

STEP **AFRIKA!**

Step Up to College



**Student Activity Journal
Middle School Edition**

Student

Group

Grade

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WHAT IS STEPPING?

WHAT IS STEPPING?

Stepping is a dance that uses the body as an instrument. It combines footsteps, claps, and spoken words to produce complex rhythms, and has roots in African dance and military marching. In stepping, the dancers wear hard-soled shoes that create loud sounds against the floor. Step Afrika! is a dance company committed to furthering the tradition of stepping.

Stepping is a dance form full of energy, pride, and tradition. As you learn how to step, remember to display confidence and trust not only in yourself but also in your step team. Stepping requires teamwork, discipline and commitment – three principles that all steppers must have and that the founders of stepping embodied.

COLLEGE: WHERE STEPPING WAS BORN

In the early 1900s, African American students who became members of college organizations called sororities and fraternities developed stepping. (Sororities are for women and fraternities are for men.) Stepping became a way members could show pride and love for their organizations.

IT'S EVERYWHERE!

Though stepping is traditionally associated with college groups, the art form is universal and highly appealing to young people. Today, stepping can be found in elementary, middle, and high schools across the United States as well as in churches and community-based organizations. Are there step teams in your community? Where?

WHAT MOVES MAKE UP A STEP?

There are many different moves that make up a step. Let's learn and demonstrate these moves together:

BLADE – To make a BLADE, extend all your fingers, but keep them close together. Straighten your arms so it does not bend at the elbow or wrist. A BLADE can be thrown at many angles as shown in the pictures.

PUNCH – Extend your arm forward and close your fist. Make sure to keep your arm straight when you throw a PUNCH. Place your left hand, fist closed, across your chest. This is the classic PUNCH position. Switch positions with both arms in order to punch each side.

SPIN – When you turn around while stepping, it is called a SPIN. You can SPIN all the way around and back to the front. Stomp one foot on the floor in front of you, and then turn your body in the opposite direction. (If you stomp on your left foot, SPIN right. If you stomp on your right foot, SPIN left.) Use your arms in the air to help you balance and not fall. You can SPIN fast or slow.

CLAP – Extend your fingers and slap your hands together. A CLAP can be done in front of you, behind your back, underneath your leg or even with someone else.

KICK – Use one leg to leap in the air. With the other leg, KICK your foot back toward the floor behind you. You can do a KICK behind you or in front of you. You can do many KICKS together. A lot of steppers clap under their leg when they finish doing KICKS.



ELEMENTS & QUALITIES OF STEPPING

RESEARCH: Look up the following words that describe the elements and qualities of stepping. Create your own brief definition.

ELEMENTS OF STEPPING

Teamwork _____

Discipline _____

Commitment _____

QUALITIES OF STEPPING

Innovative _____

Choreography _____

Energy _____

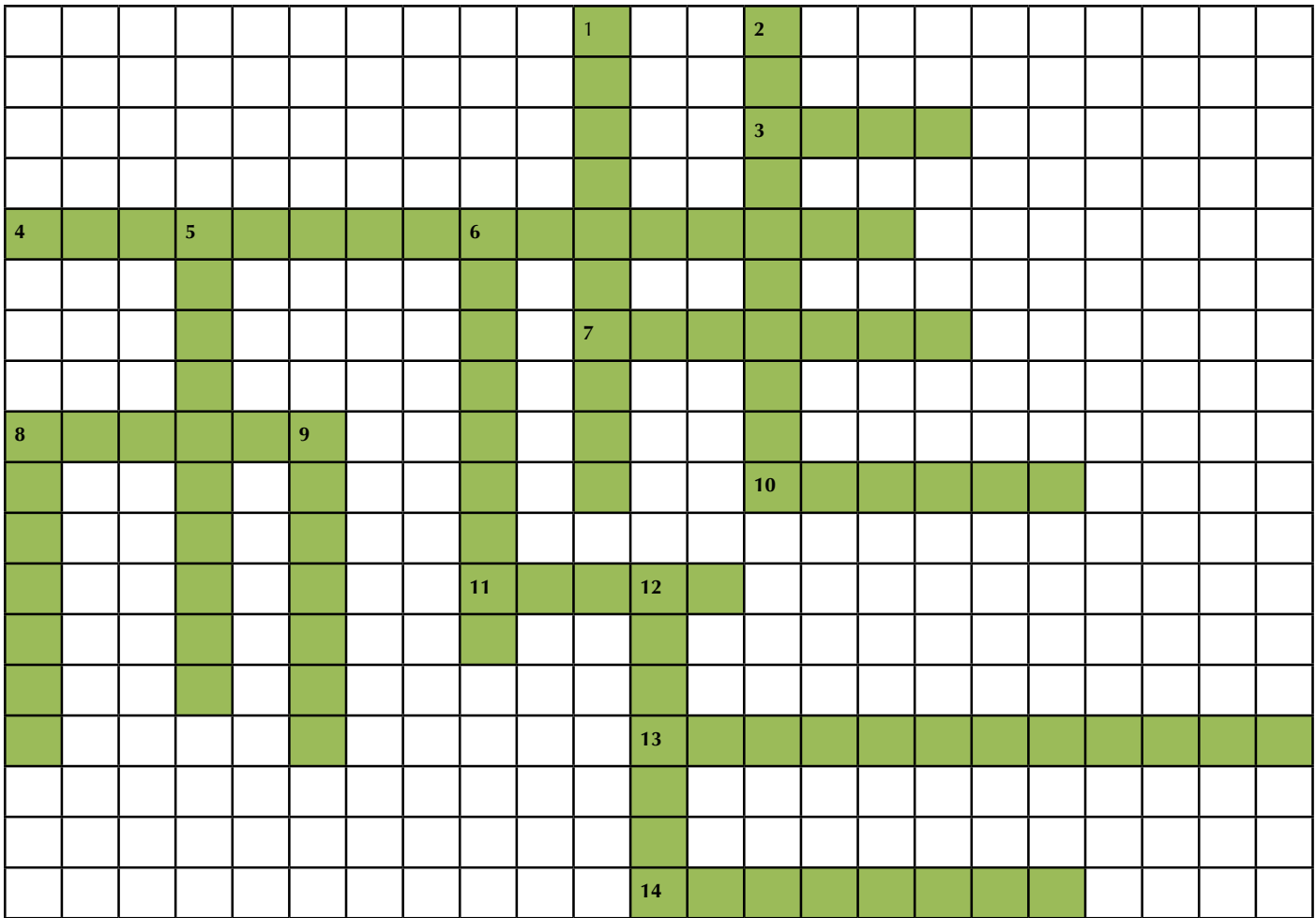
Precision _____

Diction _____

Voice Projection _____

STEP AFRIKA! CROSSWORD PUZZLE

INSTRUCTIONS: Put your knowledge to the test and complete this crossword puzzle. Ask your teacher (or step team member) for hints if needed.



Across

- 3 – to turn around while stepping
- 4 – movements in this dance form: the reel, light jig, & hornpipe
- 7 – place of higher learning
- 8 – considered to be birthplace of stepping
- 10 – doing something with force
- 11 – last letter of the Greek alphabet
- 13 – colors of Fraternity founded in 1906
- 14 – together everyone achieves more

Down

- 1 – dance style used by The Nicholas Brothers
- 2 – sticking to it
- 5 – Dance Company dedicated to the tradition of stepping
- 6 – very sharp movements
- 8 – precursor to stepping
- 9 – to speak clearly so that others can hear
- 12 – dance that originated in the goldmines of South Africa



THE GREEK ALPHABET

Αα

ALPHA [a]
ἄλφα

Ββ

BETA [b]
βῆτα

Γγ

GAMMA [g]
γάμμα

Δδ

DELTA [d]
δέλτα

Εε

EPSILON [e]
ἒ ψιλόν

Ζζ

ZETA [dz]
ζῆτα

Ηη

ETA [e:]
ἦτα

Θθ

THETA [tʰ]
θῆτα

Ιι

IOTA [i]
ἰῶτα

Κκ

KAPPA [k]
κάππα

Λλ

LAMBDA [l]
λάμβδα

Μμ

MU [m]
μῦ

Νν

NU [n]
νῦ

Ξξ

XI [ks]
ξεί

Οο

OMICRON [o]
ὀ μικρόν

Ππ

PI [p]
πεῖ

Ρρ

RHO [r]
ῥῶ

Σσς

SIGMA [s]
σίγμα

Ττ

TAU [t]
ταῦ

Υυ

UPSILON [u]
ὕ ψιλόν

Φφ

PHI [pʰ]
φεῖ

Χχ

CHI [kʰ]
χεῖ

Ψψ

PSI [ps]
ψεῖ

Ωω

OMEGA [o:]
ὦ μέγα

THE GREEK ALPHABET EXERCISE

INSTRUCTIONS: The letters below represent the names of the historically African-American fraternities and sororities who practice stepping. Three letters of the Greek Alphabet represent each name. Using the Greek Letter Chart provided, write out the full name of each of the organizations listed below.

FRATERNITIES

ΑΦΑ _____ **Fraternity, Inc.**

Founded: 1906 **Colors: Black and Old Gold**

ΚΑΨ _____ **Fraternity, Inc.**

Founded: 1911 **Colors: Crimson and Cream**

ΩΨΦ _____ **Fraternity, Inc.**

Founded: 1911 **Colors: Purple and Gold**

ΦΒΣ _____ **Fraternity, Inc.**

Founded: 1914 **Colors: Blue and White**

ΙΦΘ _____ **Fraternity, Inc.**

Founded: 1963 **Colors: Charcoal Brown and Gilded Gold**

SORORITIES

ΑΚΑ _____ **Sorority, Inc.**

Founded: 1908 **Colors: Salmon Pink and Apple Green**

ΔΣΘ _____ **Sorority, Inc.**

Founded: 1913 **Colors: Crimson and Cream**

ΖΦΒ _____ **Sorority, Inc.**

Founded: 1920 **Colors: Blue and White**

ΣΓΡ _____ **Sorority, Inc.**

Founded: 1922 **Colors: Royal Blue and Gold**

Write your own name using the Greek Capital and Lower-case letters:

IS COLLEGE FOR YOU?

DO YOU WANT TO...

1. Find your passion?
2. Grow in a supportive environment?
3. Lift up your family?

HOW DOES COLLEGE HELP YOU FIND YOUR PASSION?

College helps create endless possibilities. Some people simply have “jobs,” while others have “careers.” What is the difference? With a career, the kind of work you do is based on your interests. It is a path you have chosen. College can help you turn your passions and interests into a career you love. College also helps you discover what you would like to do.

Choosing a college major does not limit you to one type of career.

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT CAN I FIND IN COLLEGE?

College is more than training for a career and attending classes. It’s also about discovering yourself and learning to think and live independently. A lot of that occurs outside the classroom. The new people you meet. The new environments you visit. The new ideas you find. This is the stuff that helps you learn more about life. There are many supportive environments to help you become a successful student and person:

Study Groups – partnering with other students to study can help bridge into lifelong friendships. Even in college, “teamwork” is still an important key to success.

Tutoring – there is additional help that can be found in all fields of study for no cost. Getting one-on-one help can improve your GPA and boost confidence.

Academic Counseling – academic counselor help with overcoming test-taking anxieties, improving study habits, and selecting the right class every semester.

HOW DOES GOING TO COLLEGE LIFT UP MY FAMILY?

If you go to college, statistics show your children and even their children are more likely to go.

Families with more education tend to have a better standard of living. Plus, higher education enables you to help your family. With more earning potential, you can give back to your parents; help your siblings and more. There are so many reasons to go. So, if you come from a family of college-goers, keep it up. And if you’re the first in the family to consider college, tell everyone, “I’m going.”

More education for you can mean more opportunities for you as well!

WHEN I GROW UP – PART I

INSTRUCTIONS: Upon entering college, a student must choose a particular program to study. This program determines what type of degree you will earn. Below is a list of possible careers. Match the careers to the correct program.

CAREER

Doctor
Software programmer
Dentist
Accountant
Teacher
Broadcast journalist
Physical therapist
Dancer

SCHOOL

Education
Business
Arts & Sciences
Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Health Sciences
Engineering, Architecture, & Computer Sciences
Medicine
Dentistry
Communications

List three things you learned about college during your Step Afrika! class.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WHEN I GROW UP – PART II

INSTRUCTIONS: Have you thought about what you would like to do (also called a profession or career) when you grow up? List three careers you might want to pursue and why.

	CAREER/PROFESSION	WHY WOULD I LIKE TO DO THIS?
1		
2		
3		

Do you know anyone in one of these careers? Find out what they did to work in that profession.

All About Step Afrika!

C. Brian Williams, the founder and executive director of Step Afrika!, attended Howard University in Washington, D.C., where he learned how to step. Later, he visited South Africa, and saw a young boy dancing a style that looked very similar to stepping. Recognizing the connection, Brian wanted to find a way for Africans and Americans to share their dances, music, and culture. In 1994, he founded Step Afrika! As the first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping, Step Afrika! ranks as one of the top ten African American dance companies in the United States.

We Step

We promote an appreciation for stepping and its use as an educational, motivational and healthy tool for young people. We structure our performances and programs to connect intimately with our audience and create a positive influence on students' lives.

We Tour

Step Afrika! performs in more than 50 U.S. and Canadian cities each year. As a cultural ambassador, Step Afrika! also partners with various organizations to perform for audiences all over the world. During international visits, Step Afrika! joins with local dance groups and other arts organizations to develop performances that blend the styles of different cultures and create a unique experience for the audience. Step Afrika! programs are a testament to the power of the arts; bringing communities together and building tolerance, unity and acceptance among young people everywhere.

We Teach

Step Afrika! has been dedicated to arts education since its inception. We present the art, values, and culture of stepping to students of all grades and backgrounds. We have become a model for using stepping as an educational tool. Exhibiting the organization's core values of teamwork, discipline, and commitment, Step Afrika! presents the following programs:

- *Stepping with Step Afrika!* in-school performance
- *Step Up to College* residency program
- *Step Afrika! Step Shop* Workshop
- *Summer Steps with Step Afrika!* summer camp
- *Step Afrika! Youth Ensemble*
- *Step Afrika! Scholars Program*

For more information about our arts education programs, visit www.stepafrika.org, or email info@stepafrika.org.

“The story to the founding of this international arts organization illustrates not only the attraction of stepping to other cultures but also stepping’s ability to open doors to intercultural communication.”

– Dr. Elizabeth C. Fine, author of Soulstepping

