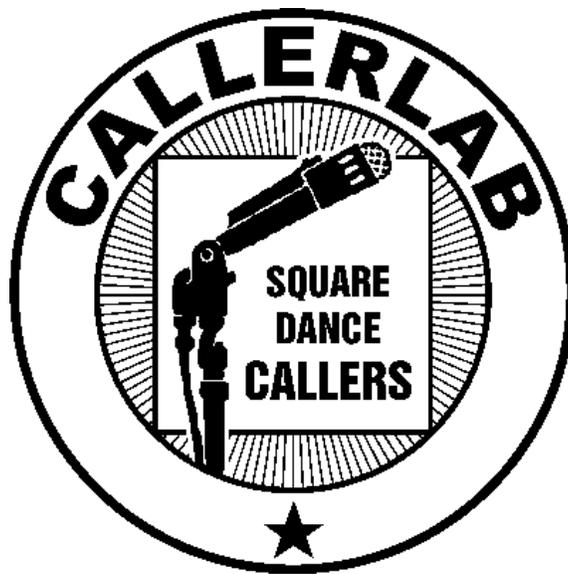# CALLERLAB

STARTER KIT FOR NEW CALLERS

Created and Edited by the
CALLER TRAINING COMMITTEE

October 31, 2023
(Major revision of the *Starter Kit for Newer Callers*)

Contents

Preamble

Who will use this kit?

The CALLERLAB Caller Training Committee created this kit to provide prospective callers and new callers with an introduction to the knowledge and skills they will need to study and acquire if they decide to learn to call modern western square dances.

What is the first goal of the kit?

First Patter Tip: This kit begins with four sections designed to help a new caller learn the skills needed to call their first tip. There is no set time frame for this, but it is suggested that the new caller work a bit on the current section at least twice a week. That way the ideas and skills learned during the last session will still be remembered for the next session.

1) Call some circular choreography using the first eight calls in the Basic Program.

2) Understand the properties of a square and create a 2×4 grid to practice walking and talking a commonly used sequence of calls.

3) Learn the Modified Chicken Plucker routine, which provides a traffic pattern framework.

4) Learn how to present the words at the right time and in cadence with the music so that dancers can dance smoothly through the sequence.

What are the next goals of the kit?

Three More Skills: Hopefully the new caller will successfully present their first patter routine and desire to learn a few more skills. This kit contains three more sections that are common next steps along the calling path.

5) Learn a Singing Call.

6) Learn a bit about Modules to create variations with the Chicken Plucker foundation.

7) Call to two couples as a way to develop your calling skills.

What additional guidance is provided?

Possible Paths: Goal suggestions and internet links to finding more information.

8) Suggested goals for further developing calling skills and links to pursue each goal.

9) Links to CALLERLAB resources and callers' school information.

10) An "Appendix" containing additional information about topics described in the kit.

Getting Started In Calling

We can give you a head start on your way to becoming a caller. This Starter Kit is a starting point and is intended to provide enough information to help you prepare for your first tip. It also has enough additional information to guide you through learning ways to add variety to your program. Beyond that point, this Kit provides links to numerous resources that can be used to progress as far as you want in becoming a caller. We've tried to make the first steps clear. The self-motivation and necessary study and practice are up to you.

Before beginning, take a look at yourself. Are you a square dancer? Maybe you are not a great dancer, perhaps not a "high-level" dancer, but you should have some experience. At least a year or two of dancing experience to enjoy being just a dancer and develop a feeling for what's happening on the floor is advised. If you enjoy the mental exercise of dancing, you'll love calling. It's easier than you may think.

You don't need to be a singer. How often we hear, "I can't sing." Most callers are not great singers, but being able to carry a tune will help. It's not uncommon for people to sell themselves short on their potential for singing. Sometimes it's just an undeveloped talent. Singing tends to improve with practice. Give yourself a chance to see what you can do. In Modern Western Square Dancing, we have singers that call, callers that sing, and those that do both well. We have successful callers of all types.

You don't have to know much about music, but having a sense of rhythm is essential. That, too, can be learned if needed.

We'll explain some of the "caller talk" associated with calling and being a caller. When you learned to dance, you learned the language of Square Dancing. Callers have language and terminology of their own. You can pick that up along the way. Be patient. As you progress, you will learn the language. It will soon make sense.

Let's Begin with a Circle

If you are fortunate enough to have eight friends who can help, or you can convince a square of your friends to show up early on a regular dance night, have them form a square. It would be great if your club caller or mentor could be there to assist by providing music. If not, proceed without music.

Call to the square using these few calls. This will give you the experience of calling and having live, active dancers move to your commands. Get a feel for calling. Feel the rhythm, and if there is no music, count out beats as if there were music. We'll add the 'beat counts' in the command line so you understand how to call and count out the rhythm and beats.

Try Calling This Circular Choreography

All join hands, **Circle Left**, (count 1, 2, 3, 4)

Circle Right, the other way round, (count 1, 2, 3, 4)

When you're home, go **Forward and Back,** (count 1, 2, 3, 4)

Allemande Left with your Corner, then

Partner right, go **Right and Left Grand**,

(count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

Meet your Partner, **Promenade Home**, (count 1, 2, 3, 4)

(count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

Most new callers also begin by learning to call a typical singing call opening figure, which may look like this, modified to remove any song lyrics:

Four Ladies Promenade inside, (count 1, 2, 3, 4)

Get back home, **Swing** your man, (count 1, 2, 3, 4)

Join up hands and **Circle Left**, (count 1, 2, 3, 4)

Allemande Left your corner there,

Weave the Ring go 'round the square,

(count 1, 2, 3, 4), Meet your Partner, **Dosado**,

(count 1, 2, 3, 4), Then **Promenade** you go,

(count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

(count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

These two easy routines will get you started. Practice them over and over with music and live dancers whenever possible. It is okay to print them out in large enough letters so that you can read them easily.

When first faced with calling to dancers, many new callers freeze up. Calling to a square of dancers can be intimidating. Don't let this alarm you or deter you from learning to call. It is normal, and it will subside. The more practice you get calling to live dancers, the easier and less intimidating it becomes.

Understanding the Square and the Grid

Get the Picture?
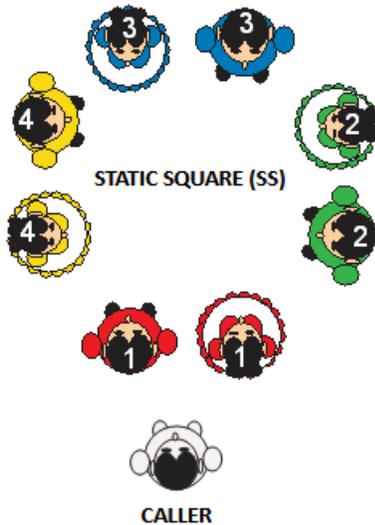
Callers write plenty of notes and develop a personal notation system for identifying what the square looks like. There are several different methods callers use to draw the square graphically. As a new caller, you will see many of these graphics. To the left and below are graphics of a Static Square, all dancers at home. Notice that each couple has an appropriate couple number, a unique color, and a facing direction. The couples are In Sequence, which means the couples are numbered in a counter-clockwise direction 1-2-3-4. Diagrams like these will help us determine different formations and arrangements of dancers and how dancers are temporarily paired as they move through calls.

In almost all cases, we use symmetric choreography. This means that whatever one-half of the square is doing, the opposite half of the square is doing the same thing. With symmetry, each dancer has a diagonal opposite. All diagonal opposites move the same way on their side of the square. Knowing this is valuable because we only need to focus on half the square to figure things out. We focus on four adjacent dancers and know the other four are dancing the same actions.

(By the way: If you see one man with three ladies, that is an asymmetric situation and it means that an error occurred. If you cannot easily help the dancers regain their symmetry, the simple solution is to tell the dancers to square up at their home position.)

When calling to a full square, many callers select four adjacent dancers as key dancers. If those four dancers are returned to home, then it is safe to assume that all went well. In the illustration, the #1 and #4 couples are key dancers with gent #1 and lady #4 as key corners. Often, lady callers will choose couples #1 and #2 instead.
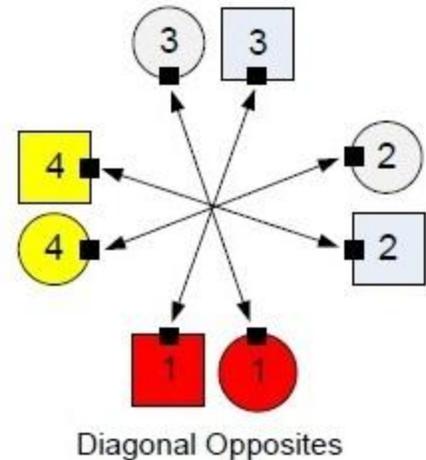
As a new caller you might find it helpful to at least note one key dancer and that dancer's partner and corner (mentally or on paper). It builds confidence to see that dancer find the correct corner for the Allemande Left and the correct partner for the Promenade. (Confirming the fourth dancer is harder and can wait for later.)

(See Definitions of FASR Terminology in the "Appendix" for more about Symmetric Choreography, Formation, Arrangement, Sequence and Relationship.)

The Underlying Grid

In the Basic, Mainstream and SSD Programs, much of the dancing is done within a 16-box grid. If you are familiar with "Sides Face Grand Square", think about the locations of the dancers during that call. Each dancer will use 4 boxes. At some time during the call each of the 16 boxes will be occupied.

Typically we begin a sequence by activating either the Heads or the Sides with a call such as "Heads Square Thru". This places all the dancers in a 2×4 grid within the 16-box grid.

If we activate the Heads, the 2×4 grid will have its long axis horizontal (or east-west) to the caller.

If we activate the Sides, the 2×4 grid will have its long axis vertical (or north-south) to the caller.
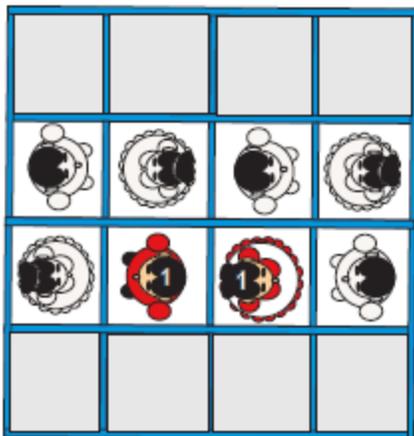
Heads activated
Horizontal or East-West

Sides Activated
Vertical or North-South

In order to help you visualize the action, we suggest that you create a 2×4 grid where you can talk and walk yourself through some of the commonly used calls.

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Create a 2×4 Grid (your dance floor)

A caller tells people where to go. For you to tell someone where to go you must be familiar with the route to get there and return. It's similar to giving someone directions to the hall for tonight's dance. If you are familiar with the area, you can probably give a variety of routes there and back.

You don't need dancers to begin learning, but you will need a dance floor. It doesn't take up much space. We suggest you draw a grid on the floor to simulate an area where dancers travel as they execute calls. When you create your grid, you can tackle the first part of learning what to call. Calling is essentially just telling the dancers where to go.

Find an out-of-the-way piece of floor where you can, at least temporarily, set up the grid. It can help with learning the traffic pattern. It doesn't take much space, and you can personally travel the dance pattern with seven imaginary dancers. We've found that blue painter's tape works very well on linoleum or hardwood. On concrete, maybe in your garage, you can use chalk.

The dimensions don't have to be accurate. Just make sure you have eight adjoining small boxes of about equal size. The grid you draw on the floor does not have to be perfect. Getting out a square and ruler to lay down the grid is unnecessary. The size and squareness of the Grid aren't any more important than the exact placement of the dancer's feet in the square. It doesn't need to be precise. You need 5 pieces of tape about 4 feet long, and 3 pieces of tape about 8 feet long.
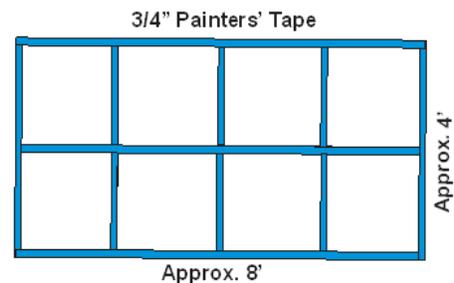
This one 2×4 grid can be used to represent either a horizontal situation or a vertical situation by simply changing the location of the caller. The terms "horizontal" and "vertical" describe the appearance of the grid as seen by the caller. Find something moveable to signify the Caller: a chair, a bucket, a lamp pole, your spouse, whatever.

When you are calling to a full square and start by activating the Heads, the grid that is formed will be horizontal to the caller and the dancers will be moving between east and west as seen by the caller. To simulate that situation, place the moveable object on the long side of the grid.

If you start by activating the Sides, the grid that is formed will be vertical to the caller and the dancers will be moving between north and south as seen by the caller. To simulate that situation, place the moveable object on the short side of the grid.

When calling to live dancers, you imagine the grid. You'll be the only one to see it.

Movement commands are NOT lyrics. Initially, there is no need to worry about filler words or rhyming patter. Use the calls as words. They are directions telling the dancers where to go. You'll find it easier to memorize the commands and the patterns if you know where to send the dancers.

Walk It and Talk It

As you begin calling, you will wonder how we move dancers and where we move them. There is a basic traffic pattern that we use when moving dancers. Many calls move dancers from one spot to another within a 2×4 formation. The grid on the floor shows these eight spots.

The caller often begins a sequence of calls by activating either the Heads or the Sides. The first call moves the activated dancers into the center four boxes of the 2×4 formation. A typical starting call is **Heads Square Thru**.

Now stand in the number one man's or ladies' position relative to the caller. Walk yourself through a **Heads Square Thru**. Don't worry about anyone else, just your ending position in the grid. There are other ways to place dancers in the grid, for example, **Heads Star Thru**, or **Heads Flutterwheel and Sweep a Quarter**. For either of those, you will still have an East-West Grid. But for now, let's concentrate on this one, **Heads Square Thru**.
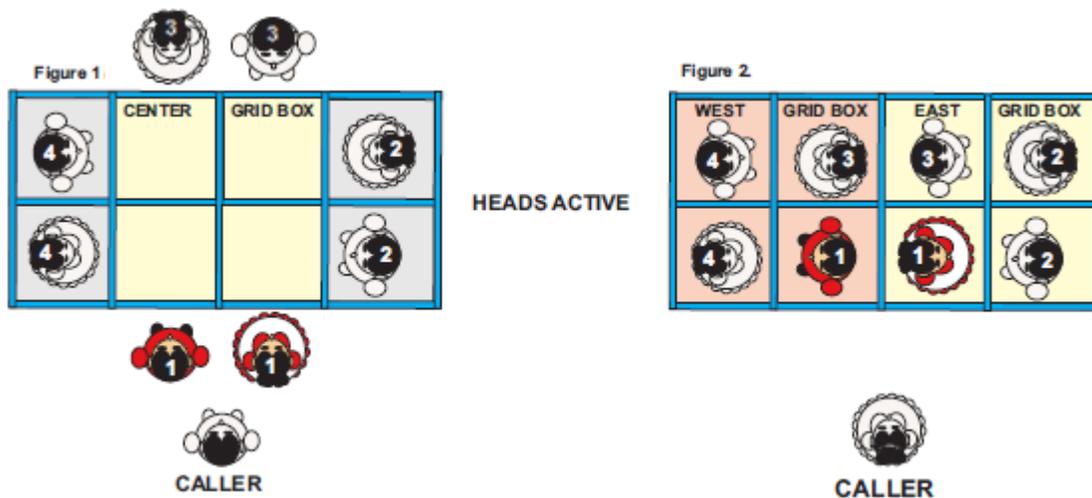
In the graphics above, the Heads are active, and the 2×4 Grid from the callers perspective, is Horizontal. That creates an East and West traffic flow. From the Static Square Figure #1, a **Heads Square Thru** will have the Head dancers in the Center Grid Box executing the **Square Thru**, and finishing with the #1 Lady being in the East Grid Box and the #1 Man in the West Grid Box as shown in Figure #2.

Place whatever you are using to indicate the callers' location so the Grid, from the caller's perspective, is horizontal. Walk though the **Square Thru** from the man's or lady's position noticing that you are moving through each of the four small center boxes and ending facing as shown.

Start in the number one couple's position and proceed to "Walk It and Talk It." Say, "**Heads Square Thru**" and walk it.

In the graphic below, the Sides are active. From the callers perspective the 2×4 Grid is Vertical and that creates a North and South traffic flow. Move whatever is indicating the caller to the narrow end of the Grid as shown below. Assume your position in the static square as the number two couple and "Walk It and Talk It." Develop a feel for where you, as a dancer, are going. So you, as a caller, can tell someone else where to go.
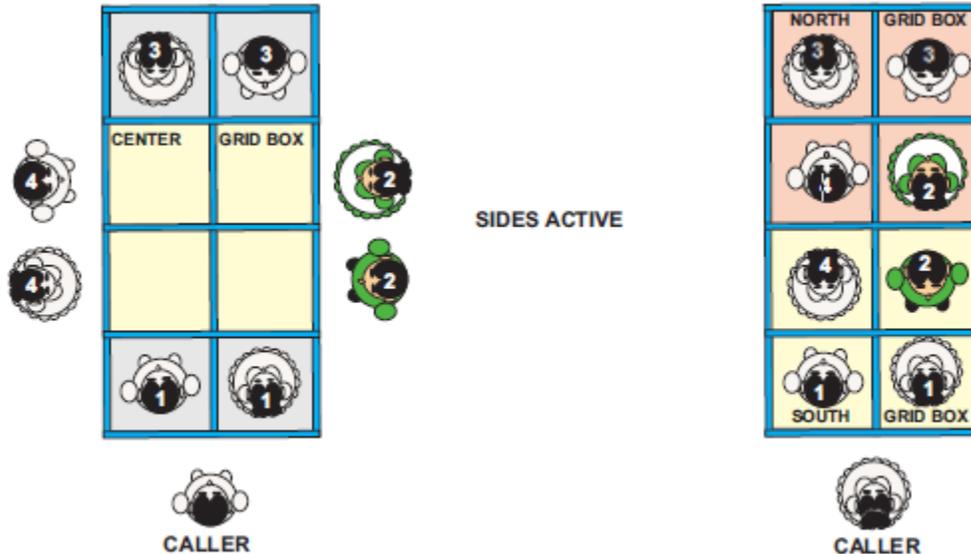
Corner Box

This might be familiar to you. The caller starts the dancers from home positions and moves them into the grid often using either Heads Square Thru or Sides Square Thru. Either of these calls places the dancers in a setup that is called a Corner Box. Notice that every dancer is facing their Corner and all the dancers are In Sequence (the numbers of the men and of the ladies "rise to the right" as you move to the right around the grid). The Corner Box is a very important setup because the dancers are in a place where you can call Allemande Left. After the Allemande Left, all dancers will be facing their partner and in the correct location for some appropriate circular choreography that will move all the dancers back to their home position.

Resolution and Ending Sequence

The next section will discuss the process of moving the dancers around and bringing them back to a Corner Box. Below is one simple option. Once in the Corner Box, if the left hand is available, you can call **Allemande Left** and proceed with a circular ending sequence such as those in the "Let's Begin with a Circle" section.

Simple Patter Sequence from Home to Home:

Move the dancers into a Corner Box:	**Heads (or Sides) Square Thru Four,**
Move dancers around:	**Dosado, Each Four Circle Left,**
	Circle Right the other way back,
Resolve from a Corner Box:	**Allemande Left,**
Add circular choreography to get home:	**Right and Left Grand, Promenade home.**

Modified Chicken Plucker Routine

The next step is to learn a series of calls known as the "Modified Chicken Plucker routine". During this routine the active dancers travel from one end of the grid to the other by going from one of the individual boxes to the next. It gives them an opportunity to dance with everyone in the square and then returns them to the Corner Box.

"Patter" or "Hash" is a collection of calls or routines each of which activates the dancers and then returns them to their home positions. Being able to use and vary the modified Chicken Plucker is enough to give you the ability to activate the Heads or the Sides, move all the dancers around, insert optional modules for variation, and bring them back to their Corner Boxes for a successful Allemande Left resolution.

The original Chicken Plucker routine is "**Right and Left Thru, Dive Thru, Pass Thru"** called twice. The modified version replaces "**Dive Thru, Pass Thru**" with "**Pass Thru, Trade By"**.

First, we need to move the dancers to the Corner Box setup. The dancers reach the Corner Box by executing the call **Heads Square Thru**. The Chicken Plucker routine begins at this point. It ends when dancers return to the Corner Box setup, where they can execute the resolution series of "**Allemande Left, Right and Left Grand, Promenade home**."

STATIC SQUARE (SS)

CALLER
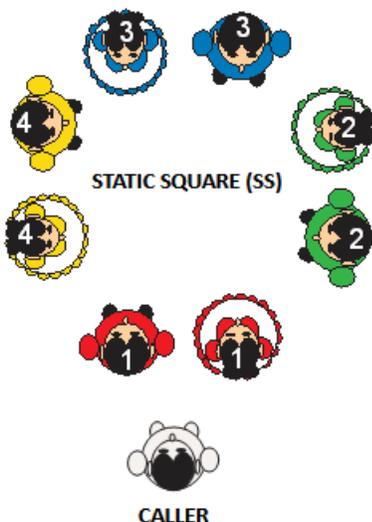
Talk this figure, and walk it on your grid. The modified Chicken Plucker is in **bold**.

- Heads Square Thru
- **Right and Left Thru**
- **Pass Thru, Trade By**
- **Right and Left Thru**
- **Pass Thru, Trade By**
- Allemande Left, Right and Left Grand, Promenade

The next two pages have diagrams showing the locations of the dancers after each call. The first page uses color to identify the four dancers nearest to the number one man. The second page uses color for the four dancers nearest to the number one lady.

Walk through this routine on your grid, dancing as the number one man, or the number one lady. Do so not only starting with Heads, but also starting with Sides. Note that "Right and Left Thru" turns you around and that "Pass Thru, Trade By" moves you across the grid. Do this repeatedly until the movements through the grid and the calls in order are totally memorized.

Both the original and the modified Chicken Plucker are commonly used traffic patterns for moving dancers across the square. They also provide building blocks for the use of modules.

Heads Square Thru followed by the Modified Chicken Plucker Routine

1. HEADS SQUARE THRU
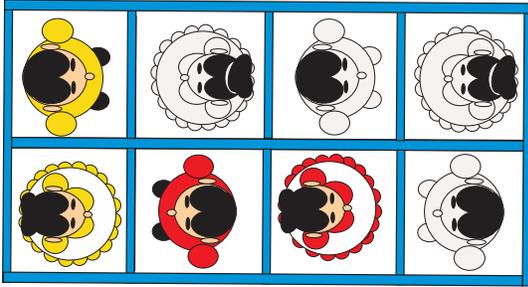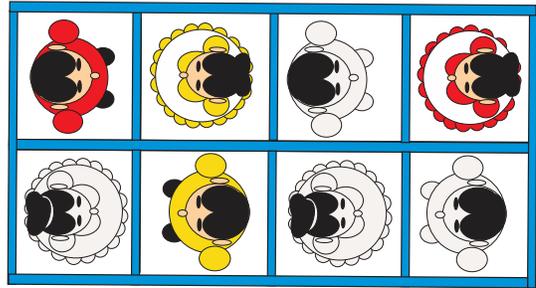
2. RIGHT & LEFT THRU
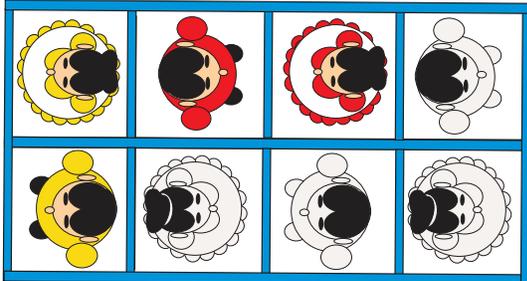
3. PASS THRU
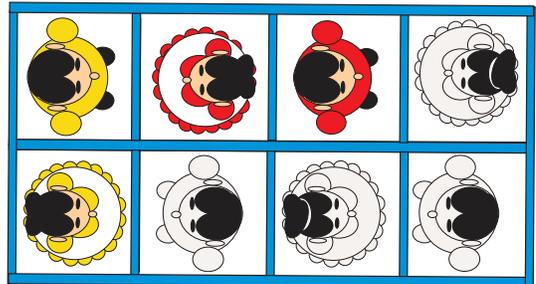
4. TRADE BY

5. RIGHT & LEFT THRU
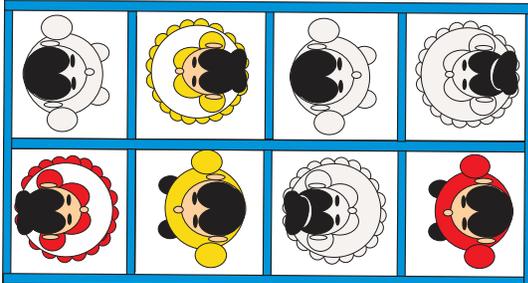
6. PASS THRU
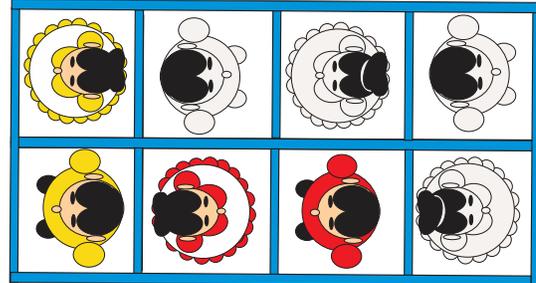
7.TRADE BY
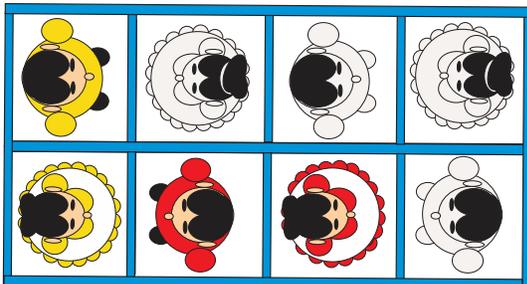
Note 1: In Figure #1 and in Figure #7 all dancers are facing their original corners.

This set-up is known as a Corner Box. The dancers are in place for an "Allemande Left".

Same Action from the Perspective of the Number One Lady

1. HEADS SQUARE THRU
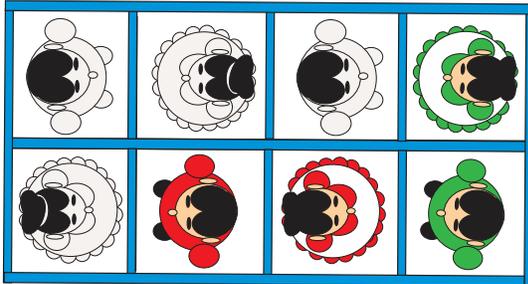
2. RIGHT & LEFT THRU

3. PASS THRU

4. TRADE BY

5. RIGHT & LEFT THRU

6. PASS THRU

7. TRADE BY

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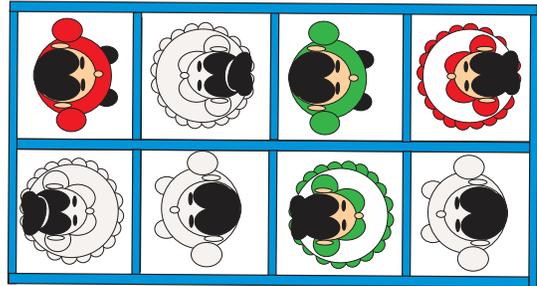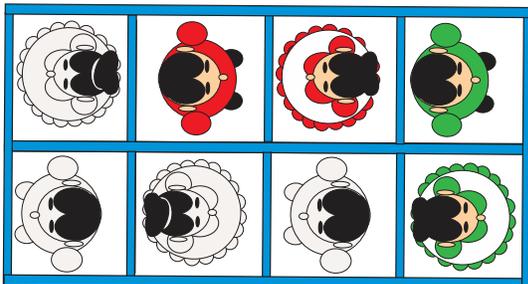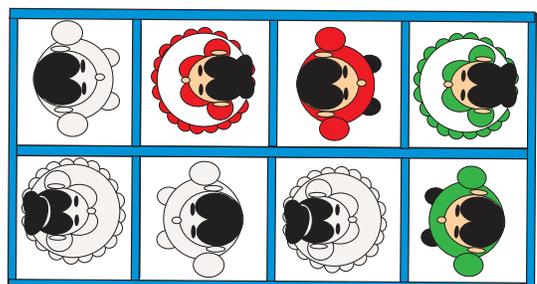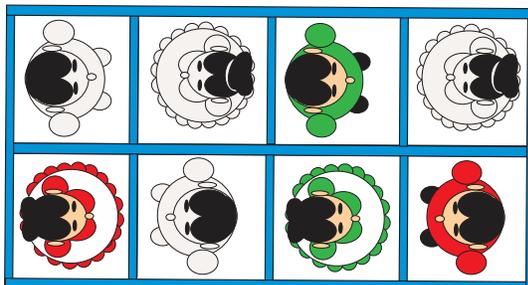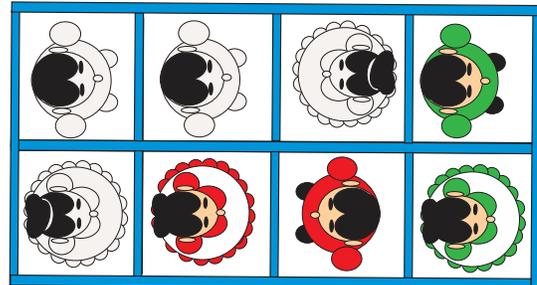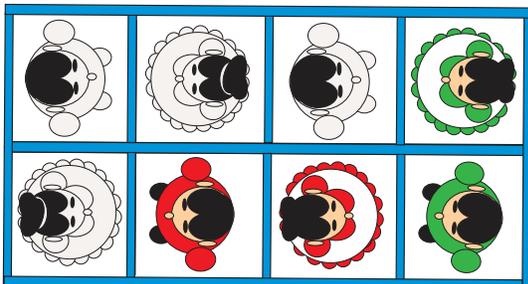
Let's Add Music

Now that you have memorized this first routine and have danced it on your grid numerous times, it is time to marry the calls to music. You need to figure out a way to play music so you can practice calling to it.

Most music used in square dancing today is in the form of mp3 digital music files. Consider looking at music currently available for purchase from [Music For Callers](#) website, a service provided by the CALLERLAB music producers committee. Once you get the file, figure out a way to play it so you can call and dance on the grid to your calling. You can play it from your laptop, desktop, iPad or whatever. It only needs to play loud enough for you to hear and use while practicing calling.

Square dance music is often composed of alternating downbeats and upbeats. Counting the downbeats and upbeats sounds like "ONE *and* TWO *and* ONE *and* TWO *and*", where the upbeats are represented by the '*and*' words. These beats can also sound like "ONE *and* TWO *and* THREE *and* FOUR *and*", or "BOOM-chuck-BOOM-chuck-BOOM-chuck-BOOM-chuck."

Most calls are delivered with two emphasized syllables. "RIGHT and left THRU, FLUT-ter WHEEL, LAD-ies CHAIN, HEADS square THRU". We marry the two-syllable call to two downbeats of music, which sets the rhythm for the dancers to move to. "BOOM-chuck-BOOM-chuck" becomes "HEADS-square-THRU-*pause*."

In calling, the upbeat (where the word '*and*' or '*chuck*' falls) is equally important as the downbeat. Dancers set their feet down on a downbeat. The upbeat causes dancers to lift their feet. This means dancers move or take steps combining the downbeat and the upbeat. For dancers to dance properly they must move rhythmically to the music. Our calls must be delivered rhythmically with the music.

Tempo is the count of the number of beats per minute, that is, just the "BOOM" sounds. Square dance music plays within a comfortable range of 124 to 128 beats per minute (bpm.) Count the number of beats in 30 seconds, then multiply that by 2 to get the tempo of the music. Adjust the tempo or choose different music if it doesn't fall within this range (62 to 64 beats in 30 seconds).

Listen to the music and tap your toe or walk to the beat. Try to identify the sections that are similar in all square dance music. An introduction can be 2, 4, 8 or sometimes 16 beats. After the "intro", there are usually several sections containing 64 beats. There is also an "outro" at the end, which can be 2 to 16 beats. Listen for these components and get comfortable identifying them. Within each 64-beat section, listen for the eight 8-beat sections.

We deliver calls around this 8-beat framework, which itself contains two groups of four downbeats. In the table on the next page, one line shows four downbeats. The first word in each line should be called in time with the first downbeat in a musical group of four. The capitalized words in bold are delivered on the downbeat. The italicized words are delivered on the upbeat. Words in parentheses indicate silent counting of downbeats.

The table illustrates how the calls and filler words are delivered on the downbeat and upbeat of the musical phrase. You should aim to deliver calls and filler words rhythmically. Combined with the music, a rhythmical delivery provides the rhythm the dancers need to move and dance. This is an example of what your first routine with the modified Chicken Plucker might sound like.

Modified Chicken Plucker Mapped to Music

Music	1	*And*	2	*And*	3	*And*	4	*And*
Beat	*Down*	*Up*	*Down*	*Up*	*Down*	*Up*	*Down*	*Up*
Call	**HEADS**	*move -*	**UP -**	*to the*	**MIDDLE**	*and*	**BACK**	
	(one)	-	(two)	-	(three)	-	(four)	-
Call	**SQUARE**	-	**THRU**	-	**COUNT**	*to*	**FOUR**	-
	(one)	-	(two)	-	(three)	-	(four)	-
Call	**RIGHT**	*and left*	**THRU**	*the*	**OUT-**	*side*	**TWO**	
	(one)	-	(two)	-	(three)	-	(four)	
Call	**PASS**	-	**THRU**	-	**TRADE**	-	**BY**	-
Call	**RIGHT**	*and left*	**THRU**	*the*	**OUT-**	*side*	**TWO**	-
	(one)	-	(two)	-	(three)	-	(four)	-
Call	**PASS**	-	**THRU**	-	**TRADE**	-	**BY**	-
Call	**ALLE-**	*-mande*	**LEFT**	*with*	**YOUR**	*left*	**HAND**	-
Call	**PART-**	*-ner*	**RIGHT**	*do a*	**RIGHT**	*and left*	**GRAND**	-
	(one)	-	(two)	-	(three)	-	(four)	-
Call	**GRAND**	*old*	**RIGHT**	*and*	**LEFT**	*I*	**SING**	*then*
Call	**PROM-**	*-en-*	**ADE**	*go*	**ROUND**	*the*	**RING**	-
	(one)	-	(two)	-	(three)	-	(four)	-
	(five)	-	(six)	-	(seven)	-	(eight)	-

Words that are not calls are 'filler words'. Some filler words are helper words that help position dancers to execute a call or add an additional explanation on how the dancers should execute a call. Filler and helper words vary a lot. Their use is part of a caller's style.

Knowing when to use them, or not use them, is important. If delivered with the same dynamic as the command for the movement, or if they interfere in a way that disrupts the timing of the dance, they can destroy the dancing rhythm and your timing. Start by using the filler words illustrated above. Later, change the filler words to suit your style.

Be articulate. Always make the commands stand out by projecting them with your voice. Use filler words as little as possible. Make sure that what you call is heard and understood. If dancers can't hear and understand you, they can't dance.

It's not important that anything rhymes. Rhyming patter was used decades ago but is much less used today. It is acceptable to deliver calls with no filler words. However, monotonic delivery should be avoided.

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The placement of the calls is critical for smooth dancing. Callers need to know how much time, in terms of beats of music, it takes for dancers to execute calls. In the Reference section there is a link to the CALLERLAB documents that list timing information for each of the calls in the Basic, Mainstream and Plus Program Lists. We need to construct our calls and filler words around these timing elements. In the Appendix of this document there is an article on Timing that discusses how to do this.

There you go! This is your first complete routine using the modified Chicken Plucker. Call it once for the Heads, then for the Sides. Call it again for the Heads, and again for the Sides, and you've done your first patter tip.

Your First Singing Call

We have talked at length about patter and how to call it. Just a few words about singing calls.

There's a good chance that during your first few times on the microphone you will be doing a singing call, and that's a good thing. Get advice from your mentor, if you have one. You will likely be doing a singing call at their dance. Here are a few things to consider:

1. Choose a familiar singing call that you like and have danced.

2. If another caller does a singing call that you like, get the title and recording company information and purchase a copy (see www.musicforcallers.com).

3. A good singing call is one that is within your vocal range. Not too high, not too low but just right when you are singing on the microphone. Today it's simple to adjust the range of the music on your computer, but for the first couple of singing calls, try to find something in a comfortable range.

4. There are a lot of singing calls that have calls contained in the Basic Program of CALLERLAB. We suggest beginning with one of those. That way, you'll have a singing call that fits the needs of most groups. Don't worry about being too easy, worry about being too hard.

5. It is alright to listen to the "called version" and sing along with the other caller. Listen to the music without the caller to be sure you can identify the seven verses of 64-beats each.

6. Go to YouTube and do a search for the pop version of the song. That gives you additional lyrics and ideas about how to present the singing call.

In the beginning, it's not necessary to analyze the choreography within a singing call. That can come later. Find something you like, memorize it word for word, get up and sing. Enjoy!

Introduction to Modules

What is a Module?

You're probably figuring out the same thing the dancers have figured out. You're calling the same traffic pattern over and over. How do we get around that? We disguise the routine using Zeros and Equivalents, that's how. Then, each time we call the routine, it has a different feel for the dancers. Most dancers won't figure out you are calling the same routine.

A module is a combination of one or more calls that have a useful and easily recognized characteristic. One such characteristic is one or more calls that "do nothing". Modules with that characteristic are called Zero modules because they return the dancer to the spot they were in when the module was first called. A simple Zero module is calling "Right and Left Thru" twice. You wind up back where you started.

Another very common type of module is a combination of one or more calls that take the place of another call. These are Equivalents. For instance, calling "Pass to the Center" instead of "Dive Thru" produces the same result. The two calls are equivalent to each other. It is also common for two or more calls to equal another call or another short call module. For instance, "Dive Thru, Pass Thru" can be replaced with "Pass Thru, Trade By". The dancers end up in the same location either way.

By using Zeros and Equivalents, you can add variety to routines and disguise them to the dancers, who more than likely are unaware modules are being used.

Learn at Your Own Pace

Study and practice this process of learning and using Zero and Equivalent modules at a pace that is comfortable for you.

1. Start by learning one Zero module that you can add after "Heads Square Thru" and before you begin the Chicken Plucker.

2. Then learn to add one Zero module when the dancers are halfway through the Chicken Plucker.

3. After you have mastered the idea of using Zero modules, move on to learning how to substitute an Equivalent module for "Square Thru".

4. You will be in "expert" territory when you are learning how to substitute Equivalents for the various calls in the modified Chicken Plucker.

In the Appendix of this document there are [Definitions of Module Types](). In the "Reference" section under [Recordings]() there is a link to the Knowledge Base which describes and links to several YouTube videos of CALLERLAB interest sessions that deal with modules. You should watch these videos to expand your understanding of modules and how they work.

Zero Modules

Every module is designed to be used when the dancers are in a specified starting setup. In order to communicate with each other about these starting setups, callers have agreed on names for them. A "Couple" is two dancers standing side-by-side and facing the same direction. A "Normal Couple" has a boy on the left and a girl on the right. When the dancers are in a Corner Box, the dancers in each half of the square are in "Normal Facing Couples".

Zero Modules designed to be used from Normal Facing Couples.

Dosado	Right and Left Thru, Right and Left Thru,	Two Ladies Chain, Two Ladies Chain (back again)
Star Thru, Pass Thru, Wheel Around, Star Thru	Circle Left Halfway, Veer Left, Wheel and Deal	Right and Left Thru, Veer Left, Chain Down the Line, Star Thru (or Slide Thru)
Right and Left Thru, Ladies Chain, Flutterwheel	Right and Left Thru, Flutterwheel, Reverse Flutterwheel	Swing Thru, Boys Run, Bend the Line, Reverse Flutterwheel, Star Thru (or Slide Thru)

Zero modules are a caller's best friend because they provide the caller with a controlled environment for using a new call, drilling a recently learned call, or just to keep the dancers moving in a smoothly flowing pattern.

Situations arise when callers need to think or plan regarding where they intend to take the dancers and what calls will achieve that end. Zeros provide some thinking time while the dancers move around and then return to the same location they were in when they began the Zero module. The time it takes dancers to execute the Zero module is time you can use to think about where you are and what comes next.

The modified Chicken Plucker has several opportunities for inserting a Zero module that is designed for use by Normal Facing Couples. In order to help yourself keep track of where you are in the Chicken Plucker, the common practice is to use just three opportunities.

1. The first opportunity is to insert a Zero module after the "Square Thru" setup and before the Chicken Plucker routine begins.

2. The second opportunity is to insert a Zero module after the first half of the Chicken Plucker.

3. The third opportunity is to insert a Zero module after the completion of the Chicken Plucker and before the Allemande Left resolution.

By inserting Zero modules where appropriate before, during, or after the modified Chicken Plucker part of your routine, you add variety. Dancers are less apt to realize you are calling the same routine repeatedly. Your routine now looks something like this. The Zero modules are italicized. The modified Chicken Plucker is bold.

Your Original Routine	Add Zero Modules
Heads Square Thru,	Heads Square Thru,
	(insert a Zero module) *Dosado*
Right and Left Thru, Pass Thru, Trade By,	(begin the modified Chicken Plucker) **Right and Left Thru, Pass Thru, Trade By,**
	(add a different Zero module) *Right and Left Thru, Veer Left, Chain Down the Line, Star Thru,*
Right and Left Thru, Pass Thru, Trade By,	(complete the modified Chicken Plucker) **Right and Left Thru, Pass Thru, Trade By,**
Allemande Left, Right and Left Grand, Promenade	(resolve and move the dancers to home) Allemande Left, Right and Left Grand, Promenade

Notice that the modified Chicken Plucker is, itself, a Zero module. It is an example of a Zero module that is designed to be used when the whole square is in an Eight Chain Thru formation with Normal Couples. When it is danced, all eight dancers interact with each other.

Another example of a Zero module that starts from an Eight Chain Thru formation with Normal Couples is: "Swing Thru, Boys Run, Ferris Wheel, Centers Pass Thru".

Get-In to Corner Box: Heads Square Thru,

Two Zero Modules: Dosado, Star Thru, Pass Thru, Wheel Around, Star Thru,

First Half of Chicken Plucker: **Right and Left Thru, Pass Thru, Trade By,**

Zero Module: Swing Thru, Boys Run, Ferris Wheel, Centers Pass Thru,

Second Half of Chicken Plucker: **Right and Left Thru, Pass Thru, Trade By,**

Resolve and move to home: Allemande Left, Right and Left Grand, Promenade

Equivalents

(These Equivalents assume the dancers are in Normal Facing Couples.)

For This Call	Use These Equivalents	For This Call	Use These Equivalents
Square Thru	Touch 1/4, Boys Run	Dive Thru	Pass to the Center
	Right and Left Thru, Square Thru 2	Dive Thru, Pass Thru	Pass Thru, Trade By
		Star Thru	Slide Thru
	Star Thru, California Twirl	Right and Left Thru	Circle Four Halfway
	Box the Gnat, Slide Thru	Right and Left Thru	Pass Thru, Wheel Around
	Flutterwheel & Sweep 1/4, Pass Thru	Right and Left Thru	Star Thru, Slide Thru

Keep in mind there are dozens of these modules that can be used. Furthermore, there are several other setups where these same modules can be applied for similar purposes. Modules are very important tools for managing choreography.

The power in using Zeros and Equivalents is easily seen by comparing how these changes impact your first routine. This is illustrated below. This example includes not only the insertion of Zero modules, but also the replacement of certain calls with Equivalents. Dance it yourself to feel how dramatically the routine has changed.

Equivalent for Square Thru: **Heads Touch 1/4, Head Boys Run,**

Zero Module: **Swing Thru, Boys Run,**
                                          Ferris Wheel, Centers Pass Thru,

First call of Chicken Plucker: **Right and Left Thru,**
Equivalent to Dive Thru: **Pass to the Center,**
Third call of original Chicken Plucker: **Centers Pass Thru,**

Zero Module: **Right and Left Thru, Veer Left,**
                                          Chain Down the Line, Slide Thru,

Second Half of Chicken Plucker: **Right and Left Thru, Pass Thru, Trade By,**
Standard Resolution: **Allemande Left, Right and Left Grand, Promenade**

Learn to Call to Two Couples

You develop modules as you go along. Most of the time, you call to a collection of four dancers at any given moment. Yes, the entire square is moving, but our focus most of the time is on four adjacent dancers on one side of the square.

Because of this, it is very useful to develop your skills by calling to just two couples. Many of the calls we use are done with just four dancers. Learning which calls these are and how to use them is a giant step forward for new callers.

Calling to two couples has several advantages and provides useful opportunities.

1. It is a lot easier to get two couples to visit your home and help you learn to call to two couples than it is to find a way to practice with a full square.

2. Two couples need less floor space than a whole square.

3. There is no 2×4 grid, and no complication regarding dancers moving from one location to another across the square.

4. You can practice proper timing, and rhythmical calling to the musical phrase.

5. You can test new modules and gradually add them to your repertoire.

6. There are only two possible boy/girl pairings (dancers are either with their partner or with their opposite). You can explore ways to change the pairing (such as Ladies Chain).

7. You can learn to manage different formations and arrangements that require only four dancers.

    Formations: Facing Couples or Back-to-Back Couples
                   Boxes (Right-Handed or Left-Handed)
                   Ocean Wave or Two-Faced Line (Right-Handed or Left-Handed

    Arrangements: Normal Couples or Half-Sashayed Couples

8. You can begin to develop basic sight skills associated with all forms of calling. This is an opportunity to verify the physical picture of the dancers in front of you with the mental image of the dancers in your mind's eye.

9. Training your mind to be ahead of the dancers and figuring out which calls to use next is easier with two couples. This is a very important skill.

10. Calling to two couples occurs regularly, even when four couples are dancing. Mastering this skill separately aids in successfully calling to a full square of four couples.

How Many Calls Between Resolutions?

This is an important question. Too often, callers string together too many calls before resolving. It is not absolute, and the range of the appropriate number of calls may change under differing circumstances. A good range is between 12 and 24 calls, then you should resolve.

Callers who venture beyond this may give the impression they are 'lost' choreographically. Also, excessive length increases the likelihood of dancer error. Every successful resolution gives the dancers a satisfied and confident feeling. When the resolutions are too far apart, dancers don't experience this. Our primary goal is for the dancers to always "win" by feeling successful.

Ethics

Callers are the stewards of the square dance activity. This role carries with it certain responsibilities you need to be aware of and follow if you want to continue as a caller. The CALLERLAB Code of Ethics lists the ethical standards we all subscribe to. The current version is available for download from the CALLERLAB website (https://callerlab.org). Search for it under Caller Resources / General Documents.

What's Next? Set Some Goals!

In this section, various links to external documents are available. Clicking on the underlined links will take you to additional information regarding specific topics.

There are several routes to follow depending on your next goal.

Goal (1): Learn more about Modules

- Use the CALLERLAB Online Teaching Resource at https://teaching.callerlab.org to study the call definitions and find modules for each call.

- Go to the "Reference" section below for a link to recordings about Modules.

Goal (2): Learn about Teaching Dancers

- If possible, find an opportunity to teach with a more experienced caller in your area.

- Go to the CALLERLAB Online Teaching Resource at https://teaching.callerlab.org This has extensive material designed to assist callers who are teaching (Definitions, Standard Applications, Call Analysis, Modules, Teaching Patter and Singers, and Other related dance ideas such as Mixers and Contras).

- Go to the CALLERLAB KnowledgeBase page about Teaching SSD

- General Teaching Information: Teaching Techniques by Jerry Reed

    https://callerlab.org/download/teaching-techniques-by-jerry-reed-december-23-2010/?wpdmdl=4032&refresh=64219104a6e191679921412

Goal (3): Learn more about Singing Calls

- Go to the "Reference" section below for a link to recordings about Singing Calls.

- Singing call figures for teaching specific calls can be found in the CALLERLAB Online Teaching Resource at https://teaching.callerlab.org

Goal (4): Learn more about Choreography

- Study the material provided in the Appendix of this document.

    Definitions of FASR Terminology
    Definitions of Module Types
    Aiming for Smooth Dancing
    Timing
    Call Analysis Sheet
    Brief Introduction to Sight Resolution

Goal (5): Learn more about Music

    Structure of Music

    https://callerlab.org/download/music-structure/?wpdmdl=4060

    Music Management

    https://callerlab.org/download/music-management/?wpdmdl=4059

    Using Digital Music

    https://callerlab.org/download/digital-music-2012-kris-jensen/?wpdmdl=3560

Goal (6): Download and Study the CALLERLAB Dance Program documents

- Download and study the documents which can be found in the CALLERLAB website under "Dance Programs".   https://callerlab.org/dance-programs/

    Once there, click on the appropriate Program and then scroll down to find download buttons for several related documents in several languages.

    Look for Definitions, Standard Applications, List, Timing, Checklist, Teaching Tips, and Related Subjects.

    Community Dance Program download page:

    https://callerlab.org/dance-programs/cdp-choreography/

    Basic and Mainstream download page:

    https://callerlab.org/dance-programs/basic-and-mainstream/

    Social Square Dancing download page:

https://callerlab.org/dance-programs/social-square-dancing/

Plus Program download page:

https://callerlab.org/dance-programs/plus/

- Also from the main Dance Program page scroll down to find other related documents.

  In particular, look for:

  Formation Arrangements (Diagrams of Arrangements)

  Formation Pictograms Chart (Diagrams of Formations)

  Lost Squares Procedure

Goal (7): Investigate the uses of Taminations

- Taminations is an online tool that illustrates the action during square dance calls. It can be used to study the possibilities for each call and to create choreography using the Sequencer tool. Go to https://www.tamtwirlers.org/taminations

Goal (8): Seek Advice

- Plan on attending a callers' school with a CALLERLAB Accredited Caller Coach. Download from the CALLERLAB Website the latest listings of information.

  Accredited Caller Coaches: https://callerlab.org/general-documents/
  Search for "Caller Coach"

  Upcoming Caller Schools: https://callerlab.org/general-documents/
  Search for "Caller Schools"

  Scholarship Information: https://callerlab.org/Scholarship-Information/

Goal (9): Learn about Beginner Party Dances and Community Dances

- Learn how to call a Community Dance or Party Dance. Visit the CALLERLAB Online Dance Resource at https://dances.callerlab.org/

This Dance Resource is a compilation of Beginner Party Dances, Community Dances, Contra Dances, and Traditional Square Dances. Each dance has instructions and prompting words. Dances are grouped by type and listed in HTML code for easy viewing. Most dances are available to be downloaded as a Rich Text File. It is also easy to copy and paste as desired. There are additional supporting documents that provide general knowledge about presenting these dances.

- *Dancing For Busy People* has become a classic for those involved with Community Dances and parties. Many of the dances are available in the Online Dance Resource. Here is the link to a free download of the book.

  Dancing For Busy People by Cal Campbell, Ken Kernen and Bob Howell

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Goal (10): Learn more about Specific Topics discussed in a Callers' School

- [Smooth Dancing and Timing](https://callerlab.org/download/smooth-dancing-body-flow-and-timing/?wpdmdl=4076)

  https://callerlab.org/download/smooth-dancing-body-flow-and-timing/?wpdmdl=4076
- [Choreographic Management](https://callerlab.org/download/method-of-choreographic-management/?wpdmdl=4054)

  https://callerlab.org/download/method-of-choreographic-management/?wpdmdl=4054
- [Degree of Difficulty](https://callerlab.org/download/degreeofdifficulty-2011-jeannette-staeuble/?wpdmdl=8032)

  https://callerlab.org/download/degreeofdifficulty-2011-jeannette-staeuble/?wpdmdl=8032

- Tim Marriner's Caller Education Materials in the CALLERLAB KnowledgeBase

  https://knowledge.callerlab.org/tim-marriners-caller-education-materials/

- Articles from the 1994 edition of the *Starter Kit for Newer Callers*

  The original version of this document was designed for "Newer" rather than "New" Callers. The following articles delve more deeply into each subject.

  https://knowledge.callerlab.org/caller-training-handouts/

    "Music As Used By Callers"
    "Music – Developing the Skill of Pre-Cueing"

    "Smooth Body Flow"
    "Timing Handout"
    "Structured Timing of Commands"
    "Timing – Music – Choreography – The Balancing Act"

    "Definitions of Terminology"
    "Modules"
    "Sight Resolution Logic Path"
    "Sight Resolutions from Ed Foote"

    "Helper Words for Callers"
    "How Hard Will It Be?"
    "Dealing with Difficulty"

References and Resources

The best general source of information on calling can be found in the CALLERLAB Knowledgebase. The CALLERLAB KnowledgeBase (https://knowledge.callerlab.org/) has links to many articles that provide technical and historic information to callers. Newer callers or people wondering what might be involved in learning to call are encouraged to explore this resource. To begin, click on the link above or copy and paste this: (https://knowledge.callerlab.org). Then click on the "Callers" category.

The materials listed here have information that is particularly aimed at people in the early stages of learning to call. In the Knowledge Base click on Callers and then filter by "Book" to find reviews and information about obtaining the following Books or Articles.

Books

All About Modules by Cal Campbell

Out of Sight by Don Beck

Becoming A Square Dance Caller 4th Edition by Bruce Holmes

Call Me Crazy by Kip Garvey

Calling for Modern Square Dancing by Jim Mayo

Articles

Lots Of Stuff About Modules by Barry Clasper

So you want to be a caller by Paul Cote

Struggling Up the Cliff by Tom Gray

Recordings

Sounding Like A Caller by Daryl Clendenin:

https://knowledge.callerlab.org/sounding-like-a-caller/

CALLERLAB Convention Education Session Recordings about Singing Calls:

https://knowledge.callerlab.org/education-recordings-about-singing-calls/

CALLERLAB Convention Education Recordings about Modules:

https://knowledge.callerlab.org/education-recordings-about-modules/

CALLERLAB Resources

Look under [Goal (6)](#) in the previous section for more information about how to find these documents on the CALLERLAB Website.

CALLERLAB Code of Ethics

CALLERLAB Lost Squares Procedure

Online Teaching Resource at https://teaching.callerlab.org

Online Dance Resource at https://dances.callerlab.org

KnowledgeBase at https://knowledge.callerlab.org

CALLERLAB Publications (free download) look under General Documents:

Caller Mentoring Guidelines (Caller Training Committee)

Sight and Module Resolution Systems (Choreographic Applications Committee)

[2014 Sight and Module Resolution Systems Preview](#) (YouTube recording)

CALLERLAB Publications available for purchase (contact the Home Office):

Choreographic Guidelines (Choreographic Applications Committee)

CALLERLAB Documents directly related to the Programs and Definitions

Program Lists (also available for Advanced and Challenge Programs)**:**

CALLERLAB Community Dance Program (CDP)
CALLERLAB Basic Program
CALLERLAB SSD Program
CALLERLAB Mainstream Program
CALLERLAB Plus Program

Call Definitions (also available for Advanced and Challenge Programs)**:**

CALLERLAB Basic Dance Program Definitions
CALLERLAB Mainstream Dance Program Definitions
CALLERLAB Plus Definitions

Standard Applications:

CALLERLAB Standard Basic Applications
CALLERLAB Standard Mainstream Applications
CALLERLAB Standard Plus Applications

Timing Lists:

> *Timing the CALLERLAB Basic and Mainstream Programs*
> *Timing the CALLERLAB Plus Program*

Pictograms of Formations and Arrangements:

> *CALLERLAB Formation Pictograms*
> *CALLERLAB Names and Pictograms of Selected Formation Arrangements*

Newsletters

Behind The Mike by Barry Wonson — A monthly informational newsletter

> https://knowledge.callerlab.org/behind-the-mike-newsletter/

Computer Programs

These resources are designed to help with creating choreography by moving dancer icons. These software programs help a caller create smooth flowing modules and routines. They can be used in the same way as checkers or dolls, but they should not replace manual moving of dancer checkers or dolls. Physically moving checkers (pawns or dolls) is a time-tested way to learn about body flow and call definitions — it is a very important part of the process.

> Taminations – owned by Brad Christie https://www.tamtwirlers.org/taminations
>
> Callarama – owned by Reinhold Roedig http://www.callarama.com/
>
> Caller Tool Box – owned by Gerhard Nanninga http://nanninga.myds.me/hp/en/
>
> Sd – A Square Dance Caller's Helper owned by Bill Ackerman (wba@alum.mit.edu)
>
> > https://challengedance.org/sd/sd_doc.html

The following program is designed to manage music and lyrics.

> Sq View – owned by Thomas Bernhed (http://www.sqview.se/download.php)

The following program deals with both creating choreography and managing music.

> Ceder Square Dance System (CSDS) – owned by Vic Ceder (https://www.ceder.net)

Appendix

Definitions of FASR Terminology

SYMMETRIC CHOREOGRAPHY: Whatever one-half of the square is doing, the opposite half of the square is doing the same thing. With symmetry, each dancer has a diagonal opposite. All diagonal opposites move the same way on their side of the square. Each half of the square should always contain two boys and two girls. Also each half of the square should be in the same formation and arrangement, and the dancers should have the same relationships.

FORMATION: A Formation is a geometric shape and facing direction of a group of two, four or eight dancers without regard to the gender of any dancer. Examples include Lines, Waves, Circles, Stars, etc.

ARRANGEMENT: The physical arrangement of boys and girls within any given formation. There are six, and only six, ways in which you can arrange any given formation in symmetric choreography. As an example, here are the six possibilities for Facing Lines:

Normal Couples	Half-Sashayed Couples,
Boys together on left, Girls on right	Boys together on right, Girls on left,
Boys on the ends with Girls in middle	Boys in the middle with Girls on the ends.

SEQUENCE: In a Squared Set, we number the couples as #1, #2, #3, and #4 in ascending order counter-clockwise around the square. Each dancer keeps their original number throughout the tip. Since this is our standard starting point, we call this ordering being "In Sequence".

We say the couples are "Out of Sequence" when the ascending order of the couple numbers goes clockwise around the square.

The fact that the Sequence of the boys can change independently of the Sequence of the girls, means that there are four possible Sequence conditions that can occur.

Both In Sequence	Both Out of Sequence
Boys In and Girls Out	Boys Out and Girls In

RELATIONSHIP: When the square first forms, relationships are set as follows and remain fixed throughout the tip. Each gent names the four ladies in the square with respect to himself. Beginning with the lady on his right and continuing around the circle they are Partner, Right-Hand Lady, Opposite, and Corner. Each lady recognizes each gent by the same name he gave her except for thinking "I am that gent's Right-Hand Lady". For her, the order begins with the gent on her left and continues in that direction.

We also talk about Relationships within a group of four dancers. For example, in a Corner Box each dancer is facing their Corner. In a Lead Right Box each dancer is standing beside their Partner.

SET-UP: The overall Formation, Arrangement, Sequence, and Relationship of a set at any point in time. This is frequently referred to as the FASR. Several common Set-Ups have names.

Definitions of Module Types

MODULE   A call, or series of calls, which will move the dancers from one useful FASR (specific Formation, Arrangement, Sequence and Relationship situation) back to the same FASR or to a different useful FASR. Modules that accomplish similar choreographic goals are grouped together under a descriptive name.

GET-IN   A series of one or more calls that create a particular FASR from a Squared Set. This is often called a SET-UP or SET-UP Routine.

-- Example: From a Static Square, "Heads Square Thru" to create a Corner Box, which is a particular Eight Chain Thru SETUP.

GET-OUT   A series of one or more calls that resolve dancers from a known FASR to a Squared Set (at least as far as Allemande Left).

-- Example: From Parallel Right-Hand Waves with girls in the center, each dancer holding right hands with their own partner and all in sequence, "Scoot Back, Right and Left Grand, and Promenade Home".

-- Another example from the same setup would be "Pass Thru, Allemande Left".

EQUIVALENT   A series of one or more calls that have the same end result as another call or series of calls.

-- Example: From Normal Facing Couples, "Touch 1/4, Boys Run" is Equivalent to "Square Thru".

CONVERSION   The mostly commonly used Conversion Modules change the FASR from a Corner Box to a Partner Line or vice versa.

-- From a Corner Box, the calls "Swing Thru, Girls Circulate, Boys Trade, Boys Run, Bend the Line" will change the FASR to a Partner Line (all original partners side-by-side and all In Sequence).

-- From a Partner Line, the calls "Touch 1/4, Column Circulate, Boys Run" will change the FASR to a Corner Box.

ZEROES	There are several different kinds of Zeroes.
GEOGRAPHICAL ZERO	A series of one or more calls that return the dancers to the same footprints they had when the call began.

-- Example: from any Eight Chain Thru formation the calls "Swing Thru, Centers Run, Wheel and Deal" return the dancers to the same FASR. |
| TRUE ZERO | A series of one or more calls that return the dancers to the same FASR but not necessarily to the same footprints (it may be rotated).

-- Example: from an Eight Chain Thru formation the call "Eight Chain Four" is a "flip-flop" that turns the whole formation 180 degrees. |
| FRACTIONAL ZERO | A series of one or more calls that can be repeated some specific number of times to return the dancers to the same FASR.

-- Example: From an Eight Chain Thru formation the call "Right and Left Thru, Pass Thru, Trade By" is a Half Fractional Zero. We also know this as half of the modified Chicken Plucker. |
| TECHNICAL ZERO | A series of one or more calls that moves dancers from a particular FASR to a technically equivalent FASR. Two FASRs are "technically equivalent" if the roles and positions of Head and Side dancers are swapped or inverted.

-- An example of technically equivalent FASRs is seen by having either the Heads step to the center and face Corners, or the Sides step to the center and face Corners. These two setups are technically equivalent Corner Box setups that have the roles and positions of Head and Side dancers swapped or inverted.

-- Example of a Technical Zero from a Corner Box: "Swing Thru, All Eight Circulate, Boys Run, Wheel and Deal". |
| INVERT AND ROTATE MODULE | This is a Technical Zero that exchanges the Heads and Sides (Inverts) and changes the square from facing East-West to facing North-South or vice versa (Rotates).

-- The classic example is from a Corner Box: "Star Thru, Pass Thru, Bend the Line, Star Thru".

-- Another example from a Corner Box: "Centers Split Two and Separate Around One to a Line, Pass Thru and U-Turn Back, Star Thru". |

Aiming for Smooth Dancing

SELECTION OF MUSIC:
- Choose your music to enhance the feeling desired.
- Choose music that you can synchronize with.

TIMING:
- Aim to deliver the call at just the right time so that the dancers hear the next move as they complete the last move and can immediately begin the new action.
- You must know the execution time of your calls as well as the beginning and ending formations and arrangements.
- Listen for the swish of feet and watch for simultaneous action.

DELIVERY STYLE:
- Commands should be given clearly and in time with the music.
- Strive to allow the dancers to step off with the music on beat one by pre-cueing to the beginning of the 8-beat phrase as much as possible.

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:
- Wind-in-the-face dancing requires choreography that is within the ability of the dancers.
- If success with the choreography requires stop-and-look time then it is too difficult for smooth dancing and belongs in a workshop tip.

CHOREOGRAPHIC BODY FLOW:
- The required hand must be available and ready for use.
- There must be enough space available for the execution of the call.
- Avoid abrupt and awkward changes of direction. Ex. BGBG wave, "Boys Run, Bend the Line"
- Hand and arm turns are meant to give a center for pivoting and some resistance.

ANTICIPATION AND ADJUSTMENT:
- Dancers should counter-dance by moving in and out to allow activity outside or inside.
- Dancers will adjust their body flow if given a little extra lead time.
- Avoid tricking the dancers with misleading anticipatory information.

THE DIZZINESS FACTOR:
- Avoid sequential overflow (several calls in a row with same direction turns for some)
- Some moves have intrinsic overflow and need counteracting moves before and after.
- Intersperse some straight-ahead actions between sequences of several left and right turns.
- A series of circle moves is often dizzying.

LENGTH OF SEQUENCES AND LENGTH OF TIP:
- Dancers need to have the square resolved periodically in order to feel successful.
- Very few dancers want to dance longer than 15 minutes without a break.
- Learn to know your dancers' wishes and to judge the energy level of the floor.

DANCER STYLING:
- Styling was developed to enhance smoothness.
- Teach it, encourage it and allow time for it.

Timing

We must preserve and enhance the pristine nature of Modern Western Square Dancing (MWSD) by speaking the calls clearly and giving the dancers time to understand the call you called before they begin to execute the call's dancing action.

You will also sometimes find the need to help or "cue" part of the dancing action to help the dancers succeed. You will also need to breathe, which takes a beat or two each time you breathe.

All of the above are primary factors in your vocal delivery. Filler words are entertaining but should always be considered secondary in your vocal delivery style. Never speak filler words that cause the dancers to stand and wait while you finish a filler words phrase. The verbal timing chart for the modified Chicken Plucker in the *Starter Kit For New Callers* shows how you can speak the calls clearly while also providing "filler words entertainment" for the ears.

There will come a time in your square dance calling progress when you want to use filler words around more calls. For example, let's say you want to call this sequence with a few filler words included:

> Heads Square Thru 4
> Right and Left Thru
> Veer Left
> Ferris Wheel
> Centers Pass Thru
> Allemande Left
> You're Home

Your first effort to call this sequence should probably contain **zero** filler words! You need to call this sequence, calls only, and watch live dancers dance it. Here are some things you need to notice.

The first call in your sequence is Heads Square Thru 4. According to the Timing Chart, dancing Square Thru 4 from a Squared Set takes 10 beats. Since the dancers know this call very well, they probably started dancing it on your spoken word "4". So now you probably think you have 9 beats remaining for filler words. Wrong! Here's why.

Your second call is Right and Left Thru. Any call you put here (Touch 1/4, or Pass Thru, or Dosado, or Swing Thru, etc.) will have the dancers walk directly into it, so you will need to "pre load" it by calling it during the Square Thru 4.

In this sequence, you probably need to say "Right" on about beat 8 and "Thru" on about beat 9 of the 10 beats after the dancers started Square Thru. There is enough time here for a few filler words such as "4 Hands Around You Go".

"HEADS SQUARE THRU 4, FOUR HANDS AROUND you GO"

(This is 8 spoken down beats)

In this analysis, "Go" is spoken on beat 8 of this phrase and on the 4th beat after the dancers started the Square Thru. So you probably have at least 2 beats to breathe before you say "Right". Callers usually use 2 beats to say, "RIGHT-n-left-THRU". (Sometimes they use 3 beats to say, "RIGHT-n-LEFT-THRU".) The Timing chart says Right and Left Thru takes 6 beats to dance.

The third call in your sequence is Veer Left. For proper timing with filler words added, you probably need to call,

"**RIGHT-n-left-THRU**-n-TURN-the-GIRL-n-THEN-**VEER-LEFT**".

That's 7 beats. Practice saying this phrase on 7 down beats. If you timed it to dance properly after Heads Square Thru 4, you will be directing the dancers to begin the Veer about 2 beats before they finish the Courtesy Turn part of Right and Left Thru so they can flow smoothly into it.

Veer Left only takes 2 beats to dance, so you should immediately say,

"**FERRIS WHEEL**", which takes 6 beats to dance.

You should be saying "Centers" before the slowest dancer doing the Ferris Wheel arrives on their finishing spot. That is the last Ferris Wheel step this person takes. You will be calling

"**CENTERS-PASS-THRU, ALLE-mande-LEFT**", (which is 5 down beats).

Centers Pass Thru takes 2 beats to dance while you are saying Allemande Left. Allemande Left takes 4 to 6 beats to dance so you get 1 quick breath before you say

"Face in, **YOU'RE HOME**".

Putting this all together using 8 downbeats per line:

HEADS SQUARE THRU 4, FOUR HANDS AROUND **you** GO,

(1, 2, 3, 4)**, RIGHT-n-left-THRU**-n-TURN-the-GIRL,

AND THEN **VEER-LEFT, FERRIS WHEEL** (7, 8)**,**

(1), **CENTERS-PASS-THRU, ALLE-mande-LEFT** (7, 8)**,**

FACE IN**, YOU'RE HOME.**

Every sequence you build into your calling repertoire should have this analysis built into it. Great timing and flow are required for great calling. Think of great timing and flow as baking the best cake you can. Think of filler words as really cool icing on a great cake.

Call Analysis Sheet

Name of Call_____ Program _____

CALLERLAB DEFINITION _____

_____

_____

From what FORMATION(S) can the call start?_____

_____

And what ARRANGEMENT(S)? _____

Must any dancers be facing? No ____ Yes ____ If yes, how many?_____

Is an available hand needed? No _____ Both _____ Right _____ Left _____

Good preceding calls considering body flow: _____

_____

What FORMATION(S) will exist upon completion of the call? _____

_____

And what ARRANGEMENT(S)? _____

_____

Will dancers be facing? No _____ Yes _____ If yes, how many? _____

Which hand(s) will be free? None _____ Both _____ Right _____ Left _____

What body flow will exist as call is completed? Direction? For which dancers?

_____

_____

What is the TIMING of the call (number of steps to dance comfortably)? _____

Teaching suggestions _____

_____

Brief Introduction to Sight Resolution

In order to resolve a square using sight calling methods, you must be able to change between formations and arrangements efficiently and smoothly and be able to visualize the different end results of "Pass Thru" and "Square Thru 3".

Before starting to call, take note of two adjacent couples and the two dancers within the couples who are corners. These are your Key Couples and your Key Corners. For example, two adjacent couples are couples #4 and #1 and the key corners would be Lady #4 and Man #1.

Using the Chicken Plucker Routine
There is a "safety net" when you are using the Chicken Plucker Routine described in the main document. The Chicken Plucker Routine always has one paired couple and one unpaired couple.

1) If you have one paired key couple and the other key couple is not paired, maintain the pairs and move the dancers into an Eight Chain Thru formation. Then put the paired couple on the outside. If your Key Corners are facing each other, call **Allemande Left**. If the Key Corner are not facing then you are halfway through the Chicken Plucker Routine, call the second half of the routine to bring the Corners together.

2) If neither Key Couple is paired, go to step 1 below.

3) If both Key Couples are paired, make Normal Facing Lines and then call **Star Thru**. Bring Key Corners together using **Pass Thru** or **Square Thru 3** as needed.

Simple Two-Faced Line Resolution
The following resolution method uses Ferris Wheel. If the dancers do not know Ferris Wheel, use "Veer Right (back-to-back) and the outsides California Twirl". (Or use "Veer Left" if appropriate.)

The first requirement of the following Two-Faced Line Resolution method is to make Normal Two-Faced Lines. There are numerous ways to do this, here are two:

    a) From Facing Lines of Normal Couples: **Pass the Ocean, Swing Thru, Boys Run**
    b) From Eight Chain Thru with Normal Couples: **Right and Left Thru, Veer Left**

1) First, make a Normal Two-Faced Line. Then use **Circulate** and/or **Trade** to pair one couple (bring either one of your Key Couples together as partners).

2) If only one Key Couple is paired, place the paired couple facing out by calling **Couples Circulate** if needed. Then call **Ferris Wheel**. Bring Key Corners together by having the **Centers Pass Thru** or **Centers Square Thru 3** as needed.

3) If both Key Couples are paired, call **Bend the Line and Star Thru**. Bring Key Corners together using **Pass Thru** or **Square Thru 3** as needed.

Table of Revisions and Changes

In July 1994 the Caller Training Committee created the original *Starter Kit for Newer Callers.*

That document was available as printed material in a 3-ringed binder. It contained 15 official handouts from CALLERLAB as well as the Formations Document, the Arrangement Pictograms, the Code of Ethics, the Basic, Mainstream, and Plus Program Timing Sheets, Checklists and Definitions, the *Standard Basic & Mainstream Applications,* and the *Standard Plus Applications.*

In 2023 the Caller Training Committee recognized the need for a major change in the structure and contents to better match the current use of online resources and to better address the needs of a new caller. The new version was renamed as *Starter Kit for New Callers.*

Change Date	Change Made
1994 / July	*Starter Kit for Newer Callers* first published.
2005 / 01 / 25	*Starter Kit for Newer Callers* revised.
2005 / 06 / 22	Revised Plus Timing Chart (changed Linear Cycle to read 10-12).
2006 / 10 / 18	Reformatted document.
2006 / 11 / 10	Updated CALLERLAB Formation/Arrangement Pictograms.
2007 / 11 / 15	Updated CALLERLAB Formations.
2008 / 01 / 01	Reconfigured entire document.
2008 / 06 / 01	Updated Formation Charts.
2009 / 06 / 01	Updated CALLERLAB Address throughout document.
2009 / 10 / 21	Converted to Word.
2010 / 02 / 03	Updated all documents and added Analyzing a Call at end.
2011 / 05 / 23	Updated Basic and Mainstream Programs list / Check off list.
2012 / 10 / 25	Changed Definitions to the Abbreviated Definitions.
2013 / 05 / 31	Updated CALLERLAB Abbreviated Definitions.
2014 / 12 / 22	Updated Plus Definitions.
2015 / 04 / 22	Updated Accredited Caller Coach Listing.
2016 / 01 / 12	Updated Plus Definitions, changed definition of Follow Your Neighbor.
2016 / 11 / 01	Updated Accredited Caller Coach Listing.
2019 / 03 / 02	Updated Ethics; Basic, Mainstream and Plus Dance Programs. Updated Scholarships.
2023 / 10 / 31	Major revision and name change to *Starter Kit for New Callers.* Provided links to CALLERLAB Website for access to the Definitions, Timing Sheets, Lists, Formations, Arrangements and Standard Applications. Caller Training Handouts from previous version placed in KnowledgeBase.

Credits

This paper began as been a project of the CALLERLAB Caller Training Committee and was completed during 1994 with Committee Chairman John Kaltenthaler and Vice Chairman Deborah Carroll-Jones. Other authors and editing people included: Don Beck, Stan Burdick, Bill Davis, Decko Deck, Herb Egender, Ed Foote, Kip Garvey, Mike Jacobs, Dick Leger, Jim Mayo, Martin Mallard, Bill Peters and John Sybalsky. Appreciation is also expressed to the Home Office Staff for their efforts in making the final arrangements for packaging and pricing.

Updates and changes have been coordinated under Committee Chair Betsy Gotta and successive Vice Chairs Mike Jacobs, Ron Markus, and John Marshall.

Additional participants in the 2023 major revision included Daryl Clendenin, Mike Sikorsky, Steve Turner, Dottie Welch and Gary Winter.