


ATARI® 400/800™

COMPUTER GAME  
**ASTEROIDS™**



A Warner Communications Company 

Model CXL4013  
Use with  
ATARI® 400™ or ATARI® 800™  
PERSONAL COMPUTER SYSTEMS





---

# ASTEROIDS™

---



A Warner Communications Company 

Every effort has been made to ensure that this manual accurately documents this product of the ATARI Computer Division. However, because of the ongoing improvement and update of the computer software and hardware, ATARI, INC. cannot guarantee the accuracy of printed material after the date of publication and cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.

Reproduction is forbidden without the specific written permission of ATARI, INC., Sunnyvale, CA 94086. No right to reproduce this document, nor the subject matter thereof, is granted unless by written agreement with, or written permission from the Corporation.

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

MANUAL, PROGRAM, AND AUDIOVISUAL © 1981 ATARI, INC.





# CONTENTS

---

1	INTRODUCTION	1
---	--------------	---

---

2	SETTING UP	3
	ATARI Components Required	3
	Equipment Setup	3
	Using your Joystick Controllers	4

---

3	A BASIC ONE-PLAYER GAME	5
	Asteroid Waves	5
	Space Bar	6

---

4	A ONE-PLAYER GAME WITH OPTIONS	7
	Your Defense Options	7
	Shields	7
	Hyperspace	8
	Flip Over	8
	No Effect	8
	Beginning Play	8

---

5	MULTIPLE-PLAYER GAMES AND OPTIONS	9
	Select Your Game	10
	Standard Play Asteroids	10
	Melee Asteroids	10
	Co-op Asteroids	11
	Team Asteroids	11
	Patrol/Combat	12
	Select Your Defense Option	12
	Begin Play	12

---

6	EARNING POINTS	13
	Bonus Ships and Point Scores for Targets	13
	Game Option Points	13

---

7	TIPS ON PLAYING	17
---	-----------------	----

---





---

# INTRODUCTION

---

## **AGE RANGE: 8 to Adult**

Asteroids surround you.

Trapped far from home, your embattled spaceship hurls toward its doom. You are caught in the center of a gigantic cloud of asteroids. You have no choice. You must pulverize all the asteroids in your path with your photon cannon—if you are ever to save yourself and your ship.

You have more than enough photon power to destroy all the asteroids you can see, but you can fire only four shots into the asteroid field at one time. Asteroids fly past your viewing screen as you reach for your target controls. You can be hit four times before your ship is finally destroyed. Every 10,000 points you score will earn you another ship.

Rubble from an exploding asteroid bounces off your ship's hull. The hull rings like a bell. If you don't get busy, that could be your death knell. Your hair stands on end. A glowing blur flashes across your viewing screen! So that's where the rubble came from! The asteroid was blasted by an Alien Robot Saucer!

The asteroid cloud has trapped Alien Robot Saucers with you. They lost their command circuitry eons ago—now they fire at random. But the metal in your ship's hull always registers as a more important target than the rocky asteroids do. Be careful when you see an Alien Robot Saucer!

Other players also can be trapped with you. Eighteen game variations allow you to team with or compete against one, two, or three other players. Let's get ready to play.

---



---

# SETTING UP

---

## ATARI COMPONENTS REQUIRED

- **ATARI® 400™** or **ATARI 800™ Personal Computer System** with a minimum of 8K RAM installed
- **ASTEROIDS™** Cartridge
- One Joystick Controller per player (1 to 4 players)

## EQUIPMENT SETUP

1. Connect the ATARI 400 or ATARI 800 Personal Computer System to your television set and to a wall outlet as instructed in the Operator's Manual.
2. Open the cartridge door on the top of the computer console. Hold the ASTEROIDS cartridge so that the label is facing toward you. Insert the cartridge firmly into the cartridge slot (use the LEFT CARTRIDGE slot in the ATARI 800). Close the cartridge door.

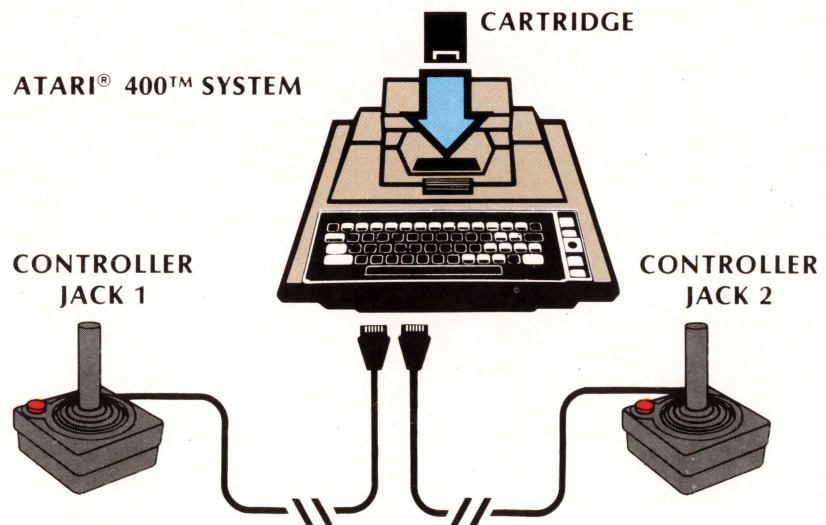


Figure 1. Setup Diagram

3. Turn on your television set.
4. Turn on your ATARI Personal Computer System by pressing the POWER switch on the right side of the console to ON.

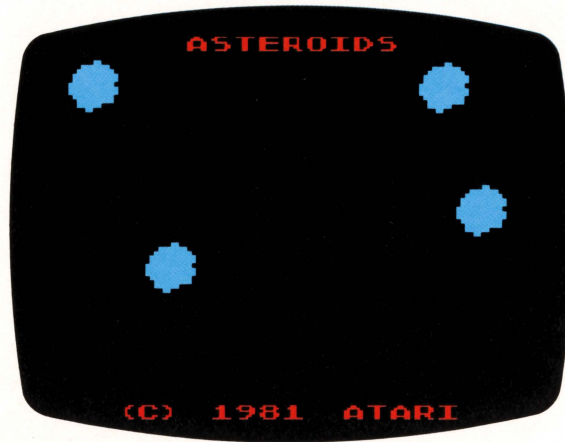


Figure 2. ASTEROIDS Title Screen

5. If all equipment is properly connected and turned on, you will see the ASTEROIDS title screen.
6. Plug the Joystick into the far left controller jack labeled CONTROLLER JACK 1 on the front of the computer console. Additional players should use CONTROLLER JACKS 2, 3, and 4.

## USING YOUR JOYSTICK CONTROLLERS

Hold your Joystick with its red trigger button to the upper left of your television screen. Figure 3 illustrates the different Joystick movements.

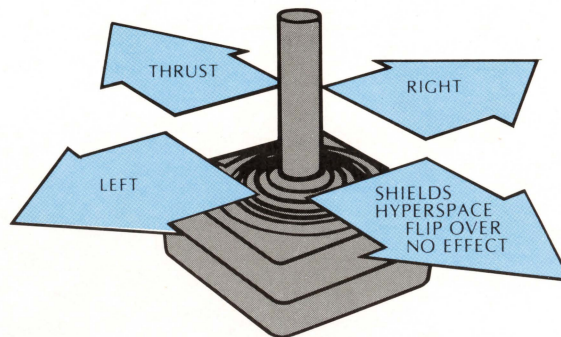


Figure 3. Joystick Operation

- Move the Joystick to the left or right to rotate your ship on the screen to the left or right. Your Joystick can fire into the screen at 16 different angles. The asteroids slowly drift across your line of fire on the screen.
- Push forward on the Joystick to move your ship in the direction it is pointed. This is called thrust.
- Move your Joystick forward to move your ship ahead in space, but remember—you have no brakes. You have to rotate your ship 180 degrees and thrust in the opposite direction to halt your forward movement. If you are moving slowly, you may fire your cannon—8 or 10 shots will bring your ship to a halt.
- Pull back on the Joystick to turn on your defense option (see DEFENSE OPTIONS).



---

## A BASIC ONE-PLAYER GAME

---

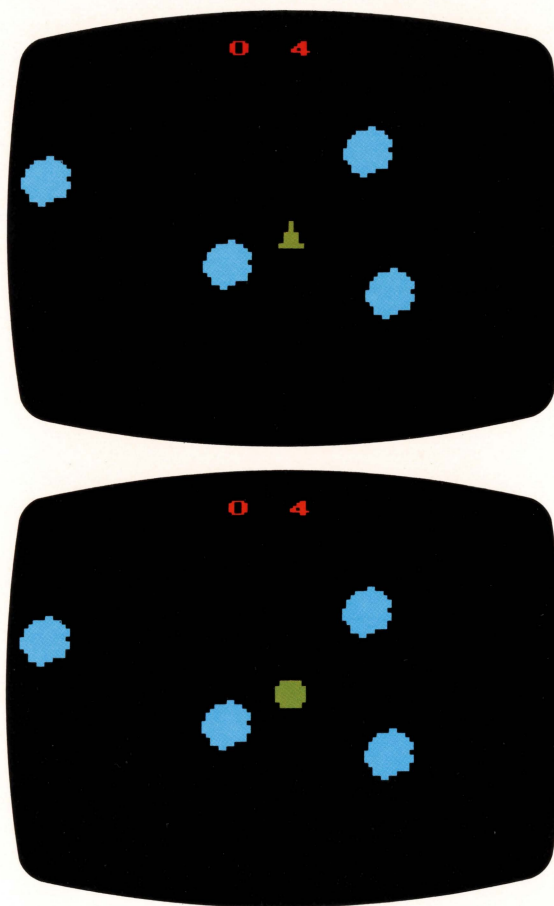


Figure 4. Activating Shields

You may press **START** to begin a slow, one-player STANDARD PLAY game. The screen color and asteroid configuration will change simultaneously. Asteroids will crowd in on your ship from the four corners of the screen until you destroy them. Your ship is armed with SHIELDS (see Section 4, Your Defense Options).

### ASTEROID WAVES

When you empty the screen of asteroids, a new wave of asteroids will crowd into your field. Each new wave you face will be more difficult to destroy than the last.

The first wave generates from four large asteroids. The second wave generates from six large asteroids. The third wave generates from eight large asteroids—and so on, up to the eighth wave, which presents you with 18 large asteroids to pulverize. Only 32 asteroid targets can appear on your screen at any one time.

---

Your reserve fleet of three ships stands ready in hyperspace. Each time you are hit, a reserve ship will appear in the asteroid field at your starting position. The program waits until your starting position is free from passing asteroids, then it places your new ship into play. This empty area that the computer guarantees to be empty of asteroids is called a "window" in the asteroid field.

## SPACE BAR

In all ASTEROIDS games, you may press the Space Bar to freeze game play. Press the Space Bar again to resume game play at the point it was stopped. The highest score of the game will display on the ending screen. This score will be updated as higher scores are tallied in later games. The highest score finally will be erased when you turn off your computer console, or press **SYSTEM RESET**.



---

## A ONE-PLAYER GAME WITH OPTIONS

---

ASTEROIDS offers many different game options. You may either start playing immediately, or you may adjust the game rules. Follow this sequence to select a new game and defense option.



Figure 5. Bounce on ASTEROIDS

1. Press the **B** key to select a BOUNCE ON ASTEROIDS version. Press **B** again to change back to REGULAR ASTEROIDS.

When you select a BOUNCE ON version, you activate an invisible rectangular barrier shield that contains the asteroids within your firing range. Asteroids move out to the edge of your field of vision and bounce back toward your ship. They cannot escape you.

In a REGULAR ASTEROIDS game variation, each asteroid moves slowly off the screen as new asteroids move onto the screen.

2. Press the **F** key to select a FAST ASTEROIDS version. Press **F** again to change back to SLOW ASTEROIDS. Some asteroids move more quickly than others in a FAST ASTEROIDS game version.
3. Press and release the **OPTION** key to view your four defense options one at a time.

### YOUR DEFENSE OPTIONS

**SHIELDS.** When you pull directly toward you on the Joystick, you turn on a barrier shield that defends your ship against hits from saucers or asteroids. The SHIELD turns off when you recenter your Joystick. ASTEROIDS automatically gives your ship SHIELDS if you do not select any other defense option.



---

**HYPERSPACE.** Pull toward you on the Joystick and you warp into HYPERSPACE—but be careful! You can come back into the asteroid field at any time.

**FLIP OVER.** Allows you to turn 180 degrees instantly, so you can fire toward asteroids of enemy ships approaching from the rear of your ship.

**NO EFFECT.** Leaves you defenseless against asteroid collisions or enemy photons. You score points much faster with NO EFFECT than with any other defense option.

You may also press and hold the **OPTION** key. Your defense options will flip onto the television screen. Release the **OPTION** key when the desired defense option is displayed.

4. Press the red trigger button on the Joystick to arm the ship with the defense option you have selected. Your ship appears on the television screen when you press the trigger button.

#### **BEGINNING PLAY**

Now you may press **START** to begin play, after making your selection. Asteroids crowd in on your ship. These asteroids are real—get ready to fire!

# MULTIPLE-PLAYER GAMES AND OPTIONS

Decide on the number of players. Make sure you have plugged a Joystick into a Controller Port for each player in the game.

Press and release the **SELECT** key to choose game options, one at a time, from 18 choices. Choose an option that allows only the number of players in the game to play.

If you simultaneously press and hold the **SELECT** key, your options will flip onto the television screen. Release the **SELECT** key when your desired game selection appears.

Figure 6 shows you all 18 possible game option variations.

GAME SELECTION		TARGET OPPORTUNITES				GAME DURATION	
		ASTEROIDS	SAUCERS	ENEMY PLAYER	TEAM PLAYER	FIRST PLAYER OUT	LAST PLAYER OUT
<b>STANDARD PLAY</b>	1 PLAYER PATROL						
	2 PLAYER PATROL						
<b>MELEE</b>	2 PLAYER PATROL						
	2 PLAYER COMBAT						
	3 PLAYER PATROL						
	3 PLAYER COMBAT						
	4 PLAYER PATROL						
	4 PLAYER COMBAT						
<b>CO-OP</b>	2 PLAYER PATROL						
	2 PLAYER COMBAT						
	3 PLAYER PATROL						
	3 PLAYER COMBAT						
	4 PLAYER PATROL						
	4 PLAYER COMBAT						
<b>TEAM</b>	3 PLAYER PATROL						
	3 PLAYER COMBAT						
	4 PLAYER PATROL						
	4 PLAYER COMBAT						

Figure 6. Game Variations



---

SELECT  
YOUR GAME



Figure 7. Standard Play ASTEROIDS

#### STANDARD PLAY ASTEROIDS

This version allows either one or two players to play ASTEROIDS. The first player takes his turn until he loses one ship. Then the second player takes his turn. Players alternate until the game ends.



Figure 8. Melee ASTEROIDS

#### MELEE ASTEROIDS

All players in a game appear together on the television screen. In MELEE PATROL versions, your photon shots will pass through other players' ships without disabling them. In MELEE COMBAT versions, you are vulnerable to photon shots fired by all other players in the game, and you score points for hitting other players.





Figure 9. CO-OP ASTEROIDS

#### CO-OP ASTEROIDS

All players are supplied with ships as long as any player has a ship he hasn't used. You benefit by keeping all other players alive. In COMBAT versions, you may hit all other players, but it is usually not to your advantage. When you are hit, your computer will place your new ship at a random location within your "window," so enemy players cannot shoot you automatically when you reappear.



Figure 10. Team ASTEROIDS

#### TEAM ASTEROIDS

Each team battles the other team, as well as the saucers and the asteroids. The game ends for a player when he or his teammate loses all his ships. Players on the other team may continue the game. In TEAM COMBAT versions, you may hit players on the other team. When you lose a ship in a COMBAT version, your computer will place your new ship back in a random location within your "window," so enemy players cannot shoot you automatically when you reappear.

---

## PATROL/COMBAT

As you select your game you also choose one of two photon weapons in the MELEE, CO-OP, or TEAM battle options.

- A **PATROL** photon will not injure man-made objects. Your PATROL photons pass through other players' ships.
- A **COMBAT** photon can destroy man-made objects. In MELEE and CO-OP, your COMBAT photon will destroy anything it hits. In TEAM, your COMBAT photons will destroy only enemy ships, and will pass through your teammate's ship.

Be careful of Robot Saucers! They are all armed with special WAR photons which will destroy anything they hit under all battle conditions.

## SELECT YOUR DEFENSE OPTION

1. Press and release the **OPTION** key until your defense option displays on your television screen. See the DEFENSE OPTION LIST in Section 4.
2. Press the red trigger button on the Joystick when the defense option displays. Your ship will appear on the screen.
3. Let the next player in the game select his defense option.

**Note:** Each player may select any defense option he wishes. He may choose the same defense option as other players in the game, or he may select his own defense options.

## BEGIN PLAY

Press **START** to begin play when all players have selected their defense options.

---

## EARNING POINTS

---

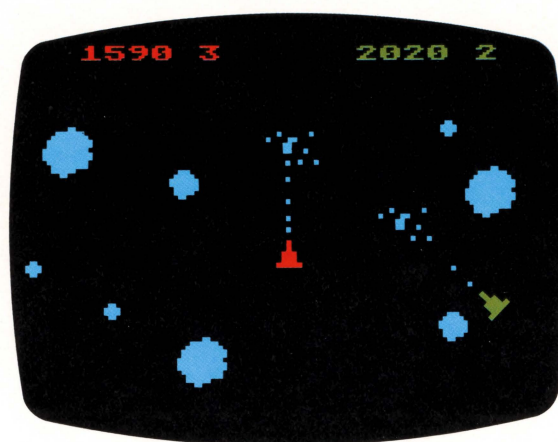


Figure 11. *ASTEROIDS in Play*

### BONUS SHIPS AND POINT SCORES FOR TARGETS

You receive a bonus ship for every 10,000 points that you score. You score points in the following order:

- Other players' scout ships disintegrate when you hit them. They will reappear if they have not used up all their lives. You score most for hitting other players' ships.
- The small saucer explodes when you hit it.
- The large saucer explodes when you hit it.
- Small asteroids disintegrate when you hit them. You score high for these targets.
- Medium asteroids break into two small asteroids when you hit them.
- Large asteroids break into two medium asteroids when you hit them.

### GAME OPTION POINTS

You score twice as many points in FLIP OVER or NO EFFECT as you do in SHIELDS or HYPERSPACE for hitting the same target.









	SHIELDS	HYPERSPACE	FLIP OVER	NO EFFECT	
	500	500	1000	1000	OTHER SHIPS
	250	250	500	500	SMALL SAUCER
	100	100	200	200	LARGE SAUCER
	50	50	100	100	SMALL ASTEROIDS
	20	20	40	40	MEDIUM ASTEROIDS
	10	10	20	20	LARGE ASTEROIDS

Figure 12. Point Matrix Chart

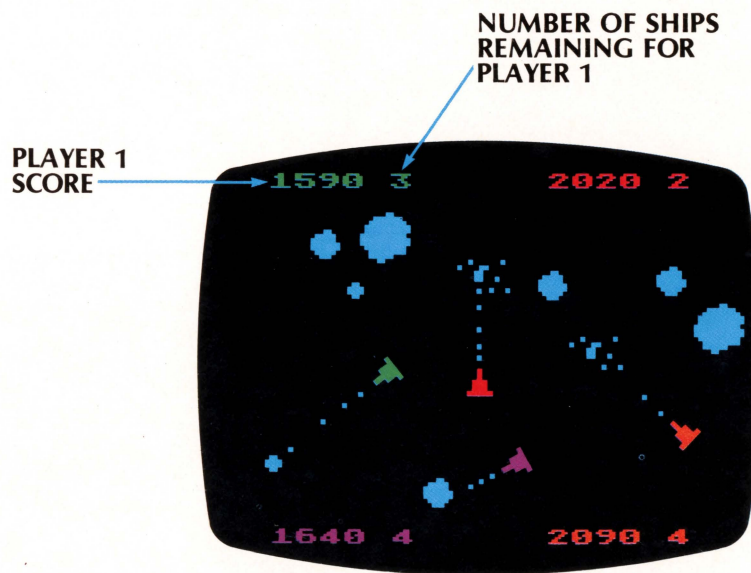


Figure 13. Score Display Screen

Read the score on your television screen at one of four locations. The score for player 1 is displayed in the upper left corner; player 2, the upper right; player 3, the lower right; and player 4, the lower left corner. You will see the number of ships you have remaining in the game next to your score.



Figure 14. Ending the game

The high score of the game is displayed on the last screen. Higher scores earned in following games will replace the first game's high score until the computer console is turned off.

---





---

## TIPS ON PLAYING

---

- The defense option you select determines the number of points you receive for hitting a target. You score lowest in a SHIELDS game, because this option makes ASTEROIDS easiest to play. You can play a long time in a STANDARD PLAY game.
- HYPERSPACE is next in difficulty. FLIP OVER and NO EFFECT are both much more difficult to master. You must work to stay alive with a NO EFFECT option in a four-player COMBAT-MELEE game.
- You may shoot at anything you see on the screen, but you will score more points with a target priority. Remember these three tips to preserve your ships and score high point tallies:
  - First, fire at the closest asteroid approaching your ship.
  - Second, fire at the fastest moving target approaching you.
  - Third, fire at the saucers.
- Even a grazing contact with an asteroid will cost you a ship. Sometimes you can preserve your ship by “rolling over” an approaching asteroid that is going to graze your ship. Move the Joystick to the left or right, causing your ship to rotate across the body of the asteroid, while you fire your cannon. Normally a graze contact would cost you a ship, but the “roll over” maneuver will sometimes register as a “no contact.”
- You are ready to move from SHIELDS or HYPERSPACE to FLIP OVER or NO EFFECT when you score around 5000 points on SHIELDS. Earning 5000 points in SHIELDS would have earned you 10,000 points in FLIP OVER or NO EFFECT —gaining you an extra ship, and added playing time. You are actually better off playing with a more difficult defense option once you gain some playing skill, because the extra ship you earn will prolong your game play.
- Initially, you do not need to know how to move your ship forward to play ASTEROIDS. You can simply stay in one place and fire, turning on SHIELDS or HYPERSPACE to protect yourself from asteroid collisions. In NO EFFECT, however, you must maneuver away from clusters of asteroids. Learning to move your ship carefully can extend your playing time by three or four ships per game.

- 
- In the TEAM option, the game ends when the first player loses all his ships. If you select NO EFFECT as a defense option, you will score points much faster than other players in the game; but you will probably be the first player to lose all your ships. This means that you will probably have the highest score when the game ends. You win the game on points, even though you were the first player to lose all your ships.
  - Do you want to run your score up as high as possible? Play two-to-four player CO-OP PATROL with SHIELDS. Gather at the center of the screen. Divide the screen into equal sectors. Protect the other players from a rear approach. The asteroids will almost never be able to approach a player with normal skill until the final waves. This game strategy is called the WHEEL OF FIRE.











PRINTED IN U.S.A.

A Warner Communications Company 

C014189-13 REV. 1