

# ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

• middle school •  
• elementary • • high school •

title

## Verbs and Adverbs

skill



dance



theatre

about the strategy

Students construct verb and adverb lists, then combine them imaginatively to create choreographed dances. This process encourages them to move past stereotypical movements to explore the nuances and details of actions. This is a particularly effective strategy for helping second language learners become familiar with English vocabulary.

visual

watching and interpreting one another's movements

auditory

matching words to movements

kinesthetic

moving to show nuances and combinations of actions

instructional steps

objective

Students combine verbs and adverbs to create and recognize details of movement, then create choreographed dances using the movements. Note: locomotor movement means moving through space (walking, running etc.); non-locomotor movement is movement that is executed in one place (waving, reaching, kicking, etc.).

materials

Flip chart or stick-on notes

Markers

Open space

procedure

### 1. Listing Verbs

- Collect action words (verbs) on a flip chart or stick-on notes in one of the following ways:
  - Teacher observes students as they work or play and records their actions.
  - Students watch other students, and write down observed actions.
  - Students and teacher brainstorm together and create a list of locomotor, non-locomotor, and gesture action words.
- Write the list of verbs on the left half of a flip chart page, categorizing them as locomotor, non-locomotor, or gesture.
- Demonstrate several actions in movement or ask a volunteer to demonstrate.

## Verbs and Adverbs

instructional steps

procedure

### 2. Listing Adverbs

- Brainstorm a list of words ending in -ly (adverbs) on the right half of the flip chart page, focusing on opposites, for example: loudly/softly, angrily/happily, clumsily/gracefully, inconspicuously/obviously, self-consciously/brazenly.

### 3. Combining Verbs and Adverbs

- Choose a combination of one verb and one adverb, and try the corresponding action. Each student develops three distinct actions.
- Share the movements with a partner, each determining what the verb/adverb combination is.
- Each pair of students chooses and combines one action from each partner into a longer pattern.

### 4. Expanding the Patterns

- Share the movement pattern with another pair, then choose elements from both patterns to create a longer movement sequence.
- Discuss possibilities for combining patterns, including:
  - Performing one after the other
  - Performing them both at the same time
  - Choosing half of one and half of the other
  - Choosing one movement and repeating it over and over

### 5. Refining and Sharing

- Refine the movement into a short choreographed piece, perhaps combining with another foursome to have 8 dancers.
- Practice, assess, and revise until it is ready to perform.
- Share with others.
- Identify the verb/adverb combinations used by others in their dances.

## Verbs and Adverbs

strategy for curricular connections



language arts

- Use verb/adverb combinations in descriptive writing assignments.
- Write a story based on the sequence of actions in the group performance. This could be done as a storyboard.
- Note that students must use good oral communication skills to share and shape their choreography.



social studies

- Create a skit to reenact a geographic location or an historical period, for example, a photo safari. Describe the movements of the characters as the scene comes to life, using verb/adverb combinations



science

- Describe and act out the movement relationships between parts of systems such as ecosystems, solar systems, body systems, plant systems, etc. For example, describe and act out the movement relationships of the different parts of the cell, using verb/adverb combinations.



music

- Add sounds to the movement sequences, or accompany the performances with instruments.



visual arts

- Draw a graphic map of the choreography, with a different visual symbol for each verb/adverb combination.
- Create a storyboard or comic strip to show the choreography.



dance

- Cooperatively consider formation, pathways through space, levels, and the overall appearance of the performance before students complete a final draft.

## ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

### Verbs and Adverbs

multiple intelligences target



visual • spatial



bodily • kinesthetic



interpersonal



intrapersonal

adaptations

to simplify

- Limit the number of different choices when listing verbs and adverbs in columns. You may begin with just verbs. For ESL/ESD students, label the actions with large word cards. Color code verbs and adverbs.

to challenge

- Encourage students to create dances that are non-representational, and focus only on the actions and shapes that are created by bodies and movement. This abstract approach requires more sophisticated thinking and focus.

special needs

- Include actions that can be done by physically challenged students or students with a limited movement range. If a child can only move her eyes, then “looking curiously” is a good combination.