

The Ballet Continuum  
Features to Look for and Think About as We Watch Dance Videos

Is there a narrative or concept? Is it purely movement driven?	Story Theme Concept Political or social commentary
Are there characters portrayed and what can you tell about them or are they purely dancers?	Roles in a story Caricatures, stereotypes, body type conventions Gender role conventions
Is emotion portrayed and, if so, how is it done?	Gesture Movement Posture Tempo Connections between dancers
Is there music or sound and what is it like?	Instrumental vs Words Acoustic vs Electronic Soundscape Connection to movement: synchronized; dynamically related; enhancing, distracting from, or irrelevant to movement
What is the scale of the production, grand or minimal?	Stage size Number of performers Scenery and costumes: simple, complex, grand
Is there a mood and what conveys it?	Dramatic Playful Mysterious Dangerous Other
Is there uniformity among the dancers?	Dancing style Race and color Size and shape
Choreographer	Can you tell anything about the choreographer from the dance? If you know the choreographer, is the work similar to or different from other works done by that person?

Movement Features to Look For	
Ballet technique elements	Posture erect, lifted, reaching away from floor Stretched legs and pointed feet Turnout Arm positions: gently rounded or fully extended, framing, not obscuring face Pointe shoes
Contradictions of traditional ballet rules	Legs and feet working in parallel, not turned out Extension relaxed legs or feet Flexed feet and hands Isolated movement of hips and torso – not kept in alignment Focus on hand movements and shapes
Other dance techniques	Modern: contraction and release, fall and recover Jazz: hip and upper torso isolations Hip Hop: fluidity, body rolls, gliding, robotic movements, floor work African: hip and shoulder movements; isolations; ground connection; stomping; slapping and patting parts of the body to make an accompaniment
Pedestrian movement	Walking, Running, Skipping Reaching, Bending, Standing at ease
Perception of gravity; use of floor	Illusion of weightlessness by rising on balls of feet or toes, sustained balances, large jumps across floor Sense of weight in deep plie, flat foot, body posture Emphasis on connection to floor through falling or movement on floor
Use of stage space	Formal, symmetrical arrangement of dancers vs loose groupings and seemingly erratic lines of movement Use of scenery and props to arrange the dancers in movement and to fill the stage cube
Connection with Audience	Preservation of the fourth wall Dancer focus on, and making eye contact with, the audience Dancer looking beyond audience Dancer focus on points around stage or other dancers
Partnering	Lifting, supporting, turning Swinging, dragging Contorting, stretching Bumping bodies Sculptural arrangement of bodies