



3. Have students try dancing the movement phrase. Be sure to count 1,2,3,4, hold for 4. Practice the variation with music. The music must be in 4/4 time or 4 beats per measure.

4. Ask the students to make their own variations.

2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade should be given 3 variations to choose from. Practice the variations to music.

5<sup>th</sup> grade and up can work on their own. Encourage them to try different variations. Practice the variations to music.

5. Make a dance by giving structure to the variations.

2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade: Dance all 3 chosen variations in a determined order.

5<sup>th</sup> grade and up: Choose one variation. Students find a partner. Each partner will teach their variation the other partner. Then put the 2 variations into an ABA structure:

A=1<sup>st</sup> partner's variation  
B=2<sup>nd</sup> partner's variation  
A=1<sup>st</sup> partner's variation again

6. Have students dance the structured variations in unison groups of 2's (5<sup>th</sup> and up) and 4's (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>).

7. Choose the best groups and have them perform their structured variations to music.

### **Floor-work**

**Students will explore making level changes in dance. The goal is to try doing everything you can think of on the floor (the low space).**

1. Find out what the students already know? Ask them to demonstrate different ways to move on the floor:

Crawling  
Rolling  
Sliding  
Somersaults  
Cartwheels  
Wiggling, Etc.

2. Now encourage students to make non-conventional movement no one has demonstrated. Be imaginative.
3. Have the students make names for the new floor-movement.
4. Make a phrase from selected floor-movement. For example: crawl; somersault; lie down into a log roll, wiggle, push yourself up; and slide across the room!

### **Transitions**

**The goal here is to complete a phrase using all of our dance vocabulary: falling, floor-work, and standing (leaping/freezing) movements. Students will connect the standing to the falling/floor-work by creating transitions.**

1. Have students demonstrate a floor-movement named by the class. Students must find a way to stand up from this movement. Once standing, choose standing vocabulary such as leaping or freezing. After standing vocabulary, initiate a fall. The fall will take students back to the floor where they transition into floor-work again.
2. Encourage students to try making their own transitions. Use a strategy similar to "Simon Says". Students begin standing or on the floor, moving accordingly. Next, tell the students when to transition. Three times per phrase is a good number. Remind students to use falling, floor-work, leaping, and freezing. But students must change levels each time the teacher says, "transition".

### **LESSON 2: TRUST WALK**

**This lesson will teach trust and encourage positive behavior during group interaction. It is important to prepare well before beginning this lesson. Know goals and choose priorities.**

1. Pretend you are creatures from other planets exploring earth for the first time. Choose a partner to take you on the exploration. Allow one partner to guide the other around the room.
2. Choose a mandatory floor-plan for all explorations. For example: follow the basketball lines on the gymnasium floor; only allow front, back, and/or lateral movement; or move anywhere within a pre-determined space.
3. Try moving and allow talking (students can communicate fears of being lead by another or discuss what they are exploring). Try moving again without talking (students concentrate and pay special attention to their senses).

4. Try the partner explorations with music to see if it changes the student's perspective of the environment.
5. Try exploring using slow or fast movement. The guiding partner chooses the speed. Always be careful not to endanger the other partner. Notice how speed of movement changes perception.
6. Switch partners and repeat.

### **Physical disability**

**Using the same movement as above, sensitize students to life with a physical disability. Ask the students questions: What would it be like if you could not walk? How would you locomote? Can you demonstrate other ways to get from here to there?**

1. Have students demonstrate their explorations with their partners on the given floor-plan.
2. The first day, students will partner with somebody they like.
3. The second day, students will partner with somebody they don't usually work with.

### **The Wave-Ritual of opening and closing**

**This exercise can be related to the peaceful resistance movements of the 50's and 60's. Movements of opening and closing are explored.**

1. Students form a line beginning at the door. No talking. Students walk into a circle. Once in a circle they do a wave (like the wave done at sporting events).
2. Next, students try the same thing using the trust walk. Partner up in line. Once the partners arrive in a circle, the students that were being led will sit down one at a time (in a wave). The students that were guiding their partners will remain standing.
3. The standing students try to move the sitting students. The goal of the seated students is to make themselves unmovable. How can you manipulate your weight to stop your partner from picking you up? Introduce the idea of opening and closing your body to make it easier or more difficult for your partner to pick you up.
4. Switch partners and repeat.

### **Making the Dance**

1. Partnerships choose 6 ways to be unmovable with your partner. Both partners choose 3 ways each. Remember the idea of opening and closing.
2. In the partnerships, each person is responsible for making a movement phrase out of their 3 ways. This will result in 2 variations. Each variation will be labeled A or B.
3. Structure the variations using ABA and then continue with the trust walk. Next, immediately go into BAB and continue with a trust walk.
4. The entire dance should go like this: Partners enter in a line. Form the circle. Partner A sits down in the wave. Start variation ABA and trust walk. Start variation BAB and trust walk. Repeat until students choose to end the dance by walking off-stage.

### **LESSON 3: GOVERNMENT**

**This lesson is great for 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up. The three branches of government are explored: judicial, executive, and legislative. These three branches will be related to choreographer, performer, and critic. Because the branches are explored separately, all students can participate in each branch together.**

1. Begin with the choreographer/legislative branch. The goal is to make the rules-dance rules that is. Make four movement rules. For example: always hop on the left foot, never look down, don't move too fast/slow, keep one hand on top of your head, smile the entire time, sing a song while you dance, etc. Write the dance rules down. Use words and draw pictures to notate what is to be done. Map out a movement sentence. This means write and draw out the movement rules similar to a sentence structure. When students are finished, put all papers into the middle of the room.
2. Next as the performer/executive branch, we execute the movement sentences and dance rules. Read the movement sentences and perform the movement to the best of your ability. BUT the students must remember the predetermined dance rules. Choose the performing/executing group size according to the needs of your students.
3. Lastly, the dance critic/judicial branch does their job. Students must choose a group they did not perform with. Judge that group according to the movement rules made by the choreographer/legislative branch. Judge how well the performers adhered to the 4 rules. Everyone finishes by writing their own critique in a one page essay.

## **LESSON 4: FOLKDANCING**

**Choose a variety of folkdances to study. Encourage the students to closely examine each dance. Discuss who does the folkdance? Why do they dance? When is the dance performed?**

1. Ask the students to choose their favorite folkdance. Ask why that dance is their favorite.
2. The students will explore the dance chosen as favorite. Have the students discuss the vocabulary of the dance. Do the dancers move in a line or a circle. Do they use the high or low space. Do they dance with partners or alone? Do the dancers always face front? Do the dancers make noise with their feet? Etc.
3. Next, have the whole class make up their own folk dance. They must begin by choosing a setting. It could be the classroom, the playground, a special holiday, a grocery store, basically anywhere that gives an identity to the dance. Once the setting is chosen, use the setting to inspire the general movements of the dance. Let what usually happens in that environment help to create the movement.
4. This process could be done many ways:
  - a) It could be given as homework. Students must think of 3 things to contribute to the dance. They may also think about how to structure the dance. Keep in mind ideas like: the shape of the movement; traveling pathways for the movement; and the directional facings of the movement. (Remember the structure of the favorite folk dance for help.)
  - b) Or, the process could be done together by dividing the class into groups of 3 or 4. These groups must each come up with 8 count of movement.
  - c) Either way, have the students write down the movement in a movement sentence so that nothing is forgotten.
5. Select which movements to keep, and the best structure for the movements (the teacher or the class can do this). Then, solidify the counts to the dance. Choose the sound you are dancing to according to the setting that was chosen. Some suggestions are environmental noises, taped music, students singing live, or text.

## **LESSON 5: PARTNER DANCE**

**This lesson will take one to two days. It works best with 7<sup>th</sup> grade and under. Students usually feel most comfortable with the same sex. Be**

**sensitive to the children's comfort level for holding hands. Include a gender-role discussion and address leader vs. follower.**

**Jitterbug**

1. Begin by having partnerships choose who will be the leader and who will be the follower.
2. Keep the rhythm in single time. One, two, three, four. . . not One and two and, One and two and. . .
3. Partners face each other holding both hands in a neutral position.
4. Teach the basic jitterbug step. The leader begins by stepping **left**; then step **right**; **rock-step** by swinging left foot back (behind right) and then quickly stepping back on the right; and then end by stepping **left**.
5. These steps coincide with the rhythm:

one two three four  
**left right rock-step end left**

6. The follower begins at the same time as the leader, using opposite feet. This would be right, left, rock-step right to left, and right. The partners should be mirroring each other and moving simultaneously.
7. Once this basic step is accomplished the students can learn how to turn. The leader will turn the follower by the arm. The follower must turn in the direction the leader's arm initiates. Encourage the students to try multiple turns in a row. Suggest they use their partner as a spot in order to keep their balance. Try moving from the basic swing step into the turn, and then into the basic swing step again.
8. Next, make "solos". Allow the students to make up a new move. Insert the move into the basic swing step and turning they have already learned. All solos should include the basic step, turns, and a new move. Give the students a chance to show their creations to the group. Each partnership is in charge of remembering their new solo.
9. Make a structure for a group jitterbug dance using ABA format.  
  
A= all dance the basic swing step and turns with their partner.  
B= a "solo" is done while the rest of the dancers gather around in a circle. The dancers in the circle should clap rhythmically for the solo happening in the center of the circle.  
A= all partnerships return to the basic swing step and turns.

10. Repeat the ABA structure with a new solo until everyone has been in the center of the circle.
11. Finish with everyone doing their "solo" material at the same time. Have all the partnerships choose the best part of their dance. Make that best part the last shape, the ending. It may take some practice to synchronize the endings with the music.

## **LESSON 6: SELF-PORTRAIT WITH MOVEMENT**

**This lesson will take some preparation. It is best to do it towards the middle or end of the school year. Have the students keep a journal. You may want to keep the journals in a special place in the classroom.**

1. Ask them to write about the following things:
  - What is your favorite way to spend time?
  - When are you the happiest?
  - What are your favorite ways to locomote? (running, skipping, walking, jumping, flipping, etc.)
  - What is your current favorite song?
  - What is your favorite way to sleep? What position are you in?
  - Do you ever talk with their hands? What kind of gestures do you make?
  - What type of movements remind you of friendship? (hugs, high fives, hand shakes, head nods)
2. Now make a basic movement phrase from the journal entries . Study the journal for movement ideas. Look for action vocabulary such as "running around" and "hanging out". Also, notice the movement you do naturally when you sleep, talk, walk, etc. Choose the best movements and make a movement sentence out of them. Each student's phrase will be unique.
3. After everyone has made their personal basic phrase, they must decide if they want to remain a solo or create a duet.
4. If they choose to make a solo, make as many variations of your basic phrase as time allows. Use the choreographic tools of retrograding, speed variation, and effort/shape.

**Retrograding:** Make the movements go backwards. It looks like pressing rewind on a VCR.

**Speed variation:** Make movements very fast, repeat them quickly over and over again, or move in slow motion.

- Effort/Shape:** Think of emotional intensity. Is the movement direct and to the point, or does it flow around freely? Is the movement heavy or light? Should it appear to be connected to the floor, or floating in the air?
5. For making duets include the connecting movements from the following question:  
*What type of movements remind you of friendship? (hugs, high fives, hand shakes, and head nods)* Combine contact movements with the solo variations. Apply the choreographic tools to the new duet.
  6. Perform the solos/duets to their favorite music.

### **TIPS FOR TEACHERS:**

- ❖ **Always communicate good behavior rules. These activities demand discipline.**
- ❖ **Tell the students they must participate and be constructive or they are out. They can sit and observe the rest of the class.**
- ❖ **Remember, no one's interests are more important than everyone's safety.**
- ❖ **Make the students do the writing assignments. This will help them remember what is being taught and provide discipline in the creative environment.**
- ❖ **Make sure everyone has done the work, whether it is showing work, or turning in written work.**
- ❖ **Don't get frustrated too easily if they don't get something the first try. Learning to work our bodies is like learning to drive a car. Remember, it takes almost a year to get a driver's license and before that you only get a learner's permit.**
- ❖ **Keep the creative time in a "structured chaos". If things seem to be getting out of hand, or if students are getting frustrated, choose someone's work for demonstration.**
- ❖ **Have the students discuss what they like after a demonstration. Make them communicate WHY it was good.**
- ❖ **Stress no talking during critiques. It is rude and it will cause students to lose focus.**

- ❖ **Feel free to modify lessons at any time according to the needs of your students.**
- ❖ **Be comfortable with what you've chosen to do. You can't teach what you can't do.**
- ❖ **Articulate the creative process clearly. Give demonstrations if necessary.**
- ❖ **Explain your choices when making variations.**
- ❖ **Clarify how certain concepts are attached to certain movements. How are they related?**
- ❖ **Keep it open. Be ready for some creative input from the students. Don't pre-determine what dance is and what dance isn't. Non-traditional movement is great!**