



## Dance #1: What's so special about dance?

You don't need to be a dancer to be a brilliant dance teacher: you can find examples of brilliant dance online! It could be a live performance from the Royal Ballet company or an interesting contemporary music video.

Actively engage your learners whilst they watch these productions by asking them to analyse and reflect on what they see.

In this way the building blocks are being put in place for creating dances of their own.

Teach the vocabulary they need to describe and identify dance movements and performances, building confidence and familiarity with what's special and unique about dance.

### ACTIVITY 1: Dance Bingo

1. Choose a dance video online which suits your theme or that will engage your learners. You could explore classic contemporary dance works such as those by Jasmin Vordimon, Matthew Bourne or a contemporary dancer such as Sean Tuan John who is based in Wales.
2. Introduce the dance movements one-by-one at first to ensure a good understanding of what the learners are looking for:-  
**Jump, twist, stillness, turn, stretch, travel, roll, symmetrical shapes, asymmetrical shapes.**
3. Provide a bingo card with all these to look out for as they watch. This activity will encourage learners to look for a variety of dance movements in the pieces, and familiarise the learners with key dance vocabulary.

This is a series of 15 'Skills not Frills' resource sheets, each accompanying a short video.

This is no #1 of 3 dance resource sheets and accompanying film.

A2 Connect Arts Champions are teachers who work with us to share their practice and expertise with other schools/teachers in the region.

## ACTIVITY 2: Adverb tennis

1. Introduce the learners to the adverbs- words we can use to describe the movements
2. Stand in a circle and give each learner an adverb from the list:-  
**quickly, slowly, heavily, lightly, suddenly, smoothly, repetitively, softly, robotically, staccato, lyrically, powerfully.**
3. Choose to either throw an imaginary tennis ball to one another, or to throw a real item:- silk scarves throw slowly and gently and will give a lyrical quality from the beginning.
4. You could display this specific dance vocabulary on a wall or on flashcards so the learners become familiar with each word and are confident to use them in your lessons.

An alternative to the adverb tennis is 'emotion tennis' to develop your learner's emotional literacy:- throwing the scarf angrily, lovingly, uncaringly, hopelessly, thoughtfully, daringly, distractedly....

## What to look out for in a dance performance:

**Music-** Film/orchestral music often gives a many-layered sound which allows for many interpretations. Percussion rhythms can be created by clapping, chanting, playing drums on your stomach or thighs etc.

**Costumes-** costume can be just hats or headwear, bring a splash of relevant colour, or add a historical/cultural context.

**Props-** items held/lifted/stood upon would be props. A collection of silk scarves/different fabrics can be useful for open-ended props.

**Atmosphere/Story-** is there a theme or story to the piece? How is the story told?

**Dynamics** – Is there a change in the dance, for example from small movements to big energetic movements?

**Pace or Tempo** – Are the movements slow and relaxed or do they look like they are in a hurry!

**Structure** - Does the dance fit into different sections, like a verse and a chorus in a song? Is there repetition, surprising elements or turning points?

**Stillness-** Does the dance have still moments? Why?

**Lighting-** How is the performance lit? How does that add to the meaning or atmosphere of the piece? Compare and contrast candlelight/spotlight/coloured lights for example.

**Staging-** How is the stage set out? Are the audience standing or sitting in front, behind, or all around the dance?

## What next and where to find more help

### LINKS: Watch dance performances with your pupils

<https://jasminvardimon.com/>

<http://www.matthewbourne.com/>

<https://ndcwales.co.uk/>

<https://www.wmc.org.uk/>