

## Dance Around the World

All over the world people dance for all sorts of reasons. All dance involves moving the body in a rhythmic manner, usually to music. Some dances may tell stories, some dances express emotions and some dances are to celebrate special events. Sometimes people dance just for fun.

### America

Native Americans have a traditional dance called a powwow. A powwow is a special event where thousands of people come to enjoy music and dance. Powwow dancers move to the beat of a drum. The dancers try to move their bodies in perfect time to the drumming, no matter how fast it gets. Some of the dances are very fast and the dancers jump and twirl. They train for months to develop strength and fitness.

At the start of the powwow, the dancers form a big circle. The circle shows that no person is above another, and everyone is equal.



The powwow dancers wear beautiful costumes. The women wear handmade dresses made out of buckskin and decorated with beads. Some women wear brightly coloured glass beads, which can hang to the waist, or all the way to the ankles. The beads catch the light as the women dance to the music.

The men wear brightly coloured feather headdresses, which swirl around as they dance. They also carry coup sticks, which are highly decorated with ribbons or feathers. The coup stick was originally a small stick carried into battle by a warrior.

## Spain

The flamenco is a traditional dance in Spain. Music for the dance is played on the guitar. Often the dance is accompanied by singing, too. The songs can be happy or sad.

The flamenco dancers stamp the floor with the heels of their shoes. They perform complicated stamping patterns to match the rhythm of the guitars. The footwork is lightning fast. The dancers turn their arms gracefully, reaching high above their heads. They clap their hands or snap their fingers in short bursts. The dance starts slowly, then the music gets quicker and the dancers move faster and faster.



Flamenco dancing is very energetic. The dancers' feet move as fast as raindrops pattering on a window.

The women wear frilly spotted dresses in bright colours and the men wear black trousers, a shirt and a short jacket.

You need to be very fit to become a good flamenco dancer and dancers train for years to improve their style.

## India

India is the home of a dance called kathakali, which means 'story-play'. These dances tell stories from Hindu tales about the struggle between good and evil. The dancers move to the music of percussion instruments, including drums, cymbals and gongs.

In kathakali, every movement tells part of the story. An expression on a dancer's face may show sadness or surprise. The dancers must be strong and flexible. They train every muscle – even the muscles in their eyes.

All over the world, people dance to express their culture. But that is not the only reason they dance. They dance also because it's fun!



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1** Look at the first paragraph.

What does the author say that tells you that dance is popular?

\_\_\_\_\_

**2** Look at the first paragraph. Which of the following does the author say are reasons why people dance? Tick **two** boxes.

To get fit

To celebrate special events

To tell a story

To look good

**3** In the first paragraph, the author says: *some dances express emotions ...*

What does 'express emotions' mean?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**4** Look at the paragraphs under the sub-heading: **America**.  
What sort of music is used at a powwow?

\_\_\_\_\_

5 At the start of the powwow the dancers form a big circle. Why do they do this? Tick **two** boxes.

To show that no one is more important than anyone else

To show off their costumes

To form a circle

To make it fair

6 Which statements about flamenco dancing are true and which are false? Tick **one** box for each statement.

**True**

**False**

Singing always accompanies flamenco.

Flamenco is accompanied by the guitar.

Flamenco songs are usually happy.

Flamenco is a traditional dance.

7 Look at the sentence: *They perform complicated stamping patterns to match the rhythm of the guitars.*

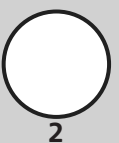
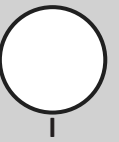
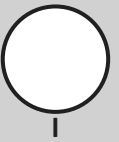
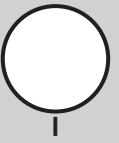
What does the word 'complicated' mean in this sentence?

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8 The sentence: *The dancers' feet move as fast as raindrops pattering on a window* uses a simile. What **two** things are compared in the simile?

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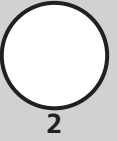


9

Look at the simile: *as fast as raindrops pattering on a window*.  
Why is this a good comparison?

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10

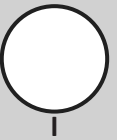
Which two things are the same in both powwows and flamenco?  
Tick **two** boxes.

Women wear frilly dresses.

Men carry a coup stick.

Dancers have to be very fit.

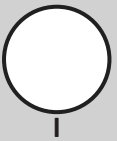
The dances are very fast.



11

What is surprising about the muscle training that kathakali dancers do?

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12

Which of the following statements are facts and which are opinions?  
Tick **one** box for each statement.

Kathakali dancing is beautiful.

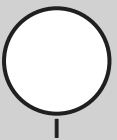
Fact

Opinion

Kathakali dancers use their faces to show their feelings.

In kathakali dancing the movements tell the story.

The kathakali dances that tell a story of evil are the best.



13

Which style of dancing would you most like to try? Give **three** reasons for your choice and refer to the text in your answer.

I would like to try \_\_\_\_\_ dancing because:

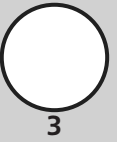
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14

What do kathakali dancers need to do? Tick **three** boxes.

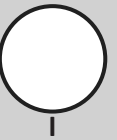
Get to know the  
Hindu tales

Learn to play  
the drums

Learn to move to the  
beat of the music

Train to become  
strong and flexible

Learn to dance without  
showing any feelings



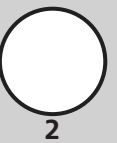
15

Think of **two** ways in which the final paragraph links back to the beginning.

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**For teacher use**

Your mark	_____ out of 20
What went well	
How to improve	

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