



BASICS OF
PISTOL
SHOOTING
INSTRUCTOR LED TRAINING

LESSON PLANS & SHOOTING QUALIFICATIONS



INTRODUCTION

The NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course introduces students to the **knowledge, skills** and **attitude** necessary for owning and using a pistol safely. Through this course, the students will learn about pistol parts and operation, ammunition, gun safety, pistol shooting fundamentals, and pistol shooting activities. The Basic Pistol Course will also help prepare the student for participation in other NRA courses.

In order to uphold the NRA's adherence to safety, and to maintain standardization among all NRA courses, adhere to the following guidelines when conducting the NRA Basic Pistol Course.

Course Outline and Lesson Plans

The key to conducting a successful Basic Pistol Shooting Course is to be well organized and know the subject. The course outline and lesson plans are designed to help you in these areas so that you can spend your time teaching, not trying to figure out what to teach. This course outline identifies the:

- Course goal
- Length of course
- Student text
- Course lessons

To maintain national standards for this program, the NRA has developed lesson plans for you. Each lesson plan provides the:

- Lesson title
- Learning objectives
- Estimated length of lesson
- Recommended training aids
- Lesson references
- Lesson content outline
- Instructional notes
- Key to training aid or text references

Combined with the information found in the *NRA Trainer's Guide* ("Planning and Conducting Your NRA Course"), the material presented in this course outline will put you on the road to success. The learning objectives are your road map--use them.

Course Length and Time Requirements

The course length of the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course is based on the estimated length of each lesson indicated in the lesson plans. The actual course length may vary from this figure, as the time required for each lesson will vary because of class size, facilities, instructor experience, student experience and comprehension level, student-to-instructor ratio, weather, and unforeseen circumstances.

This course has been designed to allow for maximum flexibility in scheduling. It may be conducted a few hours at a time over several days or it may be conducted as a one-day course.

Instructors teaching this course for the first time, those mentoring new instructors, or those who do not have the support of an experienced instructor team should factor in additional time. It is better to plan a longer course and finish early than to run overtime or cut a lesson short. With experience gained by teaching from these lesson plans, you will soon be able to plan an entire course accurately and adhere strictly to your schedule.

The Course Is Based on Objectives

This course is objective based. *The instructor must ensure students have met the learning objectives before successfully completing the course.* This may take more or less time than indicated in the lesson plans. All of the objectives are stated in terms of student performance, i.e., what the students will be able to do at the conclusion of the lesson. Explanations and demonstrations provided by the instructors are not to be confused with meeting a learning objective. The students must be able to perform each objective. To track your students' performance through the course, the instructor needs to use the Performance Requirements Checklist, located in Appendix 4. Instructors are authorized to make photocopies of Appendix 4 as needed.

Courses may be conducted for one specific pistol platform. (Semi-automatic or Revolver) In this instance the platform used must be listed on the completion certificate.

Each instructor must review and acknowledge a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the "roles and responsibilities" of being an NRA Instructor prior to conducting the NRA Basics of Pistol Shooting Course.

Instructors should provide a signed copy of the Performance Requirements Checklist to the student and keep a copy for their own records.

Total Participant Involvement

The key to a successful and positive training experience is total participant involvement (TPI). *People learn by doing!* Use questions, discussions, demonstrations, group interaction, and practical exercises to their maximum potential. Minimize lectures. Remember, telling is *not* synonymous with teaching.

Student-to-Instructor Ratio

During the range exercises for the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course, a one-to-one student-to-instructor ratio on the firing line is encouraged whenever possible. If this is not possible, the ratio on the firing line should not exceed two shooters for every NRA Certified Pistol Instructor.

Whenever possible, the coach/pupil method should be used, with one student coaching the shooter on the line through the proper technique. This promotes student learning, and also provides an extra pair of eyes on the shooting line for greater safety.

Additionally, it is recommended that a range safety officer oversee the safety of the entire line. The range safety officer's responsibility is to ensure safety, not to give individual instruction.

Depending upon the range facilities used and the number of instructors available, it may be advantageous to split the class into two or more separate groups or to use two relays for the range sessions.

Emphasize Firearm Safety

During every lesson, constantly emphasize in words and by your own actions that a gun must always be kept pointed in a safe direction. Be certain that students observe this rule at all times, especially when students handle guns, as in dry-fire, live-fire and gun cleaning exercises. Safety must be your foremost concern; therefore, you must personally observe all of the gun safety rules at all times, and monitor your students carefully to ensure that they are also observing these rules.

Whenever you pick up a pistol, either for demonstration purposes or to hand it to a student, always be sure to keep it pointed in a safe direction, keep your finger off the trigger, remove the magazine (if any), open the action, and visually and physically check the chamber(s) to be sure that no live round remains in the gun. Use each such occasion as an opportunity to reinforce your students' gun safety training by having a student verify the unloaded condition of the pistol. Be sure that each student also performs this sequence of steps each time he or she picks up a pistol. Ensure that the student observes all of the safe gun handling rules (such as "**ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction**") while he or she inspects the chamber(s) to verify that the pistol is empty.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All training aids to be used as representation of a firearm (e.g.: Blue guns, Laser training devices, Air Soft, Air guns, toy guns, etc.), **MUST** be treated in the same fashion and with the same safety rules as firearms **AT ALL TIMES**. Infractions against this rule will be treated exactly the same as infractions using firearms in the same manner.

Terminology

Do not use the term “weapon” in this course. “Weapon” has a negative connotation. Use “pistol,” “revolver,” “gun,” “firearm,” specific model, etc.

Establish Emergency Procedures

Establish emergency procedures to be followed in the event of an accident. All course staff should be aware of these procedures and maintain a list of emergency telephone numbers.

No Live Ammunition in the Classroom

No live ammunition is permitted in the classroom. In a training environment where handling and dry firing is necessary, it is imperative that no loaded firearms be present. If ammunition is not in the room, it cannot possibly get into a firearm! This protects instructors from potential liability and protects the students as well. Only dummy ammunition that is visually distinct from live ammunition is allowed in the classroom. Live ammunition may only be present on the range during live-fire exercises.

Demonstrations on the Range

If you have difficulty scheduling range time, or must maximize the amount of shooting and minimize dry practice while on the range, then you may want to conduct all of the dry-firing drills contained in Lessons III and IV in a classroom setting before proceeding to the range. **NOTE: The benchrest exercise in Lesson III may be conducted in the classroom using firearm simulators with a resetting trigger, sights and a laser indicating shot placement.**

Pregnant Women and Nursing Mothers

Pregnant women are encouraged to discuss their participation in this course with their physicians prior to the first lesson. They should discuss the effects of exposure to loud sounds and (if using an indoor range) airborne lead particulate. If any students are pregnant or nursing an infant, *they should not handle any chemicals, lubricants, or solvents* unless they have discussed doing so with their physician.

Physical Limitations and Disabilities

Some students will not be able to assume certain shooting positions (i.e., standing shooting positions) because of physical limitations or disabilities. The presence of a physical disability does not by itself affect a student’s eligibility to attend the course or receive a completion certificate. Where necessary, adapt the exercise to work within each student’s range of ability. For example, students in wheelchairs may substitute a sitting unsupported shooting position for the standing positions taught in this course.

Students who are in wheelchairs, use prosthetic devices, or with amputations may need gun handling skills and techniques adapted in ways that are not covered in this lesson plan or the student handbook. An excellent resource for assistance and advice when working with shooters with disabilities is the national manager of the NRA Adaptive Shooting Program. Call National Manager, Adaptive Shooting Programs, Education and Training Division, National Rifle Association of America, (703) 267-1491, for further information and assistance. Regardless of ability, all students must demonstrate the necessary **knowledge**, **skills**, and **attitude** to receive a course completion certificate. Also, safety must not be compromised in any technique modified for a person with a disability .

Release, Waiver, Indemnification, Hold Harmless, and Assumption of Risk Agreement

A sample Release, Waiver, Indemnification, Hold Harmless, and Assumption of Risk Agreement is included in the NRA Trainer’s Guide. You or your club may want to develop a similar agreement for use with your shooting activities.

Please note that the legal issues that may be raised in an attempt to enforce such an agreement involve the interpretation of contract and tort law, both of which are governed by state (not federal) law. Tort and contract law varies from state to state and this form agreement may be enforceable in some jurisdictions and not in others. You will have to tailor this agreement to comport with the law of the state in which you intend to use it. You are strongly urged to obtain the advice of an attorney licensed to practice law in your state to advise you of the specific applicable state statutory and common law as they relate to tort and contract law, and in particular how to ensure the enforceability of release and waiver and hold harmless and indemnification agreements in your jurisdiction.

The form agreement was not drafted by an attorney licensed to practice law in your state, nor was it drafted to comport with and to withstand the scrutiny of the particular laws in your state. The agreement is therefore not to be considered as a restatement of law, nor is it to be relied upon to protect you. You must have an attorney, who is licensed to practice law in your state, review said form, if you intend to make any use of it.

Please note that the agreement is intended to be executed by adult individuals, not minors. Even if otherwise effective, it will not be effective if executed by or on behalf of a minor.

NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Examination and Answer Key

The student exam and answer key are found after logging in at NRAinstructors.org under the “**Lesson Plans/PowerPoints**” section. The exam will also be available in the student packets. Use the exam as a teaching tool. The minimum passing score for the student exam is 90 percent and each student will have a maximum of five attempts to achieve a passing score. .

Qualification Course of Fire

Students must qualify shooting a course of fire consisting of four five shot groups within a 4 inch circle. Groups do not have to be consecutive. Students must qualify at the Level 1: Red level to earn a Basic Pistol Course Completion certificate. Once the student accomplishes the Level 1: Red level, instructors are encouraged to offer them the opportunity to qualify for the Level 2: White, Level 3: Blue, and Instructor level endorsements on their certificates.

- Qualification for **Level 1: Red** is four five shot groups within the four-inch circle at 10 feet.
- Qualification for **Level 2: White** is four five shot groups within the four-inch circle at 15 feet.
- Qualification for **Level 3: Blue** is four five shot groups within the four-inch circle at 20 feet.

Note- Groups can be cumulative and do not need to be shot consecutively

Instructor Level Qualification (Level 4)

Instructors can also take this opportunity to allow the students the opportunity to shoot to the same qualification standard that an NRA Certified Instructor must shoot. For Level 4, use the NRA Instructor Training Qualification Target. Have the student shoot 20 shots from 45 feet. If they are able to place 16 of the 20 shots within a six inch group, the student would earn the level 4 endorsement. Each endorsement is something they would be proud to share with their friends and family.

Targets

Use targets with no bullseyes for the first shooting exercises. Blank targets (such as typing paper or the back of a standard target) allow beginning shooters to concentrate upon sight alignment and trigger control without the distraction of a bullseye. Sample qualification targets are available at the end of this lesson plan. Instructors may make as many copies as needed, however print a test page for each level to ensure they have printed to the proper target measurements. If not, you may have to enable your printer to print outside of the margins. If you're unable to print the targets to the proper size, create your own targets to meet the standard.

NRA Pistol Marksmanship Qualification Program

Be sure to explain the NRA Pistol Marksmanship Qualification program. This program is designed to support the course content and will help the students get started in a shooting program. Emphasize that it is a fun and challenging way for students to demonstrate the skills they have acquired in the Basic Pistol Shooting Course, and also serves as an incentive to further enhance those skills.

***Thank you for your dedication to upholding
the standards of the NRA training programs.
Good luck with your course!***

We thank you for your commitment to firearm education and for participating in the training programs of the National Rifle Association. Your expertise and dedication will help train a new generation of shooters to exercise their freedoms safely and responsibly. If you have any questions about the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course, please contact your training counselor.

To join NRA today, or for additional information about membership, call 1-800-NRA-3888. Your membership dues can be charged to Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover.



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This manual is under no circumstances to be viewed as a restatement of the law in any jurisdiction or to assure compliance with any applicable federal, state or local laws, ordinances, rules or regulations. You must consult a local attorney to ascertain compliance with all applicable federal, state or local laws, ordinances, rules, or regulations and to advise you of the applicable duty of care required in your jurisdiction.

COURSE OUTLINE

NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course

Course Goal: To teach the basic **knowledge, skills** and **attitude** necessary for owning and using a pistol safely.

Student Text: *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting* handbook

Instructor Preparation:

- Introduction (read and understand)
- Gathering period

Lesson I: Pistol Knowledge and Safe Gun Handling

Learning Objectives:

1. State the course goal and any special requirements for the five lessons.
2. Identify the principal parts of a pistol and the types of pistol actions, and demonstrate how they function.
3. State, explain and apply the NRA Rules for Safe Gun Handling.
4. Demonstrate how to handle a pistol in a safe manner.

Lesson II: Ammunition Knowledge and the Fundamentals of Pistol Shooting

Learning Objectives:

5. Identify the different components of a pistol cartridge.
6. Explain the firing sequence of a cartridge.
7. Explain how to properly identify and store ammunition.
8. State the major types of cartridge malfunctions and how to react to them.
9. Explain the fundamentals of pistol shooting.

Lesson III: Shooting Positions and Shooting Qualifications

Learning Objectives:

10. Demonstrate the learning steps to assume the benchrest position, and shoot from the benchrest position.
11. Demonstrate the learning steps to assume the Isosceles position, and shoot from the Isosceles position
12. Shoot the course qualification.

Lesson IV: Scoring Targets, and Selecting and Maintaining Your Pistol

Learning Objectives:

13. Properly score a pistol target.
14. Explain the basic guidelines for selecting and purchasing a pistol.
15. Identify the materials needed to clean a pistol.
16. Demonstrate how to safely clean a pistol.

Lesson V: Continued Opportunities for Skill Development

Learning Objectives:

17. Identify several ways to pursue pistol shooting activities after the course.
18. Successfully complete the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course written examination.

COURSE MATERIALS

NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Student Packet. (Provide one per student.)
- NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook
- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Lesson Plans (one per instructor)
NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Wall Charts or Basics of Pistol Shooting Power Point
- Firearms appropriate to platform being taught (semi-auto/revolver or both)
- Dummy and live ammunition (suggest 200 rounds of factory ammunition, objectives could be met with a bare minimum of 40 rounds if the benchrest portion is conducted in the classroom with a simulator. The vast majority of students will require more than the minimum.)
- Targets (blank typing paper and qualification targets)
- Staple gun and staples, and/or target holders
- Target pasters
- Eye and hearing protection
- Empty ammunition boxes and fired cartridge cases
- Cleaning equipment
- Course evaluations (found at www.nrainstructors.org)
- Pens or pencils

OPTIONAL MATERIALS

- NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program
- NRA DVD: *Fundamentals of Gun Safety* and DVD player
- NRA Range Rules Poster
- Flip chart, easel, and marker
- Dry erase board, markers, and eraser
- Name tags
- Marking pens
- Highlighter pens
- Folding chairs
- Refreshments
- NRA Member Services Guide (one per student)

Go to NRA Materials Center, <http://materials.nrahq.org> for item numbers and prices.

No live ammunition in the classroom!

GATHERING PERIOD

Purpose:

- Provide adequate parking for all participants
 - Make everyone feel welcome
 - Register students
 - Inspect all equipment for live ammunition in the classroom (secondary inspection)
 - Provide an opportunity for students to get acquainted
 - Have students review the displays
 - Start on time
-

Length: 15-20 minutes before class starts

Facility: Classroom or adjacent meeting area

Suggestions:

- Provide a parking attendant or greeter.
- Set up a table for registration.
- Set up a gun and equipment inspection area.
- Provide student name tags.
- Have assistants mingle and welcome students as they arrive.
- Set up an NRA display area for students.
- Provide refreshments for all.
- Escort the students to the classroom when it is time for class to begin.

No live ammunition in the classroom!

LESSON I

Pistol Knowledge and Safe Gun Handling

Learning Objectives:

As a result of their participation in this lesson, students will be able to:

- State the course goal and any special requirements for the lessons.
 - Identify the principal parts of a pistol and the types of pistol actions, and demonstrate how they function.
 - State, explain and apply the NRA Rules for Safe Gun Handling.
 - Demonstrate how to handle a pistol in a safe manner.
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Length: 2 hours (a 10-minute break should be given after 50 minutes of instruction)

Facility: Classroom

Required Materials:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook*
- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Wall Charts or BOPS PowerPoint Presentation
- Firearms appropriate to platform being taught (semi-auto/revolver or both)
- Appropriate dummy ammunition (must be clearly distinguishable from live ammunition—**no live ammunition can be present in the training classroom.** See special note to the instructor on page 3 of the Introduction)
- Notepads and pens or pencils—one per student
- Other training aids as appropriate

References: *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook*

No live ammunition in the classroom!

Lesson Content	Instructional Notes	
A. Welcome Students	Introduce the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Instructor • Assistants/staff 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Welcome Slide </div>
B. Administrative Items	Cover the following administrative items with the students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy regarding ammunition in the classroom. • Security of firearms • Restrooms and drinking fountains • Phones and emergency exits • Refreshments/snack policy • Smoking policy • Breaks and lunch • Air conditioning and heating adjustments • Cell phones 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Slide I-1 Administrative Items </div>
C. Conduct of Course	Inform the students regarding the conduct of the course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course overview (length of course, breaks, meals, and completion time) • Course goal: To teach the basic knowledge, skills and attitude necessary for owning and using a pistol safely. 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Slide I-2 Course Goal </div>
D. Gun Owner's Responsibilities	Read the "Gun Owner's Responsibilities" in the <i>NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting</i> to the class	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Slide I-3 Gun Owner's Responsibilities </div>
E. Introduce Lesson	Review the learning objectives for this lesson.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Slide I-4 Learning Objectives </div>
F. Why Americans Own Pistols	Ask why many Americans choose to own pistols. Their responses should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational shooting • Competitive shooting • Hunting • Protection of self and family • Collecting • Exercise of a constitutional right 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Slide I-5 Reasons To Own A Pistol </div>

G. Types of Pistol Actions

Explain that the three most common pistol types that will be discussed in this course are:

Slide I-6
Types of
Pistol
Actions

- Semi-automatic pistol
- Single-action revolver
- Double-action revolver

H. Revolver Knowledge

Define a revolver for the students:

A revolver is a pistol that has a rotating cylinder containing a number of firing chambers. The action of the trigger or hammer will line up a chamber with the barrel and firing pin.

Explain that a revolver consists of three main parts: the *frame*, the *barrel*, and the *action*.

Slide I-7
Main
Parts of a
Revolver

1. *Frame*

The frame is the backbone to which all other parts are attached.

Point out and describe the functions of the revolver frame components:

Slide I-8
Revolver
Frame
Com-
ponents

- *Grip panels* (usually of wood, rubber, or plastic, and attached to the lower portion of the frame—also called *stocks*)
- *Trigger guard* (protects the trigger and reduces the possibility of an unintentional discharge)
- *Rear sight* (used with the front sight when aiming)
 - In addition to iron sights, pistols may also have optical, red-dot or laser sights. The primary advantage of all such sights is that, unlike iron sights, they do not require the alignment of a front and rear sight with the target.
- *Back strap* (the rear vertical portion of the frame that lies between the grip panels)
- *Front strap* (the front vertical portion of the frame that lies between the grip panels)

Display
Pistol
Wall
Chart

When using an actual gun in a demonstration, verify that it is unloaded, have a student perform a secondary verification that it is unloaded, and ensure that it is pointed in a safe direction at all times.

2. Barrel

The barrel is the metal tube through which the bullet passes.

Display
Pistol
Wall
Chart

Point out and describe the functions of the following revolver barrel parts or characteristics:

- *Bore* (the hole inside the barrel)
- *Rifling* (the spiral lands and grooves cut into the bore. Rifling imparts a spin to the bullet, which stabilizes its flight.)
- *Muzzle* (the front end of the barrel where the bullet exits)
- *Front sight* (used with the rear sight in aiming)
- *Caliber* (the diameter of the bore, measured across the lands or, sometimes, across the grooves, in decimal fractions of an inch or in millimeters)

Slide I-9
Parts of a
Revolver
Barrel

Slide I-10
Lands and
Grooves

3. Action

The action is a group of moving parts used to load, fire and unload a pistol.

Display
Pistol Wall
Charts

Point out and describe the functions of the following revolver action parts:

- *Trigger* (when pressed it activates the hammer)
- *Hammer* (causes the firing pin to strike and fire the cartridge)
- *Hammer spur* (the projection on the hammer that may be gripped by the thumb)
- *Cylinder* (holds ammunition in individual chambers that are rotated into firing position by the action of the trigger or hammer)
- *Cylinder release latch* (on double-action revolvers, releases the cylinder to swing out for loading and unloading)
- *Ejector* (removes cartridges from the cylinder when activated by the ejector rod)
- *Ejector rod* (activates the ejector)

Slide I-11
Double-
Action
Revolver
Action
Parts

Slide I-12
Single-
Action
Revolver
Action
Parts

Demonstrate the functions of the action parts using the sample revolvers.

Slide I-13
Single-
and
Double-
Action
Revolvers

4. Single-action and double-action revolvers

Explain the difference between a *single-action* and a *double-action* revolver.

I. Semi-Automatic Pistol Knowledge

In a *single-action* revolver, the trigger performs one action: releasing the hammer. The hammer must be manually cocked with the thumb.

In a *double-action* revolver, the trigger performs two tasks: it both cocks and releases the hammer. Most double-action revolvers can also be fired in the single-action mode by manually cocking the hammer with the thumb.

Demonstrate the difference between these two types of actions using the revolver and dummy ammunition.

Define a semi-automatic pistol for the students:

A semi-automatic pistol is a firearm that, each time the trigger is pressed, fires a single cartridge, automatically extracts and ejects the empty case, and inserts a new cartridge into the chamber.

A semi-automatic pistol, like a revolver, consists of three main parts: the *frame*, the *barrel*, and the *action*.

1. Frame

The frame is the backbone to which all other parts are attached.

Point out and describe the functions of the following semi-automatic pistol frame components:

- *Grip panels* (usually of wood, rubber, or plastic, and attached to the lower portion of the frame—also called *stocks*)
- *Trigger guard* (protects the trigger and reduces the possibility of an unintentional discharge)
- *Back strap* (the rear vertical portion of the frame that lies between the grip panels)
- *Slide stop* (locks the slide in an open position)
- *Magazine release* (a device that releases the magazine so that it can be removed from the pistol)
- *Front strap* (the front vertical portion of the frame that lies between the grip panels)
- *Safety* (a mechanical device that prevents firing of the handgun, and thus helps reduce the chance of an unintentional discharge—sometimes mounted on the slide)

Slide I-14
Main Parts
of a Semi-
Automatic
Pistol

Display
Pistol
Wall
Charts

Display
Pistol
Wall
Charts

Slide I-15
Parts of a
Semi-
Automatic
Pistol
Frame

Emphasize that the safety is a mechanical device, and can fail; thus, the shooter cannot depend upon a safety to absolutely prevent an accident. The prevention of a firearm accident is always the responsibility of the gun handler.

When using an actual gun in a demonstration, verify that it is unloaded, have a student perform a secondary verification that it is unloaded, and ensure that it is pointed in a safe direction at all times.

2. Barrel

The barrel is the metal tube through which the bullet passes.

Point out and describe the functions of the following pistol barrel parts or characteristics:

- *Bore* (the hole inside the barrel)
- *Chamber* (unlike the revolver, the semi-automatic pistol has a single chamber, located at the rear of the barrel. The chamber holds the cartridge at the instant of firing)
- *Rifling* (the spiral lands and groves cut into the bore. Rifling imparts a spin to the bullet, which stabilizes its flight.)
- *Muzzle* (the front end of the barrel where the bullet exits)
- *Front sight* (used with the rear sight in aiming; mounted on the end of the barrel or slide)
- *Locking lugs/locking surfaces* (in locked-breech actions, areas of the barrel that lock it to the slide)
- *Caliber* (the diameter of the bore, measured across the lands or, sometimes, across the grooves, in decimal fractions of an in or in millimeters)

Display
Pistol Wall
Chart

Slide I-16
Parts of a
Semi-
Automatic
Pistol
Barrel

Slide I-17
Lands and
Grooves

3. Action

The action is a group of moving parts used to load, fire and unload a pistol.

Point out and describe the functions of the following semi-automatic pistol action parts:

- *Trigger* (when pressed it activates the hammer)
- *Hammer* (causes the firing pin to strike and fire the cartridge)

Slide I-18
Semi-
Automatic
Pistol
Action
Parts

Display
Pistol Wall
Chart

- *Hammer spur* (the projection on the hammer that may be gripped by the thumb)

Some semi-automatic pistols do not have a visible or external hammer, and are often referred to as *hammerless*, even though there may be an internal hammer or striker.

- *Slide* (a component that slides on rails in the frame. Upon firing, the slide moves to the rear, and is returned forward to close the breech by pressure from the recoil spring. Some slides enclose the barrel, while others are located at the rear of the barrel.)

The slide has three primary functions:

- It extracts the cartridge case from the chamber and ejects it from the pistol
- It cocks the hammer or firing pin (in most models)
- It moves the top cartridge from the magazine into the chamber

Slide I-19
Functions
of a Semi-
Automatic
Pistol
Slide

The slide may also contain the rear sight and, often, the front sight also. Explain that in addition to iron sights, pistols may also have optical, red-dot or laser sights. The primary advantage of all such sights is that, unlike iron sights, they do not require the alignment of a front and rear sight with the target.

- *Slide stop* (a lever on the frame that, when engaged, holds the slide rearward, and when disengaged, allows the slide to move forward)
- *Safety* (a mechanical device designed to prevent firing of the handgun, and thus helps reduce the chance of an unintentional discharge—sometimes mounted on the frame) **Remember—mechanical devices can fail!**
- *Decocking lever* (a device that is designed to safely lower the cocked hammer of a semi-automatic pistol)
- *Takedown lever* (a lever or other device on the frame that, when activated, allows the slide and barrel to be separated from the frame)
- *Magazine* (a detachable storage device designed to hold cartridges ready for insertion into the chamber)
- *Magazine release* (a button, lever or catch that releases the magazine so that it can be removed from the pistol)

4. *Types of semi-automatic pistol actions*

Demonstrate the functions of the action parts using a semi-automatic pistol.

There are a number of types of semi-automatic pistol actions:

- *Single-action* (each press of the trigger only performs one function—releasing the cocked hammer; the hammer must be manually cocked for the first shot)
- *Traditional Double-action* (the initial long, heavy trigger press both cocks and releases the hammer; each subsequent shot is fired in the single-action mode)
- *Double-action-only* (each trigger press both cocks and releases the hammer, as with a double-action revolver)

Slide I-20
Types of
Semi-
Automatic
Pistol
Actions

Demonstrate the functional differences among these three types of pistols (if appropriate sample pistols are available) or show a picture of a representative sample of each type.

J. Operating Revolvers and Semi-Automatic Pistols

Explain, demonstrate and discuss how to load, cock, uncock and unload revolvers and semi-automatic pistols.

No live ammunition is to be used during this part of the lesson. Only dummy ammunition is to be used to demonstrate loading and unloading procedures.

Note that you, as the instructor, will be handling the pistols constantly. Always be sure, when picking up any handgun, to keep the gun pointed in a safe direction, and your finger off the trigger, alongside the frame. Constantly observe all safe gun handling rules—set a good example for your students.

1. *Single-action revolver*

Explain and demonstrate the following procedures with the single-action revolver:

- Loading
- Cocking
- Uncocking
- Unloading

Use only dummy ammunition when demonstrating these procedures.

2. *Double-action revolver*

Explain and demonstrate the following procedures with the double-action revolver:

- Loading
- Cocking
- Uncocking
- Unloading

Use only dummy ammunition when demonstrating these procedures.

3. *Semi-automatic pistol*

Explain and demonstrate the following procedures with the semi-automatic pistol:

- Loading
- Cocking
- Uncocking
- Unloading

Use only dummy ammunition when demonstrating these procedures.

Remind students that different semi-automatic pistols vary in their uncocking procedures. The specific uncocking procedure for a specific model of semi-automatic pistol is found in the pistol's owners manual.

Emphasize that when unloading any semi-automatic pistol, **the magazine must be removed first**. Then the action may be worked to eject any live cartridge in the chamber. Ask students why this is necessary.

K. Safe Gun Handling

1. *Causes of firearm accidents*

Ask what the major causes of firearm accidents are. Discuss their responses. There are two major causes of firearm accidents:

- *Ignorance* (a lack of knowledge)
 - Ignorance of the rules of safe gun handling
 - Ignorance of the proper and safe way to operate a pistol

Slide I-21
Causes of
Firearm
Accidents

2. *NRA Rules for Safe Gun Handling*

- *Carelessness* (poor or improper attitude)
 - Failure to apply the rules of safe gun handling
 - Failure to observe proper procedures for safely operating a pistol

Display
NRA
Rules for
Safe Gun
Handling
Wall Chart

- **ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction**

Emphasize that this is the single most important rule of gun safety. This rule means that a gun must ALWAYS be pointed so that even if it were unintentionally discharged, it would not cause injury or damage. Ask what a “safe direction” might be under different circumstances. Discuss the responses.

Slide I-22
NRA
Rules for
Safe Gun
Handling

- **ALWAYS keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot**

Instruct the students that while continuing to point the pistol in a safe direction, they should place the index finger alongside the frame of the pistol, above and away from the trigger guard.

Slide I-23
Safe
Trigger
Finger
Position

- **ALWAYS keep the gun unloaded until ready to use**

A pistol cannot fire if it is unloaded. Tell the students that whenever they pick up a firearm, they must immediately point it in a safe direction, with the finger off the trigger, and then check to make sure it is unloaded.

Explain how the NRA Rules for Safe Gun Handling apply in the classroom, on a range, and in everyday life.

L. Safe Pistol Handling Practical Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to provide the students with an opportunity, under supervision, to learn and practice the safe gun handling rules through practical application. The exercise also allows the students to learn and experience the loading, cocking, uncocking and unloading procedures with different types of handguns.

Evaluate each student as appropriate, providing positive feedback as appropriate.

1. *Practical exercise set-up*

Use a table in the classroom as a firing line. Lay the various pistols on the table so that they are pointed safely downrange, in different operating modes (action open or closed, magazine inserted or out, hammer cocked or down, etc.)

NOTE: Although in Lesson III you will thoroughly discuss the details of a range layout and the various range commands, you should provide the students now with rudimentary knowledge of range layouts and the basic commands necessary for the conduct of the exercise.

2. *Safe gun handling exercise*

Have the students practice all of the safe gun handling rules while they pick up the pistols. Observe the students closely and evaluate their performance. Be sure that each student, when picking up a gun, immediately checks to make sure the gun is unloaded while keeping it pointed in a safe direction and maintaining his or her finger off the trigger.

3. *Gun operating procedures exercise*

Have the students practice unloading, cocking, uncocking and loading the pistols. Use the range command, “Load,” during this part of the exercise. Watch the students carefully and offer helpful suggestions. Make your corrections in a positive manner.

Finally, have each student pick up a pistol and hand it to another student. Ensure that the students observe the rules for safe gun handling at all times.

When conducting this practical exercise, remember—safety first! Always make sure that the students observe the gun safety rules at all times, **and ensure that there are no live cartridges in the classroom.**

M. Summarize Presentation

1. *Lesson Summary*

Highlight the most important points of the lesson:

- State the course goal and any special requirements for the lessons
- Identify the principal parts of a pistol and the types of pistol actions, and demonstrate how they function
- State, explain and apply the NRA Rules for Safe Gun Handling
- Demonstrate how to handle a pistol in a safe manner

Slide I-24
Summary

2. *Question and
answer period*

Ask the students if they have any questions. Answer questions.

3. *Preview next
lesson*

Briefly preview the next lesson.

LESSON II

Ammunition Knowledge and the Fundamentals of Pistol Shooting

Learning Objectives:

As a result of their participation in this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify the different components of a pistol cartridge.
 - Explain the firing sequence of a cartridge.
 - Explain how to properly identify and store ammunition.
 - State the major types of cartridge malfunctions, and how to react to them.
 - Explain the fundamentals of pistol shooting.
-
-

Length: 2 hours (a 10-minute break should be given after 50 minutes of instruction)

Facility: Classroom

Required Materials:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting* handbook
- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Wall Charts or BOPS PowerPoint Presentation
- Firearms appropriate to platform being taught (semi-auto/revolver or both)
- Appropriate dummy ammunition (must be clearly distinguishable from live ammunition—**no live ammunition can be present in the training classroom.** See special note to the instructor in the Introduction)
- An empty ammunition box and a fired cartridge case for at least one of the above pistols
- Notepads and pens or pencils—one per student
- Other training aids as appropriate

References:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting* handbook

No live ammunition in the classroom!

Lesson Content	Instructional Notes	
<p>A. Lesson Introduction</p> <p>B. Pistol Ammunition</p>	<p>State the learning objectives for this lesson.</p>	<p>Slide II-1 Learning Objectives</p>
<p>1. <i>Components of a pistol cartridge</i></p>	<p>A cartridge has four components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Case</i>—a metal cylinder usually made of brass, closed at one end, which contains the other three components. • <i>Priming compound</i>—an impact-sensitive chemical compound used for ignition. • <i>Powder charge</i>—a fast-burning chemical compound used as a propellant. • <i>Bullet</i>—the projectile. <p>Point out that “cartridges” are commonly and incorrectly called “bullets.”</p>	<p>Slide II-2 Cartridge Components</p> <p>Display Ammunition Wall Chart (Optional)</p>
<p>2. <i>Rimfire and center-fire cartridges</i></p>	<p>Explain the difference between a <i>rimfire</i> and a <i>center-fire</i> cartridge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a <i>rimfire</i> cartridge, the priming compound is contained in the inside rim of the case head. • In a <i>center-fire</i> cartridge, the priming compound is contained in a metal cup, called a <i>primer</i>, located in the center of the case head. 	<p>Slide II-3 Rimfire and Center-Fire Cartridges</p>
<p>3. <i>Firing sequence of a cartridge</i></p>	<p>Explain the firing sequence of a cartridge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The firing pin strikes the primer or case rim and ignites the priming compound. • The flame generated by the priming compound ignites the powder charge. • The powder burns rapidly and generates a large volume of hot, high-pressure gas. • The high-pressure gas propels the bullet out of the barrel at a high velocity. 	<p>Slide II-4 Cartridge Firing Sequence</p> <p>Display Cartridge Firing Sequence Wall Chart</p>

4. *Cartridge designation and identification*

The shooter must know how to identify a cartridge to load the proper cartridge in the pistol.

The shooter should match the cartridge designations:

- Marked on the pistol
- Stamped on the head of the case of a center-fire cartridge (called the *headstamp*)
- Printed on the factory ammunition box

Show the students the cartridge designation on a pistol, on the head of a fired case, and printed on an empty ammunition box.

Slide II-5
Cartridge
Designation
and Identifi-
cation

a. Multiple names

Some cartridges may have more than one name (e.g. 9 mm Para, 9 mm Luger, and 9 X 19 are all the same cartridge). Sometimes one name may be found on the gun and another on the cartridge headstamp.

b. +P and +P+ cartridges

Some cartridge designations include a “+P” or “+P+” suffix. Such cartridges are loaded to higher pressures than standard cartridges of the same name.

The shooter should consult the pistol’s owner’s manual, the pistol’s manufacturer, or a knowledgeable person (such as an NRA Certified Pistol Instructor) to determine what cartridge may be fired in a pistol, or if the pistol is approved for “+P” or “+P+” cartridges.

Slide II-6
+P and
+P+

5. *Storing ammunition*

Explain the following regarding the proper storage of ammunition:

- Ammunition should be stored in a cool, dry place. Avoid storage in a high-temperature location such as an attic or trunk of a car.
- Always keep the ammunition in the original factory box or carton. Ask why this is important.
- Store ammunition in a location where children or other unauthorized persons will not have access to it.
- Do not expose ammunition to water or solvents, petroleum products, bore cleaner, ammonia or other chemicals. These materials can cause deterioration of the powder and priming compound, resulting in a cartridge malfunction.

Slide II-7
Ammuni-
tion
Storage

- Wipe fingerprints off cartridges. The salty residue may cause corrosion.

6. *Cartridge malfunctions*

a. misfire

There are three types of cartridge malfunctions: misfire, hangfire, and squib load.

A *misfire* is the failure of a cartridge to ignite when the primer or case rim has been struck by the firing pin. This situation may be caused by a defect in the cartridge or by a defect in the pistol that causes a weak firing pin hit.

Slide II-8
Types of Cartridge Malfunctions

Slide II-9
Misfire

b. hangfire

A *hangfire* is a perceptible delay in the ignition of a cartridge after the primer or case rim has been struck by the firing pin. This delay may last several seconds.

Slide II-10
Hangfire

When a cartridge fails to fire immediately, it will not be known at first if the problem is a misfire or a hangfire. The shooter must keep the pistol pointed in a safe direction, as a hangfire condition might exist and cause the pistol to fire after a substantial delay. The shooter should wait at least 30 seconds before opening the action to remove the cartridge.

c. squib load

A *squib load* occurs when the cartridge develops less than normal pressure or velocity after the ignition of a cartridge. Squib loads can cause a bullet to fail to exit the muzzle and become lodged in the bore.

Slide II-11
Squib Load

If anything unusual is noticed upon firing a shot, such as a reduction in noise, muzzle flash or recoil, a squib load should be suspected. **The shooter should stop firing immediately and, keeping the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, unload the pistol, checking to ensure that all chambers are empty.** Then, with the action open, he or she should visually inspect the barrel to make sure that it is not obstructed. If a bullet is lodged in the barrel, the firing of another shot could cause serious injury or damage to the gun.

C. Review Safe Gun Handling Rules

Review the NRA Safe Gun Handling Rules before discussing the pistol shooting fundamentals. Be sure that the instructor demonstrating the pistol shooting fundamentals follows all the gun safety rules and draws attention to their proper application.

Display NRA Safe Gun Handling Rules Wall Chart

D. Dominant Eye

The pistol shooter should aim with the dominant eye.

E. Position

Establish the dominant eye for each student by using the exercise described in *The NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting* handbook. It is recommended that the shooter use the hand which is on the same side of the body as the dominant eye, if possible.

A *position* is the platform from which all the shooting fundamentals are executed.

Slide II-13
Position

A position should be *consistent, balanced, supported, naturally aligned with the target (NAA), and comfortable*.

1. *Benchrest position*

The *benchrest position* is the initial position that will be taught in this course. Explain and demonstrate the elements of the benchrest position, as described below and in *The NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting* handbook:

Slide II-14
Elements of
the
Benchrest
Position

- Sit behind the bench or table facing the target.
- The feet should be flat on the ground
- Both arms are extended fully forward.
- The back should be straight or leaning slightly forward
- The wrists are supported by sandbags.
- The head is fully erect. If necessary, raise the sandbags to allow the head to be erect.

2. *Two-handed standing shooting position*

The *two-handed standing shooting position* is the other position taught in this course. Explain and demonstrate this position. Point out that the two-handed standing shooting position is assumed by simply standing up from the benchrest position, with both arms extended fully forward and the feet evenly spaced.

Explain that the two-handed standing shooting position taught in this course, with both arms extended fully forward, is called the *isosceles position*, because the arms, seen from above, form an isosceles triangle. Mention that there are other two-handed standing shooting positions, such as the Weaver, Modified Weaver, Chapman and others.

F. Grip

Grip refers to the manner in which the pistol is held in the hand. A proper and consistent grip is essential to accurate shooting. Together, grip and position are the foundations that allow proper execution of the shooting fundamentals.

1. *Assuming a proper grip*

A *two-handed grip* is taught in this course.

To assume a proper two-handed grip:

- While keeping the gun pointed in a safe direction, and with the finger off the trigger, use the non-shooting or support hand to place the pistol in the shooting hand.
- Fit the “V” formed by the thumb and index finger of the shooting hand as high as possible on the pistol back strap.
- Grip the pistol using the base of the thumb and the lower three fingers of the shooting hand. The pressure of the grip should be directed straight to the rear.
- Hold the pistol firmly, but without exerting so much pressure that the hand shakes.
- Keep your finger off the trigger. It should lie along the side of the frame, outside of the trigger guard.
- The thumb should lie relaxed on the other side of the frame.
- Wrap the fingers of the support hand around the fingers of the shooting hand such that the corresponding knuckles of both hands meet. Place the heel of the support hand against the heel of the shooting hand. With a revolver, place the thumb of the support hand on the thumb of the shooting hand. With a semi-automatic pistol, place the support-hand thumb forward of and below the shooting-hand thumb.

Slide II-15
Assuming a
Two-
Handed
Grip

Slide II-16
Assuming a
Two-
Handed
Grip
(cont'd)

Slide II-17
Thumb
Position:
The Two-
Handed Grip

With students using semiautomatic pistols, be sure their thumbs are out of the path of the recoiling slide.

Emphasize that uniformity is the most important aspect of the grip. The shooter should grip the pistol the same way every time.

2. *Grip practical exercise*

Have the students assume the benchrest position and practice the steps to assume a proper grip. Have participants describe each step as they perform it. Observe participants to ensure that they perform the steps correctly and in the proper sequence, and that all safety rules are followed.

G. Fundamentals of Pistol Shooting

Discuss the fundamentals of pistol shooting and why they are important. The fundamentals should be performed every time a person fires a shot from any position. *Position* and *grip* are the platform from which the fundamentals are executed.

Slide II-18
Fundamentals of
Pistol
Shooting

The five fundamentals of pistol shooting are ***aiming, breath control, hold control, trigger control*** and ***follow-through***.

1. *Aiming*

Aiming is the process of achieving the proper relationship between the target, the front sight and the rear sight. *Aiming* consists of two components: *sight alignment* and *sight picture*.

Slide II-19
Aiming

a. sight alignment

Sight alignment refers to the proper relationship of the pistol's front and rear sights.

- With typical post-and-notch sights found on most pistols, the top of the front sight is even with the top of the rear sight, and the post is centered in the notch, with equal amounts of light on both sides.
- Proper sight alignment is the key to accurate shooting. Any misalignment of the eye, the front sight or the rear sight introduces an angular error that multiplies with distance.

Slide II-20
Sight
Alignment

b. sight picture

Sight picture refers to the proper positioning of the aligned sights on the target.

Slide II-21
Sight
Picture

- *Sight picture* is obtained by achieving proper sight alignment and then putting the aligned sights into their proper relationship with the target.
- The eye can only focus on one object at a time. The pistol shooter should concentrate on the front sight, which will appear sharp and clear, while the rear sight and the target will appear less sharp or blurred.

Slide II-22
Errors in
Sight
Alignment
and Picture

Slide II-23
Front sight
Focus

It is best to keep both eyes open while aiming, as more light is available to the eyes, depth perception is better, and facial contortions and muscle tension are eliminated. Note: a small piece of frosted tape on the inside of the lens of the shooting glasses in front of the non-shooting eye can relieve eye strain, if evident. Focus should be on the front sight.

2. *Breath control*

Body movement while breathing can produce gun movement which impairs shooting. For maximum accuracy, the shooter uses *breath control* to minimize such movement.

Slide II-26
Breath
Control

- To minimize body movement, the shooter should take a breath before each shot, let enough air out to be comfortable, and stop breathing while firing the shot.
- Holding the breath too long can result in muscle tremors. If this occurs, the finger should be removed from the trigger, the gun should be lowered (while pointed in a safe direction), and the shooter should relax, take a few breaths, and then begin the firing cycle again.

3. *Hold control*

Exercising *hold control* allows the shooter to maintain the proper sight picture and sight alignment during the process of firing the shot.

Slide II-24
Hold
Control

a. grip

An important factor in hold control is the way in which the pistol is gripped. Reinforce the proper method of assuming a proper firing grip, as described above and in *The NRA Guide to the Basics of Pistol Shooting*.

b. arc of movement

It is impossible to hold the pistol in a shooting position without some motion; this is called the “arc of movement.” The shooter should try to maintain proper sight alignment and sight picture while minimizing the arc of movement. With practice, the arc of movement will decrease.

Slide II-25
Arc of
Movement

4. *Trigger control*

Trigger control refers to the proper method of activating the trigger to minimize movement that can misalign the sights.

Slide II-27
Trigger
Control

- The index finger is placed so that the trigger is halfway between the tip of the finger and the first joint.
- The trigger is pressed straight to the rear in a smooth, continuous manner without disturbing sight alignment. Pressure should be applied evenly, not in a start-and-stop manner.
- The shooter should not be able to predict when the gun will fire. Each shot should come as a surprise.

- Trigger press and sight alignment must be done simultaneously while maintaining a minimum arc of movement.

5. *Follow-through*

Follow-through is the continuation of the application of the shooting fundamentals through and immediately after the shot. Follow-through enables the shooter to integrate, maintain and continue all the shooting fundamentals before, during and immediately after firing the shot.

Slide II-28
Follow-Through

Relate the importance of follow-through to other sports such as golf, baseball, etc.

Emphasize that the two most important fundamentals in pistol shooting are **aiming** and **trigger control**. The other fundamentals all contribute to achieving these.

Slide II-29
Most Important Shooting Fundamentals

H. Summarize Presentation

1. *Lesson summary*

Highlight the most important points of the lesson:

- Identify the different components of a pistol cartridge
- Explain the firing sequence of a cartridge
- Explain how to properly identify and store ammunition
- Identify the major types of cartridge malfunctions, and how to react to them
- Explain the fundamentals of pistol shooting

Slide II-30
Summary and Review

2. *Question and answer period*

Ask the students if they have any questions. Answer questions.

3. *Preview next lesson*

Briefly preview the next lesson.

LESSON III

Shooting Positions and Shooting Qualification

Learning Objectives:

As a result of their participation in this lesson, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the learning steps to assume the benchrest position, and shoot from the benchrest position.
 - Demonstrate the learning steps to assume the Isosceles position, and shoot from the Isosceles position.
 - Shoot the course qualification.
-
-

Length: 2 hours (a 10-minute break should be given after 50 minutes of instruction)

Facility: Classroom/Range

Required Materials:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook*
- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Wall Charts or BOPS PowerPoint Presentation
- Eye protection
- Hearing protection
- Firearms appropriate to platform being taught (semi-auto/revolver)
- Sufficient ammunition per student to complete instruction (suggest 200 rounds of factory ammunition. Objectives could be met with less or it could take more)
- Targets
- Sandbags, benches (tables), and chairs
- Small screwdrivers or other tools for adjusting pistol sights
- Other training aids as appropriate

References:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook*

Lesson Content

Instructional Notes

A. Lesson Introduction

State the learning objectives for this lesson.

Slide
III-1
Learning
Objective

B. Range Safety Briefing

1. *Purpose of the shooting event*

Live-fire exercise for NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course

Introduce range staff (if appropriate):

- Chief Range Safety Officer
- Range Safety Officers and Instructors
- Any other range personnel

- Administrative briefing

Review any administrative procedures for the range facility (parking, sign-in, sign-out, etc.)

2. *Range layout and limits*

For the range you are using, identify and explain the significance of the following:

Slide
III-2
Range
Layout and
Limits

- Ready line
- Firing line
- Target area
- Backstop/impact area
- Left and right range limits
- Firing points
- Target and firing line numbers
- Downrange
- Safety berms
- Entry and exit routes
- Range flags
- Warning markers or other physical safety features of the range
- First-aid kit
- Phone (indicate whether 911 service is available and if any special dialing procedures are needed to access an outside line)
- Fire extinguishers
- Rest rooms
- Any other applicable equipment

3. Range safety rules

- Review general safety rules

Review the NRA Rules for Safe Gun Handling.

- **ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.**
- **ALWAYS keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.**
- **ALWAYS keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.**

Slide III-3
NRA
Rules for
Safe Gun
Handling

Review the NRA Rules for Using and Storing a Gun.

- Know your target and what is beyond.
- Be sure the gun is safe to operate.
- Know how to use the gun safely.
- Use only the correct ammunition for your gun.
- Wear eye and ear protection as appropriate.
- Never use alcohol or drugs before or while shooting.
- Store guns so that they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.

Slide III-4
NRA Rules
for Using or
Storing a
Gun

- General range safety rules

Review the range safety rules for the particular facility being used. Note that most ranges have their own range rules, which are usually posted.

- Know and obey all range rules (wait for each command to be given during each exercise).
- Know where others are at all times.
- Shoot only at authorized targets.
- Stop shooting immediately if you think you may have experienced a malfunction.

Slide III-5
General
Range Safety
Rules

Ask students to define, and state the proper action for, a *misfire*, *hangfire* and *squib load*. If necessary, review the content on these malfunctions given in Lesson II.

A shooter having any questions or problems during any of the range exercises should:

- Stop firing immediately.
- Keep the gun pointed downrange.
- Raise the non-shooting hand to signify there is a problem. Range personnel will provide assistance.

Slide III-6
Questions/
/Problems on
the Firing
Line

4. *Hygiene guidelines*

Shooting or cleaning guns can expose a person to airborne lead particulate, powder residue, solvents, and other chemicals. Although casual exposure to these elements is minimal compared to daily activities and exposures (such as exposure to household chemicals), the shooter should still follow certain precautions:

Slide III-7
Hygiene
Guidelines

- Refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, or placing hands close to your mouth.
Keep your hands away from your face to prevent ingestion of lead particulate and chemical residues. This precaution includes refraining from applying lip balm or makeup.
- After shooting or cleaning a gun, wash your hands and face thoroughly with soap and *cold* water prior to eating, drinking, smoking, or otherwise placing your hands near your mouth eyes or nose. (Cold water shrinks the pores in the skin, thus reducing the chance of absorption.)
- Change and wash clothing as soon as possible after shooting or cleaning a gun so that possible exposure to lead particulate or solvent residue may be minimized.

The safety rules in this lesson apply to shooting pistols at the particular facility where this course is being conducted. Other facilities may have different rules and other activities—such as hunting and shooting other types of firearms—have additional rules and precautions.

Whenever visiting a new range, confer with the range personnel regarding range rules and procedures.

5. *Site-specific range rules*

Review the range safety rules for the specific range that you are going to use.

6. *Range commands*

State and explain the “Load,” “Commence Firing” and “Cease Firing” range commands.

Slide III-8
Range
Commands

a. Load

On the “Load” command, the students may load their pistols. This command authorizes the students to load their pistols—nothing else. Students must still keep their fingers off the trigger.

b. Commence Firing

When the “Commence Firing” command is given, students may begin firing when they are ready.

c. Cease Firing

When the “Cease Firing” command is given, all shooting must stop **immediately**. Even a shooter who is in the process of pressing the trigger must stop, remove his or her finger from the trigger while keeping the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, and wait for further instructions from the range officer. These instructions could include such commands as:

**UNLOAD
CYLINDERS OPEN
MAGAZINES OUT
SLIDES BACK
GUNS ON THE BENCH**

The “Cease firing” command can be used during normal range procedures or in an emergency situation.

The “Cease Firing” command is not restricted to use by the range officer. Anyone observing an unsafe situation may and should call “cease firing.”

d. Firearm Problems

A student who has any type of problem with his or her pistol should take the index finger off the trigger, keep the gun pointed in a safe direction, and raise the non-shooting hand for assistance from one of the range personnel.

C. Benchrest

Follow the step-by-step sequence outlined below. Benches/tables, chairs and sandbags or other appropriate solid supports should be in place. **NOTE: The benchrest exercise may be conducted in the classroom using firearm simulators with a resetting trigger, sights and a laser indicating shot placement.**

Targets should be blank pieces of paper for the first two shooting exercises. A good blank target is a sheet of typing paper, the back of an NRA 50-foot bullseye target, or even an 8” or 10” paper plate. By using a blank target, the students will be able to concentrate on the front sight and keep it in focus without being distracted by the bullseye. Have the students aim at the center of the blank targets, which should be placed at a distance of about 15 feet from the firing line.

1. *Study the benchrest position*

Demonstrate the proper two-handed grip and the benchrest position as described in the *NRA Guide to the Basics of Pistol Shooting*.

2. *Practice the position without a pistol*

Have the students focus on attaining a proper body position before adding the handgun.

3. *Practice the position with the pistol*

Allow adequate time for students to become familiar and comfortable with it. Be sure the students are using the proper grip. Shooters should have their arms fully extended and the sights properly aligned on the target.

Ensure that those students using semi-automatic pistols do not place their thumbs in the way of the recoiling slide.

4. *Align position with target*

Make sure that the students are positioned so that their pistols naturally point at the center of the target.

5. *Dry-fire the pistols at the target*

Dry-fire the pistols at the target while applying the fundamentals:

- Aiming
- Hold control
- Breath control
- Trigger control
- Follow-through

While the students practice shooting fundamentals by dry-firing their pistols, emphasize that they should concentrate on sight alignment and pressing the trigger without disturbing the sights.

Dry-firing will familiarize the students with cocking and firing their pistols. Suggest that they use dry-fire practice at home.

The students must be able to execute the fundamentals of shooting during dry-firing before they are allowed to progress to live ammunition.

6. Shoot at targets using live ammunition

Ensure that everyone on the range has eye and hearing protection.

Have students shoot live ammunition at the blank targets using single-shot and then multiple-shot exercises. Emphasize the importance of applying the shooting fundamentals every time they fire a shot.

Note: Students with double-action revolvers should cock the hammer before each shot, if possible.

a. single-shot exercise
10 shots

Have the students load and fire only one cartridge at a time. Have them fire five times at a blank target, and have coaches evaluate the shooters. Perform this exercise at least twice, for a total of 10 shots.

b. five-shot exercise
5 shots

Have students load five cartridges and fire at a blank target, at their own pace, to achieve a shot group. All shots should be on the target. Be sure that the students rest between each shot.

Repeat the exercise until your student is able to shoot four-inch groups anywhere on the target. Observe and offer feedback as appropriate.

7. Adjust the rear sight to center a group on the target no greater than a 4" group

Once the students are able to shoot 4-inch groups, instruct them how to make sight adjustments. Remind them to move the rear sight in the same direction that they want the hits on the target to move. Emphasize that the guns must be unloaded before any attempt is made to adjust the sights.

Slide III-10
Adjusting
the Sights

Point out that some pistols do not have adjustable sights.

8. Continue firing five-shot groups from the bench
15 shots

If sight adjustments were necessary, continue to have the students load and fire five shots from the bench using the Level 1 target.

Remind students that their eyes can focus on only one object at a time, and that the front sight should be in sharp focus, with the rear sight and target being less clear.

The students should rest after each shot. Continue to make sight adjustments as necessary.

Repeat the five shot exercise until your student is able to shoot at least three, five-shot groups within a four-inch circle. If you are using the coach/pupil method, have participants reverse the roles and repeat the eight steps. Observe and offer feedback as appropriate.

D. Isosceles Position

The students should rest after each shot. Continue to make sight adjustments as necessary.

Repeat the five shot exercise until your student is able to shoot at least three, five-shot groups within a 4-inch diameter circle in the middle of the target. If you are using the coach/pupil method, have participants reverse the roles and repeat the eight steps.

Demonstrate the Isosceles shooting position. Explain that both hands are used to grip and support the pistol.

Have the students learn this position using the proper sequence of steps.

Slide III-11
Elements of
a Two-
Handed
Standing
Position

1. Study position

Demonstrate and describe the key points of the position, referring students to the pictures of the position in the handbook.

Describe and demonstrate the two-handed grip presented in the text.

2. Practice position without a pistol

Assist students in achieving the proper foot, arm and body position without a pistol.

3. Practice position with a pistol

Assist students in achieving the position with a pistol. Check for:

- Proper grip
- Feet shoulder width apart and body weight distributed evenly
- Legs straight
- Back straight or bent slightly forward
- Head erect
- Arms fully extended
- Pistol brought to eye level
- Shooter should be relaxed and comfortable

4. Align position with target

Make sure that each student's position is such that the pistol is naturally aligned with the target.

5. Dry-fire pistol at target

Have students dry-fire their pistols at a target. Emphasize:

- Sight alignment--aiming
- Trigger press—trigger control

Point out that nobody can hold a pistol perfectly still. The students must try to keep the sights aligned while maintaining a minimum arc of movement.

Emphasize that the trigger should be pressed straight to the rear, and that the hammer fall should be a surprise.

Note: Students with double-action revolvers should cock the hammer before each shot, if possible.

6. *Single-shot exercise*
5 shots

Have the students load and fire one cartridge at a time. Have the students fire five shots at a blank target. Be sure that the students rest between each shot.

If the two-handed position is maintained for eight seconds or more without firing a shot, the shooter should remove the trigger finger from the trigger, keep the gun pointed in a safe direction, and lower it or rest it on the bench before attempting another shot.

Using the coach/pupil method, have coaches evaluate the shooters.

7. *Five-shot exercise*
15 shots

Have the students load five cartridges and fire at a blank target, at their own pace, to achieve a shot group. All shots should be on the target. Be sure the students rest between each shot.

Repeat the five shot exercise until your student is able to shoot at least three, five-shot groups within a 4-inch diameter circle in the middle of the target. If you are using the coach/pupil method, have participants reverse the roles and repeat the previous steps.

E. Evaluation of Shooting Practice

Lead students in a discussion of the shooting exercises. With each student, focus on the positive aspects (what the student did right.)

**F. Shooting
Qualification**
20 shots

When the student is ready, begin the shooting qualification for Level 1: Red. Use the Level 1 through 4 targets provided. Print as many copies as desired.

Once the student has met the qualification, offer the opportunity for students to continue with the other levels. Issue a certificate and initial each level the student has earned.

(Reference page 6 for Qualification details. Targets are located at the end of the Lesson Plan.)

NOTE: Minimum round counts are given for each shooting exercise. If the student completes the benchrest portion with a simulator, the bare minimum round count to complete the course with the qualification is 40 rounds. This is a best case scenario with most students needing to shoot more.

Slide III-12
Summary
and Review

**G. Summarize
Presentation**

1. *Lesson
summary*

Highlight the most important points of the lesson:

- Demonstrate the learning steps to assume the benchrest position, and shoot from the benchrest position.
- Demonstrate the learning steps to assume the Isosceles position, and shoot from the Isosceles position.

2. *Question and*

- Shoot the course qualification
Ask the students if they have any questions. Answer questions

3. *Preview next
lesson*

Preview the next lesson briefly.

LESSON IV

Scoring Targets, and Selecting and Maintaining a Pistol

Learning Objectives:

As a result of their participation in this lesson, students will be able to:

- Properly score a pistol target.
 - Explain the basic guidelines for selecting and purchasing a pistol.
 - Identify the materials needed to clean a pistol.
 - Demonstrate how to safely clean a pistol.
-
-

Length: 1 hour

Facility: Classroom

Required Materials:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook*
- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Wall Charts or BOPS PowerPoint Presentation
- Eye protection
- Firearms appropriate to platform being taught (semi-auto/revolver)
- Targets used in Lesson III
- Cleaning equipment
- Other training aids as appropriate

References:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook*

No ammunition in the classroom!

Lesson Content	Instructional Notes	
<p>A. Lesson Introduction</p>	<p>State the learning objectives for this lesson.</p>	<p>Slide IV-1 Learning Objectives</p>
<p>B. Scoring Targets</p>	<p>Explain the following about scoring targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hits outside the scoring rings have a value of zero • Hits that are completely or partially inside a scoring ring receive that ring's value • A hit that touches a scoring ring receives that ring's value <p>Demonstrate as necessary with fired targets.</p>	<p>Slide IV-2 Scoring Targets</p>
<p>C. Selecting and Purchasing a Pistol</p>	<p>Emphasize that it is critical for students to know the laws in their jurisdiction regarding the purchase, ownership, use, possession and carrying of a pistol. Penalties for violation of firearms laws can be severe.</p>	
<p>1. <i>Types of pistols</i></p>	<p>There are three basic types of pistols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Air pistols</i>—provide opportunities for practice at home (the same safety rules apply to air pistols) • <i>Rimfire pistols</i>—have low recoil and use inexpensive ammunition; good for recreational shooting • <i>Center-fire pistols</i>—available in a variety of calibers, making them useful for personal protection, hunting, competition and more. 	<p>Slide IV-3 Types of Pistols</p>
<p>2. <i>Factors in pistol selection</i></p>	<p>Factors that should be considered when considering the purchase of a pistol include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended use of the pistol • Price and budget • Availability and price of ammunition • Pistol fit and ergonomics • Size/weight • Recoil • Simplicity of operation and ease of cleaning • Reputation of manufacturer • Reliability record of the make and model • Warranty or guarantee • Availability of repair or aftermarket parts 	<p>Slide IV-4 Factors in Selecting a Pistol</p>

D. Caring for the Pistol

When considering purchasing a pistol:

- Consult knowledgeable shooters
- Research and, if possible, test-fire various makes and models
- Purchase the pistol from a reputable dealer

Slide IV-5
Selecting a
Pistol

Discuss the importance of taking proper care of the pistol through preventive maintenance. The pistol should be cleaned and lubricated at the end of each shooting session.

Slide IV-6
Caring for
the Pistol

The pistol must always be checked to ensure it is unloaded before it is cleaned.

No ammunition should be present when a pistol is cleaned.

1. *Cleaning*

a. cleaning equipment

A proper firearm cleaning kit contains at minimum the following:

- Cleaning rod
- Bronze or nylon brush and jag of the proper size
- Bore solvent
- Cotton patches
- Small brush (for cleaning residue out of crevices)
- Soft cloth
- Gun oil

Slide IV-7
Cleaning
Equipment

b. cleaning procedure

Explain and demonstrate to the students the proper use of the components of a gun cleaning kit to properly clean a pistol. Show them how to use daylight, a bore scope, or a white piece of paper to visually examine the bore for remaining powder, lead or copper residue.

Slide IV-8
Gun
Cleaning
Procedure

c. cleaning practical exercise

Have the students demonstrate that they know and can perform each step of the cleaning procedure using the items in the cleaning kit.

Slide IV-9
Gun
Cleaning
Procedure
(cont'd)

Monitor the students' activities as they do the exercise, and make corrections as needed.

2. *Pistol repairs*

Emphasize to the students that pistol repairs should only be performed by the factory, or by a qualified and experienced gunsmith.

3. *Pistol storage*

Make the following points to the students in regard to pistol storage:

- Store guns and ammunition so that they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.
- Store guns and ammunition separately.
- Store guns and ammunition in a cool, dry place.

Slide IV-10
Pistol
Storage

Briefly describe some of the more common pistol storage devices such as pistol cases, lock boxes, gun safes, etc.

**E. Summarize
Presentation**

1. *Lesson summary*

Highlight the important points of the lesson:

- Properly score a pistol target
- Explain the basic guidelines for selecting and purchasing a pistol.
- Identify the materials needed to clean a pistol
- Demonstrate how to safely clean a pistol

Slide IV-11
Summary
and Review

2. *Question and
answer period*

Ask the students if they have any questions. Answer questions.

3. *Preview next
lesson*

Briefly preview the next lesson.

LESSON V Continued

Opportunities for Skill Development

Learning Objectives:

As a result of their participation in this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify several ways to pursue pistol shooting activities after the course.
 - Successfully complete the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course written examination.
-

Length: 1 hour

Facility: Classroom

Required Materials:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting* (one per student)
- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course examinations
- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course evaluations
- Pens or pencils
- Exam key
- BOPS PowerPoint Presentation

Optional Materials:

- NRA Member Services Guide (one per student)
- NRA membership applications (one per student)
- *NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program* booklet
- Other training aids as appropriate

References:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting* handbook

No live ammunition in the classroom!

Lesson Content	Instructional Notes
<p>A. Introduction</p>	<p>State the learning objectives for this lesson.</p>
<p>B. Maintaining Skills</p> <p>1. <i>NRA Pistol Marksmanship Qualification Program</i></p> <p>2. <i>Training Opportunities</i></p>	<p>Encourage students to participate in any of the numerous NRA activities that can enhance their skills.</p> <p>Describe the NRA Pistol Marksmanship Qualification Program. Explain that the program is a self-paced skill development program which allows shooters to earn awards while practicing by themselves or with others.</p> <p>Distribute <i>NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program</i> booklets.</p> <p>Describe the firearm training opportunities offered by the NRA. NRA courses are taught by thousands of Certified Trainers nationwide, and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Firearm Safety • Basic Pistol Shooting • Basic Rifle Shooting • Basic Shotgun Shooting • Basic Muzzleloading • Basic Metallic Cartridge Reloading • Basic Shotgun Shell Reloading • Personal Protection In The Home • Personal Protection Outside The Home • Range Safety Officer • Refuse To Be A Victim • NRA Coaching courses • Defensive Pistol <p>The NRA Training Department can put the students in touch with instructors in their area. The Training Department can also assist those students wishing to become instructors themselves.</p>

Slide V-1
Learning
Objectives

Slide V-2
NRA
Pistol
Marksmanship
Qualification
Program

Slide V-3
NRA
Training
Opportunities

3. *Competitive Shooting*

The NRA Competitive Shooting Division sanctions pistol shooting tournaments and leagues throughout the country. Each competitor, after firing a prescribed number of shots in NRA-sponsored matches, will receive a national classification card indicating their skill level.

Slide V-4
Competitive
Shooting

The NRA also publishes *Shooting Sports USA*, a digital magazine for competitive shooters that has articles on equipment and shooting techniques, as well as listings of NRA-sponsored matches throughout the country.

Students interested in competition should contact the NRA Competitive Shooting Division (listed in the Appendix of the *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting*).

4. *NRA Clubs*

Encourage students to join one of the thousands of clubs nationwide that are enrolled in or affiliated with the NRA.

Slide V-5
NRA
Clubs

For information on these clubs, have the students contact the Clubs and Associations Department (listed in the Appendix of the *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting*).

C. The NRA

The NRA developed this course. Note also that this course was conducted by instructors trained and certified by the NRA, part of a team of thousands of NRA Certified Instructors nationwide.

1. *Programs*

NRA programs include:

- NRA Basic Firearm Training Programs for every shooting discipline—rifle, pistol and shotgun
- NRA Instructor and Coach training
- Myriad youth programs and activities
- Competitive shooting programs
- Women’s programs
- Law enforcement training
- And much more!

Slide V-6
NRA
Programs

2. *History*

The NRA was established in 1871, originally to promote marksmanship training.

Slide V-7
NRA
History and
Goals

3. *Benefits of membership*

NRA's basic goals are to:

- Protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, especially in regard to the Second Amendment.
- Promote public safety, law and order, and the national defense.
- Train members of law enforcement agencies, the armed forces, and people of good repute in the safe handling and effective use of firearms.
- Foster and promote the shooting sports at local, state, regional, national and international levels.
- Promote hunter safety and proper wildlife management.

Note the following benefits of NRA membership:

- Subscription to *American Rifleman*, *American Hunter*, *America's 1st Freedom* magazines or Shooting Illustrated.
- *NRA Family* a digital magazine for junior shooters (under 18)
- Firearm and self-defense insurance.
- Discount programs for airline tickets, rental cars, hotels, etc.
- A watchful eye and a powerful voice in our nation's legislatures, at all levels of government.

Slide V-8
Benefits
of NRA
Member-
ship

Encourage students to join the NRA.

D. Course Review

Briefly review key points of the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course.

E. Examination

Administer the examination, which is conducted in an open-book manner. However, students may not ask other students or course graduates for answers. The minimum passing core for the student exam is 90 percent. Each student will have a maximum of five attempts to achieve a passing score.

Note to Instructors: Additional causes for failing a student would be the inability to meet learning objectives, poor attitude or the inability to learn safe gun handling. As an instructor, you must make a subjective judgment as to whether the student has gained the requisite *knowledge, skills and attitude* in order to receive a completion certificate.

F. Student Course Evaluation

Distribute course evaluations and ask your students to complete and return them to you. Explain that these evaluations are valuable in improving the course and the performance of the instructors.

G. Complete PRC, Report Class and Award Completion Certificates

Instructors should provide a signed copy of the Performance Requirements Checklist to the student and keep a copy for their own records.

Slide V-9
Summary
and
Review

Report classes at www.nrainstructors.org. Ensure that test scores are entered with the report. After successfully reporting the class, print certificates from the report page and distribute to students. (See users guide at nrainstructors.org for assistance or contact your Training Counselor.

H. Closing Comments

Special thanks should go to the NRA Foundation and its generous donors for helping make this course possible.

Thank the students for their participation in your course and for displaying the proper attitude by seeking training.

Slide V-10
Dismissal

Encourage the students to continue their education, training, and participation in the shooting sports, and to introduce others to the shooting sports as well, so that they may continue the American tradition of safe and responsible gun ownership.

I. Dismissal

Dismiss the class.

APPENDIX 1

LESSON VI

One-Handed Standing Shooting Position

Learning Objectives:

As a result of their participation in this lesson, students will be able to:

- Safely demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to assume the one-handed standing shooting position.
 - Safely shoot a pistol from the one-handed standing shooting position, using the fundamentals of pistol shooting, at a target on a range.
-
-

Length: 1 hour

Facility: Range

Required Materials:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook*
- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Wall Charts or BOPS PowerPoint Presentation
- Eye protection
- Hearing protection
- Firearms appropriate to platform being taught (semi-auto/revolver)
- Sufficient ammunition per student to complete instruction (suggest 200 rounds of factory ammunition. Objectives could be met with less or it could take more)
- Targets
- Other training aids as appropriate

References:

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook*

Lesson Content

A. Lesson Introduction

B. Review of Safety Rules and Range Commands

C. One-Handed Standing Shooting Position

1. *Study the position*

2. *Practice the position without a pistol*

3. *Practice the position with the pistol*

4. *Align position with target*

5. *Dry-fire the pistol at the target*

Instructional Notes

State the learning objectives for this lesson.

Review NRA Rules of Safe Gun Handling, range safety rules, hygiene guidelines and range commands presented in Lesson III, as needed.

The one-handed standing position is more difficult than two-handed positions, but can be mastered with practice. The one-handed standing position is used in some pistol competitions because it is more challenging.

Demonstrate the proper one-handed grip and the one-handed standing position as described in the *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting*.

Have the students focus on attaining a proper body position before adding the handgun.

Check for the following:

- Proper one-handed grip
- Feet shoulder width apart with body weight evenly distributed
- Body and head comfortably erect
- shooting arm fully extended with wrist and elbow locked
- Non-shooting hand relaxed in a pocket or comfortably hooked in the belt or waistband
- Pistol raised to eye level
- Shooter relaxed and comfortable

Students should be positioned so that their pistols naturally point at the target center. Use the NAA exercise in the *NRA Guide to the Basics of Pistol Shooting*.

Have students dry-fire their pistols at the target while applying the fundamentals:

- Aiming
- Hold control
- Breath control

Slide VI-1
Learning
Objective

Slide VI-2
Elements of
One-
Handed
Standing
Shooting
Position

- Trigger control
- Follow-through

Students should concentrate on sight alignment, focusing on the front sight, and p r e s s i n g the trigger without disturbing the sights. Students must be able to execute the fundamentals of shooting during dry-firing before they can progress to live ammunition.

6. *Shoot at targets using live ammunition*

Ensure that everyone on the range has eye and hearing protection.

Note: Students with double-action revolvers should cock the hammer before each shot, if possible.

a. single-shot exercise

Have students load and fire, one cartridge at a time. Have them fire five times at a blank target. Using the coach/pupil method, have coaches evaluate the shooters. Perform this exercise at least twice, for a total of 10 shots.

b. five-shot exercise

Have the students load five cartridges and fire at a blank target, at their own pace, to achieve a shot group. All shots should be on the target. Be sure the students rest between each shot.

Have the coaches evaluate the shooters after this five-shot string. Repeat the exercise until you are satisfied with the students' performance.

D. Evaluation of Shooting Practice

Lead students in a discussion of the shooting exercises. With each student, focus on the positive aspects (what the student did right).

E. Coach Program

Students wishing to refine the one-handed standing shooting position, and/or take part in pistol competition, should contact the NRA Coach Program.

F. Summarize Presentation

1. *Lesson summary*

Highlight the most important points of the lesson:

- Safely demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to assume the one-handed standing shooting position
- Safely shoot a pistol from the one-handed standing shooting position, using the fundamentals of pistol shooting at a target on a range

2. *Question and answer period*

Ask the students if they have any questions. Answer questions.

G. Dismissal

Dismiss the class.

Slide VI-3
Summary
and Review

APPENDIX 2

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF PISTOL SHOOTING

INTRODUCTION: This detailed outline is provided as a study reference to assist you in your preparations to teach the fundamentals of pistol shooting.

I. Importance of a Fundamental

- A. What does “fundamental” mean? What is a fundamental?
1. “Fundamental” has a number of meanings:
 - a. basic; elemental
 - b. necessary; indispensable
 - c. primary; principal; most important
 - d. central; key
 - e. of or relating to essential structure, function or facts
 2. In terms of pistol shooting, a “fundamental” is an essential skill, technique or principle that provides the foundation for effective shooting.
- B. Why are fundamentals so important in sports? What role do they serve?
1. They are the elementary skills necessary to the beginner for “initial success” in the early stages of skills development.
 2. They are the basic skills that form the foundation of a sport activity.
 3. They are the basic skills that can be built upon to meet the specific skill requirements of a sport.
 4. They are forever essential in providing a sound foundation for progressively improving the performance of a sport skill from beginner to world champion.

II. Eye Dominance

Determining which eye is dominant will tell the shooter which eye should be used to aim the pistol. This information, in turn, usually also indicates which hand should be used to hold the pistol.

For most shooters, the dominant eye and dominant hand are on the same side. A minority of individuals experience cross-dominance, in which the dominant eye and dominant hand are on opposite sides. Such shooters should aim the pistol using the dominant eye, and learn to hold the gun with the non-dominant hand. If this is not possible, the shooter can cant the gun in order to aim with the dominant eye.

Establishing eye dominance needs to be done before teaching the pistol shooting fundamentals. Have the students use the following exercise to determine their dominant eye.

A. Skills Learned

1. Establish dominant eye to determine which eye should be used to aim the pistol, and which hand should be used to hold the pistol.
2. The student learns how to determine the dominant eye.

B. Exercise

1. Extend the hands at arm's length in front of the face. Bring the hands together, leaving a small opening between them, and, keeping both eyes open, look at a distant object through this opening. Focus the eyes on the object as the hands are brought slowly to the face. As the hands reach the face, the eye that is used to view the object is the dominant eye.
2. If the right eye is dominant, the pistol should be aimed with the right eye and held in the right hand, if possible. If the left eye is dominant, the pistol should be aimed with the left eye and held in the left hand, if possible.

C. Instructional Points:

1. Repeat the exercise several times to check for consistency of results.
2. Have the students extend their hands at arm's length, and then bring their hands together, leaving a small hole between them. Then have the students look through the hole at the bridge of your nose. This will allow you to validate the identity of the dominant eye.

3. However, for cross-dominant shooters, there is nothing wrong with holding the pistol in the dominant hand in front of the dominant eye.
4. As with most any exercise, there may be exceptions to the rule, but this exercise will reliably establish the dominant eye in the majority of cases.
5. Do not give the students medical or optometric advice regarding their dominant or non-dominant eyes. Don't attempt to be an eye doctor unless you are one!

III. Pistol Shooting Foundations

A. Shooting Position

1. Not a shooting fundamental, but the platform from which the fundamentals are executed.
2. A *shooting position* is the position of the shooter's body and gun in relationship to the target. The suggested teaching order in this course is the two-handed grip in the benchrest position and then the two-handed grip in the standing position.
3. Elements of a shooting position
 - a. A shooting position should be *comfortable*. This can be achieved through stretching exercises and by practicing the position.
 - b. A shooting position should be *balanced*, putting the body's center of balance over the supported points of the position. An erect head position is key, contributing to balance and also permitting the shooter to sight through the center of the lens of the eye. This, in turn, avoids distortions in the sight picture caused by looking through the eyelashes.
 - c. A shooting position should be *consistent and relaxed*.
 - d. A shooting position should be *aligned with the target*. A good position must provide a steady natural aiming area (NAA). The entire body position must be shifted to align the NAA with the target. After firing, the pistol will tend to return to the NAA.
 - e. *NAA exercise*. To establish NAA, the shooter should take his or her unloaded pistol and acquire the shooting position in relationship to a

target. The shooter should then close his or her eyes and allow the body to settle naturally into the position. The shooter then opens the eyes and determines where the gun is pointing in relation to the target. If the gun is pointing slightly to the right or left, the body is shifted to bring it naturally into target alignment.

5. Benchrest position

The benchrest position is the most stable pistol shooting position, and should be the position learned first by new pistol shooters. Its stability also makes it useful even for experienced pistol shooters during accuracy testing and sight zeroing.

To assume the benchrest position:

- a. Sit behind the bench or table facing the target, with both feet squarely on the ground.
- b. Extend both arms fully forward toward the target, with the pistol held in a proper two-hand grip.
- c. The back should be straight or leaning slightly forward.
- d. Rest both wrists on sandbags or other suitable support. Do not allow the gun to touch the support.
- e. Keep the head erect. If necessary, increase the height of the sandbag or other support to raise the pistol to eye level, which allows an erect head position.

6. Two-handed standing shooting position

The two-handed standing shooting position is probably the most versatile offhand shooting position, being useful for self-defense, competition and general recreational shooting.

To assume the two-handed standing shooting position:

- a. Stand facing the target with the shoulders and feet square to the target. The body weight should be equally distributed through both feet.
- b. Extend both arms fully forward toward the target, with the pistol held in a proper two-hand grip.
- c. Raise the pistol so that sights are at eye level. It is important to have the head erect and vertical, not canted to one side.

- d. Lean forward slightly, on the balls of the feet, so that the body can absorb recoil. Avoid leaning backward.

B. Grip

Grip refers to the manner in which the pistol is held in the hand. A proper and consistent grip is essential to accurate shooting. A *two-handed grip* is taught in this course. Together, grip and position are the foundations that allow proper execution of the shooting fundamentals.

To assume a proper two-handed grip:

1. While keeping the gun pointed in a safe direction, and with the index finger off the trigger, use the non-shooting hand (“support hand”) to place the pistol in the shooting hand (“dominant hand”).
2. Fit the “V” formed by the thumb and index finger of the shooting hand as high as possible on the pistol backstrap.
3. Grip the pistol using the base of the thumb and the lower three fingers of the shooting hand. The pressure of the grip should be directed straight to the rear.
4. With the pressure of the grip applied at the “V” of the thumb and forefinger, wrap the lower three fingers naturally around the grip. This isolates the trigger finger from the grip, allowing better trigger control and less gun movement when the trigger is pressed.
5. Hold the pistol firmly, but without exerting so much pressure that the hand shakes.
6. Keep the index finger off the trigger. It should lie along the side of the frame, outside of the trigger guard.
7. The thumb should rest relaxed on the other side of the frame.
8. Place the heel of the support hand against the heel of the shooting hand. With a revolver, place the thumb of the non-shooting hand on the thumb of the shooting hand, and firmly wrap the fingers of the non-shooting hand around the fingers of the shooting hand. With a semi-automatic pistol, place the support-hand thumb forward of and below the shooting-hand thumb before wrapping the fingers of the support-hand around the fingers of the shooting-hand.

With students using semiautomatic pistols, be sure their thumbs are

out of the path of the recoiling slide.

Emphasize that uniformity is the most important aspect of the grip. The shooter should grip the pistol the same way every time.

IV. Pistol Shooting Fundamentals

A. Aiming

Aiming is the process of putting the gun's sights into proper relationship with each other and with the target. Aiming is composed of two elements: *sight alignment* and *sight picture*.

1. *Sight alignment* is the visual relationship between the eye and the front and rear sights. In correct sight alignment the front sight will be viewed as centered in the notch of the rear sight with the top of both sights on the same level.
2. *Sight picture* is the visual relationship of the eye, the aligned sights and the target. The aiming point may be the spot where the shooter wants the bullets to strike (center hold) or it may be another spot where sight alignment can be more precisely seen (such as a 6 o'clock hold). In the latter case, the sights are adjusted such that the shot will strike the desired location rather than the actual aiming point.
3. To achieve correct sight alignment and sight picture, it is imperative that the shooter focus on the front sight. The appearance of the rear sight will be less sharp, and the target will likely be blurred.
4. Proper sight alignment is more critical to accuracy than a proper sight picture. Even a slight error in sight alignment can cause an inaccurate shot. On the other hand, a similar error in sight picture, if sight alignment is correct, may still produce an acceptable shot.

B. Hold Control

Hold control refers to the ability of the shooter to maintain the proper sight picture and sight alignment during the process of firing the shot.

1. It is impossible to hold the pistol in a shooting position without some circular or oval motion of the sights; this is called the "arc of movement." If no errors in executing the shooting fundamentals are committed, each shot will strike within the shooter's arc of movement. With practice, the shooter will develop the muscles and coordination used in holding the pistol steady, and the arc of movement will decrease. Beginning shooters should be encouraged to accept their arc of movement and execute the fundamentals to the best of their ability.

2. A proper grip assists the pistol shooter to fire the shot without disturbing sight alignment, and thus is an essential factor in hold control. A good grip also enables the shooter to quickly re-establish the correct sight picture for subsequent shots.
 - a. The handbook describes ways to initially establish both the two-handed and one-handed grip. Some adjustments in grip may be required to accommodate the individual shooter's hand size, finger length and hand strength. If the shooter cannot dry-fire the pistol without disturbing sight alignment, grip adjustments should be made until correct sight alignment can be maintained while dry-firing.
 - b. *Consistency* is the most important element in establishing the grip. Once the shooter determines the optimum grip, it should be practiced until it can reliably be repeated, shot after shot.
3. *Natural Aiming Area* (NAA) refers to the individual, instinctive alignment of the shooter, gun and target in a specific stance. The NAA is achieved when the stance feels most balanced and comfortable to the shooter, and the pistol is in close alignment with the target. An exercise for determining an individual's NAA is described in the *NRA Guide to the Basics of Pistol Shooting*. Ensuring the students are able to establish and consistently repeat their NAA will enhance their ability to master hold control quickly.

C. Breath Control

Body movement while breathing can produce gun movement which impairs shooting. *Breath control* enables the shooter to hold the pistol steady and maintain proper sight picture.

1. To minimize body movement, breathing must stop while firing a shot
2. The shooter should breathe normally while settling into position. Before each shot, the shooter should take a breath, let enough air out to be comfortable, and hold the remaining breath while firing the shot.
3. If the shot isn't fired within 5 to 8 seconds after breathing is interrupted, oxygen depletion may cause muscle tremors and/or blurred vision, resulting in a poor shot. If this period of time elapses without a shot being fired, the index finger should be removed from the trigger, the gun should be lowered (while continuing to be pointed in a safe direction), and the shooter should relax, take a few breaths, and then begin the firing cycle again. Instructors should be attentive to a student's reaction to delayed shots, and have them rest and restart the shot process as needed.

D. Trigger Control

Trigger control describes the process of pressing the trigger without disturbing the sight picture. This is generally accomplished using a gradual trigger press that produces a surprise trigger break. The grip and placement of the trigger finger on the trigger may need adjustment to accomplish the correct trigger press.

1. The trigger finger pressure on the trigger should be directly rearward, and should be continuous and uninterrupted until the shot is fired.
2. Instructors should be watchful that the new shooter with a large arc of movement does not attempt to jerk the trigger at the instant when a correct sight picture may fleetingly appear. Ball-and-dummy exercises (A3-3) will usually reveal trigger jerking. Be sure your corrective instruction is positive. Tell the students to “press the trigger steadily” rather than “don’t jerk the trigger.”

E. Follow-Through

Follow-through is an important aspect of many physical skills, such as sports. In general, follow-through involves the continuation of an action, with proper technique, through and beyond the completion of the action. For example, in swinging a golf club, follow-through means that the club is swung through and past contact with the golf ball while maintaining proper grip, balance, head and body position and so forth.

1. In pistol shooting, follow-through means to maintain position, and continue aiming, hold control, breath control, and trigger control for one or two seconds after the shot is fired. Follow-through ensures that the shooter will integrate and continue all shooting fundamentals before, during and immediately after the shot is fired.
2. When the mind causes the trigger finger to activate the trigger, trigger movement causes the firing pin to go forward and hit the primer, which in turn creates a spark which ignites the powder charge. This produces a volume of high-pressure gas which propels the bullet down the bore. The mind simply cannot calculate the precise moment when this process is complete and the bullet is on its way to the target. In order to ensure that all fundamentals are actually applied at the moment the shot is fired, the shooter must employ follow-through, consciously continuing the fundamentals even after the bullet has left the barrel.
3. A shooter exercising proper follow-through should be able to “call the shot.” This means that the shooter is so focused on sight alignment and sight picture that he or she can report, with reasonable accuracy, where the pistol was pointing at the moment the shot was fired. The practice of calling the shot will aid the shooter in maintaining concentration on the front sight.

V. Teaching Basic Shooting Positions

Only after the student has learned the fundamentals involved in firing a shot in the benchrest position is it appropriate to introduce the standing two-handed position. The two-handed standing shooting position taught in the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course is the *isosceles position*, so called because the shooter's arms form an isosceles triangle when viewed from above. There are a number of other two-handed standing shooting positions, including the Weaver, modified Weaver, and modified isosceles.

APPENDIX 3

PISTOL SHOOTING SKILLS

INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD

INTRODUCTION: This detailed outline is provided as a study reference to assist you in your preparations for Lesson III, “Firing the First Shots,” in the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course.

I. Method Objectives

- A. To expose the beginning shooter to a successful shooting experience.
- B. To instill confidence in the beginner’s ability to hit a target on his or her first attempt by properly using the fundamentals of pistol shooting.

II. Method Preparation Requirements

- A. Number of participants per instructor. The instructor’s experience, the physical size and mental maturity of the participants, and the limitations of the range facility are all factors that will determine the instructor/participant ratio. It is important that you know your capabilities and limitations and always work within them. Ideally, an instructor will be at each firing point.
- B. Equipment/materials:
 - 1. Range: one or more firing points
 - 2. Targets: 5 targets per shooter
 - 3. Firearms:
 - a. One pistol for each two shooters for dry-firing exercises. If not possible, run the exercises in relays.
 - b. One pistol for each firing point
 - 4. Ammunition: suggest 200 rounds of factory ammunition, objectives could be met with a bare minimum of 40 rounds if the benchrest portion is conducted in the classroom with a simulator. The vast majority of students will require more than the minimum.
 - 5. Accessories:
 - a. Hearing protection for each shooter and instructor

- b. Eye protection for each shooter and instructor
- C. Operational Considerations for Group Exercises:
- 1. A shooting line must be marked on the ground to maintain safety, group control and position during group exercises (tape or baby powder are good for marking lines)
 - 2. The instructor should position themselves so all shooters can hear or see instructions:
 - a. Without firearms: in front of the class, at the end of the firing line or at the center of the group
 - b. With firearms: in the rear of the class, at the end of the firing line, or at the center of the group
- D. Things To Help Your Students Concentrate
- You should do everything possible to enhance your students' learning and concentration on hitting the first target. Listed below are a few suggestions:
- 1. Small caliber—less recoil
 - 2. Proper gun fit—grip not too large or small
 - 3. Proper gun weight—not too heavy
 - 4. Shorter barrel—not muzzle-heavy
 - 5. Safety off—instructor check
 - 6. Gun functional and mechanism clean
 - 7. Reliable ammunition of good make and proper caliber
 - 8. Target should be close
 - 9. Target should be large
 - 10. Target background—clear
 - 11. Range should be well-lit
 - 12. Range should have little or no wind

13. Range should have little or no background noise
14. Clothing—shooters should wear light shirts or jackets closed in front
15. Do not over-instruct
16. Keep extraneous spectators to a minimum
17. Don't introduce or discuss competitive shooting until the students can hit the target

E. Instructional Techniques Used

1. Coach/Pupil method—Two students are paired as a team, one as the shooter/pupil, and the other as the coach. The roles are reversed upon the direction of the instructor.
 - a. Provides for increased attention to safety
 - b. Makes productive use of non-shooting time of students
 - c. Allows for productive exchange of information on the skill
 - d. Improves performance
 - e. Increases learning
2. Dry-Firing—practicing the fundamentals of firing a shot with an unloaded gun. A dummy round may be used or the hammer/firing pin may be dropped on an empty chamber. For .22 rimfire, insert a fired case to protect the firing pin.
 - a. Allows shooter to focus attention on the fundamentals rather than the results of a shot.
 - b. Allows refinement of skills before attempting live firing, thus greatly increasing the likelihood for success.
 - c. Assists instructor in analyzing skill performance.
3. Ball and Dummy Method—This is a combination of live and dry-firing used at the discretion of the instructor. The gun is loaded with a combination of live cartridges and dummy rounds. Loading of the gun is done by the instructor, out of sight of the student, so that the student does not know when he or she might be pressing the trigger on a live cartridge or a dummy round. This allows

the instructor and shooter to readily recognize errors in shooting fundamentals, especially trigger jerking, anticipation, flinching, etc.

- a. Allows shooter and instructor to analyze execution of fundamentals under circumstances that simulate live fire for the student
- b. Allows reinforcement of correct skills execution

III. Instructional Method

A. Points to be reviewed with class before beginning shooting exercises:

1. Range layout and operation orientation
2. Positions and movement of people on and around the range
3. Range commands or signals to be used
4. Pay attention to instructors at all times
5. Firearms handling and shooting rules—at all times, firearms are to be carried on the range either with the muzzle pointed in the safest direction, or cased, as appropriate
6. Special procedures concerning firearms and ammunition during exercises. Instructor(s) should supervise ammunition before, during and after session.
7. Reconfirm eye dominance of shooters.
8. Other points as may be appropriate to the situation.

B. Exercises applicable to all positions:

1. Exercise One: Practicing the fundamentals using the coach/pupil method
 - a. Coach/pupil assignment—have students count off by twos and pair off, ones being “pupils” and twos being “student-coaches.”
 - b. Have students put on eye and hearing protection
 - c. Have “pupils” step up to the line at arm’s length (at least) apart with the “student-coach” immediately to the rear.
 - d. Stress the absolute importance of paying attention to, and immediately following, the directions of the instructor

- e. Re-emphasize the rules of safe firearms handling:
 - (1) Keep the gun pointed in a safe direction at all times. During the practicing of the fundamentals, pistols are to be pointed downrange. At all other times, they are to be held or carried with the muzzle pointed in the safest direction.
 - (2) Keep the finger off the trigger at all times, except when directed otherwise by the instructor.
 - (3) Keep the action open at all times, and the pistol unloaded, except when directed to load the pistol and close the action by the instructor. Now is the time to ingrain in the students the habit of frequently checking the action, magazine and chamber of a gun to ensure it is unloaded.
 - f. Remind shooters that their dominant eye determines which eye they will use to aim the pistol, and which hand should be used to hold it, if possible.
 - (1) Right-eye dominant—hold pistol in right hand
 - (2) Left-eye dominant—hold pistol in left hand
 - (3) Cross-dominant shooters can simply raise the gun to their dominant eye for aiming.
 - g. Stress the importance of staying in position and on the line
 - h. On command, have student-coaches get a pistol and return to the firing line behind their pupil.
 - i. Per your directions, have each coach/pupil pair practice the fundamentals at their own pace.
 - (1) The student-coach checks the shooter's pistol shooting fundamentals
 - (2) The student-coach should hold the pistol or it should be placed on the bench/table when the pupil is not actually practicing the fundamentals, to avoid tiring the pupil.
2. Exercise Two—Shooters dry-fire at the target using the pistol. Instruct each pair of shooters from the rear of the line as needed.
- a. Skills learned:
 - (1) How to open and close the pistol's action.

- (2) The benchrest shooting position.
 - (3) Aiming.
 - (4) Hold control.
 - (5) Breath control.
 - (6) Trigger control.
 - (7) Follow-through.
- b. Exercise preparation:
- (1) Explain exercise to class.
 - (a) Pistol action to be closed by pupil only on command of the instructor
 - (b) Action to be opened immediately by pupil each time upon completion of dry-firing.
 - (2) Review proper procedures for opening and closing the pistol action. Let students practice before starting exercise.
 - (a) Stress muzzle control and awareness.
 - (b) Stress keeping the finger off the trigger, except when in position and ready to shoot.
 - (3) Continue same coach/pupil assignments, with students exchanging roles
- c. Exercise:
- (1) Position shooters on line with student-coaches to the rear holding the pistol, or place pistol on bench/table.
 - (2) On command from the instructor, student-coaches hand the pistol to the pupil, who closes the action and attains a proper benchrest position and grip.
 - (3) The instructor then gives the “commence firing” command. The shooter aims and presses the trigger.
 - (4) Shooter then opens the action of the pistol.

- (5) Repeat and allow discussion as necessary to improve skills.
- (6) Have student-coaches and pupils exchange roles.
- (7) Repeat c. (1) through c. (5), above.
- (8) Student-coaches should return the pistol to the bench/table when the exercise is finished.

d. Instructional points:

- (1) Check ability to properly close and open action in a safe manner.
- (2) Be sure shooter opens action immediately upon completion of dry firing.

3. Exercise Three—individual shooters participate with the class instructor (one-on-one) in ball-and-dummy exercises.

a. Skills learned:

- (1) Reinforce safe handling and shooting under live-firing conditions.
- (2) To shoot at own initiative and pace.
- (3) To load and unload live ammunition from the pistol .
- (4) To shoot at a target using the fundamentals of pistol shooting.

b. Exercise preparation

- (1) Explain exercise's purpose and how it works to class.
- (2) Stress and review importance of gun handling, shooting rules, and related exercise procedures.
- (3) Demonstrate the proper procedures for loading and unloading ammunition for the pistol used.
- (4) Have instructors and students put on eye and hearing protection.

c. Exercise:

- (1) The instructor loads the pistol with live cartridges and dummy rounds, with the shooter looking in the other direction as loading takes place so as not to see the loading process. The instructor then closes the action.
- (2) On command, the shooter aims, fires and follows through.
- (3) The shooter checks to see if the action is open and, if not, opens it.
- (4) Repeat the ball-and-dummy exercise as necessary.
- (5) Upon completion of the ball-and-dummy exercise, allow the shooters to fire the remaining rounds on their own.
 - (a) With the shooter holding the pistol, give the shooter one cartridge and supervise loading of the pistol.
 - (b) Allow the shooter to shoot the target at his or her own pace.
 - (c) Repeat the process until all five cartridges are fired.
- (6) If the shooter is executing the fundamentals correctly, normally the first two or three initial attempts should be dummy rounds with a live cartridge to follow. This allows the instructor to prepare the shooter for success with the first live cartridge, gives the shooter time to settle down, allows him or her to see and correct minor problems (usually flinching), and promotes shooter familiarity with shooting from the firing point independently.
- (7) After the first round is fired, be very supportive, whether the shot is a hit or miss. Give one to three more dummy rounds as appropriate before providing the second live round.
- (8) If the first two live shots result in hits, allow the shooter to fire the remaining three shots on his or her own initiative under supervision. If the shooter has missed any targets with the first two live cartridges, continue the ball-and-dummy exercise through the third live cartridge. Thereafter allow the shooter to fire the remaining shots, loading and firing at his own initiative.

d. Instructional Points:

- (1) Work with only one shooter at a time.
- (2) Pay special attention to the muzzle direction at all times during the exercise.

- (3) When handing the pistol to the shooter, cup your hand around the trigger guard to ensure safety and to train new shooters to keep their trigger fingers off the trigger upon receiving the pistol
- (4) Instructors and student-coaches conducting the exercise should be the only ones handling ammunition and the pistol except the shooter participating under supervision.
- (5) On the first attempt, if students experience great difficulty in executing the fundamentals because of live firing, continue the use of dummy rounds, up to five times. *Using any more than five dummy rounds may only increase the anxiety level and begin to tire the shooter.* If problems still persist, the instructor has two options:
 - (a) Allow the shooter to fire one cartridge. In some cases, the anxiety of the first shot may be the only problem. Firing even one shot, though the chance for success may be minimal, is necessary to get him or her “over the hump.”
 - (b) Shooters with consistently severe problems that will clearly cause them to miss the target should be returned to dry-firing until the problems are resolved.
 - (c) Knowing when to use which option will come with experience
- (6) Make the exercise fun and enjoyable for the shooter. Be enthusiastic and encouraging. Remember, it can be every intimidating performing a skill for the first time in front of peers.
- (7) Keep the exercise moving. Beginners tire quickly and the rest of the group will be anxious for their turn.
- (8) Keep instruction limited to only that which is necessary to produce a target hit (success). Too much instruction at the beginning destroys the ability to concentrate and creates frustration.
- (9) If possible, have qualified assistant instructors conduct the exercise for other shooters on other firing points.
- (10) Provide supervision for the rest of the class while working with shooters. Keep their attention and involvement.

APPENDIX 4

Instructor Led Training: Performance Requirements Checklist

A. INFORMATION

Student copy

Instructor copy

STUDENT INFORMATION					
Last Name		First Name		Date	
Street Address			Apartment/Unit #		
City		State		ZIP	
Phone		Work Phone			
E-mail Address					

SIGNATURE				
Date Started		Date Completed		
Certification Earned	Level 1: Red <input type="checkbox"/>	Level 2: White <input type="checkbox"/>	Level 3: Blue <input type="checkbox"/>	Level 4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Student Signature		NRA No.		Date
Instructor Signature		NRA No.		Date

B. CHECKLIST

In order to receive certifications, instructors must witness students performing the following requirements for each exercise and add a signature or initial to each line. It is up to the instructor's discretion on the total number of attempts and the number of successful attempts required to meet requirements.

Note: Exercise requirements may vary based on availability of materials, class size, and available locations. Add non-applicable (N/A) in place of the signature for activities that are not required for certification.

SAFETY EXERCISE				
Requirement	Notes	Date	Instructor Initials	Student Initials
GUN HANDLING SAFETY				
1. Independent handling exercise				
a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				
2. Pistol exchanging exercise				

SAFETY EXERCISE

Requirement	Notes	Date	Instructor Initials	Student Initials
a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				

FUNDAMENTALS

Requirement	Notes	Date	Instructor Initials	Student Initials
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EYE DOMINANCE

Student determined eye dominance.

- Right Non-Dominant
 Left

TWO-HANDED GRIP

1. Student assumed the proper two-handed grip:

a. With a semi-automatic				
b. With a revolver				

2. Student followed safety rules throughout the exercise:

a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				

FIVE FUNDAMENTALS OF PISTOL SHOOTING

1. Student demonstrated the five fundamentals of pistol shooting:

a. Aiming				
b. Breath control				
c. Hold control				
d. Trigger control				
e. Follow through				

2. Student followed safety rules throughout the exercise:

a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				

LOADING, COCKING, DE-COCKING, UNLOADING, AND PISTOL MAINTENANCE

Requirement	Notes	Date	Instructor Initials	Student Initials
1. Student properly loaded, cocked, de-cocked, and unloaded:				
a. A single-action revolver				
b. A double-action revolver				
c. A semi-automatic pistol				
2. Student followed safety rules throughout the exercise:				
a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				
2. Student understands how to safely clean a pistol.				
a. Inspect.				
b. Oil.				
c. Clean.				

SHOOTING POSITIONS AND SHOOTING QUALIFICATION

Requirement	Notes	Date	Instructor Initials	Student Initials
1. Student demonstrated the learning steps to shoot from the:				
a. Benchrest position				
b. Isosceles position				
3. Student followed safety rules throughout the exercise:				
a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				
4. Shooting qualification:				
<p>After completion of Exercise IV, add the completion date and your signature to the first page of this Performance Requirements Checklist.</p> <p>Students are now ready to complete the shooting qualification. Print the targets provided. Students must earn a minimum of Level 1: Red level certification to pass the course and receive certification.</p>				

APPENDIX 5A

NRA BASIC PISTOL SHOOTING COURSE

STUDENT EXAMINATION

Name _____ Date _____ Grade _____

DIRECTIONS: Please select the *best* answer for each of the following multiple-choice and true-false questions. The questions in this examination are based on *The NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting*.

1. The three major components of a pistol are:
 - a. barrel, action and grip
 - b. frame, barrel and action
 - c. barrel, frame and hammer
 - d. cylinder, frame and barrel

2. Your finger may contact the trigger:
 - a. when drawing from the holster.
 - b. when you are ready to shoot.
 - c. when gripping the pistol.
 - d. when it is unloaded.

3. The *trigger mechanism*:
 - a. releases a spring-powered hammer or striker to fire the cartridge.
 - b. the part of a firearm in which a cartridge is contained at the instant of firing.
 - c. the end of the barrel where the chamber is located.
 - d. another term for the slide on a semi-automatic pistol.

4. Aiming consists of:
 - a. grip and position.
 - b. sight alignment and sight picture.
 - c. breath control and aiming.
 - d. trigger control and follow-through.

5. When aiming a pistol, the eye can only focus on one object at a time; therefore, you should focus on the _____ so that it appears clear and sharp.
 - a. rear sight
 - b. target
 - c. front sight
 - d. bullseye

6. To ensure you use the correct ammunition for your gun:
 - a. check the information stamped on the barrel and/or slide.
 - b. check your owner's manual.
 - c. check the cartridge box and cartridge headstamp.
 - d. all of the above.

7. When a cartridge fails to fire immediately, you should:
 - a. put the safety on and put the pistol down.
 - b. keep the pistol pointed in a safe direction and, after waiting at least 30 seconds (as a precaution in case of a hangfire), open the action and remove the cartridge.
 - c. open the action immediately and inspect the cartridge to determine the malfunction.
 - d. none of the above.

8. When gripping the pistol, you should:
 - a. use the same grip each time that you hold the pistol.
 - b. change your grip when going from short-range to long-range targets.
 - c. slowly increase your grip pressure when you begin pulling the trigger.
 - d. hold the pistol as loosely as possible to prevent muscle tremors.

9. *Follow-through* is important because:
 - a. it integrates, maintains and continues all shooting fundamentals before, during and immediately after firing the shot.
 - b. it helps maintain your grip.
 - c. it keeps the gun from recoiling excessively.
 - d. none of the above.

10. The frame of a pistol is:
 - a. made of wood or metal.
 - b. is pulled to release the hammer.
 - c. is the central component of most pistols.
 - d. none of the above.

11. The four components of a pistol cartridge are:
 - a. primer, wad, case and bullet.
 - b. hull, shot, slug and primer.
 - c. bullet, hull, powder and wad.
 - d. case, primer, powder charge and bullet.

12. Some of the benefits of the Isosceles Position are:
 - a. gives considerable support to the firearm.
 - b. it is natural and easy to assume.
 - c. enhances recoil absorption.
 - d. gives excellent mobility.

13. *Double-action* refers to the type of action:
 - a. in which pulling the trigger performs two tasks: cocking and releasing the hammer.
 - b. found only on revolvers.
 - c. found only on semi-automatic pistols.
 - d. none of the above.

14. Before cleaning a pistol, be sure that:
 - a. the pistol is unloaded.
 - b. The pistol is disassembled according to instructions in owner's manual.
 - c. no ammunition is present in the area.
 - d. all of the above.

15. A _____ occurs when a cartridge fails to fire after the primer has been struck by the firing pin.
 - a. hangfire
 - b. dry-fire
 - c. squib load
 - d. misfire

16. The *safety* on a pistol is:
 - a. a mechanical device, and can fail.
 - b. never fails.
 - c. is found only on revolvers.
 - d. none of the above

17. When shooting, you should hold your breath because:
 - a. it minimizes body movement.
 - b. it enhances concentration.
 - c. it eliminates muscle tremors.
 - d. all of the above.

18. Dry-firing:
 - a. occurs when the cartridge fails to fire after the firing pin strikes the primer.
 - b. is a long delay in the ignition of a cartridge after the firing pin strikes the primer.
 - c. involves practicing every phase of the firing process using an *unloaded* firearm.
 - d. is the firing of live ammunition at tin cans and other similar targets.

19. The basic rule for sight adjustment is:
- move the rear sight in the opposite direction that you want hits on the target to move.
 - move the front sight in the same direction that you want hits on the target to move.
 - move the rear sight in the same direction that you want hits on the target to move.
 - none of the above.
20. Trigger control when shooting refers to:
- pulling the trigger when the arc of movement has been eliminated.
 - the technique of pulling the trigger without causing any movement of the aligned sights.
 - both a and b.
 - none of the above.

TRUE OR FALSE QUESTIONS

21. T F As the gun powder burns, it creates high-pressure gas that begins to push the bullet down the bore.
22. T F Consistency, balance, support, natural aiming area, and comfort are elements of a good shooting position.
23. T F Proper sight alignment is having the front sight even with the top of the rear sight, and the front sight centered in the notch of the rear sight so that there is an equal amount of space on each side of the front sight.
24. T F A squib load develops less than normal pressure or velocity after ignition of the cartridge powder charge.
25. T F A gun that is properly maintained will function more reliably, shoot more accurately and last longer.
26. T F **ALWAYS** keep your gun pointed in a safe direction.
27. T F The safety on a pistol is a mechanical device that can fail.
28. T F Pistols should be stored so that they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.

- 29. T F A misfire is a perceptible delay in the ignition of a cartridge after the primer has been struck by the firing pin.
- 30. T F Most pistol cartridges can be fired from any handgun.
- 31. T F Both ear and eye protection are highly recommended whenever you are firing live ammunition..
- 32. T F Cartridges loaded to lower pressures than standard ammunition are known as “+P” cartridges.
- 33. T F You should always bury unserviceable ammunition.
- 34. T F You should always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- 35. T F Grip consistency is essential for accurate shooting.
- 36. T F Ammunition should not be present when cleaning a pistol.
- 37. T F The single most important selection criterion revolves around the purpose of the firearm.
- 38. T F Your breath should be let out slowly and steadily until the shot is fired.
- 39. T F Your non-dominant eye should be used for aiming the pistol.
- 40. T F You should always keep your gun unloaded until you are ready to use it.
- 41. T F Pistols that are fired regularly do not need to be cleaned.
- 42. T F Aiming consists of two stages: sight alignment and sight picture.
- 43. T F Trigger control is one of the most important shooting fundamentals.
- 44. T F The major components of breech-loading pistol include the frame, the barrel, and the action.

NRA Basics of Pistol Shooting

- 45. T F The Natural Aiming Area refers to the natural alignment of the shooter and the gun in any position.
- 46. T F The first Rule for Safe Gun Handling can be ignored while dry-firing.
- 47. T F Pistol cartridges should not be exposed to water or solvents.
- 48. T F The muzzle is the front end of the barrel where the bullet exits.
- 49. T F When shooting a pistol, you should always know your target and what is beyond.
- 50. T F Before handling a gun, learn how it operates. Read the owner's manual for your gun.

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APPENDIX 5B

NRA BASIC PISTOL SHOOTING COURSE

STUDENT EXAMINATION KEY

Name _____ Date _____ Grade _____

1. The three major components of a pistol are:
 - a. barrel, action and grip
 - b. frame, barrel and action (H-25)**
 - c. barrel, frame and hammer
 - d. cylinder, frame and barrel

2. Your finger may contact the trigger:
 - a. when drawing from the holster
 - b. when you are ready to shoot (H-13)**
 - c. when gripping the pistol
 - d. when it is unloaded

3. The *trigger mechanism*:
 - a. releases a spring-powered hammer or striker to fire the cartridge. (H-27)**
 - b. the part of a firearm in which a cartridge is contained at the instant of firing.
 - c. the end of the barrel where the chamber is located.
 - d. another term for the slide on a semi-automatic pistol.

4. Aiming consists of:
 - a. grip and position.
 - b. sight alignment and sight picture. (H-73)**
 - c. breath control and aiming.
 - d. trigger control and follow-through.

5. When aiming a pistol, the eye can only focus on one object at a time; therefore, you should focus on the _____ so that it appears clear and sharp.
 - a. rear sight
 - b. target
 - c. front sight (H-74)**
 - d. bullseye

6. To ensure you use the correct ammunition for your gun:
 - a. check the information stamped on the barrel and/or slide.
 - b. check your owner's manual.
 - c. check the cartridge box and cartridge headstamp.
 - d. all of the above. (H-63)**

7. When a cartridge fails to fire immediately, you should:
 - a. put the safety on and put the pistol down.
 - b. keep the pistol pointed in a safe direction and, after waiting at least 30 seconds (as a precaution in case of a hangfire), open the action and remove the cartridge. (H-64)**
 - c. open the action immediately and inspect the cartridge to determine the malfunction.
 - d. none of the above.

8. When gripping the pistol, you should:
 - a. use the same grip each time that you hold the pistol. (H-72-73)**
 - b. change your grip when going from short-range to long-range targets.
 - c. slowly increase your grip pressure when you begin pulling the trigger.
 - d. hold the pistol as loosely as possible to prevent muscle tremors.

9. *Follow-through* is important because:
 - a. it integrates, maintains and continues all shooting fundamentals before, during and immediately after firing the shot. (H-76-77)**
 - b. it helps maintain your grip.
 - c. it keeps the gun from recoiling excessively.
 - d. none of the above.

10. The frame of a pistol is:
 - a. made of wood or metal.
 - b. is pulled to release the hammer.
 - c. is the central component of most pistols. (H-26)**
 - d. none of the above.

11. The four components of a pistol cartridge are:
 - a. primer, wad, case and bullet.
 - b. hull, shot, slug and primer.
 - c. bullet, hull, powder and wad.
 - d. case, primer, powder charge and bullet. (H-59-61)**

12. Some of the benefits of the Isosceles Position are:
 - a. gives considerable support to the firearm.
 - b. it is natural and easy to assume . (H-89)**
 - c. enhances recoil absorption.
 - d. gives excellent mobility.

13. *Double-action* refers to the type of action:
 - a. in which pulling the trigger performs two tasks: cocking and releasing the hammer. (H-34)**
 - b. found only on revolvers.
 - c. found only on semi-automatic pistols.
 - d. none of the above.

14. Before cleaning a pistol, be sure that:
 - a. the pistol is unloaded.
 - b. The pistol is disassembled according to instructions in owner's manual.
 - c. no ammunition is present in the area.
 - d. all of the above. (H-116)**

15. A _____ occurs when a cartridge fails to fire after the primer has been struck by the firing pin.
 - a. hangfire
 - b. dry-fire
 - c. squib load
 - d. misfire (H-64)**

16. The *safety* on a pistol is:
 - a. a mechanical device, and can fail. (H-27-28)**
 - b. never fails.
 - c. is found only on revolvers.
 - d. none of the above.

17. When shooting, you should hold your breath because:
 - a. it minimizes body movement. (H-74)**
 - b. it enhances concentration.
 - c. it eliminates muscle tremors.
 - d. all of the above.

18. Dry-firing:
 - a. occurs when the cartridge fails to fire after the firing pin strikes the primer.
 - b. is a long delay in the ignition of a cartridge after the firing pin strikes the primer.
 - c. involves practicing every phase of the firing process using an *unloaded* firearm. (H-131-132)**
 - d. is the firing of live ammunition a tin cans and other similar targets.

19. The basic rule for sight adjustment is:
- move the rear sight in the opposite direction that you want hits on the target to move.
 - move the front sight in the same direction that you want hits on the target to move.
 - move the rear sight in the same direction that you want hits on the target to move. (H-85-87)**
 - none of the above.
20. Trigger control when shooting refers to:
- pulling the trigger when the arc of movement has been eliminated.
 - the technique of pulling the trigger without causing any movement of the aligned sights. (H-75-76)**
 - both a and b.
 - none of the above.

TRUE OR FALSE QUESTIONS

21. **T** **F** As the gun powder burns, it creates high-pressure gas that begins to push the bullet down the bore. **(H-61-62)**
22. **T** **F** Consistency, balance, support, natural aiming area, and comfort are elements of a good shooting position. **(H-79-81)**
23. **T** **F** Proper sight alignment is having the front sight even with the top of the rear sight, and the front sight centered in the notch of the rear sight so that there is an equal amount of space on each side of the front sight. **(H-73)**
24. **T** **F** A squib load develops less than normal pressure or velocity after ignition of the cartridge powder charge. **(H-64)**
25. **T** **F** A gun that is properly maintained will function more reliably, shoot more accurately and last longer. **(H-115)**
26. **T** **F** **ALWAYS** keep your gun pointed in a safe direction. **(H-13)**
27. **T** **F** The safety on a pistol is a mechanical device that can fail. **(H-27-28)**
28. **T** **F** Pistols should be stored so that they are not accessible to unauthorized persons. **(H-16)**

29. T F A misfire is a perceptible delay in the ignition of a cartridge after the primer has been struck by the firing pin. **(H-64)**
30. T F Most pistol cartridges can be fired from any handgun. **(H-63)**
31. T F Both ear and eye protection are highly recommended whenever you are firing live ammunition. **(H-16)**
32. T F Cartridges loaded to lower pressures than standard ammunition are known as “+P” cartridges. **(H-63)**
33. T F You should always bury unserviceable ammunition. **(H-64)**
34. T F You should always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot. **(H-13)**
35. T F Grip consistency is essential for accurate shooting. **(H-73)**
36. T F Ammunition should not be present when cleaning a pistol. **(H-116)**
37. T F The single most important selection criterion revolves around the purpose of the firearm. **(H-109)**
38. T F Your breath should be let out slowly and steadily until the shot is fired. **(H-74)**
39. T F Your non-dominant eye should be used for aiming the pistol. **(H-71)**
40. T F You should always keep your gun unloaded until you are ready to use it. **(H-14)**
41. T F Pistols that are fired regularly do not need to be cleaned. **(H-115)**
42. T F Aiming consists of two stages: sight alignment and sight picture. **(H-73)**
43. T F Trigger control is one of the most important shooting fundamentals. **(H-75)**
44. T F The major components of breech-loading pistols include the frame, the barrel, and the action. **(H-25)**

NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course

45. **T** **F** The Natural Aiming Area refers to the natural alignment of the shooter and the gun in any position. **(H-80)**
46. **T** **F** The first Rule for Safe Gun Handling can be ignored while dry-firing. **(H-131)**
47. **T** **F** Pistol cartridges should not be exposed to water or solvents. **(H-63-64)**
48. **T** **F** The muzzle is the front end of the barrel where the bullet exits. **(H-26)**
49. **T** **F** When shooting a pistol, you should always know your target and what is beyond. **(H-14)**
50. **T** **F** Before handling a gun, learn how it operates. Read the owner's manual for your gun. **(H-14-15)**

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APPENDIX 6

NRA BASIC PISTOL SHOOTING COURSE EVALUATION

Your input is needed to improve future training courses. Please take a few moments to complete this evaluation and return it to the instructor.

General Information

1. How did you learn about this training course?

Course Poster School Local Advertisement
 Family Member Friend Firearms Dealer
 NRA Website Gun Club Government Agency
 Other _____

2. Please indicate your age group.

9 and under 10-12 13-17 18-21 22-30
 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-80
 over 80

3. Male Female

4. Are you an NRA member? Yes No

Your Knowledge and Skills

Please rate how well you feel you can do the following as a result of attending this course, on the following scale: **1=not at all; 2=poorly; 3=satisfactory; 4=very well; 5=extremely well.**

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Identify the principal pistol parts and types of actions, and explain their operation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Identify and demonstrate the rules for safe gun handling. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Identify the types of pistol ammunition, and explain how to care for and store ammunition. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Identify and explain the five fundamentals of shooting a pistol. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary for owning and using a pistol safely. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Identify the materials needed to clean a pistol and demonstrate how to clean it safely. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Identify the criteria for selecting a pistol. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8. Identify the sources for obtaining information about pistols and their uses. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Identify ways to pursue pistol shooting activities, and know how to obtain NRA pistol marksmanship qualification awards. 1 2 3 4 5

Course Organization and Instruction

Circle the appropriate number representing your response to each statement below, using the following scale: **1=not at all; 2=poorly; 3=satisfactory; 4=very well; 5=extremely well.**

1. The material presented was easily understood. 1 2 3 4 5
2. The material was presented in a logical manner. 1 2 3 4 5
3. This course has helped me gain a better understanding of the function and safe operation of firearms. 1 2 3 4 5
4. This course met my needs. 1 2 3 4 5
5. The instructors presented the information effectively. 1 2 3 4 5
6. The instructors answered my questions. 1 2 3 4 5
7. The training aids were used effectively. 1 2 3 4 5
8. The instructors made the course enjoyable. 1 2 3 4 5
9. The instructors presented a favorable image. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Your suggestions for improvement on any statement you rated 1 or 2: _____

Comments

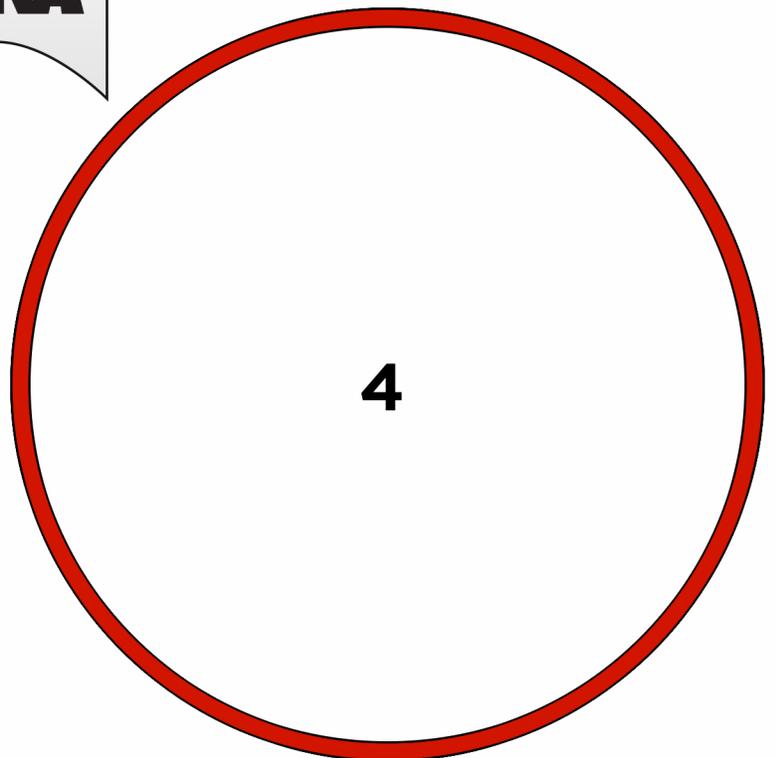
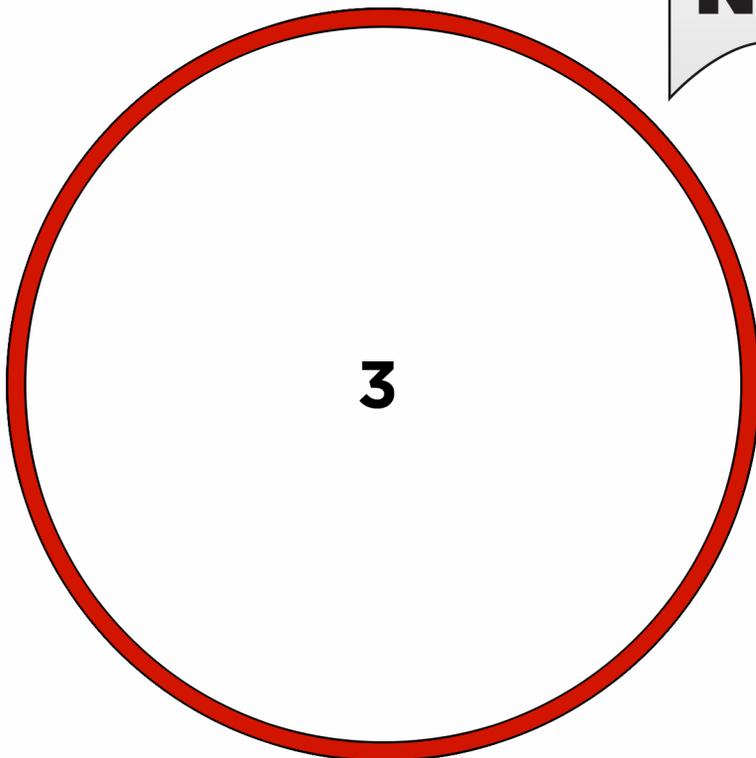
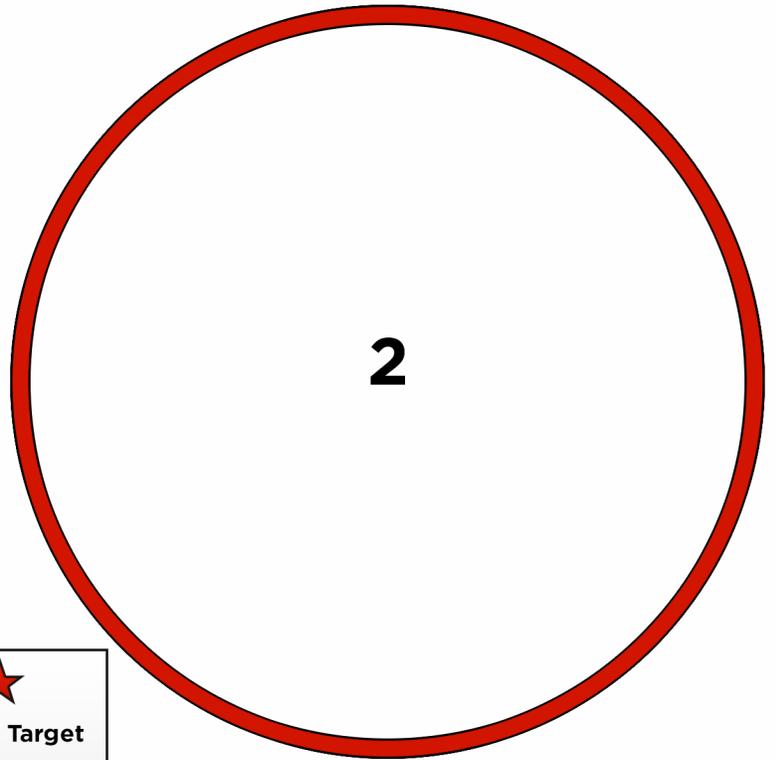
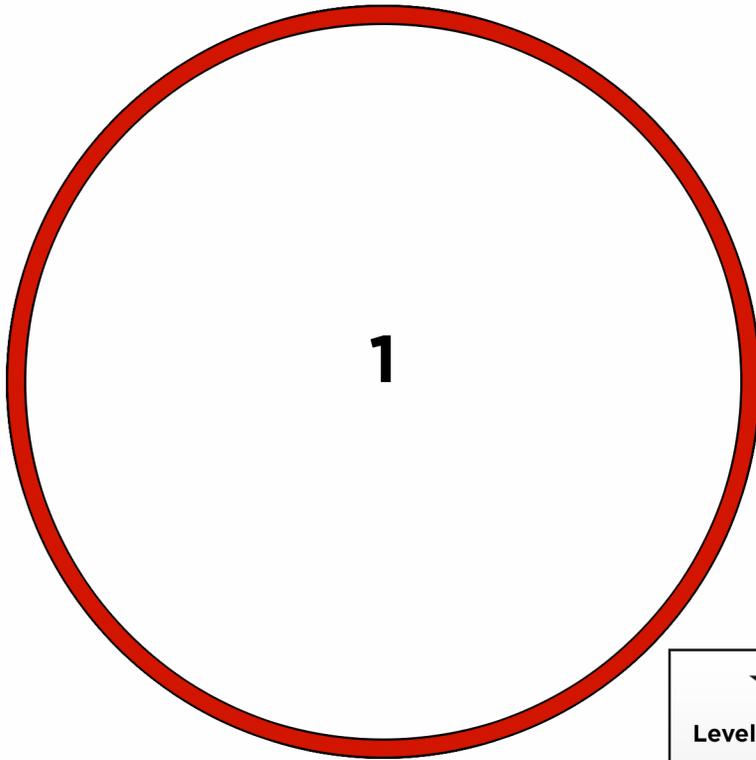
1. How do you feel this course could be improved? _____

2. What parts of this training course do you feel were most beneficial? _____

3. Please make any additional comments _____

NRA Basic Pistol Achievement Target

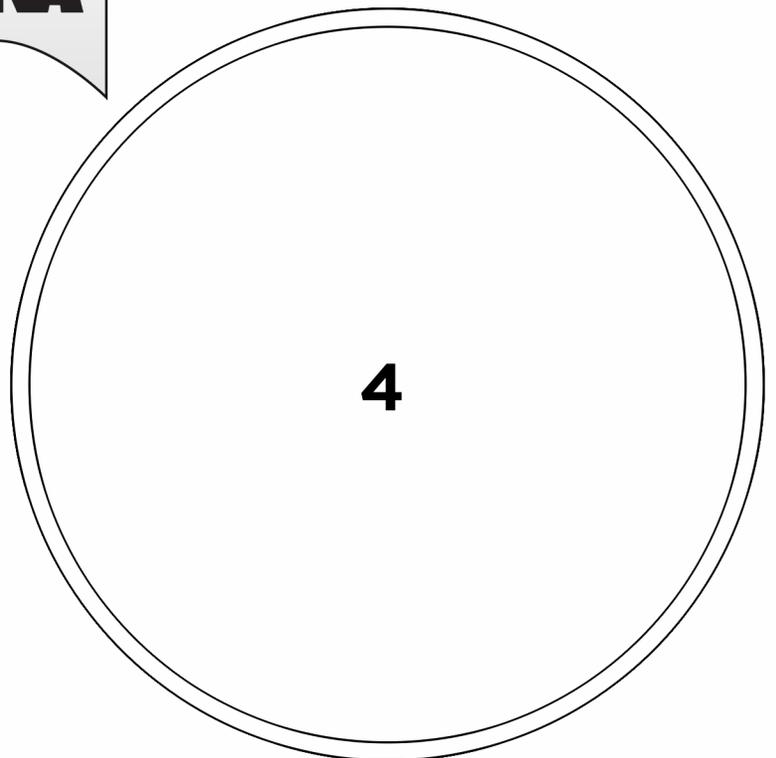
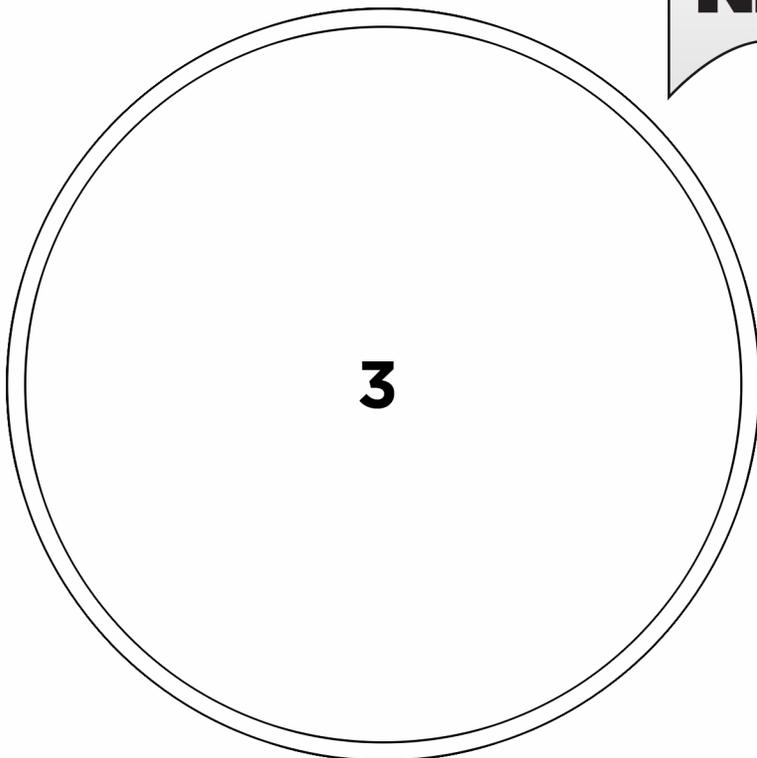
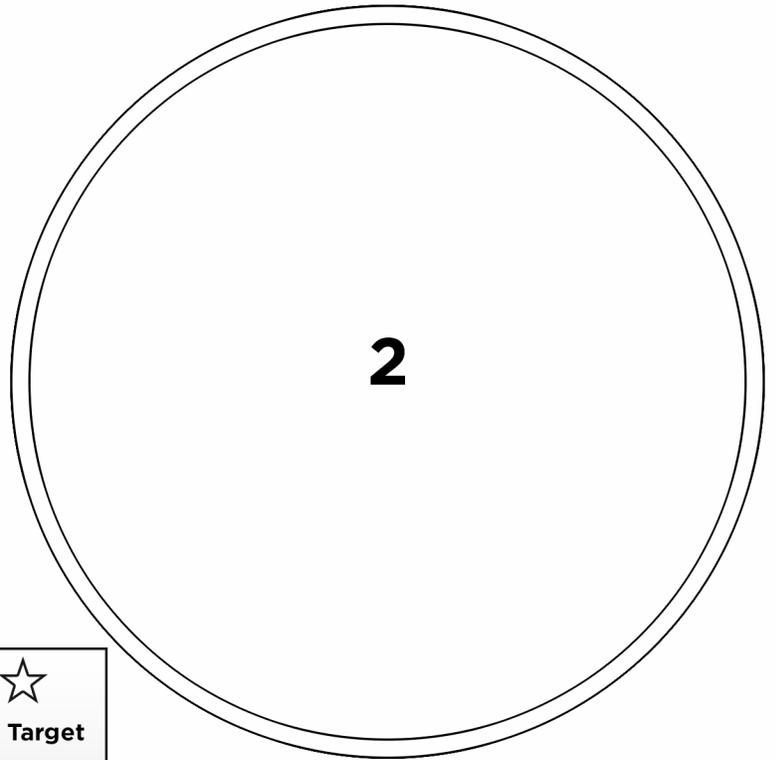
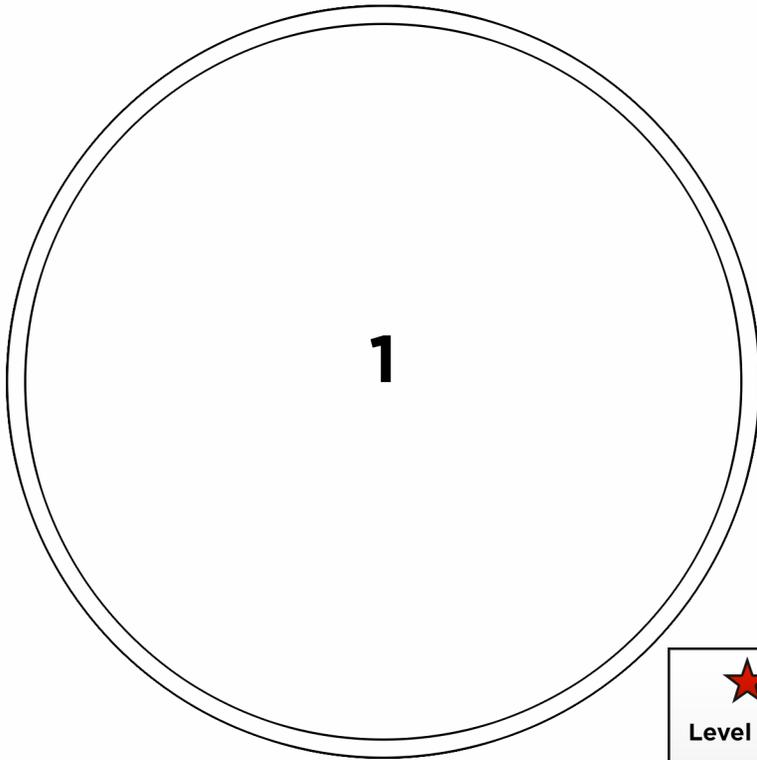
Student Name: _____ NRA Certified Instructor: _____ Date: _____



5 Shots/10 Feet Standing
Bullets that pierce the outside edge of the circle count as hits

NRA Basic Pistol Achievement Target

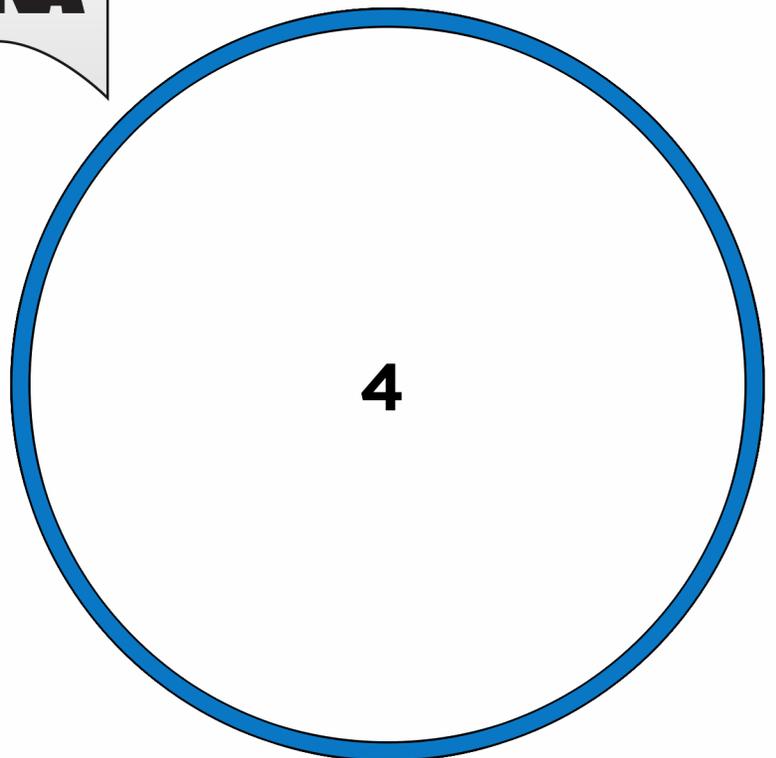
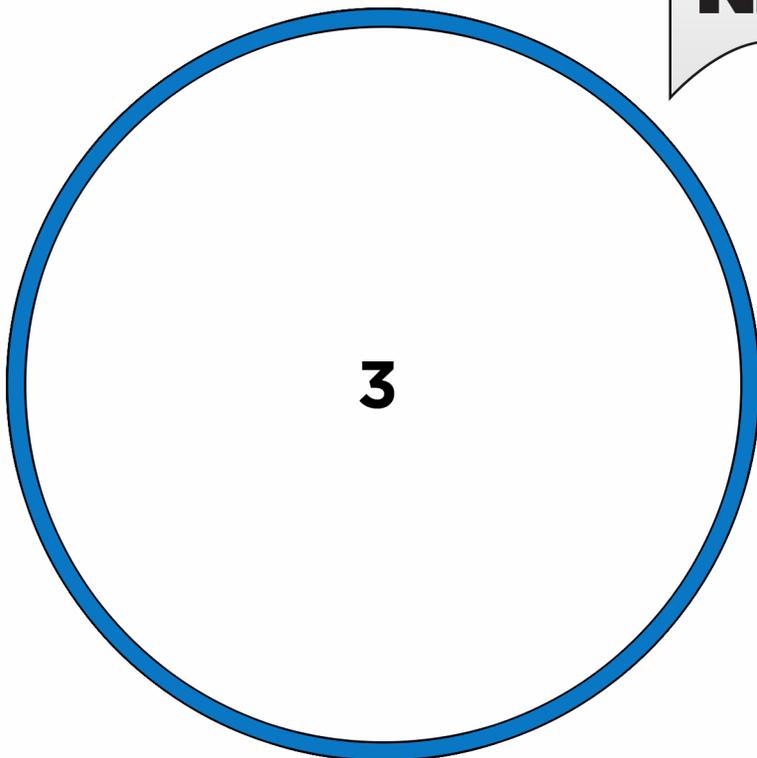
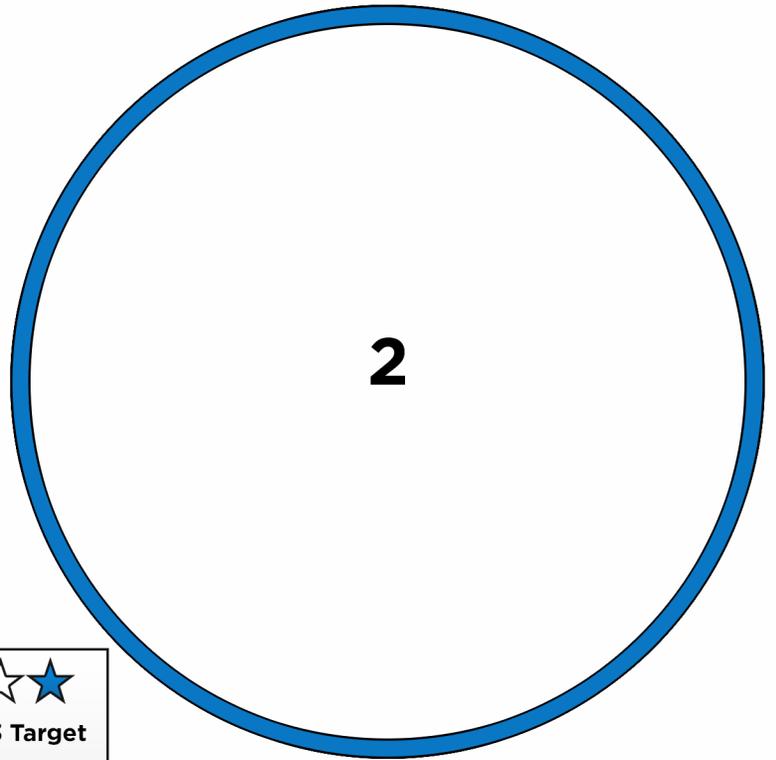
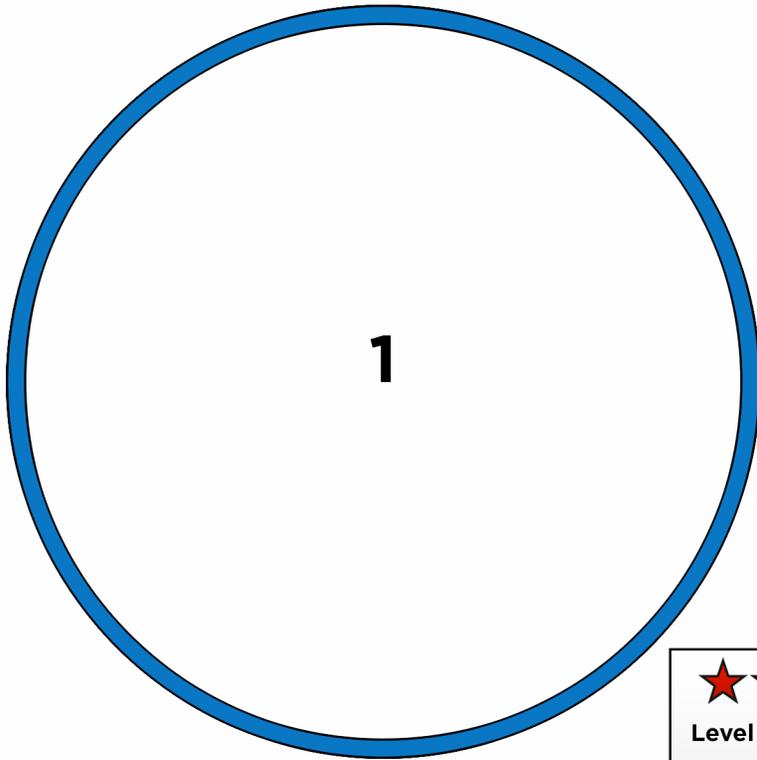
Student Name: _____ NRA Certified Instructor: _____ Date: _____



5 Shots/15 Feet Standing
Bullets that pierce the outside edge of the circle count as hits

NRA Basic Pistol Achievement Target

Student Name: _____ NRA Certified Instructor: _____ Date: _____



5 Shots/20 Feet Standing
Bullets that pierce the outside edge of the circle count as hits

NRA Instructor Training Qualification Target

20 shots/15 yards (45 feet) 16 out of 20 shots in a 6 inch group

