

Progression Dance



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Questionnaire

Take some time to consider your starting point and the areas you need to develop.

Do you attend a dance school or youth dance company?

What dance styles/genres do you do and at what level?

Are you studying GCSE dance? (many schools do not offer GCSE Dance so it is not a requirement)

If you do study GCSE Dance, what grade are you predicted?

If you do not do GCSE Dance nor attend weekly classes, what recent (over the past two years) performance 'experience' do you have?

The A Level Dance Course has 3 components: Analysis, Choreography and Performance. In order to succeed you will need to be competent in all three.

Do you like performing? How many dance performances have you been involved in recently?

Do you have experience of choreographing dances? Have you performed your own choreography? Have you choreographed dances on others?

Do you have any experience of writing about Dance?

Have you seen any professional Dance works recently? These could be in any genre: Contemporary, Hip Hop, Jazz or Ballet.

Do not worry if your answers are 'no' to any of these questions. Most students of A Level Dance have no prior experience of writing about Dance unless they have studied Dance at GCSE.

What are your reasons for wanting to study Dance? Tick as many of the statements below as apply.

It is something I feel I am good at.

I feel it will complement my other courses.

I find it easy.

It is a passion and something I want to pursue as a career.

It is something I can imagine pursuing as a leisure time activity.

Analysing Dance... 'what, where and how'

The what where and how of dance is your way of describing any movement that you watch:

'What' refers to Actions. What are you seeing? There are 5 basic actions:

- Travelling (locomotion)
- Elevation (jumping)
- Turning
- Gesturing (isolated movements)
- Balancing / Stillness

'Where' refers to Space. Where is the Action happening? Spatial aspects are:

- Directions / Facings
- Size (how much space the movement takes up)
- Pathways
- Levels

'How' refers to the way in which the movement is performed. These are the Dynamics of the movement:

- Speed
- Energy
- Flow

If you have studied GCSE Dance you will be very familiar with these terms. If you have not do not worry, they are very simple to use.

Read the quotation below, which describes some of the movement in Akram Khan's solo dance 'Fix' choreographed in 2000. Identify the Action, Space and Dynamic words used here.

"Akram Khan's arms slam down like pistons and flutter as fast as hummingbird wings. Strong, sinuous, yet fluid and hugely expressive, Khan's arms speak volumes in his opening solo, Fix, which builds from sculptured, controlled poses to whirling dervish spins, right arm bending over his head as if winding himself up like a spinning top."

Stephanie Ferguson
(Monday 20 November 2000 Guardian review)

Find a short dance excerpt to view on-line. The dance can be of any style or genre. Choose a short phrase of movement performed by one dancer. You need less than a minute of movement – the length will be determined by the complexity of the movement. Describe the movement using clear Action, Space and Dynamic words.

Performance and Choreography

I have chosen the task below as the choreography is an example of work of 'A Level' standard, it is in a contemporary style, that you need to become familiar with, and the movement is accessible to all. It can be learned and performed by any body in any space.

Anne Therese de Keersmaecker is one of Europe's most well-known and acclaimed contemporary dance choreographers.

Below is a link to an excerpt from her work 'Rosas danst Rosas'. This section, the 'chair' section, is performed by four dancers. It consists of several simple phrases, all performed with a chair, that can be learned in a very small space. The phrases are repeatedly re-ordered by the four dancers allowing the audience to interpret relationships, build and tension between the performers. Please watch the excerpt:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQCTbCcSxis>

The choreographer Anne Therese de Keersmaecker has broken down one of the key movement phrases from her work 'Rosas Danst Rosas' and teaches it on her website. The link is below:

<https://www.rosasdanstrosas.be/en-home/>

(you can change to 'English' at the top of the page)

Watch de Keersmaecker talk about her work. Learn this contemporary movement and experiment with the order of the movement. Teach it to other members of your family and create your own version of 'Rosas'.



<https://www.rosas.be/en/publications/431-rosas-danst-rosas>

Performance Review

Just as reading as much as possible is one of the best ways of improving your writing skills, there are two important ways in which to improve your performance skills. One of these is to get involved in a youth dance group or if you are not already involved. (It's also a great way to make new friends!)

The second way is to see or experience as much live dance as possible.

Find a filmed 'live' dance performance to watch in full.

When you have chosen your performance you need to do a little research in order to understand the choreographer's intention in making the work. She or he may have written a programme note or given an interview that you might find on-line. There will probably be existing reviews of the work available on-line.

Write a review, outlining your main impressions of the performance.

Begin with an introduction to the work itself, stating the title and choreographer.

What was the style of the work? Can it be categorised or are there a number of different styles evident?

What themes and ideas are being explored in the work?

Do you think the intentions of the choreographer of the piece were met? In order to answer this question you must discover a little about the work before watching it.

What were your lasting impressions. How did you feel at the end of the performance?

Comment on the performances of individuals, especially any who particularly impressed you. What were the aspects of performance that were particularly impressive? You could mention several aspects of dance performance:

- Technique
- Athleticism
- Stamina
- Focus
- Characterisation
- Expressivity

Did technical (lighting, sound, effects) and/or design (set, costume, make-up) elements impact considerably on the performance as a whole? How?

Some help in finding works to review...

Arte.tv has a contemporary dance work by the renowned British choreographer Akram Khan:

'Xenos' by Akram Khan

<https://www.arte.tv/en/videos/093507-000-A/xenos-by-akram-khan/>

Marquee.tv has some exciting contemporary dance on this site with works by ground breaking International choreographers such as Anne Therese de Keersmaecker and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui.

'Puzzle' by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui is a challenging piece of combined arts and the whole work can be viewed on youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwITGJ1tcRs>

'The Creation' is a contemporary dance work by the choreographer Mark Baldwin.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29stmPI3iHA>

'Revelations' by Alvin Ailey explores deep grief and holy joy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAGFJCW_Toc

There are several full length ballets that you can watch on-line

'Swan Lake' by the Kirov Ballet, choreographed by Petipa/Ivanov

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rJoB7y6Ncs>

Matthew Bourne's 'Swan Lake' is a contemporary version of 'Swan Lake'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQsECog9XGM>

'The Nutcracker' by the Mariinsky Ballet, choreographed by Petipa/Ivanov

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtLoaMfinbU>

Matthew Bourne's 'Nutcracker' is a contemporary version of 'The Nutcracker'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jleSq2FFhs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ug3gBSu89xs>

The more professional dance you are familiar with the better.

Contact:

If you have any questions about the A Level Dance Course please use the email address below. If you have completed any of the tasks from this booklet please send bring them along for discussion in your A Level Dance class.

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