

CALLERLAB

DEFINITION GUIDE FOR BASIC/MAINSTREAM



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This guide is intended to help callers with their first exposure to the [Basic and Mainstream Definitions](#), especially those who want to omit reading the introductory material. There are no abbreviated or abridged definitions. The method used to read any definition will be explained by using another definition as an example.

In the following example, you will notice that the definition is given in several parts, starting with the recommended teaching order, number, and the call name. Seven specific sections that will be covered in more detail follow this. A complete understanding of some of these sections will require reference to other sections of the Definitions or to other documents.

22. Right and Left Thru

Starting formation: Facing Couples

Command examples:

Right and Left Thru

Head Couples, Right and Left Thru

Dance action: Right Pull By; Courtesy Turn

Ending formation: Facing Couples

Timing: 6

Styling: Dancers extend right hands to each other, and perform a Pass Thru action, releasing handholds as they pass each other. A literal “pull” is neither required nor desired. For Courtesy Turn styling, refer to entry #15.

Comments: The Ocean Wave Rule applies to this call.

At Basic and Mainstream, Courtesy Turn is restricted to a man turning a woman.

At Basic and Mainstream, from Facing Lines in which the centers form a Normal Couple, the caller should not use “Right and Left Thru” in the expectation that only the centers will do the call (because they are the only ones who can due to the above restriction). The proper call would be, “Centers Right and Left Thru”.

On the call “Right and Left Thru, Full Turn”, the Courtesy Turn will be for a full 360 degrees, and the ending formation will be Couples Back-To-Back (see “Part 4: Additional Detail: Commands: Fractions”).

On the call “Right and Left Thru and 1/4 More”, the Courtesy Turn will be for 270 degrees, and the ending formation will be a Right-Hand Two-Faced Line (see “Part 4: Additional Detail: Commands: Fractions”).

Let's look at each of the sections of the definition in more detail.

Starting formation(s): This is a list of starting formations applicable to the call. If you find one that you don't understand, please use the "[Formation Charts](#)" document as your reference. Most of the names are in common use among callers.

- All common starting formations are listed.
- The smallest starting formations are listed (i.e., Facing Couples, not Facing Lines for Right and Left Thru).
- Uncommon starting formations may be listed.
- Other starting formations may be possible.
- The list of starting formations is not restrictive unless it says "only".

We know that "Right and Left Thru" commonly starts in Facing Couples, but can also be done from a Right-Hand Ocean Wave. The idea that calls that start with a Pass Thru or Pull By action have two possible starting positions has been given a name—the Ocean Wave Rule. Instead of listing Right-Hand Ocean Wave as a possible starting formation, you will see the phrase, "The Ocean Wave Rule applies to this call" in the "Comments" section. This is discussed in more detail in the "Conventions and Rules" section of the Definitions.

Command Examples: This is a list of possible ways you might deliver this call. The most common and preferred command examples are listed first. Newer callers should use these. Occasionally there will be notes about improper call delivery. Look at the call Separate for a much richer set of command examples.

Dance Action: This is the meat of the definition. If the call has parts, the dance action will reflect this (e.g., Right and Left Thru has two parts). When it is impractical to write a definition that covers all the cases, the dance action will cover the common applications and the comment section covers the exceptional cases.

Ending Formation(s): Provides confirmation of your understanding of the call by listing the final results.

Timing: Each call comes with a timing number which represents the numbers of beats of music it should take dancers to execute the call. Since your dancers are taking one step for each beat of music, the timing number also represents the number of steps to do the call. From a Squared Set, calls like Right and Left Thru take two additional beats to give the dancers time to move into the center and execute the call. This is discussed in more detail in the "Squared Set Convention" section of the Definitions. Timing is discussed in more detail in the "Timing" section of the Definitions.

Styling: Square dancing is more than moving your body to the correct spot at the correct time. The "Styling" section helps us teach the new dancers how to put the "dance" into dancing with correct posture, footwork, handholds, and skirt work. Be sure to review and teach the recommended styling as the calls are taught and not as an afterthought. This is discussed in more detail in the "Styling" section of the Definitions.

Comment(s): This section allows us to amplify, clarify, and explain exceptions and extensions to the dance action. Consider the five comments for Right and Left Thru:

1. *The “Ocean Wave Rule” applies to this call.* This reminds us that we can start this call from an Ocean Wave. New dancers should probably be exposed to this in class, but certainly not until they are comfortable with the more usual starting formation.
2. *At Basic and Mainstream, Courtesy Turn is restricted to a man turning a woman.* The Mainstream Committee felt there was enough variety available with the other calls that Courtesy Turn should be kept gendered, and we should respect their request. This restriction is lifted starting with the Plus program.
3. *At Basic and Mainstream, from Facing Lines in which the centers form a Normal Couple, the caller should not use “Right and Left Thru” in the expectation that only the centers will do the call (because they are the only ones who can due to the above restriction). The proper call would be “Centers Right and Left Thru”.* This explicitly covers a case where a caller is using a definition to trick the dancers. This comment says, “Don’t do this”.
4. *On the call “Right and Left Thru, Full Turn”, the Courtesy Turn will be for a full 360 degrees, and the ending formation will be Couples Back-To-Back (see “Part 4: Additional Detail: Commands: Fractions”).* It is reasonable to assume that applications listed in the later part of the Comments are extended applications or traditional uses of the call. All callers would not be expected to teach this application, nor would all dancers be expected to know it. Callers are expected to use good judgment as to if or when this application is taught or called (see the discussion below about standard applications).
5. *On the call “Right and Left Thru and 1/4 More”, the Courtesy Turn will be for 270 degrees, and the ending formation will be a Right-Hand Two-Faced Line (see “Part 4: Additional Detail: Commands: Fractions”).* This is another extended application.

When teaching beginners, callers should refer to the [“Standard Applications”](#) document for guidance regarding which applications should be taught first. This document lists the applications that experienced callers have found to be in common use and usually successful (Standard Applications). New dancers will need to learn these applications in order to be successful when dancing to other callers.

When teaching time allows, dancers should have an opportunity to explore some of the more creative applications of a call. Good judgment is required in selecting a few extended applications to ensure that the dancers properly understand the definition.

Comments that document extended applications or traditional uses should primarily be viewed as ideas for or explanations of theme or workshop material.

How to Use the Definitions to Assist in Teaching

Oftentimes, callers review the definition of the call before they need to teach it. This refreshes their knowledge of the call and its applications. However, the Definitions are not meant to be read to the dancers directly. The call should be conveyed to the dancer in language that they can understand. The language used to define calls is generally not the language that should be used to teach the calls. General purpose definitions must cover all cases. When a call is taught, a few well chosen words are needed to get the dancers doing a close approximation to the correct action in a short amount of time. For example, the definition of Allemande Left is rather complicated as it captures many nuances of this flexible call. Dancers need to be taught the most basic version of Allemande Left with a short teach. Week by week, as Allemande Left is used from more positions the dancers will intuitively pick up the other applications. Additional explanations may be given as needed to clarify the use from these new positions.

Other sources of information on how to teach certain calls can be found in the document “[Teaching Tips](#)”, [The Caller Teacher Manual](#) by Bob Osgood (out of date but full of good information), and audio tapes of teaching and “How Do People Learn” sessions from CALLERLAB Conventions. Some are available in the “[Members Only](#)” section of our website (www.CALLERLAB.org):

- “[How People Learn](#)” – Mike Jacobs / Jerry Junck
- “[Teach a New Language](#)” – Betsy Gotta
- “[Aspects of Teaching](#)” – Mike Degmatich
- “[Teachers](#)” – Martin Mallard

Others are available from [Convention CDs, Inc.](#) or perhaps your local caller organization:

- 1996,1997: “Teaching Techniques”
- 1997: “Teaching Examples – How People Learn”
- 2002: “How They Learn – Learning Styles”
- 2002, 2003, 2004: “Teaching Tips”
- 2005, 2006: “Why Squares Break Down”
- 2007, 2008, 2009: “Learning Should Be Fun”
- 2008: “How People Learn”

If you still have questions, consider one or more of the following:

- See the document, “[Applications Review Committee \(ARC\) History](#)”.
- Ask a caller you respect.
- E-mail: askcallerlab@callerlab.org
- E-mail: definitions@callerlab.org
- For a definitive answer, send your question in writing to the ARC (app-review@callerlab.org)