

DANCE



History:

The origins of many dances are unclear, and often there aren't really any origins: Dances often grow out of each other. Dancing probably began as an imitative act, i.e., early people imitating some of the ritualistic dances of the animals.

Historically, dance seems to have reached its low point during the days of classical Greece. Then it was looked upon as an ignoble activity. Aristotle was supposed to have said, "No citizen should pursue these arts (music and dance) so far that he approaches professional status," and relegated such activities to slaves, freedmen, and foreigners.

The great Roman, Cicero, said, "Nobody dances unless he is drunk or unbalanced mentally." Italy saw the return of dancing during the fifteenth century, but France may be said to be the Mother of the modern art.

Invented for a stage routine in 1914 by Harry Fox, it became so popular that he started teaching it as a social dance. The main difference with respect to earlier dances was its alternation of quick and slow steps.

Polka

Originally a Czech peasant dance, it is believed that it was invented by a peasant girl. By 1833 it had reached Prague, and from there it went on to Paris, the rest of the continent, and the V.S. It never became very popular in England. After the Second World War, Polish immigrants in the V.S. adopted the dance, although the name has nothing to do with Poland: Polka is Czech for "half-step."

Square Dance

Square dancing has been around for centuries. It began in England and France and came to America early in the history of the New World. As the population spread westward, so also did square dancing-taking different forms as it went. The uniquely American contribution to this development was the caller, sometimes called the prompter because he prompted the dancers' memory of patterns they had learned. Modern square - dancing began with the advent of public address equipment to allow changing dance patterns and the use of recorded music. Hundreds of new calls were created during a 20-year period.

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History Continued:

Swing:

The precise origins of swing are not clear, although in the 1910s there was a similar dance called the Texas Tommy. Then there was the Lindy Hop that originated in the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, New York. The name refers to Charles Lindbergh's "hop" across the ocean in 1927. From this evolved the Jitterbug. This name appears in a Cab Calloway song of the early 1930s. Lindy and Jitterbug evolved into East Coast Swing and Jive. West Coast Swing became a separate dance in the 1940s.

The Tango:

The tango originated in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in the nineteenth century. A form of this tango was introduced in Spain and France at the end of the nineteenth century and in England at the start of the twentieth. Maurice Mouvet, a New Yorker of Belgian descent, learned this tango in Paris, and introduced it in New York in 1911, where it became an instant hit.

The Two-Step:

Dances carrying the name "Two Step" have existed since the nineteenth century, when it was done as a cowboy dance. There was a dance in the early 1800s called the "valse a deux temps" (two-beat waltz) which was rejected by many as appearing jerky in its movement. In 1847, in his book *La Danse des Salons*, Henri Cellarius expressed his regrets about the use of the term "deux temps," stating that the dance would be better accepted if it were called "deux pas" (two-step) as the term better described the step of the dance. Subsequent to his use of the term, many other authors used the term "two step."

The Waltz:

The waltz was originally an Austrian peasant's dance, and was danced at the Hapsburg court in the seventeenth century. The current waltz grew out of a figure in the contrivance. It was becoming accepted in high society by the start of the nineteenth century, though not without opposition from dance masters, clergy, and other guardians of public morals.

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Movements Common to All Dances:

All forms of locomotion can be reduced to five fundamental steps that include the walk, run, leap, jump, and hop. All other types of locomotion, including the skip, gallop, and slide, are a combination of these basic steps.

1. **Walk**-Weight is alternately transferred from one foot to the other with one foot always staying in contact with the ground.
2. **Run**-Speed of the walk is increased with a brief period when both feet are off the ground.
3. **Leap**- A spring into the air by means of a strong push off from one foot and returning to the ground on the other foot for the purpose of height or distance.
4. **Jump**- A spring into the air from both feet and landing on two feet. Other jumps may involve a single foot takeoff with a two-foot landing or a two-foot takeoff with a one-foot landing. A jump may be made for either height or distance.
5. **Hop**- A spring into the air by means of a strong push off from one foot and returning to the ground on the same foot.
6. **Skip**- A combination of a step and a hop. The free leg will swing forward and upward.
7. **Slide**- A sideward movement resulting from weight being transferred from one foot to the other with a step on one foot followed by a quick drawing up of the other foot with an immediate step and transfer of weight back to the first foot.
8. **Gallop**- Similar to a slide except with a forward movement of a step with one foot and then a leap with the other. The foot executing the leap is brought up to but not beyond the foot that has completed the step. The leap is completed with slight height; distance is not a factor.

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Terminology:

1. **Meter**- Refers to time in music or grouping of beats to form the underlying rhythm within a measure.
2. **Rhythmic Pattern**- The melody patterns or groupings of beats, as the melody of a song Pattern correspond to the underlying rhythm.
3. **Even Rhythm**-Beats getting full note value, either long or short, causing a slow or fast rhythm.
4. **Uneven Rhythm**-A combination of slow and quick beats.
5. **Broken Rhythm**-A combination of slow and quick beats when the rhythm pattern takes more than one measure. A repetition will begin in the middle of a measure.
6. **Tempo**- Rate of speed at which the music is played.
7. **Measure**- One group of beats made by the regular occurrence of the heavy accent. It represents the underlying beat enclosed between two adjacent bars on the musical staff.
8. **Phrase**- A musical sentence that can be felt by listening for the complete thought, similar to the way sentences may express a thought in a paragraph.
9. **Shuffle**- Moving forward with an easy one-step from one foot to the other. Different from a walk in that the weight is transferred from the ball of the foot to the heel or kept on the balls of the feet.
10. **Two-Step**- Step forward on the left foot, close right to left, take weight on right, step left again. Repeat beginning with the right foot. The rhythm is uneven (quick, quick, slow) in 2/4 or 4/4 meter.
11. **Polka**- A bright, lively dance in uneven rhythm (2/4 meter). Similar to a two- step with the addition of a hop so that it becomes hop-step-close-step with the hop coming on the up beat.
12. **Schottische** - Three running steps and a hop or a step, close, step, hop done in a slow even rhythm (4/4 meter). Done in four measures (step step step hop, step step step hop, step hop, step hop, step hop, step hop). Common variations include holding, turning, or swinging the free leg on the fourth count instead of the hop.
13. **Waltz** - A smooth, graceful dance step in an even three-beat rhythm consisting of three steps (step forward on the left, step to the side with the right, close left to right taking weight on left). Done in 3/4 meter with the accent on the first beat, the box waltz is the basic pattern for the box waltz turn (forward side close, backward side close).
14. **Mazurka**-Step left, bring right up to left with a cut step displacing left, hop right while bending left knee so that left approaches the right ankle and repeat on the same side. Done in 3/4 meter using a strong, vigorous, even three- beat rhythm with the accent on the second beat.

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Dance Formations:

No Partner:

- Single circle
- Broken circle
- Line, side by side
- File, one behind each other

Couples in a Circle:

- Single circle, facing center
- Single circle, partners facing each other - Double circle, couples facing each other
- Double circle, partners facing, one partner's back to center

Couples in a Line:

- Side by side, facing forward
- Couples in a Line
- Side by side, partners facing each other
- Side by side, alternate man and woman, facing forward
- Side by side, alternate man and woman, facing each other

Three People:

- Three in a line, side by side
- Set of three, facing set of three
- Single circle, facing center

Two Couples:

- Set of two couples, partners facing
- Set of two couples, couples facing

Four Couples:

- Set of four couples, side by side, single circle, facing in

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Dance Etiquette:

- Dress appropriately for the occasion to feel confident in your appearance.
- Be attentive to partner.
- Avoid looking around at others or acting bored.
- Encourage your partner by covering up difficulties or ignoring weaknesses.
- Work with your partner to generate a feeling of cooperation.
- Ladies should always graciously accept a gentleman's request to dance.
- A gentleman should not stand on the side or "cut in" if there is a lady waiting to dance.
- A lady or gentleman should always graciously accept any partner with whom he or she is paired in a mixer.
- Avoid singing, showing off, smoking, or gum chewing while dancing.
- The gentleman should always take the lady's hand or arm to guide her to and from the dance floor.
- Couples should move in a counterclockwise direction avoiding cutting across or moving in the opposite direction of traffic.
- Avoid dances that require extra moving space while on a crowded dance floor.
- Gentlemen should always thank a lady after the dance. Ladies should acknowledge the courtesy.
- When couples are talking, it is courteous to introduce your partner.
- Avoid teaching or asking to be taught new dance steps on the dance floor.
- In square dancing, couples should introduce themselves.
- Avoid leaving or changing a set after the sets have been formed.
- A gentleman does not "cut in" on the gentleman who has taken his partner until another gentleman has cut in.
- A lady should not refuse to change partners when a gentleman "cuts in."
- A gentleman should touch the left shoulder of the lady's partner when "cutting in."
- A gentleman should never leave a lady unaccompanied on the dance floor.
- It is courteous to greet the hosts and guests at a dance.
- It is courteous to thank the host and/ or chaperones before leaving the dance.