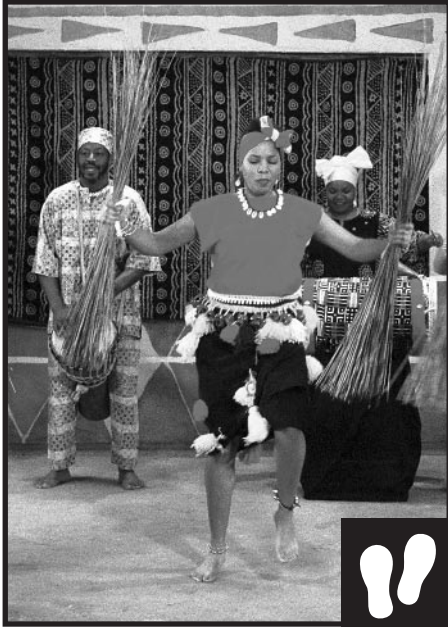


PROGRAM 1: UNDERSTANDING DANCE

WHY PEOPLE DANCE



Program Objective

To provide an overview of what dance is and why people dance.

Program Description

Dance is the art of human **movement**, a way of communicating without words. Its unique nature allows dance to communicate and draw connections between people across cultures and generations. Whether in **performance**, in **ritual**, or for fun, dance is a reflection of life, of the individual or community, of a culture.

This program examines both what dance is and what dance is not. The program is divided into three segments:

- ✦ **Movement** - this segment compares dance to other forms of movement in nature and in sports. Two dancers also talk about what dance means to them.
- ✦ **Choreography** - this segment explains the role the **choreographer** plays in the creation of dance. Three choreographers talk about where their ideas come from.
- ✦ **Culture** - this segment explores the role of **culture** in the creation of dance. It explores the three main categories of dance — **artistic**, **ceremonial** and **recreational** — and how they help explain why people dance. Examples include a Senegalese and a Shaker dance.

Before You Watch

As a class, come up with a definition of dance. Ask students: What is dance? Why do we dance? Who creates dance or where does it come from? How many forms/styles of dance can students name? Discuss what kinds of dances the students know. Have any performed or taken dance classes? Where have they seen dance?

“Man on the Street” interviews: Ask students to conduct random interviews asking the questions: what is dance and why do people dance? Collect answers and compare. What are the most common answers?

Create a class bibliography on dance. Include a list of books, magazines, videos, films and local resources (including dance schools and teachers). Add to the list as new dance topics are explored.

Ask students to bring in photos of dance. Have them describe what they see in the images using these questions as a guide: what do you know about the dancer/s? the dance style? costume? setting? Create a bulletin board collage of dance images. Save these and after watching the programs, ask students to describe them again.

Consider making the dance bulletin board an ongoing project that students add to throughout the period they are looking at the series and/or studying dance. Have students brainstorm what to add to the bulletin board as they learn about new concepts or artists.

After You Watch

Ask students: How did the program help you better understand the purposes of dance? What new information did you learn about why people dance? Create a list of as many dance forms as the class can think of and decide whether each fits under the category of artistic, ceremonial or recreational. In some cases they may fit under more than one.

Ask students to choose one dance form and research it, being sure to describe what it is and why it is done. Use the Internet, dance books or resources listed on the class dance bibliography, if you've created one.

Choose a particular form of dance and a particular sport. Compare and contrast their movements. Find similarities and differences and show examples of each in photographs, video or demonstration.

Interview a choreographer. Be sure to ask why they dance and choreograph, what their influences are and what they are trying to communicate. If there are no local choreographers, perhaps you can find an interview with a choreographer on the Internet or a choreographer who would consent to be interviewed via e-mail.

Move It

Observe and copy movement from nature. Make a list of movements found in nature, e.g., ocean waves, lightning, wind, autumn leaves. Choose one to copy. First use just the arms, then the whole body. Try combining more than one of these movements, one after the other.

Invite a local dance instructor in to teach the class some form of recreational dance, e.g., salsa, a square, swing or folk dance.



Go as a class to see a production of some form of artistic dance, e.g., a ballet, modern dance, jazz, tap or musical theater production. Describe and discuss what you saw and experienced at the performance.

For more information

Visit the *DanceSense* web site at www.ket.org/dancesense

Key Kentucky Core Content Addressed

(See Kentucky Core Content for Arts & Humanities: Dance in Appendix)

AH-E-2.1.34
AH-E-2.2.32

AH-M-2.2.31
AH-M-2.2.32
AH-M-2.1.33

AH-H-2.2.33

Key National Standards for Arts Education: Dance Addressed

Content standards addressed in video and teacher's guide:

CS3: Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning

CS4: Applying and demonstrating critical and creative thinking skills in dance

CS5: Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods

CS7: Making connections between dance and other disciplines

KEY TERMS

(see Glossary for definitions)

artistic
ceremonial
choreographer

culture
dance
movement

performance
recreational
ritual

