



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER
GRADES 9-12



INTRODUCTION

Great American Dance Learning Guide

The goal of the *Great American Dance Learning Guide* is to help students engage fully with the dance performances featured in the Lincoln Center at the Movies inaugural season. It is suitable for those who are already dance lovers and those who have no previous dance experience. Each guide enables educators to engage students in experiencing the thrill of the artistic process, and in understanding how artists think as they develop their work, how they face artistic challenges and make important choices before they present the world with their creations.

The guide has been created by LCE Teaching Artists who work in pre-K–12 and Higher Education classrooms throughout New York City and the tristate area, and are mindful of the learner of any age. In the guide, you will find information about dance and different takes on the performances in film, books, and other media. There are three lessons with activities and discussion questions that prepare students for the performance they will see on film, and a lesson that makes them reflect on the performance with a wholly different point of view after they've seen it. These lessons are flexible, so teachers can adapt them to specific grade levels and student populations in-school and out-of-school. Most important, the lessons have been designed for anyone curious about the art of dance.



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



INTRODUCTION

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater grew from a now-fabled performance in March 1958 at the 92nd Street Y in New York City. Led by Alvin Ailey and a group of young African-American modern dancers, that performance changed forever the perception of American dance. The Ailey company has gone on to perform for an estimated 25 million people at theaters in 48 states and 71 countries on six continents—and has reached millions more online and through television broadcasts. In 2008 a U.S. Congressional resolution designated the Company as “a vital American cultural ambassador to the world” that celebrates the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance heritage. When Mr. Ailey began creating dances, he drew upon his “blood memories” of Texas, the blues, spirituals, and gospel as inspiration, which resulted in the creation of his most popular and critically acclaimed work, *Revelations*. Although he created 79 ballets over his lifetime, Mr. Ailey maintained that his company was not exclusively a repository for his own work. Today the Company continues Mr. Ailey’s mission by presenting important works of the past and commissioning new ones. In all more than 235 works by more than 90 choreographers have been part of the Ailey company’s repertory. Before his untimely death in 1989, Mr. Ailey named Judith Jamison as his successor, and over the next 21 years she brought the Company to unprecedented success. Ms. Jamison, in turn, personally selected Robert Battle to succeed her in 2011, and *The New York Times* declared he “has injected the company with new life.”

Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs

In fulfillment of Alvin Ailey’s long-standing dictum, “dance is for everybody,” the Ailey organization is committed to bringing dance into the classrooms, communities and lives of people throughout the world. Its innovative Arts In Education programs include special performances, lecture/demonstrations, technique classes, and curriculum-based residencies which use dance to teach academic subjects in a unique way. Each program is designed to develop self-respect, confidence, discipline, and creativity while fostering an appreciation for the joy of dance.

For information about Ailey’s Arts In Education programs visit the Ailey website:
www.alvinailey.org/about/company/ailey-arts-education-community-programs



TABLE OF CONTENTS

5	Welcome
	Description of symbols
6	Line of Inquiry
	Learning Outcomes
7	Before the Performance Lesson I
13	Before the Performance Lesson II
18	Before the Performance Lesson III
23	After the Performance Lesson IV
27	Common Core Standards Addressed in this Guide
	National Core Arts Standards Addressed in this Guide
	Capacities for Imaginative Thinking Addressed in this Guide
28	Capacities for Imaginative Thinking (Complete)
29	Continue Your Exploration



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



WELCOME

Welcome to the Great American Dance Learning Guide for elementary school students, grades 9-12. This guide is composed of four lesson plans designed around Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's performances of *Chroma* by Wayne McGregor, *Grace* by Ronald K. Brown, *Takademe* by Robert Battle, and *Revelations* by Alvin Ailey: three "before the performance" lessons and one "after the performance" lesson.

We strongly encourage you to read through each lesson before sharing it with your students, so that you can familiarize yourself with the pace of the activities, the discussion questions, and the suggestions for online resources should you wish to include them. Additional resources on dance and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater are listed in "Continue Your Exploration" at the end of this guide.




Questioning is an essential component of this guide. We have constructed it in a way that empowers you and your students to ask questions, and through them, make discoveries and find new understanding. On the next page, you will find a suggested "Line of Inquiry" — a theme that can help you focus your questioning. Remember: there are no small or big questions, no good or bad questions. Questions are a great learning tool. So allow them to inspire you as you explore *Chroma* by Wayne McGregor, *Grace* by Ronald K. Brown, *Takademe* by Robert Battle, and *Revelations* by Alvin Ailey.

You now have front row seats to a Lincoln Center performance. Enjoy the show!

Let us know what you think! Send us your comments at LCE@lincolncenter.org.

If you have photos of your students' work that you would like to share, please do! You can find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Description of symbols used in this guide:

-  Indicates a section to be read aloud
-  Indicates a question to be asked
-  Indicates an optional resource for further exploration



LINE OF INQUIRY

How do choreographers Alvin Ailey, Ronald K. Brown, Robert Battle, and Wayne McGregor communicate emotional and abstract themes through their diverse use of space, shape, movement qualities, color, and sound?

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing the lessons in this guide, students will be able to:

- Understand that movement can communicate emotion as well as abstract design;
- Create movements and body shapes in response to words and images;
- Use movement to express emotion;
- Understand how sculptural shapes can communicate concepts of the human experience, such as oppression and hope;
- Reflect on their own experiences and connect those experiences to the work of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater;
- Understand that choreographers can make dances that reflect their life experiences;
- Recall sense memories from the performance and transform them into words.



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON I

Grace— Meaning and Movement

Materials needed for this lesson:

- Index cards
- Pens/pencils
- Shakara by Fela Kuti & Africa 70 included in Lesson I, Slide 16

INTRODUCTION FOR THE TEACHER:

Many of the dances forming the core of the repertory of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater reference the experiences – slavery, racism, and discrimination—of African Americans in the United States. At the same time, these dances are imbued with the role of religion, spirit and faith in providing strength and motivation to endure. Alvin Ailey reflects the black Baptist traditions of his childhood in Revelations, while a generation later, choreographer Ronald K. Brown echoes Alvin Ailey’s spiritual inspiration and reaches even farther back to African ancestral roots in his ecstatic work, Grace. With a movement vocabulary of modern dance and West African, Brown embodies “grace” on several levels – grace as the smooth elegance of the dancers, and grace as the bestowing of blessings, strength, support from a divine source. With movements of opening and closing, giving and receiving, 11 dancers reach toward sky and earth, set on a journey to a better place by a solo figure – mother, angel, spirit. This lesson explores the physical metaphors – movements of open/close and give/receive—used to express the actions and feelings of Grace.

OPENING ACTIVITY:

OPEN AND CLOSE, GIVE AND RECEIVE

 10 minutes

Have students form a standing circle.

Introduce the idea of movements that open and close by giving several examples:

- open and close a hand,
- open by expanding the whole body, reaching and stretching as wide as you can
- close by contracting your limbs in towards yourself
- open and close the arm and leg on one side of the body,
- lunge out on one leg and then close by bringing the legs in towards each other

Have students watch your demonstrations of each open/close movement. They will then repeat the movements along with you.

Going around the circle, each student will contribute an open/close movement with the rest of the class copying the movement.



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON I

Grace— Meaning and Movement

(continued)

Encourage students to find new ways of opening and closing so that each student's choice is different.

If necessary, prompt students to explore new possibilities by using another part of the body to open/close. You can also introduce other movement ideas such as twisting or crossing to enhance the actions of open/close or changing levels by sitting on the floor or resting on your knees.

Remaining in the circle, introduce the idea of open/close as representing the actions of giving and receiving – the movement of opening as “giving” and the action of closing as “receiving.”

Demonstrate several examples for your students:

- “Give” (open) an imaginary gift to the student standing next to you and have the student “receive” by closing their hands inward
- “Give” (open) a gesture, such as a fluttering hand or a swinging arm or a swiveling leg to the student standing next to you and have the student “receive” it by repeating the gesture movement, only this time in towards their body

Set the “giving” and “receiving” movements in motion around the circle.

One person starts by “giving” a movement to the person standing next to them who “receives” the movement as given.

The receiving person will “give” a new movement gesture to the person standing next to them who will continue the action of “receiving” the new movement and “giving” a different movement to the next person in the circle.

The action will continue in this way traveling around the circle from person to person.

Ask your students:

- › *What do you notice about the relationship of “open and close” and “giving and receiving”?*
- › *Does the **idea** of “giving and receiving” change the feeling of the “open and close” movement from the first time we went around the circle? If so, why?*



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON I

Grace— Meaning and Movement

(continued)

ACTIVITY 1: **OUR EXPERIENCES OF GRACE**

 15 minutes

Distribute index cards and pens or pencils. Have students find a quiet place in the room for writing.

Introduce students to the word “grace” and its different meanings by asking the following questions:

- *What do we mean when we say that someone is “moving gracefully”?*
- *What do we mean when we say that someone is “graceful” as a person in their behavior and interaction with others?*
- *What does it mean to do something—work, chore, or a favor to another person—with “good grace”?*

Ask students to think about a time when they have experienced any of the “grace” types described above.

Possible responses may include moving during an athletic effort, such as skateboarding or basketball; receiving encouragement from a teacher, coach, or friend when you are sad or not sure you can achieve your goal; doing a chore at home without complaining even though you’re tired. Students will write about the experience on their index card. Encourage them to think about the person who was encouraging when they needed it, and how it felt to receive that kind of “grace.”

Let students know that they will be sharing their writing with a partner.

Divide students into pairs.

Each pair will create a short movement phrase inspired by their writing.

The movement phrase will consist of 2 movements that represent their experience – 1 movement for “giving” (open) and 1 movement for “receiving” (close).

Challenge students to show the feeling or power of their experience in their movement choices.

Students may choose to have their partner “give” while they do the “receiving”, or they may choose to show both of their “giving” and “receiving” movements at the same time.



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON I

Grace— Meaning and Movement

(continued)

Each pair will have two different combinations of “giving and receiving” – 4 movements total.

Students will practice their short movement phrases with their partners so the phrases flow smoothly.

Challenge student pairs to repeat their “giving and receiving” patterns 3 to 4 times.

ACTIVITY 2:

THE JOURNEY OF GRACE

⌚ 20 minutes

Have students walk slowly towards the side walls of the classroom.

Mid-walk, stop your students and ask them to notice the relationship between the opening and closing actions of their walk. (Almost all traveling movements of the body involve opening and closing actions).

Ask students to walk again, only this time they will pay close attention to *how* they walk.

Students may choose to walk in a step-together-step-together pattern, or continue their regular “pedestrian” walk with legs and arms swinging alternately between open and close actions.

Next, have students find their partners. You will divide the pairs into two large groups: the **movers** and the **viewers**.

Position the **movers** in a corner of the room, with the **viewers** observing off to the side.

Use the Fela Kuti music or other West African music to accompany the movers.

Shakara by Fela Kuti & Africa 70 included in Lesson I, Slide 16.

Movers will travel in their pairs diagonally across the room before performing their short movement phrase.

Ask each pair to walk one at a time, in their own way, down the diagonal line towards the center of the room.

Each pair will stop in the center and perform their short movement phrase of “giving and receiving”, repeating it 3 to 4 times.



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON I

Grace— Meaning and Movement

(continued)

After they perform, the pair will continue walking down the diagonal line towards the opposite corner of the room, at which point the next pair will begin.

Encourage each pair to take their time with their walking journey and movement phrase.

Ask the **viewers**:

- *What do you notice about the giving/receiving movements you saw?*
- *Were there any similarities in the movement choices you saw?*
- *Which parts of the body were used in the giving/receiving movements?*
- *How did each pair use the space? What was their spatial orientation to each other?*
- *What words could you use to describe the feeling of the performance?*
- *What makes you say that?*

Ask the **movers**:

- *Did the experience of creating movement from your writing change the feeling of your movement? If so, how?*
- *Did the experience of performing to music affect the way you moved? If so, how?*

Switch roles so that the movers become the viewers and the viewers become the movers. Repeat the exercise and reflection questions.

CLOSING ACTIVITY:

DISCUSSION

DID YOU KNOW?

Choreographer Ronald K. Brown created a dance called *Grace*. Ronald K. Brown, like Alvin Ailey, is a choreographer whose work draws on his roots as an African-American man living in the United States. The title of his dance reflects the inspiration of spirit and faith. In making the dance, he celebrates the grace of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater company and its dancers with his smooth and elegant choreography. He also celebrates the “grace” of the human spirit—the giving and sharing of strength, support, and forgiveness.

 5 minutes





BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON I

Grace— Meaning and Movement

(continued)

Lead a brief discussion with your students, inviting them to reflect on their experiences with the grace of the human spirit:

- *Have you ever felt “grace” received as a gift or words of encouragement?*
- *How did it feel to receive it?*

DID YOU KNOW?



Grace by Ronald K. Brown uses many of the movements of West African dance, which use exaggerated actions of open and close. This is one of the reasons why *Grace* is so exciting and beautiful to watch. In Ronald K. Brown’s *Grace*, you will see a solo dancer representing a spiritual or religious leader set off a group of dancers on a journey to a better place. The mood of *Grace* is serious at times, but also celebratory and high-energy.

Based on their experience of the lesson, ask students:

- *What movements do you imagine you’ll see in the Ronald K. Brown’s Grace?*
- *What do you imagine you’ll feel?*



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON II

Revelations: Oppression, Dignity, Hope and Determination

Materials needed for this lesson:

□ Lesson Printables

**The curriculum writer for this guide has titled the Revelations photos as educational tools to help students understand the emotional themes of the dance in age-appropriate terms. The section of the dance from which the photo is taken is listed next to the photo. Please note that the titles listed have no affiliation with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater*

INTRODUCTION FOR THE TEACHER:

Alvin Ailey's Revelations has become one of the most widely seen and beloved dances ever created, seen by over 25 million people in 71 countries. Inspired by Alvin Ailey's childhood memories of his Texas Baptist Church, the dance embodies the African American experience of slavery and discrimination in America. At the same time it speaks to audiences of all races and religious backgrounds with its universal themes of struggle, forgiveness, determination, hope and salvation. These profoundly deep emotions are present in the spirituals that Alvin Ailey drew from to create Revelations. They are also present in the shapes of the dancers' bodies. This lesson explores some of the ways in which emotion is conveyed through shape and architectural design.

OPENING ACTIVITY

⌚ 7 minutes

Show students the following photo from *Wade in the Water*:

<http://pressroom.alvinailey.org/photo?id=502060f829371a7548000083&fid=5021c-7c329371a6e510003c3>

Ask your students:

- *What do you notice about the photo?*
- *Where is the picture taking place? What makes you say that?*
- *Who are the people in the picture? What is their relationship?*
- *What event might be taking place?*
- *What kinds of shapes are their bodies making?*
- *What words describe the shapes?*
- *What is the feeling of the picture?*

ACTIVITY 1:

OPPRESSION/DIGNITY/HOPE/DETERMINATION

⌚ 15 minutes

On four separate sheets of chart paper write one of these words:

Oppression

Dignity

Hope

Determination



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON II

Revelations: Oppression, Dignity, Hope and Determination

(continued)

Circle the titles on your four sheets of chart paper, and draw lines radiating from each title.

Ask students to brainstorm related words, images, and ideas that come to mind when saying each word aloud.

Write the corresponding words on the radiating lines, creating a web chart for each word.

Extend another, longer line from each word. Draw a smaller circle.

Label the smaller circle "African-American experience".

Have students brainstorm the topic of the African-American experience as it relates to the words "dignity", "determination", "oppression", and "hope".

Write words and ideas on the lines radiating out from the smaller circles.

Student responses may include slavery, Jim Crow, civil rights, discrimination, etc.

Ask your students:

- *What do you notice about each web chart?*
- *Do you see similar words being used? Explain.*
- *Do you see different words being used? Explain.*

ACTIVITY 2:

EMBODYING OPPRESSION/DIGNITY/ HOPE/DETERMINATION

 **20 minutes**

Have students form small groups of 4-6 people.

Distribute one slip of paper per group labeled with the words "oppression," "dignity," "hope," or "determination."



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON II

Revelations: Oppression, Dignity, Hope and Determination

(continued)

Ask each group to create a multi-person sculpture for the Metropolitan Museum of Art using the following criteria:

- › *The sculpture should use all members of the group;*
- › *The arrangement of the figures, and the shapes and lines of the bodies should express the theme that is given to the group;*
- › *Figures in the sculpture may be separate or connected;*
- › *Figures in the sculpture may be similar or different;*
- › *Figures in the sculpture should be fairly close to each other—imagining that the sculpture is positioned on a base of marble or metal.*

Ask students not to share their word with other working groups. They should keep their theme secret until the sculpture is “installed” in the museum.

Allow students time to work in their groups. After 5 or more minutes, call groups together for the “installation” of the sculpture in the museum.

Using your voice, a handclap or other sound signal, have one group at a time get into their sculpture formation and hold absolutely still for 20-30 seconds.

The other groups will serve as the visitors at the museum, walking around the sculpture to look at it from different angles.

The sculpture group can rest while you ask your “museum visitors” the following questions:

- › *What do you notice about the sculpture?*
- › *What words describe the shapes and lines of the bodies?*
- › *How does the sculpture use space? Are the figures mostly low, high, or in the middle space? Are the figures connected to each other?*
- › *Where is the focus of the sculpture?*
- › *If the sculpture began to move, how would it move?*
- › *What do you think is the word or theme of the sculpture?*
- › *What makes you say that?*



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON II

Revelations: Oppression, Dignity, Hope and Determination

(continued)

Ask the sculpture group:

- › *Which theme did you work on?*
- › *What was your collaboration process like?*
- › *Did your theme evoke any emotions? Which ones?*
- › *Does your sculpture capture that emotion?*

Take time to have the rest of the class observe each group's work.

Ask observing students to explain which theme(s) they think they see.

The sculpture group may then reveal their theme and explain their collaboration process.

Lead a brief class discussion:

- › *Which words describe the sculpture for oppression? For dignity? For hope? For determination?*
- › *What surprised you most about this exercise?*

CLOSING ACTIVITY

WRAP-UP

Share all four photos together:

<http://pressroom.alvinailey.org/photo?id=502060f829371a7548000083&fid=5021c-7c329371a6e510003c3>

<http://pressroom.alvinailey.org/photo?id=502060f829371a7548000083&fid=5022a8a929371a6e51000b9e>

<http://pressroom.alvinailey.org/photo?id=502060f829371a7548000083&fid=53adb6bf7241c85acb004118>

<http://pressroom.alvinailey.org/photo?id=502060f829371a7548000083&fid=5021c7dd29371a6e510003c4>

 5 minutes



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON II

Revelations: Oppression, Dignity, Hope and Determination

(continued)

Ask students which of the four words – oppression, dignity, hope, determination – might be the title for each photo from Alvin Ailey’s *Revelations*. Students may disagree with titles of the photos, but must support their opinions.



DID YOU KNOW?

Alvin Ailey drew on his experiences for the choreography of *Revelations*. He grew up in rural Texas during the Great Depression, and was acutely aware of racial segregation and violence that took place at the time. However, while *Revelations* certainly speaks to those themes and the feelings of an African American in relation to them, it also transcends them. It is a dance admired around the world and across cultures.¹



➤ *Why do you think this dance, made from one man’s perspective, has communicated so universally?*

OPTIONAL RESOURCES

Research Alvin Ailey’s life story for a better understanding of his life as an artist and as an African American:

- *Revelations: The Autobiography of Alvin Ailey* by Alvin Ailey and A. Peter Bailey
- *Alvin Ailey: A Life in Dance* by Jennifer Dunning

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alvin_Ailey



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON III

Sinner Man—Can You Run? Can You Hide?

Materials needed for this lesson:

- Chart paper
- Painters' tape (blue, non-stick) marking a large rectangle of open space on the floor with dimensions 8'x10' or larger
- Journals
- Sinner Man included in Lesson III, Slide 17

INTRODUCTION FOR THE TEACHER:

One of the most expressive and exciting sections of Revelations is Sinner Man. In this high-voltage trio lasting less than 3 minutes, the dancers try desperately to escape from their past mistakes or misdeeds. The energy of their attempt is compelling, and yet the lyrics of this traditional spiritual imply that the escape is futile.

OPENING ACTIVITY

 7 minutes

Assemble students in an open space.

Ask students to walk around the room weaving in and out of their fellow classmates. They should not touch or bump into one another.

Begin with a slow walk as students negotiate the space they're in. As they continue to walk, gradually urge them to speed up their walk from slow to medium to fast.

Challenge them to see how fast they can walk (without running or bumping into one another). Encourage students to push the speed to super-fast.

Any student that collides into another student will be "out" and should sit on the periphery of the room and observe their classmates.

Each time a student is called "out", begin the walking exercise again from the slowest to the fastest speed possible (again, without running).

Continue this walking game to engage students' competitive spirits.

Signal "freeze" with your voice and a handclap to stop the action.

Ask your students:

- *How did it feel to walk very fast?*
- *How did it feel to move with other people walking fast around you?*
- *What words would you use to describe the emotions evoked in the very fast movement?*

Document student responses up on chart paper.

Responses may include words like exciting, tense, high energy and panicky.



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON III

Sinner Man—Can You Run? Can You Hide?

(continued)

ACTIVITY 1: **WRITING AS A *SINNER MAN***

Tell students that they will be doing a writing activity. They should only write about an experience that feels safe enough to share with their fellow classmates.

Think about a time when you did something wrong. Describe the story in as much detail as you are comfortable to. How did you feel about your actions? Did you keep from getting caught or did someone find out? What happened next? Did you have to apologize? Were you punished? If you didn't get caught, did you feel guilty or nervous afterwards? Were you afraid that someone would find out about your misdeed?

Allow time for students to write in their journals.

Pair students up with a partner and have them share their responses to the writing assignment.

Lead a brief class discussion:

- *What do you notice about your and your partner's stories?*
- *What emotions came up for both of you?*
- *Are there similarities in your stories? Explain.*
- *Are there differences? Explain.*

Document student responses up on chart paper.

ACTIVITY 2: **ON THE RUN**

Assemble the class outside of the rectangle you taped on the floor.

Ask for a student volunteer. This volunteer will be tasked with running across the space.

Position the student volunteer in one corner of the rectangle outside the tape. The student will run as fast as possible along a diagonal line from one corner of the rectangle to the other. They will stop just outside the rectangle.

Have the student turn around and run back across the space along the same diagonal line, returning to their original corner.

 10 minutes



 20 minutes



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON III

Sinner Man—Can You Run? Can You Hide?

(continued)

Ask the student to repeat the assignment about three more times to establish a **fast** run and a **clean** stop just outside the rectangle.

On the third attempt, ask the runner to stop **inside** the rectangle and freeze as if they are hiding from something. They can duck, dodge, flatten, or contract the body—the choice is theirs.

You will clap your hands to prompt him or her to freeze into position. Clap again, and the student will resume his or her run crossing safely to the other side.

Add another volunteer to the rectangle and have them begin in the opposite corner.

Designate your first volunteer as **Student A** and your second volunteer as **Student B**.

Student A will cross the space first and **Student B** will cross shortly after. **This will help to avoid collision.**

Encourage your runners to remain alert and to anticipate the actions of their fellow runner at all times.

Both runners will run across the space stopping just outside the taped rectangle corner. The students will turn around and run back across the space along the same diagonal line, returning to their original corners.

Ask **Student A** and **Student B** to repeat the assignment about three more times.

On the third attempt, have both students freeze in their hiding positions at the clap of your hands.

They can choose to hide anywhere they want within the rectangle.

Clap again, and the students will resume their run and cross safely to the other side.

Continue this game of stopping and starting, of running and hiding and running again. You may continue clapping your hands to prompt the changes in action.



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON III

Sinner Man—Can You Run? Can You Hide?

(continued)

Challenge your student volunteers to negotiate the space and each other without much time to overthink their actions.

Ask your observers:

- › *What did you notice?*
- › *What impact did this have on you as the viewer?*
- › *Did you feel any tension in the improvisation?*
- › *What decisions did you see your classmates make in terms of their speed and their use of restricted space?*

Ask your student volunteers:

- › *What was your experience like in the rectangle?*
- › *Outside the rectangle?*

Lead a brief class discussion:

- › *Did the exercise of writing about a past mistake influence the way you viewed the running activity? Explain.*

Document student responses up on chart paper.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY



If time permits, play the music from *Sinner Man* included in Lesson III, Slide 17 and resume the running/hiding improvisation game once more.

Ask your students:

- › *How does the music impact the movement improvisation?*
- › *Does Sinner Man add tension or drama to the activity? Explain.*



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON III

Sinner Man—Can You Run? Can You Hide?

(continued)

CLOSING ACTIVITY WRAP-UP

Refer to the chart paper of student responses.

Circle the words or ideas that were repeated most frequently throughout the lesson—words like exciting, tense, worried, high energy, alert, scared, guilty, etc.

Ask your students:

- Which words do you associate most closely with the running activity?

DID YOU KNOW?

In the dance section called *Sinner Man* (which can be seen in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*) Alvin Ailey creates an atmosphere of excitement and tension through his choreography and his choice of music. This piece deals with religion and with God. In the dance we see three men trying to run from their mistakes, and yet, they cannot—despite their best efforts—escape divine judgement as seen through the eyes of their Lord. Ailey dancer Clifton Brown describes the experience of performing *Sinner Man* in this way:

“There’s also the actual aspect of what’s going on: running for your own salvation. It’s Judgment Day, and it needs to have all of that energy and desperation because you don’t want to be damned. You’re a small part of a huge world or universe because it’s something much greater than you—you need to be seen as a frantic being in a huge world. The dancers are up against the wall where there is no place to hide.”

FURTHER EXPLORATION

Read this article from the New York Times where Ailey dancers describe their experience of performing the different sections of *Revelations*: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/30/arts/dance/30revelations.html?_r=0

View Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s *Grace* by Ronald K. Brown, *Chroma* by Wayne McGregor, *Takademe* by Robert Battle, and *Revelations* by Alvin Ailey

 10 minutes





ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



AFTER THE PERFORMANCE LESSON IV

Through the Senses: A Memory Poem

Materials needed for this lesson:

- Chart paper — 4 large pieces of chart paper labeled:
 - “I Hear.....”
 - “I See.....”
 - “I Feel.....”
 - “I Remember.....”
- Additional plain large chart paper, 6 – 10 sheets
- Blue painter’s tape
- Pastels, markers, colored pencils, crayons
- Index cards
- Pens/Pencils
- (Optional) – **Cinquain** structure chart (see below in note to teacher)

INTRODUCTION FOR THE TEACHER:

The rich diversity of works in this Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater performance: Ailey’s own classic Revelations, Artistic Director Robert Battle’s Takademe, Ronald K. Brown’s Grace, and Wayne McGregor’s Chroma provide a cornucopia of sense memories for the audience. Ears take in the percussive vocal sounds of Takademe, the soaring melodies of spirituals in Revelations, and the kinetic rhythms of Fela Kuti from Grace. Eyes remember the deep browns and vivid yellows of Revelations, the spectrum of colors in Chroma against the light and dark of its set, and the lumi- nous whites and deep reds of Grace. Bones and muscles feel the push and sweep of Revelations, the angular geometries of Chroma, the release and fling of Grace, and the rhythmic flexions of Takademe. The brain, in turn, takes in and crafts words to express those sense memories. Because dance engages our senses, it invites us to make meanings for ourselves in individual ways. In this post performance lesson, students are encouraged to access their own sense memories of the performance, and create a collective poetic response.

OPENING ACTIVITY: SENSE MEMORIES

 10 minutes

Distribute 3-4 index cards per student with a pen or pencil for writing. Students will find their own space in the classroom for writing.

Begin by having them close their eyes and directing their attention to the performance they viewed.

Focus their attention on the sounds they heard in the performance: the words, lyrics, rhythms, melodies, stomping sounds or handclaps.

➤ *What did you hear?*

Ask students to write or draw their responses.

Next, focus their attention on the colors they saw by asking:

➤ *What colors stood out to you in the performance (costumes, sets)?*

Ask students to write or draw their responses.



AFTER THE PERFORMANCE LESSON IV

Through the Senses: A Memory Poem

(continued)

Have students focus their attention on any of the shapes they remember seeing the dancers make with their bodies.

Ask students to draw the shapes they remember seeing.

Finally, focus their attention on their own muscular responses to the performance:

- *What was a moment of tension?*
- *When were you surprised?*
- *What movement did you want to try?*

Ask students to write or draw their responses.

ACTIVITY 1:

ASSEMBLING OUR SENSE MEMORIES

 15 minutes

Divide the class into 4 groups.

Ask each group to begin in a corner of the room. Each corner will have one large piece of chart paper taped to the wall or floor with markers for writing.

The four chart papers will be labeled:

"I Hear..... "

"I See" "

"I Feel" "

"I Remember....."

The "I See....." chart paper will have an assortment of pastels, colored pencils and crayons.

Explain that each group will have 3-5 minutes to visit each corner and record their sense memories on the chart paper.



AFTER THE PERFORMANCE LESSON IV

Through the Senses: A Memory Poem

(continued)

After a signal from you, groups will rotate to the next corner.

The Four Sense Memory Corners:

"I Hear "

Record the sounds you remember in words. Write the lyrics, melodies and rhythms you heard.

"I See "

Using the pastels, colored pencils, markers and crayons, show the colors you remember. Use the colors to draw or record shapes, movements, and textures you saw.

"I Feel "

Using the markers or pencils, write or draw the emotions that came up for you.

I Remember"

Using words, phrases and descriptive language, describe a favorite moment from the performance

After students have made a full rotation of the room, ask them to do a "gallery walk" around the room to observe the memories written down by the whole class.

Ask your students:

- *What do you notice about these sense memories?*
- *Did one kind of sense memory seem especially powerful? Why do you say that?*
- *What surprised you about these sense memories?*



AFTER THE PERFORMANCE LESSON IV

Through the Senses: A Memory Poem

(continued)

ACTIVITY 2: SENSE MEMORY POEM

Ask each group to work together to create a “sense memory” poem. You may want to create smaller work groups depending on the size of the class.

Note: Depending on your class, you may choose to assign a poem structure for the “sense memory” poem. Some classes might tackle and enjoy free verse, such as spoken word or rap. Others might prefer the constraints of simple cinquain form:

Cinquain is a class of poetic forms that employs a 5-line pattern:

For example, you could suggest:

- 1) Noun
- 2) 2 Adjectives
- 3) 3 Verbs
- 4) 4 or 5 word phrase
- 5) Noun – repeat the first line or use a synonym

Give each group time to work and create. Encourage groups to incorporate colors, sounds, movement words, and descriptive words in their poems from the Four Sense Memory Corners. Groups may also add drawings, sounds, and/or movement to create a performance piece that compliments their poem.

CLOSING ACTIVITY: TRANSFORMING OUR SENSE MEMORIES

Ask groups to share their poems with the class.

The presenting group may choose to speak their poem or have someone outside the group read their poem out loud while they perform.

Ask observers:

- › *What do you notice about the poems?*
- › *How do the color, sound, and movement words connect us back to the performance?*
- › *Do you think we experience life/art through our senses in the same way? What makes you say that?*

 10 minutes

Example:

*cat
black, smooth
skipping, jumping, playing
pretends I am her prey
feline*

 10 minutes



Common Core Standards Addressed in this Guide

College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards for Reading

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS ELA-Literacy.CCR.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCR Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

CCSS ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on each others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

National Core Arts Standards Addressed in this Guide

Anchor Standard #7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard# 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard#11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Capacities for Imaginative Thinking Addressed in this Guide

At Lincoln Center Education (LCE), we value not only what is learned but how it is learned and believe that the people best prepared to perform in our dynamic world are those who think like artists. Artists solve problems, collaborate, communicate, imagine, persevere, and create. The Capacities for Imaginative Thinking is a learning framework designed to help learners interact meaningfully with a work of art and to develop habits of mind to enable them to think like artists.

(for the full list and definitions, see the next page.)

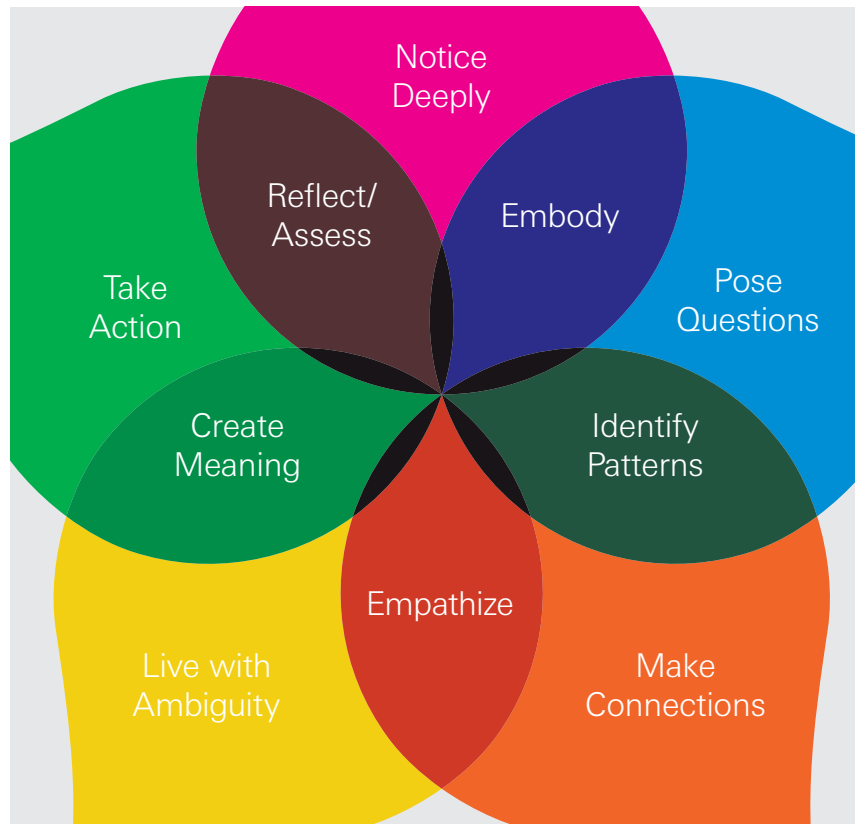
Notice Deeply: How many layers of detail can you identify if you take the time? Can you go deeper?

Embody: Use your body to explore your ideas. Try it out.

Make Connections: How is this like something else? Make personal, textual, and wider connections



Helping young minds perform in a dynamic world



NOTICE DEEPLY

How many layers of detail can you identify if you take the time? Can you go deeper?

EMBODY

Use your body to explore your ideas. Try it out.

POSE QUESTIONS

What do you wonder?

IDENTIFY PATTERNS

How might different details relate? Analyze them.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

How is this like something else? Make personal, textual, and wider connections.

EMPATHIZE

Can you understand how others think and feel? What are their perspectives?

LIVE WITH AMBIGUITY

What if there is not just one answer? Be patient with complexity.

CREATE MEANING

Bring together what you've thought so far. What new interpretations can you make?

TAKE ACTION

What will you choose to do with your ideas? Put them into practice.

REFLECT/ASSESS

Look back on what you've experienced. What have you learned? What's next?



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



CONTINUE YOUR EXPLORATION

Modern, African and Brazilian Dance

Modern Dance

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_dance

History of Modern Dance Student Handout

<http://www.balletaustin.org/education/documents/HistoryofModernDanceStudentHandout.pdf>

Common Ground / 5 Modern Techniques for the 21st Century
Dunham, Limón, Horton, Graham, and Cunningham demystified

By Lisa Traiger for Dance Magazine (March-April 2008 Volume 13 Issue 2)

<http://www.dancestudiolife.com/common-ground-5-modern-techniques-for-the-21st-century/>

African Dance

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/african_dance

Five(ish) Minute Dance Lesson: African Dance: Lesson 1: Dinhe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3W-YloW8Bw>

Katherine Dunham: Library of Congress Collection, includes tutorials of Dunham technique

<http://www.loc.gov/collections/katherine-dunham/>

Katherine Dunham Biography

<http://kdcah.org/katherine-dunham-biography/>

Lester Horton Technique Description and History

http://www.dancespirit.com/2009/04/Horton_Technique/

How to: Horton Technique

<https://vimeo.com/71110456>

Anna Sokolow Dance Foundation

<http://www.annasokolow.org/>

Capoeira class at The Ailey Extension

<https://vimeo.com/channels/ailey/29730425>



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



CONTINUE YOUR EXPLORATION

West African class at The Ailey Extension
<https://vimeo.com/channels/ailey/10725616>

Horton Technique class at The Ailey Extension
<https://vimeo.com/channels/ailey/10725553>

Ronald K. Brown teaches a master class at Harvard:
<http://youtu.be/gm1kHuNcg7w>

Katherine Dunham's influence on American modern dance:
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.ihas.200003839/default.html>

Lester Horton biography:
http://www.danceheritage.org/treasures/horton_essay_prevots.pdf

Katherine Dunham:
<http://www.danceheritage.org/dunham.html>

Alvin Ailey and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Website
<http://www.alvinailey.org/>

Alvin Ailey Biography
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alvin_Ailey

History and Timeline
<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/alvin-ailey-american-dance-theater/exhibition-items.html>

Documentary: *Beyond the Steps: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater*
Order at: <http://www.aileyshop.com/cd-dvds.html>

Book: *Alvin Ailey: A Life in Dance*.
Jennifer Dunning. New York, NY: De Capo Press. 1998.

Book: *Alvin Ailey*.
Andrea Davis Pinkney. New York, NY: Hyperion Books for Children. 1993.



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



CONTINUE YOUR EXPLORATION

Revelations by Alvin Ailey

Music from *Revelations: Revelations Audio Cd*
Order at: <http://www.aileyshop.com/cd-dvds.html>
Includes an 11-minute interview with Judith Jameson

Book: *Revelations: The Autobiography of Alvin Ailey*.
Alvin Ailey and A. Peter Bailey. Secaucus, NJ: Birch Lane Press. 1995.

Book: *Dancing Revelations: Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture*
By DeFrantz, Thomas

New York Times: Ailey dancers describe their experience of performing the different sections of *Revelations*
By Gia Kourlas, November 29, 2010
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/30/arts/dance/30revelations.html?_r=0

Spirituals Brief History
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_%28music%29

Comprehensive Guide to the History of Spirituals
<http://www.negrospirituals.com/index.html>

Video Clips of Modern Dance Choreographers

Anna Sokolow
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWivJg7T1sw>

Martha Graham
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb4-kpClZns>

Lester Horton
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uq--drAx11s>

Katherine Dunham
www.youtube.com/watch?v=FetuMAG0zBc
<http://www.loc.gov/item/ibas.200003869>



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



CONTINUE YOUR EXPLORATION

Additional Resources

My Story, My Dance: Robert Battle's Journey to Alvin Ailey

<http://www.amazon.com/My-Story-Dance-Battles-Journey/dp/1481422219>

Dance & Democracy: Politics & Protest, World War I Through the Cold War

http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=5611

This recorded lecture from the Library of Congress contextualizes Alvin Ailey's work alongside other modern dance luminaries

"Making Rich Tales of Diaspora Take Flight," *New York Times* February 12, 2008

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/12/arts/dance/12brow.html>

Choreographer, Ronald K. Brown

<http://www.evidencedance.com/#ronald-k-brown/cb08>

Choreographer, Robert Battle

<http://www.alvinailey.org/about/people/robert-battle>

Choreographer, Wayne McGregor

http://www.randomdance.org/wayne_mcgregor/biography



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

GRADES 9-12



Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

Lincoln Center, the world's foremost performing arts center, is a private non-profit organization. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts presents over 350 performances annually through its different performance series, and administers educational and community outreach programs.

The mission of Lincoln Center is fourfold: 1) to celebrate the performing arts with a dazzling array of programming, performed by an international roster of virtuoso artists; 2) to engage thousands of schoolchildren in active learning through its arts-in-education organization, Lincoln Center Education; 3) to extend the range of the performing arts presented at Lincoln Center, complementing the extraordinary offerings of the eleven other Lincoln Center Resident Companies, all of which are flagship institutions in the world of the arts; and 4) to provide support and services for the Resident Companies and the 16-acre Lincoln Center campus, which together make up the world's leading performing arts center.

Lincoln Center Education

Lincoln Center Education (LCE) is the educational cornerstone of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Founded in 1975 as Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education, LCE enriches the lives of students, educators and lifelong learners by providing opportunities for engagement with the highest-quality arts on the stage, in the classroom, digitally, and within the community. For four decades, LCE has offered unparalleled school and community partnerships, professional development workshops, consulting services, and its very own repertory of music, dance, theater and visual arts. LCE's work has reached more than 20 million students, teachers, school administrators, parents, community members, teaching artists, pre-service teachers, university professors and artists in New York City, across the nation and around the world.



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