

Teaching Dance Basics

Action	These are the six basic dance actions: <i>Travel, turn (rotate), jump, stillness, fall, gesture</i>
Body parts	Isolated parts of body: joints, muscles, limbs, or surfaces <i>Example: nose, elbows, spine, thigh, shoulder, sole of foot, etc.</i>
Canon	Moving one after the other <i>Imagery: Dominos</i>
Choreography	Creation and composition of dance
Dynamics	Quality of movement; amount of energy used: <i>Example: Rapid, heavy, push, jagged, flowing, sticky, suspension, etc.</i>
Exercise	A set of related movement to warm-up the body <i>Example: Foot exercise; Swing exercise</i>
Focus	Looking at a point in space or another dancer; eye-line
Gesture	A movement that does not travel or take the weight of the body <i>Example: left arm reach; right knee circle in the air; head tilt</i>
Neutral position	Feet in parallel and hip width apart, torso straight, arms by side, focus forward. <i>(Imagery – ‘feet on railway tracks’; ‘top of your head floating towards the ceiling’)</i>
Phrase	A movement combination or section of choreography
Relationship	Dancers relating to each other in space, time, or action <i>Example: facing the same direction; performing different movements but close together; doing same movement but at different speeds</i>
Space	Area in or around which the movement takes place: <i>Size, body shape, direction, level, floor and air patterns</i>
Timing	Variations of speed and rhythm: <i>Example: Stillness, slow-motion, slow, regular or even beat, fast, staccato, repetition, irregular beat, crescendo, etc.</i> <i>Double time: twice as fast. Half time: half the speed</i>
Travelling	Movement that is weight-bearing and moves through the space <i>Example: hopping in a diagonal line</i>
Unison	Moving at the same time <i>Imagery: flock of birds</i>

Action	Description	Movement example
Elevate	<i>Rise or leave the support of the floor</i>	Jump, leap, lift
Travel	<i>Move through the space</i>	Walk, run, skip, hop, crawl
Turn	<i>Rotate a limb or turn whole body</i>	Spin, twist
Gesture	<i>Non-weight bearing movement</i>	Arm position, kick
Stillness	<i>Pause or suspend movement</i>	Balance
Fall	<i>Drop in level. Collapse or go with gravity</i>	From standing to crouching