

# Student Handouts: Arbeau's Dances

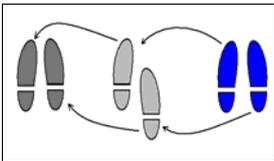
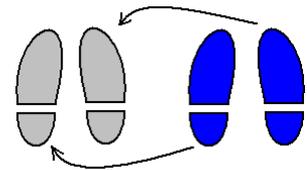
## Basic Steps

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### Single and Double

We covered these steps first in class but they are the basics for every renaissance dance from every time period and place.

The single (left) goes like this: step left, close feet. Here is a diagram:



The double left goes like this: Step to the left with the left foot, bring the right foot over near the left foot (either to the right of it and adjacent to it, or to the right and slightly behind it, or behind it while turning slightly at the waist). Then step to the left again with the left foot, and join feet, stepping to the left with the right foot.

Singles and doubles to the right are just the opposite of the ones that I just described.

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Occasionally you'll find that we ask you to do a single or double with a "cross". This just means that at the end of the step, you cross your foot in front of one knee as you finish. So, if you are doing a double to the left, you cross your right foot over in front of your left knee as you finish. See the picture on the right.



### Kick

A kick left goes like this: Jump into the air very slightly, finishing with the left foot off the ground.

A kick right is just the opposite. Note that the picture shows that the dancer only comes very slightly off the ground with the front foot.



**Capriole**

The picture below shows part of a capriole. This is done by leaping into the air and passing your feet back and forwards past each other. Depending on how adept you're feeling, you can make 2, 3, 5, or even more passes.



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# Week 1: Bransles

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## Double and Single Bransle

These are the easiest dances. The double bransle goes double left, double right, and repeats forever.

The single bransle is double left, single right, double left, single right, etc.

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## Bransle Gai, Bransle de Bourgogne

These are the next easiest. The Bransle Gai has four kicks: left right left right.

The Bransle de Bourgogne (Burgundian Bransle) is the same as the first bransle (double bransle) except that you cross your feet as you are finishing each double.

- When you are stepping left, bring your right foot up to just under your left knee.
  - When you are stepping right, bring your left foot up just under your right knee.
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## Official Bransle

Known in some parts as the “officers’ bransle”, the “hospital pass bransle”, the “ding dong merrily dance” (because of the tune), or “toss the duchess”.

The dance starts with four doubles: left, right, left, right.

Then do six singles to the left (I just know you can all count to six).

Then, to the count of four, the men face the ladies to their right (partners), and pick them up, passing the lady over to the man’s left, so that all the ladies rotate one place around the circle.

**Men:** remember not to pick the lady up by her armpits, breasts, scruff of the neck, or elbows. Hands firmly on either side of the rib cage please, and **tuck your thumbs in!** Guide the lady firmly but gently across into place. Do not throw her!

**Ladies:** put your hands firmly on the man’s shoulders and push down hard as you jump. Again, keep your thumbs tucked in (away from the neck veins please, either across the collarbone or on the shoulder blades. Don’t attempt to leap with your hands on his arms, or holding hands at a distance, it won’t work.

Push down firmly with your palms as you jump so that the man doesn’t have to pick you up at the end of his arms. Imagine you’re leaping on the moon.

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## Week 2: Mimed Bransles

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### Washerwoman's Bransle

This dance starts with four doubles, left, right, left, and right.

Partners turn 90° and face each other.

Men: Single left and right, wagging their fingers at the ladies in a scolding manner, the ladies stand with their hands on their hips.

Ladies: Single left and right as above, wagging their fingers at the men.

All dancers turn and face the center again.

Double left, clapping your hands to the beat of the music.

Double right.

Double left, clapping as above.

Kick Left, Right, Left, and jump (saut majeur), while turning in place over your left shoulder.

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### Pease Bransle

Double left, right, left, and right.

Men: Jump left on both feet, away from their partner.

Ladies: Jump left on both feet, towards their partner.

Men: Jump left with three smaller jumps, away from their partner.

Ladies: Jump left on both feet, towards their partner.

Men: Jump left on both feet, away from their partner.

Ladies: Jump left with three smaller jumps, towards their partner.

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### Shoes Bransle

Double left, right, left, and right.

Men: Single left, single right, then stamp 3 times with the right foot.

Ladies: Single left, single right, then stamp 3 times with the right foot.

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### Horses Bransle

Double left then right, repeat four times.

This introduction is twice as long as the introduction for the other bransles in this set.

Men: Paw the ground twice with the right foot, imitating a horse. Single right. Double left, turning over the left shoulder, across the front of their partner, ending to the left of the partner (in other words, the men rotate around the circle one place to the left).

Ladies: Paw the ground twice with the right foot. Single right, double left turning as above.

Repeat the theme.

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## Week 3: More Bransles

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### Simple abbreviations

Last week's hand out contained most of the basic bransle steps. From now on, they will be abbreviated, as follows:

SL, SR      Single Left, Right  
DL, DR      Double Left, Right  
KL, KR      Kick Left, Right  
Cp            Capriole

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### Mixed Bransles

The mixed bransles are a set of five bransles that appear in Orchesographie. The first three are Cassandra, Pinagay, and Charlotte.

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### Bransle Cassandra

Starts with: DL DR DL DR.

Chorus: DL, DR, SL, DR, and repeat.

Remember to **listen for the dip in the music** when the single starts.

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### Bransle Pinagay

Starts with: DL KL DL KL KR KL.

Chorus: DL DR

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### Bransle Charlotte

Starts with: DL KL KR DR.

Chorus

DL KL KR, SR KL KR KL, SL KR KL KR, DR

**Note:** At the end of the **singles** don't place your foot all the way down as you close, because you have to kick on the foot you last moved rather than change feet.

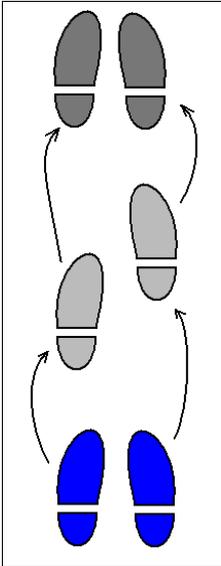
Always change feet at the end of a **double**, so that you kick on the **opposite** foot to the one you just placed.

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## Week 4: Pavan and Galliard

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### Pavan



We went through a simple Pavan and Galliard. The **Carolingian Pavan** is the one commonly done in the SCA. It goes forwards and backwards (not side to side like the bransles). The diagram on the right shows a double left, going forwards.

A **pavan set** is a set of steps that always goes **single, single, double**. The Carolingian Pavan is made up entirely of pavan sets, and goes like this:

SL SR DL, SR SL DR, SL SR DL

SR SL DR (backwards)

At this point the men drop to one knee, and the ladies walk around them, doing SL SR DL, SR SL DR.

The men then stand, and walk around the ladies doing SL SR DL, SR SL DR.

The dance repeats two or three times before the start of the galliard.

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### Galliard

The galliard is a much more energetic dance. Reportedly the favourite dance of Henry VIII, and one of Elizabeth I's favourites as well (amongst La Volta and the Canary).

A galliard set, or **cinque pas**, goes like this:

KL KR KL KR Capriole.

In the next repeat, it starts on the opposite foot: KR KL KR KL Capriole.

There are lots of variations on the basic galliard, incorporating kicks backwards, sideways, crosses, foot changes, etc. One simple one goes like this:

KL (backwards) KR (forwards) KL (backwards) KR (forwards) Capriole.

Another less simple one goes like this:

KL (forwards) KR (across), KL (backwards) KR (forwards) Capriole

Once you've learned those, get a list of more fancy ones from Del and impress all of your friends.

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# Week 5: Even More Bransles

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## Mixed Bransles

The first three mixed bransles were done in week 3. These were Cassandra, Pinagay, and Charlotte. The last two are La Guerre and Aridan

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## La Guerre

La Guerre starts with DL DR DL DR DL DR DL DR.

The next bit goes like this:

- DL DR
- SL SR DL
- SR SL DR
- SL KL KR KL Cp

The above section is done twice as fast as the verse so you have just enough time to dance but not quite enough time to think. Practice it until you get used to doing it.

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## Aridan

This is probably the most complex of the French Bransles. It starts with a chorus that goes like this:

- DL KL KR KL
- DL KL KR KL

The next section is divided into three parts.

Part A goes: DL SR SL SR

Part B goes: DL KL KR

Part C goes: DR

Step onto the left foot

Hop onto the right foot

Hop back onto the left foot, kicking out  
with the right foot

Step back onto the right foot

Close feet

Kick out with the left foot

All of this  
is done  
quite  
quickly

In fast motion, the above goes like this:

- Double, Three singles.
  - Double, Two kicks.
  - Double, shuffle kick, step and kick.
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