

## Teaching Jazz for Grades 5-8 and 9 – 12

This material is designed for use in public and private academic schools.

All exercises may be performed without barres, dance flooring, or mirrors.

There are 10 lesson plans similar in structure to the sample page. Each lesson plan would be used for more than one class period as repetition is important to the development of proper skill.

There is a section of background information including terminology, body positions, brief history of jazz, additional resources, national arts standards in education and progress tracking sheets.

Exercises are laid out in a similar manner to the samples included. Each exercise contains a beginner, intermediate and advanced version of the exercise. The three levels are set in a way that they can be taught concurrently if there are 3 levels present in the same class.

Exercises cover warmup, isolations, stretch / strengthening, across the floor, and center work.

## Lesson Plan 2 – Grades 9-12

Begin the movement exercises for Lesson Plan 2 when the exercises in Lesson Plan 1 can be executed cleanly, with a minimum of verbal cuing.

1. Ask each student to write down 7 single words to describe jazz to someone who has never seen it. Where are jazz dancers seen in the mainstream media? Discuss what the difference is between a stereotype and an image. What stereotypes are prevalent in the depiction of jazz dancers? Are these accurate images? What would students like to see done differently, if anything, when jazz dancers are depicted? How many celebrities can the students name who represent an area of jazz dance as dancers?

### NSAE Standards 5d

#### Beginner

1. Moving Warm Up 1 (directions e-g)
2. Plie' 1A
3. Stretching / Strengthening as appropriate
4. Stationary Isolations 1
5. Step Tap 1A
6. Jazz Walks 1A
7. Backward Heel Walks

#### Intermediate

1. Moving Warm Up 1 (directions e-g)
2. Plie' 1B
3. Stretching / Strengthening as appropriate
4. Stationary Isolations 1
5. Step Tap 1B
6. Jazz Walks 1B
7. Backward Heel Walks

#### Advanced

1. Moving Warm Up 1 (directions e-g)
2. Plie' 1C
3. Stretching / Strengthening as appropriate
4. Stationary Isolations 1
5. Step Tap 1C
6. Jazz Walks 1C
7. Backward Heel Walks

## Lesson Plan 3 – Grades 5-8

As you repeat the material from Lesson Plans 1 and 2, incorporate the following exercises into your class:

1. Count, clap, or use a drum for the first student to cross the floor in the Step Tap Exercise. After the first student crosses the floor it is their job to set the rhythm for the next student. Continue this until all the students have had a chance to set the rhythm one time. Remind the students crossing the floor to maintain the rhythm throughout their movement. If they are styling their steps ask them to keep the feeling of the rhythm in mind.
2. Pair the students up with another student. When one person is executing the Jazz Walks have their partner execute Backward Heel Walks. Practice the exercise once across the floor for the students comfort. Give the students 5 minutes to create styling that compliments their partner's movement. Explain that complimentary styling does not have to match but needs to be harmonious. A good way of explaining complimentary movement is by relating it to colors. Hunter green and burgundy don't match each other, but the colors compliment each other. After all the pairs have performed their movement across the floor once, ask the other students to discuss why the movements complimented each other.
3. Repeat Exercise 2. Have the students work with different partners. Explain contrast in movement. Relating contrast to music is usually very effective with this age group. Play a piece of music and demonstrate contrasting it – either in tempo or quality of movement. Tell the partners that as they travel across the floor they want to contrast each other's movement this time. If you use this exercise on a separate day from Exercise 2, allow the students to travel across the floor once with their partners before giving them 5 minutes to create their contrast. After each pair performs have the students orally list where they saw contrast.

### Beginner

1. Step Tap 1A
2. Plie' 1 A
3. Stretching / Strengthening as appropriate
4. Stationary Isolations 2
5. Jazz Walks 1A
6. Backward Heel Walks
7. Pas des Bourree' 1A

### Intermediate

1. Step Tap 1B
2. Plie' 1 B
3. Stretching / Strengthening as appropriate
4. Stationary Isolations 2
5. Jazz Walks 1B
6. Backward Heel Walks
7. Pas des Bourree' 1B

### Advanced

1. Step Tap 1C
2. Plie' 1C
3. Stretching / Strengthening as appropriate
4. Stationary Isolations 2
5. Jazz Walks 1C
6. Backward Heel Walks
7. Pas des Bourree' 1C

**NSAE Standards added** 1d, 2e,

## Plie' 1C

**Starting position – feet parallel, hands on hips. Hands can extend to the front or side if needed during the grand plie'. The reason for the shift would be to improve balance.**

Counts	Movement
1,2	<b>Demi plie' parallel 1<sup>st</sup></b>
1-4	Repeat
1,2	<b>Grand plie' parallel 1<sup>st</sup></b>
3,4	Stretch
1,2,3, 4	Open Right leg to parallel 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
1,2	<b>Grand plie' parallel 2<sup>nd</sup></b>
3,4	Stretch
1-4, 1-4	<b>Repeat</b>
1-4, 1-4, 1-4	Repeat the plie's in parallel 1 <sup>st</sup> .
1,2,3, 4	Open left leg to parallel 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
1-4, 1-4, 1-4	<b>Repeat the plie's in parallel 2<sup>nd</sup>.</b>
1,2,3,4	Close left leg to parallel 1st.

### General Notes:

1. The feet do not need to touch in parallel 1<sup>st</sup> position. There can be a small space between the feet if it allows for better leg alignment.
2. In parallel 2<sup>nd</sup> it is important that the feet are placed under the hips. Placing the feet further apart can affect the ability of the knees to track properly.
3. The knee should be tracking over the center 3 toes in all positions. Ideally there will be a straight line from the hip through the knee and through the ankle if the body is in proper alignment.
4. When executing a grand plie' in parallel 1<sup>st</sup> position the heels will leave the floor. It is important that the plie' only go as deep as proper body alignment can be maintained. The pelvis needs to remain neutral through the plie'. Tilting forward or back is an indication that the student is bending further than their stability and possibly flexibility will allow.
5. In grand plie' in parallel second, watch for the alignment of the pelvis. A shift from neutral to either front or back indicates movement beyond that student's natural range of motion or stability.
6. For variety, repeat the exercise with turned out feet or actually replace the parallel legs with turned out legs once in awhile.

## Grapevine

### **A Continuous**

Facing front and traveling to the left, cross the left foot behind the right.  
Step side with the right foot to the right side.  
Cross the left foot in front of the right.  
Step side with the right foot to the right side.

Continue this all the way across the room.  
Reverse to travel the opposite direction.

### **B Grapevine with Tap**

Facing the front and traveling forward, cross the left foot behind the right.  
Step side and slightly forward with the right foot to the right side.  
Cross the left foot in front of the right.  
Step side and slightly forward with the right foot to the right side.  
Cross the left foot in back of the right.  
Step side and slightly forward with the right foot to the right side.  
Cross the left foot in front of the right.  
Tap the right foot next to the left foot.  
Begin with the right foot to move to the left while still traveling forward.

### **C. Grapevine with Grand Battement**

Following the directions in Grapevine with Tap, replace the tap at the end of each pattern with a grand battement (high kick) to the side. When kicking to the side it is important that the students' legs go to their side and not true side. With rare exception students' side will be on an angle forward.

### **General Notes:**

1. Do not teach grapevine until students are comfortable with the pattern of a pas des bourree. These two steps are very easy for students to confuse.
2. In Grapevine with Tap and Grapevine with Grand Battement, the pattern can be cut to 4 counts instead of 8 by eliminating steps 4, 5, 6, 7 from above.
3. Both Grapevine with Tap and Grapevine with Grand Battement can be done with the open foot stepping pure side. When this is the case there is no travel across the room.
4. The first timing used should be one count per step. Next move to using the and count so there is a syncopation involved and finally you will use 1, and, a , timing to bring it even faster. When the fastest speed is used there will be a jump to cross the feet and change direction.
5. All of the grapevines can be done in plie', bouncing between plie' and straight, straight, and on releve'.
6. If character shoes are being worn the heels do not touch the floor. You may use the version in plie' even in heels, as long as the plie' is not extremely deep and the movement is traveling sideways.