

DREAMCATCHERS

POPEJOY SCHOOLTIME SERIES TEACHING GUIDE 1 - 12

Dance Theatre of Harlem



Dreamcatchers Teaching Guides align with the Common Core Standards.

Standards Addressed By Attending the Performance

NMCCSS
ELA-Literacy.SL.2

NCAS
DA:Re9.1



“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

– DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Synopsis

The Dance Theatre of Harlem Lecture/Demonstration is an informal presentation on the art and science of dance. The lecture demonstration has three components: a brief, front-of-curtain introduction, demonstrations of ballet training and stage lighting followed by excerpts from Dance Theatre of Harlem repertoire. The excerpts show how all of the elements come together to create the magic of performance.

Every ballet dancer from student to professional who is serious about perfecting his or her art begins each day with a ballet class. A typical class is divided into two parts, the barre and the center.

During the barre, dancers execute specific movements to warm up and develop dexterity and control of the muscles of the legs and feet as well as coordination with the upper body. A barre is a horizontal rod or pipe that is placed approximately 3.5 feet from the floor and is used for support. Dancers hold onto the barre with one hand while they exercise the opposite leg. In a normal class exercises are done on the right and left sides. In the Lecture Demonstration the exercises are done only on one side, allowing time for description and explanation of the French terminology used throughout the class.

In the center, dancers use the full range of body movement as well as space to execute the movements they have prepared at the barre. Female dancers work sur les pointes, or on the tips of their toes. To accomplish this, female dancers wear special shoes called pointe shoes. In addition to demonstrating frequently used movement vocabulary for the women, an explanation of the pointe shoe is also covered.

The final section of the Lecture Demonstration is made up of selections from the Dance Theatre of Harlem repertoire. These excerpts put into practice the movement vocabulary—or steps—of class as building blocks for making dances. Varied in length and style, the excerpts show how music, steps, and dynamics come together to create a dance.





Excerpt 1

Vessels / "Belief"

Choreography by Darrell Grand Moultrie; Music by Ezio Basso

"Belief" is the second of four sections. It is danced by three women.



Excerpt 2

Equilibrium
(BROTHERHOOD)

Choreography by Darrell Grand Moultrie; Music by Kenji Bunch

An exploration of athleticism, precision and individuality danced by three men.



Excerpt 3

Brahms Variations (adagio)

Choreographed by Robert Garland

The adagio section displays sustained lyrical movement performed by a central couple supported by a corps de ballet of three.



Excerpt 4

Return / "Mother Popcorn"

Choreographed by Robert Garland; Music by Aretha Franklin and James Brown

Garland interweaves the vocabulary and style of classical ballet with contemporary African American social dances.



Vocabulary

ballet — a dance form performed to music using precise and highly formalized steps and gestures characterized by light, graceful, fluid movements and the use of pointe shoes

choreographer — one who composes the sequence of steps and moves for a dance

energy — amount or force of the movement; sometimes referred to as the color, texture or dynamics of the movement

Harlem — a district in New York City, historically with a large black population

rhythm — a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound

space — the whole design and use of the place in which a dance unfolds

tempo — the speed at which a passage of music is or should be played

time — measurable period when movement or dance occurs. Dance articulates the passage of time through a myriad of movement patterns, from complex, rhythmic to long, unbroken stillness

Ballet Terms

glissade (glee SAAD) — glide, a travelling step that begins and ends in fifth position moving to the front, side or back. Glissades are small jumps done close to the ground to link steps in a combination.

plié (plee-AY) — to bend, pliés are used to warm up the muscles of the legs and feet. All jumps in ballet begin and end in a plié. There are two types of pliés: demi and grand (small and large).

rond de jambe (rawn duh-JHAHM) — circle the leg, this exercise loosens hip ligaments and improves turnout. The leg and foot are brushed forward, then circled around to the back and closed at the original position.

tendu (than-DEW) — to stretch, this exercise stretches and strengthens the arch underneath the foot and extends the leg fully from the hip. The toe always touches the floor.

Fun Facts for Students

Dance is often used as **a way to express**

how one is feeling and to socially connect with others.

People from **all over the world** use dance to mourn, celebrate, worship, honor, heal, demonstrate power, and to entertain.

Dance is an **international language** - like music and math.

Dance can be a window into nuances of **cultures and time periods**.

Dance and rhythmic movement are often used as **nonverbal ways of communication** with other human beings socially, especially when language is a barrier.

Dance can communicate a story to an audience, have a message or **specific idea**, or can simply be communicating a visual effect or a range of emotions.

Dance can be improvised or created spontaneously as it is performed.

Costumes are used to help bring the choreographed dance to life and communicate the story.

A male dancer can lift over 1 - 1/2 tons worth of ballerinas during a performance; the equivalent to lifting a 100-pound weight 30 times.

About

Dance

Dance is a sport. As much as dancers are artists, they are also athletes. They need to maintain flexibility, physical and mental endurance, and muscular strength. Yoga, weightlifting, and cardio exercises are some of the routines practiced to stay in shape. Most exercise for an average of six hours every day. The harder they work, the more they achieve, just like in sports.

Dance is diversified. There are countless types of dance in various countries, such as belly-dancing, break-dancing, ballroom, salsa, tango, tap, body-popping, and so on. Most countries have their own dance type(s) which they showcase as a part of their culture. Dance can be done for purely entertainment purposes, but it can also tell stories and communicate certain feelings to the audience.

Learning dance. Dance is not just about having the talent to do the moves. In some countries, dance is an integral part of the National Curriculum and can be further pursued up to PhD level degree. More and more students are enrolling in dance classes or are pursuing dance as a full-time career. More higher learning institutions are offering dance courses,

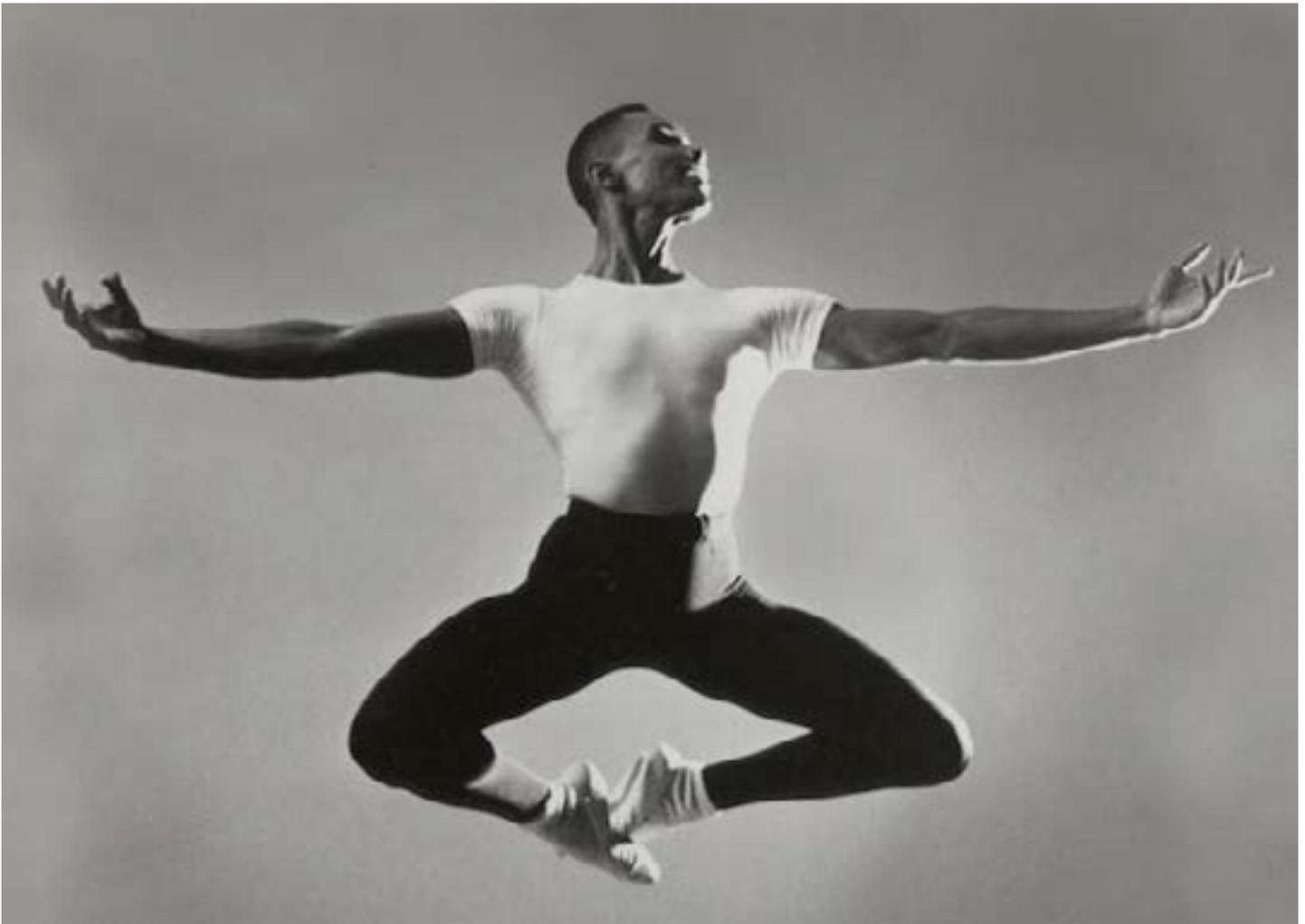
making it possible for anyone with a passion for the art to learn. Even the “worst” dancer can learn to dance quite beautifully if they have passion, a positive attitude, perseverance, and determination.

Dance is passionate. No matter what kind of dance routine, audience members connect with the passion contained in it. Dancing releases endorphins in the body, resulting in positive moods. Dancers are passionate about their art form and feel very connected to it and more alive because of it, more than they feel when doing other activities. Their passion shows in every movement they make, in each pose they assume, in the look in their eyes.

Dance is timeless. Just as in literature where themes transcend centuries, the life of a piece of choreography continues to speak in a language that knows no time limit.

How dance evolved. Centuries ago, in Europe, only the men danced. In fact, women weren’t even allowed onstage; in early theatre, women’s roles were played by young boys or men. Just as today’s dancers use movement to tell a story, those early dances were most

often about myths or war. Ballet, as we now know it, originated in the 1400s and was used as entertainment for Italian and French royalty. That is why the names for the various ballet positions are in either French or Italian. In ballet, the body is held mostly upright, with the legs turned out from the hip. In the early 1700s, dancing for both males and females became popular. Female dancers, or ballerinas, began wearing short skirts, or tutus, so audience members could see their legs and appreciate and understand the new dance techniques being developed. During the 1800s, most ballets told a story from beginning to end. Famous examples include the Christmas holiday ballet, *The Nutcracker*, or *Swan Lake*, which is based on a fairy tale. Then in the 1900s, dance began to change. Dancers removed their shoes; they performed in clothes normally reserved for rehearsal; and the way in which their bodies moved changed. Dancers felt free to show off their athleticism in new and different ways along with their individual personalities and range of emotions. This was the beginning of modern dance.



Arthur Mitchell, Founder / President/ Artistic Director

Arthur Mitchell, the son of a Harlem building superintendent, was a plucky street kid, sneaking into nightclubs to watch hoofers, men and women who largely performed tap dances. “I took over running the family when my father left. I was 12”. Mitchell recalled, “I didn’t want to be a ballet dancer. My motivation was the musicals. ... Vaudeville was incredible. The Apollo, fantastic. Fred Astaire? When I auditioned for the High School of the Performing Arts, I rented top hat, white tie and tails, and sang Steppin’ Out With My Baby. They took me not because I was good but because I had so much nerve.”

After graduation he was accepted to the all-white School of American Ballet at a time when few African-Americans had the opportunity to pursue a dance career. Bruising rejections, Mitchell suspected, stemmed from racial prejudice which ironically drove him to ballet. He figured, “If I took ballet, that would make me so good they couldn’t refuse me.”

In 1955, Arthur Mitchell became the first African-American to become a permanent member of the New York City Ballet. He quickly rose to the position of Principal Dancer but encountered many of the prejudices faced by African-Americans in the 1950s. “Jackie Robinson was making headlines in baseball, and I said I didn’t want any publicity about being a Negro barrier breaker. At my first performance, no one knew I was coming out.” He was

21. A few years later he broke the black/white barrier and not only partnered, but openly touched, a white woman. “Do you know what it took for Balanchine (the Director/Choreographer of NYCB) to put me, a black man, on stage with a white woman? This was 1957, before civil rights. He showed me how to take her (holding her delicately by the wrist). He said, ‘put your hand on top.’ The skin colors were part of the choreography. He saw what was going to happen in the world and put it on stage.”

After the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, Mitchell was inspired to begin a ballet school for children in his home neighborhood of Harlem. He wanted to show the world that anybody could succeed, given the opportunity.

His specific inspiration was Dr. King’s teaching of nonviolence. Mitchell determined that by teaching the children of Harlem to dance, he was giving them a way up and out, using their own gifts and hard work to do so.

When he founded Dance Theatre of Harlem in 1969, Mitchell cultivated dancers representing different nationalities and cultures from around the world. He fought against stereotypes and taught his dancers how nothing should limit their goals and aspirations. “I just love to dance. Whatever I could do to dance, I did it.”

The Name Game + Movement

Grades 1 - 12

NMCC
ELA-Literacy.SL.2

NCAS
TH:Cr1.1

Lesson 1

Objectives

Students will:

- create a movement to match with their name;
- remember and repeat those who have gone before;
- combine movements to create a choreographed group piece.

Materials

- A large open space in which the class may move freely

Procedure

1. You can use this activity to build community and to help everyone learn names at the beginning of the school year, or as a movement and vocal activity throughout the year. Have the students gather in a circle. Divide into two circles if you have a large or young class.
2. Ask each student to think of one movement to match with their name.
3. Each student will say their name and perform their corresponding movement.
4. The group will repeat that student's name and movement once.
5. When it is the first student's turn again they will repeat their name and movement a second time.
6. The turn will pass to the next student in the circle. Before they say their name and movement they must say, "this is (name of person to their left) and do that person's movement. Then they do theirs.
7. Start from the beginning of the circle again but this time everyone says the name and movement of each person in turn. The movements should be done in unison.
8. Spread the circle out to form a line. Have the students each take a turn stepping forward, making their own movement without saying their name, then stepping back in line.
9. As soon as the last person finishes the entire line begins with the first person's movement (staying in line) and moves immediately into the second and so on through all the movements as though they are performing a dance.
10. Have them repeat this until their movements flow together and are made at the same time. Then try steps 8 - 10 starting with the last person.
11. Discuss what they experienced as changes were made and more was asked of them at the same time.

Extensions/Modifications

- Add music to steps 8 - 10. Have the students move to the beat of the music.
- Vary the genre of music and tempo.
- Try this exercise using only ballet moves or movements they saw in the show.

Assessment

- Quality of participation

Dance 101

Lesson 2

Grades 1 - 6

NMCCSS
ELA-Literacy.SL.2

NCAS
TH:Cr1.1

Objectives

Students will:

- experiment with movement.

Materials

- A large open space in which the class may move freely

Procedure

1. Explain to the students that dance can be inspired by anything: sports, running, jumping rope, acrobatics, gymnastics, and martial arts, to name a few. Today they are going to experiment with movement. It will happen in three parts.
2. Ask students to experiment with movement. Either in a circle or moving freely:
 - a. Walk as if you are under water, or going uphill against a strong wind.
 - b. You are as light as a feather.
 - c. You weigh as much as King Kong.
 - d. You are an egg frying; a snowman melting; a flower growing in the sun.
 - e. Pick an animal and move around as if you are that animal, without making noise.
3. Have them sit in the space and ask them how they felt about being able to express all those things? What animals did they see in the room? How could they tell what they were?
4. Explain that now they will expand on their ideas of movement.
5. On the chalk board, as a bulletin board, poster, etc., have the class make the following lists:
 - a. Opposites: High/Low, Fast/Slow, Loud/Quiet, Heavy/Light, Long/Short, Hot/Cold, Solid/Liquid, etc.
 - b. Movement: tip-toe, dance, jump, march, float, jiggle, skip, hop, slide, crawl, fly, swim, gallop, sway, leap, twist, melt, glide, creep, etc.
 - c. (Optional) Rhythms: Have them name and draw the musical notes: whole, half, dotted half, quarter, quarter rest.
6. Now they will move based on the words called out to them adjusting according to the direction.
7. Have them spread out in a circle or let them work free form; However, they are not to touch other students. Ask them to be aware of the movement around them and to be careful near others. They are to stop moving each time you call "freeze."
8. Have fun! When the period has about 10 minutes remaining, have the students sit on the floor again and describe how the different words affected their movements and what they felt about these movements. Would using these words help them choreograph their own dance?

Extensions/Modifications

- In small groups have the students choose up to ten of the words or create another list of their own. Give them time to practice, then each group will present their choreography. Have the students who are observing see if they can identify the words represented.

Assessment

- Quality of participation

Bonus Explorations

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Discuss more modern forms of dancing, such as hip-hop, disco, punk or slamming, break dancing, and others. What kinds of music are used? What kinds of costumes? Note how for many of these styles of dance, specific steps are never officially preserved, but are taught and passed along from one person to the next, one neighborhood to the next. Do students know any group dances, such as square dancing or clogging? Do people have different dance styles based on their neighborhood, city, state, or country? Have the students do research. Discuss. Demonstrate. Teach.

Dance can easily be linked to math through geometry and the study of shapes. Have students analyze dance positions they see in the performance or in a video. Look for shapes that dancers' bodies make as they move across the stage. The students can draw the dance positions they observed in the performance, then identify the geometric shapes they created.

The values of self-discipline, self-esteem, focus and goal-setting are stressed at Dance Theatre of Harlem. Discuss with your students how these values cross over to other areas of their lives, such as education. Make comparisons between dancers and athletes. For example, both have specific exercises for development of muscles and are constantly training their bodies. Both wear a kind of uniform that allows for freedom of movement. Athletes and dancers must concentrate and focus to achieve desired results, just as students must concentrate and focus on their studies.

Resources

BOOKS

For Younger Children:

A Very Young Dancer, Jill Krementz, Yearling Special/Dell Publishing, 1976.

Ballet for Boys and Girls, Katherine Sorely Walker and Joan Butler, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1979.

Of Swans, Sugarplums and Satin Slippers: Ballet Stories for Children, Violette Verdy, Scholastic, NY 1991.

The Firebird, Misty Copeland, illustrated

by Christopher Myers, G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, NY, NY, 2014.

For Older Children:

Ballet Steps: Practice to Performance, Anthony Dufort, Clarkson N. Potter Inc., NY, 1985.

Barefoot to Balanchine (How to Watch Dance), Mary Kerner, Anchor, NY, 1990.

Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina, Misty Copeland, Touchstone, New York, NY, 2014.

Magic Slippers (Stories from Ballet), Gilda Berger, Doubleday, NY, 1990.

Black Dance in America: A History Through Its Peoples, James Haskins, Thomas Y. Crowell, NY, 1990.

Ballerina: The Art of Women in Classical Ballet, Mary Clarke and Clement Crisp, Princeton Book Co., Pennington, NJ, 1987.

WEBSITES

[Dance Theatre of Harlem](#)

[How to Learn Basic Ballet Moves](#)

[A History of Modern Dance, \(Ballet Austin\)](#)

[DanceAdvantage](#)

[Contemporary Dance](#)

[An introduction to over 40 traditional and contemporary dance forms](#)

[How to Line Dance - Illustrated](#)

About the Company

Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) was founded in 1969 by Arthur Mitchell and Karel Shook as their personal commitment to the people of Harlem in response to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It stands as a world renowned cultural institution, consisting of: the Dance Theatre of Harlem School; Dancing Through Barriers® - a leading education and community outreach program; and an international touring company that continues to receive praise and unparalleled acclaim for its' stellar performances and eclectic repertoire. Two of DTH's many achievements are its' historic 1988 invitation to be the first American Ballet Company to appear in the former Soviet Union and in 1992, they performed for the first multi-racial audience at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre in South Africa. The organization is united in its mission to be artistic, educational, and socially aware.

Questions to Engage & Connect

What did you see/notice in the production?

Do you remember the basic steps on which ballet is based?

What makes a ballet classical or modern?

What moves were smooth and graceful, or strong and powerful?

How did the dancers use their arms, legs, bodies, and heads?

Did the ballet seem to convey stories, moods or emotions?

How did the dancing vary depending on the music used?

POPEJOY SCHOOLTIME

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About the Schooltime Series

The Popejoy Schooltime Series brings national and international touring companies and performers to Albuquerque. Each company is selected with youth and family audiences in mind, and our repertoire reflects the cultural diversity of our global community. The Schooltime Series includes new plays, familiar stories, literary works, biographies, mythologies, folktales, science shows, music, dance, and puppetry. These professional performing artists create entertaining educational experiences designed to encourage literacy, creativity, communication, and imagination.

The Dreamcatchers Teaching Guides

By their nature, the arts engage students in learning through observing, listening, and moving, offering learners various ways to acquire information and act on it to build understanding. They also offer a natural way to differentiate instruction as the arts offer multiple modes of representation, expression, and engagement. Additionally, the arts provide an authentic context in which students solve problems. By engaging in learning in one subject, learning in another subject is reinforced and extended, and vice versa. These guides introduce students to what they will see, a basic vocabulary associated with the show, fun facts, vetted resources, and activities providing a connection between the arts and classroom curriculum.

Popejoy Hall

Popejoy Hall is New Mexico's premiere nonprofit venue for the performing arts and entertainment. Our mission is to provide access to the performing arts for all New Mexicans.

House Policies & Etiquette

The inside of a theatre where the audience sits is called a "house" and to get along, have fun, and enjoy the shows, there are rules to follow. Schooltime is a wonderful opportunity to learn how good behavior in a live theater is different from watching television. For guidelines to practice with your class and chaperones, including safety, special needs, food and drink, backpacks, cell phones, photography, recordings, and more, go to schooltimeseries.com/house-policies.

Dreamcatcher Credits

Dreamcatchers are Teaching Guides produced by the Education Department of PopejoyHall. Selected materials provided by [Dance Theatre of Harlem Teacher Guide](#), [Pilobolus Company Guide](#), [News One](#), and other resources noted in this guide.