



Black Belt Testing

Requirements and Study Guide



Part I: The Nine Steps to Becoming a Black Belt

Part II: Leadership Stripes

Part III: Class Rules

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Part V: Planning Your Journey



Black Belt Testing

PART I: Nine Steps to Becoming a Black Belt

Step 1: Leadership

You will need to know and be able to demonstrate the forms SongAhm 1-5 and InWha 1 and 2.

Red/Black belt students earn a stripe on the left side of their belt for perfecting each of the following forms: SongAhm 1 – 5 and InWha 1 & 2 for a total of seven stripes. After the first three stripes have been earned, the student may be asked to “defend” any of their stripes by demonstrating that form to their instructor. If the form is not perfect, the student will “lose” that stripe by moving it over to the right side of their belt. The student must then earn back that stripe by perfecting that form again and demonstrating it to their instructor. Students will also be required to “defend” stripes by demonstrating their leadership requirements at a color belt testing every eight weeks.

Step 2: All or Nothing Test

When all seven stripes have been earned, the student may test for their All-or-Nothing stripe. At this point, the senior instructor will randomly choose several of the forms and have the student demonstrate them. If these forms are perfect, the student earns their All-or-Nothing stripe and can no longer lose any stripes. If the forms are not perfect, the student loses all their stripes and must earn them back during a re-attempt for their All-or-Nothing stripe.

Be very confident in everything that you do, especially during your all or nothing test. If you make a mistake, keep going and keep smiling!

Step 3: Black Belt Form

Throughout earning and losing stripes you will need to be learning and practicing the black belt form, ChoongJung 2. You will not be asked to perform this form during your all or nothing test, but at black belt testing it should look amazing. Students will be required to demonstrate ChoongJung 2 at a color belt testing every eight weeks.

Step 4: Ambassadorship

You will need to perform a demo in your community. This is your ambassadorship. The demo should represent Taekwondo, the ATA, your instructor, and most importantly, yourself. There should be included in the demo the physical skills you have learned throughout your journey to black belt.

Step 5: Volunteerism

You will also need to have donated 6-8 hours of community service to a local non-profit organization. Some examples: picking up trash in your school every afternoon for a month, volunteering at Habitat for Humanity, and reading to the elderly at the Life Care center. Be creative and choose something that means a lot to you. Remember this is your time to help the community.

Step 6: Korean Language

At black belt testing you will need to know a number of Korean words. (These can be found on the attached study guide.)

Step 7: Korean Philosophy

All new black belts should have an understanding of the culture that Taekwondo originated in. You will be asked several of the following questions at black belt testing to demonstrate your knowledge.

KARATE FOR KIDS

- ★ Please recite the Wha Rang Code of Chivalry.
- ★ Explain who the Wha Rang were and their importance in their society.
- ★ Explain the various symbols on the Korean flag.
- ★ Explain what the different colored belts, including black belt mean.
- ★ Explain the elements and symbolism of the Paragon patch.

ADULTS

- Explain the various symbols on the Korean flag.
- Explain what the different colored belts, including black belt mean.
- Explain the elements and symbolism of the Paragon patch.
- Explain how a black belt achieves power. Begin by explaining the Theory of Power.
- “Knowing others is wisdom. Knowing the self is enlightenment. Mastering others requires force. Mastering the self needs strength. A good Taekwondo technician measures his technique not only by whom he defeats, but rather by his defeat of his own imperfections in technique and training.” How does this proverb differentiate an athlete from a martial artist?

Most of this information can be found on the attached study guide and in The Way books. You are encouraged to do additional research on you own. Upon mastering a section of knowledge juniors may approach your instructor to test for a knowledge star.

Step 8: Free Sparring

Black belt candidates spar at their black belt testing with a high rank. This will allow them to reveal their advanced level material that they have learned.

Step 9: Board Breaking

You will be required to break a wooden board at your testing with either a (1) combination elbow strike, jump reverse sidekick or a (2) running jump sidekick over one obstacle.

“The journey is far more important than the destination.”

Enjoy your journey. There are many who have gone before you and many who will follow, but no one will follow your same path. When you put on your black belt, it is our desire that you, your family and your instructors have no hesitation that this part of your journey is truly behind you.

At your black belt testing you have the option to choose who will tie your black belt for the first time. From that day forward, everyone will know that you have earned the right to be called a “Black Belt.” Share that moment in your life with someone who you feel has inspired you and made a difference in your life.

If you have any questions about the path to black belt, please ask any of the staff-- they are dedicated and anxious to share your journey.



*Master Bill Hauptman
6th Degree Black Belt*



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PART II: Leadership Stripes

There are three phases that a student will go through prior to earning a stripe for a form. The time required varies greatly depending upon the student's age, ability, memorization skills, work ethic, personal strengths, and prior focus on the fundamental concepts of technique. The more a student has focused on and mastered the fundamentals as a color belt, the faster they tend to progress as a Red/Black belt. As a Red/Black belt, students will progress at their own speed. Requirements will not be changed or reduced to meet a time schedule.

Phase I: Memorization

Memorization is the foundation of the form. Students should attempt to complete this phase as quickly as possible with at home practice in addition to in class instruction. Until this foundation is solid the student will be unable to devote their full attention to Phase II.

Phase II: Refinement

If memorization is the foundation of the form, then fundamental concepts are the foundation of good technique. Refinement is often the longest phase taking anywhere from 2-6 weeks of intense training per form before individual can move on to Phase III. Refinement starts with the student focusing on one or two concepts, practicing and then developing a habit of executing the concepts correctly. Habits are not something that can be learned in a class or two, rather they require consistent focus to develop. If a student is inconsistent in their focus on developing a new habit, it will slow their progress and they may become frustrated that the instructors keep telling them to work on the same thing. During the refinement phase, the instructor will often times give a student only one or two concepts to refine rather than overwhelm the student with all concepts at once. Because of this, a student may transform a concept into a proper habit, test for a stripe, and be given another concept to focus on prior to earning the stripe.

Refinement is a building process. If a student truly masters a fundamental concept of technique in Songahm 1, it should carry over to each additional form. Although each form should be perfected as completely as possible, sometimes an instructor will allow a student to earn a stripe even if student is unable to execute all concepts perfectly. This may be done at the instructor's discretion. This is not allowing the student to "get away" with something, rather it is recognition that the student has worked diligently to perfect the concept to the best of their ability at this time. In future forms the instructor will have the student continue to work upon the needed fundamentals by expecting a greater level of skill to earn future stripes and/or by defending stripes.

The following are some of the fundamental concepts of technique your instructor may ask you to work on:

Kicks

Correct Hand Position
Full Pivot
Body Alignment
Balance
Full Chamber
Complete Extension
Correct Foot Position
Full Rechamber
Controlled Return
Power
Height
Fluidity

Stances

Foot Position
Bent or Straight Knees
Weight Distribution
Smooth transition

Hand Techniques

Correct Beginning Position
Correct Ending Position
Reaction Hand
Rotation
Power
Fluidity

Form

Timing
Intensity
Balance
Speed
Power
Rhythm
Fluidity
Floor Pattern

Life Skills

Attitude
Discipline
Focus

Phase III: Form Synergy

Synergy is defined as “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” There is no clear line between Phase II and Phase III. This transition is seen when a student can go through the form executing the technique correctly without having to “think” about all the little details required to perform the technique. The more fundamental concepts of technique the student has transformed into a habit, the more synergistic the form will be. These habits can be called “Automatic Reflex”. We have all seen a student who can demonstrate their memorization of a form “automatically” without thinking about it. This is often seen at the end of Phase I. Phase II transforms a memorized form into a dynamic form with sharp technique resulting in a synergistic presentation. When you see an exceptional martial artist or Olympic athlete that seems a little sharper or better than the rest, it can always be traced back to their attitude and their continued practice of the fundamentals. Sometimes when a student hasn’t practiced a form in a little while, they will loose this synergy resulting in a lost stripe. Students should welcome the opportunity a lost stripe will provide them to work on and perfect the form again in preparation for their all or nothing testing.



Black Belt Testing

PART III: Class Rules

1. A form must be perfect to earn a stripe. This includes all the fundamental concepts of technique such as correct stances, chambers, ki-haps, timing, as well as excellent technique in strikes, blocks, punches, and kicks.
2. There are no half stripes. Red/Black belt class is training for black belt – a form must be perfect to achieve a stripe and there is no such thing as “half-perfect.”
3. Testing for stripes is a privilege; therefore, if a student’s behavior in class is poor he/she will need to wait until the next class to test for a stripe.
4. To develop the habit of good technique, the student must try to make every move in their form perfect every time they practice. If an instructor sees that a student is not practicing a form to the best of his or her ability for a stripe they have already earned, the instructor has the right to take the stripe without allowing the student the opportunity to defend the stripe.
5. After a student has earned three stripes, he/she will be asked to defend a stripe every time he/she earns a new stripe.
6. Student is expected to know all the forms that they have stripes for. An instructor may ask the student to defend a stripe at any time, not just when he/she is testing for new stripes.
7. If a student looses a stripe they must wait at least one class to develop a correct habit before they can earn it back.
8. Student may not earn new stripes if they have any “lost” stripes on their belt.
9. Student may not test for more than one new stripe per class.
10. Student may not learn a form and test for a stripe for that form in the same day.
11. Student may not earn a stripe at their very first Red/Black belt class.
12. Student is required to demonstrate and defend their leadership materials (low rank forms) every eight weeks at a color belt testing.



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PART IV: Study Guide

At their Black Belt testing, students should be prepared to recite from memory all philosophy, Korean history and belt meanings that have been indicated for their age. Korean words, Hwa Rang Code of Chivalry and Belt Meanings should be recited exactly as written. For the Korean Flag, Paragon Patch, Theory of Power and about the Hwa Rang, students should put together an informative verbal presentation from memory, much like a book report, based upon the materials provided here and further research from books and the internet. Instructor will typically ask students for knowledge from 3-4 of these areas during Black belt testing. When you have mastered an area of knowledge, you may approach your instructor to earn a knowledge star.



Adult Knowledge Requirement



Karate For Kids Knowledge Requirement



Karate For Kids Knowledge Star #1

Hwa Rang Code of Chivalry

*Be loyal to your country,
Honor your parents,
Be loving between husband and wife,
Be cooperative between brother and sister,
Be faithful to your friends,
Be respectful to your elders,
Establish trust between teacher and student,
Use good judgment before taking action,
Always stand for justice,
Always follow through on your commitments.*



Karate For Kids Knowledge Star #2

About the Hwa Rang

The Hwa-rang Youth were a group of young men that played a pivotal role in ancient Korea. About 1,200 years ago, the Hwa-rang (translation “flower children” which means children that look young, a group of 15-17 year olds, trained in many different disciplines (such as archery) including Taekyon as their hand to hand combat method.

This group played a major role in protecting the smallest of the dynasties of Korea, Shilla. The Hwa-rang headquarters was located in KyungJu, located near the southern tip of Korea. KyungJu also served as the capital of the Shilla Dynasty.

The youth were dedicated to protecting their countryside and devoted themselves to their King for which their loyalty was so strong. They would die to serve him.

The Hwa-rang Youth in their study of Hwa-rang Do (no relation to the martial art of today by the same name), adhered to a strict code. Later, this oath became a moral code used by many as a guideline for their life.



Belt Meanings



White Belt

Pure and without the knowledge of Songahm Taekwondo. As with the Pine Tree, the seed must now be planted and nourished to develop strong roots.

Orange Belt

The sun is beginning to rise. As with the mornings dawn, only the beauty of the sunrise is seen rather than the immense power.

Yellow Belt

The seed is beginning to see the sunlight.

Camouflage (Camo) Belt

The sapling is hidden amongst the taller pines and must now fight (find) its way upward.

Green Belt

The pine tree is beginning to develop and grow in strength.

Purple Belt

Coming to the mountain. The tree is in mid-growth and the path becomes steep.

Blue Belt

The tree reaches for the sky towards new heights.

Brown Belt

The tree is firmly rooted in the earth.

Red Belt

The sun is setting. The first phase of growth has been accomplished.

Red/Black Belt

The dawn of a new day. The sun breaks through the darkness.

Black Belt

The tree has reached maturity and has overcome the darkness.... It must now begin to "plant seeds for the future."



Karate For Kid Knowledge Star #4



Paragon Patch

Below is a student's individual research of the word "Paragon", and other elements of the patch in Asian Mythology and Asian History. You are encouraged to research and develop your own description for friends and family.

*The word **paragon** itself means a model or pattern of excellence and perfection of a kind.*

Taeguk is represented in the background of the Paragon patch, which signifies the origin of all things in the universe.

The ying and yang symbolizes balance and the duality of everything.

Each belt color is also depicted within the patchs design.

A paragon also represents a very large, spherical pearl. According to gem mythology the pearl is said to help one see themselves and improve self-worth.

The tiger in the patch also has mythological ties. It symbolizes the traits of courage, optimism, tolerance and generosity. Tigers are also revered for their great power and grace.

The paragon patch ties all these elements together to create great unity within the dojang, and symbolizes traits that are revered within our schools.

-Chad Chisholm



Karate For Kids Knowledge Star #5



The Korean Flag



The "Tae Kook Gye" is the Korean Flag. "Tae Kook" means "the origin of all things in the universe." The circle in the center of the flag is divided into portions of red and blue by a horizontal "S." These red (top) and blue (bottom) portions symbolize the Um and Yang theory of eternal duality which exists within nature. (i.e.: heaven-earth, light-dark, hot-cold). In science, this theory can be represented with the symbols "+" and "-."

The four "gye" (bar designs) in the corner of the flag are based on the Um and Yang principal of light and darkness. The locale of these gye represent the four points of the compass. Ee-gye (lower left) indicates dawn and early sunlight as the sun rises in the east. Kun-gye (upper left) represents bright sunshine when the sun in the south. Kam-gye (upper right) represents twilight as the sun moves to the west. And, Kon-gye (lower right) indicates total darkness when the sun is in the north. Together these symbols express the mysteries of the universe.

The flag always hangs with the red on top when hanging in landscape fashion and with the blue on the left side of the circle when hanging in portrait fashion.



Korean Words

For Many students, Korean words will be the most challenging requirement. This is why this is the sixth knowledge star, as it may take students as many as 6 months to learn all the words. **It is recommended that the students begin learning these words immediately after earning their Red/Black belt.** Your instructor will be able to help you with pronunciation. Many parents report that they practice Korean words in the car while driving to and from activities.

Students shall recite “Sir, the Korean word for Yell is Kihap, Sir!”

Count to ten in Korean:

1 = Hah-nah	6 = Yeo-seot
2 = Dool	7 = Il-geup
3 = Set	8 = Yeo-deol
4 = Net	9 = Ah-hop
5 = Dah-seot	10 = Yeol

Ready	June-bee
Master Instructor	Tae-sah-bum-nim
Thank You, Instructor	Sah-bum-nim Com-sa-ham-ni-da
Yell	Ki-hap
Punch	Jee-reu-gi
Fist	Jeo-mahk
Front Kick	Ahp Chah-gi
Side Kick	Yeop Chah-gi
Round Kick	Dol-reyo Chah-gi
Stop	Keu-mahn
Form	Poom-sae
Sparring	Gyeo-roo-gi
Taekwondo facility	Do-jahng
Victory	Pil-sung
1st Degree Black Belt	Cho-dan
Uniform	Do-bok
Degree (rank)	Dan
Start	Se-jahk
At Ease	Shi-uh
Grade (rank)	Geup
Strike	Chi-gi
Block	Mahk-gi
Attention Stance	Mo-ah Seo-gi
Testing	Shim-sah

Korean Pronunciation Guide

eo = is the same as the u sound in “suffer”

eh = is the same sound as the ea in “death”

o = the long o as in “go”

g = g as in “good”

oo = as sounded in “zoo”

y = always used as its sound in “yell”

ee/i = as the ee in “see”

ah = as in “father”

eu = the oo as in “Good”

r = to “roll” the r as used in Spanish

At testing, always reply “Sir, the Korean word for *Ready* is *June-bee* sir!”



Theory of Power

$$\text{Power} = \frac{1}{2} \text{ mass} \times \text{velocity}^2$$

This means to take the mass (hand or foot that will be used as the striking tool) and divide it in half. Now, calculate the speed and multiply it by itself. Then, multiply the speed by the mass and you have the amount of power you will be striking with. Take note that increasing speed will increase the power dramatically while an increase in mass (or muscle) increases the power very little.



Korean Proverb

There is no correct answer. Students should be introspective and determine what the proverb means to them.

A Brief History of Taekwondo:

Although its roots can be somewhat traced back to ancient Korea, it is a historic fact Taekwondo as an organized art is relatively modern. In fact, the only documented history begins in the mid 1900s.

The actual beginnings of Taekwondo are obscured by time, yet many historians believe it originated from a Korean martial arts form known as t'aekyon practiced over 1,300 years ago.

In the early 1900s the art evolved with the introduction of Chinese and Japanese techniques, a practice that concerned some because these influences did not demonstrate the incredible kicking power of the art nor its traditional values of philosophy.

The actual name (and art) of Taekwondo wasn't official until 1955. At that time Korean General Hong Hi Choi organized a movement to unify Korea's various martial arts styles (called "Kwans") and presented the name "Taekwondo" to a committee specially formed to select a name for the new art. On April 11, 1955, Taekwondo was recognized as the name for the newly unified Korean martial art.

As an interesting side note, the word Taekwondo itself is made up of three Chinese/Korean words: Tae, meaning to kick or jump; Kwon meaning fist or hand; and Do, which means the way. Therefore Taekwondo can be thought of as "The way of the hand and the foot."

In the 1960s Taekwondo began to spread internationally and evolved throughout the late 1900s (along with most martial arts) into primarily a combat sport, although self-defense, fitness, and the philosophy of the practice (including self-discipline and self-knowledge) were still crucial elements. The style of SongAhm Taekwondo was developed and is supported by the ATA.

PART V: Planning Your Journey

The average student will remain a Red/Black belt for a minimum of 6 months. Many times a student will remain a Red/ Black belt for up to 12 months before completing their requirements. Students do not need to feel that they must accomplish all the requirements entirely on their own. They should seek out coaches, motivators and other training partners such as parents, friends and other Red/Black belts to join them on their journey. Camaraderie can be developed by participating in volunteerism and ambassadorship together with other students. Today, I can still think back and remember every one of the Red/Black belts who joined me on my journey to Black Belt.

Below is a standard and fast track guide to help you plan your journey. These tracks are recommendations to help you achieve your Black belt. If you apply yourself diligently, you will have a better chance of passing your all-or-nothing test and receiving permission to test sooner rather than later. However, these tracks are not a guarantee that you will be ready to test for your Black belt at a certain time, as each individual must progress at their own rate. Requirements will not be changed or reduced to meet a time schedule. You will be asked to demonstrate and defend the materials perfected during the current and previous sessions every eight weeks at a color belt testing.

Standard Track

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6
Chung Jung 2	Chung Jung 2	Chung Jung 2	Chung Jung 2	Chung Jung 2	Chung Jung 2
Songahm 1 Stripe	Songahm 3 Stripe	Songahm 4 Stripe	Songahm 5 Stripe	Inwha 1 Stripe	Inwha 2 Stripe
Songahm 2 Stripe					
Knowledge Star	Knowledge Star	Knowledge Star	Knowledge Star	Knowledge Star	Knowledge Star
Leadership Demo	Leadership Demo	Leadership Demo	Leadership Demo	Leadership Demo	Leadership Demo

Fast Track

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Chung Jung 2	Chung Jung 2	Chung Jung 2
Songahm 1 Stripe	Songahm 4 Stripe	Inwha 1 Stripe
Songahm 2 Stripe	Songahm 5 Stripe	Inwha 2 Stripe
Songahm 3 Stripe		
2 Knowledge Stars	2 Knowledge Stars	2 Knowledge Stars
Leadership Demo	Leadership Demo	Leadership Demo