

Unit 48: Tap Dance

Unit code:	F/502/5158
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

In this unit learners will develop the technique and performance skills needed in tap dancing, which will involve both group and individual work.

● Unit introduction

Tap dance technique is essential for anyone intending to work in musical theatre performance, or wishing to progress to higher qualification levels within dance. The choreographers of many London West End shows and cruise ship entertainments work with tap dance and often require dancers to audition in this style to show their versatility and expertise.

Learners will be required to perform a range of work demonstrating a developed understanding of tap dance styles, technique and use of music. Regular classes will allow learners to experiment with different rhythms and styles, exploring set combinations to develop their personal repertoire.

This unit aims to give learners the skills and knowledge they need to progress with tap dancing. Learners must be aware of their strengths and weaknesses in order to evaluate artistic and technical progress. This unit also aims to equip learners with a chance to recall combinations, sequences and phrases in order to build on movement memory and technical skills. They will also learn thoroughly the distinct movement vocabulary that is tap dancing, which is challenging to learn and fun to perform.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to show the relationship between music, accompaniment and tap dancing
- 2 Be able to perform competently the key features of tap dancing
- 3 Be able to perform studies and combinations within the style of tap dancing.

Unit content

1 Be able to show the relationship between music, accompaniment and tap dancing

Different styles: at least two from jazz, swing, Broadway musicals, blues, rock, boogie, tango

Use of rhythm and accuracy: different time signatures 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/8; complex rhythms; stop-time; tacit

Syncopation: use of off beats and displaced accents; cross phrasing; doubling up

2 Be able to perform competently the key features of tap dancing

Features: relaxed use of ankles and knees; alignment of limbs; downward stressed and grounded movements; sharp changes of direction and focus; parallel coordination and opposition arms; still held positions; contractions of the centre and other body parts

Structure: warm-up; centre exercises; travelling and turning; time steps; combinations

Steps: eg step, stamp, stomp, hop, tap spring, tap step, shuffle, ball change, toe tap, forward tap, straight tap, brush, drop, heel tap, heel beat, pick-up, pick-up change, flap, cramp roll, scuff, 3, 4 and 5 beat riff, wings, pull backs

3 Be able to perform studies and combinations within the style of tap dancing

Movement memory: build-up; repetition; recall; increased length of phrases; practice

Combinations: three different combinations of steps using different rhythms to include: time steps and breaks, pick-up time steps, Suzie Q, Maxi Ford

Accurate performance of combinations: of order; actions; timing/phrasing/rhythm; use of personal and stage space

Physical and interpretative skills: appropriate use of contrasting dynamics, projection and focus, coordination; style and interpretation, tonal quality of light and shade

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 show an awareness in performance of the relationship between tap dance and accompaniment	M1 demonstrate, in performance, the relationship between tap dancing and accompaniment clearly	D1 demonstrate, in performance, the relationship between tap dance and accompaniment expressively and imaginatively
P2 demonstrate the ability to perform key features of a tap dance style	M2 perform competently the key features of a tap dance with a degree of style	D2 perform the key features of a particular tap dance style to a high technical standard
P3 learn and recall in performance combinations of tap dancing with a degree of accuracy [SM]	M3 learn, recall and accurately reproduce in performance a range of tap dance combinations with appropriate dynamic input, demonstrating proficient physical skills and a developing sense of interpretation	D3 learn, recall and perform tap dance combinations to a high technical standard, incorporating a full range of contrasting dynamics where appropriate, demonstrating a strong sense of physical and performance skills with own interpretation evident
P4 display a sense of rhythm with only occasional lapses in accuracy and concentration.	M4 display a sense of rhythm when performing a tap dance with accuracy and focus.	D4 perform a tap dance with a complete sense of ease, with rhythmic accuracy and a real sense of style.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

The styles chosen will reflect the tutor's training and consistency should be assured throughout the unit. All classes or workshops need to follow a similar structure, with exercises, sequences, combinations and studies. These will be taught over a number of weeks to enable learners to develop physical skills, increase movement memory and challenge abilities. Whilst a basic grounding in dance practice is invaluable, no previous dance experience is necessary for this unit. However, learners should be aware that regular attendance at classes and workshops will help them to achieve the level of accuracy this style of dance requires in performance. Although the focus of the unit is on two tap dance styles, tutors might like to introduce a variety of styles to give learners a broader understanding of tap dance and its many musical influences.

Over the course of the unit exercises will increase in complexity, giving learners the opportunity to develop their skills further. This unit will provide learners with a solid foundation in tap dance technique. It is important to allow learners to build up their knowledge of tap dance over the course of the unit allowing time for corrections and the practice of difficult rhythms and steps. Learners also need to understand the disciplined way in which a tap technique class works and demonstrate an improved and developed technique over the course of the unit.

Learners need to be given opportunities to perform on their own in class work so that the rhythms they create can be audible, as well as in small group and ensemble work to further challenge accuracy and musicality.

Learners should be encouraged to observe recordings of their individual and group performances of exercises, centre work and combinations. The content and outcomes of this unit should be demonstrated through the development of practical skills.

It would be difficult for a learner to achieve higher grades in this unit without the appropriate footwear as the assessor/tutor will need hear the dynamics, rhythm, light and shade in the sounds made. The shoes and the flooring used need to make the tap style work.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Tap dance class: building on foundations. Over 12 sessions. Barre work, centre work, introducing and perfecting steps, arms, building in travelling phrases and simple combinations.
Assignment 1: Class Work (P1, M1, D1) Using all the exercises in an assessment class with demonstrations of key steps asked by the tutor. Rehearsal for assessment – independent study. Performance piece no. 1 – duets. Continuing with class work building of level and more steps, looking at two combinations that can be performed as a duet.
Assignment 2: Duets (P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4) Rehearsal for assessment. Continuation of class work used as a warm-up and to teach combinations for use in a whole-group piece.
Assignment 3: Whole-group Piece (P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4) A big musical theatre style (style 1) number with all dancers showing their abilities. Rehearsal for assessment. Continuation of class work used as a warm-up and to teach combinations for use in a whole-group piece – possible second class assessment for learners to achieve grading criteria.
Assignment 4: Whole-group Piece (P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4) A tap dance with a jazz interpretation (style 2). Rehearsal for assessment.

Assessment

The work produced for this unit should clearly communicate the principles of the tap dance technique in whichever styles are being studied. Evidence will take the form of video recordings, tutor feedback and observation. Learners will present performances of solo, group and ensemble pieces to the tutor, other learners and other audiences for feedback by the tutor.

Expertise and development in this technique should be demonstrated in at least two routines lasting two to three minutes each. These routines could be performed as a whole group piece, in a small group, a trio, a duet or even as solo work. Solo performance work would need a good level of competence. The emphasis of these routines needs to be on the performance for learners to achieve the grading criteria, whether that be a performance to peers, a sharing, to an audience or even on an appropriate stage. It would benefit learners if class work could also be assessed.

Learning outcome 1 requires learners to demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between music or aural accompaniment and rhythms created by the dance steps. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent through the depth of understanding shown in the body in performance with musicality and flair.

For P1, learners will be able to perform the set steps with some sense of timing within the time signature but may struggle with off beats, keeping up with fast sections and syncopation. This may also mean that not all sounds made by the steps are clear, heard or in the correct place in the bar. Learner may use clapping as a way of showing the rhythm before dancing.

For M1, learners will be able demonstrate a confident performance showing an understanding of the musical implications of the dance, clearly finding highpoints and using rhythms that are quite complex. There may be some inconsistencies with fast sections or some rhythmical errors but this will not detract from the overall performance.

For D1, learners will be able to use the music to enhance the step patterns, clearly and confidently finding complex rhythms, cadences and crescendos to match, counterpoint or 'fill' the music. Performances may also have a degree of 'artistic licence' with learners creating extra sounds, steps and/or exploiting the music that clearly demonstrates the knowledge and understanding acquired.

Learning outcome 2 requires learners to learn and perform the key features of tap dancing proficiently, to learn and recall in performance. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be evident through learners' technical ability to recreate to perform exact steps as well as using correct posture and arm movements.

Grading criteria 2 and 3

At pass level, learners will produce a performance that recognisably uses the given steps but the sounds made may be lost and lack clarity. Pass level learners will be competent dancers and able to use some coordination skills but there may be inconsistencies.

At merit level, learners will provide a performance which is technically secure and that has a consistent approach but may lack clarity of sound or whole body participation.

At distinction level, learners will produce the combinations and step patterns with the correct stylistic qualities such as posture, arms and a high quality to the sound of the steps.

Learning outcome 3 requires learners to reproduce technical studies and combinations learnt with accuracy and a strong use of rhythm. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent through the use of dynamics, a sense of rhythm and use of space in the whole body and a consistency of correct body actions. Movement material used must challenge learners at this level.

Grading criterion 4

For P4, learners will be able to demonstrate the movement material with a basic understanding of rhythm, dynamic and use of space. They may miss counts; a cue or find it difficult to perform actions at the correct tempo. For the most part, learners will perform the movements in a considered way.

For M4, learners will be able to use the whole body, whether in isolation or moving as a whole, to demonstrate clearly the timing and rhythm of the material and the chosen dynamic. There may be moments that show a strong understanding of the body actions.

For D4, learners will have a true understanding of the correct rhythm, dynamics in body movement and the use of space. Rhythm will be shown through the body. Distinction level learners will be able to perform complex tap dance combinations confidently and accurately.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Classwork 1	Foundations of tap steps, travelling work and combinations learnt in class over a term.	Tutor observation. Practical assessment. Video/DVD recordings.
P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4	Duets	Combinations learned and perfected for performance in pairs with use of cannon and unison to a piece of music given by the tutor and performed in a style of tap (style: musical theatre, jazz, rock, blues etc).	Tutor observation. Practical assessment. Video/DVD recordings.
P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4	Whole-group Piece	A big musical theatre style number (style 1) with all dancers showing their abilities.	Tutor observation. Practical assessment. Performance to an audience. Video/DVD recordings.
P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4	Whole-group Piece	Continuation of class work used as a warm-up and to teach combinations for use in a whole-group piece. A tap dance number with more of a jazz feel (style 2).	Tutor observation. Practical assessment. Performance to an audience. Video/DVD recordings.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Performing and Production Arts sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Performing and Production Arts suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Exploring Dance Skills	The Development of Dance	Dance Performance
	Performing Dance	Choreographic Principles
		Choreographing Dance
		Dance Appreciation

Essential resources

A practical dance space will be required, with mirrors, barres and preferably a suitably covered sprung floor. Access to sound equipment and/or accompanist, a video camera and video playback facilities would be useful. It will be necessary to video examples of classes, workshops, combinations and performances. Access to tap dance work seen live or on video should be used to support this unit.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres are encouraged to develop links with professional dance companies, choreographers, local universities and dance colleges and dancers in the dance world. This could be talks, demonstrations, workshops, classes, taught repertoire, performance opportunities, visits to the theatre, visiting performances to centres and education resources that are available to centres.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Audy R – *Tap Dancing: How to Teach Yourself to Tap* (Vintage Books, 1976) ISBN 9780394716442

Berkson R – *Musical Theatre Choreography: A Practical Method for Preparing and Staging Dance in a Musical Show* (A&C Black, 1990) ISBN 9780713632736

Feliksdaal F – *Modern Tap Dance: Techniques, Theory, Method, Anatomy, History, Exercises, and Dance Routines* (Bekebooks, 2003) ISBN 9789080769922

Fletcher B – *Tapworks: A Tap Dictionary and Reference Manual, Second Edition* (Princeton Book Company, 2002) ISBN 9780871272478

Knowles M – *The Tap Dance Dictionary* (McFarland and Co, 1998) ISBN 9780786403523

Ormonde J – *Tap Dancing at a Glance* (Applewood Books, 2001) ISBN 9781557094353

Rees H – *Tap Dancing: Rhythm in Their Feet* (The Crowood Press, 2003) ISBN 9781861265791

Website

www.dancebooks.co.uk

Dance books, CDs and resources

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	rehearsing set movement phrases independently
Creative thinkers	adapting movements learnt to a new facing or timing
Reflective learners	watching performances on video and setting targets for improvement
Team workers	performing unison work in small groups considering other dancers in the space during technique classes and performances reviewing work with other learners and agreeing ways of improving collaborative work in the future
Self-managers	pushing their own technical abilities in class work being responsible for self-discipline responding to tutor direction and correction
Effective participators	identifying strengths and weaknesses for improvement giving appropriate direction to peers.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	carrying out research into pieces that use tap dance. researching dance companies visiting the theatre
Creative thinkers	creating rhythmic patterns or steps from given rhythms adding appropriate arms on to movements
Reflective learners	watching themselves on video reviewing their own and their peers' progress and performance
Team workers	working in small groups considering how to create innovative rhythmic phrases being responsible collaborating on choreographies
Self-managers	improving their own performance organising rehearsal time responding to direction from tutor and peers researching dance pieces planning rehearsal schedules
Effective participators	working in groups to create choreography and performance pieces offering improvement suggestions.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	discussing performances and evaluating strengths and weaknesses giving seminars on tap dance used in musicals
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching into the historical aspects of tap dance
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing reviews of dance pieces watched.