



3 Dance Art

Teacher's Notes

1 Synopsis

In this video, the American dancer and choreographer Sara Sweet Rabadoux tells us about the dance company she runs in Boston called *hoi polloi*. The video begins with Sara talking about the different things that inspire her work. We see parts of two of the company's performances called *Beach Blanket Butoh* and *Cupcake*. Sara continues by explaining when and how she started dancing, and describes her favorite parts of the job. She talks about how the work is difficult and tiring, but incredibly fun and rewarding. The video ends with the reflection that painters and dancers inspire each other and, in turn, these artists are a source of inspiration for us.
Length of video: 4:53 min

2 Target Language

Grammar: Verb tenses; stative and dynamic verbs
Vocabulary: visual, performing, and literary arts; adjectives to describe a performance
Language Points: *feel like, have been working so hard on, talked me into*

3 Procedural Notes

A Before you watch

1 As a class. On the board, draw three ovals with four branches coming out of each. Write these words inside the ovals: *Visual arts, Performing arts, and Literary arts*. Elicit or explain the meaning of each term (visual arts are types of art made for people to look at; performing arts are created for people to watch; literary arts are written for people to read). Have students look at the example of each type of art on the worksheet (visual arts – photography; performing arts – dance; literary arts – poems).

In pairs. Encourage students to brainstorm as many examples of each type of art as they can in two minutes and write their ideas on the worksheet. Then, ask the class to call out ideas, and write them on the board.

Possible answers:

Visual arts: photography, painting, drawing, movies, TV shows, sculpture, architecture

Performing arts: classical music, dance, theater/drama, comedy, rock music

Literary arts: novels, poems, short stories, plays, essays

2 As a class. Write these verbs on the board: *like, prefer, think, love, believe, know, understand*. Explain or elicit that these are stative verbs. Stative verbs aren't used in the progressive because they describe states, rather than ongoing activities. Offer some example sentences to illustrate this contrast: *Jane is sitting by the window; I'm standing at the front of the classroom; We know the answers to exercise 1; I think you will enjoy today's video.*

In groups. Before students talk about their preferences in small groups, nominate students to read aloud the example answers. Encourage students to use different stative verbs and explain their preferences. After five minutes, invite some students to report what they learned to the class.

3 As a class. Elicit the names of some artists and write them on the board. Accept any type of artist, including singers and movie stars. You may want to add some of your own ideas. Then, ask the class to call out suggestions of what inspired these artists and gave them their ideas. If the class can't think of anything for these particular artists, encourage them to think of sources of inspiration for artists in general (e.g., family, everyday life, a vacation, nature, important events, relationship break-ups, death, other artists, etc.).

Possible answers:

The rapper Eminem was inspired by famous rap artists when he was a teenager.

Andy Warhol was inspired by everyday objects, like soup cans.

Van Gogh was inspired by the life of working people in the countryside.

Renoir, Degas, and Toulouse-Lautrec were inspired by dancers.

Frida Kahlo was inspired by the native cultures of the Americas.

Isabel Allende was inspired to write her novel *The House of the Spirits* by her family and her native country, Chile.

B While you watch

1 In pairs. Explain to students that they are going to listen to a video about a woman who works in the performing arts named Sara Sweet Rabadoux. Write the words *diorama* and *hoi polloi* on the board and teach their meaning (a *diorama* is a small model representing



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a scene, often found in museums; *hoi polloi* is the name of Sara's dance company; *hoi polloi* is also an insulting word for people who are not very rich or well-educated). Explain to students that they need to work in pairs and complete the text about Sara by reading the words and definitions and then writing these words in the correct position in the text. Allow five minutes. Do not check the answers at this stage.

As a class. Play the video from the beginning to the point where the critics' comments appear on screen [up to 00:52]. Tell students you will give a signal at the point in the video where the text on their worksheet begins. Have them check, and if necessary correct, their answers as they listen.

Answer key: 1 choreographer 2 sources
3 inspiration 4 performing 5 reviews

As a class. Nominate students one at a time to read aloud their answers for checking.

2 As a class. Nominate students to read aloud the sentences. Pre-teach the meaning of *cupcake* (a small round cake with a sweet sugary substance on the top; it's the name of one of Sara's performances). Tell students that you will give them a signal at the point where the reporter begins to talk about *Cupcake* (they will first hear about another of Sara's performances called *Beach Blanket Butoh*).

Individuals. Play the video from where you last paused it [00:52] to the end. Give a signal when the word *Cupcake* appears on screen [01:56]. Students listen and choose their answers. If they don't manage to answer all eight questions on the first listen, play the section again.

As a class. Check answers as a class. Encourage students to correct the false statements.

Answer key:

1 T 2 F (It was inspired by Ravel's opera *The Child and The Magic Spells*.) 3 F (It gets most of its money from private foundations and governments in the form of "grants." Sometimes institutions hire artists to create new work.) 4 T 5 F (Their next performance is called *24 Cakes*.) 6 F (Her favorite part of having a dance company is traveling, getting to perform for other cultures, and meeting other dancers and people around the world.)

3 As a class. Write these five verb tenses on the board: *simple present, simple past, infinitive, present passive, past passive*. Elicit an example of each, using the verb *teach*. (I teach. I taught. I like to teach. The class is taught. The class was taught.)

In groups. Do a multi-listening task (see *Techniques for teaching with video* in the DVD booklet). Put the students in groups. Assign each group one of the five verb tenses to listen for. Explain that each group should raise their hands when they hear a verb in their tense and write it in the appropriate column of the chart. Play the video from *Cupcake tells the story ... to ... to add another layer of visual imagery* [01:56–02:26]. If necessary, play the section a second time and encourage groups to check their lists.

As a class. Invite each group to write their verbs on the board. Encourage students to complete the remaining columns of the chart.

Answer key:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| simple present | tells |
| simple past | decided |
| infinitive | to work, to create, to use, to add |
| present passive | is projected |
| past passive | was inspired (by) |

C After you watch

As a class. Elicit the meaning of *critic* and *review*. Tell students to imagine they are critics. You will play the video of the *Beach Blanket Butoh* performance again [1:19–1:51], and they will then work in pairs to write a short review of this piece for a local newspaper. Encourage them to take notes while they watch.

After students have watched the section of the video, make sure they understand that the inspiration for the performance was American surf culture and a modern form of Japanese dance called *butoh*. Then, ask them to help you brainstorm a list of adjectives that they could use in their reviews to describe the performance (e.g., *modern, colorful, funny, boring, terrible, strange, interesting*). If students don't mention them, teach the following adjectives from the video as well: *captivating* – very interesting or attractive *dreamlike* – strange, like the things you experience in dreams *surreal* – so strange that you cannot believe it's real *unusual* – not normal, common, or ordinary



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In pairs. Students write their reviews. To help them get started, draw attention to the model sentence on their worksheet. Encourage them to use some of the sentences from Exercise 2 *While you watch* to help them.

Possible answer:

The *hoi polloi* dance company's performance of *Beach Blanket Butoh* was captivating. The choreography was modern. The dancers pretended to be surfers, but the style of dance was Japanese *butoh*. That combination was very unusual. Sara Sweet Rabidou's work is surreal and dreamlike.

As a class. Invite a few pairs to read aloud their review to the class. When they have finished, highlight and encourage the class to help you correct any significant errors. Alternatively, invite students to put their reviews up on the walls around the classroom. Encourage them to circulate and read different ones. Then, take a class vote for the best one.

D Language Points

1 Individuals. Nominate students to read sentences 1–3 aloud. Give students a minute or so to do the exercise. Then, check the answers as a class.

Answer key: 1 b 2 a 3 b

2 As a class. On the board, write: *I feel like ...* Say two sentences, e.g., *I feel like watching TV is a waste of time. I feel like I know more about the performing arts now.* Explain that in this usage, *I feel like* is a way of giving an opinion or expressing a belief. Then, write:

I've been working so hard ... Say a couple of sentences, e.g., *I've been working so hard on passing my driving test in the last few weeks. I've been working so hard on my English this month.* Finally, write: *talked me into.* Say a few sentences, e.g., *My friend talked me into getting my hair cut short. My classmate talked me into going to a classical music concert. I talked my parents into buying me a new laptop.* Explain that this expression means "to convince someone to do something that they don't initially want to do." Highlight that this expression is always followed by a gerund, unless it ends with the pronoun "it." ("She talked me into it.")

Individuals. Have students complete the sentences on their worksheet with information about themselves.

In groups. Have students share their sentences in groups of three or four. Then, nominate a few students to tell the class some of the things that the people in their group said.

E Your Viewpoint

In groups. Nominate three students to read the questions aloud and check to be sure that everybody understands them. Give students time to discuss the questions in small groups. While the groups are working, circulate and help with vocabulary.

As a class. Have a class discussion. Take a class vote. Who thinks these are forms of art and who doesn't? Ask a few students to share their reasons. Then, invite a few students to tell the class what inspires them, and what types of art they would like to try. Encourage the class to ask questions to find out more information.

4 Video Script

Presenter: Famous artists like Renoir, Degas, and Toulouse-Lautrec were inspired by dancers. What inspires dancers to create their art? Sara Sweet Rabidou is a dancer and choreographer who sometimes works with videographers to create her art. She draws inspiration for her choreography from many sources, including old photographs and movies.

Sara: I get inspiration for my dances from the small things in life. My dances are like dioramas of the little things in life.

Presenter: Sara founded the *hoi polloi* dance company six years ago. They have been performing ever since, and getting great reviews from dance critics all over the country. For Sara, ideas for dances come from places that are often very unusual.



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- Sara:** Postcards someone might send you from somewhere, teacups, the way people wait for the bus.
- Presenter:** In addition to photography, other forms of art inspire Sara.
- Sara:** I feel like I tell stories in my dances, without being literal. So when I find stories that are evocative of small things, that also inspires me.
- Presenter:** The inspiration for *Beach Blanket Butoh* came from some unusual sources.
- Sara:** *Beach Blanket Butoh* came to me out of the fact that American surf culture and *Butoh*, which is a modern form of Japanese expressionistic dance, came together at the same time in the world.
- Presenter:** One critic called *Beach Blanket Butoh* "captivating." *Beach Blanket Butoh* is captivating and surreal. Much of Sara's work is surreal and dreamlike. *Cupcake* tells the story of a very strange birthday party. For *Cupcake*, Sara decided to work with a videographer to create additional images. This very surreal video is projected onto the stage and dancers during the performance.
- Sara:** *Cupcake* was inspired by Ravel's opera *The Child And The Magic Spells*. I decided to use video in this piece to add another layer of visual imagery.
- Presenter:** Over the past six years, Sara has worked hard to establish a reputation and get publicity for her company. Running a dance company is not easy. Sara has faced many difficulties, and has managed to be successful. Artists like Sara often depend on grants of money from private foundations and from governments to create their art. Sometimes, an institution hires or commissions an artist to create new work.
- Sara:** *Hoi polloi* is a small, non-profit dance company. We've been very fortunate in that people respond to our work, and we've gotten many grants in recent years for the creation and presentation of new work.
- Presenter:** Sara's hard work and persistence are paying off. *Hoi polloi* was commissioned to create a new work. Now, she's working on a new piece, inspired by a poet.
- Sara:** We're working on a new piece right now called *24 Cakes*. This work was commissioned by Crash Arts here in Boston to be performed at their showcase called *Dance Straight Up!* And we have been working so hard on this the last few weeks.
- Presenter:** Many professional dancers start dancing when they are very young. But Sara did not start as a child.
- Sara:** I didn't start dancing as a child. I started very late. I was an athlete, and was much more interested in playing field hockey and writing stories than I was in anything else. And in college, I discovered a dance class. Someone talked me into taking it. And the choreography element seemed to me to be what I loved best in life.
- Presenter:** The work is tiring and sometimes difficult. But Sara finds her life incredibly fun and rewarding.
- Sara:** My favorite part of having a dance company is traveling, and getting to perform our work for other cultures and to meet other dancers and other people all around the world.
- Presenter:** Painters and sculptors are inspired by dancers. They try to capture their grace, and even the sound of music that they are playing. A dancer is inspired by art, film, and photography. Her movements bring images to life on the stage. All of them look at the world around them and create vivid impressions that can inspire our own imaginations.