

Color Guard Curriculum

Part 1: Dance Basics

1. Posture
2. Positions of the feet
3. Positions of the arms
4. Plié
5. Tendu / Dégagé / Battement
6. Relevé
7. Rond de jambe
8. Arabesque
9. Coupé
10. Passé / Retiré
11. Attitude
12. Lunges
13. Combinations:
 1. Plié / relevé
 2. Plié / tendu

Stretching: To properly warm up the body and protect it from injury, stretching is recommended before any dance or guard rehearsal. Standing or sitting stretches should be performed to warm up all the major muscle groups: body/head/neck, shoulders/arms, wrists/forearm, torso, hips, legs (hamstrings, calves, quads), and ankles.

Exercises: Completing certain exercises can help color guard members with various areas of movement and technique development. For example, push-ups (and pull-ups) can help build arm strength while exercises targeting the abdominals can help increase the sense of balance in the body by strengthening the core. In addition, aerobic exercises such as jogging can help the guard build endurance to perform at a high level throughout a show that is several minutes in length.

Posture: Correct posture should be maintained at all times in color / winter guard. While guard members are often focused on their hands and on the piece of equipment that they are spinning, it is the body and the way it moves that provides the support for the equipment. Appropriate posture should be consistently sustained throughout basics exercises, practice, and performances. Correct posture is a “stacked” posture - the hips should be stacked over the heels and the shoulders should be stacked over the hips by rolling them back and down, opening up the collarbone. Tuck the pelvis under slightly to take some of the curvature out of the spine. Lift through the spine and rib cage and do not allow the torso to sink into the hips. The chin is typically held slightly higher than level, so that any performance can be carried up to the audience and judges.

Lunges: Lunges can be performed to the front, side, or back, and typically involve one leg bending in plié, bearing the majority of the weight of the body, while the other leg stays straight with the heel on the floor. Make sure in any lunge position that the feet are far enough apart that the bent knee stays behind the toe. The bent knee should not extend past the toe, as this can put undue strain on the knee. Define the feet position in the lunge, such as whether they are turned out or parallel. Also define how the leg is getting out to the lunge position and how it is closing (e.g., through tendu).

Dance Terminology:

Arabesque (*air uh BESK*) - a position of the leg that is extended, straight, and turned out behind the body. An arabesque can be performed with the standing leg on the floor or in jumps, such as sauté. The standing leg can be straight or bent. The extended leg is always straight in an arabesque.

Assemblé (*ah sahn BLAY*) - assembled / joined together; a jump step in which one leg brushes into a jump and then the feet come together to land. Starting in first, third, or fifth position, the working leg extends in dégagé to the front or side, coming a few inches off the floor. The standing leg then goes into demi plié and jumps off the ground, squeezing the legs together in the air. Both feet land in demi plié at the same time. The landing is usually in third or fifth position with the working leg in front. This step travels toward the working leg in the air.

Attitude (*at uh TEWD*) - a leg position that can be performed to the front, side, and back of the body. In a front attitude, the working leg is extended forward from the hip and is bent at the knee so that the lower leg and foot extend down at a 45 degree angle towards the floor. In a side attitude, the working leg is extended to the side, knee pointed up, and bent so that the lower leg and foot extend down towards the ground at a 45 degree angle. In a back attitude, the leg extends behind the body with the knee turned out and bent so that the lower leg and foot point in towards the body at a 45 degree angle, with the knee held higher than the foot. The foot of the standing leg remains firmly planted on the ground. The upper body remains in an upright posture, and the toes stay square at the front.

Balance (*bah lahn AY*) - a small step; a small jump step that travels from side to side or from front corner to back corner, in a couple of feet. Begin in first, third, or fifth position. The working leg brushes into dégagé to the side or front corner, then the standing leg goes into demi plié and jumps. Land in demi plié on the working leg. The standing leg is pulled into a coupé position behind the working leg, then steps onto demi pointe with the body weight shifted onto it as the knee straightens. The working leg is lifted off the floor slightly, knee straight and toes pointed. The body weight then shifts back to the working leg, which ends in turned out fondu, and the back leg returns to coupé behind. The step can then repeat to the other side.

Barre (*bar*) - the horizontal wooden bar that is attached to the wall in a ballet studio and is used to help aid balance in ballet exercises.

Battement (*bah MAH*) - beating; an extension of the leg from the body in a type of kick. Battement can be performed to the front, side, or back of the body. The knee stays straight and the movement initiates from the hip and abdominals, with the working foot using the floor to brush up into the air. The standing leg stays straight, and the standing foot stays firmly planted on the ground without lifting up onto the toes. In a front battement, the leg is turned out so that the inner thigh is lifting toward the ceiling. In a side battement, the knee is rotated up towards the ceiling. In a back battement, the knee is rotated away from the body, with the outer thigh turned towards the ceiling. The upper body remains tall and does not collapse or initiate the movement in a battement. Keep the body weight centered over the standing leg.

Bourrée (*bur AY*) - small steps performed on full pointe or demi pointe with the legs squeezed together.

Développé (*dayv luh PAY*) - developing; a gradual extension of the leg, performed to the front, side, or back of the body. Typically, a développé is performed from a passé or coupé position. From there, the working leg lifts at the hip while gradually straightening the knee until the leg reaches its full extension with the knee turned out and toes pointed. It then closes to first, third, or fifth position through tendu.

Échappé (*ay shuh PAY*) - escaping; a small hop on both feet. Begin in third or fifth position in demi plié. Jump out with both feet, ending in second position on demi pointe with both knees straight and turned out. Then jump both feet back into the starting position while switching the feet (the foot in front will end in back and the foot in back will end in front). End in demi plié in third or fifth position.

En croix (*ahn KRAH*) - in the shape of a cross. A typical pattern for tendu, dégagé, or battement exercises. The sequence of en croix is front, side, back, side.

Entrechat (*ahn truh SHAH*) - interweaving / braiding; a jump in which the feet beat back and forth against each other before landing - similar to a changement, but with several rapid beats of the feet. Begin in third or fifth position, then demi plié and jump into the air with straight legs and pointed toes. While in the air, the thighs squeeze together and the legs reverse position, with the foot in front traveling to the back and then to the front again before landing, and vice versa. An entrechat can contain anywhere from 2-10 separate beats. Even numbered entrechat land on both feet while odd numbered entrechat land on one foot with the other foot in back coupé.

Fond (*fawn*) - sinking down; the bending of the standing leg when the other leg goes off the ground. Similar to a plié, the leg is always bent.

Fouetté (*fweh TAY*) - whipped; a general term for any move in which the leg or body whips from one side to the other. In color guard, a fouetté is a jump in which the body changes sides. Start in first, third, or fifth position. Brush the working leg up to a front battement while the standing leg goes into demi plié. Jump, keeping the working leg extended, and turn the body in the air so that it faces the opposite direction from which it started. The working leg will rotate at the hip to switch from a front battement to an arabesque position while remaining in the air. Land on the standing leg in demi plié, then close the working leg.

This term can also be used for a turn in which the working leg opens to the side to begin the turn and then whips into passé position during the rotation, opening out to the side again as the body returns to the front.

Glissade (*glee SAHD*) - glide; a side leap from one leg to the other. Begin in third or fifth position. Brush the working foot into dégagé to the side, lowering the standing leg in plié. Push off the standing leg to land on the working leg in plié, extending the standing leg into a dégagé on the other side before closing in third or fifth position.

Jeté (*zhéh TAY*) - throwing; a leap where both legs are extended, one to the front and one to the back. Similar to a split leap, the front leg can either brush from the floor or extend in développé to initiate the leap. The back leg will extend straight to the back. The legs will land in demi plié, the front leg landing before the back leg.

Retiré (*reh TEER ay*) - withdrawn; a leg position where the toes of the working leg lightly touch the front, side, or back of the knee of the standing leg. The knee of the working leg is turned out to the side, and the working leg bends so that the foot lightly touches the standing leg at knee level. There is no weight placed on the foot of the working leg. The foot of the standing leg remains firmly on the floor. The standing leg can either be straight or bent in fondu. The foot of the working leg remains pointed and does not sickle in towards the standing leg.

Rond de jambe (*ron duh ZHAM*) - around the leg; a step in which the working leg circles around the standing leg. A rond de jambe can travel from front to back or from back to front, and is basically a connection of the three tendu positions (front, side, back). Begin in first, third, or fifth position. Tendu front, then slide the toe to a second position tendu without closing, rotating the leg in the hip socket so that the heel remains turned in towards the body. Continue sliding the toe to a back tendu, keeping the knee turned out and letting only the toe remain on the ground. The working leg then closes in back. The knee of the working leg remains straight throughout the rond de jambe. The standing leg remains turned out, and can be straight or bent in fondu. The rond de jambe can also begin in a back tendu and travel through second position to a front tendu. The leg remains turned out throughout the move, maintaining the alignment of the hips to the front. The front and back tendu positions need to be directly in front and in back of the body, and not at a 45 degree angle. A rond de jambe can also be performed a few inches off the floor, known as a rond de jambe en l'air. The upper body remains

Sauté (*sew TAY*) - to jump; a basic jump on one leg. Sauté is a general term for a jump on ballet. In college, our version of sauté is on one leg and hop with the working leg extended to the back in arabesque. Begin in first, third, or fifth position. Tendu front, then lower the heel and bend the leg in demi plié, keeping the knee turned out. Swing off the standing leg while extending the back leg in demi plié, keeping the leg straight, turned out, and toes pointed. Land on the standing leg turned out in demi plié. For closing or jumping to a leg with the back leg.

Sissone (*see SOHN*) - a type of leap where both legs jump and land at the same time. Begin in first, third, or fifth position. Demi plié both legs. Jump up with both legs, keeping one leg extended toward the floor while the other leg raises to an arabesque position to the side or back. Both feet will land at the same time in first, third, or fifth position with the legs in demi plié. Legs can also be bent in this jump to an attitude position.

Sous-sus (*soo SEW*) - under-over; a movement in which the dancer springs up onto full or demi pointe and squeezes the legs together, tightening the feet into relevé.

Soutenu Turns (*SOO ten noo*) - sustained; a cross turn. Begin in first, third, or fifth position. Extend one leg towards the front, then bend it at the knee and cross it over the other foot, planting it on the ground in demi pointe. Use the unwinding of the crossing of the legs to initiate the turn. Finish with the body facing front and the feet in third or fifth position with the leg that crossed over in the back. See Spotting.

Spotting - a technique of head movement during turns that allows a dancer to execute several turns in a row without getting dizzy. When preparing for a turn, the dancer will look in the direction of travel and will pick a spot to gaze at as the turn begins. The dancer turns the head to continue looking at that spot as long as possible as the body turns. When the dancer can no longer look at the spot, the head then whips around and refocuses on the spot as the turn is completed. The shoulders can also be lined up with the selected spot to keep multiple turns traveling in a straight line.

Part 1 Dance Basics Quiz

** Information for the quiz can be found on the video to Part 1 and in the Dance Syllabus.

1. Which of the following is not correct in dance posture:
 - A. The hips should be stacked over the heels.
 - B. The shoulders should be rolled back and down to open the collarbone.
 - C. The torso should sink down into the hips.
 - D. The chin should be slightly above level.
2. How many positions of the feet are there in ballet? _____
3. (Circle one) True or false: All ballet arms should remain slightly in front of the body to maintain balance.
4. What are two things that should be remembered to perform a demi pli e with correct technique?

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5. (Circle one) True or false: The knee of the working leg should be bent extending the leg into tendu.
6. In a battement tendu, the heel of the standing leg does what?
- A. Stay planted on the ground.
 - B. Rise onto the toes.

7. What is the name of a dance move in which the dancer rises onto her/his toes?

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8. Which of the following are important to remember when performing a rond de jambe with correct technique (circle all that apply):
 - A. The working leg should remain straight and move from the hip.
 - B. The hips should shift toward the back as the leg travels to the back.
 - C. The working leg should draw a complete semi-circle around the standing leg.
 - D. The working leg should remain turned out during a ronde de jambe.

9. What are the two types of working leg positions in a pass e?
 - A. Turned out and turned in
 - B. Straight and bent

10. (Circle one) True or false: When performing a lunge, the knee of the bending leg should stay behind the toes.

Skills Mastery Worksheet
Part 1 Dance Basics

Mastery Criteria: The student can demonstrate execution of the target exercise without major errors and with appropriate flow in at least 3 out of 4 consecutive attempts.

Name: _____

Skill	Date Started	Date of Mastery
Positions of the feet		
Positions of the arms		
Plié		
Tendu		
Dégagé		
Batttement		
Relevé		
Rond de jambe		
Arabesque		
Coupé		
Passé		
Front and Back Attitude		
Lunges		
Combinations: Plié / relevé; Plié / tendu		