

CULTURE COURSE

Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

A history and culture course on taekwondo and the Korean martial arts, read from open sources: older traditions, the kwans, the federations, the sport and the claims, with every claim attached to its owner.

10 Chapters

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Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

Course 1 · Chapter 1 · Why Taekwondo? Scope & Sources

Taekwondo is practised around the world, is an Olympic sport, and is often described as an ancient Korean art. The sources read for this course describe it differently: as an art developed in the 1940s and 1950s, with a dispute about where it came from. This course reads the history, organisations and culture of taekwondo and its neighbours from open sources, keeps each claim attached to its owner, and uses the gaps and disagreements to show how to read any claim about a martial art. This chapter sets the words, the scope and the method.

How this chapter was checked

The facts here come from Wikipedia's articles on Taekwondo (its introduction, history, styles, philosophy and competitions sections), Taekkyeon and Muye Dobo Tongji, as I read them. I read the opening of the Taekkyeon and Muye Dobo Tongji articles and most of the Taekwondo history. I read no books, federation statements or interviews, and every date, name and claim is an article's. This is a history and culture course, not a training manual, and it gives no instruction in techniques.

A note on tone

Origin and ownership of a martial art are matters of national pride for many people, and the sources record a real scholarly and political argument. This course reports each side's claims with their owners and does not pick a winner. It describes people through their public roles and documented work only.

The Words

The Taekwondo article calls it "a Korean martial art and combat sport involving primarily kicking techniques and punching", and says the name can be translated as *tae* ("strike with foot"), *kwon* ("strike with hand") and *do* ("the art or way"). It gives the main parts of the art, using Korean terms that recur in this course:

- **Patterns.** "Hyeong, Poomsae or Teul" are patterns of kicking, punching and blocking techniques, with the term depending on the style.

- ***Gyeokpa*.** The art of breaking wooden boards.
- ***Kyorugi*.** The full-contact sparring "seen in the Olympics".
- ***Dobok*.** The uniform.

The article adds that taekwondo "is primarily an unarmed martial art" and "does not include weapons such as swords or nunchucks". "Korean martial arts" is wider: the course also covers *taekkyeon*, which the Taekkyeon article calls "a traditional Korean martial art and a combat sport", and the older military tradition behind a manual such as the *Muye Dobo Tongji* (Chapters 2 and 7).

A Table of Dated Claims

The Taekwondo article gives this sequence. All dates and names are the article's.

When	What the article says
From 1945	"Shortly after the end of World War II and the Japanese occupation, new martial arts schools called *kwans* opened in Seoul", founded by Koreans with "backgrounds in Japanese and Chinese martial arts".
1952	President Syngman Rhee saw a demonstration by Army officers Choi Hong-hi and Nam Tae-hi, "misrecognized the technique on display as taekkyon", and urged a single system for the army.
From 1955	Kwan leaders discussed a unified art. Until then "Tang Soo Do" was the term for Korean karate. Choi advocated "Tae Kwon Do", chosen as the name closest to the pronunciation of *taekkyon*.
1959	The Korea Tae Soo Do Association (later Korea Taekwondo Association, KTA) was established; the article calls it "the oldest governing body for taekwondo".
1966	Choi "broke with the (South Korea) KTA" and established the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF).
1972–1973	The Kukkiwon was established as a national academy in 1972; the World Taekwondo Federation (later World Taekwondo, WT) was established in 1973.
1988 and 2000	A demonstration event at the 1988 Seoul Games; "an official medal event at the 2000 Summer Olympics".

When	What the article says
2017–2018	The WTF changed its name to World Taekwondo in 2017; "in 2018, the South Korean government officially designated taekwondo as Korea's national martial art".

Dates that don't line up

The article says Choi broke from the KTA and founded the ITF in 1966, yet in another section it refers to "the ITF before its 1973 split with the KTA" and says South Korea "withdrew its support for the ITF" in 1972. These may describe different steps (a founding, a split and a withdrawal of support), but the article does not tie them together. The article also says the ITF was founded "in Canada" in one passage and "headquartered in Toronto" later. I report the dates as given and flag them for Chapter 4.

Where Did It Come From?

The article's first paragraph says taekwondo "is originally a martial art which was developed during the 1940s and 1950s by Korean martial artists with experience in martial arts such as karate and Chinese martial arts". Its history section then says that "discussions around the historical influences of taekwondo have been controversial, with two main schools of thought: traditionalism and revisionism":

- **Traditionalism** "holds that the origins of taekwondo are indigenous".
- **Revisionism**, which the article calls "the prevailing theory", "argues that taekwondo is rooted in karate".

It adds that "in later years, the Korean government has been a significant supporter of traditionalist views as to divorce taekwondo from its link to Japan and give Korea a 'legitimate cultural past'". That is a claim about motive, with no source in the passage I read, and the quoted phrase is the article's, not a government statement. Chapter 9 takes the argument up in full. For now, the point is that this course treats "ancient Korean art" as a claim to check, and that the main Wikipedia article already states that the modern art dates from the 1940s and 1950s.

Older Things With Similar Names

The Taekkyeon article says taekkyeon "has come to be seen as a living link to Korea's past" and "is often considered as the oldest martial discipline of Korea", that it "was almost wiped out during the Japanese occupation, before being rediscovered after the Korean War", and that it "influenced the name and conceptualization of taekwondo". It also says it was "the first martial art listed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2011". The Muye Dobo Tongji article describes a manual "commissioned in 1790" and "published in four volumes in 1795", and says "the majority of any documentation of Korean indigenous martial techniques... has been lost" because of repeated invasions. So the older record is thin by the article's own account, and the link from those older arts to the modern art is itself a claim. Chapter 2 asks what they show.

What the Course Covers, and Leaves Out

It covers the older traditions the sources document, the post-1945 schools and the naming, the federations and their split, forms, sparring and belts as the sources describe them, the spread abroad and the Olympic path, taekkyeon and other Korean arts, the culture of the training hall, and the disputes (Chapters 2 to 9). Chapter 10 turns those threads into a checklist for reading any claim about a martial art.

It leaves out instruction in techniques; ranking the styles or schools; training advice; commercial school listings; and result tables for competitions. North Korean practice gets a short factual note in Chapter 4 only, because the ITF's history involves it. The other Korea courses have their own chapters on cookery, K-pop and drama.

A Method for the Rest of the Course

1. **Whose claim?** Attach every date and every origin story to an article, a federation or a named person.
2. **Art, name or organisation?** A martial art, the word for it, and a governing body can each have a different beginning.
3. **Which taekwondo?** "Traditional", ITF, Kukkiwon/WT and others are different styles (Chapter 4), and a claim about one need not hold for another.
4. **Whose purpose?** The article suggests a government motive for one view of origin. Note who benefits from a claim and look for a second source.
5. **What is missing?** A gap, such as an origin story with no source, is a result too.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Break down the word *taekwondo* as the article does, and name three of the Korean terms used for its parts. Then say what the article's first paragraph says about when and by whom the art was developed.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Using the table, give the year and event for the naming of the art, the first governing body, and the split that created the ITF. Then explain one way the article's dates for the ITF do not line up.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

State the traditionalist and revisionist views of origin, and say which the article calls "prevailing". Then give the article's claim about the Korean government's role, and explain why this chapter treats it as a claim and not a fact.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Taekwondo:** *tae* (foot), *kwon* (hand), *do* (way); patterns (*hyeong/poomsae/teul*), *gyeokpa*, *kyorugi*, *dobok*
- **Timeline (per the article):** kwans from 1945; name advocated from 1955; KTA 1959; ITF 1966; Kukkiwon 1972; WTF 1973; Olympic demonstration 1988, medal event 2000; WT rename 2017; national martial art 2018

- **Origin views:** traditionalism (indigenous) versus revisionism (rooted in karate, "prevailing")
- **Older arts:** taekkyeon (UNESCO 2011); *Muye Dobo Tongji* (commissioned 1790, published 1795)
- **Check:** the 1966/1972/1973 ITF dates, the government-motive claim, any "ancient" claim

Next chapter: Before Taekwondo, which looks at the older Korean fighting traditions as the sources document them and what they do and do not show about the modern art.

Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

Course 1 · Chapter 2 · Before Taekwondo

Chapter 1 left a question: if the modern art dates from the 1940s and 1950s, what came before it? Korea had fighting traditions long before then, and some of them have names that sound like taekwondo's. This chapter reads what the sources say about three of them: subak, taekkyeon and the 18th-century manual Muye Dobo Tongji. It asks one question of each: what is actually documented, and what is later interpretation?

How this chapter was checked

The facts here come from Wikipedia's articles on Korean martial arts, Subak (martial art), Taekkyeon and Muye Dobo Tongji, as I read them through the Wikipedia API. Several of these articles state that their own evidence is thin, and I have kept that wording. I read no books, museum catalogues or federation statements. The overlapping articles disagree on a few details, which are flagged below. This is a history course and gives no instruction in techniques.

A note on tone

"Oldest Korean martial art" is a prized title, and the sources record live disputes between present-day groups about who inherits which tradition. I report each claim with its owner and do not rule between them. People are described only through their documented public roles.

The Big Picture: Fragments

The Korean martial arts article describes practices "shaped mainly by military needs and state institutions rather than by a hereditary warrior class", and says that under the Joseon dynasty "the dominance of Neo-Confucianism reduced the social status of martial pursuits". It adds that "much of premodern Korean martial traditions survive only in fragments", because the collapse of Joseon, the Japanese occupation, the Korean War and the division of Korea "disrupted martial transmission". The Muye Dobo Tongji article gives a similar reason from an earlier angle: repeated invasions, including the Mongol invasions of Korea, destroyed "palaces and libraries"

and so "the majority of any documentation of Korean indigenous martial techniques and combat styles has been lost".

The same Korean martial arts article makes two points that matter for everything below. Early evidence "comes from archaeological remains, such as tomb murals from the Goguryeo period, and later historical sources rather than detailed instructional texts", so "specific techniques and training methods are not well documented". And Koreans "relied more heavily on bows and arrows in warfare than they did on close-range weapons". The picture is of an armed, archery-led military tradition, not mainly of unarmed arts.

Subak

The Subak article defines it as "a historical Korean martial art and a combat sport recorded as both a competitive activity and a method of hand-to-hand combat". The name is written with the Chinese characters for "hand" and "strike" (*su* + *bak*), and the article says "the exact techniques and characteristics of Subak are uncertain due to the fragmentary nature of surviving documentation". Its records, as the article gives them:

Period	What the article says
Three Kingdoms	Goguryeo tomb murals (Anak Tomb No. 3, Muyongchong) "depict figures engaged in unarmed combat that are sometimes interpreted as representations of Subak". Similar readings of some Baekje and Silla artifacts "remain debated". The Korean martial arts article calls subak "a general term rather than a clearly defined martial art".
Goryeo (918–1392)	Organised matches called *subakhui*. The *Goryeosa* records that the military figure Yi Ui-min "rose to prominence partly through their skill in Subak", and royal court events sometimes included competitions.
Joseon (1392–1897)	Early legal codes such as the *Gyeongguk Daejeon* mention subak in connection with military examinations, and royal annals record kings watching competitions as entertainment. By the late period "references to Subak decline".

Two features of this record are worth stating plainly. The word is attested for roughly a thousand years, so it is well documented as a word and an activity. But the article says no technique list survives, and it warns that the Chinese characters read in Mandarin as *shoubo* "functioned primarily as a descriptive expression for unarmed fighting rather than the name of a clearly

defined or continuous martial system". The word may mean "bare-hand fighting" in general rather than one art.

> **Subak and its namesakes**
>
> The article says subak "should not be confused with" *subyeokchigi*, a hand-slapping game, "nor with the modern martial art Soo Bahk Do, which uses the same pronunciation but is unrelated historically". A shared name is not evidence of a shared history, which is a reminder that applies to the "taekkyeon" and "taekwondo" pair as well.

The 1790s: A Manual, a Word and a Quotation

The Muye Dobo Tongji article describes "a Korean martial arts text written by Yi Tŏngmu, Pak Chega, and Paek Tongsu and published in four volumes in 1795", "commissioned in 1790 by King Jeongjo". It grew out of earlier works: the *Muye jebo* (1610, six weapon systems, compiled after the Japanese invasions of 1592–98, and with no unarmed content), a later 18-weapon version associated with Crown Prince Sado, and the *Muyesinbo* (1758). The article calls it "little more than a field manual for cataloguing required skills" and "widely regarded as a resource for understanding the nature of Korean military science in the 18th century".

Its contents matter for our question. Volumes 1 to 3 "focus primarily on polearms and swordsmanship", and the fourth volume "covers unarmed combat (*gwonbeop*, 'boxing'), blunt weapons (staff and flail) and equestrian skills". Unarmed combat is therefore a part of the book, not its centre. The article adds that the *gwonbeop* material was modified so that partners used "matched methods which would only produce a 'stalemate'", to fit Neo-Confucian thought, and that this practice "rapidly fell into disuse for its lack of practical combat effectiveness". It also notes that the Chinese characters for *gwonbeop* mean "boxing", the same as Chinese *quánfǎ* or Japanese *kenpō*, so the term itself points to wider East Asian vocabulary, not a purely Korean one.

The same decade supplies the earliest written appearance of the word *taekkyeon*. The Taekkyeon article says "the earliest written source of the term appears during the reign of King Jeongjo (1776–1800)... in the book Jaemulbo", where the author glossed a second-century Chinese reference to unarmed contests as "like today's Taekkyon". The Subak article gives the same quotation in a different form, dating the *Jaemulbo* to 1798: "Subak and Gakryeok are like today's

Taekkyeon". That passage is "often cited in debates about the relationship between Subak and Taekkyeon", because it can be read either way.

> **Small discrepancies between the articles**
>
> The Subak article says the "1790 martial arts manual Muyedobotongji briefly mentions" subak, but the Muye Dobo Tongji article says 1790 was when the book was commissioned and 1795 when it was published. I use 1790 for the commission and 1795 for publication. The two articles also render the *Jaemulbo* quotation differently (one speaks of *byeon*, the other of *subak* and *gakryeok*); both agree that the sentence links an older unarmed game to the taekkyeon of the 1790s. Neither article is a translation I can check against the original.

Taekkyeon

The Taekkyeon article calls it "a traditional Korean martial art and a combat sport", characterised by "fluid, dynamic footwork" called *pumbalbgi*, with hand and foot techniques "to unbalance, trip, or throw the opponent". In competition "points are scored by throwing the opponent or landing kicks on their head". Its account of the history runs like this:

1. **Joseon.** It "was widely practiced". Two versions existed: "one for combat application used by militaries, the other as a game, very popular among lower classes alongside ssireum". Tournaments were held at festivals; the article names the Dano festival. In 1895 the anthropologist Stewart Culin described it in *Korean Games*, which the article calls the first documentation in the West. Song Deok-gi, the main source of the later revival, wrote that "it cannot be said for sure when and how Taekkyon came into existence".
2. **Decline.** Its popularity "declined as Neo-Confucianism became widespread among the elite". By the early 1900s it was practised "only around the capital city of Hanyang (Seoul), in the district of Jongro". The Japanese occupation "prohibited gatherings of people and indigenous fighting techniques, which nearly made the art extinct".
3. **One surviving master.** After the Korean War "there was only one surviving master: Song Deok-gi", who had learned from Im Ho and practised in secret. After a demonstration for President Syngman Rhee's birthday he was revealed to the public on 26 March 1958 and became known as the "Last Taekkyon Master of the Joseon Dynasty". That is the same Syngman Rhee who, in Chapter 1's table, saw a 1952 demonstration and took it for taekkyeon.

4. **Recognition.** On 1 June 1983 the Korean government designated it an Important Intangible Cultural Asset, "through the effort of Song's pupil, Shin Han-seung". In November 2011 UNESCO listed it, "honored as the first martial art on the list".

What was reconstructed

The article says Shin Han-seung, "himself a physical educator, created a modern training system by adapting methods from other martial arts and sports", introducing "several innovations that were originally absent from the original taekkyon such as pre-arranged forms... a formal ranking system" and re-conceiving it "as a sanitized, modern sport". This "created a rift within the community between modernists and preservers". Both men died in 1987, twenty days apart, and their heritage status was revoked; the community then split further, with Song's followers emphasising "the preservation of traditional forms" and Shin's followers a "more sport-oriented approach". So "traditional taekkyeon" is itself a layered thing, with a documented break in the chain of teachers.

The Question That Matters: Do These Lead to Taekwondo?

The sources answer in three different ways.

- **The name.** Chapter 1's table reports that "Tae Kwon Do" was chosen as the name closest to the pronunciation of *taekkyon*, and the Taekkyeon article says taekkyeon "influenced the name and conceptualization of taekwondo". So for the *name*, the link is documented.
- **The technique and lineage.** The same article, in its section "Taekkyon and taekwondo", says: "Even though the taekwondo establishment claims an ancient lineage through taekkyon, and even partially modeled its name on it, the two disciplines don't have much in common and taekkyon associations explicitly deny any link." It calls the idea of taekkyeon as an "ancient version of taekwondo" a "common myth" that arose "mainly due to the spread of taekwondo as the national martial sport of Korea after the Korean War". Note that these are the article's statements, and the article is itself sourced from taekkyeon-side groups.
- **The older fighting tradition in general.** Subak is "widely known as a distinct martial art" in the article, though "some scholars consider it to be related to, or an earlier name for, Taekkyon". The article states that "there is no continuous, documented technical lineage linking historical Subak to modern Taekkyeon".

Putting those together, the claims the sources do support are narrow: a shared set of words (subak, taekkyeon), a documented influence on the choice of name, and a long record of Korean unarmed and weapon-based fighting. A documented unbroken lineage from those to modern taekwondo is not what the passages I read describe. That fits Chapter 1's finding that the main taekwondo article places the modern art in the 1940s and 1950s.

Other Strands the Sources Mention

- ***Ssireum* (wrestling).** The Korean martial arts article calls it, under the name *gakjeo* or *ssireum*, "generally considered the oldest form of wrestling and grappling in Korea", and notes depictions in Goguryeo tomb murals of the 4th to 6th centuries. The Taekkyeon article says taekkyeon and ssireum are the only two Korean martial arts to have received national "living treasure" recognition.
- **The Hwarang.** The Korean martial arts article calls them "an elite youth group" of Silla with classical education, ritual practice, moral education, loyalty and physical training, sometimes credited with helping Silla's unification. It adds that "surviving historical sources do not describe a formalized martial arts system", so "the actual martial role of the Hwarang... is debated". Chapter 8 returns to this, because modern taekwondo teaching sometimes cites the Hwarang.
- **Songdo Subak.** The Subak article describes a "modern revival movement" whose founder, Song Chang-ryeol (1932–2017), said he learned the art during the colonial period; his son systematised it. The article says "the historical continuity of these practices... remains a subject of debate due to limited independent documentation", and that the organisation has been in public disputes with taekkyeon groups over lineage and heritage designation. I give this only as an example of how the question is still live, not as a judgment on either side.

Reading Rules From This Chapter

1. **A word is not a lineage.** Subak, taekkyeon and taekwondo share syllables and a peninsula. Check what actually connects them.
2. **Murals and manuals are different evidence.** A painted figure "sometimes interpreted" as a fighter is weaker than a catalogued manual, and both are weaker than a documented chain of teachers.

3. **Look for breaks.** Colonial-era suppression, war and a 1987 split are recorded gaps. A claim of "unbroken" continuity should name how it crossed them.
4. **Ask who is writing.** Taekkyeon groups deny a taekwondo link; "the taekwondo establishment" claims one. Each has an interest.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Using the Subak table, give one piece of evidence from each of the Three Kingdoms, Goryeo and Joseon periods. Then explain why the articles say the exact techniques of subak are not known, and what the word *subak* may mean in general terms.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

State when the *Muye Dobo Tongji* was commissioned and published, and where unarmed combat sits in its four volumes. Then give the earliest written source for the word *taekkyeon*, and one discrepancy between the Subak and Muye Dobo Tongji articles.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Summarise the taekkyeon revival in four steps (survival, public reappearance, recognition, split). Then say what is documented about the link from taekkyeon to taekwondo, and what is a claim with an owner.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Subak:** "hand striking"; murals (disputed), *subakhui* in Goryeo, military exams in Joseon; techniques unknown; relation to taekkyeon unresolved
- ***Muye Dobo Tongji*:** commissioned 1790, published 1795, four volumes; mostly weapons; unarmed *gwonbeop* in volume 4
- **Taekkyeon:** term first written in the *Jaemulbo* (Jeongjo's reign); Song Deok-gi public 1958; designated 1983; both masters died 1987; UNESCO 2011
- **Link to taekwondo:** the name, yes (per the Taekkyeon article); a technical lineage, claimed by "the taekwondo establishment" and denied by taekkyeon associations
- **Check:** 1790/1795 usage, the *Jaemulbo* quotation, any "unbroken lineage" claim

Next chapter: The Kwans and the Naming, which looks at the schools opened after 1945, the Japanese karate influence the sources discuss, and how the name "taekwondo" was adopted.

Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

Course 1 · Chapter 3 · The Kwans and the Naming

Chapter 2 found a documented older tradition but no unbroken line from it to the modern art. The modern art's own story starts in the 1940s, with a handful of schools in Seoul and a long argument about what to call what they taught. This chapter reads that story: who founded the kwans, what training they had, how the name "taekwondo" was chosen, and how it was spread through the army and the government.

How this chapter was checked

The facts here come from Wikipedia's articles on Taekwondo (its History section), Kwan (martial arts) and Choi Hong-hi, as I read them through the Wikipedia API. The Kwan article lists founders' training in some detail, and a good deal of that detail is the article's own summary of founders' accounts. I read no books, interviews or federation histories. Where the three articles disagree, the chapter says so. This is a history course and gives no instruction in techniques.

A note on tone

The founding generation's training, ranks and relationships are matters of dispute between their successors' organisations, and the sources note that some founders' own accounts changed. I report the articles' wording and attribute it. People are described through their documented public roles only; the political controversy around Choi Hong-hi is reported as the article reports it and is taken further in Chapter 4.

What a Kwan Is

The Kwan article gives the word as Korean for "building or hall", which in martial arts "can also refer to a school or clan of martial artists who follow the same style or leader". The Taekwondo article says that "beginning in 1945, shortly after the end of World War II and the Japanese occupation, new martial arts schools called kwans opened in Seoul", founded "by Korean martial artists with backgrounds in Japanese and Chinese martial arts". It adds that the founders "who were able to study in Japan were exposed to Japanese martial arts, including karate, judo, and kendo, while others were exposed to the martial arts of China and Manchuria".

The Original Kwans

The Kwan article lists "five kwans" and then "nine kwans". The five, as it describes them:

Kwan	Founded (per the article)	Founder's background, as the article gives it
Song Moo Kwan	20 March 1944, Kaesong; "first of the original kwans"	Ro Byung-jik, who "had studied karate under Gichin Funakoshi... in Japan"
Chung Do Kwan	September 1944; "second kwan dojang in Korea"	Lee Won-kuk: studied taekkyeon in Seoul; Shotokan karate in Japan; kung fu in China
Moo Duk Kwan	1945	Hwang Kee, who taught "Hwa Soo Do" first, then worked Japanese-influenced Tang Soo Do into the curriculum after 1946; the article says he had studied taekkyeon and Chinese arts
Ji Do Kwan	3 March 1946	Chun Sang-sup, who "had studied Shotokan karate with Gichin Funakoshi in Japan" and called his art *Kong Soo Do*; the school was named Jidokwan after he went missing in the Korean War
Chang Moo Kwan	1946 (as the YMCA Kwon Bop Club)	Yoon Byung-in, who had studied Chinese kung fu and, at Nihon University, Shudokan karate; the article says the early school "was mainly based on Chinese Kung Fu"

The "nine kwans" are the five plus four opened in the 1950s: Han Moo Kwan (1954), Oh Do Kwan (1955, founded by Choi Hong-hi), Kang Duk Won (1956) and Jung Do Kwan (1956). The article says that by 1960 there were 40 kwans, that by 1974 the Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA) "had succeeded in consolidating the 40 schools into nine major schools", and that by 1978 a "Unification Proclamation" had all nine agree to abide by Kukkiwon-style taekwondo and rank promotions, though "many of the schools split during this period, with some factions still practicing (even today) their original martial arts styles".

> **Dates and counts that don't line up**

The Taekwondo article says the kwans opened "beginning in 1945, shortly after the end of World War II and the Japanese occupation", but the Kwan article dates Song Moo Kwan (March 1944) and Chung Do Kwan (September 1944) earlier, during the occupation. The Taekwondo article also says the "nine original kwans" were founded by people exposed to Japanese arts, whereas the Kwan article calls five the "original" ones and describes the other four as opening after the Korean War. I report both and note that the count of "original" kwans depends on the source. The Kwan article also says the KTA was set up "shortly after the Korean War", while the Taekwondo article dates it to 1959. Treat the 1944 dates as the Kwan article's claims, unconfirmed by the second article.

Karate and the Question of Roots

Chapter 1 set out the two schools of thought: traditionalism ("the origins of taekwondo are indigenous") and revisionism ("the prevailing theory", that it "is rooted in karate"). The kwan table is the evidence the revisionist view leans on. Three of the five founders are described as having studied karate in Japan (Shotokan and Shudokan are named), and the Taekwondo article states that before 1955 "Tang Soo Do" was "the term used for Korean karate", written with the characters for the Japanese word *karate-dō*. The Choi Hong-hi article says Choi studied karate in Japan, reached first dan in 1939, and "combined elements of Oh Do Kwan Karate and Tang Soo Do to develop a style of the martial art known as 'Taekwondo'".

The kwan table also shows the traditionalist side's evidence, because several founders are said to have trained in taekkyeon or in Chinese arts. Hwang Kee is described as having "discovered Soo Bahk, a traditional Korean martial art from Muyedobotongji" in 1957, and in 1960 the Korean Soo Bahk Do Association was registered "as the traditional Korean martial art". That is the same manual and the same word met in Chapter 2. So the sources show founders drawing on Japanese, Chinese and older Korean material at once; the argument is over which was the main root, and I do not decide it here.

A founder's account that changed

The Choi Hong-hi article says Choi "originally claimed" his father sent him to study calligraphy under Han Il-dong, "also 'a master of taekkyon, the ancient Korean art of foot fighting'", but that "he later recanted this story and said that he never studied taekkyeon and that it had nothing to contribute to taekwondo". The article also says that by his 1965 book "Choi was claiming 9th Dan" after reaching second dan in karate soon after 1939.

> These are the article's statements; it does not give the sources for them. They show why a founder's own history is a claim to check, not a fact.

How the Name Was Chosen

The Taekwondo article describes how a single art was sought and how the name emerged:

1. **1952.** President Syngman Rhee saw a demonstration by Army officers Choi Hong-hi and Nam Tae-hi, "misrecognized the technique on display as taekkyon", and "urged martial arts to be introduced to the army under a single system".
2. **From 1955.** The kwan leaders "began discussing in earnest the possibility of creating a unified Korean martial art". Until then "Tang Soo Do" was the term for Korean karate, and "Tae Soo Do" (*tae* "to stomp, trample", *su* "hand", *do* "way") was also used for a unified style.
3. **The new name.** Choi advocated "Tae Kwon Do", replacing *su* "hand" with *kwon* "fist". The article says the name "was also the closest to the pronunciation of 'taekkyon'". It was "initially slow to catch on among the leaders of the kwans", but when taekwondo "was also adopted for use by the South Korean military", that "increased its popularity among civilian martial arts schools".

The Choi article adds a specific date: the style was "so named on 11 April 1955". Note that the Taekwondo article gives only "beginning in 1955" for the discussions, so the 11 April date is a single article's claim.

The Fight Over One Style

The Korea Tae Soo Do Association was set up in 1959 "to facilitate the unification of Korean martial arts". The article says Choi "wanted all the other member kwans of the KTA to adopt his own Chang Hon-style of Taekwon-Do, as a unified style", but "this was, however, met with resistance as the other kwans instead wanted a unified style to be created based on inputs from all the kwans". It gives two reasons for his break with the KTA in 1966: that disagreement, and "political disagreements about teaching Taekwon-Do in North Korea and unifying the whole Korean Peninsula". Chapter 4 picks up from there with the two organisations that resulted.

Who Counts as Founder?

The Choi article says he is "regarded by many as the 'Founder of Taekwon-Do'", most often "by organizations belonging to the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF)", while "others, such as World Taekwondo, portray Choi as either an unimportant or a dishonorable figure in taekwondo history because of his defection to North Korea, either by omitting him from their versions of taekwondo history or through explicit statements". The article says ITF organisations "have consistently claimed that ITF-style taekwondo is the only authentic style". So even who counts as the founder is a claim with an owner on each side. The article also credits Choi, "together with other Korean martial arts instructors", as "a major contributor to the global expansion of taekwondo", which Chapter 6 takes up.

Reading Rules From This Chapter

1. **Founders' histories are accounts.** A founder's own origin story can change (Choi's taekkyeon story), and rank claims are also claims.
2. **Count carefully.** "Original kwans" can be five or nine depending on the source; the same goes for the date a school opened.
3. **One source, one date.** A precise date such as 11 April 1955 that only one article gives is worth marking as such.
4. **Mixed training is the norm.** The sources describe Japanese, Chinese and Korean strands in the founders' backgrounds. A question like "which root?" has to say what it is measuring.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain what a *kwan* is. Then name three of the five original kwans and, for each, the founder and one training background the Kwan article gives.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Give the sequence of steps in the naming of taekwondo from 1952 to its adoption. State what "Tae Soo Do" and "Tae Kwon Do" each mean, and say what changed between them.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Find two places where the Taekwondo and Kwan articles do not line up, and say how the chapter handled each. Then explain why Choi Hong-hi's changed taekkyeon story matters for reading origin claims.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Kwan:** "hall" or school; founded in Seoul and Kaesong in the 1940s by people trained in Japanese and Chinese arts
- **Five kwans:** Song Moo, Chung Do, Moo Duk, Ji Do, Chang Moo; **nine:** plus Han Moo, Oh Do, Kang Duk Won, Jung Do
- **Name:** "Tang Soo Do" (karate, before 1955); "Tae Soo Do"; "Tae Kwon Do" (Choi; closest to "taekkyon"); army adoption increased popularity
- **Consolidation:** 40 kwans by 1960; nine by 1974; Unification Proclamation by 1978
- **Check:** 1944 vs 1945 for the first kwans; "five" vs "nine" original; the 11 April 1955 date; Choi's changed taekkyeon story; founder status

Next chapter: Two Organisations, which looks at the split between the International Taekwon-Do Federation and World Taekwondo, the role of the Kukkiwon, and what the sources say about politics, with a short factual note on North Korea.

Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

Course 1 · Chapter 4 · Two Organisations

Chapter 3 ended with Choi Hong-hi leaving the Korea Taekwondo Association in 1966. This chapter follows what that produced: the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF) on one side, and on the other a pair of South Korean institutions, the Kukkiwon and World Taekwondo. It sets out what each body does, what the sources say about the politics behind the split, and where the articles contradict each other. Since "taekwondo" in a news story, a club sign or an Olympic result can mean either family, this is the chapter that tells them apart.

How this chapter was checked

The facts here come from Wikipedia's articles on the International Taekwon-Do Federation, World Taekwondo, Kukkiwon, Taekwondo and Choi Hong-hi, as I read them through the Wikipedia API. These are summary articles, and on the ITF side they are partly based on the organisations' own accounts. I read no federation documents, court records or news reports, and I report every date and claim as an article's. This is a history and culture course and gives no instruction in techniques.

A note on tone

The relationship between the two families, and the position of North Korea, are sensitive and have been contested for decades. The sources describe the politics in a few words and do not give detail. I do not fill that in from my own knowledge, I do not rank the organisations, and I say where a claim has no named source. North Korea gets a short factual note and no more, in line with the course's scope.

The Three Bodies at a Glance

Body	What the article says it is	Founding, per the article
International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF)	"an international 'Taekwon-Do' organization" founded "to promote and encourage the growth of the Korean martial art of Taekwon-Do"; it sets standards for	22 March 1966, Seoul, by Choi Hong-hi, "with nine associations from Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia,

Body	What the article says it is	Founding, per the article
	patterns, sparring and "destruction" (breaking), and handles rank certification	Singapore, West Germany, USA, Turkey and Egypt"
Kukkiwon	"the central institution and the highest technical authority of Taekwondo"; it regulates and certifies instructors and manages Dan ranks; also called World Taekwondo Headquarters	Building and organisation "officially renamed 'Kukkiwon' on February 6, 1973"; the building was first the KTA's central training hall
World Taekwondo (WT), formerly WTF	"an international federation governing the sport of taekwondo and para taekwondo"; member of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations	28 May 1973, at its inaugural meeting at the Kukkiwon, "with participation of 35 representatives from the world"

The Taekwondo article describes the split of function: "while the Kukkiwon focus on the martial art and self-defence aspects of Kukki-Taekwondo, the WT promoted the sportive side, and its competitions employ a subset of the techniques present in the Kukkiwon-style taekwondo". So "Olympic-style" or "WT-style" taekwondo is, in the article's words, "defined by the Kukkiwon, not the WT". The Kukkiwon article says that since 2010 it "has been officially recognized as a sports organization and operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism", and that it works "in cooperation with World Taekwondo" on competitions. In May 1973 the KTA and the Kukkiwon hosted the first World Taekwondo Championships, "attended by 200 athletes from 17 countries".

How the Split Is Described

The articles give pieces of one story. They do not give a full account of the politics.

1. **1959–1966: an association, then a break.** The Taekwondo article says the KTA was set up "to facilitate the unification" of the kwans, that Choi wanted his own Chang Hon style adopted by all, and that the other kwans "wanted a unified style to be created based on inputs from all the kwans". It gives as reasons for his 1966 break this resistance "along with political disagreements about teaching Taekwon-Do in North Korea and unifying the whole Korean Peninsula". The ITF article puts it differently: Choi "left the KTA due to international organizational politics".

2. **Limited government support, then withdrawal.** The Taekwondo article says the South Korean president "initially... gave Choi's ITF limited support, due to their personal relationship", but "Choi and the government later split on the issue of whether to accept North Korean influence on the martial art. In 1972, South Korea withdrew its support for the ITF". The ITF article says that in 1972, "following political disagreements with South Korean President Park Chung-hee, Choi went into exile to Toronto, Canada". The Choi article says he went into exile in Canada in 1972 "after the South Korean government refused to allow his organisation to teach taekwondo in North Korea".
3. **1972–1973: new institutions.** The Taekwondo article says the KTA and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism "established the Kukkiwon as the new national academy for taekwondo" in 1972, and that in 1973 the KTA and Kukkiwon "supported the establishment of the World Taekwondo Federation". The World Taekwondo article says it was established in 1973 "after it separated from the International Taekwon-Do Federation because of political reasons". The ITF article says the heads of the nine kwans "formed a new group called 'Taekwondo'" and that "the South Korean Government established the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) to promote their 'Taekwondo' globally as an Olympic competitive sport".

The three versions agree on the shape (a break in the mid-1960s, a withdrawal of support in 1972, a new federation in 1973) and on the word "political". They differ on who did what, and none says what the politics were beyond North Korea.

Where the articles disagree

- **Where the ITF was founded.** The Taekwondo article says Choi established the ITF "in Canada"; the ITF article says it was founded "in Seoul, South Korea" on 22 March 1966 and moved to Toronto only after the 1972 exile. I use the ITF article's Seoul founding, since it gives a date and the founding associations, and note the discrepancy.
- **The KTA's name.** The Taekwondo article calls the 1959 body the "Korea Tae Soo Do Association" (later Korea Taekwondo Association); the ITF article calls it the "Korean Taekwon-Do Association" and says Choi "founded" it and "served as its first president". I could not reconcile these two accounts of the founding.
- **The Kukkiwon's date.** The Taekwondo article says it was established in 1972; the Kukkiwon article says the building and organisation were renamed on 6 February 1973. The 1972 date may refer to the founding of the institution and the 1973 date to the renaming, but neither article says so.

- **The WTF's rename.** The Taekwondo and World Taekwondo articles say June 2017 (the reason given is that the acronym overlapped with internet slang), but the Choi Hong-hi article says "renamed to WT in 2018". I use 2017, which two articles give.
- **The ITF's headquarters.** The ITF article says Choi "established the new headquarters of the ITF in Vienna, Austria", and another passage says the Vienna-based body "describes the headquarters as established in 1985". The Taekwondo article says it was "headquartered in Toronto". Presumably it moved, but I do not have a source for the date and this chapter does not state one.

Olympic Recognition, per the World Taekwondo Article

- **1974:** affiliated to the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF, now SportAccord).
- **17 July 1980:** recognised by the International Olympic Committee at its 83rd Session in Moscow.
- **1988 and 1992:** demonstration sport at the Seoul and Barcelona Games (the article names the Seoul venue and the 25th Olympiad in Barcelona).
- **4 September 1994:** adopted as an official sport of the 2000 Summer Olympics at the 103rd IOC Session in Paris.
- **2013:** recognised by the International Paralympic Committee (16 October); the article says the IPC "later included taekwondo in the Tokyo 2020 Summer Paralympics".

The article names Kim Un-yong as the first president in 1973 and says he resigned in 2004, when Choue Chung-won was elected. It gives no reason for the resignation and I did not read further, so I make no claim about it. As of May 2023 it lists 213 member nations.

The ITF After 2002

The ITF article says that after Choi's death in June 2002 "the International Taekwon-Do Federation experienced a succession dispute", and that this produced "separate organizations that each claimed continuity". It describes three groups: one recognising Chang Ung as president and linked to the Vienna-based structure; one electing Trần Triệu Quân (later led by Pablo Trajtenberg and, from 2019, Paul Weiler); and one supporting Choi's son, Choi Jung-hwa, originally based in Toronto. The Taekwondo article says the split happened "in 2001 and then

again in 2002" into "three separate ITF federations, each of which continues to operate today under the same name". Each, the ITF article says, "claims to preserve the teachings and legacy of Choi Hong Hi". So "ITF taekwondo" is itself not a single body today.

The ITF article also says that "in the years that followed, many of the founding masters of the ITF and several other instructors left the organization to form their own independent organizations following disagreements with Choi, mainly because Choi Hong Hi also wanted North Korea to be a part of the ITF". No further source is named.

A Short Factual Note on North Korea

Following the course's scope rule, this is all I give. The Choi Hong-hi article says Choi "traveled and defected to North Korea" in 1979, was "welcomed by the government and supported in his project of spreading Taekwondo to the world", and died in Pyongyang on 15 June 2002 "where he received a state funeral". It describes him as "controversial due to his introduction of taekwondo to North Korea", and says World Taekwondo portrays him "as either an unimportant or a dishonorable figure" because of the defection. The ITF article says one of the three successor groups recognised Chang Ung as president, and that this organisation "belongs to North Korea" (the article's wording, which I read as saying that president was from there). I do not use North Korean sources, I do not describe practice there, and I draw no conclusions beyond what the articles say.

Reading Rules From This Chapter

1. **Name the body.** "Taekwondo" in a headline might mean ITF, Kukkiwon/WT or an independent school. Check which family and which of the three ITF groups.
2. **Institution, rule-book, style.** The Kukkiwon defines the style; World Taekwondo runs the sport; the ITF has its own syllabus. They answer different questions.
3. **"Political" is a placeholder.** Every article uses the word and none explains it fully. Treat it as a gap.
4. **Check each date against its source.** Five contradictions in four articles suggest how easily dates drift when one organisation's history is retold by another's partisans.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Fill in a three-row table for the ITF, the Kukkiwon and World Taekwondo: what each does, and the founding date the relevant article gives. Then say what the Taekwondo article means by "defined by the Kukkiwon, not the WT".

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

List the reasons the articles give for Choi's break with the KTA and for the 1972 withdrawal of South Korean support. Then list three events between 1974 and 1994 on the road to Olympic status, with the dates the World Taekwondo article gives.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Choose two of the disagreements between the articles (where the ITF was founded, the KTA's name, the Kukkiwon's date, the WTF's rename, the ITF headquarters). For each, state the two versions and how this chapter handled it. Then explain how many ITF groups exist today according to the articles.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **ITF:** founded 22 March 1966 in Seoul (per the ITF article); Choi's exile in Toronto 1972; three successor groups after 2002
- **Kukkiwon:** national academy and "highest technical authority"; defines Kukkiwon-style taekwondo; renamed 6 February 1973 (per its article)
- **World Taekwondo:** founded 28 May 1973 at the Kukkiwon; IOC recognition 17 July 1980; Olympic sport for 2000 (adopted 1994); renamed June 2017
- **Politics:** "political disagreements" including over North Korea; no further detail in the articles read

- **Check:** Canada vs Seoul for the ITF's founding; 1972 vs 1973 for the Kukkiwon; 2017 vs 2018 for the rename; KTA name

Next chapter: Forms, Sparring and Belts, which looks at *poomsae* and patterns, how sparring and scoring are described, the belt and dan system, and how rules and equipment have changed.

Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

Course 1 · Chapter 5 · Forms, Sparring and Belts

Chapter 4 showed that "taekwondo" names several families. This chapter shows what that means on the floor of a training hall or tournament: three different words for forms, two quite different sparring rule sets, and a belt system that, in the Taekwondo article's words, is "not standardized". It is a rules-and-structure chapter, not a technique chapter. It reads what the sources say about how the activities are organised, scored and ranked, and how the rules have changed, and it flags where two articles give different numbers.

How this chapter was checked

The facts here come from Wikipedia's articles on Taekwondo (its Equipment, Ranks, Forms and Competitions sections), World Taekwondo (its Sparring section), and the International Taekwon-Do Federation (its Patterns section), as I read them through the Wikipedia API. Competition rules change often, and the figures below are the articles' as I read them on 2026-10-31, not an official rulebook. I read no rulebook, federation website or news report, and I give no instruction in how to do any technique.

A note on tone

Some of the rule changes below were argued over, and the sources note disagreement about electronic scoring. I report the articles' wording with its owners. I do not rank the rule sets or say which version of the sport is better or more authentic.

Forms: One Idea, Three Words

The Taekwondo article says that "three Korean terms may be used with reference to taekwondo forms or patterns", and that "these forms are equivalent to kata in karate":

Term	Where the article says it is used
Hyeong (sometimes hyung)	"usually used in Traditional Taekwondo (i.e., 1950s–1960s styles of Korean martial arts)"

Term	Where the article says it is used
Poomsae (sometimes pumsae, formerly poomse)	"officially used by Kukkiwon/WT-style and ATA-style Taekwondo"
Teul (officially romanised *tul*)	"usually used in ITF/Chang Hon-style Taekwondo"

It defines a hyeong as "a systematic, prearranged sequence of martial techniques that is performed either with or without the use of a weapon", and adds that "different taekwondo styles and associations (ATA, ITF, GTF, WT, etc.) use different taekwondo forms". For the ITF, the ITF article says there are "24 patterns in the official ITF syllabus; this is symbolic of the 24 hours in a day" and that the names "typically refer either to events in Korean history or to important people in Korean history". It adds that one pattern, Ko-Dang, "was retired/replaced by Juche in 1986 by General Choi Hong Hi", and that patterns are performed "in accordance with 'The Encyclopedia of Taekwon-Do' in 15 volumes written by General Choi". The symbolism ("24 hours") is the ITF article's statement and I have no second source for it.

Under World Taekwondo, the article says the federation "sanctions competition in poomsae or forms, although this is not an Olympic event". Competitors are assessed on "accuracy (accuracy of movements, balance, precision of details) and presentation (speed and power, rhythm, energy)", with deductions for errors; pair and team events exist, and "there is experimentation with freestyle forms that allow more creativity".

> **Same word, different meaning**
>
> The Taekwondo article gives an example of how the families' vocabularies diverge: "in Kukkiwon/WT-style Taekwondo, the term *ap seogi* refers to an upright walking stance, while in ITF/Chang Hon-style Taekwondo *ap seogi* refers to a long, low, front stance". Different schools "may even refer to entirely different techniques by the same name". When you read a term in a rule or a book, check which family it belongs to.

Sparring: Two Rule Sets

The Taekwondo article separates "two kinds of competition sparring": "point sparring, in which all strikes are light contact and the clock is stopped when a point is scored; and Olympic sparring, where all strikes are full contact and the clock continues when points are scored". In

Olympic competition, it says, "only sparring (using WT competition rules) is performed". Other tournaments "typically involve sparring, breaking, and patterns", sometimes with demonstration teams and self-defence.

The WT / Olympic style

- **Contact and scoring.** "Full-contact", "continuous scoring", in an 8-metre area (square or octagon). Matches are three two-minute rounds with one minute's rest, with a "golden point" round for ties.
- **Equipment.** The Taekwondo article says the Kukkiwon/WT tradition always uses "padded helmets called *homyun*" and "padded torso protectors called *hogu*", with protectors for feet, shins, groin, hands and forearms. In the ITF tradition "typically only the hands and feet are padded".
- **Scoring.** Electronic: the article says "all major national and international tournaments have moved fully (as of 2017) to electronic scoring, including the use of electronic headgear", with human judges still assessing "technical (spinning) techniques" and punches.
- **What counts.** Only kicks (using "an area of the foot below the ankle"), punches with the closed fist, and pushes are allowed. The article says kicks below the waist are not permitted, and that punches to the head are not allowed. It notes that WT sparring "award[s] additional points for strikes that incorporate spinning kicks, kicks to the head, or both".

The ITF style

The Taekwondo article says the ITF's rules are "similar to the WT's, but they differ in some ways": hand attacks to the head are allowed, the competition "is not full contact", "excessive contact is not allowed", and a competitor who injures an opponent so he cannot continue is disqualified. Scoring is 1 point for a punch to body or head, 2 for a jumping kick to the body or a kick to the head, and 3 for a jumping kick to the head. The competition area is 9 × 9 metres for international events, and competitors "do not wear the hogu".

Rules Change: A Timeline from the WT Article

When	Change, as the article gives it
Until 2008	A 7-point lead, or a total of 12 points, ended the match at once.

When	Change, as the article gives it
Start of 2009	Those rules abolished. A kick or punch to the hogu scored one point, with an extra point for a fully turning kick; a head kick scored three.
October 2010	An extra point for a turning kick to the head (4 points); a point-gap rule reintroduced (a 12-point lead at the end of round two, or at any point in round three, ended the match).
March 2010	No extra points for knocking down an opponent.
November 2016 (effective January 2017)	The WT General Assembly updated the rules so the sport "dazzles and excites": more offensive actions, some leg blocks disallowed, mid-game interruptions eliminated, simpler penalty assessment.
2017	Major tournaments fully electronic, including headgear.
June 2018, and 2026	The Taekwondo article says the turning-kick head score changed from 4 to 5 in June 2018; the WT article says it is 6 points "since 2026, 5 points until 2025".

Where the two articles' numbers differ

The Taekwondo article's WT scoring list gives 2 points for a regular hogu kick, 3 for a regular head kick, 4 for a technical (turning or spinning) hogu kick and 5 for a technical head kick, and says a match ends on a *20-point* lead. The WT article gives 1 point for a strike to the chest, 2 for a standard chest kick, 3 for a standard head kick, 4 for a turning chest kick and 6 for a turning head kick, and describes a *12-point* lead rule (introduced in 2010). The Taekwondo article also says "a punch that makes strong contact with the opponent's hogu scores a point". The numbers could reflect different years (the WT article says rules were updated in 2016–17 and 2026), but neither article dates each figure, so I do not state a "current" scoring list. Check any official rulebook for the version in force.

A reported controversy: technology

The Taekwondo article reports that "some believe that the new electronic scoring system reduces controversy concerning judging decisions, but this technology is still not universally accepted". It says that "the move to electronic headgear has replaced controversy over judging with controversy over how the technology has changed the

sport": because the headgear "is not able to determine if a kick was a correct taekwondo technique", and the sensor threshold is "kept low for safety reasons", "athletes who improvised ways of placing their foot on their opponents head were able to score points, regardless of how true to taekwondo those techniques were". This is the article's account and it names no owners for the criticism; Chapter 9 returns to rule disputes.

Belts and Dan Grades

The Taekwondo article says: "Taekwondo ranks vary from style to style and are not standardized." The structure it describes is common:

- **Junior ranks** use *geup* (also *gup* or *kup*), a number paired with a belt colour, sometimes with a stripe. These "typically count down from higher numbers to lower ones".
- **Senior ("black belt") ranks** are each a *dan* or "degree", which "counts upwards".
- **Promotion** requires passing tests, and "promotions happen at a progressive rate depending on the school".

Titles attach to rank, differently in each family:

Family	1st–3rd dan	4th–6th dan	7th and above
ITF	*boosabum*, assistant instructor	*sabum*, instructor	*sahyun* "master" (7th–8th); *saseong* "grandmaster" (9th)
WT / Kukkiwon	*kyosa-nim*, assistant instructor, "not yet allowed to issue ranks"	*sabum-nim*, master instructor, may grade students below their own rank	7th–9th dan "considered Grandmasters"; "an age requirement, with grandmaster ranks requiring an age of over forty"

The Kukkiwon article adds that issuing and recognising dan ranks is one of its main functions. So the Kukkiwon is, in practice, the issuing body for the largest rank system, while the ITF groups issue their own. The same black belt can therefore mean different things in different halls.

Reading Rules From This Chapter

1. **Which family?** A term (*ap seogi*), a form name or a rank title is only meaningful once you know the ITF, Kukkiwon/WT or another style.
2. **Which year?** Competition rules are amended often, and the sources give figures from different dates. A number without a date is a weak fact.
3. **Rules shape the sport.** Full-contact scoring with electronic equipment encourages different behaviour from light-contact point sparring. A reported controversy about headgear is a reminder that a scoring system is also a design choice.
4. **Rank is not universal.** A black belt's meaning depends on who issued it and what that body requires.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Name the three Korean terms for a taekwondo form and say which tradition each belongs to. Then give the Taekwondo article's example of one term meaning different things in different families.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Compare WT/Olympic sparring and ITF sparring on contact level, equipment and head hand-attacks (use the Taekwondo article). Then give three dated rule changes from the WT timeline and say why the chapter does not give one "current" scoring list.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Explain how geup and dan ranks are counted, and give the title for 4th–6th dan in the ITF and in WT/Kukkiwon. Then summarise the reported controversy about electronic headgear and say who the article names as the owner of the criticism.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Forms:** *hyeong* (traditional), *poomsae* (Kukkiwon/WT, ATA), *teul* (ITF); ITF has 24 patterns (per its article); poomsae is WT-sanctioned but not Olympic
- **Sparring:** WT/Olympic is full contact, continuous scoring, electronic, three 2-minute rounds; ITF is not full contact, no hogu, hand attacks to the head allowed
- **Rule changes:** 2009 (old 7/12-point rules abolished), 2010 (12-point gap reintroduced), 2016–17 (new rules), 2017 (electronic headgear), 2018 and 2026 (score changes)
- **Belts:** geup count down, dan count up; "not standardized"; titles differ by family
- **Check:** the two articles' scoring lists and 12 vs 20 point rule; "24 patterns / 24 hours" claim; any undated score figure

Next chapter: Going Global, which looks at the spread overseas, the Olympic path in more detail, and what the sources say about numbers of practitioners.

Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

Course 1 · Chapter 6 · Going Global

Taekwondo is now taught in far more places than it was founded in. This chapter reads how the sources tell that story: the instructors and school chains that carried it abroad, the long road from a national sport to the Olympic programme, and the question of how many people actually practise it. That last question turns out to be a useful lesson in itself, because the articles I read give membership figures for federations but no count of practitioners.

How this chapter was checked

The facts here come from Wikipedia's articles on Taekwondo (its styles section), Taekwondo at the Summer Olympics, World Taekwondo, Kukkiwon and Jhoon Rhee, as I read them through the Wikipedia API. I searched the Taekwondo, World Taekwondo and Kukkiwon articles for any total of practitioners and found none. I read no census, market survey or federation press release, so the chapter says nothing about how many people practise beyond the figures quoted. This is a history course and gives no instruction in techniques.

A note on tone

Who "brought taekwondo to" a country is a source of pride, and individual instructors are often described as "fathers" of their country's taekwondo by their own organisations. I report each such title with its owner. I describe people through their documented public roles and say nothing about their private lives.

Carrying It Abroad: Instructors and School Chains

The Taekwondo article says that "some of the nine original kwans during this period were brought to United States and other countries". Its styles section then describes three overseas strands. All three are the article's accounts, and none is verified elsewhere in my reading.

Strand	What the article says
Jhoon Rhee	In 1962, on graduating from college in Texas, he "relocated to and established a chain of martial arts schools in the Washington, D.C. area that practiced Traditional Taekwondo". In the 1970s, "at the urging of Choi Hong-hi", he adopted ITF-style Taekwon-Do but "like the GTF later departed from the ITF due to the political controversies surrounding Choi and the ITF", developing "his own style". His own article says he is "widely recognized as the 'father of American taekwondo'", and that he studied under Nam Tae-hi, graduated from the Chung Do Kwan, and went to the United States in 1956 as an Army officer to study.
American Taekwondo Association (ATA)	"In 1969, Haeng Ung Lee, a former Taekwondo instructor in the South Korean military, relocated to Omaha, Nebraska and established a chain of martial arts schools". The style is called *Songahm* Taekwondo, and the ATA "went on to become one of the largest chains of Taekwondo schools in the United States". Its international spin-offs were "reunited under the umbrella of ATA International" in 2015.
ITF-style instructors	The Choi Hong-hi article says "ITF taekwondo organizations credit Choi with starting the spread of taekwondo internationally by stationing Korean taekwondo instructors around the world". The ITF article says the ITF was founded in 1966 "with nine associations from Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, West Germany, USA, Turkey and Egypt".

Three things stand out. The overseas spread started under the older kwan-based schools, before the Kukkiwon and the WTF existed. Several of the early overseas leaders formed their own organisations and styles, not branches of one global body. And the sources attribute the spread to named instructors, with the credit assigned by the organisation telling the story (the ITF credits Choi; Jhoon Rhee's article calls him the father of American taekwondo). Nothing I read gives a country-by-country account, so this chapter does not claim to describe how it spread in Europe, Latin America, Africa or Asia beyond Korea. Those are gaps.

The Olympic Path

The Taekwondo at the Summer Olympics article says the effort "began in 1974 in the United States when taekwondo was admitted into the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)", whose role is "to establish standards for various sports nationwide". The article says the WTF's technical standards were adopted by the AAU taekwondo group. Its later steps:

Year	Step, per the Olympics article
1975	Affiliated to the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF).
1980	The WTF was granted recognition by the IOC.
1981	"One of the primary events in the World Games", for non-Olympic events.
1982	Designated an official demonstration sport for the 1988 Seoul and 1992 Barcelona Games.
1986–87	Included in the World Cup (1986), Asian Games (1986), All-Africa Games (1986) and Pan American Games (1987).
1988, 1992	Demonstration sport. At Seoul "the opening ceremony featured a mass demonstration of taekwondo, with hundreds of adults and children performing moves in unison".
1994	The IOC adopted it as an official Olympic sport for the 2000 Games in Sydney, where it became a full medal sport.

The Olympic format as the article gives it: single-elimination brackets by weight category, with a repechage for the bronze medals, and medals "in four different weight classes for both men and women". Until the 2012 Games a national Olympic committee could send "a maximum of two men and two women competitors"; "this restriction has been lifted for the 2016 Summer Olympics", so each may now qualify one athlete per weight category. The Taekwondo article adds that since 2000 taekwondo has been one of "three Asian martial arts (the others being judo and karate)" among the sports in the Olympic Games, that it entered the Commonwealth Games in 2010, and that the Paralympics recognition came in 2013 (Chapter 4). Only sparring is contested at the Olympics; poomsae is not an Olympic event.

> **GAISF: 1974 or 1975?**
>
> The World Taekwondo article says it was affiliated to the General Association of International Sports Federations on 8 October 1974, but the Olympics article says "in 1975, taekwondo became an affiliate" of the same body. The two may describe different steps, but neither says so. I give both dates with their owners.

Numbers: What the Sources Do and Do Not Say

The figures I found are about institutions and events, not individual practitioners:

- The World Taekwondo article: "as of May 2023 there are 213 member nations".
- The Kukkiwon article: the first World Taekwondo Championships in May 1973 had "200 athletes from 17 countries"; the Kukkiwon has run an annual "World Taekwondo Hanmadang" since 1992.
- The WT article lists continental unions: the European (1976), Asian (1976), Pan American (1978) and African (1979) inaugural meetings, and Oceania recognised as the fifth only in July 2005.
- The Olympics article: a "number of athletes by nation" table (not reproduced here).

What is missing is any total of people who practise taekwondo, or any count of schools. Popular sources often give a figure in the tens of millions. I did not find one in the three articles I searched, and I do not repeat a number from memory, because I cannot name who counted. It is a fair example of a claim worth checking: a membership list of national associations (213) is not a count of practitioners, and a figure of "practitioners" could mean current students, anyone who has ever held a belt, or people registered with a federation. Before using any such figure, ask who counted, in what year, and what counted as a practitioner.

> **Why a "worldwide" claim needs a counter**
>
> The Taekwondo article's own statement that "taekwondo ranks vary from style to style and are not standardized" (Chapter 5) and the existence of at least three ITF federations, the ATA, the Kukkiwon system and independent chains (Chapter 4) mean that any total would have to say which of these it includes. A single overall number would hide that.

Government Recognition at Home

One thing the sources do say about Korea's own position: "in 2018, the South Korean government officially designated taekwondo as Korea's national martial art". The Kukkiwon article adds that "since 2010, the Kukkiwon has been officially recognized as a sports organization and operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism". These are consistent with Chapter 1's table. The Kukkiwon's own permanent demonstration team, established in 1974, is a further example of the state's role in promoting the art abroad, though the article does not say where the team has performed.

Reading Rules From This Chapter

1. **"Father of" is a title with an owner.** Several countries and organisations name their own founder. Treat the title as the owner's claim.
2. **Membership is not participation.** A count of national associations says how widely a federation is organised, not how many people train.
3. **Follow the road, not the date.** The Olympic path is a chain of recognitions (national governing body, international sports body, multi-sport games, IOC). Different articles date each link differently.
4. **Silence is a result.** No practitioner total in the sources read is itself a finding. Do not fill it with a remembered number.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Describe the overseas strands the Taekwondo article gives for Jhoon Rhee and for the ATA (who, where, when, style name), and say how the ITF side credits the early spread. Then say what the sources do not tell you about the spread outside the United States.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Using the Olympics article, list the steps from 1974 to 2000 in order, with each date, and name the format used for the bronze medals. Then give the GAISF dates the two articles disagree about and how this chapter handled it.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

List the numerical figures about reach that the sources do give, and say what each measures. Then explain, in two or three sentences, why "213 member nations" cannot

be used as a count of practitioners, and what three questions to ask about any "millions of practitioners" claim.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Overseas strands:** Jhoon Rhee (Washington, D.C., 1962); ATA/Haeng Ung Lee (Omaha, 1969, Songahm); ITF instructors stationed abroad (per the Choi article)
- **Olympic path:** AAU 1974; GAISF 1974/1975; IOC recognition 1980; demonstration 1988 and 1992; adopted 1994; medal sport 2000; Commonwealth Games 2010; Paralympics 2013
- **Format:** single elimination by weight category, repechage for bronze; four weight classes each for men and women
- **Figures given:** 213 member nations (May 2023); 1973 first championships, 200 athletes from 17 countries; no practitioner total in the articles read
- **Check:** GAISF dates; "father of" titles; any "millions of practitioners" claim

Next chapter: Taekkyeon and Other Korean Arts, which looks at taekkyeon's present-day practice and heritage listing, hapkido and other Korean arts, and how the sources separate the older from the newer.

Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

Course 1 · Chapter 7 · Taekkyeon and Other Korean Arts

Taekwondo is the best-known Korean martial art, but it is not the only one, and the others show a different pattern of history. Some, like ssireum and archery, are described as continuing for centuries. One, taekkyeon, is described as nearly lost and revived. Several, like hapkido, are described as creations of the decades after 1945. This chapter reads how the sources sort these arts, and how they treat the question each one raises: how old is it, really?

How this chapter was checked

The facts here come from Wikipedia's articles on Korean martial arts, Taekkyeon and Hapkido, as I read them through the Wikipedia API. The Hapkido article is long and I read its introduction, etymology and its account of the founder; I did not read the biographies of the later figures. I read no books, federation websites or Daitō-ryū sources. This is a history and culture course and gives no instruction in techniques.

A note on tone

Founders' training claims and lineage titles are disputed between organisations, and some of the people involved have living students and successors. I report the articles' statements and their owners. I describe people through their documented public roles only, and I do not judge whose account is right.

Taekkyeon Today

Chapter 2 told taekkyeon's revival. This chapter looks at the present. The Taekkyeon article says that after the 1987 deaths of Song Deok-gi and Shin Han-seung the community "was definitively split" and describes the groups:

Group (per the article)	What it says about it
Korea Taekkyon Federation (KTF)	Founded 1991; "the largest and most developed taekkyon association globally"; "the only taekkyon organization recognized by the Korean

Group (per the article)	What it says about it
	government's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism"; a Korean Sport & Olympic Committee member since 2007; "instrumental in shaping the modern perception of taekkyon, promoting it as a non-violent folk-game focused on kicking techniques".
Widae Taekkyeon Preservation Society and World Taekkyeon Federation	The followers of Song Deok-gi. The Society "maintains a purely traditional approach and does not teach the sport science innovations from the mid-1980s and does not hold competitions". The World Taekkyeon Federation, incorporated in 2019 in Los Angeles, is led by Song's most senior student.
Korea Traditional Taekkyon Association (KTTA)	Based in Chungju; set up by two pupils of Shin Han-seung; the article says it "was responsible for the recognition of Taekkyon as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity".
Kyulyun Taekkyon Association	Founded in 2000; known for the annual Taekkyon Battle since 2004.

Two practices coexist. In **sport taekkyon** the article says competition "uses a limited subset of techniques, focusing on grappling and kicking only": points are scored "by throwing (or tripping) the opponent to the ground, pushing them out of the ring, or kicks to the head", with "no hand strikes or headbutts". In **yetbeop ("old methods") taekkyon**, sparring may include punches, open-handed strikes, elbows, knees, kicks, throws and clinch fighting. The article notes that taekkyeon "did not have a formal ranking structure until the 1970s" and that "due to the fragmented nature of the Taekkyon community, there is no universal standard"; Widae does not use formal ranks, and instructors judge skill.

Two descriptions of the same art

The KTF's picture, as the article gives it, is of "a non-violent folk-game focused on kicking techniques". The yetbeop picture is of a broader fighting art that includes hand strikes, knees and elbows. Chapter 2's article says Shin Han-seung's modernising added forms and ranks the original lacked; the KTF article says it standardised rules with multilingual videos. A reader asking "what is taekkyeon?" gets different answers from different groups, and the article reports all of them without choosing.

Hapkido

The Hapkido article describes it as "a hybrid form of self-defense that employs joint locks, chokeholds, throwing techniques, kicks, punches, and other striking attacks", also teaching "traditional weapons". It says the art "was adapted from Daitō-ryū Aiki-jūjutsu as it was taught by Choi Yong-sool when he returned to Korea after World War II after having lived in Japan for 30 years", and that his disciples later "combined" it with "the kicking and striking techniques of indigenous and contemporary arts such as Taekkyon and Tang Soo Do, as well as various throwing techniques and ground fighting self-defense techniques from Japanese Judo". The Korean martial arts article says that because of "its early development by different instructors, Hapkido has no single standard curriculum".

The name is worth noting. The Hapkido article says the characters mean roughly "joining-energy-way" and notes that Japanese aikido and hapkido "share common technical origins" through the founders' Daitō-ryū training and "some Chinese characters", though they "differ significantly in philosophy, range of responses, and manner of executing techniques". It adds that this shared ancestry "has proved problematic in promoting hapkido internationally as a discipline with its own set of unique characteristics".

A founder's training: a contested account

The article says "Choi Yong-sool's training in martial arts is a subject of contention". Choi, in an interview in the United States in 1980, claimed to have been adopted by Takeda Sōkaku at 11 and to have trained with him for 30 years. The article says this "is contradicted by other claims asserting that Choi was simply a worker in the home of Takeda", that enrolment records of Takeda's son "do not seem to include Choi's name", and that "except for claims made by Choi himself, there is little evidence that Choi was the adopted son of Takeda". It also reports that the current head of the main Daitō-ryū line has released a page from Takeda's register that contains Choi's name, and that "some scholars believe it is likely that Choi received most of his training in Daito Ryu from Yoshida Kotaro". It also cites a recollection attributed to Kisshomaru Ueshiba, repeating what his father said about a young Korean at a seminar, which is second-hand. Pulling these together, the sources agree Choi brought Daitō-ryū techniques to Korea and disagree on how much he trained and under whom.

How the Sources Sort the Arts

The Korean martial arts article gives a view of the 20th century that cuts across the individual stories. It says that after liberation in 1945, Japanese arts "such as Daitō-ryū Aiki-jūjutsu, karate, judo, and kendo were already widespread due to the colonial education system, while Chinese martial arts had a more limited influence". Taekwondo and hapkido "became the most prominent" of the new systems: "although their techniques were largely influenced by Japanese martial arts, their founders emphasized Korean identity and historical continuity, often through terminology, symbolism, and naming". It names further hybrids, "Hwa Rang Do, Hankido, and Kuk Sool", and the Hapkido article says two of Choi's students (named there) "went on to form the arts of Kuk Sool Won and modern Hwa Rang Do", with the caveat "though some argue that their training stems from time spent training under Kim Moo-hong".

Group	Arts and what the article says
Described as long-continuous	**Ssireum** (wrestling): "probably the oldest martial discipline of Korea"; "survived into the modern era with relatively clear continuity"; federation in 1920; designated Important Intangible Cultural Property No. 131 in 2017; UNESCO-listed 2018, jointly with the North. **Gungdo** (archery): the composite bow was "Korea's primary weapon of war for centuries"; "not as severely affected" by occupation; National Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 142 in 2020.
Revived after a near-break	**Taekkyeon**: "recorded history dating back at least to the 18th century"; revived through Song Deok-gi; designated 1983 and UNESCO-listed 2011.
Mid-20th-century creations built on Japanese, Chinese and Korean sources	**Taekwondo, hapkido, Tang Soo Do** (based "primarily" on karate as taught during the occupation, "with later indigenous influences"); **Soo Bahk Do**, developed by Hwang Kee "in the 1960's" and "inspired in part by Gwonbeop and Hwang's interpretation of the manual *Muyedobotongji*"; Hwa Rang Do, Hankido, Kuk Sool.
Late 20th and 21st century	Kyukgido, GongKwon Yusul, Kyeok Too Ki, Kunguk-Do (20th century); **Yongmudo** (created in 2001 by professors of Yong In University, "combining their martial arts and combat sports programs into a single hybrid").

The article's own summary sentence is the one to keep: "over time, some schools began emphasizing connections to traditional Korean martial arts and cultural heritage, though in many cases these links were largely symbolic rather than based on continuous practice". That is the same distinction Chapters 1, 2 and 3 drew for taekwondo, applied across the whole field. The

article also says that from the 1960s to the 1970s "South Korea's military governments actively supported certain martial arts, particularly Taekwondo", and describes taekwondo as "standardized, institutionalized, and promoted as a national sport".

More small discrepancies

- The Korean martial arts article lists Korean swordsmanship sources as "Muyejebo (1610), Muyeshinbo (1759), and Muyedobotongji (1790)". The Muye Dobo Tongji article gives 1795 for publication (1790 for the commission) and 1758 for the Muyesinbo. I use the Muye Dobo Tongji article's dates, as in Chapter 2.
- The Korean martial arts article's taekwondo section calls it "the national martial art of both Korean states". Earlier chapters give 2018 as the date of the South Korean designation. I report the two-Korea phrasing as that article's and do not use any North Korean source to check it.
- That section also says that after Choi's emigration "the name Choi Hong-hi and his works were to be erased from the memory of the South Korean people". No source for this appears in the passage, and it is stronger than the Choi article's account, which says World Taekwondo omits or criticises him. I do not rely on it.
- The Korean martial arts article says Taekkyeon was "the first Korean martial art" to get official cultural recognition (1983), while the Taekkyeon article says it and ssireum are the two with "living national treasure" status. These are compatible (ssireum's designation, per the first article, came in 2017), but they are different claims.

Reading Rules From This Chapter

1. **Ask what kind of "old".** Continuous (ssireum, gungdo), revived (taekkyeon), or a 20th-century creation with an older name or symbol. The sources use different words for each.
2. **A founder's account is a claim.** Hapkido's founder, like taekwondo's, has an origin story that other records do not fully support.
3. **Names are not lineages.** "Tang Soo Do" and "Soo Bahk Do", "hapkido" and "aikido", "subak" and "Soo Bahk Do" share sounds or characters without sharing a history.
4. **More than one version of one art.** Taekkyeon's sport, yetbeop and Widae forms differ, and a statement about "taekkyeon" should say which.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Describe the two modern forms of taekkyeon (sport and yetbeop) and say how the Widae Preservation Society differs from the KTF. Then explain why "taekkyeon" in a news item may need further information to be understood.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Give the Hapkido article's account of hapkido's technical sources, and state what is contested about Choi Yong-sool's training. Which points do the sources agree on?

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Sort ssireum, taekkyeon, taekwondo, Soo Bahk Do and Yongmudo into the article's groups (continuous, revived, mid-20th-century, newer) and give one supporting phrase for each. Then quote the article's sentence about symbolic links and say how it connects to earlier chapters.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Taekkyeon today:** KTF (largest; government-recognised), Widae (traditional; no ranks or competitions), KTTA, Kyulyun; sport vs yetbeop versions
- **Hapkido:** Daitō-ryū techniques via Choi Yong-sool, plus kicks and other elements; no single curriculum; founder's training contested
- **Sorting:** ssireum and gungdo continuous; taekkyeon revived; taekwondo, hapkido, Tang Soo Do, Soo Bahk Do mid-20th-century; Yongmudo 2001

- **Key quote:** links to tradition "largely symbolic rather than based on continuous practice"
- **Check:** 1790/1795 and 1758/1759 for the manuals; "both Korean states"; Choi Hong-hi "erased" claim; any "oldest" claim

Next chapter: The Dojang, which looks at the training hall, the uniform, etiquette, the tenets and philosophy attached to taekwondo, and how much is documented history and how much later teaching.

Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

Course 1 · Chapter 8 · The Dojang

So far the course has followed organisations and rules. This chapter goes inside the training hall (the dojang) to look at what the sources say about its setting, the uniform and belt, and the ideas taught there: the tenets, the oath, the "theory of power" and the appeal to the Hwarang of ancient Silla. The question to keep asking is the one from Chapter 1: for each idea, who wrote it, when, and what does the record show about where it came from?

How this chapter was checked

The facts here come from Wikipedia's articles on Taekwondo (its Philosophy section), Dobok, Dojang and Hwarang, as I read them through the Wikipedia API. The Dojang article is mostly about the Japanese *dōjō*, with one line on the Korean hall, so I found no description of taekwondo etiquette (bowing, entering and leaving, who stands where). I do not describe any, and that is a gap in my reading, not a claim that none exists. I read no federation handbook or school website.

A note on tone

Tenets, oaths and "spirit" are held sincerely by many practitioners and are not here to be debunked. The aim is narrower: to show what the record says about who put each idea forward and when. I describe founders through their public roles, report what each organisation says about itself with its owner, and do not rank the philosophies.

The Hall, the Uniform, the Belt

The hall. The Taekwondo article says "the school or place where instruction is given is called a *dojang*" (도장; 道場). The Dojang article lists the Korean *dojang* among "similar cultural establishments" and says this type of school "is fairly similar to the Japanese variety". The word is the Korean reading of the same characters as the Japanese *dōjō*, which the article says "originates from Buddhism" and means literally "place of the Way". The article's detailed customs (shoes not worn, ritual cleaning, a front wall called the *shomen* with a shrine or flowers) are described for Japanese halls; I do not apply them to taekwondo.

The uniform. The Dobok article says *dobok* is "the uniform worn by practitioners of Korean martial arts", *do* meaning "way" and *bok* "clothing", and that it "came from the Japanese keikogi/dōgi, used in Japanese martial arts, such as judo". It continues:

- The pants and sleeves "are wider and longer than the traditional Japanese keikogi", and so practitioners "often wear a dobok modeled after the Korean hanbok".
- WTF-style doboks "usually have v-neck jackets, tailored after the design of the hanbok"; traditional taekwondo practitioners "may wear doboks that are identical or very similar to keikogi, with a cross-over jacket front"; ITF-style practitioners "typically wear a newer design with a vertically closing jacket front".
- Colours: "white and black are the most common".

The belt. The article says the belt (*tti*) denotes rank: coloured belts for *geup*-holders and black for dan-holders, with the order "different from school to school" (a white first belt is most common, followed by "yellow, orange, green, blue, purple, red, brown, and then black"). That matches Chapter 5's finding that ranks are "not standardized". The belt colour sequence itself is an example of something the sources describe as varying, with no historical origin given in the articles read.

The Tenets and the Oath

The Taekwondo article opens its Philosophy section with the statement that "different styles of Taekwondo adopt different philosophical underpinnings". It gives Choi Hong-hi's as the first example: "the Five Tenets of Taekwondo":

Tenet	Korean
Courtesy	*yeui* (예의)
Integrity	*yeomchi* (염치)
Perseverance	*innae* (인내)
Self-control	*geukgi* (극기)
Indomitable spirit	*baekjeolbulgul* (백절불굴)

They are "further articulated in a taekwondo oath, also authored by Choi": to observe the tenets, respect the instructor and seniors, never misuse taekwondo, "be a champion of freedom and justice" and "build a more peaceful world". The article adds that "modern ITF organizations have continued to update and expand upon this philosophy". So here the authorship is documented: the article names Choi as the author of both. It does not give the year.

World Taekwondo's and the Kukkiwon's Account

The article says that the WTF (now WT) "also refers to the commandments of the Hwarang", and "like the ITF philosophy, it centers on the development of a peaceful society as one of the overarching goals". Its stated philosophy is that this goal "can be furthered by adoption of the Hwarang spirit, by behaving rationally ('education in accordance with the reason of heaven'), and by recognition of the philosophies embodied in the taegeuk (the yin and the yang, i.e., 'the unity of opposites') and the sam taegeuk (understanding change in the world as the interactions of the heavens, the Earth, and Man)". It adds that "the philosophical position articulated by the Kukkiwon is likewise based on the Hwarang tradition". The WT account has no named author in the article; it is an institutional statement.

Choi's Theory of Power

The article says that the emphasis on speed in taekwondo "has its origins in analyses undertaken by Choi Hong-hi", known to ITF practitioners as "Choi's Theory of Power". Choi "based his understanding of power on biomechanics and Newtonian physics as well as Chinese martial arts", and the article's example is that kinetic energy "increases quadratically with the speed of the strike, but increases only linearly with the mass". It lists the "components": reaction force, concentration, equilibrium, breath control, mass and speed. It also describes a "relax/strike" principle, which "it is believed" increases power, and a "sine wave" technique, which the styles section says "some ITF schools adopt, while others do not". I describe these only as named ideas with an author and an organisation that teaches them. The article does not say how the theory was tested, and I give no technique instruction.

The Hwarang Referent: What the Record Shows

Both the ITF (as the Taekwondo article reads) and WT/Kukkiwon accounts cite the Hwarang. The Hwarang article says they were "an elite warrior group of male youth in Silla" from "the mid 6th century" to "the early 10th century", with their information found "mainly in the historiographical works Samguk sagi (1145) and Samguk yusa (c. 1285)". Several points from that article bear on how to read the reference:

- **Late knowledge.** The article says "the history of the hwarang was not widely known until after the National Liberation Day of Korea in 1945, after which the hwarang became elevated to symbolic importance". That is the same date as the first kwans.
- **Lost primary sources.** The surviving works "cite primary sources no longer existent". The article reports that "in the late 1980s, an alleged Hwarang Segi manuscript was discovered in Gimhae", and that the scholar Richard McBride "regards it as a forgery".
- **The "Five Commandments".** The article says the monk Won Gwang composed the *Sesok-ogye* ("Five Commandments for Secular Life") for two youths, and that "these have since been attributed as a guiding ethos for the Hwarang". They are: loyalty to one's lord; love and respect for parents; trust among friends; never retreat in battle; never take a life without a just cause.
- **A debated martial role.** Chapter 2's Korean martial arts article says "surviving historical sources do not describe a formalized martial arts system" for the Hwarang. The Hwarang article quotes the historian Vladimir Tikhonov's description of them as "sweet young men" who served in the military because of the era's "strict military laws and traditions".

A referent is not a copy

The Taekwondo article says taekwondo philosophies "refer back to the Five Commandments of the Hwarang as a historical referent". Compare the lists. The Hwarang commandments, as the Hwarang article gives them, are loyalty to a lord, filial piety, trust among friends, no retreat in battle and no killing without just cause. Choi's tenets are courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and indomitable spirit. They overlap in spirit (and the oath's "never misuse taekwondo" sits near "never take a life without a just cause"), but they are different lists. This reading is mine, from the two articles; neither article says the tenets were derived from the commandments. The article's careful phrase is "historical referent".

Documented, Attributed, Later

Idea	What the sources let us say
Dobok	Documented descent from the Japanese keikogi, with Korean (hanbok-style) variants in some styles.
Five Tenets and oath	Attributed to a named author, Choi Hong-hi, and carried by ITF organisations; no date in the articles read.
WT/Kukkiwon philosophy	An institutional statement of the Hwarang spirit and the taegeuk; no named author or date.
Theory of Power	Attributed to Choi and the ITF; its testing is not described.
Hwarang link	A "historical referent" for later philosophies; the Hwarang were little known until 1945; their martial role is debated; one manuscript regarded as a forgery.
Hall etiquette	Not described for taekwondo in the articles I read.

Reading Rules From This Chapter

1. **Find the author.** A tenet with a named author (Choi) is a different kind of fact from a philosophy attributed to an institution or to "tradition".
2. **"Based on tradition" asks for a chain.** When an old group is cited, check what is known of it, when it became known, and what survives of its teaching.
3. **Compare the lists.** Two sets of five can share a number and a spirit and still be different content.
4. **Silence on etiquette is a gap.** Do not fill in rituals from the Japanese dōjō or from memory.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Using the Dobok and Dojang articles, say where the dobok is said to come from and how the WTF-style, traditional and ITF-style jackets differ. Then say what the Dojang article tells you about the Korean dojang, and what it does not tell you.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

List Choi's Five Tenets and the oath's themes, and say what the Taekwondo article states about their authorship. Then summarise the WT and Kukkiwon statement of philosophy, naming the two concepts it cites besides the Hwarang spirit.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Give three facts from the Hwarang article that affect how much weight the Hwarang reference carries. Then compare the Hwarang Five Commandments with Choi's Five Tenets, and explain why the chapter calls the Hwarang a "referent" and not a source.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Dojang / dobok / tti:** hall "fairly similar to the Japanese" one; dobok descends from the keikogi, with hanbok-style variants; belt order varies by school
- **Choi's Five Tenets:** courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, indomitable spirit; oath also by Choi; Theory of Power
- **WT/Kukkiwon:** Hwarang spirit, rational behaviour, taegeuk and sam taegeuk; aim a peaceful society
- **Hwarang:** Silla youth group; known from the Samguk sagi (1145) and Samguk yusa (c. 1285); little known before 1945; Hwarang Segi manuscript regarded as a forgery by one scholar; martial role debated
- **Gap:** no taekwondo etiquette described in the articles read

Next chapter: Claims and Controversies, which gathers the disputes met along the way (origin stories, the karate-influence argument, rule and scoring disputes) and reports each as reported,

with owners.

Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

Course 1 · Chapter 9 · Claims and Controversies

Every chapter so far has met a dispute: where taekwondo came from, whether it descends from taekkyeon, who founded what, which organisation is "authentic", how a match should be scored. This chapter collects them, sorts them by who makes the claim and what evidence is offered, and adds the best-documented rule controversy in the sources, the refereeing and protest disputes at the 2008 Olympic taekwondo events. The aim is not to settle any of them. It is to practise reporting a dispute accurately.

How this chapter was checked

The facts here come from the Wikipedia articles used in earlier chapters (Taekwondo, Taekkyeon, Subak, Korean martial arts, Hapkido, Hwarang, Choi Hong-hi, ITF, World Taekwondo), plus Ángel Matos and Taekwondo at the 2008 Summer Olympics, as I read them through the Wikipedia API. For the 2008 events I read the Matos article in full and the rule-dispute passages of the Olympics article. I read no news reports, WTF statements, referee reports or court records, so the 2008 account is Wikipedia's summary of what others reported, and quotations in it are the articles' own.

A note on tone

Several of these disputes involve named living or recently living people and organisations with current members. I report what the articles say each side claims, mark allegations as allegations, and say where an outcome is stated and where it is not. I draw no conclusions about anyone's motives or honesty. Where an article's wording is stronger than its sourcing, I say so.

Claims About Origins

Claim and owner	What the articles give for and against	Status in the sources
Taekwondo is indigenous (traditionalism; the	For: the ancient fighting traditions (Chapter 2); Hwang Kee's use of the	Open. The article calls revisionism "the prevailing

Claim and owner	What the articles give for and against	Status in the sources
Taekwondo article says "the Korean government has been a significant supporter")	*Muye Dobo Tongji*. Against: the founders' karate training; "Tang Soo Do" as the pre-1955 term for Korean karate (Chapter 3).	theory". The government-motive claim has no source in the passage read.
Taekwondo is rooted in karate (revisionism)	For: three of five original kwan founders are described as karate-trained; Choi studied karate in Japan. Against: the traditionalist view, and founders who also trained in taekkyeon or Chinese arts.	Open; "prevailing" per the article.
Taekwondo descends from taekkyeon ("the taekwondo establishment", per the Taekkyeon article)	For: the name was "closest to the pronunciation of taekkyon". Against: "taekkyon associations explicitly deny any link"; "the two disciplines don't have much in common"; Choi recanted a story of studying taekkyeon.	Name documented; technical lineage disputed by a named side.
Subak was an early form of taekkyeon ("some researchers")	For: a late Joseon reference equating them. Against: "others maintain" they were distinct; "no continuous, documented technical lineage".	"Unresolved" per the Subak article, which adds that the dispute has entered heritage-designation arguments between present-day groups.
Hapkido founder's long training under Takeda (Choi Yong-sool, in a 1980 interview)	For: a register page released by the current Daitō-ryū head. Against: enrolment records "do not seem to include" his name; "little evidence" apart from his own claims.	Contested; sources agree only that he brought Daitō-ryū-type techniques.
Taekwondo's philosophy comes from the Hwarang (the WT, Kukkiwon and others)	For: later statements cite the commandments. Against: the Hwarang were little known before 1945, a manuscript is called a forgery, their martial role is debated, and the lists differ.	A "historical referent", not a demonstrated source.

Claims about whose story to tell

The Choi Hong-hi article says ITF organisations regard Choi as "Founder of Taekwon-Do" and "have consistently claimed that ITF-style taekwondo is the only authentic style of taekwondo", while World Taekwondo "portray[s] Choi as either an unimportant or a dishonorable figure" by "omitting him from their versions of taekwondo history or through explicit statements", because of his defection to North Korea. Each side's version of history includes or excludes the same person. The Korean martial arts article goes further and says "the name Choi Hong-hi and his works were to be erased from the memory of the South Korean people", with no source in the passage read. Treat that last claim as unverified.

Disputes About Organisations

- **The 1959–1966 break.** Choi wanted his Chang Hon style adopted as the unified style; the other kwans wanted one built from all of them (Taekwondo article). The articles also cite "political disagreements" about North Korea. None of them gives the politics in detail (Chapter 4).
- **Whose history is right about founding dates.** The ITF article, the Taekwondo article, the Kukkiwon article and the Choi article disagree about where the ITF was founded, when the Kukkiwon began and when the WTF was renamed (Chapter 4).
- **Succession after 2002.** Three groups each claim continuity with Choi's ITF (Chapter 4). The articles read give no outcome, because it is an ongoing arrangement of independent bodies.
- **Heritage arguments.** The Subak article says organisations promoting Songdo Subak "have questioned the historical claims of Taekkyeon groups, particularly in relation to cultural heritage recognition", and the Taekkyeon article records that the community split over Shin Han-seung's modernising. Both are disputes in which a group's standing depends on its account of the past.

Rules and Scoring: The 2008 Olympic Events

Chapter 5 flagged an unattributed claim that electronic headgear had changed the sport. The sources give a better-documented example of a rule dispute in one event. The 2008 Olympic

taekwondo article records two incidents. They are the article's account, and several quotations come from other writers it cites.

The bronze-medal match, men's over 80 kg

The Matos article says the Cuban athlete Ángel Matos, who "led the match 3–2" when he incurred a foot injury, took a one-minute medical timeout (*kyeshi*) under WTF rules. The referee gave a warning at 40 seconds; when the minute ended without Matos returning to the centre, the referee "ruled that he had retired". After his opponent from Kazakhstan was declared the winner, Matos "kicked him in the face", "punched a judge in the arm, and spat on the floor of the arena". The same article reports:

- **The WTF** banned Matos and his coach for life from WTF-sanctioned events, called it "a strong violation of the spirit of taekwondo and the Olympic Games", and deleted his 2008 results. The article says the IOC later ratified the ban.
- **His coach** said the referee "was too strict" and accused the Kazakhstan team of offering bribes (an allegation; the article gives no evidence).
- **Fidel Castro**, then a former Cuban president, wrote that Matos was "rightfully indignant over his disqualification".
- **The opponent** said "to me it was obvious he was unable to continue".
- **Matos**, in a 2018 interview, "expressed his regret at his actions", while still believing "it was judge's unfair decision that cost him a fight".

So this dispute has a clear record of an event and of the sanction, and opposed statements about whether the referee's ruling was fair. The sources do not settle that question, and the article states the facts of the rule (a one-minute allowance) without saying whether the referee applied it correctly.

The quarter-final of an American two-time champion

The Olympics article says that in the men's 80 kg event, Steven López, the "two-time defending gold medalist", had a point deducted in his quarter-final against Mauro Sarmiento of Italy for what the referee judged an illegal "cut kick". This turned a 2–1 lead into a 1–1 tie, and López lost in sudden-death overtime. The article then lists allegations by **Herb Perez**, the US team leader, against the WTF:

- the protest, which "must be made within 15 minutes", got no response for 45 minutes;
- the US team "received no indication why the protest was deemed 'unacceptable'";

- at a June 2008 conference, team heads "were asked to sign an agreement not to file any protests at the Games";
- after the protest was denied, WTF officials "approached him and asked him not to talk to the press".

These are Perez's allegations. The passages I read give no WTF reply, and I do not know whether the federation answered them. The article quotes the American sports writer Charles Robinson calling the events "a chaotic episode that might ultimately prove to be the tipping point to Olympic doom". The Taekwondo at the Summer Olympics article's medal table is "updated after the 2024 Summer Olympics", and the World Taekwondo article says the sport was confirmed for the 2008 and 2012 Games; so taekwondo stayed in the Games. That inference is mine, not the writers'.

How to report a dispute accurately

Notice the pattern in the two accounts. The record gives *what happened* (a ruling, a point deduction, a ban, a results deletion) and *who said what* (the coach, Castro, Perez, Robinson, the WTF). It does not give a verdict on whether the ruling was correct. A good report keeps those separate: an event is stated flatly, each claim is given to its owner, an allegation is called an allegation, and an unknown outcome is called unknown.

A Checklist Built From the Course

1. **Whose claim?** Name the person, the federation or the article.
2. **What evidence is offered?** A mural, a manual, a register page, an interview, a rule book, a video?
3. **What does the other side say, in its own words?**
4. **Is the thing a fact, an interpretation or an allegation?** A ban is a fact; a motive is an interpretation; an unevidenced accusation is an allegation.
5. **What is the stated outcome, if any?** If none is stated, write "outcome not given" and stop.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Choose two rows of the origins table. For each, state the claim and its owner, one piece of evidence on each side, and the status the sources give. Then say which row's status rests on the weakest sourcing, and why.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Write a short, balanced report of the Matos bronze-medal incident in four to six sentences. Separate the event, the sanction, the claims of each named party, and what the sources do not settle.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Take Perez's four allegations about the López protest. For each, say whether the article presents it as fact or as an allegation, and name one thing you would need to see (a document, a reply, a rule text) before treating it as established. Then say what is lost if a report leaves out "Perez alleged".

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Origins:** indigenous vs karate-rooted (revisionism "prevailing"); taekkyeon lineage denied by taekkyeon associations; subak–taekkyeon unresolved; hapkido founder's training contested; Hwarang a referent
- **Organisations:** 1959–66 break, conflicting founding dates, three ITF successors, heritage arguments
- **2008 Olympics:** Matos bronze-medal ruling and lifetime ban; López protest and Perez's allegations; WTF's reply not seen in the articles read
- **Method:** event flat; each claim to its owner; allegation as allegation; "outcome not given" when it isn't

- **Unverified:** the government-motive claim; "erased from memory"; bribery allegation by Matos's coach

Next chapter: Capstone: Reading Claims About Martial Arts, which brings the course's threads together (roots, schools, bodies, sport, culture) and ends with a checklist for reading any claim about a martial art.

Taekwondo and Korean Martial Arts

Course 1 · Chapter 10 · Capstone: Reading Claims About Martial Arts

The first chapter asked what happens when you take "ancient Korean art" as a claim to be checked. Nine chapters later, the course has a picture, with gaps. This final chapter pulls the five threads together, lists the open questions the sources leave, and ends with a checklist you can use on any claim about taekwondo or any other martial art. It adds no new facts, so everything below is a restatement of what earlier chapters reported from the Wikipedia articles listed there.

> **How this chapter was checked**
>
> This chapter summarises Chapters 1 to 9. Every statement in it comes from those chapters, and each of those comes from a named Wikipedia article read through the API. I read no books, federation documents or news reports for the course, so everything here is only as strong as those summary articles. Where two articles disagreed, the earlier chapters said so, and so does this one. This is a history and culture course and gives no instruction in techniques.

Five Threads

1. Roots

The modern art is described as "developed during the 1940s and 1950s by Korean martial artists with experience in martial arts such as karate and Chinese martial arts" (Chapter 1). Korea had older fighting traditions: subak (a word attested for centuries, techniques unknown), the weapon-centred *Muye Dobo Tongji* of 1790–95 with unarmed material in one volume, and taekkyeon, whose name first appears in writing in the 1790s (Chapter 2). The sources describe a documented influence on the *name* but not an unbroken *lineage*. The Korean martial arts article's summary (Chapter 7) is the best one-line version: links to tradition are in many cases "largely symbolic rather than based on continuous practice".

2. Schools

After 1945 (the Kwan article says 1944 for the first two) a handful of kwans were founded by men with Japanese, Chinese and Korean training, and the number grew to 40 by 1960 before being consolidated (Chapter 3). A name was chosen in the mid-1950s ("Tae Kwon Do", closest to

"taekkyon"), the army adopted it, and the question of one style or many was already live. Founders' own accounts changed, as with Choi's taekkyeon story (Chapter 3), and training claims were disputed, as with hapkido's founder (Chapter 7).

3. Bodies

Choi's 1966 ITF, the Kukkiwon (1972–73) and World Taekwondo (1973) split the art into families with different syllabi, forms, sparring rules and rank systems; the ITF itself divided into three after 2002 (Chapter 4). The word "political" appears in every article's account of the split, and none explains the politics beyond North Korea. At least five date disagreements remain between articles.

4. Sport

Sparring, scoring and equipment changed frequently (Chapter 5): the 7- and 12-point rules abolished in 2009, a point gap reintroduced in 2010, the 2016–17 reforms, electronic headgear and its reported side effects. The Olympic path ran from the US AAU in 1974 to a medal sport in 2000 (Chapter 6). Disputes in 2008 show how rulings, protests and sanctions are reported, and where reports stop (Chapter 9).

5. Culture

The dojang, the dobok (descended from the Japanese keikogi, with hanbok-style variants), the belt, the tenets and oath (attributed to Choi), and the WT's Hwarang and taegeuk philosophy form the cultural layer (Chapter 8). The Hwarang reference is a "historical referent" for an old group little known before 1945, and the commandments differ from Choi's tenets. Taekkyeon, ssireum and gungdo show what documented continuity or documented revival looks like in the sources (Chapter 7).

A One-Page Timeline of Claims, Not of Facts

Period	What the sources let us say	What they leave open
Before 1900	Subak is attested as a word; murals are "sometimes interpreted" as fighters; the *Muye Dobo Tongji* (commissioned 1790, published 1795) catalogues weapons and some unarmed combat; taekkyeon is named in the 1790s.	Subak's techniques; whether subak and taekkyeon are one; any line from these to modern taekwondo.
1910–1945	Japanese rule suppressed indigenous practices, nearly ending taekkyeon; founders trained in Japan and China.	How much training was karate and how much anything else.
1944–1960	Kwans, the 1952 demonstration, the naming from 1955, the KTA in 1959.	The first kwans' dates; "five" or "nine" original kwans; the exact naming date.
1966–1973	ITF 1966; Kukkiwon and World Taekwondo Federation 1972–73.	Where the ITF was founded; the Kukkiwon's year; the politics.
1974–2000	AAU, GAISF, IOC recognition in 1980, demonstration status, adoption in 1994, medal sport in 2000.	GAISF's year; practitioner numbers.
2001 onwards	ITF splits (2001–02); WT rename in 2017; national martial art in 2018; rule changes through 2026.	Which scoring list is current; the WTF rename year (2017 or 2018).

The unverified items, gathered

- The government-motive claim attached to the traditionalist view (Chapter 1).
- The Korean martial arts article's statement that Choi's name was to be "erased from the memory" of South Koreans (Chapters 7 and 9).
- The bribery allegation by Matos's coach, and Perez's four allegations, with no WTF reply seen (Chapter 9).
- The ITF's "24 patterns = 24 hours" symbolism (Chapter 5).
- Any practitioner total: none was found in the articles read (Chapter 6).
- Taekwondo etiquette: not described in the articles read (Chapter 8).

The Checklist

This is the course's method as seven questions, in the order you would ask them of a new claim.

1. **What exactly is being claimed?** A martial art, its name and its governing body can each have a different beginning ("taekwondo is ancient" may mean the techniques, the word or the organisation).
2. **Who owns the claim?** A federation, a founder, a school, an article, a government. Attach the name.
3. **What kind of evidence is offered?** A mural interpreted by someone, a manual, a register page, an interview, a rulebook, a video. Rank them.
4. **Is there a chain?** For any "traditional" claim, ask what connects the old thing to the new one and whether the chain has breaks (occupation, war, a 1987 split).
5. **Which family or version?** ITF, Kukkiwon/WT, ATA, traditional taekkyeon, sport taekkyeon, yetbeop. A claim true of one need not be true of another.
6. **Who benefits?** Not to dismiss the claim, but to know where to look for a second source.
7. **What is missing?** A date with no second source, an allegation with no reply, a total with no counter. Write "not given" and stop; do not fill from memory.

What a Reader Can Do Next

If you wanted to take this further, the sources the Wikipedia articles themselves rest on are the next step: the Korean martial arts article's further-reading list (including Journal of Asian Martial Arts papers on the Korean manuals), the federations' own histories (read as claims with owners), and the heritage records for taekkyeon and ssireum. This course read none of them. A deeper course would also need Korean-language sources, which I did not use.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

The following are illustrative statements, not quotations. Apply the first three checklist questions to each: (a) "Taekwondo is a 2,000-year-old Korean art." (b) "Taekkyeon is the ancestor of modern taekwondo." (c) "More than a hundred million people practise

taekwondo." For each, name what is being claimed, who might own it, and what evidence the course found for or against.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Choose one of the five threads (roots, schools, bodies, sport, culture) and write six to eight sentences saying what the sources let us say, what they leave open, and which chapter's finding best illustrates the difference.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Pick one martial art not covered in depth here (judo, karate, kendo, capoeira, or any other) and write a plan of five checklist questions you would ask before trusting a website's "history" page about it. For each question, say what a good answer and a warning sign would look like.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Roots:** modern art from the 1940s–50s; older traditions documented, but name link rather than lineage
- **Schools:** kwans from 1944–46; 40 by 1960; name chosen from 1955; founders' accounts change
- **Bodies:** ITF (1966, three groups after 2002), Kukkiwon, World Taekwondo (1973)
- **Sport:** frequent rule changes; Olympic medal sport in 2000; 2008 disputes
- **Culture:** dobok from keikogi; Choi's tenets; Hwarang as referent
- **Checklist:** what, who, evidence, chain, version, benefit, missing

That completes the course. The combined PDF is in this course's `pdfs/` folder.