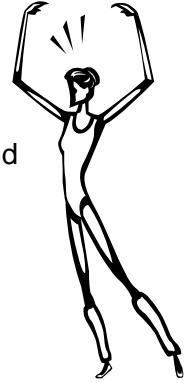


Dance Terms & Definitions



Warm-up: Movements and/or movement phrases which are designed to prepare the body and mind for focus, injury prevention, and muscle development which will be required for more complex movement patterns. The “warm-up” section of a class also elevates the heart rate which in turn increases blood flow to the muscles for increase elasticity.

Space: One of the three elements of dance. Relating to the area through which one moves.

General space: An area of space beyond personal space available for movement space.

Personal space: Space which immediately surrounds the body in stillness and motion. It is also referred to as a “space bubble” which one occupies and includes all planes and directions. This concept is often used to help concretize the concept of personal ownership and respect for others. The exact concept and extent of personal space is defined differently by individuals and cultures.

Stage space: The entire area which a performance occupies.

Positive and Negative space: The positive areas in a composition are definite forms and shapes; negative areas are the unoccupied or empty spaces. For example the body frozen in a shape is the positive space and the empty space around the body’s shape is the negative space.

Dance space map: A map of a dance using drawn pathways, dots, and symbols drawn on paper. A compass and a key or legend is also drawn to help decipher the dance. The map helps the dancer see how they are using the stage space and when and where they do specific movements in choreography.

Line: The path of moving through the space or the design/contour of a shape.

Axial movement: Any movement that is anchored to one spot by a body part using only the available space in any direction without losing initial body contact. Movement is organized around the axis of the body rather than designed for travel from one location to another.

Locomotor movement: A movement that carries the body from one place to another through space using the feet or any other part of the body as a base for moving. Basic locomotor steps - walk, hop, jump, run, leap, skip, gallop, and slide. Even rhythm locomotor steps - walk, hop, jump, leap. Uneven rhythm locomotor steps – skip (one leg steps-hops and alternates), gallop (up-up switching legs in the air), slide (legs open-close).

Pathway: A course of movement on the floor or in the air which could be straight, curved, random, etc.

Levels in space: Levels in which the body moves or holds a shape in relation to the floor and ceiling. High space, middle space, and low space.

Energy: One of the three elements of dance. It is the amount of force or manner in which a movement is performed, or the qualities of movement: percussive, sustained, lyrical, vibratory, rebounding, exploding, collapsing.

Quality: The inherent and essential characteristic or distinctive property of a movement; its distinguishing flavor or color.

Collapsing movement: Movement that is characterized by a relaxed release into gravity, resulting in a folding or curling of the body downward. To suddenly lose force and energy.

Percussive movement: A movement quality that begins with a strong sharp impetus, expends energy in spurts, small or large explosions, stops suddenly at any point and then may start again. For example, the percussive rhythmic bang of a jackhammer, popcorn in a popcorn popper or the sporadic burst of explosions in a display of fireworks.

Suspended movement: A movement that results when the initial force is expended for an instant and a momentary stillness in space is achieved.

Sustained movement: A movement quality that is characterized by an even flow of energy resulting in motion that is ongoing and smooth. The initial impetus of energy creates an accent and the resultant movement quality carries a smooth and seamless nature.

Swinging movement: A movement quality that is characterized by a reaction to the force of gravity. A lifted body part releases and drops along a curved path. Energy is added to the momentum of the drop to carry the body part upward on an arc where it suspends before returning on a downward path.

Vibratory movement: A movement quality that results when extreme tension is applied to a body part which responds with a series of fluttering, quivering movements.

Contrast: A diversity of adjacent parts in color, emotion, tone and style. Diversity in energy qualities.

Variety: The quality or state of having different forms or types, something differing from others of the same general kind.

Unity: A combination or ordering of parts in an artistic production that constitutes a whole or promotes an undivided total effect.

Value: An attribute of color, its lightness or darkness. In movement, the value may be in the energy or within the dynamics.

Unison: Two or more dancers performing the same movement at the same time.

Time: One of the three elements of dance. Relating to the rhythmic aspects of dance as well as the duration and tempo of a movement.

Freeze: A command to cease all movement at once and to remain immobile in the shape the body presented when the signal word was given.

Pattern: A symbol or motif in movement.

Improvisation: Movement which is created spontaneously, ranging from free form to highly structured environments but always with an element of chance. Improvisation is instant and simultaneous choreography and performance.

Choreographer: One who creates dance.

Choreography: The art of making a dance, or the design of a dance.

*Definitions are from "Move! Learn! Dance! A K-6 Dance Teaching Resource Guide,"
And Rachel Swenson, dance specialist*