

Square Dance Study Guide

HISTORY:

- A square dance is a dance for four couples (eight dancers) arranged in a square, with one couple on each side, facing the middle of the square. Square dances were first documented in 16th-century England but were also quite common in France and throughout Europe. In some countries and regions, through preservation and repetition, square dances have attained the status of a folk dance. The various square dance movements are based on the steps and figures used in traditional folk dances and social dances from many countries. In most American forms of square dance, the dancers are prompted or cued through a sequence of steps (square dance choreography) by a caller to the beat (and, in some traditions, the phrasing) of music.
- Traditions are an important aspect of American culture. The Physical Education Department at North Tonawanda High School has been promoting the tradition of teaching square dance dating back to the 1960's. If your parents or other family members attended North Tonawanda they also participated in a similar square dance unit. We are still using many of the same records, which were popular forty years ago. We have been able to convert these classics to CD's so students can appreciate them for years to come.

RULES OF THE GAME:

- A square consists of four couples, with one couple stationed on each of the four sides of the square. Everyone starts facing the center of the square. Each couple consists of a "boy"/"man" and a "girl"/"lady", with the boy standing on the left.
- The lady on a man's left is his corner, and conversely the man on a lady's right is her corner.
- Couples are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4 starting with the couple closest to the caller and moving counterclockwise.
- Couples 1 and 3 are the heads, and 2 and 4 are the sides.
- A caller at a square dance is responsible for calling out the instructions to the dancers.
-

KEY TERMS:

- Honoring your partner - to bow or curtsy
- Do-si-do - passing right shoulder to right shoulder.
- See-Saw – passing left shoulder to left shoulder
- Allemande left - extending your left hand to the corner and courtesy turning to the home position.
- Chaining – usually, performed by the girls. They extend their right hand to the opposite girl, pull past that person and extend their left hand to that opposite boy.
- Head Couples – couples one and three
- Side Couples – couples two and four
- Promenade – couples join right hands together and left hands together and walk counterclockwise
- Star – boys or girls put one hand in the middle of the square and walk in a circle.

- Bend the line- The center dancers in the line drop hands with each other. With each half of the line working as a unit, the ends move forward while the centers back up until both halves of the line are facing.
- Right/Left Grand- In the right and left grand for all dancers, hands are involved with alternating pull-by movements, no twirls. Arms should be held in natural dance position and the handhold position should be released as dancers pass each other.
- Grand Square- : A call that has the sides doing one part while at the same time the heads are doing another. While the heads are doing the first 16 steps, the sides start by facing their partners to back away and do the second 16 steps. Completing this, the sides do the first 16 steps, while the heads are doing the last 16. The principle of walking 3 steps and turning (or reversing) on the fourth step is followed throughout.

DIAGRAMS:

