

New York State Learning Standards for the



# Dance

## Glossary

TOGETHER WE • CREATE • PRESENT  
PERFORM • RESPOND • CONNECT  
PRODUCE

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**New York State Learning Standards for the Arts**

**DANCE**

# **GLOSSARY**

**of Discipline-Specific Terms & Concepts**



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**NOTES:**

✓ A checkmark in the right-hand column indicates that the definition is a New York State addition or revision to definitions published by the National Core Arts Standards (SEADAE, 2014). When only a small part of a definition has been added by NYS authors, that part is underlined.

NCAS definitions can be found at <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/content/glossary>.

<b>Definitions</b>	NYS additions to NCAS
<b>A</b>	
<p><b>AB</b> A two-part compositional form with an A theme and B theme. The binary form consists of two distinct self-contained sections that share either a character or quality; e.g. the same tempo, movement quality, or style.</p>	✓
<p><b>ABA</b> A three-part compositional form in which the second section contrasts with the first section. The third section is a restatement of the first section in a condensed, abbreviated, or extended form.</p>	✓
<p><b>Abstraction</b> Refers to choreography that does not tell a story, nor is related to symbolic content, feelings, ideas or elements other than the movement. A dance can be considered abstract if it is seen through the frame of pure movement or its compositional elements; e.g. space, time, body, and effort.</p>	✓
<p><b>Accumulation</b> A choreographic device where new movements are added to existing movements in a successive manner; e.g., A, AB, ABC, ABCD. In 1971, Trisha Brown used the word to name a solo dance work that was based on adding one movement gesture to another, one at a time, and repeating the growing phrase with each new movement.</p>	✓
<p><b>Active stillness</b> The state of being still in an energized shape.</p>	✓
<p><b>Aesthetic</b> A set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty.</p>	
<p><b>Alignment</b> The process of adjusting the skeletal and muscular system to gravity to support effective functionality.</p>	
<p><b>Alternative performance venues</b> A performance site other than a standard Western style theater (e.g. classroom, site-specific venue, or natural environment).</p>	

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p><b>Artistic criteria</b> Aspects of craft and skill used to fulfill an artistic intent.</p>	
<p><b>Artistic expression</b> The manifestations of artistic intent conveyed through dance, music, drama, art, literature, media technology, or another artistic medium.</p>	
<p><b>Artistic intent</b> The purpose, main idea, and expressive or communicative goal(s) of a dance composition or performance.</p>	
<p><b>Artistic statement</b> An artist’s written description of their work.</p>	
<p><b>Audience etiquette</b> Appropriate audience behaviors such as no cell phone use, respect for the performers, etc., when viewing a performance; behavioral norms will vary according to performance genre/venue (e.g. traditional theatrical concert vs. hip-hop/dance team performance vs. capoeira roda).</p>	√
<p><b>B</b></p>	
<p><b>Body use</b> The ways in which movement patterns and body parts are used in movement and dance practice; descriptive method of identifying patterns.</p>	
<p><b>C</b></p>	
<p><b>Canon</b> A compositional structure in which a movement pattern is executed by two or more dancers starting at different times. This term is referenced similarly in dance and music, where it is also called a round.</p>	√
<p><b>Central initiation</b> Movement that begins from the torso.</p>	√
<p><b>Choreographic devices</b> Tools used to manipulate movement, sequences, or phrases; e.g., augmentation, diminution, inversion, repetition, retrograde, reverse, and sequencing.</p>	
<p><b>Choreographic structures</b> The organization of choreography and movement to fulfill the artistic intent of a dance or dance study e.g., AB (binary), ABA (ternary), rondo (ABACA), theme and variation (A, A1, A2, A3) and narrative; often referred to as choreographic form.</p>	√

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p><b>Codified movement</b> Common motion or motions set in a style that often has specific names and expectations associated with it.</p>	
<p><b>Core support</b> Connectivity and engagement of major muscles of the abdomen, lower and upper back, hips, buttocks, and inner thighs that provides postural strength and support.</p>	√
<p><b>Counterpoint</b> Expresses harmonic interdependence or a relationship between two melodic lines whose rhythm and contour are different. When referring to dance, it expresses the same, but in choreographic terms: two (or more) choreographic fragments with different use of space, time, and/or body are executed together and make part of a choreographic unity.</p>	√
<p><b>Criteria</b> Values and characteristics used to assess a dance; factors considered to evaluate progress, and attain an aesthetically satisfying dance composition or performance.</p>	√
<p><b>Cultural context</b> Surrounding patterns of behavior, practices, values, and symbol systems that are acquired, preserved, and transmitted by a group of people.</p>	√
<p><b>Cultural dance practices</b> Dances associated with a country, community, or people, that may or may not be performed in formal theatrical performance spaces. Such dance practices contain philosophies and purposes originating from and relating to their cultural contexts. In a broad sense, all dance forms are cultural, from ballet to breakin’ to ballroom.</p>	√
<p><b>Cultural movement practices</b> Movements characteristic of a country, community, or people. This may include philosophy and purpose related to the cultural context.</p>	√
<p><b>Cultural values</b> Ideas about what is good, right, bad, just, and of worth in a community or society.</p>	√
<p><b>D</b></p>	
<p><b>Dance exemplar</b> Dance examples that highlight the diversity of student work or dance works of art; e.g., historical, cultural, social, sacred, and theatrical dance. A dance exemplar serves as a model of excellence.</p>	√
<p><b>Dance genres</b> Types of dances based upon form, technique, intent, or philosophy. For example, hip-hop, ballet, modern, and butoh are four distinct genres. Genre is also an overarching category that may contain multiple dance styles (see <b>Dance styles</b>).</p>	√

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p><b>Dance literacy</b> The total experience of dance learning that includes the doing and knowing about dance: dance skills and techniques, dance making, knowledge and understanding of dance vocabulary, dance history, dance from different cultures, dance genres, repertory, performers, choreographers, dance companies, notation and preservation.</p>	
<p><b>Dance making</b> An overarching concept of creativity that encompasses refined completed dance, dance phrases, and improvisations done as works of art, ritual, social, personal practice, or for any other reason.</p>	√
<p><b>Dance notation</b> A symbolic representation of human dance movement and form, using methods such as graphic symbols and figures, path mapping, numerical systems, and letter and word notations. Several dance notation systems have been invented, many of which are designed to document specific types of dance; e.g. <i>Labanotation</i>. Recorded dance notation that describes a dance is known as a <b>Dance score</b>.</p>	√
<p><b>Dance phrase</b> A brief sequence of related movements that has a sense of continuity and artistic or rhythmic completion.</p>	
<p><b>Dance structures</b> The organization of choreography and movement to fulfill the artistic intent of a dance or dance study; e.g. AB, ABA or theme and variation; often referred to as choreographic form.</p>	
<p><b>Dance study</b> A short dance that is composed of several dance phrases based on an idea or concept.</p>	
<p><b>Dance styles</b> Embraces many elements, including a preference for certain kinds of movement (fast or slow, simple or intricate) or for kinds of energy and attack (sharp, edgy, and hard, as opposed to soft and fluid). It also embraces different ways of phrasing movement or arranging dancers into groups, as well as an interest in certain kinds of music or design. Examples: Graham Technique is a style of Modern Dance, Rhythm/Tap is a style of percussive dance.</p>	√
<p><b>Dance techniques</b> A specific set of tools and skills needed to produce a particular style of movement.</p>	
<p><b>Dance terminology</b> Vocabulary used to describe dance and dance experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Simple dance terminology</b> (Tier 1/PreK-2): basic pedestrian language (for example, locomotor words, such as walk, run, tip-toe, slither, roll, crawl, jump, march, and gallop; and no non-locomotor words, such as bend, twist, turn, open, and close).</li> </ul>	



	NYS additions to NCAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Basic dance terminology</b>                      (Tier 2/grades 3-5): vocabulary used to describe dance movement techniques, structures, works, and experiences that are widely shared in the field of dance (for example, stage terminology, compositional vocabulary, language defining dance structures and devices, anatomical references, dance techniques such as alignment or “line”).                 </li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Genre-specific dance terminology</b>                      (Tier 3/grades 6 up): Words used to describe movement within specific dance forms ballet, contemporary, culturally-specific dance, funk, hip-hop, jazz, modern, tap, and others (e.g. in Polynesian Hula dance, terms such as auwana, kahiko, halau, kaholo, uwehe, ami; in ballet: glissade, pas de bourrée, pas de chat, arabesque; in jazz: kick ball change, pencil turn, jazz walk, jazz run; in modern: contraction, triplets, spiral, pivot turn; and in tap: sheeted, cramp roll, riff, wing, time step).                 </li> </ul>	
<b>Direct pathway</b> A straight path that is the shortest distance to travel from point A to B.	
<b>Duple meter</b> A rhythmic pattern with the measure being divisible by two. This includes simple double rhythms such as 2/2, 4/4, but also compound rhythms such as 6/8.	√
<b>Dynamics</b> The qualities or characteristics of movement which lend expression and style; also called “efforts” or “energy” (e.g. lyrical, sustained, quick, light, or strong).	
<b>E</b>	
<b>Elements of dance</b> The key components of movement; movement of the body, using space, time, relationships, energy/dynamics as referenced in Laban Movement Analysis, B.A.S.T.E. and Language of Dance, B.E.S.T.R.	√
<b>Elements of movement</b> (See <b>Elements of Dance</b> )	√
<b>Embody</b> To physicalize a movement, concept, or idea throughout the body.	
<b>Evaluative criteria</b> The definition of values and characteristics by which dance can be assessed; factors to be considered to attain an aesthetically satisfying dance composition or performance.	
<b>Explore</b> Investigation of dance through a variety of stimuli (e.g. music/sound, dance exemplars, <i>(cont’d)</i>	



	NYS additions to NCAS
literary forms, notation, ideas and images, own experiences, objects, natural phenomena, world news, and social issues), the elements of dance, and choreographic structures.	
<b>External sources</b> Ideas and concepts that originate from inspiration outside of the body.	√
<b>F</b>	
<b>Facings</b> The direction in which the body stands in relationship to a dance space, performance venue, or other dancers. Stage directions, ballet body facings, and elements of dance can be used as directives to clarify body positions.	√
<b>Focus</b> The gaze of the eye. It is also used in dance to refer to internal or external focus. Internal focus is awareness of sensations inside the body. External focus is full attention to the space outside the body. Focus can also refer to the ability to concentrate.	√
<b>Functional alignment</b> The organization of the skeleton and musculature in relationship to gravity (e.g. vertical) that supports safe and efficient movement while dancing.	
<b>G</b>	
<b>General space</b> Space beyond one’s kinesphere (see <b>Personal space</b> ).	
<b>H</b>	
<b>I</b>	
<b>Indirect pathway</b> A meandering route traveled through space.	√
<b>Informal sharing</b> Communal sharing of learning experiences presented in spaces other than a proscenium theater; e.g. the dance studio, classroom, gym, site-specific venue, or natural environment.	√
<b>Internal sources</b> Ideas or concepts originated from inspiration derived from the choreographer’s own body or personal experiences/sensations.	√
<b>Interpretation</b> Analysis or appreciation of meaning in an artwork by a viewer; or the meaning communicated by the performer of an existing artwork.	√

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p><b>Inversion</b> A choreographic device in which movements are executed upside down; e.g. a movement performed on the feet with the torso bent over might be performed lying on the back with the feet in the air.</p>	√
<p><b>J</b></p>	
<p><b>Jump shape</b> Body positions created while suspended in the air.</p>	√
<p><b>Juxtaposition</b> Placing dancers or things side-by-side, which draws the viewer's attention to the similarities or differences between the elements.</p>	√
<p><b>K</b></p>	
<p><b>Kinesthetic awareness</b> Pertains to a keen sensory attunement and comprehension of bodily movement.</p>	
<p><b>L</b></p>	
<p><b>Locomotor movement</b> Movement that travels from one location to another or in a pathway through space (e.g. in Pre-K: walk, run, tip-toe, slither, roll, crawl, jump, march, gallop; in Kindergarten: the addition of prance, hop, skip, slide).</p>	
<p><b>M</b></p>	
<p><b>Media technology</b> Interactive computer elements; e.g. the use of graphics, text, video, sound, or animation to deliver a message.</p>	√
<p><b>Motif</b> A gesture, movement or phrase that references or represents the main idea of a dance study or choreography and that is repeated throughout the choreography.</p>	√
<p><b>Movement characteristics</b> The qualities, elements, or dynamics that describe or define a movement.</p>	
<p><b>Movement elements</b> (See <b>Elements of Dance</b>)</p>	√
<p><b>Movement problem</b> A specific focus that requires that one find a solution and complete a task; gives direction and exploration in composition.</p>	

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p><b>Movement texture</b> The overall kinesthetic feeling of a group or sequence of movements. In choreographies, texture usually supports the conveyance of artistic aesthetic, intent, and/or expression. Different textures are created when the elements of movement are varied and/or juxtaposed.</p>	√
<p><b>Movement vocabulary</b> Codified or personal movement characteristics that define a movement style.</p>	
<p><b>N</b></p>	
<p><b>Negative space</b> The area (space) around and between the dancer(s) or dance image(s) in a dance.</p>	
<p><b>Non-locomotor movement</b> Sometimes called axial movement, is movement that remains in place; movement that does not travel from one location to another or in a pathway through space (e.g. in Pre-K bend, twist, turn, open, close; in Kindergarten, swing, sway, spin, reach, pull).</p>	
<p><b>Notation</b> (See <b>Dance notation</b>)</p>	√
<p><b>O</b></p>	
<p><b>P</b></p>	
<p><b>Pathway(s)</b> Pattern(s) created in the air or on the floor by the body or body parts as a dancer moves in and through space.</p>	√
<p><b>Performance etiquette, Performer etiquette</b> Expected behaviors when rehearsing or performing (e.g. no talking while the dance is in progress, no chewing gum, appropriate appearance, dancers do not call out to audience members who are friends).</p>	
<p><b>Performance tasks</b> Any learning activity or assessment that asks students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and proficiency. Performance tasks yield a tangible product and/or performance that serves as evidence of learning.</p>	√
<p><b>Peripheral initiation</b> Movement that begins away from the center of the body.</p>	√
<p><b>Personal movement</b> Personal movement vocabulary: an individual's patterns of movement, which can be identified and extended through improvisation.</p>	√

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p><b>Personal space</b> The area of space directly surrounding one’s body extending as far as a person can reach; also called the <b>kinesphere</b>.</p>	
<p><b>Positive space</b> Any medium occupied by an element or a form.</p>	
<p><b>Production elements</b> Aspects of performance that produce theatrical effects (e.g. costumes, makeup, sound, lighting, props).</p>	
<p><b>Production terminology</b> Words commonly used to refer to the stage, performance setting, or theatrical aspects of dance presentation.</p>	
<p><b>Proprioceptive feedback</b> A sensory receptor, found chiefly in muscles, tendons, joints, and the inner ear, that detects the motion or position of the body or a limb by responding to stimuli arising within the organism.</p>	√
<p><b>Q</b></p>	
<p><b>R</b></p>	
<p><b>Retrograde</b> To reverse the order of a sequence of a dance choreography.</p>	√
<p><b>Rhythm(s)</b> (and all adjectival forms of Rhythm including polyrhythmic) The patterning or structuring of time through movement or sound.</p>	
<p><b>Ritual dance</b> Dance that is primarily performed in religious or other rites, and reflects specific cultural customs.</p>	√
<p><b>Rondo</b> A choreographic form of three or more themes with an alternating return to the main theme (ABACADA).</p>	√
<p><b>S</b></p>	
<p><b>See. Think. Wonder.</b> An inquiry-based Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) used for critical analysis, from Harvard Project Zero, in which children respond to simple questions (What do you see? What do you think? What do you wonder?) that enable them to begin to make meaning from an observed (dance) work of art.</p>	

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p><b>Somatic strategies</b>                      A field within bodywork and movement studies that emphasizes internal physical perception, body-mind connection, and experience. The term is used in movement therapy to signify approaches based on the soma, or the body as perceived from within, including the Alexander technique, the Feldenkrais Method, and Rolfing.</p> <p>In dance, the term refers to techniques based on the dancer's internal sensation, in contrast with performative techniques, such as ballet or modern dance, which emphasize the external observation of movement by an audience. Somatic techniques may be used in bodywork, psychotherapy, or dance.</p>	√
<p><b>Sound environment</b>                      Sound accompaniment for dancing other than music (e.g., street noise, ocean surf, bird calls, spoken word).</p>	
<p><b>Sourcing</b>                      Method of using choreographic principles to guide the way that movement is produced from any part of the body. Involves deep reflection and conscious decision-making in how the body is used.</p>	√
<p><b>Space</b>                      Components of dance involving direction, pathways, facings, levels, shapes, and design; the location where a dance takes place; the element of dance referring to the cubic area of a room, of a stage, or of other environments.</p>	
<p><b>Spatial design, Spatial patterns</b>                      Predetermined use of directions, levels, pathways, formations, and body shapes.</p>	
<p><b>Stimulus, Stimuli</b>                      Thing(s) or event(s) that inspire action, feeling, or thought.</p>	
<p><b>Structures</b>                      (See <b>Dance structures</b>)</p>	
<p><b>T</b></p>	
<p><b>Technical dance skill</b>                      The degree of physical proficiency that a dancer achieves within a dance style, genre, or technique (e.g. coordination, form, strength, speed, and range). Also refers to specific ways of training, preparing or learning dancing skills; e.g. ballet, Graham, Dunham, West African, Soca, tap, hip-hop, bon odori, and tango, among many others.</p>	
<p><b>Technique(s), Technical (adj.)</b>                      (See <b>Dance techniques</b>)</p>	

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p><b>Tempo, tempi</b> The pace or speed of a pulse or beat underlying music or movement.</p>	
<p><b>Theme</b> An idea that is stated choreographically.</p>	
<p><b>Theme and variation</b> A choreographic structure in which a central or significant movement phrase is repeated in varied but recognizable forms.</p>	√
<p><b>Triple meter</b> A musical meter characterized by a primary division of 3 beats to the bar, usually indicated by 3 (simple) or 9 (compound) in the upper figure of the time signature, with 3/2, 3/4, and 3/8 being the most common examples.</p>	√
<p><b>U</b></p>	
<p><b>V</b></p>	
<p><b>Verbal communication, verbalizations</b> Refers to both spoken and written communication.</p>	√
<p><b>W</b></p>	
<p><b>X</b></p>	
<p><b>Y</b></p>	
<p><b>Z</b></p>	