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Dance Lesson Plans

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Learn along with members of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre as they dance out different emotions with Sesame Street's Elmo.

Watch the Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMDquZqH-EE>

Guided Learning:

- How did the dancers change their movements to express the different emotions? Think about body (what parts of their body did they move and what was their facial expression), time (how fast or slow did they move), space (how high or low and where on the floor did they move), and energy (how light or strong were the movements).
- Play dance charades by writing down at least 10 emotions on slips of paper. Draw them from a hat or bowl one by one and see if you can create a dance to express that new emotion.

Learn More:

Alvin Ailey founded the American Dance Theater in 1958 to carry out his vision of a company dedicated to enriching the American modern dance heritage and preserving the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience. He pioneered programs promoting arts in education, particularly those benefiting underserved communities. Throughout his lifetime, he was awarded numerous distinctions. <https://www.alvinailey.org/>





Learn more about legendary contemporary dancer, Martha Graham, by watching this video presented by the Kennedy Centre Education Digital Learning danced by the Martha Graham Dance Company in 2005.

Watch the Video (60-min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVKGN9xZXHc>

Guided Learning:

- How did Martha Graham get inspired to create her modern dance style?
- 4:15 – Breathing and warm-up exercises and demonstrations. Can you copy the breathing exercises performed by the dancers when they are sitting on the floor?
- 11:30 – finish of the first demonstration. Use this as an opportunity to get up with your child. Try some balancing exercises. How long can you balance on your foot? How far can you extend your body without losing balance?
- 11:40 – Dance is a body language. What emotion is being portrayed by the dancer? Pause at 12:43. Let your child make guesses.
- 12:43 – Dance #1 "Errand Into The Maze" dance about conquering fears based on mythology.
- 18:37– Dance #2 "Appalachian Spring," dance about joy and love, moment right after a wedding
- 22:33 – Walking and falling techniques demonstrations. Pause at 24:51. Use this as an opportunity to get up with your child. Try walking around the room in different ways. Can you walk slow and fast? Can you try jumping while you are walking?
- 24:51 – Falling demonstration.
- 28:23 – Dance #3 "El Penitente," combining the walk and falling techniques. A dance about facing troubles and difficulties.
- 32:18 – Dance #4 "Diversion of Angels," reinforcing dance as a language that we all speak. Shows three aspects of love. Can you figure out those three aspects through the dancers? What do you think love is? What movements did the dancers show that you read as love? How did the music and costumes also help you?
- 51:10 – start of a question and answer period where the dancers answer questions from students in the audience.

Learn More About Martha Graham:

<https://marthagraham.org/history/>



Watch and learn more about Flamenco Dance.

Watch the Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cm9IYSDxagc>

Guided Learning:

- The video showcases a variety of short clips of different Flamenco dance performed by the Ballet Flamenco Andalucia during the Flamenco Festival at New York City Center.
- After watching the video, have your child examine what was the same and different about the performances by asking these questions:
- What was something that was the same about the dances? Think about the parts of the body they use, how they used them, what type of music was being played, what instruments and voices were heard, what language they are speaking (Spanish), and more.
- How were the dances different? Think about how many dancers were on stage, how were they dressed, where they were standing, how fast or slow the songs were, what sounds were different, and more.
- Pause the video at different parts and try getting into the dance positions. Extension: play a freeze dance game and pause the video in different spots while you are watching (like musical chairs) and have your children strike the position of one of the dancers. The first one to strike a pose gets a sticker or point. The person with the most points at the end of the video wins!
- After playing your game, learn more about the basic steps and clapping rhythms by watching this dance lessons with Megan La Azulita: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBPI6so2xY8>. Watch the video and try to learn the steps.
- Watch the 5 minute video again, this time observing if you recognize any of the moves you learned from Megan!





Learn more about Mexican-American choreographer and dancer José Limón and watch some of his iconic choreography.

Watch the 8-min Short Documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8jdyMYd9wc>

Watch the 60-min video from the Kennedy Centre Education Digital Learning by the José Limón Dance Company as they perform “The Moor’s Pavane”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWVzMwRCD8>

Guided Learning:

- From 3:40-9:00, in the Kennedy Centre video the dancers demonstrate how the stage can be thought of like a canvas. Try creating a work of art that follows the motions of the dancers and how they divide the space. Can you divide your piece of paper or canvas the same way?
- Read more about José Limón and Doris Humphrey and their relationship that built the José Limón Dance Foundation into what it is today: <http://limon.org/about-us/founders/>
- Watch this video of dancers talk about a piece of his iconic choreography “Concerto Grosso” and their experience and feelings about dancing this work: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHU9XG_ZcA





Learn more about dancer Josephine Baker with a read aloud of “Jazz Age Josephine” by Jonah Winter and illustrated by Marjorie Priceman (ages 4-6) or with “Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker” by Patricia Hruby Powell and Christian Robinson (ages 7-10).

Listen to the Read Aloud for Jazz Age Josephine:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxiXEIq5A6U>

Read “Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker” (you can borrow the eBook through the RPL): <https://saskatchewan.overdrive.com/media/9ED2ABF8-CFE2-41F4-9BCD-73DA8BDB3D92>

Guided Learning:

- Read more about Josephine Baker here: <https://www.dance-teacher.com/josephine-baker-1906-1975-2392648073.html>
 - Purchase this teaching resource to be able to offer leveled lessons to different age levels: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Jazz-Age-Josephine-1870588>
 - Follow along with this activity and resource found on: <https://www.mesaartscenter.com/download.php/engagement/jazz-a-to-z/resources/archive/2016-2017/teacher-resources-2016-2017-season-new-orleans-los-angeles-and-paris/josephine-baker-activity>
 - Before reading the story ask the following questions:
 - Do you like to dance? Recall any instances where you have taken lessons or performed dances for audiences.
 - Have you heard jazz music?
 - What was life like for African Americans in the 1930's?
 - What do you know about Paris?
 - Why might an African American dancer choose to live in Paris?
 - On a piece of paper set up three categories: Jazz, History of America or Paris, and Josephine Baker. While you read the story, pause every page or so and write what they have learned in the appropriate column. After you read the story, find out more about anything on their lists that they don't know about or understand. Research together!
- Possible discussion questions:
- What do you admire about Josephine Baker?
 - Why do think America treated her badly?
 - How have things changed in North America since Josephine's experiences there?





Have you ever wanted to try hip hop dancing, but didn't know where to start? This 13 minute tutorial will give you some easy moves! Made for ages 4+.

Watch the Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWTyO8npkOQ>

*Disclaimer: don't forget to stretch before you dance! www.sasksport.sk.ca/cis/pdf/movement.pdf

Guided Learning:

- What was your favourite dance move from the tutorial?
- Hip Hop involves the use of the entire body in your movements. Do you prefer to use your arms or legs when you dance?
- Turn on an upbeat song, and try to match the dance moves to the beat. Did it work for the song you chose? Did you change anything about the dance?





Learn how a dancer can tell a story through dance presented by KQED Arts.

Watch the Video Example from Educator & Choreographer Lenora Lee:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CUOEgK9zUk>

Guided Learning:

- What were the purposes of the movements that Lenora Lee picked for the dance in her video? Recall the story she was telling.
- Learn about the elements of dance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGuD9Geeb2k>
- Examine the video by Lenora Lee using the elements of dance:
 - What body parts did she use?
 - What actions did she show?
 - How did she use the space?
 - How would you describe her use of time?
 - How would you describe her energy?
- Write a short story including these elements:
 - Main character
 - A problem that they encounter
 - How they fix the problem
- Take everything you have learned about the elements of dance and storytelling in dance to create a short dance to tell the story you wrote.





Have you ever wondered how dancing started? Learn about how ballet began, and why it was so important to learn to dance. Not only is ballet a form of dance, it is also a great way to exercise and increase flexibility.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEekFTj5PvU>

Have you ever wondered how ballet dancers can spin over and over again? This video explains the science behind how a ballet dancer can move:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5VgOdqptRg>

Guided Learning:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zV1qLYukTH8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fb1Blvfp78>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwHjUyd3Ewo>

- Watch the above videos, one of which is ballet, one is a mixture of ballet and hip hop, and the final one is a fun blend of both traditional ballet music and beatboxing!
- Ask these questions for each of the videos:
 - What parts of the body did the dancers use?
 - Did the movements seem relaxed, or very tense?
 - What kind of energy did the dancers have?
 - Listen to the song that was used in the video. Did it make you want to dance? If so, what kind of dancing did it make you want to do?
- Think about the clothing a dancer wears; notice that in the second video, the dancer had 2 different styles of costume sewed together. Why would different dances require a different outfit?
- What is your favourite kind of music?
 - What style of dance would suit the music that you like?
 - What kind of clothing would you wear for your dance? Ex. If your dance has the splits, you wouldn't want to wear tight pants. Think about how you're moving, and what clothes would allow you to be comfortable during your dance.
- The third video has a fun mashup!
 - What style of music and dance would you put together for your own fun mashup of genres? Ex. Maybe you would put tap dance with pop music, or something a little weird, like highland dancing to rock music. Here are some examples of both tap dance and highland dance:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmV9XRZsp2o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfE7jHThiUc>



Are you sick of being stuck inside? Get up and get moving with these fun movement exercises! Dancing is a great way to get exercise and burn off some of that pent up energy you may have.

<http://www.houseoftheroses.org/blog/2017/2/9/movement-games>

Remember to stretch before you dance!

www.sasksport.sk.ca/cis/pdf/movement.pdf

Guided Learning:

- You have a lot of muscles all over your body, but you have to stretch each muscle differently.
- When you were stretching, what muscles were being stretched during the eggbeater stretch?
- What was your favourite stretch to do, and where did you feel the stretch?
- How many of the movement activities did you try? Which of these activities did you prefer?
- Pay attention to the way your body moved, and how you felt during the activities.
 - Did you still feel different muscles stretch while you played the games?
 - Which activity made you feel the most active?
 - How did you feel when you were doing your favourite activity? Ex. Excited, happy.
- If you and your child have access to video messaging applications, try some of these activities with a friend.
- Think about the way movement and emotions can go together.
 - Do you prefer to move slower or faster when you dance? Would you dance slowly if you were happy?
 - What dance makes you feel the best? How were you moving when you felt that way?





Dance is all about movement and fun! Sometimes, it is fun to add accessories to your dance. For Dance Wednesday, we will be making our own dance ribbons!

This website shows how to make your own dance ribbons, as well as substitute supplies for if you do not have the supplies listed on hand: <https://earlylearningideas.com/easy-craft-dancing-ribbons/>

Guided Learning:

- Once you have made your dance ribbons, check out this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2c5u_EMFQ4 *Disclaimer: make sure you have a lot of space! If you do not have a lot of space in your house, watch the video, and then try the moves outside.
- Different movements will make your ribbons move differently.
 - Try moving gracefully, and then, try walking how you imagine a caveman would walk. Did your ribbons move differently when you walked like a caveman?
- Make a ribbon dance with your favourite song.
 - Pay attention to how your ribbons are moving; are they moving fast, or slow?
- Here's another video of a dance performed with ribbons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCJZYskdoiw&t=191s>
 - What were the dancers doing with their bodies when the ribbons moved in circles?
 - Try moving your ribbon like these dancers!



This week, try out some Zumba moves! Zumba is perfect for anyone who does not know what style of dance they like. Zumba takes inspiration from many different styles of dance. The best part is: You get to listen to your favourite upbeat songs while you learn to dance, and get a great workout!

What is Zumba? <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/expert-answers/zumba/faq-20057883>

Try out any of these awesome Zumba routines: <https://family.gonoodle.com/channels/zumba-kids>

Guided Learning:

- How did you feel before, during, and after doing Zumba?
- What parts of your body did you use when you danced?
- The songs on GoNoodle had different titles. What about the title made you want to choose the routine you tried?
- Turn on the radio, or one of your favourite songs, and try doing some of the Zumba moves to that song. Do you think those moves worked better with the song that you chose, rather than the song on GoNoodle?
- Make your own Zumba routine! Maybe you know a dance move that you didn't see in one of the videos. Add that in to your routine to mix it up a bit!





Believe it or not, dancing can help you with your math class. Today's lesson will show you how to find the beat in your favourite dance song, and how to notice different elements of the song to add to your dance. This lesson may be better suited for ages 8+

Watch the Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6t8hwKp71g&t=323s>

Guided Learning:

- Listen to a song that you like.
 - Similar to the video, try to find the main beat of the song.
 - Once you have found your beat, use your head, hands, arms, legs, or feet to move up and down to the beat.
 - Challenge yourself. Using different parts of your body, move one part of your body on the beat marked by a number, and another part of your body on the “and” beat. Were you able to do it?
 - Make up a simple dance using the number beats to the song that you chose. It can be as simple as rocking from side to side and clapping, or you can add in whatever step that you know.
 - This video discussed the bass drum, and hi-hat, the sounds that they make, and how they add to the main beat. Does the song you picked have either of these instruments? Learn about these two instruments by following this link: <https://beginnerdrums.uk/parts-of-a-drum-kit/>
 - Some songs may not use a drum kit to keep their beat, and that is okay! Does the song you picked use any parts of a drum to keep the beat going?
- After watching the video, how do you think this style of counting can help with math?
- This link includes beginner and advanced activities that show how to divide a beat, and how it relates to fractions: <http://mathengaged.org/resources/activities/music/rhythms-fractions/>





Staying at home during times like this can make anyone a little jittery and ready to move. Movement and exercise is incredibly important to keep your brain and body healthy and active. During the day, don't forget to take some movement breaks.

Watch the Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsKLihqkcd0>

Movement activity for younger audiences: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=388Q44ReOWE>

Mindful movement for all ages: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGX2IU35Jqc&t=197s>

Guided Learning:

- Take a movement break from your schoolwork.
 - How did you feel before your movement break?
 - How did you feel during your movement break?
 - How did you feel after your movement break?
 - Return to your schoolwork. Do you feel differently about doing it than you did before your movement break?
- Movement can help with your mood.
 - If you are feeling frustrated, find a quiet space, and take some deep breaths.
 - Think to one of the movement videos that you watched, and some of the ways that the people moved. Try one of your favourite movement exercises.
 - Pay attention to how your body feels during the movements.
 - Do certain parts of your body feel more tense when you are frustrated? Pay special attention to those parts when you are moving.
 - Picture all of your frustration flowing out of your body as you move.
 - Do you feel calm after taking your movement break? If not, try it again! Moving is a great way to relieve stress, and the only way to make it work is to keep practicing mindful movement.



Different styles of dance are unique to each culture in the world. Today, we will check out this video that shows how to perform some Grass Dance steps!

Watch the Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuZBx5cz0TA&list=PL6bNa81aVS4S3dl7Iii2QSK0BShDRUS8P&index=6&t=0s>

Guided Learning:

- Watch how the dancers move their feet.
 - What did you notice about how they moved their feet? Were they stomping, or tapping their feet?
 - Did you find that there were patterns in how they were moving? What pattern did you notice?
- Once the dancers have changed into their regalia (traditional dance outfits), ask your child these questions:
 - What were the differences between the men's regalia, and the woman's regalia?
 - The ribbons on the woman's regalia seemed to flow with the music. If you have anything similar, try to dance like they do in the video, but move your ribbon with the music. How did the ribbon move?



You may have heard of a Pow Wow, or even been to a Pow Wow, but do you know why they are so important? Today's lesson will explain what a Pow wow is, and why everyone is welcome to this wonderful celebration.

What is a Pow Wow? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0KImr-ewaE>

History of Pow Wow's as told by the Canadian Encyclopedia:

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/history-of-powwows>

Competition Pow Wow: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UY9TNEHGuUY&t=331s>

Guided Learning:

- After watching the “What is a Pow Wow” video, ask yourself these questions:
 - Did you learn something new about Pow Wow's?
 - What is your favourite kind of dance performed at a Pow Wow? Why do you like that dance?
 - If you have ever been to a Pow Wow before, did you recognize any of the dances being performed?
 - What was your favourite regalia (dancers outfit)?
 - With your new knowledge about Pow Wow's, would you like to go to more of them?
- After watching the Competition Pow Wow video, ask yourself these questions:
 - Though these dancers were performing the same dance, they all had different steps. Why do you think that is?
 - You were able to see quite a few kinds of traditional dance! Did you notice any similarities in the dances? How about any differences?
 - How did the music change for each dance performed?





Today's dance lesson will put some dance skills to the test! Have some family fun today with the Tissue Dance!

Watch the Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DYfhgrBbJI>

Brief Instructions: Get a song ready to play. Place a Kleenex, or piece of bathroom tissue on your head. Once you hear the music start playing, start dancing! Try to keep the tissue on your head for as long as you can. If you play with family members, the last person with tissue on their head is the winner of the game!

Guided Learning:

- This dance involves a lot of posture control!
 - Try this activity in front of a mirror. How did you have to hold your head to keep the tissue on it?
 - Do the same dance, but this time, without the tissue. What differences did you notice in how you could move?
 - What types of dance moves did you choose?
 - Which dance move made it the hardest to keep the tissue on your head?
 - Did you recognize any of the dance moves in the video?
 - What song did you pick to dance to?
 - What made you pick the song that you did?
 - What was your favourite dance move to do during this activity?
- Try some silly dance moves with the tissue game!

Ridiculously Fun Dance Exercise for Kids:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oejqTGo-BCc>

 - Which moves made it hard for you to keep the tissue on your head?
 - Did you notice if it was harder to keep the tissue on when you moved your arms a lot?
 - How did you like the music in the dance exercise video?
 - Try these dance moves with a song that you choose! Have fun!

