

Lesson Plan

Focus on Positions

Book: *Ballet*

Series: Shall We Dance?

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students practice identifying and summarizing the main ideas of a text as well as to learn more about the basic positions that form the foundation of ballet.

Supplies

- *Ballet* book
- Ballet Hub lesson “The Five Basic Positions of Ballet”: <https://ballethub.com/ballet-lesson/five-basic-positions-ballet/>
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Read through the *Ballet* book, or assign it to students to read on their own.

Activity

Ballet is the foundation of dance. Many other dances have been influenced by ballet dancing. Some styles borrow dance moves from ballet. Other styles, such as modern dance, are a reaction against ballet’s structure and rules.

The five positions form the basics of ballet. Almost every other ballet dance step begins or ends with one of the five positions. Each position has a specific way for dancers to hold their feet and arms. Ballet dancers practice these moves over and over. The positions can be combined together to form more complicated dance steps. Or, dancers may combine the foot placement of one position with the arm movement of a different position.

Ask students to read the Ballet Hub lesson “The Five Basic Positions of Ballet.” This article explains what a dancer’s arms and feet do as part of each position. But it describes the foot positions and arm positions separately. After students read the article, ask them to write one paragraph about each position. Each paragraph should describe what the dancer’s arms and feet should do during that position. Students should combine information from the online article’s separate explanations of foot positions and hand positions. But they should make sure to use their own words.

Evaluation

Using the attached answer key, give students five points for each position they accurately explain, for a total of up to 25 points.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading informational texts standards, grade 5 (RI 5.1) and writing standards, grade 5 (W 5.9).

Answer Key

First Position

- feet: heels together and toes facing out to the sides
- arms: arms curved out in front of the body as if holding a beach ball, with fingers a few inches apart

Second Position

- feet: heels about hip distance apart and toes facing out to the sides
- arms: arms curved out in front of the body as if holding a beach ball, with both arms moved several more inches apart than in first position

Third Position

- feet: one foot in front of the other, fairly close together, with toes facing out to the sides and one heel at about the middle of the other foot
- arms: arms curved out in front of the body as if holding a beach ball, with only one arm moved several more inches apart than in first position

Fourth Position

- feet: one foot in front of the other, about a foot's width apart, with toes facing out to the sides and the front heel lining up with the toes of the back foot
- arms: one arm curved out in front of the body in second position, the other arm curved up over the head

Fifth Position

- feet: one foot in front of the other, feet close together, with toes turned out to the sides
- arms: both arms curved up over the head