

Subject specific vocabulary

Definitions of key terms used in our GCSE Dance specification (8236). Students should be familiar with and gain understanding of these terms.

Accessory

An additional item of costume, for example gloves.

Actions

What a dancer does eg travelling, turning, elevation, gesture, stillness, use of body parts, floor-work and the transference of weight.

Acceleration

Speeding up the movement.

Accompaniment

The sound that you hear during a dance. For example, percussion.

Accumulation

When a dancer performs a series of movements and others join in at different times until all perform in unison.

Air pattern

A design that is traced in the air by part of the body.

Alignment

Correct placement of body parts in relation to each other.

Appreciation

Recognition and understanding of the qualities of dance.

Artistic intention

The aim of a dance; what the choreographer aims to communicate.

Artistry

Creative skill.

Auditory

Relating to sound.

Aural setting

An audible accompaniment to the dance such as music, words, song and natural sound (or silence).

Balance

A steady or held position achieved by an even distribution of weight.

Binary

A composition in two parts or sections.

Canon

When the same movements overlap in time.

Choreographic approach

The way in which a choreographer makes the dance.

Choreographic devices

Methods used to develop and vary material.

Choreographic intention

The aim of the dance; what the choreographer aims to communicate.

Choreographic processes

Activities involved in creating dance such as improvisation, selection and development.

Choreography

The art of creating dance.

Climax

The most significant moment of the dance.

Complementary

Perform actions or shapes that are similar to but not exactly the same as another dancer's.

Constituent features

Characteristics of choreography such as style, stimulus, subject matter, number/gender of dancers, action content, choreographic principles, form and structure, physical and aural settings.

Contrast

Movements or shapes that have nothing in common.

Control

The ability to start and stop movement, change direction and hold a shape efficiently.

Coordination

The efficient combination of body parts.

Costume

Clothing worn by dancers in performance.

Counterpoint

When dancers perform different phrases simultaneously.

Critical appreciation

Evaluation of dance based upon knowledge and understanding, including original insights.

Dance film

Where dance and film are both integral to a work; this includes documentary, animation, dance for camera and a screen adaption of a stage work.

Dance for camera

Where the choreographer collaborates with (or is) the film-maker; where the intention is to produce a dance work in a multi-media form that cannot be achieved in live performance.

Dancewear

What the dancer wears for class and rehearsal.

Deceleration

Slowing down the movement.

Development

The way in which movement material is manipulated.

Direction

The facing of a movement.

Duet

Two performers.

Dynamics

The qualities of movement based upon variations in speed, strength and flow.

Elements of dance

Actions, space, dynamics and relationships.

Elevation

The action of 'going up' without support, such as in a jump.

End-stage

A performance space with the audience on one side; also known as 'end-on'.

Episodic

A choreography with several sections, linked by a theme.

Execution

Carrying out actions with the required intention.

Expressive skills

Aspects that contribute to performance artistry and that engage the audience, such as focus and musicality.

Extension

Lengthening one or more muscles or limbs.

Facial expression

Use of the face to show mood, feeling or character.

Features of production

Lighting, set, properties, costume and aural setting.

Flexibility

The range of movement in the joints (involving muscles, tendons and ligaments).

Focus (use of)

Use of the eyes to enhance performance or interpretative qualities.

Form

The overall shape and structure of a dance.

Formations

Shapes or patterns created in space by dancers.

Fragmentation

Use of parts of a phrase or motif.

Highlights

Important moments of a dance.

Ideational

Relating to ideas or concepts.

Improvisation

Exploration or generation of movements without planning.

In-the-round

A performing area with the audience seated on all sides.

Intention

Aim or desired outcome.

Interpretation

Finding the meaning that is in the movement or finding the movement that is in the idea.

Isolation

An independent movement of part of the body.

Kinaesthetic

Sensory perception (or awareness) of movement and position.

Levels

Distance from the ground: low, medium or high.

Lighting

The illumination of the performance area.

Logical sequence

The flow of phrases or sections of a dance.

Manipulation of number

How the number of dancers in a group is used.

Mental rehearsal

Thinking through or visualising the dance.

Mental skills

These include commitment, concentration, confidence, movement memory, systematic repetition, mental rehearsal, rehearsal discipline, planning of rehearsal, response to feedback and capacity to improve.

Mobility

The range of movement in a joint; the ability to move fluently from action to action.

Motif

A movement phrase encapsulating an idea that is repeated and developed throughout the dance.

Motif development

Ways in which a movement phrase can be varied.

Movement material

The matter of dance: actions, space, dynamics and relationships.

Movement memory

The automatic recall of learned movement material, without conscious thought.

Musicality

The ability to make the unique qualities of the accompaniment evident in performance.

Narrative

Dance that tells a story.

Pathways

Designs traced in space (on the floor or in the air).

Patterns (spatial)

A repeated design traced in space (on the floor or in the air).

Performance

The presentation of dance to an audience.

Performance (personal)

Acquisition and development of physical and expressive skills.

Performance environments

Different settings for dance such as in-the-round, proscenium and site-sensitive.

Phrase

A short sequence of linked movements.

Phrasing

The way in which the energy is distributed in the execution of a movement phrase.

Physical skills

Aspects enabling effective performance such as posture, alignment, balance, coordination, control, flexibility, mobility, strength, stamina, extension and isolation.

Posture

The way the body is held.

Professional work

Original choreography by an individual or company that is recognised nationally or internationally.

Projection

The energy the dancer uses to connect with and draw in the audience.

Prop/property

A portable object that is used in a dance, for example a suitcase.

Proscenium

The arch or opening that creates the effect of a picture frame and separates the stage from the auditorium.

Rehearsal discipline

Attributes and skills required for refining performance such as commitment, systematic repetition, teamwork, responsibility and effective use of time.

Relationships

The ways in which dancers interact; the connections between dancers.

Repetition

Performing the same action or phrase again.

Retrograde

Reversing a movement phrase.

Rhythmic content

Repeated patterns of sound or movement.

Rondo

A music or dance form with alternating and repeating sections eg verse and chorus.

Safe execution

Carrying out actions safely.

Safe working practice

Personal care, respect for others, safe execution and preparation and recovery from dancing.

Sensitivity to other dancers

Awareness of and connection to other dancers.

Site sensitive

Dances that are designed for (or relate to) non-theatre spaces.

Solo

One performer.

Space

The 'where' of movement such as levels, directions, pathways, shapes, designs and patterns.

Spatial awareness

Consciousness of the surrounding space and its effective use.

Spatial design

The way that elements of space have been considered, utilised and designed (can be personal space and general space).

Staging/set

The presentation of dance in the performing space including set, furniture, props, projection and backdrop.

Stamina

Ability to maintain physical and mental energy over periods of time.

Stimulus/stimuli

Inspiration for an idea or movement.

Strength

Muscular power.

Structure

The way in which material is organised to create the whole.

Structuring devices

The ways in which a dance is made, built, ordered or organised.

Style

Characteristic way of dancing.

Style fusion

The combination of features of two or more styles.

Systematic repetition

Repeating something in an arranged or ordered way.

Tactile

Relating to the sense of touch.

Technical skills

These include accuracy of action, timing, dynamic, rhythmic and spatial content and the reproduction of movement in a stylistically accurate way.

Ternary

A composition in three parts.

Timing

The use of time or counts when matching movements to sound and/or other dancers.

Transitions

Links between dance phrases or sections.

Unison

Two or more dancers performing the same movement at the same time.

Unity

A sense of 'wholeness' or harmony.

Visual

Relating to sight.