Dontcha Know About Your Past?
...Finding our roots through dance.

One, two, three, hop, one, two, three, hop. “Roll out the barrel...” Chances are if you grew up in Central Wisconsin and had German and Polish ancestry, the polka was a mainstay at family weddings and even dance class in gym. The fun uncles and dads knew how to spin partners around the dance floor with breathtaking speed. Traditional dances help to maintain cultural identity in this diverse state and country. Take your students on a historical and contemporary journey by encouraging them to explore their ancestry and the process of performing through dance.

**Target:** Elementary/Secondary General Music

**Descriptive Paragraph:**

The performance used as a basis for this lesson comes from the wp.tv video highlighting the Stoughton High School Norwegian Dancers. Other traditional dances are provided from various internet sources. Food, music, art, and dance are essential in helping create and maintain cultural identity. Students will research their family history, and with guidance from their instructor, explore various traditional dances. They will have the opportunity to also explore the creative process of performing as the high school students discuss in the WPT video.

**WMEA Music Standards:**

This curriculum guide corresponds with the following WMEA Music Standards:

**Artistic Process **PERFORM:  
**Enduring Understandings **–  
Performers make interpretive decisions based on their understanding of context and expressive intent.  
To express their musical ideas, musicians analyze, evaluate, and refine their performance over time through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of
appropriate criteria. Musicians judge performance based on criteria that vary across time, place, and cultures.

**Performance standard (sample): SELECT**
Demonstrate and explain personal interest in, knowledge about, and purpose of varied musical selections. 
MU:Pr4.1.2a

Other performance standards to consider:

**Analyze:** Demonstrate knowledge of music concepts (such as tonality and meter) in music from a variety of cultures selected for performance. MU:Pr4.2.2a

**Rehearse Evaluate Refine:** MU:Pr5.1.2b

**Present:** MU:Pr6.1.2b

**Artistic Process:** **RESPOND**:

**Enduring Understandings** –
Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

**Performance standard (sample): INTERPRET**
Demonstrate knowledge of music concepts and how they support creators'/ performers' expressive intent. 
MU:Re8.1.2a

Other performance standards to consider:

**Evaluate:** MU:Re9.1.2a

**Artistic Process:** **CONNECT**:

**Enduring Understandings** –
Musicians connect their personal interests, experiences, ideas, and knowledge to creating, performing, and responding. Understanding connections to varied contexts and daily life enhances musicians’ creating, performing, and responding

**Performance standard (sample): PERSONALIZE**
Highlight how music interacts with the affective domain, such as feelings, values, opinions, wishes, personal awareness, or character. 
MU:Cn10.1.2b-WI
Other performance standards to consider:

**Broaden: MU:Cn11.1.2c-WI**

**GETTING STARTED:**

Great students at the door with folk music highlighting a part of your, the teacher's, heritage. Possibly even greet them in traditional clothing or performing a folk dance. Watch the brief video of the Stoughton High School Norwegian Dancers. Discuss the great diversity of people and culture that makes up Wisconsin.

[https://wisconsinperforms.org/stoughton-norwegian-dancers/](https://wisconsinperforms.org/stoughton-norwegian-dancers/)

**STRATEGIES:**

- Talk about what heritage and ancestry is
- Send students home with a questionnaire for their parents/grandparents/family/other teachers to discover their cultural background or the background of someone in the community. Questionnaire could include:
  - Inquiries into the ethnic makeup of the student
  - Favorite dishes that were passed down in the family
  - Songs and games passed down in the family
  - Dances learned from home
- Explore various folk dances from various cultures. Some examples on exploration:
  - Teach students a folk dance- polka, tinikling, line dance (american heritage), etc
  - Watch videos of folk dance- some are included, or research others
- Watch the video of the high school dancers again and talk about how they prepare for a performance.
- As a class or in large groups, learn a folk dance to perform. Chose a song or dance, make a plan, practice, and perform.
- For middle school, have students conduct research on the history of the dances or the regions from which certain dances originate.
  - Discover food, clothing, education, games, songs of the area
  - Present findings in a creative presentation

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (Video/Audio/Print):**

Dances from Mexico-
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0lg2dmd0qk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0lg2dmd0qk)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRPtiUL4kZI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRPtiUL4kZI)
Irish Dance-  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0ftEPfDv4I

German Dance- 
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axQ-MmrCWz8  
  ● 4:21 has second dance  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQ9g5zFQwEI

Greece  
Kalinka- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwS50EDcMGE

Hmong folk dance- 
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwiaNjxiP5k  
  ● Starts at 1 min  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smYeXVoqyDU  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6ogx9IpTU

Philippines- Tinikling  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLfqDMwA_o  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfHr1RISXdc

**ASSESSMENTS:**

Performance- Perform folk dance and reflect on the process of preparing for the dances

Writing- Heritage questionnaire, history and background of certain folk dances

Projects- Students explore the food, dance, music, and much more of a particular culture and present findings to class or community in creative fashion

Discussion- Involvement in classroom discussion, critiques and decisions