

STUDY GUIDE

DISCIPLINE:
DANCE

ARTIST:
INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES



The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist’s visit.

It includes curricular connections, assessment strategies, and suggested classroom extensions. All materials are intended for use at the teacher’s discretion and may be adapted as necessary to suit the specific needs of the students.

THIS STUDY GUIDE

Discipline / Artist Example:

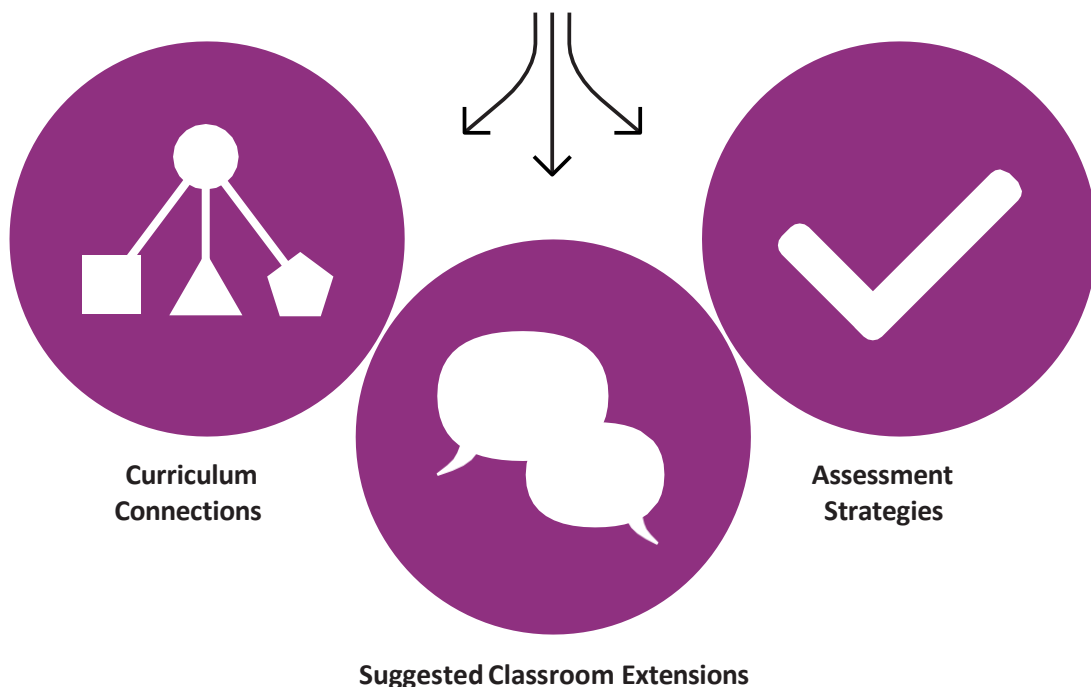


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STUDY GUIDE: DANCE

SPIRIT OF DANCE

Program Overview

Artist Name: Indigenous Experiences

Artist Bio: Indigenous Experiences offers authentic programs sharing the rich culture, teachings, and history of Canada's Indigenous Peoples from a First Nation perspective. Representing diverse native nations, the team highlights Indigenous cultures' evolution. Students engage in traditional activities and games, gaining meaningful insight into both historical and contemporary Indigenous life.

Program Description: This performance celebrates the diversity of our evolving culture with vibrant performances of five unique Pow Wow dance styles set to the "heartbeat" of the drum, concluding with a special contemporary hoop dance as well as a friendship dance.

Artistic Discipline: Dance

Recommended Grade Levels: K - 6

Session Logistics: In person and online

Cultural Context: 2SLGBTQIA+, Culturally Diverse, Indigenous, Men+, Person of Colour, Women+

Vocab bank/glossary: [Click here](#)



SPIRIT OF DANCE

Curriculum Connections

Learning Themes:

- Express their responses to a variety of forms of drama, dance, music, and visual arts from various cultures and communities. (K)
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing
 - Apply the critical analysis process to communicate their feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of dance pieces and experiences. (Grades 1-6)
- Strand C: Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts
 - Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of dance forms and styles from the past and present, and their social and/or community contexts. (Grades 1-6)
- Cross Curricular Connections
 - History – Heritage and Identity

SPIRIT OF DANCE

Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)

Here are optional discussion prompts to extend the artist session in the classroom. These are recommended and are not mandatory. Please use what is best for your classroom. You can also find suggested activities in the additional resources package.

K

Pre

- Have you ever seen people dance in a circle?
- What do you think a Pow Wow might sound like?
- How do you think dancers dress for special celebrations?

During

- What colours did you see in the dancers' outfits?
- What did the drum sound like to you?

Post

- Why do you think the drum is important in the dances?
- What did you learn about the people who shared their dance with us?

**GRADES
1-3**

Pre

- What do you think a Pow Wow is? What might happen there?
- Why do you think music and dance are important to cultures?
- What do you think dancers wear for special performances like this?

During

- What were some of the different dance styles you saw?
- What instruments did you hear? How did they sound?
- Did you notice any patterns in the dancing or drumming?

Post

- Why do you think these dances are important to Indigenous Peoples?
- How can dancing help people share stories and traditions?

GRADES
4-6

Pre

- What do you know about Pow Wows and their cultural importance to Indigenous communities?
- Why might dance be a way of passing down traditions or stories?
- What do you think the hoop in the hoop dance might represent?

During

- What differences did you notice between the five dance styles?
- What role did the drum and singing play in the performance?
- How does the hoop dance combine storytelling and movement?

Post

- How do these dances help preserve Indigenous traditions while also evolving with time?
- What messages or themes did you hear or see during the performance?

DANCE OVERVIEW

Dance is a powerful form of cultural expression that celebrates diversity, fosters connection, and supports healing. By exploring various dance forms, students build empathy, challenge stereotypes, and gain global awareness. Dance promotes physical literacy and mental well-being through movement, creativity, and emotional release.

The creative and critical analysis process helps students generate, refine, interpret movement, encourage collaboration, resilience, and emotional intelligence. When used to complement artist-led sessions, these frameworks guide students to become thoughtful creators, reflective learners, and active participants in building a more just and connected world.

Dance also supports cross-curricular learning. It brings stories to life in language arts, explores cultural traditions in social studies, and connects to science through anatomy and body mechanics. These interdisciplinary links highlight the dynamic role of dance in education and deepen student engagement across subjects.



APPENDIX

Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **Pow Wow:** A traditional gathering with dance, music, and celebration of Indigenous culture.
- **Regalia:** The special clothing worn by dancers during cultural ceremonies or Pow Wows.
- **Drum:** A key instrument in Indigenous music, often called the "heartbeat" of the dance.
- **Hoop Dance:** A storytelling dance using hoops to create shapes and symbols.
- **Friendship Dance:** A communal dance meant to bring people together and celebrate unity.
- **Tradition:** A custom or belief passed down through generations.
- **Culture:** The way of life, beliefs, art, and traditions of a group of people.
- **Community:** A group of people who live together and share traditions and experiences.
- **Heartbeat:** Symbolically, the steady rhythm of the drum in Indigenous music and life.

Student Health and Well-Being

How did today's activity make you feel (body and mind)?

- Choose a colour to describe that feeling. Use one word to describe how your energy changed after the activity.

Mini-Activity: Feelings Freeze Frame (Tableau)

- Ask students to create a freeze-frame (tableau) that shows how they're feeling right after the activity.
- Then, they can:
 - Share it with a partner or small group
 - Draw their freeze-frame in a journal
 - Write or talk about what made them feel that way

Additional Resources

- Assessment Guide
- Cultural Protocol/Sensitivity Guide
- Evaluation Document
- Resource Database for Further Learning