

NATIONAL
Dance
WEEK

Fifth - Eighth Grade Foxtrot Dance Project

Objectives

- ❖ To introduce the Foxtrot Dance style.
- ❖ To teach teamwork through partnered dancing.
- ❖ To use Foxtrot as an introduction to ballroom dancing.
- ❖ To allow students to experience the joy of dance.
- ❖ To look at ballroom dancing as an activity that can be enjoyed for the rest of the students' lives .
- ❖ To encourage students who have an interest in dance to continue to pursue opportunities which will enhance their personal development and appreciation of the art form.
- ❖ To have fun and explore creativity through movement

Dance Activity (approx activity length 45 minutes)

Equipment

Something to play music on (stereo, mp3 player and speakers, etc)
2 or 3 of the suggested songs, or songs that are similar in rhythm and tempo

“Fever” by Peggy Lee

[Download song here from Amazon](#)

Other versions of this song would work as well

“Something’s Gotta Give” by Sammy Davis Jr

[Download song from Amazon](#)

“Popsicle Toe” by Diana Krall

[Download song here from Amazon](#)

“Moondance” by Michael Buble

[Download song here from Amazon](#)

If your school has a no physical contact policy for students you will need short scarves or bandannas that the students can hold in their hands. Having each student in the pair hold one end of the fabric allows them to maintain a connection with their partner without touching the other person.

Movement Exercise General Information

Divide the students into 2 lines. Traditionally foxtrot is danced with a male and a female, but the most important thing is that there are 2 people dancing together. If the students are too close together in this double line, split the lines in half and make 4 lines. The students should be facing their partners.

Traditionally the male is the leader, but in this lesson the leaders and followers will switch roles so that all students learn both parts.

After every 7 or 8 times through the step, have the leaders move 1 person to their left so that the students are constantly rotating partners. If there is no one to the leader’s left have the leader go to the other end of the line.

The students will need a fair amount of room to move in safely. The gym or a large all purpose room would be the best spaces.

Dance Position

The leader and the follower stand facing each other. The heel of the leader's right hand is on the lower edge of the follower's left shoulder blade. There is contact along the top of the length of the leader's arm and the bottom of the length of the follower's arm. The follower's left hand is on the leader's right arm at approximately the bicep level. The leader's left hand is holding the follower's right hand. Both dancers have their upper arms out to their side on a slight angle to the front of their bodies. There should be tone or tension in the hands and arms between the two dancers. The leader's left hand is gently closed around the follower's right hand. There is a comfortable distance between the two dancers. This distance is primarily regulated by arm length. In the smooth dances it is important the dancers are slightly offset to each other. The leader's right foot should be lined up in between the follower's feet. The follower should be conscious of staying on the left side of the leader unless otherwise noted. In steps that use promenade position (described later) the follower will feel like they are one step behind the leader.

The second option for dance position is to have the 2 students stand facing each other and take a 4 hand hold. This position will keep the dancers a little further apart than the traditional dance position, but might be more comfortable to the students when they are first exposed to dancing with a partner. If you are using fabric in lieu of students touching each other, this is the dance position you will need to use.

Line of Dance

Smooth ballroom dances travel in a counter clockwise direction. The leaders should be facing in the direction of travel to avoid collisions with other dancers.

Forward Basic

Teach the foxtrot basic as broken down on the notes that follow.

Practice it for 2 songs changing partners as described above

Have the students change partners at the conclusion of the 2nd time through the song and also change places with that new partner so that the leaders are now followers and vice versa.

Repeat the exercise in this manner for the length of 2 songs.

Left Rock Turn

Have the students change partners and reverse roles again.

Teach the Left Rock Turn as broken down on the notes that follow.

Have the students practice 4 left rock turns with their partner and then change partners.

Continue this for the length of 1 song and then have the students change partners and reverse roles. Practice and (changing partners) for the length of 1 song.

Have the students dance the forward basic until they are almost out of room to continue travelling in the same direction. The students then do a left rock turn and continue to travel until they are almost out of room and then complete a left rock turn. Depending on the size of your space, have the students change partners after every 2nd left rock turn or 4th left rock turn.

To give the students more practice switching between the forward basic and the left rock turn, divide your dance space in half and your dancers into 2 groups. Have each group work in half the space. The smaller the space, the more transitions between straight and turning will be needed.

Have the students practice the forward basic, left rock turn combination for the duration of 1 song. At the conclusion of the song, have the students switch partners and switch roles.

Backward Basic

Teach in the same manner as the forward basic.

Once the students have finished practicing just the backward basic use the following practice pattern to travel around the floor:

- 2 forward basics
- 2 left rock turns
- 2 backward basics
- 12 counts to change partners

Continue with this pattern for the duration of 1 song and then have the students reverse roles and repeat.

Foxtrot - Forward Basic

This pattern begins with the leader facing the line of dance.

Leader

Count	Count	Foot	Footwork	Description of Movement
1, 2	Slow	Left	Heel to flat.	Step forward outside of partner's right foot.
3, 4	Slow	Right	Heel to flat	Step forward in between partner's feet.
5	Quick	Left	Toe	Step to the left (small step).
6	Quick	Right	Toe, ball of the foot, flat	Close right foot to left foot.

Follower

Count	Count	Foot	Footwork	Description of Movement
1, 2	Slow	Right	Toe to flat	Step backwards.
3, 4	Slow	Left	Toe to flat	Step backwards
5	Quick	Right	Toe	Step to the right (small step).
6	Quick	Left	Toe, ball of the foot, flat	Close left foot to right.

General Notes:

1. The forward steps should feel like regular walking.
2. It is important the forward and backward steps are taken in a straight line. The partner's dance position is slightly offset to allow the feet to move in straight lines without stepping on each other.
3. It is very common for the side step to turn into a diagonal movement. This will confuse the follower. The step needs to be directly side.
4. Even though all of the side steps are taken to the left, the pattern travels in a straight line. This occurs because there is a slight rightward intent to the two walking steps that counters the left side step (as long as the step remains small).
5. There is a slight bouncing feel to the Foxtrot. This bounce happens naturally because of the footwork on the side steps and should not be manufactured.
6. The lead is the initial movement of the body and the follower following the change of weight. The frame or body position between the two dancers remains consistent throughout the pattern.

Foxtrot – Left Rock Turn

This pattern is used to change your direction or facing in the dance space.

Leader

Count	Count	Foot	Footwork	Description of Movement
1, 2	Slow	Left	Heel to flat.	Step forward outside of partner's right foot. At the end of this step increase the pressure of the right hand on the follower's back to signal them to stop progressing.
3, 4	Slow	Right	Toe to flat	Rock backwards in place. Using the pressure of the right hand bring your partner with you.
5	Quick	Left	Toe	Step to the left (small step). This step turns $\frac{1}{4}$ to the left but is smaller than normal. At the same time your arms / frame keeps your partner in front of you.
6	Quick	Right	Toe, ball of the foot, flat	Close right foot to left foot. You are now facing your new alignment.

Follower

Count	Count	Foot	Footwork	Description of Movement
1, 2	Slow	Right	Toe to flat.	Step backwards. You should feel pressure on your back at the end of this step.
3, 4	Slow	Left	Heel to flat.	Rock forwards. It is often more comfortable to turn your left foot out as you step on it to allow the turn to happen more easily.
5	Quick	Right	Toe	Step to the right. Although this is a side step you are rotating around your partner attempting to maintain your parallel position with them.
6	Quick	Left	Toe, ball of the foot, flat	Close left foot to right foot. You are now backing your new alignment.

Foxtrot – Left Rock Turn continued**General Notes:**

1. When leading the Left Rock Turn it is important to guide your partner around you without pushing them too far.
2. The follower's side step is approximately 2.5 – 3 times larger than the leader's step. Encourage the leaders to keep a small step there.
3. The turn can be less than 90 degrees.
4. The amount of turn cannot be more than 90 degrees.
5. The turn is to the left to facilitate the counter clockwise movement around the dance floor.

Foxtrot Backward Basic

This pattern begins backing the line of dance.

Leader's Part

Count	Count	Foot	Footwork	Description of Movement
1, 2	Slow	Left	Toe to Flat	Step backwards. Slightly more pressure must be placed on the follower's back to bring them with you.
3, 4	Slow	Right	Toe to flat	Step backwards. Maintain the pressure on the back
5	Quick	Left	Toe	Step to the left (small step).
6	Quick	Right	Toe, ball of the foot, flat	Close right foot to left foot. You are now facing your new alignment.

Follower's Part

Count	Count	Foot	Footwork	Description of Movement
1, 2	Slow	Right	Heel to flat.	Step forward outside of partner's left foot.
3, 4	Slow	Left	Heel to flat	Step forward in between partner's feet.
5	Quick	Right	Toe	Step to the right side.
6	Quick	Left	Toe, ball of the foot, flat	Close left foot to the right foot. You are now facing your new alignment.

General Notes:

1. While the leader is still leading, the follower is dictating the step length and power since they are the one going forward.
2. The note about avoiding drifting to the leader's left applies in this step as well.
3. It is important that the leader have a good idea of the traffic around him / her before leading this step. The follower should notify the leader if there is a potential problem with traffic.

Choreography Project (activity length can vary from a few minutes to a full class)

Have students create their own steps that work with the Foxtrot timing. Encourage students to work with the concepts of lead and follow as they create their steps. Remind the students that the leaders need to begin the patterns with their left foot and the followers with their right foot. If the patterns do not start on the correct feet, the students will not be able to mix the new patterns with the patterns you previously taught them.

After the students have created steps with their current partners, have the pairs split up and teach his / her partner the steps created with their previous partners. Once the new partners have caught each other up, have the students integrate the steps that they have created with the Foxtrot steps that were taught in class.

Continue to have the students change partners and share their step patterns while they practice with each other.

Research Project

Have the students research the history of the Foxtrot. The performer often credited with the invention of the Foxtrot is Harry Fox.

Have them try to find answers to the following questions:

- What did Harry Fox do before he invented the Foxtrot?
- What kind of music was popular during the invention of Foxtrot?
- What types of music were popular for early swing dancers?
- Can you find any examples of Foxtrot in movies, television or theatre?
- What was happening historically when Foxtrot was invented and popularized?
- Who were famous Foxtrot dancers?
- If the students find pictures of Foxtrot dancers, what kind of costumes are they in? What words describe the attitude and "personality" of the Foxtrot?
- Explain to the students that the Foxtrot rhythm is the most common rhythm in popular music. What current artists have songs that you would be able to dance a Foxtrot to?