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Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

Dance across America

Before there was the written word, there was the language of dance. Dance expresses love and hate, joy and sorrow, life and death, and everything else in between.

Dance in America is everywhere. We dance from Florida to Alaska, from horizon to horizon and sea to sea. We dance at weddings, birthdays, office parties and just to fill the time.

‘I adore dancing,’ says Lester Bridges, the owner of a dance studio in Iowa. ‘I can’t imagine doing anything else with my life.’ Bridges runs dance classes for all ages. ‘Teaching dance is wonderful. My older students say it makes them feel young. It’s marvellous to watch them. For many of them, it’s a way of meeting people and having a social life.’

So why do we dance? ‘I can tell you about one young couple,’ says Bridges. ‘They’re learning to do traditional dances. They arrive at the class in a bad mood and they leave with a smile. Dancing seems to change their mood completely.’

So, do we dance in order to make ourselves feel better, calmer, healthier? Andrea Hillier, a choreographer, says, ‘Dance, like the rhythm of a beating heart, is life. Even after all these years, I want to get better and better. I keep practising even when I’m exhausted. I find it hard to stop! Dancing reminds me I’m alive.’