

ANABASIS for the C=64

A 2D joystick adventure for up to two players on a vast map
© 1987 Gordon Axmann

Licence (summary): Non-commercial use and redistribution of unmodified copies only. No distribution of modified versions without permission. No warranty. Full text: see LICENSE.txt in the repository. - The original program was developed in German and translated into English in 2026.

The original manual, containing the complete list of monsters and items, has unfortunately been lost. This revised manual therefore only covers the most important aspects of the game, in order to preserve proper enjoyment of play. :-)



Starting the software:

When using VICE: start the x64 emulator. From the menu, select File/Autostart disk image and choose the file Software.d64. Read this manual for information on controls and gameplay. Have fun!

Aim of the game

Anábasis (Greek: Ἀνάβασις; pronounced “uh-NAB-uh-sis”, stress on the second syllable) is set on a vast island (32k map). The aim of the game is to find the castle in which the evil wizard Saruman dwells, and to defeat him. Saruman is extremely powerful (level well above 100). For this reason, you must first prepare your hero accordingly. The word “Anabasis” is Greek and means ascent, referring to the rise of your hero.

When playing with two players, you may support each other to a limited extent, for example by trading items. Combat, however, is always resolved individually.

On some worlds, including the supplied one, the legendary Mithril armour exists and can be found, along with a matching two-handed weapon.

Not everything in Anabasis follows a linear structure. There are weapons which are inexpensive yet highly effective (for example the flail), and there are monsters which can be extremely dangerous even at low experience levels (for example piranhas).

Character Creation

The different professions you may choose have different abilities, as far as can still be remembered. The Warrior is and becomes particularly strong. The Ranger can feed on berries while in forest terrain. The Scout can swim. A Mage can cast spells (using mana potions), but is weak in combat and therefore not recommended for beginners. Finally, there is the Adventurer, who has no special abilities and is intended only for advanced players.

1. Create a character

First of all, you should create a hero, referred to as a “Char”. To do so, press (C) in the main menu. The computer will then display your character’s attributes: (Att)ack, (Def)ence and (Dex)terity. If you are not satisfied with the values rolled, you may press the space bar (“Space”) to roll again. Press ENTER (=CR) to accept the roll.

After this, the computer will display your profession. Once again, you may press the space bar to roll a different profession, and press ENTER (=CR) to accept the result.

If this is your first time playing the game, you should choose a Warrior, Ranger or Scout. The professions Adventurer and Mage are intended for advanced players.

You will then be prompted to enter a name for your hero. Do not use special characters. Make sure to remember this name, as you will need to enter it again when starting the game.

You can later look up the name on the disk if necessary, or start the program “+++LOOKER” to display the existing heroes. You will now be returned to the main menu.

2. Start or continue a game

After selecting (S) for start or continue game and after the computer has loaded the world (this may take some time), a random, full-screen section of the island will be displayed.

Press any key to start the game and enter the name of the hero you wish to play. If you have forgotten the name, you must check the directory of the disk or exit the game and start the program “+++LOOKER” from the disk.

If you wish to play alone, simply press ENTER when prompted for the second character.

Playing the game

The colour of the screen border changes with the cycle of day and night. During daytime it is light blue, during the night dark blue. When the disk drive is accessed, the border turns white. During combat it turns brown.

In pause mode the screen border is black (Pause = F7).

Directly below the map section, your current values are displayed. The first line shows your combat attributes: (A)ttack, (D)eference and De(X)erity. These values are directly modified by weapons and armour. The second line shows your hit points (=HP) and the (F)oood you are currently carrying.

By pressing the fire button on the joystick, you enter your character's equipment menu.

Here you will find further information about your character. In the upper left corner, your base combat attributes are shown without weapon modifiers, namely (A)ttack, (D)eference and De(X)erity, as well as your (F)oood, your (S)ilver, and your maximum hit points (=HP).

Below this are shown your profession (PROF), your (Arm)our, the number of (Cano)e(s) you are carrying, and your experience points (=XP).

Below that, your inventory is listed. In order to carry more than two items, you require a backpack, which can be purchased in some villages. It is not that expensive.

Within the equipment menu, you may perform the following actions. The corresponding joystick commands are shown at the bottom of the screen.

You may equip weapons. The inventory is numbered, starting at position zero. If a weapon is equipped, a “+” is shown next to entry “0”. In that case, the weapon in this position is considered equipped and its bonuses and/or maluses take effect.

You may also equip armour. Once equipped, armour is removed from the inventory and displayed at the top under “Armr”.

Armour and weapons must be equipped in order to take effect (when in doubt, check it with the press of the button to reach the character menu).

Weapons change (Att)ack and (Def)ence, armour modify (Def)ence and (Dex)erity:

- Weapon -	Att	Def	- Armour -	Def	Dex
Club	+1	-3	Clothing	+2	0
Whip	0	-6	Soft leather armour	+4	0
Knife	0	-2	Hard leather armour	+7	-1
Flail	+3	-2	Chain mail	+15	-3
Short sword	+3	-1	Knight armour	+29	-7
Handaxe	+6	-2	Mithril armour	+33	-3
Scimitar	+7	+2	Shield	+3	0
Broad sword	+7	+2	Hide helm	+5	-1
Warhammer	+15	-2	Metalhelm	+9	-1
War axe	+18	-1			

- Weapon -	Att	Def	- Armour -	Def	Dex
Morningstar	+25	-5			
Halberd	+25	+2			
Mace	+25	-2			
2-h sword	+32	+5			

Helmets, shields, blankets, tents and similar items take effect automatically as soon as they are carried in the inventory.

Two-handed weapons, of which there are only a few in the game, cannot be used together with a shield. In this case, the shield becomes nothing more than ballast.

Attention: within the equipment menu you can also adjust the on-screen display of your character values by multiplying the display by ten or dividing it by ten. If this happens unintentionally, the result may look strange, as your character may suddenly appear to be extraordinarily powerful. However, once your values exceed two digits, you will come to appreciate this function.

Movement speed varies depending on the terrain of the world (mountains are very slow). On certain terrains you may also encounter special monsters. If you are travelling on land while carrying a canoe, you will move very slowly.

Survival comes first

Survival is everything at the beginning. The first steps are not easy, which is why a few useful hints are given here to make getting started less difficult.

Saving the game regularly is advisable, as your character can be killed and items may sometimes simply break. Saving is possible in villages, for a fee.

A blanket and/or a tent will restore additional hit points at dawn. This is extremely helpful for survival.

If you move too far into the water, meaning more than two tiles, you will die unless you are carrying a canoe. The Scout is an exception, as he is able to swim.

Your character can survive for a limited number of days without food. Once this limit is exceeded, death follows. Food can be purchased in villages and towns.

If your character dies, the last saved state of that hero will be reloaded.

Be very careful when fighting a “Mewlip”. All characters except the Ranger can be killed completely by a Mewlip, without any possibility of revival. If your character is defeated by this soul-draining creature, he is **irreversibly deleted** from the disk.

If you keep the fire button on the joystick pressed during combat, you attempt to flee. If successful, the combat ends immediately, but you gain no XP. If the attempt fails, a new check is made in the next round. When your hit points are running low, fleeing is often the only way to survive.

Spells

Mages may cast spells during the game and before combat, provided they possess mana potions. A selection menu is always displayed, showing the options available to the Mage.

Immediately before combat, the Mage may, by pressing the fire button, display additional spell options:

Name	Explanation	When	Cost
Heal	Restores hit points to the character.	Any time	$\frac{1}{2}$ potion
Cano	Materialises a canoe.	Any time	1 potion
Fuvi	Shows the Mage whether escape from combat will be successful (future vision). If a character attempts to flee and fails, the enemy receives the first strike. This is disadvantageous, as one would normally not attempt to flee without good reason.	Before combat	4 food
Casp	Halves the opponent's life energy. This spell is therefore only useful against strong enemies (cast a spell).	Before combat	1 potion
Boli	A lightning spell which reduces the opponent's hit points before combat begins (bolt of lightning).	Before combat	$\frac{1}{2}$ potion
Noat	Prevents the opponent from attacking for a few rounds (no attack).	Before combat	$\frac{1}{2}$ potion

A few concrete gameplay tips?

At the beginning of the game, it is advisable to find a village as quickly as possible, sell the canoe, equip yourself with a weapon, a blanket and food, and save the game. Once you have saved, you are protected against weapon breakage and death, with the exception of encounters with a Mewlip.

A flail offers a very good balance between price and effectiveness at the start of the game. Also a scimitar.

In forest terrain you will encounter many enemies, while in water and mountains you will encounter very few.

At the beginning, only attack small monsters and flee from larger ones. If you do not yet know a monster, you should assume that it is dangerous, as monsters become stronger as your XP increase. Over time, you will learn to judge the strength of the various monsters. Kraken give a lot of money as they protect treasures. If you are in need of food, you can fight, because after each fight you may gain a little food.

Items you find during your travels can be sold in villages for money. Fortune favours the traveller. The more ground you cover, the more opportunities there are for chance discoveries.

If a village already has the item you wish to sell, which is usually the case, you will only receive roughly half of the original price.

Some items are of no practical use at all, apart from their resale value.

On most worlds there is a large mountain range running from north to south, which can be used as an orientation aid on the large map.

When undertaking longer journeys by canoe, it is advisable to carry a second canoe and to check from time to time whether both are still present. Canoes can break, and one would not wish to drown unnecessarily.

In towns, prices are generally lower than in villages. You may therefore be able to trade goods and make money. Towns and villages do not stock the same wares: some items are more commonly found in villages, others are more readily available in towns. If an item is not stocked at all in a village, you will receive the full price when selling it, rather than the usual half.

There is an old man in the game. In two-player mode, he walks back and forth between the two characters.

Once your hero has reached a level at which he can confront the evil wizard, with experience well above 100, it is best to search the map for the castle using a canoe, as travel by canoe is very fast.

If nothing else helps, there is a program on the disk intended as a last resort for locating the castle. However, it is recommended not to use it prematurely, if at all.

If your character is already above level 100, you may use the program “+++ITEMER” to check whether the legendary Mithril armour exists in your world. You must still find it yourself. It is often more likely to be found in a remote village than in a large town.

3. World creation

If you grow tired of the existing world, you may also create a new one from the start menu, featuring fresh items and a newly placed castle. Please note that the existing world will be overwritten in the process. It is therefore advisable to make a copy of the D64 file beforehand.

World creation takes quite some time, and this might not be avoidable. In the so-called “warp” mode of the emulator, world generation runs significantly faster. However, the resulting world will likely look strange. At least in earlier versions, the emulator’s random number generator did not cope well with the increased execution speed.

C=64 emulator

If you are not using an original C64, you must first obtain a suitable emulator. The VICE emulator is recommended.