Grades
6-12

Materials
chart paper and markers
music from various periods

Materials
TV/DVD player
CD player

Vocabulary
artistic dance
choreographic structure
classical dance
elements of dance
ethnic dance
folk dances
purpose
salsa
style

Length
1 or more class sessions; potential for use as a unit

Concept/Objectives
Students will understand the purpose of dance in various cultures and throughout history.

Activities
Students watch a video history of dance and discuss the development of dance from ancient times to the present, create a timeline, and demonstrate their understanding by performing a dance that grew out of the blending of two cultures.

Toolkit Resources
Dancing Through Time on the DanceSense Enhanced DVD Length of Segment: 00:25:35
Additional dance performances and segments, from The African Root, Dance Performances, Dances of the Americas, Dances of the World, Dance Onstage, and DanceSense Enhanced DVDs

History of Dance

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Note to Teachers
Dancing Through Time is a 25-minute history of dance. It could be used to introduce students to dance, as a review, or to prepare for assessment. You could use sections of the video (and this lesson) to accompany study of specific cultures or periods, based on grade level needs, or you could make this an outline for a history of dance unit. This lesson plan divides the history into bite-sized segments, allowing you to use as little or as much as you need to. Each segment comes with discussion topics as well as expansion ideas that you can incorporate or adapt if time allows.

Preparation
Display the Dancing Through Time timeline poster on the wall.
**Why People Dance**

Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss why people dance. Ask them to come up with three reasons and put them on chart paper. Have each group post their responses and report out. Compare student responses and generate a master list. Tell students they will be exploring the history of dance and its many roles in society and culture and seeing how the major events of history have influenced dance among cultures. Suggest that to better understand history, we must explore how events affect the human condition. Studying major works from each of the arts disciplines reveals reactions, attitudes, thoughts, and fears of artists throughout history, giving us insights into times. Tell students they will create their own dance timelines as they move through history, beginning some 3,000 years ago. As they watch each video segment they should note dates and events they would like to include.

**Ancient and Tribal Dance**

**Introduction**: Dance served a significant role in society from earliest times. Ask students to watch the first video segment and look for the purposes of tribal dances. Ask them to jot down the dates of events that seem important and/or pique their interest. As they watch all the segments, they will continue to jot down dates and events to plot on their timelines.

**Show**: Ancient and Tribal Dance from the Dancing Through Time video.

**Discuss**:

- How far back in time do we have evidence of people dancing? What is the evidence?
- What were the purposes of dance in earliest civilizations?
- Do people dance for any of these reasons today?

Remind students to begin creating their timelines.

**Expand**: What did ancient dances look like? Show examples of dances that originated centuries ago and discuss how they reflect the purposes of ancient/tribal dance. Ask: Why are these dances still performed today? Possible dances to show: any of the African dances on the **The African Root, Dance Performances**, or **Dances of the World** DVDs.

**Greece and Rome**

**Introduction**: Do students expect the purposes of dance to change as we move on to Greece and Rome? Ask students to note how dance developed during this period.

**Show**: Greece and Rome from the Dancing Through Time video.

**Discuss**:

- The function of dance in Greek society.
- The purpose and forms of dance in Greece/Rome compared to dance in ancient times.
- The pantomime dance of the Romans.
- Similarities and differences of dance in Greece and Rome.
  (The Greeks sought to acquire higher learning, as the Romans sought to acquire power. What from Greece was adapted by the Romans?)
Strange Turns in Dance

The Middle Ages

Introduction: With The Middle Ages segment of Dancing Through Time, have students observe the impact of the early Christian church’s reactions to Roman behavior and on the development of dance.

Watch, discuss, and update timelines. Then pose the question: Does history repeat itself?

Have students return to their small groups as they watch and discuss Strange Turns in Dance.

Small group discussion questions:

• What are some examples of how history repeats itself?
• What was one of the greatest fears of people during the Middle Ages?
• How might superstitious beliefs have been passed along through cultures? How do superstition and folklore spread today?
• Although they are quite different cultures, how were the dances of Japan and Afghanistan dances similar?
• What dances were born out of fear of plagues and death? What might cause a society to create such dances?
• How are dances spread and transformed?

Ask groups to summarize the most important points made during their discussion and report them back to the whole class. Give students time to compare their points, question each other, and discuss any issues that arise. Remind students to update their timeline drafts.

Expand: Teach students the tarantella. Use the instructions in the Teaching Folk Dance section of the binder. Show the Tarantella performance from the Dances with European Roots section of the Dances of the World DVD. Have students reflect: Does doing a dance help students understand the dance’s purpose?

Dance as an Art Form

Begin by having students review where they are in time, either by looking at the timeline poster or their own drafts. Remind students to continue to update their timelines.

Renaissance and Baroque

Introduction: Ask students to share what they know about the Renaissance. Given what they know about the period, what would they expect to see happen in the world of dance? With that in mind, have them watch the Renaissance and Baroque Dance segment of Dancing Through Time.

Discuss:
• Commedia dell’arte and its role in the development of dance.
• Church versus the nobility.
• The effect of the rise of the nobility on dance.
• What, if anything, dance retained from the Middle Ages.
The Renaissance marked the rise of dance as art and as entertainment. The performing arts were in a golden age. Shakespeare was writing plays in England; opera was flourishing in Italy. Ask: What was happening in the world of dance?

Have students return to their small groups to watch and discuss The Golden Age of Ballet.

**Small group discussion topics:**
- court dances and dance as a symbol of power
- purposes of dance in this time period
- development of ballet and characteristics of the form

Have one group share key points about one of the discussion topics. Allow the others to add to, take issue with, or revise these points. Do the same with the other topics.

**Expand:** Ballet developed into a classical form of dance with a special set of positions codified during this period. Show the first part of the Dance Vocabulary/Basic Positions segment from the *DanceSense Enhanced* DVD (Part 4: Dance Traditions). In this segment, young dancers demonstrate the five positions. Have students stand and try these positions as they are demonstrated. Ask them to compare these movements to the movements they saw demonstrated in the ancient/tribal dances.

If students are interested in learning more about ballet, show *DanceSense* Program 7: Ballet.

**Timeline Review**

This might be a good time to take a break and have students update and review their timelines. You might give them an opportunity to research a particular time period, culture, or dance form in order to enhance their timelines. For example, they might want to find out what other major events were happening during various periods to get a better sense of the relationship between the history and the development of dance. (The Dancing Through Time guide in the History and Styles section of the binder offers some good web sites to get students started.) Begin discussing how the timelines might be presented, including acceptable formats and ways to illustrate.

**Meanwhile in America**

Ask students to speculate about dances in America. Suggest that they think about Native Americans as well as the settlers. Show the Meanwhile in America segment of Dancing Through Time.

**Discuss:**
- European dance styles that came over with the settlers.
- the purpose of dance in Colonial America.
- the waltz, what influenced it, and how it came to be a popular social dance in America.
- Native American dance and the purposes of dance in this culture.

Ask: Why did settlers fear the Ghost Dance? Did you ever think that a dance would bring about so much death? How does this compare with what you have studied about this time in history? Is this consistent with the treatment of Native Americans in other aspects of their ways of life?
Expand: Show one or more Native American dances from the *Dances of the Americas* DVD and discuss the role of dance for Native Americans today. Or learn a folk dance that might have been danced in Colonial America (Goin’ to Boston on the *Dances from Many Cultures* DVD is a possibility or maybe someone knows and can teach the Virginia Reel). Explore the role of dance in slave communities as a precursor of the upcoming look at the Jazz Age and the contributions of West African dance to American dance forms. Show the Plantation Dance/Ring Shout on *The African Root* DVD.

**The Ballet Russe**

After students update their timeline, tell students that you are moving from America to Russia to trace the evolution of ballet. As French ballet was losing its appeal and popularity, the Russian school of ballet was taking off. As they watch the next segment on The Ballet Russe, ask students to note changes in ballet and who some of the artists and impresarios were who played a role in affecting these changes.

Discuss:
- evolution of ballet.
- the artists who influenced the development of ballet, including Serge Diaghelev and the Ballet Russe.
- the use of sets, music, and costumes and their effect on ballet.
- Balanchine and his role in both the Ballet Russe and American ballet styles.

**The Turns of the Century**

**Modern Dance**

Prepare students for the modern dance segment by discussing what was happening in the beginning of the 20th century. Ask: What was changing during this period? How do you think these changes might have affected dance styles worldwide? As students watch the Modern Dance segment, ask them to think of ways the new roles of women in society transformed the way that women danced. You might want to put students in small groups again, this time assigning each group a specific question to answer from the list below. You could expand this to have them do additional research on the Internet. Show Modern Dance.

Discussion questions:
- What are some characteristics of the new style of modern dance?
- What are the similarities and differences between ballet and modern dance?
- What is the relationship between the suffrage movement and the development of modern dance?
- Who are some of the modern dance innovators and what did they contribute to the form?
- How do dance and other forms of art give us insight into a time period and help us understand the human condition? Give examples from modern dance as well as from other areas you can think of.
- Why do cultures tend to resist new forms of art, initially, before gradually recognizing and accepting these forms? Do we still do this today? Can you give examples?
Expand: Show the second part of the Dance Vocabulary/Basic Positions segment from the DanceSense Enhanced DVD (Part 4: Dance Traditions). In this segment, young dancers demonstrate the basic positions done in the modern style. Have students stand and try these positions as they are demonstrated. Ask them to compare these movements to the basic ballet movements they performed.

If students are interested in learning more about modern dance, show DanceSense Program 8: Modern Dance and/or the What is Modern Dance segment from Erick Hawkins: Killer of Enemies on the Dance Onstage DVD. Have students select a modern dance pioneer, choreographer, or company; research them on the Internet; and share what they learn. Allow them flexibility in how they share their knowledge: through PowerPoint presentations, movement demonstrations, posters, monologues, etc.

Or invite a modern dance choreographer into the classroom and allow students to interview him or her. Have them prepare questions in advance, based on what they’ve learned about the development of modern dance and modern technique.

Jazz: An American Style of Dance

As students enter, have an early jazz recording playing—maybe some early Louis Armstrong. Ask students to identify the music. Ask: How do you dance to jazz music? Can they name some dances that might have been danced to jazz? Show the Jazz Age segment of Dancing Through Time.

Discussion topics:

- jazz music and the relationship of jazz dance to jazz music
- what else was happening during this period (e.g., the Great Depression)
- compare African polyrhythms and jazz music and dance
- tap and swing dancing
- the dance element of time and its significance

Note that these were the first dances to be televised, yet television also contributed to the loss of interest in dance in the ’50s and ’60s. Many dances from this era are coming back today and are popular in nightclubs around the world. Vintage ’40s clothing and hairstyles are popular as well. Students may also be familiar with jazz dance through musicals they’ve seen either in person or in the movies.

Expand: Show the third part of the Dance Vocabulary/Basic Positions segment from the DanceSense Enhanced DVD (Part 4: Dance Traditions). In this segment, young dancers demonstrate the basic positions done in the jazz style. Have students stand and try these positions as they are demonstrated. Ask: How are ballet, modern, and jazz similar and different?

If students are interested in learning more about jazz dance, tap dance, and other 20th century social dances, show DanceSense Program 9: Jazz Dance and Program 10: Tap and Percussive Dance. For a better understanding of these dance styles, compare and contrast these forms by showing examples from the Dance Performances or Dance Onstage DVDs.

Contemporary Dance

Ask students: What are the dances you do today? Do you see any connection between the dances you enjoy and the dances you’ve studied? What is the role of young people in the development of new dances? Ask them to think about where dance may be heading as they watch the final segment, Contemporary Dance.
Discuss their ideas about what the next style of dancing might become, what it might look like, what might influence the movements, the choreography, the purpose.

Create Timelines

Allow students to work on their timelines. Suggest that they add illustrations, other important dates from history to give the dance dates more context, anecdotes, and anything else they think might add to the richness of their product.

Have students post their timelines around the classroom (or present them if they are in an alternative format). As a review, give students the opportunity to tour the classroom and look at the timelines.

About Assessment

Ask students if they can identify some common themes in the development of dance and the role of dance in diverse cultures. List these on the board. One that will surely come up is the way new dances have emerged out of the blending of two or more cultures. Two good examples are tap dance and the salsa. Tell students that they will learn one of these dances as a way to better understand how cultures interact and produce a new art form.

The performance assessment is based on the Afro-Cuban Dance segment of *The African Root* and the salsa. Using the Afro-Cuban Dance video segment and the instructions in the Dance and Culture section of the binder, tell students to follow the directions of the video instructor, Katherine Kramer. You should be available to facilitate the learning, perhaps stopping and starting the video as students learn and practice the steps. Note that the video includes a warm-up and the warm-up is included in the assessment. You might want to discuss why dancers need to warm up before they dance.

As an alternative to the salsa, you could opt for tarantella instead. You’ll find instructions for the tarantella in the Teaching Folk Dance as well as lesson plans on both tarantella and the salsa in the Lesson Plan sections of the binder. In either case, you will probably need to spend more than one day helping students learn these dances. You’ll also want to follow-up with a discussion about what they learned by doing these dances.

Support/Connections/Resources

Use the variety of dance performances in the toolkit to help students apply and extend what they’ve learned. Select dances from various world cultures and have students analyze how dances reflect cultures and time periods and how time, place, and society influence the arts. Here are video resources to consider:

- African Dance: See performances of West African dances on *The African Root*, *Dances of the World*, and *Dance Performances* as well as information about West African dance, also on *The African Root*.
- Asian Dance: See the Bharatanatyam of India and Chinese Fan Dance and Chinese Sword Dance on *Dances of the World* DVD and the Kathak, also from India, on *DanceSense Enhanced*.
- European Dance: See The Tarantella on *Dances of the World* and Three Irish Dances on *DanceSense Enhanced*. Examples of artistic dance styles with European roots (e.g., ballet) are included on *Dance Performances* and *Dance Onstage*. 

Deepen the Learning

In conjunction with any of the video segments, consider inviting an artist in the area being studied. For example, you could invite an African dancer to go along with the study of tribal dance or the contributions of West African dance to American dances or a ballet, modern, jazz, or tap dancer when you study these forms. Check the Kentucky Dance Resources section of the binder or the Kentucky Arts Council’s online Roster of Artists for suggestions.

Other ways to deepen the learning include attending a live ethnic, ballet, modern, jazz, or tap dance performance; participating in a community folk, vintage, or social dance; or taking a trip to a powwow.
- Native American Dance: See the dances of the Cherokee, Mohawk, Apache, Navaho, Tsimshian (Git-Hoan), and Totonac on Dances of the Americas and Zuni Harvest Dance on Dances from Many Cultures.
- For an overview of the purpose of dance in cultures around the world: See the first three programs of DanceSense on the DanceSense Enhanced DVD.

**Writing for the Lesson**

**Personal-Expressive:** Write a poem based on a personal experience you have had in dancing, moving your body, or stretching.

**Transactive:**
- Write a speech intended to generate support for a new form of dance (e.g., defending the new dance form developed by Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, or Martha Graham).
- Write a persuasive essay to encourage your community to commission a choreographer to choreograph a dance that reflects the opinions, the economy, and the diversity of that community.

**Applications Across the Curriculum**

**Language Arts**
Use segments from Dancing Through Time in conjunction with literature from specific time periods to aid in student understanding of events from that period and how these events affect the human condition.

**Social Studies**
Use in conjunction with appropriate history units, exploring how dance is a product of its time and how it reflects its time.

**Physical Education**
Perform the salsa, a West African dance, or a folk dance. Explore the importance of warm-up before dance, as before any type of physical exertion.

**Visual Art**
 Illustrate the timeline (see the Dancing Through Time poster). Create a photographic or video timeline of dance.

**Practical Living**
Ask members of the school dance club to demonstrate dances. Find students who belong to various dance organizations or study various types of dance and ask them to speak to the class and demonstrate dances.

**Open Response Assessment**

**Prompt:**
We have studied the history of dance and how dance has evolved through time influenced by and reflecting the events, cultures, and social transformations of the times.

**Directions:**
Analyze and discuss how dance reflects history and culture. Use examples from this lesson.
Performance Assessment

Performance Event:
Create a warm-up exercise to prevent injury, then, as a class, perform the salsa.

Directions:
With a partner, create and perform a warm-up exercise to prevent injury. Then perform a salsa dance that demonstrates creativity, musicality, and correct execution of salsa movements.

Performance Scoring Guide

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<td>• Student exhibits extensive understanding of concepts and vocabulary while consistently and effectively communicating this knowledge and understanding with the use of insightful supporting examples or details.</td>
<td>• Student exhibits broad understanding of concepts and vocabulary while effectively communicating this knowledge and understanding with the use of supporting examples or details.</td>
<td>• Student exhibits basic understanding of concepts and vocabulary while somewhat effectively communicating this knowledge and understanding with the use of some supporting examples or details.</td>
<td>• Student exhibits minimal understanding of concepts and vocabulary while ineffectively communicating this limited knowledge and understanding with the use of no supporting examples or details.</td>
<td>• No answer or irrelevant response.</td>
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<td>• Student effectively completes the assignment, exhibiting complete understanding of the salsa movements. • Student performs and thoroughly articulates the purpose of the warm-up exercise. • Student demonstrates extensive critical thinking skills through creativity and purpose in movement.</td>
<td>• Student completes the assignment, exhibiting broad understanding of the salsa movements. • Student performs and articulates the purpose of the warm-up exercise. • Student demonstrates broad critical thinking skills through creativity and purpose in movement.</td>
<td>• Student attempts to complete the assignment, exhibiting some understanding of the salsa movements. • Student performs and somewhat articulates the purpose of the warm-up exercise. • Student demonstrates some critical thinking skills and creativity.</td>
<td>• Student only partially completes the assignment, exhibiting little or no understanding of the salsa movements. • Student minimally performs a warm-up exercise, but its purpose is not clear. • Student demonstrates little or no critical thinking skills or creativity.</td>
<td>• Non-participation</td>
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Multiple Choice Questions

1. Ancient civilizations included music and dancing. In ancient Greece, dance was valued for its intellectual aspects. A statesman was expected to
   A. create pottery featuring musicians.
   B. choreograph dances for public events.
   C. direct slaves in dancing.
   D. dance with skill.

2. During the Roman Empire, dance entertained the wealthy and was performed at Colosseum events. The dancers were often
   A. aristocrats.
   B. Roman officials.
   C. slaves and captives.
   D. Roman guards.

3. According to legend, the tarantella was a dance from the Middle Ages
   A. which was part of a courtship ritual for young girls.
   B. which cured the black death and the plague.
   C. danced in worship services all over Europe
   D. which saved one from a tarantella bite.

4. The Renaissance period marked the establishment of
   A. art sculptures portraying music and dance.
   B. dance for ceremonial purposes.
   C. ballet as a classical dance.
   D. dance for recreational purposes.

5. In ballet, there are
   A. three basic positions of the feet.
   B. two basic positions of the feet.
   C. five basic positions of the feet.
   D. four basic positions of the feet.

6. The Ghost Dance was a
   A. dance of the Renaissance.
   B. dance of the Middle Ages.
   C. Native American dance.
   D. dance of ancient Greece.

7. A popular social dance in Colonial America with three basic steps was the
   A. Lindy Hop.
   B. waltz.
   C. reel.
   D. square dance.

8. The Ballet Russes has made a lasting impression on the art of ballet. Choreographer Michael Fokine was just one of many well-known artists from this company. The Ballet Russes is from
   A. the United States.
   B. India.
   C. Russia.
   D. Poland.

9. Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham were pioneers of
   A. the Kathak.
   B. modern dance.
   C. folk dancing.
   D. ballet.

Answer Key for Multiple Choice Questions

1. D
2. C
3. D
4. C
5. C
6. C
7. B
8. C
9. B

Based on a lesson by Cynthia Warner
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Reviewed by the Kentucky Department of Education

This lesson plan is part of the Dance Arts Toolkit. To order the entire toolkit or for more information about the Arts Toolkit project, visit www.ket.org/artstoolkit or call (859) 258-7294.