

Dancing Bachata

with teaching artist Andre Avila

Grade Band: K-12

Arts Subject: Dance

SUMMARY

Teaching artist Andre Avila guides students through some basic steps from bachata dance, a style of social dance from the Dominican Republic.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students Will:

- Learn about the social dance from the Dominican Republic known as bachata
- Rehearse and perform a few basic movements from bachata dance
- Understand how to use phrases of eight counts to create a rhythm for dance

GETTING STARTED

Vocabulary You Will Learn:

- **Bachata** - A type of social dance originating in the Dominican Republic.

Materials You Will Need:

- Nothing, just yourself!

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

TRY IT YOURSELF

How to Dance Bachata

1. This is a dance that uses phrases of eight counts. If you'd like to get used to counting out these beats before learning the dance, scroll to around 2:15 in the video and clap along with the music the way Andre does.
2. Next, we're going to learn a basic bachata step. Start by taking one step to the left with your left foot and then bringing your right foot to meet it. Take another step to the left with your left foot and then bring your right foot in and tap your right toes next to your left foot. Keep your right heel lifted and your right knee bent. This step is done to a count of four, with one count on each step.

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3. Repeat step two, but in the opposite direction, starting with your right foot. This step is also done to a count of four, so when you combine the steps, you'll create the phrase of eight counts. Practice repeating these two moves, stepping to the left and then the right, keeping your knees relaxed and your posture straight.
4. Now, let's add in the arms. As you do the steps described in 2 and 3, circle your hands around your belly button to the rhythm created by the phrase of eight counts. If it helps you to keep the rhythm, you can clap when you reach "four" and "eight" in the phrase of eight counts. To see Andre do this, scroll to around 5:00 in the video.
5. Now it's time to put all the steps together! You can scroll to 6:50 in the video to hear music that you can perform the dance to. Practice putting the steps together with the arm movements while the music plays.

THINK ABOUT

In this video, Andre shows us how to do a few basic steps to create our own bachata dance. If you want to go even further, think about these questions:

- Can you create another move to add onto the steps that Andre taught us? Think about other ways that you can move your body to the eight count phrase we learned, and try incorporating them into the dance.
- As Andre said in the video, there are many hip hop and pop songs that bachata can be performed to. Can you think of any that would fit the dance in this lesson? You can experiment performing the dance to different songs, seeing which ones fit with the rhythm we learned.
- What else can you use to create the eight count rhythm that Andre teaches us in the video? Do you play an instrument that you can incorporate into the rhythm, or can you create some simple percussion using pencils and a box or table?
- In the video, Andre talks about how bachata represents the cultural diversity of the Dominican Republic as it blends together European, indigenous Taino, and African music elements. Can you think of any other types of music or dance that bring together different cultural elements?

MORE ABOUT THE TEACHING ARTIST

ComMotion (Community in Motion) is a non-profit with the mission of making the many benefits of dance and movement accessible to all. The organization has taught more than 14,000 students of all ages and abilities in person and online. Artistic Director Andre Avila (he/him) is a professional dancer and dance instructor originally from Bogota, Colombia. Visit www.ComMotionNC.org to learn more.

ACCESSIBILITY NOTES

Don't forget that you can turn on "Closed Captioning" when watching the YouTube video to

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view English captions. Modify handouts and give preferential seating for visual presentations. Allow extra time for task completion.

If you are performing this dance seated, you can rock your torso instead of stepping while dancing. For steps 2 and 3, simply rock your torso to the left, then right, then twice to the left. Then repeat the move starting on the right. You can also incorporate your arms by extending them in the direction that you are swaying. So when you sway left, extend your left arm; when you sway right, extend your right arm, and, when you sway twice in the same direction, extend the arm twice as well. You'll be doing all of this to a phrase of eight counts, with one count happening on each sway. If it helps you to keep the rhythm, you can clap on counts "four" and "eight."

CREDITS

Original Video: Andre Avila

Resource Production: Kennedy Center Digital Learning; School & Community Programs

Additional Content: Laurie Ascoli

Copy Editing: Sandra Frey; Alyssa Kariofyllis

Revisions: Alice Doré

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