

Ask®

Join the Dance

Dance is defined as “the movement of the body in a rhythmic way, usually to music and within a given space, for the purpose of expressing an idea or emotion, releasing energy, or simply taking delight in the movement itself.” This month’s issue of ASK magazine explores the beautiful world of dance in both our human, and our animal, populations.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What is the purpose of dance?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn the purpose of dance in the animal world.
- Students will learn how dancers and athletes control their bodies.
- Students will learn about the footwear needed for different types of dance.
- Students will classify information.
- Students will construct explanations.
- Students will examine structure and function.
- Students will discuss various human communication methods.
- Students will write a “How-to” article.
- Students will create analogies.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core STEM skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

- **Dances with Animals**
Expository Nonfiction
- **How Do They Do That?**
Expository Nonfiction
- **Putting on Your Dancing Shoes**
Expository Nonfiction

Dances with Animals

pp. 7–13, Expository Nonfiction

Bobbing, strutting, and prancing are just a few of the words used to describe the dancing movement of animals. This article examines how different animals use dance to convey information.



RESOURCES

- Classifying Information: Wild Beats

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn the purpose of dance in the animal world.
- Students will classify information.
- Students will discuss various human communication methods.

KEY VOCABULARY

- territorial** (p. 9) describes animals (or people) that try to keep others away from an area that they use or control
- adorn** (p. 11) to make someone or something more attractive by adding something beautiful
- rivals** (p. 13) people who are competing for the same object or goal as another

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is the purpose of dance?

Motivate students to learn about the topic of dance by playing a game of Freeze Dance. In this pre-reading activity, everyone dances as the music plays. When it stops, each player must freeze immediately and hold that position until the music starts again. After the game, discuss how the mind and body work together in dance and how dancing makes us feel. Why do humans dance? Further question the class, “Do animals dance? Why?”

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and discuss the three vocabulary words and definitions. Have students Think-Pair-Share with a partner. Give them the following directives, one at a time:

- What reasons might an animal have for being **territorial**?
- How can we **adorn** the classroom to celebrate the Spring season?
- Discuss examples of **rivals** in books and movies.

READ & DISCUSS

Reinforce comprehension of the concepts presented in the article by using the following questions to direct discussion.

- How do animals communicate without words?
- Why do animals dance?
- How do bees navigate direction?
- Explain the war dance of the meerkat.
- How do dancing and language engage the brain in similar ways?

SKILL FOCUS: Classify Information

INSTRUCT: Guide students to obtain information from the text, captions, and photos in the article. Remind students that the article was written to teach readers about the characteristics and behaviors of different animals dancing in the wild. Introduce the *Wild Beats* graphic organizer and instruct students to record their findings. Lead the activity and demonstrate how to reread pertinent passages and how to mark the correct column, if necessary.

ASSESS: Review information that the students have recorded on their charts.

EXTEND

Communications: Animals in nature have many ways of communicating. They send messages with smells and sounds and sometimes by dancing. Ask students to brainstorm a list of ways that humans communicate. Pose the following questions for further consideration: *What affects the method of communication that humans choose? When are certain forms of communication inappropriate? How do communication methods vary by age? What will future communication look like? What role do you expect technology to play in our day-to-day communication?*

Wild Beats

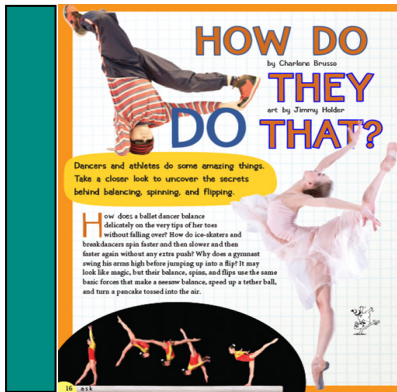
Classifying Information Use information from the article to properly classify the details listed. Place an **X** in the correct column to show which animal the statement is describing.

Gem Detail	Bees	Fish	Lizards	Birds
She vibrates her wings and wags her body side to side very quickly, 13 to 15 times a second.	X			
The red-crowned species walk, flap, bob heads, jump, spin, and fly in formation as part of the courtship dance.				
The majorities of the species settle conflicts over space with a simple chase or nip.				
To appear bigger and scarier, they raise a scaly crest along their backs and develop dark spots behind their eye sockets.				
Because they steer by the sun, the dancer lines up her dance with the sun in the sky.				
They sport a variety of odd body parts, including flaps of skin under their necks that can flare out like fans.				
Side to side, they beat the water with their tails, getting faster and faster until one male backs down.				
A flight plan is coded in her movements.				
They tread water and dance with weeds dangling from their face.				
So intricate are their movements, they are said to be performing water ballet.				

How Do They Do That?

pp. 16–19, Graphic Nonfiction

Dancers, gymnasts, and athletes all demonstrate amazing control over their bodies. This article explains how they are able to master complex movements.



RESOURCES

- Construct Explanations: On Your Toes

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how dancers and athletes control their bodies.
- Students will construct explanations.
- Students will write a “How-to” article.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **shifting** (p. 17) used to describe something made up of parts that are continually moving and changing position in relation to other parts

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is the purpose of dance?

Introduce the article, “How Do They Do That?” and tell the class that they will be reading about the mental and physical processes that allow dancers and athletes to perform certain movements. Give the students a few minutes to share their own experiences achieving a certain level or working towards a goal. Ask them to consider the brain-body connection.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and discuss the key word and definition. As this article uses simple text to explain dance and movement, there is only one key word. Take the opportunity to do a primary word study using the word **shifting** as follows: *How many letters does the word have? How many letters are vowels? How many letters are consonants? How many syllables does the word have? Is it a thing (noun), action word (verb), or a describing word (adjective)? Can you name a synonym and an antonym for the word? How can you use the word in a sentence? Make a real-life connection to the word.*

READ & DISCUSS

As a post-reading activity, lead a discussion based on the following questions.

1. How does your body adjust to help you stay balanced?
2. Why can you spin faster by tucking in your arms and legs?
3. How can you compare a gymnast’s tumbles to flipping a pancake?
4. Explain the role that your center of gravity plays in movement.
5. How does gravity affect the movement of an object in the air?

SKILL FOCUS: Construct Explanations

INSTRUCT: Advise students to review the article and to study the movement techniques under the three subheadings. Distribute the graphic organizer, *On Your Toes*, and tell the class that they will complete the chart with a partner. Students will need to provide clear explanations of how balancing, spinning, and tumbling are possible.

ASSESS: Review the chart with the class. How is the inclusion of technology in sports creating more powerful athletes?

EXTEND

Language Arts: Discuss the contents of the article and guide students to notice that the article was written to teach readers how particular actions are done. Challenge students to write their own “How-to” articles by choosing any physical feat to explore—*How do toddlers learn to walk? How do you dunk a basketball? How do you make meatballs?*

Process of creating a “How-to” presentation include:

1. Selecting topic
2. Hook: address audience
3. Research
4. Draft with steps
5. Specific information
6. Conclusion

On Your Toes

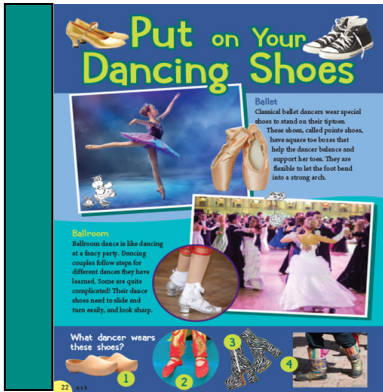
Construct Explanations The three subheadings from the article are listed below. Using information from the article, as well as your critical thinking skills, provide clear explanations addressing each question. Include details.

Article Subheadings	Construct Explanations
<i>Balance on Tippi Toes</i>	How do dancers stay balanced?
<i>Speed Up Your Spin</i>	How do dancers control their spin?
<i>Heels Over Head</i>	How do gymnasts utilize their center of gravity?

Put on Your Dancing Shoes

pp. 22–25, Expository Nonfiction

From metal plates to painted bare feet, this article explores the world of dance through footwear. Readers will learn how dance shoes are made specifically to cater to the type of dance being performed.



RESOURCES

- Structure and Function: Fancy Feet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the footwear needed for different types of dance.
- Students will examine structure and function.
- Students will create analogies.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **sharp** (p. 22) stylish
- **interweave** (p. 24) blend closely
- **stamping** (p. 24) beating forcibly with the bottom of the foot

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is the purpose of dance?

Discuss with the class how different activities/sports require different clothing and equipment. Particularly important when participating in different sports is the footwear. Worn for both performance and protection, the type of shoe required for a sport depends upon many conditions. Propose different sports (football, basketball, hockey, etc.) and discuss the footwear. Introduce “Put on Your Dancing Shoes” and have students share what they know about the world of dance.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following statements and underline the key vocabulary terms. Review how to infer the meanings of new words by using context clues and background knowledge. Then have partners work together to determine the meaning of each word. Reveal definitions.

- Blake looked sharp walking into the interview in his new suit.
- The movie about the Beatles interweaves actual footage of the performances.
- Stamping their feet in rhythm, the crowd’s applause shook the bleachers.

READ & DISCUSS

Post and discuss questions prior to reading. Have students read the article independently and answer the questions in full sentences.

1. Why are there so many different types of dance shoes?
2. What are the requirements for ballroom dancing shoes?
3. What do the dancers at the Lunar New Year Parade dress as?
4. Why do different styles of Irish dancing use different types of shoes?
5. Why do South Asian ballet dancers paint their feet?

SKILL FOCUS: Structure and Function

INSTRUCT: Guide students to obtain information from the text, captions, and photographs in the article. Remind them that the article was written to teach readers about the variety of shoes used in dance. Present the graphic organizer, *Fancy Feet*, and tell students that they will be using information from the article to Show & Tell how each shoe structure provides a specific function. Review.

ASSESS: Have students choose 3 additional structures to examine for function.

EXTEND

Figurative Language: Review with students that an analogy is a comparison of two otherwise unlike things based on resemblance of a particular aspect. Post the following example on the board, **hand: glove** **foot: sock** and read it aloud as “a hand is to a glove what a foot is to a sock.” Instruct students to use words and ideas from the article to create three analogies, such as: **pointe shoes: ballet** or **cleats: soccer**. Invite students to share their analogies aloud.

Fancy Feet

Structure and Function Gather information from the photographs and words in the article to explain the purpose of each dancing shoe/part listed. You may use pictures and words to record your answers.

Shoe Element	Show/Use Pictures What does it look like?	Tell/Use Words Why is it necessary for a specific type of dance?
metal plates		
pointe shoes		
flamenco shoes		
flexible leather boot		