JUDO BELT CHART BY FEDERATION

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The senior kyu colors five judo bodies use, the junior ladders, and the dan grades with their minimum ages. Fill in your own ladder, then pin it by the mats or send it to parents.

Club: _____

Federation: _____

Updated: ____/____/_____

Senior Kyu Grades by Federation

Find your federation's column. Write your club's belt for each grade in the last column.

GRADE	IJF GUIDE	JUDO CANADA	BRITISH JUDO	USJA	USJF (17+)	OUR CLUB
6th kyu	*Not listed*	White	Red	Yellow	White	
5th kyu	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Green	
4th kyu	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Blue	
3rd kyu	Green	Green	Green	Brown	Brown	
2nd kyu	Blue	Blue	Blue	Brown	Brown	
1st kyu	Brown	Brown	Brown	Brown	Brown	
1st dan	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	

Judo Canada's Half Steps

Judo Canada adds a two-color half step between each grade.

White-yellow
between 6th and 5th kyu

Yellow-orange
between 5th and 4th kyu

Orange-green
between 4th and 3rd kyu

Green-blue
between 3rd and 2nd kyu

Blue-brown
between 2nd and 1st kyu

READ THIS FIRST

Before 6th kyu: most ladders start beginners on an ungraded white belt, so a British novice wears white before earning red.

IJF guide: a teaching ladder the IJF recommends. Its member federations don't have to follow it.

USA Judo isn't in the chart: we couldn't find a senior kyu color chart it publishes, but it accepts USJA and USJF kyu ranks.

Sources: IJF Belt Grades Guide 2026 (ijf.org PDF); Judo Canada (judocanada.org/grading-2); British Judo kyu syllabus (britishjudo.org.uk PDF); USJA (usja.net/about/promotion); USJF rank handbook (usjf.com PDF); USA Judo rank recognition (usajudo PDF).

Junior Ladders

Most federations run a separate junior ladder with more steps, two-color belts, or tabs. The full color order for each is in the federation's own document, linked below.

SYSTEM	AGES	GRADES	FIRST TO LAST BELT	HOW IT LOOKS
USA Judo junior kyu	From about 5	10	White/yellow → Purple	White/yellow up to purple, with half-colored belts
USJF updated junior	16 and under	11	White → Purple	White up to purple, with half-colored belts
British Judo Sho awards	5 to 7	9	*No colored belt*	Awards earned in Judo Kids sessions, before any colored belt
British Judo mon grades	8 to 17	18	Red → Brown	Red up to brown, one to three tabs per color
Kodokan junior kyu	Elementary school	7	Light blue → Brown	Light blue up to brown

MOVING JUNIORS UP

USA Judo: the junior program assumes a kid starts at five or six and earns about half a belt a year. At that pace, it says, a junior will have a brown belt by age 14 or 15.

British Judo: juniors can switch from mon grades to the senior kyu syllabus from age 14, and have to by 18.

USJF: recommends four separate ladders, split by age, so a club can run a junior ladder and a senior ladder side by side.

Our Club's Junior Ladder

One row per step, lowest first.

STEP	BELT AND TABS	MINIMUM AGE	NOTES

Sources: USA Judo junior quidelines (usajudo.net PDF); USJF rank handbook (usjf.com PDF); British Judo Sho (britishjudo.org.uk); British Judo mon (britishjudo.org.uk); Kodokan junior ladder (via AJJF) (judo.or.jp).

Dan Grades and Minimum Ages

Dan colors are the one part most federations agree on. Minimum ages are where everyone splits.

Black: 1st to 5th dan · Red and white: 6th to 8th · Red: 9th and 10th · Black/red: USJA 4th and 5th dan

DAN	BELT	KODOKAN	USA JUDO	BRITISH JUDO
1st (shodan)	Black	14	15	15
2nd (nidan)	Black	—	16	17
3rd (sandan)	Black	—	18	20
4th (yondan)	Black	—	21	24
5th (godan)	Black	20	26	29
6th (rokudan)	Red and white	27	32	—
7th (shichidan)	Red and white	33	42	—
8th (hachidan)	Red and white	42	55	—
9th (kudan)	Red	—	60	—
10th (judan)	Red	—	70	—

Ages are minimums. A dash means that body doesn't publish a separate age for that grade.

Before Shodan

The rule books only set the minimum. Most adults take well past it.

BODY	MINIMUM AGE FOR 1ST DAN	TIME BEFORE SHODAN
Kodokan	14	Candidates for its international shodan exam need at least a year and a half of judo training.
USA Judo	15	Three years at the grade below for a non-competitor; as little as six months with 20 competition points.
British Judo	15	One kyu a month up to 5th kyu, one every three months after that, then a year at 1st kyu plus 100 points.
USJF	14 to 16	See the USJF rank handbook.

WORTH KNOWING

The USJA is the outlier on colors, listing 4th and 5th dan as black/red.

Red and white: USA Judo says a 6th dan can wear red and white or keep wearing black, and the red-and-white belt isn't worn in regular competition. British Judo calls it customary to keep the black belt for everyday practice.

Since January 2026, the IJF requires its member federations to submit every dan grade for IJF validation.

Sources: Kodokan dan regulations (kdkjudo.org); USA Judo promotion procedures (July 2025) (usajudo PDF); British Judo dan syllabus (britishjudo.org.uk PDF); USA Judo red and white belt guide (usajudo.net PDF); IJF dan regulations (ijf.org PDF); Kodokan international grading guidelines (kodokan.org PDF).

Our Grading Rules

Fill this in once, pin it next to the chart, and send it to parents with the welcome email.

Federation or association we grade under: _____

Who runs our kyu gradings: _____

Where our dan grades go: _____

Next grading date: _____

Grading day contact: _____

What Each Grade Needs at Our Club

GRADE	BELT	MINIMUM AGE	TIME AT GRADE	CLASSES OR HOURS	OTHER (SKILLS, POINTS)

Track promotions against your federation's rules

Gymdesk has a judo rank style built in. Set a minimum age, days at the current rank, attendance, and skills, and the promotion report shows who's ready across every program.

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