

This is an informal guide to give our students insights on the important ceremony of the batizado. Most of this information has already been passed to them during classes. However, this summary may help the visualization and understanding of our system, as well as how to get the most benefit from practicing capoeira. It is important to mention that no book or manual is a substitute for a continuous and attentive participation in the capoeira class and life as well. During classes, we challenge our students to extend the limits of their physical possibilities without losing perspective of traditional values, rituals and all the aspects encompassed by capoeira.

With the growth of our school, many who aspire to learn more about the roots and philosophy of capoeira can do so. However, teaching outside of Brazil and to relatively large numbers of students places special responsibilities on both the school and on the students to seek clear and comprehensive information on capoeira, a complex art with history and full cultural context of important meaning.

Even the explanation about the categories or levels of capoeiristas established by oral tradition and the contemporary charts of distinctions of knowledge in this booklet should be used only to guide your study and not to encumber it with useless detail, rigidity or superficial structure.

"The career of the capoeirista begins with the batizado. From their first jogo to the point of fully understanding the art, students will spend many years constantly training and probing their weaknesses, facing the treacheries of life with open eyes. During this time, they will be physically, mentally and spiritually challenged as they strive toward a well-rounded study of the art. An isolated focus on any one of those aspects will bring limited results and shortsighted capoeiristas.

The journey through the stages of development will be continuous with no abrupt advances along the way. Students cannot jump from one plateau to the next but must climb through them slowly and carefully, following a natural process that comes from dedicated training and a feeling of well-being in the art. It never should be a hasty and neurotic attempt to progress prematurely, or a plunge into unhealthy and excessive work toward unattainable goals. Capoeiristas, however, must fully commit themselves in every jogo, continuously striving to play beyond falsely perceived points that we may believe to be our limits. Seemingly limitations of knowledge, age, or even experience over opponents should not cause capoeiristas to give up striving toward their full potential, nor should the amount of toil, occasional pains, or previous failure discourage anyone from starting each jogo anew.

The goals one sets in Capoeira define the categories of discipulo, contra-mestre and mestre. The majority of capoeiristas are disciples who live the art as a complementary activity to the other activities in their life. They are satisfied simply to have capoeira in their hearts and to improve the quality of their lives through its practice.

Contra-mestres are capoeiristas who definitely have reached the maximum of their physical potential, who dedicate time to internalize the philosophy of capoeira, and who have a strong desire to pass on the tradition of the art.

Mestres are those who have crossed the paths of discipulo and contra--mestre, who totally open themselves to an understanding of the spiritual dimension of the art, and who are totally committed to devote a lifetime helping others discover, enjoy and become initiated into capoeira".

In our school we have students with different levels of knowledge. These students, as well as many other capoeirista in Brazil or abroad belong to the following ranks:

**Calouro**  
**Batizado**  
**Formado**  
**Contra-Mestre**  
**Mestre**

**Calouro** means "freshman". The calouros are applicants to become regular students in our school. During this trial period, the students may determine their real desire to study capoeira, while learning the basic movements and etiquettes of capoeira, as well as the rules and regulations of our school. The instructors also observe the student's attitude and their level of commitment to be accepted as one of our regular students.

**Batizado** is the ceremony in which the student plays for the first time under the berimbau rhythm in a formal capoeira setting and when more advanced students move to a different graduation level. Batizado is also the denomination for those who become regular students after their participation in the batizado ceremony.

**Formado** are the students who completed our normal school program.

**Contra-mestres** are those formados who have contributed to the school by teaching and assisting their mestres in many different ways.

**Mestre** is a traditional and valued title attributed to some capoeira teachers. To become a mestre, the capoeirista must have a long career teaching capoeira and satisfy the following requirements:

- Must be indicated to the title by a recognized and well known teacher.
- Must be recognized by an official confederation of capoeira in Brazil such as the Confederação Brasileira de Capoeira.
- More than anything else, must have the popular recognition as a mestre and unanimous acceptance as such by the traditional masters of the art.

Note:

During classes and formal capoeira settings, students must address the mestres as "Mestre". You may have noticed that in the same circumstances, mestres also address themselves as such. This treatment is part of the traditions of the art form and a recommended behavior within the capoeira circles.