

# The Belt Ranking System

## Compiled from various sources by Brandon Harris

The Taekwondo belt ranking system symbolizes both the students' personal advancement and their increased awareness to the martial arts. The belt rank represents both the students' personal advancement inside of the dojang and their personal growth outside of the dojang. A higher belt rank indicates the students' increased respect and positive attitude. The belt ranking system can be related to that of a tree. The symbolization of each belt in relation to the story of the tree is described below:

**White Belt:** The white belt represents the beginning of a new journey. The student has no previous experience in martial arts. The white belt can show the purity and birth of the student. The white belt symbolizes the seed just planted into the soil. The seed is ready to absorb all nutrients from the soil, just like a student is ready to learn all there is of taekwondo. **White Belt Characteristics: Open-minded, respectful, attentive, eager to learn.**

**Yellow Belt:** The yellow belt represents the energy of the student. The student has just learned basic knowledge of taekwondo, generating the energy required to learn even more. The yellow belt symbolizes the energy the seed has just received from the sunlight. **Yellow Belt Characteristics: Co-operative, Helpful, Developing Teamwork.**

**Green Belt:** The green belt represents the personal growth of the student. The student has much knowledge of taekwondo, but there is still more to learn. The student strives to learn more about taekwondo, while strengthening the skills that they have already learned. The green belt symbolizes the growth of the seed as it sprouts from the earth and strives to be as close to the sun as possible. **Green Belt Characteristics: Perseverance, Leadership, Setting a Good Example, Taking Responsibility in the school.**

**Blue Belt:** The blue belt represents the increased knowledge the student has learned to further develop their skills, mind, body, and attitude. The blue belt symbolizes the determination of the plant to reach the sky and then the heavens, getting even closer to the sun. **Blue Belt Characteristics: Self-Discipline, Developing the Whole Person, Applying Martial Arts Lessons to All Areas of Life.**

**Red Belt:** The red belt represents more detailed knowledge of taekwondo. Since the student has now learned numerous skills, it is important that they be more cautious of their actions for they now have the ability to seriously hurt someone if they use their skills foolishly. The red belt symbolizes that the plant is now able to see the sun, but is not yet able to reach it. **Red Belt Characteristics: Mentoring, Problem Solving, Creating Strong Community, Bringing out Strengths in Others.**

**Deputy Belt:** The deputy belt represents how close the student is to attaining their black belt. By now the student has learned most of the knowledge and history of taekwondo, but there is still more room for progress. The student should know everything they have learned since their first day as a white belt. The deputy belt symbolizes that the plant is now so close it can almost touch the now setting sun. **Deputy Belt Characteristics: Communication, Knowledge, Accepting Leadership Roles, Expressing Appreciation.**

**Black Belt:** The black belt represents the knowledge and skills the student has learned. The student by now should be able to help other belts with their training. The student should now be perfecting every skill they have learned. The black belt symbolizes the trees final growth. Now the sun has set, and the tree must now travel back to its roots in order to remember its journey and how it can further grow.