

Dance Curriculum Glossary

Alignment	The position of the body parts in relation to each other.
Allemande Left	In a square set, couples turn back-to-back, join left hands with their “corners”, swing around once, and return to their partners. An allemande right is the same sequence done with right hands.
Beat	The underlying pulse; found in most music.
Bend	Flex a joint, bringing two body parts together.
Bilateral	The same on both sides of the body, e.g., doing the same movement with both arms.
Body Facing	The spatial orientation of body surfaces, e.g., front, side to side, etc.
Body Mechanics	Safe movement practices including bending the knees when landing from a jump, falling on soft body surfaces, etc.
Body Shape	The design created by placement of body parts, e.g., curved, angular, symmetrical, asymmetrical, wide, narrow, twisted, etc.
Cast Off	The leaders of two parallel lines of dancers walk away from each other, leading their lines down to the foot of the set.
Change Direction	Create a new line of motion.
Choreography	Planned movements for a dance.
Circle Dance	A dance done in circle formation without partners.
Dab	A quick, light stroke of a body part as though one were applying a spot of paint.
Developmental Movement Patterns	Movement sequences that are necessary for neurological development (See chart entitled “Developmental Movement Patterns: Dancing with the Brain.”)
Direction	The spatial orientation of the line of motion, e.g., clockwise, counterclockwise, etc.
Do-Si-Do	Partners begin by facing each other, then move toward each other, pass right shoulders, step to the right, walk backward, pass each other again by the left shoulders, and return to facing position.
Double Circle	A partner formation of concentric circles. Partners stand side by side or front to partner. Each member of the inside circle is connected to a partner in the outside circle by holding one or both hands and moving together.
Down The Alley	Moving from top to bottom through a long ways set.
Eight Effort Actions	Movements created by combining elements of space, time, and weight (float, dab, punch, glide, slash, wring, flick, and press).
Elbow Swing	Link elbows (right or left) with partner and turn.
Exchange Places	Each partner in a dance or singing game takes the other’s original place.
Flick	A quality of movement that is light, sudden, and indirect.
Float	A quality of movement in which the body moves slowly, without sudden changes. Can be used with locomotor or nonlocomotor movement.
Flocking	Group shadowing; everyone in the group is facing the same direction following the movements of the leader.
Flowing	A sustained quality of movement, without sudden starts or stops.
Focus	Where the eyes look; can be single (focused on one spot) or multi (focused on several spots.)

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Folk/Traditional Dance	A patterned dance that comes from a particular culture.
Foot Couple	In a long ways set, the partners at the foot of the set or the end farthest from the source of music.
Force	Sometimes called “energy” or “quality”; the characteristic of movement that results from the interplay of time and force, e.g., heavy, light, sudden, percussive, sustained, shaky, swinging, and vibratory.
Form	How the dance is structured, e.g., AB, ABA, etc.
Formation	A group spatial arrangement or design, e.g., concentric circles, square, long ways set, etc.
Free/Bound Flow	Free is undirected movement, while bound is directed purposeful movement.
Gallop	A locomotor combination of a step and a leap. The step gets a quarter note value and the leap gets an eighth note value.
Gesture	The movement of a non-supporting body part that can have literal or abstract meaning.
Glide	A quality of movement that is light, sustained, and direct.
Grand Right And Left	A movement sequence with a single circle of partners facing one another: partners grasp right hands, walk past partner; take the next persons’ left hand and release partner’s right hand, walk past that person, take the right hand; and so on around the circle until partners meet again.
Grapevine Step	A series of weaving movements (cross/side/back/side).
Group Shape/Design	The spatial outline created by a gathering of people. Related to formation, but not all group shapes are traditional designs.
Head Couple	The partners at the head of the set or the end nearest the source of music.
Hop	A non-alternating basic locomotor form. Performed by first standing on one foot, that foot then leaves the ground and the same foot returns to the ground.
Imitate	Copy movement while it is being done by the leader.
Improvisation	Spontaneous movement (as opposed to planned movement).
In Place	In self-space.
Jump	A non-alternating basic locomotor form in which both feet leave the ground at the same time and land on the ground at the same time.
Leap	A basic locomotor movement in which weight is transferred from one foot to the other, with a moment in which neither foot is on the floor. A leap differs from a run because it is done of either height or distance, not speed.
Level	A place on an imaginary vertical line between high and low.
Line Formation	Dancers next to one another, either side by side or front to back, forming a straight line.
Line Unilateral	Performed on one side of the body.
Locomotion	Going from one place to another, or traveling.
Long Ways Or Contra Dance Set	Parallel lines of dancers usually facing each other.

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March	A walk variation in 2/4 or 4/4 time that uses military-style steps. Alternate knees are raised and lowered with each step. One step for each underlying beat.
Mirror/Shadow	Strive to move in perfect unison. Mirror can be done by facing partners or by a group, usually with a designated leader. Shadow is done following a leader.
Movement Sequence	A series of individual movements that flow from one to the next. (e.g., run, leap); also called a movement phrase or movement sentence.
Movement Problem	A question proposed by the teacher that encourages students to create multiple movement solutions. E.g., “How many different ways can you make a curved shape?”, “Create a movement sequence that makes a pattern”.
Nonlocomotor	Movement that does <u>not</u> involve traveling from one place to another. Sometimes called axial movement, e.g., bend, twist, stretch, sway, swing, and reach.
Pathway	An imaginary line created by moving through space. Pathways can be on the floor as you travel through space or in the air as you move body parts.
Pivot	A change of body facing in which the ball of one foot remains fixed to a spot on the floor while the other foot changes location.
Press	A quality of movement that is sustained, strong, and direct.
Promenade	To perform this movement, a couple walks side by side, usually with skater’s hold.
Punch	A quality of movement that is strong, direct, and sudden.
Range Of Movement	The size of a movement, or how much area is required to execute a movement, e.g., large or small.
Relationships	A dance term which reflects the spatial position of body parts to each other, one person to another or group, people to the space around them (usually relationship words are preposition words, e.g., around, above, below, etc.).
Rhythm	Long and short sounds and silences that are heard one after the other, can be even and uneven.
Run	A basic locomotor form in which the transfer of weight from one foot to the other is fast, including a moment when both feet are off the ground.
Sashay	A slide or sideways gallop often done with a partner.
Scattered Formation	A group of individuals or couples spaced randomly around the movement area.
Schottische	A dance style based on a sequence of three steps and one hop in an even rhythm. Can be done forward, backward, or to the side.
Self-Space/General Space	Self-space is the area that an individual occupies, sometimes called personal space. General space is the total area through which more than one person is moving; sometimes called shared space.
Skater’s Hold	A traditional position for dance in which partners stand side by side with the same hands being held.
Skip	A locomotor combination of a step and a hop. The step has the value of a quarter note and the hop has the value of an eighth note; the leading foot alternates.
Slash	A quality of movement that is sudden, strong, and indirect.
Slide	A sideways gallop.

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Space	The area in which movement occurs.
Stage Direction	Geographic locations on the stage, i.e., downstage, upstage, stage left, stage right, also text in a script suggesting action of the players, often written parenthetically, or in italics.
Stamp	Bring foot to the floor forcefully, making a loud sound without transferring the weight to that foot.
Star	(Right-hand star, Left-hand star) A folk dance figure in which a group of dancers (usually four) join right/left hands in the center and move around the center.
Step-Hop	A 2/4 dance step similar to a skip except the rhythm is even and each movement gets one whole beat.
Step-Touch	A dance step in which weight is transferred to one foot on one beat and the other foot taps the floor on the next beat without transferring the weight.
Strong/Light	Requiring high level of energy/requiring low level of energy/force.
Strong Beat/Weak Beat	The accented or stressed beat in a series is the strong beat; can be reflected in dance by emphasizing the strong beat with a movement.
Style	A quality of movement or a particular way movement elements are combined that makes a dance recognizable as unique. Styles can be influenced by the origin of the dance or the kind of music used (e.g., jazz, square dance, or Appalachian clogging).
Sustained	A continuous quality of movement with no sudden changes or surprises, i.e., smooth.
Sudden	A sharp quality of movement with many quick changes.
Sway	Shift weight from one foot to the other without taking feet from the ground.
Swing	A quality of movement in which there is a suspension and a release, like the feeling one gets on a playground swing, e.g., swinging one's arms.
Tempo	The speed of the movement (fast, medium, and slow).
Turn	A continuous change of body facing.
Twist	Turn a body part against a fixed point or point of resistance.
Up And Down	Opposite movement along an imaginary vertical line unilateral performed on one side of the body.
Unison Movement	At least two people moving identically.
Waltz	A 3/4 time dance in which the first step of each measure is slightly accented.
Weave	Go in and out, e.g., going in front of one person in a circle, in back of the next, and in front of the following person.
Wring	A quality of movement that is sustained, strong, and indirect.
Wring The Dishrag	Partners face each other holding both hands and swing hands to one side and up. As hands go overhead, partners turn underneath their joined arms, face back to back, then bring the arms down, and resume front-to-front facing.