

FOCUS➤

BALANCES AND WEIGHT TRANSFERS ON APPARATUS

Grades 3-5

Following a successful study of balance on the floor (mats) and balances on low equipment, students are ready for an introduction to balance on large pieces of gymnastics apparatus, which include parallel bars, Olympic balance beams, and vaulting boxes, as well as climbing frames, ladders, inclines, and bridges.

Elementary students are introduced to gymnastics apparatus as each piece becomes developmentally appropriate in size and structure. Early experiences include exploration of the apparatus, safety, body control, and acceptance of responsibility. Young children eagerly await introduction to the “big equipment.”

The progression of skills follows closely the progression that occurs on the mats and low apparatus: balances on apparatus, bases of support, transitions between balances, approaches to and mounts onto apparatus, and dismounts from apparatus.

At a more advanced level of skill development, students also study transfers into and out of balances on apparatus, combinations of balances and transfers, as well as transfers onto and off apparatus beyond jumping.

Specific pieces of gymnastics apparatus, such as parallel bars and balance beam, may dictate the types of approaches and dismounts that students can perform safely in elementary physical education. Safety rules pertaining to each piece of apparatus should be posted on the wall near the apparatus. See the following example for the balance beam.

**Balance Beam
Safety Check:
Mats in place.**

**Dismounts:
All landings on two feet.
No crash landings!**

Grade 3

Balances on various bases of support, weight transfer travel on apparatus, approaches with mounts onto apparatus, and dismounts from apparatus (jumping and landing).

Grades 4, 5

Preparation for final gymnastics sequence follows the guidelines established for low equipment: rotation of all students to all stations, choice of two stations, and selection of one station for final project.

- Grade 4: Combining traveling with balance and weight transfers to create a sequence
- Grade 5: Combining actions, balances, and transferring weight to create a sequence alone or with a partner

Final Gymnastics Project on Apparatus

- Approach
- Mount onto apparatus
- Balances, weight transfers, and travel
- Dismount from apparatus
- Ending shape: ta-da

The final project assignment follows the guidelines established for the previous lesson, Balances and Weight Transfers on Low Equipment, for assignment procedures, criteria for sequence evaluation, and sample assignment sheet.

Students will create, record, and perform sequences at their selected piece of apparatus, using skills commensurate with their balance and weight transfer abilities. Differentiated guidelines and developmentally appropriate expectations are critical for students in gymnastics.