

What is Character Dance?

Character Dance is the stylized representation of European national and folk dance traditions, and uses movements and music which have been adapted for the theater. It is integral to much of the classical ballet repertoire, and is usually used to depict large scenes of gatherings, royal parties or festivals.

In observing traditional ballets such as *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Giselle*, or *Don Quixote*, look out for dancers in elaborate costumes and special heeled shoes instead of pointe or soft ballet shoes. It can be a joyous and celebratory part of a Ballet and is often rather lively.

Character work teaches musicality, rhythm and mime, often working with props or dancing with a partner.

Our students wear a heeled "character shoe" which creates a tool for rhythm work and teaches the dynamic between strong and soft presentation of work. Girls will also wear calf-length black skirts with ribbons sewn at the bottom.



Character is introduced for the first time in Grade 1 (Classical Ballet 1), and is shown through Grade 8.

In most levels, character represents 20% of their grade during an exam.

ABSA requires the character shoe to be a specific style. New shoes may be purchased at Dance Supplies, Etc. in Severna Park, MD

Girls CB1-CB3	Girls CB4- CB8	Boys
Freed canvas character shoe with low heel	Freed canvas character shoe with cuban heel	Lace-up character shoe for boys

ABSA measures all girls for character skirts at the beginning of the year, and they are made by Brenda Lasher in-house.