

Elements of Dance – With Descriptions

Time – All dancers move in time.

- Stillness: focus on the difference between stillness and movement.
- Tempo: focus on different tempos of movement, like fast, slow; also on changes of tempo, i.e. speeding up and slowing down (acceleration and deceleration.)
- Rhythm: focus on exploration of different rhythms, including musical (3/4, 4/4 time), breath and pulse

Space - All dancers move in or through space.

- Stage Directions: traditional directions used by performers while on stage, i.e. downstage (toward the audience), upstage (away from the audience), stage right and stage left (right and left when facing the audience onstage).
- Personal Directions: these directions are from the dancer's view, no matter where they are facing - front, back, sides, diagonals, up, down.
- Pathways: the line a dancer can take while moving through the space - curved, straight, zigzag
- Formations: the groupings dancers can arrange themselves in while moving through the space - lines, circles, clusters, and chaos.
- Levels: exploration of space around the body; high (above the head or on tiptoe), middle (standing or with semi-bent knees), and low (pelvis at least as low as deeply bent knees, or on the floor).

Energy/Force – All dancers move with energy/force/effort.

- Strong/light: contrast of strength and lightness of effort.
- Quick/sustained: contrast of changes in direction or dynamics. This is different from fast and slow tempo.
- Direct/indirect: contrast of where energy is focused.
- Flow – free/bound: how energy is managed.

- Sharp/Smooth: contrast in movement qualities.
- Swingly/Bouncy: contrast in movement qualities.

Body

- Body parts: one way of focusing and organizing movement - head, neck, shoulders, ribs, hips, pelvis, knees, ankles, feet, arms, elbows, wrists, hands and whole body.
- Shapes: focus on how the body is configured in space; contrasts include - large/small, wide/narrow, straight/round, angular/twisted, symmetrical/asymmetrical.
- Locomotor movements: ways that a dancer can move or travel through space from one location to another, including - walk, run, hop, jump, skip, leap, slide, crawl and roll.
- Non-locomotor movements: ways that a dancer can move in space without traveling; at least one foot usually remains in place - bend, stretch, twist, reach, turn, melt, fall, kick, push, pull, slash, float and glide.