

The Elements of Dance

- I. Body:**
- A. Body parts: Inner - Muscles, bones, joints, heart, & lungs (breath)
Outer - head, shoulders, arms, hands, back, rib cage, hips, legs, & feet.
 - B. Body moves: Non locomotor – stretch, bend, twist, circle, rise, collapse, swing, sway, & shake.
 - C. Body steps: Locomotor – Walk, run, leap, hop, jump, gallop, skip, slide, chasse, pas de bourre, leap, etc.
- II. Space:** The unlimited area in which the universe exists. In dance, space is the relationship of the body and the surroundings which make up design.
- A. Shape: Body design in space
 - B. Level: Low – lying down, sitting, & crawling.
Middle – Kneeling, standing with bent knees (plie), and standing.
High – On the ball of the foot (releve) or an elevation of the floor.
Combination of levels at once.
 - C. Direction: Forward, backward, sideward, diagonal, turning, zigzag, square, arc, etc.
 - D. Range: The size of movement that the body can create – Small, medium, big, or a combination of the three.
 - E. Floor pattern: A design made on the floor tracing the pattern of the dancer's movement. The pathway either curved or straight.
 - F. Focus: Direction of gaze.
 - G. Planes: The flat surfaces of the body using three dimensions – Horizontal, vertical, diagonal, & a combination of the three.
 - H. Design in space: The outline of a dancer or group of dancers' bodies in space.
Balance – Symmetrical, if the design is exactly balanced.
Asymmetrical, if irregular in design or off balance.
Group movement – In unison, opposition, or succession.
- III. Time:**
- A. Tempo – The rate of speed with which a series of movements is performed.
Adagio – slow, Andante – moderately, Allegro – fast or brisk, & Presto – fast/at once.
 - B. Rhythm – The steady underlying beat or pulse.
 - C. Accent – Force or a stressed beat (something that stands out).
 - D. Duration – Long or short.
- IV. Dynamics or Force:** The amount of energy expended in the body.
- A. Attack – Sharp or smooth.
 - B. Weight – Heavy or light.
 - C. Strength – Tight or loose.
 - D. Flow – Free flowing, bound, or balanced.

V. Compositional Form: The combination of elements, which give structure to a dance.

A. Elements of form: Unity, contrast, repetition, transition, variation, development, climax, resolution, balance, proportion, sequence, or harmony.

B. Sequential form: compositions in which sections follow each other according to the definite order.

1. Two part AB.
2. Three part ABA.
3. Theme and variations.
4. Free form.

VI. Sources: For movements may come from subjects, titles, ideas, feelings, moods, and communications.

VII. Arranging a dance: Putting together a routine or composition by arranging basic steps and movements already choreographed.

VIII. Choreographing a dance: Creating an original composition by experimenting with movement to vary movement in new ways.

Weight Sharing – Create a section of your dance that utilizes the sharing of weight. Partner work or a group that uses each other to create an image, symbol, or object. Bearing someone else's weight and holding them up.