



AJKA-I

American JKA KARATE Association

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

AJKA-International

Kyu–Dan Examination Requirements Manual

2026 Edition



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Philosophy of Examination

1. **Purpose:** The karate examination serves both the student and the instructor. It provides a clear view of the student's progress and identifies specific corrections needed to move forward.
2. **Conduct:** A student's behavior and conduct, both before and after the examination, are considered when determining the final grade.
3. **The Path:** Never forget that Karate-Do practice is a lifetime process. The examination is only one part of this long road. Practice as much as you can; this is how you will one day understand the meaning of Karate-Do (Sensei Nakayama).

General Proficiency Standards

Kyu Levels (Color Belts)

- **8-Kyu (Yellow):** Ability to perform and apply the simplest techniques externally.
- **7-Kyu to 4-Kyu:** Increased proficiency of technical and mental skills performed with gradually increased intensity.
- **3-Kyu to 1-Kyu (Brown):** Ability to perform basic techniques effectively with internal mental expression.

Dan Levels (Black Belt)

- **1st Dan (Shodan):** Ability to perform and apply basic techniques with force (focus) and perform basic combinations effectively.
- **2nd Dan (Nidan):** Ability to perform all basic and combination techniques, making compensation for individual body limitations.
- **3rd Dan (Sandan):** Understanding the principles behind basic techniques and applying them under different circumstances.
- **4th Dan (Yondan):** Thorough understanding of body dynamics and the ability to teach these principles to others.
- **5th Dan (Godan):** Completion of research in a special subject, including the ability to explain and demonstrate the findings.
- **6th Dan (Rokudan):** Contribution to Karate through physical and mental aspects for the benefit of others.
- **7th Dan (Shichidan):** Ability to apply knowledge clearly within a practical instructional process.

Honorary Ranking Standards

Honorary rank is an award resulting from service and support of the development of AJKA-I karate.

- **Shodan/Nidan:** Support of karate at the local community level.
- **Sandan/Yondan:** Support at the national level or local leadership.
- **Godan/Rokudan:** Support by a national leader or dignitary.
- **Shichidan/Hachidan:** Support by a national sovereign or highest official.
- **Kudan/Judan:** Support by an international leader or internationally respected figure.

Kyu Examination Requirements

8th Kyu – Yellow Belt

Objective:

Perform and apply fundamental external techniques with coordination and balance.

A. Kihon (*4 times each, to examiner's count*)

1. Oi-zuki (Jodan)
2. Age-uke (stepping back)
3. Oi-zuki (Chudan)
4. Ude-(Soto) uke (stepping back)
5. Uchi-Ude-uke
6. Shuto-uke (forward and back)
7. Mae-Geri (Chudan)
8. Mae-Geri (Jodan)

B. Kata: Heian Shodan (Heian #1)

C. Kumite: Basic Sanbon Kumite (Jodan × 3, Chudan × 3)

7th Kyu – Orange Belt

A. Kihon

1. Oi-zuki (Jodan)
2. Age-uke → Gyaku-zuki (stepping back)
3. Oi-zuki (Chudan)
4. Ude-(Soto)-uke → Gyaku-zuki (stepping back)
5. Uchi-Ude-uke → Gyaku-zuki (forward)
6. Shuto-uke → (back and forward) – Kokutsu
7. Mae-Geri (Chudan)
8. Mae-Geri (Jodan)
9. Yoko-Geri-Keage (Kiba-Dachi)

B. Kata: Heian Nidan (Heian #2) + one previous kata

C. Kumite: Sanbon Kumite (Jodan, Chudan, Mae Geri)

6th Kyu – Green Belt

A. Kihon

1. Oi-zuki (Jodan)
2. Age-uke → Gyaku-zuki (back)
3. Nihon-zuki (Oi-zuki Jodan → Gyaku-zuki Chudan)
4. Ude-(Soto)-uke → Gyaku-zuki (back)
5. Uchi-Ude-uke → Gyaku-zuki (forward)
6. Shuto-uke → Gyaku-zuki (back/forward Kokutsu ↔ Zenkutsu)
7. Mae-Geri (Chudan)
8. Mae-Geri (Jodan)
9. Yoko-Geri-Keage
10. Yoko-Geri-Kekomi

B. Kata: Heian Sandan + one previous

C. Kumite: Ippon Kumite (Jodan, Chudan, Mae Geri)

5th Kyu – Blue Belt

A. Kihon

1. Oi-zuki (Jodan)
2. Age-uke → Gyaku-zuki (back)
3. Nihon-zuki (Oi / Gyaku Jodan–Chudan)
4. Uchi-Ude-uke → Kizami Zuki, Gyaku-zuki (back)
5. Ude-(Soto) - uke → Empi-uchi (forward, Zenkutsu & Kiba)
6. Shuto-uke → Maeashi Mae-Geri → Gyaku-zuki (Kokutsu ↔ Zenkutsu, back)
7. Mae-Geri (Chudan)
8. Mae-Geri (Jodan)
9. Yoko-Geri-Keage (Kiba)
10. Yoko-Geri-Kekomi (Kiba)

B. Kata: Heian Yondan + two previous

C. Kumite: Ippon Kumite (Oi-zuki Jodan/Chudan, Mae geri, Yoko-kekomi)

4th Kyu – Purple Belt

A. Kihon

1. Oi-zuki (Jodan)
2. Age-uke → Gyaku-zuki (back)
3. Oi-zuki (Chudan) → Gyaku-mawashi-zuki (Jodan)
4. Uchi-Ude-uke → Kizami-zuki → Gyaku-zuki
5. Ude-Soto-uke → Empi-uchi, Uraken uchi, Gyaku Zuki (forward, Zenkutsu & Kiba)
6. Shuto-uke → Maeashi Mae-Geri → Gyaku-zuki (Back, Kokutsu ↔ Zenkutsu)
7. Mae-Geri (Chudan / Jodan)
8. Yoko-Geri-Keage (Kiba)
9. Yoko-Geri-Kekomi (Kiba)
10. Mawashi-Geri → Gyaku-zuki (Zenkutsu)

B. Kata: Heian Godan + two previous

C. Kumite: Ippon Kumite (Oi-zuki Jodan/Chudan, Mae Geri, Mawashi Geri, Yoko Kekomi Chudan)

3rd Kyu – Brown Belt 1

A. Kihon

1. Sanbon-zuki (Jodan × 3)
2. Age-uke → Gyaku-zuki (back)
3. Oi-zuki (Chudan) → Gyaku-mawashi-zuki (Jodan)
4. Uchi-Ude-uke → Kizami → Gyaku-zuki
5. Ude (Soto)-uke → Empi-uchi → Uraken → Gyaku-zuki (Zenkutsu–Kiba–Zenkutsu)
6. Shuto-uke → Maeashi Mae-Geri → Gyaku-zuki
7. Mae Geri → Mawashi Geri → Yoko Geri Kekomi → Gyaku Zuki

B. Kata: Tekki Shodan + two previous

C. Kumite: Ippon Kumite (Jodan/Chudan Oi-zuki, Mae Geri, Mawashi Geri, Yoko Kekomi)

2nd Kyu – Brown Belt 2

A. Kihon

1. Sanbon-zuki (Jodan)
2. Age-uke → Gyaku-zuki (back)
3. Oi-zuki (Chudan) → Gyaku-mawashi-zuki (Jodan)
4. Ude (Soto)-uke → Empi-uchi → Uraken → Gyaku-zuki (Zenkutsu–Kiba–Zenkutsu)
5. Shuto-uke → Maeashi Mae-Geri → Gyaku-zuki (Kokutsu ↔ Zenkutsu)
6. Mae-Geri (Chudan) → Mawashi Geri → Ushiro Geri → Yoko Geri Kekomi (back & forth)
7. Mae-Geri → Gyaku-zuki (Zenkutsu)
8. Mawashi-Geri → Gyaku-zuki (Zenkutsu)
9. Yoko-Geri Kekomi → Gyaku-zuki (Zenkutsu)

B. Kata: Bassai Dai + two previous

C. Kumite: Ippon Kumite (Oi-zuki Jodan/Chudan, Mae Geri, Yoko Geri, Ushiro Geri)

1st Kyu – Brown Belt 3 (Pre-Black)

A. Kihon

1. Sanbon-zuki (Jodan)
2. Age-uke → Gyaku-zuki (back)
3. Oi-zuki (Chudan) → Gyaku-mawashi-zuki (Jodan)
4. Uchi-Ude-uke → Maeashi Mae Geri - Kizami zuki → Gyaku-zuki
5. Ude (Soto) -uke → Empi → Uraken → Gyaku-zuki (Zenkutsu–Kiba–Zenkutsu)
6. Shuto-uke → Maeashi Mae-Geri → Nukite (Kokutsu ↔ Zenkutsu)
7. Mae Geri → Mawashi → Ushiro → Yoko Kekomi → Gyaku Zuki
8. Mae Geri → Gyaku Zuki (Zenkutsu)
9. Mawashi Geri → Gyaku Zuki
10. Yoko Geri Kekomi → Gyaku Zuki

B. Kata: Bassai Dai + two previous

C. Kumite: Jiyu-Ippon Kumite (Offense: Jodan, Chudan, Mae, Yoko, Ushiro Geri)

- Students 55 + may choose Jiyu-Kumite Ippon

Rank Advancement & Fees

Time-in-Grade Requirements (see separate table)

Examination Fees

- **Registration Fee:** \$125.00 US
- **Examination Fees:**
 - **Shodan:** \$125.00
 - **Nidan:** \$150.00
 - **Sandan:** \$175.00
 - **Yondan:** \$200.00
 - **Godan:** \$225.00

Dan Examination Requirements

1st Dan (Shodan)

Objective: Integrate fundamentals with control and composure; demonstrate readiness for advanced practice.

A. Kihon

1. Sanbon-zuki (Jodan → Chudan → Chudan) – 1 step 3 punches
2. Age-uke → Maeashi Mae-Geri → Gyaku-zuki (stepping back)
3. Ude (Soto)-uke → Empi-uchi → Uraken → Gyaku-zuki (Zenkutsu–Kiba–Zenkutsu)
4. Uchi-ude-uke → Maeashi Mae Geri → Kizami-zuki → Gyaku-zuki (back)
5. Shuto-uke → Maeashi Mae Geri → Nukite (Kokutsu-Zenkutsu)
6. Mae-Geri Chudan → Jodan (one count two steps)
7. Mawashi-Geri Chudan → Jodan (one count two steps)
8. Kiba-Dachi Yoko-Geri Keage → turn 180° → Yoko-Geri Kekomi
9. Maeashi Yoko-Geri Kekomi → step forward → Mawashi-Geri → Gyaku-zuki
10. Maeashi Mawashi-Geri → Oi-zuki (Jodan)
11. Zenkutsu-Dachi: Mae-Geri → Yoko-Geri Kekomi → return stance (× 4 per leg)

B. Kata

1. Examiner selects one Kata from the *Heian group* or *Tekki Shodan*.
2. Examinee selects one Kata from *Group A*.

C. Kumite

- Jiyu-Kumite vs one Brown belt, one Shodan, one Nidan
- Ages 55+ may perform Jiyu-Kumite Ippon option

2nd Dan (Nidan)

A. Kihon

1. Jiyu-Dachi Kizami-zuki (stationary), Oi-zuki × 2 (Jodan)
2. Jiyu-dachi Kizami-zuki (shifting) → 2 Mae-Geri + Oi-zuki (advancing)
3. Maeashi Yoko-Geri Keage → turn 180° → Yoko-Geri Kekomi
4. Step back Age-uke → step forward Mawashi-geri → Uraken → Oi-zuki Jodan
5. Zenkutsu-Dachi: Mae-Geri → Yoko-Geri Keage → Ushiro-Geri → return stance

B. Kata

1. Examiner selects one from Groups A or B plus one from Heian or Tekki (Shodan / Nidan).
2. Examinee selects one from Groups A, B, or C.

C. Kumite

1. Jiyu-Kumite
2. Offensive and defensive techniques against multiple styles/opponents.

3rd Dan (Sandan)

A. Kihon

1. Jiyu-Dachi Kizami-zuki (Jodan) → Oi-zuki (Chudan) → Gyaku-zuki (Chudan) forward
2. Jiyu-Dachi Age-uke → Ude (Soto)-uke (same arm) → Gyaku-zuki (back)
3. Jiyu-Dachi Uchi-uke → Kizami-zuki → Gyaku-zuki (Kokutsu → Zenkutsu dachi)
4. Jiyu-Dachi Age-uke (step-in) → Mawashi-geri → Uraken → Oi-zuki (Chudan, forward only)

B. Kata

1. Examinee selects one from Groups A, B, or C.
2. Examiner selects one from Group A or B + one from Heian or Tekki.

Instructional Tasks

- Explain one combination and its power development concept.
- Describe technique execution from start to finish.
- Teach a student the correct performance.

C. Kumite

1. Jiyu-Kumite vs Shodan.
2. Jiyu-Kumite vs stronger opponent.

4th Dan (Yondan)

A. Kihon

- Explain combination techniques and important points.
- Demonstrate ability to instruct a group using those techniques.

B. Kata

1. Examinee selects from Groups A – D.
2. Examiner selects from A – C.

C. Kumite

1. Jiyu-Ippon Kumite
2. Jiyu Kumite
3. Explain timing / strategy from attacking and defending perspectives.

D. Technical Research Paper

1. Select a technical subject and teach it.
2. Submit a ≥ 500-word paper explaining the topic.

5th Dan (Godan)

Objective: Contribute to karate through research & instruction.

1. Complete research on a special (physiological) subject; explain + demonstrate it.
2. Examinee selects Kata from Groups A – D; Examiner selects from A – C.
(*Kata must differ in principle — e.g. Shorin vs Shorei.*)

6th Dan (Rokudan)

1. Submit research on a psychological or physiological topic; present and teach it.
2. Examinee selects Kata from A – D; Examiner selects from A – C (different principle).

Kata Groups and Selection

Rank Level	Examinee Selects From	Examiner Selects From
Shodan	Group A (Heian / Tekki)	Group A (Heian / Tekki)
Nidan	Groups A–B	Group B
Sandan	Groups A–B–C	Groups A–B
Yondan	Groups A–B–C–D	Groups A–B–C

Kata Classifications

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Tekki Nidan	Tekki Sandan	Kanku Sho	Gojushiho Dai
Bassai Dai	Jion	Sochin	Gojushiho Sho
Kanku Dai	Gankaku	Chinte	Unsu
Hangetsu	Jitte	Nijushiho	–
Empi	Bassai Sho	–	–

AJKA Research Report / Thesis Guidelines

Research Thesis Guidelines (4th Dan & Above)

- **Editorial Standards:** Use complete English sentences, double-spacing, and one-inch margins.
- **Header:** Except for page 1, include the page number (center), your name (right), and an abbreviated title (left).
- **Structure:**
 1. **Title Page:** Title, full name, organization, and address.
 2. **Abstract:** Less than 200 words describing the project.
 3. **Executive Summary:** A one-page concise summary that can stand independently.
 4. **Table of Contents:** Detailed sections beginning on page 4.
 5. **Scientific Body:** Specific Aims, Background (identifying gaps in knowledge), Methods, and Significance.
 6. **Karate Significance:** Usefulness in teaching, combat, or self-development.
 7. **Appendices & References:** Supplemental material and full citations of all past work.