

STEAMDANCE Resource: Stage Directions

This pdf aligns with the following video resource: <https://youtu.be/hCPsfVWDzos>

Background

The directions for stage craft developed from the historical context of 'raked stages'. A raked stage was sloped downward towards the audience, while the audience stood or were seated on a flat surface. The angled stage allowed the audience to see the performance better, but this required the dancers perform on a tilted stage.

These days, most modern stages are flat and it is the audience who may be seated on an angle, using tiered seating (like a stadium). There are still many raked stages in existence around the world, but they are less common.

The activity

- Firstly, students learn the orientation of downstage, upstage and centre stage.
- Add in left, centre & right (e.g. downstage left)
- Develop themes/focus related to topic:
 - Change locomotor(way) that the students travel between places (skip, hop, jump, shuffle etc)
 - Change the movement quality (soft, slow, sharp, rigid etc)
 - Add in fractions or percentage (50% of class upstage left, 50% centre stage)
 - Move like a character the students are analysing
 - Move like a gas, liquid or solid particle
- Modify: Instead of stage directions, you can employ directions related to a theme, for instance;
 - Ship – starboard/port side
 - Map grid – letter and number coordinates
 - Australia – divide areas into states
 - North/South/East/West or Cardinal directions
 - Battery – positive/negative
 - Story sequence
 - Anatomy –eg. the four chambers of the heart or sections of the spine

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THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Audience (Front of stage)

Downstage left	Downstage centre	Downstage right
Centre stage left	Centre stage	Centre stage right
Upstage left	Upstage centre	Upstage right

Backdrop (Back of stage)

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