



center dance ensemble

PRESENTS

THE ABC'S OF DANCE

STUDY GUIDE GRADES K-6

Dear Educators,

Center Dance Ensemble is pleased to present “The ABC’s of Dance.” The program is designed to introduce your students to vocabulary words and styles used in dance. We hope we will inspire not only interest in, but also an appreciation of, dance. A fast-paced 45-minute program using each letter of the alphabet to define a style or vocabulary word used in dance, “The ABC’s” also allows the audience the opportunity to learn a bit of dance history as well as participate verbally and physically throughout the program. After the performance the students are encouraged to ask the dancers any questions they may have.

This Study Guide has been created for use both before and after the performance. It includes two vocabulary lists with definitions (the first one is correct, and the second one for students to match the word to its correct definition). We have also included background information for each of the dance styles you will see. There is also a Movement Study that is designed to help get your students’ creative juices flowing.

We realize your “extra time” is at a premium, but encourage you to look the Study Guide over and share with your students any information you feel will assist in making “The ABC’s of Dance” a truly educational and enjoyable experience. If you have any questions feel free to call me.

Thank you,
Sally Hogan
480-239-1530

“The ABC’s of Dance” is supported by



VOCABULARY WORD	CORRECT DEFINITIONS
Arabesque	A ballet step where one leg is held up behind.
Ballet	A style of danced based on positions.
Contraction	A dance step used in Modern Dance based on exhaling.
Direction	Where the body is going or facing.
Entrance and Exit	The way to go on and off stage.
Folk Dance	A special dance of a state or country.
Green Eggs and Ham	A book written by Dr. Seuss in 1960.
Hip-Hop	A style of street dance.
Isolation	Moving one body part at a time.
Jazz	This style of dance started when a new type of music became popular.
Kinetic	Energy caused by motion.
Leap	A large step in the air.
Modern Dance	A freer form of dance created to break away from Ballet.
Natural Movement	Movements like walking, running, skipping.
Ovation	A way for the audience to show appreciation.
Port de bras	Movement of the arms.
Quiet	When one is silent or still.
Rhythm	Structured patterns of time used in music
Sauté	A step used in Ballet meaning "to jump".
Swing	A movement named after something on the playground.
Shuffle-step	A step used in Tap Dancing.
Tap Dance	A style of dance based on rhythm and sound.
Up Stage	Moving or standing away from the audience.
Vibratory	A shaking movement of the body.
Wizard of Oz	This story is about Dorothy in the land of OZ.
X	This letter is used to mark the stage.
Yoga	A type of exercise used to increase flexibility.
Zig-Zag	Moving in a path of short sharp turns.

VOCABULARY WORDS	DRAW A LINE FROM EACH VOCABULARY WORD TO ITS CORRECT DEFINITION
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Kinetic	A shaking movement of the body.
Leap	A ballet step where one leg is held up behind.
Modern Dance	Structured patterns of time used in music.
Natural Movement	Where the body is going or facing.
Ovation	A movement named after something on the playground.
Port de bras	Moving or standing away from the audience.
Quiet	A style of dance based on rhythm and sound.
Rhythm	Movement of the arms.
Sauté	A style of dance less structured than Ballet.
Swing	A special dance of a state or country.
Shuffle-step	
Tap Dance	A large step in the air
Up Stage	The way of getting on and off stage.
Vibratory	This style of dance started when a new type of music became popular.
Wizard of Oz	A dance step used in Modern Dance based on exhaling.
X	A style of street dance.
Zig-Zag	A style of dance based on rhythm and sound.

BALLET

Ballet is “a classical dance form characterized by grace and precision of movement and by elaborate formal gestures, steps, and poses.” It is also defined as “a theatrical presentation of group or solo dancing to a musical accompaniment, usually with costume and scenic effects, conveying a story or theme.”

Ballet originated in the 15th century. First performed in the Italian Renaissance Courts during Gala events, the dancers not only danced, but also read poetry, played and sang music, and even showed or created paintings during and between dinner courses.

In 1600 the five basic positions of the arms and feet used in ballet were created in France by Beauchamps. All Ballet steps start, end, or pass through one or more of the 5 basic feet positions. The word “Ballet” is French, borrowed from the Italian word “Balletto” which is derived from the Latin word Ballare (meaning to dance.) All Ballet terminology is either French or Italian.

In 1661 the first Ballet School was opened in France. All the students were male; ladies were not allowed to take classes until 1681. The ladies did not wear tutus (as are worn today) but wore long ankle-length dresses. They were called Ballerinas or danseuse, while the men were called Ballet danseurs.

Ballet became the most loved entertainment for the French courts in the 17th century, and continued to evolve in technique and expand its repertoire of Classical Ballets that are still seen and performed today. These Ballets were theatrical spectacles with complex costumes, sets, lighting and costumes. It was not until the 1920's when companies in Europe began touring the United States that America began to truly acknowledge the beauty of Ballet.

As with any art form Ballet has changed with the times. Many Ballets choreographed since 1944 do away with classical music and are instead using Jazz, Pop, and even Rock and Roll. The movements used in these Ballets are also influenced by Jazz, Modern, and even popular social dance, expanding and redefining Ballet. These new works are called “Contemporary Ballets.”

FOLK DANCE

Folk dances are dances created before the 1800's that have been passed down from generation to generation. They are dances that were usually created in rural farming areas of countries to celebrate such times as planting, harvest, and rites of passage. It is a form of recreational or social dance done for the dancer's enjoyment rather than for an audience's enjoyment.

As people migrated to the United States they brought with them their nations' customs, and dances. As they settled in communities, town halls were built for Saturday night gatherings after a long hard week of work. The town halls in New England are where Square Dancing is said to have begun.

Because each ethnic group brought different dances with them, the Town Hall was a place of learning the favorite dances from various countries. Square Dancing is actually a combination of dance steps from various dances. The “caller” was the designated Choreographer of the Square Dance. His job was to call out steps from various dances to create new dances. Square Dance is normally done with 4 couples to make a square. The females are often called “Ladies, or Gals”, and the males are “Men, or Guys.”

As the United States became more urbanized, Square Dancing lost its popularity, but in 1928 Henry Ford (of Ford Motor Company) endorsed a program encouraging that Square Dance be taught in schools as part of their Physical Education Program. He felt it would encourage teamwork and courtesy, as well as teaching rhythm and being good exercise. His endorsement worked and by the end of the year at least 50 percent of schools in the United States had added it to their curriculum.

Square Dancing was made the National Folk Dance of the United States in a bill signed by Ronald Regan in 1982. As of December 2009, 32 states including Arizona have passed bills making it their “State Dance.”

HIP-HOP

Hip-Hop is over 30 years old, and is a free style form of dance created on the streets of New York and California. Uprock and Breaking were created on the East Coast listening to DJ scratching and rap music of the 1970s. Locking and Popping, although created during the same time on the West Coast, was danced to Funk and R&B music.

New Hip-Hop styles and steps are constantly being added to the vocabulary in part because of the changing musical scene and as well because of its increasing popularity throughout the world. Some of the more recent additions are Krumping (2000), The Jerk (2009) and The Dougie (2010). Hip-Hop is a high-energy dance style that has created an outlet for inner city youths to release anger and frustration in a nondestructive and creative way. Dance groups called “Crews” are formed and Dance-offs take place between crews, or two dancers.

If a one-on-one contest is being held, the crews form a “Cipher” (which is a circle), one person enters the Cipher and freestyles, and then passes it on to a member of the opposing crew. The “Battle” consists of trying to out-dance the other crew member.

Some elements of standard Hip-Hop are: standing footwork (toprock), footwork done on the floor using their hands for support (downrock), spins on the head, neck, back and shoulders (power move), and balances on the forearms and elbows (freezes). As in all dance forms transition between movements are also important. In Hip-Hop these are called drops when done in-between standing and floor work.

The Hip-Hop dance you will see in our program is a Lyric Hip-hop piece, a fluid and more interpretive version of a new style of hip-hop, most often danced to down-tempo rap music or R&B music.

For more information on the History of Hip-Hop I suggest the website Physical Graffiti...The History of Hip Hop by Jerge "Popmaster" Fabel.

JAZZ DANCE

The first Jazz dance "craze" happened during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920's. Dance was the extension of the Jazz music being played during that time. The first noted Jazz dance was the "Charleston." It was the Flapper era and it was the first dance that allowed free movement of the arms and torso.

Jazz dance began as a "social dance form." After the great depression choreographers began using more stylized versions of the popular Jazz dances in musicals and in movies. Jack Cole, one of the great choreographers in the 1940's, is said to be the first to have created a standardized Jazz vocabulary and technique. He did so by adding isolations, syncopated rhythms, and movements from modern dance to dances like the Charleston.

In the 50's Jerome Robbins (another Broadway choreographer) went one step further by combining Ballet and Jazz. This created a more dramatic and smoother Jazz style as can be seen in "West Side Story," which Robbins choreographed.

Because of the exposure of this "new Jazz style" seen in movies and musicals in America, dance studios were swamped with requests for Jazz classes. Jazz became the 2nd most taught dance form after Ballet in the United States. Today Jazz is a combination of many dance styles and techniques, and is performed to music of all kinds.

The piece you will see today is a tribute to another choreographer who created his own style of Jazz. His name was Bob Fosse and the technique he developed turned his "negatives" into positives. Many of Fosse's works used bowler hats (to hide his balding head) and he used wide-open hands covered with gloves to hide his un-balletic hands. He worked with his knees turned in to hide his lack of turnout, and because he had rounded shoulders he created movement with his back rounded forward.

MODERN DANCE

Modern Dance is “a free form of dance created to break away from the formal and structured world of ballet with no restrictions on the theme, music, or emotional intent of the movement. *Good* Modern Dance creates an environment using its vocabulary movements that communicate the choreographer’s vision. It turns from a vision to an art form when it has a beginning, middle, and an end. Modern Dance can tell a story like a Ballet, but it doesn’t have to.

The Modern piece in our program is based on two visions. The first is the vision of an Ice Skater, who glides and moves. The second is how music looks when you are recording it. The lines jump up and down, go forward and backward, and pulse. The movement is created to resemble these visions, but not be them. Imagination is needed!

While Ballet is based on a universal language with set steps and positions clearly defined, there are many different sets of vocabulary words in Modern. The early pioneers of Modern Dance each developed their own technique, which in turn created their own vocabulary words. These “personal vocabularies” are why the work of one Modern choreographer looks so different from another.

Early pioneers of modern such as, Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Martha Graham, and Doris Humphrey, each created dance companies using their unique style and technique. As dancers left the companies many started their own companies using the basic technique taught to them by their teachers, and then expanding, molding, or reinventing the movement to make it their own. They created their own vocabulary to be passed down and redefined by the next generation. This is the cycle of modern dance, and these continued changes create the magic and the mystery of Modern Dance.

For more information on the early Modern Dance Pioneers go to www.pitt.edu or do a search for Modern Dance Pioneers.

MUSICAL THEATER (The Wizard of Oz)

Musical Theater is a form of theater that combines music, songs, dialogue, and dance. The story, as well as its emotional content, is communicated through each of them as well as through lighting, costumes, and sets.

The three major components of a musical are the music, the lyrics and the book. The music consists of not only the score (the written music) but also of the lyrics to be sung. The book is the script (lines the performers are to speak) and often includes descriptions of characters, settings (where and when the action takes place), prop lists (items the character needs for a scene) and even suggestions on set designs.

Unlike a play which has one director, a musical requires a team of three: a director who oversees the “blocking” which gives the cast stage directions and intent; a musical director in charge of

the music and the parts the cast sing; and a choreographer to create and teach the dances. This “team” is responsible for making the book come to life. The production crew is responsible not only for lights, sound and sets, but also all backstage activities.

All types of dance are seen in Musical Theater, and dancers need to be trained in all forms as well as be able to sing and act in order to get work on Broadway.

The “Wonderful Wizard of Oz” was a book written by L. Frank Baum in 1900. The story of Dorothy Gale, her dog Toto, and her whirlwind trip to Munchkin Land, it fast became a literary classic. Baum went on to write 14 more books about the characters from Oz before his death.

In 1904 The Wizard of Oz was first produced as a Broadway Musical. 1939 brought the release of the movie starring Judy Garland as Dorothy. This movie is still shown on TV at least once a year. In 1987 a new version of the Broadway show opened in London and the present American tour is running through December 2011.

The “Jitterbug” was a popular dance during the time when the “Wizard of Oz” was being filmed. A dance for Dorothy, the Cowardly Lion, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Man was choreographed for the movie, but was not seen in the released version, however it was included in the 1987 Broadway Revival.

TAP DANCE

Tap is a style of American dance that involves precise rhythmic footwork that is heard because of metal strike plates on the bottom of the shoes hitting the floor. Inspired by Irish step dancing, English clogging, and African dance moves brought to America by immigrants, Tap became a folk dance in the 19th century. It wasn't until 1920 that taps were added to the shoes creating more audible rhythms. Because the sounds could now be heard, rhythms became more syncopated. Syncopated in music means there are stops or interruptions in the normal rhythm, or that the accents are put where they normally are not. Jazz music uses a lot of syncopation. Tap dancing requires good rhythm, loose ankles, and quick feet in order to make the correct sounds and execute the steps correctly.

Tap like Ballet has a universal vocabulary that all dancers know, but allows more freedom of movement to the arms and upper body. Today Tap has elements of Modern and Ballet thanks to the film stars of the 1930's, 40s and 50's. Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly added style and grace to the basic steps of Tap. Although Tap fell out of fashion in the 60's dancers like Gregory Hines renewed public interest in this dance form in the 70's, and it is still going strong today!

If you want to see some good Tapping I suggest the movie “Tap” (1989) starring Gregory Hines and many more wonderful tappers!

MOVEMENT STUDY

1. Have each student pick a letter of the alphabet (no two should have the same letter if possible).
2. Ask them to write their letter in the air with their head, finger, elbow, arm, and foot.
3. Repeat writing the letter on the floor, using their body parts
4. Say a word and have the students spell it through movement. Keep using new words until you have a sentence (a sentence in dance is called a phrase).
5. Experiment. By changing the speed of one or more of the letters or words in the sentence, you can make the movements look different. You can do this easily by playing music that has different tempos, or simply by designating how many counts each letter or word will get, and clapping it for the students.
6. Now let the students choose their own speeds and show their classmates.
7. HAVE FUN! ☺