

# STEP **AFRIKA!**

## STEP UP TO COLLEGE



## STUDENT ACTIVITY JOURNAL

### MIDDLE SCHOOL EDITION

**Student**

**School**

**Grade**

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# All About Step Afrika!

C. Brian Williams, the founder and executive director of Step Afrika!, attended Howard University in Washington, D.C., where he learned how to step. Later, he visited South Africa, and saw a young boy dancing a style that looked very similar to stepping. Recognizing the connection, Brian sought to find a way for Africans and Americans to bridge the gap between their dances, music, and culture. In 1994, he founded Step Afrika!, the first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping. Step Afrika! ranks as one of the top ten African American dance companies in the United States.

The collaborative nature of our work teaches the dancers three-core values:

Teamwork: working together to accomplish a goal

Discipline: having the self-control and focus necessary to achieve

Commitment: being dedicated to something

Today, Step Afrika! is known not only for its engaging, high energy performances, but for its artistic innovation as well. Most recently, Washingtonian christened Step Afrika! a showstopper – “one of twenty exciting performers and groups well worth a trip to the theater!”

## We Step

We promote an appreciation for stepping and its use as an educational, motivational and healthy tool for young people. We structure our performances and programs to connect intimately with our audience and create a positive influence on students’ lives.

## We Tour

Step Afrika! performs in more than 50 U.S. and Canadian cities each year. As a cultural ambassador, Step Afrika! also partners with various organizations to perform for audiences all over the world. During international visits, Step Afrika! joins local dance groups and other arts organizations to develop performances that blend the styles of different cultures and create a unique experience for the audience. Step Afrika! programs are a testament to the power of the arts; bringing communities together and building tolerance, unity and acceptance among young people everywhere.

## We Teach

Step Afrika! has been dedicated to arts education since its inception. We present the art, values, and culture of stepping to students of all grades and backgrounds. We have become a model for using stepping as an educational tool. Exhibiting the organization’s core values of teamwork, discipline, and commitment, Step Afrika! presents the following programs:

- Stepping with Step Afrika! in-school performance
- Step Up to College residency program
- Master Class Workshops
- Summer Steps with Step Afrika! summer camp
- Step Afrika! Scholars Program

For more information about our arts education programs, visit [www.stepafrika.org](http://www.stepafrika.org), or email [info@stepafrika.org](mailto:info@stepafrika.org).

# What is Stepping?

Stepping is a dance that uses the body as an instrument. It combines footsteps, claps, and spoken words to produce complex rhythms, and has roots in African dance and military marching. In stepping, the dancers wear hard-soled shoes that create loud sounds against the floor. Step Afrika! is a dance company committed to furthering the tradition of stepping.

Stepping is a dance form full of energy, pride, and tradition. As you learn how to step, remember to display confidence and trust not only in yourself but also in your step team. Stepping requires teamwork, discipline and commitment – three principles that all steppers must have and that the pioneers of stepping embodied.

## College: Where Stepping was Born

In the early 1900s, African American students who became members of college organizations called sororities and fraternities developed stepping. (Sororities are for women and fraternities are for men.) Stepping became a way that members could show pride and love for their organizations.

## It's Everywhere!

Though stepping is traditionally associated with college groups, the art form is universal and highly appealing to young people. Today, stepping can be found in elementary, middle, and high schools across the United States as well as in churches and community-based organizations. Are there step teams in your community? Where?

## What Makes Up a Step?

There are many different moves that make up a step. Let's learn and demonstrate these moves together:

**Blade** – To make a BLADE, extend all your fingers, but keep them close together. Straighten your arms so it does not bend at the elbow or wrist. A BLADE can be thrown at many angles.

**Punch** – Extend your arm forward and close your fist. Make sure to keep your arm straight when you throw a PUNCH. Place your left hand, fist closed, across your chest. This is the classic PUNCH position. Switch positions with both arms to punch each side.

**Spin** – When you turn around while stepping, it is called a SPIN. You can SPIN all the way around and back to the front. Stomp one foot on the floor in front of you, and then turn your body in the opposite direction. (If you stomp on your left foot, SPIN right. If you stomp on your right foot, SPIN left.) Use your arms in the air to help you balance. You can SPIN fast or slow.

**Clap** – Extend your fingers and slap your hands together. A CLAP can be done in front of you, behind your back, underneath your leg or even with someone else.

**Kick** – Use one leg to leap in the air. With the other leg, KICK your foot back toward the floor behind you. You can do a KICK behind you or in front of you. You can do many KICKS together. A lot of steppers clap under their leg when they finish doing KICKS.

# Elements and Qualities of Stepping



## Research

Look up the following words that describe the elements and qualities of stepping. Create your own brief definition.

## Core Values of Stepping

Teamwork \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline \_\_\_\_\_

Commitment \_\_\_\_\_

## Qualities of Stepping

Innovative \_\_\_\_\_

Choreography \_\_\_\_\_

Energy \_\_\_\_\_

Precision \_\_\_\_\_

Diction \_\_\_\_\_

Voice Projection \_\_\_\_\_

## Elements of a Step Show

Theme \_\_\_\_\_

Costumes \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction \_\_\_\_\_

Transition Step \_\_\_\_\_

Special Effect/Stunt \_\_\_\_\_

Chant \_\_\_\_\_

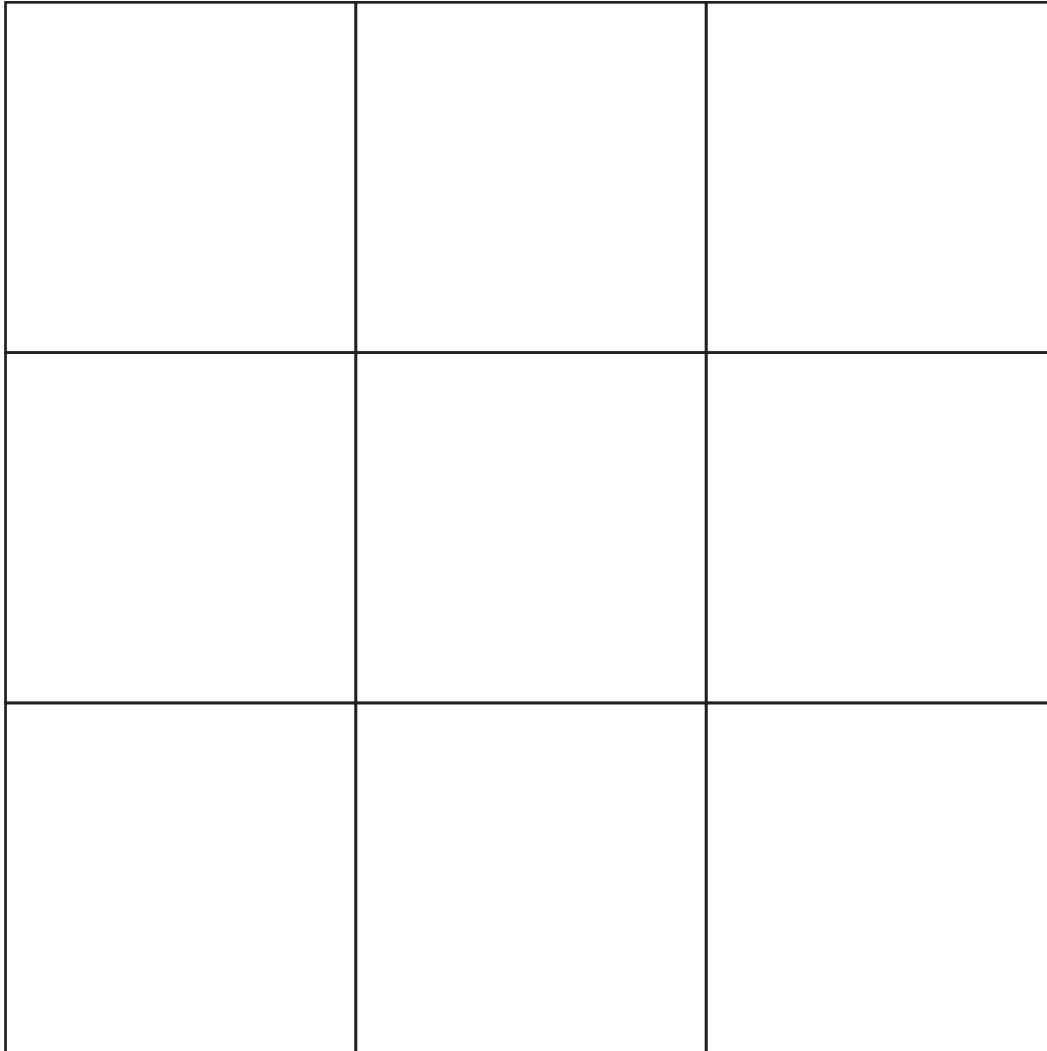
Strolls \_\_\_\_\_

Outro/Closing \_\_\_\_\_

# Stage Directions

Use the following diagram to write the universal theatre stage directions.  
Please write the entire word, not just the number or letters.

## Audience



Upstage	Center Stage	Downstage Right
Upstage Right	Upstage Left	Downstage Left
Downstage	Stage Right	Stage Left

# The Greek Alphabet

Αα

ALPHA [a]  
ἄλφα

Ββ

BETA [b]  
βῆτα

Γγ

GAMMA [g]  
γάμμα

Δδ

DELTA [d]  
δέλτα

Εε

EPSILON [e]  
ἕψιλόν

Ζζ

ZETA [dz]  
ζῆτα

Ηη

ETA [eː]  
ἦτα

Θθ

THETA [tʰ]  
θῆτα

Ιι

IOTA [i]  
ιώτα

Κκ

KAPPA [k]  
κάππα

Λλ

LAMBDA [l]  
λάμβδα

Μμ

MU [m]  
μῦ

Νν

NU [n]  
νῦ

Ξξ

XI [ks]  
ξεῖ

Οο

OMICRON [o]  
ὀ μικρόν

Ππ

PI [p]  
πεῖ

Ρρ

RHO [r]  
ῥῶ

Σσς

SIGMA [s]  
σίγμα

Ττ

TAU [t]  
ταῦ

Υυ

UPSILON [u]  
ὔ ψιλόν

Φφ

PHI [pʰ]  
φεῖ

Χχ

CHI [kʰ]  
χεῖ

Ψψ

PSI [ps]  
ψεῖ

Ωω

OMEGA [oː]  
ὦ μέγα



# The Greek Alphabet Exercise

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The letters below represent the names of the historically African-American fraternities and sororities who practice stepping. Three letters of the Greek Alphabet represent each name. Using the Greek Letter Chart provided, write out the full name of each of the organizations listed below.

## Fraternities

**ΑΦΑ** \_\_\_\_\_ Fraternity, Inc.

Founded: 1906                      Colors: Black and Old Gold

**ΚΑΨ** \_\_\_\_\_ Fraternity, Inc.

Founded: 1911                      Colors: Crimson and Cream

**ΩΨΦ** \_\_\_\_\_ Fraternity, Inc.

Founded: 1911                      Colors: Purple and Gold

**ΦΒΣ** \_\_\_\_\_ Fraternity, Inc.

Founded: 1914                      Colors: Royal Blue and Pure White

**ΙΦΘ** \_\_\_\_\_ Fraternity, Inc.

Founded: 1963                      Colors: Charcoal Brown and Gilded Gold

## Sororities

**ΑΚΑ** \_\_\_\_\_ Sorority, Inc.

Founded: 1908                      Colors: Salmon Pink and Apple Green

**ΔΣΘ** \_\_\_\_\_ Sorority, Inc.

Founded: 1913                      Colors: Crimson and Cream

**ΖΦΒ** \_\_\_\_\_ Sorority, Inc.

Founded: 1920                      Colors: Royal Blue and Pure White

**ΣΓΡ** \_\_\_\_\_ Sorority, Inc.

Founded: 1922                      Colors: Royal Blue and Gold

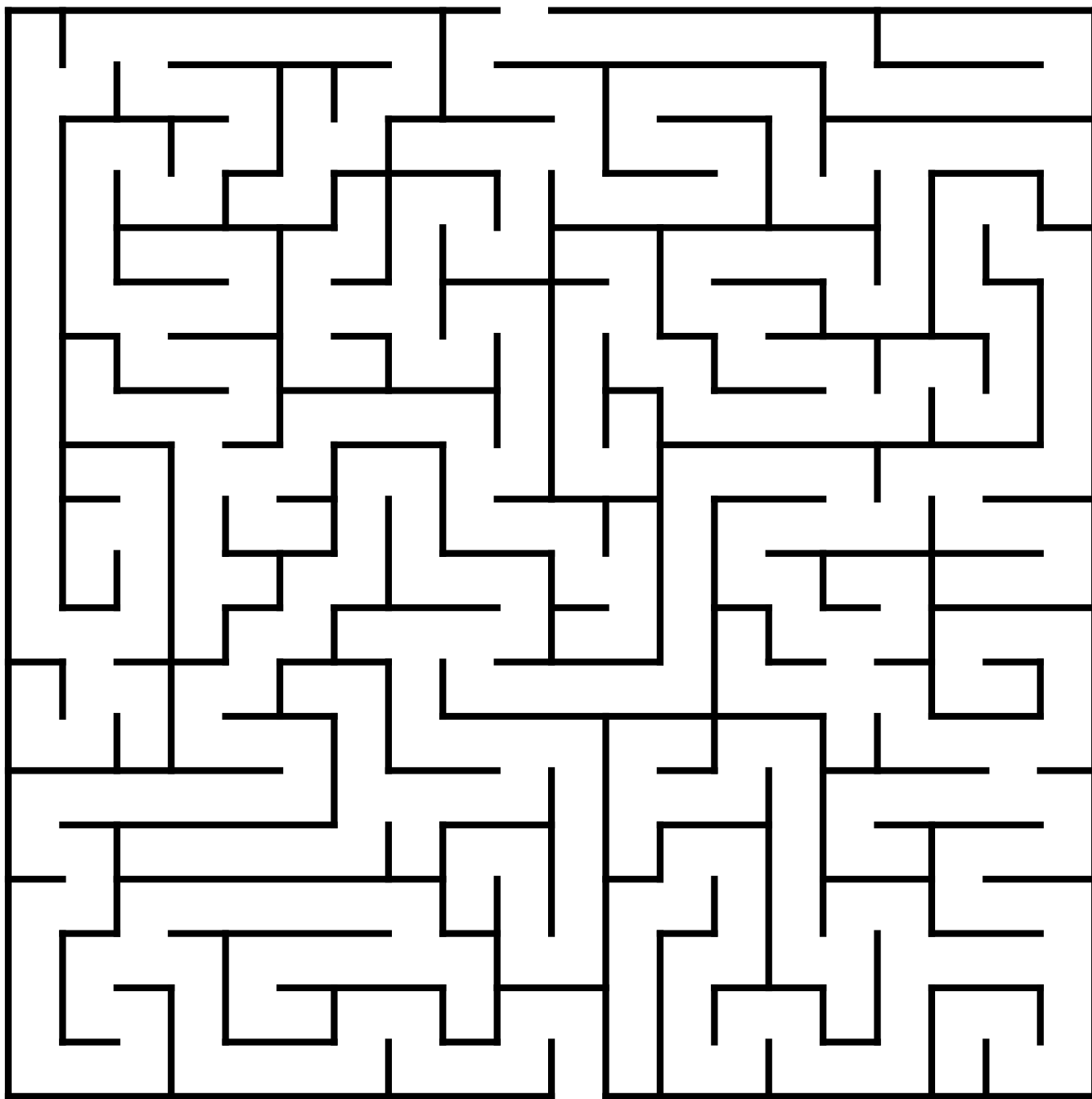
Write your own name using the Greek Capital and Lower-case letters:



# Creating My Own Path To College

Making it into a college or university can be as difficult as making it through a maze, but it is NOT impossible. Find your way through the maze and create your own path to COLLEGE.

**Start HERE**



**College/University**

# Is College for You?

## Do You Want To...

1. Find your passion?
2. Grow in a supportive environment?
3. Uplift your family?

## How Does College Help You Find Your Passion?

College helps create endless possibilities. Some people simply have “jobs,” while others have “careers.” What is the difference? With a career, the kind of work you do is based on your interests. It is a path you have chosen. College can help you turn your passions and interests into a career you love. College also helps you discover what you would like to do.

*Choosing a college major does not limit you to one type of career.*

## What Kind of Supportive Environment Can I Find in College?

College is more than training for a career and attending classes, it's also about discovering yourself and learning to think and live independently. A lot of these experiences occur outside of the classroom. The new people you meet; the new environments you visit; the new ideas you find. There are many supportive environments to help you become a successful student and person:

**Study Groups** – partnering with other students to study can help grow into lifelong friendships. Even in college, “teamwork” is still an important key to success.

**Tutoring** – there is additional help that can be found in all fields of study, for no cost. Getting one-on-one help can improve your GPA and boost confidence; most often you are paired with an upper classman which can be advantageous to learning how to create good study habits.

**Mentorship** – You can find support in your academic counselor, who will help with overcoming test-taking anxieties, improving study habits, and selecting the right classes every semester. Your academic advisor is also a mentor that you can speak to directly about the simple challenges of the college atmosphere.

**Extracurricular activities** – Joining clubs and organizations are a definite way to meet people that share similar interests with you. Participating in the Sustainability Council, Student Government, Student Activities Committee, and Greek Letter organizations are just a few ways that may help you become more involved with campus life.

## How Does Going to College Lift Up my Family?

If you go to college, statistics show your children and even their children are more likely to go. Being a first-generation college student sets a standard for your family and reveals the attainability of reaching this milestone. You will create a better life for yourself and in return a better life for your family.

Higher education enables you to help your family. Families with more education tend to have a better standard of living. Plus, with more earning potential, you can give back to your community. If you are the first in your family to consider college, don't hesitate to tell everyone, “I'm going to college.”

**More education can mean more opportunities!!!**

# When I Grow Up – Part I

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Upon entering college, a student must choose a particular program to study. This program determines what type of degree you will earn. Below is a list of possible careers. Match the careers to the correct program.

## Career

Doctor  
Software programmer  
Dentist  
Accountant  
Teacher  
Broadcast journalist  
Physical therapist  
Dancer

## School

Education  
Business  
Arts & Sciences  
Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Health Sciences  
Engineering, Architecture, & Computer Sciences  
Medicine  
Dentistry  
Communications

List three things you learned about college during your Step Afrika! class:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# When I Grow Up – Part II

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Have you thought about what you would like to do (also called a **profession** or **career**) when you grow up? List three careers you might want to pursue and why.

	<b>Career/Profession</b>	<b>Why I want to do this</b>
1		
2		
3		

Do you know anyone is these careers?

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# Daily Reflections

Think about your day today. What was one person, place, object, or situation that made it good. Write out the story to help you remember this day.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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