

# Explanation of Classes

Note: These guidelines relate to, but in no way, impact scoring. In all cases, the criteria reference system and appropriate WGI and RMCGA policies will be considered when determining classification of units.

All unit classifications are subject to RMCGA Board of Director approval based on actual scores received during the season and comparison with other units within a class. See the Rules and Regulations document for further information.

The following unit classification descriptions are representative of what units in each class will typically attempt or achieve. These descriptions are in no way meant to limit or restrict creativity of the designer or achievement of the performer. Instead they are meant to serve as general guidelines for instructors when making the decision as to what classification to place units at the start of the contest season. It is expected there will be some overlap of classes in terms of what is attempted and what is achieved. Often units at the top of one class will demonstrate some qualities of the next class. However, if a unit demonstrates a majority of the criteria for a particular class, it should be competing in that class. Designers should pay close attention to the scoring criteria when crafting the program for a unit.

Timing Note: Please pay close attention to timing requirements listed at the end of each classification. Novice and Regional A requirements are significantly less than other classes. The below reflects the changes made at the May 2011 membership meeting with the addition of Cadet in 2015 and the addition of Scholastic AA in 2018.

**Cadet** – This classification is for any unit in which most members are 11 years and younger. The Board of Directors will approve exceptions to the age restriction as deemed appropriate. The purpose of this class is to help the performers grow in the beginning principles and efforts in handling equipment, movement, and performance. This class emphasizes growth and achievement for new students and to have fun. Units competing in this classification will be judged using “Novice Class” criteria.

Cadet Equipment and Movement will focus on the training and achievement of simple, introductory skills. Recognize which principles are essential at an introductory level and train for the excellent demonstration of these skills. The purpose of this class is to help performers grow in the very elementary principles and efforts in handling equipment and movement. Always support proper training and development on whatever piece of equipment or movement choice the unit displays. In the Ensemble Analysis caption, compositional qualities should include logic and presentation with good connections and flow from one single idea to the next. It is OK for these teams to not have drill but just static staging. Obvious melodic line reflections will be the choice for most groups in reflecting musical structure. Focus on the correctness of the basics of

composition. At an excellence level, definition of forms, timing and accuracy of equipment and movement, and such elements as pulse, in-step, and consistent step-offs and builds to new sets will be the priorities. In General Effect, design and performance skills will be at an elementary and introductory level. As beginners, single efforts and simple responsibilities will occur. The concept of layered skills will probably not exist. Shows will likely “set, move, and spin” presenting one skill at a time. Effect will be generated largely through clear concept, colors, and costumes, along with precision and timing and isolated performance moments. Achievement of simple introductory skills is the main focus of this class. Timing rules: Minimum 2 minutes; maximum 4 minutes; interval time 6 minutes and 2 minutes equipment time.

**Novice** – This classification is for any units that are middle school aged (14 and younger). The Board of Directors will approve exceptions to the age restriction as deemed appropriate. The purpose of this class is to help the performers grow in the introductory and beginning principles and efforts in handling equipment, movement, and performance. This class emphasizes growth and achievement for new students and new instructors. Units competing in this classification will be judged using “Novice Class” criteria.

Novice Equipment and Movement will focus on the training and achievement of simple, introductory and beginning skills. Recognize which principles are essential at a beginning level and train for the excellent demonstration of these skills. The purpose of this class is to help performers grow in the very elementary principles and efforts in handling equipment and movement. Always support proper training and development on whatever piece of equipment or movement choice the unit displays. In the Ensemble Analysis caption, compositional qualities should include logic and presentation with basic connections and flow from one single idea to the next. It is okay for these teams to not have drill but just static staging. Obvious melodic line reflections will be the choice for most groups in reflecting musical structure. Focus on the correctness of the basics of composition. At an excellence level, definition of forms, timing and accuracy of equipment and movement, and such elements as pulse, in-step, and consistent step-offs and builds to new sets will be the priorities. In General Effect, design and performance skills will be at an introductory or beginning level. As beginners, single efforts and simple responsibilities will occur. The concept of layered skills will probably not exist. Shows will likely “set, move, and spin” presenting one skill at a time. Effect will be generated largely through clear concept, colors, and costumes, along with precision and timing and isolated performance moments. Achievement of simple introductory and beginning skills is the main focus of this class. Timing rules: Minimum 2 minutes; maximum 4 minutes; interval time 6 minutes and 2 minutes equipment time.

**Scholastic Middle School**– All members attend the same school, feeder school or school within the same district (if school does not have an active winter guard). This classification is for any units that are middle school age (14 and under). The Board of Directors will approve exceptions to the age restriction as deemed appropriate. The purpose of this class is to help the performers grow in the introductory to beginning principles and efforts in handling equipment, movement,

and performance. This class emphasizes growth and achievement for new students and new instructors. Units competing in this classification will be judged using “Novice Class” criteria. All units competing in this class will be required to provide RMCGA with a current scholastic letter.

Middle School Equipment and Movement will focus on the training and achievement of simple, introductory and beginning skills. Recognize which principles are essential at a beginning level and train for the excellent demonstration of these skills. The purpose of this class is to help performers grow in the very elementary principles and efforts in handling equipment and movement. Always support proper training and development on whatever piece of equipment or movement choice the unit displays. In the Ensemble Analysis caption, compositional qualities should include logic and presentation with basic connections and flow from one single idea to the next. It is okay for these teams to not have drill but just static staging. Obvious melodic line reflections will be the choice for most groups in reflecting musical structure. Focus on the correctness of the basics of composition. At an excellence level, definition of forms, timing and accuracy of equipment and movement, and such elements as pulse, in-step, and consistent step-offs and builds to new sets will be the priorities. In General Effect, design and performance skills will be at an introductory or beginning level. As beginners, single efforts and simple responsibilities will occur. The concept of layered skills will probably not exist. Shows will likely “set, move, and spin” presenting one skill at a time. Effect will be generated largely through clear concept, colors, and costumes, along with precision and timing and isolated performance moments. Achievement of simple introductory and beginning skills is the main focus of this class. Timing rules: Minimum 2 minutes; maximum 4 minutes; interval time 6 minutes and 2 minutes equipment time.

**Scholastic Regional A (SRA)** – All members attend the same school, feeder school or school within the same district (if school does not have an active winter guard). For a unit not yet ready for the demand of A, Open, or World Class. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI “Regional A Class” criteria. Equipment and Movement will focus on the training and achievement of beginning and some basic skills. Tosses use a limited variety of release and catch points and typically take place from a stationary position. Weapons will usually toss no higher than a triple. Dimensionality is limited and phrases are often very short (16 to 24 counts) with much built-in recovery time. Movement is mostly demonstrated by moving from place to place with a good range of gestural qualities. There is usage of simple turns and leaps and performers occasionally explore level changes around the body. Performers should demonstrate good examples of body awareness (posture, line, shape, weight) with very little change in dynamic qualities. Ensemble Analysis will display a beginning level of artistic effort focusing on clear staging of the elements, logical progression of ideas (horizontal orchestration), and a basic use of the design elements. The triad is never completely used with elements most often presented singly, and occasionally two at a time. In General Effect, the concept and intent should be clear, consistent, and moderately developed. Ideas should move successfully from one to another and the intent of the concept is not totally dependent on the role of the performers.

Performer role, character, and emotional development is evident but at a basic level with minimal changes. Timing rules: See WGI handbook.

**Independent Regional A (IRA)** – All members may or may not attend the same school or feeder school. Members fall under the age rules for A Class guards within WGI guidelines. For a unit not yet ready for the demand of A, Open, or World Class. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI “Regional A Class” criteria. Equipment and Movement will focus on the training and achievement of beginning and some basic skills. Tosses use a limited variety of release and catch points and typically take place from a stationary position. Weapons will usually toss no higher than a triple. Dimensionality is limited and phrases are often very short (16 to 24 counts) with much built-in recovery time. Movement is mostly demonstrated by moving from place to place with a good range of gestural qualities. There is usage of simple turns and leaps and performers occasionally explore level changes around the body. Performers should demonstrate good examples of body awareness (posture, line, shape, weight) with very little change in dynamic qualities. Ensemble Analysis will display a beginning level of artistic effort focusing on clear staging of the elements, logical progression of ideas (horizontal orchestration), and a basic use of the design elements. The triad is never completely used with elements most often presented singly, and occasionally two at a time. In General Effect, the concept and intent should be clear, consistent, and moderately developed. Ideas should move successfully from one to another and the intent of the concept is not totally dependent on the role of the performers. Performer role, character, and emotional development is evident but at a basic level with minimal changes. Timing rules: See WGI handbook

**Scholastic AA (SAA)** – All members attend the same school, feeder school or school within the same district (if school does not have an active winter guard). For a unit achieving beyond Regional A Class but perhaps not ready to meet the full timing requirements of A Class. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI “A Class” criteria.

Equipment and Movement will focus on the training and achievement of basic and some intermediate skills. Tosses use a limited variety of release and catch points and typically take place from a stationary position. Weapons will usually toss no higher than a triple. Dimensionality is limited and phrases are often very short (16 to 24 counts) with much built-in recovery time. Movement is mostly demonstrated by moving from place to place with a good range of gestural qualities. There is usage of simple turns and leaps and performers occasionally explore level changes around the body. Performers should demonstrate good examples of body awareness (posture, line, shape, weight) with basic changes in dynamic qualities. Ensemble Analysis will display a basic to introductory level of artistic effort focusing on clear staging of the elements, logical progression of ideas (horizontal orchestration), and a basic and successful use of the design elements. The triad is never completely used with elements most often presented singly, and occasionally two at a time. In General Effect, the concept and intent should be clear, consistent, and moderately developed. Ideas should move successfully from one to

another and the intent of the concept is not totally dependent on the role of the performers. Performer role, character, and emotional development is evident but at a basic to intermediate level with strong success and engagement for this level. Timing rules same as Regional A: Minimum 3 minutes; maximum 4.5 minutes; interval 7 minutes and 3 minutes equipment time.

**Scholastic A (SA)** – All members attend the same school, feeder school or school within the same district (if school does not have an active winter guard). For a unit at a level beyond beginning skills but not yet ready for the demands of Scholastic Open, or World Class. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI “A Class” criteria. Equipment and Movement will focus on the training and achievement of basic skills. Tosses will display more variety of release and catch points. There is more exploration of basic dimensionality of equipment and layering of efforts. Ensemble Analysis shows a more developed program with skills demonstrated more frequently and with an increasing usage of two elements of the triad simultaneously, with occasional use of all three. In General Effect, the concept shows greater use of artistic effort and a variety of methods to create effect. Characterization is more developed and changes in the emotional character are explored. The concept places responsibility on the performers to be fully realized.

Guards in this class have staffs and marching members with a complete understanding of the basic principles of performance and design. Units may occasionally explore more intermediate concepts encouraging performers and designers to broaden their skills. There is moderate rehearsal opportunity and funding to develop this level of competitive program. Timing rules: See WGI handbook

**Independent A (IA)** – All members may or may not attend the same school or feeder school. For a unit not yet ready for the demand of Open, or World Class. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI “A Class” criteria. Equipment and Movement will focus on the training and achievement of basic skills. Tosses will display a basic variety of release and catch points. There is more exploration of basic dimensionality of equipment and layering of efforts. Ensemble Analysis shows a more developed program with skills demonstrated more frequently and with an increasing usage of two elements of the triad simultaneously, with occasional use of all three. In General Effect, the concept shows greater use of artistic effort and a variety of methods to create effect. Characterization is more developed and changes in the emotional character are explored. The concept places responsibility on the performers to be fully realized.

Guards in this class have staffs and marching members with a complete understanding of the basic principles of performance and design. Units may occasionally explore more intermediate concepts encouraging performers and designers to broaden their skills. There is moderate rehearsal opportunity and funding to develop this level of competitive program. Timing rules: See WGI handbook

**Scholastic Open (SO)** – All members attend the same school or feeder school or school within the same district (if school does not have an active winter guard). For a unit too advanced for competition in A Class but not yet ready for the demand of World Class. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI “Open Class” criteria. Equipment and movement will focus on the training and achievement of intermediate skills. Guards in this area have greater experience and a wider range of skills. Both staff and performers have the talent to grow beyond the basics, exploring a higher level of design and performance techniques. There is sufficient rehearsal opportunity and funding to develop this level of competitive program to benefit the students and broaden their performance abilities. Timing rules: See WGI handbook

**Independent Open (IO)** – All members may or may not attend the same school or feeder school. For a unit too advanced for competition in A Class but not yet ready for the demand of World Class. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI “Open Class” criteria. Equipment and movement will focus on the training and achievement of intermediate skills. Guards in this area have greater experience and a wider range of skills. Both staff and performers have the talent to grow beyond the basics, exploring a higher level of design and performance techniques. There is sufficient rehearsal opportunity and funding to develop this level of competitive program to benefit the students and broaden their performance abilities. Timing rules: See WGI handbook

**Scholastic World (SW)** – All members attend the same school or feeder school or school within the same district (if school does not have an active winter guard). For the most highly developed high school programs, this is the most advanced level of competition. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI “World Class” criteria. Guards with appropriate student talent, rehearsal time, budget capabilities, and a design team capable of producing creating challenging programs will compete here. Students and designers will be challenged to expand their technical and performance base to achieve their fullest potential within programs utilizing advanced, and often new, concepts. Timing rules: See WGI handbook

**Independent World (IW)** – All members may or may not attend the same school or feeder school. This is the most advanced level of competition applicable for the highly developed program. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI “World Class” criteria. This is a class where innovation and setting new standards is the goal. Guards with the membership talent, design and instructional staff, and budget to place their performers at this challenging level be challenged to expand their technical and performance base to achieve their fullest potential within programs utilizing advanced, and often new, concepts. Timing rules: See WGI handbook

**Independent Senior Class (ISC)**- All members may or may not attend the same school or feeder school. For a unit too advanced for competition in A Class but not yet ready for the demand of World Class. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI “A Class” criteria. Equipment and Movement will focus on the training and achievement of basic

skills. Tosses will display a basic variety of release and catch points. There is more exploration of basic dimensionality of equipment and layering of efforts. Ensemble Analysis shows a more developed program with skills demonstrated more frequently and with an increasing usage of two elements of the triad simultaneously, with occasional use of all three. In General Effect, the concept shows greater use of artistic effort and a variety of methods to create effect. Characterization is more developed and changes in the emotional character are explored. The concept places responsibility on the performers to be fully realized.

Guards in this class have staffs and marching members with a complete understanding of the basic principles of performance and design. Units may occasionally explore more intermediate concepts encouraging performers and designers to broaden their skills. There is moderate rehearsal opportunity and funding to develop this level of competitive program. Timing rules: See WGI handbook