

# GRUPO AMERICA

TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE—LINKED TO IRP'S

## ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

The one-hour school program features folkloric dances from six different countries which range from the pre-Columbian era to the modern day. The performance illuminates the three main influences in dances from the Americas: European, African, and Native. Each dance is accompanied by a brief description of the country followed by the dance's origin and story. The basic show involves dances from Mexico, Cuba, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and the USA. Grupo America has many dances from all the countries of the Americas and so schools may select their own program if they wish—just let us know in advance what dances you'd like to see.



### THEMES:

- *Central America*
- *Coordination*
- *Culture*
- *Dance*
- *Geography*
- *History*
- *Latin America*
- *Music*
- *North America*
- *Rhythm*
- *South America*
- *Tradition*

## STUDENT PARTICIPATION



Latin rhythms are truly infectious and so Grupo America will invite students to participate during the show to learn a few steps. Teachers may join in too!

## HOSTING THE PERFORMANCE

**Sound** One voice microphone on a stand, and a working electrical outlet to plug in the sound system

**Lighting** Basic lighting, warm wash if on a stage. If in a gym, just the overhead fluorescents will be fine

**Props** Large rollaway blackboard on which to hang a map

**Stage or Gym floor** 30' wide by 25' deep required

**Changing room or classroom nearby** There are numerous costume changes, so ample space is required and, since the costumes are very expensive, the space must be clean. Please have a teacher or student make an introduction to start the show and say a few words of thanks after.



## The Dances

The following are just a few of the dances that Grupo America can perform for their school show. If there is one dance in particular that you don't see listed or a particular country that is not represented, please inquire. Grupo America have a vast repertoire of dances which means that they could come to your school every year with a completely different show, or you can choose your own dances!



**The Mexican Hat Dance** tells the story of love and courtship. It can be performed either by a couple or a group of couples.



**Salsa** refers to a fusion of informal dance styles having roots in the Caribbean, especially Cuba. There is also a strong African influence in the music and the dance.



**Samba** is a lively, rhythmical dance of Brazilian origin in 2/4 time danced under the Samba music.



**Native Polynesian Dance from Easter Island** A Chilean dependency in the eastern Pacific Ocean, the easternmost outpost of the Polynesian island world, Easter Island takes its



**Swing dance** commonly refers to a either group of dances developing in response to swing music in the 1920s, 30s and 40s, or to lindy hop, a popular partner dance today.

## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

**IRP link** - students will demonstrate a growing awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the histories, diversities, roles, and influences of dance within society.

K-12 PRE-SHOW – use the following information on the dances for a brief study and discussion about any previous knowledge or experience re: the various cultures/dances.

K-12 POST SHOW – practice some of the steps and moves learned during the show!

Grupo America teach dance classes and workshops at both their studio in Vancouver and right at your school. Dancers of all ages and skill levels are welcome. For more information on classes available, please visit Grupo America's website:

[www.grupoamerica.net](http://www.grupoamerica.net)

