



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER
LIFELONG LEARNERS



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.



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



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WELCOME

Welcome to the Great American Dance Learning Guide for lifelong learners. This arts appreciation study guide can be enjoyed by anyone between the ages 18 to 108. It is composed of four lesson plans designed around Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's performances of *Grace* by Ronald K. Brown 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 participants, 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 participants 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 *Grace* by Ronald K. Brown 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 Ronald K. Brown's *Grace* and Alvin Ailey's *Revelations* use extended and contracted movement, spacing, groupings, and polyrhythm to embody personal and collective histories?

PARTICIPANT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Understand some of the influences of choreographers Ronald K Brown and Alvin Ailey when they created their work, including the interwoven roles of personal history, African American Modern Dance, and dances of the African diaspora;
- Identify polyrhythm;
- Identify specific spacing and grouping choices;
- Analyze and make inferences about the relationships between the individual and the group in *Grace* and *Revelations*;
- Identify similarities and differences between *Grace* and *Revelations*



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON I

Exploring Extension and Contraction

Materials needed for this lesson:

- Lyrics from spirituals: Wade in the Water, Rocka My Soul, I've Been 'Buked included in the Lesson Printables*
- Paper and writing implements*

OPENING ACTIVITY: INTRODUCTION

 10 minutes

Ask participants to stand in a circle.

Explain that they will be experimenting with different ways of moving their bodies, including the movement ideas of extension and contraction.

Talk them through the series of prompts listed below, inviting them to explore what it means to extend. Begin with an exploration of the arms, and then gradually include the other parts of the body—the hands, legs, and torso

Ask your participants:

- *How can you reach or extend your arms?*
- *How can you extend your hands?*
- *How can you extend your legs?*
- *How can you extend your torso?*

After they have had a chance to explore, invite participants to share their experiences with the group:

- *What did you notice about performing these actions?*
- *How did it feel?*
- *What would the opposite of “extension” be and what would it look like?*

Invite participants to explore the opposite of extension, contraction.

As before, begin with an exploration of the arms and then the hands, legs, and torso. You can lead participants to return to their extended shapes before finding their contracted shapes. Encourage them to find a full range of movement for each part of the body—extending all the way out and then contracting all the way back in.

Ask participants:

- *How can you contract your arms?*
- *How can you contract your hands?*
- *How can you contract your legs?*
- *How can you contract your torso?*



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
LESSON I

**Exploring Extension and
Contraction**

(continued)

Ask participants:

- › *What did you notice about performing these actions?*
- › *How did it look?*
- › *How did it feel?*

Explain to participants that the movements of extension and contraction are foundational in modern dance.

OPTIONAL RESOURCES



Time permitting, you can share images from the [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater website](#) that demonstrate extension and contraction, and invite participants to come up with descriptive language that describes what they see.

ACTIVITY 1:

CREATING AN INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENT SEQUENCE

 **15 minutes**

Explain to participants that they will be creating a movement sequence they will need to remember and repeat later on.

To do this, ask participants to create two extension movements. They may choose which parts of the body they want to focus on.

Then, ask them to create two contraction movements. Again, their choice for which parts of the body they want to focus on.

Participants will develop a movement sequence by choosing an order in which they will perform their movements.

Once they have developed their movement sequence, ask participants to rehearse it. Their movement sequence will begin and end in stillness.



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON I

Exploring Extension and Contraction

(continued)

To recap:

Each movement sequence will include four movements in an order of the students' choice:

- › *2 different extension movements*
- › *2 different contraction movements*
- › *Participants will begin and end their sequence in stillness*

Ask participants:

- › *How might you move through your sequence to express great joy?*
- › *How might you move through your sequence to express great sorrow?*
- › *How might you move through your sequence to express faith?*
- › *What other emotions or states of being could you explore?*

Encourage participants to try out their movement sequences in different ways drawing inspiration from the discussion.

After participants have had the opportunity to explore their movements with feeling, ask them to share their movement sequences with the group.

Lead a brief discussion afterwards:

- › *What did you see?*
- › *How are your peers using extension and contraction to express feeling?*
- › *What mood or feelings do the movement choices elicit for you as a viewer and as a performer?*
- › *How did your own movement choices change when you began expressing an emotion?*



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON I

Exploring Extension and Contraction

(continued)

ACTIVITY 2: CONNECTING TO SPIRITUALS

DID YOU KNOW?

Alvin Ailey considered *Revelations* one of his “Blood Memory” pieces. The piece is derived from Ailey’s personal history growing up as an African American child in the poor, depression-era South. In *Revelations*, he draws specifically on memories from his childhood in the Southern Baptist church.

Share excerpts of the lyrics from “Wade in the Water,” “Rocka My Soul,” and “I’ve Been ‘Buked”.

It’s best to enlarge these lyrics and post them on the four walls of the room, so participants can see all of them at once.

Invite a participant to read each of the four sets of lyrics aloud to the group.

Wade in the Water

Wade in the water
Wade in the water, children
Wade in the water
God’s gonna trouble the water

Jordan’s water is chilly and cold
God’s gonna trouble the water
It chills the body, but not the soul
God’s gonna trouble the water

I’ve Been ‘Buked

I’ve been buked and I’ve been scorned, yes
I’ve been buked and I’ve been scorned, children
I’ve been buked and I’ve been scorned,
I’ve been talked about, show’s you’re born

There is trouble all over this world, yes
There is trouble all over this world, children
There is trouble all over this world
There is trouble all over this world

 10 minutes





BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
LESSON I

Exploring Extension and Contraction

(continued)

Rocka My Soul

Rocka my soul in the bosom of Abraham
Rocka my soul in the bosom of Abraham
Rocka my soul in the bosom of Abraham
Oh rocka my soul
Why don't you rocks my soul

I went down in the valley
To find time and peace to pray
I felt my soul so happy
That I sung my prayers all day

Ask participants to select one set of lyrics they would like to focus on.

Create groups of no more than 5 participants, organizing groups by lyric selections.

Ask each group to read through the lyrics once more and discuss their responses to the following questions:

- › *Imagine a setting for your lyrics. How would you describe this setting?*
- › *What are the lyrics trying to express?*
- › *What drew each of you to select this particular set of lyrics?*
- › *Do they connect to anything you've experienced in your own life?*
- › *Are there any connections between these lyrics and what you've experienced so far today?*

Explain to participants that they will be creating a movement phrase with their group that is inspired by their chosen lyrics. Their movement phrase will incorporate extension and contraction and will begin and end in stillness.

Groups may use some of their movement explorations from earlier in the lesson, but they may also decide to create new movement ideas collectively as a group.

They should focus on letting the overall feeling and imagery of their chosen lyrics inspire their movement choices of extension and contraction.



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
LESSON I

**Exploring Extension and
Contraction**

(continued)

To recap:

Each movement phrase will include six movements in an order of the group's choosing:

- 3 different extension movements
- 3 different contraction movements
- Groups will perform all movements together at the same time
- Groups will begin and end in stillness

ACTIVITY 3:

VIEWING CREATIONS

 10 minutes

View each group's creation one at a time.

Ask participants:

- › *How did each group use extension and contraction?*
- › *How did each group allow the lyrics to inspire them?*
- › *What do you notice about the individuals in the group?*
- › *What do you notice about the whole group?*
- › *How would you describe the mood or feeling in each group's creation?*

OPTIONAL RESOURCES



Time permitting, view each group's creation once more to the corresponding music:

I've Been 'Buked (Lesson I, Slide 30)

Wade in the Water (Lesson I, Slide 30)

Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham (Lesson I, Slide 30)

Ask participants:

- › *What changes do you notice when the phrases are performed to music?*



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON I

Exploring Extension and Contraction

(continued)

ACTIVITY 4: EXPLORING CONTEXT

Watch a Horton technique class at the Ailey Extension:
<https://vimeo.com/channels/ailey/10725553>

DID YOU KNOW?

Lester Horton was a key figure in American Modern Dance. He was one of Ailey's major influences—Ailey studied and danced with Horton as a young man living in California. Ailey eventually took over the direction of Horton's dance company after Horton died. At the time, Ailey had only been dancing for a few short years.

Ask participants:

What do you notice about the movement in this video clip?

Based on what you've seen, how is Horton Technique similar or different to the movements you created?

View a contraction performed in the Katherine Dunham Technique:
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/natl/lib/ahas/warehouse/dunham/200003853/seg01/0001.mpg>

DID YOU KNOW?

Katherine Dunham was also an influence on Ailey, and Dunham technique is still taught at the Ailey School. Dunham was a dancer, choreographer, educator, and an anthropologist who studied dances of the African diaspora, engaging in extensive ethnographic study of the dance forms of the Caribbean. She was a very influential figure in African American Modern Dance and had her own company for close to 30 years. She was a notable stage and film performer having performed on Broadway and traveled extensively as an international artist. One of Ailey's own formative dance experiences as a young man was seeing Katherine Dunham perform in *Tropical Review*.

Ask participants:

› *What do you notice about the movement in this video clip?*

› *How is the Dunham contraction similar or different to the contractions you created?*

 10 minutes





BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
LESSON I

Exploring Extension and Contraction

(continued)

CLOSING ACTIVITY
DISCUSSION

🕒 5 minutes

Ask participants to return to a circle.

Once again, guide them through the explanation of extension and contraction using different parts of the body:

- *How can you extend your arms?*
- *How can you extend your hands?*
- *How can you extend your legs?*
- *How can you extend your torso?*
- *How can you contract your arms?*
- *How can you contract your hands?*
- *How can you contract your legs?*
- *How can you contract your torso?*

Lead a brief discussion:

- *How did today's lesson affect your movement choices?*
- *How did the videos affect your movement choices?*



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
LESSON II

Polyrhythm

Materials needed for this lesson:

- *Gabriel by Roy Davis Jr. (Lesson II, Slide 20)*
Shakara by Fela Kuti & Africa 70 (Lesson II, Slide 12)
- *Black paper with red and white oil pastels OR paper with crayons or markers*

OPENING ACTIVITY
INTRODUCTION

 **5 minutes**

Bring participants into a standing circle.

Lead participants through a brief movement exercise in which everyone takes deep breaths in and deep breaths out. Guide everyone to reach their arms up on the inhale and back down toward the ground on the exhale.

Do this several times, emphasizing deep breathing and the reaching of arms upwards and downwards.

Now, ask participants to bring their hands to their heart and to find a comfortable stance. They will bring their focus inwards and listen to their beating hearts—participants are encouraged to close their eyes.

Have participants tap their hands on their chests to express this beating rhythm.

Have them bring this rhythm into their feet. Hands and feet should be moving together.

Ask participants to feel one another's rhythm and to find a "groove" that connects everyone's movement together—eventually everyone will be stepping to the same beat.

While the foot-stepping rhythm continues, ask participants:

➤ *Who can add to or change the rhythm?*

Select a volunteer to lead a change in rhythm. Continue moving all together as a group while keeping up with the change in rhythm.

➤ *Who can add to or change the rhythm using the other parts of the body to stomp, clap, tap, snap, etc.?*

Select different volunteers to lead changes in rhythm. Continue moving all together as a group while keeping up with the changes.

Ask participants:

➤ *What did you notice about the exercise we just did?*

➤ *How would you describe the rhythms we just made?*



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
LESSON II

Polyrhythm

(continued)

ACTIVITY 1:
EMBODYING RHYTHM

 **10 minutes**

Play *Shakara* by Fela Kuti & Africa 70 in Lesson II, Slide 12

Return to the stepping circle and respond to the rhythm of the music.

Once you have the group moving, encourage participants to move in their own way as a response to the music.

Ask participants:

› *How can you express the music using another part of your body?*

Explain that the expression doesn't have to make a sound as our feet did in the first exploration.

Possible movement responses can include the hands, shoulders, backs, and hips.

After giving participants a few minutes to practice their new movement response, go around the circle and have each participant share their movement choice.

Stop the music.

Ask participants:

› *What changed once you started moving to music?*

› *How did one person's expression influence another's?*

Replay the music.

Select 3 volunteers to perform their movement choices for the rest of the group.

Ask the following questions encouraging participants to compare/contrast and make connections to the 3 interpretations:

› *What is similar about their movement choices?*

› *What is different?*



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON II

Polyrhythm

(continued)

ACTIVITY 2: DRAWING RHYTHM

SHARE THIS TERM WITH YOUR GROUP¹:

Polyrhythm is the simultaneous use of two or more conflicting rhythms, that are not readily perceived as deriving from one another, or as simple manifestations of the same meter. The rhythmic conflict may be the basis of an entire piece of music (cross-rhythm), or a momentary disruption. Polyrhythms can be distinguished from irrational rhythms, which can occur within the context of a single part; polyrhythms require at least two rhythms to be played concurrently, one of which is typically an irrational rhythm.

DID YOU KNOW?

Polyrhythm, or using more than one rhythm at once, factors heavily in most African music, jazz music, and in the Fela Kuti selections we just heard. Choreographer Ronald K Brown uses these polyrhythms in his dance piece, *Grace*.

Hand out black paper with red and white oil pastels OR paper with crayons or markers.

Play *Gabriel* by Roy Davis Jr. in Lesson II, Slide 20.

Ask participants to draw what they hear.

Invite them to choose one sound or instrument from the music and to pay close attention to its rhythm. Each individual will choose one color, and with that color they will draw a visual representation of what they hear that instrument doing.

This may take many forms: dots, lines, contours, zig-zags, etc. Each participant will determine for themselves their own graphic representation of what they hear.

Have them select a second color focusing on a different instrument or sound in the music.

They will draw their response to this sound.

 5 minutes



¹ <http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyrhythm>





BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON II

Polyrhythm

(continued)

Ask participants:

- › *What do you notice about your drawing?*
- › *How did the music influence you?*

Display everyone's drawings so that they can be observed.

Have your group compare and contrast their own drawing with those of their peers.

- › *What do you notice about your peers' drawings?*
- › *How do you think the music influenced him or her?*

ACTIVITY 3: CREATING IN GROUPS

Divide participants into groups of 4–5.

 10 minutes

Have participants continue comparing and contrasting their drawings with those of their peers.

They will use this discussion as a means of creating a physical response to the Fela Kuti music.

Each group will select three drawings to work from. The groups will look at all three drawings as inspiration for movements they can remember and repeat.

They may draw inspiration from the movements they performed at the beginning of class.

They may also discover new movement choices together.

To recap:

Each group will create a movement phrase that includes 3 expressions of the music performed in a sequence of Movement 1, Movement 2, and Movement 3:

- **Movement 1: Physical expression of Drawing #1**
- **Movement 2: Physical expression of Drawing #2**
- **Movement 3: Physical expression of Drawing #3**

ACTIVITY 4:



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON II

Polyrhythm

(continued)

SHARING

Bring participants back into the circle.

Replay the music. Have each group share their movement phrase while the rest of the participants observe.

Ask observers:

- › What did you notice about the different ways they interpreted the music?
- › What did you notice about the interplay between the individual and the group?
- › What did their dance remind you of?

🕒 15 minutes

ACTIVITY 5: EXPLORING CONTEXT

Share this interview in which Ronald K. Brown discusses his creative influences:
<http://www.theaterjones.com/ntx/features/20150115142601/2015-01-15/QA-Ronald-K-Brown>

🕒 10 minutes

Excerpt:

Question: You have traveled all over the world experiencing different dance cultures. What dance styles did you encounter?

Answer: When I traveled to West Africa in 1995 I think my exposure to traditional, social, contemporary and spiritual dancing helped me understand where I stood in this continuum of contemporary dance. Before that I think I was nervous about using traditional dance steps. I would deconstruct the rhythm or play with the technique but realized I wanted to do something else. And when I started working there I was told that when you touch African dance it automatically becomes something else. A similar thing happened when I went to Cuba for the first time in 2001. I was exposed to traditional and social dances that really broadened my vocabulary and my eye. There is this one style I encountered in Senegal called sabar that makes sense to my body, but then Afro-Cuban also feels really good on my body. And I incorporate all these techniques into my movement vocabulary.

Next, share this video of a West African dance class from Ailey's Extension program: <https://vimeo.com/channels/ailey/10725616>



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON II

Polyrhythm

(continued)

Ask participants to make connections between what they noticed in the dance video and what Ronald K. Brown discussed in his interview with TheaterJones.com.

› *What connections can you make between the West African dance video and Ronald K. Brown interview with what you did in today's lesson?*

CLOSING ACTIVITY:

DANCE CIRCLE

Bring participants back into the circle.

Play either music selection from the beginning.

- *Gabriel* by Roy Davis Jr. (Lesson II, Slide 20)

- *Shakara* by Fela Kuti & Africa 70 (Lesson II, Slide 12)

Have participants find the rhythm in their feet once again.

As they move, invite them to think back to what they learned in today's lesson, ie. what they learned about polyrhythm, Ronald K. Brown, African Dance, etc.

Encourage participants to find their own way of moving in the circle.

Invite one participant at a time to take a turn entering the circle and performing a solo movement.

 5 minutes



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
LESSON III

Exploring Group
Formations

Materials needed for this lesson:

- Chart paper and markers
- Drum or other percussion instrument

OPENING ACTIVITY:
CLOSE AND FAR

 10 minutes

Explain to participants that they are going to explore the room.

Invite participants to look around the room and find a spot to move towards. Participants will go and stand at their spot in the room.

Ask participants:

➤ *How would you describe where you are in the space?*

Use a drum or other percussion instrument to provide a steady beat inviting participants to walk to a new spot in the room along with the beating of the drum.

Stop beating the drum.

➤ *How would you describe your new spot in the room?*

➤ *How would you describe your location in relationship to someone else in the room?*

Restart beating the drum.

Invite participants to walk again to the beat. Tell them that they should stop walking as soon as the drum beating stops.

Stop beating the drum. Everyone should have stopped walking.

Ask participants to notice the distance between themselves and another person:

➤ *How close are you to this person?*

➤ *How far are you from them?*

Continue beating the drum. Participants should resume their walking.

Ask participants to make eye contact with one other person to signal that they have selected one another. From this point on, they should keep track of each other.

As soon as the music stops, participants will stop and focus on their selected partner from their spot in the room.

➤ *Where are you in relation to your selected partner?*



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON III

Exploring Group Formations

(continued)

Invite participants to continue doing this each time the music starts and stops. You will use the drum beat to guide participants through the activity. This exercise is intended to play with the idea of intentional spacing—choosing to be close or far from someone in a deliberate way.

Ask participants:

- › *What did you notice about your choices as you moved through the space?*
- › *What did you notice about others' choices?*
- › *Did any groups form as a result of this exercise?*

Continue beating the drum. Invite participants to find multiple partners in the room through eye contact.

- › *Can you create small or large groups through eye contact alone?*

Allow participants 2 or 3 chances to form different arrangements of groupings, stopping and starting to the beating of the drum.

As the last round of drum beating dies down, invite participants to freeze into a shape or position of their choosing.

ACTIVITY 1:

SPATIAL FORMATION

This activity is an opportunity for participants to share their prior knowledge of dance.

In this activity, we will explore what we already know about dance and dance formations. For example, consider the Radio City Rockettes in their famous kickline, country line dancers dancing in groups of 2 or more, and ballroom dancers sharing a dance floor?

Ask participants:

- › *What kind of spatial relationships can dancers make?*
- › *What kind of group formations can dancers make?*

Record participant responses on a sheet of chart paper.

 10 minutes





BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON III

Exploring Group Formations

(continued)

Possible responses can include: straight lines, circles, pairings or groupings where dancers are oriented far apart or close together, and dances performed as a solo (1 person), duet (2 people), trio (3 people), etc.

Invite someone from the group to draw a diagram or line drawing for every spatial formation and grouping that participants come up with. This line drawing can be drawn directly on the chart paper, next to the word or words it is helping to illustrate.

Ask participants to work in groups and create 3-4 of the group formations listed on the chart paper.

Use the drum to keep a steady rhythm as participants move into their first formation. When you stop beating the drum, participants should freeze into position.

Call the group's attention to what they have created in the space.

Continue this exercise another 2-3 times allowing participants to explore different formations.

ACTIVITY 2: CREATING DANCES

 10 minutes

Divide participants into groups of 6.

Explain to participants that they will be creating a movement phrase that includes extended and contracted movements, polyrhythm, and group formations.

Each group should begin by having each participant share a favorite movement of their choice from the first lesson (extension and contraction) and a favorite movement of their choice from the second lesson (polyrhythm).

As soon as each person shares their favorite movements, participants will perform those movements all together as a group.

Make sure that every participant has a chance to share their favorite movements with the group.

Groups will perform all 12 movements in an order of their choosing. Depending on your participants, you may want to have paper and writing implements available so they can write down their order.



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON III

Exploring Group Formations

(continued)

This will be a long phrase, and participants can continue to “follow the leader” as each offers their movements in turn.

The group should work together to perform all 12 movements at the same time. However, participants should be encouraged to make each movement their own by allowing their contribution or individual movement quality to shine through.

Ask participants:

› *How can you perform your “favorite movements” in a way that will allow your personality to show through?*

Allow some time for groups to rehearse their movement phrases.

Then, have each group select one spatial formation they can include in their movement phrase. Participants will perform their group dance while maintaining this spatial formation.

Give them additional time to work.

Lastly, invite participants to select one member from their group to perform a solo. This participant will repeat one of their favorite movements as a solo while everyone else in the group pauses.

Ask the group to decide:

› *Who do we want to be our soloist?*

› *When should the solo happen in the group dance?*

As participants continue to work, play the selected music tracks and ask participants to think about which music they’d like to perform to.*

- *I’ve Been Buked* (Lesson III, Slide 30)

- *Wade in the Water* (Lesson III, Slide 30)

- *Rocka My Soul* in the Bosom of Abraham (Lesson III, Slide 30)

** Silence is also a possibility.*



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON III

Exploring Group Formations

(continued)

ACTIVITY 3: SHARING DANCES

 10 minutes

View each group's creation with the music of their choice.

Ask participants:

- › *What did you notice?*
- › *Did you see elements of extension and contraction? Of polyrhythm? Explain.*
- › *How would you describe the group as a whole?*
- › *Did you notice someone's personality shine through, even as the group moved together in unison? Explain.*
- › *How would you describe the overall mood of the group dance?*
- › *If this were a scene in a play, what do you think might be happening?*

ACTIVITY 4: EXPLORING CONTEXT

 15 minutes

Share the two videos below, and ask the corresponding questions.

<http://www.alvinailey.org/about/company/alvin-aley-american-dance-theater/reper-tory/revelations>

and

<https://vimeo.com/17307366>

Ask participants:

- › *What does this video reveal about Alvin Ailey's influences?*
- › *What does it reveal about his process of creating Revelations?*
- › *What questions does it leave you with prior to viewing the work?*

A Podcast Featuring Ronald K Brown:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zh38BnlqVoQ>



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE LESSON III

Exploring Group Formations

(continued)

Ask participants:

- › *What does this video reveal about Ronald K. Brown's influences?*
- › *What does it reveal about his process of creating dances?*
- › *What questions does it leave you with prior to viewing the work?*

CLOSING ACTIVITY

CONCLUSION

Ask participants:

- › *Based on what we've done in the last three lessons, what questions do you have about the works you are about to see?*

Invite each student to take their question with them when they view the performance. This question will serve as a lens through which to view the work.

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

 5 minutes



AFTER THE PERFORMANCE LESSON IV

Reflection

OPENING ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

🕒 5 minutes

Bring participants into a circle. Have them close their eyes and think about the following:

- › *What did you notice about the performance?*
- › *Can you remember a time in which extension and contraction were used?*
- › *Did you notice elements of polyrhythm? How?*
- › *What was a favorite moment from the performance?*

Ask participants to open their eyes.

Go around the circle and have each participant share a movement they recall from the performance using only their bodies.

ACTIVITY 1: REFLECTING

🕒 5 minutes

Now move into a group discussion about the performance.

Ask participants:

- › *What did you notice about the performance?*
- › *Did you see elements of extension and contraction? Of Polyrhythm?*
- › *Did you notice any interesting relationships among the dancers, ie. as individuals or in a group?*
- › *What was similar about Grace and Revelations?*
- › *What was different about Grace and Revelations?*
- › *How would you say the mood shifted throughout each piece?*
- › *If choreographers Ronald K. Brown and Alvin Ailey drew inspiration from their life experiences, could you envision what some of those experiences might have been?*

Lastly, if it has not come up already, revisit the questions that were shared pre-performance. Discuss the questions that are relevant to the performance.



AFTER THE PERFORMANCE LESSON IV

Reflection

(continued)

ACTIVITY 2: AILEY'S HISTORY

Divide participants into groups of 4.

Each group will focus on one section of the Library of Congress's online exhibition:

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater: 50 Years Cultural Ambassador to the World
<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/alvin-ailey-american-dance-theater/exhibition-items.html>

DID YOU KNOW?

This online exhibit includes many photos of Alvin Ailey and the company, and a comprehensive bio of Alvin Ailey written as timeline and thematically. It includes a lot of information on *Revelations*, so depending on the size of your class, you might select only those pages or you might select some of the pivotal moments from the timeline to work with.

You may choose to post different excerpts around the room, print and distribute select pages to each group, or have computers available for participants to pull up the online exhibit.

Once groups have read their chosen section, ask them to create a **tableau** (or "still image") in response to what they have read.

DID YOU KNOW?

In a **tableau**, participants make **still images** with their bodies to represent a scene.
— The tableau technique can be used to explore a particular moment in a story or drama, or to replicate a photograph or artwork for deeper analysis.²

For this activity, participants will create a tableau with their bodies to represent either:

- A photograph they've just viewed where they take on the body positions of the individuals in the photograph;

Or

- A key moment in Alvin Ailey's personal history

 20 minutes



²<http://dramaresource.com/strategies/tableaux>



AFTER THE PERFORMANCE LESSON IV

Reflection

(continued)

Have groups share their tableaux (plural of *tableau*) one by one, so that everyone can observe their peers' creative choices.

After each group performs their tableau, invite the group to share the content of their article and/or photo selection.

ACTIVITY 3:

EXPLORING AILEY AND BROWN'S BODY OF WORK

🕒 20 minutes

View the following selections of Ronald K. Brown and Alvin Ailey's dance work:

- Alvin Ailey's *Blues Suite*: <https://vimeo.com/10184571>

And/or

- Alvin Ailey's *Cry*: <https://vimeo.com/16903021>

- Ronald K. Brown's *Four Corners*: <http://www.alvinailey.org/four-corners>

Ask participants to compare and contrast these dance selections with the elements they saw in *Grace* and *Revelations*. Excerpts included in Lesson IV slides.

If there are specific questions about the dance works that come up in conversation, you may invite participants to go back and rewatch those sections.

Ask participants:

- *Based on seeing these new excerpts alongside Grace and Revelations, how would you describe Alvin Ailey's choreographic style?*
- *How would you describe Ronald K. Brown's?*
- *What elements are similar between the two choreographers approaches?*
- *What elements are different?*



AFTER THE PERFORMANCE LESSON IV

Reflection

(continued)

CLOSING ACTIVITY

CONCLUSION

Ask participants to identify something they are still curious about and to think of a specific question they have. Suggest that this could lead them toward additional research in the future.

Have participants return to the opening circle.

Ask each person to perform their movement from the beginning of the session (derived from a moment they remember in the performance), and then ask their question aloud.

Point participants towards the “Continue Your Exploration” portion of this guide as a resource for further information.

 10 minutes



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.

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.)

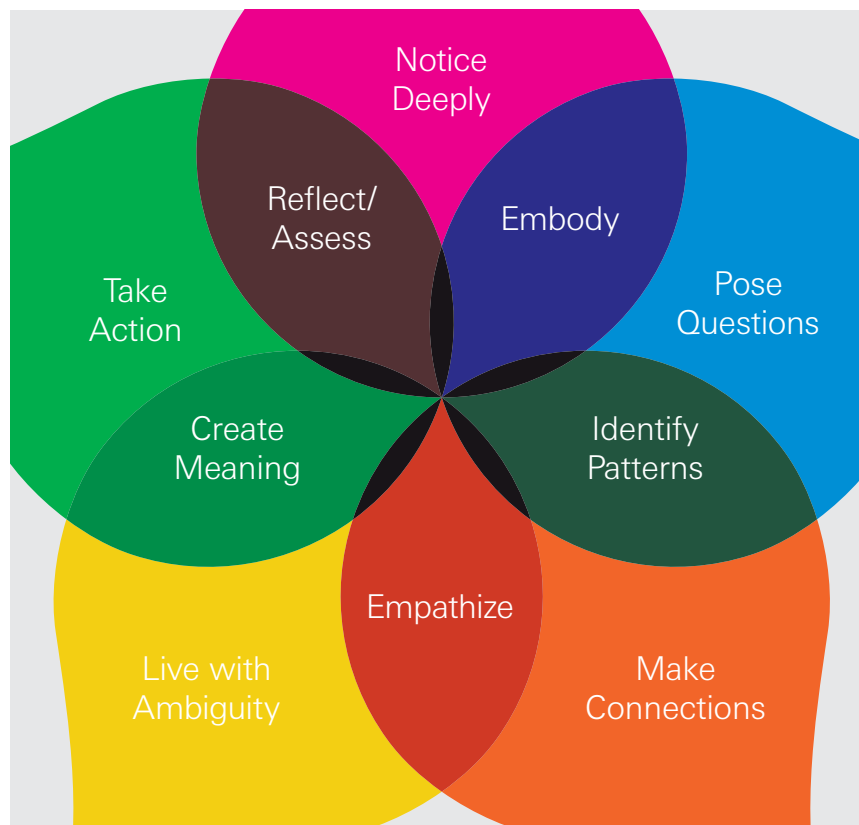
Notice Deeply: How many layers of detail can you identify if you take the time? Can you go deeper?

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?



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>



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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

LIFELONG LEARNERS



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=FetuMAGOzBc
<http://www.loc.gov/item/ibas.200003869>



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

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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



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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