

There are seven basic categories of drill team dance: jazz, kick, pom, prop, military, lyrical and novelty-character. Many teams will use other forms of dance such as ballet, modern, tap, folk, aerobics, clogging, drill, and these areas strongly influence the individual style of a team.

General Category Descriptions:

JAZZ: A variety of contemporary dance styles but all performed in precision. Jazz can be quick and sharp yet also fluid and interpretive in style. It does not carry out a theme, utilize a prop nor take the form of robotic, military moves.

KICK: Is sometimes, but not always, performed in a connected line with at least 20 'jump kicks'. It can contain other forms of kicks such as swing, developpe', fan, passe', etc. It can also contain some dance steps but must have the majority of the routine focused towards some type of kick combinations.

PROP: Is a routine with the primary focus utilizing a prop. The prop can be set aside briefly but must be used during at least 75 % of the routine. Do not confuse a prop with a stage effect or back drop.

MILITARY: This routine will contain sharp, robotic arm movements and footwork. It will utilize any sections, formations and traveling patterns and may contain a short kick series for effect. None of the movements should be "soft" or flowing. There should be dynamic movements.

POM: This type of routine will have lots of arm work with poms in hand. It will contain formations and is usually very sharp and energetic in style. Poms should be in hand at least 75% of routine and should be the focus of the visual effect.

NOVELTY: This category is usually the most entertaining in that a theme is carried out through costumes, music and characterizations. Props, staging and backdrops may be used to carry out the theme but the prop should not become the primary use of the routine and should not be used more than 25% of the dance. Do not allow team members to become "sloppy" on novelty merely because it is "fun". Precision and technique always play important roles.

LYRICAL: This dance is performed in fluid, balletic type movements; sometimes takes the form of 'modern dance' or gives an interpretation of music or thought. Again, there is precision and energy in its execution and is not to be mistaken with 'ad-libbing' and frolicking around the performance area. Lyrical is sometimes thematic and emotional.

In preparation for choreography of any category of dance, the procedures are the same. (1) Music selection and appropriateness is the first consideration, followed by, (2) phrasing your music, (3) determining strong portions of music, (4) placing steps within the phrasing and inflection of the music, (5) determining patterns and their placement in the music, and (6) evaluating choreography.

Your choreography sources can be limitless. Television, movies, stage productions, musicals, sports and any form of movement can be an influence on a routine. Never limit yourself. There are several philosophies in the drill team world on choreography responsibilities:

1. Director
2. Officers
3. Summer camps and workshops
4. Outside choreographer
5. Combination of 1-4

My philosophy parallels with #5 as to not rule out any source of creativity. You don't have to be a "dancer" to assist with the choreography for your team. I encourage you to train your officers in these procedures to help them to be better leaders as well as choreographers.