



Irish Academy of Arms

Bronze Blade Examination in Sabre

Conditions and Questions for the Bronze Blade

The examination takes place in the candidate's Salle or club and is conducted by a member of the Irish Academy of Arms. It is split into two parts, each marked out of 50, with a mark of less than 25 in either section failing the examination.

Part One - Theory

Each candidate will be asked three questions and will have up to five minutes to answer them.

If the candidate does not reply to two of the questions satisfactorily or get fewer than 25 marks, s/he will be eliminated and will not be allowed to participate in the second section.

Part Two - Practical

The candidate will take a lesson.

This lesson will be based on the first (theory) part of the examination and will require the candidate to put the theory into practice, on the Assessor's command.

The exercises will consist of the following: cut to head; cut to advanced target; cut to cheek; cut to flank; and all the compound attacks following from them, with the relevant parries (Quinte, Tierce and Quarte), ripostes (simple and compound) and counter-ripostes (simple only).

Any candidate who does not know how to do the exercises or who makes a major error will be eliminated.

The Guard

Q What is the guard?

A The guard is the only position which allows the fencer to be prepared either to attack or defend.

The Engagement

Q Is there 'engagement' in sabre?

A No. The vertical position of the blades doesn't allow this.

Q Do you know another reason for the lack of engagement?

A Yes. The distance separating the fencers.

Q What is the basic sabre position and why?

A The hand is on the right (for a right-handed fencer) to protect the advance target, with the point slightly to the left to facilitate the parry of quinte.

The Measure

Q What is the measure?

A It is the longest distance at which a fencer can hit his/her opponent while lunging.

Movement

Q What actions do you use to move on the piste?

A The step forward, the step back, the bounce (forwards or backwards), the lunge, the balestra.

NB - **The flèche and any forward movement crossing the legs** or feet is forbidden..

The Valid Target

Q What is the valid target in sabre?

A Any part of the body above a horizontal line drawn between the top of the folds formed by the thighs and by the trunk of the fencer when in the on-guard position.

Ways of Making a Valid Hit

Q How do you make a valid hit?

A All hits made with the cutting edge, the flat, the back of the blade or the point are counted as good.

The Attack

Q What is an attack?

A An attack is **correctly carried out** when the straightening of the arm, with the point or the cutting edge continuously threatening the valid target, precedes the initiation of the lunge.

Q What is *the* attack?

A It is, in a particular fencing phrase, *the first* straightening arm, whether or not preceded by movements of the point, followed by a lunge or balestra.

Q How many types of attack are there?

A 2, the simple attack and the compound attack.

The Compound Attack

Q What is the compound attack?

A It is the simple attack, preceded by one or several feints and, of course, followed by a lunge or balestra.

Q How many compound attacks are there?

A Their number is as the sands of the desert.

The Feint

Q What is the feint?

A Generally, it is the movement of the blade to draw an opponent into one line, making

him/her uncover another.

The Parry

Q What is a parry?

A It is the action of defending yourself from an attack by deflecting your opponent's blade with your weapon.

Q How many parries are there?

A There are five: Tierce, Quarte and Quinte + Prime and Seconde, .

The Riposte

Q What is the riposte?

A It is the action against an opponent, with or without a lunge, *after having parried* the opponent's attack. . It can be either direct or indirect, simple or compound.

Q How would you describe a direct and an indirect riposte?

A A direct riposte is one which is given in the same line as the parry.
An indirect riposte is given in a line different from the parry.

Q When is a riposte compound (composed)?

A When it is preceded by one or more feints.

The Counter-Riposte

Q What is the counter-riposte?

A It is the riposte made after having parried a riposte from your opponent.