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TERM ONE

Dance

In this term you will cover

Topic 1: Dance performance 3–19

- Discuss dance conventions
- Learn about posture and alignment
- Do warm-up exercises
- Do floor-work exercises
- Improve your joint mobility or movements
- Transfer your weight from side to side
- Prepare to land safely after small jumps
- Use simple locomotor movement combinations
- Do cool-down exercises

Topic 2: Dance improvisation and composition 20–24

- Learn about the elements of dance: space, time, energy/force, relationships
- Explore the elements of dance: space, dimension, level, direction, pathways
- Explore the elements of dance: time – duration, tempo, accent, phrases – using rhythm-steps

Topic 3: Dance theory and literacy (intergrated into Topics 1 and 2)

- Learn dance terminology
- Discuss the importance of warming-up
- Discuss the importance of good posture and alignment
- Discuss the elements of dance: space and time

Term 1 Formal assessment: Practical Technique and improvisation (space and time) 25

These icons mean

- > work alone
- >> work in pairs
- >>> group work
- >>>> class work



Dance conventions

UNIT 1

Dance is about your body, how you move it to music or how you move even when there is no music playing. Dance can be beautiful, with flowing movements, or it can be random and have no particular structure. This means that if you are moving, then you are dancing.

We need to think about our safety before we can begin to move. We speak of safe practice in dance. Usually this refers to how we execute our movements and how we move in our dance space to ensure we do not hurt other dancers sharing the dance space with us. However, there is more than this to safe practice in dance – we need to follow the conventions of dance.

Dance conventions are the ways in which we agree to work in the dance class. These conventions include agreements about how to keep our class safe and clean, and about how to behave. Rules of behaviour are called **codes of conduct**. In dance class we set rules on how to greet each other and enter and leave the class, on our **personal hygiene** or cleanliness, and on how we treat each other in class.

Glossary

- dance conventions**
the agreements we follow in the dance class
- codes of conduct**
a set of rules for behaviour
- personal hygiene**
your own cleanliness

How do you set up a safe classroom environment?

It is important to ensure that the space where we will be dancing is safe and that there is nothing that will hurt us. We usually dance without shoes. This means that the floor must be clean, so it is best to sweep the floor before we start. This will remove anything from the floor that could hurt us. It is also better to dance on a polished floor so that we can glide freely.

Next, we must look around ourselves and clear the space of anything else lying around that we could kick or trip over. Things such as desks and chairs should be removed from the room or packed neatly in a corner. There should be nothing lying around that could get in the way when we dance.

! Always look at the floor to make sure there is nothing that will hurt you or others, or make you slip and fall.

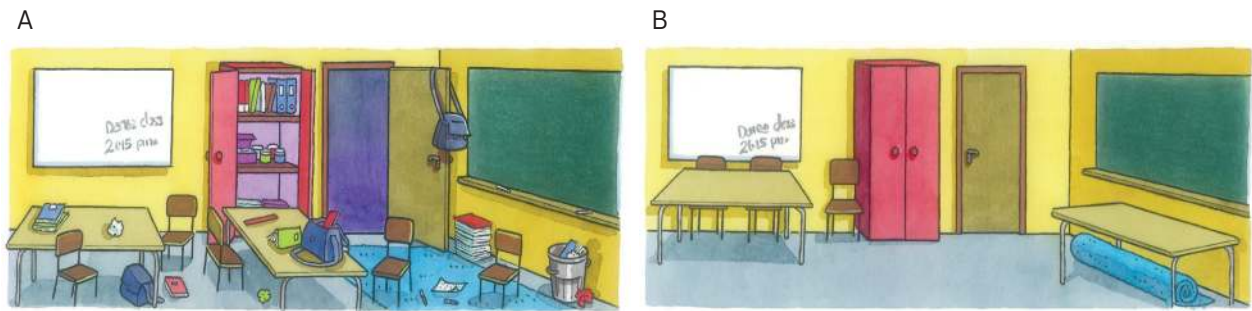


Figure 1.1.1 Which environment would you feel safer and freer to dance in?

Activity 1 Set up a safe classroom environment

- » 1. Check how safe your classroom is for dancing.
Copy Table 1.1.1. Tick (✓) Yes or No.

	Yes	No
Is there anything on the floor that will hurt you, or make you slip and fall?		
Has the floor been swept clean?		
Is the space clear?		
Is there anything that you can bump into, kick or trip over?		
Are the desks, chairs, school bags out of the room or packed neatly in a corner?		

Table 1.1.1 Safety checklist



- »»» 2. Discuss your findings. Agree on how to make the classroom safer for dancing in.

Dance conduct

It is important to decide with our teacher on ways in which we could work well together in dance class. This means that we decide how we relate to each other and how we dance. Deciding on the ways in which we work will involve things like:

- Greeting everyone in the class when you enter
- Asking to be excused when you need to leave
- How to dress for dance class
- How to behave during dance class
- Awareness of the use of space when you are moving with others
- Respecting and trusting one another.

Your body is special, and you are in control of your own body. You must look after your body by eating healthy food, drinking enough water, giving your body rest, and keeping your body clean. It is very important to wash yourself every day (especially after dance or other sports classes), and to use a good deodorant.



Figure 11.2 Personal hygiene is good for everyone

Activity 2 Decide on how to work together

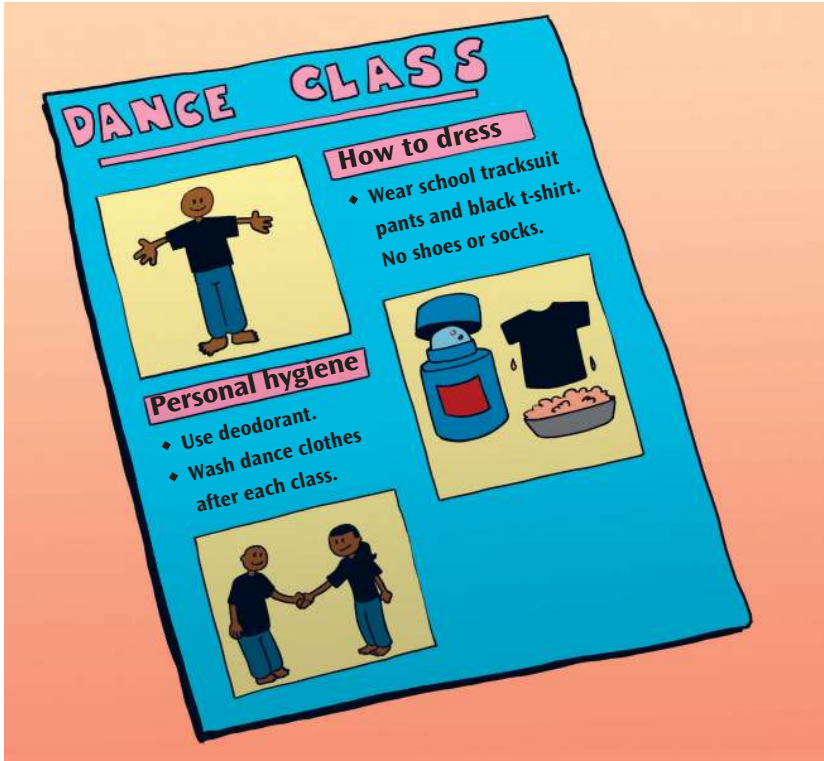
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1. Think about your answers to the questions.

a. What makes you feel uncomfortable in the dance class?
b. How can you help everyone feel more comfortable?
c. How can you improve your personal hygiene?
d. How can you treat others in the class with more respect?
-
2. Sit in a circle. Discuss dance conventions.

a. How can you all make sure the classroom is clean and safe?
b. How can you all improve your personal hygiene?
c. How should you enter the class and greet each other?
d. How should you leave the class and say goodbye?
3. Discuss a classroom code of conduct for the dance class.

a. What dance-wear should you wear to the dance class?
b. How should you use the dance space properly and appropriately – your own space and the space of others?
c. How can you show respect for and sensitivity to other dancers?
d. How can you learn to trust each other? What trust exercises can you do?
-
4. Form two groups. Group 1 will make a poster about the dance conventions you have all agreed to. Group 2 will make a poster about the code of conduct.
5. Make sure that the points are easy to read. Decorate your posters.
6. Put up the posters on the wall and keep them there for the whole year.
7. At the beginning of each dance lesson quickly read through the posters so that you remember what you have agreed to.

! Keep your own workbook in which you write down dance vocabulary and other knowledge and skills you are learning.



! You need to continue practising all your dance conventions throughout the year.

Figure 1.1.3 A poster made by a Grade 7 class

UNIT
2

Posture and alignment

How are you sitting or standing right now? Are you slumped forward or leaning back? Are your feet flat on the floor? Is your lower back straight or arched? Are you standing with your weight all on one leg? The human body is an amazing machine. But to move properly it needs to be well-balanced. For this, you need good posture and body alignment.

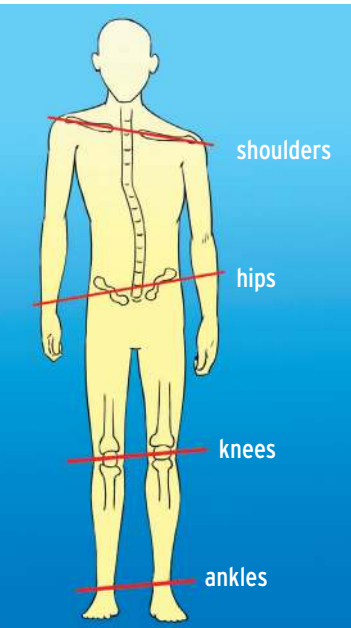


Figure 1.2.1A Poor body alignment: Standing with all your weight on one leg is bad for your posture

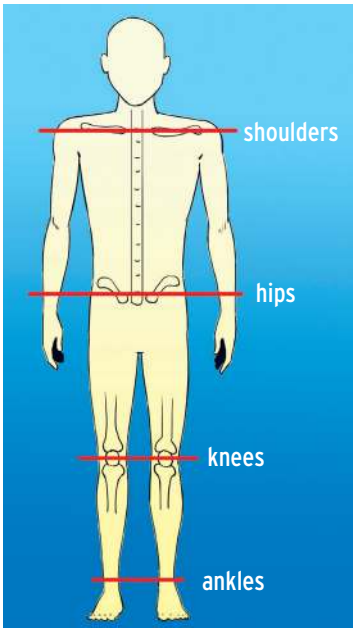


Figure 1.2.1B Healthy body alignment: Your weight should be evenly balanced for good posture

What is posture and alignment?

Posture is the way you carry your body. This is very important for a dancer. When your posture is properly aligned, your back and stomach muscles are held in; there is a slight natural curve to your spine; and your arms and head rest comfortably above your rib cage.

The principles of posture and alignment

Good posture and **alignment** help you:

- improve your balance, which is important in dance
- improve your **agility** so that you can move and change position quickly and with control
- develop your muscles to prevent injuries
- make a good dance partner in a **duet** because you can hold your own posture and do not rely on your partner for help
- make your movements look graceful and beautiful.

Glossary

- posture** how you carry your body
alignment the even position of your body when you are standing
agility to move and change position quickly and with control
duet a dance performed by two people

Poor alignment puts a strain on the muscles and joints of the lower back and legs, causing muscles to work beyond their natural ability.

Improving your posture will improve your appearance both on and off the dance floor. Dance of all genres can help to improve your posture. Even if you're not a dancer, improving your posture can have positive effects on your body, as well as your social life.

Tips to help improve posture

- Stand with your body weight forward, mostly on the balls of your feet.
- Evenly distribute your body weight between your feet.
- Keep your feet shoulder-width apart when standing – your feet, knees and shoulders should be in line.
- Try not to lock your knees or hold them stiff, they should be relaxed.
- Stand tall, hold your shoulders square and relaxed.
- It will feel as though you are sticking out your chest if your shoulders are correctly aligned.
- Keep your head in line with your spine, eyes straight ahead.
- Hold your chin parallel to the floor.
- Keep your neck long and stretched upward

Activity 1 Check your posture and alignment

1. Look at the three learners in Figure 1.2.2. Try out each posture. Which one do you think is good posture for a dancer? Why?
2. Stand as in posture B (Figure 1.2.2), which is good posture. Stand facing forward with your arms hanging loosely at your side. Soften your knees slightly and make sure that your weight is balanced equally over both your feet. Take a deep breath to relax.
3. Imagine that there is a string hanging next to you. It is attached to the ceiling and it has a weight hanging on the end. Now correct your posture so that your ear, shoulder, hip, knee and ankle are in line with the string.
4. As a class create a simple, short four movement sequence and perform it in front of the mirror while watching your alignment and posture throughout. Help each other with correcting your posture and alignment through this process. Check the following or ask a partner to check the following:
 - a. Your head is resting comfortably above your rib cage – not leaning back or forward.
 - b. Your shoulders are not hunched.
 - c. Your tummy and back muscles are tucked in.
 - d. Your back is long and your lower back follows the natural curve of your spine.



Always be aware of, check, and correct your posture and alignment.

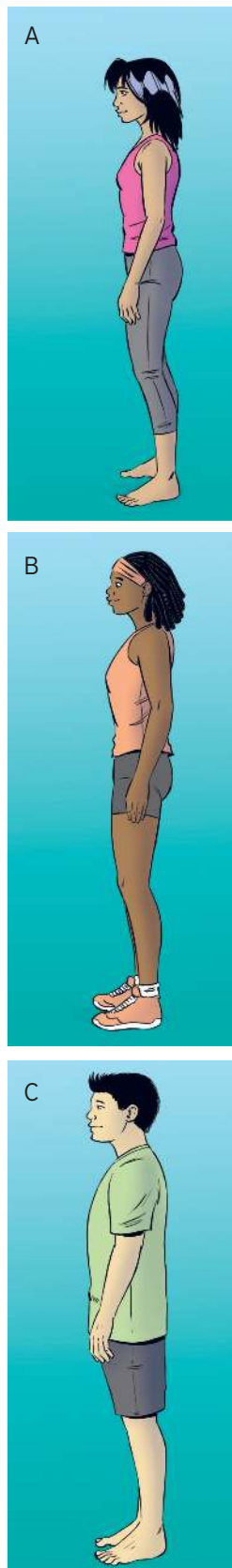


Figure 1.2.2 Good posture helps dancers look graceful

UNIT
3

Warm-up: Walking and running

Glossary

warm-up to prepare your muscles to work harder than normal
heart rate the number of times your heart beats in one minute

It is very easy to injure yourself when you dance, especially if you don't warm-up your body properly before you start.

Why do you need to warm-up?

Each part of your body has muscles that you need to **warm-up** before you dance. Warming them up:

- prepares these muscles to work harder than normal
- improves your posture and alignment
- prevents injuries
- increases your **heart rate** and makes blood flow quickly to your muscles to give them more oxygen for heavier or harder movement.

Do the following warm-up exercises to prepare your muscles before dancing. By doing these six warm-up exercises as a sequence to warm up, you can say that they are part of your warm-up routine.

Warm-up routine



a. Take three long steps forward.



b. Drop your front knee until it almost reaches the ground.



c. Take another three big steps forward. Drop your other knee. Repeat this three times.



d. Run forward, raising your knees high to a 90° angle.



e. Skip as high as you can. Raise your right arm when your right leg is off the ground.



f. Focus on your posture as you jog back to where you started.

Figure 1.3.1 A warm-up routine

Activity 1 Walk, run, freeze

- 1. Move very slowly around the room. When your teacher says, 'Freeze', stop wherever you are and freeze into a big shape.
- 2. When your teacher says, 'Move faster', start moving again a little faster than before.
- 3. When your teacher says, 'Freeze', freeze into a small shape.
- 4. Your teacher will continue to give you instructions to move slowly, faster or very fast; to move backwards, forwards, sideways, diagonally, or in any direction you like; to move on the floor, on your knees, back, or bottom; to run, skip, gallop or jump up in the air; or to freeze into big, small or medium shapes.

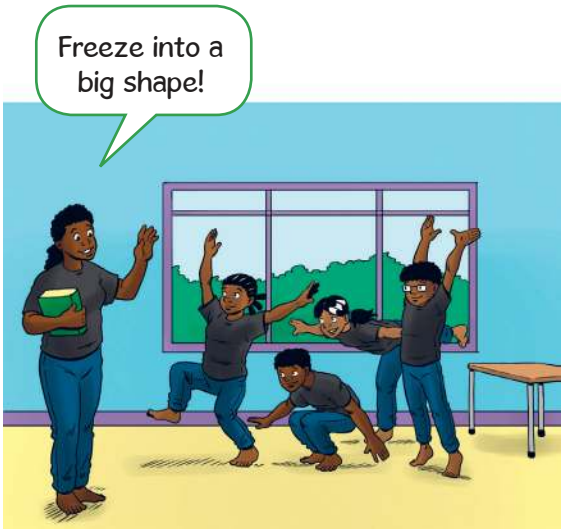


Figure 1.3.2 Make your warm-up fun!

Activity 2 Create a warm-up routine

- Preparation:** Think about the different muscles in your body, how they work and how they allow you to move.
- 1. Draw a table like the one below. In Column 1, write down different parts of the body (from the feet up). In Column 2, give an example of a warm-up exercise for each body part. There is one example for you.

Body part	Example of warm-up exercise
Feet	Make five circles to the right and five to the left. Then move feet up and down five times.

Table 1.2.1 Warm-up activities for each part of the body

- 2. Look at your exercises. You should be able to answer YES for each of these questions (if you cannot, then fix your exercises!).
 - a. Are there exercises that work each muscle separately, for example the calves?
 - b. Are there exercises that work a group of muscles together, for example the muscles in the legs?
 - c. Are there different kinds of exercises – some that work high up in the body; some that work lower down; some that change direction; and some that make you stand, sit, lean, run, jump, skip or be still?
 - d. Are the exercises fun?
 - e. Is your warm-up music fun?
- 3. Practise your warm-up routine. Demonstrate it to the class.

Your heart rate has increased if after your warm-up you are breathing and sweating more heavily than normal.

This is your warm-up and cool-down group for the term.

Informal assessment

Do warm-up activities slowly, and in an even, unbroken way.

UNIT
4

Floor-work

Glossary

core muscles the muscles in your abdomen or stomach, lower back and pelvis

Floor-work can involve rolling or kneeling on the floor, or balancing on your hands. In this unit you do floor-work exercises to strengthen certain muscles and to increase your flexibility.

What are your core muscles?

Your **core muscles** are like a box.

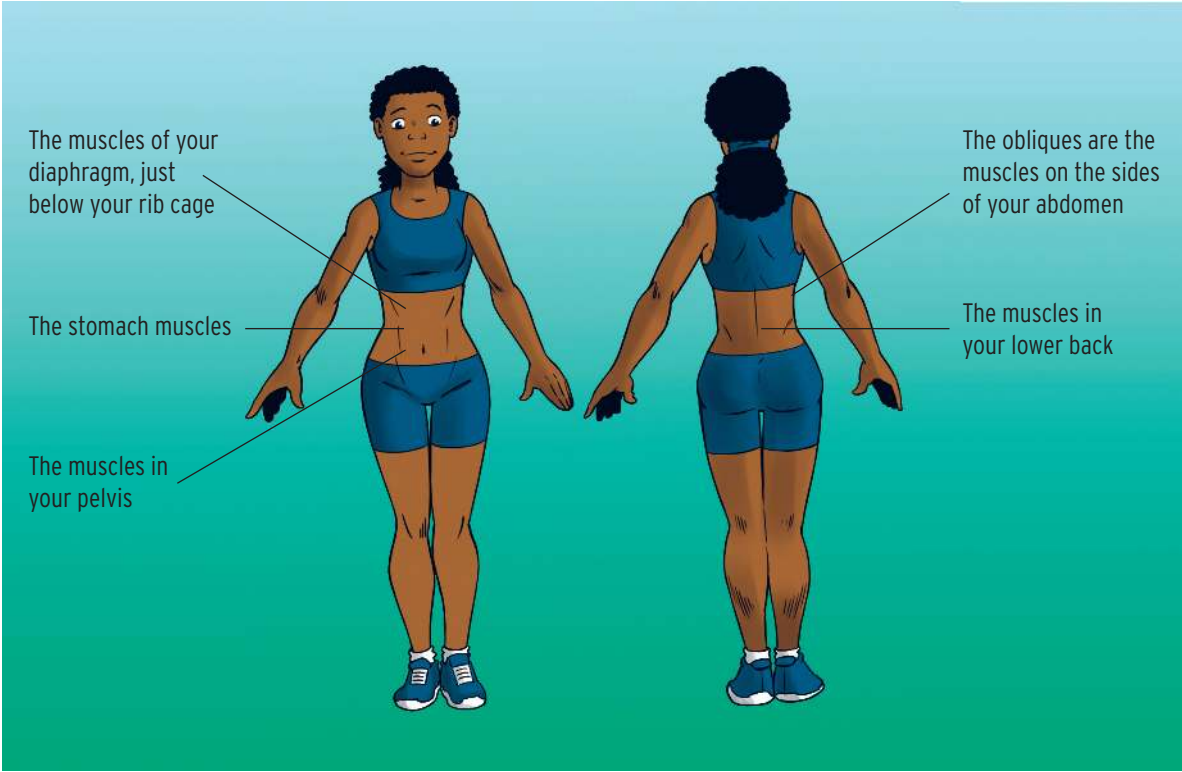


Figure 1.4.1 The core muscles are like a box

Glossary

core stability the ability of the core muscles to help you align your posture properly
stable to hold a steady position
flexibility to be able to bend parts of your body easily



Use your hands to feel the different core muscle groups in your own body.

How does floor-work help with core stability?

Floor-work exercises help you strengthen your core muscles so that you can hold a position and not fall over. They help strengthen your **core stability**. This is the ability of your core muscles to keep your posture **stable** or balanced during movement. There are also floor-work exercises that increase your **flexibility** so that you can bend your body easily, without damage or injury.