

USMC Rank Study Guide for NJROTC Cadets

This study guide provides a structured overview of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) enlisted and officer rank hierarchy, tailored for NJROTC and MCJROTC cadets based on the 2025 USMC JROTC Manual updates.

USMC Enlisted Ranks

Pay Grade	Rank Name	Abbrev.	Notes
E-1	Private	Pvt	Entry rank; no insignia.
E-2	Private First Class	PFC	Next step; junior enlisted.
E-3	Lance Corporal	LCpl	First level of experienced enlisted.
E-4	Corporal	Cpl	Start of NCO leadership.
E-5	Sergeant	Sgt	NCO leadership and supervision.
E-6	Staff Sergeant	SSgt	Start of Staff NCO tier.
E-7	Gunnery Sergeant	GySgt	Experienced SNCO leadership.
E-8	Master Sergeant / First Sergeant	MSgt / 1stSgt	Technical or command track roles.
E-9	Master Gunnery Sergeant / Sergeant Major	MGySgt / SgtMaj	Top enlisted level; senior advisors.

USMC Officer Ranks

Pay Grade	Rank Name	Abbrev.	Notes
O-1	Second Lieutenant	2ndLt	Entry officer rank; leads platoon.
O-2	First Lieutenant	1stLt	Increased responsibility and leadership.
O-3	Captain	Capt	Company commander or staff officer.
O-4	Major	Maj	Field-grade officer; staff duties.
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	LtCol	Battalion commander or senior staff.
O-6	Colonel	Col	Regimental/brigade command level.
O-7	Brigadier General	BGen	One-star general officer.
O-8	Major General	MajGen	Two-star general officer.
O-9	Lieutenant General	LtGen	Three-star general officer.
O-10	General	Gen	Four-star; highest active officer rank.

Study Tips

- Use flashcards to memorize pay grade and rank names.
- Drill the insignia by visualizing chevrons (enlisted) and bars/stars (officers).
- Practice identifying ranks during inspection and drill.
- Explain ranks and roles to fellow cadets to reinforce memory.
- Use the NJROTC handbook rank chart for quick review.

Citations: USMC JROTC Manual (2025 Edition), Marines.com, Military.com, MarineParents.com