Ensemble Español
Spanish Dance Theater

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We are so excited to welcome you and your students to our National Historic Landmark theatre in downtown Chicago for a memorable performance experience. Before you walk through our doors, we invite you to use this Classroom Companion to prepare for the show.

In the pages that follow, you will find ways to encourage and guide your students as they ENGAGE with the performance, activities that CONNECT the performance to the learning happening in your classroom, and ways to inspire students to CREATE their own unique art!

We hope that this experience does not stop after the performance, and continues beyond the walls of the theatre to actively encourage your students to immerse themselves in artistic culture.
ENGAGE
The journey that dance takes you on can be different for each person. Everyone responds to and interprets the movement that they see on stage differently. Have your students pay attention to how they feel throughout the performance.

Ensemble Español’s mission is to preserve, promote, and present the Flamenco, Folkloric, Classical, Escuela Bolera and Contemporary Dance and Music traditions of Spain.

Encourage students to think about why it’s important to preserve these aspects of different cultures.

CONNECT
One of the primary initiatives of Ensemble Español is to include both American and Spanish culture within their dance company and education programs. Embracing the “bi-culture” entails catering to both American audiences and Hispanic audiences. Rather than having these two cultures separated, an integrative approach enhances the overall dance experience — from a dancer’s perspective and an audience member.

Ask students to consider whether any of the dance pieces connect to anything in their lived experience. Encourage your students to connect the cultures and the emotions happening in the show to their own. Or if it’s difficult for them to connect to their lives, encourage them to connect to some other media they’ve seen. What do they connect to and why? How are different cultures similar?

CREATE
Dance and music are an important part of everyday life. In cultures all over the world, people of all generations dance to celebrate accomplishments, communicate messages, and show community pride. There’s an African proverb that says, “If you can talk, you can sing; if you can walk, you can dance.” We at the Auditorium Theatre celebrate this idea and believe that dance is for everyone!

Use the exercises at the end of this classroom companion to help students create their own dances after seeing the performance.
Theatre Etiquette

Before the performance, here are some things to expect when you come to the show.

BE ON TIME
Walking in late is distracting and takes away from your theatre experience.

SAY NO TO CELL PHONES
When in the theatre, it is important to devote your entire attention to the performance. Taking pictures, recording, or using social media during a show is distracting to you, the performers, and to those around you. Remember, you've come for the performance, so let yourself get lost in the experience.

SHOW YOUR REACTIONS
One of the unique things about live performance is that the performers and musicians are there in the same room with you! They pick up on your energy and it feeds their performance. If you are enjoying something, don't be afraid to applaud. If you think something's funny, it's okay to laugh.

DON'T TALK DURING THE SHOW
Save your thoughts for post-performance discussions. Because talking during the performance disturbs the performers and fellow audience members, having conversations afterwards are highly encouraged. Take note of all of your personal comments and share them with your friends after the show.

STAY SEATED
Try to avoid leaving in the middle of the performance because this is considered disrespectful to the performers. We recommend using the restrooms during an intermission or before the show begins. Of course, if it's an emergency, let your teacher know.

HELP US KEEP THE AUDITORIUM CLEAN
The Auditorium Theatre is 133 years old. Along with the people who see performances here year-round, the Auditorium is also the workplace of many others. We all must ensure that this historic landmark is taken care of. Food and drink can damage the theatre. Instead of eating during the show, enjoy a pre or post performance meal.

WHY DO PEOPLE COME TO THE THEATRE?
• Entertainment
• Engage in Social Change
• To Learn
• For Enjoyment

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GAIN FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE THEATRE?

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What is Dance?

**DANCE (n):** To move one’s body rhythmically, usually to music; creative expression of an idea or of oneself through movement sequences; an art form involving body, mind, and spirit.

There are many different styles that fall under the larger definition of dance in the United States. Each is unique in its technique and performance style, but the goal of telling a story or revealing a message is common among all forms. Dance offers the audience an opportunity for exploration, escape, and entertainment.

**BALLET**
Formalized steps and gestures. Graceful quality and illusions of weightlessness; utilizes intricate patterns that flow smoothly.

**JAZZ**
Energetic atmosphere, rhythmic elements, highly performative/interactive with audience. Often uses big, impressive movements.

**TAP**
Uses shoes with metal taps. Primarily relies on syncopation and rhythm for movement. Focused on footwork.

**FOLK**
A part of a particular culture; associated with tradition. Also called ethnic dance; often performed at social events.

**HIP HOP**
Evolved from hip hop culture. Also known as street dancing. Emphasis on freedom to experiment, originality, and individuality.

**MUSICAL THEATRE**
Production-oriented. Theatrical; includes singing and acting. Jazz element embedded, uses a narrative tool for larger storyline.
Exploring the Company

ENSEMBLE ESPAÑOL

Established in 1975, Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater is a Chicago dance company that strives to share the beloved Hispanic culture among local Chicago citizens. Spanish dancing thrived both in and out of the United States even before 1975.

1500
The Creation of Latin Dance
Latin Dance is a broad term that is used when identifying varying genres of Latin influenced dance. Most Latin dance is performed for social purposes and is a strong part of Latin culture.

1832
Birth of Samba
Originating in Brazil, Samba has become a part of Brazilian identity. It is also associated with African culture, as African dance is implemented within its Latin structure.

1850
Birth of Flamenco
First associated with Spain, flamenco became popular all over Europe and even traveled to Japan.

1898
Birth of Merengue
A style of Dominican music and dance, merengue was first seen as social dancing in towns and was often presented in nightclubs.

1933
Birth of Salsa
Salsa originated in the Caribbean as a social dance. It was officially coined as a dance technique in New York City many years later.

1940
Birth of the Conga Line
The conga line derived from Cuban carnival dance and became popular in the US. In Cuba, politicians would create a conga line in order to appeal to voters.
Learning about Spain

The second largest country in Western Europe, Spain is bordered by Portugal to the West and France to the North and the continent of Africa to the South. The capital city is Madrid and its government is a parliamentary monarchy, meaning that the monarch is the head of state, while the prime minister is head of the government. Currently, Felipe VI is the King of Spain. He ascended to the throne in 2014 while the Prime Minister is Pedro Sánchez. Spain has 50 provinces. Each province has about 15 dances of its own. There are approximately 10,000 dances distinguishing this country as having the richest and most diverse dance culture in the world.

Dances from Spain are lively and spirited, representing a diverse and intriguing culture. They reflect Spain’s colorful and dynamic history and traditions, influenced over the centuries by the Visigoths, Moors, Berbers, Sephardic Jews, Celts, Romans, and North Africans (Moroccans, Egyptians).

**STYLES OF SPANISH DANCE**

**Dances from Spain can be classified into three main styles:**

1. **Classical** – Dances that are schooled, highly-stylized, and ballet-like. They are set to Spain’s classical music and can combine regional dance too.

2. **Regional** – Dances that are folk, representing each of Spain’s 50 provinces.

3. **Flamenco** – Probably the most popular Spanish dance. Flamenco is widely known for its rapid heelwork, flashy movements, and sinuous hand, finger, and wrist movement.

Many of these styles of Spanish dancing are found within Ensemble Español’s performances, yet flamenco drama remains a consistent and crucial component of their repertoire. Flamenco dramas are considered a production because it includes dancing, singing, and instruments — all performed live and on stage together. Through the collaboration process, the dancers and musicians tell a story that speaks to Spanish culture or history. Along with their heavy storyline and intense presentation, hand clapping tap dancing, and shouting are also included in flamenco dramas.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF FLAMENCO
Flamenco dance comes from southern Spain in the Andalusian region associated with the Roma or gypsy people. In Spain, the Roma are called Gitanos. Thought to have migrated from northwest India between the 9th and 14th centuries, Gitanos used tambourines, bells, and wooden castanets and incorporated it into the music. Flamenco is the result of Roma music mixed with the rich cultures of the Sephardic Jews and the Moors, also living in southern Spain. If you look closely at flamenco dance movements, you may recognize arm, hand, and foot movements that closely resemble those of classical Hindu dance from the Indian subcontinent.

Have your students look for flamenco while watching the performance!

Observing the Performance
When watching the performance, there are many special effects and aspects that contribute to the entire show. Taking the time to recognize the ornate costumes, the props, the plotline, and the music adds to the overall storyline that is being delivered.

MUSIC
Listen to the music that is in each piece — music enhances the story of each performance. Because each piece has a different storyline and intention, the music and instruments used will all be different. Common instruments used in Spanish music include the guitar, castanets, accordion, and bongo drums. Find a clip (YouTube is a great resource) of each of these instruments being played, and ask students to listen closely for each of these instruments when watching Ensemble Español!

RHYTHMIC DANCE
Flamenco is one of many “rhythmic dance” styles. While these styles are performed to music, the dancers add to the auditory experience with the sounds created by their movement. Special shoes are worn to amplify sounds of stomping as well as more intricate sound patterns made by the movement of the feet. At the show, work to differentiate the rhythms created by the dancers’ feet and the rhythms created by instruments!
MOVEMENT QUALITY
The way in which the dancers move has a lot to do with the story they are trying to tell. Often, the movement quality syncs with the type of music being used. In Spanish dancing, there are times when the movement is fast-paced and sharp and other times when it is slow and elegant. There are also times when the dancers move in complete unison, creating a sense of harmony and strong movement quality — how does the change make you feel as an audience member? How does the movement quality help to tell the story?

COSTUMES
Costumes capture the audience almost immediately — the many colors and styles are attractive and exciting. Just like music and movement quality, the costumes also are a part of the storytelling process. If the piece is a joyous, the costumes will reflect this and be full and detailed. If the piece is casual, the costumes will be simple. Costumes are an integral part of Spanish dance, with skirts and fans directly incorporated into the movement. What costume pieces stand out to you in the performance? Why?

STORYTELLING – Every component of the performance is carefully chosen to make sure that the storyline is an integral part of the dances, because it is a testament to their history and culture. Following the plot may evoke emotions – such as happiness, grief, anger, or sadness. It is also common to relate to a certain feeling or story that the dancers are portraying — this is the most direct artistic expression that is felt among the audience and is a main reason for their expression. Have students take note of how they feel during each piece the company performs. What did they feel during their favorite dance? How about during their least favorite? See if they can describe why.

Language of Spanish Dance

BAILE — (bay-leh) Dance
BRACEO — (bra-seo) Arm movements
CAJÓN — (kah-hohn) A percussive box-type drum used in Flamenco; originated in Peru
COMPÁS — (kohm-pahs) Rhythm
COPLA — (koh-plah) A section of the cante (song) por baile (dancing)
JALEO — (hah-leh-oh) Shouts of expression and encouragement, like Olé!
LETRA — (leh-trah) The lyrics or verse of the song (cante)
MANTON — (mahn-tohn) The large shawl used by female Flamenco dancers
PASOS — (pah-sohs) Steps
PELLIZCO — (peh-yees-koh) A sharp movement of the body, such as the head, shoulder, arm, etc.
PITOS — (pee-tah) Finger snaps
TIEMPO — (tyehm-poh) Tempo
VUELTAS — (bwehl-tahs) Turns
Elements of Spanish Dance

CASTANETS — The name castanet, or castanuela (in Spanish), comes from the Latin word castanea, meaning chestnut. Castanets are a percussive instrument which are made of two shell-like pieces held together by a cord. Castanets are made of a variety of materials including metals, ivory, bone, fiber, or wood. The best professional castanets are made of woods such as walnut, boxwood, beech, rosewood, ebony, chestnut, and oak. Castanets for Classical and Flamenco styles of dance are worn on the thumb.

ZAPATEADO — Heelwork in English, refers to the sounds and rhythms that dancers make with their shoes to accompany the music. Spanish dancers wear shoes with wooden soles with small nails on the toe and heel. The nails, similar to taps on a tap shoe, bring a unique sound to the dancer’s heelwork. Spanish dancers use four parts of the foot to create a variety of rhythm. The four parts of the foot are:

- Punta – Tip toe
- Planta – Ball
- Tacón – Heel
- Golpe – Entire foot

FLOREO — Floreo, or flowers, is the movement a Flamenco dancer makes with their hands while dancing that resembles a flower. Both men and women do flores, but it looks different on each. Men use minimal movement of the fingers and only circling their hands to resemble fans with their fingers.

PALMAS — Hand clap in English, are used to help keep the beat of the music. In Spanish dance there are two types of palmas, Palmas Sordas and Palmas Claras. Palmas Sordas is a muffled-sounding hand clap and is done by cupping both hands and striking them together. Palmas Claras is a louder sounding hand clap and is achieved by straightening the left hand and striking the four fingers of the right hand into the palm of the left hand.

In Spain the dancers and musicians often work with a 12-count rhythm with an accent on certain numbers:

1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12
ABANICO — The fan, was first introduced to Spain by the people of North Africa in the 14th century. The travelers brought the fans to give a sense of mystery and privacy for women but the fans also provided relief from the heat. Over time, the use of the fan gained popularity and Flamenco dancers began using them in performances. It’s believed that fans also had a “secret language” for young ladies to communicate with possible suitors. By using certain fan gestures, they could convey their interest, or disinterest, at social gatherings.

GUITARRA — Guitar, is the national instrument of Spain and is recognized as a singular string family instrument. Without plugs or cords, the Spanish guitar is an acoustic instrument that is made of wood. In contrast to the classical guitar, the Flamenco guitar is often equipped with a tap plate know as a golpeador. It is commonly made of plastic and similar to a pick guard. Its function is to protect the body of the guitar from the rhythmic finger taps, or golpes.

CANTE — The song was the first component introduced to Flamenco. There are five types of Flamenco songs:

1. Cante Jondo — profound and deep, this sad form of cante deals with themes of death, anguish, despair, or religious sentiments and may be sung a palo seco (without guitar accompaniment).

2. Cante Chico — “little song”, this form of cante sings of lighter subjects including love, bawdy humor, and happiness to the accompaniment of the flamenco guitar.

3. Cante Intermedio — “intermediate”, this form is less profound but also moving, sometimes containing an Asian sound to the music.

4. Cante por Baile — songs for dancing.

5. Cante por Cant — songs for singing.
Classroom Activities

GRADES K–2
Activity — Either individually or in groups, give the students a sheet of 7 shapes with the styles of dance written inside the shapes (see dance style listed on the previous page.) Have the students color the shapes and cut them out. As a class, call out a dance style and ask students to hold the correct shape up. See if you can find photos or video clips demonstrating each dance style (YouTube is a great resource) to share with your students. Eventually, the students should be able to connect the specific dance style with its movement dynamic, costumes, and music. Also ask the students which category Ensemble Español falls under (the company’s mission is the presentation, preservation, and promotion of the classical, folkloric, flamenco, and contemporary dance and music traditions of Spain, so they are both a folk and contemporary style company). After all the shapes have been identified, make it a game. Describe the dance style, or show pictures, videos, or music connecting to that style to see which students get the correct shape in the air first.

GRADES K–5
Activity — Ask students to share a special memory from their life with a partner — it can be influential/pivotal, or just a fun memory. One at a time, have each partner describe the event itself: What happened? Who was there? Then ask each partner to think about how the event made them feel? Were they happy? Sad? Excited? Scared? Why? After each partner shares their memory, ask pairs to work together and think of a song that would match with each story. If you have time, see if you can find these songs to create a class story playlist.

GRADES 3–6
Activity — Tell the class a creative story of your choice. After you have told the story, have the students write down what they remember from the story. As a class, discuss the interpretations that were written down — did certain aspects change? What remained the same? Was anything added or excluded — why? Consider discussing the concept of individual storytelling and the unique qualities that each individual brought to the well-known story. What dance style would students choose to tell the story you just created and why? What type of story do they think Ensemble Español — a company with the mission to present, preserve and promote the classical, folkloric, flamenco, and contemporary dance and music traditions of Spain — might tell?
GRADES 6–12
Activity — With a writing prompt, have the students write about a special memory from their life – it can be influential/pivotal, or just a good memory. Describe the event itself, but also make sure they include personal reactions and thoughts about the event — how did it make them feel? Why? What aspects of the memory were valuable? After writing about the memory, have them choose a song that correlates with their story. The song should be chosen freely as a form of artistic expression. How does the song contribute or overlap in the storytelling process? How does it enhance it? What aspects are included in the song and what aspects aren’t?

GRADES 7–12
Activity — Divide the different styles of dance among the students and have them research their specific style. Either individually or in groups, the research should include a general definition of the dance form, its history, any influential figures, and any connections they can make to either popular culture or the current age. Have the students present their findings to the class so that they are able to learn from each other. Also ask they students to identify which style Ensemble Español might fall under.

CREATE YOUR OWN DANCE!
Dance styles, like our own lives, evolve over time. Have the students create a timeline of their own lives on a piece of paper. Specific dates are optional, but it should include important moments in their lives (birth of a sibling, moving, a new school, etc.) Ask them to create a short movement for each element of their timeline — for example, if one of their moments is moving to a new place, a student might skip from one side of the room to the other. Once they have their movements created, put on some music and string the movements together into their life timeline dance! Challenge older students to be specific with why they’re choosing movements to represent elements of their timeline, and ask them to present their final dances to one another. For an added challenge, see if students can work together to create a dance that reflects through movement, the Spanish-Latin dance timeline above.

IGNITE CONVERSATION
Discuss the concept of culture with the students – What is culture? What are different examples of culture? What is tradition? What aspects are often included in culture (i.e., food, dance, art, etc.)? Do people who are “outside” of a specific culture sometime see or describe it differently than the members of that culture? Why does this happen? How can we confidently and proudly express our cultures in a country that is a melting pot of many different cultures?
CULTURE COLLAGE
Have students reflect on their own culture. Do they identify as American? Chicagoans? With the culture of their country of origin? Perhaps with their family’s religion? All of the above? Ask them to create a collage (using images from magazines, written words, photos, etc.) representing all of their favorite parts of their individual (likely multi-faceted) culture. Remember, there is no wrong representation of a culture so long as they can describe their reasoning. Share these collages with other members of the class — what similarities and differences do we see?

Other Activities for the Classroom

ACTIVITY GRADES K–2
Learning Stage Directions
Performers, directors, choreographers, technical designers and backstage crew all must know the areas of the stage in order to communicate with each other and create their performance piece. Use this worksheet to learn stage directions.
• Upstage — Away from the audience
• Downstage — Close to the audience
• Left and Right — From the performers perspective if they are facing the audience

Example: Director says for Maria to come Downstage Left (Maria would move downstage left). If the Director doesn’t say and Maria moves, then Maria is out.
ACTIVITY GRADES 3–12

Mystery Mover

The object of this game is to catch the Mystery Mover. Gather your students to stand in a wide circle. Choose one student to be the guesser and have them exit the room. While the guesser is away from the group, decide who will be the mystery mover. The mystery mover will start making small movements that everyone will follow as discreetly as possible. As the guesser is called back in to take their place in the center of the circle, the mystery mover will shift through different movements while the guesser is slowly turning around trying to catch them. Allow the guesser three attempts to catch the mystery mover before they identify themselves.

The key to this game is to change movements when the guesser has their back turned to the mystery mover and have the rest of the students use their peripheral vision. This game is a can be played for as long as you would like as your students cycle through different guessers and mystery movers!
Resources

**Ensemble Español Website**
Find out more history of the company and some great photos and video!
- [ensembleespanol.org/education/4580455017](http://ensembleespanol.org/education/4580455017)

**Spain and Flamenco Resource**
Use this website as a resource for yourself as a teacher first. It has great information on not only flamenco, but also Spain in general.

**How to discuss dance with your students:**
- [lubovitch.org/Educate/Resources/Enjoy_the_Show/enjoy_the_show.html](http://lubovitch.org/Educate/Resources/Enjoy_the_Show/enjoy_the_show.html)

**Music to use as background for the 3–6 grade activities:**
This is a website with a great selection of free music you can use to have in the background as the children explore dancing like the shapes. This will help them feel more fluid.
- [soundformovement.com/quiet](http://soundformovement.com/quiet)
Curriculum Connection

LANGUAGE ARTS
Dance often pulls inspiration from literary arts. A lot of dance pieces come from stories or books. Ask: What books would you like to see turned into dance? Have your students explore a piece of literature and see what movement could be added to retell this story as a dance.

SOCIAL STUDIES
Tales of Spain explores a country’s culture and identity through its dance. Ask students to dive more deeply into other aspects of Spanish culture, from language and customs to landmarks and political structure. What other types of artistry is Spain known for? What other countries have they studied and how do dance and art appear in those countries?

MATH
To see math in dance, you have to explore the way that dancers count. They commonly count in sets of eight, but it all depends on the music they are dancing to. It could be a range of other counts. In Spanish dance it is frequently a 12-count phrase. Also look for particular shapes that are created during the choreography and how the dancers work within shapes and change them to lead into other shapes. What does this communicate to the audience?

SCIENCE
Human bodies moving through space the way they do in dance can be explained by physics. There is plenty of great content on YouTube that you can show your students that explains the physics in dance!
COMPREHENSION AND COLLABORATION

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1**
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2**
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS FOCUS ON THE PERFORMANCE AS A “TEXT”

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1**
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

P21 PARTNERSHIP FOR 21ST LEARNING SKILLS

*Learning and Innovation Skills: A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration*
- Think creatively
- Work creatively with others
- Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution

*Life and Career Skills*
- Be flexible: Incorporate feedback effectively, dealing positively with praise, setbacks, and criticism. Understand and negotiate diverse views to reach workable solutions.
- Be self-directed learners: All programming challenges students to explore and expand their own learning in the connected areas.
- Interact effectively with others: Both the teamwork and the attendance at the performance teach students to know when it is appropriate to listen and to speak, and to conduct themselves in a professional manner.
NATIONAL CORE DANCE ANCHOR STANDARDS ADDRESSED

**Anchor Standard 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.  
*Essential Question:* Where do choreographers get ideas for dances?

**Anchor Standard 7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.  
*Essential Question:* How is a dance understood?

**Anchor Standard 8:** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.  
*Essential Question:* How is dance interpreted?

**Anchor Standard 9:** Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. Enduring Understanding: Criteria for evaluating dance vary across genres, styles, and cultures. *Essential Question:* What criteria are used to evaluate dance? Interpreted?

**Anchor Standard 10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. *Essential Question:* How does dance deepen our understanding of ourselves, other knowledge, and events around us?
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