

Meet the Orchestra

May 2 & May 6-9, 2025

TURN THE BEAT AROUND Movement Activity

In this activity, students will:

- Learn basic rhythms and footwork patterns for square dance and salsa dance
- Compare the feeling of different rhythms
- Create patterns using square dance and salsa dance footwork

Connection to the Music

Hoedown is taken from Aaron Copland's 1942 ballet, *Rodeo*. The ballet takes place in the American West and follows the story of The Cowgirl, the Head Wrangler, the Rancher's Daughter, and the Lead Roper. A **hoedown** is an energetic dance competition, and Copland's music features two American square dance tunes, "Bonaparte's Retreat" and "Miss McLeod's Reel."

Mambo appears in Leonard Bernstein's 1956 musical, *West Side Story*. In the famous dance scene, members of the Sharks and the Jets battle on the dance floor to the Cuban Mambo. During the scene, the groups dance in their own style and refuse to mix with the "other side."



About the Dances

Square dancing is a traditional folk dance that originated in the United States. It draws inspiration from English country dances, the French quadrille, and African American call-and-response dances. Western square dance, also called modern square dance, originated in the American West and is still danced today.

Square dancing features a **Caller**, a person who announces the dance steps. The dance steps are known as “calls.” There are over 100 calls in modern square dance. The music used in square dancing is based on jigs, reels, and hoedowns. Musicians play banjos, guitars, and fiddles and can improvise the melody based on the instructions the caller gives to the group.

Rueda de Casino is a type of salsa dance that originated in Havana, Cuba, in the 1950s. Its music and footwork are a blend of different dance rhythms and styles, including music originating from the Son Cubano and Cha Cha genres, and partner framework and steps from the Cuban Mambo, Rumba, and North American Jive.

“Rueda” is Spanish for “wheel,” and refers to the circular format of this group dance. Rueda de Casino also features a **Caller**, a person who announces the dance steps. Each dance step has its own hand gesture in addition to a name; there are over 150 dance steps total.

When Cubans left their country and came to the United States, they brought their dances with them, and now Rueda de Casino is danced worldwide. Cuban salsa music features many percussion instruments including claves, congas, timbales, and cowbells so dancers can clearly hear the beat.

Putting it Together

Materials:

- Call sheet of Square Dance and Rueda de Casino calls
- YouTube [playlist](#) to square dancing and salsa music
- Space to move around

Process:

Use this process with both the Square Dance and Rueda de Casino calls!

1. Form groups of eight. These groups will be your square/rueda.
2. Within each group, establish four pairs with one person in each pair designated as **Partner A** and the other person as **Partner B**. **Partner A** will stand on the right, **Partner B** will stand on the left.
3. Practice stepping in place to the beat of each piece of music in the playlist to feel the rhythm patterns.
4. Learn the Calls for each dance. Practice first without music. Once the groups are comfortable, add music!
5. Next, practice transitioning from call to call. Use the call sheet (or make up your own pattern) to sequence the steps together. Practice first without music, then add music when ready.

Extension: Have students come up with their own pattern of calls. Take turns leading the class in their choreographed sequences.

Post-Activity Discussion Questions:

1. How did each dance feel in your body?
2. Was one style easier to learn than the other?
3. How did it feel to dance in a group?

Learning the Basics

Square Dancing

- Square dancing is a 4-count, 8-step dance, meaning each movement will take at least 8 steps to complete and moves in a four-beat rhythm pattern.
- Start each pattern with your right foot and follow a right-left-right-left pattern. Try walking this pattern to the beat of the music to establish rhythm.
- Each group member has Partner and a **Corner**. The **Corner** is the person beside you who is not your original partner. Sometimes you may dance with your **Corner** instead of your Partner.
- Square dancing patterns are decided by the Caller. The Caller can stand in the center of the square or can stand outside of the square. The Caller tells the group what patterns they will dance together.

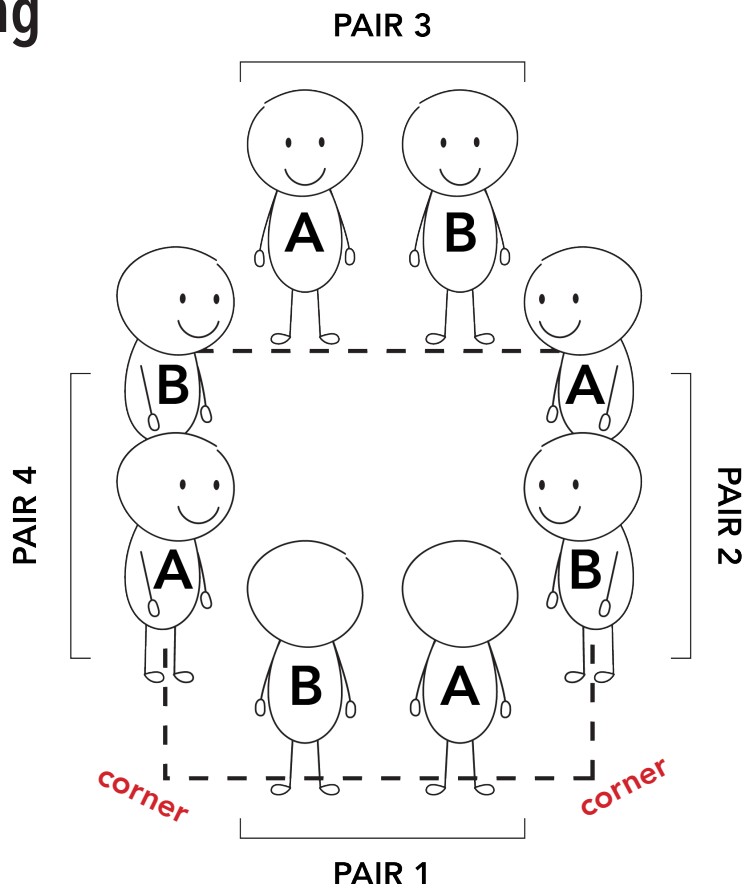
Basic Calls:

- **Bow to your partner:** Bow to your partner, return center by the end of count 8.
- **Bow to your **corner**:** Bow to the person beside you who is not your partner, return center by the end of count 8.
- **Swing your partner:** Lock opposite arms with your partner and swing in a circle for 7 counts, facing the center of the square by the end of count 8.
- **Swing your **corner**:** Lock opposite arms with your **corner** and swing in a circle for 7 counts, facing the center of the square by the end of count 8.
- **Right circle:** Everyone in the square joins hands and walks in a circle to the right for 7 counts. Unhook arms and face center by count 8 so you're ready for the next call!
- **Left circle:** Everyone in the square joins hands and walks in a circle to the left for 7 counts. Unhook arms and face center by count 8 so you're ready for the next call!

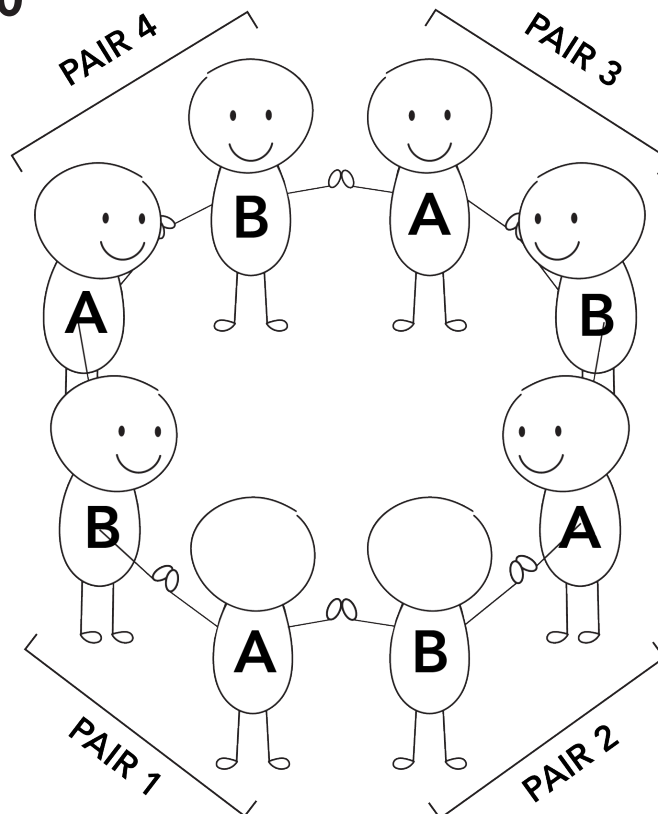
Advanced Calls:

- **Partner A Star:** **Partner As** of the group connect right hands in the center of the square and walk in a circle to the right for 8 counts, returning to their partner by the end of count 8. **Partner Bs** march in place to the beat.
- **Partner B Star:** **Partner Bs** of the group connect right hands in the center of the square and walk in a circle to the right for 8 counts, returning to their partner by the end of the count 8. **Partner As** march in place.

Square Dancing



Rueda De Casino



Rueda De Casino

- Rueda De Casino is a 6-count, 8-beat dance, meaning each movement will take six steps to complete and moves in an 8-beat rhythm pattern.
- The footwork follows the basic salsa 8-count pattern, quick-quick-slow (pause): 1-2-3 (pause on 4), 5-6-7 (pause on 8).
- Start each pattern with your right foot and follow the quick-quick-slow pattern: right-left-right (pause) left-right-left (pause). Try walking this pattern to the beat of the music to establish rhythm.
- Rueda De Casino patterns are decided by a Caller. The Caller can stand in the center of the circle or can dance with everyone and make calls while inside the circle. The Caller uses **anticipatory cueing** to tell the group what pattern is coming next. The next cue will come four beats before it is called. It is up to the group to listen closely to their Caller to know what is coming!

Basic Calls:

All calls happen with the group standing in a connected circle with their arms up and palms touching the hand of the person on either side of them.

- **Basic Step:** March basic salsa rhythm in place to establish beat and footwork pattern.
- **Para al Medio (Step through the middle):** With palms still touching to form a circle, group members alternate stepping to the right and left. The right foot steps down on beat 1, the left foot taps lightly next to it on beat 3; the left foot steps down on beat 5, the right foot taps lightly next to it on beat 7; repeat.
- **Arriba (forward):** With palms touching, the group walks in a circle to the right while stepping the basic salsa rhythm (1,2,3, pause, 5,6,7, pause, alternating between right and left feet).
- **Abajo (backward):** With palms touching, the group walks in a circle to the left while stepping the basic salsa rhythm (1,2,3, pause, 5,6,7, pause alternating between right and left feet). It's best to turn the whole body toward the left, but advanced groups can try walking backward.

Advanced Calls:

Dile que no (Tell them no): **Partner Bs** step the basic salsa rhythm in place with their arms up and palms facing out. On beat 1, **Partner As** high five their left hand across to their Corner's left hand. They return to center by beat 3. Then **Partner As** high five using their right hand to their partner's right hand on beat 5. They return to center by beat 7.

Dile que si (Tell them yes): **Partner As** step the basic salsa rhythm in place with their arms up and palms facing out. On beat 1, **Partner Bs** high five their left hand across to their partner's left hand. They return to center by beat 3. Then **Partner Bs** high five using their right hand to their Corner's Right hand on beat 5. They return to center by beat 7.

Sample Calling Sequences

Square Dancing Sequence 1 (Easy): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bow to your partner 2. Swing your partner 3. Circle right 4. Bow to your corner 5. Swing your corner 6. Circle left 	Rueda de Casino Sequence 1 (Easy): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Para al medio 2. Basic step (in place) 3. Para al medio 4. Arriba 5. Basic step (in place) 6. Abajo
Square Dancing Sequence 2 (Medium): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bow to your partner 2. Swing your partner 3. Partner A star 4. Circle right 5. Bow to your corner 6. Swing your corner 7. Partner B star 8. Circle left 	Rueda de Casino Sequence 2 (Medium): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Para al medio 2. Basic step (in place) 3. Dile que no 4. Basic step (in place) 5. Dile que si 6. Basic step (in place) 7. Arriba 8. Para al medio
Square Dancing Sequence 3 (Hard): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bow to your partner 2. Swing your corner 3. Partner A star 4. Circle left 5. Bow to your corner 6. Swing your partner 7. Partner B star 8. Circle right 	Rueda de Casino Sequence 3 (Hard): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic step (in place) 2. Dile que no 3. Arriba 4. Para al medio 5. Basic step (in place) 6. Dile que si 7. Abajo 8. Para al medio