



GENERATION
INEXT
EDUCATION INITIATIVE

STEP AFRIKA! EDUCATOR GUIDE



Charline & Red McCombs
ARTS EDUCATION FUND
The Tobin Center

Educator Guide

Created by: Dr. Kimberly Stephenson

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STEP AFRiKA!

Title: *Step Afrika*

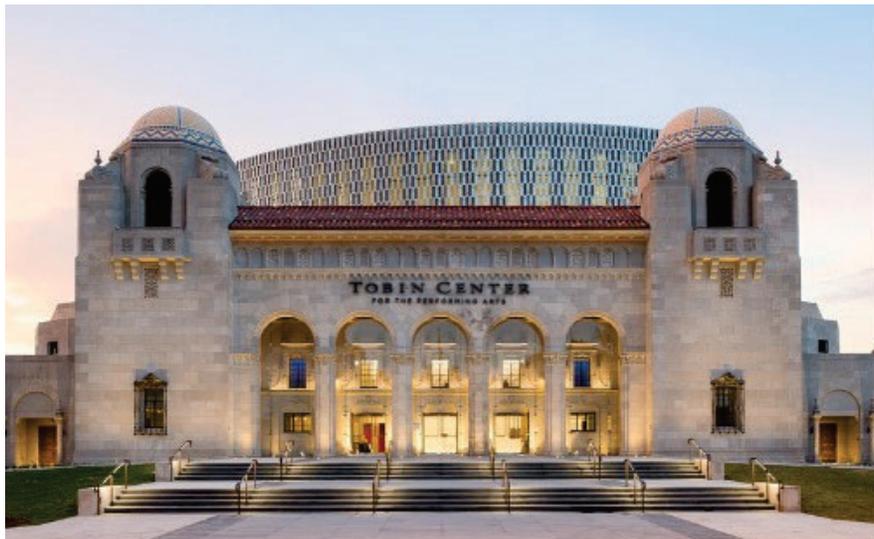
Date / Time: 3.04.26, 10 am and Noon

Target Grade Levels / Subjects: 3rd - 8th (MS, HS: dance, theatre, step groups, percussion, beginning music/dance/art rotation classes)

Run Time: approximately one hour

Location:

Tobin Center for the Performing Arts
100 Auditorium Circle
San Antonio, TX 78205
www.tobincenter.org



Welcome to the Show!



Dear Audience:

Welcome to the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts!

We are excited to welcome you to a thrilling performance experience with Step Afrika!, a world-renowned professional dance company dedicated to the vibrant art form of stepping. Founded in 1994, Step Afrika! has become one of the most celebrated dance ensembles in the United States, known for its high-energy performances that blend rhythmic movement, precision, and expressive storytelling. Through touring, workshops, and educational programs, Step Afrika! promotes creativity, teamwork, commitment, and discipline—making the art of stepping both an engaging performance art and an educational tool for young people.

This educator guide is designed to support classroom connections before and after the performance. Inside you'll find background information, discussion prompts, and activities that invite your students to explore rhythm, collaboration, and artistic creativity. Whether you're preparing for a show or reflecting afterwards, we hope this guide enriches your students' experience and encourages them to think about movement in new and expressive ways. Thank you for joining us in celebrating the energy and artistry of Step Afrika! We hope this performance leaves a lasting impression on you and your students.

Feel the beat!

Sincerely:

Dr. Kimberly Stephenson
Director of Education
Tobin Center for the Performing Arts



Just like movies, books, paintings, and videos, DANCE is a way to tell stories.

Just like a picture or a painting, DANCE tells stories without words.

**Just like a book, or a painting, DANCE uses symbols (movements)
that can be decoded, read, and understood.**

Historical & Cultural Background

Stepping's Origins

Stepping, sometimes called stomp or streetstyle, emerged in the early 20th century as a cultural expression among African American fraternities and sororities. Over time, it became a form of creative storytelling, celebration, and competition. Performers use footwork, body percussion, and chants to share messages of unity, identity, and pride.



Historical Context of Stepping

Stepping is a percussive dance tradition that originated within African American fraternities and sororities in the early to mid-20th century, especially through the “Divine Nine” historically Black Greek-letter organizations. Its roots trace back to African tribal dances, where rhythm, footwork, and call-and-response were central to ceremonies and storytelling. Over time, stepping evolved into a highly disciplined and synchronized art form, blending chants, claps, stomps, and intricate foot patterns.

In the 1970s–80s, stepping became a cultural statement of identity, pride, and unity on college campuses. By the 1990s, companies like Step Afrika! began bringing stepping to the professional stage, blending it with influences from South African gumboot dancing, hip-hop dance culture, and spoken word performance.

Reference:

Strathmore. (n.d.). Step Afrika! dancers against a white background [Photograph]. Strathmore. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://www.strathmore.org/media/bv3ow0fn/step-afrika-dancers-cut-out-against-a-white-background.jpg>

About the Performance



Step Afrika! is the first professional dance company dedicated to the tradition of stepping—a percussive, highly physical art form that uses the body as an instrument. Rooted in the practices of African American fraternities and sororities, stepping combines clapping, stomping, spoken word, and synchronized movement to create complex rhythms and stories. This performance integrates stepping’s African heritage, its evolution within historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and its fusion with hip-hop, jazz, and other contemporary influences.

TEKS Alignment Overview

Dance TEKS

- §117.114, §117.117, §117.120, §117.123 (Movement composition, cultural/historical dance traditions, performance, and audience behavior)

Music TEKS

- §117.102–§117.115 (Rhythm, form, cultural music traditions, collaborative performance)

Theatre TEKS

- §117.112–§117.126 (Storytelling through performance, audience etiquette, integrating movement with narrative)

Social Studies/History TEKS

- §113.15, §113.18, §113.41 (Cultural contributions, African diaspora traditions, U.S. cultural history)

Reference Entry (APA 7th Edition–style)

The Pennsylvania State University School of Theatre. (n.d.). Step performance on stage [Photograph]. Penn State School of Theatre. Retrieved August 11, 2025, from <https://cpa.psu.edu/sites/cpa.psu.edu/files/slide-step10.jpg>

Cultural & Musical Connections

- Stepping has roots in **African American fraternity and sorority traditions**, blending influences from **traditional African** dances and **modern performance styles**.
- It often incorporates **call-and-response**, storytelling, and community participation—just like African drumming circles and hip-hop cyphers.
- In Step Afrika!, you may also see fusions with house, **hip-hop, tap, and contemporary dance**.



REFERENCES:

Mercyhurst University. (n.d.). Step Afrika! dancer in mid-air [Photograph]. Mercyhurst University. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://www.mercyhurst.edu/sites/default/files/styles/large/public/2024-03/StepAfrika%21PhotoOption1.png?itok=ORDPFKkp>

Step Afrika!. (n.d.). Live drummers during holiday Step Afrika! performance [Photograph]. Step Afrika!. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://www.stepafrika.org/app/uploads/StepAfrikaHolidayStep121121-42-1-scaled.jpg>

Appalachian State University. (n.d.). Step Afrika! ensemble on stage [Photograph].

Appalachian State University. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from https://today.appstate.edu/_images/_posts/2015/10/step-afrika.jpg

African Influences

Stepping's rhythmic precision and call-and-response structure draw directly from African drumming and dance traditions, such as gumboot dancing from South Africa and the polyrhythmic movements of West African dance.

African Influence:

- Gumboot Dance from South African miners, using boots to create rhythm when drums were banned.
- West African Drumming and Dance, emphasizing polyrhythms and storytelling through movement.
- Call-and-Response patterns seen in both dance and music.

New York City & Hip-Hop Connection

Stepping's athletic precision and rhythmic complexity found new resonance in the urban arts scene of New York City in the 1980s and 1990s, where percussive movement intersected with hip-hop dance, spoken word, and beatboxing. Like hip-hop, stepping is about voice, presence, and making a statement—through movement, music, and community connection.

Hip-Hop Influence:

- Stepping's precision and group choreography influenced by hip-hop crews of the 1980s.
- The battle format — groups competing to outdo each other with creativity and skill.
- Integration of breakdance freezes, popping, and locking within step routines.



REFERENCES:

- Northeast State Community College. (n.d.). Step Afrika! performance image [Photograph]. Northeast State Community College. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from https://www.northeaststate.edu/events/_files/images/step-afrika-750x500.jpg
- Strathmore. (n.d.). Step Afrika! dancers performing in formation [Photograph]. Strathmore. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://www.strathmore.org/media/j5pfveqn/step-afrika-833x476.jpg>

Vocabulary (Key Terms for Students)

- **Stepping** – A percussive dance style using the entire body to produce rhythm and sound.
- **Body Percussion** – Creating rhythm using stomps, claps, snaps, and spoken word.
- **Percussive Dance** – Dance where rhythm is created by striking the body or floor.
- **Call-and-Response** – A traditional African and African American performance structure where a leader calls and the group responds.
- **Formation** – The arrangement of performers on stage, often shifting for visual impact.
- **Gumboot Dance** – A South African dance style that uses stomping and slapping of rubber boots to create rhythms.
- **Polyrhythm** – Multiple rhythms played or performed at the same time.
- **Syncopation** – Placing emphasis on the “off-beat” in rhythm.
- **Stomp** – A strong foot strike producing sound.
- **Clap** – Bringing hands together to make a sharp sound.
- **Fraternity/Sorority** – Collegiate organizations central to the origin of modern stepping in the U.S.
- **Tradition** – A custom or practice passed through generations.
- **Improvisation** – Creating movement or rhythm in the moment without pre-planning.
- **Chant** – Rhythmic speaking or singing, often used in stepping.
- **Precision** – The accuracy of timing and movement in group performance.
- **Unison** – Multiple dancers performing the same movement at the same time.
- **Cypher** – A performance circle used in hip-hop and African traditions for showcasing skills.
- **Unity Step** – A synchronized movement performed together as a team to demonstrate cohesion.
- **Two-Step**: A fundamental move where one foot steps to the side, followed by the other foot closing to meet the first.

- **Chassé:** A series of sideways steps where the feet "chase" each other, often involving one foot closing to the other.
- **Box Step:** A sequence of four steps that form a square or box shape on the floor.

Common Street Dance Moves

- **The Woah:** A specific pop-style move that involves a quick, jerky, and somewhat isolated "wobble" or "waving" motion in the body.
- **The Running Man:** A move that creates the illusion of running in place with quick footwork and body action.
- **The Body Roll:** A fluid, wave-like movement that travels through the dancer's entire body.
- **The Sprinkler:** A quick, foot-and-leg movement that mimics the action of a lawn sprinkler.

Influential Street Dance Styles

- **Locking:** A dance style characterized by quick, rhythmic, and abrupt motions combined with sudden "locks" or pauses, often with a strong visual element.
- **Popping:** A dance style that involves contracting and relaxing muscles to cause a "pop" in the dancer's body in time with the music.
- **Breakin':** (Breakdancing) A dance style that is known for its acrobatic and athletic movements, often performed on the floor, with distinct vocabulary related to spinning, power moves, and footwork.

Key Elements of Street Dance

- **Groove:** The feeling and musicality of the dance, often expressed through the rhythm and flow of the movements.
- **Character:** The personality and intention expressed through movement, making each dancer's style unique.
- **Originality & Creativity:** The act of developing new moves, combinations, and ways of expressing music.
- **Social Interaction:** The dance's community aspect, where dancers often share, compete, and collaborate.

Collegiate and grassroots step teams

- Alpha Phi Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, Iota Phi Theta, Delta Sigma Theta, Sigma Gamma Rho: These are just a few examples of historically African-American fraternities and sororities that are known for their strong stepping traditions and competitive step teams.

REFERENCES:

- Western Kentucky University. (2018). Step dancers performing on stage [Photograph]. The Herald. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://wkuherald.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/4a04dd3ab1d80726c27b60c727a48684.jpg> WKUHerald.com
- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. (n.d.). Alpha Phi Alpha logo [Logo image]. African American Registry. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://aaregistry.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/alpha-phi-alpha-logo.jpg> AA Registry
- University of Connecticut Today. (2011). Stepping competition at UConn [Photograph]. UConn Today. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from https://today.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/StepCompetition512_Ig.jpg UConn Today
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. (n.d.). Delta Sigma Theta logo [Logo image]. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTdyLqERFIMbw6npHYbVFQSOWSO8Uo1RhIb0A&s> Google Images
- (n.d.). Step team holding trophy [Photograph]. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQ5Oaktxm_6Bk03V6-bgt21ww5MWdQcrVs7Fg&s Google Images
- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. (n.d.). Sigma Gamma Rho logo [Logo image]. Northwestern University Fraternity & Sorority Life. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://www.northwestern.edu/fsl/images/updated-chapter-placards/nphc-placards/sigma-gamma-rho.png>
- YouTube. (n.d.). Step Afrika! performance still [Photograph]. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/FB7W7XITJvQ/hq720.jpg> i.ytimg.com





KΑΨ
Kappa Alpha Psi



- **National Step Championships:** College step teams compete in various national and regional competitions like the NCPA and NHSPA National Step Championships, showcasing their intricate routines and fostering school pride.



REFERENCES:

Howard University. (n.d.). Step dancers performing on steps in front of Science Hall [Photograph]. Howard University. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://images.ctfassets.net/6pezt69ih962/5j2JXvd2ljsrZbnMsDHtLu/d7917c8662368d55299bff79275a393e/Production-1600x1200-Howard.jpg?h=1000&fm=webp&q=90>

Image captured by an anonymous photographer. (n.d.). Step dancers performing on the Apollo stage [Photograph]. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSkxBZ-oM0cfAfBGhQTjMRRvnXHqMcDrY7OCg&s>
Citation (APA 7th Edition):

YouTube. (n.d.). National College & High School Step Championships, live from the Apollo, Harlem [Thumbnail image]. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/AffOw5ND0kA/mqdefault.jpg>

- **Community-based Ensembles:** Step dancing is also practiced by numerous groups in elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as churches and drill teams, fostering discipline, self-respect, and community engagement.



REFERENCES:

Essence. (n.d.). Step dancing group performing at an Essence event [Photograph]. Essence. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from https://www.essence.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/1501513279/Brit_Pack12.jpg

The Fayetteville Observer. (n.d.). College step show performance on stage [Photograph]. The Fayetteville Observer. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from https://www.fayobserver.com/gcdn/presto/2022/04/17/NTFO/bfdaebe2-a400-4de9-8472-1aed322d57df-NCFAY-041722-PG-stepshow_01.jpg

Shankbone, D. (Photographer). (n.d.). Step dancers performing in “The PLAYERS Club” [Photograph]. Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a8/The_PLAYERS_Club_Steppers_by_David_Shankbone.jpg

The Fayetteville Observer. (n.d.). Step performance at a football halftime event [Photograph]. The Fayetteville Observer. Retrieved August 12, 2025, from <https://www.fayobserver.com/gcdn/presto/2021/10/18/NTFO/7f7fac58-ae41-4d87-a964-8aac40ff6029-NCFAY-101821-SPT-Football568.JPG>



Step Afrika! – Did You Know?

- ...Step Afrika! is the first professional dance company in the world dedicated to the tradition of stepping.

Founded in 1994, it began as a collaboration between artists in the United States and South Africa.

- ...Stepping originated in African American fraternities and sororities in the early 20th century, blending military-style precision, rhythmic footwork, and hand claps.
- ...The art form connects to traditional African dances that use the body as an instrument, as well as gumboot dancing from South African miners, where boots were used as percussion.
- ...Performances are more than just dance—they're part music concert, part storytelling. Step Afrika! combines percussive movement with spoken word, singing, and call-and-response.
- ...The company merges traditional and contemporary influences, pulling from hip-hop, jazz, and modern dance alongside African rhythms and movements.
- ...Stepping is both visual and auditory. You don't just watch it—you feel the beat through sound, vibration, and movement.
- ...Audience participation is a core element of Step Afrika! shows, reflecting the communal nature of African and African American performance traditions.
- ...Stepping celebrates discipline, teamwork, and leadership, values deeply rooted in the culture of historically Black Greek-letter organizations.
- ...Each Step Afrika! performance is unique—the choreography often evolves depending on the audience, venue, and cultural context.
- ...The company tours globally, acting as cultural ambassadors for stepping and African American heritage.

REFERENCE:

- The Pennsylvania State University School of Theatre. (n.d.). Stepping performance on stage [Photograph]. Penn State School of Theatre. Retrieved August 11, 2025, from <https://cpa.psu.edu/sites/cpa.psu.edu/files/slide-step11.jpg>



Timeline of Street Stepping Traditions

Pre-1600s – African Roots

- In various regions of West and Southern Africa, percussive dance forms develop as part of community celebrations, storytelling, and rituals. Movements often combine stomping, clapping, and vocal calls.

1600s–1800s – African Diaspora in the Americas

- Enslaved Africans maintain rhythmic traditions through body percussion when drums are banned in many areas. Patting Juba, ring shouts, and hand clapping emerge as both cultural expression and resistance.

Early 1900s – African American Fraternities & Sororities

- Historically Black Greek-letter organizations begin incorporating synchronized movements, chants, and songs into their culture. Stepping becomes a way to showcase unity, pride, and skill during public events.

1920s–1940s – Military Drills & Rhythmic Marching Influence

- Stepping incorporates influences from military-style drills, precision marching, and call-and-response chants, expanding its performance vocabulary.

1960s–1970s – Modern Step Shows

- Step competitions, or “step shows,” become formalized on college campuses, often mixing storytelling, humor, and thematic costumes.

1980s–1990s – Hip-Hop Fusion

- The rise of hip-hop culture influences stepping, with new elements such as breakdance-inspired moves, beatboxing, and street dance flair.

2000s – Professionalization & Global Reach

- Groups like Step Afrika! bring stepping to professional stages worldwide, blending it with African dance forms, contemporary choreography, and theatrical production.

Today – Cultural Preservation & Innovation

- Stepping thrives as both a competitive art form in schools and universities and as a professional performance style. It continues to evolve, integrating multimedia, live DJs, and cross-genre collaborations.



REFERENCE:

Image by anonymous contributor. (n.d.). Stepping performance still [Photograph].

Retrieved August 12, 2025, from https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcStg7bk7pube4XtrCVMFGwVaGtW_8lIJ0_JfA&s

Pre-Show Questions

1. What do you already know about step dancing or percussive dance traditions?
 2. Have you ever seen or participated in a performance that combined both music and movement without using traditional instruments?
 3. Why do you think some communities use body percussion instead of drums or other instruments?
 4. Step Afrika! blends African traditions with modern influences. What other art forms or cultural activities can you think of that mix old and new styles?
 5. In what ways can dance and music be used to tell a story or share history?
-

Post-Show Questions

1. What movements, sounds, or rhythms stood out to you during the performance, and why?
2. How did the performers use their bodies as both instruments and storytellers?
3. What African and/or modern influences could you identify in the show?
4. How did the performance make you feel, and what do you think the dancers wanted the audience to experience?
5. If you could add one element to the performance—such as a visual effect, costume change, or different rhythm—what would it be and how would it fit into the story?



What is BEST in Dance?

BEST stands for:

- **B**ody – The parts of the body and the kinds of movements used (e.g., arms, legs, gestures, posture).
 - **E**nergy – The quality of movement (e.g., sharp, smooth, heavy, light, tense, relaxed).
 - **S**pace – Where movement happens, including direction, level (high, medium, low), size, and pathway.
 - **T**ime – The speed, rhythm, and timing of movement (e.g., fast, slow, syncopated, pauses).
-

Why We Use BEST in Dance

BEST gives dancers, choreographers, and audience members a shared language to **describe and analyze movement**.

- For **students**, it helps break down what they see or perform into clear, observable elements.
- For **performers**, it's a tool to think more deeply about artistic choices.
- For **audiences**, it makes talking about dance easier, turning general reactions (“I liked it”) into detailed observations (“I liked the sharp, fast arm movements in the high space”).

Using BEST encourages **critical thinking, artistic appreciation, and better communication** about an art form that's often hard to put into words.

How to Talk About Stepping

Stepping is a percussive dance form that uses the entire body as an instrument. To talk about stepping like a pro, focus on **what you saw, heard, and felt**—and connect it to the four BEST elements.

1. Body – What Moves Did You See?

- **What to Notice:** Hand claps, stomps, chest pounds, synchronized group shapes, jumps, and gestures.
 - **Talking Prompts:**
 - “I noticed how the dancers used their hands/feet/body to create sound.”
 - “The arm movements looked powerful and precise.”
-

2. Energy – How Did It Feel?

- **What to Notice:** Intensity, strength, discipline, humor, and emotion in the movement.
 - **Talking Prompts:**
 - “The energy was explosive during the group stomps.”
 - “The dancers’ focus made the routine feel powerful.”
-

3. Space – Where Did It Happen?

- **What to Notice:** Formations, levels (low, medium, high), use of the stage, and interaction between performers.
 - **Talking Prompts:**
 - “They spread out to fill the stage and then came together for a unison move.”
 - “The way they moved in lines and circles created excitement.”
-

4. Time - How Was It Structured?

- What to Notice: Rhythm, tempo, pauses, syncopation, call-and-response patterns.
 - Talking Prompts:
 - “They sped up the stomps to build excitement.”
 - “The pauses made the next beat hit even harder.”
-

Sentence Starters for Feedback or Discussion

- “One movement that stood out to me was...”
- “When I saw (be specific), it made me think/feel/wonder (be specific).”
- “The group’s rhythm felt...”
- “This reminded me of...”
- “I could hear/see the connection to...”
- “The story I felt they were telling was...”

BEST Peer Review Guide

Name of Performer(s): _____

Name of Reviewer: _____

Date: _____

The BEST model helps us talk about dance and movement using four main elements: **Body, Energy, Space, and Time**. Use the prompts below to give your peer specific, supportive, and helpful feedback.

Quick Tips for Peer Review:

- Be specific: “I liked the way you stomped in unison during the ending” is better than “It was good.”
 - Balance positive comments with ideas for growth.
 - Focus on what you **observed** rather than what you **assume**.
-

1. BODY - What parts of the body were used and how?

Prompt: “I noticed you used your...” or “One strong movement with your body was...”

Your Feedback:

2. ENERGY - How did the movement feel (sharp, smooth, heavy, light, strong, soft)?

Prompt: “The energy of your movement felt...” or “One moment where your energy matched the story was...”

Your Feedback:

3. SPACE - How did the dancer(s) move through the performance area (levels, directions, pathways)?

Prompt: "I liked how you used space when you..." or "You could explore more space by..."

Your Feedback:

4. TIME - How did the timing, speed, and rhythm support the performance?

Prompt: "The timing of your steps worked well when..." or "It might be interesting to try..."

Your Feedback:

5. Favorite Moment

Prompt: "My favorite part of your performance was..."

Your Feedback:

6. Suggestions for Growth

Prompt: "One way you could make this even stronger is..."

Your Feedback:

2nd Grade ELAR: “Stepping into Stories: Descriptive Writing through Dance”

TEKS Alignment

-
- §110.13(b)(6)(A): Participate in student-led discussions by listening and speaking respectfully.
- §110.13(b)(6)(E): Make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and the community.
- §110.13(b)(7)(B): Write brief compositions that convey feelings and describe events.

Objective:

Students will watch a video of Step Afrika! and use descriptive language to write about the performance, connecting movements and rhythms to emotions and personal experiences.

Materials:

- Short Step Afrika! performance clip (1-2 minutes)
- Chart paper and markers
- “Dance Word Bank” handout (adjectives, verbs, and sound words)
- Writing journals or paper
- Pencils and crayons

Lesson Steps:

1. Engage (5 minutes)

- Begin with a simple discussion: “What is dance? Can dance tell a story?”
- Tell students they will watch a performance where dancers use steps, claps, and stomps to make rhythms.

2. Watch & Listen (5 minutes)

- Show a short clip of Step Afrika!
- Ask students to pay attention to what they see (movements, shapes, patterns) and hear (claps, stomps, voices).

3. Build Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- On chart paper, create two columns: What We Saw and What We Heard.
- Record student responses. Add sensory words from the Dance Word Bank (e.g., “thunderous,” “sharp,” “steady,” “quick”).

4. Guided Writing (10 minutes)

- Model writing a descriptive sentence about the performance:
“The dancers stomped their feet like a drum and it made my heart beat fast.”
- Students write 3-4 sentences about what they saw and heard, and how it made them feel.

5. Share & Connect (5 minutes)

- Invite students to share sentences aloud.
- Make connections between the students’ words and the idea that dance can tell stories without words.

Assessment:

- Students use at least one descriptive word for sight, one for sound, and one feeling word in their writing.
- Participation in discussion and ability to make personal connections.

Extension:

- Turn student sentences into a class poem about Step Afrika!
- Add illustrations showing the movements they described.

Dance Word Bank

What We Hear

(Sound Words)

- Boom
- Bang
- Clap
- Tap
- Stomp
- Snap
- Thump
- Slap
- Shuffle
- Beat
- Shout

How It Feels

(Feeling Words)

- Happy
- Excited
- Proud
- Brave
- Energetic
- Silly
- Calm
- Powerful
- Joyful
- Strong
- Determined

What We See

(Sight Words)

- Stomp
- Clap
- Jump
- Spin
- Kick
- March
- Snap
- Wave
- Step
- Tap
- Slide

What other sight, sounds, or feelings did you notice?

Here is space to draw something you found exciting:



Grade 2 – Social Studies “Stepping Through Time”

TEKS: §113.15 (15)(A), (19)(A)

Objective: Students will identify how cultural traditions like stepping connect communities and reflect history.

Materials: World map, photos of African dance, Step Afrika! video clip, chart paper.

Steps:

1. **Map Connection** – Locate Africa and the U.S. on the map, trace the cultural journey of stepping.
2. **Photo / Video Analysis** – Compare traditional African dances with fraternity/sorority stepping.
3. **Class Chart** – Create a “Past and Present” chart showing cultural connections.
4. **Discussion** – How do traditions help tell community stories?

Extension: Draw a picture of a dance that tells your family’s story.

Grade 2 – Social Studies “Beats of Belonging”

TEKS: §113.15 (15)(A), (19)(A)

Objective: Students will explore how stepping reflects cultural traditions and community identity.

Materials:

- Short video clip of Step Afrika! performance
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers

Steps:

- **Intro to Culture & Tradition:** Show a short clip of Step Afrika!. Discuss what students notice about the movements, rhythms, and group coordination.
- **Community Connections:** Explain how stepping comes from historically African American fraternities and sororities and connects to African traditions.
- **Class Chart:** On the board, create two columns — *What We Saw and What It Means*. Guide students to connect observations to cultural values like teamwork, pride, and history.
- **Wrap-Up:** Students draw a picture showing one movement or moment they remember, labeling it with one word about its meaning.

Extension: Compare with a local cultural tradition (e.g., Fiesta parades) to identify similarities in community expression.

See Word Bank under **Stepping into Stories: Descriptive Writing through Dance**

Grade 2 Lesson Plan – Dance : “Percussive Pathways”

TEKS:

- Dance: §117.114 (2)(B)(C)(i), (3)(A)
- Social Studies: §113.15 (15)(A), (19)(A)

Objective:

Students will explore basic stepping patterns, emphasizing rhythm, unity, and cultural meaning.

Materials Needed:

- Drum or recorded percussive beat
- Open space for movement
- Visual cards with stomp/clap icons

Steps:

- Introduction – Explain stepping as a tradition and its African roots.
- Warm-Up – Practice clapping on the beat and stomping in unison.
- Step Pattern Creation – Students work in pairs to combine 4 claps and 4 stomps into a short pattern.
- Performance – Groups perform their patterns for the class.
- Reflection – Discuss how it feels to make rhythms with the body.

Extension: Create a “step chant” with the students’ names.

See: **How to Talk About Stepping and BEST Peer Review Guide**

Grade 4 – History “The Story of Stepping”

TEKS: §113.15 (3)(A), (15)(A)

Objective: Students will explain how stepping evolved from African traditions to a recognized performance art.

Materials: Timeline template, historical stepping fact cards, video clip.

Steps:

- 1. Timeline Intro** – Present a visual timeline of stepping’s origins and growth, from stepping’s roots in African traditions, 1900s fraternities/sororities, and into today’s performances.
- 2. Group Sorting** – Students place fact cards in the correct order on a timeline.
- 3. Class Discussion** – What events or movements influenced stepping’s growth?
- 4. Group Research** – In small groups, students examine one period from the timeline and identify its cultural or historical significance.
- 5. Report Back** – Each group shares findings, adding images or keywords to the class timeline.
- 6. Wrap-Up** – Discuss how cultural traditions evolve while keeping ties to their roots.
- 7. Reflection** – Write one paragraph about why preserving this tradition matters.

Extension:

- Add other U.S. performance traditions to the timeline for comparison.
- Have students research another dance form with roots in a different cultural community and compare how it has evolved.

Historical Stepping Fact Cards – *on the following page*

Card 1 - Roots in Africa

Fact: Stepping is deeply connected to African traditions of rhythm and movement, especially the use of the body as a percussive instrument. These traditions date back thousands of years and include drumming circles, call-and-response singing, and communal dancing.

Connection Question: How might the absence of traditional instruments have influenced the use of the body in creating rhythm?

Card 2 - Post-Civil War Foundations

Fact: After the Civil War, African American communities preserved cultural traditions through dance, music, and storytelling, even when formal performance spaces were limited. Early forms of body percussion evolved in social gatherings, work songs, and church.

Connection Question: Why do you think movement and rhythm were important for keeping cultural identity alive?

Card 3 - Fraternities & Sororities

Fact: Modern stepping developed in the 20th century within historically African American fraternities and sororities, where precise, synchronized movements expressed unity, pride, and group identity.

Connection Question: How do group performances show teamwork and discipline?

Card 4 - Influence of Military Drills

Fact: Some aspects of stepping draw inspiration from military drill formations—sharp lines, precise timing, and powerful stomps—which were incorporated into fraternity and sorority step shows.

Connection Question: How does the precision of stepping make it more impactful to watch?

Card 5 - Civil Rights Era

Fact: During the Civil Rights Movement, stepping and other African American performance traditions became tools for community gatherings, rallies, and celebrations, reinforcing solidarity and cultural pride.

Connection Question: How can dance and music help inspire change in a community?

Card 6 - Connection to Hip-Hop

Fact: Hip-hop and stepping share an emphasis on rhythm, syncopation, and storytelling. In the late 20th century, hip-hop's beats and energy began influencing step performances, blending traditions into new forms.

Connection Question: What might be the similarities between a step routine and a hip-hop performance?

Card 7 - Stepping Today

Fact: Today, stepping is performed worldwide and blends African traditions, African American history, modern music, and theatre. Groups like Step Afrika! bring the art form to theaters, schools, and international stages.

Connection Question: Why is it important to share traditional art forms with new audiences?

Card 8 - Building Community Through Stepping

Fact: Stepping has always been more than performance—it's a way to strengthen bonds within a community. Step teams often represent schools, fraternities, sororities, or neighborhood groups, using performance to share pride, tell stories, and unite people of all ages.

Connection Question: How can participating in a performance help people feel connected to each other and their community?

Grade 4 Lesson Plan – Choir “Sing, Move, Listen, Feel: Stepping with All Senses”

TEKS:

- Music: §117.111 (2)(A)(B), (3)(B)
- Social Studies: §113.15 (13)(A), (15)(A)

Objective:

Students will combine call-and-response singing with basic stepping to create a short performance.

Materials:

- Simple call-and-response song lyrics
- Steady beat percussion track

Steps:

1. **Review Call-and-Response** – Show examples from African American traditions.
2. **Learn the Song** – Practice the leader part and response part.
3. **Add Steps** – Integrate claps and stomps on key beats.
4. **Group Practice** – Split into two groups for leader/response.
5. **Perform Together** – Keep steady rhythm as a class.

Extension: Add verses in Spanish or another language for cultural connection.

Call-and-Response songs

- with a steady beat that work beautifully for stepping practice and performance

Traditional / Folk Songs

- "Hey, Hey, Bo Diddley" – Classic steady-beat pattern, easy to adapt with claps and stomps.
 - "Che Che Koolay" (Ghana) – African children's song with clear call-and-response and movement potential.
 - "John the Rabbit" – Short, rhythmic responses make it great for beginner stepping patterns.
 - "Did You Feed My Cow?" – Narrative call-and-response with steady phrasing.
 - "Green Sally Up" – Steady pulse ideal for stomps, claps, and dynamic accents.
 - "Here We Go, Zudio" – A movement-friendly circle game with built-in steady beat and interactive movement cues.
-

African American Musical Heritage

- "This Little Light of Mine" (call-and-response style) – Adaptable tempo for layered step rhythms.
 - "Wade in the Water" – Can be arranged for percussive movement between vocal lines.
 - "Oh, Freedom" – Space between phrases allows for strong rhythmic punctuation in stepping.
-

Playground & Chant-Based

- "Who Are We?!" (cheer style) – Flexible structure for creating your own group identity chant.
 - "Down Down Baby" – Familiar beat that transfers easily to stomp-clap patterns.
-

Call-and-Response Song Stepping Possibilities

Song Title	Suggested Stepping Pattern	Skill Level	Notes for Teaching
Hey, Hey, Bo Diddley	Simple stomp-clap pattern: Stomp–Clap–Pause–Clap	Beginner	Great for Grade 2 introduction to beat; emphasize listening for leader’s call.
Che Che Koolay (Ghana)	Step-touch with alternating knee lifts between calls	Beginner	Adds cultural connection to African dance traditions; can layer in hand claps for Grade 4.
John the Rabbit	Stomp–Clap–Stomp–Clap with knee lift on “Yes Ma’am”	Beginner–Intermediate	Teaches response timing; can add syncopation for older students.
Did You Feed My Cow?	Heel tap–Clap–Step–Step with body lean on question phrases	Beginner	Builds storytelling through movement; pair with acting facial expressions.
Green Sally Up	Squat down on “down” phrases, rise on “up” phrases with double clap	Intermediate	Works well for Grade 6–8; strong lower-body endurance challenge.
Here We Go, Zudio	Circle stepping + clap on every 4th beat	Beginner–Intermediate	Encourages group cohesion and spatial awareness; adaptable to mixed-age groups.
This Little Light of Mine	Stomp–Stomp–Clap–Pause pattern with optional snaps on rests	Beginner–Intermediate	Layer harmonies for choir connections in Grades 4–8.
Wade in the Water	Slow, deliberate stomp–Slide–Clap pattern	Intermediate	Perfect for expressive, dramatic stepping; strong cultural and historical tie-in.
Oh, Freedom	Step–Tap–Step–Tap with percussive chest hit on “freedom”	Intermediate–Advanced	For Grade 8+; allows for variation in dynamics and accents.



Song Title	Suggested Stepping Pattern	Skill Level	Notes for Teaching
Who Are We?! (Cheer style)	Call phrase: Jump–Clap–Step; Response phrase: Stomp–Clap–Stomp	Intermediate–Advanced	Builds teamwork and unison; great for identity chants.
Down Down Baby	Quick Stomp–Clap–Stomp–Clap with partner interaction	Beginner–Intermediate	Good for Grades 2–6; introduces syncopation in a playful way.

Teaching Suggestions by Grade Level

- **Grade 2:** Stick to Beginner patterns (steady beat, simple sequences, minimal syncopation).
 - **Grade 4:** Mix Beginner and Intermediate patterns; introduce layering of stomps and claps.
 - **Grade 6:** Add Intermediate patterns with syncopation, body percussion variety, and formations.
 - **Grade 8:** Incorporate Intermediate–Advanced patterns, call variations, and dynamic changes.
-



Sing, Move, Listen, Feel! Call-and-Response Examples

-- A Rhythm and Movement Companion for Classrooms

1. Hey, Hey, Bo Diddley

Call Example:

Leader: *"Hey, hey, Bo Diddley!"*

Group: *"Hey, hey, Bo Diddley!"*

Suggested Stepping Pattern:

Stomp-Clap-Pause-Clap (Beginner)

Cultural Connection:

Blends African American rhythm traditions with popular music history.

2. Che Che Koolay (Ghanaian Traditional)

Call Example:

Leader: *"Che Che Koolay!"*

Group: *"Che Che Koolay!"*

Suggested Stepping Pattern:

Step-Touch with alternating knee lifts.

Cultural Connection:

Links West African call-and-response to contemporary stepping formations.

3. John the Rabbit

Call Example:

Leader: *"John the Rabbit!"*

Group: *"Yes Ma'am!"*

Suggested Stepping Pattern:

Stomp-Clap-Stomp-Clap with knee lift on responses.

Cultural Connection:

African American folk call that connects storytelling to rhythm.

4. Did You Feed My Cow?

Call Example:

Leader: *"Did you feed my cow?"*

Group: *"Yes Ma'am!"*

Suggested Stepping Pattern:

Heel tap–Clap–Step–Step with body lean on question phrases.

Cultural Connection:

Builds sequencing and response timing — perfect for elementary learners.

5. Green Sally Up

Call Example:

Leader sings *"Green Sally up, Green Sally down"*

Group mirrors action.

Suggested Stepping Pattern:

Squat down on “down” phrases, rise on “up” with double clap.

Cultural Connection:

Great for middle school endurance and unison challenges.

6. Here We Go, Zudio

Call Example:

Leader: *"Here we go, Zudio!"*

Group: *"Zudio, Zudio!"*

Suggested Stepping Pattern:

Circle stepping + clap on every 4th beat.

Cultural Connection:

Traditional African American game song that easily adapts to step formations.

This Little Light of Mine

Call Example:

Leader: "This little light of mine"

Group: "I'm gonna let it shine!"

Suggested Stepping Pattern:

Stomp–Stomp–Clap–Pause; add snaps on rests.

Cultural Connection:

Civil Rights-era anthem that connects music, activism, and rhythm.

8. Wade in the Water

Call Example:

Leader: "Wade in the water"

Group: "Children, wade in the water"

Suggested Stepping Pattern:

Slow, deliberate stomp–Slide–Clap.

Cultural Connection:

Spiritual with coded historical meaning; pairs well with dramatic movement.

9. Oh, Freedom

Call Example:

Leader: "Oh, freedom"

Group: "Over me"

Suggested Stepping Pattern:

Step–Tap–Step–Tap with chest hit on key word.

Cultural Connection:

Freedom song used in the Civil Rights Movement — emphasizes emotion in rhythm.

Who Are We?! (Cheer Style)

Call Example:

Leader: "Who are we?!"

Group: "We are strong!"

Suggested Stepping Pattern:

Jump-Clap-Step (call), Stomp-Clap-Stomp (response).

Cultural Connection:

Team identity chant; great for building group cohesion.

TEACHING TIPS

- Layer gradually: Start with the call and response only, then add claps, then stomps.
 - Integrate movement: Encourage facial expressions and posture changes.
 - Link to history: Share cultural origins before practicing each piece.
 - Encourage leadership: Rotate student leaders for calls.
-

REFERENCES:

American folk song. (n.d.). Hambone. In American Folklife Center: Traditional music archive [Audio recording]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov>

Childrens' Music Workshop. (n.d.). I Like to Move It [Song]. In Songs for kids and movement. <https://www.childrensmusicworkshop.com>

Seeger, P., & Lomax, A. (n.d.). Call-and-response songs of the U.S. South. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. <https://folkways.si.edu>

Traditional African American game song. (n.d.). Here We Go, Zudio [Song]. In Smithsonian Folkways Children's Music Collection. <https://folkways.si.edu>

Workman, C. (n.d.). Steppin' to the beat: Percussive call-and-response traditions. African American Music History Archives. <https://www.aamha.org>

Grade 6 – ELAR “Feel the Beat, See the Step, Tell the Story”

TEKS: §110.22 (6)(E), (7)(B)

Objective: Students will interpret and respond to performance-based storytelling in stepping.

Materials: Step Afrika! performance clip, graphic organizer for “Story Elements in Dance,” sentence stems.

Steps:

Performance Viewing – Watch a segment and focus on body movements, patterns, and energy changes.

1. **Story Mapping** – Use the graphic organizer to identify characters (dancers), setting, plot, conflict, and resolution in the performance.
2. **Discussion** – How is a story told without words?
3. **Written Response** – Describe a moment in the performance that communicated emotion or meaning.

Extension: Write a short scene and plan a movement-based way to perform it.

Just like movies, books, paintings, and videos, DANCE is a way to tell stories.

Just like a picture or a painting, DANCE tells stories without words.

Just like a book, or a painting, DANCE uses symbols (movements) that can be decoded, read, and understood.

How to use the Story Elements in Dance Graphic Organizer:

1. Before the Performance
 - o Discuss each story element with examples from books or movies.
 - o Predict how dance might show these ideas.
2. During or After the Performance
 - o Take notes or sketch movement ideas for each element.
3. In Choreography Projects
 - o Use the organizer as a blueprint for creating your own movement-based story.

Story Elements in Dance – Graphic Organizer

Story Element	Guiding Questions	Dance Representation
Characters	Who is in the story? What do they look like, act like, or feel like?	Movements that show personality, costume choices, posture, or facial expression.
Setting	Where and when does the story take place?	Shapes, spacing, and levels to suggest place (e.g., wide arm sweeps for open space, crouching for small spaces).
Problem / Conflict	What challenge or obstacle do the characters face?	Contrasting movements (fast vs. slow, heavy vs. light) to show struggle or tension.
Events / Action	What happens in the beginning, middle, and end?	Sequenced movement phrases showing progression of the story.
Resolution	How is the problem solved? How does the story end?	Movement that shows change, relief, celebration, or return to calm.
Theme / Message	What is the main idea or lesson?	Overall mood and energy, repeated motifs, or signature gestures.



Name: _____ Title of My Story: _____

Part 1 – Story Basics

1. Characters – Who is in your story?
(People, animals, or imaginary beings)

2. Setting – Where does the story happen?
(Place and time)

3. Theme / Message – What is the big idea or lesson?

Part 2 – Story Events

Story Part	What Happens?	Movement Ideas
Beginning	How does it start?	_____ _____
Middle	What’s the problem or main action?	_____ _____
End	How is it resolved?	_____ _____

Part 3 – BEST Movement Planning

Body	What parts of the body move?	_____ _____
Energy	Is the movement sharp, smooth, heavy, light?	_____ _____
Space	Big or small movements? Where on stage?	_____ _____
Time	Fast, slow, still, or changing?	_____ _____



Part 4 - Performance Details

- Music or Rhythm Choice: _____
- Props or Costumes: _____
- Special Effects (levels, patterns, formations): _____

Part 5 - Reflection

- One thing I want my audience to feel: _____
- A movement I'm excited to perform: _____

Room to sketch:

Grade 6 – ELAR “Rhythm You Can See, Sound You Can Feel”

TEKS: §110.22 (6)(E), (7)(B)

Objective: Students will write a descriptive paragraph that captures the sensory experience of a Step Afrika! performance.

Materials:

- Video clip of performance
- Sensory words chart (sight, sound, touch, movement, emotion)
- Writing paper or digital docs

Steps:

- Sensory Prep: Watch a short clip of Step Afrika!. Ask students to jot down words for what they see, hear, and feel.
- Word Bank: Build a shared sensory vocabulary chart from student contributions.
- Writing Task: Students draft a descriptive paragraph, using at least one sensory detail from each category.
- Peer Review: Exchange drafts with a partner for feedback on imagery and clarity.

Extension: Convert paragraphs into short spoken-word pieces and perform with a beat or clapping pattern in the background.

Sensory Word Chart

Examples of vivid, specific words describing stepping.

Sight (What you see)	Sound (What you hear)	Touch (What you feel physically)	Movement (How bodies/objects move)	Emotion (Feelings or mood)
Bright costumes	Rhythmic stomps	Vibrations in floor	Sharp	Excited
Uniform lines	Hand claps	Air rush from movement	Smooth	Proud
Synchronized steps	Drum beats	Warmth from lights	Bouncy	Energized
Facial expressions	Audience cheers	Pressure from seat	Jerky	Connected
Light reflections	Call-and-response voices	Breeze from dancers passing	Flowing	Joyful
Fast footwork	Snapping fingers	Texture of program or seat	Explosive	Empowered
Shadows on stage	Music changes	Shake from bass	Controlled	Inspired



Sensory Word Chart

Name _____

Use this chart to brainstorm and record descriptive words from what you observe during a performance. Try to fill in each column with vivid, specific words.

Sight <i>(What you see)</i>	Sound <i>(What you hear)</i>	Touch <i>(What you feel physically)</i>	Movement <i>(How bodies/objects move)</i>	Emotion <i>(Feelings or mood)</i>

Sensory Word Chart – Sentence Stems

Name _____

Use these sentence starters to help you write vivid, descriptive sentences about what you experience during a performance. Try to complete each step *with specific details*.

Sight (What you see)	Sound (What you hear)	Touch (What you feel physically)	Movement (How bodies/objects move)	Emotion (Feelings or mood)
I saw...	I heard...	I felt...	The movement was...	I felt...
The stage looked...	The rhythm sounded...	The floor felt...	They moved like...	The performance made me feel...
The costumes were...	The beat reminded me of...	The air felt...	The energy of the movement was...	I sensed a feeling of...
The lights made...	I noticed the sound of...	My seat felt...	They stepped in a way that...	The mood of the piece was...
The shapes and patterns...	The clapping and stomping...	I could tell the vibration when...	Their bodies created shapes like...	I connected to the performance because...



Grade 6 Lesson Plan – Orchestra “From Yard to Stage”

TEKS:

- Music: §117.115 (2)(B), (3)(B)
- Social Studies: §113.18 (21)(A)(B)

Objective:

Students will accompany a stepping sequence with layered rhythms using classroom percussion and string pizzicato.

Materials:

- Orchestra instruments
- Auxiliary percussion (hand drums, tambourines, shakers)
- Video example of Step Afrika!

Steps:

- 1. Watch Clip** – Identify where rhythm accents occur in stepping.
- 2. Select Percussion Leaders** – Assign parts for downbeats, offbeats, and accents.
- 3. Pizzicato Practice** – Strings pluck on beat to match stomps.
- 4. Ensemble Rehearsal** – Combine stepping and music parts.
- 5. Performance & Feedback** – Class discusses how the music supports movement.

Extension: Experiment with dynamics to match intensity.

Grade 8 – Social Studies/History “Beats Build Bridges”

TEKS: §113.20 (21)(A)(B)

Objective: Students will analyze how Step Afrika! blends historical African traditions with modern performance to promote cultural identity.

Materials: Articles on African American fraternities/sororities, Step Afrika! artist interviews, Venn diagram worksheet.

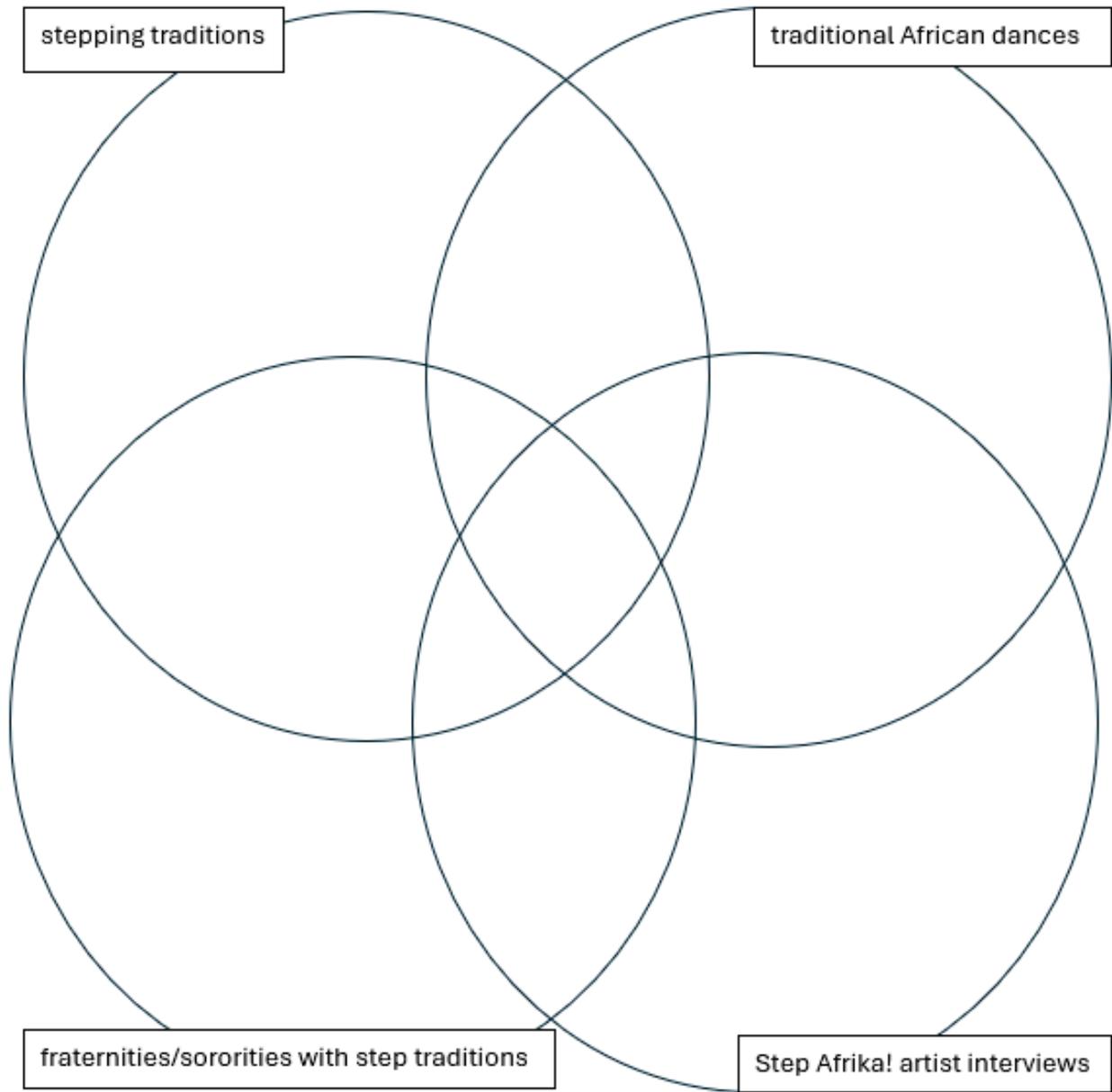
Steps:

1. **Research** - Research and select short articles on stepping traditions, traditional African dances, fraternities/sororities with step traditions, and Step Afrika! artist interviews.
2. **Research Overview** - In pairs, read short articles on African American stepping traditions and traditional African dances.
3. **Venn Diagram** - Compare and contrast movement styles, purposes, and cultural significance.
4. **Class Share** - Discuss how fusion art forms keep traditions alive.
5. **Exit Ticket** - One sentence on how Step Afrika! connects past and present.

Extension: Create a presentation on another cultural art form that blends old and new.

Beats Build Bridges Venn Diagram - movement styles, purposes, and cultural significance.

Name: _____



Grade 8 – History “Unity in Motion”

TEKS: §113.20 (21)(A), (21)(B)

Objective: Students will analyze how stepping serves as both an art form and a tool for social connection, discipline, and cultural expression.

Materials:

- Interviews or quotes from Step Afrika! performers
- Performance video excerpts
- Discussion guide with critical thinking questions

Steps:

1. **Performance Review:** Watch excerpts and highlight moments where teamwork, discipline, or cultural pride is evident.
2. **Performer Perspectives:** Read or listen to quotes from performers about why stepping matters to them.
3. **Small Group Discussion:** How do the movements and rhythms connect to African roots? How do they connect to modern culture?
4. **Class Share:** Groups present findings, noting examples of tradition meeting innovation.

Extension: Have students design a “mini performance plan” blending a traditional rhythm with a contemporary element (spoken word, hip-hop beat, etc.).

Grade 8 Lesson Plan – Percussion “Full-Body Polyrhythm”

TEKS:

- Music: §117.118 (2)(A)(B), (3)(B)
- Social Studies: §113.20 (21)(A)(B)
- Dance: §117.123 (3)(B)

Objective:

Students will compose and perform a complex step sequence using polyrhythm.

Materials:

- Space for movement
- Floor tape for formations
- Metronome or click track

Steps:

1. **Polyrhythm Intro** – Demonstrate two rhythms at once (hands vs. feet).
2. **Small Group Work** – Each group creates an 8-count step phrase.
3. **Layer Phrases** – Groups combine to create overlapping rhythms.
4. **Formation Change** – Add visual stage patterns.
5. **Performance & Peer Feedback** – Use observation sheets for constructive critique.

Extension: Record and analyze performance for precision.

See: **How to Talk About Stepping and BEST Peer Review Guide**

Literature Connections: Steps & Pages

Grade 2

1. **Jabari Jumps** by Gaia Cornwall
 - Themes of courage and trying something new, connecting to the experience of performing.
 2. **This Jazz Man** by Karen Ehrhardt
 - Rhythmic, musical text that mirrors stepping patterns and celebrates African American music history.
 3. **Rap A Tap Tap: Here's Bojangles—Think of That!** by Leo & Diane Dillon
 - A rhythmic tribute to tap legend Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, connecting movement and beat.
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Grade 4

1. **My Feet Are Laughing** by Lissette Norman
 - Poetry with movement imagery, perfect for combining rhythm and personal storytelling.
 2. **Hip Hop Speaks to Children** edited by Nikki Giovanni
 - Poetry and song lyrics that connect to call-and-response traditions in stepping.
 3. **When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop** by Laban Carrick Hill
 - Links stepping to broader hip-hop history and rhythm-based art forms.
-

Grade 6

1. **Brown Girl Dreaming** by Jacqueline Woodson
 - Memoir in verse, rich with rhythm and oral storytelling traditions.
 2. **The Crossover** by Kwame Alexander
 - Verse novel that uses rhythm, movement, and wordplay, echoing the beats of stepping.
 3. **Step Up to the Plate, Maria Singh** by Uma Krishnaswami
 - Blends cultural identity, teamwork, and performance.
-

Grade 8

1. **Solo** by Kwame Alexander with Mary Rand Hess
 - A music-centered coming-of-age story with rhythm-infused verse.
 2. **Piecing Me Together** by Renée Watson
 - Explores self-expression, cultural pride, and creative performance as empowerment.
 3. **Bronx Masquerade** by Nikki Grimes
 - A collection of student voices through poetry, connecting to the personal expression in stepping.
-

How To

1. **Street Dance: The Best Moves** by D.J. Hooch
 - This book offers a step-by-step introduction to various street dance styles like B-boy, Popping, Locking, Hip Hop, and House. It includes basic moves for each style and tips on music, clothing, and expert advice from dancers.
2. **Spotlight on Stepping** by Mel Hammond
 - This book is also about stepping and is available in paperback, hardcover, and ebook formats.

Digital Resources

Step Afrika! & Educational Resources

- Step Afrika! Virtual Programming Series
Explore on-demand performances and workshops like “*Five Days With Step Afrika!*” that include educational guides diving into stepping’s history and performance excerpts. [Wikipedia+15Step Afrika!+15NJ PAC+15](#)
 - Step Afrika! Repertoire & Educational Guides
Learn about signature works like *The Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence and Drumfolk*, which connect stepping to historical narratives through compelling storytelling. [Step Afrika!+2Step Afrika!+2](#)
 - Step Afrika! Background & History
Get details on the company’s founding, artistic mission, and cultural leadership as a stepping ambassador. [The Washington Informer+7Wikipedia+7Step Afrika!+7](#)
-

Stepping History & Context

- Britannica Entry on Stepping
Authoritative overview of stepping’s origins in African American fraternities and sororities, as well as its evolution as a performance and cultural tradition. [Wikipedia+15Encyclopedia Britannica+15Step Afrika!+15](#)
- Wikipedia: African-American Stepping
Broad historical and cultural context, including roots in African dance and its development into a group performance art. [Mesquite News+15Wikipedia+15Wikipedia+15](#)
- “History of Stepping” Articles
 - *Onassis Krown’s Ultimate Guide to Stepping*—details the cultural role of stepping within the Divine Nine Greek organizations. [World of StepOnassis Krown+1](#)
 - *Polygon Middle School History of Step Dance*—a student-friendly breakdown of stepping’s African heritage and evolution over time. [Culture Shock Miami+3The Polygon+3Wikipedia+3](#)

Cross-Cultural & Comparative Resources

World of Step - History

Highlights global connections, including gumboot (South African), Taino dance, and more, revealing stepping's place within a larger diasporic tradition. [Step Afrika!+11World of Step+11Culture Shock Miami+11](#)

PushBlack Article: Stepping in Culture

Explores parallels between stepping and traditional African forms like gumboot and Dahomey dance, focusing on expressive and communal functions. [UpStaged Entertainment Group+15PushBlack+15The Washington Informer+15](#)

Interactive & Performance Resources

SPAC Learning Library - Stepping Lesson Content

Interactive video lessons, a performance piece ("Hands Up!" by Soul Steps), and teaching tools that blend history, rhythm, and movement. [Cal Performances+10SPAC Library+10Wikipedia+10](#)

Step Afrika! Teacher Resource Guides

Educator-aligned PDFs designed to support classroom use of stepping through history, cultural understanding, and teamwork lessons. [Culture Shock Miami+12NJPAC+12Playhouse Square+12Cal Performances](#)

Chicago Stepping (Distinct Tradition)

Vogue: Chicago Steppers Competition

Offers cultural context for Chicago Stepping—a partnered, smooth-footwork form related but distinct from fraternity-style stepping. [SPAC Library+4Vogue+4Wikipedia+4](#)

Performer Interviews & Insights

America's Black Forum Feature

A deep-dive interview with Step Afrika!'s Founder and Executive Producer, C. Brian Williams. He shares the company's roots, evolution, and mission to elevate stepping as a recognized artform. [BeatStars+14Step Afrika!+14YouTube+14](#)

- “The Art of Stepping” – Interview with Valencia Springer
Featuring Step Afrika! performer Valencia Odeyka Emonni Springer, this conversation explores her journey, training, and role in community education through stepping. [phindie](#)
 - Stance on Dance – C. Brian Williams Interview
This Q&A discusses how Step Afrika! transformed stepping from a cultural practice into a professional stage artform and shares its inception in South Africa. [Wikipedia+12Stance on Dance+12Step Afrika!+12](#)
 - Step Afrika! on *The Kelly Clarkson Show*
A media-highlight featuring both an interview and a live, in-studio stepping workshop, offering a fun and engaging glimpse into the artform. [Step Afrika+2Step Afrika!+2](#)
-

Free Beats & Stepping Sound Resources

- Pixabay – Stepping Royalty-Free Music
Offers over 100 no-copyright audio tracks suitable for stepping rhythms and performances. [Pixabay+15Pixabay+15Pixabay+15](#)
- Pixabay – Dance Beats Collection
Hosts tens of thousands of royalty-free dance beats and instrumentals, useful for choreographing stepping routines. [Wikipedia+7Pixabay+7Pixabay+7](#)
- Pixabay – Stepping Sound Effects
Access a library of over 1,100 free sound effects that mimic real-life stepping, foot stomps, and percussive textures – excellent for multimedia or theatrical layering. [YouTube+9Pixabay+9Pixabay+9](#)
- BeatStars – Free Instrumental Beats
Offers thousands of free-of-charge hip-hop, R&B, trap, and pop instrumentals that can inspire stepping choreographies, especially when synced with digital media. [BeatStars+1](#)
- YouTube – “Stepping on the Off Beat” (TeknoAXE)
A royalty-free techno/electro/dance track ideal for high-energy stepping sequences. [Step Afrika!+11YouTube+11Pixabay+1](#)



Local Resources

1. San Antonio Dance Meetup Group

A welcoming group for dancers of all levels that convenes for social and practice sessions—perfect for students exploring various dance forms, including stepping.

[Meadowland Charter District+4Mesquite News+4Wikipedia+4YouTube+3Meetup+3Meetup+3](#)

2. City of San Antonio Parks & Recreation – Dance Classes

Offers foundational classes in Hip-Hop, tap, jazz, and modern dance, providing transferable skills and rhythm training that are beneficial for stepping.

[San Antonio](#)

3. Meetup – Stepping Groups

Online community listings to connect with local stepping practitioners. These groups encourage collaboration, shared rehearsals, and cultural exchange.

[San Antonio Happens+15Meetup+15Wikipedia+15](#)

4. [NXG Dance Crew](#)

A premier San Antonio street-dance crew (Next Generation) specializing in breaking, popping, krump, tutting, and stepping-adjacent movement. They inspire youth through monthly free “Vibe Nights,” workshops, community events, and performance battles—promoting self-expression, discipline, and cultural connection. [San Antonio Current](#)

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Situated along the banks of the San Antonio River in the city’s heart, the historic Municipal Auditorium, with its original facade preserved, has been transformed into a world-class venue. This theatrical icon is once again the pride of the river and a shining beacon of creativity, fine art, and downtown development. There is no better place — anywhere — to see and hear a live performance.

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