

# Folk Dancing Fun

## Summary

Students will learn about different cultures through dance.

## Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 1st Grade

[Standard 1 Objective 1](#)

## Materials

CD player

- *Children's Folk Dances*  
music CD by Georgiana Stewart
- Large world map or globe

## Additional Resources

### Books

- *Dance a while: handbook of folk, square, contra, & social dance*  
, by Jane Harris, Anne Pittman, and Marlys S. Waller; ISBN 0-02-350581-8

### CDs

- *Children's Folk Dances*  
, by Georgiana Stewart ( [Kimbo Educational](#), 1-800-631-2187); Item #KIM 9149CD; ISBN 1-56346-090-4
- *Folk Dance Fun*  
, by Georgiana Stewart ( [Kimbo Educational](#), 1-800-631-2187); Item #KIM 7037; ISBN 1-56346-021-1
- *Joining Hands With Other Lands*  
, by Jackie Weissman Silberg ( [Kimbo Educational](#), 1-800-631-2187); Item #KIM9130CD; ISBN 5829-29130-2
- *Sea Tunes for Kids*  
, by Brent Holmes ( [Fun Tunes For Kids](#), 1-800-431-1579); ISBN 0-9719357-0-X
- *Simple Folk Dances*  
, by Georgiana Stewart ( [Kimbo Educational](#), 1-800-631-2187; Item #KIM 07042CD; ISBN 1-56346-120-X

## Background for Teachers

Teachers don't need to be dancers to teach dance to their students. Through inviting music and simple choreography, dance is an exciting way to help students understand different cultures, including their own. Students should have background knowledge in the concepts of personal and group space before learning folk dancing. Simple musical concepts, including rhythm, are helpful but not necessary for students to achieve success. If you have students with limited movement abilities, refer to the adaptations section at the end of this lesson.

Although the following lesson will detail only one dance from the people of Hawaii, dances from other countries and cultures could easily be taught throughout the year following the same instructional procedures. Each teacher will have a different cultural focus based on the population and background of her classroom. Students will be interested in different dances based on the countries of both their relatives and their friends. Specific dances can be connected to events, like the Olympics, and holidays, like Chinese New Year.

The following words will also facilitate dance education. These words were taken directly from the Utah First Grade Core Curriculum, Math III-2. Spatial relationship vocabulary: between, before, after, middle, left, right, closer, and farther.

Folk dancing can be taught in a classroom or a bigger space if available. Clear the dancing space of objects.

Keep in mind that children will mirror their teacher when learning a dance. Practice doing the dance in the opposite direction of the students if you are facing them or face the same direction as the students if you want to move the same direction as the dancers.

### Intended Learning Outcomes

6. Communicate clearly in oral, artistic, written, and nonverbal form.

### Instructional Procedures

#### Invitation to Learn

Ask students to think-pair-share with a partner about the different kinds of music they have heard. Have several students tell the class their ideas.

Next, ask students to think-pair-share with a partner about places they know. These could include cities, states or countries where the child or his family has lived, where he has visited, or where he would like to go. As before, have several students tell their ideas to the whole class.

Ask students if they know if some of the places they have mentioned have music specific to that culture. Lead a short discussion on how music can relate to different places and cultures.

Ask students to again think-pair-share about certain music their families use at different times. For instance, a special song at bedtime or a song learned from a grandparent. Allow several students to talk.

Explain to students that they are going to hear music and learn a dance about the culture of Hawaii.

#### Instructional Procedures

(Use the following directions with any song from any folk dancing CD. Details such as the country and the specific dance steps will change, but the format will stay the same.)

Ask students to listen to a short part of "Ulili E," track 13 from the *Children's Folk Dances* CD.

Ask students if the sound of the music made them think of a specific place. Guide their answers toward Hawaii by talking about the sound of the music and the references to the sea. Ask students to think-pair-share anything they know about Hawaii. Again, have several students tell their ideas. Discuss and clarify. Using a globe or map, show students where Hawaii is located.

Ask students to listen carefully to the entire song. Explain to them that the words alternate between Hawaiian and English. The English words tell what the Hawaiian words mean.

Discuss with students what they think the song means. "Ulili E" talks about a sandpiper; define sandpiper and any other words the students might not know.

Teach students to find their own space on the floor facing you. Tell them to think about what is happening in the story and to make-up movements to parts of the song. Some students may choose to watch.

Compliment students on any movements they tried. Tell them when people folk dance, there are certain movements everybody does together.

Teach the students the following sequence of steps. These steps are also described in the CD booklet. Explain the steps, practice the steps, and start and stop the CD as needed.

Children stand, knees slightly bent, arms out to the side. Body sways with a slight circular motion.

On "a little sandpiper," children hop gently, alternating feet, gradually moving forward.

On "a great big wave," they raise both arms in front over head and swoop them down towards the floor, as if it were a big wave splashing.

With tiny steps, they run backwards and begin the sequence again.  
Continue practicing until students are able to perform the entire dance comfortably. This may take several days.

### Extensions

#### Curriculum Extensions/Adaptations/ Integration

- Invite students to draw or describe the dance in their journals.
- Ask students to bring items they might have from Hawaii (or the country of the song you are teaching).
- Provide copies of the English lyrics to advanced learners and have them memorize and sing the words.
- Encourage advanced students to find cultural music and choreograph their own dances.
- Adapt the choreography for students who may not be able to use their whole body. Students could tap their hands to the beat or sit in a chair while performing.
- Allow reluctant performers or those who need more assistance to perform the dance while holding a partner's hand.
- Teach more vocabulary to ESL students. Explain the dance with words while you do the dance.
- Have students write a story about an idea from the dance.
- Ask students to write a description about the setting of the song.
- Assign students to write a poem about part of the song.
- Ask students to figure out how many times the lyrics repeat.
- Teach patterns and counting in music.
- Demonstrate to students how to clap, snap, and pat the rhythm of the song.

#### Family Connections

- Encourage students to explain the song (since families won't have the music) and perform the dance at home.
- Perform the dance or dances at a Folk Dancing Night for parents.

### Assessment Plan

- Continually observe and provide help to students.
- Divide the children into smaller groups. Allow them time to practice. Then have them take turns performing while the rest of the group watches as the audience.
- Ask students to self-assess their dancing using the [My Folk Dance rubric](#).

### Bibliography

#### Research Basis

- Goetz Zwirn, S., & Graham, M. (2005). Crossing borders: The arts engage academics and inspire children. *Childhood Education*, 81(6), 267-273.
- Successful arts education influences effective, multicultural experiences. Dance and other fine art activities make connections between what the student learns at school and what he knows at home. These connections can further understanding of the mingling of cultures.
- Clark, R. (2002). Performance assessment in the arts. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, Volume 39 (Issue 1), pp. 29-32.
- Performance assessment methods, including well-constructed rubrics, allow teachers to assess students easily and equitably. Rubrics inform students of specific criteria that will be assessed.

### Authors

[Utah LessonPlans](#)