

Kaitlyn Hardiman | Session 1:

Diggin' Up the Roots: History of Tap

List of Required Supplies:

- Screen for PowerPoint/videos
- Students computers or worksheets

Additional Links :

Optional PowerPoint:

https://www.canva.com/design/DAE40LPeBv4/n3Wf2ljq3SDnInBk3kAeXw/view?utm_content=DAE40LPeBv4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton

Space/Facility Requirements: Tables and chairs would be ideal for this lesson plan, but students can also sit on floor during lecture if in dance room

Student Time Required: 45 minutes

Step-by-step Instructions:

- 1) Introduce the first lesson of the unit - [History of Tap](#)
 - a) Begin with a discussion with the class by asking, "What is tap?"
 - i) Have students write their own definition of what they think tap dance is.
 - ii) Once students have written their definition, take time to share what they think tap is.
 - b) Define tap dance for the students:
 - i) Tap is a style of dance that requires a specialized shoe with both heel and toe metal taps that allow the dancer to create audible beats when rhythmically striking the ground.
 - c) Show students a quick one-minute example of tap dance

- i) This can be done by either A) showing the dancers yourself with your own tap shoes and small combo or B) pulling up a quick YouTube video to watch.
- d) Ask the students
 - i) After watching an example of tap dance, what two cultural dance styles do you think formed this dance style? Why?
- e) Share with students:
 - i) While there are a few theories as to how tap dance originated, one of the most well-known theories is that the dance form began to originate in the early 19th century by merging African and Irish dance movements.
 - ii) How did this happen?
 - (1) Irish indentured servants and African enslaved individuals worked alongside each other for over a century in 19th century America, where they were able to learn about and take part in each other's cultures and traditions.
 - (2) Slave owners took away traditional African instruments. To help keep their culture alive, enslaved Africans began to use percussive type dancing to express themselves, and to communicate without speaking.
- f) Compare and contrast original tap shoes to today's tap shoes:
 - i) Show a picture of original tap shoes and modern day tap shoes side by side and have students compare and contrast the differences between the two.
 - (1) Original: Wooden soles with either a penny or small piece of metal screwed into the heel
 - (2) Modern: Large, metal taps on both the heel and toe and has rubber sole that can be flexible depending on the shoe
- g) Introduce Master Juba, the father of tap dance.
 - i) He was known as the father of tap dance because he created new techniques and rhythms by blending European (Irish) and African styles of dance, known at the time as Juba Dance.

- ii) He was also one of the first African Americans who toured with white dancers and performed for white audiences.
 - (1) Find and watch an example of Juba dance on YouTube and ask the following afterwards:
 - (a) Did Juba's dance style resemble tap dance? Why or why not?
 - (b) Describe how the dancer in the video was moving.
 - (c) Did you see any movements that resembled Irish dance?
 - (d) What about African dance?
- h) Tap dance today
 - i) Tap dance has transformed over the years into a technical dance style that can be seen all over the world. This dance style is popular in multiple areas such as on Broadway and in commercialized dance.
 - ii) Show a one- to two-minute video of a modern tap dancer.
 - (1) Discuss:
 - (a) After watching the video, in what ways is tap dance similar today to when it first began?
 - (b) In what ways is it different?
- i) Exit ticket:
 - i) Have students answer the following on their own as a reflection of what they learned:
 - (1) What two cultures merged to eventually form tap dance?
 - (2) Why did enslaved Africans begin to use percussive type movements?
 - (3) What were original tap shoes made out of?
 - (4) Who was the father of tap dance?
 - (5) Why do you think tap dance is an important dance style to learn about?