

VIRGINIA REEL

FOCUS: Folk dance

EQUIPMENT: "Virginia Reel," Folk Dancing

ORGANIZATION:

This American folk dance involves skipping, arm swinging, do-si-do, sashay, side-stepping, and casting off. If possible, form longways sets of six pairs per set. Partners face each other across the set, spaced about 3 meters (10 feet) apart from each other and arm's length apart from the dancer on either side. The Head couple is closest to the music. "Walk" couples through the figures at first; then have them listen to the music and perform at the music's tempo. Dancers also learn how to "Reel the Set." Demonstrate the figure and have couples practice slowly at "walking" tempo; then perform the Reel at the music's tempo.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

1. Forward-2-3-4; Back-6-7-8.
Each line take four skipping steps toward the other. Partners greet each other with a "High Ten," then take four skipping steps back to place. Repeat.
2. Right Elbow-Swing 3-4; Back-6-7-8; Left Elbow-Swing 3-4; Back-6-7-8.
Skip to the middle, meet your partner, link right elbows and swing around once, then skip back to place (eight counts). Repeat, linking left elbows and swinging around once.
3. Two-Hand Swing 3-4; Back-6-7-8.
Skip to the middle, meet your partner, join both hands, swing CW around once, and skip back to place.
4. Do-Si-Do-3-4; Back-6-7-8.
Skip toward your partner, pass right shoulder to right shoulder, back to back, and return to place, passing left shoulders.
5. Head couple, sashay down 3-4-...-8; sashay up-3-4-...-8.
Head couple, join hands and side-step for eight counts down the set, then side-step back up to place. Other couples clap and foot-stomp in time to the music!
6. Reel the Set:
Head couple, skip toward each other; do a right elbow-swing one and a half times around. Then separate and skip toward the opposite line. The "Head boy partner" turn the second girl dancer around once with a left elbow-swing, while the "Head girl partner" do a left elbow-swing with the second boy dancer.
- Head couple, then meet in the center of the set again for a right elbow-swing. Separate and skip to the opposite third dancer for a left elbow-swing.
- Continue down the set in this way, swinging partner with a right elbow-swing; swinging opposite dancer with a left elbow-swing.
- When you have "reeled" all five couples and are now at Foot of set, do a right elbow-swing halfway around (so that you are on your starting sides), join hands, and Sashay back to the Head of the set.
Skip back into place.
7. Cast Off 3-4-5-6-7-8.
Head couple, cast off: Each partner, turn outward and lead your file as you skip down to the foot of the set. Everyone else follow in order.
- At the foot, Head couple, form an arch by joining hands overhead.
- Each pair, in order, side-step through the arch and up the set; then separate into your original lines.
8. The second couple now becomes the new Head couple to start the dance again. Repeat the dance until each pair has had a chance to be the Head couple.

