

**Basics of Dance**

**Vocabulary:**

**Axial** – movements that do not travel through space, or which are basically done in place

**Locomotor** - a movement that can travel through space

**Serendipity** – “making fortunate discoveries by accident” (dictionary.com); in dance, and choreography specifically, it is when something pleasant happens unexpectedly (such as an accent in music fitting perfectly with an accent in choreography, even when the dance was choreographed in silence)

**Kinesphere** – the space your body occupies and the space your energy fills (the ‘bubble’ around you, which you can expand and contract with the intention and size of your movements)

**10 locomotors\***

*\*note that some dance educators identify only 8 locomotors, while others identify 10*

**Walk** – a shift of weight from one body part to another (usually feet) with an even rhythm

**Run** – same as a walk, but includes an air moment and usually a faster pace (still an even rhythm)

**Skip** – a step (or walk) and a hop, in a syncopated rhythm

**Hop** – goes from one foot to the *same* foot

**Jump** – involves two feet – either two to two, two to one, or one to two

**Leap** – transferring weight from one body part to another (usu. one foot to the other), with a large air moment and usually an uneven rhythm (suspended more than a run)

**Gallop** – any movement in a triple, syncopated rhythm

**Slide** – a movement with no set rhythm, it may be long or short, and energy decreases over the duration of the slide; keeps contact with the floor

**Roll** – any movement that turns or spins (may be a body part or whole body); usually must accompany another locomotor (for example, a cartwheel is a walk and a roll; a bottom roll is a roll and a crawl . . . )

**Crawl** – any movement on a very low level (usually involves at least three body parts contacting the floor)

**Time, space, and energy are generally and widely accepted as the three primary elements of all dance forms. Explanations and some characteristics of each are listed in the table below.**

<b><u>TIME</u></b>	<b><u>SPACE</u></b>	<b><u>ENERGY / QUALITY</u></b>
<i>All dance uses time, whether deliberately or not.</i>	<i>Dance exists in space, and dancers define and design space with their bodies.</i>	<i>Energy is the quality of movement, and it often informs the emotional context of a dance.</i>
Tempo (speed of music or movement: slow, moderate, fast; acceleration/deceleration)	Shapes (individual and group; curved vs. angular; symmetrical vs. asymmetrical; 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional)	Percussive (sharp movement)
Rhythm (even beats, uneven beats, accents, syncopation, breath rhythm)	Negative and positive space (in shapes as well as through the entire space)	Sustained (smooth, even flowing movement)
Duration (long or short)	Levels (low, medium, high, and air)	Vibratory (pulsing quick movement – may be even or uneven)
Patterns (revealed in movement, music, or both)	Size (small, medium, large)	Swing (consists of suspension and release)
Time signature (number of beats per measure: 4/4, ¾, 6/8, etc)	Direction (forward, sideways, backwards, diagonally. . .)	Explosive (sudden burst of energy)
		Collapse (release of energy)

Notes on the basics of dance: