

Adventurers of Arnh

Adventurers of Arnh (AoA) is a fantasy Role Playing Game (RPG). AoA has been designed to suit pen and paper role playing as well as being easily scalable for a computer game iteration. The role playing game, computer game, and setting have been developed in parallel.

Developing the three components concurrently does pose some issues. There are things that pen and paper RPGs do better than a computer game and vice versa, likewise, there are aspects of a setting that are easier to portray in a computer game than in pen and paper. As a result, there are times when the requirements of one format affect the design of the other.

The setting of Arnh is one of high magic and - generally - has a medieval european 'flavour'. That said, there are several continents and there is only a fairly limited amount of interaction between the inhabitants of those continents. Very little in the way of goods and commodities - much less technologies or culture - span the continental divides.

AoA has a particular emphasis on character role play and development. In both pen and paper and in the computer game version, the gameplay is very much 'sandbox' in that the player can move through the setting in whatever direction they like. At times NPCs (or monsters) may not appreciate the PCs meanderings, but the PCs can still choose to go where they like.

Characters are level and class based. However, a large amount of the points for character development are discretionary, so the Player can customize their character a great deal. For example, it is entirely possible to have a wizard who is a deadly swordsman.

At low levels, class and level choices are fairly important, but as the character gains in level, the ability to customize and the progression in 'power' means that the actual class becomes somewhat irrelevant. As such, there is no mechanism for dual or multiclassing. If a Player wants their character to be a Soldier who can cause rains of fire, then the Player has their character develop that ability.

At every level, there will be an opportunity for the Player to review the events that their character has gone through and elect to change their outlook and persona. In real life, we are affected by our experiences and in AoA, this growth is a part of the game mechanics.

Our plan is that the computer game, pen and paper RPG, and initial setting be readily available and highly interchangeable. We are also developing a program called World Forge that will allow a game master to make settings and adventures of their own and export the results as either playable computer game add ons or as pen and paper 'modules'.

We hope you enjoy it.

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Basic Notes about AoA

Dice will be d4, d8, d12, and d20. They will generally be added to an ability to overcome a target difficulty. Which dice is used is dependent on class and ability. A Wizard, for example, will use a d4 with most combat ability rolls, but will use a d20 for magic ability rolls.

Target difficulties will have a corresponding level, eg. a 6th level pit trap. However, the PCs will NOT generally be informed of an obstacle or monster's specific level. Most creature and obstacle types will have a range of difficulty levels. Usually it will be a possible a span of about 5 levels with the majority of iterations being bang in the middle of the range. So, while a Kobold might be 2nd to 6th level, most will be 4th level. The idea is that while the PC can expect a certain degree of challenge, they may be in for a bit of a rude surprise.

Generally, the specific target difficulty will be based on a given instance - not the level or abilities of the PC. Some target difficulties will be randomly generated (Usually when the content is random), but most Monsters and Obstacles will be mission or Quest set. Target difficulties WILL NOT be tweaked to suit the level of the PC. Nor will the xp or the loot.

The setting will be a sandbox style. There will be specific missions and quests readily available, but the PC can just wander around dealing with random encounters if they so choose.

Many key sites will have multiple potential inhabitants/scenarios tied to them - so PCs can revisit a site to find that it has been placed under new management. In wilderness environments, most sites will - after a bit of time - automatically spawn a random new resident after it has been cleared - simply because it is inevitable that something is bound to take up residence.

Magic will be different for the different 'flavours' of spell casters, but they will all use the same metrics and mechanisms. How spells, hexes, prayers, and orisons are wrought will be different, but they will all end up (under the bonnet) being the same.

Items (Magic and Mundane) can be crafted and repaired. Items can degrade from damage.

Character Creation

In a nutshell, the player chooses their race, gender, and class. Then the character is generated. The player has essentially no real choice with the allocation of points for '0' level. However, once they complete their 'apprenticeship' they raise various abilities by the amount specified on the Character Table and then distribute 7 points where they like. The player can only increase any one ability by 2 points at one time. Non discretionary Attributes and Characteristics cannot be improved by using points when leveling up.

When looking at the character classes, an entry for a class might be 4/+1. That means that the character starts at 4 at first level and then gets an additional 1 added every time they go up level; so a 4th level character with a 4/+1 on an ability would have a 7 - assuming that they haven't spent any discretionary points on that ability.

Attributes, Characteristics, and Abilities are broken into various sub categories to simplify character creation and to streamline leveling up. A gamer wouldn't be a gamer if he/she wasn't inherently inclined to argue with where particular things are arranged. There will be people who think that Perception should be in Stealth, or that Mana should be in Magic. There is really only one way to meaningfully respond to such arguments: Bite Me.

Seriously, everything has been placed where it is for a reason. We are talking about game mechanics. There is no 'perfect' system. Every aspect of game design involves enabling some things and ruling out others. For example, a fast, easy, and exciting combat system is unlikely to be very realistic. This system has been designed to be relatively easy to code for a computer, relatively easy to run with dice, and also be relatively unobtrusive during game play. If you want a rules heavy, ultra realistic set of game mechanics, go away.

Discretionary Attributes *(These Attributes may increase automatically by level, can be raised with discretionary points, and can be modified by equipment & magic).*

Health Points - Health Points are a simple measure of how much damage a character or creature can endure. Health Points go up by 1 every level. Lost Health Points can be recovered by healing over time or by using some form of magical or medical healing.

Mana - All magic requires the use of Mana. Characters, creatures, and some magical items can have a pool of mana. Most have their Mana x Level as a maximum pool. Creatures and some items regenerate their mana continuously. A character, NPC, monster, or item can only use their mana value per round - regardless of how much mana they have in their pool.

Action Points - Every round is about 6 seconds. This is not a precise or set value as it may serve the interests of various GMs to be a tad vague. Actions are measured in Action Points. The more Action Points you have, the more you can do in one round. All actions are defined in terms of how many Action Points they use per round.

Non Discretionary Attributes

(These Attributes can increase automatically by level and may be modified by equipment & magic. These Attributes cannot be raised by spending discretionary points).

Combat Defense - Whenever someone or something is the target of an attack, the creature, character, NPC, or item's Combat Defense is the Target Difficulty that the attacker has to roll equal to or greater than in order to successfully hit it. Hitting something is not generally an especially difficult thing to do. Damaging it, is an entirely different matter.

Magical Defense - Whenever a creature, character, or NPC is the target of a Magical Attack, the Magical Defense is the Target Difficulty that the attacker has to roll equal to or greater than in order to successfully hit it. What happens after someone has been hit with a spell depends on the specific situation.

Resistance - There are things that can make you feel poorly; poisons, disease, fatigue, starvation, various magical effects. When a creature, character, or NPC encounters/ endures this kind of thing, the poison or disease or whatever has to roll equal to or greater than the Resistance of the target. It is exactly the same mechanic as is used in combat..

While most games have the target make a roll to resist a negative effect, I couldn't see the point of adding another game mechanic given that I already had a perfectly serviceable one available. Deal.

Characteristics *(Characteristics don't usually change, however, some can be modified by equipment & magic. For example, if a character is an elf but disguised as a human, NPCs will treat them as they would a human.)*

Size - The Height and Weight of a Character. If need be, this can be broken into Height and Weight as separate categories. I don't really much care.

Gender - There are a lot of gamers - we all know one or two - who have this weird thing they do where they choose the other gender to play. They always have this transparent faux nonchalance... and this vague apprehension that people will somehow give a shit that they are gender bending. Far be it from me to deny the other gamers the pleasure of making their mates squirm, but the real reason that this characteristic is here is that NPCs DO treat the genders differently. The only point of real note at this stage is that there are more than two genders. There are (in AoA) Male, Female, Androgynous, Eunuch, Hermaphrodite, Butch, Effete, and maybe a couple of others to be added when I find the right terms. Whether Reverend Nile or anyone else likes it or not, there are a lot of people who have found all sorts of unconventional ways to butter their toast.

Race - At this stage, it is likely to be Dwarven, Human, Elven, Centaur, Hobbit, and Minotaur. These are the 'Races of Men'. I don't know whether I can use 'Hobbit'. I hope I don't have to use 'Halfling'. I haven't made up my mind how Racial Modifiers will apply. It will probably be a fairly conventional swag of points and special abilities bolted on to character generation. A bit ubiquitous, I know, but then so is basic hygiene and the desire for reliable toilet paper. Just because everyone does it does not mean that it's necessarily a bad idea.

Encumbrance - This is how much a creature, character, or NPC can carry. It is modifiable - but I am not going to go out of my way to make it obvious or a piece of cake. Certain items, training, etc. can change encumbrance. When a character carries in excess of 50% of their encumbrance, they will have a 10% penalty on all of their Abilities. Every 10% increment thereafter will increase the penalty by 20% as well. So carrying 80% of your encumbrance would attract a 70% penalty to all Abilities. hehehehehehe

Abilities *(Abilities are the things that a character or NPC can do. They are used by the character or NPC rolling an appropriate dice and then adding their ability total to the dice roll. If the resulting total is equal to or greater than the specified target difficulty, then they have succeeded in their attempt. Abilities may increase automatically by level, can be raised with discretionary points, and can be modified by equipment & magic).*

Combat

Melee Attack - Whenever an attempt to hit someone or something close up is made, it is the Melee Attack Ability that is used. Whether it is with a fist, a cudgel, or a flaming great sword, it is a Melee Attack.

Ranged Attack - A Ranged Attack is any kind of attack at range. A missile weapon. Slings, crossbows, javelins, etc are all resolved with a Ranged Attack.

Advantage Attack - This is the exception. Whenever a target is unaware of an incoming attack, or is stunned, or is taken by surprise - whatever - it is considered an Advantage Attack. Basically, the value of the Advantage Attack is added to the Melee or Ranged Attack Roll *and* the resulting damage done. Advantage Attack is very nasty.

Magic

Magical Attack - Pretty much the same thing as a Melee Attack but with a spell. Some spells will require that a target is selected and then there is a chance of missing. Some spells will attack an area, and those will be handled differently.

Enchantment - Whenever someone is trying to imbue something with magic (make a magic item), or create a fetish, or consecrate an altar, they are using enchantment. The various flavours of spell caster will call it different things, but it is essentially the same thing. This may get removed and placed under Crafting. Dunno yet.

Dweomer Lore - Whenever someone is trying to identify an item or spell, they are using Dweomer Lore. It's one of those do we really need it abilities... the jury is still out. I suspect that we do, but it bugs me.

Stealth

Sneak - Moving quietly and keeping out of sight is all about being sneaky. Avoiding detection is a potentially big part of AoA. Generally, there will be environmental factors setting the target difficulty. If the target difficulty is achieved, then any witnesses will be very unlikely to spot or hear the sneaky person.

Mechanisms - This applies to locks, manacles, traps, cogs, whatever. The Ability can be used to fix, break, or bypass a selected mechanism.

Trickery - Deception and misdirection. Lying to some guard, or picking a jailor's pocket might be handled with trickery. Conning a Magistrate into extending a Pardon for crimes committed might be handled with Trickery. I don't know how much this will be used... it's basically a game mechanic that may end up being discarded. We'll see.

General

Perception - If there is something significant that the player will want to know, their chance to have it pointed out to them is Perception. If a character makes their Perception check, then the GM will point out the valuable herb next to the path and the troll trying to sneak up on them. If they fail their perception, then the Troll will eat them and then have a lovely herbal tea to cleanse the palate. In the computer game version, I imagine that notable items will be outlined (slightly) in a bit of an aura to signal their presence.

Craft - There will be many, many things handled by the Craft game mechanic. In an abstract nutshell, there will be a recipe format along the lines of $A+B+C+D=E$. In actual craftwork (such as making a shield), A might be work environment, B might be Tools, C might be leather, and D might be wood. Put them together and you get E a Shield. Spells and God Powers and who knows what else will use the same $A+B+C$ etc approach. Lots and lots and lots of recipes. Players will use the recipes through their craft skill. I envision it being sufficiently detailed so that the players can create everything from a pair of shoes through to a castle. In a lot of computer RPGs, crafting is what seems to promise the most and deliver the least. I want to do better than that. I haven't decided how I will do specific craft skills... eg. leatherwork versus alchemy.

Appraise - Everything will have a value. Knowing what that value is will be determined by Appraisal. The more a character uses appraisal on a specific kind of thing, the more they will automatically know its worth. For example, if a character has gone out and come back to the village and sold 20 swords, they will pretty much automatically know how much they are likely to get when they flog a sword.

Character and Non Player Character Classes

There are a range of character and non character classes in AoA. The Various classes have a sort of inbuilt predisposition towards particular abilities. It stands to reason, for example, that a Burglar would have a much greater familiarity with Stealth skills than he would with Magic skills.

Combat Classes

Soldier
Warrior
Paladin

Stealth Classes

Trickster
Burglar
Assassin

Magic Classes

Wizard
Priest
Druid

Hybrid Classes

Witch
Hunter
Tomb Breaker

NPC Classes

Militia
Craftsman
Merchant
Laborer
Serf
Clerk
Scholar
Noble
Bard
Engineer

Player Character Classes

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Class	Combat	Magic	Stealth	General
Soldier	D20	D4	D8	D12
Warrior	D20	D4	D12	D8
Paladin	D20	D12	D4	D8
Wizard	D4	D20	D8	D12
Priest	D12	D20	D4	D8
Druid	D8	D20	D4	D12
Trickster	D4	D12	D20	D8
Burglar	D8	D4	D20	D12
Assassin	D12	D4	D20	D8
Witch	D8	D12	D12	D12
Hunter	D12	D8	D12	D12
Tomb Breaker	D12	D12	D12	D8

NPC Classes

Class	Combat	Magic	Stealth	General
Engineer	D4	D4	D8	D12
Scholar	D4	D8	D4	D12
Bard	D4	D4	D8	D12
Craftsman	D4	D4	D8	D12
Militia	D12	D4	D8	D8
Laborer	D8	D4	D4	D12
Clerk	D4	D4	D4	D12
Serf	D8	D4	D4	D8
Merchant	D4	D4	D8	D12
Noble	D8	D4	D8	D12

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Combat Classes			Magic Classes			
Soldier	Warrior	Paladin	Wizard	Priest	Druid	
7	7	6	4	4	4	Health
0	0	3	4	4	4	Mana
8	8	8	8	8	8	Action Point
4/+1	3/+1	4/+1	1	1/+1	2	Combat Defense
2	2	4/+1	4/+1	4/+1	4/+1	Magic Defense
3	3	3	1	2	2	Resistance
~	~	~	~	~	~	Size
~	~	~	~	~	~	Gender
~	~	~	~	~	~	Race
100 lbs	100 lbs	100 lbs	100 lbs	100 lbs	100 lbs	Encumbrance
3/+1	4/+1	3/+1	1	2/+1	2	Melee Attack
3/+1	3/+1	2/+1	1	1	2	Ranged Attack
2	2	1	0	1	1	Advantage Attack
0	0	3/+1	4/+1	3/+1	3/+1	Magical Attack
0	0	0	3/+1	2/+1	1/+1	Enchantment
0	0	2	4/+1	3	2	Dweomer Lore
2	3/+1	0	0	0	3/+1	Sneak
0	0	0	0	0	0	Mechanisms
0	1/+1	0	0	1	0	Trickery
3/+1	2	1	3	2	0	Appraisal
4	4	3	3	3	4	Perception
3/+1	2	1	3/+1	1	2/+1	Crafting

Stealth Classes			Hybrid Classes			
Trickster	Burglar	Assassin	Witch	Hunter	Tomb Breaker	
4	5	5	4	6	6	Health
3	0	0	4	1	2	Mana
8	8	8	8	8	8	Action Point
2	3	3	2	3	3/+1	Combat Defense
2/+1	2	3	3/+1	1	3/+1	Magic Defense
3	3/+1	3	1/+1	3/+1	3/+1	Resistance
~	~	~	~	~	~	Size
~	~	~	~	~	~	Gender
~	~	~	~	~	~	Race
100 lbs	100 lbs	100 lbs	100 lbs	100 lbs	100 lbs	Encumbrance
2	3	2/+1	2	3	3	Melee Attack
2	3	3/+1	2	4/+1	2	Ranged Attack
0	1	4/+1	0	2/+1	1	Advantage Attack
3/+1	0	0	3/+1	1	2	Magical Attack
0	0	0	1/+1	0	0	Enchantment
2/+1	0	0	2	0	2	Dweomer Lore
3/+1	3/+1	4/+1	3	4/+1	0	Sneak
2	4/+1	3	0	0	3/+1	Mechanisms
4/+1	2	2/+1	2/+1	0	0	Trickery
2	3/+1	1	0	2	4	Appraisal
2	4/+1	3	3	3/+1	2/+1	Perception
0	0	0	4	3	0	Crafting

Experience Points and Character Improvement

Experience points are gained for killing monsters, overcoming obstacles, acquiring treasure, role playing, completing missions and quests. Going up levels requires (desired level x 100xp). Generally speaking, most character improvement will occur when leveling

up. Characters are of a chosen class. Each class has strengths and weaknesses. As they go up levels, there will be a handful of points automatically distributed among various attributes and abilities, then there will be 7 discretionary points that the player can spend as they like. If a swordsman wants to spend a lot of their discretionary point on magic skills, they can. It's their choice.

Note: Characters DO NOT get 7 discretionary points when they become 1st level. As a storyteller, I like the idea of characters getting little choice in the beginning. As a player, I think that sucks. I am happy to change my mind on this... let the debate begin.

Leveling up is not the only way to improve, however. Players can also elect to Study or Train. Studying involves (usually) finding written materials that contain useful knowledge. Training involves finding someone with a greater skill level and convincing them to teach the character. Training and Studying can provide xp or raise specific abilities - or both. There is pretty much no limit to Studying or Training, but it can be tricky finding someone who is better than the character once the characters are fairly high level.

xp awards are pretty straightforward. They will usually look something like the following:

1xp per level of monster

1xp per level of obstacle

1xp per 10 silver pieces of treasure (or equivalent value)

Variable xp for role playing events

Variable xp for completion of missions or quests

Note: Character Traits. If a character has the trait 'Gentle' and they go around attacking everyone, they will *lose* xp. If they have a character who is 'Brutal' and they don't go around thumping people, they will *lose* xp. Traits will influence the game in terms of what dialogue choices open up, what actions are available, and how NPCs view the character. xp penalties and bonuses aren't going to be a *huge* part of it, but they will be a part of it.

xp bonuses for good role playing will be incorporated where possible... but it is likely to be tricky to code. Someone who suicidally plays their character recklessly because their character personality is... well... reckless, deserves recognition for playing the personality, but I am not sure how to phrase an algorithm for that. I will think about it.

Level

0 - 01 - 100xp

1 - 101 - 200xp

2 - 201 - 300xp

3 - 301 - 400xp

4 - 401 - 500xp

5 - 501 - 600xp

6 - 601 - 700xp

Etc.

Sample character

Okay. Here's where it gets interesting. There are a number of things that I can already see that need tweaking. For example, where does armour fit in? In AoA, damage is resisted. Once hit, a character has to rely on their armour to absorb the bad stuff. That probably needs to be on the character sheet. Height and Weight... definitely need splitting. Mana Pool needs its own category, rather than just how much can be used per round.

Exactly how the final character sheet will look will depend, I think. Things like equipment and combat stuff and magic will all complicate matters. For now, though, it starts to give a bit of a sense of what to expect.

I have a 5 hour bus trip to do today, so I expect to make my combat and magic stuff more... penetrable. For now, this will suffice.

Phred the Example (Soldier) level 3

Health Points	9 (added 1 at both 2nd and 3rd level)
Mana	0
Action Points	8
Combat Defense	7
Magic Defense	2
Resistance	3
Size	6'/180lbs
Gender	Male
Race	Human
Encumbrance	120lbs
Melee Attack	10 (added 2 at both 2nd and 3rd level)
Ranged Attack	8 (added 1 at both 2nd and 3rd level)
Advantage Attack	3 (added 1 at 2nd level)
Magical Attack	0
Enchantment	0
Dweomer Lore	0
Sneak	2
Mechanisms	0
Trickery	0
Appraisal	9 (added 1 at both 2nd and 3rd level)
Perception	6 (added 1 at both 2nd and 3rd level)
Crafting	7 (added 1 at 3rd level)

Personality Traits

To a large degree, it is a person's personality which sets them apart from everyone else. A glorious example of this is illustrated in Monty Python's 'Life of Brian', with Brian's declaration that: "We're all individuals!" prompting the fantastically ironic response from the lone chap in the crowd of "I'm not."

In computer games, it is all too easy to end up with an inevitable standard range of physical, mental, and social attributes and a character that has all of the individuality of a mass produced cookie. The reason that having control over what a character looks like is so important in most MMORPGs is that what your character looks like is pretty much the only way to personalize your character.

In AoA, a PC's character personality traits *matter*. If traits are used, it can affect how much experience a player gets, how NPCs might react to them, whether certain quests or events may occur, and even the availability of some equipment. The purpose of traits in AoA is to allow players to craft a character with a unique personality. There is not a set storyline with just one or two possible outcomes in AoA. The story that plays out and how it is resolved can *only* occur because of who the character is. That said, the player can choose not to use traits by simply selecting 'neutral' for all of them.

There are 13 Manner Traits and 13 Attitude Traits. Manner traits reflect how a character presents themselves to others. Attitude traits influence what options a player has in deciding what to say or do. When an NPC is first encountered, their assessment of the PC will be predominantly based on the PC's Race, Age, Gender, equipment (ie. clothes), and the PC's manner traits.

In order to avoid having a trait being viewed as having a 'good' extreme and a 'bad' extreme, the extremes are being listed sort of alphabetically with the extreme starting with an 'earlier' letter being listed on the left. While some of the extremes do have a culturally perceived positive or negative connotation, that is likely to be misleading in AoA. For example, a Warrior who is 'Gentle' and 'Timid' makes no sense and will be at a considerable disadvantage to a warrior who is 'Brutal' and 'Forceful'.

Manner Traits

Views themselves

Arrogantly	(N)	Humbly
Negatively	(N)	Positively

Relates to friends

Affectionately	(N)	Reservedly
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Relates to enemies

Diplomatically	(N)	Provocatively
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Relates to strangers

Carefully	(N)	Recklessly
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Normal mood

Grim	(N)	Light Hearted
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Expresses themselves

Loudly	(N)	Quietly
Boastfully	(N)	Modestly

Presents themselves

Confidently	(N)	Insecurely
Reticently	(N)	Talkative

First impression presented

Scruffy	(N)	Tidy
Friendly	(N)	Hostile
Bright	(N)	Dull

Attitude Traits

Approaches danger

Carefree	(N)	Cautiously
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Deals with others

Honorably	(N)	Treacherously
Brutally	(N)	Gently
With suspicion	(N)	Trustingly

Deals with unknown

Curious	(N)	Apathetic
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In pursuit of a goal

Forceful	(N)	Timid
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Deals with authority

Dutifully	(N)	Rebelliously
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Deals with inferiors

Considerately	(N)	Rudely
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Attitude towards another's wealth

Covetously	(N)	Virtuously
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Attitude towards own wealth

Generous	(N)	Greedy
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Expects from the future

Optimistic	(N)	Pessimistic
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Views promises or duties

Fickle	(N)	Resolute
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Approaches hard work

Industriously	(N)	Lazily
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These are the traits that didn't make the grade.

Accepting	(N)	Demanding
Calm	(N)	Nervous
Compliant	(N)	Stubborn
Extroverted	(N)	Introverted
Crude	(N)	Sophisticated
Conservative	(N)	Progressive
Candid	(N)	Private
Spendthrift	(N)	Wastrel
Chaste	(N)	Promiscuous
Close Minded	(N)	Open Minded
Decisive	(N)	Indecisive
Deceitful	(N)	Honest

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Immature	(N)	Mature
Constructive	(N)	Destructive
Idealistic	(N)	Realistic