

COLOR BASIC Manual

By Richard Degler - May 3, 2008

Here it is, the totally unofficial but totally brief:

Color BASIC is based on the original **Bally BASIC**, including the 300 baud interface code, with a couple of exceptions. There are now only EIGHT lines (by 26 characters) of text available on screen. However you can set the Background Color and the Foreground Color for each of these lines separately now! The bottom 5/13ths of the screen (as well as the border) is the same color as the top line - and hides the Basic listing. Although a smaller size is actually usable, the code runs much faster since there is no need to interlace it with (and un-interlace it from) the screen display!!

There are only two new commands to learn (and no, CLINE doesn't draw colored lines, sorry):

COLOR - sets the colors of one of eight 4-color palettes for use by the EIGHT interrupt routines that occur each sixtieth of a second. Defaults are all White except for the first one, which has Black for the foreground text characters. Usage is WORD-shift then BACKSPACE using a regular Basic overlay to get **COLOR a,b,c,d,e** - where 'a' is the palette number from 1 to 7, and the others are the regular colors from 0 to 255 for the background, foreground, plus two more unnamed colors which can be now be displayed by the regular BOX and LINE routines.

CLINE - chooses the palette to be used by each line of text. There is a little bit of jitter when the colors change in MESS, which may or may not be present on a real Bally/Astrocade machine. All lines may have their own palette or they can also share, and default to the first black-on-white color set. WORD-shift then SPACE for **CLINE n,a** - where 'n' is the line number 1 through 7 from the top, and 'a' corresponds to an 'a' as used in the Color command.

Programs can now simply ramp the colors in the palettes or shuffle the line colors around for fascinating rainbow effects. {Submissions accepted}.