

Read the short story. Then answer each question.

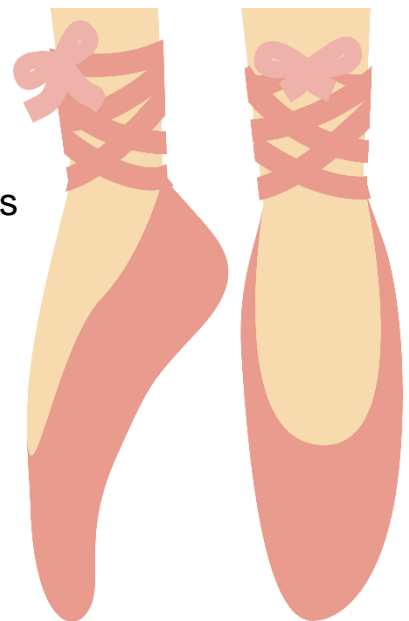
Ballet

Ballet is a type of dance that dates back to the 15th century (in the 1400s). It is an art form that can be used to express a feeling, tell a story, or interpret a song. Ballet dancers are strong, graceful, and flexible. Ballet dancers may be men and women - ballet is not just for girls!

Many movements in ballet are unusual for the human body. Dancers turn their legs out, instead of having their knees and feet straight forward. They also point their feet and may even dance on the tips of their toes (but only when their teachers believe they are ready)! Not only do dancers need to control their bodies well to perform these types of movements, but they need to have a good understanding of music to be able to dance in time with it.

Dancers must go through a lot of training. Many take classes almost daily if they'd like to be professional ballet dancers. The movements are demanding on their bodies, so they need to practice often to keep up their strength. That also means that dancers need to take very good care of their bodies, though, so their bodies can keep up with the dancing! Dancers need to be well rested and eat healthy meals. They also should drink plenty of water and listen to their bodies by resting if that's what their bodies need. They should start slowly when learning new steps, so their bodies have time to get used to the steps and not get injured.

In ballet class, most teachers begin by having dancers warm up their muscles at the barre. Dancers do movements such as the plié, tendu, dégagé, rond de jambe, and grand battement at the barre. Do these words seem unfamiliar to you? That's probably because they are in French. Many ballet dancers are required to learn what these words mean in English as well as the French terminology.



After the warm up, dancers come to the center to practice other movements, as well as doing movements across the floor. Some of these movements are leaps and turns. Teachers and choreographers (people who create dance sequences) put these steps together to match the music and the story. Dancers practice the dances many times in class or practice before they appear onstage.

Stretching is an important part of dance class, as well, so that dancers can bring their legs up high to make beautiful lines. Many dancers stretch at both the beginning and end of class, but are careful to not overstretch their muscles when their muscles are not warmed up.

Ballet looks soft and graceful, but it really is an athletic activity. If you love to move your body and use it to tell stories, ballet might be a great activity for you to try!



Questions:

1. What are three ways dancers should take care of their bodies?

2. Go back to the second paragraph. Highlight two ways that dancers move their bodies differently than most people.

3. What is a choreographer? How do you know?

4. Why do people create dances?

5. If the author were to insert a paragraph about how ballet has changed throughout the years, where would be the best spot for it in this passage? Why?

Answers:

1. What are three ways dancers should take care of their bodies?
Three ways dancers should take care of their bodies are to be well rested, eat healthy meals and drink plenty of water.
2. Go back to the second paragraph. Highlight two ways that dancers move their bodies differently than most people.
Dancers turn their legs out, instead of having their knees and feet straight forward. They also point their feet and may even dance on the tips of their toes.
3. What is a choreographer? How do you know?
A choreographer is a person who invents the dance sequences. In the sentence it says the teachers and choreographers put the steps together to match the music and the story.
4. Why do people create dances?
Answers will vary.
5. If the author were to insert a paragraph about how ballet has changed throughout the years, where would be the best spot for it in this passage? Why?
The best place to insert a paragraph about how ballet has changed throughout the years is after the second paragraph. The history would follow the description of what ballet is. Readers will want to know what ballet is before they learn about its history.