

# Say it Through Dance

**Inquiry Question:**  
**How can I use my body to express ideas through movement?**

# 7

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**I can interpret  
written text  
and respond  
through dance.**



**I can  
collaborate  
with others to  
organize  
movement into  
dance.**

**Choreographers  
use creative  
process to  
design dances.**

**I understand  
there are many  
ways to respond  
to artistic  
questions.**

This unit encourages students to explore ways to express and interpret text through creative dance.

Grade 7

Strand  
Dance

Outcomes

CP 7.1  
CP 7.2  
CP 7.3  
CR7.1  
CH7.3



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# I. Curriculum

## **Outcomes: Creative Productive**

**CP7.1 Create dance compositions that express ideas about the importance of place (e.g., relationships to the land, local geology, region, urban/rural environments).**

- Use inquiry in dance to extend understanding of place.
  - keep a record of dance phrases using invented and/or traditional notation symbols, and video where possible, to explore, record, and reconstruct movements
- Investigate how a single idea can be developed in many ways and directions.
- Recognize and consider valuable accidents in exploration.
- Demonstrate self-awareness in decision making about own movement selections.

**CP7.2 Investigate and manipulate the elements of dance and principles of composition including tension and resolution.**

- Identify ways that dances begin, build towards something, and come to resolutions during specific sections or within the dance as a whole.
- View and analyze own and peers' dance compositions for application of dance elements and tension and resolution.
- Use inquiry to investigate questions about relationships among the elements of dance and principles of tension and resolution.

**CP7.3 Create and refine transitions within choreographic forms (e.g., ABBA, narrative).**

- Develop and refine transitions using reflection, decision-making and movement problem-solving.

## **Outcome: Critical Responsive**

### **CR7.1 Respond to professional dance, drama, music, and visual art works using analysis, personal interpretation, and research.**

- Describe, analyze, and interpret dance, drama, music, and visual art works.
- Demonstrate critical and creative thinking using one or more approaches such as those described in “Responding to Arts Expressions” (SK curriculum).

## **Outcome: Cultural Historical**

### **CH7.3 Investigate and identify a variety of factors that influence artists, their work, and careers.**

- Research to determine various influences on the work and careers of selected Canadian artists.
- Explain ways that technology is used by artists in dance, drama, music, visual art, and interdisciplinary creations.

## II. Overview

### Students will know:

- Elements of dance and principles of composition can be manipulated with intention into different choreographic forms.
- There are many ways to represent text through dance.
- Dancers explore movement, take risks, and learn from mistakes.
- The creative process can vary for each project, artists view it in distinct ways.
- Careers in dance and ways that technology is used to document, share and promote work.
- Choreographers explore various ways to solve problems and are influenced by where they live.
- Dance is influenced by the place in which it is created.
- There are a variety of ways to respond to dance.

### Students will do:

- View and respond to professional dance (live or on online), discuss career path of the dancer/company, and ways that technology has been used.
- Share research with the class on a professional dancer or company.
- Develop a Learning Log to illustrate creative process, research, ideas, symbols, action words, text and interpretation.
- Generate a list of action words connected to interpretation of place and the text provided.
- Explore choreography and analyze what is most effective in communicating ideas in response to the text.
- Work in groups to collectively choreograph dance in response to the text.
- Construct a visual map of the dance as a way to record the movement through dance notation to illustrate choreographic form.
- Rehearse and perform the dance.
- Reflect on the group process of and personal role in creating.

### Questions for Deeper Understanding

How are our school values reflected in the text? What do the value statements reveal about our school and community?

How do we make effective movement choices to portray intention through dance? How can we use mistakes and accidents in our process?

How will we know if the audience understands what we want to communicate?

## III. Assessment Plan

### Formative

#### Assessment Evidence

- Anecdotal record - observation of prior knowledge
- Learning log
- Video of practice and group reflection notes
- Self assessment
- Peer assessment
- Teacher observation sheet

#### Assessment Task

- Discuss arts elements and design principles, choreographic form, review vocabulary (see appendix)
- Understand, document the creative process
- Graphic organizer to guide the dance plan, list of action words, analysis of text, dance notation
- Groups to view video and discuss ways to make improvements and solve problems through feedback
- Use language specific to dance vocabulary

### Summative

#### Assessment Evidence

- Partner conversations
- Class collaborative display
- Notation of dance choreography, description of dance intention as it connects to text
- Rubrics for performance (see appendix)

#### Assessment Task

- Response to a professional dance.
- Collect and share background information on the dancer or dance company
- Choreograph an original dance in response to the selected text
- Discuss criteria for the dance and co-construct the rubric
- Performance for peers (audience)

## IV. Learning Plan

### Lesson One: Laying the Foundation

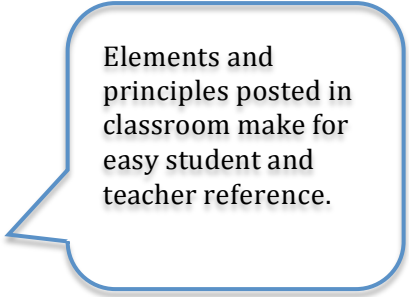
**Time frame:** approximately 2 hours

- **Introduction:** Provide students with an overview of the unit plan, vocabulary, including use of text interpretation, group choreography and documentation of process. (see appendix for Dance Concepts poster)
- **Pre-assess:** View a dance excerpt by a Canadian choreographer (e.g., Recommended Online Video Educational Resources - ROVER). Students make observations of the elements and principles in the dance. Document the discussions using an anecdotal record sheet and assess level of prior knowledge.
- **Research Dancers:** Discuss with a partner which dancer or dance company to research further. Collect background information and consider training, inspirations, technique, travel, and career. Create a class display to share this research and make connections by identifying the common elements in the world of professional dance.
- **Creative Process:** Discuss what a creative process might look like for group collaboration. What are important factors to consider? What would help the group work more effectively? What are some anticipated barriers? Brainstorm a list of words or phrases for creative process – e.g., inspiration, ideas, knowledge, skills, improvisation, problem solving, exploration, innovation, rehearse, revise, reflect, consider, etc. Students will likely come up with new words. Agree as a group on the process you wish to use and create a graphic organizer to document the process to be followed. Post in the classroom and refer to it through the unit. The process should also be open to revision as needed.

## Lesson Two: Review the Elements of Dance

**Time frame:** 1 hour

- **Review Vocabulary:** Challenge students to list and describe the elements of dance collaboratively.
- **Action Words:** Students generate a list of action words (Laban) that can be posted and used throughout movement explorations.
- **Small Groups:** Create short dance phrases that emphasize two or three of the elements of dance in combination (i.e., actions, body, relationships, dynamics, and space), based on the concept of “Home”. Investigate joining phrases in a simple ABA choreographic form (“**ABA** form begins with an opening theme, leads into a contrasting theme that complements the first, and concludes with a return to the opening theme. This conclusion is recognizable but somehow changed in order to bring the piece to its resolution. There is a **cyclic** feel, a sense of continuity, order and inevitability.” *National Dance Centre.*)
- **Peer Feedback:** Students make observations about the each group’s dance phrase and identify which elements were emphasized. Discuss how the different groups interpreted the idea of “Home”. What was similar and what was unique? How do artists develop ideas?



Elements and principles posted in classroom make for easy student and teacher reference.

## Lesson Three: Understanding Choreography through Inquiry

**Time frame:** 2 hours

- **Inquiry:** How do choreographers organize movement to make meaning?
- **Experiment:** Discuss the idea of *Place* and ways that the concept can be interpreted. Students explore short phrases, reflective of a *Place*, and that demonstrates composition principles of repetition and contrast (learned in gr. 6) and tension and

resolution. Show phrases to one another for discussion.

- **Reflective Questions:** How does contrast add interest to repetition of movements? How can we build a feeling of tension using the elements of dance? How do dancers show resolution through their movements? How can we apply the principles of tension and resolution to create interest? How was the concept of *Place* made clear to audience? Does it need to be clear or is the purpose of the concept to merely spark the idea?
- **Practice:** Students will review and experiment with simple dance form using ABA. Through a “dance by chance” activity, students select cards at random, to create an ABA form. One card lists an element and the second card lists a principle, for example: actions with repetition and contrast; or dynamics with tension and resolution.
- **Learning Log:** Students reflect on the inquiry question and describe ways to organize movement.

## **Lesson Four: Text Interpretation**

**Time Frame:** 1 hour

- **Words as Inspiration:** Warm up with movement improvised in response to words in a word association exercise. Work in groups of three – one person calls out a word and other two create a shape in response. Take turns with calling the word. Suggestions to change to emotive words or phrases, action words, and then metaphors. Discuss the exercise and how ideas are developed.
- **Text Analysis:** Provide the text to be used in creating the dance. (In this school they chose a piece of scripture to represent the school values and beliefs of the community). Students will interpret text, make connections of specific actions to the text, and reflect on the ideas of other students. Work in groups to document interpretations of text sections. Brainstorm action words that can be used to



interpret the text.

Ex. *If I speak in the tongues of mortals and angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbol.* Possible interpretation; peaceful beautiful words spoken without love are an annoying disruption. Possible action word: floating/swirling vs. striking/jerking.

- **Dance World:** Look at how other dancers have interpreted text or have been inspired by text (i.e., Kidd Pivot by Crystal Pite, “The Tempest Replica” New Yorker [article](#) and [Youtube example](#)) Discuss how the dancers use strong imagery in their bodies, in relationship to one another with tension and resolution.

## **Lesson Five: Building the Dance**

**Time Frame:** approximately 2 hours

- **Creative Process:** As a class, discuss the creative process and how you will develop the dance.
- **Practice for feedback:** Students will have a chance to practice ways to create short sequences, explore a new composition principle, explain and demonstrate their sequence to other students, perform their joint composition and reflect on the ideas of their peers.
  - Students co-construct a checklist for formative feedback before creating movement sequences.
  - Introduce new principles of tension and resolution.
  - Work in pairs to create short sequences based on selected text.
  - Reflect their understanding of tension and resolution.
  - Students choose one dance element to feature in their sequence.
  - Each pair of students combine with another pair making a group of four to teach their sequence.

- The group will combine their ideas in a way of their choosing (i.e., Simultaneously? Alternating? Sequentially?).
- Sequence must have a clear beginning and ending.
- Practice compositions for each other and participate in reflective discussion and feedback.

Observation Checklist:

- use of dance elements
  - use of various composition principles
  - description of actions reflecting a specific place
  - description of beginning and ending
  - description of transition considerations
- 
- **Building the Dance:** Students will apply the previous work as they explore ways to interpret the meaning of the text. Focus will be on problem solving and risk taking.
    - Movement exploration through varying from whole class to small groups, alternating between exploring and observing one another.
    - Students encouraged to suggest ideas and comment constructively so as to select ideas worthy of being saved, identify 'good accidents' for end product consideration, and recognize utilization of dance elements and design principles.
    - Goal is working together towards a 'draft' version of chosen ideas
    - Various possible music options could be utilized during this period for the purpose of finding sounds that resonates with the movement choices.

Requiring students to create clear beginnings and endings creates discussion about transitions and dance creation.

## **Lesson Six: Dance Notation**

**Time Frame:** 1 hour

- **Visual Mapping:** Students visually represent their dance in the form of a large sequenced map that notates movement ideas for each section of the text. (see appendix) Using large paper or a whiteboard, students work together to visually summarize or notate each section of the final movement piece in a sequential manner. The visual map or score is posted for easy reference during the product polish process. Consider mood, dynamics, energy and pathways in the notation.
- **Visual Art extension:** Select some music that captures the mood or intention of the text. Paint to the music as a response to what the dance feels like as the dancer moves. This cross over connection can take the experience to a more symbolic level of thinking about dance.

## **Lesson Six: Final Performance**

**Time Frame:** approximately 2 hours

- **Evidence of Learning:** Co-construct the dance rubric. What is our expected criteria for the dance?
- **Practice:** Rehearse the piece for one another and provide feedback. Video the dance and watch it for ideas on ways to expand and/or revise sections. Are the transitions interesting? Is tension and resolution evident? What is the choreographic form?
- **Perform:** Share with an audience. Take some time for “artist talk back” to discuss the piece.

## **Lesson Seven: Reflection**

**Time Frame:** 1 hour

- **Analysis and Self Assessment:** Students demonstrate understanding of text expression through written analysis and reflection of dance project. Students respond in writing to questions regarding their understanding of specific movements chosen to interpret specific text excerpts. How did they incorporate specific dance elements and composition principles in the final dance piece? Explain the connection between the text and the relationship to Place.
- **Reflect on Process:** Students recognize the value of collaboration, the importance of negotiating, and the role of risk-taking in a group created project. Review the Learning Log and reflect on the process, including collaborative exercises, negotiating final movement choices, and how personal risk-taking and idea 'accidents' played a role as the project developed.
- **Peer Feedback:** How effectively was the text interpreted through dance?

## V. Appendix

**Dance Concepts (poster)** page 14 & 15

**Planning your Dance** page 16

**Rubrics** page 17 & 18

**Student exemplars** page 19 - 22

**Dance Notation examples** page 23

# DANCE CONCEPTS

## Space

**Place** – Self space, general space

**Size** – Big (far reach), small (near reach)

**Level** – High, middle, low

**Direction** – Forward, backward, right, left, up, down

**Pathway** – Curved, straight, zig-zag

**Focus** – Single focus, multi-focus

## Force

**Energy** – Sharp (sudden), smooth (sustained)

**Weight** – Strong, light

**Flow** – Free, bound

## Time

**Speed** – Fast, medium, slow

**Rhythm** – Pulse, pattern, grouping, breath

## Body

**Balance** – Off balance, on balance

**Parts** – Head, neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, elbows, hands, fingers, trunk, spine, sternum, legs, knees, ankles, feet, toes, heels, pelvis, hips, etc.

**Relationships** – Under, over, around, through, above, below, beside, between, in, out, together, apart, on, off, near, far, in front, behind, mirror, shadow

**Shapes** – Curved, straight, angular, twisted, symmetrical, asymmetrical

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## Choreographic Forms

A resource from [National Dance Centre](http://www.nationaldancecentre.ca/)

- **ABA:** **ABA** form begins with an opening theme, leads into a contrasting theme that complements the first, and concludes with a return to the opening theme. This conclusion is recognizable but somehow changed in order to bring the piece to its resolution. There is a **cyclic** feel, a sense of continuity, order and inevitability.
- **Rondo:** The **rondo** (ABACADA) is an expansion of ABA form. It uses a recurring theme (like a musical chorus or refrain) to which the choreographer returns, interspersed with contrasting themes, all building to a conclusion.
- **Theme and Variation:** **Theme and variation** (A, A 1, A 2, etc.) is a form in which a basic movement theme is stated and then altered in various ways. To inject visual and dramatic variety, choreographers use devices similar to those in music composition (for example, inversion, retrograde and transposition).

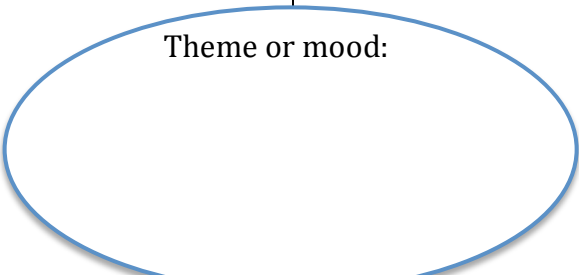
<http://www.artsalive.ca/en/dan/make/toolbox/formstructure.asp>

## Planning Your Dance

Group Names:

Date:

Attach the text to be interpreted and symbols you wish to illustrate through dance.

Beginning Pose (draw it)	Middle (action words)
 <p>Theme or mood:</p>	
Ending Pose (draw it)	Tension & Resolution (describe it)



## Cultural Historical and Critical Responsive Rubrics

Use the outcome-based rubrics to create a rubric specific to the performance task. Invite students to examine the outcomes and identify key criteria that should be considered.

### Outcome CH7.3: Investigate and identify a variety of factors that influence artists, their work, and careers.

- Research and discussion; Learning Log.

<b>Beginning - 1</b> I need help.	<b>Approaching - 2</b> I have a basic understanding.	<b>Meeting- 3</b> My work consistently meets expectations.	<b>Excelling - 4</b> I have a deeper understanding.
With help, I can list dance careers.	I can list dance careers.	I can investigate and identify a variety of factors that influence dancers, their work and careers.	I can make a persuasive argument for taking a career path in dance in Canada while also recognizing possible barriers and issues.

### Outcome CR 7.1: Respond to professional dance, drama, music, and visual art works using analysis, personal interpretation, and research.

- Research and discussion; class display; Learning Log; application to reflection upon own dance creation.

<b>Beginning - 1</b> I need help.	<b>Approaching - 2</b> I have a basic understanding.	<b>Meeting - 3</b> My work consistently meets expectations.	<b>Excelling - 4</b> I have a deeper understanding.
With assistance, I can use some language of dance when discussing a professional work.	I can use the language of dance to respond to the professional work viewed or heard.	I can show understanding of a professional dance piece by using a responding process that includes language, analysis and interpretation.	I can interpret a professional dance piece with an insightful analysis and create an original new work of my own in response.

**Performance Rubric:** Compose and perform a dance related to Place and as an interpretation of a selected text.

**Outcome CP7.1:** Create dance compositions that express ideas about the importance of place (e.g., relationships to the land, local geology, region, urban/rural environments).

<b>Beginning – 1</b> I need help.	<b>Approaching – 2</b> I have a basic understanding.	<b>Meeting – 3</b> My work consistently meets expectations.	<b>Excelling – 4</b> I have a deeper understanding.
I need assistance to express ideas in dance.	I can participate in dance compositions created by others.	I can create my own dance composition about place from an inquiry process.	I can create a dance composition and use critical thinking to convey deep meaning for the dance.

**Outcome CP7.2:** Investigate and manipulate the elements of dance and principles of composition including tension and resolution.

<b>Beginning – 1</b> I need help.	<b>Approaching – 2</b> I have a basic understanding.	<b>Meeting – 3</b> My work consistently meets expectations.	<b>Excelling – 4</b> I have a deeper understanding.
I need assistance to participate in dance.	I can identify how dance has a beginning, middle and end in the composition.	I can create my own compositions that show dance elements, and tension and resolution with expression and confidence.	I can create expressive dance compositions from an inquiry process and apply biomechanical concepts and principles.

**Outcome CP7.3:** Create and refine transitions within choreographic forms (e.g., ABBA, narrative).

<b>Beginning – 1</b> I need help.	<b>Approaching – 2</b> I have a basic understanding.	<b>Meeting – 3</b> My work consistently meets expectations.	<b>Excelling – 4</b> I have a deeper understanding.
I need assistance to make transitions between dance phrases.	I can sequence a transition between phrases.	I can create my own dance compositions with transitions between phrases for various choreographic forms.	I can create transitions and use a reflection, decision-making and problem-solving process.

## Student Exemplars

Students will rehearse and share their compositions for an audience.



*If I speak in the tongues of mortals and angels but do not have love...*



*.... I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbol.*



*And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love ...*

(grand repeated gestures at medium and high levels)



*.... I am nothing.*

(sudden collapse to floor in unison)



*If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love....*



*... I gain nothing.*



*Love is patient.*



*Love is kind.*



*Love is not envious  
Love is not boastful  
Love is not arrogant.*



*Love is not rude  
Love is not irritable  
Love is not resentful.*



*Love does not insist on its own way.  
Love is not irritable or resentful.  
Love does not rejoice in wrong doing,  
But rejoices in truth.*



*Love bears all things*



*believes all things,  
hopes all things*



*and endures all things.*

*Love never ends.*



*And now faith...*

*hope ...*



*... and love abide, these three.*

*But the greatest of these, is love.*

**Dance notation:**

