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Taekwondo is a martial art developed in Korea which debuted at the Olympics at the Seoul 1988 Games. It's one of the Olympic sports that have mainly been dominated by Asian nations, but recent Games have witnessed exciting shifts and ups and downs. The universality of the sport is no longer in question with taekwondo athletes, or taekwondoin, from Cote d'Ivoire to Jordan clinching historic gold medals at Rio 2016, and team Great Britain showing talent is abundant in Europe. There are several taekwondo styles. World Taekwondo oversees the Kukkiwon-defined style of taekwondo that is commonly referred to as Olympic taekwondo. Olympic taekwondo allows the use of a very small number of techniques. From the basics to the equipment, here's a rundown of taekwondo rules, scoring and the different belts. Action at a World Taekwondo championships. Equipment and facilities Taekwondo is a combat sport between two fighters in the same weight category. The centre of the competition area is octagonal-shaped and measures 8m in diameter. Contestants must wear a dobok or a white competition uniform. Additionally, they must have a trunk protector, head protector and, for male athletes, a groin guard that is worn under the dobok. The taekwondoin must also be equipped with forearm and shin guards, gloves, sensing socks, and a mouth guard before entering the competition area. Head protection is usually firmly tucked under left arms when entering into the competition area and is worn when instructed by the referee. Athletes fully kitted during a taekwondo match. Belts Taekwondo athletes also tie a coloured belt around their waist. The colour signifies the competitors' ranks in their sport. The belts range from white to black belts. The belt system is divided into 10 grades, or gup, and nine degrees (da) Tj T* BT /F

Grades start from white for beginners, through to yellow, green, blue, red and the highest is black. The black-belt holders, who are the most experienced, are further graded as 'dan' from the first degree up until the ultimate ninth level.