

Standard vs. Grade Exams

The basic steps, theory, and vocabulary are comparable for both Standard and Grade exams. While the technical level is the same, there are differences between the two. Occasionally, new basic steps are introduced in the Standard that are not in the Grade, and vice versa depending on the level.

In the Standard exams students are evaluated in groups of 2-4. The teacher goes into the examination with the students which allows them to present their work in a non intimidating, classroom atmosphere. The technical elements are combined into choreography with the emphasis on effort, knowledge of syllabus and theory, spacial awareness, artistry, musicality, dynamics, quality of movement and performance/ expression. Standard exams are designed to be used as a bridge between the Grades or as an enhancement in addition to the Grades. They are better suited for recreational students who only take one technique class a week, or students who are examining at multiple levels within a session.

In the Grade exams students are evaluated in groups of 2. They go into the examination without the teacher and must be prepared to present their work independently. The technical elements are combined into enchainments with the emphasis on correct placement, technique, strength, and control as well as effort, knowledge of syllabus and theory, spacial awareness, artistry, musicality, dynamics, quality of movement and performance/expression. Grade exams are best suited for the serious student who is taking more than one technique class per week.

In large ballet schools, students often examine through the Standards and Grades with both exams being presented in the same year during separate exam sessions . Ideally, we, would be able to offer every Standard and Grade level each year however, we do not always have the enrollment to support such a program. It is customary for those taking more than one technique class to take one at their level, one above their level, and/or one at the level just completed. Each combination of classes has its benefits.

Any student pursuing the Grade exams should take a minimum of two Cecchetti technique classes per week. Students who are taking one Cecchetti technique class per week will usually remain on the Standard exam track. Each year when evaluating "Standard vs Grade" we must make the decision based on the needs of the entire class. If the class is preparing for a Standard exam and a student has a desire to pursue the Grade exam, private lessons are available.

Exams are designed to give students a greater sense of accomplishment by reaching a tangible goal while insuring that each level has been successfully accomplished before progressing to the next. It is the process in preparing for the exam which is most important, instilling poise, confidence and increased proficiency with every success.