

Populous 2 FAQ/Strategy Guide

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Populous 2 SNES FAQ v1.1

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Contents:

1. Introduction to Populous 2
2. Story
3. PC vs. SNES
4. Basic Game Play
5. Screen Layout
6. Controls
7. Settlements and Walkers
8. Leaders, Heroes, and the Bronze Orb Thingy
9. Beginnings and Endings
10. God Powers
11. Strategies
12. Codes
13. End Notes

1. Introduction:

Populous 2 follows up Populous, a late eighties/early nineties real time strategy game in which you attempt become a god by beating all the other gods and your father, Zeus, at the game of the gods, known as Populous. To win, you need to have your tribe of blue clothed people out breed and annihilate the opposing red clothed people. To aid in this endeavor, the player is granted a number of god powers which can aid the growth of their own people and significantly hinder that of their foes' (providing an excellent outlet if you have bossy parents).

2. Story:

The story is fairly simple, to become a deity and assume a position among the other gods, you must defeat each of them as well as big daddy Zeus in three round matches of Populous. Opponents include Prometheus, Hermes, Demeter, Ares, Gaia, Athena, Apollo, Hades, Poseidon, and Hera.

3. PC vs. SNES:

The version of Populous for the SNES has been drastically scaled down from the PC version. Instead of 900+ levels in which your next opponent is determined by your performance against your current opponent, you face sixteen different gods over 48 levels in a linear fashion and are unable to progress to the next match unless you beat the current one. Also, you don't get to select your god's appearance, and the AI seems to be the same no matter what strategy you employ, to me at least. I should add that all this information has been gleaned from reading various websites; I haven't played the PC version

personally.

4. Basic Game Play:

Game play is fairly simple: you spend the early part of the game flattening ground for your population to grow and inhabit, and then once you've amassed enough people to have access to god powers, you spend your time hovering over enemy settlements, dropping pillars of flame and whatnot at the appropriate locations. Occasionally, you must return to your settlements to repair damage and direct population expansion.

5. In-Game Screen:

Once you've started a game, the look of things can be a bit confusing if you're not used to it. The main part of the screen is a close-up view of the game map. Most interaction with the game takes place here. You should see a number of blue clothed people (walkers) marching about who promptly settle on flat ground and become buildings or settlements. Your opponent is clad in red, but otherwise is identical to you.

Above and to the left of this main window is the overall land map. White flashing dots represent your settlements, yellow flashing dots represent enemy settlements, red dots are red walkers, blue dots are your walkers, flashing dots of any color other than these have been afflicted with plague.

Above and to the right of the main screen is the coliseum which shows how the two populous' compare in size. If you select the question mark from the populous controls menu, this area shows the information about the selected object.

Below and to the left of the main screen is the god power selector, more on this further down.

Below and to the right of the main screen is the populous control menu; also see below for more information about how to use this.

6. Controls:

Most of the action takes place in the main window in the middle of the screen. The cursor, that funny looking conglomeration of arrows with a black cross at one tip, is controlled by the d-pad. The portion of ground beneath the black cross is the place that will be targeted by a push of the button. If you direct the cursor off of the edge of the main screen, the screen will scroll in that direction.

Use the B button to lower ground or select something. Hitting the B button while positioned over the lower right-hand corner of one of your buildings causes it to send out a walker (this is known as "sprogging" in the somewhat annoying lingo of Populous), and allows for rapid expansion in the early part of the game.

Use the A button to raise ground.

Use the Y button to access the option menus. One push of the Y button will

enter the player into the overall god power menu. The choices from left to right are people, nature, earth, wind, fire, and water. Use the B button when you've positioned the hand icon over the one you want, and it will let you

choose a god power from that family of god powers, or. . .

Pressing the Y button twice will enter the player into the available god powers from the god power family currently selected (it's less complicated than it sounds). For instance, if you've already chosen fire from the first menu then pressing the y button twice will let you pick from the fire god powers -- pillar of flame, fire storm, summon achilles, or volcano -- without going through the first menu again.

And just to keep you on your toes, hitting the Y button a third time enters the game options/populous controls menu. In the SNES version, the game options are fairly limited (game speed most notably). The populous controls let you tell your blue clothed heathens how, in general, they should behave, whether it be aggressive, docile, or merge with the leader. From the bottom of the screen to the top, the menu options and their effects are:

- A) Go to papal icon: leader and walkers go to icon and merge there.
- B) Docile expansion: walkers attempt to settle before fighting.
- C) Military expansion: walkers will look to fight opponents if possible.
- D) Go to leader: walkers will merge with the leader if there is one.
- E) Information: not terribly helpful, but it provides size and arms level info about a settlement or walker.
- F) Game options: little can be changed here in the SNES version of Populous.

Hitting the Y button four times (count 'em, four) causes reality to melt away, leaving only you and your SNES in a universe of blackness and eternal video playing. Or, it might cause game play to resume as before.

7. Settlements and Walkers:

At the beginning of a game, you will notice your walkers march around for a bit, looking for flat ground to settle upon. The size of this settlement is determined by the amount of flat ground available to a walker. This can range from the micro tent if only one square is available to the castle if two squares of flat land are available in all directions. The advantage to having large settlements is that they produce stronger walkers and generate mana for god powers more quickly. At the beginning of the game large settlements can hold you back unless you sprog because they take a while to populate.

You can tell how strong a settlement is by the location of the flag on its pole. The higher the flag, the more people living in the settlement. A settlement spits out a walker automatically when the flag reaches the top of the pole.

8. Leaders, Heroes, and the Bronze Orb Thingy:

You'll notice early on in the game that one of your units (either a walker or

a building) has a golden sun over its head or building. This is your leader or pope, and corresponds to the enemy unit with a silver, medusa head hovering it. This unit grows a little faster in a settlement and fights a little tougher as a walker. You can cause all of your walkers to merge into this unit by selecting the fourth icon from the bottom on the populous controls menu (hit

the Y button three time to access, remember?). Obviously this merger greatly increases the strength of your leader unit, even if it does prevent you from expanding your settlements during the process. It also allows for a truly prodigious hero unit to be produced via one of your god powers when you have enough mana to do it.

You can control where your pope walks by placing the Papal Icon (Bronze Orb Thingy) wherever you want, usually enemy settlements, by using the god power, Place Papal Icon (see the God Powers section for more info), and then causing all of your walkers to head towards the papal icon (first option on the populace control menu). Once there they will merge with your leader unit in a glorious display of blue electricity after taking over/beating up any nearby enemy units or settlements.

If for some reason you lose your pope then the next walker to touch the bronze orb thingy will become your new pope.

You can have any number of heroes in addition to your pope, but only one pope at a time.

The strength of your pope is determined by the number of people that have merged together to form it (this can be a bit tricky because your walkers can be quite weak, especially at the start of the game, so just because a lot of walkers have merged together doesn't guarantee a strong pope or subsequently formed hero).

9. Beginnings and Endings:

Before each match begins you will be presented with a screen that shows what god powers will be available for the coming match and the rules of the match. The rules of the match are in a column on the right part of the screen. Items with a blue x by them will be unavailable for the next match. So if there's an x by raise/lower enemy land, you won't be able to make mountains out of their settlements in the coming game (the computer doesn't always have to play by the same rules).

One note: for some reason, the can't fill swamp option doesn't seem to work on SNES -- for you or the computer.

At the end of the match, if you've won, the opposing god will give you "Reveration" (I really don't think that's a word) in the form of blue lightning bolts and a small bonus to one of your god power families. On the next screen, you can invest the blue lightning bolts into a god power family of your choosing. The higher the number of a particular god power family, the more devastating the underlying god powers will be. You can earn more lightning bolts by having a higher score, which on the SNES seems to be determined by how much you've used your god powers during the previous match.

10. God Powers:

These are divided up into six groups: people, nature, earth, wind, fire, and water. You can tell what god powers are available by the tiny colored bars that appear beneath the family selection menu. A power is available even if its corresponding bar is just slightly filled.

Note: some of the god powers are directional, and, when selected will cause a rotating arrow to appear around the cursor on the main map. Just wait until the arrow is pointing in the direction you want and then unleash whatever upon thine enemy.

Second Note: Heroes are unaffected by godpowers from the same family. For example, Adonis is immune to swamps. -DragonAtma

**** People:

Raise/Lower ground -- you start the game with this ability and rarely lose it. It requires little to no mana expense.

Place Papal Magnet -- if you have a leader (or pope) this places the bronze orb thingy anywhere you want.

Summon Perseus -- the coolest looking of the heroes in my opinion, this changes your leader into Perseus and unleashes him upon the red peoples to pillage and burn. Also, "Perseus is the most intelligent -- he has the sense to move around baptismal fonts, swamp, and so on." -DragonAtma

Plague -- this creates a fast spreading plague on one of the enemy settlements, signified by a circling raven. It drastically reduces the mana production, population growth, and fighting ability of all affected units. Additionally, "plagued people instantly vanish when armageddon is declared!" -DragonAtma

Armageddon -- ends the game immediately by causing all settlements to turn into walkers who then make war upon each other until one side or the other is victorious. If you have access to this power, you'll probably be on the verge of victory anyway.

**** Nature:

Create trees -- originally I couldn't think of a good use for this power, however:

RCheronis provided this strategy which employs trees: ". . . [trees have] given me many a quick victory. The key is that you can set them on fire. Since they're so cheap in mana, you can build a huge forest around enemy settlements right at the beginning of the game, and then set them on fire. As soon as the fire hits the trees, it'll branch off in all directions burning down any houses in its path. I've won several games this way before the enemy had enough mana for swamps."

Floral bloom -- causes flowers to grow over an area of ground. Unlike its cousin power above, this is actually somewhat useful because it allows the granite ground from volcanoes to become inhabitable again.

Swamp -- not one of the more spectacular powers of the game, but one of the more useful. Create a bubbling morass around the opposing leader and watch the approaching walkers get sucked into the bog.

Deadly Fungus -- I am the fungus god! I am the fungus god! Creates a square of deadly fungus which changes into a pool of people eating fungus after a few seconds, and when planted repeatedly expands in the following manner:

"Fungus actually follows the rules of Conway's Life. . . fungus appears in cells with exactly 3 neighbors, and dies out unless there are 2 or 3 neighbors. Placing fungus according to the keypad's 2, 4, 7, 8, and 9 keys (a glider) makes the pattern travel northwest until it hits something; placing it on 2, 4, 5, 8, and 9 (the r-pentomino) forms a pattern that'll expand over a HUGE area if not interfered with. See

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conway%27s_Game_of_Life for details."

-DragonAtma

Summon Adonis -- lover of Venus and veg-head, Adonis is the Nature hero. Use this power to convert your leader into Adonis. Adonis is kind of a lame hero because he divides every time he fights, cutting his strength in half with each combat. Still, he's mostly effective.

DragonAtma contradicts me arguing that, "Sure, Adonis splits into two heroes, but that means he can fight two battles at once!"

**** Earth:

Build road -- creates a road to make your walkers travel faster towards wherever the road leads.

Also, "Roads. . . CAN be used to deny enemies of farmland," by building a lot of them in their territory. -DragonAtma

Build wall -- creates a wall around your settlements. Be warned, you can only start a wall once, all other wall pieces must connect to the original.

Earthquake -- begins a fault that keeps growing for a certain amount of time, and then opens up to become a gaping chasm which swallows all walkers dumb enough to walk into it. A very useful god power, just make sure your own people don't start falling into the chasm once the beat down is on.

Create Mountain -- causes an uprising of ground that is uninhabitable until reflattened. Gaia's version of this spell creates a humongous MOUNTAIN, which is quite a pain. I never developed my Earth power beyond the point of being able to create a pimple of dirt with this.

Summon Herakles -- you may know him better as Hercules of Kevin Sorbo fame. This power converts your leader into the hero Herakles, who inflicts double damage on all those he faces. A very useful hero, his damage against opponents makes him worth twice the populace that went into creating him.

**** Wind:

Lightning bolt -- calls a single bolt of lightning against your foes. This comes in handy when you build up your wind power a bit because it becomes accurate to where your cursor is instead of random within a several square radius. Use early and often to keep opponents from building up.

Lightning storm -- like lightning bolt, except that it affects a large area for a period of time. This power is modestly devastating if you haven't put much strength in wind. Beware the storms that Hera and Artemis cast at you.

Whirlwind -- hard to control, but it can be effective if you haven't got any other options. "Whirlwinds also create whirlpools if they're over water."

-DragonAtma

Summon Odysseus -- changes your leader into the hero Odysseus, fastest of the heroes. Pretty much the same as the other heroes but faster and with an extremely strange looking helmet.

Gale Force Winds -- Creates a powerful gust that turns all the settlements that fall in its path into walkers. I never used this power extensively, but I believe it extends in a straight line from one end of the map to the other and moves in the direction you've commanded.

**** Fire:

Ah, fire. This power brings back many wonderful childhood memories.

Pillar of Fire -- Go Old Testament on the red peoples by creating a pillar of fire that swirls about in the vicinity of its creation, charring everything in its path.

Fire storm -- like thunderstorm except, well, it's fire instead of lightning. This power remains fairly weak unless you spend a lot of experience on your fire ability. Some of your opponents, like Apollo, have truly devastating fire storms, though.

Summon Achilles -- convert your leader into Achilles. If you saw the movie "Troy," you know that Brad Pitt was pretty hot playing Achilles; Populous does "Troy" one better by making Achilles so hot that he causes things to catch flame -- literally -- whether it be walker, settlement (provided he's strong enough to defeat them) or even the native flora and fauna.

Volcano -- causes a large volcano to appear. This is the most useful of the god powers for me because it renders the ground it effects uninhabitable (no rebuilding). This power does effect a large area, so avoid using anywhere near your own settlements.

"The PC version has a fifth (but sucky) fire power: eight streams will shoot out from your leader (one in each direction, of course.) I'll stick with forest fire and Volcanos." -DragonAtma

**** Water:

Create Basalt barriers: causes a wall to form in the ocean as a barrier to land expansion. Though seemingly useless, these do stop the computer from expanding in a particular direction for a little while. Also, DragonAtma adds, "Basalt walls. . . have a 100% chance of stopping tidal waves! Use them well, and you can GUARANTEE that your land will be dry."

Whirlpool -- this power causes a land eating whirlpool to appear off of your enemies' coasts. Too unpredictable to be very useful, but if it does go in the direction you want it to, it can be devastating.

Baptismal fonts -- creates a cluster of pools that change any walker that enters it into a unit for the other side. After swamp, this power is the great scourge of the computer. Place it in enemy walker traffic lanes or around their leader to gain new walkers quickly, or target hero units such as Achilles or Helen to convert them to your side and send them right back where they came from.

Summon Helen -- Circe was so beautiful that she turned men into swine (not that hard, really). In Populous, Helen is so beautiful that she causes all of your walkers to follow her and your settlements to convert into walkers that

follow her for a while before casting themselves, like heart sick lemmings, into the sea. For me, Helen is the most deadly of the heroes because she won't die unless you kill her or convert her with baptismal fonts.

Tidal wave -- when used, creates a wave that spreads in all four direction from its point of origin and swallows a large portion of the low lying ground (and whatever might happen to be on it) into the ocean. This one's a bit hard to control because it affects such a large area, but if used with caution, can cause great harm to the enemy cause.

11. Strategies:

I'll try to keep this as brief as possible (because I could go on and on and on and. . .)

In the early levels, you should be able to win easily by continually creating mountains on your opponents settlements (Don't forget this strategy in later levels either: putting a big mountain where your settlements meet the computer's can be quite effective if the match's rules allow it). Or, if you're a more advanced player, take advantage of the computer's slow growth rate by sproging like a demon.

Once you've played about 25 levels, you'll have to sprog in order to win. At this point, I find it most effective to grow my settlements as quickly as possible towards the opposing settlements. This hastens the conflict and prevents the computer from having a much greater amount of land than you to draw people from.

Take advantage of the computer's tendency to focus on the leader unit by harassing it. On the levels in which you have swamp or baptismal fonts this is quite easy, but careful use of whirlwind or any of a number of other god powers can also be effective. Also, I switch my populous to a military focus once the computer begins sending all its walkers to the leader, so that while all its walkers are moping towards the leader, I am slowly leaching away opposing settlements.

Hang in there, usually the computer grows a bit more quickly than you in the beginning, just keep dropping those whirlwinds or baptismal fonts as they become available. It does take a toll and gradually turns the game in your favor. Sometimes, you can even overcome being vastly outnumbered with a little luck and the well placed god power.

Don't Underestimate the power of the basic lightning bolt. You get it early, and if you use it often, the computer may never really get off the ground. Also you earn points for using god powers, so you increase your score a good bit by using this power frequently.

I got really stuck on two levels in this game. The first was one of Gaia's levels which I finally won with careful/lucky use of whirlwind on the leader unit. The second was the Hera level which starts you out on three separate islands. I couldn't beat this one until I prevented her two population groups from merging by building up my settlements between hers. It messed up her "gathering" of walkers when they had to walk through my settlements to get to their leader.

Additionally, DragonAtma contributed these strategies for using god powers:

Plague and baptismal fonts should NEVER be mixed, as it allows the plague to spread from your opponent's people to yours. Plagued people spread the illness to any settlement they enter, so targetting the enemy leader works well.

Again, be careful with baptismal fonts! If you use them, DON'T use plague and try to avoid using heroes.!

Walls (plus swamps or baptismal fonts) are a great way of keeping the enemy leaderless (and therefore heroless!). If the enemy papal icon is on a swamp or similar disaster, he'll raise the land ASAP...assuming he can! So quickly place walls around it to prevent that. If (say) the magnet and swamp are on 5, and walls are on all but 2 and 5, he won't be able to change the land!

I normally don't use whirlpools, with one exception. If there's a lake in enemy lands, I'll put it there -- it'll can go in ANY direction and cause mayhem! And any one caught in one instantly drowns -- even if water is set to harmful not fatal.

Earthquake and Gale work well together. Just make sure enemies are being blown TOWARDS the quake not away from it!

Lightning Bolt can rapidly drain your mana. I use it frequently, but mainly to scorch enemy lands.

Achilles will burn any trees he passes. If any walkers are next to them, free kills!

12. Codes:

If there are any cheats, I don't know of them. This is a fairly obscure title for SNES, so if anyone knows of any and e-mails them to me, I'll include them in revisions.

For those playing on PC, DragonAtma suggests the following technique for enhancing your statistics, "You can make large boosts to your stats by editing the PC password. . . if nothing else, changing the fourth character from A to D will add 12 lightning bolts."

I am not sure about the game's replayability, but if you just want to play the final Zeus matches, this code (from one of my games) will start you at the first of those three levels.

L9kbXQGjNGf:S

13. End Notes:

Direct all feedback about this Strategy Guide to: populator100@yahoo.com. Wishful thinking here.

I couldn't find an SNES manual for Populous 2, so the information on god powers and other assorted items is provided in conjunction with the game manual

for PC reproduced on the following web site:

http://emulazione.multiplayer.it/stgraveyard/game_reviews/Populous2/Populous2_manual.htm

DragonAtma pointed out that the hero, Helen, is the same as the historical Helen who was responsible for starting the Trojan war. Interested parties can read "The Iliad," the first surviving epic poem of European culture, which chronicles the events of that war from a Greek perspective (they did win after all), or you could see the recent movie "Troy," which pretty much tells the same story.

Thanks to RCheronis for his contribution to the god powers section.

An extra-big thanks to DragonAtma for his corrections, suggestions, and taking the time to help me make this FAQ much better.

Mostly this guide is based on my own trial, error, and frustration at not being able to find any useful information about this game anywhere else.

Feel free to use and/or reproduce this FAQ in any endeavor for which it's useful, only I expect a fair cut of any money that it might directly bring in (this is conceivable -- barely).

Populous 2 is a copyrighted property, and any abuse of those rights may be prosecuted by law (at least, that's what we're lead to believe, though it doesn't seem likely unless the creators of the game really are greek deities who will come and cast lightning bolts and otherwise maledict you for tampering with their divine product. Don't tempt fate, that's what I always say, so it would seem to be in one's best interest not to mess with the game, unless you really need to, as one sometimes does). Okay, enough of that.

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Go away.

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