

INSTRUCTIONS

This Learning Packet has two parts: (1) text to read and (2) questions to answer.

The text describes a particular sport or physical activity, and relates its history, rules, playing techniques, scoring, notes and news.

The Response Forms (questions and puzzles) check your understanding and appreciation of the sport or physical activity.

INTRODUCTION

Long before there was a written record of most cultures, there was dance. For primitive cultures, dance commemorated births, marriages, religious occasions, deaths, political victories, wars and other events.

We normally think of dance as one of the fine arts, and so it is. But dance requires athletic as well as artistic ability. Whether we choose ballet, modern dance, jazz or ethnic dance, the movements required in dancing demand stamina, strength and endurance.

HISTORY OF DANCE

TRADITIONAL DANCE

In ancient Egypt, dance was an important part of daily life. Drawings done in the fourth century B.C. suggest that Egyptians had a fairly advanced concept of dance. Some Egyptian dances were similar to our ballroom dancing; others were like modern belly dancing.

Ancient Greece also had its dances, some quite similar to those of the Egyptians. One dance in particular became famous—a ritual in which Greek women stamped on grapes and whirled about in honor of the god Dionysus.



The Greek dramatist, Euripides, wrote a play about the ecstatic dimension of dance. The play was called “The Bacchae.” In it, an overly-serious man, Pentheus, did not recognize the dangers of being caught up in wild dances, and was torn limb-from-limb by the women, who mistook him for an animal.

Rome was a little slower to incorporate dancing into daily life, using dance mainly in choral processions until about 200 B.C. Many Romans considered dancing a dangerous activity and felt that only the insane would dance by choice. Yet by the second century B.C., Romans were using pantomime dance in dramas.

During the Middle Ages, dance as an art form spread all over Europe. Italy with its many festivals and celebrations, made use of jugglers and offered instruction in social dance. During the late Middle Ages, the earliest form of ballet emerged as part of the Italian *commedia del arte* or in England, as part of the so-called “mystery cycles” of religious dramas that traveled from town to town with minstrels and jugglers.

The word “balletti,” originally referring to dances performed in ballrooms, was first used to refer to productions in the theatre. In 1581, the first ballet, “Circe,” was written and produced by an Italian-born Frenchman. Another Italian who was living in France, Jean Baptiste Lully, established a dance department at the Royal Academy of Music in 1661. Lully was responsible for influencing the music, scenery and movements used in classical ballet.



By the 1600s, the center for ballet moved from Italy to France where the Academie Royale de Danse was founded. With the advent of the Academie, there was now a special school for ballet. Dance was a discipline taught and administered by specialists.

By the 1700s, ballet had progressed to the point where the well-to-do felt that dance was simply part of any well-rounded general education. It was also thought to teach good manners and character. Consequently, many rich European children were taught to dance.

America brought a somewhat different attitude to the art of dance. Colonists in the south were generally more tolerant of dance than those in the Puritan-dominated North. However, there were plenty of dancing teachers in both North and South to teach the dances remembered from the Old World. African-American slaves also brought their own dances from Africa which later became an influence on dancing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The nineteenth century saw a tremendous growth of interest in ballet. The Italian Marius

Petipa left Italy to work in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1847; he choreographed such works of classical ballet as “Don Quixote,” “Swan Lake” and “The Nutcracker.” Promoter Sergei Diaghilev imported ballet from Russia to America, bringing with him such dancers as Anna Pavlova and Vaslav Nijinsky and choreographer George Balanchine. Balanchine established the New York City Ballet and eventually helped to change the face of dance in America.

MODERN DANCE

As ballet gained a foothold in America, another form of dance was created in direct opposition to the principles of ballet. Innovator Isadora Duncan had a ballet background, yet found that the strict movements of classical ballet did not allow her sufficient freedom of expression. She created her own dance form based on the spontaneous expression of feelings — what we later came to call “modern dance.” Inspired by Isadora Duncan, dancers such as Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn created a school and company to train the next generation of modern dancers, among them Martha Graham. She in turn trained Paul Taylor, Merce Cunningham and Twyla Tharp, all of whom have helped to make America the center of modern dance.



JAZZ DANCE

Jazz dancing is a form closely related to modern dance. It was originally inspired by African-American slave music which eventually developed into jazz. The syncopated rhythm of jazz music enhances the jerky, high-energy style of jazz dancing.

AEROBIC DANCE

Aerobic dance involves doing a variety of stepping, jumping, spinning and twisting motions, following the rhythms of music. It is a fairly recent addition to dance, and started simply as a form of rhythmic exercise to increase the heart rate. Yet it quickly developed into a form of its own, borrowing many of the steps and movements of ballet, jazz and modern dance.



THEATRICAL DANCE

Although dance had frequently been used as part of a drama or an opera, only with the twentieth century production of “OKLAHOMA!” did dance theater take on a new dimension. Agnes deMille choreographed the dance sequences in this musical and made them an integral part of the story. She used ballet, folk dance and modern dance to carry the story line. Similar contributions were made by Jerome Robbins, choreographer of the dance sequences in “WEST SIDE STORY.”



THE LIVES OF DANCERS

Dance is an excellent form of exercise for both women and men of all ages. Dance never remains stagnant; it is always changing, always incorporating new movements and rhythms from many cultures and lifestyles. Today the well-rounded dancer studies ballet, jazz, modern, tap dance and aerobics in his or her quest to learn the language of movement.



Unfortunately, only a few highly talented professionals are able to make a living exclusively by dance. Funding in the arts is scarce and many dance companies have folded for lack of public support.

In addition, dance is a demanding career, requiring dancers to begin their training at an early age. Many talented dancers drop out of school before they have developed other skills. Professional dance in America is a young person’s game and those over thirty often find it difficult to find work. Sadly, dancers may train for fifteen years to dance for only a few years. In an entire career, a talented dancer will make only one-quarter of the salary that a pro baseball player will make in one season.

HOW DANCES ARE PERFORMED

THE FIVE FOOT POSITIONS OF CLASSICAL BALLET

The five positions of the feet in classical dance are the basic moves around which all ballet and other dance movements are developed. Ballet students must first become proficient in the five positions and learn to do warmup exercises in these positions. In all forms of dance, warmup exercises, stretches and flexes are always the first movements done before anything else is attempted:

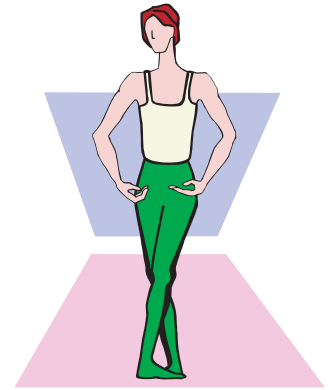
First position: Legs are side by side with the heels of both feet touching.

Second position: Legs are slightly apart with the feet turned outward.

Third position: The front (right) leg is partially in front of the left leg, with the heel of the right foot in front of the left arch.

Fourth position: The right leg and foot are placed in front of the left leg and slightly separated from it. The weight of the body should fall evenly over both legs.

Fifth position: The same as the fourth position except that the legs and feet are positioned tightly together.



In each position, the dancer must remain erect, maintaining good posture, with stomach muscles pulled tight, head up and knees straight.

EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING

For practice and rehearsals, clothing ranges from grubby leotards and sweat pants to full costumes for dress rehearsals. The essential property of any dance clothing is that it provides for a full range of motion of all bodyparts. In short, you can't dance if you don't have freedom of movement.

DANCE NOTES AND NEWS

Usually, when one thinks of dance competitions, one thinks of old movies like "Saturday Night Fever," in which John Travolta competed in disco dancing contests, or "They Shoot Horses, Don't They," in which Jane Fonda competed in marathon dancing, where contestants danced until they dropped. The last couple standing won the prize.

Reality is much more interesting. For example, every three years, the New York International Ballet Competition draws contestants from all over the world to compete, show their talents, and enhance their career opportunities. Winning dancers are awarded medals based on their cumulative scores.

On the collegiate level, International Collegiate Ballroom Dancing Competitions attract student dancers from all over the world, to compete for awards and opportunities after

graduation.

In case you still think that dance is limited to the Senior Prom, the United States and Canada combined list hundreds of collegiate dance teams on the Internet. The actual number is much greater. A quick glance at College Course Guides shows the increased popularity of dance as a field of study. There are not only many dance classes you can take for college credit, but also many courses which focus on dance and movement as therapy for those with mental and/or physical problems.



Gene Kelly, one of the world's greatest movie dancers died on February 2, 1996. Kelly was among America's premiere performers, both as a dancer and as an actor. Many claim his role as D'Artagnan in "The Three Musketeers" has never been equalled.

Other dancers often compared Kelly with Fred Astaire. While Astaire's dancing style was seen as restrained and sophisticated, Kelly's was seen as flamboyant and romantic. His movie, "An American in Paris," climaxed with a 17-minute ballet with Leslie Caron. But his glorious dance number, "Dancing in the Rain," is remembered by everyone as his crowning achievement.

You can stay abreast of dance performance and competitions by checking out sites like this one on the internet: <http://www.dancescape.com/>

National Dance Week

National Dance Week was celebrated in 2007 from April 20 through April 29, in 44 states and Canada, with performances, classes and seminars, covering the range of dance genres and styles, involving the spectrum of dance personnel from dancers to choreographers, costumers, designers, administrators and educators. National Dance Week captures everyone's secret desire to be a great dancer. When dance innovators Capezio and Dance Magazine launched the grass-roots event several years ago to bring dance to America's doorstep, St. Louis signed on as a staunch supporter.



With the mission to heighten awareness of dance and its cultural contributions, National Dance Week has achieved congressional support through the aid of the United Dance Merchants of America.

For more information about dance, and in particular, *National Dance Week*, visit this web site:

<http://www.danceonline.com>

Improvisational Classes and Workshops

Strictly Improv is a web site that is devoted to help people “dance their own dances.” It includes a partial worldwide listing of classes, workshops and links on the topic of Movement and Dance Improvisation. Some topics you’ll find links for here include: Skinner Releasing, Authentic Movement, Action Theatre, Physical Theatre, Halprin Technique, and Dance and Expressive Arts Therapies, among many others.

<http://www.geocities.com/Vienna/Strasse/3622/improv.html>

STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET

DANCE

NAME _____

DATE _____

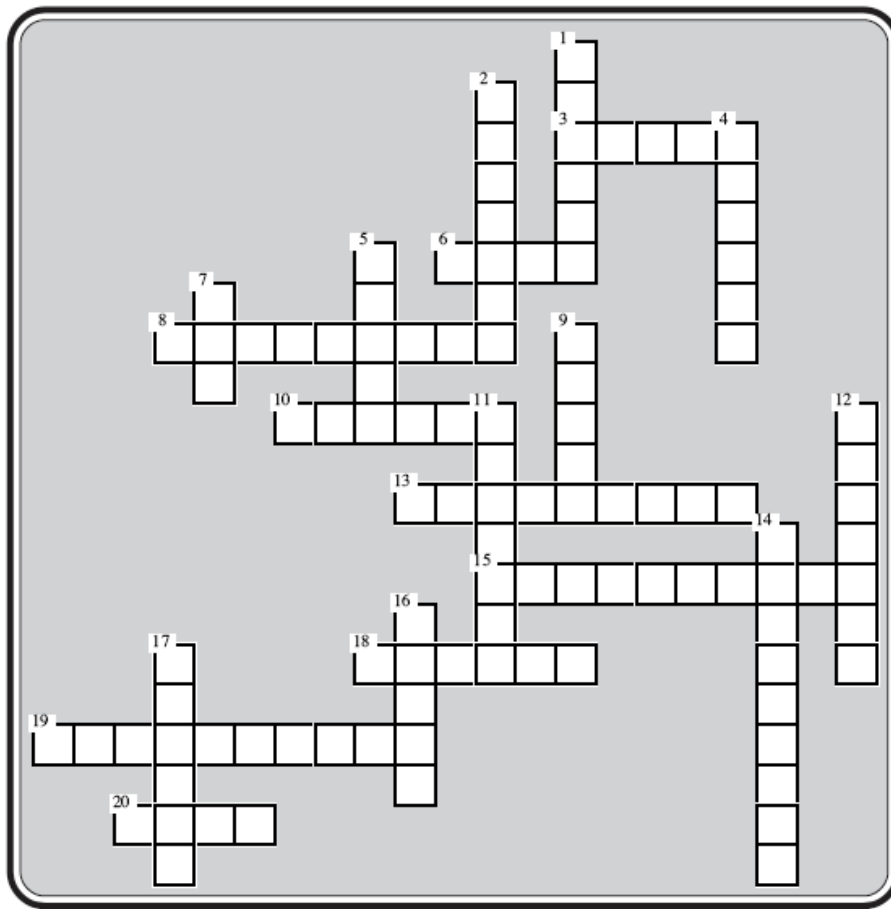
WHAT TO DO

The following questions will help you to have a greater appreciation and understanding of dance. Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, and write in complete sentences.

1. How was dance used in primitive cultures?
2. Name at least four types of dance practiced today.
3. What physical benefits can be derived from dance?
4. What is “aerobic dance” and how did it develop?

5. Why is dance such a demanding and difficult career for many young dancers?
6. What are the five positions of classical ballet?
7. Describe the posture that must be maintained in each of the five positions.
8. Who developed modern dance and why?
9. What is “theatrical dance” and how did it originate?
10. What was the musical inspiration for modern jazz dancing?

Name: _____ Date: _____

**Across:**

3. Developed modern dance
6. Number of foot positions in classical ballet
8. Romans thought dance was _____
10. Italian who choreographed Don Quixote and Swan Lake
13. Early Greek who wrote about ecstasy of dance
15. Established the New York City Ballet
18. Isadora
19. Dancing as part of a drama or musical
20. Type of dancing closely related to modern dance

Down:

1. During this age dance became an art form
2. The choreographer of "West Side Story"
4. Ballet position with feet turned out
5. Ballet position with heels of both feet touching
7. Type of dance developed in America
9. She was a contemporary American modern dancer
11. Combination of exercise and dance
12. Early dance productions in the theater
14. Brought ballet from Russia to North America
16. Producer of some of the modern ballet conventions
17. She was a great American modern dancer

Name: _____ Date: _____



Use the clues below to discover words in the above puzzle. Circle the words.

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