



Irish Academy of Arms

Bronze Blade Examination in Épée

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: straight thrust; disengagement, remise and redoublement and all the compound attacks following from them, with the relevant parries (direct, circular, semi-circular), ripostes (simple and compound) and counter-ripostes (simple only).

The lesson will begin very slowly and the exercises will be executed in both high and low lines as appropriate.

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 What is the Engagement

A It is where the two blades are in contact. It is seldom used in epee because of the en garde distance and target area.

Q What is “absence of blade”?

A It is where the two blades are not in contact.

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 flèche, the balestra.

The Valid Target

Q What is the valid target in épée?

A Any part of the body.

Ways of Making a Valid Hit

Q How do you make a valid hit?

A All hits made with the point, with at least 750g pressure, are counted as good. When both competitors are hit, and the apparatus registers both these hits as valid, there is a double hit, that is to say a hit is scored against each competitor.

The Attack

Q What is an attack?

A It is an offensive action, often preceded by the straightening of the arm, whether or not preceded by movements of the point, followed by a lunge or flèche.

Q How many types of attack are there?

A 2, the simple attack and the compound attack.

The Simple Attack

Q How many simple attacks are there? Name them.

A There are 3: the straight thrust; the disengagement and the counter-disengagement.

Q What is the straight thrust?

A It is the straightening of the arm in a line left open by an opponent, followed by a lunge or fleche.

Q What is the disengagement?

A It is the straightening of the arm while passing the point under the blade of your opponent, followed by a lunge or flèche.

Q What is the counter-disengagement?

A It is the action used on your opponent's change of engagement (qv), the point avoids the opponent's action, passing under the opponent's blade (in a direction opposite to a

disengagement in the same line), the arm is straightened and a lunge or flèche follows.

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 flèche.

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 kinds of parry are there?

A There are three: direct or lateral parry; circular or counter parry; and the sem-circular parry.

Q How do you parry?

A Whichever parry you choose, it is done in one of two ways:

with opposition, i.e. keeping in contact with the opponent's blade, without forcing.

Or

with a beat, i.e. with a crisp beat

Q How many parries are there?

A As many as there are positions (engagements), i.e. 9.

Q What are the parries most commonly used in épée?

A Sixte (Contre-sixte), seconde and octave.

Q What is a circular parry?

A It is a parry which attempts to find the opposing blade in the line in which it is presented, to gather it and take it into the opposite line, with the point describing a circle.

Q How many circular parries are there?

A As many as there are positions, i.e. 8. In épée, the most common are contre-sixte and contre-seconde.

The Riposte

Q What is the riposte?

A It is the action against an opponent, with or without a lunge or fleche, having parried the opponent's attack or as a counter-attack with opposition (effectively hitting and parrying in the same movement).

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.

Q What is a broken-time riposte?
A One which does not follow immediately on the parry.

Q What simple ripostes do you know?
A There are 3: riposte by Straight thrust
riposte by disengagement
riposte with opposition

The Counter-Riposte

Q What is the counter-riposte?
A It is the riposte made after having parried a riposte from your opponent.

Q Can you do several counter-ripostes? How many?
A Yes. Innumerable.

Q Who does the first counter-riposte?
A The attacker.

Q Can the counter-riposte be simple or compound?
A Yes, just like a riposte - simple or compound.