2025

Grading Basics - Tips



The purpose of this basic study guide is to provide the grading candidate with a document they can use for quick reference. These tips will help identify flaws that can be corrected prior to grading day. It will also increase the students' knowledge on some of the material required by the Joseki board in the basic section.

Adapted from Sensei Shelley McGregor's Initial Draft

Recommendations for techniques 1-9:

- Focus on sabaki (hip twist) action, landing the hand and the hip
- Commitment on all techniques
- Eyes focus forward, not at target
- Minimize any excessive movements

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target Area	Notes:
1	Kiba	Tsuki	10	Chudan (solar plexus)	
2	Kiba	Tsuki	10	Jodan (face)	
3	Kiba	Tsuki	10	Gedan (groin)	
4	Kiba	Tsuki	10	Alternate (Jodan – Chudan – Gedan)	Display good rhythm of all three tsuki's, correct targeting essential and always midline (on the line), keep a body axis the same (no leaning/tilting), just a little hip but not enough to cave the knee
5	Kiba	Ude-uke	10	Blocking mid/upper chest (not face)	Ensure you pass the center line
6	Kiba	Osoto-uke	10	Blocking mid/upper chest (not face)	Ensure you pass the center line
7	Kiba	Age-uke	10	Blocking face	Elbow lower than fist. Center the forearm with centre of forehead
8	Kiba	Gedan-barai	10	Blocking groin	
9	Kiba			Maintenance of Stance	Parallel hips and feet (sometimes knee will break slightly for the hip action) 50/50 weight distribution should always remain consistent.

Additional tips:

Recommendations for techniques 10-14:

- Kicks to be executed at 2 distinct heights and at the same spot each time (avoid spraying the kicks)
- Do not "pose" (hold the kick out for a long time), ensure the kicks show retraction
- Allow shoulders to rotate through or else hip is held back

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
10	Zenkutsu	Mae-geri	5	Kick right leg, belt or lower	
11	Zenkutsu	Mae-geri	5	Kick left leg, belt or lower	
12	Zenkutsu	Mae-geri	5	Kick right leg, belt or higher	
13	Zenkutsu	Mae-geri	5	Kick left leg, belt or higher	
14	Zenkutsu			Maintenance of Stance	Foot must set in proper position after retraction, ensure bent front leg

Additional tips:

Recommendations for techniques 15-22:

- Use ude-uke or gedan-barai plus gyaku zuki on turns (listen for what the instructor calls for)
- Demonstrate rank-appropriate hip rotation for all reverse techniques

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
15	Zenkutsu	Oi-zuki	10	Jodan (face)	Narrow stance with pushing hip
16	Zenkutsu	Gyaku-zuki	10	Chudan (solar plexus)	Wide stance with swinging hip
17	Zenkutsu	Ude-uke with gyaku-zuki	10	Chudan (solar plexus)	
18	Zenkutsu	Age-uke with gyaku-zuki	10	Chudan (solar plexus)	
19	Zenkutsu	Gedan-barai with gyaku-zuki	10	Jodan (face)	
20	Zenkutsu	Osoto-uke with gyaku-zuki	10	Chudan (solar plexus)	
21	Zenkutsu	Juuji-uke	10	Gedan (groin)	
22	Zenkutsu		10	Maintenance of Stance *STABILITY	Watch the heel, keep down

Additional Tips	

Recommendations for techniques 23-27:

- Show kicks at 2 distinct levels, ensure the kick hits on the same spot every time
- Put the foot down wherever the instructor asks but return to zenkutsu dachi every time
- Pivot on the toes of the non-kicking leg to allow for full hip movement (heel will face or nearly-face the opponent)

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
23	Zenkutsu	Mawashi - geri	5	Kick right leg, gedan (belt) level or lower	
24	Zenkutsu	Mawashi -geri	5	Kick left leg, gedan (belt) level or lower	
25	Zenkutsu	Mawashi - geri	5	Kick right leg at gedan (belt) level or higher	
26	Zenkutsu	Mawashi -geri	5	Kick left leg at gedan (belt) level or higher	
27	Zenkutsu			Maintenance of Stance	
Additional Tips		- - .			

Recommendations for techniques 28-32:

- All techniques are done in haichichidachi

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
28	Hachiji	Tate-zuki	10	Alternate hands, chudan level	Elbow in, body behind strike
29	Hachiji	Uraken-zuki	10	Alternate hands, jodan level	
30	Hachiji	Tettsui-uchi	10	Step left, execute right hand to head on the right side, then alternate the step to the right and execute left hand to the head	Work both hip options
31	Hachiji to Kokutsu	Nagashi-uke	10	Alternate stepping back from hachiji-dachi to kokutsu-dachi with block	Using hikite as an initial guard or strike to shin, then throw block
32	Hachiji		10	Maintenance of Stance	

Additional Tips	

Recommendations for techniques 33-38:

- Show kicks at 2 distinct levels, ensure the kick hits on the same spot every time

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
33	Kiba to juuji	Yoko-geri	5	Right leg, gedan (belt) level or lower *Step behind	
34	Kiba to juuji	Yoko-geri	5	Left leg, gedan (belt) level or lower *Step behind	
35	Kiba to juuji	Yoko-geri	5	Right leg, gedan (belt) level or higher *Step in front	
36	Kiba to juuji	Yoko-geri	5	Left leg, gedan (belt) level or higher *Step in front	
37	Juuji			Maintenance of Stance	
38	Kiba			Maintenance of Stance	Make sure toes are parallel, try not to raise up and down in stances and execution
Additional Tips		-			

Recommendations for techniques 39-43:

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
39	Neko-ashi	Ude-uke – gyaku zuki	16	Left foot forward	
40	Neko-ashi	Ude-uke – gyaku zuki	16	Right foot forward	
41	Neko-ashi	Gedan barai – gyaku zuki	16	Left foot forward	
42	Neko-ashi	Gedan barai – gyaku zuki	16	Right foot forward	
43	Neko-ashi			Maintenance of Stance	
Additional Tips					

Recommendations for techniques 44-46:

- Kicks to be targeted at only one target (side ribs, armpit)

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
44	Neko-ashi	Mikazuki-geri	5	Kick right leg, gedan (belt or lower)	
45	Neko-ashi	Mikazuki-geri	5	Kick left leg at gedan level (belt or lower)	
46	Neko-ashi			Maintenance of Stance	
Additional Tips		-			

Recommendations for techniques 47-54:

- Use a very short kokutsudachi (almost a cat stance with the back leg turned out)
- Show both a forward AND lateral shift
- Save/preserve and be able to demonstrate hip

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
47	Kokutsu to Zenkutsu	Haito-uchi	10	Left forward, shift and execute right haito-uchi	
48	Kokutsu to Zenkutsu	Haito-uchi	10	Right forward, shift and execute left haito-uchi	
49	Kokutsu to Zenkutsu	Uraken-uchi	10	Left forward, shift and execute right uraken-uchi	
50	Kokutsu to Zenkutsu	Uraken-uchi	10	Right forward, shift and execute right uraken-uchi	
51	Kokutsu to Zenkutsu	Nukite	10	Left forward, shift and execute right nukite	
52	Kokutsu to Zenkutsu	Nukite	10	Right forward, shift and execute left nukite	
53	Kokutsu			Maintenance of Stance	
54	Zenkutsu			Maintenance of Stance	
Additional Tips					

Recommendations for techniques 55-57:					
No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
55	Reverse Neko-ashi	Moware Ushiro-geri	5	Right leg forward, left kick to gedan or chudan level	
56	Reverse Neko- ashi	Moware Ushiro-geri	5	Left leg forward, right kick to gedan or chudan level	
57	Reverse Neko-ashi			Maintenance of Stance	
Additional Tips		-			

Recommendations for techniques 55-57:

- Show hip on blocks

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
58	Kokutsu	Traditional shuto-uke	10	Alternate stepping forward	Wide stance
59	Kokutsu	Slicing shuto-uchi	10	Alternate stepping forward	Narrow stance
60	Kokutsu	Morote-uke	10	Alternate stepping forward	
61	Kokutsu		10	Transition in Stance	
Additional Tips					

Recommendations for techniques 62-66:

- Show hip on blocks, 62 and 63 require you to prime the hip before throwing

No.	Stance (dachi)	Technique	Repetitions	Target	Notes:
62	Kiba to juuji	Age-uke then oi-zuki	10		

63	Kiba to juuji	Gedan-barai then oi-zuki	10		
64	Kiba to juuji	Ude-uke then osoto-uke	10		
65	Kiba		10	Maintenance of Stance	
66	Juuji			Maintenance of Stance	
Additional Tips		-			