

## Square Dance Lingo - 101

**If you're new to Square Dancing, you may notice that these square dance folks use some unfamiliar words & phrases. Here's a beginner's guide.**

**Angel** – An experienced square dancer who helps during classes by dancing with the students.

**Boy** - A female dancer who has learned to dance in the boy position to help fill-in a square if there are not enough dancers. Usually she will wear a blue sash or "boy" tag so other dancers can more easily identify which role she is dancing.

**Call** – a.) A distinct square dance maneuver that the caller “calls” to the dancers and they perform.

Examples: Allemande Left, Star Through, etc.

b.) A “song” called by the caller using many individual “calls” in a choreographed sequence.

Examples: Patter Call and Singing Call.

**Dangle** – A dangle is an item which hangs from a dancer’s name-tag to commemorate a special dance or achievement. Common dangles include an “angel” for having assisted new dance students through an entire class session.

**Halfway Dance** – A dance where the caller only uses calls from the Basic List, which is "half-way" through the plus list. This is sometimes called a "student dance," or "class-level dance." (includes about 51 calls, through Ferris Wheel)

**Highland Fling** - this is an unofficial call that experienced dancers will perform in place of do-si-do. Facing dancers put their right arm around the opposite dancer's waist and their left hand in the air, then turn 360 degrees, ending up in the same position as a do-si-do, but it is more fun.

**Home** - This is the place where you are standing with your partner when the song starts, and where you hope to get back to if you follow all the calls correctly.

**Mainstream Dance** – A dance where the caller uses calls from the Basic and Mainstream lists. (includes about 68 calls, through Recycle)

**Patter Call** - (rhymes with "batter," NOT “Pattern”) A quick succession of spoken or sing-song style dance calls usually accompanied by music, generally without lyrics. The arrangement of calls may appear "on-the-fly" with calls appearing to be randomly strung together. Sometimes these are planned in advance by the caller, but more often they are improvised by the caller as the dancers are moving. The purpose of patter calls is to give dancers a challenge by surprising them with unexpected arrangements. Also known as a “Hash Call”.

**Plus Dance** – A dance where the caller uses a variety of calls from the Basic, Mainstream, and Plus Lists. (about 100 calls through Spin Chain and Exchange the Gears)

**Pettipants** – An extra garment usually made of ruffles and lace, worn under a lady's petticoat for modesty so her underwear will not show while twirling. Also called sissy-pants, bloomers, or bike-shorts.

**Ribbon** – These are admission tickets to special occasion dances which are usually sold ahead of time, but instead of issuing a paper ticket, the dancer is given a ribbon which is then worn attached to their nametag to advertise that the wearer will be attending that upcoming dance.

**Short-Pants Dance** – A summertime dance where shorts or cooler, casual attire is encouraged due to the warm weather.

**Singles Rotation / Singles Board / Solo Dancers** – A singles rotation is a means of matching single or "solo" dancers with other dancers who need a partner. This avoids the awkwardness and down-time of trying to find a partner for each tip by instead matching dancers in a rotation. A device such as a white-board with post-it notes is used to display the matches, letting each dancer know who they are paired up with for the next tip. If there are not enough solo dancers to fill up the board, friendly club members or angels will volunteer to leave the partner they arrived with and "go on the board" for one or more tips so all the guests will be able to dance. Thus you may often see couples filling-in on the singles board as a courtesy to the guests.

**Singing Call** - A singing call is most often done to a recognizable song with known lyrics. The caller mixes in the dance calls between sections of song lyrics. Generally a singing call uses a pattern where each person dances a portion of the song with each of the other dancers in the square before returning to their original partner at the end. The purpose of singing calls is to relax, dance as a group, and enjoy the song and the caller's performance.

**Square** - This is a group of 4 couples standing in a formation so that each couple faces inward from the four sides of a square.

**Square 'Em Up** - This is what the caller and other dancers shout-out to let everyone know it's time to find a place in a square because the dancing is about to begin.

**Square Dancing Levels** - The levels of square dancing are as follows (Most dances in the U.S. are called at the mainstream or plus level.)

- **Basic** (Part A - 30 calls, and Part B - 21 calls for a total of 51 calls)
- **Mainstream** (17 additional calls for a total of 68 calls)
- **Plus** (31 additional calls for a total of 99 calls)
- **Advanced 1 (A1)** (46 additional calls for a total of 146 calls)
- **Advanced 2 (A2)** (35 additional calls for a total of 181 calls)

- **Challenge 1** (C1) (79 additional calls for a total of 260 calls)
- **Challenge 2** (C2) (86 additional calls for a total of 346 calls)
- **Challenge 3A** (C3A) (83 additional calls for a total of 429 calls)
- **Challenge 4** (C4) (A C4 dancer typically knows about a 1000 calls)
- **Challenge 5** (C5) ("Hard" C4 level dancing is sometimes informally called C5)

**Stack the Wood** – A friendly hug.

**Stacking a Square** – Making an arrangement before a tip begins to choose which dancers will be in your square. This practice is frowned upon and seen as exclusionary. However, it is sometimes done so that new dancers can be with their own club-members or angels who will graciously accommodate their mistakes.

**Tip** - A set of two square-dance “songs,” usually starting with a Patter Call followed by a Singing Call. Dancers stay in the same square for both songs.

**Visitation** – An occasion where one square dance club visits another club’s dance.

**Workshop** – A square dance class where the material covered is a review of previously learned calls. An example is when students graduate at “Plus” level, having been taught all the Plus calls, then attend classes to review, or work on mastering the Plus calls more thoroughly.

**Yellowrock** – Another word for give your partner a hug