

Dance, dance, dance

The Ancient Greeks danced for many reasons. As we do today, they performed dances for special occasions. Sometimes they danced to honour their gods. The women on an amphora dance on either side of Dionysos, the god of wine, which suggests that they are worshipping him [[Myth and Religion 4](#)]. Such women were called **maenads** or ‘mad women.’ Men also danced to prepare for battle. During these dances they wore battle gear—helmets, shields, and spears [[Warfare 2](#)]. Some people think that these **pyrrhic** dances were named after **Pyrrhus**, the son of the famous hero **Achilles**. The Greeks danced to celebrate weddings, and they even danced at funerals. Today, dancing is still important to the Modern Greeks because it provides a special link to their past.



Most Greek dances were performed while holding hands in a circle [[Education 10](#)]. Such dances were choral, where everyone did the same steps at the same time. The dance of the maenads was not choral because each woman invented her own steps. Another non-choral dance was the komos, in which each dancer gestured with his hands while lifting up his legs [[Symposium 34](#)].

Men and women usually danced separately, but the komos was one of the few dances where they could dance together. The komos was danced at symposia, a special parties held for men. Women who danced the komos at the symposium were hetairai (companions) or entertainers hired to dance and play music [[Education 3](#)]