

Gymnastics Judging Symbols and their Etymology

Each gymnastics skill is represented by a unique symbol and it can be challenging to remember them all. But symbols are just like words; they have roots, prefixes, suffixes and they are logical. This document aims to provide you with the tools to understand them rather than memorize them.









First, a look at some basic symbols:

Body Shapes

Pike:  Tuck:  Layout: 
Straddle:  Wolf:  Split (2 ways):  






**Notice how the symbols look like the body shape*

Turning and Twisting

Half Turn:  Full Turn:  Turn and a Half:  Double Turn: 
Half Twist:  Twist:  Twist and a Half:  Double Twist: 




**Notice how we 'cut' the twist in half to create half twists*

Flight, Support and Feet

Flight:  Two Feet:  With Support:  Aerial/Free:  Switch: 

**These will be 'prefixes' or 'suffixes' to supplement basic symbols to create different skills*


Basic/Root Skills


Handstand:  Cartwheel:  Roundoff: 


**Notice how the symbols look like the body during the skill*

Front Salto:  Back Salto: 


**Notice how the symbol mimics the body's trajectory in the air*


Front Walkover: 

Back Walkover: 


Tic-Toc: 


**Notice how the placement of the dot/head shows the body's trajectory*


Front Handspring: 

Back Handspring: 

**Notice how the symbol mimics the body's trajectory*

Cast: 

Swing: 

Counteswing: 

**Notice how it looks like the gymnast's head with arms and legs on each side*

Now, let's mix and match to create more complex skills:

Handstand forward roll:

**It's a handstand followed by a 'forward salto' with support on the floor*

Tuck jump:

**It's a tuck body position with flight*

Back layout full:

**It's a backwards salto in a layout position with a full twist*

Front pike half:

**It's a forward salto in a pike body position with a half twist*

Straddle jump full (Popa):

**It's a straddled body position with flight and a full turn*

Cast squat on:

**It's a cast followed by a tucked body position with support on the bar*

Giant:

**It's a swing that ends in a handstand*

Straddled cast to handstand half turn:

**It's a cast that goes to a handstand with a straddled body position and a half turn added to it*

Split leap vs split jump vs cisonne:

**It's a split position with flight VS it's a split position with flight and two feet take-off and landing VS it's an angled split body position with flight*

Changement:

**It's a straight body position with flight and a leg switch*

Front tuck mount on BB:

**It's flight from a board into a front salto*

Stag leap:

**It's a split body position with flight and a bent front leg*

Full turn with leg up:

**It's a full turn with one leg/line up*

Full in:

**It's a full twist followed by a back salto*

Double wolf turn:

**It's a wolf body position with support on the floor and double turn*

Side aerial:

**It's a cartwheel that is free from support*

Valdez:

**It starts in a tuck position with support and goes into a back walkover*


Chasse:

**It's two feet coming together with flight*

BEGINNER JUDGING SYMBOL QUIZ & STUDY GUIDE

1) How many of the elements below have a full (1/1) or 360° degree of turn?

- i)  ii)  iii)  iv) 

v) 

- a) none b) 2 c) 4 d) all

2) How many of the following elements have a complete 180° split (split forward left or right)

- i)  ii)  iii)  iv) 




v) 




- a) 4 b) 3 c) all d) 1



Often symbols resemble, in basic ways, the movement or shape of an element.

3) How many of the following elements go to or through handstand?

- i)  ii)  iii) 

- iv)  v)  vi) 

- a) all b) 2 c) 4 d) 5



There are many symbol commonalities even between different elements on different apparatus. This helps judges determine technical requirements (the requirement of a full 180° split is the same in a switch leap on beam as in a split leap on floor). Often the same basic symbol appears as part of many other symbols.

REVIEW

Note how the basic symbols: the handstand and the degree of turn symbols appear as part of other symbols.

! = Handstand

! = Handstand 1/1 pirouette

! = Back roll to handstand

! = Cast to Handstand

! = Clear hip circle to handstand

! = Back Giant

! = Handstand forward roll

○ 360° turn (and other degrees of turn)

○ = 180° or ½

! = cast to handstand ½ turn

○ = 360° or 1/1

! = back giant with full turn

○ = 540° 1 ½

○ = 1 ½ turn

○ = 720°

! = 2/1 turn in tuck stand with leg extended



Tip

There are always exceptions ☺ The symbol for a full ○-n (both FX and BB) and the symbol for a back hip circle (UB are exactly the same!

BARS

4) Which of the following is the symbol for a glide kip on bars?

a) !

b)

!

c)

!

d)

!

5) What is this symbol?

!

a) back hip circle

b) straddle back

c) cast to handstand

d) backward tuck flyaway





Tip


Check the answer key to review not just the correct answers, but also to review all the symbols & descriptions in the answer key.


REVIEW


Front (Forward) or Back (Backward) – it is necessary to tell the direction of an element. There are different ways to do this. Some elements have different symbols for the same element in a different direction, some elements just have small modifications to the root skill.


Front Giant 

Back Giant 



Front hip circle 



Back hip circle 



Front sole circle 

Back sole circle 

6) Identify in which direction the following bar elements are rotating? (note forward or backward beside the symbol)

i) Stalder circle to handstand  _____  _____

ii) Double tucked flyaway  _____  _____

iii) Clear Hip Circle to handstand  _____  _____

iv) Giant Circle  _____  _____

7) How many of the following elements are part of Group 4 'Giant Swings Backward'?

i)  ii)  iii)  iv)  v) 

a) 1











b) 3

c) all

d) 2

PRACTICE

Match the following elements with the description.


- | | |
|--|---|
| 1.  | Back handspring ____ |
| 2.  | Backward salto tucked (Back tuck) ____ |
| 3.  | Front Walkover ____ |
| 4.  | Whip salto backward ____ |
| 5.  | Forward salto piked (Front pike) ____ |
| 6.  | Handstand forward roll ____ |
| 7.  | Forward salto stretched (Front layout) ____ |
| 8.  | Backward salto stretched (Back layout) ____ |
| 9.  | Backward roll ____ |
| 10.  | Dive Forward roll ____ |





8) Basic Positions, see how you do matching basic positions – start with elements you recognize. If you need help, the following review section identifies many of these basic positions.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1.  | Switch ____ |
| 2.  | Pike ____ |
| 3.  | Scissor ____ |
| 4.  | Tuck ____ |
| 5.  | Side Split ____ |
| 6.  | Stretch (layout) ____ |
| 7.  | Wolf ____ |
| 8.  | Forward Split ____ |
| 9.  | Handstand ____ |
| 10.  | Straddle ____ |

REVIEW

Once you are familiar with the basic positions, you'll notice how many different elements can have the same basic root position.

Tuck (Squat) * 





Tuck Jump 
 Cast to **Squat (tuck)** on (UB) 
Tuck Jump ½ 
 Jump to **Squat (tuck)** on (BB) 








* Basic tucked Salto elements do not use the tuck symbol,

therefore, Front tuck  Back tuck 

Pike (Stoop) 

Pike Jump 
 Front **Pike** 
Pike Circle to Handstand (UB) 
 Back double flyaway **piked** (UB) 

Straddle 

Straddle Jump
Straddle Jump  
Straddle cast to Handstand (UB) 
 Press to Handstand finish in clear **straddle**
 support 

REVIEW

Along with basic positions, there are additional common symbol modifiers that further assist judges to distinguish different skills.

|| jump with 2 feet

∪ ½ turn

| / stretched, straight or layout

○ full turn

— leap

/ cast

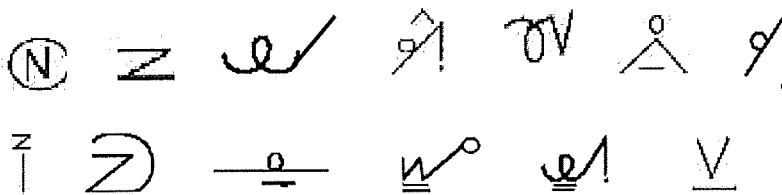
z change of legs

| handstand

- UB - bar change
- BB - performed sideways

PRACTICE

1) Practice writing the symbols! Use the elements below and draw them beside the correct description in the chart.





Element	Symbol	Value
Switch leap (FX)		
Pike jump (BB)		
Changement (straight jump w/change of legs) (BB)		
Back layout (FX)		
Tucked Sole circle (UB)		
Straddle jump full (FX)		
Front pike (FX)		
Cast to handstand (UB)		
Cast to handstand straddle technique (UB)		
Split leap (FX)		
Switch ring leap (FX)		
Full turn in tucked position w/leg extended (BB)		
Back roll to handstand (BB)		

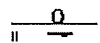

2) Now use the JO Code of Points to look up the value of each element.



The '=' tells you the element is performed with support on the apparatus.







Eg.  is the symbol for a forward salto tucked (front tuck), and this  is the symbol for a forward roll.

The '2' tells you the element takes off from 2 feet, when otherwise it would take off from one. Eg.


Is the symbol for a split leap, and this  is the symbol for a split jump. The symbols for pike jump  and straddle jump don't have the '2' as neither element can take off from one foot.









REVIEW

It is necessary to distinguish between different degrees of twisting for Forward and Backward Saltos in different positions on FX, for dismounts on beam and bars and for 1st and 2nd flight phases on vault. Degrees of twisting are measured in 180° increments.

Full (1/1) 360°		Half (1/2) 180°	
Double (2/1) 720°		1 1/2 540°	
Triple (3/1) 1080°		2 1/2 900°	





REVIEW

We use the cursive 'f'  to denote that the element is clear or 'free' of support.


Cartwheel		free Cartwheel (aerial)	
Round off		free Round off	
Front walkover		free front walkover (front aerial)	
Pike circle		free Pike circle	

REVIEW

The following are the symbols for the common skills of walkover and handsprings on FX and on BB. Note the differences between Forward and Backward.

Back Walkover		Back Handspring*	
Front Walkover		Front Handspring	



*The symbol for a back handspring on BB  implies the element steps out.

This  is the symbol for a back handspring on BB with feet together. It is a different



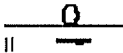


element. On FX the element is the same whether the feet land together or apart.

BEAM

8) Which symbol is a back walkover?

- a)  b)  c)  d) 



9) How many of the following dance elements take off with 2 feet?

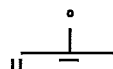
- i)  ii)  iii)  iv) 
v) 

- a) 3 b) 4 c) all d) 1



A dot • used with a skill on beam indicates the element is performed sideways on the beam, when it is commonly performed crosswise. This can change the value of the element.

E.g. Straddle jump  and side split jump  both B value performed in cross position, have a C value when performed in side position.



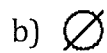
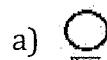
10) Match the following beam routine elements in the correct order.



- clear straddle mount, full turn, cartwheel, handstand, split leap - changement, front tuck dismount
- squat through mount, full turn, aerial cartwheel, handstand - back handspring, switch leap - split jump, front layout dismount
- press to handstand, full turn, cartwheel - back handspring, switch leap - split leap, dive roll, front layout dismount
- press to handstand, full turn, cartwheel - back walkover, split jump - split leap, front roll, front layout ½ dismount

FLOOR

11) Which of the following is the correct symbol for a full turn?




12) Which of the following is the correct symbol for a flyspring forward ('B' value) - take off from 2 feet and land on 2 feet?

a) 

b) 

c) 

d) 

13) Identify this acro series?




a) Side aerial, back handspring, back layout

b) round off, back walkover, back tuck

c) round off, whip back, back tuck

d) round off, back handspring, back layout



Use a curved line  beneath all elements that are directly connected (ie no stop, pause, extra steps, extra arm swings etc). A series can be dance series on floor or beam or acro (acrobatic) series on floor or beam that have 2 or more directly connected elements.

14) Script the following acro series on floor. If you can identify the value of each element, note directly under the element.

Eg Round off, back handspring, back tuck



A A A

a) Switch leap, split leap

b) Front handspring, front handspring

















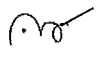


c) Front handspring, front layout

d) Front tuck, round off, back handspring, back layout



All done! The charts have a few common symbols, descriptions and values, but not all, keep studying the JO Code of Points. Good luck with your judging!

COMMON SYMBOLS ~ BARS

Symbol	Description	Value	
	Glide kip	A	
	Long kip	A	
	Cast to handstand	B	
	Cast to handstand (piked-straddle technique)	B	
	Cast to handstand 1/2 turn (any technique)	C	
	Back hip circle	A	
	Front hip circle	A	
	Clear hip circle (to within 20° of handstand)	C	
	Clear hip circle (to 21° and below)	B	
	Backward Giant	B	
	Pike sole circle	A	
	Tuck sole circle	A	
	Cast to Squat(tuck) or Stoop(pike) on	A	
	Tucked or Piked flyaway backward	A	
	Layout flyaway backward	A	
	Tuck or Piked flyaway forward	A	
	Layout flyaway forward	A	
	Underswing Dismount w/ support	A	
	Clear Underswing Dismount	A	

COMMON SYMBOLS ~ BEAM AND FLOOR (DANCE)

Symbol	Description	BB	FX
○	Full turn	A	A
⊘	1 ½ turn	B	B
↓↪	Illusion half turn	C	-
↓○	Illusion full turn	E	A free B
— ₁ ○	Split leap	A	A
— ₁ ○	Split jump	A	B
↗↘	Scissone	A	A
N	Switch leap	C	B
△	Straddle jump	B	B
NA	Johnson (switch leap ¼)	D	C
— ₁ ○	Split leap ½	C	B
↪○	Cat leap	A	A
↪○	Cat leap ½	B	A
—	Straight jump	A	-
— ₁ —	Changement	A	-
↪	Tuck jump	A	A
∨	Pike jump	B	B
↪	Scale Forward to horizontal	A	-
○	Jump full turn	C	A

lot

COMMON SYMBOLS ~ BEAM AND FLOOR (ACRO)

Symbol	Description	BB	FX
	Press, Jump or swing to Handstand	B	-
	Squat or straddle mount (not acro elements)	A	-
	Cartwheel	A	A
	Round off	B	A
	Tic Toc	A	-
	Back walkover	A	A
	Front walkover	B	A
	Back handspring	B	A
	Front handspring	B	A
	Valdez (back walkover from sit)	B	A
	Handstand forward roll	B	A
	Backward roll to handstand	B	A
	Front salto tucked	D/A (on BB/dism)	A
	Front salto piked	E/A (on BB/dism)	B
	Front stretched salto (layout)	B (BB dism)	B
	Back salto tucked or piked	C/A (on BB/dism)	A
	Back stretched salto (layout)	E/A (on BB/dism)	A
	Back stretched salto (layout) - stepout	C	A
	Back stretched salto (layout) with full twist	B (BB dism)	B