

## General Dance Terms

By studying and learning the unique language of dance, you will develop your skills faster and more completely. While the language is not the dance, improved fluency in the language greatly enhances all aspects of the learning process.

Now, in an easy-to-use A-Z format, Diane Jarmolow presents a glossary of over 300 Ballroom, Latin and Swing terms, with visual demonstrations of each. This encyclopedic video set with accompanying text will explain the words and concepts commonly used by professionals in all aspects of Ballroom Dancing, including terms related to the music, movement, technique, history, and profession. It will enable you, whether you are a pure beginner, a serious hobbyist or a professional teacher or competitor, to quickly and easily learn the language skills to accelerate the development of your dancing technique and pleasure.

### General Dance Terms

#### **Amalgamation**

A combination of two or more patterns or movements.

#### **Amateur Dancer**

A person for whom dancing is a hobby and who does not seek financial gain from the teaching or performing of dancing.

#### **American Style**

A type of ballroom dancing, which evolved from social dancing and is now a fully recognized competitive style of dance. The Smooth style allows the dancers to be in open positions allowing for a very "Fred and Ginger" style. The nine dances are divided into two groups:

- (1) Smooth style consisting of: Foxtrot, Waltz, Tango and Viennese Waltz
- (2) Rhythm style consisting of: Cha Cha, Rumba, East Coast Swing, Bolero and Mambo

#### **Arm Styling**

Positioning and movement of the arms, reflecting the character and style of the dance.

#### **Associate**

(1) The first complete level of dance figures in the International Style and some American Style syllabi representing the foundation of movements and basic dance concepts. (2) A degree attained by a Professional Dancer as a result of passing a certifying teaching exam covering the Associate Syllabus.

#### **Basic Figure**

A standardized step pattern which together with other patterns constitute the basis of a dance.

#### **Bronze Level**

The first complete level of the Medalist System, representing the foundation of movements and basic dance concepts. Also used in Competitions, representing a level above Newcomer and below Silver danced by Amateurs.

#### **Choreography**

A creation or compilation of steps, patterns and movements which make up a dance or a dance routine.

#### **Closed Division**

A category at a DanceSport event, which requires that competitors may only dance figures that are specific to a certain level and syllabus and may not dance variations and choreography outside of

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the syllabus.

**Closed Figure**

A dance figure where the feet close on the last step. Examples are Left and Right Box Turns in the American Style and Reverse And Natural Turns in the International Style.

**Combination**

A group of consecutive patterns and choreography. Similar to Amalgamation but sometimes involving a slightly more advanced set of patterns.

**Continuity Movement**

The continuous passing of the feet from one step to the next. This action is used from Silver Level on in American Style Waltz, Foxtrot and Viennese Waltz and is also characteristic of the International Foxtrot and is used greatly in International Waltz and Quickstep.

**DanceSport**

The official name given to the sport of competitive Ballroom Dancing. Relates to the more athletic form of Ballroom Dancing as recognized by the Olympic Committee.

**Drop**

A theatrical type of movement in which the follower's body weight is partially or completely supported by the leader while at least one part of the follower's body remains in contact with the floor.

**English Style**

The Internationally recognized style of ballroom dancing synonymous with International ,Style Ballroom Dancing. <

**Exhibition Ballroom Dancing**

Also called Demonstration Dancing, this represents the performing of dance routines for an audience in a stylized, theatrical way.

**Fellow**

(1) The final complete level of dance figures in the International Style and some American Style syllabi representing the most advanced movements and dance concepts.

(2) A degree attained by a Professional Dancer as a result of passing a certifying teaching exam covering the Fellowship Syllabus.

**Figure**

A standardized step pattern that, together with other patterns, constitute the dance.

**Floor Craft**

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The ability of the leader to maneuver around the dance floor in a skilled and controlled manner as to avoid colliding with other dancers.

### **Following**

The ability of the follower to react correctly to the signals given by the leader through physical and visual connections.

### **Formation Team**

A group of three or more dancers who perform ballroom style routines.

### **Freestyle**

(1) Dancing done on the dance floor in an apart where each person dances to the music doing steps of their own creation without a particular pattern or sequence

(2) Dancing with a partner in any kind of hold where the leader improvises steps. May be danced by inexperienced dancers who have never taken dance lessons or, by very advanced dancers who are so well trained in leading and following that improvisation is creative and natural.

### **Freestyle Division**

A division of competition with one or more couples on the floor, designed for the leaders to lead the follower without memorized dance routines. Also, the ability to change a predetermined routine when necessary.

### **General Dancing**

The portion of the program when the dance floor is open to the audience for social dancing.

### **Gold Level**

The third complete level of the Medalist System, representing the most advanced figures and dance concepts. Also used in Competitions, representing a level above Silver danced by Amateurs.

### **Hip Motion**

A very general term to mean any type of hip movement used in Latin Dancing. Similar to Cuban Motion and Latin Motion.

### **International Style**

The Internationally recognized style of ballroom dancing. Couples must remain in closed dance position throughout the dances. The 10 International Style dances are divided into two categories:

(1) Standard, consisting of: Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Slow Foxtrot and Quickstep.

(2) Latin, consisting of: Cha Cha, Samba, Rumba, Paso Doble and Jive.

### **Latin- American Style**

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The category of dances in the International Style that consist of Cha Cha, Samba, Rumba, Paso Doble and Jive.

### **Leading**

Effective communication of intended actions by the leader through the use of leader's own body movements and through one or more physical or visual connections to the follower.

### **Line Dancing**

A type of non-partner dancing where everyone starts in a line and learns a set pattern that repeats over and over again throughout the music. Used in Country Western and Disco Dancing and is fun and easy to learn.

### **Lift**

A theatrical type of movement in which the follower's body weight is completely supported by the leader and held aloft.

### **Medalist System**

A system of testing used by dance schools to measure a student's progress in their dancing. It provides structure in a dance program of a school and serves to give students' a sense of accomplishment in their dancing.

### **Member**

(1) The second complete level of dance figures in the International Style and some American Style syllabi representing the next set of movements and basic dance concepts. (2) A degree attained by a Professional Dancer as a result of passing a certifying teaching exam covering the Member Syllabus.

### **Mirror Image**

When one partner's steps will be matching the other partner's steps, as if viewed in a mirror.

### **Modern Style Ballroom**

The term used to describe the Ballroom dances of the International Style: Waltz, Foxtrot, Viennese Waltz, Tango and Quickstep. This term has largely been replaced by the term "Standard".

### **Movement**

(1) A shift in position or space. (2)Used to describe a dancer or couple's advancement through space on the dance floor.

### **Natural Opposite**

A term used in teaching to say that one's partner will be dancing the same foot positions in a

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particular dance pattern except in the opposite direction and on opposite feet.

### **Natural Turn**

Any dance pattern that turns to the right.

### **NightClub Dances**

Dances designed to be danced in a club or on a small dance floor.

### **Open Division**

A dance category at a dance competition where the dancers are permitted to dance figures not normally included in a standard syllabus for that particular level. (i.e. Open Gold Foxtrot).

### **Open Figure**

A very general term that can have several meanings.

- (1) Not in normal dance hold
- (2) Use of continuity instead of closing feet
- (3) Ending in Promenade Position (i.e. Open Telemark, Open Impetus)
- (4) A pattern not in a Syllabus,

### **Open Turn**

Refers to a figure where the feet do not close on any of the steps.

### **Patterns**

The term we use to mean a series of specific steps that comprise a figure. Means the same as "Figure".

### **Picture Line**

A dance figure (e.g. Oversway, Contra Check) characterized by changing shapes in stationary position. Also known as Line.

### **Professional Dancer**

A dancer who teaches, performs or competes for a living. A dancer who receives financial compensation for their work as a dancer and would be ineligible to compete as an Amateur.

### **Progressive Movement**

Any dance steps that are designed to move the couple down the line of dance.

### **Reverse Turn**

- (1) Any turn that turns to the left.
- (2) A turn used in Waltz, Foxtrot, Viennese Waltz, and Tango that turns to the left over six steps.

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**Rhythm Category**

A category of dancing that include the following American Style dances danced at competitions: Rumba, Cha Cha, Bolero, Mambo and Swing

**Rumba Walk**

Highly stylized Forward or Backward Walks done in the Rumba, characterized by stepping onto a straight leg.

**Showcase**

An unjudged dance exhibition.

**Silver Level**

The second level of dance patterns in a syllabus following Bronze and before Gold. Silver Level is the first time a dancer may use continuity (open steps) in the American Style Waltz and Foxtrot.

**Scrutineer**

A certified dance official who tabulates the judges' scores from the competitive events.

**Slot**

Used as a concept in certain dances (i.e. West Coast Swing) where the goal is for the follower to dance on a track, turn around, and then come back on the same track in the opposite direction. The leader's job is to move slightly out of the track (slot) to allow the follower a clear path.

**Slow Dancing**

A general term meant for dancing to very slow, romantic music where the couple rocks from foot to foot, improvising their own moves, with a very close, cuddly hold. No dance lessons required.

**Smooth Style Ballroom**

The term used in Dancesport events and in general to mean American Style Waltz, Foxtrot, Tango and Viennese Waltz.

**Social Dancing**

Ballroom, Latin, Swing and Nightclub dances done in dance halls, dance schools, etc. where the dancing is more relaxed and meant for the enjoyment of the dancers and not for show.

**Standard Style Ballroom**

The name that replaced the term "Modern" to mean The International Style Ballroom dances- Waltz, Foxtrot, Viennese Waltz, Tango and Quickstep.

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**Step**

Frequently used to mean the same as Figure or Pattern.

**Syncopate**

To add or subtract steps within a specific number of beats performed by dancers to vary the normal step and to allow for personal expression and creativity.

**Theater Arts/Cabaret Division**

A division at DanceSport Events that involve dramatic lifts and drops usually performed by strong, highly trained dancers requiring unusual flexibility and balance.

**Variation**

A varied or more advanced pattern than the corresponding basic figure which still contains the same main element.

**Yes!**

The appropriate response when someone asks you to dance.