on Corneria, the fourth planet in the Lylat system. Ever since his childhood, Andross's brilliance outshone that of other children. As an adult, Dr. Andross began developing a powerful engine based on hyper-spatial energy. Selfish and blinded by ambition, he repeatedly conducted dangerous experiments in the heart of Corneria's most populated city. After many warnings from the planet's ruling council, he was finally banished from the planet for endangering the inhabitants of Corneria.

Out of sight, out of mind. The inhabitants of Corneria soon forgot the menace of "Dr. Andross." One day, however, Corneria's small defense force detected some unusual happenings on Venom, the first planet in the Lylat system. Strange unidentified flying objects were monitored maneuvering around the planet in large numbers. It was not long before the self appointed Emperor Andross, who had fled to Venom, declared war on Corneria.

The planet Venom had been completely remade by Emperor Andross into a gigantic military base. Andross hoped that with his military power, he could soon control all the planets in the Lylat system. General Pepper, the commanding officer of Corneria's defense force, decided to dispatch the super-high-performance combat ship ARWING to the defense of the planet, even though it was in the prototype stage in development. Because of the urgency of the threat to Corneria, however, he did not have time to train pilots for these advanced fighters.

"We need the Star Fox team!!"

This is the call sent out by General Pepper. You are Fox McCloud, leader of the Star Fox team, a group of adventurers with outstanding combat skill. Your mission is to penetrate the defenses of the planet Venom and defeat the forces led by Emperor Andross. Your ability to maneuver the ARWING fighter will make the difference between the return of peace to the Lylat system and the fall of Corneria to the evil Emperor. As team leader, you are also responsible for the safe return of your Star Fox teammates.

[B-3] - Parade of Planets

This canonical information is taken directly from the manual.

>> Planet I: Venom <<

When Andross was driven out of Corneria by Director General Pepper, he occupied this planet as his base. While it used to be known as the "evergreen planet", and boasted beauty second only to Corneria's, Andross has re-made it into a dark, polluted world of military machines. The natives, who were not advanced, were enslaved by Andross and drafted into his military machine. Though they serve Andross, they inwardly hope that the forces of Corneria can win a victory

and liberate the Lylat system.

>> Planet II: Titania <<

Titania has no indigenous creatures and is nearly always wrapped in a dense fog. This planet is known as a treasure world because of the large deposits of raw materials that can be found there. While it has not been as hard hit by Andross's invasion fleet as some planets have, it is occupied by a large garrison of his troops. The resources here are extremely valuable to Andross's plans of future conquest.

>> Planet III: Macbeth <<

Macbeth has a long history of geological disasters which have changed its very shape. In a unique geological occurrence, the core of the planet shrank while the crust remained the same size, making much of the planet hollow. Andross has used this to his advantage, stockpiling the world with weapons, ammunition and spare ships. As a result of the amount of weaponry stored there, the planet is a gigantic bomb waiting to explode.

>> Planet IV: Corneria <<

The fourth planet in the Lylat System, Corneria, is known as the "bread basket" of the system. It is a fertile farming world with a variety of climates and terrains. Most of the inhabitants live in the shelter of the mountain ranges, where the most productive farming soil can be found. Corneria is a peaceful planet with only the smallest of defense forces. Most of its starships are designed for exploration and transportation. When Andross's invasion fleet threatened the planet, it was up to General Pepper to improvise some kind of planetary defense. He hired the Star Fox Team to pilot the experimental Arwing Fighters.

>> Planet V: Fortuna <<

Fortuna is also known as the Dinosaur Planet and is prowled by untamed and brutal creatures. Andross has fed and gained control of these brutes and plans to turn them into living weapons. The giant dragon, Monarch Dodora, is the living spirit of this planet and has powers exceeding state-of-the-art weapons. His name is feared throughout the Lylat System.

>> Asteroid Field <<

There are two asteroid fields, consisting of thousands of small planetoids, surrounding Corneria. These swarming chunks of rocks form a dangerous natural barrier to invasion of the planet, as they must be carefully navigated through. However, Andross has developed a powerful new battleship, known as the Rock Crusher, which is capable of reducing planetoids to cosmic dust. It is up to the Star Fox Team to destroy these Rock Crushers before they can clear the way for Andross's main battle armada.

>> Meteor <<

This giant planetoid is actually an artificial asteroid that was created to be a great amusement facility called "Meteor Land". The evil Emperor Andross, however, turned it into his advance base, leaving it a mere shadow of its former self. This well stocked military depot is hurtling towards Corneria behind the Space Armada of Andross.

[B-4] - Display / Controls

need it. For more information, read the control information that fills out this section.

As for those controls, let's start from the beginning. The very first thing you see (after dusting off your console and successfully turning it on with the cartridge fully inserted) is three antiquated starfighters fleeing the enemy Attack Carrier approaching Corneria. It launches beaucoup fighters, one of which flies into your face firing its lasers. Then you get the title screen, and pushing START there you get a neat control select screen where you can pick your control layout and even test them out on the spot with the little ship window on the upper left.

I'm basing my descriptions on Control A but the differences between control types can be summarized like this: Types C and D make you push up to go up and down to go down, which seems reasonable on paper but is awkward in gameplay. Types B and D reverse the blaster and brake buttons, such that you push B instead of Y for blasting and Y instead of B for braking.

>> D-pad: Nose <<
(in schemes C and D, up and down point the nose in that direction)

Up: Nose down (dive)
Down: Nose up (climb)
Left: Nose left
Right: Nose right

Pressing down to go up seems counter-intuitive, but after a few minutes of practice you'll see that this method has it all over pressing up to go up. If you don't believe me, try both and see. ;-)

This is why Pepper recommends you use type A or B, though if you're looking for a challenge I'll bet trying to complete Level 3 on C or D would be a handful!

You can also use the D-pad to select a course on the opening map screen.

>> A: Nova bomb <<

You start with three of these and can carry a maximum of five. They do a passably good job of clearing weaker enemies off your screen and inflicting significant damage on the bigger ones. You definitely don't want to be relying on them, though - they more or less exist to help you get out of a jam, or perhaps add insult to injury when you're handing it to some of the bosses.

You press A once to launch the bomb and press A again to detonate it, but if you leave it for more than a few seconds or the bomb strikes something, it will detonate automatically.

The closer your quarry is to the centre of the explosion, the better. But amazingly, the bombs won't hurt you or your wingmen. ;-)

You get additional nova bombs through the nova bomb powerup item (it looks a bit like a ball), and you start with three again after losing a ship. I suppose you could start a level with no bombs (you used them all) and kill yourself right away and that way "gain" three bombs, but they're really not that big a deal, except perhaps for clearing up stray enemies to ensure a high score. Twin blasters (see below) are, in my opinion, more important.

>> B: Brake / Retros <<
(in scheme B or D, the Y button)

This is a VERY important maneuver. If you're flying through tight spaces,

slowing down can really help you. Braking uses up your booster capacity (seen through the blue bar on the lower right of your screen - fortunately, it regenerates after you use it) and the effects are temporary, so you can't just brake and brake and brake all the way through a level. It's a really warped and twisted ship that can only be temporarily slowed down and is compelled to accelerate back to a constant velocity, but that's Star Fox physics for you.

>> X: Booster / Accelerator <<

A good thing to hit if you need to beat a closing doorway or get around a rotating beam in the nick of time, but I usually prefer to slow down to get out of trouble instead of speeding up. Like braking, boosting uses up your booster capacity (seen through the blue bar on the lower right of your screen - fortunately, it regenerates after you use it). You'll also quickly slow down to your regular speed - accelerating back to your constant velocity like before. Yes, slowing down is accelerating, but in this particular case the sign is negative. ;-) Physicists don't muck around with terms like "decelerate". :-p

>> Y: Blasters <<

(in scheme B or D, the B button)

This is the button you'll be hitting the most. You use your blasters to roast all the baddies that fill up your screen and try to shoot you down. Shoot or be shot.

You can't damage your wingmen with your own blasters, though they will certainly complain if you strike them. (Your wingmen are damaged only when they are pursued from behind by enemies, which I'll discuss below.)

Wing-mounted twin blasters are the upgrade for the single nose-cone blaster you start with. After that, there's a further upgrade, the photon shot, and it's all kinds of awesome - not only is it more powerful, but it strikes a larger area. The catch is that when you die, you go back to the single blaster. And since the twin blasters are wing-mounted, losing one or both wings means losing your twin blasters.

I'll talk about wing damage below (see Section [B-8]), but the powerup here is the Twin Blaster / Wing Gyro powerup. It's the same item, and if you have broken one or two wings you get your wings repaired, and if your wings are intact you'll get twin blasters or an upgrade to same. Be nice to your wings - losing your twin blasters is awful and it's a long hard slog to get from broken wing(s) back up to the photon shot. The one good thing though is that losing a life and trying again in a new ship brings back your wings, so from there you can at least go straight to twin blasters again.

One thing to keep in mind is that it takes time for your blaster bolts, once fired, to strike your enemies. Far-away enemies take longer to hit - but if you want to get high scores and stay safe, these are the ones to hit! A few targeting tips: 1) For moving enemies, shoot where they're going to be, not where they are. 2) If you're confident your bolts will strike, move on - get a head start on the next enemy.

>> L: Tilt / roll left <<

Press rapidly and repeatedly to roll left. You'll want to get good at this for three reasons: 1) you'll need to tilt yourself to get through tight spaces, 2) tilting left helps you move left faster, and 3) you'll need to be able to roll to deflect energy blasts. You can deflect everything from light blaster bolts to big plasma balls - you just can't deflect missiles (they need to be shot down). As you might guess, rolling is a critically important maneuver,

especially in the advanced stages of the game.

>> R: Tilt / roll right <<

Same as above, but for tilting / rolling right. Since this button is more accessible than L while you're flying, you'll probably use it more. If you need to fly left while tilted you're going to want to hit L, but for deflecting blaster bolts choosing to roll with R instead of L makes no difference.

>> START: Pause / start game <<

If you have one of those cheap "slow-motion" controllers that pause and resume the game rapidly, you can probably use it with this game since there's no chance of selecting "Quit" or "Restart Level" since there's no on-screen menu in this game - just white letters that say "PAUSED".

You can't pause in Training Mode - pressing START returns you to the Control Select screen.

>> SELECT: Selects <<

On the control screen, SELECT selects a control layout. After pushing START on the controls screen, you push SELECT to move the cursor between PRACTICE and GAME. And finally, having selected GAME, you can use SELECT to pick a flight path (more on that below).

In flight, SELECT changes your viewpoint. In terrestrial levels or inside other space vessels, you can choose between Standard view and Approach view. Approach view puts the camera closer to your ship to help you get through tight spaces. It may help, and it is the default in certain planetary stages with beaucoup obstacles. Cockpit view is simplicity in itself - triangles and lines to establish the extremities of your ship, and a nice crosshair in the middle helps in shooting things down. Go for the big scores with Cockpit view! Unfortunately, it's only available in space stages, and then only when you're in open space (not when you're flying inside another, larger ship).

[B-5] - Wingmen

Fox McCloud is a heck of a pilot, but even the best don't work alone. These bios are from the manual. They also say different things to you at the ends of stages depending on the health of their Arwing - a complete game script is outside the scope of this FAQ (but I did create one, and it should be available on Game FAQs as well as my personal website), but you may be interested in the various end-of-stage quotes, which I've included here.

>> Fox McCloud <<

Fox is the young leader of the Star Fox Team. Always at the forefront of the team's attack, he is an aggressive fighter who often must rely on his skill to get his team out of trouble. Your skill will determine if his name goes down in space history as a champion of the people or a space rouge scoundrel.

Call: "All ships check in!!"

>> Falco Lombardi <<

As a member of an avian race, Falco Lombardi is at home in the skies or in space, where his piloting skill exceeds even that of Fox McCloud. While his

short temper may lead to arguments with Fox, the two remain loyal allies when it comes to combat.

Good shape: "No sweat, Fox!!"
Slightly damaged: "It's looking good, Fox!!"
Moderately damaged: "Be a bit more careful, Fox!!"
Heavily damaged: "It's going pretty badly!!"
Destroyed: "They got me!! I'm gone!!!!"

>> Peppy Hare <<

Peppy is the moderating force on the Star Fox team. His gentle character and wealth of knowledge make him an invaluable balance to the chaotic chemistry of the other Star Fox Team members. His skill as a pilot is an added plus.

[It's later established that Peppy Hare was also part of the original Star Fox team including James McCloud and Pigma Dengar. They flew a predecessor to the arwing that I conjecture is seen in the opening scene of this game (the three ships fleeing the Attack Carrier when you first turn the game on), and which can also be seen in the Black Hole stage and as an object available for viewing on the Continue screen (after losing your last ship, you will come to this screen if you have a credit or more available).]

Good shape: "OK, OK!! What's next?!!"
Slightly damaged: "We did it, let's go!!"
Moderately damaged: "Please tread carefully, Fox!!"
Heavily damaged: "I don't think I'm going to make it!!"
Destroyed: "Aargh!!!! I'm a goner!!"

>> Slippy Toad <<

While Slippy may seem to be timid and passive at times, he always keeps a positive mindset about things. The scrapes he gets himself in may add some comic relief to the dangerous situations you find yourself in during your mission.

Good shape: "So far, so g-g-good!!"
Slightly damaged: "G-g-great!!"
Moderately damaged: "Remember not to shoot m-m-me!!"
Heavily damaged: "My ship's falling apart... Ribbit!!"
Destroyed: "No!! No!! Crrooakk!!"

You'll be dealing with your wingmen on three kinds of occasions:

1. They line up a few enemies and go after them. This happens at the same point in every level, and the wingman will announce it by saying "You're not getting away!!" or "This one's mine!!" or something like that. You can be a nice guy by letting them have their two kills or you can be a jerk and shoot them down yourself. Be on the lookout for other enemies that aren't being targeted by your wingman - you'll still have to shoot them down.

2. They get themselves into trouble, and streak across your screen with an enemy in hot pursuit, your wingman announcing "Get lost, you fiend!!" or "Help me!!" (Falco says "Bogey on my six!!" and doesn't explicitly ask for help, but you should help him anyway.) You need to shoot down these enemies as quickly as possible, because if they strike your wingmen, your wingmen take damage - and the damage persists FOR THE REST OF THE GAME! The damage they've taken affects what your wingmen say to you at the end of each level. (E.g.: "It's looking good!!" slips to "It's going pretty badly!!" - that sort of thing.) As you might have guessed by now, it is also possible to lose your wingmen if you

habitually don't respond when they get into trouble. We'll get to that below, but suffice it to say if you don't have wingmen, you'll have nobody to help you when...

3. You're approached by a group of ships in formation and suddenly they're on top of you. Instead of you taking major damage, one of your wingmen will swoop in and help you out. In fact, sometimes you'll see two wingmen swoop in to help you! Falco will say something like "Eyes forward, Fox!!" and the others' remarks are similarly chastising. It's been my experience that this usually happens in space stages, and only at particular points - like the other two types of wingman interaction. However, this one is possible to avoid entirely if you're good at shooting things down before they get close to you. Be on the lookout for missiles and other kinds of ships on collision courses with you - this is good advice generally, in fact.

So that's what your wingmen do. If you're feeling perverted, there's a stretch in Level 1-3 (Space Armada, not the Black Hole) where if you don't fly inside a ship, you repeat a particular section of the stage again (except for the last, enormous ship which you're forced to enter). Between the first and second of these ships, one of your wingmen will always be attacked. Thus it is possible to keep repeating this section, doing nothing each time, and eventually your wingmen will all be shot down. (For more details, check out section [1-3], which deals with this stage.) You can then go on to complete the game all by your lonesome. It's kind of depressing - Fox calls "All wings report in" or whatever and nobody replies. Note that it's not possible to shoot or bomb or bump your wingmen out of existence - it must be done by enemy fire, and this only happens when they are chased at particular points in particular stages. Oh, but you CAN damage your own ship by colliding with your wingmen, though the opportunities for this are infrequent.

[B-6] - Powerups

Some of the powerups in this game are facile, while some are a fair bit esoteric and benefit from explanation.

>> Yellow Ring ("Small Energy Supply") <<

Restores a little bit of your energy. Shores up your wings. You get them from shooting down enemies. In fact, you get them from the ones that flash yellow as your laser blasts strike them, but this can be hard to detect with the weaker enemies that vanish after one or two hits. In any case, if you're running low on energy, it's a good idea to particularly concentrate on shooting down as many enemies as possible (well, you should be shooting them down anyway for scoring / survival reasons, but you get the point).

>> Blue Ring ("Supply Ring") <<

Restores about half of your energy, shores up your wings, and serves as a restore point if you lose your ship. They are placed at fixed points within the levels and are fairly conspicuous. Most stages have one, but Space Armada and Fortuna have two, while poor old Titania has none, though it does have a continue point. Finally, the two special stages that I've described in Sections [1-X] and [3-X] have neither Supply Rings nor continue points.

>> Grey Ring <<

This is a funny one that's easily mistaken for a Blue / Supply Ring - it does refill about half of your energy, but it does not act as a continue point if

you lose your ship. The major visual cue: Grey rings spin around - true supply rings are solidly fixed where they appear. They are only found on certain stages: Level 1 Corneria, Level 1 Venom Surface (3), Level 2 Corneria, Sector Y (if you get the bonus, check Section [2-4] for details), Level 2 Venom Upper Atmosphere (1), Sector Z (2), and finally Level 3 Venom Surface.

>> Coins <<

This last type of shield powerup is only found in one place in one stage. If you want to know where and when, skip to Section [3-X].

>> Twin Blaster / Wing Gyro <<

Unless your wing(s) are damaged, this powerup supplies the Twin Blaster. The powerup can be found laying around in a level, though usually after flying through a particular pathway or shooting down the little blue ship that always provides it. There's also one point in the game where you can get it from a whale. But get this powerup however you can - it's super important. You might even want to consider missing a supply ring on levels like Macbeth so that you can go back and get the twin blasters at the beginning of the level if you die - the boss of that stage is extremely difficult without them, and even though I'm writing this FAQ, I find I have a lot of trouble consistently completing that stage for this reason.

Anyway. The wing-mounted twin blasters ("Type A") are the upgrade for the single nose-cone blaster you start with. After that, there's a further upgrade, the photon shot ("Type B"), and it's all kinds of awesome - not only is it more powerful, but it strikes a larger area. The catch is that when you die, you go back to the single blaster. And since the twin blasters are wing-mounted, losing one or both wings means losing your twin blasters.

If your wing(s) are damaged, this powerup supplies the Wing Gyro. If you have broken one or two wings, a little frame with wings will apply itself to your ship and you'll get your wings repaired. Again, be nice to your wings - losing your twin blasters is awful and it's a long hard slog to get from broken wing(s) back up to the photon shot. The one good thing though is that losing a life and trying again in a new ship brings back your wings, so from there you can at least go straight to twin blasters again. I talk about wings and wing damage a little more explicitly two sections down ([B-8]).

>> Power Shield <<

Ha-ha! This is my favorite powerup in the game - it turns your ship into a transparent blue wireframe (in cockpit view, your extremity indicators turn blue) and while you are in this form you are impervious to attacks! Until it wears off, that is - and it's worn off by getting hit about three times. If you want to, you can think of it as a supplementary shield on top of your current one. Unfortunately, once it's gone, it's gone - you can't replenish it like you can your wings or your basic shield energy.

Sometimes Power Shields are left lying at particular points in a level - at other times there is a special ship you can shoot down to get them, but the yellow wireframe ship that carries it is so small and usually so far out of the flight path that you have no chance of picking up the powerup. Bummer.

Anyway, if you get a Power Shield, make it a little challenge to see how long you can keep it. Amazingly, you can carry the Power Shield between levels! Yes! The easiest place to test this is on Level One, between Stages 3 (Space Armada) and 4 (Meteor). If you have spectacular skills or are playing with an emulator, you could probably even beat the game carrying this shield! Try it!

>> Extra Ship <<

The proverbial "1-UP" in platformer parlance, this adds an extra ship to your reserve. You start with two extra ships on a new game or continue, which ends up being three plays since you can play with no extra ships left (x0).

You get the powerup by shooting the three little buoys in an Extra Ship Ring, then flying through the ring to get the ship that appears.

>> Nova Bomb <<

As a powerup, it looks like a little blue ball with a wire around it. You'll find them all over the place - you start with three and can carry a maximum of five. They do a passably good job of clearing weaker enemies off your screen and inflicting significant damage on the bigger ones. You definitely don't want to be relying on them, though - they more or less exist to help you get out of a jam, or perhaps add insult to injury when you're handing it to some of the bosses.

You press A once to launch the bomb and press A again to detonate it, but if you leave it for more than a few seconds or the bomb strikes something, it will detonate automatically.

Amazingly, the bombs won't hurt you or your wingmen. ;-)

I suppose you could start a level with no bombs (like if you used them all on previous stage(s)) and kill yourself right away and that way "gain" three bombs, but they're really not that big a deal - well, unless you need to bail yourself out of a jam. By and large, the twin blasters (see above) are far more important, and potentially actually worth killing yourself for if you've got wing damage or something.

You might see if you can beat Level One without using a single bomb. You may find it hard to get a high score that way, though!

[B-7] - Enemy Fire

Your regular enemies have two basic kinds of attacks - energy blasts and missiles.

Energy blasts of all kinds can be deflected by a barrel roll (executed by rapidly pressing L or R). Here they are in increasing order of strength:

- Weak: Regular Laser (yellow)
- Medium: Ring Laser (red-orange)
- Strong: Oval Beam (white)
- Very Strong: Plasma Ball (white, sparking)

Missiles are as damaging as the strongest energy blasts, and worse than that, they home in on you, and they cannot be deflected. However, you can and should shoot them down before they reach you. You can sometimes try just avoiding them, but that is very risky. Shoot first and evade as a last resort. Always stay alert! If two or three missiles get the jump on you, that can end your game pretty quickly.

Of course, a lot of enemies will also try to collide with you, and some bosses will project parts of themselves at you, but you'll spend most of your time

dealing with energy blasts and missiles.

[B-8] - Wings and Wing Damage

Wings help you stay stable in flight - you'll find steering yourself a bit more difficult if you lose one or both wings. Probably even more importantly, the all-important twin blasters are wing-mounted, so you really want to take good care of your wings. (Though if you want a challenge, try destroying your wings on the first stage and going as far as you can without them!)

Wings also play a role in damage control - hits to the wing only damage you half as much as hits to the hull. Unfortunately, the wings aren't invincible, and after a few heavy hits or a good big thwack against a wall or two, the wings will be destroyed. (You'll know when this happens by the computer voice saying "Wing Damage" and the fact that your nice silver wing has become a puny red nub.) The wings don't have their own power meters either, so you don't really know how much further you can push them.

But one thing you can do is fly through as many energy rings and supply rings as possible. Doing so will repair the hidden damage to your wings. Keep them fresh, because you'll be sorry if you lose your twin blasters just before facing a critical boss.

Destroyed wings can be repaired by the Twin Blaster / Wing Gyro powerup (details above under "Powerups"), and when you lose a ship you'll come back with intact wings. If you're near the beginning of a stage and have the ships to spare, I'd suggest killing yourself off - that way, when you get the powerup, you'll get the Twin Blasters.

[B-9] - Scoring and Continues

It's important to shoot as many enemies as you can, because maximizing your score means maximizing your continues! If you defeat 100% of the enemies on a given level (i.e.: anything that shoots at you - the benign column-carrying walkers on Corneria, for example, don't count to this total - there are also other things like smiley asteroids that try to kill you through impact but can't themselves be killed, so they don't count either), you score 10000 points. If you get 90%, you get 9000, and so on - it's the percentage multiplied by 100.

You get a continue - an extra kick at the can, and very valuable indeed - at 10000, 30000, and 50000 points. Start on a high note - whomp the easy first stage (well, easiER) and get your first continue as you leave Corneria!

When you use a continue, you start again with two extra ships. You maintain your current score as well, but you do have to start at the beginning of the stage you were on, which may seem like a drag, but in my opinion this is actually a blessing since you will have the benefit of the powerups from the first third or half of the stage that you otherwise wouldn't have if you were to continue from the supply ring, assuming you were on the latter parts of a stage when you lost your last ship. Venom, the last planet of every level, always consists of two stages, and if you lose your extra ships on the second stage you still get to start on the second stage even though the continue credit does momentarily bump you all the way back to the course map.

You'll probably get the 10000-point continue through just about any playthrough

(except perhaps that "special detour" from stage 3-2, if you didn't score 100% on stage 3-1) and you'll get the 30000-point continue unless you travel through the black hole to stage 1-5 (it'll be impossible to get), or 2-4 (it'll be hard to get - you have to score 100% on the three main finished stages). The 50000-point continue is tricky for levels 1 and 2 (you need to score 100% on each of the first five stages - and let's be honest, if you're that good, you won't be needing it!), but easily achievable on level 3 (where you very likely will need it!).

As you might infer, going through the black hole is quite bad for you in terms of accumulating continues. It's a nice way for raw beginners to see Sector Y and Sector Z, which they otherwise wouldn't have a hope in heck of getting to, but the tour will most likely end before Venom and Macbeth respectively. But by and large, the black hole isn't like the Warp Zone in Super Mario Bros. - instead of making the game easier, it actually makes the game harder! You don't get to "complete" the second and third stages, so you miss out on 20000 potential points toward your credits. So for my money, playing through a stage the normal way is the way to go. I've been able to warp to Venom and Sector Y and finish the game, but I've only been able to warp to Sector Z and finish the game perhaps once - the key is getting through Macbeth, and if you don't have a good supply of ships and continues you may be dead in the water at that point. It's far easier to do all of the levels *without* warping.

A few tips to help you rack up high scores: Remember that it takes time for your blaster bolts, once fired, to strike your enemies. Far-away enemies take longer to hit - but if you want to get high scores and stay safe, these are the ones to hit! A few targeting tips: 1) For moving enemies, shoot where they're going to be, not where they are. 2) If you're confident your bolts will strike, move on - get a head start on the next enemy.

[B-A] - Selecting Your Course

Once you've finished reading and training, you need to decide on a route. Which way should you go? Selecting game mode, the first thing you'll see is the course-select screen. (If you leave the game on this screen for a while, you occasionally see bolts of energy fired from Venom towards Corneria.) You have three courses to choose from - press on the D-pad or press SELECT to change your course and you'll see the little flashing line jump among the routes.

>> Level 1 <<

This is the middle course on the map, the default selection, and definitely the course you should complete first. (Then you attempt Level 2, and when you finish that, you can finally attempt Level 3. No harm in trying them to see how hard they really are - I'm just saying that if you're serious about the game, the 1-then-2-then-3 skill-building path is the way to go.)

Pepper calls it a counter-attack of Venom, and you do fly directly through his fleet and a battle base, but it's still the easiest route!

PROS: The Space Armada stage is really cool. The Black Hole* is on this route.

CONS: Becomes very easy for advanced players - almost to the point of being boring. I also never really liked the Meteor stage - it breaks up what would be a good stretch of space-based courses.

* - For reasons explained in the section directly above ([B-9]), the black hole is not a good tool for beginners because you will miss out on valuable points

needed to get continues.

>> Level 2 <<

This is the upper course on the map, and it's also my favorite. It's moderately difficult - probably out of the reach of a rental Star Fox player back in the day, but any owner of the game should be able to beat this course with enough practice.

This route lets you "sneak into Venom's back door" - you get a different boss in the Venom space stage, and the Venom planetary stage is completely different and perhaps my favorite stage in the game.

PROS: Good variety of stages - Titania and Sector Y are quite fascinating. The second Venom stage is really rockin'!

CONS: Corneria isn't much different from the Level 1 stage, and the first two bosses of this route are similar to Level 1's. There are no secret stages to tempt you away from your objective.

>> Level 3 <<

This is the lower course on the map, and it just so happens to be super tough. This one will really test your mettle. It is also one full stage longer than the other courses (seven stages instead of six). That doesn't seem like much, but believe me, you feel it.

I suppose Pepper says this course choice will take Venom by surprise because we'd have to be crazy to take it!

PROS: Corneria in the evening (and a different boss), Fortuna is beautiful, Sector Z is every bit as cool as the Space Armada stage, and the final battle with Andross is something special.

CONS: Macbeth! Macbeth is super hard. A fascinating stage, certainly, but incredibly difficult. If you can get through Macbeth consistently, you're golden. Level 3 is also the way to get to the Out of this Dimension stage, which is an optional and in my opinion unsatisfying way to end the game.

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III - Training [0-0]
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The training level allows you to get a feel for the controls and practice some advanced maneuvers while not having to worry about being shot out of the sky.

[0-1] - Training: Planet IV - Corneria (daytime)

Now, let's get the hang of the controls and have some fun. General Pepper says you should use control type A or B, and I think he's right. One might think that using C or D is better because you press up to fly up, and down to fly down - but it just doesn't work somehow. And this is besides the reality that a flight yoke on a real airplane works the other way around - down means up and up means down. I thus recommend you go with Pepper on this one.

Now there are two major things you can do in training mode. First, you can see how many rings you can fly through before missing one. You'll want to fire your retros (B button by default) after rings six and ten, and using the closer

Approach view (push SELECT) will also help. Flying through all 15 allows you to skip the manoeuvres training with your wingmen, and Pepper tells you he's sorry for doubting you. You can keep flying through rings on into next year if you like; I've flown through well over one hundred myself, and as far as I know Pepper doesn't say anything more. I think that first time players should learn to get through the set of 15 rings at least once - then you can be confident that you know the controls, and you won't be sending me e-mails about how you follow my suggestions but still can't make it past certain stages. (j/k) If you can fly through a hundred rings you should be playing Level 3!

You might want to miss some rings so you get a shot at flying alongside your teammates - plus you'll get a chance to play with some objects on the ground again. See that wire frame ship that appears in the middle? That's supposed to be you. Here's how to follow along: left, right, left, up, down, tilt left, tilt right, roll left, left, roll moving right, roll moving left, right. The Approach view that helped you fly through the rings really isn't an advantage with this - I find Standard view easier (press SELECT to change views).

Mastery of the L and R buttons to angle and roll is essential if you want Slippery to compliment you at the end. To see this, you must be flawless - you can't let Peppy snap at you to stay in formation even once. If you're really awful, Falco will ask what's wrong with you. Rolling might seem like a useless thing to learn, but it isn't; rolling your ship lets you deflect laser blasts, and there's no way you'll be able to get through Level 2 and beyond without knowing how. To roll, you tap either the L or the R button twice really fast. You'll get it with time.

Here it is again, in case you missed it: The most important maneuver in the game is the barrel roll. If you can master rolling and shooting at the same time, you'll blaze right through these stages: Asteroid Belts, Space Armada, Meteor, Sectors X and Z, Titania, Macbeth, and the space over Venom stages - to name a few.

When you're finished training, press START to go back to the Control Select screen. You can also "die" in training - but despite the fact that you carry no extra ships you just start the Training stage over again as if nothing happened.

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IV - Level 1 Flythrough [1-0]
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Pepper says that the last resort to thwart Andross is counter-attacking Venom. That makes sense; what doesn't make sense is how the course that takes you directly through Andross' fleet and runs you over a battle base turns out to be the easiest!

Level 1 is still of interest even to veteran players as it is the way to get to the Awesome Black Hole, from which you can warp to the Level 1 Venom (space) stage, the Level 2 Sector Y stage, or the Level 3 Sector Z stage. That doesn't make the game any easier, though, only shorter. By skipping stages you'll miss out on points for defeating enemies, and therefore you'll get fewer or no continues.

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[1-1] - Level 1, Stage 1 - Planet IV: Corneria (daytime)
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Pepper calls it: CORNERIA - THE BASE
"Star Fox Team, our last resort is to counter attack Venom!! Good luck!!"

Boss: Advance Scout Mother Ship ATTACK CARRIER

I love the opening scenes to this game. First, of course, you see the Attack Carrier approaching Cornerian space. Better is the launch sequence out of the base and the check-ins from your wingmen. You can sense that this is going to be a cool game.

Follow Slippy through all those arches and you can collect a twin blaster powerup! Those things should be your best friend in the game, and I'll be sure to tell you where to collect them. Try to shoot the two fighters that appear at this time as you fly through the open space between the last two arches. Remember, you want to score 100% and get that continue credit, right?

After a while, one of your wingmen will go after two fighters on his own. Let him. Get used to seeing this in nearly every stage of the game - all you have to do is keep your finger off the Y button for a few moments. Don't worry; anything a wingman shoots down adds to your percentage total at the end of the stage. But you may still see things to shoot in these situations - here a little grey ground-hopper should be available to your left. Don't worry about the big tall walker, though. As your wingman shoots down the second fighter, you'll see a little moving turret on the ground in the middle of your flightpath. Get yourself as low as you can and fire away. It may leave a nova bomb powerup behind!

Now you'll fly through the city. See if you can angle yourself to fly between the buildings if you feel like it. Near the end of the city you'll see a row of orange buildings along the right side of the corridor - fly to right of those to collect a nova bomb. You may have your hands full with three fighters after you collect the bomb!

City over with, you'll have some enemy crawlers to deal with as a friendly walker strolls through your line of fire carrying a beam. Then you'll see a bouncing grey ring - these are good to get, as they restore about half of your shield meter.

Now you'll fly through a long stretch of falling columns. Stay low and in the middle and you shouldn't have any problems. A fighter appears after the columns. Now I think this will be the only stage where I try to alert you to every little thing. If I were to list every fighter or group of same that appear in the more advanced stages, I might need to give up on my science degree. ;-)

Now a wingman will fly out in front, from the right, being chased by an enemy fighter. Shoot down the enemy fighter! If you leave it too long, it fires on your wingman - and if they get hit too many times, they're out of the game! That's bad, because you'll be in situations where a bunch of ships are bearing down on you and you'll be saved in the nick of time by one of your quick-thinking wingmen. Anyway, again, get used to this sort of thing as it happens in nearly every stage and you need to be ready for it. I'll alert you to when these events take place.

Now a walker will go by, you'll have to deal with one of those little turrets, then there's the fixed, steady Supply Ring. You don't want to miss these - like other rings, they restore your shield energy and repair any wing damage (I discuss wing damage and destruction in section [B-8] of this FAQ), but they ALSO work as continue points if you lose a ship. Of course you also want to look out for the yellow rings that appear as you defeat enemies - they restore a small portion of your shield energy and shore up your wings a bit, too.

Now a ship appears overhead that you'll want to destroy before things start

parachuting out of it. Fly to the very top of your flightpath and give this ship everything you've got - it will take a good number of hits to destroy.

The wingman that you just rescued may stick around and fire a few shots along the right. Not much use, though, I have to say. You'll see another walker who's not doing much of anything. Now the boss will appear.

+++Advance Scout Mother Ship ATTACK CARRIER+++

The boss flies in over you from behind, so don't hang around the top of your flight path or you may get knocked. The boss will turn and face you. Now start firing at the right-side hangar door, even before it opens. That way, your shots hit the instant it does open, and if your aim is true you'll be able to fry the hangar before it can launch any fighters.

Now start firing at one of the left-side doors - these are missile doors, and you also want to be damaging them as soon as they open up. With luck you'll destroy them before they fire homing missiles at you, which you'll have to shoot down. Twin blasters are very handy here. Concentrate on one until it's gone, then do the other. I tend to go bottom-to-top.

After destroying the hangar and missile bays, the central hull that's left of the ship begins flying towards you, firing its plasma guns. Now you can shoot the ship anywhere on its surface and it will take damage. You can pretty easily avoid the bolts since they don't home in on you like missiles do, but you can fly right through the middle of them rolling your ship to deflect them if you want. When the ship gets close to being underneath you it will turn around, letting you just sit and fire into the back of it! Boom. Off to the Asteroid Field.

[1-2] - Level 1, Stage 2 - Asteroid Belt

Pepper calls it: ASTEROID BELT

"Andross's forces intend to build a base in this area!! Destroy their rock crusher!!"

Boss: Asteroid Destroyer ROCK CRUSHER

Sure, Andross wants to build a base in this area, but I think that the real purpose of the Rock Crusher is to clear a path so that the bulk of Andross' fleet can reach Corneria.

Science note: I don't know about the Lylat System, but here at home in the Solar System our asteroid belt is far less dense. Remember those Voyager probes NASA sent out so we could take a peek at the gas giants? There are millions and millions and millions of asteroids, sure, but you have to remember that space is BIG and asteroids are pretty tiny. Anyway, the folks at NASA tried very hard, but never managed to create a flight plan that would allow one of those probes to get near even one asteroid. It would be hard to imagine an asteroid belt this dense being formed anywhere - where would you get the material?

As soon as you fly into the level, your view is switched to cockpit mode. Boo-yah! My favorite! Now you have no excuse not to shoot down every last one of those pesky enemy fighters.

When you see those long articulated things with the blue heads you can just shoot the heads to have a chance at roasting the entire creature at once. It saves time if it works.

You can shoot gold asteroids, but not silver ones. (Sometimes funny creatures "swim" out of the gold ones as you destroy them, though I've never known them to be a threat.) As soon as you see your first asteroids, one of your wingmen will get into trouble. You'll want to help him out. While I'm all for gender equality, I'm glad that the SNES Star Fox Team is all-male - otherwise this would be grammatically awkward.

After a bunch of pairs of appearing and disappearing ships you'll fly into a particularly dense cluster of asteroids. Shoot the gold ones if they're in your way and avoid the indestructible silver ones like the plague. After they pass, you'll see a little hopper hopping between two silver asteroids with a nova bomb situated in between. Shoot the hopper and collect the nova bomb.

Also at this time, one of your wingmen will herd in two enemy fighters and line them up for himself. While this is going on, fly through the three gold asteroids that form a triangle. A twin blaster powerup will then appear slightly up and right! Get it! Now, if you were keen enough to keep your ship intact since you picked up the first twin blaster in Stage 1, you'll get the Photon Shot! Ka-pow! You definitely want to hang onto these babies!

Another blue-headed thing with the trailing yellow bits appears. Then you see a rotating bar of asteroids with one gold asteroid in the middle. If you want to go to the Black Hole, this is the tricky part. Follow these instructions very carefully. If you're playing on an emulator, make a save state here.

+++How to enter the Black Hole+++

You encounter three spinning bars of silver asteroids with a gold asteroid in the middle, one after the other. What you need to do is get close to the middle of each bar before shooting the gold asteroid; then you want to cruise right through where you just shot at - right through the middle! - that's the key to the trick. (Fire your retros to help you slow down when you're doing this, if you feel the need. Also watch out for the bolt-spewing mines between bars and the funny creatures way up above your flightpath that come down on you guns blazing.) Now, if you're fortunate, you'll see a smiling asteroid fly at you. Shoot it, and it becomes the entrance to the Black Hole. Fly through the Black Hole, and you're in. A description of this stage is available in section [1-X] directly below.

For those of you who decide to skip the black hole, let me assure you that the Andross Space Armada is an equally, if not more interesting stage that you won't want to miss. Anyway, a supply ring appears just after where the Black Hole would be, so assuming you collect that, you have to decide to do this before attempting the boss.

A wingman gets into trouble shortly after that supply ring. Keep an eye out for those bolt-spewing mines.

Anyway, you'll now fly past two big asteroids, and through a forest of mines - be fast with your laser. At the end of that, just before the boss, you'll encounter a tiny three-piece ship that fires at you from the bottom of your flightpath - don't mix it up with a 1-up, just destroy it. Oh, and there is one tiny little bonus. If you "activated" the smiling asteroid earlier but didn't shoot it, a bird will appear here and drop yellow energy supply rings in your path. Certainly nothing to write home about, but better than a kick in the teeth, I suppose.

+++Asteroid Destroyer ROCK CRUSHER+++

The deal with this sucker is you have to destroy the four laser turrets on both

sides of the vessel before you can roast the whole thing. It's a pretty tame boss at first because all it shoots at you are the lasers. You can just sit directly in front and roll-deflect the occasional yellow bolts. In any case, I recommend steady fire so that a turret will be roasted as soon as it opens. In fact, I'll go so far as to call this general advice for every boss.

When you destroy the last turret, be careful - the main bulk of the ship is then detached, and you don't want to run into it. After that part safely passes you by, you can concentrate on the center bit between the two pads of the ship - of course, it fires lasers at you. Shoot at it repeatedly, but watch out for the missiles and plasma blasts, and be sure to shoot the missiles down the moment you see them.

After you vanquish the Rock Crusher you'll make the jump to lightspeed and be off on a direct course to intercept Andross' fleet. The story of this path continues in section [1-3] farther below.

[1-X] - Level 1, Stage 3 - The Awesome Black Hole

Pepper calls it: THE AWESOME BLACK HOLE

"This space grave yard, created by Andross's experiments, is where your father vanished, Fox!!"

Boss: None, but you'll find the derelict hulls of a few of them.

Really, I find the game just as entertaining without taking the shortcuts, but if you're pressed for time the Black Hole just might be the way to go. Just note that it will make the game more challenging, since you're missing out on points (towards continue credits) from the Asteroid Belt, this stage, and any stages you skip by going this way. That said, the Black Hole is also mysterious and fascinating in and of itself, and it's good to get familiar with it.

Cribbing a bit from the comic (see section [B-2], "Story"), the reference to Fox's father harkens back to the time when Andross and Fox's father were friends, but Andross was in love with Fox Sr.'s girlfriend, and so he wanted to do away with Fox Sr. First, he rigged up a car bomb, but the wife got in the car! That was unfortunate, to be sure. His second attempt to get rid of Fox Sr. was more effective - Fox Sr. was sent on a mission out to the Asteroid Belt, but Andross placed a powerful bomb aboard his ship. Its explosion created the Black Hole.

There isn't really a lot to do inside the Black Hole besides looking for the exits, which are gray rings. In order, the three exits lead to:

1. Level 2, Stage 4 - Sector Y [2-4]
2. Level 3, Stage 4 - Sector Z [3-4]
3. Level 1, Stage 5 - Venom (space over Venom) [1-5]

If you're a beginning player, the only likely way you'll beat the game is by taking the third exit to Venom. Going to Sector Y or Z is still a good choice, though, as it will give you a near-impossible challenge and allow you to see some far-out stages that you wouldn't normally see. Take Sector Z, for instance - it's way out in the boonies, and it's a pretty tough level.

But if you're not an expert yet, but looking to complete Level 2 or 3, I suggest that you start those courses from the beginning. You'll complete more of the easier opening stages that way, and thus you'll earn more continues.

One more interesting thing to note: If you go to Level 1 Venom, the game

considers it to be Stage 4 and 5, not the Stage 5 and 6 you might expect. You won't notice this with the other courses since their point of emergence is at their fourth stages.

Okay, let's talk about the stage itself! You can find some powerups inside the black hole, so you can go through the whole area more than once and reload everything. Only a few ships actually fire at you.

Near the start of the stage is a 1-up. After that comes a twin blaster powerup inside a cube with a circular door - shoot the door to open it, then fly through the cube.

You'll see the first ring (the exit to Sector Y). If you skip this you'll fly through more debris - watch out for the little blue amoebas! They'll actually move towards you, as they're attracted to your ship's energy. If one does manage to attach itself to your ship, roll to shake it off. The next landmark is another cube with a door, and this one contains a nova bomb.

You'll see the second ring (the exit to Sector Z), and in the next cube is another nova bomb.

Finally you'll see the third ring (the exit to the Level 1 Venom), and then the stage starts all over again - unfortunately, you don't get another shot at the 1-up (wouldn't that be nice, eh?). You can, however, get as many twin blaster and nova bomb powerups as you like - just for your own sake try to keep track of how many rings you've passed. You'll know you're back at the start of the stage when you fly through the cube with the twin blaster powerup - the next ring will be the first ring, the exit to Sector Y.

[1-3] - Level 1, Stage 3 - The Andross Space Armada

Pepper calls it: THE ANDROSS SPACE ARMADA

"The Space Armada consists of powerful battleships!! Destroy their energy cores!!"

Boss: Planet Bomber ATOMIC CORE

Alright! Get set for one of the most entertaining stages in game. The goal is to destroy two of the picket ships and the large planet bomber ship at the end - good thing we're stopping these guys before they reach Corneria!

Upon leaving hyperspace you'll be greeted by a missile and then one of those little blue ships that you can shoot to get the twin blaster powerup. If you need the powerup, make sure the enemy is in an accessible part of the screen when you kill it. Then you'll contend with three more missiles; then you see your first 1-up! Shoot the three pieces (you can aim in the same place and let the bits come to your blasts instead of the other way around), then fly between them to collect it.

You'll also notice one of the smaller capital ships. Shoot between its antennae to take it down, but watch out for the missiles! You might want to let a nova bomb go here to clear the area. There will be more ships like this, and also a few where you destroy the laser turrets to destroy the vessel.

Soon you'll come up on the first picket ship. You can miss it if you like, but you'll just fly all the way back around again - you can't advance in the level without destroying the ships. (Unfortunately, skipping the first picket ship means starting from the first capital ship, not the beginning of the stage, meaning you don't get the chance to encounter the twin blaster ship or the 1-UP

again. So there's really no point in skipping the first ship, though there IS a point in skipping the second...)

Basic tips: Fire your retros when you feel the need to, and try not to bounce around too much - it's hazardous to the health of your twin blasters. ;-) Try not to move left and right unnecessarily, as it can be difficult to get yourself perfectly centered again. Here's the procedure for this first ship: fly above a beam, fly below a beam, push L or R and fly sideways between two vertical beams, fly under a yellow beam, pick up a power shield (see how long you can hang onto it - if you still have it in the next stage then you qualify as a good player), fly under another yellow beam, shoot the round portal, then start shooting steadily to destroy the energy core. Boom.

Since you're experiencing tight-quarters manoeuvring for the first time here, this might be a good time for me to deliver my lecture on wing damage (if you missed section [B-8] in the "Things to Know" part of this FAQ). Here it is: Your wings act as shock absorbers (hits to the wing only count for half damage), they assist your flight stability, and they serve as mounts for the twin blasters if you have them. It's surprisingly easy to lose a wing - just bounce around in one of these ships a bit with your wings banging on the walls and you'll see what I mean pretty quickly. Now, you can just damage your wing like the rest of your ship, and if you fly through a blue or yellow ring it will be refreshed. You can also get Wing Damage, where your wing is destroyed and replaced by a little red stub. Once in that state, you repair your wings either by getting a twin blaster / wing gyro powerup (of course, you get the wing(s), not the laser... sob!) or by getting killed (this might be necessary in certain parts of Level 3 where you almost have to have twin blasters to defeat the bosses).

Now once finishing the first ship, you're in open space again. You'll still be in Standard view, but you can go back to cockpit view if you want by pressing SELECT. Now pretty much right away, one of your wingmen will get into trouble. Here's a quick trick for the cruel people: If you want to see what the game is like without your wingmen, now's your chance - you can skip the second picket ship again and again until all your wingmen get shot down. Bummer. I don't recommend early players try this, for losing your wingmen detracts from the enjoyment of the game, in my opinion.

As your wingman is having difficulty, there's also a mine to the right that you'd better take care of. Now you'll deal with some fighters and one of those three-part ships like you faced near the end of the previous stage. More capital ships will appear, and also a supply ring. One capital ship has three turrets you can destroy to blow up the ship, but watch out for the three missiles that swing out towards you from behind it! If you're going for a perfect score, shoot the turrets first, then launch and detonate bomb to take care of the missiles.

The second ship appears. The moves are a little trickier this time, but nothing too difficult: Shoot the double doors to make them part, fly above a beam, below a beam, above a series of beams, below a series of beams (watch out for a striped moving beam here), shoot a series of double doors to make them part (I'd leave the nova bomb alone because collecting it means you'll be off-centre and you'll risk smacking into the walls or the tight vertical beams near the energy core), shoot some enemies (don't go out of your way to get an energy ring for the same reason I advised passing on the nova bomb), shoot the round portal, and start shooting at the energy core. Boom 2.

By the way, it is possible to get out of the ships without destroying the cores. Unfortunately you have to fly all the way around and enter them again, as if you'd missed them entirely.

Upon exiting the second ship you are swarmed by some tiny white and red capital ships that are as easy as anything to shoot down, except if you're trying to get back into cockpit view - I might hold off on that until you get a few clear seconds. After a few of these guys and some mines and missiles, you'll encounter a supply ring as you begin to see your final objective at the bottom of your flight path - the fearsome and deadly Planet Bomber! Kind of like Andross' version of the Death Star. A couple of fighters fly into your path after the supply ring - you know what to do. There's one last mine for old time's sake, and then you will fly into the Planet Bomber!

Inside, your cowardly wingmen decide to abandon you and head for open space if they haven't already. You do some trickier manoeuvres; pay attention to which way the arrows are pointed on the up-or-down doors. You can shoot them to change their direction or just wait for them to open for you. I'll assume that you won't be shooting them - that just complicates things!

Here's the list of moves: fly up over a down-moving-door, stay up and fly over a series of beams, fly low under a series of beams, fly up above a beam, fly below a beam, fly above a beam, fly below a beam, fly above a beam (might want to fire your retros for these), fly between two horizontal beams, fly low under an up-moving-door, fly up over a down-moving-door, fly low under an up-moving-door, fly above a beam and then over a down-moving door, shoot some enemies (might need a nova bomb to clear the way if you don't have twin blasters), shoot open a series of side-parting doors, fly between the vertical beams, and then your autopilot kicks in.

You fly through a cool passage and greet the Atomic Core.

+++Planet Bomber ATOMIC CORE+++

Ever seen Return of the Jedi? These cores have become quite a trope.

The first thing you must do is destroy the wall panels that draw energy out of the Atomic Core. I find they're easier to hit if you orient yourself so that the energy streams are coming at you around the circle. Watch you don't get nailed by the streams, and you'll want to be careful not to smash your precious wings into the wall. There's also a tiny fighter pod that appears once in a while, so shoot him down.

Once you destroy the panels, the core itself will open up, allowing you to roast the entire vessel with a few quick shots. If you're not fast enough, the core will close up, and you'll have to repeat the process with the wall panels again.

After destroying the Planet Bomber, you head to Meteor.

[1-4] - Level 1, Stage 4 - The Battle Base Meteor

Pepper calls it: THE BATTLE BASE METEOR

"Be sure to use your retros if you're going too fast!! Be careful with my Arwings!!"

Boss: Spider Shaped Machine DANCING INSECTOR

Science note: This place really shouldn't be called Meteor - meteors are those bright flashes you see in the sky when asteroids or other particles intercept the Earth and burn up in the upper atmosphere. This big chunk of rock is really an asteroid.

You'll notice that as the stage begins, you're put into Approach view. You can of course switch to Standard, but the idea behind Approach is that you have an extra-split second to see and react to things - the downside is that you lose the view of what's going on immediately beside you. Here the Approach view is suggested because, as Pepper alludes, you have to be careful with your ship here - your visibility is severely reduced, and you don't see obstacles and enemies until you're right on top of them. It's not like there's a fog - they just "pop-up" later than they would on other stages.

First you'll deal with a few walkers, then you'll encounter plasma turrets on both sides of your flight corridor. You actually see the bolts before you see the turrets! Then you see a few roving turrets. A nova bomb could come in handy here.

A wingman will find trouble as you encounter three roving turrets, all in a row. (Not one after the other, I mean that they're all in a row across your screen.)

Now you'll go through a pillared area. You might want to fire your retros. There's a nova bomb powerup available center-left, not to mention an all-important twin blaster powerup along towards the right. Then you run into a plasma turret among the pillars, so stay sharp.

Now you wend your way through some rocks and walkers. Hug the ground to take care of a couple of roving turrets. Then you've got another walker, and now some helicopters. They're hard to hit. There's a plasma turret and a little bitty turret that appear on the left, as a 1-up appears on the right. You don't have a lot of time to react.

Just as you (would) collect the 1-up, a wingman finds trouble. Then you've got more walkers and helicopters. And two more plasma turrets for good measure. Then you've got a walker.

Now you'll see a big, boxy, garage-like building on your left. Three roving turrets will spill out. You know what to do - hug the ground and blast them early before they line up under your flight path and start taking shots at you. You encounter another plasma turret or two on the left after this.

Now there's a big door in the middle of the path. There's a supply ring inside, but wait until you're close before shooting it - it closes again quickly. Shoot it when you're right on top of it, then boost through it. A wingman will be clearing up a few airborne enemies now, which leaves you free to concentrate on a huge stationary turret. It will take everything you've got to blast.

Two helicopters appear. Then you get a pair of doors like the one that held the supply ring a second ago. There's a nova bomb in the left door (and nothing at all in the right). A wingman finds trouble, and you have to deal with one of those big turrets again, then three more helicopters.

And now for the boss!

+++Spider Shaped Machine DANCING INSECTOR+++

Your wingman may actually hang around and fire a few shots at the Insector, but he'll take off before any real damage is dealt. Sigh.

The first thing to do is keep shooting the legs while the Insector dances; watch out for plasma bolts. As you tire it from dancing, it'll pull up its legs and spin around in the air. It will approach to try and hit you; it will either

fly in high or low - be ready (and do the opposite). For all of this first spin, its legs will still be blue and you can do practically no damage.

Now it'll dance again, but when it goes into a spin this time, the legs will be red. Start shooting off the legs. You want it to be singing this:

I'm never gonna dance again
Guilty feet have got no rhythm
Though it's easy to pretend
I know you're not a fool

Should've known better than to cheat a friend
And waste the chance that I've been given
So I'm never gonna dance again
The way I danced with you

As revenge for taking its legs out from under it, the Insector will begin to use its flame cannon. Since you can see its trajectory all the way, it's pretty easy to avoid, though it is quick. Move in alternating directions to miss it completely. The Insector will still be spin-approaching you on either the high side or the low side, so watch out for that.

After downing all the legs, destroy the remaining central pod (how does it stay in the air?!). Boom. Hey, Venom's on the horizon! Off we go!

[1-5] - Level 1, Stage 5 - Venom (space over Venom)

Pepper: VENOM - THE FINAL GOAL

"Andross is hiding on Venom!! Fox, you must find his core brain and destroy it!!"

Boss: Special Close Orbit Robot PHANTRON

This is basically just a fun shoot-em-up stage. Just keep your finger on that Y (fire) button.

Keep in mind is that it takes time for your blaster bolts, once fired, to strike your enemies. Far-away enemies take longer to hit - but if you want to get high scores and stay safe, these are the ones to hit! A few targeting tips: 1) For moving enemies, shoot where they're going to be, not where they are. 2) If you're confident your bolts will strike, move on - get a head start on the next enemy.

Almost as soon as you begin the stage, one of your wingmen will get into trouble. Shortly thereafter, you'll begin to see strange pods coming up from the planet. They're trying to crash into your ship, so shoot them down.

With the Venom stages, the sooner you shoot something after seeing it, the better. A lot of innocuous-looking objects and enemies tend to explode or split up in your face if you let them get too close.

There's a gray ring you can fly through to pick up two nova bombs. After that, be on the lookout for a twin blaster ship. Then a wingman finds trouble, then more pods start coming up from the surface. There's a Supply Ring, then even more pods. A wingman finds trouble yet again! After the pods stop coming after you, there are a couple of stray enemies, and then the boss appears.

+++Special Close Orbit Robot PHANTRON+++

When you first encounter this bad boy, keep firing at it; you'll inflict some damage whenever it moves. Sweep your lasers with its movements so that you can shoot down the missiles that it sends your way while it is moving. ;-)

Soon it will start spinning, and when it stops, you'll notice that there are three ships now. Only one is capable of taking damage, so find it with your laser (you'll hear a satisfying swish-like sound when your lasers find it) and shoot shoot shoot. Watch out for missiles! Before you can destroy the Phantron completely, though, the ship retreats back to the planet. The Star Fox team wisely decides to give chase.

There's a chance that the Phantron will try and ram you just before it retreats, but it doesn't happen very often. I'm not sure what triggers this. I've also found that if you really really hammer on it in the opening moments before it splits, what would be the killing blow triggers the spin, and after it splits it will recoup a little energy so that you don't kill it right away. Probably some kind of script/AI thing.

[1-6] - Level 1, Stage 6 - Planet I: Venom

Boss: Special Close Orbit Robot PHANTRON

Wow! You've finally made it! There's some tricky flying to do on this planet, so be on your toes.

Soon after arriving you'll notice a panel with a triangle pointing to the right on it. When you get up close to the panel, it will quickly rotate, becoming a large barrier on the right side of the screen that will bring you woe if you've foolishly decided to fly on that side of it. You can also fire on the triangle to change its direction, if you wish; you'll be needing to do that later to collect items and avoid getting seriously hurt. Get used to these things, you'll be seeing them a lot.

Woah! Now some blocks are appearing out of nowhere! Fly low.

One of your wingmen finds trouble. A bit after that, you'll have some plasma turrets to deal with. Hug the ground and take them out, or stay up in the air and roll-deflect the bolts as you fire away.

Another one of those panels appears, pointing to the right as before. Then there's a third one pointing right - you'll notice this one is pointing at a nova bomb. So fire at the triangle to make it point the other way (left) and then you can safely collect the nova bomb. (One little shot is all it takes - whatever you do, don't hammer on your blasters!)

Now you have a left-pointing one, and you can dodge it or redirect it, but then you have a right-pointing one on the left side of the screen. You pretty much have to redirect this right-pointing one left, and similarly redirect the left-pointing one on the right side of the screen to the right. Then fly right of a left-pointing one in the middle of the path.

Now fly low, as there will be pillars rising and sinking in the ground, though it's more eye candy than anything else. Then you'll deal with a couple of enemies, and a wingman will get into trouble. Then there will be plasma turrets on both sides. You might want to use a nova bomb here for safety reasons. A couple more enemies, another pair of turrets, then a turret in the middle.

You will then arrive at some red pillars that you can shoot if you like; then

more pillars are cast down upright upon the ground so as to be in your way - avoid those. Then there's a fancy left, right, left (or the other way around) through falling grey pillars, then you get what looks like your choice of three(!) Supply Rings. Unfortunately only the middle one is the real continue-point-making deal, so you'll probably want to fly through it. Then you have another narrow pass through floating pillars.

Now you're at the spot with the objects that fall to the ground if you fly under them. If you want to collect the nova bomb or the twin blasters, I suggest using the booster rockets. Fly sideways between the rows until you need to swing into a row to collect an item.

One last swinging bar (initially left-pointed) for old-time's sake, then you have more red shootable falling pillars, and then the Phantron comes back again.

+++Special Close Orbit Robot PHANTRON+++

Start off (as almost always) by shooting. It will split into three right away, and as before find the damage-taking one with your laser (you'll hear a satisfying sound) and fire away, watching out for missiles and rolling to deflect blaster bolts.

After you extinguish it, it flies around in a circle again, and... Oh... my... God...

Strategy for the new Phantron is easy - just fire at the head and avoid / shoot down the missiles, and avoid / roll deflect the lasers, and plasma blasts. ;-) It's easier said than done, though. You'll need to be very nimble to outlast the bugger.

Try to shoot down as many missiles as you can, as a few of them leave yellow supply rings. But you can dodge most of the missiles reasonably well if you watch their shadows and listen to their audio cues. Still, you don't want to get into a long, drawn-out fight, and I tend to favor aggressive tactics. The best defense may well be to stay right in the line of fire, shooting down the missiles and roll-deflecting the blaster bolts. But if you're not good a rolling, you'll have to play cat-and-mouse.

The Phantron's other attacks include leaping at you, and also launching a leg towards you. Try to miss those. It can also split into three, and again you have to figure out which one to shoot at. It may take a long time, but you will be able to roast the thing for good eventually.

After destroying Phantron, the autopilot kicks in and you end up inside Andross' fortress, where you do some manoeuvres in a corridor similar to the ones you executed in the Space Armada stage. Andross taunts you a bit, but he's just masking his desperation - you've made it this far, and you're not going to leave before utterly destroying the fellow. Entering his domain acts as a continue point, so if you've got an extra ship or two you should be good to go.

The corridor contains a grey ring, no doubt most welcome after your battle with Phantron. Then you'll deal with some closing bars - fly up, then down, then collect a nova bomb between two pillars. Fly under a bar, over a bar, and then - carefully - between two bars (fire your retros if you need to).

Now you have to deal with closing doors. You have to roll onto one side and move to the left and right very quickly. Retros will help immensely. Roll right and approach the right wall, roll left and approach the left wall, roll right and approach the right wall, roll left and approach the left wall, roll right

and approach the right wall (and get twin blasters), and finally roll left and approach the left wall. You don't have to get *super* close - the door only closes about 2/3 of the way.

+++Psychic Energy Core TELEKINETIC AMPLIFIER+++

First, destroy the eyes. It will probably two rounds or more of Andross spitting out the telekinetic particles and then sucking them in again for you to accomplish this. I find nova bombs don't really help much here. The faster you work, the better - playing cat-and-mouse tends to mean you get smacked around more by the telekinetic pieces. You also destroy more of them by mounting an aggressive offence. If you have the photon shot, pick an eye, sit high, and just blast away. Surprisingly, you'll take little to no damage from this stance.

When each eye gets blown up, the whole face shatters, giving you a chance to fire directly at Andross' control cube. Fire fire fire! You probably won't destroy the cube in this first round (though you can do this with the photon shot), so you'll soon see the face come back together again. Destroy the eyes like before (it won't take nearly as long - definitely a feasible one-round job if you have the twin blasters), and then utterly fry the control cube - the damage you inflicted in the previous round(s) is still there.

And then Andross blows apart. Your autopilot gets you out of the fortress before it's too late.

I won't spoil the ending for you - its mechanics are pretty much self-evident, except perhaps for a "trick" described in section [H-2] at the end of this FAQ. In any case, enjoy!

Congratulations, you've beaten Level 1, and you're well on your way to becoming an accomplished Star Fox player. Now it's time to try Level 2!

=====
V - Level 2 Flythrough [2.0]
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Level 2 is initially presented as a counter-attack on Venom like Level 1. Level 2, though, is a great deal more complex to the point that it makes Level 1 seem simplistic. While Level 2 isn't the roundabout / insane choice of routes that Level 3 is, it is less of a direct counter by the time you reach Venom. The last stage of Level 2 is one of my favourite stages in the game.

[2-1] - Level 2, Stage 1 - Planet IV: Corneria (daytime)

Pepper calls it: CORNERIA - THE BASE

"Star Fox team, our last resort is to counter attack Venom!! Good luck!!"

Boss: Advance Scout Mother Ship ATTACK CARRIER

This stage is similar to the Level 1 Corneria in appearance, but it's a little tougher.

You start off with two enemy ships, then you encounter a tiny ground-based turret (between two benign towers) and a few more enemies. Now you come to the all-important arches. Slippy doesn't show you how to fly through the arches this time, but you can do it yourself and collect a twin blaster powerup. However, as you approach to the first arch, a wingman gets into trouble!

Fortunately, both wingman and pursuer will fly right in front of you on your way to that first arch, and you can shoot the enemy before the arch if you're quick and your aim is true. If your wingman does get hit and/or you miss the twin blasters, you might want to consider restarting the game.

Nothing but walkers to bother you as you cruise through the arches. The last "arch", though, is a huge opening-and-closing door off to the left. Adjust your speed with retros or boosters so that you can collect the twin blasters without being smashed.

Now you'll have some flying and ground-based enemies to take care of. Then as you enter the city, you'll encounter an overhead ship that drops enemies on parachutes. Aim high and get rid of this fellow ASAP. Now the city gets denser. I love this part.

You get into a clearing and deal with some flying enemies. Remember, if you figure your bolts are going to hit the bogey, move on to the next one.

You fly between two control towers and a wingman gets into trouble. Follow them through the arch to collect a grey ring. Then you'll have a little turret on your right. Then you fly over two close buildings and through another arch. Some walkers pass by porting a blue pillar. Then you get into a series of falling blue pillars, and you'll have lots of roving turrets to deal with in the middle before they close in on you. For the very last turrets, you can just fly very low and in the middle - an enemy plasma bolt will wipe out a turret for you, and you can pull up a bit and collect a supply ring. Then you'll have a nova bomb tucked in an alley between two buildings. If you want it, tilt yourself to one side (hold L or R) and grab it.

Then you've got some more enemies, and control towers, and then the boss comes.

+++Advance Scout Mother Ship ATTACK CARRIER+++

This is **exactly** the same boss that you faced in Level 1, Stage 1. Because of this, I shamelessly refer you to section [1-1] of this FAQ. Just kidding. Here's the cospasta:

The boss flies in over you from behind, so don't hang around the top of your flight path or you may get knocked. The boss will turn and face you. Now start firing at the right-side hangar door, even before it opens. That way, your shots hit the instant it does open, and if your aim is true you'll be able to fry the hangar before it can launch any fighters.

Now start firing at one of the left-side doors - these are missile doors, and you also want to be damaging them as soon as they open up. With luck you'll destroy them before they fire homing missiles at you, which you'll have to shoot down. Twin blasters are very handy here. Concentrate on one until it's gone, then do the other. I tend to go bottom-to-top.

After destroying the hangar and missile bays, the central hull that's left of the ship begins flying towards you, firing its plasma guns. Now you can shoot the ship anywhere on its surface and it will take damage. You can pretty easily avoid the bolts since they don't home in on you like missiles do, but you can fly right through the middle of them rolling your ship to deflect them if you want. When the ship gets close to being underneath you it will turn around, letting you just sit and fire into the back of it! Boom. Off to Sector X, so we can take care of the rest of the invaders.

Pepper calls it: SECTOR X

"Andross's forces intend to build a base in this area!! Destroy their rock crusher!!"

Boss: Asteroid Destroyer ROCK CRUSHER

Soaring over Corneria's upper atmosphere, you reach an area densely packed with girders, pillars, and construction equipment. Uh-oh... think Andross wants to build a base here? But why would they need a *rock* crusher? Maybe its job has already been done?

You'll face enemies right away, and a wingman will get into trouble.

You'll fly into an area with rotating Ts. Fly through the slot between the columns of horizontal girders. Then one of your wingmen will go after some on his own. Watch for a 1-up here (but mind the beams!).

Proceed through the gap in the following columns of vertical girders tilted over to one side (hold L or R). As for the rotating sets of beams that follow (and you'll want to fly through them, because something nasty will happen if you try to avoid them - a plasma mine will rain down on top of you!), you can start out not being tilted, but eventually you have to avoid getting smacked. Find a nova bomb powerup amidst the chaos.

Emerging from this, you'll pass an outpost and encounter some appearing-and-disappearing enemies. Consider lobbing a nova bomb their way. You'll also see one of those little blue ships that you can shoot for a twin blaster!

Find a nova bomb between two crawly things that shoot lasers at you. Then after a few rotating beams you'll find a power shield - don't miss it, because you're definitely going to need it.

You hit the blue supply ring, then fly through the second outpost. A wingman gets into trouble. You'll then run into a vertical line of four ships that are really hard to blow up. The only time that they can be hit is when they turn to face you (you'll see a patch of yellow).

After, you do some more easy fly-bys of more rotating objects - then you run into something horrible! Pillars everywhere, headed in all directions! How do you escape without being hit? Well, that's hard. It's kind of an "instincts" thing. I would suggest that the key is not overcompensating when avoiding one pillar so that you won't run into another one; and not bothering with the retros or the boosters. Alternatively, you can fly over to the extreme left or right, though like I said earlier you'll have to deal with plasma-spewing mines raining down from above - it's a pick-your-poison situation. Unless you're really good at rolling to deflect stuff, I'd suggest just picking your way through the mess of pillars.

Just as you're nearing the end of the pillars, a wingman finds trouble, and you also have to deal with one of those triangular three-piece ships. You'll probably be firing your blasters as you dodge the last few pillars.

Those hard-to-roast ships show up again. Then comes the boss.

+++Asteroid Destroyer ROCK CRUSHER+++

So what's this thing doing here? My guess is that it's filling in for a different kind of capital ship, and to make do they upgraded their battle

tactics. The basic strategy from Level 1, Stage 2 also applies here (see section [1-2] of this FAQ), but there are a few new twists:

- The ship is now far more reluctant to open its laser turrets (thus allowing you to blow them up).
- Once you destroy all the turrets on one side, it will begin firing missiles (from its sides) every time it turns another side towards you. Ouch!

The general strategy, again:

You have to destroy the four laser turrets on both sides of the vessel before you can roast the whole thing. It's a pretty tame boss at first because all it shoots at you are the lasers (until you destroy all the turrets on a side, that is, at which time it starts firing missiles). In any case, I recommend steady fire so that a turret will be roasted as soon as it opens. This time, the Rock Crusher is loathe to open its turrets, and when it does it opens them only for a short time, so be prepared for this to take a little while.

When you destroy the last turret, be very careful - the main bulk of the ship is then detached, and its operators would love for it to smash into you. Be sure to get out of the way. After you get past that, you can concentrate on the center bit between the two pads of the ship - of course, it fires lasers at you. Shoot at it repeatedly, but watch out for the missiles and plasma blasts, and be sure to shoot the missiles down the moment you see them.

After you vanquish Rock Crusher 1.1 you'll set course for Titania.

[2-3] - Level 2, Stage 3 - Planet II: Titania

Pepper calls it: THE PLANET TITANIA

"Corneria's resource world has been overrun!! You must re-take the weather control unit!!"

Boss: Master Computer PROFESSOR HANGAR

Now this is a fun level. Titania is Corneria's resource world, and the bad guys have come in and taken over. They've even shut down the weather control - Brrr! (Titania might be a bit like our own Saturnine moon Titan - in terms of resources, Titan has cold seas of liquid methane.)

The enemies on this level are mostly stuff you've seen before - but watch out for the big crab-like robots. To destroy or disable them, you'll have to shoot at the tiny flashing blue areas where their legs join onto the body. Watch out you don't crash into them, because you usually have to get pretty close to score a hit. Of course, you can just forget about the crabs, but unless you at least disable them they'll fire at you from behind, so be sure to do some barrel rolls.

Now for the flythrough:

You start in a snowy area, and visibility is reduced. Fly under a gap left by a raised panel. Then you have to deal with some close-quarters rocky ledges, and turrets and walkers amongst that. (When you get to the big rock in the middle of your path, hang a right, as there's a walker you can shoot that's creeping that way.) Then tilt yourself to cruise between two large rocks, or fly high and centre to get over them.

Now you'll have some walkers and moving turrets to deal with, and one of your

wingmen will find trouble. These turrets are unique - they'll try to lob crystals at you, so be careful. Then you'll meet your first crab-enemy (described above). Then you meet two turrets (careful - you'll see their plasma blasts before you see the actual turrets!) and a choice of three doors.

The deal with the doors: The weather control is on the right, and you need to trip it to continue on with the stage. However, if you need twin blasters, you can reload - there's a twin blaster powerup inside the center door. (There's nothing inside the left door.) Flying through the center (or left) door means repeating some of the stage: you deal with some moving conventional turrets, a crab thing, the two plasma turrets again, and you return to the same three doors. Heck, go through the middle door again to upgrade to the photon shot! But if you're ready to continue, fly through the right door and trip the weather control.

Now you've got two conventional turrets and some flying enemies. Two helicopters appear and a wingman finds trouble.

Along the left side you'll see a nova bomb tucked in behind a sheet beam. Fly under the gap and then pull up quickly to grab it. Then you'll have another crab thing, and another, and some more crystals will be headed your way. Then you have three moving turrets - hopefully one or more of them will leave behind a yellow ring!

A wingman finds trouble, and you encounter some more plasma turrets. Be ready to roll! Then you have two crab things, then a plasma turret and a crab thing, and another plasma turret and a crab thing. Then you have a few more fighters and plasma turrets to deal with as what I conjecture to be the Titania spaceport comes up on the horizon.

You fly inside. (You're able to continue from here if you get killed, so don't worry about the fact that this stage had nary a supply ring.) A robot appears in the entrance corridor and tells you "BYE BYE!" on its screen as you fire upon it again and again. How menacing. But you don't even have to waste your thumb on it - it withdraws even if you don't shoot it. You then enter a large hangar bay.

+++Master Computer PROFESSOR HANGAR+++

I imagine that Professor Hangar was once a kind and peaceful computer that simply guided ships in and out of the Titanian Spaceport; but Andross' forces must have reprogrammed it, and now you have no choice but to blow the computer and its robotic body to smithereens.

The trick to beating this guy is through skimming along very close to the ground, swinging right and left, firing like mad. There are these winged creatures that keep coming out of the ground, and you want to destroy as many as you can while they're near the surface and not careening through the air towards your ship. Now when you destroy all the little jumpers, the machine itself finally appears, launching winged things at you. Keep firing at the computer, still skimming around on the ground to take care of those awful winged things, and you'll soon destroy it.

Professor Hangar has a special Shadow Thruster attack that it uses after four sets of launches - you'll see it coming when the robot splits into three and you'll know to get out of the way. More likely, you'll blow the thing up long before it has the chance to use it. In fact, I'm *betting* most of you probably aren't letting the boss live this long!

If it's still around after the Shadow Thruster attack, hammer on it with all

you've got before it retreats! If it manages to get away from you, you have to clear out a new batch of critters before it appears again. And here's a bit of surprising news for you: it comes back fully recharged! So there, you have a tremendous incentive not to ever see the Shadow Thruster attack, unless you're trying to write a FAQ. ;-)

[2-4] - Level 2, Stage 4 - Sector Y

Pepper calls it: SECTOR Y

"How are the Arwings handling? If an amoeba clings to your ship, use L or R to get rid of it."

Boss: Hydrogen Harvester PLASMA HYDRA

This is one of the strangest stages in the game, second only to Out Of This Dimension. If you can buy the idea of sea creatures floating through space, you'll have a lot of peaceful fun with it.

See, there are only a very few enemy fighters in this level. What you need to worry about are the sea creatures - notably the squid and the small stingrays. What's going on is that Andross attached mind-control devices to them and is thereby controlling them. You don't want to kill the creatures, you just want to knock out their equipment. You'll know this has happened when they turn blue.

You need to shoot the squid repeatedly until they make a noise and turn blue, and you need to shoot the stingrays once to turn them from red to blue. If you miss any, they will crash into you, and you won't get to see the special bonus at the end of the level. (It's worth getting and will make the boss far easier.)

There are also amoebas. If one clings to your ship, do a barrel roll (L or R twice) to get rid of it.

The last item of note is the big stingray. Don't shoot it, and stay out of its way. If you fail in this, then you miss the bonus. (You might, though, graze it once or twice and get away with it.) Getting the bonus is very important - keep it in mind above all else in this level.

Now with the flythrough:

As soon as you enter the stage, get yourself into cockpit view (by pressing SELECT twice) - those red stingrays are hard to hit. You'll see three of them off to the right almost as soon as you begin. Then you'll need to deal with two squid (remember, they take more than one hit to neutralize). Then you've got some missiles, two more squid, and a wingman gets into trouble. Then you have two hard-to-hit fighters.

Now you enter a field of amoebas. Don't miss the 1-up. The amoebas will seek you out - you have to be actively evasive, not just passively evasive. Three missiles will be launched towards the end of the amoeba field. Then there's a twin blaster ship towards the upper left.

Now the big stingray appears. Leave it the heck alone. Don't hit it with your ship and don't let your lasers strike it. (You need to be especially careful if you're packing the photon shot.) One good thing is that a wingman will pull out and take care of two enemies for you, so you don't have to risk shooting just yet.

After he's done the stingray should be out of the way, so you can get the new enemies that have flown in and rescue a wingman that gets into trouble. There'll be a supply ring, then a squid and three blue fighters.

Then you get beaucoup stingrays and a couple of squid! Turn them blue and don't miss any! You can actually turn blue ones red (angry) again by striking them unnecessarily, so be careful! Of course the big stingray (and sometimes two of them!) will be running interference! A wingman will find trouble eventually, too. Then it's boss time.

Now, if you've done absolutely everything 100% right (you can get away with accidentally plugging or crashing into the big stingrays, but you MUST be PERFECT and have turned all the little stingrays and squid to blue), right around when your wingman finds trouble you'll also hear the call of a whale. The whale will swim out in front of you (try not to smash into it!), leaving a tremendous trail of power-ups behind it. Nova bombs (speaking of, consider launching one as the whale approaches to clear the enemies since you're going to get fully restocked anyway). Power shield. Twin blasters. Grey rings. You'll need it all for the enemy that shows up as the whale leaves you.

+++Hydrogen Harvester PLASMA HYDRA+++

These hydrogen farmers must be working for Andross, because they are not very friendly.

To inflict damage on the Hydra, you have to fire on the hydrogen collectors at the ends of its arms. Once you get a lock, don't let up. Don't hesitate to fire retros. It can be hard to get a good firing angle.

The Hydra's moves include staring you down and firing missiles (from its hull, so direct some shots there to shoot them down), spinning around and firing missiles and plasma shots (roll and watch those arms!), and sitting on an angle to you with it's collector in your face, allowing you to pump laser into its miserable chassis, while it fires more missiles at you.

Once you take out the arms, the Hydra begins to spin erratically - keep shooting the central component. Feel free to lob some nova bombs to aid your cause, especially if you don't have twin blasters. The Hydra may sprout one long tail with a spiked wrecking ball on the end, and you should do your best not to get smacked with it. Finally, once you've essentially defeated the Hydra, it may make a kamikaze-like lunge for you, so get out of the way as its energy meter is fully depleted.

If you miss the final attack, or are fortunate enough to survive it, you take off for Venom. Hang on!

[2-5] - Level 2, Stage 5 - Venom (space over Venom)

Pepper calls it: VENOM - THE FINAL GOAL

"Is everyone all right, Fox?!! You're on course to sneak into Venom's back door!!"

Boss: Super Gravity Powered METAL SMASHER

Oh, this is exciting! Going in through the rear, you gotta love it. I guess those lines on the map aren't arbitrary after all.

This is another shoot-em-up stage similar to the Level 1 Venom, but here the enemies are a little tougher. For instance, there are now exploding grey drums

to contend with - either shoot them from a distance, or move far to the other side as you pass by. And of course the interception buoys are being launched from the surface again. To top it off, plasma mines rain down on you if you decide to veer too far over to one side.

Here we go. There's an initial wave of fighters - be ready and shooting and rolling. Then a wingman gets into trouble.

Now you have to contend with intercepting buoys and those exploding drums I mentioned. Shoot them down, because if they get ahead of you, the successive impacts could leave you dead in seconds. Then you get some fighters, maybe a mine, and a bunch more exploding drums. A nova bomb might come in handy. There's a twin blaster and a nova bomb hidden for the dexterous. Then there'll be a supply ring.

A wingman gets into trouble and you have more exploding drums. A cruiser appears overhead. You get a bunch more fighters. Then we're back to intercepting buoys, and a wingman gets into trouble. Then you have a fat easy cruiser, and then a bunch of little ships to deal with. In this altercation, you'll see a strange little brown wire-framed ship. If you shoot it, a power shield will appear - but it's nearly impossible to collect since the little ship rarely comes near your flight path, so when you destroy it, the powerup is usually out of reach.

But you *can* get it, though it may distract you from other things that are going on! The ship's behaviour is random, but it does have a tendency to bob down lower and lower into your flight path. Give it some time, and if you're patient and pick the right moment to strike, you should be able to collect the shield after you shoot it.

You fly through a veritable forest of drums, this time of the non-exploding variety. You face two more wings of enemy fighters. Then you run into what I conjecture to be the creator of all these drums.

+++Super Gravity Powered METAL SMASHER+++

Oh, did I ever go into mental breakdowns over this machine. Peppy told me to fire my retros - I fired my retros, and I was still getting smacked when the two halves of the machine came together. But why?! "I'm nowhere near the thing!" I'd shout to my TV.

The video game magazines, your wingmen, and many "strategy guides" all fail to tell you why the Metal Smasher continues to kick your butt. Or, more likely, why it continued to lay waste to me - I never noticed that when the two halves of the Smasher split up, it releases a whole lot of steel drums - and they hunt you down! If you don't shoot them before they're underway towards you from between the halves, you're as good as dead.

And that's the key to it. If you can vaporize the flying drums, you have what it takes to beat the Metal Smasher.

The Metal Smasher introduces itself with a leap and bound out of the distance, then opens itself up in to two halves and stops. FIRST THINGS FIRST - shoot the METAL DRUMS that appear between the ships. Sometimes one likes to hide behind a half of the ship and you have to shoot it when it's arcing around to get you. Anyway, with the drums gone you can relax and concentrate on avoiding being crushed. ;-) Now you want to get some licks in to one of the the little red panels - there's one on each side of the Smasher. It doesn't matter which one you target.

So anyway, the enemy is stopped and you're flying toward it at high speed. The enemy wants you to be trapped between the two halves when they come together. But that's elementary to avoid, you just fire your retros when Peppy screams at you to do so, and duck out of the way. If you don't want to rely on peppy, try to mentally back count and allow two whole seconds before the rig seems to be on top of you. Also, it might help to manoeuvre in the perpendicular direction to the Smasher's orientation - meaning, if it's pointed up and down, you go right, and so on. But that's not as important as when you fire the retro rockets.

You'll repeat this approach and retreat process several times. (And don't forget to get rid of those drums! They can end your game in a hurry!) Every couple of rounds, the Smasher will sit back and fire an arc of ring bolts at you instead of trying to crush you. Again, get out of the way.

After a while, you'll blow up half of the Smasher. Instead of continuing the fight, though, the Smasher just self-destructs as a shuttle departs from its bay. The Star Fox team takes off in hot pursuit.

[2-6] - Level 2, Stage 6 - Venom (aerial passage)

Boss: Central Guard Machines GALACTIC RIDERS (more importantly, the shuttle that carries the things)

Ah! So this is the rear entrance to Andross' domain! Woah! I love this stage, and I hope you do too.

This stage is really pretty simple. As long as you remember not to overcompensate when you manoeuvre, you'll be fine. Also be careful when you're flying with your ship tilted sideways - you don't want to get your wing destroyed this late in the game.

Ships will come onto the corridor from your left, so you should stay on the right where it's safer. The ships that flash yellow when you hit them will leave yellow rings behind. Don't get too close to the sides of those silver vehicles that just spin around on the runway; they'll try to hit you, and you could end up with massive wing damage (or destruction), but little or no shield damage - if you're lucky enough to get away with damage, start looking for a yellow ring to refresh your wing.

Here goes. Ships and vehicles appear on your left. I'd stay on the right and *maybe* peek left just to get some shots off, but be careful because it's easy to get stuck behind pillars or ships that take too long to destroy.

A twin blaster powerup appears early on on the right side. It might be triggered by killing enemies - let me know if you don't see it.

After the powerup, the stage opens up a bit, and you can move left and right more freely. Take full advantage of this.

You'll come to a part where there are falling ceiling tiles, but if you want to brave them to pick up a nova bomb, you can. As I write this I feel that discretion is the better part of valor, and I squeezed left of the whole mess. You might want to duck right at the tail end and maybe even deliberately smack a pillar to get the supply ring. And then a nova bomb appears in the corridor anyway! Hooray!

Now you deal with more cruisers coming into the corridor. Be very careful here.

Some smack the wall deliberately and bounce around in front of you, but the ones you really need to worry about are the ones that sort of float in and sit still, then take off again - they're dropping ring laser mines! If you see one of those little cone things on the floor, just get out of the way! If you can, shoot them down before they get the opportunity to lay them, but sometimes there'll be three cruisers on your screen at a time, and that's when you know they're going to lay a mine, because you just can't destroy them that quickly, unless you're using bombs. Don't forget to really pound on the ones that show yellow when you shoot them, because they leave those valuable yellow rings.

Now four bikers show up. You need to destroy them to go on with the stage. Fire your retros if there's one right by you, then you'll be behind it, and in firing position. They'll also destroy themselves once in a while. When all are roasted, that shuttle that escaped from the Metal Smasher shows up! Keep right!

+++Central Guard Machines GALACTIC RIDERS+++

I'm pretty sure that the title refers to the bikers and not to the shuttle carrying them - but in any case, the shuttle will be the vehicle you'll have the problems with. It's simply much too big a ship to be flying inside this corridor, and the fact that it will intentionally try to ram you doesn't help.

The shuttle actually has no weapons, it can only launch bikes and mines. Also, the only way to destroy it is by firing inside its bay when its ramp opens.

The shuttle's first launch will be bikes. If you have twin blasters, you can bring its energy meter down below half - forget the bikes until the shuttle has completely closed its door.

After you destroy the bikes, the shuttle will try to ram you. When it seems to have you nearly pinned, fire your retros and head over to the other side before it completes the ram. Then it will try to ram you again!

Provided you survive this, the shuttle will pull back and open up its ramp again. Be careful this time, though, it might launch a mine instead of the relatively harmless bikes. (Well, harmless in that they don't fire at you; as I wrote the first version of this FAQ, one of those buggers destroyed my left wing!) Your chances of getting seem to improve if the shuttle didn't at least glance you while attempting the rams. It may also launch a mine while you battle the bikes.

If you do not have twin blasters, I would suggest using bombs here. You might not be able to survive more than one round of ramming, so the quicker you can destroy the shuttle, the better.

Once you do destroy the shuttle, you find the end of the corridor. It becomes a very neat-looking but tricky passageway to Andross. It's moments like this I wish there was no autopilot. Can you imagine having to navigate such a passage? What a challenge!

Your ship sails into the brown-colored approach corridor of Andross' Telekinetic Amplifier. This will be your continue point should you bite it here and have one or more extra ships to play with. As Andross taunts you, you get a grey ring, then you fly over a closing beam, then under a closing beam, then you get a nova bomb. Then under, then over, and then *carefully* through a series: under two closing beams, over two, under two, over two (don't hesitate to fire your retros!), and finally between two.

Now you'll want to tilt yourself to the right and grab the twin blasters between the wall and a closing door. Then tilt left and go between the wall and

a second closing door. The door still closes about 2/3 of the way like in Level 1, though this time there is a little bracket on the wall side that you could theoretically smack into. It's really nothing to worry about, though.

+++Psychic Energy Core TELEKINETIC AMPLIFIER+++

This is more or less the same battle that you fought at the end of Level 1, but:

- The control cube is tougher here, and it will definitely take you more than one round to destroy.

- The cube is lined with a color triangular piece on two ends, giving you a color indication of how much damage you've inflicted!

Here follows the description from [1-6]:

First, destroy the eyes. It will probably two rounds or more of Andross spitting out the telekinetic particles and then sucking them in again for you to accomplish this. I find nova bombs don't really help much here. The faster you work, the better - playing cat-and-mouse tends to mean you get smacked around more by the telekinetic pieces. You also destroy more of them by mounting an aggressive offence. If you have the photon shot, pick an eye, sit high, and just blast away. Surprisingly, you'll take little to no damage from this stance.

When each eye gets blown up, the whole face shatters, giving you a chance to fire directly at Andross' control cube. Fire fire fire! You won't destroy the cube in this first round, so you'll soon see the face come back together again. Destroy the eyes like before (it won't take nearly as long - definitely a feasible one-round job if you have the twin blasters), and then utterly fry the control cube - the damage you inflicted in the previous round(s) is still there.

And then Andross blows apart. Your autopilot gets you out of the fortress before it's too late - you don't leave the super-cool way you came, regrettably, you go out the ugly regular surface stage route like every other time.

You get the same great ending again, but be proud of yourself - you just finished Level 2, and most people back in 1993 when this game was the hot title at the rental stores took the better part of a week to beat Level 1! By "most people" I mean "me". By "better part of a week" I mean "the third or fourth time I rented it for a week, I finally beat it". For Level 3, we could be talking years. Oh hey, that's next! ;-)

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V - Level 3 Flythrough [3-0]
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Well, if you're looking for a challenge, look no further! This is truly *the* hard way to go; hence Andross not expecting you to travel this route. Along the way, you'll see some interesting sights; Fortuna with all it's deadly plants and animals, Sector Z, and of course the Out Of This Dimension stage.

[3-1] - Level 3, Stage 1 - Planet IV: Corneria (evening)

Pepper calls it: CORNERIA - THE BASE

"You've chosen Course Three... A good choice to take Venom by surprise!!"
Boss: Ground Supremacy Vehicle DESTRUCTOR (though the Attack Carrier sort of makes an appearance)

This is by far the most interesting Corneria stage. There's more city to fly through, and you get the feeling that you're sneaking out before nightfall. I like the detail that the turrets near the base are actually on your side, firing plasma bolts far down your flightpath to help clear the way.

Some good things never change, though - you can still fly through all the arches at the beginning to collect a twin blaster powerup. When you finally reach the last small arch, shoot the ship going after your wingman and swing into the left building to pick it up. (You *could* get the nova bomb on the right if should like to, but if you miss the twin blasters I would suggest just hitting the RESET button and trying again.) In any case, you'll most likely have to fire your retros (do so sooner rather than later) or boosters to escape without damage. Timing is key.

When you get to the first set of collapsing blue pillars, I suggest you either fly high and shoot them, then zip down to ride through the double sets; or fly low close to one side, perhaps using your boosters near the end. You encounter a cluster of enemy fighters at the end - they tend to get in formation in front of you, so if you are close to the right or left edge of your path you might have a hard time shooting the fighters on the appropriate edge of the formation.

A wingman finds trouble. You fly through a cluster of buildings and encounter some walkers carrying wire-frames of ships. Interesting stuff.

In the second cluster of buildings, slow yourself down and tilt to one side to cruise through a small opening between two buildings that themselves are directly behind the first central building, and collect a nova bomb. Then fly a little lower - there are more collapsing pillars. In one of the more dramatic moments of the stage, Falco will announce that he'll destroy the Attack Carrier, then he jets off into the distance. Amazing. (Incidentally, the fact that the Attack Carrier has already been deployed is what leads me to surmise that this stage is taking place at sunset instead of at sunrise.)

After exiting the city, you'll fly through a series of arches. You could fly over them, but you want to be inside them because first there's a nova bomb and then when you come to the fork inside, you can either go left for a Supply Ring, or right for another nova bomb. I love choice.

You'll see walkers carrying pieces of ships. You don't need to shoot them - they don't count to your points total. I prefer to leave them be.

An arch opens the next section of city. I'd say that's your cue to stay low - there are blue pillars between the buildings that will fall on you! You can get by the first two pillars just by staying low, but when you come to the third there's a block in your path! Nudge yourself up only as much as necessary, then hammer on your booster, and then squeeze yourself right back down again, because there's a pair of falling blues right in front of the last arch that you won't see until it's too late.

As you exit the final archway, you notice a walker go by carrying the Attack Carrier! Does that mean Falco managed to disable it? It's anyone's guess.

+++Ground Supremacy Vehicle DESTRUCTOR+++

This stage differs from the other Cornerias in that you've allowed Andross' forces - brought in by the Attack Carrier - more time to unload their arsenal, including this wonderfully powerful battle tank.

When the Destructor enters, it will launch the shields that cover the plasma turrets into the air; so you'll be able to fire on the turrets themselves and inflict some damage. When a shield becomes pointed in your direction, make it your priority instead; the turrets may regenerate if you allow the shield associated with it to land on the Destructor again. You put in damage either way.

By the end of the second or third round, you'll probably have the shields destroyed, and you hopefully wouldn't have allowed them the time to launch a kamikaze-style attack on you. (But if you have the twin blasters - you do, right? - you can probably vaporize them before they reach you anyway.) All that remains now are turrets, and all the while the Destructor itself is firing missiles at you. You will also notice that the turrets will sometimes move around 180 degrees, preventing you from destroying them. They'll come back around though, and you'll finish them off and leave for the Asteroid Belt.

Check your score carefully. If you didn't get 100%, consider doing the stage again. You're gonna need that credit!

[3-2] - Level 3, Stage 2 - Asteroid Belt

Pepper calls it: ASTEROID BELT

"Use the L or R button to escape the tractor beam of the enemy battleship!! You can do it, Fox!!"

Boss: Space Station BLADE BARRIER

This edition of the Asteroid Belt is considerably more difficult, simply because there are more enemies and more asteroids in this far-flung region.

You'll also find a lot of mines in this stage; the first ones you'll see shoot plasma balls at you, or become a plasma ball when you shoot them. Shoot them early and get out of the way. There's also a blue variant that shoots five at a time. Ouch. Also note that the smiling asteroids will be hunting you down, and there's no way to destroy them.

So here we go. You get a great big cluster of enemy fighters at the beginning (I might use a nova bomb on them, but a skillful tracking sweep of your lasers will do the trick just as well or better), and then a wingman gets into trouble. Then you've got plasma mines to deal with. Keep rolling and shooting. Your crosshairs come in really handy since the mines are about the same angular size when they first show up.

You'll fly past a big asteroid on the left, and then you'll see one to the lower right.

++How to leave the dimension+++

Shoot at the second big asteroid until it explodes. If you look closely, you'll see an egg fly out of it and come back around again from the left; after a moment a bird will hatch. Fly into the bird's breast area to be taken right out of the Lylat System. Note that your wingman is taking on fire at the same time - help him out if you can before you leave the game. ;-) The flythrough continues in section [3-X] below.

For those of you who choose not to ignore the task at hand - defeating Andross - simply continue your forward flight, helping out your wingman who gets into trouble, taking note of the plasma mines!

You'll come to a set of three gold asteroids lined up in a triangle. Fly through the middle to collect a nova bomb, then you'll get a shot at one of those twin blaster ships. Very cool. Fighters will appear at the same moment that you'll be collecting the twin blasters, so you might want to lob the nova bomb, collect the new nova bomb, then detonate the first nova bomb.

You'll probably have perfected the barrel roll by this time. Don't stop using it. Soon you'll come to a Supply Ring between two large asteroids. After battling some enemy fighters, and helping out a wingman, you'll fly through a base. Watch for a 1-up at the end of it.

Now you're going to encounter some problems. See the silver asteroids? Well, now they're being intercepted by enemy robots that will fire some laser blasts at you, or just try to ram you with the asteroid after holding it back from you. When you shoot the robots, get out of the way! The asteroid stops dead where it is, which often means a prompt collision with your ship if you don't GTFA. That's Star Fox physics for you. Try to graze the robots-on-asteroids with the outer edge of your laser instead of putting them square in your sights - this will let you avoid crashing much more easily.

When one of your wingmen goes out to shoot some enemies, you'll encounter a batch of smiling asteroids. They're indestructible like the silver asteroids, but they also try to crash into your ship! Do what you have to do - you'll be travelling back and forth from left to right and so on often from here to the end of the stage. And don't forget about the interceptor robots - be careful or they'll pile up in front of you. Don't hesitate to lob a nova bomb to clear out some of these guys and their pesky hopper friends.

+++Space Station BLADE BARRIER+++

Now if you didn't know how to handle the robot-asteroids and the smiley asteroids, you'll be on Death's door by the time you arrive at the space station. Fortunately, you stand a chance at beating it without getting hit if you're careful.

When you first encounter the Blade Barrier, its blades will be spinning. You can't do much with your blaster at these times. But the blades will stop, which means that three missiles will be headed towards you, but you can shoot the exposed nubs and do damage that way. Three of the six will be exposed at any given blade stoppage - unless you've previously destroyed one of the nubs that would have otherwise been exposed, that is. As much as possible, you should stay in the middle of the flightpath and get lots of shots in at the nubs. You have to be quick because you don't have much time before the blades start spinning again.

So if you're in the middle, when the blades resume you'll also be in a better position to avoid the tractor beam attack! Getting caught in it would be a bad idea, because the ship drags you in and you start getting beat up by the blades. Then you're a sitting duck for the missiles afterwards. Anyway, you know how to get out of it if you get stuck - pound L or R continually, and you should be released in the nick of time.

But it's easy enough to avoid the beam entirely by waiting for it to emerge, noting where it's going, and being somewhere else. Then watch out for the missiles when you recenter yourself! You'll have to be nimble to shoot them down or somehow avoid them.

Overall, balance your aggressiveness and your patience and you should be fine. However long it does take you, be careful at the end - the station will launch the blade in your direction when you blow it up. Flying around that, you'll be off to Fortuna. Follow the action in section [3-3].

[3-X] - Level 3, Stage 3 - Out Of This Dimension

Pepper calls it: OUT OF THIS DIMENSION

"Come in, Arwings!! Fox, where are you?!! We need you to protect Corneria!!"

Boss: One Armed Bandit SLOT MACHINE

Yeah, the heck with your wingmen, the heck with Andross - we're going to get lost in space!

Watch out for the paper airplanes! Shoot them as soon as you see them. You can use the backdrop as an indicator to how much of the stage you still have to complete. As you get closer to the end, the image becomes steadier; when you see the purple and blue smiling moons again, the boss will show up.

So here goes: Again, the onslaught is made up of paper airplanes, which you must shoot down. You'll also see beams with little triangles on their ends - you can change their rotation with your laser if you like, or simply ignore them. Later you'll see airplanes that explode into smaller bits of paper going far off into the distance, then floating down into your flight path - shoot them before they become a real problem, as they will transform into new paper airplanes one after the other and quickly finish you off. To make matters worse, new planes will appear on your flightpath while you're trying to clear out the ones hanging around upstairs. There will be a lot of these eventually, and you might want to launch a nova bomb or two to clear them out. But be careful - there are no bomb or laser powerups in this stage!

If you survive all this, you'll encounter one of the strangest Enemy Force Commanders in the game.

+++One-Armed Bandit SLOT MACHINE+++

This is... fun. Play the slots by shooting the arm. Basically, you're trying to win shield-regenerating coins and not receive an Andross laugh as a prelude to laser blasts and homing missiles. Eventually you want to get three sevens and toast the machine.

You can also stop a slot from spinning by shooting the panel below it if it's flashing. Be careful about doing that, though, because it's very easy to accidentally stop the wrong slot - like an Andross slot, as it often beckons you to stop one of those! Not a good idea, because that means you're guaranteed missiles for your result.

Here is a breakdown of the results you can get:

Fruits, stars, etc.: Three of something will get you beaucoup coins; cherries will always get you a couple of coins - unless you get one or more Androsses, that is.

Bar: Often causes the panels you can shoot to stop the slots to be activated.

Andross: Avoid this! When the machine turns around, it will fire yellow laser bolts and three waves of missiles instead of those wonderful

shield-regenerating coins. The missiles aren't terribly difficult to deke, though. One good thing about Andross is that he often causes the slot stoppers to activate - so if you got a 7 with your Andross, you might be able to stop the 7 before taking your next spin.

7: One is good; three is better - getting three sevens will cause the machine to explode after giving you a whole lot of coins, thus allowing you to see the game's secret ending. On their own or as pairs sevens don't do anything, though.

Sometimes you'll get three sevens after thirty minutes or more of playing the slots; sometimes you'll get it on the second spin. At any rate, when you defeat the machine, the credits to the game will appear - even though you're still in flight! The background will be nice and solid now so you can read them clearly.

Slowing down or speeding up won't much affect the speed of the credits, but you can still travel to the extremities of your autopilot and only see parts of the presentation.

When the credits are over, you'll notice that the words "THE END" will appear - but the letters aren't oriented properly. Firing on a letter will cause it to fly off into the distance and come back oriented differently - hopefully the the right way. You'll also have to watch out for enemy fighters and missile boats that will show up and interfere - in fact, shooting a letter can trigger their appearance - possibly causing your correctly-oriented letters to revert again! Good aim is essential here. Also, if you have twin blasters, tilt yourself over onto one side to make it easier to hit only one letter at a time. When you get all the letters lined up right, you get a little clip of the standard "just-beat-the-boss" music and the letters fly off again. Then, they come back, giving you the opportunity to repeat the process again . And after that you can do it again. And again. And again. And again. And again.

One thing to note is that there seem to be a finite number of enemies you can face at any particular moment - i.e. they'll stop regenerating if you aren't doing anything for a while, but they'll come back as you start shooting letters again. Also, successfully finishing a round will cause any background enemies to disappear.

How long does this last, you ask? Until you get killed, then you start over from the beginning of the stage. Even continuing on a credit means starting here again. You can even beat the game twice without hitting the reset button! Aren't you glad you came here? Well, you saved extra-dimensional space from the menace of the slot machine, I suppose.

[3-3] - Level 3, Stage 3 - Planet V: Fortuna

Pepper calls it: THE PLANET FORTUNA

"Andross has taken control of the huge creatures who live on Fortuna!! Take care, Fox!!"

Boss: Primitive Dinosaur MONARCH DODORA

You'd think that a planet without any significant enemy installations would be fairly easy to fly over. Ha-ha. Of course, to be fair, Andross took over the animals here; they're not this mean on their own. Sounds like Sector Y.

There are three main sections to this level. The first is a grassland, the second is ocean, and the third is prairie.

In the grassland section, your visibility is somewhat impaired (that's why you're in Approach view), so fly carefully, and make sure to avoid the giant blooming flowers. Fly low when you get to the area where the flowers are on top of stems.

You'll see insects in this area, and they'll attack you, unless you shoot them to make them turn blue. Unfortunately, they just turn yellow or red again, so you'll end up having to kill them. And a wingman will get into trouble, of course. Later you'll see dragonflies, which you also ought to shoot down, though they are hard to hit. (The ones that stay perched on a flower don't seem to do anything and you can ignore them.) And as if you didn't have enough to contend with, you'll also encounter enemy plasma mines along the ground. Hopefully one will leave a nova bomb for you. Then you've got a few more of those high-stem flowering plants, so stay low. If you're good, you'll make it to the blue ring without losing a wing or getting killed.

As you pass through the blue ring, you pass onto the ocean. Hope you've got a bomb or two for this section, but hang onto them for now. Here you'll have to deal with flying fish and seabirds. You'll fly through a school of flying fish first, destroy them before they start taking off directly beside your ship. You want to get them on an early hop, in other words. It's good to skim the surface of the sea and track your lasers back and forth.

Soon you'll encounter flying fish that fly at you (shoot them), and some seabirds - as soon as you see the first bird, pull up! Shoot the seabirds so that they crash into the water, as they'll also try to dive bomb you (and you won't even see them coming if you're still skimming the surface like you were probably doing to get the first batch of flying fish). A wingman will get into trouble.

Later you'll encounter some sea monsters. If you want to kill them, you have to aim for their heads. You can practice on the first two that just snake through the water. It gets serious in a few seconds when you have fly past dozens of them poking their heads up above water, all using their fire breath on you. Before you get to that, though, you'll see a power shield under the second snaking monster - get it!! Like, you're probably gonna die if you don't.

So a bunch of monsters will start popping up in front of you. Even if you deke them out, they will be quite happy to turn around as you fly by and roast you from behind with their fire breath! Don't hesitate to lob a nova bomb - you can't afford to let any get by you, or it's bye-bye Arwing. Try your best to do something about the far-away ones, and shoot their heads off before they make a flaming mess of your flight path. Among the fire ordeal, you'll find a 1-up - directly in front of a sea monster, so try to shoot it's head off while you make your grab.

After one last snaky dragon you'll encounter the seabirds again, and a wingman will get into trouble. Then you've got one last batch of flying-fish-that-head-for-you. Get in the middle of your flight path and get through that second blue ring. Breathe a biiiig sigh of relief. But you're far from out of the woods.

As you pass through this second ring, the ocean turns to prairie. Okay, so you *are* out of the woods, but you know what I meant. You'll face mostly flowers and plasma mines - you have to pick your poison, do you want to fly low and smash into plasma bolts or fly high and run into plant stems? Be very careful, and be sure to fire your retros if you have to. The mines leave behind yellow rings when you destroy them, so take advantage of this if you can, but you may wish to fly defensively.

Along the way, you'll find a twin blaster. Nice of them to put it on the last leg of a stage. You *cannot* afford to miss it. Since it's sitting in front of a very narrow arched plant stem, you'll need to fire your retros as you collect it. After passing the last of the flowers, you get to meet Fortuna's diplomatic representative.

+++Primitive Dinosaur MONARCH DODORA+++

Your goal here is to fire at the heads or the end of the tail as much as possible. Your wingmen might hang around and complain, or they might just abandon you.

You'll first encounter the two-headed dragon from the rear. When it turns to face you head-on, get yourself in the middle between where the tail was and where the necks are going to be if you want to avoid getting hit.

When you're dealing with the rear, aim for the tail but also be sure to shoot the eggs and the seabirds that hatch out of them. They can be quite dangerous. I find it's best to shoot more or less down the lower-middle, the tail will kind of bounce around in the path of your lasers, and you'll score hits more often than you would if you were to try and track the tail as it swings back and forth.

Once in a while the dragon will suddenly halt in its place when you're behind it. Fire your retros and veer away!

Getting a lot of licks in on either the tail or the heads and necks (spread your fire over the two heads so that they are shortened to the body at more or less the same time) will cause the dragon to turn orange - this is good! Keep on firing, because now hits to the body count. Watch out for it's Arwing-seeking fire breath, though! It's much more apt to hit you than Dancing Insector's. If you're nimble, you'll put the dragon behind you and be off to Sector Z.

[3-4] - Level 3, Stage 4 - Sector Z

Pepper calls it: SECTOR Z

"Your team is doing well, Fox!! I hope you're taking good care of my Arwings!! Go for Macbeth!!"

Boss: Invasion Troop Carrier ATOMIC BASE II

Note: This stage features several "grey rings" which are like supply rings but a little greyer, and you can also identify them in how they spin around a bit - unfortunately, they don't act as a continue point! All but the ring just after the Power Shield are grey rings, not true Supply Rings.

Welcome to the sticks! Here the idea is to blast your way into Base II and destroy it, along with a large deployable garrison of troops.

Now is a good time to master the barrel roll, if you haven't already. You need to be able to do one at any time. It's possible to cruise through this stage and the next two taking very nearly no damage if you have the photon shot, and you're able to roll and shoot constantly. It's hard on your hand, sure, but the stages seem to just fly by this way.

You'll notice that most of the pillars are transparent here, and that doesn't make them any less deadly. In fact, they're more deadly because when there's more than one and you're close-in you can't tell what is cloaked pillar and

what is empty space.

So here goes. You start with a bunch of fighters and a couple of cruisers. Then it's the plasma mines. Then a wingman gets into trouble as you see the first of many, many transparent pillars. Fly through a square of them to pick up a nova bomb while you deal with missile ships. Then you get a mess of rotating pillars (you can slow / stop the ones with triangles by shooting said triangles) and you fly through a base.

Then you get to a second enemy installation with all kinds of spinning pillars between the stationary ones. Your best bet is to hang a *little* bit to the right (for an eventual twin blaster). Fly sideways through the slots. Don't go over too far, though, or some plasma mines will rain down on you. You'll see the twin blaster powerup along the right of centre behind the second set of vertical pillars in this section. It's smack behind one of those pillars and you will probably need to fire your retros in order to get it safely.

When you leave this section, fire your retros and get back in the middle of the flight path to get the grey ring.

A wingman gets into trouble as you head through another installation. Follow enemy and wingman into the middle of the "roadway" of pillars and take your shot there. Now you want to stay as close to the middle as you can through this bit because there are plasma mines with your name on them should you stray.

As this ends, you come into an area with two big mundane rectangles, and then you find a much-needed grey ring - I think it only appears if you've been on the intended course. Then there's a mess of stuff in front of you, then you get some neat partly-clear rectangles you can fly through. Look out for the power shield! It will save your life in a moment. Now there's a bona-fide supply ring inside the second-to-last rectangle - Gee, nice of them to plant this right *after* the power shield powerup... Well, you might want to fire your retros and fly sideways and get it anyway because otherwise you'll be starting this stage all over again whe- I mean, if you get killed. (Must remain optimistic.)

Now the chaos truly begins. Floating pillars, headed in all directions, everywhere. You could just fly through a little off of the middle of your flightpath and avoid as many as you can - but another thing to consider is making a dive for, say, the extreme lower left or right of your flight path. When the plasma mines rain down on you - well, you know how to do a barrel roll. But you have to be really good at barrel rolls, because if the bolts start getting to you you're basically dead in the water. Generally I recommend going most of the way over so that you miss the majority of the beams and you still have room to dodge the raining plasma bolts.

Anyway, after you pass the first big wash of pillars, there is a second, smaller round of them shortly after, so be ready. And roll, roll, roll, because you can't dodge blaster bolts and pillars at the same time - something's gotta give. A wingman gets into trouble but there's a chance his pursuer will just get smacked by a beam without your having to do anything. Ha-ha!

When the troop carrier is in sight, consider heading to the left or right of the spinning pillars that block the entrance. The nova bomb's not worth getting killed for! Your autopilot will guide you inside anyway when the time is right.

Once inside, you'll do well to fly sideways to get around the beam in the middle, being careful to note that the corridor is already narrowed by similar beams laid along its sides. It all makes me wonder what military usage these bases could possibly get out of these constricted, impractical, pillar-strewn corridors, but anyway.

After the middle-pillar bit, hit your retros and fly underneath a horizontal pillar and smoke the enemy behind it with your lasers. Now you'll get one of those doors that will retract in the indicated direction unless you foolishly shoot it and change its direction. Fly low under it as it retracts up, stay low to fly under a pillar, then tilt yourself sideways to pass between two pillars. You get a set of doors you have to shoot to open, then some softball enemies to roast.

Then there's a moving pillar, and you can boost or brake if your timing isn't going to be right. Then another three pairs of doors to shoot open and that's all - at the end of the corridor, you'll greet the base's atomic core.

+++Invasion Troop Carrier ATOMIC BASE II+++

This atomic core is similar in appearance to the one that you faced in Level 1, Stage 3, (check out section [1-3] for the details) but this one is quite a bit trickier. It's harder for one thing, and I believe it also spins faster.

This time you're *deactivating* and not destroying the energy receptors on the walls (you'll turn them black), and you need to be quick about hitting all three, because the one(s) you shoot first will reactivate before you can knock out the second and/or third and get at the core if you're not very quick about things. This process can be very frustrating. Take care not to let the beams regenerate on top of you - treat the receptors like ticking time-bombs. A regenerate beam where your Arwing is stationed can end your game in a hurry. Good aim helps here. I usually find it easier to hug the side that's coming towards me and shoot from there - it's easier to avoid the energy beams, too.

The core will open up when you deactivate all three receptors, but this time it will also close up again if you can't destroy it right away, and then you need to knock out the energy receptors again. If you have the photon shot and a 75% full shield meter, just park yourself in front the core when it opens and shoot and roll and you should be able to do this in the one round. Don't hesitate to launch a nova bomb if you have a few to spare.

Oh, and the little blue man in the pod is here again too, so shoot him when he appears. Sometimes he appears in bunches. He only has a laser but at close range it's enough to really do you damage and you might need to lob a nova bomb to clear him away.

[3-5] - Level 3, Stage 5 - Planet III: Macbeth

Pepper calls it: THE PLANET MACBETH

"The hollow interior of Macbeth is ideal for a base!! Prevent Andross from building here!!"

Boss: Light Speed Revolution SPINNING CORE

If you arrive from Sector Z with wing damage, you might consider crashing your ship right away, or perhaps after getting some practice. You *really* want the twin blaster powerup to actually be twin blasters here.

This level is truly insane. Supposedly Andross wants to build a base here. Well, that's not all you have to worry about though; this planet is also fairly difficult to navigate. There is a beauty to it all though; the level is as fascinating as it is brutal. All underground, to boot - the planet has a hollow area between the outer core and the surface crust.

Your first task will be to navigate a canyon. There's a welcome nova bomb you can pick up right away. Then you have a walker, a plasma turret, and a walker to deal with. Upon emerging, after dealing with some roving turrets, one of your wingmen will get into trouble, so you'll experience the strange sounds other aircraft make inside the hollow core of this planet.

Now some walkers and turrets - don't miss the ones on the ceiling! Then you've got a bunch of turrets and something on the ceiling lobbing diamond missiles at you (kind of like the ones you saw on Titania). Then more roving turrets on the ground. Now the buildings become more numerous. You'll pass two sets, then a set with a plasma turret slightly behind-right of the centre building, then you'll fly through a brief empty space before you reach the next set of buildings. Twin blasters are right behind the centre building. Here's what to do: Go in from the right, shoot the walker, fire your retros and pull a hard left to collect the prize.

Now you'll pass through an area with lava vents mounted on the ceiling. Don't fly directly under a vent; you'll get rained on with hot rocks. Watch for the little roving plasma turrets on the ground. Maybe one will leave a nova bomb for you.

Coming up ahead, you have a serious choice to make. A huge lava vent lies on the floor. To the right of it is a power shield. So, do you swoop down, boosters blazing, risking it all to collect the powerup; or do you hang an extreme right and attempt to avoid the whole mess altogether? Your choice, but you'll be better off going for the shield since it can be even harder to avoid the rocks if you stray from your flightpath.

Now you need to deal with a ceiling-mounted turret and a diamond missile launcher. Then you'll fly past (but please, not directly under!) some more ceiling vents, then through a by-now-most-welcome blue supply ring. (Aggravating that it's after the twin blasters, but what are ya gonna do?)

After the ring, you'll be up against a plethora of diamond missiles. They're coming from the left, from the right, and from the ceiling - do not miss any! (If you're just starting over again from here, you pretty much have to launch a nova bomb.) Then you've got two roving turrets on the ceiling. Then a wingman gets into trouble, and going past a rock you see a bunch of floor and ceiling-mounted plasma turrets. Watch that the ceiling turrets don't fall on top of you. Barrel roll your way to survival. (If you don't have the twin blasters, you are better off concentrating on survival rather than a perfect score!)

Then there's one more big volcanic vent - with no power shield to collect, you want to deke a few rocks then hit your boosters. Then you'll have a forest of ceiling-mounted turrets to deal with. If you're low on health, just dodge and roll. But you might want to get the last, roving one that will stay with you. But even it will pass as the boss shows up.

+++Light Speed Revolution SPINNING CORE+++

This rig might seem to be the kingpin of unfriendlies. It is not an easy boss; it is so tough sometimes that if you were to die, you'd almost rather go back to the beginning of the stage instead of the midway point so that you get another try with the twin blasters. I have done it with the single laser, though - you just need a full health meter, some dexterity, and a lot of patience.

The first thing you want to do is shoot down all the plasma turrets on the outside of the Core. Watch out for the plasma shots. If you want to, you can

aim your shots just to the right of the Core so that you can keep getting in licks as the turrets turn around towards the other side.

After you destroy two turrets, the top will open up, and you'll have to watch out for missiles coming around from behind on the right or left side.

Still, this is a reasonably manageable situation, and if you want to hang around shooting missiles and collecting yellow small energy supplies until your shield bar is full, that's not the worst idea in the world.

When there are no turrets left, the entire machine will leap into the air. Now, see that shadow on the ground? You don't want to be on top of it! Fire your retros and get out of the way as the Spinning Core returns to the floor.

The Core will now close its top and open up its bottom, and this is the tricky part. You have to shoot the sensitive firing membrane of the core while avoiding the blue-black balls that revolve around it. And it's positively raining laser fire at you, though luckily in a narrow stream. At times, the core will spread the balls out wide, giving you a clear shot at the central membrane. Take these shots. Don't try to do too much at once, or you will be severely punished.

When you get it down to its last little bit of energy, the Spinning Core will jettison the balls and you'll have only the central membrane left. Roll-deflect its laser blasts as you get in your final licks.

[3-6] - Level 3, Stage 6 - Venom (space over Venom)

Pepper calls it: VENOM - THE FINAL GOAL

"You've made it this far... It's your fate to destroy Andross!! We're counting on you, Fox!!"

Boss: Final Battleship GREAT COMMANDER

Do your best to conserve your nova bombs in this level. You'll find out why at the end.

You start the level with a rocket boat headed straight for you (shoot it), then you'll encounter some more rocket boats (shoot them), then some of those interceptor buoys (shoot them), then some starfighters (shoot them). There's a lot of stuff to shoot. I really like this level. A wingman will find trouble after a minute or two of this.

Eventually you'll come to a deadly-looking circle of plasma mines with a nova bomb in the middle. Do a few barrel rolls and pick up the bomb. You'll then be able to collect a power shield and a twin blaster powerup! After the powerups comes the blue ring, and you might have trouble timing the ring with a wingman that will get in trouble there. Fly through the ring first, then track your lasers to the right to destroy the pursuing enemy ship.

You'll get another long batch of fighters and buoys and missile boats, and after a while you'll come to those little grey ships that turn to face you and are hard to shoot - the kind you first met eons ago in Sector X. They're a sign that you're just one plasma-spewing triangle and a last batch of interceptor buoys away from the end.

If I had a criticism to make about this level, it would be that it's over too quickly! If you have the twin blasters, it's an utter rout. But good times often go by so fast, don't they?

+++Final Battleship GREAT COMMANDER+++

Alright, now we're going to deal with some serious firepower. Forget Andross, this ship and the Spinning Core are the toughest bosses in the game if you ask me.

First, you're forced out of cockpit view if you were still in cockpit view.

You'll first be treated to a segueway of the three segments of the Great Commander coming together. Watch out for lasers and steel barrels. You can fly low and to the right to avoid the whole mess, if you like, rolling to deflect the occasional laser blast.

When it's finished, you'll see what needs to be done. Your autopilot will bring you about again to face the vessel, and you have to deplete its energy by shooting the open turrets. Get as low as you can on each pass and keep rolling and shooting. With twin blasters, you may do well to aim sideways, but it's best to roll so that your lasers end up tracing out a circular impact pattern.

When you start inflicting some damage on the vessel (say, three out of six turrets destroyed, or you get approximately half of its energy depleted), it will begin to smoke and fire plasma balls at you while you make your little strafing run, so be sure to use your barrel roll constantly.

Don't hesitate to use a bomb if you need to speed this up. Bombs are especially good if you catch it with its pants down, that is having several turrets open at once. (Pants on the ground, pants on the ground!) Here's the key: wait until you're right on top of the ship to launch and detonate. Heck, fire your retros and increase your window of opportunity! But if there aren't any turrets open, don't bother launching a bomb. In any case, the bombs, well-used, do a reasonable job of compensating for aim. It's just too bad the game forces you out of cockpit view for this battle - or that they made the turrets so darn small!

The turrets really like to play peek-a-boo with you, so you may find it best to deke them - act like you're going to strafe one side and at the last moment switch to the other (if there are turrets open on that other side, of course).

When you finally deplete the last of its energy, the ship will fly away from you when your autopilot brings you back around. It will spiral down into the atmosphere. Care to chase it? Oh yeah!

So yeah, it was too bad the game chased you out of cockpit view for the battle, eh? Well, if you're running an early version of the game, there is one little trick. Enter the battle in a third-person view. This will stop the game from sealing off the cockpit view, so once the boss is on your screen, you can select it again! As you might imagine, it makes the fight significantly more facile, as it's much easier to target those tiny turrets. Beware, though: You might get permanently stuck when this boss turns you around, though I have yet to experience getting stuck myself. Thanks go to "D.S." for the tip.

Early version of the game? Well, I have no idea how to verify which version one is running*, unless we're talking running the game on an emulator from a ROM of known provenance. Version 1.0 has this bug; it has been corrected in (or prior to) version 1.2. (If such a thing as a version 1.1 exists, and you have access to it, let me know if the bug is there or not.)

* - If you're playing a ROM on an emulator, these distinctions might not be too hard to make. Cartridge players might be able to go by the type of cartridge.

If it's the older kind with the narrow slit for the eject-prevention lock, I would say you're probably running an earlier version (perhaps 1.0). If it's the newer kind, you could be running a later version (perhaps 1.2).

[3-7] - Level 3, Stage 7 - Planet I: Venom

Boss: Final Battleship GREAT COMMANDER

This is it. Please let me know - if this ain't love, you better let me know.

Wow, it seems like a while since you've been here, doesn't it? As you might expect, the final stage in the game is slightly on the difficult side; but if you were able to survive Fortuna and Macbeth, you'll be able to handle this.

After the autopilot puts you into your flightpath, fly up as far as you can, and dead center over the parting pillars. The last pillar doesn't move, though, so get out of its way at the very end.

You'll then fly under some falling objects. As in the Level 1 version of this stage, try to snake your way through on your side so that you slip between them. There's a power shield you'll want to get. The uppermost flat panels tend to just flip over and face you instead of falling down.

Now you'll encounter pillars that are being thrown down and erected in front of your flightpath. Some, but mercifully not all, will be allowed to fall on top of you (even if you shoot them!). Stay low here. Get *close* to the falling ones so that you clear them. It's funny how that works.

Coming out, you meet some moving turrets, and a wingman finds trouble. A lone fighter appears and an arch forms around you.

Okay, remember the rotating rectangles from Level 1? Here they are again. See the arrows? You want them to be pointed out of your flightpath, because that's the way they'll swing. Shoot the triangle once to change its direction (and that of the resulting rotation). Be careful - if you fire too many shots at once it'll just flip back and forth as many times as your lasers hit it, and your result may be frustrating!

The first one, in the middle of your flightpath, is pointing left. You might as well shoot it to make it go right, then pass it on the left. Then you come upon one on your left pointing right followed quickly by one on your right pointing left. You'll have to nimbly shoot both of these.

And then, just to mix it up a bit, you come to one with a blue triangle that keeps changing orientation. Here, you shoot the triangle when it finds a direction you like. Since there's a pillar on its left, how's about we send it right?

Then you get a right-pointing one on your left (direct it left), followed by a left-pointing one on your right (direct it right). Next to that one is a twin blaster. You need to take care of the rectangle, then fire your retros and collect the lasers.

Now you've got some more blue-triangled-rectangles. Direct them left, right, then left - but be prepared for failure and be ready to squeeze by any of these on the "wrong" side. Then there'll be a right-pointer red on the left of your flightpath that you need to send left. Then fire your retros again and get the left-pointing one on the right to go right. You'll want to fly through the

supply ring. And here's a Free Bonus Tip™: Don't pause the game in the middle of this to go have dinner. While playing/writing the first version of this FAQ, I was quickly killed upon resuming the game.

After the supply ring, a wingman gets into trouble. You work your way through some Stonehenge-esque artifacts. I guess this passes for a town on Venom. Watch out for the moving turrets. You can probably get a nova bomb somewhere in the fray. In any case, you'll have lots of things to shoot at (plasma turrets and walkers galore), and then obstacles will be generated in front of you. And a wingman gets into trouble. Take it really easy!

After a while, you'll arrive at a wall of rotating flat panels. Find an empty space towards the ground and fly through. You'll fight off the last enemy starfighters and a pair of walkers, and then the mothership will arrive.

+++Final Battleship GREAT COMMANDER+++

The Great Commander glides down over your head, turns around, and then becomes a piece of utter horror.

Okay, see that door on the lower section that keeps opening and closing? That's where you need to shoot. Watch out for the steel balls that rain down off the ends of the 'arms,' and also the occasional missile. (But if you keep shooting that hatch you'll most likely shoot down most of the missiles incidentally, anyway.)

The ship will soon show you its spinning move, where steel balls will continually be launched in your direction. You'll have a very hard time getting your licks in here. In general, when you fire off a shot, don't wait for it to hit; keep moving. Move, move, move. With dexterity, you'll survive!

When the Commander finally stops spinning (it takes a *long* time), you'll be able to get lots of hits in again. Watch out for missiles again, and, more importantly, the single arms that will be raised to launch a straight stream of steel balls. They're pretty easy to avoid, though.

Soon, you'll face a brutal ring laser attack from the head. You'll need to avoid the shots - roll-deflecting that many is hopeless. Shoot down the missiles when you can - there's a chance they'll leave behind valuable yellow rings.

Of course, if you have razor-sharp aim and a steady trigger finger, you can speed up the destruction of the Great Commander significantly. After destroying the bottom segment, two more will remain. The bridge section will begin to fly around the main body, and there's nothing special here - just destroy it with your laser. Of course, the main body will try to spin into your ship, and it will also launch some very odd-looking probes.

Once you destroy the bridge, the rest of the ship simply destructs in front of you. You'll then fly into Andross' fortress. Luckily for us, this acts as a continue point. Hope you have some extra ships left!

Andross will remark that your choice of routes took him by surprise. For all this difficulty, it better have. He'll also say a few words about your father. Meanwhile, you'll preform some amazing manoeuvres in which your retros will be your best friend:

After the grey ring, go up, then down, get the nova bomb, down, up, down, RETROS!, through, up!, down!, over (take advantage of the gaps afforded by the fact that these last bars don't extend to the full width of the corridor)...

Now you have to deal with closing doors, so fire your retros and get on your side to squeeze right, then left, then right, then left, then right to get a twin blaster (or wing gyro in my case!), and then one final squeeze to the left.

+++Psychic Energy Core TELEKINETIC AMPLIFIER+++

A British gaming magazine once did a cool stage-by-stage expose of Star Wing, and next to the photo of the second face of the Telekinetic Amplifier read the caption: "This is it! The final level of Tetris from Hell!" Ha-ha.

You're probably already a little familiar with the procedure here. Shoot the eyes until they explode, then go for the core. The core is a tad tougher to destroy this time, though (but it hangs around in front of you for a longer period of time, which I like); and when the face reforms it will be in a different shape, and the eyes will shoot plasma balls at you. Ouch. Shoot the eyes and stay away from the plasma (or carefully roll-deflect it), and avoid the telekinesis planks as best you can. It won't suck you in again, though, which is nice.

Otherwise, all is the same as before. I find a steady barrage of laser blasts works better than launching a nova bomb since you have to interrupt your lasers to launch the bomb. I can get Andross in just two rounds with the basic type of twin blaster.

When you finally eliminate Andross, you'll fly out of the collapsing fortress and meet up with your wingmen. Congratulations, you did it! You are now the best Star Fox player on your street. And this FAQ is finally finished. Total score: 66100 Average Score: 94% (low point was a 77% on Macbeth) - I think I did alright considering how often I had to pause to write! ;-)

=====
VII - Enemy Force Commander ("Boss") Data [E-0]
=====

This is the same information that's available when you complete the game, but since the geometric data is irrelevant to gameplay and the simplistic, inconsistent height-width-depth analysis of their complex shapes isn't very telling anyway, I've collated the information here instead of in the flythrough. Note that you only see the enemies you encounter on a particular route, so if you skip, say, the Space Armada and Meteor stages and go directly to Venom via the Black Hole, you won't see the data or animations from those bosses in the ending.

[E-1] - Level 1 Enemy Data

Level 1

Corneria

Name - Attack Carrier

Weapon - Missile Blaster

Size - H70xW100xD150

(It's made of fail. Still, it had to be small enough to get through the Asteroid Belt, I suppose.)

Level 1

Asteroid

Name - Rock Crusher

Weapon - Laser

Size - H60xW86xD45
(This ain't your mom's rock polisher!)

Level 1
Space Armada
Name - Atomic Base
Weapon - Laser
Size - H600xW850xD1200
(Alright! Now we're getting to the real mothers!)

Level 1
Meteor
Name - Dancing Insector
Weapon - Fire Blaster
Size - H120xW87xD72
(Was what I did so wrong? So wrong that you had to leave me alone?)

Level 1
Venom
Name - Phantron
Weapon - Laser
Size - H25xW22xD31
(Apparently the folks at Argonaut like Disney movies starring Jeff Bridges.)

Level 1
Venom
Name - Phantron
Weapon - Laser
Size - H25xW22xD31
(Same Phantron, new packaging.)

Final Stage
Name - Andross...
Weapon - Telekinesis
Size - H100xW80xD30
(I wonder what Dr. Andross' first name was? Something innocuous like "Bob", perhaps?)

[E-2] - Level 2 Enemy Data

Level 2
Corneria
Name - Attack Carrier
Weapon - Missile Blaster
Size - H70xW100xD150
(Well, we were running out of ROM, and we liked the Level 1, Stage 1 boss so much...)

Level 2
Sector X
Name - Rock Crusher
Weapon - Laser
Size - H60xW86xD45
(Why would you need a rock crusher here, anyway? I'd be inclined to *build* something out of all the crazy pieces floating around. Perhaps they were recently fabricated from the asteroid dust?)

Level 2

Titania

Name - Professor Hanger

Weapon - Shadow Thruster

Size - H25xW18xD30

(Those Brits at Argonaut Software clearly don't know how to spell. Kidding, but it's "Hanger" in the game versus "Hangar" in the North American manual.)

Level 2

Sector Y

Name - Plasma Hydra

Weapon - Plasma Spewer

Size - H96xW280xD55

(With those great long arms, it just wants to reach out and give you a hug.)

Level 2

Venom

Name - Metal Smasher

Weapon - Crush Attack

Size - H17xW20xD38

(LIES! The steel drums are worse!)

Level 2

Venom

Name - Galactic Rider

Weapon - Air Bikers

Size - H80xW61xD25

(How could this have fit *inside* the Metal Smasher?)

Final Stage

Name - Andross...

Weapon - Telekinesis

Size - H100xW80xD30

(I always said his motives weren't very deep.)

[E-3] - Level 3 Enemy Data

Level 3

Corneria

Name - Destructor

Weapon - Plasma

Size - H45xW150xD90

(Falco takes on the Attack Carrier by himself in this stage. Compared to how helpless your wingmen are the rest of the game, that's pretty badass.)

Level 3

Dimension

Name - Slot Machine

Weapon - Missile Blaster

Size - Large

(This information is conjectural. I like to think it sort of counts as a boss.)

Level 3

Asteroid

Name - Blade Barrier

Weapon - Web Attack

Size - H90xW90xD65

(I'm running out of snappy things to say. Submit your suggestions to me@willmatheson.com today!)

Level 3

Fortuna

Name - Monarch Dodora

Weapon - Fire Breath

Size - H85xW160xD200

(Like a Monarch butterfly, only a fire-breathing dinosaur.)

Level 3

Sector Z

Name - Atomic Base II

Weapon - Laser

Size - H92xW90xD1100

(Once again, the dimensions really don't make any sense.)

Level 3

Macbeth

Name - Spinning Core

Weapon - Laser

Size - H63xW52xD45

(It had a laser? I was more worried about the charged balls of energy that kept smashing into my ship.)

Level 3

Venom

Name - Great Commander

Weapon - Laser

Size - H73xW97xD250

(The first time I faced this boss, it took me a very long time to beat. The second time it only took me an hour.)

Level 3

Venom

Name - Great Commander

Weapon - Iron Balls

Size - H73xW97xD250

(In Star Fox physics, dimensions are conserved.)

Final Stage

Name - Andross...

Weapon - Telekinesis

Size - H100xW80xD30

(Hint: Make your final bosses more menacing by using a mononym, trailing off with the Obligatory Ellipsis of Mystery(TM), available in your choice of three full stops... or precomposed, if you've got Unicode.)

=====
VIII - Codes, Cheats, and Tricks [H-0]
=====

There really aren't any codes or cheats for this game, and Game Genie's out of the question unless you're using an emulator because the Star Fox cartridge uses the extra connectors, unlike most SNES cartridges. Still, at least one minor glitch has been found that you might be able to get some mileage out of - if you're interested, skip to section [H-3].

[H-1] - Object Manipulation

Having at least one credit, lose all your extra ships. On the continue screen, you'll see Fox McCloud standing next to an Arwing superimposed on a grid. Here's how you can play around:

Controller 1:

D-pad: Rotate an object in any direction. Holding down the buttons increases speed in a given direction. You can also stop the ship again by tapping in an opposite direction.

L: Zoom in.

R: Zoom out.

X: Stops any rotation.

A: Hold down to stop the grid from refreshing when you move the ship, so that you get a frame-by-frame afterimage left of your movements. You can use this to make some interesting images.

Controller 2:

D-pad, Start, Select, Y, B: Changes the object shown on the grid.

Unfortunately, you can only move through the sequence in one direction (no matter which button you press), but here's the rough order of categories:

Arwing > Arwing Mk. 1 > Powerups (and ships that grant them) > Enemy Fighters and Vehicles > Animals

There are 38 objects altogether.

At least it puts some fun into getting your butt kicked. It all kind of makes me wish Super Mario FX had gotten made.

[H-2] - Strange Music

After beating the game on any Level, leave your system turned on for a really long time. Eventually, you'll hear a few bars of the main theme, but only through one instrument. This isn't really a trick you'll get much mileage out of. ;-) It's too bad ROM space was at such a premium - they could have had a clip of General Pepper saying "Please turn your system off."

[H-3] - Great Commander Space Battle Glitch

So yeah, it was too bad the game chased you out of cockpit view for that battle, eh? Well, if you're running an early version of the game, there is one little trick. Enter the battle in a third-person view. This will stop the game from sealing off the cockpit view, so once the boss is on your screen, you can select it again! As you might imagine, it makes the fight significantly more facile, as it's much easier to target those tiny turrets. Beware, though: You might get permanently stuck when this boss turns you around, though I have yet to experience getting stuck myself. Thanks go to "D.S." for the tip.

Early version of the game? Well, I have no idea how to verify which version one is running*, unless we're talking running the game on an emulator from a ROM of known provenance. Version 1.0 has this bug; it has been corrected in (or prior to) version 1.2. (If such a thing as a version 1.1 exists, and you have access to it, let me know if the bug is there or not.)

* - If you're playing a ROM on an emulator, these distinctions might not be too

hard to make. Cartridge players might be able to go by the type of cartridge. If it's the older kind with the narrow slit for the eject-prevention lock, I would say you're probably running an earlier version (perhaps 1.0). If it's the newer kind, you could be running a later version (perhaps 1.2).

=====
IX - Sources and Acknowledgements [C-0]
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It'd be nice if I could convince the entire world that I wrote this on my Blackberry while orbiting the Earth on my third Space Shuttle mission, drawing entirely from a perfect memory of the game gleaned from my time as an engineer and tester. Nah, the reality is that I'm a former English major with pretensions to technical literacy.

I first read about the twin blasters on Corneria and the Black Hole and Out of this Dimension stages in the pages of Nintendo Power's Classified Information section. Still, most of the rest of the information is from my own experience playing the game uncountable times, both on an emulator and on the real SNES. Generally, I'd play, pause, write - repeat ad nauseum. Here's what I wrote with:

The first version of this FAQ (from 2001) was written on my old Acer AnyWare 1100LX ([<http://www.flickr.com/photos/draikar/3176543042/>] - this isn't isn't my photo or my own computer, but mine is precisely like the one on the left of that photo) with a 40MB hard drive that I loaded with 5MB of RAM, Windows 3.1 (but with the 11MHz 386SX chip I was limited to Standard Mode), and most importantly EditPad Lite for massive text files.

This rewrite has been written on my new Dell Inspiron Mini 10v with 2GB of RAM, Ubuntu 8.04 with OpenOffice.org, 16GB SSD:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/dellphotos/sets/72157618007744460/>
(these are official photos from Dell) - the whole thing weighs next to nothing, runs virtually silently, goes anywhere, and, new, cost about one-eighth of the MSRP of the 1100LX. Don't get me wrong, I love both computers, but times sure have changed. This computer can actually sit on my lap whereas the other one needed a small table.

I am especially indebted to my FAQ competitors for thinking of things to include that I would never have thought to, and even then may have dismissed out of sheer laziness. ;-) In no cases have I copied from them - I have access to an emulator and was able to transcribe things like the dimensional data of the bosses myself. But in many cases I have learned from them. Prime example: Until doing this rewrite, I had no idea there were "grey rings". They weren't in the manual, they could pass for the blue supply rings to the untrained eye, and I wasn't getting killed in the right places at the right times so that I could verify that they weren't serving as continue points like the true supply rings do. So after the the main work of the FAQ was behind me, I had to play through all the stages again just to watch for the rings!

My first version of this FAQ was posted October 23rd, 2001. It had the basic flythrough though it was not as through or detailed as the present version.

In 2010 I decided to clean it up a bit and add some of the missing facts - and what I ended up doing was a total rewrite. No portion has gone untouched.

=====
X - Version History / Closing Remarks [C-0]
=====

Version History:

1.00 - 2001/10/23 - Original version. A basic flythrough. It has the virtue of relative brevity, and though some of the minutiae are inaccurate it should still get you through the game. If by chance you're interested, it can still be found here: <http://www.willmatheson.com/guides/faq/starfox1.txt>

2.00 - 2010/07/08 - Complete rewrite. A plethora of new sections and information added, *all* level and boss strategies rewritten. Practically nothing was untouched - a list of changes would be a significant fraction of the length of this document.

2.01 - 2011/09/10 - Minor edits; added info about Great Commander glitch - thanks go to "D.S." for the tip.

Well, I hope you enjoyed the FAQ! (They probably should be called "amateur guides" or, better still, "Video-Baedekers" but I guess we're stuck with the term. ;-)) If you're interested, you can also check out my Star Fox Game Script, available here:

<http://www.willmatheson.com/guides/starfox>

(and it should also be available on GameFAQs around the same time this document is)

I also have a YouTube channel:

<http://youtube.com/willmatheson>

So that's all. I hope you enjoyed the FAQ and continue to enjoy this great, classic game.

Comments, suggestions, contributions... send all to me@willmatheson.com

"Star Fox FAQ and Flythrough" version 2.01 by William Matheson
Published September 10th, 2011

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