

Classical Ballet 1

TRIAL BOOK

A green line drawing of ballet slippers and a ribbon. The drawing is detailed, showing the texture of the slippers and the flowing nature of the ribbon. It is positioned in the lower half of the cover, behind the subtitle.

Classwork & Teaching Suggestions *for the
Ballet Teacher of Students Ages 8 to 12*

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Classical Ballet 1:

Classwork and Teaching Helps *for the Ballet Teacher of Students age 8 to 12*

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The Teacher Must Decide

The Ballet Arts series of manuals provides information, activities and suggestions for the teaching of ballet to children. The materials in these books have worked well for the author, and for other teachers of her acquaintance. However, the author cannot know what approach or which physical activities will be appropriate and safe for any particular teacher, class, or student. It is the responsibility of each ballet teacher to use his or her best judgment in applying the information and teaching suggestions contained herein, and in using the activities, enchainements, dances and teaching materials contained in the Ballet Arts series from The Ballet Source.

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Teaching Placement For Ballet 1

Ballet Posture

Stand tall, reasonably straight, weight balanced correctly over feet: the first and most important lesson in ballet.

1. Stand evenly on the triangle of the foot, weight evenly distributed between the two feet. Two thirds of the weight is on the balls of the feet, one third on the heels.
2. Feet must be correctly aligned with the knees in all movements, with insteps lifted to form the arch.
3. Legs are turned out at the hip joints.
4. From the waist, pull tail downward, and stomach upward.
5. Pelvic bone held is level and square.
6. Shoulders are relaxed, shoulder blades flat against the back.
7. Arms are relaxed, slightly rounded.
8. Neck is stretched gently upward, and is vertical; head is lifted, and moves independently of the neck.
9. Eyes look ahead, with expression.
10. When the body is centered within the lines of gravity, it takes less effort to stand, and movement becomes easier.

For some, this new way of standing may take getting used to. But, the body will adjust to it, and eventually feel at ease and alive when standing correctly for ballet.

“The total picture of a dancer: legs, arms, head, hands, feet, expression, can be compared to a chord on the piano, with all of the correct notes striking at the same time.”

—Alan Hooper

Feet

Feet must not roll or sickle; knees must point the same direction as toes.

This is taught with demi plié. Students must not turn feet out further than their knees (legs) can go.

The demi plié in second position is sometimes helpful in teaching use of the sartorius and outward rotators for turning out the legs. Those who find this concept difficult, can be helped with pliés and rises done in the parallel position.

Hips must be centered over the supporting legs, or leg.

This concept is taught with the “transfer of weight” exercise. Later, the concept of hips and shoulders making a rectangle which must have “square corners” and which must balance over the leg or legs being stood upon, may be explained.

Another help: stand facing the barre in second position. Shift the weight over the right leg, pointing the left foot. Hips must center over the right leg, and be level. Shift to 2nd, then to the left leg, checking the centering of the hips in each of the three positions.

Knees are pulled up when straight.

This can be taught with leg lifts and rises, and used in battement tendus. Eventually it will be applied to sautés. They must not confuse the straightening of the knees with the incorrect throwing back of the knee joints.

Movements are isolated.

In grand battement devant only the leg moves. In sautés, the legs do the jumping, the rest of the body is quiet. In port de bras, the arms move independently from the shoulders.

Special Rule For Knees and Feet:

When the heels are off the ground, the knees are straight; when the knees are bent, the heels must be on the ground.

This enables the leg muscles to do their intended jobs during jumps. The calf muscles throw the dancer into the air for sautés; they do the work of lifting the heels and the weight of the body in rises and relevés.

The muscles on the front of the lower legs control the landing from sautés, and the coming down from rises and relevés. These “shin muscles” should be used during demi pliés, and when landing from jumps. If heels pop up, they are not being used.

An exercise to help the shin muscles learn to work and strengthen:

- 1 Demi plié and stay down.
- 2 Lift toes off the floor, keeping everything else the same. You can feel the shin muscle tighten slightly.
- 3 Relax the toes to the floor.
- 4 Straighten from the plié.

Use of the shin muscles is taught with demi plié and rise. Be sure the two sets of leg muscles truly do take turns, and do not overlap their efforts.

This coordination of the two opposing sets of lower leg muscles produces good ballon in a dancer. If the above rule is followed in all adage and barre movements, it will help the allegro to be smoother and more graceful.

Hips must be parallel to the floor.

Hips are either perpendicular to or parallel to the barre; and must face squarely forward of the dancer without twisting or turning. To get correct advanced placement, the student must go through the absolutely square beginning placement for several years. This builds correct muscle use.

Port de bras is a good place to practice holding the body muscles correctly. It is important that posture be held correctly during battement tendus, as this exercise tends to train the muscles and to stabilize the basic placement. A tiny movement of hips in tendus will lead to larger errors in larger movements, and to more difficulty with balance in the center.

When the leg lifts to the back, the hips will tilt to face the floor, but still remain absolutely parallel to the floor. In order for this to happen, the shoulders must move forward and lower, as the back assumes a curved position due to the tilt of the pelvis.

Beginners should exaggerate this forward motion of the body until it is well understood, and until the upper and middle back areas are strong enough to begin to help lift the leg.

Under no circumstances should a student try to remain in the basic upright posture while lifting the leg to the back.

It is not really the exact “position” that we are after in ballet, but the correct and most efficient use of the various muscle groups.

When this concept is understood, teachers do a much better job of preparing students for advanced work. They do not allow beginners to strain for an “advanced line” before their muscles are strong enough to do it correctly. It takes a few years for the turnout muscles to strengthen sufficiently to actually do their share of the work in lifting the leg, for example, in an arabesque.

To require the student to lift the leg to their maximum ability before these muscles are fully trained causes other, stronger muscles to take over and do this work, leaving the turnout muscles to get continually weaker by comparison. Lifting too high too soon can prevent correct technique at more advanced levels.

Finding Their Best Posture

Have the student stand with feet parallel, two thirds of the weight on the front half of the feet, and one third on the heels.

Arms are relaxed, head is straight and level. They need to feel as tall and in balance as possible.

Now, lay your hand, flat, gently on top of the student's head. Ask the student to not change her posture at all, but to try to keep her head in contact with your hand. Lift your hand very slowly, about a half inch, perhaps a little more, for as long as the student can pull up taller.

Ballet 1 Choreography for Classwork

Using the Choreography

These exercises are typical of what ballet students ages 8-12 can learn. However, no class of this age could possibly learn all of this in one year! There is enough material here to last most classes two years or more. There are exercises and dances of varying difficulties, because some students will have had good pre ballet experience, and will need harder work. Select a reasonable number of things to teach this year. If you are familiar with the students, you will know which things they are ready to learn, and which things fit best with your current program.

Each teacher is unique in talent, experience, and teaching style. Each class is different in how they respond to ballet lessons. Teachers should feel free to make changes in the work that are appropriate for the class, and which blend with their personal teaching style.

The music was carefully arranged with the idea of helping students to become aware of musical rhythms, so they can blend their movements successfully with music. Some students take to music quite naturally, but many do not, and they need to have music that is easy to follow.

Counting methods listed for the various exercises are suggestions. Teachers should use whichever method of counting the music seems best to them: musical beats or dancers' counts.

I. Warming Up

tr# 2

♩ 6/8, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 32m
Met. 144

2.a. Skipping Forward and Back

Intro: 1-4	Facing CCW around the circle, feet parallel, arms relaxed, hold.
1-64	64 continuous skips; or, 16 forward skips, 16 backward skips, repeat.

tr# 3

♩ 3/4, 3 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 98

3. Positions of the Feet

These exercises are done in the center, hands on waist to help hips to stay level. For memory, say the name of each position as it is shown.

II. Exercises at the Barre

Spend about ten to fifteen minutes at the barre this year. Technique is best improved by learning a few exercises well, so the details can receive the dancer's attention. The barre is where the muscles learn to do the special movements of ballet. The center is where that training is used to dance beautifully. The teacher is a guide, but the student is the one who actually directs his or her muscles, and teaches them what to do. The barre is their time to teach their muscles to move beautifully and well. Demi pliés and rises (elevés) are important strengthening exercises.

Movements in natural or parallel alignment are important. Strengthening in the natural alignment gives more stability to the turned out positions later on. This encourages graceful movement, and helps prevent injuries later on.

tr# 4

♩ 3/4, 3 cts/m,
2m intro, 32m
Met. 80

4.b. Demi Pliés in 1st and 2nd Positions

Intro: 1-6	Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1-18	3 demi plies in 1st.
1-6	Hold with straight knees, good posture, feeling the turnout.
1-18	3 demi plies in 1st.
1-6	Point R foot to 2nd, lower heel, centering weight between feet.
1-48	Repeat all in 2nd position. Lower arms to bras bas to finish.

tr# 5 5. Rises (Elevés)
 ♪ 6/8, 2 cts/m,
 2m intro, 16m
 Met. 88

At first, use only half the music. Second term, introduce the rise in 2nd. Third term, do both positions in one exercise, changing positions during the last two measures (last 12 counts).

Intro: 1-2 Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.

1-2 Rise to quarter or demi point.

3-4 Lower heels in 1st.

5-12 Repeat twice, making three rises in all.

13-16 Wait, or demi plié and straighten, to rest legs.

1-16 Repeat all, then lower arms to bras bas.

6. Battement Tendu

Verbal cues for the movements: “stretch foot, stretch toes, relax toes, relax foot.” Saying cues in time with the music helps them to know when to do each part of the movement. Once learned, the exercise can be done twice as quickly, doing the exercise twice. Second position is learned first because it is easier to keep the turnout even, and it is easier to understand how to use the two parts of the foot in this position .

tr# 6 6.b. Battement Tendu Devant/Derriere
 ♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m,
 2m intro, 16m
 Met. 60

Teach devant and derriere separately at first. They will need to make an extra effort to stand tall, and keep hips absolutely still when moving the leg to the back. Keep the turnout even on both legs. There is a feeling of the foot being “underneath” you as it moves out to the back, then in. For some, there is a feeling of “folding” the foot at the ankle as they return to 1st.

Intro: 1-4 Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.

1-4 Slide R foot towards open 4th in front, showing demi pointe, then full point.

5-8 Slide back to 1st, showing the demi pointe, then closing.

1-8 Repeat derriere.

1-16 Repeat all with L foot; lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 11
 ♪ 4/4, 4 cts/m,
 2m intro, 16m
 Met. 108

11. Attitude Devant

To encourage turnout, tell them to imagine they are lifting a penny on the inside of the heel that is lifting to the attitude.

Intro: 1-8	Place free hands on waist, or along the barre, or on the barre.
1-2	Slide R foot to tendu devant position.
3-4	Lift R leg a few inches, bending knee at a right angle, maintaining placement.
5-6	Lower to tendu position.
7-8	Close to 1st
9-64	Repeat through the music, using alternate legs. Lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 12
 ♪ 3/4, 1 ct/m,
 2m intro, 32m
 Met. 112

12. Learning Rond de Jambe a Terre

Some classes will be ready for this, others will need to wait another year. Battement tendus front and back to the open fourth need to be learned first. Learn en dehors only for several weeks before introducing en dedans. An alternative way of counting 3/4 music is shown.

Intro: 123-223	Facing the barre, in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1 2 3	Brush R foot from first to tendu devant position.
2 2 3	R to 2nd, with circular movement, stopping where best turnout is reached, or, straight across from the toes of the L foot.
3 2 3	Close R to 1st.
4 2 3	Hold.
5-16	Repeat through the music.
1-16	Repeat with L foot.

III. Center Work

tr# 17
 ♪ 3/4, 3 cts/m,
 2m intro, 16m
 Met. 72

17. Floor Stretch

This exercise is long, and complicated to learn. Teach it in sections. When each part is learned, put them together. *All of the forward body bends can be towards the center, instead of to individual legs. This is easier for some students. Some people like to bounce during stretches. Bouncing has been scientifically proven to cause sore muscles the next day! And, bouncing does not increase the stretching benefits. A slow, steady, painless stretch is the safest and most

effective way to do it. Muscles must strengthen from the movement as well as from the stretch, if the flexibility is to be useful. Avoid arching the back during this exercise.

Intro: 1-6	Sitting, legs straight forward, knees & feet stretched, back straight, open arms to demi 2nd, fingers barely touching the floor.
1-6	Bend forward over both legs, starting with head and shoulders, hands reaching towards ankles, body following, with slightly rounded back.
7-12	Sit up straight, head coming up last, lifting arms to 5th, then opening to 2nd.
1-12	Repeat.
	On last count open legs to sides, knees straight with comfortable turnout.
1-6	Bend body over R leg*, starting with the head and shoulders, reaching towards ankle with hands, body following, with slightly rounded back. Note: L leg must maintain its position and not turn inward.
7-12	Roll up from hips through the back, head coming up last, arms 2nd or 5th.
1-12	Repeat to L, on last count lower arms to demi 2nd, and bring legs together (Suggestion: after music ends, shake legs to relax muscles).

tr# 21
 ♪ 6/8, 6 cts/m,
 2m intro, 17m
 Met. 52

21. Five Positions of the Arms

Counting all six counts in a measure of 6/8 meter is unusual. This music is slow enough, that counting it this way can give the students a true concept of the six beats in each measure. Two slow counts per measure is also a correct way to count the music.

Intro: 1-2	Feet in 1st, arms in bras bas.
1-3	Arms to 1st.
4-6	Arms to 2nd.
7-9	R arm in to 1st, making 3rd.
10-12	R up to 5th, and L arm in to 1st, making 4th.
1-3	L up to 5th.
4-6	With gentle wrist action, open fifth and turn hands for diagonally up.
7-12	Lower softly to bras bas.
1-24	Repeat.
1-6	Extra measure: Hold, or, lower more slowly after the repeat.

tr# 22 22.b. Demi Plié in 3rd

♩ 4/4, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 112

Intro: 1-4	Feet in 3rd, place hands on waist.
1-8	3 demi pliés, point R to 2nd and close 3rd back.
9-16	3 demi pliés, point L to 2nd and close 3rd back .
1-16	Repeat all.

23. Transfer of Weight

This helps in finding and keeping the center of balance while moving sideways. Sideways is not a natural direction to move, and does take thought and practice. This can be done two ways: On counts 5 to 8 the dancer can continue in the same direction, or return to the starting place. Both ways are useful in teaching them to center their weight over the leg or legs they are standing on.

tr# 23 23.b. Transferring Weight With Demi Plié

♩ 6/8, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 80

When placement is good and hips are staying level, add the demi plié in 2nd on count 2. (In later years they will learn this exercise moving forward through fourth position.)

Intro: 1-4	Feet in 1st, prepare arms to 2nd or place hands on waist.
1-2	Move R foot to tendu in 2nd.
3-4	Transfer weight smoothly to a demi plié in 2nd position.
5-6	Transfer weight onto R leg, straightening R knee, extending L to tendu 2nd.
7-8	Close L to 1st.
1-8	Repeat all to L.
1-16	Repeat all. Lower arms to bras bas

tr# 25 25. Ballet Walks

♩ 3/4, 3 cts/m,
2m intro, 40m
Met. 76

Use this exercise to teach them how to use the diagonal pathways of the room. Walk them through it without music. Use the music when they understand what to do. The second dancer or group of dancers starts their ballet walks on count 13, (every four measures) For a larger class, each set starts on count 7, (every two measures).

Intro: 1-3	Begin UL facing DR, feet together, bras bas.
4-6	Point L foot devant, open arms demi 2nd.

1-9	9 ballet walks with stretched feet towards DR, stopping on count 9.
10-12	Brush R foot through 1st to tendu (degagé) devant, lift arms to show an extended efface devant.
1-12	Turn to right and do ballet walks to UR, then wait for a turn on the second diagonal.

Continue through the music.



29. Walking Turns

First learn one turn, with spot. Walking straight across the room works best for learning. Have small pictures or stickers on the walls for them to spot. It usually works best to save the arms until the turns alone are performed quite well. It may help to explain that the first half turn goes forward, and the second half turn, the one with the spotting action, goes backwards.

tr# 29 29.b. Three Walking Turns and Hold

♩ 4/4, 2 cts/m,
1m intro, 16m
Met. 80

1-4	Start at left side of room, 1st position, place hands on waist.
1-6	Looking at R spot, walk six steps to stage R in 2nd position (3 turns).
7-8	Take one more step to 2nd on R, hold with L foot pointed to 2nd.
9-16	Look at L spot and repeat to L.
1-16	Repeat both directions. Close feet to 1st; lower arms to bras bas.

IV. Natural Movement

tr# 36 36. Picked Up Gallops

♩ 2/4, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 48m
Met. 112

A preparation for Pas de Chat, this step is done forward around the circle, without turnout. The basic movement pattern is that of a Pas de Chat. It's like learning the parallel retiré before learning the turned out retiré. In a counterclockwise circle, feet together, hands on waist; either foot is used on the picked up gallops. *Once the picked up gallop is learned, they can try doing four gallops on counts 5-8, instead of two.

Intro: 1-4	1st, place hands on waist, or in front holding imaginary reins.
1-4	Traveling forward, 4 skips, lifting knees high.
5-8	*2 gallops picking feet up high, as if jumping over a stick, or a low hurdle, with a slight pause after each gallop.
9-96	Repeat through the music. Lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 38 38. Learning the Polka
 ♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m, 2m intro, 37m Met. 98
 A forward polka is simply two gallops with each leg instead of four. When they change feet on every two gallops, it becomes a forward polka. Ask them what step it would be if they only did one gallop on each leg (Answer: skip).

Intro: 1-2	Feet parallel, place hands on waist, or as directed.
1-72	36 polkas forward around the circle, alone or with partner.
73-74	On last chord, hold final position.

V. Allegro Section

When the music is longer than the exercise, two groups can perform in turn, or just stop the music when they are done. The challenges and enchainements can be used after the steps are learned. Many enchainements are possible. Be sure the enchainement is not too hard—they should basically get it after 2 or 3 tries. Otherwise, solving the choreography takes all of their mental energy, and the step will not be performed as well.

tr# 41 41.a. Soubresaut
 ♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m, 2m intro, 4m all played twice Met. 90
 For this grade, soubresauts are jumps in third, not changing feet. On the repeat, do soubresauts with L foot in front.

Intro: 1-4	Feet in 3rd, R front, place hands on waist, plié on last count.
&1-8	8 soubresauts, landing on the musical beats.
Intro: 1-4	Straighten knees, point R to 2nd, close R to 3rd back, plié on last count.
&1-8	8 soubresauts, landing on the musical beats.
	Straighten knees, lower arms to bras bas.

- tr# 43** 43. Echappé Sauté
 ♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m, 2m intro, 8m Met. 88
 Once the echappé sauté closing in 1st is learned, they can try it from 3rd, not changing feet. Then, try it from 3rd changing feet. An enchainement to try: 4 claps, 2 echappés; or, 2 claps, 1 echappé, 2 claps, 1 echappé.

43.a. Echappé Sauté

Intro: 1-4&	Feet in 1st, place hands on waist, plié on last count.
1-16	8 echappé sautés to 2nd, closing 1st, turnout consistent, knees over feet.
	Straighten knees, lower arms to bras bas.

VII. Enchainements

- tr# 53** 53. Enchainement #4
 ♪ 4/4, 4 cts/m, 2m intro, 8m Met. 112
 This enchainement give practice with petit jetés and teaches the footwork for pas de bourrée under (dessous).

Intro: 1-8	From 1st, pick up R foot to demi retiré derriere, arms demi 2nd, fondu.
1-8	8 petit jetés.
1-2	Close R to 3rd back.
3-4	Step L to 2nd.
5-6	Close R in 3rd front.
7-8	Pick up L foot and fondu ready to do it on the other side.

IX. Fun Dances for Creative Expression

- tr# 58** 58. The Rainbow
 ♪ 4/4, 4 cts/m, 2m intro, 18m Met. 80
 The umbrella is imaginary. The challenge is to convince the audience that you really have one, and that you really do see a rainbow at the end. If you use real umbrellas, be sure to take and teach adequate safety precautions, to reduce the chance of injury to another dancer.

Intro: 1-4	Center back, umbrella is open and held over right shoulder. Point R forward.
1-4	Walk towards center front with 3 ballet walks, point R in front.
5-8	3 ballet walks, point L in front.
9-16	Repeat the ballet walks.
1-2	Close feet and hold R hand out to see if it is raining.

3-4	Nod head “yes”, look disappointed.
5-6	Hold L hand out to see if it is still raining.
7-8	Shake head “no”, and smile.
1-4	Close umbrella.
5-7	Shake the rain off of it.
8	Face stage left, point R foot forward, holding umbrella horizontal in both hands.
Faster: 1-8	8 gallops to center back (4R, 4L).
A tempo: 1	Hand out and look up, it is raining again.
2-4	Open umbrella.
5-8	Huddle underneath it, do heel drops to imitate rhythm of raindrops.
1-4	Hand out, it has stopped raining.
5-8	Set open umbrella on floor to right side (out of way of dancer).
Faster: 1-8	Spring Points: 2R, 2L, 2R, 2L.
1	See rainbow , point to it.
2-4	Outline it with both hands.
	Hold finish.

VI. Cool Down Activities

tr# 48
 ♪ 3/4, 1 ct/m,
 4m intro, 9m
 Met. 104

48.a. Classical Reverence for Girls

Intro: 1-2	1st, open arms demi 2nd.
1-4	Step R, curtsey extending R hand forward; repeat L.
5-6	Step R & point L front, lifting arms to 5th.
7-9	Fondu & bow over L leg, bringing arms in reverse port de bras to 2nd straightening on ct. 8, hold position on ct 9.

48.b. Classical Reverence for Boys

Intro: 1-2	1st, open arms demi 2nd.
1-2	Step R, leaving L relaxed where it is, sweeping R hand forward & side.

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 3-4 | Close L foot to 1st, sweeping L hand forward & side. |
| 5-6 | Hold, both arms forward and open. |
| 7-9 | Bow from waist, arms relaxing down, straightening on ct 8, hold ct 9. |



Positions of the Feet



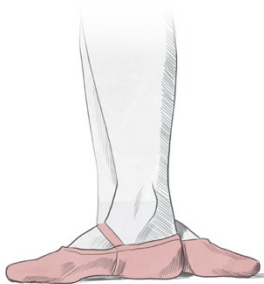
Parallel



First



Second



Third



Fourth Open



Fifth

Positions of the Feet, Showing Turnout at about 90°



Parallel



First



Second



Third



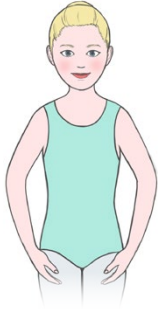
Fourth Open



Fifth

Positions of the Arms

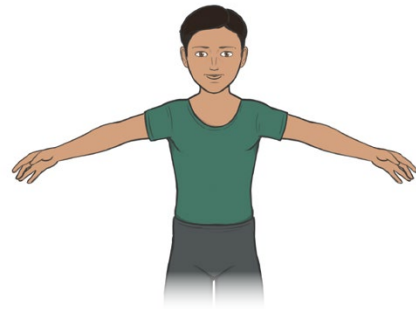
As Named by the Royal Academy of Dance



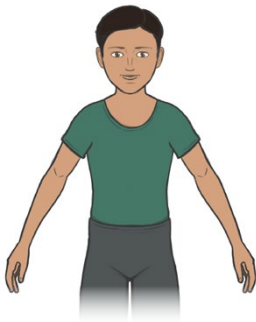
Bras Bas



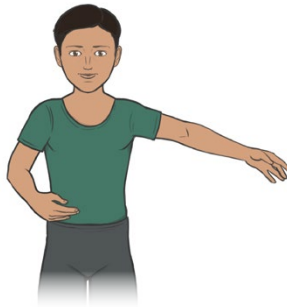
First Position



Second Position



Demi Seconde Position



Third Position



Fourth Position
or Fourth Crossed Position



Fifth Position



Open Fifth Position (when coming
from second) or, Diagonally Up



First Arabesque



Third Arabesque



Open Fifth Position
(when coming from Fifth)



Hands on Waist



Fourth Position
or Attitude

Thank you

Thanks for trying out this sample class from *Classical Ballet 1*!

Purchase the Full Version

If you have enjoyed using the ideas and exercises in this trial version, you can download the full version of *Classical Ballet 1* [here](#).

Questions?

We'd be happy to help! Feedback on all of our materials is highly valued. To leave your thoughts, simply visit our [contact page](#).

