

ELIZABETHAN CIRCLE DANCE

First, form a circle. Use as many students as you like. Keep the number of dancers even, but you don't need equal numbers of boys and girls—if you were performing in Shakespeare's day, everyone dancing in this scene would be a guy anyway. If you have an odd number of students, make your teacher dance.

Give each step eight counts before moving on to the next. Repeat steps as needed to adapt to the music you select. (If need be, you can perform the dance steps without music.)

Stand in a circle with you partner by your side.

Honor your partner.

For eight counts, gentlemen bow to the ladies to their right, and ladies curtsy to the gentlemen to their left.

Honor you corner.

For eight counts, gentlemen bow to the ladies to their left, and ladies curtsy to the gentlemen to their right.

Doubles.

All the dancers in the circle take hands and, starting with the right foot, walk forward three steps and bring the left foot forward to meet the right foot on the fourth count. Then, starting with the left foot, they walk backward three steps and bring the right foot backward to meet the left foot on the eighth count.

Repeat.

Circle clockwise.

Still holding hands, the dancers circle clockwise for eight counts.

If the music is slow, the dancers can walk around the circle with a weaving step. Have each dancer take a step to the left with the left foot, step behind the left foot with the right foot, take a step to the left with the left foot, step in front of the left foot with the right foot, and so on for eight counts. Bring the right foot together with the left foot on the eighth count.

If the music is fast, the dancers can dance around the circle with a slipping step. Each dancer takes a step to the left with the left foot, brings the right foot toward the left foot with a hop, places the right foot where the left foot was, moves the left foot a step to the left, and so on for eight counts.

Circle counterclockwise.

Repeat the directions for circle clockwise (above) in the opposite direction for eight counts.

Right palms.

Partners face each other, raise their right hands, and place the hands together, palm to palm. Each pair of dancers walks around in its own circle for eight counts.

Left palms.

Partners face each other, raise their left hands, and place the hands together, palm to palm. Each pair of dancers walks around in its own circle for seven counts and returns to the large circle on the eighth count.

Gentlemen's double.

As in doubling above, men walk forward four counts into the circle then double back to their ladies for four more counts. They clap on the fourth count and on the eighth count.

Ladies' double.

Same as above, only ladies this time.

Alternating single.



Starting with the right foot, the men take one step into the circle and bring the left foot forward to meet the right foot on the second count. They clap on the second count.

While the men single back and clap on the fourth count, the women single forward and clap on the fourth count, too.

While the men single forward and clap on the sixth count, the women single back and clap on the sixth count.

The men single back and clap on the eighth count while the women hold their places and clap on the eighth count.

Honor your partner.

Honor your corner.

Source: *Shakespeare Set Free*, Teaching Romeo and Juliet, Handout 5, Washington Square Press, The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1993.



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