

**Elk Grove Unified School District**  
**Visual and Performing Arts Resources**  
**Dance**

**Grade 4: Lesson 2**

**Title: California, Here I Come!**

**Standards Addressed**

**Artistic Perception**

*Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Dance*

- 1.1 Demonstrate mental concentration and physical control in performing dance skills.
- 1.2 Demonstrate the ability to use smooth transitions when connecting one movement phrase to another.
- 1.3 Demonstrate increased range and use of space, time, and force/energy concepts (e.g., pulse/accents, melt/collapse, or weak/strong).
- 1.4 Explain and apply the principles of variety, contrast, and unity to a dance sequence.

**Creative Expression**

*Creating, Performing, and Participating in Dance*

- 2.0 Creating, Performing, and Participating in Dance: Students apply choreographic principle, processes, and skills to create and communicate meaning through improvisation, composition, and performance of dance.
- 2.1 Create, develop, and memorize set movement patterns and sequences.
- 2.3 Describe, discuss, and analyze the process used by choreographers to create a dance.
- 2.4 Create a dance study that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Review, revise, and refine.
- 2.7 Demonstrate additional partner and group skills (e.g., imitating, leading/following, mirroring, calling/responding, and echoing).

**Historical and Cultural Context**

*Understanding the Historical and Cultural Dimensions of Dance*

- 3.3 Perform and identify folk/traditional and social dances from California history.

**Connections, Relationships, Applications**

*Connecting and Applying What is Learned in Dance to Learning in Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers*

- 5.4 Analyze the choreographic process and its relation to the writing process (e.g., brainstorming, exploring and developing ideas, putting ideas into a form, sequencing).

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Floor Plan:** A regular classroom setting, with desks cleared out of the way for plenty of general space or a stage area.

**Materials Needed:**

- Words and music to *California, Here I Come* (or any song) (optional)
- Cassette/CD player (optional)

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this lesson is to have the students choreograph and share a portion of a traditional American song (musical theater). The portions will then be put together to create a “class dance.” This dance study can then be further refined for a performance.

**Background:**

It is assumed students have heard *California, Here I Come* and have worked in groups before. It is also assumed they have a basic working knowledge of beginner dance steps (slide, cross-over steps, movement levels, etc.).

**Key Questions:**

Is there variety in movement and levels (within each group)?

Are the selected movements appropriate to the song and tempo (are they in time with the counts)?

Can the students within each group work together and perform their piece together?

<u>Steps of the Lesson</u>	<u>Thoughts for the Teacher</u>
<p><b>1 Set up purpose/goals</b> Let students know that their job today will be to become choreographers for a musical theater piece. They will be using a song from California history as their inspiration.</p>	<p><b>How are you making your purpose clear to the students?</b> Explain any new or difficult vocabulary (e.g., choreography, musical theater).</p>
<p><b>2 Engage students</b> Review and practice the song so that students have the melody and tempo. Discuss possible movements that would be appropriate.</p>	<p><b>How can I effectively get the students interested in the content of the lesson?</b> Allow the students to practice the song a few times. You may need to discuss what time period this song comes from, the lyrics, and the emotions behind it.</p>
<p><b>3 Learning Sequence</b> a) Review and practice song. b) Group work. c) Sharing and discussing of product. d) Refining dance. e) Putting it together for class dance.</p>	<p><b>What are the BIG idea(s) of your presentation? How will students understand/experience the material that you present?</b> Choreography is a collaboration of ideas, and adjustments are made through compromise and working together. You will need to be ready to monitor and facilitate groups and help with movement problems they may be having.</p>
<p><b>4 Assessment</b> Embedded into the lesson/teacher observation and group performances. Video tape performances if possible.</p>	<p><b>How will you allow your students to deepen their understanding of content presented? (Reflect, revise, retell, refine, practice)</b> Reflect on lesson through discussion and practice of necessary skills. Extend if there is time or on another day. Use video for evidence of product, support of standards, and to fuel class discussions. Are groups working together, contributing and working out dance problems?</p>

### Actual Lesson Sequence

1. *Today we are going to have an opportunity to explore the world of choreography and musical theater. In musical theater, performers not only dance, but they sing as well. These songs and dances are placed in appropriate breaks in the speaking parts and help to explain and move the story along. Today we are going to take a song and choreograph some dance steps to it to create our own musical theater piece. First let's practice the song. It is **California, Here I Come**. Take time now to teach/review/practice the song with the words and music.*
2. *Now we are ready to choreograph. Just like writing, there is a process. In the writing process we start with brainstorming and prewriting and we are going to do a similar activity. Let's first brainstorm some of the dance moves that came to mind as you listened to and sang the song. Allow for student responses. Model and clarify dance steps as needed.*

3. *Now we will start our prewriting and drafting phases. I am going to break you into groups of 8-9 (depending on class size) and I will give you your verse or the chorus of the song. You will need to work together to choreograph a dance sequence to your section of the song. You will need to be ready to perform your piece after about 10-15 minutes. Remember, your dance should have varied movements and levels and should move through different staging formations (not just in self-space—travel). Everyone needs to participate in some way. You may use the movements we brainstormed or as a group, come up with some of your own.* You may want to write these expectations on the board so that the students can reference them. Also, either distribute the words for each group’s portion to them or have them on an overhead transparency. It is important that they have a strong grasp on the song before they begin to choreograph because it will be too difficult to provide each group with a recording of their section’s music and a player. Once they get started, facilitate and monitor groups, offering assistance where needed.
4. After about 10-15 minutes, have each group perform while the other groups serve as the audience. Remind them that each group is performing their rough-draft and that mistakes at this point are alright. After each performance, have the audience offer positive, constructive criticism. (One idea: two positive comments, one suggestion for improvement) After everyone has performed, give the groups 5-10 minutes more to make any changes (editing, revising) based on the feedback given to them.
5. Have the groups perform again, this time without stopping the music between groups, so that it creates a “class dance.” You can have each group in their ready positions, almost in a U-shape all around the room. The teacher will be the only official audience at this point. Repeat the performance if necessary.

**Closure:**

Bring the class back to the listening area or the classroom seats. Begin a discussion by first praising them for their experience with choreography. Have the students give feedback as to what the experience was like. What was difficult about the process, what was easy? Would there be anything to change? What did they really like? Also let the students know that the next step would be further refining it until they could “publish” (perform) it in front of a “real” audience.

**Other Considerations:**

- Special Needs: Adjust the lesson according to the student’s abilities.

**Extensions:**

Have each group teach the rest of the class their section.

Work on combining all four sections so that all the students can perform the song/dance as a class. Transitions and changes (possibly major) will have to be worked out. This would be a longer, but very rewarding, process.

# California, Here I Come

*Al Jolson, B. DeSylva, Joe Meyer, 1924*

When the wintry winds are blowing,  
And the snow is staring to fall,  
Then my eyes turn westward, knowing that's the place  
I love the best of all.  
California, I've been blue,  
Since I've been away from you,  
I can't wait 'til I get going,  
Even now I'm starting in to call.

***Chorus:***

*California here I come,  
Right back where I started from,  
Where bowers of flowers bloom in the sun,  
Each morning at dawning birdies sing an' ev'rything:  
A sunkist Miss said, don't be late,  
That's why I can hardly wait,  
Open up that golden Gate,  
California here I come!*

Anyone who like to wander,  
Ought to keep this saying in his mind  
Absence makes the heart grow fonder  
Of the good old place you leave behind.  
When you've hit the trail awhile  
Seems you rarely see a smile;  
That's why I must fly out yonder,  
Where a frown is mighty hard to find!

***Chorus***