

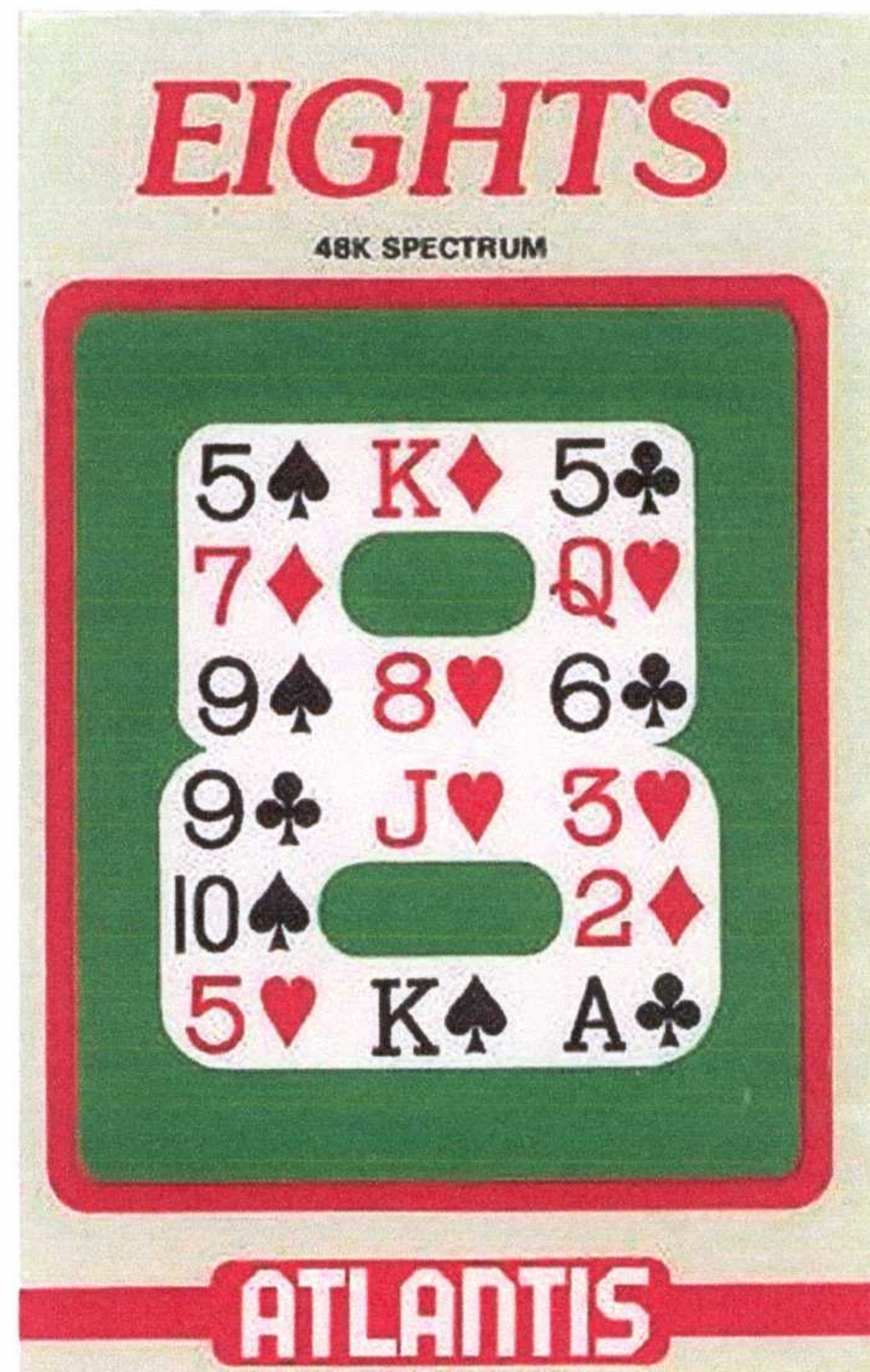
# BEST BOARD/CARD/PUZZLE GAME

## EIGHTS

by ATLANTIS SOFTWARE



The budget priced game from Atlantis was a clear winner in this category, although there were masses of votes for games like *Scrabble* and *Cyrus IS Chess*, both of which pre-date 84. *Eights* is an elegantly written program based on a clever and playable card game, and certainly at its price is excellent value. Not far behind came Artic's *Death Chess 5000* and DK'Tronics' *Jumbly*.





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## \* Shuffling \*

Atlantis are a new company marketing games for £1.99 — the 'pocket money' price initiated by Mastertronic. The first release I've seen from the company is *Eights* — a computer implementation of the popular card game.

The idea of the game is to get rid of all the cards in your hand — the two players must follow the 'lead' of the previous card and many only discard a card of the same suit or the same value. The eight is treated as a special card and can be used to change the suit to whatever you want, either to make it difficult for your opponent to go and/or easier for you to continue discarding cards. If you can't go you must pick up a new card.

In this computer version the computer plays very well and I hardly ever beat it on its simplest level of play, proving, since the cards are shuffled randomly for each new game, that it isn't a matter of luck. The game is thoughtfully designed, entering your card choice is very sensible and logical - J followed by C equals Jack of

## EIGHTS

48K SPECTRUM

5♠ K♦ 5♣  
7♦ Q♥  
9♠ 8♥ 6♣  
9♣ J♥ 3♥  
10♠ 2♦  
5♥ K♠ A♣

## ATLANTIS

Clubs. Trouble has been taken,  
too, in the form of redesigned  
character sets - shuffling noise  
and so on. In short, this is  
wonderful value for money,  
and if you like playing card  
games on computers, a must.

Program	<i>Eights</i>
Price	£1.99
Micro	<i>Spectrum</i>
Supplier	<i>Atlantis Software</i> <i>19 Prebend Street</i> <i>London N1 8PF</i>

## Eights by Atlantis Software

Next, we come to **EIGHTS**, by **ATLANTIS** Software and is the only game out of the whole bunch that is not strictly an arcade style game.

EIGHTS is an easy to learn card game of strategy for two players — you and the computer. The computer is of course master dealer, scorekeeper and opponent. We are told that the computer does in no way cheat, he just sees how many cards you've got and no further and if he did cheat, he would win every time. He plays too damn well anyway.

The game is as follows. Each player has seven cards. Player 1 discards his first card and then player 2 must follow the same suit or denomination as the card just played. If the player cannot go, he must draw cards from the deck until he can, or until no more cards are left. There is no limit to the number of cards that you may draw from the pack, so if you want to cheat . . .

Eights are played as wild, so if you lay down an eight, the suit can be changed so the player can plan out his moves and hopefully get rid of all his cards before his opponent and thus win a round. The score of each round is determined by the value of the cards in the defeated hand, with eights worth 50 points as they are so valuable. The overall winner is the first one to a hundred, but the computer will not give up easily.

The simple instructions will enable any anti-card game supporter to reverse his ways and get addicted. On your turn, you enter first of all the value of the card — eg. A for Ace, Q for Queen, 6 for Six etc. and then the suit — H for Hearts, C for Clubs and so on. The computer then checks that this card exists in your hand. If it does then the computer takes his go, and so on. If you cannot go, by simply pressing D you draw a card from the pack or if there are no cards left, X to skip your turn.

The played cards are represented in graphic form at the centre of the screen and your hand is shown at the bottom, just detailing the cards. The cards are good, although not as sharp as they could have been and also the suits could have pointed both ways up as in real playing cards and not just upwards as on the screen.

Some neat little tricks are included, with BEEPing to remind you that it is your go, the sounds of the shuffling and dealing of the pack and the four levels of

play make Eights an exciting and intelligent game that is hard to stop playing once started. The computer plays a skilled game, even at the easiest level. A good buy for any card gamester. The good thing about it is that you don't have to beg somebody to play cards with you — just switch on the computer and TV, get a couple of drinks ready and you're away.

INSTRUCTIONS	100%
PRESENTATION	90%
ADDICTABILITY	90%
VALUE	90%
ZXC FACTOR	9

Eights Instructions.txt

## EIGHTS - ATLANTIS

### LOADING

To load, press LOAD "" CODE. Press PLAY on your cassette recorder. The programme will load automatically. (The programme is recorded on both sides of the tape. In case of loading difficulty, turn the tape over, rewind to the beginning and load again).

### CONTROLS

Ace 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Ten Jack Queen King

Clubs Hearts Diamonds Spades D = Draw, X= Pass.

### GAME

"Eights" is a card game of strategy for two players, you and the computer. The computer will generate and manipulate the 52 card pack and at the same time, keep score for both of you. You and the computer play a series of games. The overall winner will be the first player to reach an aggregate total of 100 points. Please turn over for the full game instructions.

### RULES

Seven cards are dealt to each player. To start the game, player 1 can discard any card. Player 2 must then play a card which is either of the SAME SUIT or of the SAME DENOMINATION as the card just played. Player 1 must now play a card of the SAME SUIT or SAME DENOMINATION as this card and so on. If a player does not have a playable card in his hand, he MUST DRAW from the deck until he picks up a card that he can play. Note that he is NOT COMPELLED TO STOP DRAWING as soon as he picks up a playable card - but the game is won by the FIRST PLAYER TO RID HIMSELF OF ALL THE CARDS IN HIS HAND.

The winner's score is determined by the cards left in the losers hand. Picture-cards score 10 points; aces score 1 point; and the rest of the cards (except the 8s: see below) score the amount of their face value.

The complication arises from the ruling that ALL EIGHTS ARE WILD: i.e. an EIGHT can ALWAYS BE PLAYED, and the player can then SPECIFY THE SUIT WHICH HIS OPPONENT MUST PLAY.

When you play an EIGHT, you will have to choose the suit with which to ask the computer to follow. Similarly, when the computer decides to play an EIGHT, it



Eights Instructions.txt

will let you know the suit with which you must follow.

Because an EIGHT is so valuable, it will score 50 points for your opponent if you are still holding it at the end of the game. You play a SERIES of games, in which the overall winner will be the first player to reach an aggregate total of 100 points or more. Scoring is, of course, carried out totally automatically; and in those games in which you manage to beat the computer, it will show you the cards that it is still holding, so that you may gain some insight into its strategy. At the end of a series of games, you will have the option of starting a new series.

## INSTRUCTIONS

When loading is completed, you should proceed as prompted on the screen. The programme is very easy to use. When it is your turn, just enter your card, or other choice, as shown in the section "PLAYER'S TURN" below. Whenever the computer requires you to take any action apart from this, it will ask you specifically for it.

## PLAYER'S TURN

When "ENTER YOUR CHOICE" flashes at the top of the screen, you have three choices:

- a) DRAW card by pressing "D"
- b) PASS, by pressing "X" (but you are allowed to do this only when the deck is empty and you do not have a playable card)
- c) PLAY one of the cards in your hand - You do this simply by performing the following two operations:-

First Press one of A23456789TJQK

Second Press one of C D H S

The following display will appear at the top of the screen (for example) "YOUR CHOICE - TEN OF SPADES" - and your card will appear on the discard pile. If you play an EIGHT, the question "Which Suit must I play?" will appear with a flashing cursor.

Answer this by pressing ONE of C D H S. The machine will then proceed with its turn. At the start of any game in a series, you can change the skill level by pressing "L" but you can only do this before you play your first card.

## MACHINE'S TURN

During the machine's turn the display will indicate "MY TURN -I'M THINKING" You can just sit back and watch as no action is necessary. If the machine decides to play an EIGHT, it will draw your attention to this, and let you know the suit with which you must follow.

## AT THE END OF EACH GAME

The score of the winner of that game will be automatically calculated and displayed, and added to his total score.

## AT THE END OF THE SERIES

The final scores will be displayed and the overall winner declared. Remember that the overall winner is the first player to reach a total of 100 points or more. You can then play another series if you wish.

## DOES THE COMPUTER CHEAT

A note for the wary! When you are playing you can see the number of cards that the computer is holding in its hand, but NOT what they are! The computer plays its hand in a similar fashion, i.e. it plays as if it can tell only the NUMBER of cards that you are holding at any particular time. It does not "peep" to see which cards they are and adjust its play accordingly - if it did, it would become totally unbeatable. Besides, you would not want to play with an opponent who kept doing this: and the computer cannot play itself. Anyway, it doesn't need to cheat, it plays so well. Good Luck!