Developing a Deeper Perspective

# Aesthetic Scanning

Revisit the chapter opening. Imagine you are standing in the picture. Using your senses, think about the things you could see, hear, smell, or touch, or how you would move in the picture.

Choose one of the following questions or situations, then write a paragraph to share in class or for your journal.

1. During this time period, would you rather be a spectator or a dancer? Why?
2. Who in the image is most appealing to you? Develop your character based on the event portrayed in the scene (role playing).

Option: Find another visual art example from the same period, either from the chapter or another source. Compare and contrast aesthetic scans (what you observe) of the dance scene and this example. Relate your observations to what was happening in society or in other arts at the same time.

# Depict the Times

Visit some of the web links listed in each chapter’s web resource file to get a sense of what was happening in history, politics, and society at this time. Select from the following choices to share your findings:

1. Write a one-page summary of what you learned about this period, focusing on

* the significant historical, political, social, economic, and religious events as underlying themes;
* the artistic leaders and works that made significant contributions to dance; and a dancer or other personality who influenced dance.

1. Write a one-page summary in one of the following forms:

* A letter to a friend in a country other than the one you are writing about
* A newspaper article
* An entry in your personal journal
* A diplomatic analysis of the situation, which you will send back to the foreign affairs office in your home country
* A news commentator’s view of the times (titled You Were There)
* A 21st-century historian’s view of the times

# Create Time Lines

Visit some of the websites for time lines for this period. Print out one you like and re-create it on a large piece of paper, or create a time line using a computer program. Enter the most important historical events, then add the most important elements from the following:

* Dance personalities
* Dance forms
* Dance periods
* Significant dance performances or events of the period
* Significant dance literature of the period

Lay out this expanded, comparative time line. Use color coding for history and the arts, and add pictures of historical events and major figures of the period, dancers, choreographers, other personalities, dances, and significant works. This time line could be the starting point for a historical summary that allows you to look at all of these elements synergistically and form some conclusions.

# Describe Dancers or Other Personalities

Do research on the Internet or at a library to find out more about dancers and other personalities who made significant contributions to dance during this period. Select one of these personalities to study in depth. Choose from the following options:

1. Write a one-page paper describing a dancer, choreographer, personality, or author. Indicate the time frame in which the person lived and the person’s country of birth. Include relevant information such as

* career highlights,
* important roles in dance works,
* signature works,
* contributions to dance, and
* a picture of the person.

1. Compare and contrast

* two dancers or personalities from the same time period, who worked in either the same dance form or contrasting forms; or
* two dancers or personalities from different centuries or periods.

Your instructor can provide you with an extended list of dancers and choreographers.

# Re-Create a Dance of the Period

Re-creating a dance takes further research. You must find the dance and the music that accompanied it, and learn and practice the dance so that you can perform it for the class or in another venue. Reconstruction includes learning about the history and art of the period in which the dance was created or performed, as well as locating visual, oral, or written information from or about the choreographer, dancers, and critics to gain a comprehensive view of this dance or dance work. To synthesize your dance reconstruction experience, do the following:

1. Locate more information on how to do at least one dance of the times. Refer to the Dance Reconstruction or Re-Creation Project. Use the following sources to get started:

* Written information
* Internet sites
* Video documentation
* Historical notations
* Dance notations (e.g., Labanotation)

1. Find the music that accompanied the dance work, or choose appropriate music from the period to accompany the dance.
2. Practice until you can execute the dance well.
3. Perform the dance.
4. Create a 1-minute oral presentation that relates the dance and music to society and the historical period.
5. Teach the dance to another group in your own or another class.

# Write a Performance Report

View a live or recorded performance of one or more significant works of one or several periods. Choose from the following options after completing number 1.

1. Analyze the choreography and performance using the performance report form found in WebQuests and Research Projects.
2. Reconstruct part or all of one of the significant works of the period.
3. Investigate period dress, dance costuming, music, and stage space for the performance.
4. Perform the reconstruction with music and costumes.
5. Give a 5-minute oral presentation that depicts the historical period, including information about

* the choreographer,
* the choreographer’s style,
* how history, society, and the time period affected the choreographer’s style,
* the significance of the work, and
* the dance’s relationship to other arts and significant dance events or works during the period.

Use various media forms, including PowerPoint, for your presentation.

1. Compare and contrast significant dance works from one of the following options:

* Two time periods in a choreographer’s career
* Two works by different choreographers in the same time period
* Two works on the same theme by different choreographers in different time periods
* Two significant dance works from different centuries

# Interrelating Dance With the Arts of the Period

Research, describe, and provide visual examples of other arts that related to the dance performance. Present the following in a 5-minute oral or PowerPoint presentation:

* The dance space in relation to the building or outdoor environment
* The costumes
* The music that accompanied the dance
* The settings, lighting, or time of day
* Any use of technology (machines for flying, lighting innovations, use of film or video)
* A description of dance and the other arts as they related to society at the time
* The major findings from your research
* A summary of your findings

# Vocabulary

Vocabulary terms are listed at the end of chapters 1 through 13. To test your knowledge, for each term provide the information that follows.

## Dancers, Choreographers, and Personalities

For each person, include the following information:

* Birth and death dates
* Place of birth (country only or city if known)
* Nationality
* Where they lived and worked (Dancers and dance families often traveled or lived in several countries during their careers, so the answer often includes more than one place. For example, Marius Petipa was born and raised in France, but most of his life’s work was in Russia.)
* Contributions to dance, such as performance as a dancer or work as a choreographer, teacher, director, or author
* Significant dance works or literature (Select a major piece from the person’s body of choreographic or literary work. For some choreographers, one dance might represent a period of their career; for example, *Appalachian Spring* is an important work from Martha Graham’s Americana period.)

## Significant Dance Works

Include the following information:

* The title of the work (which could have changed since its initial performance)
* Where and when it premiered (Include the city—and sometimes the state, such as Hartford, Connecticut, or the country—and exact date if possible; sometimes only the year is known.)
* The names of the choreographer, composer, and important dancers
* A summary of the story or theme in a paragraph. If a ballet has several acts, summarize each one.

## Art Styles

Like dance, other art forms (visual or fine arts, music, and drama) passed through various periods, such as romantic, classical, and impressionistic. Although dance and its art periods are the focal point of this book, you should be aware of when other arts passed through the same period; they don’t always coincide. Art style information should include the following:

* Time frame
* Country of origin
* People who started it
* Whether it began in one art and then surfaced later in dance
* Representative dancers and choreographers
* Significant dance works of the period that are connected with a specific art style
* Collaborative artists (musicians, visual artists) and supporters of the style in dance
* How the art style and its works related to the history and society of their time