

# CELEBRATIONS

## Let's dance

### Teacher's notes

**Age:** Teenagers/Adults

**Level:** Upper intermediate (B2)

**Time:** 30 minutes +



**Activity:** In this lesson, students will:

1. read about popular dances
2. learn to follow instructions

**Language focus:** vocabulary for parts of the body, verbs related to movement, imperatives for giving instructions

**Preparation:** choose a piece or some pieces of music that might represent different styles of dance

**Materials:** one copy of the worksheet per student; one sheet of lined paper per student; a piece of music for Exercise 3.

### Procedure

1. Hand out pieces of lined paper, if students don't have notebooks or laptops, and dictate the following questions to students. When they have finished writing, ask them to read the questions back to you and write them on the board, making sure to correct any mistakes through peer correction and elicitation. When all the students have written down the questions correctly, ask them to work in pairs and discuss the questions. Monitor while the students discuss, making sure to correct any mistakes. When they have finished, conduct feedback as a class.

- a. Do you like dancing?
- b. How important is dancing in your culture?
- c. Is there a national dance in your country?
- d. Can you think of any good films about dancing?
- e. Why do people enjoy dancing?

2. When you have finished the feedback, elicit all the different types of dance the students know and make a list on the board, making sure to elicit the spelling. Ask the students what they know about the dances, such as where and when they became popular.

3. Tell students they are going to read some dance steps. First, pre-teach the following verbs: bend, cross, hold, move, point, shake, spin (round), stand, (take a) step, rotate and touch. Make sure to check pronunciation and also to elicit any irregular verb forms.
4. Hand out the worksheet. Ask students to read the descriptions of the dances in Exercise 1 and identify each one in pairs. Check answers as a class, then ask students if they can dance any of them.

#### Key:

Exercise 1: Famous dances

- a. waltz
- b. mambo
- c. twist
- d. flamenco
- e. samba
- f. tango

5. Divide the class into small groups. Students read the dance steps in Exercise 2 and try to follow them. (Stress that students don't need to dance; they just need to understand the instructions.) When they have finished, ask them which dance is the famous one and what it's called. What did they think of the other two dances? Do they think the other dances could become popular? What type of music do they think would best fit each one?

#### Key:

Exercise 2: Dance steps

The famous dance is number 2, the waltz.

6. Now play students a short piece of music (if you haven't chosen one yourself before class, you could ask students for their favourite piece of music and look it up on a site like YouTube or Spotify). Students continue working in groups to devise a set of movements to go with the music. When they are finished, ask each group of students to describe their dance to the class. Can their classmates follow the steps? (Again, students don't actually have to dance, although if you have a confident class you may wish to ask them to get on their feet and walk through the steps.) Students vote on which routine they think is best.

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**TECH TIP:** As an alternative to students teaching each other their dance steps, you could ask them to watch a dance video, either as a class or in small groups depending on how many devices are available to you. As they watch, students should take it in turns to describe the dance routine, using the vocabulary they've learned. Help with any additional vocabulary required.

A good source of short ballroom and Latin American dance clips is the BBC's popular TV programme [Strictly Come Dancing](#) or the US version [Dancing with the Stars](#).



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### Exercise 1: Famous dances

**Look at these descriptions of six famous dances. Read the descriptions and see if you can identify the different dances. Can you dance any of them?**

A.

It probably started as a folk dance in Austria back in the 18th century. It was one of the first dances in which the man put his arm around his partner and held her close. *The Times* newspaper described it as 'the voluptuous entwining of limbs'. It is still very popular, especially at weddings!

B.

It's the 'mother' of all Latin dances. It was Pérez Prado, the Cuban bandleader, who started the craze in the 1940s when he took the rhythms of the dances performed by Cuban sugar-cane cutters and developed them into a new dance. In Haitian Creole, the name means 'voodoo princess'. It's so fast that it can be difficult to dance.

C.

Popular in the early 1960s, this dance was introduced to the world by Chubby Checker. It became popular with young people. There are no steps and the basic movement is a simple movement of the hips and feet. It was one of the first dances that could be performed alone, with no need to touch a partner.

D.

Initially, it was only danced to singing and clapping hands. Guitars were added later. There is always a fixed basic rhythm to which variants, new steps, and counter-rhythms are added. Its appeal is in the contrast between the fixed rules and the individuality of the performance. It originated in Seville, Spain and also shows Moorish and Arabian influences.

E.

This dance is always associated with Brazil and Carnival. It was Carmen Miranda who took the dance to North America and Europe. It was originally just danced by men. The hand movements originate from the early days when dancers were intoxicated with herbs.

F.

Danced in slow 2/4 time, it originated in the back streets of Argentina and was once treated almost as a religion. It was brought to the country by slaves and then danced by the cowboys when they came back to town after months away. It was dancing in their boots that gave the dance its staccato beats. The dance reached Europe around 1900 and first became popular in France.



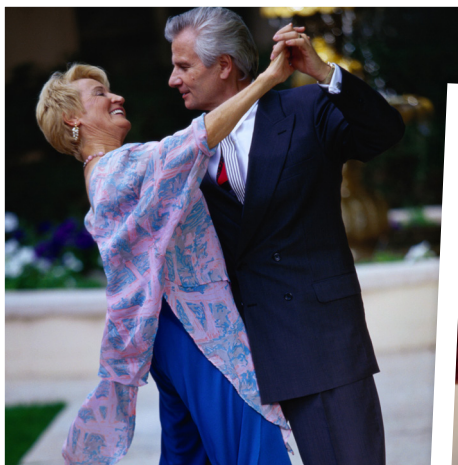
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### Exercise 2: Dance steps!

**Follow the instructions for three dances. Which one is famous? Can you think of names for the two invented dances?**

1. Stand with your feet about 50cm apart. Bend your knees and move up and down. Point your fingers at people and look tough. Now cross your arms, walk in a circle and shake your head. Repeat in the opposite direction.
2. Woman: Put your left hand on the man's shoulder. Man: Put your right arm around the woman's waist. Use your other arms to hold hands. Take a step to the man's left, and then move the other foot to touch the foot you moved. Now step to the man's right. Repeat. Slowly rotate at the same time.
3. Move your hips. Put your right arm out in front of you with your hand up in a stop gesture. Do the same with your left arm. Cross your right leg over your left leg. Quickly point your right thumb over your left shoulder. Do the same with your left thumb. Spin round. Repeat.



### Exercise 3: Create a dance

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