

# REVISED EPIC SYSTEM (FOR 3.5E)

## DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this document is to provide a rough draft for a system that can (hopefully) make epic-tier play more palatable to whatever 3.5e DMs still remain. I'm not presenting this as some sort of magical solution, but a concept that most certainly needs polishing and thorough review.

## LEVEL CAP

Characters stop gaining levels after 20. All their base statistics (HP, BAB, Saves, Skill Points, etc.) effectively freeze at that point. They continue accumulating XP for Spellcasting costs and item creation.

## EPIC TRAIT

Once the players hit 20 and have stayed in that level for a while, the DM may opt to give them the Epic Trait (either automatically or through a quest).

Characters with the Epic Trait belong to a different tier of 'play' and receive the following benefits **against** Non-Epic creatures (Anything that doesn't have the Epic trait).

- 1) All their attack rolls, saving throws, opposed skill and ability checks, caster level and other level checks are made with a +10 Epic Bonus. Ability and Spell Save DCs are increased by 10.
- 2) All their damage rolls are maximized.
- 3) They no longer automatically fail on attack rolls or saving throws on a natural 1.
- 4) They may opt to Take 10 on any given roll, even if it is not normally allowed.
- 5) All their Spell-like and Supernatural Abilities function normally in Anti-Magic.

Epic Characters are also eligible for epic boons, unashamedly taken as a concept from 5e. Epic feats are ditched entirely, although all can be easily turned into boons. It is up to the DM on how to hand them out and at what frequency.

## EPIC TRAIT AND MONSTERS

The DM can advance existing monsters to HD 50 at most. After that, apply the Epic Trait to them and start giving them boons instead of adding more HD. Monsters that exceed that limit by design should be properly re-adjusted.

## EPIC LEVEL HANDBOOK MONSTERS

It is advisable not to use them with this system. Epic Characters are still technically Level 20 and their raw statistics will reflect that. I say this because ELH monsters can routinely hit 60+ HD (including the fact they are thematically supposed to also have the Epic Trait).

## STANDARD EPIC ITEMS

The DM can hand out standard epic items and allow their creation (through boons) with modesty, or use the alternative system that will be detailed below. Keep in mind that such items may be too situational for the table's needs and even bothersome to keep track of in battle.

## ALTERNATIVE EPIC ITEMS

Items can have the Epic Trait applied to them. All epic variants receive the following benefits regardless of item type.

- 1) They cannot be damaged by non-epic sources.
- 2) They cannot be permanently disjoined by non-epic sources, instead being disabled for 1d4 rounds.
- 3) Function normally in anti-magic.
- 4) Can be of any market value.

Depending on item type, they receive the following benefits.

### EPIC WEAPONS

- 1) Double their enhancement bonus to attack and damage against non-epic creatures.
- 2) Ignore the Damage Reduction of non-epic creatures.
- 3) Receive any number of magical properties. Their base enhancement bonus is still capped at +5.

## **EPIC ARMOR AND SHIELDS**

- 1) Double their enhancement bonus to AC against non-epic creatures.
- 2) Provide Fortification against non-epic creatures (25% for Light / Small, 50% for Medium / Heavy Shields, 100% for Heavy / Tower).
- 3) Receive any number of magical properties. Their base enhancement bonus is still capped at +5.

## **EPIC ITEMS OF PROTECTION / BRACERS OF ARMOR**

Double their bonus to AC against non-epic bonuses. They are still capped at the base bonus of +5/+10 respectively.

## **EPIC ITEMS OF RESISTANCE**

Double their resistance bonus to saving throws against non-epic creatures. They are still capped at the base bonus of +5.

## **EPIC ABILITY SCORE OR SKILL ITEMS**

Unchanged. Hand them out with care.

## **EPIC SPELL ITEMS**

- 1) Can be of any effective spell level (through Metamagic effects).
- 2) Base Caster Level is fixed at 25.
- 3) Benefit from a +10 epic bonus on their Caster Level and DCs against non-epic creatures.

## **SPELL RESISTANCE ITEMS**

Increase their Spell Resistance by 10 against non-epic creatures and spell items.

## **ITEM VALUE CALCULATION (FOR ALL TYPES)**

Calculate the value as if they were normal items, then multiply by 10.

## **EPIC ENVIRONMENTS AND HAZARDS**

Areas or even entire planar layers can be given the Epic Trait. In these locations, hazards (like energy damage) threaten non-epic creatures regardless of resistance or immunity.

## **SAMPLE BOONS**

A list of sample boons will be provided with a focus on granting more abilities and ways to deal with problems, instead of flat numerical bonuses. The examples are very powerful and to be handed with great scrutiny, ideally after a great quest is completed.

### **1. EPIC ATTACK**

Prerequisite: BAB +20.

Effect: All your natural and held weapons ignore damage reduction. As a full-round action, you may deliver a death blow. This is a standard attack that also forces a Fortitude Save (DC 20 + Strength or Dexterity Modifier). If the target creature fails the save, they die as per a death effect.

### **2. TRANSDIMENSIONAL ATTACK**

Prerequisite: Epic Attack.

Effect: Your attacks are considered a Force effect and harm incorporeal/ethereal creatures normally. Your death blow is now additionally a disruption & ruination effect, which threatens undead and constructs normally. As a Full-Round Action, you may destroy an obstacle made of Force (Force Cage, Wall of Force, etc.) with a targeted attack.

### **3. MAXIMIZE DAMAGE**

Effect: Whenever you roll for damage, whether it is an attack or spell, you take the best maximum result.

### **4. KARMIC DAMAGE**

Prerequisite: Maximize Damage.

Effect: You always deal lethal damage, ignoring any sort of regeneration.

### **5. ZEN ATTACK**

Prerequisite: Transdimensional Attack, Karmic Damage.

Effect: As a Full-Round Action, you may deliver one standard attack that will hit and deal damage regardless of AC, Concealment or situational Immunity.

## **6. ANNIHILATING DAMAGE**

Prerequisite: Karmic Damage.

Effect: The damage you deal is permanent and can only be restored by the use of a Wish or Miracle spell.

## **7. HEIGHTENED PROWESS**

Effect: You increase your base attack bonus by 5, to the base maximum of 20. This Boon can be taken more than once, as long as your BAB is not 20.

## **8. AUTOMATIC METAMAGIC**

Effect: Choose one metamagic feat that you already possess. From now, it is automatically applied to all your spells without increasing their spell slot. This Boon can be chosen more than once, each time for a different feat.

## **9. EPIC MAGIC**

Prerequisite: Caster Level 20

Effect: Your Caster Level is heightened to 25 indefinitely. All spells you cast now function normally in Anti-Magic.

## **10. MASTERED SPELL**

Prerequisite: Caster Level 20

Effect: Each time you take this Boon, choose three spells that you know. You can use them once per day without spending a spell slot and components on them. Wish, Miracle and similar spells cast this way behave as if the minimum possible XP was paid.

## **11. EPIC SPELL**

Prerequisite: Epic Magic

Effect: Each time you take this Boon, choose one spell that you know. It is now considered a 10<sup>th</sup>-Level Spell with a Caster Level of 30, but uses the same spell slot. Alternatively, you gain one Epic Spell Slot and may (under heavy scrutiny) develop an Epic Spell as per the ELH.

## **12. SPELL IMMUNITY**

Effect: You become permanently immune to all 0-Level and 1<sup>st</sup>-Level Spells. You can take this Boon again, increasing the Level by one and capping at 9<sup>th</sup>-Level Spell Immunity.

## **13. DEAD MAGIC**

Prerequisite: Spell Immunity (Taken 9 Times)

Effect: You radiate a 10-foot aura at all times that negates all magical effects, including epic magic. You can take this Boon again, doubling the area each time.

## **14. EPIC TALENT**

Effect: Each time you take this Boon, you gain 3 levels worth of class features, proficiencies and skill points from any one class of your choice. Class features cap at Level 20 (or whatever non-epic cap a given PRC has) and do not improve as per the ELH progression. These are not actual levels and do not improve your HP, BAB, Saves and skill rank maximum. You do not gain Ability Score Improvements nor General Feats either. You may count them as levels for fulfilling prerequisites however. Restrictions still apply (You cannot benefit from Paladin features if you are Evil, etc).

## **15. RENEWED TOUGHNESS**

Effect: Raise all your HD (including future HD if for some reason you exceed 20) to d12s and re-roll your HP. If all your HD are already d12s (or somehow better), then maximize your HP.

## **16. EPIC RESILIENCE**

Effect: Recalculate all your Saving Throws as if they had Good Progression. You no longer automatically fail on Saving Throws if you roll a Natural 1.

## **17. EPIC CREATION**

Prerequisite: Three Item Creation Feats, Three Craft Skills at +23.

Effect: You may apply the Epic trait on items you can personally make by paying an additional 5000 XP cost and spending twice the time to craft. All other creations you make take 1/10 of the time and ½ the usual material costs.

## 18. EXPANDED TRAINING

Effect: Each time you take this boon, you gain three general feats.

## 19. ASCENSION

Effect: Your creature type changes to Outsider and you gain all associated traits. You also gain the following benefits.

- 1) Damage Reduction 15 / One Alignment Component you are opposed to & Cold Iron or Alchemical Silver (Your Choice).
- 2) Regeneration 5 that can only be overcome by opposed alignment weapons and spells.
- 3) All your attacks are aligned as per your alignment components.
- 4) Choose one plane as your home plane. If you are killed outside of it, you reappear there as per a True Resurrection spell. If you are killed within your home plane, you are destroyed normally.

## BOONS AND NUMERICAL BONUSES

Nothing stops the DM from designing boons that give flat numerical bonuses, except from the dreaded stat bloat of course. A few examples will be provided for the sake of argument.

## 20. EXPANDED GROWTH

Effect: Each time you take this Boon, you gain 3 ability score points to allot as you wish.

## 21. EPIC SKILL

Effect: Each time you take this Boon, add 10 ranks on any three skills of your choice.

## 22. SPIRIT CULTIVATION

Prerequisite: Ascension, or be of the Outsider creature Type.

Effect: Each time you take this Boon, you gain 1 Outsider HD to a maximum total of 20. These HD improve your statistics normally. If you already possess 20 Outsider HD, you cannot take this Boon.

## 23. APOTHEOSIS

Prerequisite: 20 Outsider HD

Effect: You become a Divine Rank 0 deity, gaining all the relevant benefits and traits. You can take this Boon multiple times, each time increasing your Divine Rank by 1. Alternatively, you replace your Epic trait with the Divine trait.

## TIERS BEYOND EPIC

“Divine” and “Cosmic” Traits can be made to separate play into several tiers. In this case, “Divine” Creatures/Items trivialize “Epic” ones in the same way that they trivialize non-epic ones and so on and so forth. Completely hypothetically, this system could support campaigns normally “appropriate” for character levels way beyond what the DM is comfortable with. Hopefully with this, perhaps one can pretend people can play as Immortal Heroes and Gods without having to switch to Exalted or completely homebrewing the core mechanics.