



To ensure what is expected for levelling up in your karate ranking, I am outlining some of the criteria. I have a system that will help me interpret where you are, and whether you are ready for the next rank.

While you're being tested, I will use a points system (0 to 5) in each of the following categories to give me an overall score. The advantage in this is that you will know exactly where your Karate is adept, and where it needs work.

My Standards: Traditional Shotokan Karate in the JKA/WJKA style. For reference, I use the **Best Karate Series**, by Nakayama.

We will follow the concept of **Ikken Hissatsu (一拳必殺)**, a term used in traditional karate, meaning "to annihilate at one blow". Although we will attend Shiai's and Competitions, my classes are primarily meant to teach you to protect yourself, and not for scoring points.

Some underlying, non-negotiable rules:

- 1) I am here to help you progress. I will give you no task that I can't help you achieve.
- 2) Control: Without exact control, you cannot excel in Karate. Our goal is come to within a CM of a target.
- 3) Know the Dojo Kun – Karate is as much for the mind and character as it is for the body.
- 4) Promotions are a Reward for Work scenario: you put the work in and earn it, meaning that you can be assured that If I promote you, you deserve it.
- 5) You must attend classes to advance (I understand that you can't make all classes, but you need to make the majority to be considered for testing).
- 6) You must put the work in: In the Dojo and outside the Dojo.
- 7) In keeping with tradition, if you feel you are ready to be tested, tell a Senpai (Brown or Black belt in the class) and they will approach me on your behalf.
- 8) You can't advance on skill alone. Class participation, participation in dojo-related activities, and a good knowledge of Karate history and philosophy are required. Karate is a lifestyle.
- 9) Be prepared, my gradings are not based on your time training alone. I will test you if I feel you are ready. I won't always give you notice.

Grading Notes:

- For gradings beyond Shodan (First Black), I will have Yudansha (Sr. Karate Dan Grades) from the W-JKA present for feedback and validation of your progress.
- At any point, students can request to have an official W-JKA certificate of Rank (In addition to the Budokai certificate). This is an official document from the W-JKA, signed by Hanshi Jan Knobel, 9th Dan. There is an extra fee for this certificate.
- For students Brown Belt and above getting close to grading time, you can request an extra training session with one of my Sensei, Hanshi Don Owens, via zoom for his leadership and feedback. There is no charge for this.



WHAT I TEST ON (In no particular order):

KIHON

Knowledge of Japanese Terms

Stance Definition – There should be no ambiguity in your stances. They should be clearly defined.

Posture / Transition / Balance - Move with certainty, maintaining your **center**.

Kime / Breath / Kiai – Focus, using breath to fuel your movements, and utilizing Kiai

Definition in waza – Full, deliberate techniques

***Contribution in the Dojo** – Warm-up, helping others, coaching, etc.

KATA

Crisp Authority - Everything done with Intention

Stance Definition

Waza Definition

Tempo - Portions/sections of Kata are done at different rates and with differing intensity.

Kime / Breath /Kiai

Intention / Focus – Mental intention – Getting in the “Zone”

KUMITE

Explosiveness Accuracy - There is no Soft karate. Speeds may vary, but there is always intention and control.

Ashi / Parrying - Footwork and the ability to avoid attacks with movement.

Stance Definition

Kime / Breath / Kiai

NOTES:

- I WILL ASK QUESTIONS about techniques and their usefulness, and about Japanese concepts we discuss in class.
- Homework: you will have concepts to ponder for discussion in class
- Those testing for Shodan and above:
 - Will need to do self-defense techniques
 - Will need to critique another students Kata