

Lesson objectives

To be able to form and manipulate geometric body shapes in choreography.

What am I looking for?

The ability to be able to collaborate to create a range of geometric shapes.
Explores, selects, and applies a variety of alterations.
Applies suitable dynamic qualities.

Warm up

Ask the students to find a space and find a way of making the following shapes using their bodies: circle...square...line...rectangle...triangle...

Call out the shapes and encourage the students to find unusual ways of creating the shapes, this might involve them standing, sitting, kneeling, or lying.

Repeat the names of the shapes 2 or 3 times encouraging them to find a different response each time.

Organise the students into groups of 2, 3, or 4 and ask them to find ways of creating various geometric shapes (that you will call out) using only their bodies. Call out simple shapes, such as triangle...square...rectangle...circle...

Countdown from 10 to zero to indicate how speedily the groups should work. Highlight the range of responses the groups create.

Repeat the process increasing the complexity or specificity of the shapes - eg isosceles triangle, pentagon, rhombus, parallelogram...

Since this is more challenging it is helpful to count slowly and have a visual presentation of the shape available.

Select one group and ask them to move to the side and wait for a moment - these are about to be the 'Shape Shifters'.

Ask the remaining groups to decide upon and create a geometric shape they can comfortably hold.

Then ask the 'Shape Shifters' to travel around the room finding ways to alter the geometric shapes - eg they might travel through the centre of the shape as if bisecting it; they might add to the shape to extend or distort it; they might demonstrate a line of symmetry...

Add the music for up to 1 minute and encourage the Shape Shifters to travel from group to group. Repeat the process several times with a different set of Shape Shifters each time.

Group shapes, travel + manipulation**Context**

Explain that shapes can be manipulated in a variety of ways such as folding, bisecting, flattening, or opening.

For the following tasks you may wish to join duets or trios together to make larger groups, giving them greater scope for exploration.

Manipulating shapes

Ask the groups to find a way of making a square. Then manipulate, develop, or distort it...

Repeat this process several times focusing on a different shape each time. Encourage the groups to vary how they change the shape each time and consider alternatives for each shape.

Play the music quietly in the background.

It may help to prompt the changes with suggestions, such as...stretch it, melt it, squash it, rotate it, bend it, fold it, lift it, move it, twist it, flatten it...

Shape Shifters 3: Manipulating geometric shapes

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Composition

Shape manipulation + dynamics

Ask the groups to select 3 or 4 shapes, e.g., scalene triangle, rhombus, circle then select and make their first shape.

Add the music for 1 to 2 minutes.

Ask the groups to either fold or flatten their shape.

Encourage the groups to consider whether they will do this in UNISON or CANON. Add the music for up to 2 minutes and encourage trying alternatives before deciding.

From their flattened/folded version of shape 1, consider which shape they could easily move to next.

Add the music for another 2 minutes or so and encourage them to recap their work from the beginning.

Ask them to make shape 2 either implode or explode.

Add the music for another 2 minutes or so and encourage the groups to consider the DYNAMICS of the action, e.g., will their shape explode in slow motion or with the more expected strong, sudden blast? Or will the implode feel like melting or a rapid collapse?

Ask the groups move from the explosion/implosion into shape 3. Then find a way to make this shape shatter or snap.

Add the music for another 2 to 3 minutes.

Ask the groups to reflect upon the difference between shattering (breaking into many pieces, often of irregular shapes) and snapping (suddenly breaking into 2 distinct pieces) and encourage reflecting this in the shape and dynamics used.

If groups have a fourth shape this could be used as a finishing position or groups could decide how to manipulate it.

Ask the groups to rehearse their work through.

Encourage them to think about:

- How long they will hold each shape to ensure they are clearly seen by the audience.

- That each manipulation is clear and adds interest to the dance.

Add the music for 3 minutes or so and support as required.

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Perform

Join one group with another and decide who will show their work first. Ask the observers to see identify whether they:

- Folded or flattened
- Imploded or exploded
- Shattered or snapped

...describe how they did it and comment on the effect.

Add the music and support as required.

Share feedback then change roles and repeat the process.

Gather general feedback from the class regarding how shapes can be made and manipulated, this might include comments on:

- The importance of working as a team when choreographing and performing their work
 - The precision of placement required
- The need to accurately recall the order of the movements
 - That words like explode infer a dynamic quality

Analysis + feedback

Cool down

Ask the students to find a space and create a circle with their bodies...then find a way of 'shifting' it - eg lengthening the circle - changing the level - twisting the shape. Then make a vertical line...then 'shift' it - eg bending, folding, tilting...

Continue the process with 3 or 4 other shapes and describe what you see: eg "Paris's shape has melted slowly to the floor"..."Tyler's shape is collapsing bit by bit..."

Mobility