

4E6 – An E6 alternative for Fourth Edition

“E6” was a rules idea for D&D 3rd Edition that saw a lot of traction. The idea was simple: after sixth level, you simply did not advance in levels anymore. More XP did give you minor boons, such as more feats, but nothing major.

The advantage was that heroes never lost touch with the “ordinary” world. While a sixth level character is powerful enough to beat a bunch of peasants or cut-throats, they’re not immune to low-level attacks. Besides, it can be argued that most heroes of legend (including fictional legend) are about sixth level, compared to “ordinary mortals”.

Now, in Fourth Edition, you can do the same, but there is one snag: powers. By sixth level, while you’ve amassed respectable defenses (AC, hit points and such), you really still have only a very few powers at your disposal. Thus, just adopting the E6 idea wholesale can become kind of dull in 4E.

But what if you gain powers up until double the level limit? That is, up until twelfth level. Instead of being stuck with “merely” two powers of each kind, you’d have up to four.

Also, let’s remember that we’re primarily concerned with defenses here. It is when defenses become too high you really are elevated above your peers. Not your offenses. Having a deadly offense is, after all, commonplace in today’s society (I’m thinking of automatic rifles and rocket-propelled grenades here). So allowing for more and higher-leveled powers is much less disruptive than you might think. Besides, you’ll be surprised how damage scales much less with level in 4E than before.

Rather than merely suggesting you advance in powers beyond sixth level, however, I am putting forth a complete proposal, where advancement in powers occurs at double speed, interspersed with regular level advancement.

It should be noted I’ve taken this opportunity to make two changes to the core rules:

- a) You start out with two encounter and daily powers instead of just one. My belief is that otherwise you must play several characters of the same class before getting to know all the first level powers.
- b) XP requirements for leveling have been doubled. This halves the general rate of advancement, but in a way that doesn’t force you to re-calculate encounter XP. Because you get a “powers upgrade” each half level, you still get a little something at a rate comparable to the core rules.

The table explains it all...

Total XP	Level	Powers Gained	Total
0	1st	Two 1st level at-will, encounter & daily powers	2/2/2/0
1,000		2nd level utility	2/2/2/1
2,250	2nd	3rd level encounter	2/3/2/1
3,750		<i>Upgrade a power</i>	2/3/2/1
5,500	3rd	5th level daily	2/3/3/1
7,500		6th level utility	2/3/3/2
10,000	4th	7th level encounter	2/4/3/2
13,000		<i>Upgrade a power</i>	2/4/3/2
16,500	5th	9th level daily	2/4/4/2
20,500		10th level utility	2/4/4/3
25,500	6th	11th level paragon encounter	2/4†/4/3
32,500		12th level paragon utility	2/4†/4/3†
40,000		Gain a feat; <i>Upgrade a power</i>	2/4†/4/3†
+10,000		Gain a feat; <i>Upgrade a power</i>	...

†) Plus one additional power of this type from a paragon path of your choosing.

When a new level is indicated, you gain all benefits for that level except powers: more hit points, possibly a new feat, ability score increases and so on. 6th level is the highest possible for player characters.

“*Upgrade a Power*”: This means you may take any existing power and replace it with a higher-leveled power of the same type. Obviously, you can’t choose a power of a higher level than you’ve mastered so far. Eventually, you will run out of powers to upgrade (at 100,000 XP to be exact). This is fine.

- When you reach 1,000 XP you remain first level, but you still gain a second level utility power.
- When you reach 2,250 XP you become second level (which means that your half-level bonus becomes one instead of zero) and you gain a third level encounter power.
- When you reach 3,750 XP you upgrade one of your 1st level encounter powers to 3rd level. (At this time you do not have any higher-level daily or utility powers available)
- When you reach 13,000 XP you can choose between upgrading an encounter power to 7th level, a daily power to 5th level or a utility power to 6th level.